

**COMPENDIUM OF THE
ORAL HISTORY PROJECT
FOR THE CUYAHOGA VALLEY
ADMINISTRATIVE HISTORY**

by

**Ron Cockrell
Senior Research Historian
Midwest Regional Office
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior**

**Omaha, Nebraska
1991**

**COMPENDIUM OF THE
ORAL HISTORY PROJECT
FOR THE CUYAHOGA VALLEY
ADMINISTRATIVE HISTORY**

by

**Ron Cockrell
Senior Research Historian
Midwest Regional Office
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior**

**Omaha, Nebraska
1991**

F O R E W O R D

This document represents the result of an oral history project accomplished in conjunction with historical research for the administrative history of Cuyahoga Valley National Recreation Area. The effort was undertaken by Senior Research Historian Ron Cockrell of the Midwest Regional Office of the National Park Service (NPS) in Omaha, Nebraska. Information from this compendium was used in **A Green Shrouded Miracle: The Administrative History of Cuyahoga Valley National Recreation Area, Ohio** (NPS 1992). The remaining historical data is herein preserved for use by future researchers who are interested in learning more about NPS history in the Cuyahoga Valley of Northeast Ohio.

T A B L E O F C O N T E N T S

<u>INTERVIEWEE</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
FOREWORD	i
Edward H. Adelman	01
Lewis S. Albert	13
Merrill D. Beal	57
Hugh Beattie	67
Siegfried Buerling	75
David John Cherry	95
John Daily	107
Bill Dean	129
John P. Debo, Jr.	137
Russell E. Dickenson	175
Michael Donnelly	201
Dave Dornfeld	219
Jim Dunning	243
Steve Elkinton	251
Gary Everhardt	261
Gerald R. Ford	265
Martin Griffith	269
Chester V. Hamilton	289
Robert Holmes	297
Einar L. Johnson	307
John Kawamoto	323
Dave Linderman	369
Robert P. Martin	397
Theodore R. McCann	427
Brian McHugh	461
Loretta Neumann	489
William Nye	513
Thomas Offutt	533
Randall R. Pope	551
Nathaniel P. Reed	557
John F. Seiberling	575
Sheridan S. Steele	643
Leonard R. Stein-Sapir	673
Harvey R. Swack	693
Robert Taft, Jr.	701
Ron Thoman	705
William J. Whalen	771

I N T E R V I E W V I A C O R R E S P O N D E N C E

F O R T H E
A D M I N I S T R A T I V E H I S T O R Y O F
C U Y A H O G A V A L L E Y
N A T I O N A L R E C R E A T I O N A R E A
O H I O

Edward H. Adelman
Supervisory Architect, Lowell National Historical Park
(former TAPS Chief, Cuyahoga Valley National Recreation Area)
National Park Service

Letter
September 13, 1989
Lowell, Massachusetts

Interviewed by:

Ron Cockrell
Historian
Midwest Regional Office
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Letter
August 29, 1989
Omaha, Nebraska

Edward H. Adelman

Edward H. Adelman

MR. COCKRELL: I am currently researching and compiling the Administrative History of Cuyahoga Valley National Recreation Area (CVNRA), Ohio. I respectfully request your participation in this project which will document the history and development of this important National Park Service (NPS) unit.

I have researched the park files and have conducted many oral history interviews, but I need your perspective on a number of items which are as follows:

MR. ADELMAN: I appreciate your request for information regarding those major projects with which I was involved at Cuyahoga Valley National Recreation Area. I understand that the requested information will be used to prepare the Administrative History for Cuyahoga. As we discussed over the telephone, opinions will vary as to the history of some of the projects and programs which I implemented at Cuyahoga.

In the material which follows, I have attempted to accurately relate the facts and priorities as I recall them. I have ventured opinions only on those matters with which I was intimately involved. Undoubtedly, you will receive conflicting information on some issues; I trust your good judgement to develop an Administrative History for Cuyahoga which objectively assimilates the varied data which you may receive. Good luck.

The following numbered paragraphs relate to the questions in your letter. I have tried to confine my comments to your area of inquiry; some of these issues, however, naturally lead to other subjects which I have included where I think the context is important.

MR. COCKRELL: 1. You worked under Lew Albert when he was Superintendent of Lowell National Historical Park (NHP). How did the Technical Assistance and Professional Services (TAPS) Division at Lowell parallel the one that was set up at CVNRA? How did TAPS evolve during your tenure at CVNRA (in terms of personnel, budget, workload, etc.)?

MR. ADELMAN: 1. The Division of Technical Assistance and Professional Services (TAPS) at Cuyahoga was modeled after the one set up by Lew Albert at Lowell (not the other way around, as your question suggests). As the Superintendent of both parks when they were experiencing substantial planning and development activity, Lew felt the need for a local source of technical assistance to evaluate the need for and results of various planning and development projects. The Lowell legislation specifically called

Edward H. Adelman

for technical assistance to be provided to the public; it was a matter of extension to apply this expertise to internal issues, as well.

During my tenure at Cuyahoga, I saw TAPS evolve from an advisory, operational unit to a pro-active planning and development function. As development funding was provided for Cuyahoga, much of it came in the form of many small projects--too small, for example, to be efficiently planned by the Denver Service Center or by a private A/E firm. Therefore, it was only prudent to develop the expertise on the park staff to be able to plan, design, and supervise these projects. During the PRIP years, most of these were small, phased rehabilitation projects funded with one-year money, which made sense to be managed in-house.

To illustrate this evolution, let me recap the composition of the TAPS staff. When I arrived at Cuyahoga in 1981, the division was supervised by a Landscape Architect and included a Compliance Officer, a Historian, an Architectural Technician, and a Secretary. After I became the division chief in 1985, a staff Landscape Architect, Historical Architect, and Civil Engineer were added. The duties of the Compliance Officer had been transferred to the Resources Management division. The Historian, whose major project was the preparation of a building index, retired and was not replaced; National Register nominations and other specific research projects were accomplished through contracts with private consultants or through the Regional Office.

This staffing composition provided full performance professionals in the major development disciplines, with appropriate support staff (Architectural Technician and Secretary). We were thus able to write park plans, prepare designs for small to medium sized development projects, assemble contract documents, supervise construction, and review the work of outside private A/E firms, MWRO, and DSC for projects which were too large for us to handle.

I understand that my former Landscape Architect was promoted to the Division Chief position after I left and that a project Landscape Architect has been hired. This is good; the vacant Historian and Architectural Technician positions should also be filled.

I cannot overemphasize the importance for a park with the diversity of resources like Cuyahoga to have an in-house staff which is capable of preparing and updating park plans, providing technical assistance to property owners and to the other park divisions, and serving as liaison to the professional community.

MR. COCKRELL: 2. What are some of the difficulties CVNRA has encountered over managing scenic easements? What are some of the notorious examples which come to mind?

Edward H. Adelman

MR. ADELMAN: 2. Scenic easements were envisioned to preserve the status quo in certain agricultural and residential areas within the park. Later, this concept was expanded to include historic property, as well. The properties to be protected with this less-than-fee technique were those which did not detract from the character of the park and were not required for public use. In most cases, particularly the unobtrusive residential properties on which easements were acquired, they worked well. There were at least two properties--Bishop and Jeric--which generated a substantial number of citations for violations of the easement provisions. These experiences underscored the need for mutual cooperation, education, and enforcement to ensure that the rights purchased by the government are protected.

MR. COCKRELL: 3. You were the task force leader on the Land Protection Plan. Why were you selected for this task? How important was the preparation of the plan?

MR. ADELMAN: 3. I was very pleased to have been selected as the leader to prepare the Land Protection Plan (LPP) and never inquired why I was selected. I would imagine that I was selected because, at that time, there was a growing recognition of the central importance of the preservation of the cultural landscape to the success of the park. I also would like to think that I was selected because of some skill I may have demonstrated in project planning and personnel supervision. As you probably know, all other park disciplines were represented on the planning team to ensure that proper emphasis was given to natural resource, law enforcement, interpretation, and recreation issues.

The preparation of this plan was of vital importance to identify all land in the park and to evaluate it in terms of critical resources or public use requirements. Up to this point, the park staff had an annoying tendency to view its resources and opportunities in regard to only that land which it had acquired in fee. I do not deny that this is a perfectly natural thing to do, but it results in a distorted view of the park and its context. Therefore, the LPP was the window through which we could view the big picture of the Cuyahoga Valley, not just the little patchwork of it that we happened to own. Once this was accomplished, I truly believe that the park was able to make sounder long term decisions on park programs and needs.

MR. COCKRELL: 4. How did CVNRA go about compiling it? Did the Midwest Regional Office (MWRO) provide any assistance?

MR. ADELMAN: 4. The Superintendent appointed a task force of approximately eight employees to prepare the LPP over a period of eight months. This deadline later was reduced to six months and

Edward H. Adelman

four additional seasonal employees were hired to meet this accelerated schedule. Four other individuals volunteered their time to assist the planning team. The methodology was that: natural and cultural resources were identified; requirements for public use were examined; existing land protection programs were researched; interviews were conducted with all private property owners; and public meetings were conducted for the general public and public officials. From a thorough understanding of the resource base, recreational needs, and plans of the private property owners, a range of land protection strategies was developed. Specific strategies--from no interest to fee acquisition--were then proposed for each individual tract of non-federal land within the park. In essence, this range of strategies represented a continuum of land protection which could be applied to any property if and when land protection concerns changed in the future.

The MWRO provided some assistance in the preparation of the LPP. Notably, Dave Given provided considerable assistance at the outset of the project, in reviewing the Task Directive, and in fielding innumerable questions during the preparation of the plan itself. Warren Brown of WASO also was available for telephone consultations through the course of the project.

MR. COCKRELL: 5. You briefed the Washington Office (WASO) and the Assistant Secretary's Office on the plan. How did they respond to it?

MR. ADELMAN: 5. In November 1983, Superintendent Albert and I presented the LPP to the Director and the Deputy Director of the National Park Service and to the Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks, and their immediate staffs. The plan was extremely well received in that not a single land protection recommendation was changed as a result of this or other review sessions. An Executive Summary was requested, which was prepared and is included in the approved plan. Other editing changes were made as requested to reduce the bulk of the document, but no substantive changes were made in its content. As we may conclude from the Interior administration at that time, much of the land protection planning initiative was driven by political pressure, not by resource-based concerns. I still believe that the plan was and continues to be a valuable park management tool, but from this distance it appears that procedures could have been more important to the administration than the results of the plan.

MR. COCKRELL: 6. On a Servicewide basis, how does CVNRA's plan compare?

MR. ADELMAN: 6. Without sounding immodest, I believe that the LPP for Cuyahoga Valley is comprehensive and useful. I have read many

Edward H. Adelman

others which appear to have been undertaken more as perfunctory exercises.

MR. COCKRELL: 7. Why has NPS plans for Everett Village never been fulfilled?

MR. ADELMAN: 7. I think that the NPS plans for Everett have not been fulfilled because the plans keep changing. There was a certain timidity that I was never able to break through regarding the use or removal of certain buildings. Management seemed to be plagued by the fear that the use or removal of any single building would preclude certain other, yet unknown uses. This had a paralyzing effect on decision-making. Also, the perceived magnitude of the issue seemed to cause management to defer addressing it; breaking it down to manageable portions raised the fears mentioned above. A start was made before I left, by entering into an agreement with the Ohio Watercolorist's Society for one of the buildings. I would have hoped that this would break the mental logjam surrounding Everett.

No discussion of Everett would be complete without mention of the dismal failure of the preservation plan prepared by the consulting firm of Foit-Albert, out of Buffalo, New York, selected by DSC. This useless document was time-consuming and expensive to prepare. Its futility may have made some managers to feel that the issue itself was futile. It is also important to mention that the Everett Road Covered Bridge is a popular stop for visitors and could be a lever to help revitalize the Everett area.

MR. COCKRELL: 8. What steps did CVNRA take to counter the negative publicity generated by park opponents?

MR. ADELMAN: 8. I am not sure that opposition to Cuyahoga Valley is either well organized or well understood. It is legendary by now to cite the late Jessica Savage and her misguided attack on the park through the presentation of that scandalous video "For All People, For All Time." It is, was, and always will be popular for those with an axe to grind to lament the persecution of the people by the government. We see this in Charles Cushman and the National Inholders Association and in the infamous lawsuit by the late Bob Gioia preventing Cuyahoga from removing trees. The truth to the opposition, however, is much more difficult to pin down.

From time to time, as issues arose with popular appeal, there appeared to be organized opposition to the park. In my experiences, however, the real source of anguish was from individuals who either wanted to sell something we did not want to buy, or vice-versa. The point is that there does not appear to be wholesale opposition to the park as much as sporadic disagreements over specific issues. This is frequently the case surrounding land

Edward H. Adelman

acquisition. The LPP helped to stem the tide against this particular type of opposition, which leads one to believe that people were reacting to their fears of our future actions instead of to our actions themselves. By publishing and distributing our real plans, people were generally relieved and the issue largely went away. Education, communication, and other methods of sharing information with the public frequently are effective in countering (or better yet in preventing) opposition.

MR. COCKRELL: 9. Why was Jaite selected as park headquarters when less than a year earlier the NPS was considering demolishing the company town? Who was responsible for the suggestion?

MR. ADELMAN: 9. When I first arrived at Cuyahoga in the fall of 1981, the first draft Building Utilization Plan had just been released. Much to my chagrin, the Jaite Mill Historic District was proposed for demolition, despite the fact that there was a project statement in the Resources Management Plan calling for the adaptation of this National Register district for park headquarters. I explored the idea of saving Jaite for park headquarters with the Superintendent and the Division Chiefs. In the spring of 1982, I prepared a Headquarters Study of over a dozen potential sites and concluded that for its location, capacity, and historical significance Jaite was the preferred location. I then prepared a Historic Structure Report and architectural design for the project, the first phase of which was completed the following year. Subsequent to this project, I became the Chair of the Building Utilization Committee; under my direction, and with a noticeable preservation orientation, the first approved Building Utilization Plan was prepared. This provided a long term guide for building use decisions, freeing them from radical or rapid changes without review by the entire management team.

MR. COCKRELL: 10. In your various planning endeavors at Cuyahoga, did you have adequate baseline data? If not, how did this impact these efforts?

MR. ADELMAN: 10. By definition, I think that most major planning efforts are plagued by insufficient baseline data--otherwise the information would be available for decision-making without undertaking a planning effort in the first place. Notwithstanding this natural fact, much data needs to be identified, organized, or researched through the planning process. Therefore, to answer your question, I think that the inevitable need for data in any planning effort impacted us by requiring the inclusion of time for assembling this data in our project schedules.

MR. COCKRELL: 11. Was the General Management Plan an important planning tool--why or why not?

Edward H. Adelman

MR. ADELMAN: 11. The General Management Plan was not held in high regard by my supervisor when I first arrived. This attitude permeated through the management staff and resulted in the call to rewrite the GMP in the (un)foreseeable future. For a park as large as Cuyahoga, substantial emphasis needs to be placed on the DCP level--areas of approximately 4,000-6,000 acres. The GMP itself was not particularly useful because it was more of a response to particular personalities or to political pressure than to the resource itself. For example, environmental education center were proposed throughout the valley, without much regard to who would be operating them for which populations. There also was a disproportionate amount of attention paid to natural resources and to isolated historic structures, to the detriment of a cohesive strategy towards managing the cultural landscape--unarguably the single most important resource in the park.

In my opinion, the recently completed Cultural Landscape Report is far more significant than any other document in integrating the management of the total Cuyahoga environment--natural and cultural resources, land use, ownership, building use, interpretive centers, and trail development. In a way, it combines the recommendations of the Trail Plan, Building Utilization Plan, Land Protection Plan, Interpretive Prospectus, Resources Management Plan, General Management Plan, and Statement For Management into one comprehensive document. I was pleased to have participated in the development of this Report and was proud to have had the chance to edit and compile the final Report after the other two preparers (Chet Hamilton and Steve Elkinton) had left the park. I strongly recommend this type of holistic resource planning for complex areas.

MR. COCKRELL: 12. TAPS has provided some technical assistance to affiliated areas James A. Garfield National Historic Site and the David Berger national Memorial as well as projects involving the tombs of the various Ohio presidents. With the park's small staff and workload, how did these external projects impact TAPS' effectiveness in caring for CVNRA's many historic properties?

MR. ADELMAN: 12. You correctly state that a number of the 'collateral assignments' or 'external responsibilities' have been undertaken by TAPS. And there are more, such as inspecting over a dozen NHLs and providing technical assistance to the public regarding the rehabilitation investment credit. In many ways we acted as a preservation referral service. One must remember, however, that to the public of northeast Ohio, Cuyahoga is the NPS. Speaking for my tenure there, I think that an effective balance was struck between our responsibility to serve the public and our higher park-based priorities.

Edward H. Adelman

Overall, I do believe that the effectiveness of TAPS' service to Cuyahoga was diminished by trying to cover too much ground. I requested assistance for this type of external project work and did receive approval to add a Project Architect to the staff. Bear in mind that, at the time, I was the Historical Architect and we had an Architectural Technician as well. This brought the architectural staff to three positions. To my knowledge, all that remains is the Project Architect that I hired--Paulette Oswick. My position was filled with a Landscape Architect and the Architectural Technician left and was not replaced. In my opinion, it is a question of proper staffing, not one of inappropriate workload.

In specific regard to James A. Garfield NHS, during the preparation of the GMP there were substantive conversations between the planning team (of which I was a member) and MWRO CRM personnel regarding staffing for this new unit of the NPS. The GMP team leader, Roberta Seibel, argued long and hard--but in vain--for a local staff, however small, to handle the planning, development, and overall coordination of the site.

I am not surprised that there is now concern that TAPS' effectiveness is diminished by these external projects. It is true. I must point out, however, that this observation really stands the situation on its head. The problem is one of a limited--and diminishing--staff attempting to deal with an insatiable project load. If the projects cannot be staffed in other ways, then the staff of TAPS needs to be increased; this certainly would be a cost effective way to accomplish the additional work, since the operation is in place. Otherwise, the project load needs to be reduced, and this appears to be an unlikely occurrence.

MR. COCKRELL: 13. One criticism I've heard is that TAPS has taken on too many projects, some of which the Denver Service Center should have handled. What is your opinion? Should TAPS restrict itself to small-scale projects only?

MR. ADELMAN: 13. The criticism that TAPS has taken on too many project is not one that was ever voiced at the park level. Obviously, the response to this issue is strongly linked to the above comments on workload versus staffing. I cannot imagine that the Denver Service Center wants to get involved with TAPS' project load, nor can I imagine their ability to perform the work for the available funding within the available time. There really is no mystery about this. TAPS does not "take on" projects. Projects are assigned to it. DSC has made it plain that they cannot and will not get involved with small projects (less than \$250K), particularly those which are funded with one-year money.

Edward H. Adelman

The larger question, of course, if I may read between the lines, gets to the heart of the debate over where NPS project planning personnel should be located: parks, regions, or DSC. Clearly, there is no single, simple answer to this question, or we would be organized accordingly. Staffing should be based on the specific nature of each project. Personally, I think that the regional offices are in the best position to make this decision. As more and more work is being done by outside A/E firms, I can see no reason why the money should be passed from the park to the region to DSC to a contractor. This could be best coordinated between the park and the regional office. DSC does not really need to be in the loop, based upon my observations of their performance in this area. It is very important--and becomes more critical as the distance between the park and the regional office increases--for the park to have the local expertise to manage their resources. This is not something which can be done for a park with any degree of sensitivity or responsiveness.

14. Your questions ended at thirteen, but my answers go on. (Besides, everyone knows that thirteen is unlucky!)

Historic Property Leasing Program: This should be included in the Administrative History. This program is a major preservation initiative which has had tremendous applicability for Cuyahoga. A number of leases have been signed, resulting in a level of preservation work which the park could have never afforded on its own. This also has resulted in the establishment of a number of visitor use activities which otherwise would not have been possible (i.e. the bed and breakfast inn at the Wallace House).

Youth Hostel: The Stanford Youth Hostel is one of those wonderful preservation/public use successes which everyone takes for granted, yet which almost did not happen a number of times. The TAPS files on the Stanford House reveal the time and anguish which was spent in vain trying to avoid following the rules. Upon his arrival at the park, Bob Martin quickly developed a prospectus which led to the successful solicitation of a hostel proposal. AYH, on the other hand, at times seemed to go out of its way to scuttle the project.

Quasi-Public Lands: You will notice on the land tract maps that a number of privately owned lands which are open for public use are described as "acquisition deferred." Nobody really know what this means. We tried to address this in the Land Protection Plan, but with only limited success.

These lands include, for example, Blossom Music Center, Hale Farm, ski areas, golf courses, etc. The feeling was, apparently that as long as these lands are open to the public they would not be acquired by the government. From a park management perspective,

Edward H. Adelman

however, no determination has ever been made as to when public use is more important than resource preservation. I think that limits need to be established whereby these quasi-public lands are managed in their entirety. I do not think that it is good enough for a ski area to be open to the public; the owner should not be allowed to clear cut the balance of the site, which is woodland, to make more ski runs. Neither should Blossom be able to develop their property for a resort, even if it were done around a musical/cultural theme.

The point is that these quasi-public definitions were based on land use at the time of the establishment of the park. The expansion of these prior recreational uses needs to be evaluated in the same way that the impact of any new development project would be evaluated. To do otherwise would indicate that the development of any recreational land use--regardless of the environmental or historical impact--would be allowed. This is obviously not the case. I would say that the existing ski areas--artificially mounded and actively eroding hillocks--would not have been allowed to be built after the park was established.

I do hope that these observations--some of which were in response to your actual questions--will help you prepare the Administrative History for Cuyahoga. This is an extremely important undertaking and I hope that you will not hesitate to contact me for clarifications of this or for additional information.

[END]

Postscript: Mr. Adelman has subsequently left the National Park Service to serve as an instructor at Babson College, Massachusetts.

O R A L H I S T O R Y I N T E R V I E W

F O R T H E

A D M I N I S T R A T I V E H I S T O R Y O F

C U Y A H O G A V A L L E Y

N A T I O N A L R E C R E A T I O N A R E A

O H I O

Lewis S. Albert
Deputy Regional Director, Western Regional Office
(former Superintendent, Cuyahoga Valley National Recreation Area)
National Park Service

July 13, 1989
San Francisco, California

Interviewed by:

Ron Cockrell
Historian
Midwest Regional Office
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Omaha, Nebraska
1989

Lewis S. Albert

Lewis S. Albert

MR. COCKRELL: I thought we would start the interview by my asking you to give a brief summary of your National Park Service career.

MR. ALBERT: I began my career as a seasonal ranger in Yellowstone in 1958. I worked there in 1958, 1959, and 1960. My last year I was converted to career conditional or permanent. Then I was out of the Service finishing school and one thing or another until 1965 when I reentered as an intake trainee at the Grand Canyon. I spent the normal training course there and then was reassigned to Yosemite where I spent approximately the next seven years.

During that time in Yosemite, I worked at the South Entrance of Yosemite Valley, Hodgeton Meadow, Toulumne Meadows, and Elpert Hill ultimately as a ranger. Then in the Law Enforcement Office as a ranger. Then I was promoted to Chief of the Division of Visitor Services and Public Information which was what we would call generally the Management Assistant position. I was in that from 1971 until 1972, at which time I was selected for the Departmental Manager Development Program in Washington. I went there and returned after the end of one year in that program to Lassen Volcanic National Park as Assistant Superintendent.

I served in that capacity for about one year at which time the Superintendent retired and I was Acting Superintendent then for most of the balance of my time in Lassen. From there I went to Chiricahua and Fort Bowie as Park Superintendent. That would be about 1973 to 1975, I was in Lassen, then 1975 until 1978, I was at Chiricahua and Fort Bowie. I was then offered the position of Superintendent of Lowell National Historical Park where I was the first Superintendent from 1978 until 1980. Then, I applied for and was selected for the position of Superintendent at Cuyahoga Valley National Recreation Area. I was there for seven years at which time I was offered the position of Deputy Regional Director in the Western Region. I accepted that position and that is the position I presently occupy.

MR. COCKRELL: In reading through the files, I came across some correspondence from then Director Gary Everhardt instructing Dave Sherman, Tedd McCann and yourself to go to Cuyahoga Valley to investigate the many problems there and to give the Director an update. Do you remember the time frame of this investigation and the things that you observed?

MR. ALBERT: Generally speaking, first of all, I believe it was not Gary Everhardt, was it? I thought it was Bill Whalen?

MR. COCKRELL: Maybe it was. I will have to double-check on that.

Lewis S. Albert

MR. ALBERT: Because Gary preceded Bill and Bill was the one who selected me for Lowell. It had to be Bill. There were apparently serious public relations problems at Cuyahoga, largely surrounding land acquisition policies. We were selected to go and tour the park. In fact it was my first visit there, in January of 1980. As you mentioned, Tedd McCann, Dave Sherman and I arrived there. I was the only field person of that group, I guess, for whatever reason. We spent about four days there to the best of my memory. We toured the park extensively. Bill Birdsell was the Superintendent and we were taken to see most everything of importance in the park.

I remember we came away with the impression that so much emphasis had been placed on land acquisition, almost to the exclusion of other programs. The law enforcement there was so high-profile that the combination of those two things threw the park into a position which is uncommon for the Park Service of not having the day-to-day contacts with the visiting resident public on more of the upbeat note. The average person, as you know, who comes to a park, sees a ranger probably in a pretty positive light on a guided tour, an evening program, information desk or even at an entrance station. When the primary contacts between the park and the local community, and of course the visitors, was one of either law enforcement or land acquisition, there was room for a great deal of antagonism, and in fact there was. There had been some negative publicity both on the electronic media and in the print media and the Superintendent, Bill Birdsell, was, I think it would be fair to say, embattled at that point.

Our recommendations as best as I can remember were largely ones of let's get more traditional programs going. Let's expand interpretive activities, provide more public service type of things, to soft pedal the law enforcement, and although not certainly to abandon land acquisition, but to take a little less aggressive land acquisition posture. Those I think were our primary recommendations.

My memory is that those were the things that we viewed as the principal problems. Perhaps they were unsolvable under the circumstances. I always had the impression that Bill wanted very much to create a national park there which, of course, was what he was doing. Apparently he felt rushed. I don't know that he either knew or sensed that he was not going to live very long or what the motive may have been, but I always read that he seemed to be compelled to build this park as quickly as possible. But he also seemed compelled to do it in a very orderly and progressive way. That he would not, for example, have programs until he owned the real estate and he wouldn't build structures and everything was going to be done more or less by the numbers. Which ideally would have been a marvelous way to operate.

Lewis S. Albert

In actual fact the politics there didn't seem to permit that kind of orderly development. It is a very complex park as you probably are aware of with many, many communities that are involved and political institutions. Lots of forces and interests were brought to bear on the Superintendent. It was a very difficult job which Bill, I think, handled quite well, by and large. He brought to it his history and his perspective of how parks operated and he attempted, I think boldly and often well, to bring that to fruition. Unfortunately, he met resistance in political ways that the park wasn't prepared to cope with.

MR. COCKRELL: This report, was it a written report?

MR. ALBERT: Yes it was.

MR. COCKRELL: I have not seen a copy of it anywhere. I talked to Tedd McCann about a week and a half ago and he seemed to recall that maybe one of the unwritten recommendations was that there be a change of superintendents.

MR. ALBERT: That is correct, it was. But there was a written report, I am quite certain. I am certain that one was drafted because I reviewed a draft which I believe was written by Tedd.

MR. COCKRELL: Yes, I think he said that.

MR. ALBERT: I think if you could find that it would give a much clearer picture than my faulty memory would give. Although it was not placed in the report, we did believe a change in superintendents would be appropriate. That Bill had been--and this does happen through no fault of the employee--I wouldn't say tainted, but he had been so damaged by this process that his effectiveness was beginning to suffer. We felt that it would be appropriate to get a new face in there and little did I know at the time that I was going to be the new face!

MR. COCKRELL: What kind of explanation did Birdsell provide as to what the problems were? Was he very defensive about the situation?

MR. ALBERT: I think he was as anyone would be. He was the first one there. People remembered him fondly. Bill had many, many admirers even though there were a lot of politics beating him over the head. There were a lot of people who had very strong, warm feelings for Bill. Often, I was told about how it started, when he arrived and how he moved his office into this old building owned by the state. He was the lone ranger, literally. He was mowing the lawns, he was emptying the trash cans, he was trying to run the park, he was it. No staff. He had built that from when I believe he was a GS-12 up to the point when he was a GS-14 with a staff

Lewis S. Albert

pushing 120 FTE, if I am not mistaken, when you counted some of the YCC programs and other things. He had built a fairly large organization all by himself. Obviously, it took a great deal of work and a great deal of brilliance, but partly because he was seen as the one-man band and viewed as in-charge, and all the other personnel I think were viewed generally as subordinate.

I mean, Bill was it. Bill was Mr. Park. So when things go bad, he gets the bulk of the blame as well, in spite of these accomplishments. It is on his watch, as they say today. He took a lot of the heat for those things. He represented an image, too, that when portrayed in some of the media and some of the people who hated the park for their varying reasons, he was the symbol of all that. In a way, it was important for a new person to come in and have a clean shot at it. Because Bill had done what he came to do. He had done as much as he could. I will tell you later when you ask me about my tenure, that I felt that I came with certain things to do and I did them. Having committed myself to a certain course, given a mandate, or marching orders that I felt I had, that narrowed my opportunities in many ways. So, I got stuck in a mold that I was really to spend the next seven years in.

MR. COCKRELL: I have been told that Birdsell really did not want to be transferred away from Cuyahoga Valley, and that there was a plan at least within the Midwest Region to reactivate the Chicago Field Office and put him there. But he didn't like that idea and he finally agreed to go to the Washington Office. Were you aware of any of this?

MR. ALBERT: I was not aware at the time of any of it. I had gone back to Lowell and was doing my thing and was amply busy. So, I don't know any of the undercurrents except what I heard later when I arrived there. I hadn't heard anything about the Chicago Field Office. I had heard people like Siegfried Buerling, the Director of Hale Farm, say that Bill always said he would never leave here under any circumstances. And as you know, he is buried there, so I guess he never did. In fact, it would probably pay you if there was something you wanted to know about the Birdsell years, and Birdsell in particular as a person, Siegfried is probably, if you haven't spoken to him already, a wealth of information.

MR. COCKRELL: Yes I did, and he was really was. What made you decide to leave Lowell to go to Cuyahoga Valley?

MR. ALBERT: Pride, arrogance, stupidity, a lot of things. Lowell had been a very special experience. As the first Superintendent, I had been able to do the same things that Bill had the opportunity to do, to make all the mistakes first, and it had been a very special experience. Lowell wanted a national park. They welcomed us there. We were treated almost like visiting royalty. The two

Lewis S. Albert

years was one of the most fantastic experiences I have ever had. It can't really be easily described, but once I likened it to, "Now I know what it must be like to be a rock star." People would stop you on the street and ask you for your autograph. It was just a remarkable experience. It was also a great lovefest. It is a city that I loved then and I still do. They were marvelous people who treated me very well. As a result of that and a brilliant staff, one of whom included John Debo, the current Superintendent at Cuyahoga, we were able to do some relatively remarkable things very quickly.

Having then gone to Cuyahoga for the first time on that inspection visit, I was vain enough to believe that the same magic that we had pulled off in Lowell could be pulled off in Cuyahoga. I almost didn't apply for the Cuyahoga job, because I was really quite happy at Lowell. Right at the deadline to apply, my application was not received in time, but it was mailed in time. It was one of those things. I called the Midwest Region and said, "I think I will apply for the job" and they said, "Well, as long as it is post-marked by the magic date it is fine." It was largely the vanity of thinking that I could go to Cuyahoga and bring some good people in there and do some magic. I was mistaken. It didn't turn out as easy as I had thought it was going to be. It really took the better part of probably five years even to turn around a lot of the public perception issues. I think I did an adequate or maybe even an above average job there, but I don't think I covered myself with glory like I did in Lowell. It just was not that easy. The situation was different.

MR. COCKRELL: We will get into that a little later. I am wondering if at the very beginning, did you have specific marching orders from the Washington Office or the Region?

MR. ALBERT: Yes and no. Specific marching orders like, "Go make it better!" "Calm things down!" Russ Dickens once said to me that during the latter part of Bill Birdsell's tenure and the early part of mine, every time the phone rang, he knew it was something about Cuyahoga. He didn't like to have the phone ring about Cuyahoga all the time. I would say to typical park management at all levels, it was an irritant. It was bad media, it was bad letters, the zingers were always coming and it was basically if I had marching orders, it was go and get the land acquisition quieted, get some of the law enforcement process calmed down into a more traditional, more laid-back approach; try to win, if you can, at least a level of support from the communities and from the residents, or at least don't further alienate them. Those I felt were my marching orders. They were never put in writing, but those were the things that Jim Dunning, Randy Pope, and others led me to believe was my job.

Lewis S. Albert

MR. COCKRELL: I have been told that Bill Birdsell kept a handwritten log of all his telephone calls on his desk, and that when you came in as Superintendent, that was one of the things that you tossed out or destroyed or something. Is that true? Did he keep a log of all of his phone calls?

MR. ALBERT: I have no idea. There was an immense amount of records. Bill was not, I would say, tidy. The first day I was in his office, I found that the closets were stacked floor to ceiling with papers; the desks were packed with papers, I mean every shelf was covered with papers. It looked like a rat's nest, but it was just everywhere you looked, disorganized piles of paper. I don't know why that was. Bill either liked to keep paper or he had that many things pending. I have no sense of which was which.

I do remember asking that, because that is not my style, although you look around here and you would swear it was. I said, "Let's go through this stuff, find out what is of value, send it to the Federal Records Center and dump the rest of it." As far as I know, that is what we did. The same thing was true with the park filing system, which was basically non-existent. We did an awful lot of tidying up. In the process, it is possible that such things would be lost. I don't know or remember. That doesn't mean it didn't happen, but I don't remember anything about a phone log.

MR. COCKRELL: Did you encounter very many incidents where individuals alleged that Birdsell had made a verbal commitment to them and then expected you to follow through on it?

MR. ALBERT: It happened off and on. It wasn't everyday somebody walking in, but in the earlier periods, it was more common than it was later because I had been there longer. Unlike most parks, and of course, it was a great disadvantage to the park that Bill died, because there was no one for me to turn to and say, "Did this really happen or didn't it?" Frequently, people tried to hang me with a policy that they would like to have believed Bill Birdsell had. Whether or not he actually had it or whether they chose to remember it or whether they just chose to make it up, who knows. But it is a marvelous way to beat the system by saying, "Your predecessor said so and so," or "It was his announced policy."

In some cases, I found that I was stuck with those things. More often than not, I took the position that that was fine, that was Bill Birdsell's policy, it is not mine. This park can't be ruled from the grave. I am here to manage it and I am going to have to make my own decisions. There were occasions when I was beat over the head with those things. There was never anything in writing, of course. It was always verbal.

Lewis S. Albert

MR. COCKRELL: One of those incidents that I came across involved the Frazee house. The Ohio Conservation Foundation said that Birdsell promised that the Park Service would make up about a \$20,000 discrepancy in the sale. Do you remember the details?

MR. ALBERT: I vaguely remember that instance. The Frazee house is a valuable historical property, but it seems to me that the problem was one of a legalities problem that what they say he had proposed to do he probably couldn't have legally done. I think that was the difficulty.

MR. COCKRELL: I came across your first memo to the Midwest Region and you described the sad state of communications between Cuyahoga and Omaha. You cited the attitude that "CVNRA is the armpit of the Midwest Region." Could you elaborate on this and what steps did you take to improve the relationship?

MR. ALBERT: Well, it was a two-way street. First of all, I was told by my secretary and by other people who were there prior, that Bill wouldn't talk to the Region, that if the Regional Director called, he would just say, "I am not available." It was rather strange, but apparently he did that. He felt that his political power, and to a great extent that was true, was through John Seiberling. John liked him, admired him, thought he was doing things quite well, and supported him. So he was in somewhat the catbird seat. He could afford, perhaps to thumb his nose at the Region.

On the other hand, there was certainly an impression that was counterproductive in the Region and there were a few people in the Region who never missed a change to badmouth Cuyahoga. We were Peck's bad boy of the Midwest Region. It is a two-way street and I am sure that there was fault on both sides if you have to find fault. The armpit comment came from Einar Johnson who was the Assistant Superintendent under Bill. In fact, he had arrived and reported for duty the day Bill died, which made a little welcome to the park. He had told me that when he arrived at the first Superintendent's conference he attended while he was Acting, one of the other Superintendents had come up and said, "Welcome to the armpit of the National Park Service."

That was not universally shared, but a common impression I think throughout the Region. As I say, not universal, probably no more than 10% of the people were at least overt about it, but even 10% is pretty tough when you are trying to do a job and the employees at Cuyahoga were as good as any. They think they are trying to do a job, they think they were trying to build a park, and when people are badmouthing their efforts, that is non-productive. I don't care where it comes from. So, there was a lot of strain, or at least I sensed that there was a lot of strain. Other parks were

Lewis S. Albert

jealous because, frankly, Cuyahoga was getting money when others weren't for various reasons. A strong Congressional delegation that was supportive of the park doesn't hurt a bit. So there is that. I can't say because I wasn't there when it happened where it came from, but I certainly sensed it and I think it was real.

MR. COCKRELL: What things did you do to counteract this?

MR. ALBERT: Well, first of all, I started answering the phone when the Regional Director called! In a way that was part of it. What I tried to do was mediate without taking sides. I had to be defensive or I had to defend Cuyahoga obviously against attacks. On the other hand, I couldn't take the position that we were always perfect and never did anything wrong, so it was more one of trying to take the middle road and trying to get people to take a second look like the Regional Office person who perhaps had a mad on at the parks. I said, "Come out and take a look and let us show you what we are trying to do." I tried to represent the park as well as I could when I was in the Region or at Superintendents' conferences.

It took a long time, particularly in the administrative area. A lot of the problems that we ran into with the Region stemmed from what could be argued by the Region as administrative ineptitude on the part of the park, and by the park as bureaucratic red tape on the part of the Regional Office. At least part of that was the park. The administrative systems weren't very good. Bill had a lot on his plate. He had a lot of things to do and in the priority of things, he couldn't do it all. I think that he tended to let the administrative process sort of take care of itself, go and buy ten widgeits, but not worry about how or where the budget was or that sort of thing. He was different than I was.

I think I came and tried to bring some sense of order to the administrative process. As the quality of our reports, our bookkeeping and our procurement and personnel practices improved, which took time, I think our credibility with the Region improved. At the same time, the various Regional Directors and the Deputy, I think made a serious effort to make it clear to Regional Office staff that badmouthing Cuyahoga was not acceptable conduct either. My impression has always been that they went a long way toward helping, because it reached a point that it was like a little Shakespearean quote about, "As if increase of appetite, it had grown by what it fed on." It was one of those things that became so popular to do that you didn't need a reason to badmouth Cuyahoga anymore. It was just done because everybody does it. I think both Jim Dunning and Randy Pope and later Chuck Odegaard did a lot toward saying, "That doesn't go. They are part of the team, too." But it took time.

Lewis S. Albert

MR. COCKRELL: I have come across a couple of criticisms that you tried too hard to distance yourself from Bill Birdsell. You have probably heard that before. You said, "Maybe we have been a little bit too heavy-handed in the past." How do you respond to that?

MR. ALBERT: At that time I still think I had to distance myself from it. Feelings toward Bill Birdsell ran very strong. He had, as I said, many close friends and admirers. He also had many, many people who truly despised him. If I had attempted to walk the same path as Bill Birdsell and not make fundamental changes, but only minor or cosmetic ones, or had just said, "Whatever Bill did, that is the way we are going to go," I don't think I could ever have been effective in those communities. I think the political figures that wouldn't talk to us when I arrived, still were not talking to us when I left.

Also, I bring my own sense of experience and style to a job. I had no intention of being Bill's clone. In time, I would say, I developed a much greater sympathy for Bill after I realized what he had been through initially. But it still didn't alter my belief that I had to do things my way and that was a great deal different than Bill Birdsell's. So yes, I certainly did distance myself from him. In retrospect, I am not sorry I did, although as I say, I am sympathetic with what he had to deal with.

MR. COCKRELL: How much damage did the 1979 Prime Time Sunday segment on Cuyahoga by Jessica Savitch do to the park's public image?

MR. ALBERT: That is tough; you have to ask the public. My sense is not very much really. Have you seen it? Do you know the history of it?

MR. COCKRELL: Yes.

MR. ALBERT: Then you know it was not initially done for prime time television; it was done as a propaganda piece by the homeowners. It is sad that the media elected to take that virtually without change and report it as news. By that time, I think we had already made some serious inroads into those perceptions. That was largely, and I think sadly, a beating up on Bill Birdsell, who wasn't around to protect himself. If you notice, I was in it for about 15 seconds. They interviewed me for two hours for a 15-second clip. Most of the time was really spent dwelling on the past, on Bill, the people that were mad at Bill and obviously he can't defend himself, and let's make him look as bad as possible and by inference to the park. We hadn't solved all the problems at that point; that was only a year later, but it certainly in my opinion did not do as much damage as our detractors had hoped it would. It was a nuisance. I wish it hadn't happened, but it was

Lewis S. Albert

primarily about things out of my control. It was five-year-old news.

MR. COCKRELL: Savitch also did another piece on Cuyahoga, "For the Good of All," for her Frontline program. Did she have a personal vendetta against the Park Service or Cuyahoga, or was it just a popular thing to do?

MR. ALBERT: I have no idea. That was just a rehash of the other one, anyway, really.

MR. COCKRELL: The Frontline videotape was shown extensively in the Columbia River Gorge and the Delaware River Valley areas. What impact did its slanted reporting on Cuyahoga have on those areas and what did the National Park Service do to counteract it?

MR. ALBERT: Well, I think for example, initially there was at least some interest in the Columbia River Gorge becoming a Park Service area. I think that Charles Cushman's efforts and the use of that movie probably frightened a lot of the local people sufficiently that those teetering on the fence decided that they would rather not have us there. It was portrayed in a pretty frightening way. It made us appear to be pretty nasty people and I think it did damage the Park Service in individual cases in individual areas, but I don't think even the Inholders Association is using it that much any more. I don't know what its current value is and I am not completely current on what issues the Inholders are dealing with. But I think it has run its course as well. I think its value is limited. I mean, Charles Cushman certainly doesn't come to visit Cuyahoga any more.

MR. COCKRELL: In what way did you alter the land acquisition strategy at Cuyahoga from what it had been under Birdsell?

MR. ALBERT: Largely, I attempted when I first got there to deal with the condemnation cases that were pending. I attempted to withdraw the ones that had not already been filed. Once they were filed I assumed they were out of our hands and that was the way it was, the Leonard Stein-Sapir case, for example. All of those that were on file I wanted to withdraw for reconsideration as to whether condemnation was necessary. That request was denied by the Regional Director on the theory that things had gone so far that it was foolish to reconsider.

I found myself in a poor position at that point to seriously alter anything up to the time of my arrival, so I couldn't go back and change earlier things. What I did attempt to do is assume that there were--I can't remember how many--1,400 parcels of property up there that at some time in some distant future we might acquire. When I arrived in the park, I was treated to a parade of people

Lewis S. Albert

virtually daily saying, "Please don't take my house! Please don't take my house!" I might add parenthetically by the time I left, the same line of people was there saying, "Please take my house! Please take my house! Please take my house!" There was so much fear and so little understanding of the process, and people rightly or wrongly felt that Bill used his condemnation authority arbitrarily, that if I don't like you, I will condemn your house. I don't know that that is true, but there was a perception that he would be vindictive about such things.

You talked about distancing myself from Bill; there were some cases where I did. I tried to take a position that basically we would not acquire properties by condemnation unless it was inescapable. In my seven years, we had three condemnations. Two were friendly condemnations to clear title on properties where the title was clouded. One was a property of over 20 acres that was going to be sub-divided for high density housing development. So basically, I found it unnecessary to use condemnation authority during my time there. And I still found we bought land like gangbusters. There were plenty of willing sellers. So, I tried to look and say, "What properties do we need for the management of the park?" With the idea that in many cases, we could sort of sit under the tree and let the apples fall in our lap, but we will aggressively look at properties that are important either because they are historic or have recreational value or are necessary for trails, for some purpose, not just a condemnation for the sake of getting another piece of property. I tried to start soft-pedaling that part of our acquisition.

I also found that there were lots and lots of pressures for us to purchase properties. There were people who wanted us to purchase their property. When the Reagan Administration came in in 1980, we had to start preparing Land Protection Plans. We really got sort of a nice, new, fresh look at it. We had been getting good appropriations for land acquisition and we were buying land. I would say that the land acquisition at that point was driven by two things. It was driven by willing sellers and by the realistic need of the park to have that property as opposed to another. I mean, we did a priority thing. But very often it was a priority listing of the people who wanted us to buy and how badly they wanted us to buy.

With the Land Protection Plan, we did probably the most extensive Land Protection Plan I think of any park in the Service. I set up a special team just to do nothing else, and I believe we had about six people on it, headed by Ed Adelman. It did an outstanding job. A lot of people said we did overkill, but a lot of people weren't at Cuyahoga. Cuyahoga was perhaps one of the reasons why we had Land Protection Plans. I remember Rick Davidge who was then in the Assistant Secretary's office when they were training us on how to

Lewis S. Albert

do these plans, said to me, "Yours had better be absolutely complete, absolutely perfect; it better have A, B, C, and D in it." We were more under the microscope in that planning process than anyone.

It seems to me that for six to nine months this team did nothing else but develop background information on every parcel, corresponded with every owner that would talk to us, and interviewed every owner. We had all sorts of data. I don't know if you have seen it now, but it is a large series of binders that tells you--it is a marvelous tool I think both for you and for people who come in the future--as land acquisition proceeds it gives you the information to make intelligent management decisions about your land acquisition. From that, we developed a priority list and continued on with land acquisition largely unabated. Although it was somewhat slowed down in late 1986 or early 1987 with the closure of the lands office at Cuyahoga, but the dollars were still coming and the land was still getting bought. It was just a little less convenient.

As I say, by the time I left, I think it would not be inaccurate to say that although perhaps it was not a line 30 miles long, that rarely did a week go by that one or two people weren't in asking why we wouldn't buy them next or first. I consider that to be a successful part of the program, from one of absolute hostility to government purchase at every level by everybody, virtually, to one where it was not only welcome, but a desirable outcome for a lot of people.

MR. COCKRELL: In 1981, Secretary Watt proposed a land acquisition moratorium. How did that effect Cuyahoga in the short and long term, if at all?

MR. ALBERT: I remember that wasn't anything new for us. Everytime you turned around, Cuyahoga was being investigated by somebody. The GAO was out, the IG was out; they would come in and seal our files and tell us we couldn't do land acquisition or effectively shut down the land office. Those things at worse were irritants. Yes, there was a moratorium. So we can't buy for a while. The money didn't go away. It would make the people with whom you dealt frustrated when they think that they have a deal. You are all ready, everybody has agreed on the price, you have the money in the bank and they want to sell their property and they can't. They start to get a little testy about it. But, it tended to be short-term. Ultimately, the moratorium ends or the investigation is over and we went forward again.

MR. COCKRELL: Did these investigations ever come up with anything of substance?

Lewis S. Albert

MR. ALBERT: No. In fact, I remember the first day I was there and the first person I saw. I had walked in and sat down at the desk and my secretary, Judy Campbell, came in and said, "There is a gentleman here to see you from the General Accounting Office." I thought, "What a way to start!" Later, it was the IG and other things. To the best of my knowledge, there was never any indication of misconduct by anybody in this process. There was questionable judgement perhaps. You can argue that I or Bill or anyone else should have bought Parcel A before they bought Parcel B, but illegalities? No. Nothing like that was ever uncovered and I assume it wasn't there.

MR. COCKRELL: In mid-1981, there was a furor over Cuyahoga appearing on a so-called "hit list" of areas that Secretary Watt wanted to de-authorize. Could you elaborate on the chain of events and do you believe that there was a hit list?

MR. ALBERT: I believe that there was one, but I don't know that it was Secretary Watt's. It may have come from Secretary Watt, but I remember seeing a memorandum that dealt with Santa Monica and Cuyahoga. These were the two named parks if I remember correctly. This memorandum indicated that we should "re-look" at the value of having these areas in the National Park System or something like that. First of all, I think the "hit list" is perhaps a pejorative term. I think there was an interest on the part of the Department of reevaluating whether Cuyahoga and Santa Monica were perhaps worth the dollars that were being spent on them; whether that money could be spent better elsewhere; whether they were truly of national significance; whatever reasons there may have been. I believe there was an interest in them.

I believe, in fact, there was also some correspondence on it. But, as far as a "hit list," and as far as Secretary Watt were concerned, I never saw anything that had his name on it or would indicate that he personally objected to it. With all the conjecture, it was once again on his watch, so who knows? I think it is an overstatement just to assume that it was "Mr. Watt's hit list."

MR. COCKRELL: There were also rumors at one point that the Department wanted to turn Cuyahoga over to the state of Ohio. Do you recall that?

MR. ALBERT: That came later. If it is what I think you are speaking of, it was not an effort to turn Cuyahoga over to the state of Ohio. It was, in fact, an interest on the part of the Inspector General, the audit side of the Inspector General's office. The IG came out and they were looking at small sites that could better be administered, they felt, by people other than the Park Service. They happened to look at James Garfield, which is, of course, administered by Cuyahoga, as being one of these small

Lewis S. Albert

sites because we were operating it through a cooperative agreement with the Western Reserve Historical Society. They took that as their sort of paradigm for this thing they were hung up with.

They made, I think, similar recommendations regarding places like Harry Truman and several other small parks within the Region and they looked at James Garfield and said, "Why can't you do what James Garfield is doing? Why do you have to have uniformed, full-time NPS presence and full NPS funding?" because the funding even was shared. Garfield took their admissions and ran most of it on admissions. That came out as a report, "Let's hand some of these places over to the states to run or to counties" or whatever. I don't think Cuyahoga was ever in the focus of that. I never knew that. If it is true, I never knew it. I think it was more related to Garfield.

MR. COCKRELL: At one point, Secretary Watt refused permission to allow six superintendents to travel to Washington to testify before John Seiberling's committee about land acquisition in the Park Service. You were allowed to testify. Were you told what to say to the committee and what was the outcome or the consensus of this hearing?

MR. ALBERT: I think the reason I was allowed to testify--I think a couple of others were too--is Congressman Seiberling threatened to subpoena us if we were not provided. So it was, "Do it my way, or do it my way!" I was not the only one to testify. I was not told what to say. In fact, I testified several times on park matters down there and was never given instructions on what to say or not say, in spite of popular impressions to the contrary.

MR. COCKRELL: How would you characterize the relationship between James Watt and John Seiberling?

MR. ALBERT: I have probably a better sense of what John thought of Mr. Watt than what Mr. Watt thought of John. I think John--since you interviewed him, you know this--is quite erudite, well-educated and a gentleman. I think he was somewhat nonplussed by Mr. Watt. John is not the kind of Congressman who jumps up and down and screams and bellows and badgers witnesses and things of that nature. He tends to be a gentleman and he expects the people he deals with to be gentlemen.

I think he was surprised at the--I hate to say stonewalling--but very often the sense he had that he was being stonewalled by the Department. That, "No, we won't provide these superintendents to testify," or "We won't give you this information," or whatever; "We will have a report to you on such and such," and it never came. That was my impression of John's sense, which was one of that ideologically they disagreed. Obviously two polar opposites. But

Lewis S. Albert

I think John was beyond the disagreement, which I think John can handle perfectly well. He just felt that this was the kind of personality he was unaccustomed to dealing with. I think he was frustrated by the Secretary.

MR. COCKRELL: What steps did Congressmen Seiberling and Regula take to protect Cuyahoga Valley?

MR. ALBERT: I think the most obvious thing was the continuous provision of land acquisition money. Clearly between the two of them, if I had anything going for me at Cuyahoga, it was that. When you have the senior Republican on the Appropriations Subcommittee and the Chairman of the Authorizing Subcommittee on your side, things can't be too bad. Unless they are mad at you, in which case, you are history.

Both are people for whom I have immense respect. Either side of the aisle is irrelevant. They are both gentlemen. They are both nice people. They are both good conservationists. They view life a little differently, as obviously they must, but of all the Congressmen I have known, I rank them at the top. They are just first-class people and it was such a pleasure to know them. That is one of the great things about that seven years was having the chance to deal with those people. They had outstanding staff, all of whom cared about Cuyahoga, would come to visit Cuyahoga. It was all the things that helped make an otherwise often tough job a lot easier.

MR. COCKRELL: In relation to the Cuyahoga Valley Homeowners and Residents Association, did NPS policies change because of the homeowners?

MR. ALBERT: I don't believe so.

MR. COCKRELL: Who were the primary players of the Homeowners Association?

MR. ALBERT: Marty Griffith, Leonard Stein-Sapir, Marty Griffith's wife whose first name I can't remember, I think perhaps Bob Bishop. Those are the ones that spring to mind. The homeowners actually, if this isn't getting away from your subject, were not a major force during my tenure. I think once our land acquisition policies were more rationalized, I don't know that you will ever know what their membership is, but all the rumors we had were as we became less and less threatening, their support sort of dwindled to the point that when they had meetings, all six members attended, that sort of thing. When I first arrived, they were a major group of people who were frightened and concerned. By the time I left, we had little or nothing to do with them. They didn't have that much to shoot at frankly.

Lewis S. Albert

MR. COCKRELL: I did interview Leonard Stein-Sapir and he claimed that Bill Birdsell tried to bribe him to drop his lawsuit against the Park Service. Had he ever told you that?

MR. ALBERT: No.

MR. COCKRELL: I was a little bit surprised that no one at the park seemed to remember that.

MR. ALBERT: Well, as you know, he sued Bill for some statements Bill made.

MR. COCKRELL: A 1981 GAO report concluded that the Park Service had wasted millions of dollars buying land which was not needed specifically for recreational facilities. What was your reaction to this report? How could you not buy land in the Cuyahoga Valley and have a lot of homeowners living on it with no possibility for public access?

MR. ALBERT: That is where I would disagree with the GAO. I think that their view was that you shouldn't acquire land until you had a demonstrated particularized need for that particular piece of real estate. That you don't just buy it because you want to preserve it. You buy it because you have a plan that says a trail will cross here. Or you buy it because there is going to be a ball field or a picnic area or whatever. That clearly in my view is not consistent with our mission which in the legislation said we were to preserve the Cuyahoga Valley as near as possible to its historic condition. It is one of the reasons that we took the position we did on most of our land acquisition while I was there.

First of all, my primary view on land acquisition was let's buy the big undeveloped, open space first, not the houses. First of all, you get a hell of a lot more for your money when you buy undeveloped open space than you do going around picking up quarter-acre tracts with houses on them. You protect a larger piece of real estate faster. You buy more acres for less money. I felt that that was critical, that we needed to develop manageable blocks of real estate so we had a park to manage. Not 700 half-acre pieces scattered all over the place.

That was sort of my number-one priority when I arrived on land acquisition. Large undeveloped open space first, then whatever is left over, we will deal with the homeowners who want to sell to us, and of course, we would look more at things like future uses and historic properties and a lot of other considerations. We wanted to get as much as we could from the buck. I disagreed with the GAO. That you can't manage a park without a land base. "Park" to

Lewis S. Albert

most people means a place where you can go and recreate in the out-of-doors.

MR. COCKRELL: One of the recommendations in that same report was that the NPS sell-back properties to the former owners and draft legislation was actually prepared. Did anything come out of this effort at all?

MR. ALBERT: No. I think they would have been surprised in spite of all the rhetoric they heard perhaps in their interviews to have found--and I will wager a great deal on this--that had that legislation passed, the people would not have bought the property back. There was a lot of smoke, but not much substance to that. There were several occasions when, as I say, I tried to reverse course like on those early condemnations. We looked at some other options that would allow people long term leases on property to rent. They didn't want them. Once they had been bought out and had their money, they really were not greatly interested in going back into these places.

MR. COCKRELL: One of the things that Stein-Sapir claimed was that once the homeowners submitted that draft legislation to get some of their property sold back to them, the bulldozers really went to work and demolished a lot of vacant buildings.

MR. ALBERT: I don't know what he is talking about. You are talking about 1981, of course, which was immediately after I arrived, so I am not sure that maybe he is talking about before I arrived. We did have some concerns with structures we acquired. When I came, we did start a serious program of removing non-historic structures. What we did was we started out and we said, "We have a property; the owner has moved or they have not taken a retention," which they all could do as you know. Or their retention was expired. "We now have this piece of real estate, which I perhaps might not have bought in the first place, but we had it. What do we do?"

Our basic rule was first, is it historic? If it was historic, obviously we were required by law to preserve it and so we would then seek uses for it. Second, if it was not historic, does it have administrative value? Is it a place where we would want to use it for a ranger station, or is there a contact point or whatever? In most cases, that was not the case either. Third, put it up for bid. See if we could sell it and have the structure moved by some buyer to a place outside the park. Then we would restore the landscape. Fourth, if all else failed and we put it out for bid and there no bidders, then we would hire a demo contractor to come in and remove the structure and then restore the site to its previous natural condition. We felt, and I still feel, that that was a good idea and was essential. We didn't come there

Lewis S. Albert

to have 1969 houses in prime recreational real estate, so I think we did well on that one. It is to that degree the bulldozers really roared.

When I came, one of the great complaints was boarded-up houses with U. S. Government signs saying, "Keep out - U. S. Government Property." Well, part of that process, too, was to remove that irritant and certainly the people were correct. I mean, why have a boarded-up house that has probably been vandalized repeatedly over the last several years sitting there? Somebody is going to torch it; sometimes they did. So let's get in and do something. What we did was go through that process. The historic ones generally were all taken care of anyway, so then you were talking about the other options. Most often amounted to getting rid of them.

MR. COCKRELL: Representative Dennis Eckart agreed with the GAO and said the Cuyahoga Valley had destroyed communities. He pointed out the example of Everett. Did Eckart support the sell-back proposal?

MR. ALBERT: I don't know. Everett, of course, is a very poor example. I think frankly Congressman Eckart had no damned idea of what he was talking about. Everett was in fact, a moribund, if not dead, community before the park ever was created.

MR. COCKRELL: There were many attempts to stabilize and restore those buildings and set up an artists community there. Did anything much happen during your tenure there?

MR. ALBERT: We made several tries. We worked with an artists organization in Boston that was interested in pursuing that. By the time I left, we had gone through several aborted things and I know that the last thing was we were working with the University of Akron or Kent State, I can't remember which, in an effort to get them to come and do something. My vision of that place and one that perhaps may not ever be realized was to try to make it a first-class center, artists-in-residence program for the Beaux-Arts. I don't mean craft-type things, but sculptors, painters, composers, poets, that sort of thing.

I think it would be an absolutely marvelous location for it. I think if we can find the right organization and put together the right package, it is do-able. I think it would be marvelous. All of those empty buildings--of course they are not all empty down there--but most of those places were. Everett had no economic base and I think if you check the records, you will find its population and everything else was going straight downhill. The arrival of the park didn't alter its destiny. We have ultimately bought property there, but I don't think anyone can claim rationally that the park destroyed Everett.

Lewis S. Albert

MR. COCKRELL: What was your policy on scenic easements?

MR. ALBERT: Generally, to avoid them largely because of cost. Scenic easements there--much to my surprise because it seemed like such a grand idea--in some cases could cost 110% of the cost of the fee. There are scenic easements on developed property and scenic easements on undeveloped property. Scenic easements on undeveloped property cost you an immense part of the fee because, of course, the person is giving up all of their development rights which is in many ways the real value of the real estate.

In a couple of cases, the courts had held that when the person is left with nothing except the bare land and they can't develop it and generate revenue off of it, that that is worse than not having it at all. Therefore, the cost has to be higher than the fair market value. The more common and realistic case was 80 to 95 percent. But still, you were spending immense amounts of money for a pretty questionable return because a scenic easement did not give you right of public access. All it gave you was, in effect, a zoning control that they couldn't put up a McDonald's without permission. That seems like a lot of money to pay for that. For undeveloped lands, I felt that the cost benefit and value of a scenic easement versus its cost was zilch, a waste of money.

In the case of scenic easements on residential properties, I generally was opposed to those, too, for two reasons. One, except in the rare case, most people take care of their homes. The average resident, no matter what their feelings, are not going to paint their house bright red or put neon lights on the roof, so you weren't buying much there in the normal case of a residential property. In addition, there were a few that had been bought, I think by Bill Birdsell, and what we found out was they were often unenforceable anyway.

We had one guy who put a lighthouse-type of thing in his front yard. It took us two years and all sorts of things just to get the Justice Department to agree to sue the guy to get it removed. There was no other easy administrative way to enforce those provisions, so in effect, they were toothless. They gave you very little because most people take care of their property anyway, so why would we run out and buy them?

The third case of residential property was historic; there I could see value. That gives us some control over maintaining the historic integrity of a structure, that it is a part of the scene of the valley. There I could see doing it. So, I have a mixed feeling, but generally speaking, my view was that they weren't worth the money. Or that we had better places to spend our money if we get down 20 years from now and we own everything else that

Lewis S. Albert

we really need and we want to look back on it. Also, I think we could revise and should have looked at revising the terms of those agreements to allow some more simple means short of going to court to get a scenic easement enforced. Now we could do it by establishing jurisdiction and doing it by citations or something.

MR. COCKRELL: In October of 1981, you announced that the cluster of historic buildings at Jaite would be torn down. Six months later it was selected to be the new park headquarters complex. Could you explain how this came about?

MR. ALBERT: Frankly, I am not the visionary I should have been, I guess, but the park staff looked at those structures. First of all, let me go back one step. We were occupying a small bungalow as a park headquarters down on Route 303 that was really quite inadequate. As a result, we had our office space scattered all over the park. Maintenance was in one building, Administration was in another, all sorts of communications issues and things like that. Most of those buildings weren't even of historical value. So we were interested in finding some space.

Steve Elkinton who was then the Chief of the Division of Technical Assistance and Professional Services went out and did sort of an appraisal of potential properties. His group saw the Jaite thing as one place and looked it over and felt that it was in such disreputable condition that the cost of saving it was not worth it.

A short time later, a young man who worked for me in Lowell, Ed Adelman, who was an Architect--Steve Elkinton was a Landscape Architect--came on to the staff and he took a look at Jaite and persuaded me that the initial impression, that it would be terribly expensive to save the buildings and it wouldn't be usable as headquarters, was mistaken. He had done appropriate planning and cost estimating. We found that, in fact, we could restore those structures, and convert them to the park headquarters. We did, and the credit for that goes entirely to Ed. He was a brilliant young man. He was able to persuade me without great difficulty that this was the way to go. We could get space that otherwise would have cost us probably several hundred thousand dollars.

Jokingly, I used to say if we had done this by going to Congress and asking for money to build a new headquarters building, it would have taken five years and cost us \$5 million dollars. As it was, we did it out of park funds, used day labor with our own people, had 16 thousand square feet of space or something (a lot of space at a cost of about \$200,000, maybe \$300,000) and did it in one year. It was absolutely marvelous. The Maintenance Division who did most of the work did a first-class job. I think it was a real triumph. As I say, that is the Maintenance Division, Dennis Hill, Ed Adelman and those people who really made that happen. Thank God

Lewis S. Albert

they did because it would have been a tragic loss as I look at it now.

MR. COCKRELL: One of the provisions in the 1978 boundary amendment bill was the Secretary's authority to assist local governments in establishing zoning ordinances, and that the Park Service should assist these local governments in doing this. Was there ever any additional effort put into that?

MR. ALBERT: No, for two reasons. First of all, we lacked the staff and the expertise to do very much of it. We weren't zoning people. We did participate in the sense that we testified in zoning hearings and we testified before planning boards and things of that nature on a fairly regular basis. But there was always the fear that any actions we took that repressed or down-zoned property, if it was in the park, was going to be viewed as inverse condemnation under the scope of the project rule, so we had to tread very softly on how and to what degree we involved ourselves in decisions that could effect the value of property within the park. So, the authority to do it is fine, but it doesn't alter the fact that it could cost you a lot of money later.

MR. COCKRELL: What were some of the difficulties encountered in getting the state-owned canal lands transferred?

MR. ALBERT: That was such a complex one that I am not sure I can give you a straight answer except that it was almost a catch-22. It seemed like the state had so many players involved, I think it was the Department of Administration, the Department of Public Works and the Department of Natural Resources. Trying to get those three all to come together was hard.

They were also stuck with the state law that provided that the only way state lands could be transferred to the Federal Government was through payment of fair market value. Our legislation prohibited our acquiring public land except by donation from the state and its subdivision. So we were in a box there. We couldn't get the three parties to all agree. The state had problems with the historic survey, which they didn't want to accept because of the Stillman survey that surveyed the lands. Even though the survey would have meant practically nothing because all of those titles would merge since we owned virtually all the adjacent property. Who cares where the boundary line is in two pieces? It got to be a bureaucratic nightmare.

Finally, I contacted the local State Representative named Vern Cook and he was successful in introducing legislation that would have allowed the state at no charge to donate those lands to us. I don't think by the time I left that had been completed, but the process was well underway and I think it was just a matter of time

Lewis S. Albert

at that point because it had support from a lady State Senator also from that area. We had managed to put together the legislative support for the bill and it was working its way through, so I assume after I left it ultimately passed and was done. Have the state lands been transferred yet?

MR. COCKRELL: I think they will later this year.

MR. ALBERT: It was a tough one. We labored long in the vineyards on that one. First trying to do it administratively, then realizing it just was an impossibility, and it was going to take legislation.

MR. COCKRELL: What role did you play in the Cuyahoga Valley Line in getting it added to the park?

MR. ALBERT: To go back to the beginning, Bill Birdsell, had been a trustee of the Cuyahoga Valley Line which had been a pet project of Siegfried Buerling, perhaps as much as any, Bud Warren, and a few others. Of course, when Bill died and I came on, I was asked also to be a trustee. For a time I served as one and ultimately because of potential conflicts, resigned. Also, my wife became initially a clerk for the train, taking reservations, and ultimately wound up being the director of the train.

So I was in a difficult position, because of obvious potential conflict. And yet, that train was an important part of the valley. At least it had a very positive image and very positive identification with the valley. People seemed to think that it was worthwhile. So, we tried as best we could to support it. In fact, under Bill Birdsell, of which I continued as well, the park put interpreters on the train so when it came into the park, an interpreter got on and would tell the riders about the Cuyahoga Valley as they went through it.

The biggest problem the train had was that the Chessie System who owned the tracks charged an arm and a leg for the train to operate. I believe it was in the neighborhood of \$4,000 a run for them just to use the tracks. You have to put an awful lot of people on a train. They were pretty much a hand-to-mouth operation. When Chessie decided to abandon that track, I believe Siegfried and my wife and several people went down and saw John Seiberling. He was talking about an addition to the park at that time in any event. It was that southern boundary addition that was done in 1986 except it wasn't real, it was a funny kind of addition. That was pending and at the time, it seemed logical to include the railroad line from the park boundary which was going to be extended by this anyway all the way into the Howard Street Station.

Lewis S. Albert

The idea that I had at the time was it would be desirable for the Park Service to acquire the portions of the track within the park and that extension so the train could continue to operate at the same time on a historic lease--it was also on the National Register, the right of way was, or the train, or both, I am not sure which--so we could then lease the property to the train and retain the revenues which could be used to maintain the track and other historic properties in the valley.

Ultimately, it did not work out that way. I left and John Debo came and he did it through some other mechanism, but the result is the same. The train seems to play an important role in that valley, very popular. People stand along the roads and watch it go by and wave and it is quite a big deal. People take lots of pictures.

MR. COCKRELL: In 1981 you proposed elevating the 500-acre undeveloped part of Greenwood Village from last to first priority for acquisition. What was the outcome of this?

MR. ALBERT: We acquired the property. They were going to further develop Greenwood Village and the areas in which they were going to be developed were areas that were clearly visible from the valley. It would have brought development from the rim of the valley into the valley proper. I felt we couldn't live with that. Greenwood Village is not a bad development and where it is presently sited, I think it is relatively innocuous. Some other values in the area that they wanted to develop were a series of old carriage trails which we had long viewed as having value as part of a trail loop system in the park. That may still be pending for all I know.

The United States Attorney is handling negotiations because Greenwood Village's developer went bankrupt and there were some trustees in bankruptcy. Metropolitan Life Insurance and some of the local homeowners were also involved. Like everything else in Cuyahoga, there was no shortage of players. How that ultimately came out, I don't know and I am not sure it is solved yet. But we basically forestalled development into the valley.

MR. COCKRELL: On December 9, 1982, you attended a meeting with the Cleveland Metropolitan Park District officials in which they asked you to remove the National Recreation Area's entrance signs and Canal Visitors Center to Summit County. What was their concern?

MR. ALBERT: Turf. They felt--and I suspect legitimately, although I was not sympathetic--I think they felt that we had large holdings up there and by erection of our signs and putting our visitors center there that they were going to lose their identity and that the public support that the Cleveland Metro Parks had would be

Lewis S. Albert

lessened when people thought that the entire place was run by the National Park Service. They would think it was federally funded, that they didn't need to support tax levies and that sort of thing.

I frankly could not accept that. It caused an estrangement with the Cleveland Metro Parks that was quite lengthy as a result of that. But as you know, after that they proposed to the Congress that the northern part of the park be withdrawn from the National Park Service and given to them. That was a great way to cement relationships.

As a result, for a period of about two years, we had very strained relations. I could not see that if I was going to be Superintendent of a park, I was going to be Superintendent of the whole park. I felt early in my arrival that we needed a presence in the north end of the park and we needed a visitors center. Not a temporary effort, but we needed to have something going up there so people entering the park at the north end could get information, have walks and so on. I felt that was terribly important. They felt threatened by it and attempted by political means to have it changed without any great success.

MR. COCKRELL: Was this the opinion of the entire CMPD Board or was it just the efforts of Lou Tsipis?

MR. ALBERT: It was Lou Tsipis and one of his trustees. I think it was the chairman. I can't remember his name at the moment. In fact, he was also on our Advisory Commission. As I say, they were somewhat heavy-handed and I think it was unfortunate because the effect was that I was certainly not very pleased and they weren't pleased when I said no.

MR. COCKRELL: What benefits did Cuyahoga Valley receive from the Jobs Bill in the early 1980's?

MR. ALBERT: I don't remember, frankly.

MR. COCKRELL: Was that basically the YCC Program?

MR. ALBERT: Yes, it may have been. But that program dwindled almost to nothing. In fact, ultimately it really did dwindle to nothing. It was one of the things that hurt us badly in the budget area, because the park under Bill's direction and when I first got there, had a sizeable YCC program. As funds for that kept dwindling, we found that--of course we were using YCC people basically as employees, they were bodies--and when that disappeared, we suddenly found ourselves never successfully arguing this point.

Lewis S. Albert

My belief was that we had an effective 120+ FTE in the park when I arrived and within a couple of years, we were down to roughly 80. Now, they may not have been permanent full-time Federal employee-type people, but they were bodies available to us. That made times pretty tough and I think they still are.

I had always urged both the Congressmen when they were asking what new projects they could fund, I said, "Don't do me any favors. What I need is people." I needed basic operating funds. "I don't need another damned building built or projects that I don't have the people to maintain." I hope that they have got some relief in that department. I think they got an add-on this year, which is desperately needed. Of course, that is true of every park in the Service; they are all hurting in that regard. It is not politically sexy to pay salaries. It is politically sexy to build things.

MR. COCKRELL: In October of 1983, Assistant Superintendent Bob Martin assumed responsibility for TAPS and maintenance. How well did this subdivision of the different divisions work under the two Assistant Superintendents?

MR. ALBERT: Well, as you know, and I don't mean this as criticism to Bob, but we didn't have an option. With the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service going out of business, people were having to be placed. We got a new additional Assistant Superintendent. Well, if that job would have any meaning at all, it has to have supervisory responsibilities. So it wasn't a question of whether you do it, it is how you cut up the cake. Looking back at it, I chose to put Bob in charge of Technical Assistance and Maintenance because as a unit, they were reasonably closely tied and his background seemed better suited to that.

I left Einar in charge of the traditional operating units, rangers and interpreters plus Administration because those were the things that Einar did best. Einar could have actually overseen all of them, but Bob would have had no experience at all in supervising a ranger operation for example, so I felt that was the best way to split up that pie. I think Bob did a good job. I think Einar did a good job.

I think it is not an ideal situation. I do not think the park needs two Assistant Superintendents and I think as soon as they can, they ought to one way or another, through a retirement or a transfer, they ought to abolish one. I am not even sure it needs one Assistant Superintendent. Perhaps a Management Assistant might be better. It is hard to say at this point, but certainly that is not the way to go. Circumstances dictated that. I don't think any personnel or staffing specialist would look at it and say that is the best way to run a railroad.

Lewis S. Albert

MR. COCKRELL: In mid-1984, the employees voted for a bargaining unit to be organized. Why do you believe that the employees felt they needed a union?

MR. ALBERT: A conjunction of two things. I think we had an employee whose name I don't remember who was somewhat of an activist about that sort of thing, coupled with an IG investigation and some adverse actions being taken against employees. At the same time, A76 was coming along and being perceived as a threat by the employees to their jobs. So, there was a period of great unhappiness, sort of where everything that could go wrong, did. The entire Maintenance Division was subject to A76, at least in Cuyahoga. It wasn't just a little piece.

I was asked, "Why did you contract out garbage collection?" because we had already done that. "Why did you contract out snowplowing?" because we had already done that. So, everything that was left over was under the gun for A76, a great threat to those employees who made up a sizeable number of employees. Then, as I say, an IG investigation, some serious charges of misconduct against employees, adverse actions, appeals, reversals, not total reversals, but reduced, mitigated punishments and then in that also, an activist person pushing it. I think as it turned out, as those things go in labor relations, it wasn't that many votes for the union. It was just a majority of the few who did vote. I think only 16 voted or something like that, I can't remember the exact number. But certainly you could not have established a better situation to bring a union into a park.

I viewed the union as a positive sign in many ways. A sound responsible union can be a real benefit under the right circumstances. By the time I left, I think we had a pretty good relationship with the union. A lot of the fears had blown over. We were able to deal with them quite rationally. I don't think the membership ever exceeded 20 paid members and maybe even less than that, for all I know. But it gave us a focal point for dealing with the employees. In some cases, it forced the union to take some responsibility, too, which was sort of nice. It wasn't always the Superintendent or the Assistant Superintendent or the Administrative Officer as the bad guy. Sometimes you get into those Hobson's choices things and somebody wins and somebody loses, and they got a chance to comment, and they had to take a side, and they sometimes squirmed. But they did their job. We had terrific employees there by and large, so I never felt we had a big issue with that.

MR. COCKRELL: Could you give me a brief overview of the Independence Landfill controversy and how the locals tried to get the NPS involved in that?

Lewis S. Albert

MR. ALBERT: First of all, I honestly believe it is an almost unsolvable problem. I don't know what you do because if you don't have a landfill, what do you do with this hole in the ground? Recreational lake, people say, I mean dream-up something, but the people of Independence were absolutely opposed to having that landfill there. It was in the interest of the city and Mayor Kurtz, who was a close friend of mine, to have us involved in that with them. I think they felt that their efforts to stop the landfill were strengthened by initially wanting us to be a co-plaintiff with them. We kept our distance on that and said, "No, we are not going to sue," but on the other hand, we were available to testify at hearings and things because we, too, were interested in not having a landfill there.

I remember saying, and I still believe it is true, that proposal for a landfill that could have say, in a period of five years, with proper construction and operation, or even 7 years, or maybe even 10 years, have been filled, covered with topsoil and restored. I might not have been so opposed to it, but the very nature of that agreement with Haydite was such that you probably were going to have a landfill in operation there for 30 to 40 years. And that I can't see the end of because everytime they would take the overburden to cover the waste, they would be digging a new hole, so when this one was full, they would move on to the next one and on to the next one. It was going to be a never ending thing.

There were also scientific reasons about leachate and other problems to go with that. My biggest opposition was that we were just going to have seagulls and blowing trash and God knows what and smells and the noise of trucks. The other thing that made it tough is when the state initially granted its permit. Apparently to keep Independence happy, they said that all access to the site had to be down Canal Road and through the park, rather than through the city of Independence. Well, that sort of cleared things a little too, because we would be dealing with five trucks an hour or 20 trucks an hour rolling by our visitors center and down the heart of the historic resource. Not to mention the fact that there are lots of masonry historic structure along there that would be damaged by the vibrations.

We said we just can't live with that, but we had other mechanisms to solve that problem. We could have closed Canal Road to trucking which would have effectively have enforced all that. The existing bridges were not adequate to carry those trucks. There was probably no way that any new bridge could be built without our consent because we owned virtually all the land except for the narrow road right of way, so they would have to have a wider area for construction to build a new bridge. There were all sorts of problems with that Canal Road access, and I think we could have

Lewis S. Albert

beaten them on that without any trouble, but nevertheless that was the condition of the permit. When we were asked to testify at hearings, we could say, "We can't live with this. This is prime resource stuff."

As far as I know, it is still pending. But it is a big buck item. Somebody mentioned that the value of the property--this is off the top of my head--would probably be in the neighborhood of 2 to 3 million dollars if we went to buy it from the Haydite Company without a permit. With a permit, its value goes up to about \$20 million, the value of a place to put your trash. That is the other thing. If the city succeeds and the permit is ultimately denied and there is no permit, then you have a 3-million-dollar piece of property which perhaps between the city and the park, something can be worked out to deal with that issue because the Haydite Company is largely disinterested in remaining in operation there.

MR. COCKRELL: This brings up the issue of the Ohio EPA. Is this agency an ally or an adversary?

MR. ALBERT: Do you mean as to the Haydite issue or generally?

MR. COCKRELL: That or with the Krejci Dump?

MR. ALBERT: Initially, they were an adversary in the Haydite business. Then a few things changed and suddenly they became an ally, so it depends on how you look at it. I guess I don't either view them as a plus or minus. That Krejci Dump thing got so bad, so fast, once we realized what we had, that it was really up to the U.S. EPA level. I think they are talking Superfund issues and stuff now.

MR. COCKRELL: I don't understand how the Ohio EPA could have two inspections of the Krejci Dump and say that there was no problem and all of a sudden the U.S. EPA comes in and says that you have got a big problem. What happened?

MR. ALBERT: That is a tough one. You are aware of the history of the Krejci Dump, our lack of access to it, and all the difficulties that that created? We were under the impression that we were sort of home free when finally in October or December of 1985 (whenever it was that we finally got access), we had had it checked and we thought, "Hell, we are in good shape. There is no big, bad stuff here." Then we had that incident with the bottle collector who came in and apparently stuck his head in a barrel and got dizzy and that alerted us. I believe that is about the time the U.S. EPA came in.

They took one look and we were into it for what I now understand was about a 12- or 14-million-dollar problem. And yet, if I wanted

Lewis S. Albert

just to dwell on that--I don't know if other people would have said this, but people have given Bill Birdsell all sorts of hell for having bought that thing. "Why would you buy a dump? Especially a dump that cost 12 million dollars to clean up?" Well, I think the answer to that is first, no one knew that at the time. But secondly, it is no more acceptable to have a dump full of hazardous wastes in a national park than it is many other adverse uses.

Bill was compelled, or I would have been compelled, to purchase that property for the purpose of cleaning it up. I mean, it is after all a national park or a national park area. So I don't think he deserves the lumps he gets over that. The fact that it turned out to be a lot worse than we thought and a lot more expensive is maybe bad luck, but I think still, if I were there today and knew everything I know now about that place and we didn't own it, I would still say we ought to buy it. Now maybe first we would sue the people and make them clean it up, I don't know, but you can't live with that as part of our resource and it is a horrendously awful site as you know.

MR. COCKRELL: Has the Krejci Dump incident changed NPS policy in any way?

MR. ALBERT: I have a hunch that is one of the things that has caused concern at the Departmental level that has us now doing inspections for hazardous waste before acquiring property. This is a Secretarial Order for land acquisition. I think the Krejci Dump is one--I don't know, but my guess is--that that is one of the moving things behind that. When you think you have bought a piece of property and suddenly, bam!

MR. COCKRELL: This new directive on evaluating for hazardous waste, does that preclude purchasing the property if wastes are discovered?

MR. ALBERT: No, it doesn't. I think you might play hell trying to get approval from the Department, because obviously they have to look at the cost. But in given cases, I think if you can make your case, you could persuade people to purchase it.

MR. COCKRELL: In 1986, the park was selected as one of six pilot parks for the Park Heritage Gateway Program. Although no funding or staffing was received, did this program die on the vine?

MR. ALBERT: As far as I know.

MR. COCKRELL: Nothing ever came out of it? I got this great big file that shows what the program is and never came across anything on how it was developed. Whose idea was this?

Lewis S. Albert

MR. ALBERT: I am not sure. I don't remember. What did George Hartzog say, "That policy without money is just conversation."

MR. COCKRELL: The Gramm-Rudman-Hollings Act passed during the Reagan administration provided a schedule for reducing the federal budget deficit. Cuyahoga endured a \$131,000 cut in FY 1986. What other reductions were made because of this and what was the impact on the park?

MR. ALBERT: The most obvious reductions were in lower levels of land acquisition funds and less development money, those things. It wasn't so much that you covered our operating cuts. It is one of the things that led me to say that our biggest problem was we were buying more land, creating more responsibilities and more duties and other things and weren't given the resources. I think very few people realize--for example, you talked about less than fee acquisition--how much work it is to properly monitor scenic easements. A ranger can spend a couple of days a year on one property, just to go in, look it over, verify everything is under control, write a report, make recommendations, whatever. That becomes a very big workload, especially when you have a whole bunch of properties, either retentions or scenic easements.

As we acquired more and more land, those duties increased and yet the numbers of bodies were decreasing. It put us in a tough situation. I think we felt more and more pinched. When I first got there, I wouldn't say we were flush, but we had the money for a new park to do some exciting and neat stuff. We had the money to do things like a Jaite headquarters complex. By the time I left, we were like every other park. We were up against the wall. There wasn't a lot of money. Things like even the demolition program, or the site restoration program, which was a much nicer euphemism. We were cutting back on that. Each year there was just a little less money we could put into cleaning up a site or whatever.

There were a lot of impacts, but like we have always said in the Park Service, when we get a cut, we don't cut out a program. We don't say, "O.K., we've got a \$100,000 cut; we are going to fire all the rangers." We piecemeal it across the the board so you see a very slow erosion of quality and that is what happened to us. The actual Gramm-Rudman stuff was mostly to be seen in the lack of either budget increases, construction programs or land acquisition.

MR. COCKRELL: The removal of non-native trees from Cuyahoga prompted a lawsuit and a public hearing. What did the park do to educate the public on this issue? Basically, what was behind all of the controversy?

Lewis S. Albert

MR. ALBERT: Well, I think I was indelicate, as we all were in the handling of that. I don't think we appreciated how poorly the National Park Service tells people what its mission is. I was just talking to William Penn Mott yesterday, and he says the same thing. We don't sell what we do. People come to you and they say, "Why don't you do so and so?" and it is like asking General Motors to make typewriters. Because we failed to do that, many people were surprised at the removal of those trees. A person who knows our mission would not have been surprised. Now it just so happens that Robert Gioia who lived across the street was a rabid tree person; I mean frankly, being to the point of being almost incoherent on the subject. In fact, I remember one of his quotes was, "I would rather kill a human than kill a tree!"

But this does go back to the site restoration thing I told you about when we had a building. But we had in this case a structure that was owned by one of the old families in the area. The guy had been the general manager for the Jaite Mill (I can't think of his name at the moment). We had purchased their house with them believing that the Jaite Mill was going to be purchased shortly thereafter. As a result, he only took about a three-year retention on his house--through our misguiding him, I might add.

Well, as it turned out, when I got there, his retention was up and the Jaite Mill wasn't anywhere close to being shut down. So we entered into an arrangement with him where we allowed him to stay on at a fair rental rate for as long as the Jaite Mill remained there. Well, when the Jaite Mill did close down and we bought it, he moved away. I think initially to Florida, but is now back in Peninsula. So we put his house up for sale under the stipulation that somebody buy it and move it. Well, someone did buy it and they moved it.

Of course once that house was gone, you don't really have much of a park-like landscape if you just take the house away and leave all the shrubs and the garden plantings and the driveway and the victory garden and the manicured lawns and things like that, so we wanted to return that area back to its natural state. We hired a contractor to come in and do that and in the process they not only removed the sod and everything else and reseeded it, but they removed, I believe, 19 blue spruce ranging in height from, I suppose, one to two feet up to perhaps as much as 15 feet that had been part of the decorative landscape but were no part of the historic appearance of the valley. It was reseeded and redone and Mr. Gioia came out of his tree, no pun intended. He thought that was an awful thing to do and retained a law firm and they sued us and we were temporarily enjoined, I remember, from cutting trees, except for "maintenance" purposes.

MR. COCKRELL: In the entire park?

Lewis S. Albert

MR. ALBERT: Yes. I think as it turned out, much of this happened after I left. Mr. Gioia died after I left, but I think we were in fairly good shape on the lawsuit. I think we would have prevailed. It was a question of NEPA compliance and endangered species. They were trying to convince the court that the endangered species lived in those blue spruce. It was sort of a winky case. But ultimately, the suit was dismissed after his death and that was really the end of the issue.

Of course, once things were in court, you are in that embarrassing position where we can't speak, the U. S. Attorney is not likely to speak because you may prejudice your case, but Mr. Gioia can run around and get media coverage anywhere he wants and so can his lawyers. So there was a hell of a lot of media coverage, mostly negative toward us without our being able to do very much to rebut it. It ultimately concluded, as I say with Mr. Gioia's death after I left, so what they have done now, I don't know, but I would assume that we would try through some of our processes to explain to people why we do this. I think it was sound management to do it. I have no regrets. I was always surprised by people who wanted to go see it, and saw it a few weeks after with all the weeds and it was natural-looking and they would say, "It doesn't look all that bad to me." But it happened that the guy across the street had a big problem with it.

I think we did not handle that as well as we might have, but I am not sure once it did happen there was a way to get out of it. We were in a box. We had a contract for somebody to remove those trees. If you stop the contract, you are going to be paying damages to the contractor. If you don't stop them, you are going to have somebody mad at you. We should have, perhaps, done a better job of selling that program, but like most of these things that sneak up and bite you, we had been doing that for at that point, at least the five or six years that I had been there. They had been doing it in Bill Birdsell's day. No one had ever raised the question before about removing a building and restoring a site to natural conditions. I guess we didn't expect such a violent reaction to it. I think the man spent something in the neighborhood of \$100,000 dollars to stop tree-cutting.

MR. COCKRELL: Earlier you mentioned that the Midwest Region closed down the Land Resources Office and absorbed the workload into Omaha. In Cuyahoga's case, should that office have been closed?

MR. ALBERT: Yes and no. The way it happened it was maybe unavoidable. I wanted them to keep it open for one more year. Remember my thing about buying all the large, undeveloped parcels? I think we would have finished the high priority list. They would have been down to a point of all the major parcels acquired, and

Lewis S. Albert

the minor stuff could be done perhaps just as well from Omaha. I wanted another year and we sort of agreed to keeping it open for one more year.

What happened, however, was that for varying reasons the Land Acquisition Officer retired, so there was a vacancy and it became propitious to do it at that time rather than wait a year. It was, I think, an understandable decision. Had we gone out to recruit one, we probably would have used up most of the year getting a new body in there anyway, so it would have accomplished little.

There was sort of a choke point in that process where you got all of that stuff you really needed to have the stuff that was going to be controversial, the stuff that you really wanted a person on site to talk to landowners and things, versus the sort of second step down stuff. We were sort of right at that niche where I felt that getting rid of the Land Office would have been appropriate, but I didn't think we were quite there and then circumstances changed that.

MR. COCKRELL: I am going to switch gears a little bit and get you to talk about some of the management mosaic partners in the Cuyahoga Valley. How effective did you see the Communities Council?

MR. ALBERT: I am not sure what to say here, because this gets into some personalities and I don't want to libel anyone. But I will tell you the biggest problem of the Communities Council was its Executive Director who was weak. The Communities Council, I think, had the potential to have great value, but it was so much a matter of perception. If a community decided that having a member on the Communities Council was sort of a little bit of political patronage and the mayor decided the representative for his city was going to be the dog catcher or the dog catcher's cousin, that in effect sent a message and everyone said, "Oh, well, that is exactly what the city thinks of the Communities Council."

The Communities Council as a result had some great people, some first-class people, trustees of towns and things like that, that actually did very good work, but it also had people of fairly low--I hate to say low-level--but, people tangentially interested. It was just sort of a, "Isn't it nice to be able to say you are on the Communities Council?" They didn't come to meetings, didn't participate. So, its effectiveness was badly diluted by that, I think. In principle, I think it was a great idea. It had great promise. But since it is obviously out of the control of the park, and it is a private, non-profit organization, much depends on the Executive Director and much depends on the quality of the membership. And for funding reasons, the Executive Director now only works half time.

Lewis S. Albert

They did some work on some tax issues for example. It was very helpful. The payment in lieu of taxes, the pilot program. They did some good studies, but by and large, I don't think it ever reached its promise. Perhaps under different circumstances and a different place, it would have been great, but it was there and certainly not a negative by any means, and it did give us a forum that we often used for the Land Protection Plan, for example. A lot of other things were presented in that forum, but you didn't feel like you had really reached anybody necessarily. I think it had marginal effectiveness.

MR. COCKRELL: What about the Advisory Commission?

MR. ALBERT: I don't know what it was like for Bill, of course, but it had two five-year terms and then expired. I would say for the first two to three years that I was there, I thought it quite valuable. It helped me in my efforts to change the direction of the park. It gave us a public forum. When I would give my report, we would also allow the public to come and ask questions. It gave the public the means of addressing the Park Service without coming directly to the Park Service. I think it was valuable.

I think toward the end when people knew it was going to go away or sensed that it would, and when many of the controversies had died down, it was not less valuable, but it was less valuable to me because its value to me, to be self-serving, was using it as a forum to air ideas and to show some public support for the park. That was basically where a biased body did a lot for us. Once the land acquisition basically went away, the people weren't lining up to yell at the Advisory Commission about how awful we were. They became much more a sort of rooting section I would say. They were interested in project-type things, you know, keeping up to date. When are we going to do Jaite? When is the Canal Visitors Center going to get finished? The Locktender's House? So it was more that sort of thing.

There were people who were interested in and cared for the park a lot, but their role went from one of mediator and independent advisory group to one of more or less a rooting section. They were good people. We had great folks on that commission, except for one who I think never showed up, but that was the first commission. Tommie Patty, the chairperson, was terrific and so were all the other members. I am sure you have seen the records of those meetings.

MR. COCKRELL: Right, I have been through all of those. How about the quasi-public partners in the valley, like Blossom Music Center, the ski resorts, the golf courses, how were relations with those?

Lewis S. Albert

MR. ALBERT: They varied from person to person and time to time. The ski areas were a little difficult for us. You had to walk somewhat of a fine line between the two because they were intensely competitive. So whatever one got, the other wanted or whatever. You had to be fairly careful about consistent positions with the two of them. The golf courses were never a problem, although toward the end of my tenure there, we did have some difficulty with some trespass problems with Brandywine. I think they carved a road across our real estate. That is probably another one that probably settled after I left, so I don't know how that went. But generally speaking, you dealt with those people on an issue by issue, business by business, single thing.

I had often urged that what the park needed as much as anything else was something like a Chamber of Commerce. There seemed to be so little awareness of the existence of the CVNRA and it seemed like rowing upstream to try to do anything about it. We would have business guests who would come to visit the park and they would go to the Holiday Inn and say, "How do I get to the park?" and they would say, "What park?" We weren't a destination point I realized and someday we would be maybe moreso, but there was a whole lack of understanding--I thought--among the people who could most benefit by the presence of the park: the small and middle-sized businessman. But they never got together as a group to try to market the park.

So back to your question about all of these groups, it tended to be a one on one single issue at a time thing. What they did was, if they wanted something they came to see you, and if they didn't, they ignored you. Not that they were not good people. I got along well with most of them, I think. Day to day, they ran their business and we ran ours and in some ways it was nice because the thought of every one of those private businesses being a concessionaire would have been more than the park could have handled. It was nice to know that the people running the ski areas and the people running the golf courses and people running all these small business and stuff were running their businesses without our having to go and check what a can of peas cost. That would have just been an overwhelming workload that we were not prepared to deal with.

MR. COCKRELL: In 1984, Robert Forest published his book, America's National Parks and Their Keepers. He quotes you as saying, "I never get pressure on how to run things, I have a free hand because they haven't got the slightest idea of what to do with it." Could you elaborate on what you meant?

MR. ALBERT: I don't remember it frankly. I can't remember the context of the question, so I don't know.

Lewis S. Albert

MR. COCKRELL: It was about either the Regional Office or the Washington Office not giving you any direction.

MR. ALBERT: As you read it to me and as I would remember it to be, I can't remember that particular incident, it would not have been not giving me direction. There was ample advise and direction if I asked for it, but it was like Lowell. The place was so complex that you had to be there at least a couple of years before you began to even get an inkling of what the hell was going on. It was very difficult.

It was not the case for someone to sit in Omaha and meddle in the policy decisions. Certainly Omaha should, could, and did advise us on procedural matters; how do you buy a widgeit or whatever, or what is the proper form for scenic easement? That sort of support role they played very well toward the end. There was no lack of that and if I had got myself in a box and needed council, I could always call and get help, but generally speaking, there wasn't somebody out there looking over my shoulder saying, "Why did you do this?" and "Mommy, may I?" That is one thing that Lowell and Cuyahoga have in common. They are both extraordinarily complex parks. Few people in traditional Park Service roles can quickly understand what goes on. Certainly any bright person can learn in time. But, you don't just walk in and say, "I am the man from the Regional Office and I have come to tell you how to run your park!"

MR. COCKRELL: Basically my last question was these affiliated areas like Garfield and the David Berger National Memorial. TAPS was asked to provide technical assistance to these areas as well as projects involving the tombs of the various Ohio presidents. With the park's small staff and heavy workload, how did these external projects impact TAPS' effectiveness for Cuyahoga Valley's own historic properties?

MR. ALBERT: I would like to explain to you the role I saw of TAPS, because I had actually created TAPS for the first time in Lowell.

MR. COCKRELL: Oh, I see. I didn't realize that.

MR. ALBERT: I had found that that worked so well that there was real value in having professionals on staff, not people flying in from Denver for three days, but people, at least in a new developing park, who could do design work, who could do landscape architecture, who could do those things for you on the small-scale projects. I don't mean that when it comes to a \$20 million project, Denver isn't the place you go. But what about the item that is going to cost you \$1,500 or \$15,000?

In both those parks, I felt I needed that kind of professional support right there, preferably working for me and not for someone

Lewis S. Albert

else. I was very fortunate in the people I got at TAPS. They jokingly called themselves the "technoids." Or maybe that was Lowell, I can't remember which. In fact, Ed Adelman, who wound up being chief of TAPS later, I hired him first at Lowell. He was a "technoid" at Lowell and became a "technoid" at Cuyahoga.

Those people were outstanding folks. They really worked terribly hard. They were a very capable bunch and frankly, I don't know how the hell they did all the stuff they did. As you say, when somebody comes along and says, "Well, now we have McKinley's Tomb," we needed that like a hole in the head. We had plenty on our plate. We were trying to get the first historic leasing under the Historic Leasing Act stuff going that has ever been done as far as we knew, and I think we had done about five or six before anybody else even got one. We led the country in that program.

So here we are going like gangbusters on that and somebody throws in another goody. I don't include Garfield or Berger as part of those. I mean, Garfield was part of our responsibility even though it is an affiliated area, we didn't do that much with the Berger Memorial. There was some workload up at James Garfield, probably enough to keep you busy. That was part of an initiative on presidents if you remember. It was the Garfield Tomb in Lakeview Cemetery, the McKinley one in Alliance, and was there a third one?

MR. COCKRELL: Wasn't there one for Harding?

MR. ALBERT: Yes, I think so. What those did was create a sizeable workload, but the other thing was each of those places had an in place structure. I mean, the Lakeview Cemetery had an architect and they also had people to do the work. They could contract. These were set up as cost reimbursable things so the role of the park was more or less to oversee and provide a conduit for the money. The money would come to the park. We would enter into a cooperative agreement with the people. We would oversee and insure the compliance issues were taken care of. But largely, we didn't have to be there day to day to do the job.

That is what made it bearable. It still was a sizeable workload, but it seemed to be the only way that federal money could be gotten to these people to preserve these memorials, or the only handy way. So that is how it went. It was a workload and Ed and Steve and these people did a remarkable job, but they didn't have to do it all. I mean, Ed didn't have to do the design work.

MR. COCKRELL: Is there anything that I haven't asked you that we should discuss for the record? I tried to cover most of the topics.

Lewis S. Albert

MR. ALBERT: You have the Haydite Landfill (I knew wouldn't go well). The Blossom Music Center and their sewer line; that went on for a long time, but that was not a big issue. Ultimately, it was solved. You might want to look a little further into the nature of the 1985/1986 boundary addition that included the train as to how that legislation which creates--I hate to use the term--buffer zones. I know it is unpopular, but that area in which we have some sort of zoning site, it would be interesting to see how that is implemented and how it works. It is sort of a novel approach to fix zoning as of some magic date.

The other big issue that effects the park that you haven't brought up--I guess I am a little surprised--is the water quality in the Botzum Sewage Treatment Plant. Water quality, of course, is a problem in the public reception because the Cuyahoga River was the river that burned. Even if it didn't burn in the park, it burned in Cleveland Harbor. But that still is a major issue because one of the primary resources there is the river. Its value for recreational use is pretty iffy, at best. Jokingly, people used to say when I got there, that nobody ever drowned in the river because they rotted first. I remember also early in my tenure seeing the great quantities of soap suds and one day you would look and the whole river would be bright red from some spill or somebody dumping something into the river.

My numbers may be a little off, but in principle what I am about to say is true. Probably 90% of the flow of the Cuyahoga River has passed through the kidneys of the residents of Akron. Virtually all of the Cuyahoga's flow goes into the city from La Due. I think that is the name of the dam where it is diverted. So there are only a few small tributaries that are providing a lot of the flow. Since Akron has a unified waste water and storm water runoff system, anytime you get a large storm event, it overtaxes the sewage treatment system and they just have to open the gates and so a mixture of raw sewage and storm water comes down your river.

There is not much they can do about it. The cost of changing that system would probably be more than the gross product of all of Akron. You could just imagine having to go back and having to redo that system. You are faced with a problem that the primary resource, no matter, is going to be subject to some pollution. Akron has spent big bucks--a lot of it federal bucks--to increase their storage capacity and to improve their sewage treatment. That process is not yet completed. It will be, I suppose, sometime in the next five to ten years. But over my seven-year tenure, there was noticeable improvement in water quality.

Now, we still never felt comfortable with endorsing public use of the river. People would come to us and say, "Can I float down the river?" We would tell them yes, and they would ask, "Well, where

Lewis S. Albert

can I launch?" We would tell them, "Wherever you want." But we were not telling them to do this. We don't put up signs that say boat launching ramp, or encourage people to fish because we have no idea what that water quality is. Not only do we not now know, but we probably can never know, because it can fluctuate from minute to minute. And no matter how good the sewage treatment system is, there are still problems upstream, I am sure, with illegal dumping into the river and I am sure the people of Botzum will tell you that.

So, here is a park named after a river; one of its prime resources is that river and we have got a big problem. As I say, perhaps unsolvable, but at least one that is getting better. The city of Akron has been quite responsible and helpful in that process. Somewhere down the line those issues are going to have to be dealt with; how much public access do you provide; when do you provide it; who knows?

MR. COCKRELL: What about the other major resource threats at Cuyahoga?

MR. ALBERT: Well of course, acid rain is certainly an issue. It is because we generate it there, not in the Cuyahoga, but in Ohio. We are the recipients of it. Studies I know are ongoing there. There are gypsy moth problems I understand that are at various stages. Brian McHugh could tell you more about that, but it seems to me that the problem is moving into the area, so we can start expecting serious problems with various tree parasites. That is looming over the horizon. It may be five years away before it gets really serious, but it is something that is going to have to be dealt with. Pesticide use and other things by the farmers is certainly an issue. Not a major one, but an issue. My position was we wanted to keep farming going. The Szalays, I know, wanted us on several occasions to buy their real estate and we declined to do so because we feel that is part of the history of the valley, the corn farming. It is known throughout the region for its sweet corn, so we didn't want to meddle with that.

MR. COCKRELL: How about oil and gas drilling?

MR. ALBERT: I wish you hadn't brought that up. That is a tough one. We were able over the years to get a better and better handle on that. I think, as a matter of fact we were sort of the hallmark case that caused some changes in the regulations or at least they were proposed the last thing I knew. I think it will result in extending our authority over oil and gas operations to cases even where access to the property isn't over federal land. Because there is enough of it going on there and of course it varies with the price of oil. I mean, oil goes up and the rig goes out, oil goes down and the drills go away. But that is an issue.

Lewis S. Albert

In one sense it is not a long-term issue because most of these are finite resources that will be gone and what we have to be concerned with as much as anything is that when they are gone, they are cleaned up properly and that when they are being operated, they are operated as environmentally sensitive and as inconspicuously as possible. There is little we can do to stop it, because great quantities of the land there have severed mineral rights and there is no way we could afford to go and buy those rights. But it is a tough issue, and I think we are doing better and better in regulating it.

Sand and gravel used to be a big operation in the park. The Kurtz Brothers, the mayor of Independence's family is a big sand and gravel operator, but there were several others. They are slowly phasing out and leaving the area, so that is a renewable resource. Presumably we will have a lot of those areas restored in time. There are a few borrow pits that need to be worked on. But I guess my view is the big thing that is going to come after land acquisition with all the planning and things having been done, is going to be restoration. Unlike many parks, this is going to be a place where we are going to have to spend a lot of time and a lot of money restoring man's damage to the resource. Some we can't deal with. Acid rain is something a little beyond our control, but there are many things there that we can do to restore that landscape. It is a terrific area.

MR. COCKRELL: There have been a lot of people that have criticized the Park Service for wanting to seemingly make this into a Yellowstone National Park. They say it is a national recreation area and it should have the imprint of man on it, and you can't take it back to a pristine era. How do you feel about that?

MR. ALBERT: I agree and disagree. First of all, the fact that it is a national park or national recreation area is irrelevant because in the eyes of the law they are all the same. The Redwood amendments clearly state that the manner in which we manage a national park or recreation area are totally the same. It doesn't matter what somebody happens to call them. So, that I think is a bogus argument. On the other hand, yes, man's imprint needs to be part of that scene. That is why the historic structures, the Ohio and Erie Canal, much of the history of the area is an invaluable and inseparable resource just as valuable as trees and squirrels and snails and everything else.

On the other hand, man's abuse of the land doesn't have to be a part of that. Things like borrow pits and dump sites, you know. The Krejci Dump is part of man's footprint. Anyone suggesting we keep it, maybe enshrine it, plate it in gold or something--no. When I say we want to correct man's treatment of that land, I don't

Lewis S. Albert

mean by destroying its historic character. That is absolutely important. That is why we want to save historic structures. We want do things like that bed and breakfast operation we started at Brandywine Falls. Those things are of great value, but there are places there where man's unnecessary abuse need to be corrected. It will never be a pristine wilderness and it won't be Yellowstone West or East, but what it can do is look like it did perhaps in the 1860's or the 1890's or something before we got so heavy-handed.

MR. COCKRELL: Is there anything else?

MR. ALBERT: No, not that I can think of.

[END]

I N T E R V I E W V I A C O R R E S P O N D E N C E

**F O R T H E
A D M I N I S T R A T I V E H I S T O R Y O F
C U Y A H O G A V A L L E Y
N A T I O N A L R E C R E A T I O N A R E A
O H I O**

**Merrill D. Beal
Acting Director, The Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum
(former Regional Director, Midwest Regional Office)
National Park Service**

**Letter
October 4, 1989
Tucson, Arizona**

Interviewed by:

**Ron Cockrell
Historian
Midwest Regional Office
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior**

**Letter
August 28, 1989
Omaha, Nebraska**

Merrill D. Beal

Merrill D. Beal

MR. COCKRELL: I am a National Park Service (NPS) historian currently researching and compiling the Administrative History of Cuyahoga Valley National Recreation Area (CVNRA), Ohio. I respectfully request your participation in this project which will document the history and development of this important NPS unit.

I have researched the park files and have conducted many oral history interviews, but I need your perspective on a number of items which are as follows:

MR. BEAL: Thank you for your letter of August 28, 1989, requesting certain information about the early days of Cuyahoga Valley National Recreation Area. It has been somewhat difficult to reconstruct some of the detail you desire, but a review of my notes for the period in question surfaced some material. Obviously memory alone does not suffice after 15 years have passed by. I am using the same numbers as your questions for the replies.

MR. COCKRELL: 1. When the Regional boundaries were altered in 1974, what did Northeast Regional Office officials tell the Midwest Regional Office (MWRO) about their attitude towards the proposed Cuyahoga Valley National Historical Park and Recreation Area?

MR. BEAL: 1. A group of officials from the Philadelphia Regional Office visited Omaha on January 17 and 18, 1974. They provided an objective and professional briefing on the 19 parks we were acquiring and their various stages of development, staffing, and other matters. Cuyahoga was discussed with reference to Bureau of Outdoor Recreation and National Park Service studies and recommendations that had already been made. These pointed to the desirability of a State project with assistance from Federal Land and Water Conservation funds.

MR. COCKRELL: 2. What direction did MWRO receive from the Washington Office regarding the proposed park?

MR. BEAL: 2. Legislative Liaison regarding new area proposals was clearly a Washington Office responsibility which they guarded zealously. Regional Office people and Field people assisted as required to gather information on request or to report local happenings bearing on such proposals. The prevailing view was that the proposed legislation would not pass, or it would be vetoed by the President if it did succeed.

MR. COCKRELL: 3. Who were the principal MWRO personnel dealing with this issue? Did you and most MWRO personnel accept what apparently was a generally held anti-Cuyahoga position?

Merrill D. Beal

MR. BEAL: 3. Midwest Region personnel involved in the early stages consisted of myself, Deputy Regional Director Robert Giles, and Cooperative Activities Chief Bill Dean. We definitely did not take an "anti-Cuyahoga" position. All of us were professionals dedicated to carrying out the intent of Congress and the policies of the National Park Service.

MR. COCKRELL: 4. What steps, if any, did MWRO take to prevent CVNRA's authorization?

MR. BEAL: 4. Midwest Region took no steps to prevent a legislative initiative that was clearly the function of the Washington Office.

MR. COCKRELL: 5. How deeply involved was Ohio Group Superintendent Bill Birdsell in coordinating Cuyahoga Valley matters prior to its authorization? How frequent was his contact with MWRO?

MR. BEAL: 5. Bill Birdsell was the designated State Coordinator for Ohio. As such, it was his charge to monitor events in the State as related to National Park Service interests and report on them. He did this quite well. He contacted the Regional Office regularly, but only as necessary. These contacts related to many things besides the Cuyahoga proposal. He was involved in coordinating a House Congressional Committee visit to Cuyahoga in early June, 1974.

He also assisted me in an orientation visit to Ohio June 27-30. We stopped at all NPS units in the State as well as the Cuyahoga area. Bill's approach and attitude was quite professional.

MR. COCKRELL: 6. In the fall of 1974, Birdsell warned MWRO that Cuyahoga would become a park. He came to Omaha for a briefing. What happened at that meeting?

MR. BEAL: 6. Bill Birdsell came to Omaha on August 14 and 15, 1974, to participate with Regional staff and two other Superintendents in a review of Superintendents qualification and rating standards. On August 16th we discussed his promotion and transfer forms. While I am sure the Cuyahoga situation was discussed I cannot recall anything specific that happened (or should have happened). Legislative liaison was still a Washington Office responsibility.

MR. COCKRELL: 7. Why didn't MWRO believe the CVNRA "patchwork" could be a "manageable unit?" What steps did MWRO take to make it a "manageable unit" prior to its authorization? Did Birdsell (or someone else) redraw the boundary map, and what significant areas were added?

Merrill D. Beal

MR. BEAL: 7. I could fill a book with case histories on the difficulties involved in trying to manage "patchwork" parks, but will not do so. Suffice to say:

a. Access to the land is extremely important for study and use, as well as the protection of property.

b. Activities and programs on public lands should not adversely affect neighboring private landowners (at least impacts should be minimized). Conversely, activities on private land can adversely affect uses by the public on public lands, and confrontations are frequent in many situations.

c. Enforcement of rules and regulations is extremely difficult in a patchwork situation.

d. The only management which really works when you cannot properly maintain your boundaries and manage the resource is laissez-faire, hardly consistent with preserving resources and providing for public use and benefit. The boundary map for the proposed Cuyahoga Valley NRA was constantly evolving. My perception is that enthusiasm and support was building at that stage, and Congressman Seiberling got added input each time he visited his district (and home). I make no attempt to say who drew which line on the map, and believe that is an exercise in futility. All proposed boundary changes were subject to critical review, either administrative or legislative.

MR. COCKRELL: 8. Why was the designation national historical park and recreation area (NHP&RA) changed to national recreation area (NRA)?

MR. BEAL: 8. The change in designation was a legislative matter, and I do not have sufficient information to comment.

MR. COCKRELL: 9. Birdsell was told to be "impartial" in coordinating Cuyahoga-related matters like arranging the Congressional hearings in Peninsula. To the best of your knowledge, was Birdsell impartial?

MR. BEAL: 9. Bill Birdsell carried out his duties in coordinating public meetings and Congressional hearings in a professional manner to the best of my knowledge.

MR. COCKRELL: 10. Why was Bill Birdsell chosen to be project manager and then Superintendent of Cuyahoga Valley National Recreation Area? Was there any political pressure involved (i.e.,

Merrill D. Beal

from Congressman John Seiberling)? Were there any other candidates considered?

MR. BEAL: 10. Bill Birdsell was designated "keyman" for the Cuyahoga project in mid-January, 1975, shortly after the authorizing legislation became law. This was a logical extension of the State Coordinator role he had been filling for several years. No staffing or funding was made available to Midwest Region at this point for the project. A Certificate of Eligibles was requested from the Branch of Employee Evaluation in Washington to fill the Project Manager position. Bill Birdsell was certified among other eligibles. He was clearly the best available candidate and he was selected, with the concurrence of the Directors Office in Washington as required at that time. He accepted the position on March 26, 1975. I was not subjected to political pressure from any source in this appointment, and I wonder why you asked that question.

MR. COCKRELL: 11. In January 1975, the Denver Service Center (DSC) planning team arrived at CVNRA. Part of their responsibilities was to conduct a feasibility study on the Ohio & Erie Canal. With the staggering job ahead at newly authorized CVNRA, was there a predetermined result (no further Federal involvement) when it came to the canal?

MR. BEAL: 11. I was not aware of any "predetermined results" on any phase of planning for Cuyahoga Valley National Recreation Area, and doubt that this was the case concerning the Ohio and Erie Canal.

MR. COCKRELL: 12. When CVNRA was authorized and established in June 1975, it showed up on a list of areas where the NPS would contract with State and local authorities for operation and maintenance. Was there a plan within the Department not to make CVNRA a full-fledged NPS unit?

MR. BEAL: 12. The listing of Cuyahoga Valley NRA as an area that might be managed by contract with other government entities was undoubtedly only a small part of a broader effort to find ways of discharging mandated responsibility in a period of stringent personnel ceilings and budgetary problems. It should not be viewed as a plan directed specifically at Cuyahoga.

MR. COCKRELL: 13. Why wasn't a detailed land acquisition plan prepared for Congress within one year of its authorization as required by the park's organic act?

MR. BEAL: 13. MWRO Chief of Lands John Wright did prepare and submit the land acquisition plan called for in the legislation. It may have been mishandled elsewhere!

Merrill D. Beal

MR. COCKRELL: 14. Why did the land acquisition program, which was conducted under a Memorandum of Agreement with the Corps of Engineers, have so many problems? Did the NPS enter into the agreement enthusiastically or with trepidation? Why was the agreement finally terminated?

MR. BEAL: 14. The NPS entered into an agreement with the Corps of Army Engineers of necessity. NPS did not have sufficient personnel ceiling to staff the activity and apparently the Corps did. We had serious concerns about the adequacy of such an arrangement because of our familiarity with the Corps. Several of our land acquisition people had worked for the Corps and sensed its usual procedures and methods (which I am sure complied with applicable law) might create problems in acquiring park land.

The Agreement was later terminated because rate of progress was insufficient to meet legislative requirements, and relations with landowners was unsatisfactory. Also, NPS obtained sufficient personnel authorization to take over the work. This change was interpreted by the Office of Personnel Management as a transfer of function, and NPS was required to take the Corps personnel along with the task.

The above explains in part why there were land acquisition problems at Cuyahoga, but again, this park project should not be viewed in isolation. There were problems in most NPS land acquisition activities, from the oldest parks to the newest. This was the time the Charles Cushman Inholders Association spread like wildfire. It was also a period of abrupt and rapid change in National Park Service land acquisition policy under three different Directors in rapid succession.

MR. COCKRELL: 15. What problems did MWRO encounter with Birdsell's management style?

MR. BEAL: 15. Bill Birdsell was a competent manager and was fully committed to the successful establishment and operation of the Cuyahoga project. His zeal sometimes made him impatient with the efforts of others and as a result he had his share of personnel problems. He rendered a good service to his country with his work at Cuyahoga. I fully documented his performance and counseled with him annually, filing the required reports with higher authority.

MR. COCKRELL: 16. With Birdsell's extremely close relationship to the Ohio congressional delegation (i.e., John Seiberling), was he really accountable in all ways to MWRO--or was he secure enough to pick and choose what instructions to follow?

Merrill D. Beal

MR. BEAL: 16. Superintendent Birdsell was held accountable in the same way as other Park Superintendents were. I would not be so presumptuous as to say he (or they) were "accountable in all ways"-the very essence of delegation of authority is to grant discretion to responsible people to carry out their duties without undue interference. Evaluations should be based largely on results. If you are asking, "did Birdsell use Congressman Seiberling as a shield," the answer is definitely not, at least during my period of association with him. He certainly did not "pick and choose" which instructions to follow.

MR. COCKRELL: 17. At any time during your tenure in MWRO was the question of replacing Birdsell at CVNRA ever considered or discussed? (If yes, please explain).

MR. BEAL: 17. Bill Birdsell suffered a heart attack in early February, 1976. I immediately detailed one of my most capable Park Managers (Superintendent Randy Pope of Ozarks Scenic Rivers) to act as Superintendent at Cuyahoga because of the planning activity, public meetings, etc. underway there. During Bill's convalescence we did discuss whether he should be replaced, in the interest of his own welfare and health, as well as for the benefit of the project. His subsequent recovery appeared to be sufficient to permit continuing his work--which he resumed in late April, 1976.

MR. COCKRELL: 18. In February 1976, a disastrous public meeting in Valley View resulted in a near riot. There were many opposed to expanding the park into residential areas along Tinkers Creek Road and Alexander Road. Congressman Ron Mottl sent a scathing letter to you. How did this get so out of hand? Who authorized the DSC planners to delete so many of the proposed additions to the park?

MR. BEAL: 18. You will have to get particulars on the Valley View meeting from those who were there. I am not at all sure that DSC planners were "authorized" to delete proposed additions to the Park as much as consensus being reached by the planning team as to what they recommended. The planning process is long and complicated. This was a period when NPS was just beginning to get serious about public involvement in the planning process and considering the input received.

I don't have a clear recollection of Congressman Mottl's "scathing" letter, but I am sure we responded to it and that answer will have to suffice.

MR. COCKRELL: 19. In an interview shortly before his death, Birdsell said that Akron Metropolitan Park District (AMPD) Director John Daily intentionally delayed the negotiations for an agreement for the transfer of Virginia Kendall Park to the NPS. Was Daily

Merrill D. Beal

against the Virginia Kendall transfer? Why didn't the NPS know that AMPD would strip Virginia Kendall of everything not nailed down--from trash cans to woodpiles to warming shelters? How did NPS respond?

MR. BEAL: 19. Akron Metropolitan Park District Director John Daily was in the position of having his best park unit taken from him. I fully understand his feelings--at the very least he was reluctant to have this happen. I can also understand why the Park District removed all portable property for use in other parks that were not as well equipped. I do not see this as a big issue! NPS responded by providing new equipment/furnishings as soon as practicable.

MR. COCKRELL: Any additional information you care to contribute will also be greatly appreciated.

MR. BEAL: I get the feeling from the questions you ask that someone is doing a hatchet job on Bill Birdsell and the Cuyahoga project. This is both unwarranted and inappropriate. I sincerely hop you obtain a clear picture of the times and challenges relating to this project. In the beginning "everyone" was in favor of it--The Cuyahoga Valley Federation of conservation interests, the entire Congressional Delegation, etc. The opposition at that stage came from the National Administration, which was generally opposed to new parks, appropriating land and water conservation funds, additional federal employees, etc., etc. Local opposition did not really surface until there were specific proposals to shoot at. The professionals of the National Park Service were caught in a squeeze between the legislative branch and the executive branch. The role of the civil servant appears to be that of taking full responsibility for anything that goes wrong.

Midwest Region was sufficiently committed to the Cuyahoga project that the Regional Superintendents Conference was held there April 20-25, 1975, and a major part of the session was devoted to a workshop on public input in planning which was conducted by Kate Warner and Tom Borton of Ann Arbor, Michigan. We wanted all our Superintendents to be aware of the resources at Cuyahoga and the potential for public use.

Other people you may have already contacted or may find helpful in this matter are:

Ted McCann and Ed Peetz (planners in Washington Service Center, involved in Cuyahoga study);
Randy Pope (now at Great Smoky Mountains);
Fred Babb and Mike Donnelly (Denver Service Center planners involved in Master Plan);
Chuck Rinaldi (former Chief of Lands, WASO);

Merrill D. Beal

Loretta Neumann (Congressman Seiberling's staff and former NPS employee);

Gary Everhardt (visited project as Director, NPS, in April, 1976);

Bill Whalen (visited project as Director, NPS, in May, 1978); and

John Kawamoto (Associate Regional Director for Professional Services, MWR).

Good luck in your efforts to prepare a balanced administrative history of Cuyahoga Valley National Recreation Area.

[END]

I N T E R V I E W V I A C O R R E S P O N D E N C E

**F O R T H E
A D M I N I S T R A T I V E H I S T O R Y O F
C U Y A H O G A V A L L E Y
N A T I O N A L R E C R E A T I O N A R E A
O H I O**

**Hugh Beattie
Retiree
former Chief, Division of Operations Evaluation
Midwest Regional Office
National Park Service**

**Letter
November 2, 1989
Ramona, California**

Interviewed by:

**Ron Cockrell
Historian
Midwest Regional Office
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior**

**Letter
August 29, 1989
Omaha, Nebraska**

Hugh Beattie

Hugh Beattie

MR. COCKRELL: I hope that retired life is treating you and your wife well. If I might intrude on your retirement, I respectfully request your assistance on my current historical research project: the Administrative History of Cuyahoga Valley National Recreation Area, Ohio.

I have researched the park files and have conducted many oral history interviews, but I need your perspective on a number of items which are as follows:

1. As head of the Region's Operations Evaluation Office, you conducted two Operations Evaluation Reports (OER) of Cuyahoga Valley in 1976 and 1978. Both graphically outlined the many problems there. Why did Superintendent Bill Birdsell take such offense at the OERs? What did he say to you?
2. Birdsell refused to permit his staff to see the OERs. Were your efforts wasted? Did the Region insist that changes be made? (Why or why not.) Were any changes made?
3. Relations between the park and the Region were not good. Did Birdsell see himself, and therefore operate, as a free spirit because he knew he had the full support of Congressman Seiberling?
4. Could you relate your memories regarding the 1980 plans to transfer Birdsell (including the Midwest Regional Office plan to reactivate the Chicago Field Office and the eventual Washington office plan? Who was involved in these decisions?

Any additional information you care to contribute will also be greatly appreciated.

MR. BEATTIE: Sorry, but I let my own personal, petty pleasures as a retiree delay my reply. In the meanwhile your original letter with its questions has disappeared. So be it! At least your other materials have arrived and are at hand. We will do our best.

First, though, you should understand that my reply might be overly replete with either personal bias or opinion. This could only be natural considering the fact that CUVA and Bill B. regularly and consistently received much largess and consideration not normally tendered to other parks and park managers. Perhaps it is only natural to be somewhat jealous or even resentful of the "cry baby" actions and even tantrums which were so very effective and productive when applied by CUVA and Bill.

Second, an overview of Bill and his executive and managerial styles:

Hugh Beattie

-- Bill was an enigma, mystery and largely unpredictable operator.

* He operated with great skill in the political and executive arenas and whenever his outlook was upward and outward. In this view he was extremely effective and should be largely credited with making the CUVA "sow's ear" into the proverbial "silk purse."

* When operating with a lateral outlook toward equals or those without direct power over him or the park he was distant, disdainful, and lacking in honesty, cooperation and a spirit of "the greatest overall good of the NPS." His personal goals for the park and for himself were always paramount in those situations.

* When operating with subordinates or those without the power to thwart his plans or ambitions he was an absolute tyrant and bully. This is the basic reason he such a poor manager (explained further below).

* Thus he could be briefly described as 1) a good, competent executive; 2) a not too trustworthy friend; and as 3) a disastrous manager. Bill was more than a dichotomy; he a "trichotomy!"

-- CUVA was (is?) a "stepchild" park. Few in the NPS supported its inclusion in the System. It was too complex in concept and in reality and was very likely to siphon off resources critically needed elsewhere at that time. Perhaps Bill (or a clone or alter ego) was the only type of person who could "pull it off!" He certainly made his mark and achieved significant contributions toward the establishment of the park.

-- Bill's political connections and activities made it possible for many achievements to take place. However, these same connections also made it possible for him to be too far "above the law" and thus not entirely responsive to direction and to the standardized demands or requirements of a unified NPS System. This same statement is also true of Lew Albert. I cannot forget the very nice reception hosted by the C. V. Association and attended by Jim Dunning and me (among many others including Tom Thompson, MWRO) in which Lew in a separate cabal of the power elite raised his voice so that Dunning and I could hear his statement to the effect that "I'm running this park my way and if the Regional Director doesn't like it he can take a flying f___ at the moon or else I'll take my case to Washington." The words could just as well have come from Bill's mouth!

Hugh Beattie

-- Bill was an extremely poor manager. Management by crisis was his only style. He had no constructive back-up style. Thus he rejected any suggestions for a systems approach to management or the implementation of any components of a management system (official NPS or personal). Combining this with his penchant to "fly by the seat of his pants" and his inability to even consider the possibility that he might be wrong resulted in managerial chaos. This was especially serious in light of his inability to delegate to his staff and to solicit and trust their input. In essence it was a one-man show at CUVA!

-- Almost as a continuation of the above, Bill was not a good supervisor. He did not communicate well with subordinates nor define his expectations of their work. I well remember sitting outside his office when a subordinate came out and showed me a letter which was not complex in nature but which had been rejected for signature for the 8th or 10th time without any helpful suggestions on what would have to be changed in order to make it worthy of being signed. He just didn't like it but couldn't pinpoint his objections. Many employees recounted similar stories of Bill's undefined expectations followed by tirades over their lack of acceptable performance. One afternoon I could not find Bill who was urgently needed to address a really major issue. Somewhat later I ran into him at Happy Days info station and he was compiling a birdlist--obviously a tedious process. He stated that he was doing so because the park needed the list (granted!) but "the damn naturalist couldn't do the job right."

During our operations evaluations many illustrations of Bill's personal ineptitudes and of general park deficiencies came to light. All observations were cross-checked and confirmed prior to the official reports. Bill refused to believe the data or to assume any personal or institutional responsibility. The only exceptions to this were when suggestions or recommendations did not reflect adversely on him personally in any manner or those that strictly fit into his agenda, e.g. staffing deficiencies, onsite lands personnel, etc.

In one case Bill was so disturbed by the O.E. Report that he refused to share it with his staff! Clearly this was not the act of a competent and rational manager!

As time went on it became apparent that Bill had made his major contribution(s) to CUVA and that his continued service in the park would be increasingly counter productive to ongoing park operations. I believe that I first suggested to the R.D. that Bill should be replaced at a squad meeting. There was much support for that position because each of the Regional Directorate realized that, over time, he had also, through staff or directly, begun to carry a good share of the CUVA burden. Almost all squad members

Hugh Beattie

had serious doubts about Bill's ability to really manage a park of the scope of CUVA.

Time went on--discussions of possible Regional Office assignments were abortive--after all Bill had a power base which would protect him from any menial assignments. He could, realistically, demand a promotion to a position of real power. And, besides, there were no appropriate Regional positions for him. So, clearly, WASO was the place for Bill! I was not involved further in this issue and the Regional Director did not inform me of his actions.

In any case, after Bill's demise Lew Albert proved to be every bit as politically adept but with the added bonus of being a competent manager. CUVA was now really off and running on a fast track!

During the early years of the Albert regime I made several "trouble shooting" trips to CUVA. There were no incidents of real note, however.

In regards to comparisons of CUVA with SLBE, APIS, PIRO, and INDU, I remember that as first Superintendent of Pictured Rocks I might well be subject to charges of bias. However, take the following for what it may be worth.

-- Both CUVA and INDU were unwanted by the NPS but had such strong political support they soon became "the poor little rich boys" of the Region. Resources were begged, borrowed or stolen to satisfy their needs. This was, as often as not, at the direct expense of the other new areas. (Oh, the stories I could tell!)

-- Both CUVA and INDU suffered in the early years from imposition of incompetent managers. Both were great political-type operators, however. SLBE was also saddled by an inept manager who was a good (not great) political operator.

-- PIRO, SLBE, APIS, and INDU had their early years under the old Northeast Regional Office which really did not understand nor support these new "Western" areas. NERO was totally wrapped up in Eastern history. "Western" natural areas took a very low priority. Transfer of these areas to the MWRO was a great blessing. MWRO had just lost the great natural areas of the Rockies and Dakotas and lavished its love and resources on all the parks in the lake states. CUVA did not suffer nor benefit from this situation.

-- PIRO, especially, and APIS and SLBE to a lesser degree, benefitted from being "first" in the new professional land acquisition program of the NPS. Buying land without undue hindrance to management was much easier at first. By the time INDU and, finally, CUVA were into land acquisition, things tightened up and opposition to NPS land acquisition began to get organized.

Hugh Beattie

There it is. As much as my enfeebled mind can put out for now. Write or call if you need follow up. I'm quite sure I left out the best part. I get my last mail before an extensive trip to Mexico back country on Dec. 1--please send photocopy of this trash and your letter prior to 9/15 to me for my file (?). Thanks.

[END]

O R A L H I S T O R Y I N T E R V I E W

F O R T H E

A D M I N I S T R A T I V E H I S T O R Y O F

C U Y A H O G A V A L L E Y

N A T I O N A L R E C R E A T I O N A R E A

O H I O

Siegfried Buerling
Director, Hale Farm and Western Reserve Village
Western Reserve Historical Society

May 23, 1989
Bath, Ohio

Interviewed by:

Ron Cockrell
Historian
Midwest Regional Office
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Omaha, Nebraska
1989

Siegfried Buerling

Siegfried Buerling

MR. COCKRELL: I thought I would begin by asking you to give a brief summary of your background and career.

MR. BUERLING: Well, it is very simple. I started in 1945 as an apprentice in my father's cabinet shop in Essen, Germany. I worked there three and one-half years as an apprentice. I became a journeyman and worked for about three more years with my father. I then started working as a representative for a mail order furniture house. My job there was to go to where furniture arrived damaged and to repair them on site if I possibly could, or negotiate a deal where they got some money back. From there I went back to my father's shop because he had taken ill. That didn't work out, so I went back again to the furniture outfit.

In 1956, I left for Canada. There was no special reason for that. We had asked our boss for a raise and he wouldn't give us one so two of us went to America and one of us went to Canada. I couldn't get a sponsor here, so I had to go to Canada. I worked in Montreal for three years at a Canadian antique store. By the end of 1959, I had met my wife in Canada and we had gotten married. She was a German lady that had gone to Canada a year earlier than I had. Our first son was born there.

We then got a visa to the United States. We had traveled extensively in the States and had already decided that we wanted to go to Cleveland to live. We seemed to think the Midwest people were the ideal people. I did not quit my job in Canada. When I went to Cleveland it was during the steel strike in 1959. We wanted to make sure I had a job before I moved here. I did get a temporary job at the Western Reserve Historical Society. They hired me for six weeks on November 1, 1959. I have been there ever since. So that is the background. It was one of those things of getting a job and keeping it.

MR. COCKRELL: How long have you been the Manager of Hale Farm?

MR. BUERLING: My first season out here at Hale Farm started May 1, 1960. That is the first time I set foot out here. Approximately three years later, our then Assistant Director for the Historical Society in charge of the Hale Farm left and I was kind of the only one that was left that knew what was going on here. I had all kinds of titles in the Historical Society: Carpenter, Carpenter Preparer, Superintendent of Buildings, Superintendent of Buildings and Grounds, Manager of Operations. During all those years with all of those titles, I had already spent six months out there at Hale Farm. I was pretty much in charge from that time on.

I am not sure about the exact timing, but I believe it must have been around 1970 when I had to make a decision. Hale Farm started

Siegfried Buerling

growing rapidly. I had to make the decision of either staying full time in Cleveland and take a Business Manager position there, or if I wanted, to go full time out in the country. There was not much question in my mind. I took the country position.

Subsequently, I moved out here because there were some quite strange relationships. It had something to do with the philosophy in the park that the local people here did not think very much of the Cleveland organization. The owner of the Hale Farm felt it should have been a Summit County organization. At that point we decided the only way it would come to this would be by moving out here and becoming part of the community. I moved out here, joined Rotary, and did all of the good things. I joined a local church. We did just about all of the right things. The kids were in the schools, Boy Scouts, you name it. It really took me about three years or so after I moved here before the community really was happy with the set-up.

Incidentally, that is about the first time when Bill Birdsell and the Congressional delegation started showing up here. The discussion of the park started. I am sure you are aware that in the past, the state had made a study in 1976 or so, somewhere thereabouts, to make the Cuyahoga Valley a state park. Then when the Federal Government got involved, the state park people backed up the Department of Natural Resources and did a very extensive study.

Right from the very beginning--I can't say if it was 1972 or 1973--Bill Birdsell came on the scene. We hosted many of the Congressional delegations here anytime there had to be a reception or something like that. Since we are a private and non-profit organization, it was much easier than going to commercial places. We hosted the committees. When 1974 came around, of course, the park got established and authorized. Bill Birdsell became the Superintendent and we became pretty close friends from then on.

MR. COCKRELL: Before the park was established, what was the Society's position on whether it should be a state or a national park?

MR. BUERLING: I have not too much use for big government. Personally, I was in favor, but our organization officially had a hands-off policy at that time. Basically, they said, "Let's wait and see what will happen here." I left here then and this enabled me to persuade the organization to get officially behind the park in 1970. My dates may not be exactly correct. They can be a year one way or the other. About 500 or 600 acres of the Firestone property, which is to the northwest of the Hale Farm, became available for sale. We had looked into buying it and we decided

Siegfried Buerling

this was too expensive. It was not original Hale property so we really had no justification for adding it to the Hale Farm.

One morning I walked out my door here. I lived on the grounds, about 500 feet to the north from here. I looked out and saw a station wagon with a surveying team in it. The car had New York license plates on it. I asked them what they were doing here. They said they had been hired by the Firestone family to find the highest valuable use for the property. I said, "What can you do? This property is not zoned for anything but farming and residential use. I doubt that anybody can make any other use for it." They said, "You have to be kidding. This will make a fantastic site for a highrise."

I said, "Yes, but you will never get the zoning across." They said, "Don't kid yourself. You know the Coliseum area was zoned the same way and you see what happened there." With that, I turned around and went to my boss and said, "Listen, I would like you to recommend to the Board that this site gets officially behind the park. If they are building a highrise apartment in our back yard, this scenery is going to be destroyed." So we got the O.K. from our Trustees and officially joined the Park Federation.

Subsequently, I got really heavily involved with the Park Federation. I was on the Board for many years there, and we just helped to push the park. From that time on, the Historical Society has done everything we possibly can to help. When I say the Historical Society, that is the Western Reserve Historical Society, which is our parent organization. We helped in any way, shape, or form that we could to establish the park.

MR. COCKRELL: What specific activities did you promote?

MR. BUERLING: We did write-ups in our newsletters. We asked our members to promote it any time they made a presentation. I had a preliminary map I took with me when I gave talks. I gave probably on the average two to three talks a month. I always brought the park into the action. Also, any time I was at a meeting, or wherever I was, I defended the park, pointing out to people that the objection to the Hale Farm had been there in the early days and that this would be an identical situation. It took ten years for us to overcome the public objection and now all of a sudden we are the good guys and the park are the bad guys. I became kind of an ombudsman-type of a thing between the local community at large and the Park Service.

MR. COCKRELL: What was your earliest impression of what a national park in this valley would mean?

Siegfried Buerling

MR. BUERLING: I hate to say this, but I have been from the very beginning influenced by the state study. I have conceived the park just almost exactly like it is. I have had no illusions that this ever would be a national park in the sense of Yellowstone Park or even of Smoky Mountains Park. Historically, I thought it was important, but not important enough to make it a historical park. I have been involved in the National Register over the years with the National Trust and I am very realistic in the way of what "historic" really meant. Having every damn building in the world saved just creates problems. So I felt that when the concept of a recreation area was mentioned, I would say that was very much what I would have thought that a park looked like.

MR. COCKRELL: Did you foresee the national park being established here impacting in any way your operations at Hale Farm?

MR. BUERLING: We thought so and we still think so, but always in a pleasant way. I thought we could compliment each other. I can say now, fifteen to twenty years later that there has not been one hard feeling between us and the park. We have cooperated from one end to the other. They use our equipment when they need it, and we use their equipment. We have a big crane and they don't. They use it when they set light poles. We had an occasion where we needed some trees transplanted. They had a tree spade that helped us out.

But on a larger scale, the rangers are patrolling the area now, coming through here. We are working with the Park Service's Interpretation department. I give lectures at the park. The park people lecture to our staff training courses and vice versa. The whole area in here is approximately 50 acres and two buildings which belong to the National Park Service. We have them under a special use permit. The cooperation goes literally from the Maintenance department in the park to the Superintendent's office, and from the Interpretation office to the Education department. We have always had the Superintendent of the park on our Advisory Board here as an auxiliary member. Any time there is a major meeting or a public meeting or anything that the park is involved in, I get invited to that. It is a very happy, I would almost call it a marriage. It is not quite a marriage, but it is a very happy living-together type of relationship. Today, one does not get married any more; one just lives together.

MR. COCKRELL: There have been three Superintendents in the national recreation area. How have your relations been with each of these Superintendents?

MR. BUERLING: I always say there were three and one-half. Randy Pope was in here for a while as Acting Superintendent.

Siegfried Buerling

Starting out with Bill Birdsell, he was typically the Superintendent that one dreamt of as motherhood and apple pie in a Smokey the Bear hat. As a matter of fact, his hat is hanging right there. His mother gave it to me when he died. He was just a fantastic gentleman. He was very fussy about anything that was being written. There was nothing that went out of his office that he didn't read the letters and correct them. You very seldom, if ever, saw him out of uniform. He was just the typical old-fashioned Superintendent. I don't mean that in a derogatory manner at all, not one way or the other. It was a fact of life that he literally lived and breathed the National Park Service. His whole life was nothing but the Park Service. Whatever he did just centered around the Park Service. When Bill Birdsell died--there are many, many stories to go into, but I don't want to go into them.

When the Jessica Savitch thing was done on Bill, for example, it was up at Virginia Kendall Park. They had put a great big stack of firewood there to have the producer looking down on Bill, because Bill was six feet six, or six feet eight inches tall. He was a big, big man. Jessica Savitch, of course, had never been here. They had the producer ask the question and then she got dubbed in. It was just an absolute hatchet job. They asked questions and every time anybody wanted to say anything positive they said, "We are not interested in that comment. We want to find out what happened here and what happened there."

One of the questions was, and I don't know if it ever came out in the tape or not, "Is it true that so and so many people have died of a heart attack since the National Park has been in here?" And Bill told them, "It may be true that so and so many people have died in the park, but I am not sure, only God can answer if they wouldn't have died anyhow. By the law of averages, in a population group of that size, so and so many people die of heart attacks." This went on and the program was all screwed up there.

But Bill was an absolutely excellent man. We were very, very close friends. We went vacationing together. We are still in touch with his mother. She writes us regularly. We write her regularly. Bill is buried right next door here. At that time, the cemetery was full, but I happened to have four grave sites that I had reserved just in case something came up. So Bill Birdsell is buried here and the sign says "The First Superintendent of the Park."

I think he got a bad deal because being the first Superintendent in my opinion is the hardest job because he had to do all of the nasty and dirty work about land acquisition. So when he finally had to leave, he did not want to leave the park. You know he got promoted to Washington. He had been ill with a heart problem for

Siegfried Buerling

years by then and he was an absolutely perfect person. There was never a pencil out of order on his desk and everything always was done absolutely proper and in the right order. I never knew Bill Birdsell not to work at being absolutely careful in what he did. When it was time for him to leave, he was packing up in his office. I knew that he had only two days until leaving time, or maybe three days or so. I gave him a call and I said, "Bill, I suppose you don't want to go to lunch, you are too busy to go for lunch?" He said, "No, I am not too busy to go to lunch."

I drove by to pick him up and he was sitting in his chair. Everything was a mess. He hadn't started packing or anything. Under normal circumstances, everything would have been in neat boxes and labeled. He must have just been thinking, "I don't really want to leave here." Well, what happened? In that very chair in the next day or two he died. Bill would have died anyhow. His heart was in such bad shape. Half of it had been cut out and he wasn't supposed to smoke or drink.

To give you kind of an idea of what kind of a guy he was, when the doctors told him not to smoke and not to drink, he asked, "Do you have any assurance that I am going to live if I don't smoke or drink any more?" They said, "No, there is very little difference in it." He said, "Then I am going to smoke and drink," and he died a very happy man in that sense. So that was Bill Birdsell.

Randy Pope, we can skip. He was here a very short time. He just did the administrative work. Then Einar Johnson was here for a little while as the Acting Superintendent. They were both just temporary administrators there.

Then Lew Albert arrived on the scene and that is a totally different situation there. All of a sudden there is a gentleman that you never see in a uniform. He was totally on the other end of the spectrum. He was totally businesslike at any given time. We very quickly became friends. I always remember the first days when I showed up here in the area how tough it was to deal with the local people. When a new Superintendent came on board, I instantly called his office, or paid a visit there, or go out to have lunch with him, etcetera, so we could sniff each other out for a while. Pretty soon I was able to help introduce the superintendents to society, throw welcome parties for them. Soon, I had about as close a relationship with Lew Albert as I had with Bill.

People would ask me to describe the two every once in a while and I always say that they were different people. Not that Bill was here and Lew was here, or vice versa, but Bill was on that side of the spectrum and Lew was on that side of the spectrum--in a horizontal level. They had totally different management styles. As I mentioned earlier, when Bill had a letter from anyone in his

Siegfried Buerling

office and there was a mistake in it, he sent it promptly back. Lew felt that if those guys get paid what they are being paid and they make mistakes in their letters, grammar or spelling, everybody in the world ought to know it and let the letters go out that way. That goes for his whole management style.

A short time after they arrived here, we hired Babs Albert. We had the railroad going, but we needed a Director, so we hired Babs. That was way before the time the park was buying the railroad. Babs was our Director until the park started negotiating for the acquisition and then she quit. She resigned because it was apparently not the proper thing to do. I never saw the difference in it, but in time, the implication of the appearance of improprieties, she felt she had to resign from the railroad.

MR. COCKRELL: How important is the railroad to Hale Farm?

MR. BUERLING: It is very important. There is a whole different chapter in that one, but let's go through the Superintendents first so I don't get too confused on issues.

As far as I know, Lew Albert was very happy here, but there was no place here for him to go up. I don't know what Superintendents are, GS-13 or 14 or 15, whatever it is. But apparently there was no way there would be an upgrade in this park so he started looking into new opportunities where he would be one grade higher. That eventually materialized by his going out west where he is now in San Francisco.

Then for a short time the question was, "Who is going to be the new Superintendent here?" Everybody was wondering and then all of a sudden it was John Debo. Who is John Debo? One morning there was a picture of him in the paper and I went up to the office and said to Judy, "Has John arrived yet?" The front door was locked to give you an idea about the meeting. I went in the back door and I said, "You know your front door is locked?" She said, "Yes, they are all in a meeting, meeting the new Superintendent." At that moment there was a knock on the front door and she said, "That is probably him coming back. I have to run down and open the front door." I said, "No, let me run down, I will unlock it for you."

I went down and there was John standing there. I recognized him from the picture and I said, "You must be John Debo." He said, "Yes. There can be only one person in this whole park that comes in and opens my own office door for me on my first day on the job. You must be Siegfried Buerling!" He had heard about me because I was on the list of people he had to meet. I was busy at noon, so I asked him, "After work would you be available and have time for a cocktail?" He said, "Sure." He was living at the Holiday Inn

Siegfried Buerling

or wherever they lived at the time and we had cocktails and dinner that evening. We saw eye to eye quite quickly.

Comparing the two, if you take Lew Albert and you take Bill Birdsell, put them in a bag and shake them up fiercely, what comes out on the bottom is John Debo. He has the good parts of both of them. I would almost say without qualification that he has not the bad parts of either one of them. I think he is just an absolute marvel to work with. I think he works much too hard. He listens to everybody and the people in the park are very happy. I think staff morale is probably tremendously high at the moment. But I go to meetings with him where I would throw the people out after half an hour when I was fed up with them. He sits there patiently for two hours and listens to every argument regardless of how silly it is. I hope he ends up changing his ways because he is going to kill himself if he keeps up that pace he is doing now.

So that is the superintendents. I guess we should talk now about the railroad. I don't know how familiar you are with the background of this and how far you want to go, but the idea of the Cuyahoga Valley Line was spawned in 1967 or 1968. There was a gentleman by the name of Henry Lucas who was then Vice President of the Cuyahoga County Fair. One day we were driving up Riverview Road and he said, "You know, my dream is getting a steam railroad going between Cleveland and Akron." The last passenger service had been in 1962, but one or two freight trains a day still went on at that time. So I said, "My God, that is a great idea! Let's do it!" He pointed out that that really is not that simple. He said he had talked already to the Chessie and the Chessie said, "Go away!" At that time it was still the B&O, and they just told him to go away and never come back.

I said, "Let's try this again." So he and I made an appointment with a gentleman that was the Vice President for Public Relations. His name was Aldorpo. I don't remember his first name. We went up into the ivory tower at the Terminal Tower and he said, "Gentlemen, there is just no hope. We are so glad to be rid of passenger service, there is no way in the world that we are going to let you run. Now, this is my official position." He said, "Now unofficially, I think you are a little ahead of time. Come back and see me in two years." We went back in two years. In the meantime, we fiddled around here and there. We went on trips to the east and checked out excursion railroads. Two years later we went back again and he threw us out again. It was the same story. He said, "Come back in two years." That must have been approximately 1970 or 1971.

Henry Lucas said, "I've had enough. I give up on the railroad." I said, "This is never going to fly. We are not going to get anywhere." In the meantime, the state study had been made and in

Siegfried Buerling

that study, they had identified the railroad as a very important factor in the park: one, for transportation since there are no good roads there, the other is for excursions. So whatever we were doing, we were within the framework of the state's study.

Nothing happened. In 1974, possibly 1973, I was out here in the parking lot. We were restoring a log cabin that had belonged to Lawnfield, but that is a different story. A guy walked up to me and he said, "Do you work here?" I said, "Yes, I am the Director here." He said, "I heard that you are interested in getting a steam train going between Cleveland and Akron." I said, "I sure am!" He said, "I want to help you." I said, "Every bit of help is welcome. Who are you?" He said, "I am Nick Mileti." I said, "Well, welcome to the club. What can I do for you?" He said, "I would like to know everything." I said, "Well, why don't I give you the file that I have compiled." By that time it was an inch to an inch and half thick of material on meetings that had been held with Chessie and so on.

Less than a week later, I got a call from him. I said, "Can you come to a meeting at a union club?" He had pulled together about twelve of the most important people in the Cleveland area, particularly Frank Joseph from Blossom, the Cleveland Orchestra, the Musical Arts Association; the Director of the Cleveland Zoo; the Vice President of Public Relations (by that time he had changed, his name was Skidmore, the old one had retired) and Bob McDowell from McDowell Development; Fred Crawford, the Chairman of TRW; and a very impressive group of people. He laid it out to them and said, "We are going to get this train going."

Fred Crawford, who is one of the great old men, is like Cyrus Eaton. He is the last of the generation of business tycoons. As a matter of fact, his picture is right there on the wall. He is our Chairman of the Board, also for the train, by the way. He said, "O.K., let's get going." So two weeks later, we were on one of the commuter trains of the Chessie that left downtown Cleveland with about twenty of us taking a ride along. The commuter train was kind of an observation car with theater-style seating. We traveled all the way from Cleveland into the Goodyear Airdock. RTA had a party bus with a horseshoe bar in the back. We drove back by bus and talked.

I said to Skidmore, "Why don't you give us the railroad?" He said, "We can't do that because we still haul freight on it." I said, "Well, why don't you give it to us?" He said, "You couldn't afford to maintain it, even if you had it." I said, "Then we will lease the freight rights back to you and you can run the freight." He said, "You must be crazy. First we are supposed to give it to you, and then we are going to pay you for renting it?" So, to make a long story short, we still couldn't get a right-of-way from the

Siegfried Buerling

Chessie. Then Fred Crawford had breakfast with Cyrus Eaton. They were both buddies and Cyrus Eaton at the time was still the Chairman of the Chessie. When Fred came back from breakfast at the Arcadia Farm, we had the right-of-way for the train. That took us two years to do.

In the fall of 1975, we ran the first train through. There were all kinds of union problems in there and we finally overcame them. We ran only six or seven trains that year. The following year, we ran our first full season and it was successful until 1985, maybe 1986. At that time the Chessie abandoned the rails and would not let us run. They gave us a one-year contract after they had abandoned it and then they wouldn't let us run it any more. The issue was they were worried about the safety and the liability. Here is where Lew Albert really came to our rescue. If anybody really deserves credit for making things click, he does. He was an excellent politician. His input was great. He really knew his way around. Actually, Bill did, too, but in a different way. With Bill it was more of a jovial kind of a way. He was very good friends with the legislators, but he was not the business-type like Lew.

When we found out that Chessie had told us that we were not getting our agreement renewed, we had already done all of this printing of publicity brochures, office correspondence, and everything was rolling. Every time we had asked them for our contract, they said, "It is in another legal department. Don't worry about it. It will be all clean and you don't have to worry about it." Sometime in March, they informed us that they were not going to renew our lease, so we were up the creek. We had spent close to \$50,000 advance money and all of our office costs and labor costs and everything was there. There was no bending. So Lew with Ralph Regula's and John Seiberling's help, we had a meeting in Washington. Actually, Lew was not there. Babs went with me at the time. We tried to persuade Congress there, or the delegation at least, how important it was that money instantly be made available so that the railroad could be bought so that we could get our season into place. Nothing goes as fast as we wished, but we found a vehicle to speed things up which was the Trust for Public Land. We figured out that the government has to go through all kinds of billing processes. By going through the Trust for Public Land, they acted as the agent. They could buy this and turn it over to the National Park Service and we would be off and running.

All of this took a little bit of doing, but we were able to loosen up two point two million dollars, which at that time was the acquisition price according to the Park Service's appraisal. We realized we could not get going in June as we had planned to, but we figured that if we get going in August, we could still have enough time to recuperate our money and break even. Within five or

Siegfried Buerling

six days before the final transaction was supposed to be made, we had a big meeting here at the Cuyahoga office. Everybody said, "We just want to make sure that everything is under control." The money had been authorized and appropriated and everything was clear. Out of the blue sky there was one problem. This was the little guy from the Title Bureau who said, "The Chessie cannot produce a clear title for the land."

Everything went back to the drawing board. That absolutely killed any hope that we had of getting the season going. There was nothing we could do and we all started crying in our beer. We decided for this year we were going to mothball the whole thing. It took them almost another full year to clear the title and find ways around it. Subsequently, we lost the 1987 season totally. We lost two seasons all together. By September 1987, the acquisition was completed. We were all happy we got a temporary authorization to go on the tracks to start repair work on it. By spring of 1988, we very happily ran our first season and it was very, very successful. This is a little bit of the history of the train.

When the Park Service people did their feasibility study for the park and all the management studies and all subsequent documents, the train was pushed as one of the most important things within the valley. Due to that fact that we had this to base on, Mr. Seiberling with the help of Mr. Regula was able to persuade Congress to authorize the money. We were thinking of a special use permit. When John came on board, he thought that would probably take another two or three years to get a special use permit put together. He said, "You know the way it works, but we can find a separate vehicle." He came up with a cooperative agreement. A cooperative agreement had been approved in Omaha and sat on a desk somewhere waiting for the final signatures. So we have a temporary, three month to three month extension, but there is not a problem with this thing.

MR. COCKRELL: The first couple of years the park was established, there was a Park Service interpretive living history program called Johnnycake Village. Did that conflict in any way with your operation here?

MR. BUERLING: No, it did not. As a matter of fact, we were heavily involved in loaning our costumes and our objects to the village and things like that. Johnnycake Village was, as far we were concerned, a theatrical performance which had absolutely nothing to do with what we are doing daily. They took a certain setting out of a certain area and pretended. They did first-person role playing rather than history. It think it was billed as a living history program. I think it was just a very nice performance with very small participation of the general public in

Siegfried Buerling

there. It was reasonably successful, but it absolutely had nothing to do with what we are doing here.

We can follow up on that. People always say the National Folk Festival and all the things that are going on over there are interfering. If anything, they compliment each other. You are doing your things over there. You don't charge admission so the people have something different to see. You spend a lot of money in getting the performers there and here the people have to pay admission and we don't pay performers. We just pay them expenses and it is kind of a different ballgame. John and I have been talking of possibly combining some special events because we are directly connected to the special events site in the back. You can walk over. As a matter of fact, people park over here to go over there when special events are there.

MR. COCKRELL: Why do you think Johnnycake Village was not renewed after a couple of years?

MR. BUERLING: Lack of attendance probably. For one thing, I think it worked off of a certain grant. I think they give you two years and unless you make it on your own, you are out. I think funding was part of it. I think it would be good to have back, because as I said, we could have the festival site. I think it would be just fantastic to have it back, but just as another program.

MR. COCKRELL: How does the Hale Farm promote the national recreation area and vice versa?

MR. BUERLING: In every one of our brochures--and I will give you one afterward--we state quite clearly that we are located in the beautiful Cuyahoga Valley National Recreation Area which is located between Cleveland and Akron. On every presentation I give I have one of my standard slide shows. It doesn't matter what subject it is, I always have the first ten slides introduce the Western Reserve Historical Society. From there, I go through the properties and then I end up with the Hale Farm and a map of the national park in there. And then I say, "We are located within the park." People say, "Do you belong to the park?" And we say, "No, we are a private entity within the park."

I explain to them the intent of Congress in the bill that there are public and quasi-public institutions. As long as they stay within the framework of the ideals of the park, they are going to be exempted from acquisition. I give a lot of lectures doing this. For example, the other day I talked to 70 people in Independence and I got more questions about the park than I really got about the subject that I had been talking about. They wanted to find out something about the bridges. They wanted to find out why the roads

Siegfried Buerling

were closed and other things. Through my contacts with the park people, I know most of the answers quite well.

The same thing is in reverse as you go through your visitor centers. At any given place and location, you will find that about twenty percent, maybe even more of the pictures are Hale Farm pictures. Your brochures talk about it frequently and so I think we promote each other quite well.

MR. COCKRELL: How was Hale Farm involved in the effort to reconstruct the Everett Road Covered Bridge?

MR. BUERLING: We initiated it. That was way before the park and the recreation area was formed. The bridge had collapsed a couple of times before and we had been actively involved in persuading the county to restore it. One time it was only a semi-collapse and another time it really was a bummer. The county wanted to tear it out, but with the local historical society and our efforts, we were able to persuade them to put it back together and jack it up and repair it. At that time, it was already closed to traffic; they wouldn't let any traffic go through it any more.

When it collapsed the last time, they had to reduce the weight limit. The first time a recreation vehicle went through, got stuck in it, and messed it up from the inside. It was so big, they had to let the air out of the tires to get it through! But the damage was not too serious. The second time around, a bulldozer went through it. The bridge had a 12-ton limit on it which they maintained so that school buses could go through it. The bulldozer went through it at a very high rate of speed and the bridge collapsed behind him. So they fixed that up again and that time, they closed it to traffic.

Then we had a flood which finally wiped it out. I was going through it about two or three hours before it gave out and the water at Furnace Run was just about within a foot of the banks. I never had any idea that it could possibly wash the bridge out. What apparently happened is the flood got higher and higher and the bridge got lighter and lighter. One side wasn't anchored down properly, so the water picked it up and just like a jackknife, opened it up. It must have been for a second or two floating, just pivoting on one side. It took off downstream about five hundred to a thousand feet and collapsed into pieces left and right. The park must have come into being just at that time because they sent down an architect from the National Park Service from Denver to do the drilling and the marking of the timbers, etcetera.

I believe it was the Cuyahoga Valley Association--I am not 100% sure about this--either the park paid for having the timbers moved, or the Cuyahoga Valley Association paid for having the timbers

Siegfried Buerling

moved. We volunteered to put the timbers here on the Hale Farm property so that they would be saved and take it from there for the restoration. The Cuyahoga Valley Association started a fund to restore the bridge, but they never got much further than about \$10,000 or \$15,000. The county didn't want the bridge to go back up at all. There were lots of arguments in the process. Then finally when the park really got into the swing, they were really serious about getting it restored. We had the first set of drawings here and we had some of the bolts and materials to be used. We had all the timber here.

When they finally came to the conclusion of what could be used and what couldn't be used, it turned out that everything was so far gone that they had to start over again from scratch which was a smart thing to do. There was just not enough of the original bridge left. Unfortunately, the gentleman that had come in from Denver to sort out pieces had not been careful enough. I do not blame him because he probably had a week to do whatever had to be done. He cut some of the pieces with a chainsaw, and some of the cords could not be used. In the long run, I think he did us all a favor because if they had to use the old pieces, it would have been a very complicated system. The park put it back together again.

MR. COCKRELL: I know that you worked with Bill Birdsell in getting James A. Garfield's home added to the National Park System. Could you explain that process?

MR. BUERLING: In 1936, the Garfield family gave Lawnfield--that is the name of the house--to the Western Reserve Historical Society because the family felt that it couldn't afford to maintain the property to the standards it deserved. In 1938, the house itself plus approximately one acre was donated. In 1944, they gave an additional two and one-quarter acres and another building with it. From that time on we formed a Lake County Chapter of the Western Reserve Historical Society for the operation of Lawnfield. That was its sole purpose. In 1956, county commissions were given authorization to give local county historical societies a certain amount of tax money. In the case of Lake County it was \$10,000. To be able to receive this money, we incorporated the Lake County group and made it officially the Lake County Historical Society, rather than a chapter of the Western Reserve Historical Society.

Subsequently, for a few years they got \$10,000 from the county commissioners. Then the county commission went broke and the first thing they did was cut off their money. Very soon we found ourselves in the same position. The Lake County Historical Society didn't have any money. We at the Historical Society didn't have enough money to do a proper job, so I was asked to prepare a report on what the future of Lawnfield would be. I gave three alterna-

Siegfried Buerling

tives. The first one was to give it to the state of Ohio as a historic site. The second one was to give it to the National Park Service. The third one was to operate it ourselves, but take it away from the Lake County Historical Society. At that time, I had hoped that the Western Reserve Historical Society would operate it by ourselves like we do Hale Farm assuming eventually that we could make it go.

At that time, Bill Birdsell came on the scene and I became pretty good friends with him. I said, "Bill, is there any way at all that we can get money from the Federal Government to help in operating Lawnfield?" He said, "It is very difficult. If the Park Service doesn't own the property, it is almost impossible. The one exception could be preservation funding." Well, we had gotten almost \$15,000 in preservation funds that were all tokens. Bill said, "You know, the best thing to do with this whole deal is give it to the Park Service." I said, "My study indicated that already, but we really don't want to give it up." He said, "Well, maybe the Park Service can hire you to operate it."

That is the way this whole idea was spawned. He said, "I know two things. One is that Senator Hatfield is very much interested in presidential properties. I also know that there is a directive in the Park Service that says that the Park Service should own a property for each President." I said, "You have those two things, so go ahead and run with it." I went and visited Congressman Stanton. I told him the whole story and he got the ball rolling, but somehow he thought we were the Ohio Historical Society and they addressed their correspondence to the Ohio Historical Society. It was never forwarded to us, so we lost two years in the process. I thought there was just no interest from Congress, so finally I called Stanton's office and I asked what was happening. A staff person told me, "Congressman Stanton said that Senator Hatfield has written you a letter and you have never replied to it." I said, "You've got to be kidding!" They pulled out a copy of the letter and I saw it had gone to the Ohio Historical Society. They thought we had lost interest and we thought the same thing.

So we put this thing in the hopper again. We got the law passed authorizing the acquisition. The Lake County Historical Society in the meantime had bought some land behind our property to build their own museum on it. So when the law was written, it was with the understanding that the National Park Service would buy the property from the Lake County Historical Society and that the Western Reserve Historical Society would donate the land and the building to them. Subsequently, and very speedily, the National Park Service bought three or so acres from the Lake County Historical Society. They moved out and went somewhere else. We took over the operation for Lawnfield.

Siegfried Buerling

It took another six years until we really got the document all finished. I don't want to go into why that happened, but with the exception of a few sentences and some punctuation, it was exactly the way I had written the agreement in 1982. But it was held up anyhow. One of the conditions we have in there is that the National Park Service is the owner of the property, but we own the contents. We kind of pushed it in as a safety valve. Lew Albert didn't like that at all. We put it in as a safety measure that if the park ever would kick us out as the operators for Lawnfield, we could literally bundle up our collection and go away. We all hope that will never happen because, again, we have a very good relationship with the local people.

Subsequently, Congressman Eckhert was able to get \$580,000 authorized for the first phase of restoration under the cooperative agreement. We are paying for the operating costs, but the Park Service, subject to authorization by Congress, is allowed to subsidize our operating costs. We have just asked for a half a million dollars for capital improvements and another \$68,000 for operating costs. God only knows when we are going to get it.

MR. COCKRELL: What are your views on the Park Service's land acquisition difficulties in this valley? Specifically with the Homeowners Association?

MR. BUERLING: I probably toot our horn a little bit being a quasi-public organization, but I think that the park has been very reasonable with the acquisition plans in the sense of people being able to stay there for the rest of their lives. No homeowner has really been driven out of the park. After selling their land to the park, most people come out smelling like roses. I can tell you a few stories that would fill up a half-hour tape of how people ripped out their hair after the park paid them for their land. They never even dreamt of the amount of money they got! And there were tax advantages just by still living there, etcetera, as far as the acquisition of residences is concerned. As for commercial businesses, I give no mercy for in a sense that the people are properly reimbursed. They helped them to find sites. They paid relocation costs and all of that stuff. If you build a turnpike, somebody is going to lose a house here and there.

The policy of resident landowners, I have no problems with. They should be stricter than they are. For example, that trailer park has no business being there any more. That should have been wiped out years ago. Every time you turn around, they are getting another extension. I know they are very much concerned with public opinion, but when you look over during the heydays of controversy when the landowners were fighting with Bill Birdsell all the time, the Homeowners Association probably had 200 members. Of those members, about 120 lived in that one trailer park. So that gives

Siegfried Buerling

you an idea of what the proportions were of the people that were really fighting it. I would like to see a much more aggressive land acquisition of commercial properties, like the Winnie property down on the other end of the park near the Krejci Dump. I know there is no money available. There are still landowners in the park who are abusing the policies there. I know it can't be done, but I would stop them from doing gravel pits and top soil operations and stuff like that within the park area. I know it can't be done.

MR. COCKRELL: Do you foresee any time in the future that Hale Farm might be owned and operated by the National Park Service?

MR. BUERLING: No. I think there are two reasons for that. I don't think our Board of Trustees ever would consider this, and I don't think the park really has an interest. I mean, we don't know what will happen in 50 to 100 years, but there is absolutely no intention now to do it.

As a matter of fact, different administrations of the park have different ideas on things. As it stands now, the National Park Service, to the best of my knowledge, is more interested in cooperative agreements rather than ownership. I talked to John Debo hour after hour on plans for some of the other properties, Tinker's Creek, and places like that. You know they are desperately searching for expedient methods to do this and I could almost see the time coming when the Hale Farm will take over some more operational areas from the National Park Service.

We have been talking about the canal boats. And we are definitely interested in taking over the Cuyahoga Valley Line if that ever materializes. I would say that I can see a canal boat within five years going in the area. Nothing can be worse than what we had to go through with the Chessie. I can see an internal transportation system coming into the park with buses, which also may be run by the Cuyahoga Valley Line. I can see the farm areas, maybe even Everett areas, taken over by our organization for administration on a combined use venture. But the park taking over the Hale Farm is not something I can foresee. I am not saying that as a threat. I am looking realistically at everything and I would not have too many proposals in mind any how, so what difference does it make to me? But I just don't think it is a realistic thing that could happen.

MR. COCKRELL: Is there anything that I haven't asked you that I should?

MR. BUERLING: I have a cute story to close this out. Are you familiar with the Bronson Memorial Church in Peninsula? The Bronson Memorial Church was the first building that really started

Siegfried Buerling

the village here at the Hale Farm. We drove through there every morning, my employer, the Assistant Director of the Historical Society and I. The church was caving in. The steeple had tumbled from the foundation. The roof leaked and God knows what else.

We said, "Wouldn't it be nice if we took some of the Hale money and helped to restore the church?" We approached our Board of Trustees at the time and they said, "No, the Hale money cannot be used in Peninsula. It has to be used at the Hale Farm." So the idea was born that if we cannot take the money to the church, maybe we can bring the church to the money. From there, the idea of the village was born.

This is the preliminary for the story. The Episcopal Church had given us the church. When we started to prepare for the move there was a woman standing in front of the steps and she said in a mad tone of voice, "You are not going to take our church away!" We said, "O.K., if the people in Peninsula can find money to restore the church or maintain it, we will back out from our contract."

They formed what then was called the Peninsula Valley Heritage Association. After the church was restored, the Peninsula Valley Heritage Association changed its name and its purpose. They didn't want to disband and then become the Cuyahoga Valley Association. Out of the Cuyahoga Valley Association grew the Park Federation. The Park Federation became the lobbying agency to make this park a national park.

So we feel that the Peninsula church in a very small way was responsible for helping make this a park. We remember that the Park Service did not want this to happen. President Ford was advised the evening before the signing of the bill that he should not sign the park into law because the Park Service felt that this was not a good park for them to have. He said, "Look at these petitions that we have here. With this much public interest, I wouldn't dare not sign this." And he put his signature on the bill.

Literally, major support came through the Park Federation. We had over 100 organizations in northeastern Ohio involved in those petitioning drives. We had a full-time Director working there, plus an Assistant Director doing nothing else but working on this, and they were all within the law. I do believe that if it hadn't been that way, if Peninsula hadn't saved their church, there might not be a park here.

[END]

O R A L H I S T O R Y I N T E R V I E W

F O R T H E

A D M I N I S T R A T I V E H I S T O R Y O F

C U Y A H O G A V A L L E Y

N A T I O N A L R E C R E A T I O N A R E A

O H I O

David John Cherry
Associate Regional Director, Western Regional Office
National Park Service
(former Regional Director,
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service)

July 13, 1989
San Francisco, California

Interviewed by:

Ron Cockrell
Historian
Midwest Regional Office
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Omaha, Nebraska
1989

John David Cherry

John David Cherry

MR. COCKRELL: I thought we would begin by me getting some background information on you and your Federal career, from when you started out up to the present day.

MR. CHERRY: I graduated with a B.S. degree in fish and wildlife management from Humboldt State here in California and did a year's graduate work in zoology at Southern Illinois University. My Federal career began in 1962 with the Fish and Wildlife Service at Fort Worth, Texas. I worked as a Field Biologist in Texas and Louisiana, mainly on Corps of Engineers water resource projects.

I went from there to Washington on a Departmental Management Training Program. Shortly thereafter, I ended up in Washington in the Division of River Basin Studies. In 1965, I transferred to the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation or BOR as an Outdoor Recreation Planner working in Resource Area Studies and Grants in Aid.

I shipped out to the Lake Central Region in 1968 as the Assistant Regional Director. I basically had charge of New Area Studies--rivers, trails, and new areas. When the incumbent Regional Director, Roman Koenings, was transferred to Washington in 1971 as a Deputy Director, I became the Regional Director. About that time, Congress was considering the Cuyahoga legislation. BOR was the Departmental agency responsible for New Area Studies.

In other words, we would do new area studies and if there was legislation or field hearings, we would be heavily involved, as opposed to the present situation where the Park Service is the principal player. Even though those areas that were being considered were destined for the National Park Service administration, BOR was still the principal player in developing alternative proposals.

MR. COCKRELL: BOR's New Area Studies, would this be for all units that the Department of the Interior was interested in?

MR. CHERRY: Right. Or areas that were being studied jointly by the Department of Agriculture or the Interior Department. Or in some cases, even three agencies. The Department of the Army was included in some of those. The three categories were wild and scenic rivers, recreation trails, and recreation areas.

MR. COCKRELL: So when the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service came into being, you were still in Ann Arbor?

MR. CHERRY: Right. I was in Ann Arbor when HCRS came into being in 1977. Then shortly thereafter, I was transferred as Regional Director here in San Francisco. That was in 1978.

MR. COCKRELL: Could you explain what the basic mission of BOR was?

John David Cherry

MR. CHERRY: It came out of the Outdoor Recreation Resources Review Commission study under President Eisenhower. There were a number of recommendations, but one of them was to set up an independent agency to look at the whole question of outdoor recreation in the United States. To a certain extent, those functions were scattered around the existing Federal agencies. I think the Park Service had a Division of Technical Assistance and the Forest Service was involved, so was the Corps of Engineers. The decision was made to set up an independent agency and that was done via Executive Order by President Kennedy. Then there was a succession of acts which gave us further duties: Land and Water Conservation Fund Act, Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, National Trails Systems Act, etc.

In order to be eligible for Land and Water Conservation Fund grant monies, the states were required to prepare outdoor recreation plans, which among other things, considered the feasibility of establishing new areas in the states. BOR was also involved in a separate nationwide planning effort which I have to say was not that successful and did not yield much. There was a nationwide plan produced, maybe a follow-up plan.

MR. COCKRELL: What was BOR's relationship with the National Park Service?

MR. CHERRY: At the working level, it was very good, at the top level, it was very poor. I don't know from first-hand experience, but I understand that the creation of BOR and Connie Worth's reaction to that resulted in his dismissal. I can't confirm that, but I understand he got into some difficulty with Secretary Udall at the time. But working relationships in the field were excellent. At that time, NPS had a Field Office in Chicago manned by Bob Chandler, who is now Superintendent of Everglades National Park. We had a very good working relationship with Bob.

MR. COCKRELL: Was the NPS land acquisition program largely funded through BOR, with Land and Water Conservation Fund money?

MR. CHERRY: Yes it was. However, BOR was never able to achieve any real significant control over Federal land acquisition. I would say that our oversight role was fairly nominal, particularly when it came to the Park Service. We probably had more influence with the Forest Service acquisitions than we did with the National Park Service.

MR. COCKRELL: Why was that?

MR. CHERRY: I think it was because of the influence that the Park Service exerted within the Department and with the committees on the Hill. I think what it amounted to was that even though there

John David Cherry

may have been some written policy giving BOR some oversight responsibility, in effect, what really happened was that the committees ignored that.

MR. COCKRELL: What was your opinion of the Cuyahoga Valley as a potential unit of the National Park System? When was the first time you visited Cuyahoga Valley and what was your impression of it?

MR. CHERRY: I suspect that I had visited the area many times not knowing that I was actually in a future National Recreation Area. We had a program of grants to the states to buy and develop recreation facilities. It often entailed field trips to the sites, state areas, county areas, city areas, so I suspect I was in the area many times. Obviously, to most professional resource people, it was a carving out or making an area out of whole cloth. It didn't appear to have any overriding attributes that cried out for national designation. On the other hand, it certainly fit in well with trying to create new areas for people and preserve whatever was left. The Cuyahoga River had a terrible reputation as being a cesspool. There was the old story about it catching on fire near the harbor. I guess other than that, we didn't know very much about the Cuyahoga Valley as an entity.

MR. COCKRELL: Some of the early movement for it to come into the National Park System began in 1966 when Secretary Udall visited and was impressed enough that he sent an NPS and BOR team to make a preliminary evaluation. The Ann Arbor office sent Urban Recreation Director, Robert Lobdell, who agreed that the valley should be preserved as park land. Then a year later, the BOR and the NPS study concluded that the valley did not qualify for national park designation. You said you came to Ann Arbor in 1968?

MR. CHERRY: I arrived in Ann Arbor in the fall of 1968 after the initial Cuyahoga study. I think what you have to realize is that at the time Cuyahoga was being pushed by the Ohio Congressional delegation, the Administration was dead set against creating any new areas. I suspect that even if the study had come out in favor of an area, an effort would have been made in the Department to change that.

MR. COCKRELL: This was under the Johnson Administration?

MR. CHERRY: I don't recollect who was the President at the time when I moved there.

MR. COCKRELL: When Nixon came in in 1969, there was the Legacy of Parks Program and their theme was "Parks to the People."

John David Cherry

MR. CHERRY: Yes, but that was mainly putting together surplus properties. That was not basically an acquisition program. That was really a natural for the Republican Administration to be behind that sort of thing. At the same time, they were not really committing themselves to a lot of acquisition even though it may have sounded otherwise. So you are telling me it was not Lyndon Johnson, it was Nixon at the time that the bill was being considered in Congress?

MR. COCKRELL: Yes, that was definitely under the Nixon Administration.

MR. CHERRY: Right, and I can understand why the study would have been initiated under Johnson because that was a continuation of the Kennedy years.

MR. COCKRELL: Regional Director Koenings was pessimistic about the valley's recreational potential and suggested that the Ohio and Erie Canal be studied as a potential national historic landmark. Did the Ann Arbor office pursue this? Was BOR in charge of NHLs?

MR. CHERRY: No, we were not.

MR. COCKRELL: In 1967, Udall asked the Park Service to initiate a historical study of the Ohio and Erie Canal and the Miami and Erie Canal to determine if they merited further consideration for inclusion in the System. I have seen references to that, but I have never seen the study. I don't know if it was the BOR that did it or the NPS, or if BOR had any input into it. Was there interest in preserving the canals through Ohio at the Federal level or was this being encouraged by the state?

MR. CHERRY: Because I was not directly involved, I am not aware of that study. It could very well be that was done by the Park Service itself.

By the way, I transferred out of the Ann Arbor office in 1978. The Bureau of Outdoor Recreation was established by Executive Order in 1962; it became the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service in 1977. Then, in 1981, the agency was abolished and its functions transferred to NPS. The Ann Arbor office remained as a sub-office of the Omaha Park Service Region for a period of time. I am not sure exactly when it shut down; eventually it was shut down and the staff and office moved to Omaha.

MR. COCKRELL: And programs were administered from Omaha?

MR. CHERRY: Actually, Omaha was administering former BOR programs before the Ann Arbor office closed. NPS was trying to place people prior to its closure.

John David Cherry

MR. COCKRELL: BOR was working with the Ohio Department of Natural Resources to develop a Master Plan for the Cuyahoga Valley. The state was doing the study, but was there much coordination with the Ann Arbor office on trying to put together a Master Plan for recreation in the valley?

MR. CHERRY: Do you have dates on that?

MR. COCKRELL: The study began in 1972, I think.

MR. CHERRY: Was this sort of a counterpoint to the national proposal?

MR. COCKRELL: Yes.

MR. CHERRY: You know, I have a vague recollection of that and I think we were involved in it. I don't think it went anywhere. I don't think the state took it anywhere. But I do vaguely remember that we were involved in meetings. I don't know whether Bob Teater was the Director at the time?

MR. COCKRELL: William Nye was.

MR. CHERRY: Bill Nye, yes. Teater took over after Nye.

MR. COCKRELL: BOR Director James Watt summoned Bill Nye to Washington in August of 1973 and gave him a check for two million dollars to begin land acquisition in the Cuyahoga Valley and said that this was going to be the first step in the Federal/state partnership to create a state park in the Cuyahoga Valley. What was BOR's reaction when the national park bill started going through the hearings process?

MR. CHERRY: I would like to comment on that. The National Park Service operated fairly independently from the Department on the Cuyahoga issue. They dealt outside of channels with the committee members. I can't give you proof of that, but that is my understanding. That is my recollection. Even though the position of the Administration was not to create new national areas, the Park Service was intent upon having this.

What made it also more likely was that the Congressional delegation from Ohio, Republican and Democrats, were one hundred percent behind the proposal. There was no way that that bill was not going to go through. Yet, the Administration kept to the position.

As a matter of fact, that led to my appearing before the Committee. I don't have the dates and I don't have a copy of my testimony, but it was very brief. I testified on behalf of the Department against

John David Cherry

the bill at the field hearing. I am not sure who was the chair, but Seiberling was the principal local Congressman and Ralph Regula was there.

MR. COCKRELL: What do you remember about it?

MR. CHERRY: The thing I remember about that is being uncomfortable and knowing about the feeling about the Congressman from Ohio for the area. There was a groundswell of support and I was uncomfortable in opposing that. But they were very kind to me. I don't recall who it was, it might have been Seiberling who allowed that he understood my position and I was representing the Administration and was required to do this. So there was no hostility from the staff whatsoever. As I recall, there were no questions either. They recognized me as a spokesperson for the Administration with whom they were totally in disagreement.

We had a very elaborate field trip to the Cuyahoga Valley with a number of Congressmen. Seiberling hosted the affair. Ralph Regula was there. We visited most of the area by automobile, including the canal areas. That evening, Seiberling hosted a reception at his estate and I was really impressed because they had a tuxedoed string quartet playing for the group. It was a really elegant service with silver and china and that quartet for background music. We were given a tour of the Seiberling estate where they had built one of the first indoor swimming pools in the country. It was quite interesting.

MR. COCKRELL: Do you think that swayed any opinions?

MR. CHERRY: No, I don't think it did.

MR. COCKRELL: The Director at that time was James Watt. His philosophy then was a lot like his philosophy when he was Secretary of the Interior. When he became Secretary, Cuyahoga Valley was the brunt of a lot of Departmental intrigue against the park. There were investigations to see if the money was being spent right or if the money could be spent better elsewhere.

MR. CHERRY: This occurred later on after Cuyahoga had been established. I would mostly know about it from reading newspaper articles.

MR. COCKRELL: Was James Watt's attitude toward Cuyahoga Valley in the mid-1970's--1974 at least when he testified at the hearings--pretty much consistent or was Cuyahoga a special place? Was Watt's attitude applied nationwide, that the System should not be increased in size?

John David Cherry

MR. CHERRY: I think everything that Watt did came from ideology. He believed in a small government. He believed that the Federal Government already had too much land. If there was going to be some Federal involvement, it should be in the way of partnership rather than Federal administration. During his tenure, the Department developed new guidelines which put a lot of emphasis on calling for other than Federal administration on any new area that might be developed.

Actually, as far as Cuyahoga is concerned, Watt was very supportive of state administration. I was at the ceremony in the Department in Washington when the two million dollar check was given to Bill Nye for the state.

Watt had a close working relationship with Regula. His knowledge of Regula's support for the Cuyahoga Valley National Recreation Area legislation didn't seem to effect this relationship; nevertheless, Watt maintained a pretty persistent and consistent approach to new areas in government.

MR. COCKRELL: The position against Cuyahoga Valley's authorization--did this position originate in the White House or in the Department or was this President Nixon's position, or was it someone in the Office of Management and Budget? Do you have any knowledge of this?

MR. CHERRY: I don't know. I can only speculate. I would think that Watt himself probably had a significant role in that knowing his ideology and in knowing how things are delegated downward.

MR. COCKRELL: It has always kind of surprised me that the bill that was being considered was for the Park Service to administer this area. Yet no one from the Park Service testified, it was just the BOR. Why was that do you think?

MR. CHERRY: That is consistent with the position of the Administration that they didn't want this area and they didn't want other areas. I am guessing, but if they had put the Park Service on the stand, even though the Park Service would have made a statement, they could have easily gotten different positions by asking the Park Service questions, which is frequently the tactic that is used.

MR. COCKRELL: So they might subpoena the planners who did the favorable park feasibility studies?

MR. CHERRY: They could, yes.

Now that I think about it, there was also a person who was very influential in the passage of that bill: Loretta Neumann. I am

John David Cherry

trying to think of where she was at the time. I think she was on Seiberling's staff and there most assuredly was a lot of close contact between Loretta and the Park Service during the process.

MR. COCKRELL: She was a former Park Service employee.

MR. CHERRY: Yes she was, and a champion of the bill.

MR. COCKRELL: In the files, I came across a letter that you wrote to Bill Birdsell dated July 3, 1974, and you said, "I think it is clear that Congress will vote the project in. What happens after that is anyone's guess." If you knew this six months before the park was authorized, what steps did you take--or did you take any steps--to impede its passage? Did you try to warn anybody further up the ladder in the BOR or in the Department and say, "Hey, you had better take this more seriously!" or "Do something!" or "This is gonna pass!"

MR. CHERRY: Oh, no, because I felt that it was a good bill. I thought it was a good area to create. I was in favor of it. I would not have done that.

MR. COCKRELL: So you actually did believe that Cuyahoga merited being in the National Park System?

MR. CHERRY: Well, I don't know whether I would use the term merited. Merited from the standpoint of creating another public area. Yes, from that standpoint. Whether it met national criteria, the old national criteria, I suspect I probably thought it didn't as compared to some of the other parks. I certainly was in favor of it, but there was no way for me to express that.

MR. COCKRELL: How much coordination did you have with Bill Birdsell prior to the bill's passage?

MR. CHERRY: Very little. As I said before, the Park Service acted pretty independently and behind the scenes on this one. Since BOR was a creature of Watt and the Administration, I don't think they were anxious to confide in us, even though our relationships remained cordial.

MR. COCKRELL: There was a lot of speculation in late 1974 after the bill went through Congress that President Ford was going to veto it. Did your office do anything or communicate anything to Washington to encourage that it be vetoed?

MR. CHERRY: No.

MR. COCKRELL: I know that the Department sent over a very strong veto message that was seen by President Ford.

John David Cherry

MR. CHERRY: I am quite sure that would have been done in Washington. If we had a role in it, it would have been in providing specific information on the area, that sort of thing. We would not have been asked to draft it.

MR. COCKRELL: One last thing I came across in the file. You may not know anything about this. Six months after the park bill was passed there was a memorandum from the Department about a list of new areas that the National Park Service would contract with the state and local authorities to operate and maintain. Cuyahoga was on that list. Do you know of any plan that was within the Department not to make Cuyahoga Valley a full-fledged unit of the National Park System? Were they still trying to make the state take the primary role?

MR. CHERRY: I don't know anything specifically, but I do know that the Department had a fall back position or a fall back tool in slowing the thing up. That was through the land acquisition process. I am not sure what actually you will find out by reviewing the records. I don't know whether they were actually successful in slowing up the acquisition or not. But that certainly was an obvious tool.

MR. COCKRELL: Is there anything that I haven't asked you that I should?

MR. CHERRY: No, as a matter of fact, your questions sort of reminded me of a few things that I had forgotten.

[END]

O R A L H I S T O R Y I N T E R V I E W

F O R T H E

A D M I N I S T R A T I V E H I S T O R Y O F

C U Y A H O G A V A L L E Y

N A T I O N A L R E C R E A T I O N A R E A

O H I O

John Daily
Director, Akron Metropolitan Park District

May 22, 1989
Akron, Ohio

Interviewed by:

Ron Cockrell
Historian
Midwest Regional Office
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Omaha, Nebraska
1989

John Daily

John Daily

MR. COCKRELL: I thought we would begin the interview by me asking just a general question. From your own perspective, could you give an overview of how the Cuyahoga Valley became a preserve of different park lands, and what role did the Akron Metro Parks play in preserving the valley?

MR. DAILY: I think the initial idea to preserve the valley as a park probably goes back to the 1925 report that the Olmsted Brothers did for the Akron Metropolitan Park Board. They were commissioned by the Park Board to develop the first master plan for this Park District and as you might suspect from that era, the mid 1920's, much of the emphasis was on parkways, long strings of parks or lineal parks with roads in them. Quite a bit of that plan included portions of the Cuyahoga Valley, in Summit County at least. The Park District never did follow that plan completely for which I am grateful now, at least in the respect of all of the roadways and parkways. They did use it as kind of a basis for some of their efforts in land acquisition. When you look at that old Olmsted plan, you see certain elements of it that exist today in the Akron Metropolitan Park District.

From that, I guess in the mid-1960's perhaps, when I first came to the Park District, there were some people who were generating interest in preserving more of the Cuyahoga Valley. This Park District thought it was a worthy project and we had a Board at that time that was very much interested in land acquisition. Although we had very limited funds, we decided to try to preserve some of the key parcels anyway, especially those that we thought would be most subject to development, some of the major road intersections, and some of the parcels that had quite a bit of level land that would be easily developed.

We applied for several federal matching grants to do some of those projects, even going back to the open space program administered by HUD, which, of course, was the only one at that time. That was before the Land and Water Conservation Fund Program was made law. More toward the end of the 1960's, we started talking to the Cleveland Metropolitan Park District, too, about a joint effort to try to preserve the valley with the Cleveland people doing the north end and Akron doing the south end. We did apply, as I mentioned earlier, for several matching grants. Cleveland was in it in all of the discussions and all of that. Harold Groth, the Director at that time up in Cleveland, indicated an interest and a desire to do a kind of cooperative, joint preservation effort. I don't think they actually acquired much in the way of property. We forged ahead and bought probably 1500 to 1800 acres with our limited resources, some of which was matched by federal funds.

John Daily

John Seiberling, who was President of the Tri-County Regional Planning Commission, was very much interested in preserving the valley. I remember going with him and with a member of our Board, E. J. Thomas, who was a retired Chairman of the Board of Goodyear, to Columbus on a couple of occasions to try to get the state interested.

I remember meeting with Governor Rhodes one time. Eventually the state did become involved, had a study done by Mosure-Fok & Syrakakis, an engineering company. There was an earlier study done by a local engineer named Rosenstock. He was the one that was, as I recall, the impetus to get the state involved. As a study, the Rosenstock Study really didn't amount to much, but it had value to my way of thinking in that it began to focus the attention of people in this area on the desirability of preserving the valley. From that standpoint, I think it was valuable.

Then later on, when the state made a pretty firm commitment to try to do some preservation, they had the Mosure-Fok & Syrakakis study done. The state did come in and do quite a bit of land acquisition. I remember the one dramatic result of that was that land values escalated tremendously in the valley. Within a year or two, the state was paying three times what we had paid for land just a short time before.

MR. COCKRELL: Was that because the state had announced its intentions to make a bigger park? Is that why the land values went up?

MR. DAILY: I think part of it was because of incompetent appraisers; people that didn't know the land values here. Of course it makes it easy to buy land when you are willing to pay property owners a lot more than the land is worth on the open market. I guess we worked harder at it in negotiations and so on and tried to keep the prices within bounds and within reason. Then eventually, of course, John Seiberling was elected to Congress and proceeded to introduce the bill to create the national recreation area. It had several names in the early thinking. It had history involved in it. The Ohio Canal was part of the title at one time as I recall. The national park, which many people still call it, and finally settled on the proper name, Cuyahoga Valley National Recreation Area.

MR. COCKRELL: How much input did you have with Seiberling and the Tri-County Regional Planning Commission in the 1960's when this was beginning to evolve? Was there much contact?

MR. DAILY: Yes, I was the Park Board's representative in the Tri-County Regional Planning Commission, so I had contact with John Seiberling on a fairly regular basis. Really, the Park Board and

John Daily

I were very interested in preserving the valley and the Board, as I indicated before, was willing to devote practically all of its limited resources. We weren't doing any major development at the time, and once the Board zeroed in on the idea of trying to preserve the Cuyahoga Valley, we didn't do any land acquisition in other areas either. We let those slide and concentrated on the valley.

MR. COCKRELL: For the Rosenstock Study, was there any coordination between the Metro Parks and it? Or was that an independent effort?

MR. DAILY: I have a hard time remembering much about that. It seems like we were involved a little, but it was primarily a study by that firm. We were questioned for background and some of those things, but I just cannot remember too much about that study.

MR. COCKRELL: I had an interview yesterday with John Seiberling. He recalled that before the study was submitted, that he sat down one night and was up until 3:00 a.m., practically rewriting the study and giving his own blueprint of how he saw the park as it should be. He was very much surprised when it was finally published that Rosenstock had used his version practically word-for-word without editing, and all of his photographs that he submitted. It seems like it was John Seiberling's plan in the very end.

MR. DAILY: I don't know. I wasn't aware of that.

MR. COCKRELL: In 1966, Secretary of Interior Udall came to the valley and toured and expressed an interest in possibly a national park at that time. Do you remember the details of that visit?

MR. DAILY: I remember being with him. In fact, I have a photograph of Stewart Udall and Charles Vanik, who was then a Representative from the Cleveland area and was quite supportive of the whole valley effort, too. I remember taking them out. Udall had a very short time here as I recall and some of that was spent in a meeting in Cleveland. I remember taking him and Charles Vanik out to the Ledges at Virginia Kendall, one of our Metro Parks at the time, and one of the spectacular areas around here and in the valley. I thought Stewart Udall would be impressed by seeing that view of the valley from the Ledges, so I wanted very badly to make sure he got out there in spite of his limited time. I remember we rushed out there and saw it. I have a few pictures that we took out there. Then we had to rush him to Cleveland Hopkins Airport so he could go back to Washington.

Other than that, I don't remember too much about conversation or commitment, but I think it was following Udall's visit that there

John Daily

was a team from the National Park Service sent here. I am trying to remember some of the people's names. They were in the valley for several weeks, I think, and I spent quite a bit of time with them showing them some of the back-roads areas and places that I was familiar with that I thought were significant in the valley, some of the hidden waterfalls and places. That was fun because I was able to show them places they didn't know about and I think they were quite impressed. They had come here thinking they were going to see the Cuyahoga River in flames and junk cars lining the banks which still were in a couple of places. I think they were impressed with some of the natural beauty that we were able to show them and that they found in the course of their study. I wish I could remember that team leader's name.

MR. COCKRELL: There was an early team sent after Udall's visit. Then in 1971, there was another team that came and did a feasibility study. Tedd McCann was on that team. That is probably the one you just recalled. I know a lot about that study, but Udall promised that there would be a follow-up study made in 1967 or 1968 and I have never found a copy of that report.

MR. DAILY: I pretty well had forgotten that, but it does seem like there was kind of a quick, superficial effort. I had the feeling that the Park Service really didn't think it was worthwhile even after Udall saw very quickly a couple of the things at the Kendall Ledges. I kind of had the feeling that the Federal Government wasn't all that interested in it. I don't definitely remember the circumstances of that study. It seems like somebody did come after Udall was here and just do a kind of quick look and disappear and that was just about the end of it. But the group that McCann was involved with spent some time here as I recall. I spent quite a bit of time taking them around and showing them some of the back roads places.

MR. COCKRELL: How did the Akron Metropolitan Park District work with the Ohio Department of Natural Resources under William Nye to preserve the valley?

MR. DAILY: I think Bill Nye was probably one of the main reasons that the state did get involved, although I mentioned earlier our efforts with John Seiberling and our Commissioner, Eddie Thomas, visiting with Governor Rhodes. There was a little interest there. In fact, one time I remember Rhodes even visited the area with quite a large group of people on a bus. Governor Rhodes and some of his staff were there and we took a bus tour around the valley. I always remember stopping at Brandywine Falls on Brandywine Road. People got off of the bus and stood there on the bridge looking over at the falls and Mrs. Ben Richards came storming out of her house several hundred yards away. She came over and was giving everybody a hard time about encroaching on their property. Of

John Daily

course, most of us were just standing on the road. We hadn't actually gotten on her property, but she gave the Governor a piece of her mind, too! It was funny.

The next administration must have been Governor Gilligan's, because it was under Gilligan that Bill Nye was Director of Natural Resources. Of course, Bill was from Akron. Interestingly enough--this is a little side comment--Bill had worked for this Park District as a Seasonal Maintenance Person during the summer when he was in college, so maybe he got some of his interest in natural areas through his association with the Park District as a youngster. When he was Director of ODNR, that is when the state really got involved. I think that is probably when the Mosure-Fok & Syrakis Study was done, although I am not sure. The state began to acquire land. They worked pretty much on their own then, although we did have contact with them. We were still winding up, I think, some of our acquisition under some of the federal matching programs. Of course, the state administered those, at least the Land and Water part of it. I would have to go back in our records really to see when those things took place and the proper chronology of it all. It is all becoming fairly vague.

MR. COCKRELL: It was quite a few years ago.

MR. DAILY: Yes, 20-years-plus now.

MR. COCKRELL: Were you involved in John Seiberling's donation of the scenic easement on his property in the valley to this Park District?

MR. DAILY: Yes.

MR. COCKRELL: You are aware that there was a Congressional investigation for some improprieties of that?

MR. DAILY: I didn't know there was a Congressional investigation, or if I did, I had forgotten it. I remember there were some people that questioned the fact that he would be able to get a tax exemption or tax deduction from his donation of scenic easements on two parcels of his land to the Park District. I thought John was very sincere. For years he was very much interested in preserving the valley, as long as I knew him from the time he was on the Tri-County Regional Planning Commission. We served together on that and he was Chairman, as I mentioned, prior to being elected to Congress. I think he was very sincere in his desire to preserve the valley. He really exhibited monumental effort in promoting it, getting people interested in it, taking pictures, giving slide talks, and all kinds of efforts. I didn't think there was anything wrong.

John Daily

This Park District, as part of its effort in preserving the valley, in addition to buying land, tried to convince people that scenic easements were one way of preserving portions of it. In fact, I even wrote a little folder on scenic easements that we distributed to interested property owners. I remember giving a supply of them to the Peninsula Library to distribute to people that might be interested. But it was just a folder explaining some of the advantages to the recipient of the easement, the Park District in this case, and to the property owners from the tax reduction standpoint.

MR. COCKRELL: What came of that? Were there more scenic easements?

MR. DAILY: No, I think in addition to the two from the Seiberlings, we only actually received one other that I can recall. Everything started coming together pretty quickly and it seems like just about that time when we were trying to make a push for scenic easements, the state got involved and was paying very high prices for land. Some people I talked to about scenic easements wanted almost as much for the sale of a scenic easement as they did for the sale of the fee on the property. Our effort kind of got sidetracked by the state's involvement, and shortly after that, by the federal involvement.

MR. COCKRELL: Was the state emphasizing acquiring scenic easements or were they just buying in fee?

MR. DAILY: I don't recall that they did. I think they were talking about buying in fee pretty much. They may have talked to some property owners about scenic easements, but I am not aware of that.

As I was saying about John Seiberling, I don't think there was anything improper about his. I think in essence he was trying to put his money where his mouth was, so to speak, in actually giving up rights on his land to the Park District. It was an example, maybe, to some of his neighbors in the valley.

MR. COCKRELL: He was trying to set an example?

MR. DAILY: Yes.

MR. COCKRELL: One of the occurrences which prompted the national park movement was the building of the Coliseum. What position did the Akron Metro Park Board take on that?

MR. DAILY: I don't recall that the Board took any particular position, although as I recall, that is going back a long ways, too. Nick Mileti, the guy who was promoting that, did have a

John Daily

number of meetings trying to explain what he had in mind. He involved people all over the valley. I was involved in some of those and was involved in a train ride through the valley to see it. That really gave me a totally different perspective on the valley because I had seen it only from the roads, essentially, and out in the boondocks on foot. But as you go through the valley on the railroad, you sure see a lot of different things than you do from the roads. That was an interesting experience.

I can't recall whether the Board actually took any position as far as Milet's Coliseum project was concerned or not. I think we were all concerned that that project would begin to eat into and erode some of what we were trying to preserve in the valley. We all visualized motels and other development coming in as a result of the Coliseum which, surprisingly enough, has not happened. Some of that may be because the CVNRA was established, but there was some time between the Coliseum as I recall and the establishment of CVNRA when some of those bad things could have happened and not too many of them did. I kind of hate to see the Coliseum where it is. You can see it from many places on the east side of the valley. It really sticks up like a sore thumb if you want the honest truth.

MR. COCKRELL: One of the other early controversies which prompted the park movement was the Towpath Village development. What do you recall about that?

MR. DAILY: That one we were involved in very much. That came up before the state's involvement when the two park districts were working on preservation. There was a group of people, including Attorney David Brennan; Tom Merriweather, who was then President of Akron Savings; and the developer, who lives over in Kent and developed quite a few things around this area, fairly expensive homes and subdivisions. I can't think of his name. This particular developer was the one that got it started. He had options on quite a few parcels of land out in that area where Towpath Village is and where Blossom Center is. He tried to get the Musical Arts Association, the parent organization of the Cleveland orchestra, interested in developing a summer home on this property that he had. He was going to promote residential development around this summer music site.

I remember meeting with some of the people from Musical Arts and looking at the property. The developer's name was Darrell, I can't think of the last name, maybe I will get it. His first name was Darrell. I don't remember when all of that took place, but the idea of the Orchestra being there was fine with us. We thought that would be a compatible use in our efforts to preserve the valley, but the residential portion of it we didn't like.

John Daily

I remember talking to David Brennan and meeting with him several times to try to work out something where we might acquire some of that property. But that didn't work out. We considered some way of stopping them legally. In fact, I even had some conversations with an attorney in Patchogue, Long Island, New York, who I had heard as a speaker at some national conferences and was doing some remarkable things in environmental law. I wish I could remember his name. I think it was an Italian name. This attorney, as I indicated, had developed quite a reputation at that time for successfully litigating environmental causes. One that he did that I remember in particular was the Florissant Fossil Beds in Colorado where some developer was going to chew that all up and develop the area. He was successful in blocking that and the feds have a national monument there now. I talked to this attorney and he was willing to get involved, but for some reason or other, the Board didn't pursue it. I don't know whether it was the cost or the fact that the Brennan group, Darrell what-his-name and that group, had gone too far with the development or what it was, but it may have been that that was when the state came in. We never did hire that attorney.

I think that was about when we stopped acquiring land, too, because then the state came in and was acquiring land. Although Blossom initially was not too keen on the idea of coming out in this area because they were concerned about noise. Some of the major flight patterns from Cleveland Hopkins were overhead, but they were actively looking for a summer home site similar to Tanglewood and Revinia in Chicago. This developer, Darrell, thought he had the site and was trying to get them interested. Of course, eventually, they did go there, and the state bought most of the other land that this development group, Brennan's group, was going to develop residentially, except for the one relatively small area which is now Towpath Village. They went ahead with that development, much to everyone's chagrin.

MR. COCKRELL: In the early days when they were talking about the possibility of a state park, how was it envisioned that would be managed? Would it be a cooperative effort or kind of like Virginia Kendall and managed by the Metro Park District?

MR. DAILY: I don't recall whether any decision had been made on that. I remember there were some conversations about it, but I don't recall that any specific plan was ever put in place or developed.

You mentioned Kendall. Of course that is kind of an interesting story, too, how things come around in circles. The initial property for Virginia Kendall Park was left in the will of Hayward Kendall. The first recipient of that was supposed to be the National Park Service and the Park Service turned it down.

John Daily

Number two was the state of Ohio. They didn't really want it, but they accepted it on the condition that the Akron Metropolitan Park District would manage it for the state which we did for some forty years. We received the proceeds from the trust fund that was established in Kendall's will. We also used some Park District money, too, but we tried to do it pretty much entirely with the proceeds from that trust fund.

It is kind of interesting that the land was originally offered to the Park Service and they turned it down and years later they got it anyway. So when the CVNRA was established, even though it was operated by the Park District, it was actually owned by the state, and the state transferred it to the feds as they had promised to do in the Congressional hearings that took place prior to the bill being passed.

MR. COCKRELL: Speaking of the hearings, what promises did the Akron Metro Park District make if a national park became a reality?

MR. DAILY: Cooperation. It seems like there was a kind of specific statement that the Board developed. I am trying to think of what it was. I could get that out of the minutes very easily. During the hearings and in conversations with John Seiberling, I tried to get Congress to recognize the effort and the sacrifice that the Park District had made in trying to preserve some of these key parcels of land.

I felt that the bill should recognize that and compensate the Park District for local funds that went into the purchase of these lands. I didn't expect, of course, that the federal matching money would be paid back to the Park District, but I felt that the half-share of any portion of local tax money that went into preserving those lands should be paid back to the Park District in the form of purchase of the land or park purchase, starting with a certain date. I didn't think we should go way back into the 30's and 40's and expect to get paid. I felt that land should become a part of and be donated to the Park Service, but land that we had acquired say after 1970, at some cut-off date, that we would be reimbursed for the local taxes that went into it. That never did materialize in the bill.

MR. COCKRELL: Was there a substantial amount of local monies that went in to valley land acquisition?

MR. DAILY: Yes. For what we had, there was a lot. When you look at the amount that both the state and the Federal Government paid after that for land that they acquired, it was a drop in the bucket. But at that time, the Board really made a commitment to put all of our spare funds--anything we didn't need for operation and maintenance--into the land acquisition. At that time,

John Daily

it was land acquisition in the valley.

MR. COCKRELL: How much of that land that your District acquired was transferred to the park?

MR. DAILY: None of it has been so far.

MR. COCKRELL: Is there a plan underway eventually for that to be transferred?

MR. DAILY: We have had some discussions with the Park Service. They never have actually come to us and said, "Give us the land." But we have talked with the previous Superintendent, Lew Albert, about management agreements. He didn't think there was any way that the Park Service could trade land. The current Superintendent is investigating some possibilities of some way even to the extent of getting legislation to accomplish something like that.

MR. COCKRELL: So there is something in the works?

MR. DAILY: I presume so, possibly. Of course there have been changes in feeling on the part of the Board as individual members have changed through the years, but I think, generally speaking, the feeling has been that we should retain the parks that we have. There were actually five named parks of the Akron Metropolitan Park District within the boundaries of CVNRA and one of those was Virginia Kendall. The developed portion of that and of course the state-owned portion of that has been transferred to the Federal Government. The other four we still operate. I always felt and I think the Board has agreed with me that we would retain the three parks that are on the perimeter of CVNRA and perhaps even broaden those. That is where this possible trade comes in. We would get some of the federal land attached and enlarge our three metro parks and then give up the one metro park that is completely in the valley, although I have some opposition on the staff to that idea.

MR. COCKRELL: Is that Furnace Run?

MR. DAILY: No, that would be Deep Lock Quarry. I feel it would more properly be part of the national recreation area because it is so deep within the CVNRA, whereas the other three, Furnace Run, O'Neil Woods and Hampton Hills are on the edge.

Really, the only reason Furnace Run, if you want to be honest about it, is even in CVNRA is because it was in our original plan for the valley. We developed the original boundary, the plan for the preservation of the valley, along with Cleveland. They did their portion up north and we did our part in Summit County. Since we already owned a fair amount of land in the Furnace Run Valley and it was a major tributary to the Cuyahoga River, we felt that we

John Daily

ought to include that area within our valley effort. When the federal park was created, the initial idea for the boundaries of the federal park coincided almost exactly with our boundaries. There have been some changes since, and there were some, I think, by the time the valley was actually established in the law, but I feel certain that Furnace Run is only in it because we had it in the original plan.

MR. COCKRELL: Speaking of the boundaries, what kind of input did you have in determining what would constitute the federal park? Did they come and ask you, "Should we include the metro parks within the federal boundary?" or was this done without your input?

MR. DAILY: I really don't remember. I think, although I am not sure, that it was done without our input, except for the fact that Congress and John Seiberling knew what we were trying to preserve. Part of that was developed in conjunction with Tri-County Regional Planning Commission. Of course John was a part of that, as I was. I think it was all kind of coordinated back in that early effort, but I can't remember when the bill was before Congress whether we were specifically consulted about it or not. Basically, they took our joint plan, the Cleveland/Akron plan, and went with that to start with.

MR. COCKRELL: Do you think that the people understood what a national park would mean?

MR. DAILY: Not really, not any more than they understood what a metropolitan park would mean. I remember in these early efforts when the two Park Districts were the only ones involved in preserving the valley and being involved in a couple of public meetings in Peninsula. They were at one of the schools in Peninsula and the room was just filled with people. Of course they were all concerned about the Park District coming and buying up all of their land and so on.

Well, gosh, we didn't have any money to do that first of all. I tried to explain what our plan was and there were a few rather quiet supporters in the audience, but it was mostly several hundred people versus me! It was funny, though. I remember during one of those meetings, one of the people who was most vocal about his opposition to park preservation in the valley, called me at the office the next day and offered to sell his land! There were a couple of other instances like that where people were quite vocal, but then they offered to sell.

MR. COCKRELL: Was there any limit placed on the number of homes that were going to be acquired for the park?

MR. DAILY: By the Park District?

John Daily

MR. COCKRELL: Yes.

MR. DAILY: Our idea frankly was not to acquire houses because we knew it cost so much. We were more interested in the open land. Our plan was not to remove the houses and restore the valley to its pristine condition, but to preserve what had not been developed at the time in its natural condition and to preserve the agricultural and rural aspect of the valley. That meant leaving the homes and the farms and so on. I guess part of that was based on philosophical attitude and a lot of it was pure monetary. We just couldn't afford to do the complete purchase of buildings and businesses and so on that the Federal Government has been able to do.

MR. COCKRELL: When the federal program began, did people perceive that there was going to be a small number of homes acquired, none at all, or a large number?

MR. DAILY: It seems like the initial idea was that there would not be too many homes acquired. That is the impression I had. I remember being somewhat surprised myself when I saw the number that were being acquired and removed. I don't think it is all bad, but it sure created a lot of controversy at the time. I do recall being surprised, so I must have felt that the federal effort was going to be similar to ours in retaining the rural farm character of that portion of the valley.

MR. COCKRELL: What is your perception of the problems that the National Park Service has had with the Cuyahoga Valley Homeowners and Residents Association?

MR. DAILY: I have not been involved in that at all in recent years, but I remember when the Park Service first started acquiring land. I think some of the residents of the valley who were opposed to the idea of the park and the national recreation area, a lot of it was just because they wanted to be able to do what they wanted to do and not have anybody restrict them. I don't know whether somebody among those people got in touch with this inholder's group which until then had been active mostly in the west or whether the inholder's group heard about some of the controversy here and offered their help. I do remember that the inholders were lobbying Congress and doing various things even before the bill was passed to try to prevent its passage and then to try to get changes made and prevent residential properties from being acquired and so on.

I think maybe the approach that the first superintendent of CVNRA took might have created some of that. I remember there was a lot of battling and Bill Birdsell, the first Superintendent, had a hard task coming in and starting from scratch and doing battle. I

John Daily

understood that because I had faced the same thing in our efforts to preserve the valley. I remember a number of people in that first big meeting I attended in Peninsula said, "We have been preserving the valley all these years, why do we need the Park District?" Of course, in some areas they had been, but in some they had not done a good job of preservation. One of my answers to them was, "Yes, maybe that is true through the years, but here we are in the late 1960's and there is more pressure for development coming both from Akron and Cleveland. Without some specific plan for preservation, whether it is public purchase or metropolitan park or whatever, something has to be done in the form of a plan, otherwise it is just going to disappear. I didn't convince a lot of people of that, I don't think.

MR. COCKRELL: You said that Bill Birdsell had a hard task ahead of him, that perhaps some of the difficulties might be attributed to him. What certain things did he do that you feel he should have done in a different way?

MR. DAILY: I only know mostly from conversations with Bill and some of the other people in the valley, but I think he was kind of dogmatic. Of course in that position, you kind of have to be, too. You have your mission in focus and you charge ahead to try to accomplish it. He could have perhaps been a little more diplomatic at times in his dealings with some of the property owners. As I say, I know he had a hard time and I know what he faced because of what we were faced with. In the early stages, I think the Federal Government had hoped that much of the valley could be preserved through scenic easements. Bill ran into the same thing we did. When people were asking for the sale of a scenic easement, they were asking practically the same price that they would if the sale was in fee for the property. I guess my main impression of what problems he may have had in dealing with the public came from some of the problems we had in dealing with Bill, although I got along with him fine. I had the distinct impression that although he preached cooperation, the cooperation was definitely a one-way street. It was, "Do it my way, or else!"

MR. COCKRELL: I spoke earlier about the transfer of Virginia Kendall Park to the National Park Service. Could you describe the negotiations for that transfer? Were there any problems in making that transition?

MR. DAILY: I don't recall any in particular. Of course, the ownership question was between the state and the Federal Government and the state transferred ownership to the feds. We continued to manage it. Bill Birdsell talked to us and my Board about that. The CVNRA had no staff at that time to manage it, nor the funds, and they were perfectly happy to have us continue to do that. I don't recall when the transfer of ownership actually took place.

John Daily

My guess would be in 1974 or 1975. We continued to manage the property and operate it until January 1, 1978, when we turned over operation and maintenance through a management agreement that we had negotiated with the Park Service. I don't recall any vague arguments or problems in coming to an agreement on that. As I recall, Bill and somebody from Omaha, I don't recall who it was, came and talked to our Board at a meeting. We pretty well agreed on the basics of it. There was a written agreement of some sort worked out, but I don't recall any big problems in coming to an agreement on that.

MR. COCKRELL: After the transfer, in looking through some of the old records, the Park Service had some difficulties the first year of operating Virginia Kendall because some of the facilities, some of the park materials had been removed by Akron Metro Parks before the Park Service took over.

MR. DAILY: Some of the park materials?

MR. COCKRELL: Yes. Trash cans and some of the privies were taken out and things like that. Was that part of the agreement to remove certain things?

MR. DAILY: I don't recall. We didn't remove any privies that I know of. We took some picnic tables which had been purchased with park funds, not Kendall Trust funds. The trash cans for the same reason; they were part of our property. We bought them in bulk and distributed them to the various parks, including Kendall. I don't recall whether we removed any picnic grills or not.

MR. COCKRELL: I think I read where some of the warming shelters, some of the wooden structures were taken out at the sledding hills. There were no warming huts.

MR. DAILY: There never were any warming huts. We used, and still do in our winter sports areas, what we call a salamander. It is an old boiler that the insides have been removed and openings cut in the top and bottom. We stick those in the ground and usually put legs on them so they have an anchor point and then feed them from the top with large chunks of wood. We still use those at our iceskating and sledding hill areas. We often will put a wooden wall around half of the thing, a half a hexagon or something like that on the windward side of the salamanders, so people can get out of the wind. I don't recall whether our Superintendent of Operations was involved in that. Frankly, I don't remember whether or not we took any of the wind breaks, but it would only be windbreaks, there weren't any shelters. I don't think we took anything from the shelters. There were three: Happy Days, the Octagon, and Ledges. Other than maybe folding tables and chairs, which again were Park District property, the only things that I can

John Daily

remember specifically that we got were picnic tables. Now you say trash cans. I have no doubt that that is probably true. Perhaps grills, but I am not sure of that.

MR. COCKRELL: Following the establishment of the park, did this District request any more Land and Water Conservation Funds to continue purchasing land in the valley?

MR. DAILY: Following the establishment of CVNRA? No. In fact, I think by the time the state came in and started buying land, we stopped our efforts to buy any more land in the valley, partly because we didn't have any money. We had used up all of our funds. Even if we had had money, we probably would have turned our efforts into other park needs in Summit County, rather than the valley, figuring that the state had much greater resources and greater capability than we did.

Certainly, when the Federal Government got involved, there was really no reason for us to pursue it. In fact, we had a land acquisition study done for the Park District that was completed in 1972. It was done by Johnson, Johnson and Roy in Ann Arbor, Michigan. That study took several years so it started probably in 1969 or 1970. It treated Summit County and treated the Park District in three areas as the report had three separate areas. One was the addition of some relatively small parcels of land to the existing metro parks. I think there were six outside the valley at that time. The second part of the study was the creation of six new metro parks scattered around Summit County. The third was the Cuyahoga Valley itself. Because it was such a large area, it was treated separately in the study. As I say, that was completed in 1972, which was before CVNRA was established. By the time CVNRA came in in late 1974, to our way of thinking, that three-part concern (existing parks, six new parks and Cuyahoga Valley) was being handled by the National Park Service.

MR. COCKRELL: Basically, by 1972, when this study came out, your Cuyahoga Valley phase had already been completed, or the state had taken over and then the Federal Government was taking care of valley preservation?

MR. DAILY: I think so. I can't remember when the state came in and started actually acquiring land, but it must have been in 1971 or 1972. Maybe a little later, but there was enough interest on the part of the state. Of course, the valley was such a huge area that JJ&R treated the valley as a separate part of this study, and really didn't get into it too much. That makes me think that by this time, the state probably was at least involved in some way. Otherwise, I am sure that they would have shown some more detail of the valley. But that is about as detailed as the valley shows on this plan.

John Daily

MR. COCKRELL: How was the Akron Metro Park Board involved in the Everett Road Covered Bridge reconstruction project?

MR. DAILY: As far as the bridge itself and the reconstruction, we weren't involved at all. We owned land on the east end of the bridge. There is a little isolated triangle surrounded by roads and then a large block of land that lies between Everett Road and Furnace Run. The Park Service came to us a few years ago when they were about to begin the reconstruction of the bridge and wanted the Board to donate that little triangle and a piece at the west end of the larger piece of land closest to the bridge. Our Board agreed to do it even though we didn't have any management agreement in this overall trade consideration worked out, but they felt that was all right. They were perfectly willing to donate that land and passed a resolution to that effect, giving the Park Service what they asked for.

Our law requires that any disposal of park land be approved by the Probate Court. The Probate Judge is the appointing authority for our Board and any disposition of the land, after being approved by the Park Board, has to be approved by the Probate Court. Judge Spicer felt that there wasn't any provision in state law that would allow the Board to donate the land. He felt that we could sell as had been done in previous years and a couple of cases in more recent years, small pieces that had been given to the park district in a will and had no connection with any park. We could sell those parcels and the judge had always approved those. We had made a trade just prior to this with a private property owner where we got some land. It was next to a golf course and the golf course owner consolidated his ownership, and we were able to consolidate our ownership in this area which happens to be in Cascade Valley Metro Park now.

So the judge had approved these kinds of transactions, trades and sales, but he didn't feel that the state law would permit us to give away the land. Then the Park Service took the initiative and contacted Vern Cook who was a State Representative from this area, from Cuyahoga Falls, and got him to introduce a bill into the State House of Representatives which would authorize park districts to give land to other public agencies, such as the state or the Federal Government to be used for park purposes. Those were some of the limitations in it. As I recall, that bill passed the House unanimously and then got bottled up in the Senate and never saw the light of day.

MR. COCKRELL: So this bill has never been approved?

MR. DAILY: I don't know what happened to it. Of course, that session of the State Legislature expired. I thought the Park

John Daily

Service was going to get one of the Representatives to reintroduce it because it had passed unanimously so there certainly wasn't any opposition to that. Frankly, I don't know what has happened, whether it has been introduced, whether the Park Service has not pushed for it, or what. I didn't feel that we should spend a lot of time on it. It wasn't anything that was going to benefit us. It was something that the Park Service wanted and needed. I felt if there was anybody was to spend time on it, they had a heck of a lot bigger staff than we did, and they should do it and not us, although we were supportive of it. I had talked to Vern Cook who introduced the bill and indicated our support. Of course, unfortunately, Vern has passed away now, so I don't know who is carrying the ball or whether anyone is.

In the meantime, the Park Service wanted to proceed with the restoration of the covered bridge, even though we had been told by them many times before that they couldn't spend any federal funds on land unless they owned it. Because of this delay with the bill in the Ohio Legislature, the Park Service came to us and asked the Board if we would give them an easement on the property since we could not give it to them. Our Board was perfectly willing to do that and did in fact give them the easement. They proceeded to do the bridge. Our land was not needed for the bridge. It was needed for the parking and the approach to the bridge and that sort of thing. So I guess that has all been accomplished now and on land that the Federal Government only has an easement on. Eventually, I think it will all come out in the wash, but that is where it stands at the present time. Our Board was perfectly willing to cooperate with the feds in that. It authorized first of all, the actual donation of the land. When that met a legal roadblock, it was done by giving the Park Service the easement on it.

MR. COCKRELL: The Summit County Probate Judge approved donation of the easement?

MR. DAILY: He doesn't have to on leases as I recall. I don't remember whether we went to him. I don't think we did. I don't remember whether we have gone to him when we have given easements in various situations or not. I don't think we have. I think it was just for disposal of land. I would have to go back and read the law now to refresh my memory on it myself.

MR. COCKRELL: I don't want to put you on the spot or anything, but you have already talked about Bill Birdsell as a manager. Could you describe your working relationship with Lew Albert?

MR. DAILY: I think it was good. I think Lew was more inclined to see the other party's side of a problem or a question than Bill was. As I mentioned before, Bill talked cooperation but I always felt it was pretty much a one-way street, whereas Lew was more

John Daily

inclined to truly cooperate. We really didn't have that many opportunities to cooperate. We didn't have that much contact. I would see him occasionally and sometimes things would come up. This management agreement idea was developed when he was Superintendent and we did talk occasionally about that. I had more contact I guess with Bob Martin on that particular issue than with Lew, although I felt that Lew was much more willing to truly cooperate than Bill had been.

MR. COCKRELL: How about John Debo?

MR. DAILY: I think even more cooperative, much more so than Lew. I have found him to be so far anyway.

MR. COCKRELL: What do you see in the future happening between Metro Parks Serving Summit County and the National Park Service? We have already talked about the possible land transfer or exchange.

MR. DAILY: We are both involved in the Cuyahoga Valley Communities Council. We might both be involved in this heritage corridor that there seems to be some interest in now. I have had a fair amount of contact with John and he is a very nice person to work with. He has taken a lot more initiative on trying to work out ways to accomplish the land trade if that is what it eventually works out to. That will probably be our big point of contact, that whole issue. I don't know whether I mentioned Board's idea on this land that we have in the valley. We feel that some of these isolated parcels and the pieces next to Virginia Kendall, which amount to about five hundred acres that we still own adjacent to Kendall and other parcels up in the valley--some of which were gifts and some we bought--are more properly a part of the CVNRA. In my view, that includes Deep Lock, although as I mentioned before, some of our staff are opposed to that. We should retain the metro parks that are on the outer border of CVNRA, such as Furnace Run, Hampton Hills and O'Neil Woods. I think the present Board still agrees with that idea.

I was involved, too, in the Cuyahoga Valley Association. That went back to the promotional efforts in trying to get Congress to create the CVNRA. I recognized that certainly we couldn't do it. The Park District and probably the state couldn't either. I was involved with that group and then continued in the group after the creation of CVNRA. In their early years, it was kind of a support group. I guess they are still active. I have kind of gotten away from it and don't know too much about what they are doing any more. I think my dropping off from the group happened when the group kind of became very inactive for several years. We even had a hired Director for a time. Harvey Swack at one time was the Director and then there was a young fellow named Sheridan Steele who left to

John Daily

become an employee of the Park Service. I was pretty actively involved in that group for a number of years, but I haven't been recently.

MR. COCKRELL: When you say actively involved, what sort of activities to you mean?

MR. DAILY: Going to all the meetings and helping make the decisions and promoting the things that the organization was promoting initially: the creation of the valley.

MR. COCKRELL: Is there anything that I haven't asked you that you would like to add?

MR. DAILY: No, but I will probably think of a half a dozen things after you leave.

[END]

I N T E R V I E W V I A C O R R E S P O N D E N C E

F O R T H E
A D M I N I S T R A T I V E H I S T O R Y O F
C U Y A H O G A V A L L E Y
N A T I O N A L R E C R E A T I O N A R E A
O H I O

Bill Dean
Retiree
(former Assistant Regional Director, Cooperative Programs)
Midwest Regional Office
National Park Service

Letters
September 18 and 26, 1989
Omaha, Nebraska

Interviewed by:

Ron Cockrell
Historian
Midwest Regional Office
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Letter
August 28, 1989
Omaha, Nebraska

Bill Dean

Bill Dean

MR. COCKRELL: I am a National Park Service (NPS) historian currently researching and compiling the Administrative History of Cuyahoga Valley National Recreation Area (CVNRA), Ohio. I respectfully request your participation in this project which will document the history and development of this important NPS unit.

I have researched the park files and have conducted many oral history interviews, but I need your perspective on a number of items which are as follows:

1. In his capacity as Cuyahoga Valley key man, Bill Birdsell was instructed by the Northeast Regional Office (Philadelphia) and then by the Midwest Regional Office (MWRO) to remain impartial in all of his Cuyahoga dealings (especially the congressional hearings). To the best of your knowledge, did Birdsell remain impartial?

MR. DEAN: [September 18, 1989, letter] I'm pleased to respond to your request for information in connection with an administrative history of Cuyahoga Valley National Recreation Area. I'm sorry that my memory fails me on some of the questions you posed.

Did Bill Birdsell remain impartial? I was not involved with Birdsell relative to Cuyahoga before passage of the legislation, and therefore cannot answer your question.

MR. COCKRELL: 2. Bill Birdsell came to Omaha in the fall of 1974 and reported that the proposed CVNRA would be a reality. What do you recall about this meeting in terms of what amendments were suggested for the final bill and what substantial changes were made to the boundary map?

I am sure you are aware of all this, but to put things in perspective, let me say that the Midwest Region, the Service and I believed the Department all opposed the proposal to create a Cuyahoga Valley NRA. In addition, many people at the management level in the Region and WASO--probably an overwhelming majority of them--as individuals were strongly opposed. One consequence would have been that it is unlikely that anything Birdsell would have said on his trip to the Region would have produced a positive reaction.

However, late in the legislative process the Region received a call from the Chief of Legislation in Washington who had been approached by Representative Seiberling. The congressman wanted input from the Park Service on the boundary for the NRA. At this point it had become a foregone conclusion that the legislation would pass. WASO Legislation and the Region agreed that if the NPS was going to get then new area, whether we wanted it or not, at least we should do what we could to get the most manageable boundary.

Bill Dean

WASO sent us a copy of the boundary proposal as it stood at that moment. Time was very short and Ken Krabbenhoft and John Kawamoto, both of whom were senior planners and were assigned to my staff, and I each took home a copy of the proposal to study overnight. I recall that my reaction to the plan was that NPS would be managing a road network and very little else. The following day, Ken and John produced what we thought to be a reasonable proposal which straightened some boundaries and made some additions to areas over which the NPS would have some control. I believe this Regional proposal was the basis for most of the boundary as contained in the legislation. A few months later I saw John Seiberling at a hearing in Chicago, and he made a point of expressing his gratitude to the Region for its help.

Because the Service was opposed to the legislation, WASO's request to the Region and our boundary submission was an informal procedure as a favor to the Congressman (and obviously to protect ourselves from being saddled with an area with a very unworkable boundary).

Ken Krabbenhoft believes a copy of the boundary map from the Region should be in the files of External Affairs.

MR. COCKRELL: 3. Before its actual authorization on December 28, 1974, did you believe that President Ford would veto/pocket veto the CVNRA bill? What was the prevailing view on this in MWRO? The Washington Office (WASO)? The Department of the Interior?

MR. DEAN: 3. As to the possibility that President Ford might use a pocket veto to kill the bill, I simply don't recall what the speculation was.

MR. COCKRELL: 4. Did Birdsell request or lobby to be the first Superintendent at CVNRA? Were there any other candidates considered?

MR. DEAN: 4. I have no recollection one way or another. The best person to answer that question would be Merrill D. Beal who would have been either Regional Director or Deputy at the time.

MR. COCKRELL: 5. Why was Tedd McCann (Denver Service Center park planner assigned to WASO) ousted as the first General Management Plan team captain in favor of Michael Donnelly?

MR. DEAN: 5. I don't recall. But what I do remember is that McCann favored the creation of Cuyahoga NRA when the Service was opposed to it. At the time, his rather high-profile advocacy was looked on with displeasure by many managers in the Service.

Bill Dean

MR. COCKRELL: 6. How would you assess the effectiveness of Cuyahoga Valley's Advisory Commission as compared to others in the Midwest Region? Was it a useful tool for park management?

MR. DEAN: 6. My recollection is that no park advisory commission in the Midwest Region could be credited with having a major impact or playing a high profile role. This would have been true of Cuyahoga's. Much of this was due to the way these commissions were conceived. The citizen's organization at Cuyahoga which did have impact was the umbrella organization of citizens' groups which lobbied for and supported development of the park and of which Sheridan Steele was the paid executive. (I'm afraid I've forgotten the organization's name.)

MR. COCKRELL: 7. Did MWRO hold tight reigns over Birdsell's activities or was he able to operate independently?

MR. DEAN: 7. Tight reigns? No. I don't think that was possible with Birdsell. But the Region did monitor his activities fairly closely and tried to maintain overall control. As Regional Director, Dave Beal expected park managers to manage; they were not just figureheads doing the bidding of the RD. This applied to Birdsell as well as anyone else. But Birdsell was inclined to be a rather loose cannon and when this occurred, the Region attempted to reign him in.

MR. COCKRELL: 8. In what ways did Birdsell's close relationship with Congressman John Seiberling cause problems for MWRO?

MR. DEAN: 8. Many of the problems with Bill developed out of his close relationship with Congressman Seiberling. The Congressman's policies and objectives were not always those of the Service, and the Region frequently had to point this out to Birdsell. I think it is fair to say that the Region spent more time riding herd on Birdsell than on most superintendents.

I first met Birdsell during a public relations class I conducted at one of the training centers. I remember him because he was so negative in PR matters, particularly media relations. Shortly after the NRA was authorized Bill gave me a tour of the new area. He was bubbling with enthusiasm--an enthusiasm he never lost. He and I became rather good friends and I was surprised to find that the man who had been so negative to PR at the training center was in fact a natural when it came to public relations. He developed productive, positive relationships with a variety of publics in the Cuyahoga Valley.

Bill was a bachelor, and therefore was able to give his complete attention to the park. In fact the park was his life, and his deep, intense, personal interest made it more difficult for his

Bill Dean

superiors to keep a reign on him. I believe John Seiberling shared much of the intensity of Bill's interest in Cuyahoga.

My recollection is that, unlike some NPS relationships with Congressmen, Bill always worked directly with Seiberling. I don't recall that the Congressman's staff ever entered into the relationship. Bill always referred to the Congressman as "John."

Birdsell had a great deal of charm and used it to good advantage in dealing with the great variety of people with whom he came in contact, including those of us in the Regional Office. As a result, MWRO people were more often frustrated with Bill than angry at him.

MR. COCKRELL: Any additional information you care to contribute will also be greatly appreciated.

MR. DEAN: To put all of this in perspective, Cuyahoga was a very difficult assignment. The Park Service was just getting into the business of urban parks and was not enthusiastic about it. Cuyahoga was a very complex area with many problems and a variety of clashing interests. But because of Bill Birdsell--and John Seiberling--it took shape rather quickly and developed into the kind of major recreational resource that its supporters had hoped for. Had Bill Birdsell been a doctrinaire, conservative, less confident, and even less personable superintendent, I doubt that this would have been true. He was in a job in which it helped to be 6-foot-4, 250-pound or whatever, happy warrior.

MR. DEAN: [September 26, 1989, letter] This is an addendum to my earlier reply to your request in connection with the Cuyahoga NRA administrative history.

Because of a special interest in advisory bodies in the NPS I had hoped that my memory would have served me better in regard to the one at Cuyahoga. However, Al Hutchings was kind enough to do some research and provide me with the names of the members of the Cuyahoga Commission. These have triggered some further recollections.

I think the members of the Cuyahoga Commission could be considered to be more representative of the public, government and conservation sectors interested in the park than was usually the case in NPS park commissions. Several of them were people of stature and most of them were genuinely interested. My recollection is, however, that as a group their contributions were not noteworthy. However, several were very active as individuals in connection with various park problems. Norman Godwin was one of these.

Bill Dean

Robert W. Teater, head of the state Department of Natural Resources, used his position on the Commission to monitor park policies relative to state interests. I believe the same was true of representatives of other segments of government.

One of those who was very active and I believe served as Commission chairman at one time was Delores Warren. Al Hutchings has an address for her, and should you wish to pursue the question of Commission impact, I think you would find her very responsive.

Again, I hope this is somewhat helpful.

[END]

O R A L H I S T O R Y I N T E R V I E W

F O R T H E

A D M I N I S T R A T I V E H I S T O R Y O F

C U Y A H O G A V A L L E Y

N A T I O N A L R E C R E A T I O N A R E A

O H I O

John P. Debo, Jr.
Superintendent, Cuyahoga Valley National Recreation Area
National Park Service

May 25, 1989
Brecksville, Ohio

Interviewed by:

Ron Cockrell
Historian
Midwest Regional Office
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Omaha, Nebraska
1989

John P. Debo, Jr.

John P. Debo, Jr.

MR. COCKRELL: I thought I would start by asking you to provide a summary of your background and career.

MR. DEBO: Well, I grew up in a place called Detroit, Michigan. I went to school in Detroit. My family were long-term Detroiters going back to, I guess, some of the original French settlers. One of the interesting and formative experiences of my days growing up right in the city of Detroit was being afforded the opportunity of going to a summer camp up in Michigan for a couple of weeks every summer which, I think, was really my first introduction to the great outdoors. I dearly loved it.

I ended up heading out to the University of Michigan where I went to undergraduate school. Those were interesting times. I started out in Ann Arbor in 1967, and several things happened out there. One, the Vietnam War activity reached a crescendo. I was one of those students who couldn't quite believe that I would actually grow up and face the alternative of the draft to head to Vietnam at the end of my experience. As the years unfolded it looked ever and ever more likely.

At the same time, in addition to all the campus unrest on the war issue, and what was then called the Black Action Movement in Ann Arbor, this thing called Earth Day occurred. Earth Day I think had an interesting and formative effect on me. I drifted over into the School of Natural Resources as a result of Earth Day activities. I liked what I saw, and harkened back to those couple of weeks I'd spent up in northern Michigan every year as a kid. Although I finished with a degree in political science, I did end up spending almost the bulk of my junior and senior years over in the School of Natural Resources. That led me to a decision that I wanted to pursue some sort of environmental curriculum for my graduate work.

At the same time a rather fortuitous and very unexpected circumstance arose. It was probably the only good thing President Nixon ever did, from my perspective, and that was to institute the lottery. It was inaugurated in the spring of my senior year. Having had my physical, having had an indication from the old draft board that I was going to hit the streets--I won't comment on whether I was intending to do that or not--that's another issue. But in any event, the lottery came into being and I got what all of us in that class who escaped felt it was: the eleventh hour and fifty-nine-minute reprieve. I was in an apartment with four guys. I had the lowest of the numbers that were drawn, and my number was 335 in the lottery. It was almost nothing short of a miracle. And that simply meant that that issue was over.

I then proceeded to head out for the University of Massachusetts, basically trailing a couple of faculty people that I had met in Ann

John P. Debo, Jr.

Arbor. They made the shift out to the University of Massachusetts in Amherst and were involved in the School of Landscape Architecture, specifically the planning curriculum, environmental planning.

I pursued what ended up being a Master's Degree in what was called Regional Planning. However, I basically did a self-directed and self-designed program which I called Environmental Policy Planning that dealt very heavily in environmental law, urban planning, and regional planning.

I became a VISTA volunteer, and worked in Springfield, Massachusetts, with the low-income community there, orientated toward planning issues and primarily emphasizing environmental planning in an inner city area. Shortly after leaving school, I landed my first job which was with the Massachusetts Department of Natural Resources as a Senior (as they put it) Land Use Planner. This was a junior position by anybody's definition, but they referred to it as Senior Land Use Planner. I worked for about a year and a half for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in that capacity. It was interesting.

It was my first exposure, not to the Park Service actually, but to the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation at that time. I was involved in what is called State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Planning, or SCORP, which was a very dispiriting experience from the state level at which I worked. It was little more than--in my opinion at the time, and it really hasn't changed--a kind of foolish bureaucratic exercise in statewide recreation planning that had absolutely no impact upon state policy, decision making, or budgeting. It was purely a requirement to satisfy BOR's need to have plans before they distributed money.

It was very interesting. The commissioner of the department--I only really dealt with him once--brought us in as a group. There were five of us involved in State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Planning. He told us, "Your job is to produce a plan. My job is to make decisions and spend money." I never saw him again. I did have some interesting exposure to BOR folks down in Philadelphia, some of whom are still with us.

In any event, the one interesting thing that occurred at that point, and really the only saving grace of that job, was that I was at the right time at the right place to be assigned the responsibility of providing the staff support for a state-level inter-departmental task force which was to evaluate the potential for extending the state park system into a city called Lowell, Massachusetts.

At that point Lowell was a struggling, broken down mill town. The political process had taken it to the point where the governor was

John P. Debo, Jr.

under a lot of pressure to do something there. The idea that surfaced was, "Well, let's have a park," which was a radical departure for Massachusetts at that time because the state park system basically was out in the great western forest in Massachusetts, and a few beaches on the coast. The idea of the state park system going into a urban area was a rather radical departure. I provided the staff support to this interdepartmental task force.

That resulted in the recommendation and the eventual implementation of the state's first urban heritage park. Massachusetts subsequently went on after I left to develop a whole system of urban heritage parks taking the state park system into what I believe are now fourteen cities, a very innovative project which has since been copied in many states. New York has followed the model. Illinois is doing the same. A lot of states are pursuing heritage park concepts for their departments.

I left that job when it seemed like the proper time after about a year-and-a-half. I took about a one-year break and traveled in Europe, primarily Great Britain and Scandinavia. I developed my keen interest in British canals and spent a lot of time on the water. I came back after a year, a very important year in my personal development, ready to go but with nowhere to work per se.

I had to find work. After a rather discouraging three months of job-hunting, I got a call from a faculty person at the University of Massachusetts who was under contract with the Park Service to work at Acadia National Park. Acadia was undergoing a highly controversial master planning and boundary planning exercise. This was at the same time that the Yosemite master plan was developing. That had the most national visibility. Acadia was probably number two on the agenda of the national environmental groups in terms of priority. He asked me what I was doing. I said, "Not much." And he said, "Well, the Park Service is desperate for help with Acadia. Would you be interested?" And I said, "Sure, who do I talk to?"

I went to Boston and interviewed with Denis Galvin, Keith Miller, who was the Superintendent at Acadia, and Charlie Clapper. I was hired forthwith in a little temporary 120-day job, as many of us have the same background getting started that way. I was told it could not go beyond 120-days, but that it would be fun work. And indeed it was!

I got thrown into the middle of something that was much bigger than I was at that point. Highly controversial, very visible, and very heated controversy as to the future of Acadia, which to that point had never had a boundary or a master plan. The local interests were on the rampage. The state of Maine was intensely involved and the national conservation groups were very heavily involved. So

John P. Debo, Jr.

my time was sort of split between Maine, Boston, and Washington, working back and forth.

It was just a remarkable job experience to have as your first experience in the Service working directly for the Superintendent and the Regional Director. As I say, I think I grew a lot in the job. I learned an awful lot. Apparently they thought I gave something to the project also because they managed to extend the appointment. That turned into eventually a little over a year experience at Acadia. It was the most volatile experience I think I ever had. We took what was a desperate situation and worked out, in my opinion, a beautiful compromise, by anybody's definition, for the future of Acadia with the Maine Natural Resources Council, the umbrella group representing all of Maine's conservation groups, and the local county and municipal interests who were on the other side of the spectrum as to what ought to happen.

The NPCA's Destry Jarvis, who I admire and respect, made an appointment with Bill Whalen who was the Director at that time, and asked Bill please not to approve the Acadia compromise that had been worked out. He felt that it did not satisfy the need for the environmental issues as he saw them. That shocked all of us who were involved. We thought we had worked those issues out, and certainly with the Maine conservation groups.

NPCA hadn't been very intimately involved until the very end of the process and then it all fell apart. Since then I have gotten to know Destry better. I respect and understand the guy. However, I think that even Destry might say that we would have been better off to accept that compromise that was worked out in 1976 than the one that finally emerged in 1987. Unfortunately, from an environmental perspective, that didn't accomplish anywhere near as much as the '76 plan. But that is hindsight! No one could have predicted where that went.

The summary of that is that it was a very intense experience, one which gave me a very broad perspective on what the Park Service is and how it viewed itself and its relationship with the outside world.

I went from there to a place called Fire Island which was rather warm at that point also. Dick Marks was the Superintendent. There were major master plan and legislative issues brewing. Threats from the Corps of Engineers to the resource base of the island. I spent a year working there as a community planner. I should say in both jobs at Acadia and Fire Island I was actually an employee of the Regional Office, but detailed to the two sites. I spent a little over a year at Fire Island, again a marvelous experience. One of the great benefits I had, I think, were great teachers.

John P. Debo, Jr.

Keith Miller at Acadia and Dick Marks at Fire Island. They were both top of the line park managers, in my opinion.

Fire Island was real interesting. My job was to get out and mix it up with the communities and try to develop cooperative relationships, to deal with the resource management problems that are so inextricably woven between the park and those communities on the island. Again, it was a beautiful experience.

At that point, having known Deny Galvin extremely well from the Boston experience, I said to Deny along the way, "If Lowell ever does come into being as a National Park, I would very much like to be involved up there." And indeed, Lowell worked its way through the legislative process during the time I was at Acadia and Fire Island. The legislation passed in June 1978 establishing Lowell as a National Historical Park.

I got a call about a week later from Galvin who said, "How would you like to go to Lowell?" We worked out an arrangement where I went to Lowell in a position they called a Management Assistant, which you know is sort of a neither here nor there position, but gives one a great deal of freedom and leeway. Within the scope of my position were all the planning and development responsibilities for Lowell, since that was my background. I was actually the first Park Service employee assigned to Lowell. I drove into town with pencil and paper in hand and not much else.

The Superintendent, who was Lew Albert, showed up about three weeks later. I worked for Lew for about two-and-a-half years in Lowell. About half-way through that experience, Lew left for Cuyahoga. John Burchill came to Lowell from Yellowstone as the new Superintendent and it was at about that point that my position was converted from Management Assistant to Assistant Superintendent of Lowell. Lowell was a beautiful experience for me. During the five years I spent there it went from one employee to about ninety. The park grew from zero dollars to about, as I recall, a two-and-a-half-million-dollar operating program. Roughly twenty million dollars in development money was spent while I was there.

I had the rare opportunity to be involved with the selection of the entire staff. We didn't inherit any problems. The only problems that developed were the ones we created. It was really almost a Camelot kind of period in Lowell. We had more money than we knew what to do with. We had marvelous political support, and a directive from Bill Whalen to move the project. We went through a master planning process in Lowell which took less than two years from start to finish. When I left in 1983, the park was at least fifty percent developed which I think is quite a statement, reflecting not so much our abilities, but rather that we did have the money and political support, and it wasn't so difficult.

John P. Debo, Jr.

Lowell was different for me. Acadia and Fire Island had involved intensely antagonistic constituencies in both areas. In Lowell, we had nothing but love and support. Frankly, no matter what we did, the community would have loved us. I think that is still largely the case in Lowell.

In 1983, I left Lowell. I had applied for the Departmental Manager Program that Interior operates and indeed was selected for the 1983-84 year. I was the only Park Service person in the program in that year. That was a real roller coaster of an experience, too. I think everyone that is in that program feels the same way about it. It's a marvelous opportunity. I was basically turned loose in Washington for about a year-and-a-half and told, "Do what you want, but make it productive." There is very little structure to that program and very little guidance. There were people from other bureaus involved in the program, but everyone was off in different directions and very independent. Maybe ten percent of my time was spent with the group, and ninety percent of my time was on my own.

I made the decision to spend the vast majority of my time outside the Service. I worked on a couple of Service-related projects, but most of my time was spent with other agencies, up on the Hill working for the House Water and Power Subcommittee, and with a private lobbyist in Washington, D.C. It was a marvelous experience! One, however, gets to feeling so detached from the organization you wonder if you will ever get back in. As a matter of fact, I had the experience that many people have in that program of being made numerous job offers while I was down there outside the organization, none of which I accepted, but a lot of people do. They leave the Service as a result of that kind of experience.

I came out of that program and back up to Massachusetts to Boston to work for the Boston National Historical Park where I was Assistant Superintendent, again working for John Burchill, who had moved from Lowell over to Boston during the period I was in Washington. That was a very comfortable arrangement. I knew and respected John. We were good friends as well as, I think, a good team. Lacking any other opportunities around the Service, that seemed like the best available at the time. It was a very interesting job. I spent about two years in Boston.

Somewhere in the fall of 1987, I saw a job announcement for a place called Cuyahoga, applied, was selected, and arrived here in late April of 1988. That's probably more than you needed.

MR. COCKRELL: No, that's great! So now you've been here for more than a year, and you have a fresh perspective and your own ideas about this park. I have three questions: What were your first

John P. Debo, Jr.

impressions; now that you know it better how would you characterize it today; and what is your vision for the future?

MR. DEBO: My first impressions? I had not been to Cuyahoga, in spite of having grown up in southern Michigan, Detroit, I had actually never been to Cleveland. So this was all virgin territory for me. Having been in the Service at that point, however, for probably a dozen years, one picks up information, has a chance to see the images, hear a bit about the lore of a place like Cuyahoga. I, like many people, turned on the television the night the Jessica Savitch piece was on several years ago.

I did have the opportunity also to meet Bill Birdsell, actually while I was at Acadia. Since we were involved in various serious controversies involving land acquisition and boundaries, Bill was doing the same here at Cuyahoga, and the Yosemite folks were involved. We all rendezvoused down in Washington, D.C., for a day back when I was in my first year in the Service. This big imposing guy walked into the room and it was Bill Birdsell. That was the extent of my exposure to Bill. But from those various experiences, I had developed an image of Cuyahoga.

I guess my overwhelming observation upon arriving here and one which has stayed with me is that Cuyahoga is billed as an urban park. I have had an opportunity to personally see Gateway and Golden Gate over my career. I guess I was somewhat taken aback in spite having seen the images of the park as a pastoral kind of place. I somehow felt that there would be a stronger urban orientation to the park, that it bore a more direct relationship to Cleveland to the north and Akron to the south. That is really not the case.

Although the park is located in a major metropolitan area, it is very much a quiet pastoral scene. Some people refer to it as a backwater. We do not have the connections with the urban area. The brochure when it was sent to me uses the expression "Cuyahoga: Where the Sidewalk Ends," when in reality not many sidewalks end at Cuyahoga because we are off in a suburban and almost exurban environment. You don't walk out of the park into the city by any stretch of the imagination. You have to get your car and drive twenty minutes in either direction to get up to Cleveland or down to Akron. So I guess that was my most overwhelming and most powerful impression.

I was very much struck by the beauty of the landscape. I suppose I expected the Cuyahoga River to be a more imposing water course than it is. It's really quite a small, gentle stream. It did not fit the images which we all saw back in 1969 on television of a filthy cesspool on fire. That happened, but seven or eight miles

John P. Debo, Jr.

from the park. Those were my impressions of the physical landscape.

I was very much struck upon arriving of having the opportunity to meet the staff. I'm very much impressed with the quality of the people of Cuyahoga. And I'd have to say, all things considered, it's probably the strongest staff that I have been involved with in any of my positions in the Service with the possible exception of Lowell, which I thought was exceptional. There is a tremendous reservoir of talent here. People who are dedicated and very capable. That was my other most significant impression. I was very, very pleased by what I saw, and the people I met on the crew involved with the park.

MR. COCKRELL: What are your impressions now?

MR. DEBO: Well, I still feel the same, obviously, about the staff. That's not to say it's perfect. They never are, I suppose. But I think it is nonetheless a very capable crew. In any park you will have a constituency beyond the park who are supportive and involved, and there are indeed those kinds of people in the area. The magnitude of the volunteer program in Cuyahoga is great. I think we have upwards of 1200 volunteers now working for us. I believe the numbers were on the order of 34,000 hours of volunteer time in the last calendar year, 1988. There is an extraordinary cadre of committed people out there.

On the other hand, what I did not find, which I think I expected to find, was a strongly antagonistic, and well-organized opposition to the park. What I hear out there is what I refer to as echoes of discontent and dissatisfaction with the park. There are people here who still very strongly feel that Congress did a very bad thing when it established this park, and that the Park Service pursued it in an arrogant and antagonistic manner, contrary to what had been presented to them when the park was in its legislative phase. But all that is sounding more and more like a distant echo to me.

Frankly, even those who are involved in that opposition fashion have been very muted to me in their criticism of the park. One of the things that I did do on coming into the job was meet with them. I guess this is sort of my personal approach toward the issues, and probably stems from my experiences in the controversies at Fire Island and Acadia where I was right in the middle of it and in the thick of it. My approach is to basically confront those issues head on, meet the players regardless of what side of the fence they are on, and do business with them. One of the first things that I did upon arriving here was make a call to Marty Griffith, introduced myself, and asked to get together, which we did a couple of times in the first year.

John P. Debo, Jr.

I made the request at the first meeting Marty and I had that I'd like to get together and meet with the property owners association as a group. I think that Marty might have been taken a little aback by that request. That meeting actually did materialize just a month or two ago where I sat down in Peninsula with the property owners association as well as a much broader contingent of Peninsula residents who were very interested in that kind of dialogue. We had what I would call a very good meeting. My sense with many of those people, at this point in time, is that they are somewhat starved for communication.

I am not critical of Lew Albert because I think Lew and Bill Birdsell were operating in a very different environment than I'm operating in. Birdsell, when the park was in its early formative stages when the bulk of land acquisition was going on, was put in an almost untenable position. Someone had to play the role that Bill played. Lew came in, I know, in an attempt to try to establish more of a dialogue with the opposing forces. But at that point in the process, as I understand it, passions were still running very high. I think Lew had some success in cooling off this park, but it to a degree resulted in somewhat of a stand off with many of the opposing factions.

I'm now the third Superintendent coming into the park and I think there is a different kind of opportunity. There is an opportunity to mend some fences. There is an opportunity to establish some working relationships with some of the opposing factions. And I'm sensing a degree of acceptance on the part of those who opposed us so bitterly in the past, and a willingness to develop working relationships. So that's what I have been working on here. I think it will be very positive for the park in the long run.

MR. COCKRELL: What is your vision for the future of this park?

MR. DEBO: Well, that is an interesting question. I guess it harkens back, and I'll have to paraphrase here, to that old saw that if you don't understand where you've been, it's hard to figure out where you're going. I do think it's very important that we do step back and think about the historical perspective of this park. And I would say that my impression is that the Park Service's concept of what Cuyahoga is has evolved considerably. I'll be real interested to see some of the result of your work, Ron, to see how some of those you have interviewed perceived what has gone on in the past.

It's pretty clear to me that when Cuyahoga was established and Bill Birdsell was selected for this job, that a certain force was put into motion, perhaps without the full understanding on the part of the Service of what we were really doing here. Bill Birdsell

John P. Debo, Jr.

clearly came into this job, as I'm told by many, with the notion that the challenge at Cuyahoga was to reclaim this 32,000-acre piece of landscape and allow nature to reassert itself. Basically, to restore and remedy the impacts of man upon the landscape and allow natural forces to do their work. It's very clear to me that those early days of the park and probably leading right up until 1980 when Bill left that he had the orientation that Cuyahoga someday would be one of the great natural parks in the System.

I don't believe there was a lot of consideration given to what we're now referring to as the cultural landscape aspect of the park. Bill's basic emphasis was to buy structures and subsequently remove them. I'd have to say in hindsight and retrospect, from my perspective, that indeed was a mistake. If we had had a little bit better sense of the importance of this landscape before the land acquisition process and the planning process really got underway, I think perhaps the course of history at Cuyahoga would have proceeded differently. I think this notion of Cuyahoga being a cultural landscape, a lived-in landscape, would indeed have resulted in a different path of history being followed and perhaps less controversy associated with the development of the park.

With Lew Albert's arrival, I think the transition occurred towards a much greater emphasis on preservation of a cultural landscape. And the ramifications of a cultural landscape are very significant in terms of retaining a human presence on the landscape. If one is to retain a human presence on the landscape, then the structures associated with it and their occupations and practices obviously are going to impact the park. I don't feel, however, even in the Albert era, although we had developed a very fine cultural landscape management plan, I'm not sure that the thrust of that document and the implications of the document were ever fully understood and brought to implementation.

I guess the example, and there are many that I would use, is I think we have purchased many older historic buildings, homes, farmsteads, in the name of preservation and in preserving a cultural landscape. The net result of the purchase of those properties has meant in many cases we've lost them. Because of neglect. Because of insufficient funding to deal with them. Because when you remove the human habitation aspect, you're losing something very critical to the cultural landscape equation. It's hard to preserve the farm without the farmer. It's hard to preserve an old historic building without an occupant.

We are now in a position, and it's really a very, very, tough position, it's one which I hope to over a matter of years work out of, where we're simply the custodian and absentee landlord, if you will, of probably thirty to fifty properties of historic significance which are not so slowly deteriorating into rack and ruin. We are struggling trying to find uses for these properties.

John P. Debo, Jr.

I think that if the Service had had a little better understanding of the implications of preservation of the cultural landscape, we might have made a decision along the way simply not to acquire these properties or acquire a lesser interest in these properties. Perhaps we might have been much more aggressively involved in sell-back kinds of approaches, where we buy them to establish certain uses on the property, but put them back in private hands very quickly.

We've had an interesting experience, Ron, with our agricultural leasing program. That's a laudable goal. I was very interested to see the approach that's been taken to agricultural leasing, which has been to lease lands exclusively, without the barns, without the farm houses, without the related structures that are part and parcel of an agricultural setting. And it's proven very difficult. What we are, in effect, dealing with now are absentee farmers who will come in and work a piece of land, but they don't necessarily have a need or use for the structures that accompany the landscape. It raises the questions: Should we have purchased them in the first place? Was that the best approach to preservation? So this is evolving in terms of our land acquisition program. I'll certainly do my "darndest" not to create any more new situations like that.

I guess I see the significance of Cuyahoga indeed as a cultural landscape. I'm very much committed to that prospect. I see the valley, the 32,000 acres represented by the valley, as really a marvelous opportunity. Perhaps the only opportunity of its type in this part of the country to preserve a significant piece of what is referred to in these parts as the Western Reserve landscape; this rather fascinating mix of agricultural use, fields, meadows, and woodlands making up what Ron Thoman refers to as the tapestry of the Cuyahoga landscape.

I think that although the landscape is never a static thing, it does evolve over time and is very difficult from the standpoint of landscape engineering or social engineering to try to say that we are preserving something. But those difficulties notwithstanding, we have, in my opinion, what is highly representative of that nineteenth century Western Reserve landscape. Yes, it's been modified. Yes, it has evolved. But it's nonetheless the best example of that kind of landscape in the Midwest in my opinion. There is no one else doing it out there.

That is the challenge here, to attempt to develop and stabilize this landscape and the buildings that are on it, and the forms of human use and habitation that exist here. It's quite a challenge. It's never easy and there is a fair amount of what I call social engineering involved. We may have a romantic notion of what that

John P. Debo, Jr.

landscape looks like, but times change, the economy changes, people need to make a living, and what our romantic notion might be might not actually support someone making a living. So we have to be creative and, I think, somewhat flexible here.

I think there is another major challenge at Cuyahoga. And I hope I'm not skipping away from subjects that we may want to come back to. But that relates to the environment in which the park lies. I think it is a fair statement that Bill Birdsell was almost exclusively orienting his efforts to the park, to that which occurred within the boundary of the park. I think that was largely true also in Lew Albert's tenure, although it's clear to me that Lew made a major effort to reach out beyond park boundaries and establish working relationships with Cleveland interests, Akron interests, and broader interests here within the park.

There is, however, a whole new challenge and that is to attempt to achieve the full potential of Cuyahoga as a National Park unit. I don't believe that can really be done until we look beyond the boundaries of the park. And the nature of the resource is such that we look to the north and we look to the south. Not so much to the east and west. We look down the river valley towards Cleveland. We look up to what I call the canal corridor toward Akron and points south. We are at a point of time, in my opinion, whereby there are marvelous opportunities to make connections from the park to the north and to the south. I'll characterize that as both physical connections as well as thematic connections with this landscape to the north and the south.

The opportunity that exists today, I'm convinced, will not be there in twenty years. This area, like just about anywhere else, is growing, it's developing. Today, Cleveland and Akron have clearly moved out of the rust belt syndrome and are now dynamic, expanding economies, and environments. Developers are actively at work to the north and south of the park. The river landscape, the canal corridor, the rail connections, and the important historic resources that are related to the purposes of Cuyahoga, are, in my opinion, rapidly falling under the impact of time and change and the developers' bulldozers.

We have just a terrific opportunity here to make a move beyond park boundaries to become involved, and to assist, in what will be by anyone's definition, a cooperative approach with multiple jurisdictions, levels of government, private industry, non-profit organizations, interested citizenry, you name it, to attempt to establish the connections and to protect the important resources to the north and south.

This is not an original idea on my part. There have been individuals in the area, and I think those on the park staff, who

John P. Debo, Jr.

felt for some time that these opportunities were there. But clearly it simply was not a priority, of either of the two preceding administrations. Perhaps it was a luxury which they simply could not afford to pursue given the controversy and the difficulty of managing what is within the park. I think those management tasks within the park are still very great. There is an immense amount of work to be accomplished within the park boundary.

But I basically have arrived at the conclusion that a great deal of my time and effort has to be expended beyond park boundaries. To take advantage of what I see are wonderful political opportunities for support, and to attempt to make the connection and preserve these resources while the window of opportunity exists. And frankly, it will probably mean that some of what might be accomplished under my leadership and direction within the park will not be accomplished because of this focus beyond the park boundaries. But, as I have told the Regional Director, I think the time is now to make our move.

There are things happening. This really didn't take too long to materialize in my mind. I had six months of orientation to the park and the resources. Late in the summer or early fall of 1988, it became clear to me that the time was ripe to begin to work outside the park with the interested organizations and individuals. I will say I think I have had a very formative role in energizing those beyond the park boundaries who wanted to do something, but didn't know how in the absence of active Park Service participation. And things are happening now. The Gund Foundation, Cleveland Foundation, BP America have funded a \$70,000 study. That money has been made available to the Cuyahoga County Planning Commission to explore the feasibility of National Heritage Corridor designation for the area north of the park from Rockside Road down to the Cleveland lakefront, down the river and the canal corridor.

There is a private non-profit group called North Cuyahoga Valley Corridor Inc. A small group of dedicated people who have pursued this notion, and frankly I think when we sat down with them and I gave them my view on the issue of what is important beyond park boundaries, I think that gave them all the stimulus they needed to go out and get that money and begin to get this process into shape.

I should say now, in order to cover my own interest here, that my interests here are resource-oriented. I'm interested in making physical connections by foot trail and bike paths. I'm interested in rail connections to establish rail access from Cleveland, Akron, and perhaps Canton into the park, and encouraging the preservation of the important historic resources which are related to park themes, most of which are river- and canal-related resources, beyond the park boundaries.

John P. Debo, Jr.

I am not an advocate per se of a National Heritage Corridor, that's not my role in life. Congress designates National Heritage Corridors. I am an advocate of what we're calling the Heritage Corridor planning effort. It indeed might result in a National Heritage Corridor designation. It just depends on where Congress goes on the issue.

MR. COCKRELL: Is there political interest in that?

MR. DEBO: There is very intense political interest, but it's no secret that the Regional Office is now in the process of preparing a capability statement. Congressman Regula, in the 1990 appropriation bill, has requested \$170,000 from Congress to be used in a directed study by the Park Service to determine the eligibility and feasibility of National Heritage Corridor status. From the lake in Cleveland, up the Cuyahoga River Valley, to the park, presumably inclusive of the park, and then south of the park up the Ohio & Erie Canal corridor, and south to a point about thirty miles south of Akron called Zoar, Ohio.

That is the area in which Congressman Regula was interested in terms of potential National Heritage Corridor designation status. Frankly, I am personally very heartened by that. Whether it indeed becomes a National Heritage Corridor or not, is almost neither here nor there, but it does mean that the Service will be giving its full attention to these resources beyond our boundaries.

I also was able with the help and support of Bill Spitzer, in the Recreation Resources Assistance office in Washington, and with Al Hutchings, Dave Given, and Don Castleberry, independently of the heritage corridor feasibility study, to put together a plan to hire a planner at Cuyahoga who will be jointly funded fifty percent by the Washington Office and fifty percent by Omaha. That planner will be oriented exclusively to working beyond park boundaries in this corridor. Probably seventy-five percent of it will be oriented toward greenway planning or corridor planning to the north and south of the park. Maybe twenty-five percent of her or his time will be spent elsewhere in Ohio on river and trails planning.

I just think it is a really critical step, and I am immensely gratified that the Regional Director and the Washington Office have seen it appropriate to address these areas beyond park boundaries. I think they all see Cuyahoga as perhaps a prototype of using a national park as the core resource to tackle much larger and greater issues of regional concern.

Frankly, I don't expect that the boundaries of the park will ever be significantly expanded. I don't think that is what is needed. But what is needed is for the Park Service to throw its effort and

John P. Debo, Jr.

will behind an effort to work with local jurisdictions, regional jurisdictions, state jurisdictions to make the connections to make this place really work.

The example that I use, by way of illustration, is that we are now embarking on a three-year effort to plan, design, and build the Towpath Trail within the bounds of the CVNRA. That will be a marvelous twenty-one-mile linear foot path/bike path, I think it is of almost unparalleled import and significance to this area. The canal corridor that traverses the park is fascinating in terms of its historical associations, the archeological resources, the built resources on the canal. It will really become the focal point, I believe, of public use, recreational use, and interpretation for the park. It's sort of a "all roads lead from the Towpath" kind of concept.

It will provide access into many areas of the park making the connections with the other foot trails and interpretive facilities. But what a terrible shame and tragedy if that Towpath Trail indeed terminates at Rockside Road on the north, and Bath Road on the south, and we have this detached twenty-one-mile pathway leading to nowhere.

The connections need to be made. The connection needs to be made right up to Cleveland. The foot path needs to lead into Cleveland; the bike path needs to lead into Cleveland and Akron, and points south. It needs to be perceived in the regional context to really make any sense, otherwise what do we have? We have people who live in the area who live in Cleveland and Akron, whom this park is intended to serve, who have to get in their cars and drive to the park. If it was not really the vision of the park to begin with, it's what we have today. But by working beyond the boundaries, again, I think, we can realize the full potential of what Cuyahoga really represents.

I'll go on to say, Ron, if I were drawing the boundaries of the Cuyahoga park today--the Cuyahoga Valley--lacking political constraints and financial constraints, I think an appropriate boundary for this park would have been the headwaters of the Cuyahoga River 100 miles down to Lake Erie. Not to say that all of that by any means would have needed to be in Federal ownership. But I think perhaps along former Director Mott's line of thinking: for a resource really to make any sense, you need to attempt to capture some sense of the larger whole, the ecosystem, whatever you want to call it.

Fortunately, the headwaters of the Cuyahoga are largely protected. It's an Ohio Scenic River. And I don't think we particularly need to be involved up in that area. I think in terms of national significance however, the area downstream of the park to the north

John P. Debo, Jr.

of Rockside Road, where the valley undergoes this remarkable transformation from a bucolic pastoral landscape to one of the most heavily industrialized settings in the world, that area is indeed of national significance. What happened in the lower Cuyahoga Valley, and its connections with the development of heavy industry in this country, with Great Lakes history, with the Rockefellers, the steel interests that developed in Cleveland, and the nexus with what's going on in Duluth, Minnesota, and all throughout the Great Lakes. That landscape is indeed a nationally significant landscape, and frankly, I wish the Park Service were involved.

It's kind of difficult for us to try and interpret the Cuyahoga Valley when we stop at Rockside. The Valley continues on down through this amazing area (and being somewhat of a disciple now of industrial history having worked in a place like Lowell and Boston with the industrial history of the Navy Yard) I very much would like to see the Park Service involved in interpreting and perhaps some degree of attempting to assist with the preservation of those nationally significant industrial resources. We haven't really done it in the Service. I guess Lowell is the most aggressive example of Park Service involvement in industrial history, and more recently the Western Pennsylvania Project has provided another foray into industrial history. I suppose Steamtown also.

But with respect to Cuyahoga again, it's rather a truncated story which we tell the public in interpreting this valley, by not dealing with that which is downstream of the park. And concerning those industrial resources, I'm very hopeful that this corridor planning effort will begin to address them. I believe that they are marvelous assets. It would be a tragedy if this great industrial heritage and the artifacts of that heritage were lost over time.

Whether or not we can make any headway towards their preservation will remain to be seen. But I really feel we should be involved. Hopefully it will be a major thrust of this corridor planning effort. The recreational access, public access, is a major component of that. But I think the historic preservation side is equally important. Yes, I'd like to get the public down the foot path, and the bike way, down the Ohio Canal Towpath as far as American Steel and Wire and from there probably down the rail corridor into downtown Cleveland. Yes, I'd like to make the train connections. And those are important in their own right, but they'll be so much more important if the most important historical elements of that industrial landscape can somehow be preserved and protected.

It's no easy task given the fact that it's privately owned land. You've got active steel mills and rolling mills. You're subject to economic forces beyond everyone's control. But it is something

John P. Debo, Jr.

that I feel should be done. Likewise, to the south of the park, the Ohio & Erie Canal does not stop at Bath Road. It continues right up into Akron. Akron is probably the most historically significant town along the entire canal. In spite of the depredations of urban renewal in Akron, there still are some marvelous historic resources there.

I've been actively involved with the city in attempting to ensure the preservation of the Cascade flight of locks up in Akron, that portion which still remains, as well as what I think are a couple of important structures beyond our park boundary. Then to the south of Akron, the corridor leads through a series of small towns, Barberton, Massillon, Clinton, Zoar Village. All fascinating in their own right. Canal Fulton has little pockets of canal history. I'm very hopeful that the corridor protection effort will address those resources and put them in context; put the Cuyahoga Valley that we administer in the same context as those resources, and provide a much broader regional overview and orientation to those resources.

I will ramble on here and say something else and that is that one of the things that interests me about Cuyahoga; that is the limited recognition of the park and the really quite limited constituency that is associated with this park. We do have 1200 volunteers and an organization called the Cuyahoga Valley Association which has evolved over time from being, in effect, the private lobbying group who supported the authorization of the park back in the '70s to now what is, I think, by most people's definition, a friend's group of the park. They are wonderful people. I believe the membership is around 400. Those plus our volunteers are an immensely dedicated group.

But my strong sense is that it's a very limited group and you don't need to go far from this park to encounter a total lack of understanding that there is a National Park unit here. For all practical purposes, in my opinion, we do not have an Akron constituency or a Cleveland constituency, which is ironic given that this park was established by Congress in large measure to serve that urban constituency! I don't think we will ever arrive at the point, given the realities of life, that anything like ninety percent of the people in the area would understand that there is a National Park here and what it represents. But I sure would like to think that we might be able to approach fifty percent recognition.

Right now I would characterize popular understanding of even the basic existence of the park at probably something less than five percent in northern Ohio. It's really quite astounding. I happened to locate, by chance, out in a place called Aurora, Ohio, which is about fifteen miles to the east of the park. I've met a

John P. Debo, Jr.

lot of wonderful people, none of whom are even vaguely aware of the National Park Service presence--in a community that is white collar, all college educated people for the most part, who you would think would know! And by George, they don't! "You work for who? Debo, you do what?"

In Cleveland there's very, very little understanding. It's not that we don't have select individuals in those places, Cleveland and Akron, who are understanding of who we are, and what we do, and are intensely supportive, but there is just no general understanding. And part of it, I think, relates back to the fact that we have concentrated our efforts between Rockside Road and Bath Road very intensively.

Until such time as these larger, physical connections and thematic connections are established beyond park boundaries, we won't develop those constituencies. I think it is very important that we do. We need to reach out and not only serve the public in those areas, but bring them into the pool with us. And whether indeed that extends to the point of the Park Service having operational visitor information and orientation facilities in places like Cleveland or Akron, I don't know, but it would be one logical step to take to attempt to reach those people in addition to extending the threads of the park out into those areas. Very important!

MR. COCKRELL: What is the history of the land exchange negotiations with Akron Metro Parks?

MR. DEBO: Well, it's a checkered history I suppose. I think there has been for some years a desire on the part of the National Park Service to exchange lands with Akron Metro Parks, and I would say with Cleveland Metro Parks, to better consolidate and make more rational the holdings of the various organizations within the boundaries of CVNRA. This goes back also to some ancient history which I am not all that conversant with. You may have talked with John Daily about what might have been perceived as the ex-appropriation of Akron Metro Park lands by the Park Service and some hard feelings which might have resulted from that exercise. Frankly, I haven't gotten into it, and it's not really terribly important to the future of the issue.

When I arrived the prevailing thinking had been that the way to resolve the issue was for Akron Metro Parks specifically to donate lands to the National Park Service and for the Park Service to assign management responsibility to other lands owned by the Park Service to Akron Metro Parks. Well, I chewed on that one for some time. I talked to our staff about it and I traveled down to Akron to talk to John Daily about it. What I met from John was a very lukewarm reaction to that concept. And frankly, it was a very understandable lukewarm reaction. We are all in the park manage-

John P. Debo, Jr.

ment business. There are issues of turf and management responsibility which one can't escape, and frankly, the approach didn't make all that much sense to me.

I was struggling to find the equity and the rationale behind an approach where we would take title to Akron Metro Parks lands, but they don't take title to our lands, where an exchange is indeed what is envisioned. And the more I got into it, it became clear also that the concept was somewhat flawed. Because our ability to assign another agency management responsibility for our land is very limited. When one actually sat down to look at what the implications of that assignment were, what you really found was that the best we could do for Akron Metro Parks was to say: "Here, you manage the land, but don't do anything to it without talking to us." We cannot escape our legal liabilities and responsibilities for NEPA and for 106 historical compliance, certain law enforcement jurisdictional responsibilities, and certain landlord responsibilities with respect to structures and oil wells.

The more I got into that issue the more I realized that perhaps we had been attempting to sell a pig-in-a-poke. I asked John Daily about this, "John, do you understand?" His basic response was, "No. I did not understand that when you talk about assigning the land to us, that in effect, you are an ever present landlord." It's just not a workable arrangement.

I suppose it raises the issue of whether the Metro Parks ought to be involved at all within the boundaries of the Cuyahoga Valley. Akron. Cleveland. Should we be involved? Should there be joint management responsibility? The answer is absolutely, "Yes!" I see no reasons other than the most parochial that would suggest that in order for this place to fulfill its legislatively determined objectives that we have to own it all.

The Cleveland Metro Parks and the Akron Metro Parks both, I think, do a very fine job of managing their units. They certainly are more highly developed units than the Park Service area. There may be some differences in management philosophy and approach, but none that I see that has any significant, negative consequences for the management of the area. The brutal fact is that the financial obligations involved in taking on those properties would be enormous. There simply is no need.

I'm very much supportive of the shared management responsibility. Maybe this goes back to my days in Lowell where we had a state park and a national park operating within a park boundary and a separately established Federal Commission with their responsibilities. In my mind, it is the wave of the future, and is to be encouraged at Cuyahoga as opposed to discouraged. I pursued, Ron, to the utmost degree of my ability the potential to exchange

John P. Debo, Jr.

lands with Akron Metro Parks within existing legislative authorities. I sought solicitors opinions. I lobbied and conjured, but the final decision on that matter, after pursuing as many alternatives as I could dredge up, including some that involved third party exchanges using the Trust of Public Lands or some other entity as a middle man to affect an exchange, was, "Debo, you simply can't do it! There is a legislative prohibition intrinsic to the Cuyahoga legislation which does not provide you the authority to exchange land with other public entities." I had been very hopeful that this third party exchange using the Trust for Public Lands or some other organization might be accomplished. And it was interesting that the Solicitor's response to me on that was, "Technically, Debo, you're probably correct. A third party might be used, but the practical upshot is that Congress could very well perceive an overt attempt to circumvent the legislative mandate regardless of its legal propriety. We would strongly urge you not to do it."

Well, the message was pretty clear to me. I've got to back off this idea of trying to use existing authorities. The solution to the problem, I think, is probably very straightforward at this point. And it is one which I intend to pursue during the coming year. And that is simply to seek a legislative amendment which will authorize the exchange of lands between public agencies at Cuyahoga. If indeed we are going to have a shared management responsibility here, it really is the only solution to the problem. Right now Akron Metro Parks lands are scattered throughout the Cuyahoga Valley. It's a managerial nightmare. Likewise our lands are immediately adjacent, surrounding, or in the way of Akron Metro Parks logical development of their facilities.

The same can be said for Cleveland Metro Parks by the way. I have talked to Vern Hartenburg about the same issue. Vern is conceptually supportive of our obtaining the authority to exchange lands with the Cleveland Metro Parks as well as Akron Metro Parks to rationalize and make coherent the management units in the park. So, I'll be doing that. Whether the impetus comes from the Administration for that legislative amendment or whether it comes from the Congressional delegation remains to be seen. Frankly, I don't care. But clearly we need that kind of authorization to straighten out the holdings of this park. I do not feel we will encounter opposition to it. Anyone looking at the situation would agree that we have a circumstance here at Cuyahoga which merits that kind of authority. So, hopefully that will be resolved within the coming year.

MR. COCKRELL: After the legislation is approved, then would there have to be some sort of joint effort to decide how to rationalize the boundaries?

John P. Debo, Jr.

MR. DEBO: Yes. Because of the nature of the evolution of the issue, that work has basically been done with Akron Metro Parks. John Daily and I have an agreement on what lands should be exchanged. There is work yet to be done with Cleveland Metro Parks on that issue. I guess my thinking there, is, I'm not going to be going to Congress asking for legislative authority to exchange specific parcels. I'm going to be asking for a more generic legislative authority. The fact of the matter is we will continue to be buying lands over time, as well as Cleveland and Akron Metro Parks, that more properly might be managed by the other. This will be an evolving issue over time. My guess is that we would probably have a couple of large land exchanges very early following the passing of legislation, but there will be a need over time to continue to make those modifications.

By the way, I'm hopeful that that authority will not be limited to the Metro Parks, but will be generally extended to other public entities. There are minor issues, bits and pieces of lands here and there that are owned by municipalities, for instance, where an exchange also would be an appropriate tool at Cuyahoga.

MR. COCKRELL: That would be an extension to state lands like Stumpy Basin and the canal?

MR. DEBO: Well, the state lands, yes, but I would not limit the authority. In other words, I would include the authority to exchange lands with the state. That will be largely, I think, a moot point. But, perhaps, not exclusively, in that the governor has signed legislation authorizing the transfer of the so-called canal lands to the Park Service exclusive of any exchange. That will happen, I think, sometime in the next six months. All of the state canal lands, and that would include the Stumpy Basin area, will come to the Park Service, no doubt before this exchange authority is even achieved with the U.S. Congress. But there may again be bits and pieces of state land here and there associated with the Interstate highway or other state holdings of a more minor nature where that authority would be very useful.

Frankly, Ron, I find that ironic. I think it is one of the great ironies in this park that I have the authority to exchange lands with private landowners, and indeed we're executing several exchanges in that regard, but I don't have the authority to exchange land with public landowners. One kind of searches for the rationale there. I understand there is one, but it perhaps is more germane to other units in the System in other circumstances than it is to Cuyahoga.

MR. COCKRELL: You spoke earlier about the Homeowners Association. What role do you see them playing in this park? What is the policy toward fee acquisition versus scenic easement? Do you think that

John P. Debo, Jr.

this park can offer a quality park experience with a large number of inholdings within it?

MR. DEBO: I guess my answer to that question would be, yes. I think, again, it relates to issue of the cultural landscape and what a cultural landscape means. I do not equate cultural landscape with a museum landscape. I think they are two different things. I think if one accepts the implications of people living on the land, then inholdings become a component of that landscape as opposed to being perceived as a threat or problem. It's not to say that there aren't issues which arise with regard to private ownership of land within the park, but I think they are manageable issues, and there are trade-offs. I think the trade-offs in most cases are acceptable. No, we may not have complete control, but what is the alternative? Federal acquisition? Remove the occupants? Tear down the residences? That's not necessarily the solution to the problem.

So, yes, the answer to the question is, inholdings that are appropriate. Of course we've got legislative inholdings: the Towpath Village, the bulk of the Village of Peninsula, and areas up in the northern end of the park and Valley View which are totally surrounded by park lands. I don't even refer to those as inholdings. They simply are communities within the park. We have arrived at an administrative determination through the development of the Cultural Landscape Plan that the Village of Boston will in effect remain over time in an inholding situation. We are not attempting to purchase that community in the name of preservation. I think it would be a poor idea. Purchase is not the solution here.

As far as the role of the Homeowners Association per se, it will be a very minor role. My impression is that it has become progressively less and less active, a progressively smaller organization in part because many people have left who perhaps would have been members. I think there will always be an inholders group, and I think appropriately so. But I think, again, it will evolve over time to a much more compatible kind of working relationship. The homeowners need to have representation. If that didn't exist, we might even try to invent it as a way of communicating. Frankly, it has not been a significant piece of business for me in this first year in the park and I don't expect that it will be.

MR. COCKRELL: Just to clarify something for me, are you saying that scenic easement is the tool of the acquisition program now?

MR. DEBO: No. No I wouldn't say that. Certainly with respect to undeveloped lands, I think in the vast of majority of cases fee acquisition is the approach that best serves the governmental

John P. Debo, Jr.

interest. There may be instances where easements indeed are the answer. But, I think, they are somewhat limited. Our experience has shown that in many cases the cost of acquiring an easement is ninety percent of fee in terms of the market value of the land. That raises the issue of why fool with it?

I think where easements more come into play definitely are in the area of developed properties where there are historic residences on properties. In instances where we have a more modern residence, the Cultural Landscape Plan classifies these as a detractor from the landscape. Clearly it would be contrary to our own management objective to acquire an easement on such properties. The objective which is firmly rooted in the approach of the Cultural Landscape Plan is to preserve those structures over fifty years old which are of historical importance and are valuable in establishing the scene of the valley.

Now the fifty-year break point is by anybody's definition arbitrary. But for better or worse that's what we settled on here. It's highly debatable, but it's not an issue which I want to take on because there is no right answer. It is just simply an answer to the equation. So for those residence out there which don't meet the criteria of being contributors to the landscape as the Cultural Landscape Plan defines them, no, it doesn't make sense to acquire easements. What does make sense is to acquire the property in fee. Legally, we are obligated to offer life estates or up to 25-year retentions. Whenever that period elapses, then take the step to remove the residence and allow the land to either revert to a natural condition or attempt to maintain any historic landscape associations that might be involved.

If it's something we want to preserve, it raises again the serious question in my mind, why buy it in the first place? If simply the end product will be to go through the one or two-year effort to get it on the list of eligibility for the Register so that we can pursue a historical leasing program, we become a landlord and, in effect, don't accomplish anything much greater than we had in the first place: a habited structure maintained for residential purposes. We now have a couple such historic lease properties in the park. They are nice projects, but once you have acquired it, then the trick is to get it inhabited again so that the structure can be preserved. So, why acquire it in the first place?

Maybe what you might want to do is acquire an easement to protect the physical appearance of the property, or do a sell-back so that deed restrictions can be put on the property to accomplish the same objective. That would be the basic thrust.

You know it's interesting, Ron, the overview of land acquisition in this park. We have acquired roughly 18,000 acres of property

John P. Debo, Jr.

in the park. Ten thousand acres of land in the park have been identified in the plan as being compatible in private ownership. These are the Brandywine Ski Area, the Boston Mills Ski Areas, the four golf courses, the Hale Farm, the Blossom Music Center, etcetera. All of these areas represent about 10,000 acres, where there is no need for the Federal Government to acquire them.

The arithmetic then tells you that since the park is 32,000 acres that there are roughly 5,000 acres yet to be acquired in this park. They are going to be very expensive 5,000 acres. The bulk of it is undeveloped land and we are proceeding to acquire those undeveloped properties just as quickly as the money flows. We have been operating roughly on a four-million-dollar a year land acquisition program, on average over the last several years. And that money is largely being oriented to acquiring undeveloped lands.

The only developed lands we are acquiring, with only a very few exceptions, are those where the owner of a residential property comes to us and says, "Will you please buy? I am ready to sell." And in those instances, by legislative directive, we are required to give those property owners special consideration in terms of priorities. So that is why we are indeed acquiring structures here and there.

Ninety-nine percent of developed properties we are acquiring are where people have come to us. In just a very few cases we are acquiring residential properties against the wishes of the owners, because they clearly stand in the way of some important park objective. One example would be the residence owned by CEI right up on the Towpath where the residential use of the property would preclude the use of the towpath going through the property.

So we have got 5,000 acres yet to be acquired. We will be moving on the undeveloped lands. Of the developed lands, and most of these fall into the one-acre lot with a home on it, the two-acre lot with a home on it, the 5-acre lot, there's very little that can happen to us on those properties that hasn't already been done. On a one-acre lot with a house on it, and there are many of those, there simply is no priority to acquire them. You can't build another home on the property. The zoning won't allow it. The deed has been done. We'll let those people come to us over time.

Again, depending on the nature of the property, if it's historic, we probably will say, "No, I don't think we'll buy that. Maybe all we need is an easement there, or maybe we'll do a sell-back arrangement to you or something." Those that are non-historical, sure we'll pick them up as they come to us. We estimate that maybe there is another \$28 million of land acquisition still out there at Cuyahoga. My guess is that will spend itself out over, at this

John P. Debo, Jr.

point, I'd say fifteen to twenty years. That's the beauty of the land acquisition program at Cuyahoga.

I think that today the imperative relates to the undeveloped lands. We don't want those to be developed. And there is no real controversy. No one in the property owners association or anyone else out there has told me, "You shouldn't acquire those lands, Mr. Superintendent." I think there is general support for the notion of prevention of development. As for the developed properties, those will come to us naturally over time and it is not an issue that needs to be forced.

MR. COCKRELL: In the instance of the Valley Trailer Court, there is a long history of the Park Service planning to acquire that. What's the status on that?

MR. DEBO: I will say that, following in the grand tradition that's been established before me, I haven't made any headway on that issue in the year that I have been here. It was discussed fairly extensively shortly after my arrival, both here at the park level and at the Regional level. It's a problem which I think needs to be addressed. I intend to address it within the tenure of my stay, however long that might be in this park. On the other hand, it's a very difficult political problem. You know that the fact of the matter is that there are 120 families living in the trailer park. And 120 families represents a lot of human interest and a lot of political interest. I have not heard anyone suggest that the Park Service approach should be to bite-the-bullet and throw those 120 families out in the street. Under no political circumstances could I see that happening. It's just not realistic.

I think that the goal that I have is one which has been pursued by my predecessors. That is the idea of developing a strategy which will provide for a gradual phase out of the trailer court. There could be some sort of purchase with a delayed fuse that would result in perhaps phasing out the trailer court over a ten-, fifteen-, or twenty-year time frame. It is clearly an esthetic intrusion in the park. I think there are probably some resource management implications in terms of sewage handling and other issues down there that impact the park. But the cold cruel reality is that it will be there until we put together a plan and an approach that provides for a phase out of that activity. What I really need is some support and assistance at the Regional level and probably the Washington level to develop some sort of a very, very carefully conceived site-specific approach towards removing the trailer park from the park over time. The problems that my predecessors ran into, and I ran into very quickly, was after you lay out the various issues involved, it very much has the appearance of "you can't get there from here" kind of problem. The policy, procedures, and practices of the Federal Government in

John P. Debo, Jr.

respect to land acquisition and relocation all lead you down blind alleys as you address the trailer court problem.

Lew Albert pursued legislative remedies with John Seiberling, and even John Seiberling was unsuccessful in getting a legislative remedy to the problems. As John tells it, I believe Phil Burton did not accept the legislative solution because he felt it would establish a bad precedent in respect to other similar circumstances around the country.

I don't know if you talked to John about that, but there has been no lack of effort on the part of my predecessors. I frankly haven't given it much time to date. To be very honest, it is not extremely high on my priority list today. It's there as an issue. I'd like to begin to make progress over time on the issue. I'd be satisfied if three years from now we had an approach in place that would result in the kind of phase-out that I talked about. I think it will take that long to put it together. It's still an objective of the park that we have. It needs to go. It's an inappropriate private use, but it is a tough nut to crack.

MR. COCKRELL: In 1987, your land acquisition office closed here and the functions are now being handled by the Midwest Regional Office. In this park's case, should that office have been closed and moved out since you still have an acquisition program going on?

MR. DEBO: In my one-year tenure here I have found the current arrangement very acceptable. I have got a good, solid, straight-forward working relationship with Fred Meyer. Paul Kausch is heavily involved. They both have been extremely cooperative. I have gotten involved in a few of the land acquisition issues, because I think they warranted the Superintendent's involvement. Generally, of course, the land acquisition people like to keep the Superintendent and park staff out of the picture, and for very good reasons. But, in those instances where I deemed it necessary to become involved, they have been very supportive, very helpful.

I'd say to the contrary, I think that the land acquisition function can be very adequately handled from Omaha. Maybe that's dependent upon the personalities. If we have the wrong guy in Omaha, maybe I'd say it wouldn't work at all, but under the current leadership out there of Meyer and Kausch, in my opinion, it has worked very satisfactorily.

MR. COCKRELL: This decade has been one of austerity and budget cuts. What's been the impact on this park, and to do a credible job, what should your budget and staffing level be?

MR. DEBO: Well, like any park Superintendent, Regional Office Manager, or Program Manager, I'm short of money, and this park is

John P. Debo, Jr.

short of money. I'll use my crib sheet here, because I did pull together some figures on this.

Where have we been and where are we today? The numbers really, I think, are quite disturbing in terms of the budgetary situation for the park. I think we need to distinguish here between the operating budget, land acquisition budget, and the capital development budget. Regarding the capital budget program, we have had very, very, strong support of the Congressional delegation. They have been successful, between Ralph Regula, John Seiberling, and Tom Sawyer, as of late, in securing money for the continued long term development of the park. Actually some of those monies have been oriented towards somewhat more towards operational needs than development needs, such as plugging oil and gas wells, restoring disturbed sites, and those kinds of projects.

We have good support there and we will need a lot of support in the future, because as I tell people, the development program at Cuyahoga is really still in its infancy. We have really very, very critical and crying needs for development money in this park. The numbers are somewhat staggering when you total up the obligations out there of what our planning documents say this park is to have, such as the Interpretive Prospectus and the other plans. But you can't complain when you're getting, I think this past year, about nine million dollars in add-on monies between the various categories. So setting aside land acquisition and capital development, it's the operations budget that is really, in my opinion, a very sick patient here. In researching the issue, Ron, the numbers speak for themselves.

In 1982, the fiscal year ONPS operating budget for this park was \$2.7 million. In 1989, the operating budget for the park is \$3 million even. So over the period from 1982 to 1989, seven years, we experienced a \$271,000 increase in our operating funds. That averages a 1.6 percent per year increase. Well, if we got a 1.6 percent a year increase, I'm sure there are parks that perhaps did worse. But forgetting about the relative circumstances of where we stand in respect to other parks, what else happened during that same period?

Federally owned acreage increased by twenty-five percent. The park is twenty-five percent larger now than in 1982 in terms of land. Visitation went from 596,000 to 1.25 million. It more than doubled. And, frankly, I asked for but no one could really answer the question: where do we stand with respect to the numbers of structures that have been acquired in that period that we are responsible for preserving, maintaining, and operating? The number is elusive. We estimate that we probably have had an increase in the number of structures that we are responsible for around thirty percent.

John P. Debo, Jr.

As you drive around this park, as you have, you will note we're in quite serious trouble. We've got so many buildings that we've classified as National Register properties, historically significant structures, and they are not getting a dime's worth of attention. In fact, many of them are just falling down. We will get to the point where demolition is the only reasonable alternative.

From 1982 to 1989, employee salaries increased twenty-three percent due to pay adjustments. That's a raw figure. The cost of living index, or CPI, increased thirty percent that same period. That affects utility costs, material costs, supplies, contracts, etcetera.

You can see those figures, a twenty-three percent increase in employee salary costs, and the thirty percent increase in the CPI, the additional acreage, and number of buildings; and we've been averaging a 1.6 percent operating increase. It's a recipe for disaster. One of the outgrowths of those numbers, I think, is easily seen in our FTE. In 1982, we were operating at ninety-one FTE. In 1989, we are operating at eighty-three FTE. We have gone backwards from where we were in 1982, about an eight percent decline. When you take that in the context of these other facts and figures, it really paints a very distressing picture.

We are just struggling here, in my opinion, to keep our heads above water. Frankly, we aren't doing it! And it's not the first park I've worked in where we are not doing it. But it strikes me that the situation is somewhat exacerbated here in Cuyahoga. It is really a very serious issue in a growing park. Those kinds of numbers have very damaging impacts.

It's manifested in two ways in particular. I think the standard of maintenance of the facilities has deteriorated. In fact, my Chief of Maintenance, Dennis Hill, who is very fine and has a very fine staff, will say the same. They just can't stay up with it, those things which we are supposed to be maintaining.

The Cultural Landscape Plan, in my opinion, has suffered terrible, terrible damage. In effect we have a plan, and I think it is a very good plan, for maintaining the cultural landscape. Keeping the fields as fields, the meadows as meadows, and preserving the historic structures associated with it. The fact of the matter is that the fields are all growing up. They are going into second growth. It's a tragedy because the cost of getting back in after the fact and remedying the situation is extraordinary.

We recently, this year, tackled one field up by the Environmental Ed Center that hadn't been touched in six or seven years. What would maybe be a \$500 cutting job for a brush hog suddenly becomes

John P. Debo, Jr.

a major task for ten guys and chain saws, tractors, and everything else for a month to get a field returned to the condition that we want it to be. There are thousands of acres out there that are growing back, and I'm very sad to say we do not have the money to keep them where they are supposed to be.

It's a critical problem. I wish I knew where to take the money from to address that issue. So far we've said, "Well, then, it's the fields that have to suffer." But we may get to the point where we simply say, "O.K., let's not have an interpretive program this year. Let's not do the Lyceum series. Let's not do the things that have much more public visibility that are critical to the operation of the park" and put our resources into landscape maintenance.

With the built landscape, I don't need to tell you, Ron, you've seen them. Structures that we deem as being of important historic significance and critical to the maintenance of the cultural landscape, they're not heated, they're not painted, they're not roofed. They're not anything! It just creates a terrible problem for us from a public relations standpoint, and from a managerial standpoint, I feel guilty. I don't sleep real well at night--I honestly don't--thinking about the sounds and sights of deterioration that are occurring in this park. I am not sure what the solution is.

Certainly one solution is to bring private resources to the issue at hand to attempt to help us with those problems. We're doing that, I think, reasonably aggressively, but I think we need to get much more aggressive, and perhaps much more innovative and creative, as we do that. We have got this marvelous "Catch 22" irony which I think has developed at Cuyahoga and I think the Service as a whole needs to come to grips with it.

I've talked to a couple of folks in the Regional Office about it. It is a terrible irony. We often do not address these deteriorating structures because we don't have the money to do it in the manner consistent with our own standards. The problem is that the alternative is either total destruction and loss of the resource, or the accumulation of such extravagant restoration costs, because of our unwillingness to touch them until we can do it right! I don't know if it is cutting off your nose to spite your own face, but we are having an adverse affect upon the resource.

Lacking more money coming from the executive branch or from the Congressional branch through add-ons to augment the budget of this park, we might need to sit down and make some tough decisions about our own historic preservation standards. I can preserve some of these buildings in stop-gap fashion, in a less than exemplary standard that is not representative of the Park Service, but I

John P. Debo, Jr.

can't do it and at the same adhere to Park Service standards. It's a tough situation.

What would we rather do is the issue. Would we rather lose a barn or would we rather apply a lesser standard of preservation to keep it standing? I guess I can answer my own question. I think that there probably does need to be some relaxation of the standards to be applied to many of these, what I would call vernacular structures. They are not structures which are significant in their own right as important historic associations. They represent the tapestry of the landscape here.

I know this is a highly controversial issue and there are people out there who would hit me over the head for saying we should relax our standards, but we are seeing it out there today. We are losing them. I'm already going to have to make a decision to tear some of them down because we just haven't had the resources to work with them. It's a real "Catch 22," but it's certainly one of the most overt manifestations of lack of operational budget support in this park.

It doesn't matter who you talk to in this park, from whichever division. The Resource Management people have crying needs. I hear once a week from Visitor Protection that we are not meeting our basic mandates for visitor protection in this park. We do not have staff on after midnight, generally. That's rather unusual in a park of this size and scope. There is a lot going on out there. I think our people do a magnificent job. That's another subject, by the way, how the law enforcement posture has evolved over time in this park. It really doesn't matter what area you talk about. There are some very, very serious funding deficiencies in the park.

There is one area in particular in which I think we need to be involved. Cuyahoga is uniquely qualified to undertake the subject of environmental education. I think that, given who we are and where we are, in the midst of this large urban population, as has been the case in parks like Gateway and Golden Gate, there needs to be a special thrust in the area of environmental education. Although we have had very specific school outreach programs in an attempt to take the environmental education message beyond park boundaries, it is an area which needs a lot of attention and work.

Ron Thoman may have talked to you about our plans for the development of the environmental education center in the park. I would put that as probably one of the top two or three priorities in this park in terms of where we go next. In terms of our environmental interpretive program, we have marvelous facilities up on Oak Hill Road. Historic farmsteads we have acquired are crying out to be used and developed for that purpose. We feel we probably could reach upwards of 30,000 kids a year on an extended stay basis.

John P. Debo, Jr.

Thirty thousand kids at a week at a time each if we were able to put together the right kind of environmental education program.

We are working hard to develop a cooperative relationship with Akron University to get them to be, in effect, the operational entity in cooperation with us. The beauty of that arrangement is that we think that the operations costs of the facility will be manageable within the program itself, that the revenues will offset operations costs. With the involvement of Akron University's Graduate School of Education, in effect we can operate a program with little net requirement of our operating funds for the facility.

The trick will be to get the capital development funds necessary to put those facilities in the right shape to accomplish that end. We have requested some monies for the water and sewer component through the Multi-year Development Program, and we are hopeful that that money will come forward: \$350,000. Then there is another, oh, maybe three, four, or 500,000 dollars required in capital development money.

It is really a very limited investment for what I consider to be the fantastic potential on the return. The idea that we could reach 30,000 kids in this area in an intensive environmental curriculum, and **really reach** those kids. The demand is there. Jeff Maugans operates a very modest little program where he serves perhaps 1,000 kids a year on an overnight basis up at the Environmental Education Center. The school systems are beating down his door to get in and to have more, and bigger, and better. They want what the Park Service can offer in terms of an environmental education ethic and curriculum approach.

I think it needs to be done here at Cuyahoga. So we are very hopeful that in addition to whatever monies we can secure from the Park Service, we will have success in securing foundation monies, and team up with Akron University. That would be a role which this park really ought to play, and one which not every park is able to do, but we think this is the time and the place to do that.

While we're on the budget subject, I'm very positive and supportive of the program that was initiated last year, my first year here, the Junior Ranger Camping Program. This is really the first time that we have reached out and touched in any meaningful way this urban constituency that we work with. Last year we were able to bring in 250 kids, by any definition disadvantaged, and give them a good, quality, environmental education outdoor experience: a three-day, two-night backpacking trip in the park. Twenty-five kids per week over the course of the summer, we handled roughly 200 kids in a pilot project using the \$25,000 of donated Coleman Corporation's equipment that Director Mott lined up for us.

John P. Debo, Jr.

It was such a good program that we were able to obtain the support of the Gund Foundation this year, who gave us \$27,000, in addition to about \$20,000 which we have put into the program. This year we will be doubling the size of the program to 500 kids who will come in over the course of the summer, again, on the three-day, two-night backpacking experience.

This is the kind of thing this park definitely should be doing. Unfortunately, it is cost-extensive. It costs a lot of money to reach kids in small groups with a quality experience. Frankly, I was amazed that we were able to secure \$27,000 from the Gund Foundation. Foundations are not in the habit of giving the United States Government grants. But they felt strongly enough about it, and we do too, that it's the kind of program Cuyahoga ought to have.

The challenge now, since I am not expecting any manna from heaven in terms of operational monies from the Park Service to support this kind of program, is going to be to develop long-term corporate interest. We need to develop corporate sponsors who find it in their best interest that inner-city kids in Cleveland, Akron, Canton, Youngstown, or wherever, that those kids have an opportunity to have this kind of experience. Frankly, I'm ninety percent optimistic that we will be able to develop that long-term corporate support for this kind of program that has demonstrated validity and appropriateness for a park situated in an urban area. We are hopeful this will serve as a model for the rest of the Park Service. Hopefully other parks that are in a position to make connections with their urban constituencies will do the same.

MR. COCKRELL: Is there anything that I haven't asked you that I should or that you would like to have on the record?

MR. DEBO: Well, yes, I've made a little list here. Just a couple of more items. I hope I am not droning on too long.

MR. COCKRELL: Not at all. Go right ahead.

MR. DEBO: One thing we haven't talked about is the Resource Management side of the equation. I feel that although there has been a lot of good work done here in the area of Resource Management, there is really a lot more to do. I don't think that we really have a very good handle on the ecosystem that is represented by the park. We do not have a Scientist on our staff. We do have a Resource Management staff, but I think it has been demonstrated in other areas that if you're serious about understanding the inter-play of the various factors in an environment, you really need a more science-oriented approach.

John P. Debo, Jr.

I know one of the models we are very envious of is the program that is in place over in Indiana Dunes. They have had good Congressional support to establish that program. We'd love to do it here, too. There are two issues that I see as paramount in the Resource Management area that need to be addressed. The first is to get a handle on the evolution and changing factors that influence our flora and fauna. We've got some base data available, but it's very clear to me that we really don't have a very clear understanding of what is happening out there in our environment, how we are being impacted by external factors, and just what the dynamic of this whole natural system is. It is very hard to respond to the issue of threats at Cuyahoga because I don't really feel we know enough about how the system is operating to know what constitutes a threat beyond our boundaries.

The other issue which is very important is one which I have made a really substantial personal investment in of my time to date, and will continue to do so. That is the whole matter of cleaning up the Cuyahoga River. The Resource Management approach under the previous administrations, and I think probably justifiably so, basically regarded the Cuyahoga as an issue which was beyond our capability of handling or addressing in a political context because of the nature of so many factors beyond park boundaries upstream affecting water quality in the river. So we focused our attention here in the park on the smaller tributaries and streams. That's where the Resource Management thrust has been, to understand what is happening with Yellow Creek, Tinkers Creek, and Brandywine Creek. We have some good base data which gives us a sense of the problems associated with those smaller stream resources.

I guess it was perhaps fortuitous when I first arrived here, Brian McHugh and Gary Williamson felt that the time had come for the Park Service to begin to focus on our namesake resource, the Cuyahoga River. At the same time through the mechanism of the International Joint Commission on the Great Lakes, the Cuyahoga River was identified as one of forty-two of what are referred to as "areas of concern," or "hot spots," on the Great Lakes. The Joint Commission has agreed that in each one of these forty-two areas, including the Cuyahoga, there will be an effort to remedy the problems associated with these major sources of pollution into the Great Lakes Basin.

The Ohio EPA has taken the lead on this, and through the mechanism established by the International Joint Commission, has established what's called a "RAP Committee," a Remedial Action Plan Committee, whose task it is to serve as an advisory body to the Ohio EPA on matters pertaining to the clean-up of the Cuyahoga River. This committee consists of thirty-three individuals who represent a broad cross section of governmental agencies, private citizens, conservation-oriented groups, industry representatives, and

John P. Debo, Jr.

municipal representatives. It basically touches upon the cross section of all interests who are involved with the river.

The focus of concern is from Akron downstream to Cleveland Harbor. The charge of the committee is that over a two-year time frame it will involve the public in a discussion of identifying the issues associated with the river in terms of water quality, to identify the alternatives that would be available for cleaning up the river, identifying the costs associated with those alternatives, and hopefully to develop the public support and consensus among the committee itself for a recommendation to Ohio EPA as to how to proceed with the clean-up of the river.

Most importantly, it will lead to the establishment of water quality standards for the river. Right now there are not very ambitious standards for the Cuyahoga. It strikes me as just one more of the ironies of being the Superintendent of a National Park called the Cuyahoga Valley National Recreation Area. The primary geographic focus of that resource is the Cuyahoga River. It runs the whole length of the park. It is the thread that ties together the whole. I am in the unenviable position of having to tell the public that it is against their better health interests to use the river in any manner other than to stand back and gaze at it.

There are really two issues involved there. One is the recreational limitation; in fact, the recreational prohibitions on the use of the river. It is a shame, because it is a pretty river. It could be used for fishing, canoeing, and probably limited swimming, but it is not the type of stream that lends itself well to the latter. It ought to be used as one would imagine it would be in a National Recreation Area. The second thrust, which is equally important, is the biological health of the river. The river is severely degraded. Its ability to support the flora and fauna indigenous to the area is severely hampered by sewerage from the City of Akron.

I am a member of that thirty-three-person committee. It has taken many hours a week of my involvement, but I think it is time for the Park Service to get out front on the issue of the Cuyahoga River. The RAP will serve as the vehicle, and hopefully we will begin to act as an effective advocate for the clean-up of the river.

Conditions will change over time. Already we are beginning to see some impact on public perception of the river through the media efforts of this committee to reach the public and get them involved. Really the most important thing, and the thing that is most lacking about the Cuyahoga that struck me upon arriving here, is there is no constituency for the Cuyahoga River. Nobody cares, other than a very limited cadre of people. Before a river can be cleaned up, there really needs to be a constituency of people who

John P. Debo, Jr.

care about it and want to use it. That will be a major thrust of my efforts, to help develop that constituency. The clean-up will follow once you've got their hearts and minds. The physical work and effort will flow from that.

I have two other quick ones, Ron, if you have no other items on your agenda. One of them I'll just gloss over because it is a general subject and I'm not sure in the time frame we have that I can make a lot of sense of this. I think that one of the things I find frustrating about being a Superintendent and one of the things I find frustrating about being a National Park Service employee and a U.S. Government employee are the severe limitations that we get involved in with respect to our authorities. This is something which I have to say has evolved over time. By way of example, I think the Reagan Administration, who so fervently supported the deregulation of the private sector, paradoxically, were involved in a massive over-regulation of the public sector.

We are very, very much constrained by the rules, regulations, and policies of the government in what kind of approaches we can bring to the problems we have out there. By way of specific example, with respect to agricultural lands in this park, the rules and regulations pertaining to leasing agricultural lands make it very difficult to find a farmer who is willing to play the role that we ask him to perform. The interest within the Cuyahoga Valley National Recreation Area is not the same interest that it may be on the eastern plains of Colorado with respect to BLM lands, where the objective is maximization of government financial return. The issue here at Cuyahoga is preservation of a cultural landscape, but we don't have leasing policies that are attuned to the problem of trying to get lands in private tillage.

That is just one example of thousands. I feel somewhat constrained by the authorities and policies. It very much tends to impede creative and cost-effective solutions to problems. I guess I'll leave it at that. Speaking in a general sense, I'd love to be deregulated as a Superintendent and I'm sure you would as a Historian, the Regional Director would, and everybody else would.

One area, and this is the last that I will talk about that I think is important to Cuyahoga, is a critical Servicewide issue. It is one area where we need to show a lot more flexibility and understanding of the situation that our employees are in as employees of the National Park System. I operate a park here, as do my peers around the Region and the country, that operates almost on slave labor wages. I am in a constant state of embarrassment and disgrace over the fact that a college-educated National Park Service Ranger at a minimum with a bachelor's degree, and many of whom have Master's degrees, and an occasional Ph.D. thrown in, are being employed at wage rates which cannot compete at all in the

John P. Debo, Jr.

private sector. And Secretaries, Janitors, and Laborers are being paid more than my Interpreters and Law Enforcement Rangers! It is an absolute disgrace!

I know it is having a devastating effect on recruitment. I don't say it too often publicly, because it is damaging to park morale to have to say something like this, but I think it is very true and it needs to be said. The caliber of employee that we are attracting in the traditional Ranger ranks is falling like a rock. I have not yet seen a certificate of eligible candidates on a Ranger position in this park where any of the candidates are in the top half of their class. I have not seen certs which bring to us candidates who are what I consider to be employees with career development potential. I won't speak in absolutes, because there are occasional exceptions.

I really feel that the organization in the Ranger ranks, and in other professional series also, is suffering very severe problems. We are getting people in a whole wide range of disciplines who do not represent the cream-of-the-crop, as we have traditionally presented ourselves. I think it is a horrible problem. My basic approach in management is that the people who we have on board our staff should be paid to the maximum extent law and policy and regulation will allow for the service they are providing. I am not going to balance the budget of this park on the backs of my employees by artificially depressing grades and compensation.

I am frankly mystified by the reluctance of Classifiers to classify our Law Enforcement Rangers in particular above the GS-5 level. It strikes me as being absolutely insane for the level of educational background that we demand and for the level of responsibility they have in the field. I think the same can be said of our Interpreters, and the same can be said of many other job disciplines, but I think it is most egregious in the Ranger ranks.

I am going to be pursuing this matter with the utmost vigor, and start the process of having personnel evaluations being made, classification evaluations being made, whatever. We can't attract decent people and we can't keep decent people under these circumstances, and Cuyahoga is not a particularly high-cost area. We're blindfolding ourselves if we think it is business as usual out there in terms of who we are attracting to this organization, because it ain't happening! It's tragic.

I think that's about it.

MR. COCKRELL: I certainly appreciate you taking time out of your schedule to sit down and discuss all these issues.

[END]

O R A L H I S T O R Y I N T E R V I E W

F O R T H E

A D M I N I S T R A T I V E H I S T O R Y O F

C U Y A H O G A V A L L E Y

N A T I O N A L R E C R E A T I O N A R E A

O H I O

Russell E. Dickenson
former Director of the National Park Service (1980-1985)

July 18, 1989
Pacific Northwest Regional Office
National Park Service
Seattle, Washington

Interviewed by:

Ron Cockrell
Historian
Midwest Regional Office
National Park Service

Omaha, Nebraska
1989

Russell E. Dickenson

Russell E. Dickenson

MR. COCKRELL: When was the first time you visited the Cuyahoga Valley? Were you familiar with it before it was a National Recreation Area, or did that come after 1974?

MR. DICKENSON: My knowledge of Cuyahoga came after it was established.

MR. COCKRELL: When you were Deputy Director, how did Director Ron Walker explain to you the Nixon Administration's policy on urban parks, particularly on proposed National Recreation Areas?

MR. DICKENSON: During Ron Walker's time, we continued, essentially, the emphasis that had been given by President Nixon at the two Gateways. My recollection is that Golden Gate in San Francisco and Gateway in New York were added in 1972. Of course, Ron became Director in January of 1973 so there was essentially a continuation, an emphasis, if you will, on providing urban recreation in consonance with the policies that had been established regarding the two Gateways.

MR. COCKRELL: Do you know who it was in the Nixon Administration that developed these policies?

MR. DICKENSON: I believe that maybe the real impetus toward that came from the interaction of George Hartzog, as Director of the National Park Service, and the Secretariat of the Department of Interior. That discussion would have developed in the mid to late '60s.

As a matter of fact, when I was the Chief of New Area Studies and Master Planning in Washington under Hartzog in 1967, that was a subject which we dealt with at some length. Although there was perhaps no **direct** movement--there was no cause/no effect, that sort of thing. Nevertheless, there was a policy discussion and plan for the movement of the National Park Service into urban recreation.

In January of 1968, I moved from the Chief of New Area Studies and Master Planning in the Washington Office to the National Capital Parks. On the same date, January 13, 1968, Nash Castro became the Director and I was his Associate.

Action had begun in 1967 to develop a Summer in the Parks program for the National Capital Parks. There was a realization that there had to be changes. There had to be some Federal park and recreation involvement in the cities simply because of the Civil Rights Movement that was underway at the time. In April of 1968, the burning of Washington occurred. Other cities also experienced this. Unrest was common in most urban centers at that time.

Russell E. Dickenson

Our many years of urban park and recreation experience at National Capital Parks, the financial problems existing at that time in most cities, the trend toward national solutions--all of these factors propelled the National Park Service, I think, into the urban scene. A final note here. The success in Washington, D.C., of the special program called "Summer in the Parks" had quite an effect. It was emulated by several other cities in some form later on including Boston, New York, Philadelphia, etcetera.

MR. COCKRELL: The proposal to create a National Recreation Area in Ohio was not looked upon with any favor by the Administration. Why did they not want a National Recreation Area anywhere else but the two Gateways?

MR. DICKENSON: My belief is that the resistance to Cuyahoga stemmed largely from the actions of the National Park Service Advisory Board. It was common practice at that time to present proposed areas to the Advisory Board for review. There was a strong undercurrent of opposition within the National Park Service Advisory Board to moving into the urban scene. We saw that evidence itself later at Santa Monica.

The National Park Service Advisory Board was a very conservative, traditional group of outstanding citizens. At that time it was composed of giants in their fields, not politicized as it became somewhat later on, and so it carried a lot of weight. My firm impression and belief is that the major impact that that group had on the National Park Service position probably helped it prevail.

At the same time, the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation was actively promoting urban recreation areas in most major cities, and conducting surveys and studies.

MR. COCKRELL: Why was the Administration sanctioning proceeding in areas like Big Thicket and Big Cypress, but not Cuyahoga Valley?

MR. DICKENSON: Simply because of the perceived natural values as opposed to the urban recreation values. Big Thicket certainly is a unique biological area and for the Ivory Bill Woodpecker, it was one of the last refuges. I think that typifies pretty much the philosophical difference that occurred there.

MR. COCKRELL: Before Cuyahoga was authorized by Congress, what was the attitude within the National Park Service itself, the NPS bureaucracy, toward Cuyahoga Valley?

MR. DICKENSON: Negative!

MR. COCKRELL: Negative. Was that universally held?

Russell E. Dickenson

MR. DICKENSON: Generally. The attitude within the bureaucracy basically reflected, I think, a traditional natural area sentiment. What characterized the Service for so many years was that there was just simply no internal imperative to move into the urban recreation scene. The bias strongly favored natural, wilderness parks.

I guess maybe the only proponents of urban recreation areas (if not proponents, at least those who looked more favorably on urban national recreation areas) were those who worked in National Capital Parks, including myself. I had a feeling that there was a role to play. That needed to be well defined, however. George Hartzog was a strong proponent. But within the Service itself, the bureaucracy, was essentially negative in my opinion.

MR. COCKRELL: In July 1973, Director Walker rejected outright the National Park Service feasibility study for Cuyahoga Valley National Recreation Area. Were you involved with this decision and did you agree with it?

MR. DICKENSON: I don't recall that specifically. I have really no recollection that I dealt with that in a personal sense at all.

MR. COCKRELL: Tedd McCann of the Washington Office was the one who wrote the study, and I guess he developed a very close relationship with Congressman John Seiberling.

MR. DICKENSON: Yes, he did.

MR. COCKRELL: There was some criticism that this may have clouded McCann's professional judgement. James Watt, Director of the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation at the time, advocated that Cuyahoga be a State Park and locally operated. Apparently, BOR felt that NPS had gone counter to the Administration's policy in developing this very positive Cuyahoga report. Do you remember any of that discussion at all?

MR. DICKENSON: I don't remember the discussion, although I readily concur that there was a special relationship between Congressman Seiberling and Tedd McCann as well as between Tedd McCann and one of Congressman Seiberling staffers, Loretta Neumann. I can't dredge up that particular feasibility study, but I'm not surprised you telling me that it was entirely favorable.

MR. COCKRELL: Just on a side note. I did speak with Tedd and Loretta in Washington about a month ago. I was very surprised setting up the interview. I knew that they had had a close personal relationship in the past, but I had no idea that they were married! So, I guess it all worked out!

Russell E. Dickenson

MR. DICKENSON: Well I didn't know that either. I knew they were good friends for so many years.

MR. COCKRELL: For the Indiana Dunes Administrative History a few years ago, I interviewed former Assistant Secretary Nat Reed. We did talk about Cuyahoga a little bit. He was very critical of the apparent lack of communication between BOR and NPS. I've been told that NPS has always operated almost by itself, without much direction from the Department. What can you tell me about the relationship between the two bureaus?

MR. DICKENSON: Let's put it in this context. Since the creation of BOR in the early '60s, there was a resentment on the part of the National Park Service regarding the creation of that bureau. There later developed a competitive atmosphere between the two, and occasional criticism occurred between the two bureaus.

One instance, in particular, that I can recall which created a lot of bitterness was the fact that the lead study on the Redwoods National Park was given to BOR instead of the National Park Service. NPS was very critical of the studies. So in that light, you can see there existed differences of opinion in the case of Cuyahoga.

MR. COCKRELL: I spoke to Dave Cherry in San Francisco last week. He was the former BOR Regional Director in Ann Arbor. Cherry said that BOR felt that it was their mission to do all of the planning for new areas being considered within the Department of the Interior.

MR. DICKENSON: That was **their belief** and that was strongly disputed by the National Park Service!

MR. COCKRELL: O.K. You clarified that matter!

MR. DICKENSON: Right!

MR. COCKRELL: Bill Birdsell was the first Superintendent of Cuyahoga Valley having come from Mound City Group in central Ohio.

MR. DICKENSON: I knew Bill well.

MR. COCKRELL: Why put Bill Birdsell at Cuyahoga? I ask you that because some have speculated that the NPS bureaucracy didn't feel that Cuyahoga was going to go anywhere so by putting someone from a small park there, it really wouldn't matter if he fumbled the ball. You could blame that on inexperience. But if a high level Park Service manager came in and fumbled the ball, it would really be an embarrassment. Would you agree with that?

Russell E. Dickenson

MR. DICKENSON: I believe not. I think that perhaps the most important factor in the selection of Bill Birdsell for that was his local knowledge and the fact that he had an Ohio presence.

Bill was a capable individual. No one thought that he was to be a "sacrificial lamb" per se, although it was conventional knowledge at the time that were an individual selected for the Superintendency of a controversial area, you recognized that you had to watch the situation carefully. If serious opposition arose, a change might be advisable because it might be unbearable for a person and his family.

I think the reason that Bill was selected for the Superintendency was the type of personality (outgoing, friendly) plus the fact that he was well established in the Ohio scene.

MR. COCKRELL: Speaking of controversy, there have been a lot of investigations at Cuyahoga. In the early 1980s, the General Accounting Office looked at John Seiberling's scenic easement and fee simple purchases by the National Park Service. Were there "high placed" people out to "get" Seiberling?

MR. DICKENSON: Well, he certainly had some enemies, some of whom met with me periodically in my office. These were individuals who had organized into a group, and the meetings almost always related to real estate issues. But it was quite obvious to me in the two or three meetings that I can recall that they were certainly not friends of John Seiberling, and resented the fact that he was a strong advocate for the establishment and continued operation of the National Recreation Area.

MR. COCKRELL: Were these people connected with Charles Cushman?

MR. DICKENSON: No, no. This was a group in which I can't recall his name right now. My memory is that one of the guys was a lawyer who...

MR. COCKRELL: It was a local group of people?

MR. DICKENSON: Yes, right.

MR. COCKRELL: The Cuyahoga Valley Homeowners Association?

MR. DICKENSON: That well could have been it. It was a local pressure group that was **strongly resentful** of the National Park Service activities and of John Seiberling's continued advocacy for the area. It was a local pressure group led by...

MR. COCKRELL: Leonard Stein-Sapir.

Russell E. Dickenson

MR. DICKENSON: That's it! You got it. He met with me on a couple of occasions. There was litigation pending and on the advice of counsel, there wasn't a lot that I could really say to those people, although I listened to them as courteously as I could. But yes, that's him.

MR. COCKRELL: In April 1980, there was a series of articles in **The Cleveland Press** about the problems of NPS activities at Cuyahoga. Bill Birdsell was infuriated by these articles and wrote some letters denouncing the newspaper which got forwarded to Secretary Andrus and then to your attention. What do you recall about this, and was this one of those events that led to your decision to transfer Bill someplace else?

MR. DICKENSON: This would have been very shortly after I became Director. I have at least a vague recollection of the flap in the media about this. I don't recall that Andrus was in any sense upset with this or any of the Departmental staff on the thing, but the real impetus toward moving Bill Birdsell later on came from Seiberling himself.

MR. COCKRELL: Why did he want Birdsell transferred?

MR. DICKENSON: Because the pressures, the attacks, on Bill had been so strong, and so severe, and so wearing. I can recall at least two or three personal telephone calls that John Seiberling and I held regarding this matter. He was increasingly concerned, as we talked over a period of a couple of weeks or so, about the impact that it was having on Bill Birdsell, and had suggested that if there was any possible way that we could relieve Bill of that pressure and the tension that was building on him. The local attacks were so severe. So I agreed with John Seiberling that we would attempt to try and work something out that would be satisfactory.

So that's where the pressure came from to try and do something, not within the Department itself. Nor was it an initiative on my part, necessarily. It was simply an attempt to respond meaningfully to a proposition posed by John Seiberling.

I did talk to Bill Birdsell about it, again, on two or three different occasions trying to get him to understand and to work something out. He was reluctant at the outset, but then after he reflected on this, he began to see that it was probably a reasonable thing. In other words, he had run his course. He had done all that he could do, and his continued presence would probably be counter productive to some of the things that he accomplished there.

Russell E. Dickenson

MR. COCKRELL: There was talk at one point about the Midwest Region reactivating the Chicago Field Office and had office space designed for Birdsell there. Did he like that idea, or did he have a specific place that he wanted to go?

MR. DICKENSON: As a matter of fact, I don't recall that Bill even evidenced a desire in terms of alternative assignments. I can't recall that. When the time came, I offered him a move to the Washington Office simply because there was an existing opportunity. I can't recall that we even discussed Chicago. We might have, but I can't recall.

MR. COCKRELL: That could have been planned back in the Midwest Regional Office possibly.

MR. DICKENSON: Yes. I don't have a personal knowledge of that.

MR. COCKRELL: Getting back to Leonard Stein-Sapir, the lawyer for the Cuyahoga Valley Homeowners Association. In February 1981, just after the Reagan Administration came in, he wrote a letter to Secretary Watt calling for the deauthorization of Cuyahoga Valley. Subsequent to that, there was the so-called "hit list" of unwanted areas being looked at by the Department. Can you relate what was happening at this point in time?

MR. DICKENSON: The Reagan Administration, with its basic, conservative philosophy toward government, i.e., big government needs to be made smaller, etcetera, produced a manifesto and came into office with a plan already prepared as to actions that it expected to take. It was a guide for implementation by lower and middle level staff.

I attribute the whole flap about the "hit list" as having come out of Arnett's office, the Assistant Secretary, and several of his staff who worked diligently trying to make a name for themselves, to reform government, etcetera. But the fact of the matter is there **was** a list developed. It did exist. It was later denied, but there was a list developed by that group within the Assistant Secretary's office.

I think the denial finally came from Watt himself, on more than one occasion, and that finally laid the issue, sort of, to rest. But it existed for a while with the initiative originally coming out of Arnett's office. It existed largely in that form, but I don't think it was ever taken up as a major Departmental initiative. The minute the media hopped on it, my recollection is that Secretary Watt began to disavow the whole thing. He had more troubles than he needed and that was a battle he didn't need to fight at that particular time.

Russell E. Dickenson

But nevertheless, it stemmed from this manifesto. I've got a name in my mind for it, but I can't remember it now. Anyway, it was put out by the strong, far right conservative wing of the Republican Party. It was the game plan for the Reagan Administration, detailing what they intended to do. It hinted in that that the System was expanding too rapidly, particularly in the urban recreation field.

MR. COCKRELL: So the Reagan plan for the National Park Service was what--put the brakes on urban parks?

MR. DICKENSON: Absolutely! Yes. The growth of the System itself was virtually terminated, for different reasons than I advocated. I was an advocate of the effort to try to consolidate our gains. Primarily, this was simply for basic budgetary reasons: economics. The Republican Reagan Administration on the other hand advocated discontinuation of growth for philosophical reasons and purposes. So, as it turned out, we were both advocating a slowing of the growth of the System, at least for awhile, or even to discontinue it, but for different reasons.

MR. COCKRELL: Did you ever talk to Charles Cushman about Cuyahoga Valley National Recreation Area?

MR. DICKENSON: Yes sir!

MR. COCKRELL: Probably many times?

MR. DICKENSON: Many times. Yes sir!

MR. COCKRELL: As a member of the NPS Advisory Board, did Charles Cushman have much influence there? Was he very effective in promoting his views?

MR. DICKENSON: He was promoting it, but not effectively, including commandeering the agenda at a point or two, and showing these inflammatory films that were produced. But, interestingly enough, there was very little substantive reaction on the part of the Board because they recognized an individual who had an ax to grind. He was promoting it; he had a lot of self-interest that was involved in this. And so the impact on the Board was minimal, in my opinion.

MR. COCKRELL: What were the things Cushman was concerned about in the Cuyahoga Valley?

MR. DICKENSON: He had a very basic rabble-rousing technique, as you may have observed or discovered. By continuing to promote discontent, it enabled him to build his own resources and his own organization using the theme of "Drive the Scoundrels Out!"

Russell E. Dickenson

He would say, "Your property rights guaranteed by the Constitution are being invalidated by Congress, National Park Service, etcetera, etcetera." And this spoke to a large segment of that population who was being impacted by land acquisition activities. So his techniques, while not admirable, were very effective, and he utilized them very well. Not only there, but in dozens of other places in stirring up resentment and discontent.

MR. COCKRELL: Was Cuyahoga the primary example he used?

MR. DICKENSON: I think it probably was very close to the top anyway. Certainly in terms of national visibility, for a while, the Jessica Savitch film really got a hell of a lot of attention. It was simply journalism that was less than straightforward.

MR. COCKRELL: Savitch did a couple of pieces on Cuyahoga Valley. Did she have an ax to grind, or did it just make her look good?

MR. DICKENSON: I think it simply played to the media with her own dramatic approach--sensationalism, you know. I don't think she was a champion of the downtrodden or anything else. I think it was just a good, "Alar"-type story.

MR. COCKRELL: The Savitch "Frontline" videotape was shown in the Columbia River Gorge and in the Delaware River Valley. What impact did this have on these areas, and what did the Park Service do to try to counter it?

MR. DICKENSON: The impact of course was very severe in terms of public relations for the National Park Service. In the case of the Columbia River Gorge, the Forest Service felt the brunt of it, too.

Cushman used this type of media event in order to exploit the latent feelings that most people had, resentment toward government, protection of private property, etcetera. So the National Park Service was hard put to try and cope with this. There was really no logical way to go into a community once those resentments have built to a point and try to bring it back.

But the only technique that was available was certainly utilized to some extent in New York, and that was to search for sympathetic people, particularly newspaper editors, editorial writers, or others who could give a more balanced point of view. You looked for support and sympathy in support groups and you will always find a few individuals who have common sense and who understand that there is more than one side to the issue.

Russell E. Dickenson

Certainly, that is the only response that I am aware of that we ever really tried to do. Seldom if ever did we try to come out and go on a direct attack. We try to work through the third party.

MR. COCKRELL: One avenue that Bill Birdsell looked into was he wanted Harpers Ferry Center to produce a counter program, but apparently he found out that it was against Park Service policy to promote an agency or its program and his request was denied. Was this definitely against policy?

MR. DICKENSON: Yes, I think that is consistent with what I just said. I can't recall ever that we were in a direct, promotional, attack mode. We always tried to work through sympathetic supporters.

MR. COCKRELL: What kind of working relationship did you have with Secretary James Watt?

MR. DICKENSON: Very close as it related to the work of the National Park Service. Secretary Watt of course was Director of BOR at the time that I was Deputy Director of the National Park Service in the mid-70s.

MR. COCKRELL: So you were friends at that time?

MR. DICKENSON: Oh, yes. I knew Secretary Watt when he was a bureau chief, and sat in many a staff meeting with him and others when Nat Reed was Assistant Secretary. Ron Walker tended to be an absentee type of Director. He was gone a lot on the road. This is said without criticism. It's just simply to explain that I was the guy who minded the store. So I attended the basic staff meetings within the Department. Jim Watt and I became pretty well-acquainted.

But, after I left Washington, D.C., for the Regional Director's assignment here in Seattle in December 1975, I had no further contact with Jim Watt until the Reagan Administration came in. Of course I went in during the latter part of the Andrus regime when Bill Whalen was fired. That covered a period from April until the elections in November 1980.

At that particular point, I really expected to come on back to Seattle or someplace within the Service. Obviously the decision would not be made until January 1981, but when a succession of two or three possible Secretary's were named, I began to assess my chances on whether or not I was going to stay on. Cliff Hansen was one that was mentioned prominently, but because of grazing and other conflict of interest reasons, he dropped out.

Russell E. Dickenson

Then came Watt. I made no attempt to contact Watt. As a matter fact, after he was sworn in, he came to my office and asked me to stay on just flat out, not by telephone, no meetings, nothing. He came to my office and sat down and asked me. And that started the beginning of at least what I consider to be a fairly special relationship in which I could speak my mind to the Secretary. He didn't always agree, but I had the ability to say to Secretary Watt what I needed to say on behalf of the National Park Service because I was an advocate for its programs and a **defender** of its personnel!

MR. COCKRELL: Did Secretary Watt share the Reagan Administration's plan to curb the National Park Service?

MR. DICKENSON: Yes. He was a strong believer in capping out--"rounding out" as he used to say--the National Park System. Certainly, he felt that the National Recreation Areas basically had no real place, no real role.

Now I'm not saying that to make a contrary statement to what I said earlier. I still believe that the primary instigators within the Department came out of Arnett's office. I know in my own mind that Secretary Watt believed that National Recreation Area administration was not a proper activity for the National Park Service.

When the time came that the media raised the furor over the hit list, he disavowed it. You know that's the way politicians are able to do. Nevertheless his belief was that it was an inappropriate activity for the Park Service.

MR. COCKRELL: Why do you think, and I'm interested in getting your own personal opinion, that Jim Watt made such a controversial Secretary and ultimately a liability to the Reagan Administration?

MR. DICKENSON: I obviously have experienced and thought about that a great deal. Jim Watt has two personas: one is public and one is private. I'm speaking now in terms of just managerial. He has a private managerial persona and he has a public persona. Very smooth, easy going, personable individual except when he is on stage. Then he becomes the prophet. He becomes the enforcer. He does have philosophical beliefs obviously that are very much in tune with the conservative wing of the Republican Party. And he espouses those.

One of the first things he told me was that he expected to be fired within 18 months from the day that he and I first talked. And that was simply because he recognized that he was going to adopt a persona of confrontation, and he was going to advocate programs which would simply infuriate the environmentalists. He was trying to turn around a long-standing set of policies, to bring them more

Russell E. Dickenson

in line with his philosophical view of the world. He knew his time was going to be numbered. As it turned out, he was pretty close.

MR. COCKRELL: I've never heard that before! You were talking about Assistant Secretary Ray Arnett. Did you discuss the problems at Cuyahoga with him?

MR. DICKENSON: I don't recall any direct discussion with Ray Arnett. I'll put it in this context. During the Jim Watt period, actually I had very little direct policy discussion with Arnett because the Secretary and I dealt pretty much directly.

MR. COCKRELL: Why?

MR. DICKENSON: That's just the way Secretary Watt wanted it. He and Arnett didn't have a very good rapport. Arnett was appointed by the White House Personnel Office over the objections of Watt. So there was never a real rapport between the two individuals.

MR. COCKRELL: You mean you didn't actually have to go through Assistant Secretary Arnett?

MR. DICKENSON: No. The Secretary would pick up the telephone or tell me to come up to his office, or he would come to mine or whatever. Arnett was just sort of sitting over here, isolated.

MR. COCKRELL: How did Arnett feel about that?

MR. DICKENSON: Well, you know what the human reaction to that is. It created a hell of a situation between Arnett and I, which I tried to smooth over because I did not create it. The Secretary created it. And I tried to be very open with Assistant Secretary Arnett about what was going on and have him understand. But, nevertheless, there was a very brittle atmosphere there.

MR. COCKRELL: How did the Department's land acquisition policy change under James Watt?

MR. DICKENSON: Well, he cut it to zilch. He had the announced budgetary intention of zeroing it out, but he found out that he couldn't do that, and besides, there is always the Congressional counterbalance. We fought many an internal battle, I'll tell you. The formulation of a budget at the Departmental level can be a brutal affair. We tried to support a reasonable level and, in spite of everything, it would just be cut to the bone.

We finally reconciled the situation. I talked to John Sieberling about this several times and Sid Yates and others at the Congressional level as to what my situation was: that I could continue to fight, but I wasn't going to win. The only thing that was going

Russell E. Dickenson

to save the program, the only thing that was going to save the National Park Service, was a strong Congressional reaction to that. As a matter of fact, that was what happened. The levels certainly never approached that which we had in prior years, but at least it kept the program alive.

The interesting thing is even though the Department developed such a strong resistance to land acquisition programs, occasionally there would be some of the Congressional buddies from California who had a little piece of land that they **wanted** to sell in Santa Monica or someplace. Then you ought to see them stir their stumps to see where the land acquisition money was: "Yes, we have to take care of this guy here. Where's the money?" So you run into these dichotomies of purpose and those who talk out of both sides of the mouth!

MR. COCKRELL: One press account quoted James Watt as saying that he had ordered five park land acquisition offices' records sealed, including Cuyahoga's, but when reporters talked to you, you didn't even know about it. Was this standard operating procedure with Watt, to say that he had done something, but no one knew about it?

MR. DICKENSON: Oh, yes. Not uncommon. Not uncommon. Not only in the land acquisition field, but in other things as well. He was full of surprises. He knew the Department well enough, he knew the pressure points, and special interest groups, and the media all well enough that he would adopt a position in some instances on-stage. He would formulate decisions and policy on-stage to the amazement of some of us who were in the program! Most of the time, you could ultimately reconcile this one way or the other--after the fact. But nevertheless, it caught a lot of people by surprise.

MR. COCKRELL: Sounds like there was never a dull moment.

MR. DICKENSON: Never, oh yes!

MR. COCKRELL: The Arnett memorandum which was leaked to the press asked you to prepare a paper on how to transfer Cuyahoga Valley and Santa Monica Mountains over to state control. Arnett at first claimed he had recalled the memorandum, that it was never sent out of his office. Congressman Seiberling asked you and you said you had indeed received it. Was there any discussion in 1981 of turning Cuyahoga Valley National Recreation Area over to the State of Ohio to manage?

MR. DICKENSON: This was at least a proposition proposed by a staffer named Ric Davidge. Davidge of course was a henchman of Cushman. I guess you are aware of that particular relationship. This was a period in which Davidge was sort of running wild. He was a crazy guy. Although he denied having any continuing

Russell E. Dickenson

relationship with Cushman, we saw evidence of it from our standpoint that there was indeed a lot of manipulation going on behind the scenes between Cushman and Davidge, etcetera, etcetera. As a matter of fact, I'll give Ray Arnett his due here. I think he is perfectly right. I think he was unaware. I think he was completely unaware of what his staff was doing in some cases.

MR. COCKRELL: This was in 1981, the early days of the Reagan Administration?

MR. DICKENSON: Yes. Things improved somewhat after Davidge left. When Bill Clark came in as successor to Secretary Watt, there was a little different atmosphere and tone. It was much more reasonable. The agenda was less important. Clark was a troubleshooter. Instead of trying to promote the Reagan Revolution or the conservative manifesto, why he was a much more reasonable guy to deal with so that permeated down into the Department. There was a more reasonable working relationship.

MR. COCKRELL: When did Ric Davidge leave? Was this before Secretary Watt resigned?

MR. DICKENSON: I've forgotten the exact period, but I think it is about coincidental with the same time. My memory may be playing a trick on me, but I think it was about the same period. He was re-assigned to Alaska.

MR. COCKRELL: After these two moves, the deauthorization and transfer of Cuyahoga, were shot down in the press, were there any other attempts within the Department against Cuyahoga Valley or the other blacklisted parks?

MR. DICKENSON: I can't recall if there were any other serious attempts. There were still some occasional references during meetings within the Department, but that would be considered very much in-house and just shop talk. There was nothing in terms of a serious effort that I can recall.

I had the unhappy duty one time of representing the Department at a hearing before John Sieblering in which he was seeking, as I recall, some money for soil conservation purposes. Anyway, I had to be negative about it simply because of a budgetary constraint. It hurt me deeply; a minor matter, relatively speaking, you know, but I sat before John Sieberling who was a personal friend. Like I said, we were sort of on the same wavelength. But to tell him I was representing a position that was negative to what he wanted--well, that's life!

MR. COCKRELL: Speaking of John Sieberling, in May 1980, he called a meeting in Washington with some of the local park staff and

Russell E. Dickenson

supporters and I believe you were also there. Seiberling wanted to talk about ways to reverse the negative publicity that Cuyahoga was generating. Do you remember much about that meeting?

MR. DICKENSON: Yes. It's sort of vague in my mind, but I do recall that this happened up on the Hill. Yes, there might have been some slides shown, a little "show and tell" perhaps even by Tedd McCann, maybe even Loretta. Anyway, I recall that there was such a meeting, but that's about all I can really come up with at this time.

MR. COCKRELL: Was this an unusual event to focus on one particular park?

MR. DICKENSON: Yes. That was very unusual.

MR. COCKRELL: There have been no other Congressional meetings called to talk about any other unit of the National Park System?

MR. DICKENSON: No. Highly unusual. I can't recall a precedent for it anywhere in terms of a Congressman trying to deal at a public meeting really to turn around public opinion. There may have been others, but I can't recall a similar circumstance like that.

I think it just shows the strong feelings, the strong advocacy that John felt, stemming all the way from the kind of resistance he had from the Park Service to the fact that he went to Ford and convinced him not to veto the bill. He fought. He fought tenaciously.

MR. COCKRELL: In 1981, a General Accounting Office report concluded that the National Park Service had wasted millions of dollars buying land which was not needed for specific recreational facilities. What was your reaction to this GAO report?

MR. DICKENSON: Well, like most of them, politically inspired. I lost all real confidence in the objectivity of GAO. GAO responding indiscriminately really to the requests by individual members of Congress to conduct these studies, in almost every case that I can think of, with preordained judgments. Personally, I have very little confidence in the objectivity of the GAO.

MR. COCKRELL: One of the recommendations of that specific report was that the National Park Service should sell back properties to former owners, and draft legislation was prepared. Did anything come out of this?

MR. DICKENSON: I can't recall that it did. This was one of the favorite tenets of Ric Davidge and Cushman, of course. I'm

Russell E. Dickenson

convinced that the whole GAO study was the work of Cushman behind the scenes, trooping in and out of various Congressional offices up there.

MR. COCKRELL: I'm told that investigating teams were sent to Cuyahoga and they didn't find anything. They went back to Washington and they were told to go back and find something, and this kept going on, but they never did find anything.

MR. DICKENSON: No. It was absolutely vague. The whole basic idea of selling property back has to have some other kind of philosophical underpinning to it. If you are going to sell property back, there have to be kinds of restrictive covenants and a lot of other things which will ensure that the protection and preservation objectives are met. There were other motives underlying that whole approach that was being advocated at that time. It was just a way of trying to gut and decimate the land acquisition program itself per se.

MR. COCKRELL: When you look back on your years as Director of the National Park Service, what units of the System stand out in your mind as ones with the most controversy and caused you the most problems?

MR. DICKENSON: Well, certainly, since Cuyahoga is the subject at hand, I'd have to say that one was all right because it was a continuing problem. If not one thing, it was another.

The Gateway area in New York produced an awful lot of travail, simply because of the strong special interest groups that were involved there, and the kind of greed that penetrated that whole effort by "entrepreneurs" trying to preserve their own self-interest. It was a tough deal.

Cape Cod caused a hell of a lot of headaches in terms of beach operations and beach buggies.

We worried a good bit about--and indeed I had many a sleepless night--over the National Recreation Area in Atlanta. Land acquisition was the central issue.

There's also Santa Monica.

When you really stop and think about my time as Director, I worried about getting the Alaskan areas off to a good start because in December of 1980, President Carter signed the bill at the White House. I was there. So high on the priority list of troublesome things to do was, how in the hell to get Alaska going in a time of budgetary crisis, dealing with land acquisition issues at Cuyahoga,

Russell E. Dickenson

concessionaire-type issues at Gateway in New York, land acquisition at Atlanta and Santa Monica.

I worried a good bit about trying to protect the civil service status of employees within the National Park Service as all kinds of efforts were made to make political inroads to move people because of their perceived objections to Reagan and the Reagan Revolution.

I got caught in a mad whirlwind about privatization. I lost a lot of skin on that one. I guess there weren't individual areas per se. Some areas in the System stand out because Glacier National Park became a hotbed of opposition to the privatization idea. We had employee groups organize, and we had hearings about it, and here I was caught in the position of trying to mollify the Administration and at the same time protect the programs and the people of the National Park Service. It was a no win deal, absolutely. A-76, you probably remember that mandate?

MR. COCKRELL: Yes, there's still rumblings about it today.

MR. DICKENSON: Yes, there is indeed. There is indeed. Interestingly enough, I just found out that British Columbia, as one of the provinces of Canada, has adopted the privatization idea extensively, including the actual operation of some of the provincial parks by private contractors.

MR. COCKRELL: Let's hope that doesn't go over too well!

MR. DICKENSON: I don't believe it will. I don't believe it will work. There are a lot of skeptical people in Canada.

MR. COCKRELL: You spoke earlier about the differences between Bill Clark and Jim Watt. How about the differences between Don Hodel and Watt?

MR. DICKENSON: Yes. Hodel of course was Under Secretary during the Jim Watt era and I dealt a great deal with Don because he was the enforcer. He was the daily operations man, Jim Watt being the figurehead and spokesman. Don was strongly imbued with the Republican spirit and I think he basically understood what the National Park Service represented--as Jim Watt did.

I think both men truly understood what the National Park Service represented but there was some deep resentments both with Watt and Hodel to the fact that it was a **career** Service, that there was a perceived lack of responsiveness on the part of the bureaucracy to the thrust of the Administration.

Russell E. Dickenson

Hodel evidenced from time to time some resentment to me personally, simply because I was a career Ranger who had moved up the ladder to Director. Little remarks would be made from time to time that would lead you to believe that he believed that there ought to be a political leader rather than a career man heading up a bureau. It was just one of his instinctive beliefs.

I'll say this. Hodel always dealt fairly with me and in most instances with the organization. After Clark left, the Secretary had his own basic agenda. By that time, they had begun not to pay that much detailed attention to the National Park Service. Of course, I left in March of 1985. Mott and Hodel had some real set-tos later on, but Hodel and I got along pretty good. At that time, he wasn't paying all that much attention to the Park Service.

MR. COCKRELL: You mentioned before the issue of a political appointee as Director of the National Park Service. Do you believe that that is going to continue?

MR. DICKENSON: Yes. I think there is a strong trend in that direction. As a matter of fact, even when I was Director, I predicted that I might be the last career person to occupy the Directorship, and I haven't changed my mind. I see those trends very strongly.

In terms of the operations of the White House Personnel Office and its influence, primarily the influence exerted now in the whole selection process, using as a litmus test political loyalty, work done in campaigns, production--in other words toward the election of the President--these are the kinds of litmus tests now. This has nothing to do with program knowledge. It has nothing to do with the kind of test that we would ordinarily have applied in the past.

MR. COCKRELL: One question I really want to pose to you has to do with your philosophy about the place of urban parks within the National Park System.

MR. DICKENSON: I think there is a place for them. Let me preface my other remarks here by simply saying what I really deplored about the early development and entry of the urban national recreation philosophy.

What it seemed to be was a reaction from the part of the Federal Government to unmet needs which properly should have been met at the local level. You can make a pretty good case during the late '60s of seeing the kind of pressures that built for urban National Recreation Areas simply because those needs which were real, not perceived, were just simply not being met. Economics of city

Russell E. Dickenson

operations at the time wouldn't permit a lot of city parks to be operated.

Out of this came a rationale to support the development of urban National Recreation Areas including the conversion of unused military properties, etcetera, etcetera. I think that there is a real justification for urban National Recreation Areas provided you can support that truly on a national significance basis. Obviously that's going to vary from person to person, and from time to time, but once you can make a strong case that it is in the national interest, not just the local Mayor's or the Chamber of Commerce's interest to develop it, why then we're on the road to doing it.

I think that you can do that at Golden Gate. I think that Gateway New York is supportable in terms of the national interest that is involved. I would have perhaps some reservations about Santa Monica. I think maybe the values that are involved there might have to stretch a little bit to make some national interest there. It's more regional, state, Western-oriented, trying to save a piece of land from the developers of Southern California. It is something that probably should have been done by local units of government or by other local action as opposed to national action.

I haven't seen personally that much of national significance in Santa Monica as I believe I see in Golden Gate and Gateway. I have trouble in Atlanta thinking up a case for national significance there.

Remember there came a time during, I guess it was the early to mid-'70s, a study at the instigation of then-Senator Henry Jackson, which was called "Urban National Recreation Area Study." I believe it was conducted by BOR. Out of that came a proposal for 40 National Recreation Areas to be established in 40 cities of the United States. Now, that is not my idea of what the National Park Service ought to be involved in. Putting the Federal imprint in every major urban center in the country with "NRA" is like using the philosophy every state ought to have a National Park. I don't believe that! Only if it is meritorious, worthy, as national significance. That is my basic philosophy.

MR. COCKRELL: I'll put you on the spot now. How about the placement of Cuyahoga Valley within the National Park System? You were talking about national significance. Do you see national significance in Cuyahoga Valley?

MR. DICKENSON: I'm willing to concede that now, although I damned sure couldn't see it at an earlier period. Maybe that's a more reasonable approach, to look at things anyway. There's an evolutionary sort of approach. It's like taking reclaimed land like Shenandoah and giving it a little time, and letting it become

Russell E. Dickenson

a wilderness. At the onset, I personally could not see the significance of a Cuyahoga. Now 20 years later, I'm willing to concede that maybe there's something really there that is truly of national significance. How to respond not only to the societal needs of a couple of great cities, but also how to bring the land back. That's even more important, I think, from an environmental and national significance sort of standpoint.

MR. COCKRELL: One of the problems that Cuyahoga presents is its tortured landscape, the Krejci Dump and the discovery of toxic wastes there.

MR. DICKENSON: Absolutely.

MR. COCKRELL: What do you remember about discussions on that within the Park Service in the Washington Office?

MR. DICKENSON: At the outset?

MR. COCKRELL: Yes.

MR. DICKENSON: Oh, yes. Part of the whole negative approach at first, and of major influence, I think, on the National Park Service Advisory Board was, "What in the world would we do with it? Why do we want this landscape?" When people were so imbued with the idea of the pristine qualities of the landscape, of Grand Canyon, Yellowstone, Yosemite, what do you want a Cuyahoga for?

To some extent that prevailed in terms of Santa Monica and all that. "What do you want this land for? It's just a typical part of Los Angeles. Let them solve their own problems"--that was sort of the prevailing mood. "Let them pass their own zoning laws. If the state of California is really serious about doing something, put it in the State Park System."

MR. COCKRELL: I've been told by Lew Albert that before he took the Cuyahoga Superintendency he received some marching orders from you. You told Lew you were tired of hearing the phone ring and knowing that most of the time it dealt with Cuyahoga Valley. Did you send Lew Albert there to calm the waters?

MR. DICKENSON: Absolutely. He was chosen as carefully and as specifically as you could imagine. He had certainly earned his spurs. The degree of controversy at Lowell was never the same as at Cuyahoga; it was a much more cordial working relationship with special interest groups and others. He had shown the qualities, I believe, that were needed.

Russell E. Dickenson

And let's just be candid enough to say, also, that I ran him by John Seiberling. John was very pleased with him--not only an attractive individual, but very articulate and intelligent.

MR. COCKRELL: Did you run him by Seiberling because you felt you needed to do that?

MR. DICKENSON: Yes. I felt that I needed to do that because of the extraordinary degree to which Seiberling had associated himself with the Cuyahoga area, and his involvement, and the attempt to solve some of the problems. No question that he was a key player. Therefore, in any kind of operational proposal of the National Park Service, it just would have been good business to clear it with Seiberling, to let him know what you were going to do. In the case of Lew Albert, it was just simply having Lew go up and visit with him and let John see him, to look him over, that sort of thing.

MR. COCKRELL: Do you feel the selection of Lew Albert proved to be the right thing?

MR. DICKENSON: Yes! I do personally. Yes, indeed.

MR. COCKRELL: Did events prove that the waters were calmer in Cuyahoga Valley?

MR. DICKENSON: Oh, yes. He moved in, and although he had his problems as everybody did with Cuyahoga, nevertheless, they began to have a deeper and better involvement from the Regional Office. He began to get some backup. I think that was truly part of the problem that Bill had because he was a man hanging out there alone. We needed to get a lot of people involved. Lew was able to move very aggressively into that situation.

MR. COCKRELL: Funny you should mention the Midwest Regional Office. I thought that I had a question about that on my list, but evidently not. I've seen in the records that the relationship between the park and Omaha was abysmal. In fact, Lew Albert's first memorandum to the Regional Director said that he was surprised by this and that the common perception was that Cuyahoga was the "arm pit" of the Midwest Region. Lew wanted to do something to improve the relationship. Were you aware that this was going on?

MR. DICKENSON: Yes.

MR. COCKRELL: Why do you think this was the case?

MR. DICKENSON: It was part of the desire, I believe, of the then Regional Director to remove himself somewhat from the direct controversy, the line of fire. Bill was on the firing line. He

Russell E. Dickenson

had big, broad shoulders. And I think there was simply a desire by the Regional Office to avoid involvement to the maximum degree possible.

MR. COCKRELL: Is that kind of unusual for a Region to do that?

MR. DICKENSON: Yes, but the Regional Director at that particular time was in the latter stages of a career, and was looking forward to--as a matter of fact as I recall, he had already pinpointed his intended date of retirement. So it was just one of those situations in which there was a vacuum of leadership, coupled with the fact that there was a strong desire to just simply not get involved in a hell of a messy situation.

MR. COCKRELL: Jim Dunning was the Regional Director to whom you're referring?

MR. DICKENSON: Yes. I think Jim hated to go out. I think he just absolutely avoided Cuyahoga in every way possible.

MR. COCKRELL: I don't believe he actually ever went there.

MR. DICKENSON: I can't recall that he ever did!

MR. COCKRELL: He's on my list of people to correspond with. Maybe I'll ask him how many times he visited Cuyahoga.

MR. DICKENSON: That'll be interesting to get his viewpoint, but what I've given you is my perception that there was just a desire to avoid getting into a no win situation. And that's the way everybody looked at Cuyahoga at the time, no win.

MR. COCKRELL: Was that an attitude not just in the Midwest Regional Office, but throughout the Service?

MR. DICKENSON: Yes. I think that was pretty pervasive at the time. You didn't touch it unless you had to. Everything was sort of reactive, including my own actions pretty much. I didn't try to take any great initiative in trying to straighten Cuyahoga out except to try to get people on site who could deal with issues.

When I nominated, recommended, and then did in fact get Chuck Odegard in as the Regional Director, one of the first things I told Chuck was I said, "You sit in John Seiberling's lap and keep old John happy. When you are in town, go up and visit with him and be responsive. Go to Cuyahoga. Go and get acquainted, and start having an impact." And of course that was a reaction to my perception about Jim Dunning, who wasn't, I believe, all that immediately involved.

Russell E. Dickenson

MR. COCKRELL: Chuck did tell me earlier this morning about when you asked him to go to Omaha, that you wanted him to get the Region back on track.

MR. DICKENSON: You bet.

MR. COCKRELL: Can you relate to me some of that discussion?

MR. DICKENSON: Sure, you bet. It was again a reflection of the wind-down atmosphere that prevailed in the Region there. There were so many unsettled issues. There were so many projects that were troublesome. New activities that were floundering. That was my thrust to Chuck Odegaard. I told him to "hit the road. Get out there. Start getting local communities aware that there was a Regional Office. Get those Superintendents involved with the Regional Office and start pulling the thing organizationally together."

He responded very well to that, too, I must say. He really hit the road. He got out and started meeting not only the upper echelon, the Governors, but he started meeting townspeople and backing Superintendents up.

Another one that he got very deeply involved with at the time was the Taft House which was a troublesome little issue. We had a recalcitrant Superintendent at the time and she was exerting some influence on the technicians, and there was a conflict of management. She had ingratiated herself with the Taft family, and some other people and other donors. But, nevertheless, it was a hell of a sticky issue with people threatening to quit, and accusing each other of a lot of things, so I threw Chuck into that one.

So that is just simply to illustrate that there were a dozen of these things in the Midwest Region at that time that a new Regional Director needed to get on top of.

MR. COCKRELL: Is there anything I haven't asked you that I should, or maybe you would like to comment on?

MR. DICKENSON: Let me compliment you on a extraordinary interview with well thought out questions.

MR. COCKRELL: Well, I've done my background research.

MR. DICKENSON: It's obvious that you have done your homework. It's obvious.

MR. COCKRELL: Thank you.

Russell E. Dickenson

MR. DICKENSON: You can name individuals that I can only just visualize. It's been a pleasure dealing with you, and I wish you every bit of luck as you continue this.

[END]

O R A L H I S T O R Y I N T E R V I E W

F O R T H E

A D M I N I S T R A T I V E H I S T O R Y O F

C U Y A H O G A V A L L E Y

N A T I O N A L R E C R E A T I O N A R E A

O H I O

Michael Donnelly
Assistant Regional Director for Planning Services
National Capital Region
(former GMP Team Captain for Cuyahoga Valley NRA)
National Park Service

June 29, 1989
Washington, D.C.

Interviewed by:

Ron Cockrell
Historian
Midwest Regional Office
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Omaha, Nebraska
1989

Michael Donnelly

Michael Donnelly

MR. COCKRELL: I thought we would start by asking you to give a brief sketch of your NPS career.

MR. DONNELLY: I began with the National Park Service in 1967 as a summer student employed in the Eastern Office of Design and Construction. I was in the landscape architecture program at the University of Georgia.

Upon graduation in 1970, I became a permanent member of the National Park Service in the Eastern Service Center, which was located in Washington. In November of 1971, the Eastern Service Center was consolidated with the Western Service Center in Denver. I worked on the Western Team primarily in Yosemite for three years. I left the Park Service and moved to New York for one year where I worked for a private planning firm. I returned to the Park Service and worked on the Midwest/Rocky Mountain Team which is now called the Central Team. I was there for three years. Then I was moved to the Western Team again and did a variety of special studies for the Region including Grand Canyon, Santa Monica Mountains, things like that.

In 1978, with the passage of the Redwood National Park expansion bill, I moved to Redwood National Park to produce a general management plan and work on the superintendent's staff, which I did for two years, at which time I moved to the National Capital Region to build a planning program.

MR. COCKRELL: Before the passage of the Cuyahoga bill in 1974, what were some of the attitudes within the Park Service about Cuyahoga Valley?

MR. DONNELLY: The official attitude was that the NPS already had too many urban areas and that they were a financial and personnel resource drain on an agency that was already stretched beyond its capabilities. That attitude was expressed in testimony when the Cuyahoga legislation was moving through Congress.

Many of the people that I worked with in the Denver Service Center felt as though it was time for the Park Service to move into urban recreation and urban parks. On the one hand you had the official position of the agency weighed against the personal feelings of a staff, who would probably carry out these Congressional mandates.

MR. COCKRELL: So this was the staff in Denver. How about the staff in the Regional Office in Omaha?

MR. DONNELLY: I never ever had a philosophical conversation with anyone from the Regional Office about whether or not we belonged in New York or San Francisco or Cleveland or wherever it may be.

Michael Donnelly

By and large, the Regional directorate and staff echoed the administration's position.

MR. COCKRELL: When you first arrived at Cuyahoga, the planning team had a dual responsibility of a feasibility study for the Ohio and Erie Canal and to start the GMP for the new park. Focusing first of all on the Ohio and Erie Canal, the administration went ahead with this study. The money was appropriated or approved in 1974 before the bill was signed. Why were they going to go ahead with the Ohio and Erie Canal study if they were fighting the park establishment?

MR. DONNELLY: I honestly don't know. I would venture a guess in that it was probably perceived as a good trade-off to look at this historic resource as opposed to supporting the Cuyahoga Valley bill. The general feeling was that stewardship for the historic canal would be a shared responsibility among the Feds, the state, and the local jurisdictions, minimizing financial drain on federal resources.

MR. COCKRELL: So it was kind of a predetermined solution before it even started, that the Feds would not be involved?

MR. DONNELLY: I would guess that the Department felt that. I don't think the folks doing the plan felt that.

MR. COCKRELL: One of the recommendations of that canal study was that the National Historic Landmark-designated segment in Valley View be extended three miles south to where the canal empties into the river. Was this ever done to your knowledge?

MR. DONNELLY: I believe it was. If I remember correctly, we did that through the plan, but that has been a long time ago.

MR. COCKRELL: I could check that out, I just wasn't sure if it had actually gone through the process. The previous studies done by Tedd McCann and Ed Peetz, how important were those to your planning effort?

MR. DONNELLY: In all honesty, their value was minimal in terms of what we were doing. The citizens in and around the park suggested that the land base and the recreational potential of this park was much more than the previous feasibility studies and preliminary studies had identified. Those done plans focused a lot on easements which would retain a scenic wooded character, preventing rampant urban growth into the area, but really didn't come forward with a strong measure of recreation for a multi-million population base.

Michael Donnelly

MR. COCKRELL: Had they collected a lot of information that was valuable to you?

MR. DONNELLY: No. Very little information was available.

MR. COCKRELL: I did interview Tedd and he said at the very first, he was selected to be the team captain for Cuyahoga. Is that true?

MR. DONNELLY: I don't know if that is true. I know that there was a lot of debate that went on within the National Park Service between the Washington Office, the Regional Office, and the Denver Service Center. I was sitting in Glenn Hendrick's office when he had a conversation with Dave Beal and John Kawamoto on the phone. He said that it would be a long time until he allowed the Washington Office to select his team captains.

MR. COCKRELL: Wasn't Tedd McCann though in theory a DSC employee?

MR. DONNELLY: In theory.

MR. COCKRELL: In practice?

MR. DONNELLY: In practice, more of an individual who was available to do quick, special studies for the Service.

MR. COCKRELL: Your other team members, there is a listing in the back of the GMP, was it a pretty cohesive group?

MR. DONNELLY: After Glenn selected me as team captain, he allowed me to select a team from all the resources of the Service Center. Although I would not advocate that every planning job be done that way, that close-knit of the group really helped. It allowed for a lot of debate and arguing without jeopardizing the job.

MR. COCKRELL: Was there a lot of interest among the professionals at DSC for the Cuyahoga job?

MR. DONNELLY: No, if you are talking about--I forget what it was at the time, 400 people or so--probably 50 individuals showed some interest in participating in it.

MR. COCKRELL: How much input did Superintendent Birdsell have in the planning effort? Did he feel like you were intruding on his domain?

MR. DONNELLY: That is probably a pretty good way to put it. I never thought of it in those terms. I think Bill and I had a professional relationship that was tenuous at best. He had never been involved in a major planning effort with a lot of political overtones, so he was feeling his way through. A lot of times, we

Michael Donnelly

would agree on alternative approaches and we would prepare to present these to the Region for a reaction. As in any planning job, everybody has their own opinion, so I would be presenting alternatives and Bill would say to the Regional staff, "I don't know where this came from." It went like that for the entire process. It was not easy dealing with Bill because you were never real sure what he was going to do.

MR. COCKRELL: Even things that he had agreed to previously?

MR. DONNELLY: Absolutely. When the plan was printed in final and after it was sent to the public, which included the land acquisition map that was called for by the legislation, he ordered me to change the land acquisition map because he had purchased some land in fee that the map as easement land. I said, "I am not going to do that. It is already out in the public domain. It is too late."

MR. COCKRELL: Do you remember what these areas are?

MR. DONNELLY: I believe they were residential.

MR. COCKRELL: Looking at this Cuyahoga Valley map, you are pointing to the north end, just south of Bedford Metro Park.

MR. DONNELLY: The Bedford Metro Park line cuts around that actually, so this was a residential area as was this.

MR. COCKRELL: So he had already bought those in fee and they were marked as scenic easements?

MR. DONNELLY: Right.

MR. COCKRELL: Did that cause a lot of concern among the public when they found out that the acquisitions had gone on and a scenic easement was presented?

MR. DONNELLY: I don't know the answer to that. I would guess that it did, given the short history of the park. Shortly after that I was moved on to other things.

MR. COCKRELL: How much input did John Kawamoto have in the GMP process?

MR. DONNELLY: In the process, very little. In the outcome of the plan, I would say John was the one individual in the Region that took the time to try and understand the alternatives, try and understand the situation and participate in the final development of the document. The Regional staff was a big disappointment in this whole project. From where I sat, there was very little support given to the park. There was virtually no support given

Michael Donnelly

to the planning team. I remember we put together the first set of alternatives pretty rapidly after the initial public meetings because we were on a tight time frame.

We had scheduled either all day or a day and one-half with the Regional Director, the Associates and the Division Chiefs. By the end of 4 or 5 hours there was only one person sitting in the room representing the Regional Office. I was sitting there thinking to myself, "Well, if he is the only one left, then he must be speaking for the Region because everybody else split." He said, "These alternatives won't do, you have to go back and redo them." That was pretty typical of the approach that the Region took to this, with the exception of John K. who got involved.

MR. COCKRELL: Do you think most of the people in Omaha still had the concept that maybe Cuyahoga did not belong in the System and anything that you would recommend, they wouldn't like?

MR. DONNELLY: The first part of that question, I would suppose so, given their actions. Again, I didn't sit down and talk to anybody about it. I don't know that anything we would recommend they wouldn't like, but it seemed that way.

MR. COCKRELL: Before you arrived at the park, or maybe in the very beginning, did you have any direction or marching orders either from the Washington Office or the Regional Office, or even from Birdsell himself about what Cuyahoga should be?

MR. DONNELLY: No. In fact, that was left pretty much up to the planning effort to make that determination. Take the legislation and take the public input, in fact that was the question that we asked the public, the question was, "What kind of park should this be?" Because it surely wasn't New York Harbor and it wasn't Indiana Dunes, it was something else. It probably wasn't a recreational park, it was probably a historical park. We received quite a lot of public input concerning what kind of park the public was looking for. Looking back through the congressional records and the debates that were held in Congress and our own feelings, we fashioned a vision and produced a Statement for Management, the first document that came out of the effort, and got that out to the public to define the resources and the objectives, special features of the park. I think that probably gave individuals a pretty clear vision of what the Park Service was going to do in that park.

MR. COCKRELL: Would you say that what you produced, both the Statement for Management and the final GMP reflected Bill Birdsell's vision of Cuyahoga? Or did he even have a vision before this was produced?

Michael Donnelly

MR. DONNELLY: As any Superintendent put in that position, I think he was trapped in the immediacy of the day. I don't believe had the luxury to sit back and entertain philosophical thoughts about the future. He was pretty much alone in the park, particularly during that first six to eight months. His staff was the planning team. He was trying to make contacts and build coalitions and keep everybody happy and that doesn't give you a lot of time to think about the future.

MR. COCKRELL: Did the GMP process at Cuyahoga Valley break any new ground in terms of Servicewide planning?

MR. DONNELLY: It invented what is now called the Small Group Workshop Public Meeting Format. Ken Hornbeck was a new employee in the Service Center. He was a sociologist who brought to the team, a real good background in community organization and coalition building. He and Dennis Piper took a process that had been used in Wisconsin for land use decisions for some years and refashioned it slightly for the Park Service. What the process is intended to do, and I think did in Cuyahoga very, very successfully, is to get everyone who comes to the meeting to have a chance to get their ideas out on the floor.

There is no soapbox. There is no microphone. There is no domination of the conversation. It is neighbor talking to neighbor about values and how those values can be used to fashion a plan and a park. I remember the first meeting we had in Peninsula, in the elementary school/high school, whatever it was. We were prepared to handle about 300 people. The meeting started at 7:30. About 6:15, all the seats were full, the aisles were full and there were people standing in the hall outside the auditorium. So we did a quick head count and there was around 500 people as I recall. It was scary.

MR. COCKRELL: What was the mood of the people?

MR. DONNELLY: Many of the individuals were valley landowners and gave off feelings of if we can't shoot them, we will hang them! But I guess we were too dumb to know any different and we were successful in getting all of these folks to actively participate. When it was all over, they came back in the auditorium and presented their ideas and actually gave us some applause for being the first unit of government that they had ever seen that seemed to want their input. We had about 15 meetings throughout the Cleveland/Akron area over a period of a couple of weeks.

MR. COCKRELL: I have been told that the planning process was slowed down a bit by a lot of people coming to these meetings, but wanting to talk about their own personal situation, if their land was included in the boundaries and if it was, were they going to

Michael Donnelly

be fee or scenic easement? Was that true? Were some more interested in land acquisition matters?

MR. DONNELLY: Yes, if you lived in or near an emerging park, that question is always on your mind. We did deal with a lot of that, but that didn't have any negative effect on the effort. That is just something that you normally deal with.

MR. COCKRELL: Was there any hostility or resentment that you guys were coming from Denver, Colorado, and telling the people in Ohio what kind of park they wanted?

MR. DONNELLY: Yes, but that was overcome real fast. I was there quite a lot. I would say probably 40% of the time over the 18-24 months I was in Cleveland or Akron. So my face became very familiar with most of the people, whether they were in the metro parks or citizens or planning agencies in and around town.

MR. COCKRELL: Some of the critics of the park have charged that the Park Service did not do enough to inform the public about what the park was to become. This criticism intensified as the land acquisition program was in full force. How would you respond to this?

MR. DONNELLY: They don't know what they are talking about. The public involvement effort that was put forth for this plan far exceeded anything that had ever been done in that state by anybody. If they didn't know what was going on, that was their fault. I don't think a day went by that there wasn't an article in the **Cleveland Plain Dealer** and **Akron Beacon Journal**, as well as the other local papers. It was on the news almost every night. We had over the course of the entire effort, probably 50 organized Federal Register type meetings, probably 200 special meetings.

We put together, with the help of a lot of people, the Cuyahoga Valley Communities Council. We were dealing with 37 jurisdictions. We could not go to each city council meeting. There wasn't enough time. So what we did was ask the political jurisdictions and subdivisions to get a representative and come to a monthly joint meeting, at which time we would talk about the park and they could bring their concerns as to what was going to happen to the fire department, the school tax district, or whatever it was. Everything was put forth on one table and we would deal with it. Now for somebody to stand there and say they didn't know what was going on is unbelievable. Most of that came from individuals who didn't want to be in the park, who wanted to be left alone. So you say, "Well nobody ever told me." Well, I am sorry about that.

MR. COCKRELL: I came across some information in the files relating to a February 1975 meeting in Cleveland between the Park

Michael Donnelly

Service and NASA over the feasibility of NASA developing and using solar energy to benefit the developing park. What were some of the plans put forth and what was the outcome of that?

MR. DONNELLY: The plans never got past the conceptual stage. The lab in northwest Cleveland was developing for NASA the photovoltaic cell which is very common now. At the time it was very new. It was to be the power generating source for Skylab. They were looking for an opportunity to test these to make them cost-effective to be commercially available, which is one of NASA's charges. They said, "We would like to build a visitor's center for the park and power it by photovoltaic cells. Are you interested?" We said, "You bet! Why wouldn't we be?" So we had three or four meetings with folks at NASA and I can't remember what happened. I know it got kiboshed. I think it was a question of money. We didn't have any money. In the end, the whole idea of the solar power visitor's center died.

MR. COCKRELL: Do you remember who on the Park Service side was involved in these meetings?

MR. DONNELLY: The only one I could pinpoint would be Bill Birdsell.

MR. COCKRELL: In February of 1976, Birdsell was in the hospital after suffering a heart attack and Randy Pope was brought in as acting superintendent. At a planning meeting in Valley View, I believe it was, people were upset about a map that had been published in a Cleveland paper that showed 4,000 acres in the Valley View area were going to be included in the park boundaries. Evidently, this was the first they ever knew about it and they were very upset. Could you relate what happened during this public meeting?

MR. DONNELLY: There were two public meetings. I don't recall the meeting Randy attended. The northern end of the park was extremely narrow where Tinker's Creek emptied into the river. What was happening in that part of the area was that, high intensity industrial uses were being zoned around the park contrary to a lot of verbal commitments by local jurisdictions that that would not happen. The Corps of Engineers was at least talking about damming Tinker's Creek, which would drastically modify the land between the Bedford Reservation, a Cleveland Metro Park, and Cuyahoga Valley National Recreation Area. The more we looked at it from a long-term land use and visitor use perspective, the more we became convinced that a land-based connection between Bedford and the Ohio and Erie Canal, in the area of Wilson's Mill, was absolutely vital for the long term health of the park.

Michael Donnelly

So we began looking at how one might fashion a boundary. We wanted it understood, and I thought that Bill had pretty much taken care of this with the mayor and the town council of the city of Valley View, that this area was not a fee purchase, only easements with a smattering of trail access corridors. Apparently, communications somewhere along the line broke down, because you are right, the citizens went absolutely bananas. I don't blame them.

We were asked to attend an emergency town council meeting. We got there and the map was hanging on the wall. It became obvious to me in discussions with the mayor and town council before we went out onto the stage that there was a portion of the town council that felt this was a good thing. There was yet another portion that felt this was absolutely horrendous that the Park Service would even consider this. The meeting accomplished very little. We were able to present the easement concept, however, virtually no one believed us.

MR. COCKRELL: Had anything like that ever happened before?

MR. DONNELLY: To me? Sure. I am used to that happening. Whenever you are dealing with people's land, that happens. That is just the way it goes. I guess we were in there perhaps an hour. When we went out, most of the folks had gone. And this little girl, she must have been maybe 10 came up, and said, "Mr. Donnelly?" and I bent down because I don't like to look down at little kids. I looked her in the eye and I said, "Yes?" She said, "I would like to apologize for the way my parents and their friends treated you tonight, because I think what you are doing is for me and my friends." I said, "Little girl, you just made this whole night worth it!" It was really sweet. The objective in that Valley View/Tinker's Creek area was not to go in there with fee ownership. The objective was to include it in the boundary for the purpose of preventing industrialization and physically connecting the park units of that valley, not to move people out, not to bring a lot of visitors into that community. Hopefully, that message got through.

MR. COCKRELL: Congressman Ron Mottl got involved because of the Valley View incident. Did he misread the situation?

MR. DONNELLY: Totally. I don't believe the NPS provided the Congressman with the information he needed to make an informed decision.

MR. COCKRELL: What was done to turn him around?

MR. DONNELLY: I don't know.

Michael Donnelly

MR. COCKRELL: So he was no longer trying to oppose the Park Service?

MR. DONNELLY: Right.

MR. COCKRELL: What kinds of pressures were being put on the team to speed up the GMP so that the boundary expansion issue could be resolved?

MR. DONNELLY: None. We had laid out a schedule when we started the job and I believe that we were very close to maintaining that. We may have been late by a couple of weeks or so, but that wasn't too bad. The biggest problem in the whole schedule was that the legislation called for a land acquisition plan to be published six months in advance of the General Management Plan. That is the opposite way that you should do business. First, you make a determination on how to use the land or preserve the resources on it. That tells you how to buy it, whether in fee or easement or leave it alone. So we had to accelerate the development, visitor use and resource management portion of the plan to have some idea as to how the land acquisition should take place. That was difficult. We didn't have any land base maps and no idea where property lines were. It was unbelievable, the lack of preparedness on the part of the Park Service to undertake this. The state was being recalcitrant at best.

MR. COCKRELL: Why was that?

MR. DONNELLY: I was told privately by an individual from Columbus in the state office that they felt that they got taken to the cleaners on this because the state was developing a state park in Cuyahoga long before the Park Service arrived. In fact, we arrived the day they had their last public meeting on the State Master Plan, which is called Cuyahoga Valley 1975. The state had spent possibly \$1 million dollars in doing this plan. Most of that went to collecting information on traffic, school districts, taxes, and natural and cultural resources. We spent six to eight months negotiating with the state to have that information turned over to the Park Service.

MR. COCKRELL: They did not want to give it to you?

MR. DONNELLY: No.

MR. COCKRELL: I thought part of the agreement all along was that if the national recreation area was established that they would not only turn over their lands, but cooperate in every way with the Park Service?

Michael Donnelly

MR. DONNELLY: That is correct. You read that correctly. But they didn't do either.

MR. COCKRELL: Was it because those promises were made under a Democratic governor and then the administration in Columbus changed to a Republican governor?

MR. DONNELLY: I don't believe that was the reason. I do know that the state planning office and state parks or state DNR, I can't remember which, really felt that they got shafted out of a major state park.

MR. COCKRELL: And the information was finally turned over?

MR. DONNELLY: Yes, it was turned over about a month after the point at which we could have used it.

MR. COCKRELL: By that time you had gathered the information?

MR. DONNELLY: No, by that time we were so far down the road in developing the visitor use development and resource management proposals that the information we got could only serve to validate certain assumptions we had made. It was one of those things.

MR. COCKRELL: In 1976 Congress approved adding 900 acres to Cuyahoga Valley. Why did this go through before the NPS boundary study was approved in the fall of 1977?

MR. DONNELLY: I remember that. Do you know where the 900 acres were?

MR. COCKRELL: Kind of scattered in various parts along the periphery.

MR. DONNELLY: That was a proposal that was made after looking at the legislative boundary. The legislation allowed the Park Service to make minor boundary adjustments. All of those boundary adjustments that were being proposed were to bring land into the park that had visitor use and development potential. Most of it was upland property, flat, good soils, good access off the major road systems. If you look at the boundary that Congress gave us, most of it was comprised of land with 40 to 60% wooded slopes which is scenic, but if you want recreation to occur, you have got to have some flat land.

This is where everything fell apart later, with Bill's death. Probably a lot of it is my fault. I didn't explain it well enough to the folks in the Region. We went after some major parcels at key intersections along the two major roads that parallel the park with the intention of not developing those lands for 20 to 30

Michael Donnelly

years, or until such time as they became critical for development of this park. We realized that development money, if it came, would be spent on the immediate resources like the canal and the mill, or stabilizing the CCC resources in the metro parks. They were beginning to fall into disrepair. The real capital investment to support intensive visitor use would be well down the road, but you needed the land base to support that development when it came. If you wanted to entertain a transportation system from Cleveland or from Akron, you needed a place for those buses or whatever vehicles you used to drop people off. You need a place to greet and to orient, you cannot do that on a wooded hillside.

So we recommended a boundary adjustment to include those lands. I made a presentation to Congressman Seiberling in his office with John K., Jerry Patten and Ray Freeman. Ray was the Associate Director for Planning and Development, WASO. I explained the theory to him and why we were proposing these boundary alterations. He said, "That makes some sense. We will do that." That is how that happened. The boundary adjustments weren't necessarily linked all that tightly to the land acquisition map. The land acquisition map was intended to declare how was the Park Service going to buy land.

For reasons which are probably unknown to many people, the Park Service did not have any land acquisition people. They had all been let go. We still had land officers and realty officers in the Regions, but we had no field staff to conduct negotiations with individual owners, to do appraisals and all that.

The National Park Service contracted with the Corps of Engineers. The Corps of Engineers only buys land for one reason, to flood it. And if you are going to flood it, you can't allow somebody to live there under life estate or easement.

MR. COCKRELL: Weren't they educated about that?

MR. DONNELLY: As far as I know, the education was incomplete.

MR. COCKRELL: How could that possibly happen?

MR. DONNELLY: I thought it was going on. The land acquisition field office was in the park and they reported to the Superintendent.

MR. COCKRELL: Do you think that was an intentional plan on the part of Bill Birdsell?

MR. DONNELLY: No.

Michael Donnelly

MR. COCKRELL: Did he see Cuyahoga Valley with a lot of inholders in it? Did he want a lot of inholders in it?

MR. DONNELLY: No. He was a very traditional Park Service field manager and I know from talking to him that it was his belief that if you are going to manage it, you have to own it.

MR. COCKRELL: So the Corps was contracted with for about two years and then when it got a little bit heated, the Park Service found their own money to hire their own staff. But then, I don't think all that many easements were purchased until right before Birdsell died. They did start buying a couple of scenic easements finally.

MR. DONNELLY: Is that how it happened?

MR. COCKRELL: Yes, but it was mostly all fee acquisition for the first four years. One of the major controversies in the town of Independence was a proposed landfill at the Hydraulic Press Brick Company. Could you explain the background to that, what some of the headaches were?

MR. DONNELLY: The city of Cleveland was rapidly running out of sanitary landfill space for the entire metropolitan area. I think they had six years left on every landfill they had. So they were out looking for additional sites. They found this quarry that had been dormant for years. It seemed to them to make sense to fill this quarry up with rubbish and then fill it over and restore the forest. The city of Independence chose to fight this recommendation and enlisted the help of the National Park Service and the EPA. The planning team recommended against adding this parcel to the park. Ultimately, the political process being what it is, the parcel was added to the park. I don't know what Cleveland did about their landfill needs.

MR. COCKRELL: This past year it finally went through the courts and it was blocked, so no landfill. Was there ever any consideration given to expanding the park to the upper reaches of the Cuyahoga River in Portage and Geauga Counties or south along the canal beyond Akron?

MR. DONNELLY: No, not north. There were two A95 units, one in the north and one in the south. A95 was a funding mechanism for local governments through the Feds and you had to coordinate with the A95 districts. I think those became what we now call Council of Governments. We talked to the A95 folks about some sort of public use corridor from the northern end of our park to parks along Lake Erie. In fact, we went back to that idea when we did the Cleveland, Akron, Lorraine urban study in 1978. There was never any serious discussion about having the Park Service move north of the legislated boundary. In the south, there was some very serious

Michael Donnelly

discussion about adding floodplain land to the park to provide a physical link with a park that either the city of Akron or Summit County was developing. It was our feeling that it would be to the benefit of the metropolitan population to have those two parcels linked somehow. However, by that time, the boundary was set and we did not actively pursue the idea.

MR. COCKRELL: Part of the planning process at Cuyahoga was that transportation study which came out in 1980 or 1981. Was it difficult for the GMP without knowing how the transportation situation was going to go down?

MR. DONNELLY: Yes it was. We felt that--folks up in Gateway and New York City were facing the same thing--public transportation to this park was the key to the success of the park. Down the road, 20 or so years from now, this park could not be an automobile dependent park. It would probably be a cousin to Central Park, surrounded by dense residential/commercial developments and serving as a walk-in park for nearby residents and a public transportation park for other metropolitan area residents. We planned the internal road network based on that concept. We attempted to get the political jurisdictions through the transportation districts interested in upgrading for future use. We began looking at the possibility of bus systems going between Akron and Cleveland.

At the same time, the ICC was conducting a hearing on abandonment of a rail line to the east of the park. It went from Cleveland to Cincinnati. So we started making noises about not abandoning that rail line, but converting that rail line into a surface rail transportation system for commuters that would double as a park access system during the weekends. We even went as far as to identify major road intersections on that rail line where stations could be developed and those stations could in fact, have Park Service personnel in them. The concept was to take the train to a local station, get oriented, get on a bus, go over to the park, and spend a day. Another was the excursion line that went from, I believe the Zoo down to Hale Farm. We never held out much hope for that as a primary transportation source. It was more of an attraction, a "historic" feature that was nice. We felt that it would be cost prohibitive for most people in the metropolitan area to use that as a source of transportation to access the park.

MR. COCKRELL: Do you know what the outcome of that was?

MR. DONNELLY: On the outcome of that whole transportation idea?

MR. COCKRELL: No, of that historic train route? The Park Service now owns it. In 1986, John Seiberling pushed the bill through and the Park Service now owns the tracks from somewhere in Cleveland all the way down into Akron at Quaker Square downtown. Originally,

Michael Donnelly

there were ten planning units that the park was divided into. There is a footnote here in the very beginning that says that this was revised down to nine. Why was that?

MR. DONNELLY: Faintly I recall having some discussions about the units with Bill Birdsell. Bill was concerned that patrol rangers would radio in and say, "I am in the Blossom Unit," or something, when in fact they were at Blossom Music Center. So he wanted to clean up the names and make them sub-district units. It was really for radio communication purposes. I thought, "Why wait until the end to tell me this, Bill? Why didn't you tell me this a year ago? It would have made things a lot easier."

MR. COCKRELL: What were the major areas of disagreement? This is my last question.

MR. DONNELLY: The major areas of disagreement within the Park Service was what lands are going to be in fee and what lands are going to be in easement and how should the purchase of those properties be prioritized? To the best of my memory, I think the planning team felt that the fee lands on the upland areas ought to be first. By and large, those were not residential lands, they were open fields. Once you got past the land acquisition, the next major area of disagreement was the makeup of the internal road network. I think we proposed to abandon most of the mileage in the park and keep one road running the length of the valley.

MR. COCKRELL: Riverview Road?

MR. DONNELLY: Yes, and even that got involved in land acquisition because, if that was going to be the main arterial in the park, it was going to be real difficult to maintain private use along that road. Because you are going to have a lot of people and buses and what have you on that road, and the folks who live along there are going to be saying, "I can't live here any more because there is too much traffic." So we tried to avoid that. We, in fact, needed title to a lot of those properties that bordered the road, but we did not need to take occupancy immediately.

There was a major disagreement about what kind of NEPA document ought to be produced. It was the team's feeling that an environmental assessment was sufficient, as opposed to environmental impact statement. We felt the real area of impact was the passage of legislation that said, this land is going to be public land. The decision to go EIS was made very, very late, after we had done an environmental assessment, issued draft plans and all that, so the public got confused as to what it was we were doing.

The last area of disagreement was the whole question of how does one treat the metro parks, whether they were in Cuyahoga County or

Michael Donnelly

Summit County. The coordination with the Cleveland Metro Parks was real good. They took a real interest in the plan and actively participated. Unfortunately, there never seemed to be a tangible agreement between the Park Service and the two metropark systems as to what is the future of these parks? Not who is going to own them, but how are we going to use them and how do they fit into the overall fabric of this huge recreation area? It would have been good for the park and good for the planning effort had we been able to go forward as a "troika" rather than the collective but separate relationship that existed.

MR. COCKRELL: Do you think Akron Metro Parks maybe was a little bit burned about giving up Virginia Kendall to the Park Service and was afraid that any more of its territory might be taken away?

MR. DONNELLY: Probably yes. I mean, I would. It is like somebody walking in from Wyoming and saying, "Why don't you give Yellowstone to the state?" You can imagine what our reaction would be.

MR. COCKRELL: So relations between the Park Service and the Metro Parks, where they pretty good?

MR. DONNELLY: Yes, I thought that they were good. There was a very good professional relationship. We just couldn't get the politics, in the finest sense of the word, together to make it better.

MR. COCKRELL: Is there anything that I have not asked that I should have? Anything that we might have overlooked?

MR. DONNELLY: No, I think you have covered it.

MR. COCKRELL: Is there anything else?

MR. DONNELLY: After this was all said and done and we walked away from it, about six or seven years later, John Kawamoto told me in a private moment that he felt that we had done a very good job under very adverse circumstances. I passed that along to all of the team members. I found them wherever they were and told them that. Everybody felt that coming from John K., that meant something; that that made it OK. So we all agreed to toast John someday when we all got back together.

[END]

O R A L H I S T O R Y I N T E R V I E W

F O R T H E

A D M I N I S T R A T I V E H I S T O R Y O F

C U Y A H O G A V A L L E Y

N A T I O N A L R E C R E A T I O N A R E A

O H I O

Dave Dornfeld

**Visitor Protection Specialist
Cuyahoga Valley National Recreation Area
National Park Service**

**May 22, 1989
Brecksville, Ohio**

Interviewed by:

**Ron Cockrell
Historian
Midwest Regional Office
National Park Service**

**Omaha, Nebraska
1989**

Dave Dornfeld

Dave Dornfeld

MR. COCKRELL: I thought I would start the interview by asking you to give me a basic overview of your background and career.

MR. DORNFELD: Basically, I have been in the National Park Service since 1974. I started out with the St. Croix National Scenic Riverway in Minnesota and Wisconsin. I worked approximately three summers up there, working in each district. I was in law enforcement, resource management, and interpretation, usually in the fall times of the year because they can only keep so many seasonals on. I also worked in land acquisition.

After that, I decided that I would like to see if I could get a winter position with the National Park Service. Since the opportunities for permanent employment were not real good at that time, I decided to put in for some different parks in the Midwest Region. I didn't want to go really too far.

Initially I got a call from Cuyahoga Valley National Recreation Area. They offered me a GS-4 position as a Park Technician at that time. The same day, I got a call from Biscayne National Monument in Florida and they offered me a GS-5 position. I told them that I would like to check with Cuyahoga Valley first. My main reason behind that really was to see if Cuyahoga Valley would offer me a GS-5, which after I told them Biscayne offered me a 5, they did.

The main reason Cuyahoga Valley really wanted me, and I did find this out, is because of my land acquisition background. I ended up working at St. Croix National Scenic Riverway, taking over lands, working with the Land Acquisition Office in all three summers. I did clean-up of the sites, takeover of the sites, and worked directly with the lands office in checking out properties to make sure they were suitable for the Park Service to take them over, whether it be problems with structures or what was on the land as far as any adverse use, these types of things.

I did this all three seasons. One of the seasons I did a resource campground inventory on the lower end of the St. Croix National Scenic Riverway, which was the St. Croix River, and part of the Namekagon which is in Wisconsin. We also did a BLM island study on the lower end of the St. Croix. I believe now the islands have been taken over by the National Park Service. I ended up writing my first citation--which I was scared to death--in the middle of the woods up in Trego, Wisconsin, which is in the northern end of the park, for a guy making park benches out of park trees. Fortunately, I had another ranger with me to calm me down so my hand would steady so I could write the citation! I will never, ever forget that.

After that, it was a little bit easier. At that time, we did not carry weapons and did not have radios. After that season I worked

Dave Dornfeld

with the local schools and running visitor centers up in both Grantsburg and the Trego area. I decided after working in resource management, law enforcement, and interpretation, I would like to try another park.

In October 1976, I started at the Cuyahoga Valley National Recreation Area. At this time, I worked for Superintendent Bill Birdsell and worked again in all areas, including maintenance for the park. I was basically the first ranger to be hired on with one other gentleman, Mr. Dick Williams. We were the first two permanent rangers to be hired on to the park.

MR. COCKRELL: Did you have a position description at all?

MR. DORNFELD: I don't remember having a position description because of the vast area of my duties. It was so broad that they just needed a body down there to do all of these things. I was acting almost as Chief Ranger, Interpreter and Resource Management person all at once, working directly for Superintendent Birdsell.

MR. COCKRELL: When you first arrived here, what were your impressions of this new area, and how has that changed since there have been new developments here?

MR. DORNFELD: My initial impression of the area as I crossed Highway 80 over the Cuyahoga River, I was kind of surprised due to the fact that when they told me it was between Cleveland and Akron, I felt it was going to be more of a urban-type setting. If you talk to other Park Service people, most believe that this is truly an urban setting. To me it is not. It leans more towards rural than an urban setting.

My initial impression was really good. I said, "I am from the back country of St. Croix National Scenic Riverway." I did all of those back country things and I took the chance because it was close to go down to Cuyahoga Valley. They really wanted me because of the land acquisition experience. In fact, there were no signs, no nothing. All I had were directions on a map on how to get to this house off of State Highway 303. When you exit, you get off Highway 8. I went to the first motel I came to, which was the Virginia Motel. I remember it well and it is still there. I ended up staying there that night before I went and looked for the park office because I got in late.

The next morning, I got up and drove to the intersection of Highways 8 and 303, and went down to a brick house off of 303, which at that time was the park headquarters. Before that from what I understand the Superintendent was working out of the Holiday Inn on Highway 8 with a card table in his room. That is initially how Superintendent Birdsell started out. I can't remember for

Dave Dornfeld

sure, but I believe the Land Acquisition Office was also intact at that time off of Boston Mills Road. I guess you realize this went on 12 and a half years ago, so some of this stuff is a little fuzzy.

I reported to the Secretary in that office. I believe her name was Lynn Carst. We had a Maintenance Worker named Chris Hastings who got there two weeks ahead of me. We had another Maintenance Worker by the name of Gordon Keckler, who was in another program, a county program--I forget the name of it--working for the park also. Administratively, I can't remember the name of the person that we had. I think we had one Administrative person at that time. I don't know if he was there or not, but Bob Holmes, the Management Assistant, entered into this. Either he was there or shortly after I got there, he entered the picture as a Management Assistant.

Just a little back note, the first seasonal Ranger there was named Dave Pintar, who was there ahead of me. I came in October of 1976, so he was there that summer before me and was the actual first Ranger. My duties and responsibilities as outlined by the Superintendent were very broad. His main purpose in getting me at this time was for me to deal with these land acquisition people in the valley.

At that time, there was an organization called the Park Federation, with Sheridan Steele, who is now in the Washington Training Program in Washington, D.C. He was the head of it at that time. We worked very closely with them. When I say we, I mean actually the whole park staff. We worked directly with them in getting cooperation throughout the valley in making the transition period a little bit easier. They were a very interesting group of people because they came from all aspects of life through the valley. I believe it really did help this park as far as the transition period goes.

We also had another group called the Cuyahoga Valley Communities Council, which was again, community members helping to establish the park in the area. I attended different public meetings. Normally, the meetings were very positive as far as the townspeople, whatever town we were in. You also had the Homeowners Association, which was fighting the park and still does fight the park in certain aspects. The Homeowners Association was a group of people that formed because they did not want the park in the valley. They did not want their homes taken.

It was hard for me as the only law enforcement person--when I first got hired it was seasonally--to explain to people that the National Park was here and the boundaries were established by Congress and I was here just doing my job. It was almost to a point where if they found out if I was in the area, I had to kind of watch myself,

Dave Dornfeld

initially, because the feelings were very antagonistic towards any of the Park Service people being on any land.

The Land Acquisition Office sent their letters out saying that the Park Service would be acquiring their land, they would give them a consideration for their property. Early on, I would say we ended up condemning many properties and going through the U.S. District Court in Cleveland. It was the same way with easements. At that time, they weren't called preservation easements. I believe they were called scenic easements.

The park basically was saved, or I should say the valley was saved and established into a park for two different reasons as far as I am concerned. Number one, poor water quality within the entire area. Number two, the Ohio and Erie Canal, the historical aspects as far as being of national significance. The Cuyahoga Valley Association decided that this area should be saved. Along with that group and the public hearings that were held by the Superintendent--I believe he did a very good job in making sure these things were being held--they got together with Congressman Seiberling, who is considered the father of the park. The park bill was brought to Congress and in 1974 it was proclaimed. In 1975 it was established as a park unit of the National Park Service.

MR. COCKRELL: Would you say that the community here understood what a National Park Service area entailed?

MR. DORNFELD: No. In fact, the lack of personnel for the Park Service at the time, and trying to educate all of these people, was almost impossible. They needed more manpower to do this type of thing. I gave some programs to churches, school and whatever, but I could only do so much. The land acquisition programs and the law enforcement was not easy. But, I think that the initial antagonistic part of the people in the valley was that they didn't understand what the park was actually doing there. They didn't understand what a National Park was all about. The people in the valley did not understand what their rights were as far as being able to stay within the area, whether it be on a term occupancy or whether it be on a life estate, which again they could do if they wanted to.

MR. COCKRELL: Wasn't that explained to them when the acquisition people talked to them?

MR. DORNFELD: Yes. But the problem with that was that these people have been here for generations. They did not want to leave the area. They wouldn't have to, that is true, but they did not want to have the feeling of having any type of takeover by the National Park Service or the Federal Government, whether it even

Dave Dornfeld

be an easement telling them, "Well, you cannot cut these trees." On some of our initial properties, I said, "Well, you people cannot be on here with your snowmobiles," I felt very threatened at times because I was not armed. This was evident until 1978.

They finally sent me to Federal Law Enforcement School in Georgia. There was definitely a need for some law enforcement in the area. I tried to turn my cheek, which I did many times, talking to these landowners. I was a lot of times the initial contact on a takeover of a property. I had to go out and meet these people. I had people crying on my shoulders. I had people swearing at me. I had people doing everything under the sun that you can imagine trying to have the NPS not takeover their property, trying to persuade me verbally, saying that the government shouldn't be able to do this.

Sometimes it was very hard. I had to be somewhat sympathetic towards a lot of these people. But then again, I explained to them each time what their options were. It didn't really seem to make any difference. The park was here, we were going to take the land and it didn't matter what the stipulations were. Whether it was good or bad for them, they were still going to be antagonistic toward the park.

Mr. Birdsell, the Superintendent, took a very strong stand on what was established as far as land acquisition goes for the boundaries within the park. They had to figure out which tracts would be acquired, either fee ownership, a scenic easement or an agricultural easement. When you tried to explain that to someone in the valley that these things were set up and established by Congress, it didn't make any difference. It is just that they were going to lose their land and we shouldn't be here.

I got a little bit frustrated after the first few takeovers. Finally I started seeing homes disappear. What we did was put them up for public bid. If they didn't get bid on, a demolition contract was put into effect and we cleared out the area. I have seen many areas here cleaned up. It looks so different now. If you go through the valley now in comparison to 12 and a half years ago, the amount of open space and dumps and trash that the personnel in this park have cleaned up, including the quality of the river which has been upgraded, it has really made a big difference.

The biggest takeover in the whole aspect of this park was the takeover of the Virginia Kendall Ledges or the Virginia Kendall areas which initially was turned over by the state to be run by the Akron Metro Parks. The main areas that we got are our major use areas even today and probably will be for a while. We ended up getting trail systems, picnic areas, fishing areas, and sledding hill areas. We try to keep those intact as much as possible.

Dave Dornfeld

The only thing that is not intact today like it used to be is the toboggan chutes. They were considered a safety hazard. They were not in good shape. We did not have the personnel to run them in recent years here. At this time, I believe they are being surveyed, to be taken out and not to be replaced. I did, however, get the opportunity to go down them. They were open two years and I did get to go down them. It is a heck of a ride, let me tell you.

MR. COCKRELL: Was there a lot of public opposition to that being closed down?

MR. DORNFELD: Not that I have heard of, but once we got to the point where it got cold enough even for the ice to be on them so you could slide down them, we didn't have that many days that we were open. In order for you to go out on the lake per National Park Service regulations, I believe the ice has to be at least seven inches thick. So that is the only time we could really open the area. Or if it wasn't cold enough, there was no way you could open them.

We had volunteers mainly run the chutes. We didn't have the NPS personnel; we have to use volunteers. Early on, Mr. Birdsell got some volunteers helping him out with interpretive programs and whatever. But in the Kendall operation, we really got a lot of volunteers to help out. That operation consisted probably of at least 20 volunteers each evening.

MR. COCKRELL: Virginia Kendall Park experienced some problems because consumption of alcohol was initially permitted. Can you outline some of the problems?

MR. DORNFELD: Oh yes, there is another very major point that needs to be made here. When the Federal Government got the Virginia Kendall areas, there were no regulations per se on the use of alcohol within the area. In most national parks, at least within this area, alcohol was banned, like at Perry's Victory and William Howard Taft and Mound City Group. All of the state parks, all of the metro parks, banned alcohol. The only area that you could drink was Cuyahoga Valley. After about six months, my wife and I went down to South Forks State Park in southern Ohio. We heard people talking, kids mainly, about going up to Cuyahoga Valley National Recreation Area to party!

The staff at this time was growing. We now are getting more Park Ranger positions. We established a District Ranger and a Chief Ranger position. We are running these areas and we have some seasonal people too that are law enforcement-commissioned. We also had a small interpretive staff, nothing in Resource Management except Mr. Rod Royce. He was here as a Resource Management

Dave Dornfeld

Specialist and he came down from Indiana Dunes after I did. It must have been about a half-a-year to a year after I did.

Bob Byrne came in as a Chief Ranger. Lloyd Kortge came in as a District Ranger. Then there was myself and approximately four or five other permanent Rangers in law enforcement and some seasonals. The interpretive staff was basically just seasonal people running it for quite a while until we got Doug Palmer in. He has been around for quite a while as a Recreation Specialist.

After the Kendall takeover, a major change of events occurred. We started getting all types of gangs. We started getting all types of low-lives, lots of drugs and alcohol involved up at the area. My main situation was that our District Ranger at that time, Lloyd Kortge, used to take us to Big Bob's in the morning to have coffee on weekends to mellow us out before we went into battle. I thought Lloyd did a real good job of calming the troops and getting them ready--if you want to say it that way--to where we basically went over our strategy.

Usually on the weekends it got to a point to where we could not even house all of the visitors that were coming to our major use areas in the Ledges, Kendall Lake, and Octagon areas mainly. We also were getting people at the hills. We had all those parking lots in Virginia Kendall Hills. There was no way that we could be every place where we needed to be. It was a never-ending battle. We were making arrests, writing even more citations than we ever have. I was getting bottles thrown at me. I was pulling weapons off of people. We were macing people, drawing our weapons. It was a situation to where something had to be done. This went on for I would say a couple of years if I remember. We finally got a special regulation in what is now 36 CFR 7.17 saying that there are no open containers of alcohol allowed within Cuyahoga Valley National Recreation Area.

MR. COCKRELL: How did you go about enforcing that?

MR. DORNFELD: We went about it very, very cautiously. The initial thing that we did is that we wrote all of the schools and let them know what was going on. Then we went public with it. We signed our major areas. For the first year, it was a warning-type basis. We did not really write that many citations. I think we would not have given the public a fair chance if we wrote citations initially, even though they were warned when they came in, to get used to not being able to drink in the area. We confiscated the alcohol or the beer that was brought into the park and gave them a warning. We put it on what we call FI cards, so we knew that a person had been warned before. Usually on a second incident, you would end up writing a citation.

Dave Dornfeld

I should mention that we also established a communications center at this time located directly across from the park dormitory at 607 Streetsboro Road. This is where both Chris Hastings and I lived. I have lived in quarters before, but this is probably the most plush quarters I have ever lived in. Again there were some major problems with water. The whole valley has problems with water. A lot of iron content, sulphur content through the valley.

Getting back to the liquor ban, we got to a point to where we had to even extend our staff and go at one time to 24-hours because there was so much stuff going on. We had one person on for the whole park. At that time, we only had one district. We initially were down at Pine Lane, which is now a trail head. From Pine Lane, we then moved down to what is now the Everett Ranger Station as one district. For a while, we were working out of both areas. I think we were at Pine Lane for about a year and one half or two years, then we moved down to Everett.

Working out of Everett was a lot better. We had a lot more facilities there for search and rescue stuff and all of this type of thing. Early on, we did get involved also in the law enforcement aspect with some deaths, some drownings, some search and rescues, that type of thing. One of the deaths happened to be Mrs. Clark who lived on Stanford Road over here. Her husband was not all together and made basically a lot of threats against the park. I think they had some problems and she basically committed suicide. We went ahead and helped and assisted the local entities around here with the body recovery in the river.

We got involved in so many different things here. You have the land acquisition problems, you have the problems with the alcohol, and you had general enforcement problems because you didn't have jurisdiction. We only had at that time, concurrent jurisdiction, which basically means that you can enforce your laws on your land. We now have concurrent jurisdiction which means we can enforce both state and our 36 CFR violations on land concurrently with the local entities.

As time went along, we knew we had to write a new regulation, because it wasn't going well. There was just too much going on. So we got that through and the change over was a little bit rough. Then after a while, people realized that they could not do this. It was an education process. I felt the park did a real good job on that. We just didn't pound down and say, "You can't do this!" We let them know, but we also explained the violation.

In certain cases, we could not explain the violation because people were just so disorderly we ended up arresting them. You win some, you lose some, let me put it that way. You do the best you can. Media coverage and P.R. by the Superintendent's office, the

Dave Dornfeld

education with our slim interpretive division, the Rangers explaining the violations and trying to calm down the landowners, and trying to obtain cooperation with local law enforcement and fire departments, we had our hands full.

MR. COCKRELL: Were there very many acts of vandalism or violence against Park Service property?

MR. DORNFELD: At one time, I forget what year it was, we had 12 arsons. Basically the state and the Park Service were investigating these. We never did find out who did them, we have some ideas. We had a volunteer at that time who everyone thought was true-blue named Paul Baker. We kept getting all of these arsons and he finally decided that he wanted to work out west at the Tetons where he ended up getting caught trying to set two of their structures on fire.

He had all of our building and alarm codes because we trusted him so much for so many years. When it comes right down to it, he came back and they kicked him out of the Tetons, of course. We interviewed him and Peninsula police interviewed him. We did not get a confession out of him, but we still feel to this day that he is the one that set a lot of these fires. In fact, he was on a lot of the investigations. He was always there.

MR. COCKRELL: So did the arson stop when he went to Tetons?

MR. DORNFELD: Yes. When he went to Tetons, everything stopped.

MR. COCKRELL: Is he still here in the park?

MR. DORNFELD: He is still here in this area. In fact, the last I heard, he was working in the summertime at Szalays, which is a farm in the valley that is very noted for their sweet corn crops. In the wintertime, he worked here at Brandywine Ski Area. That was a real interesting time. We had a lot of structures that we were taking over and boarding up. It was a constant thing; houses getting ripped off, windows being broken. With the manpower we had, we were only operating on a 16 hours a day basis instead of 24 hours a day. We just didn't have the manpower and it wasn't working out. We tried to cover what we could the best we could with the manpower we had.

As structures started going out of the valley, people started questioning things. "Why are you tearing down all of these gorgeous houses?" That was another problem that we had, trying to explain the purpose of the National Park being here and what we were trying to do. That was another negative factor toward the National Park Service. These buildings kept being torn down and

Dave Dornfeld

they found out that maybe they could go ahead and buy them. They didn't realize these things were going up for government bid.

The first house in this valley that I remember was sold either for \$46 or \$76 dollars. My picture was in the front page of the Beacon Journal with the house. When people learned about this, we got bids all over the place on these houses. Now it wasn't a total bad thing for the public. Some people were under the impression that "Oh, wow, I can buy a house for this cheap cost!" It wasn't as simple as that though. If we had trees around the house that we did not want cut, or a situation where it would adversely affect the environment, they would have to sometimes cut the building in thirds or tear the building down to get them out of there. Again, we went back the other way.

In recent times here, we are still doing the same thing. I think the management pretty much has stayed the same. I do believe if it effects the resource, the structure will have to be taken down before the resource will be damaged. That is why we are here. I believe all of the managers that we have had, Bill Birdsell, Lew Albert, John Debo, all basically have the same philosophy and I think that is the philosophy of the Park Service. It was real interesting to see the changes in people when they see pictures in the paper of these houses being sold for these phenomenal prices. You get calls left and right. I had to answer calls on land acquisition problems. Fortunately I knew all about land acquisition from working up at St. Croix, so I really helped out.

MR. COCKRELL: Let me ask you about Bill Birdsell in the early days. Following the establishment of the park, how frequently did Birdsell hold staff meetings, if at all, to communicate with his staff?

MR. DORNFELD: He mainly communicated with his Management Assistant which was Ben Holmes. I really don't know how often. They talked with each other every day because they were the only two in the office. When they needed me to do something, I had my assignments basically from either one of them. I went ahead and did what I could. He had to communicate with the Region, but Bill was the type of person that if he could get it Congressionally, whatever he was needed, he would do so.

A lot of times, that created unfavorable feelings with the Regional Office. This is the way things developed and I think one of the reasons why Cuyahoga Valley has had a negative reputation in the Regional Office. I am not totally sure about that, but this is what I have heard. I can't say that some of those add-ons didn't help, because we did get some Congressional add-ons. We did get manpower. We got money. The way that Mr. Birdsell went about

Dave Dornfeld

things was not always proper to the way he was supposed to be doing it.

I do believe that it is the responsibility of the Superintendent to make sure that the needs of the park are known to the Congressional people. But I do think that the overall scheme of things should be relayed to everyone who needs to know. That wasn't always done. That is basically how things got a little bit tense between the park and the Regional Office.

MR. COCKRELL: As the staff grew, did Birdsell give much authority to his staff, or did he closely guard his power?

MR. DORNFELD: Bill was not one to delegate. After Bill died--everybody probably knows he died at his desk--the paperwork was gone through and there was stuff dated four years back. Bill did everything on his own. Bill worked day and night. Bill was very close to this mother. He was not married. A lot of times he would come back at night and do work or he would do it at home. It was just totally amazing. He was a workaholic. He was a true Park Service person. But Bill wanted to run things the way Bill wanted to run them. I think that things would have been better off if he could have delegated more. I think there was nothing really delegated unless he trusted the situation to whomever. The major tasks were all done by Bill.

MR. COCKRELL: How did this hinder park operations?

MR. DORNFELD: It made it kind of rough with me being out in the field. What I knew from Bill and how he wanted things, I knew that I had to watch what I said, how I said it, and when I said it at all times. If I was not sure of what to do, I would give no answer. I would say, "Contact the Superintendent's office." Now maybe that is a cop-out, but no way did I want to get involved in a situation with a new park this early on. I didn't want to get the park in deeper as far as with the general public. I wanted us to have more of a positive attitude. Those things I think initially were passed on to Mr. Holmes, who could say a little bit more than me, because of course he was the Management Assistant. Other than that, we kind of watched our steps.

MR. COCKRELL: During the Birdsell period, how was staff morale?

MR. DORNFELD: I would say it was pretty low due to the fact that you couldn't do anything, even simple things, without prior approval. If you have a college degree and you can't get out there talk to people the way you want to talk to them and find out some information, it's frustrating. Birdsell really didn't want us talking to people. He just wanted me to be friendly, but he didn't really want me to ask questions.

Dave Dornfeld

If there were any major questions, he asked us to have them come to him. That is usually what happened. We were out there mainly as his eyes. If I observed anything--which I did many times--I would report back to him directly. Most of that was adverse use or break-ins of properties that were boarded up by our two lone Maintenance people.

There were times when I think he expected a little too much for the grade and position I was in. For instance, getting called out in the morning because the snow had covered up his driveway to go and plow out his driveway. I had a little bit of a problem with that, although I went ahead and did it, or I probably wouldn't have been there. This was on my day off. This was not during my working days. I don't remember even getting paid for that to be honest with you.

After that, things went kind of downhill, because there were so many responsibilities that I had in all of those different areas. I was doing major reports in the position that Chief Rangers are doing now. I didn't know beans when it came right down to it, so I did the best I could. We didn't have a lot because I was there almost at the inception. In a way, some of them were hard and some of them were pretty easy, because there wasn't a lot there.

When I got there, there had been one incident report written by Dave Pintar. I set up all of these different systems and files creating the instant report system more or less, the accident and injury type of things. I was responsible for the land acquisition files and monthly reports, whether they be law enforcement, interpretive, resource management or whatever, I did them. A lot of them were drafts that went in to Bill, which is a normal thing really. Your supervisor looks them over, they get typed by the Secretary and go out. But you had to do a lot of the digging.

It was very much a learning experience for me. In that aspect, I think I learned a lot, I really did. I learned to have more patience because of the supervision that I did have. Sometimes I think that was a positive factor for me. Bill never got the point where he really yelled at me, but you knew when you didn't do something right or it should have been done another way.

You couldn't say, "I am a seasonal employee. I have only been in the Park Service two seasons and I don't know how to do this yearly report for law enforcement. I worked three years of law enforcement. I didn't carry a gun. I wrote some citations. That was it." You didn't do that. For Bill it was, "You do the report and you get it done and get it to me in draft form."

MR. COCKRELL: Did he rewrite some of your stuff?

Dave Dornfeld

MR. DORNFELD: Bill would rewrite everything. There was nothing that wasn't rewritten, even things from Bob Holmes. Everything was redone. That is why I am saying there was no delegation. Basically, you did the footwork. If he liked it, it went in rewritten. If he didn't like it, he rewrote it and redid the work.

MR. COCKRELL: When the staff grew a little bit and there were division chiefs, how did these chiefs work with Birdsell? Was it a good working relationship?

MR. DORNFELD: Ron Thoman came in. I believe Ron had a half-way decent rapport with Bill. Interpretation was a little bit more on top of the world then than it is now, or was. Bob Byrne and Bill, I believe, tolerated each other. The Resource Management Specialist, Rod Royce, did fine. The Administrative Officer was Gerry McClarnon. I think they went against each other quite a bit. I wasn't in the administrative part of it that much, but there seemed to be a lot of conflict there. I think that the overall morale as far as what was going on there was more of a negative than a positive factor with all division chiefs.

There was no delegation of anything. All of the decisions were made right then and there by Bill or they were never made.

MR. COCKRELL: I have read a couple of Operations Evaluations that were produced I believe in 1976 and 1978 by the Midwest Regional Office. Hugh Beattie was the team leader. The reports were very critical of this park. What was the reaction of the park staff to these reports?

MR. DORNFELD: For one thing, I don't think everybody got to read them. I think the reason that there was a lot of criticism was because the comments of the staff were not very positive. I also think that Bill was not liked even before the team came. There were a lot of the things Bill did that maybe went above the Region's head. Not delegating and the morale being low are the reasons why a lot of the things weren't done as far as Operations Evaluations were concerned.

MR. COCKRELL: What are some of the difficulties that the park has encountered in managing scenic easements and retentions?

MR. DORNFELD: Initially, you would have property where there were 50 acres. Usually retentions are approximately 3 acres. People are used to using all 50 acres. Up to this day our District Rangers, when we takeover lands, are monitoring these retentions to where the people still feel that they can use whatever they want to off of the retention. There was so much--and still is--encroachment on park lands. I think our District Rangers have been doing an

Dave Dornfeld

excellent job managing NPS lands. Way back when it was hard to do it because we had less manpower. For a while there, we were getting property just left and right, whether it be through condemnation or whatever.

I think that was the major problem as far as the retention goes. Not so much that the government owned the property and they were actually leasing from us, because they got their money right away. It was a point that they wanted to do everything they did before, even though they were off of the retention. When you would come and explain it to them, that they can't do that, they want to know, "Well, what is this hurting?" That is not the point. Then if you let some of those go by and other people hear about it, then it blossoms all over the place.

Scenic easements are a little different situation. For one thing, I am not aware altogether how much we were paying for scenic easements. I would say anywhere from 10% to 90%. Even though with a scenic easement we do not own the property, we are buying rights to the property. In other words, in a scenic easement, basically they cannot cut trees, build additions, have commercial operations or animal grazing, without written permission from the Superintendent. We still run into problems with people going ahead and doing things without getting this permission. It is right in the easement that they signed. It is the same way with the retentions.

MR. COCKRELL: Did they just ignore that?

MR. DORNFELD: Yes. They just ignore it. In this case, we don't have the jurisdiction there and where the retention is we do because we own the property. But you still have those regulations being violated in either case. We still find cases today. We are still in the land acquisition stage. We aren't quite buying as much now, but we still have some of the same problems.

MR. COCKRELL: What are the penalties for violating this agreement?

MR. DORNFELD: The fines now have changed. I am the Law Enforcement Specialist now for the park and handle the court system. Depending upon what the violation was, usually if it was a preservation of natural resources, it was anywhere from a \$25 to a \$50 fine. Or if it was a mandatory appearance where they gave the Ranger a rough time, the U. S. Magistrate could fine or incarcerate, \$500, and/or 6 months in jail for each offense.

MR. COCKRELL: Has that been done: jail and a \$500 fine?

MR. DORNFELD: Neither one have gone to the maximum. The U.S. Magistrate's office and the U.S. Attorney's office to this day has

Dave Dornfeld

not accepted the National Park Service really as far as their violations are concerned, because what are they? They are misdemeanors. These people are used to handling mainly felonies. The U.S. Attorney has the right to decide what to do with a case. We have had some turned down. The majority of them, they would rather just either dismiss or else have them pay a minor fine.

We are getting to the point now to where we are getting a lot more incarcerations due to DWI's, and vandalism of structures. I think they are starting to listen to us a little bit more because we are bringing more case to them. I still get this statement once in a while, "Well, why don't you let the state handle it?" "If we are there and on the scene first, we will handle it, and it will be in your court. If you want to dismiss it or do whatever you want to, it is totally up to you, but we are enforcing the laws on the lands that the government owns."

We have gotten another U. S. Attorney in who is a little better. I guess he is not fully aware yet of all the things that happen in the park, so he is taking everything with a grain of salt and helping us out a little bit more.

MR. COCKRELL: What steps did this park take to counter some of the negative publicity that the park opponents were getting across in the media?

MR. DORNFELD: What we did was we had meetings with the Homeowners Association. We had the Park Federation. Again, this was early on though, spreading the word as far as helping us is concerned. There was a 13-member council to help get the park established. We had the Cuyahoga Communities Council, which met monthly, and the Superintendent was a member of that. We also held the public meetings on the park that we are supposed to do, and comments were taken in writing. Everyone had the opportunity basically in this valley to respond to the park being here.

There seemed to be more opposition after the park came. People didn't speak out when they were supposed to. In fact, from what Bill told me, more of the comments at the meetings were positive than negative. Also, there were letters in the Beacon Journal and the Plain Dealer. Everything that needed to be announced publicly was done through the papers or word of mouth with the councils and different committees.

MR. COCKRELL: So people had the opportunity to say what kind of park they wanted?

MR. DORNFELD: People had that opportunity. There is no question in my mind. We have been kind of talking about negative things and what we could do to counteract them. Bill took a strong stand on

Dave Dornfeld

land acquisition. Then the new Superintendent came in, Lew Albert, I think the main thing Lew should be given credit for was mellowing out the landowners in the valley. I think that the times of the harshness and cut-and-dried decisions totally changed when Superintendent Albert came into the Cuyahoga Valley.

He was more lenient in handling special use permits, etcetera. This would help both the landowner and maybe even the Park Service before takeover of the property or structures. A lot of times people had problems getting out of their structures in time. Extensions were then granted. That started to ease feelings somewhat and showed that the Park Service was sensitive to the feelings of the people of the valley that had to leave.

I think that Albert's P.R. with all of the different organizations and political subdivisions that he had to be involved with were a positive factor for the park. Things started changing around in the papers, articles coming out positive as far as for the recreational area in the valley. The editors were being positive towards the park. So you could just kind of feel the trend change. You could feel it even when you went out as a Ranger, too. People were starting to look up to a Park Service uniform a little more.

Again, you have people like Ron Thoman coming in with an interpretive staff that is starting to spread this word and educate the public, making all of the difference in the world. You need to have the education in this valley to this day. There are still many people in the valley that don't even know that they are in a National Recreation Area run by the Department of the Interior. I go to Cleveland and Akron and people do not know that there is a park here to this day.

The establishment of the visitor centers has helped. We put \$300,000 into the Happy Days Visitor Center and brought in a little bit more staff to help out. Later on, Ron Thoman had a VIP Specialist, Phil Hastings, who eventually ended up having kind of a tragic death. If we couldn't do it with our staff, let's get some volunteers.

As you probably know, Cuyahoga Valley has gotten awards for volunteerism within the National Park Service. With this help and also environmental education, we have people in here now getting the word out. We are getting kids here. We are getting the University of Akron involved. The word is getting out more. I think that was another major problem way back when. We couldn't get the word out the way we wanted to. Whether we did or not, we didn't have any choice under Birdsell's regime because everything was cut and dried. Under Albert, things started loosening up.

Dave Dornfeld

Under the new administration now, I feel that things will basically stay the same with John even given a little bit more emphasis to reaching out to different adjoining areas of the park, the corridors of the park, and reaching out as far as making this a total entity in establishment of the recreation area and to facilitate the entire area.

I think Lew Albert got a lot of things done here as far as upgrading a lot of our facilities, our trail systems, our structures, and law enforcement. Then after a couple of years, things started going down, mellowing out. We started seeing the families come back. You still have your problems every once in a while, but not like it was. The law enforcement started getting to a normal rate, which I was glad to see, because I was getting tired.

Then we tried to build up more with staffing, which has always been a problem--and I don't know why--with the Regional Office in establishing more FTE and money. We started out at the same keel as Indiana Dunes, but they now have passed us, both in FTE and money. The only thing I don't understand is why we don't get more ONPS money. As far as law enforcement, we have just as much money problems. We have twice as much land ownership in the boundaries. They have about 18,000 and we have about 32,000.

I am still really questioning the feeling of the people within the National Park Service, the feelings of the Regional Office, and I guess even the feelings of the people here as far as the park goes. Some people still have a negative attitude here. I try to keep an open mind. I have bought a home. My wife has an excellent job and we are probably going to stay here. I ended up getting married coming down here so that is another aspect of staying here in the area. I think the Park Service has changed in that aspect where you are not moving as much any more when both people in the family are working.

Getting back to Lew Albert, we also had a person by the name of Sheridan Steele in both regimes of Bill Birdsell and Lew Albert as Management Assistant after Bob Holmes left. He came from the Park Federation. There again was another turning point even under Birdsell's administration when Mr. Steele came in. Mr. Steele is the type of person that knew everyone in the area after being in the Park Federation. He started establishing a rapport that Bill did not have and continued to do so under the Lew Albert regime, although Lew didn't need as much help because of Lew's personality.

I think with the addition of him it was a very positive aspect for him to get into this park and help out because of the influence that he had being with the Park Federation. He was a big influence on me. We got to be very good friends. In fact, he was in my wedding, and Chris Hastings was also. It was held right here in

Dave Dornfeld

the valley. I almost forgot about Sheridan and I don't know how I did that. He was a very positive aspect in all areas as far as helping the Superintendents out as far as what people needed to know.

MR. COCKRELL: Was he kind of like the public relations officer?

MR. DORNFELD: That is correct, yes. He was very, very good.

MR. COCKRELL: I know that you are the Safety Officer here. Could you give me a brief overall history of the safety program?

MR. DORNFELD: I have been a Safety Officer for about ten years. I started in 1979. They won't let me get rid of it. That is the only thing I have a problem with because of my training and experience. I think it goes all the way back to where you had the safety and the takeover of the structures and with oil and gas wells. If we owned the property, we had to inspect it for safety violations. You never know what people leave behind. I have found everything from gas tanks to glass to hazardous trees. Something had to be done if the government was going to own it.

The safety job involves a lot. This park needs a full-time Safety Officer right now. It encompasses everything from training to inspections to contractors to working with outside agencies. To put it all in a nutshell, there is so much going on here, whether it be with the Krejci Dump, structural problems, violations of the life safety code as far as restoration of buildings being up to standard, going out and inspecting contractors on site while they are doing the job, attending pre-construction conference meetings, inspecting land acquisition tracts for the Regional Office to make sure there are not hazardous materials or toxic chemicals on the property, filling out quarterly and yearly safety reports, there's a lot to do.

I also answer all questions throughout the year having to do with any safety problems in the valley whether it be with a structure or the land itself. We had one instance where I believe one of the contractors hit a barrel of a toxic substance and had problems with breathing for a while.

MR. COCKRELL: Was that at the Krejci Dump?

MR. DORNFELD: No, it was not.

I had the entire Safety Program as far as training goes which I am responsible for in drivers training, writing the documented safety plan, first aid, Safety Committee, Boards of Review, Boards of Inquiry. It has been a continuing thing. Our facilities have gone from the Kendall areas up to a numerous amount of public use areas.

Dave Dornfeld

Some are small picnic areas, but most of these have some type of structure or parking lots on them, but everything has to be inspected. To do all of that and be the Visitor Protection Specialist-Law Enforcement Specialist, tort claims officer, fire arms instructor, and communications supervisor, it is a never-ending battle.

Right now the way I feel is I don't know where to go first. That is when you asked me to come and do this. I thought, "What time do I have to come and do this?" I have to set my priorities and the goals of my supervisors to what they want done first and sometimes that is hard because they want more than one thing done at once. You know how that goes.

MR. COCKRELL: How would you characterize relations with neighboring jurisdictions? Are some more helpful and others not so helpful?

MR. DORNFELD: I would say that I don't know of any law enforcement jurisdictions that are hostile. What is so nice about this park--here again is a positive aspect--if I have a law enforcement problem in this park and I need some backup, I think there are at least 17 different political subdivisions we work with. I am going to have a response in a fairly good time and there is not one of them that will not respond. There is not one, whether that be fire or emergency or law enforcement.

I think there has been a little rub sometimes on the cooperative agreements because we are not paying now with the fire contracts as much as we were. I don't know if we are paying anything now, but they are still going to respond. They have always done it and they have put a little squirm here and there since the Park Service has been here. This in the fire aspect, emergency and rescue. But as far as the law enforcement goes, the rapport seems to be pretty good.

We house our prisoners now at Brecksville and other jails close to the park. I don't think there is really that much of a problem there. We don't have anything in writing, a lot of parks don't, but per NPS-9 we are basically instructed to try and get cooperative agreements with these people. These have been written up in draft. I wrote those up about three years ago, but basically nothing has been done.

MR. COCKRELL: The evolution of the Communications Center--how does that work and why is there 24-hour coverage when there is not a 24-hour patrol?

MR. DORNFELD: I think it was 1982 or so that we had the Communications Center. We felt that there was a need for us to have

Dave Dornfeld

communications in the field with the antagonistic people that we had way back when. And that if someone got into trouble, we needed to have someone to call to help us out.

Another reason is we have people like Bob Byrne in here and Gordon Wissinger, who was previously in my job as a Law Enforcement Specialist. They had the knowledge and know-how from previous experience to get this type of thing established. That was the main reasoning why we felt we needed it. We needed to cover a large area and we needed radio communications.

This park is over 22 miles long and 32,000 acres. You need to have something established. All of the other political subdivisions covering a small area within the park boundaries all had radio communications. This way also, we could call our Communications Center to have them respond. In fact, we had a radio patch system to where we could talk to them directly. That really helped out in certain cases, not all of them. That is the main reason for the evolution of the system.

We went 24-hours because it was a regulation to have the LEADS terminal within the Communications Center from Columbus--you need to have 24-hour coverage. The reason that we don't have 24-hour patrols is because approximately two years ago, we had a team from Washington and the Regional Office come out to evaluate the law enforcement program and what our needs are. From what we are doing now, they felt we needed seven more people. We have never seen those seven people.

I don't think we would even still go to a 24-hour operation. You don't think we have back country here? People are mistaken. We don't have anybody on the trails. We are lucky we have people now in our major use areas once a day that we are covering 16-hours a day. If we get that other seven people, we will be able to do everything that we really need to do during those 16 hours. But we need to really have 24 hours. We are doing after-the-fact law enforcement a lot of times. In other words, a lot of that is happening. We are getting there and trying to figure out and investigate what the heck went on.

I would say that our promises just didn't come through. As far as what the needs were written down as, we have never gotten anything. And that doesn't necessarily mean even if we got the seven FTE--they come down to the Region or the Region gives them to us--that doesn't necessarily mean they would all go for law enforcement. You understand that probably as well as I do. But yes, there is a need.

The LEADS terminal again does require we have a lot of hits for other agencies that we catch. We have them come in and pick up

Dave Dornfeld

their person--whether it be a misdemeanor or whatever. We don't usually get a lot of felonies, but it happens once in a while. You need to run plates. A lot of vandalism and a lot of destruction have gone through this park in the 12 years that I have been here. We have upgraded our defenses a little bit more. We have alarm systems now in our historical buildings. We do have some portable alarms that we can move around a little bit and we have caught some people and we are catching more and more.

MR. COCKRELL: Is there something that I haven't asked that I should ask? Maybe one of your contributions that you would like to talk about?

MR. DORNFELD: As far as contributions go, I really set up the North District initially. We went to two districts--I forgot to say that--and I set up that district at Coonrad here to where our Communications Center has now been moved to. It has been three or four years since we have been up here. It is also the North District Ranger Station.

My main accomplishments have been the establishment of the safety program and the initial files set up under Bill Birdsell--procedures as far as patrol procedures, initial things having to do with law enforcement, and safety operations. In the position that I am in now, it is a little bit more special. I might as well be honest. We are going to be evaluated by the Regional personnel office in June. Maybe we will get another FTE to establish a separate position for safety or a Communications Center Supervisor.

[END]

Jim Dunning

I N T E R V I E W V I A C O R R E S P O N D E N C E

**F O R T H E
A D M I N I S T R A T I V E H I S T O R Y O F
C U Y A H O G A V A L L E Y
N A T I O N A L R E C R E A T I O N A R E A
O H I O**

**Jim Dunning
Retiree
(former Regional Director, Midwest Regional Office)
National Park Service**

**Letter
October 4, 1989
Fresno, California**

Interviewed by:

**Ron Cockrell
Historian
Midwest Regional Office
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior**

**Letter
August 29, 1989
Omaha, Nebraska**

Jim Dunning

Jim Dunning

MR. COCKRELL: I am a National Park Service (NPS) historian currently researching and compiling the Administrative History of Cuyahoga Valley National Recreation Area (CVNRA), Ohio. I respectfully request your participation in this project which will document the history and development of this important NPS unit.

I have researched the park files and have conducted many oral history interviews, but I need your perspective on a number of items which are as follows:

1. Considering all of the parks in the Midwest Region, formulate a list of the five most troublesome for you during your tenure as Regional Director, and give reasons why. (I'm interested in seeing if Cuyahoga makes your list!)

MR. DUNNING: I talked to Don [Castleberry; Regional Director] yesterday as I was not quite sure from your letter just what 'tone' the history is going to take, but now feel assured of the professionalism of the final product. With that said I will take your questions in order and give you my view of the situation that prevailed at the time.

1. When I arrived in Omaha to take up the duties of R.D. [Regional Director] about half of the areas were classified as established while the balance were new areas. The established areas by their very nature had settled into routine operation thus taking a lessor proportion of my and R.O. staff time. When I arrived the new areas were in a land acquisition phase as well as establishing the beginning of park operations. I can't answer your question as stated. All the new areas took more of my time, but I can't say Cuyahoga took more in proportion to the others. Sand Dunes, Apostle Islands, Sleeping Bear etc. all made their demands but to put one above the other as more 'troublesome' would be impossible.

MR. COCKRELL: 2. How did NPS respond to NBC-TV's late 1979 production of "Prime Time Sunday" with Jessica Savitch? How much damage did it do to CVNRA's public image?.

MR. DUNNING: 2. I am a little fuzzy on this one but as I recall there was not too much long term fall-out.

MR. COCKRELL: 3. In mid-August 1979, you instructed parks with active land acquisition programs that the Washington Office wanted each park to prepare a Land Acquisition Plan by December 31, 1979. Why was this so rushed, and did this directive come primarily because of the growing land acquisition problems at CVNRA?

Jim Dunning

MR. DUNNING: 3. At this time the Service was having land acquisition problems in most of the new areas that had been created from a high percentage of private land vs. the traditional where a large percentage of the land is already in public domain. Land acquisition by its very nature is an emotional activity and over the years since these areas had been authorized. All areas were having problems since the easy purchases had been made and the remainder exercising their political rights and thus putting pressure on the Service and their land acquisition.

We were told by WASO and we knew that the appropriation hearings would be tough if we expected to keep the land program going since the price in all areas was rapidly going up. Thus the request to CVNRA was so the Region and WASO could put together a consolidated program and be able to answer questions on future needs. I don't recall CVNRA was having any more of a problem than the other new areas.

MR. COCKRELL: 4. It has been charged that Superintendent Bill Birdsell paid little attention to instructions from MWRO. Is this true? How would you characterize your relations with Birdsell?]

MR. DUNNING: 4. To answer this question I will have to share a bit of my management philosophy as it relates to management of a NPS area. Early in my career with the Service, when with WODC [Western Office of Design and Construction] or MWRO-Chief of Maintenance, I observed that the park visitor was, as a percent, becoming more and more urban oriented and our management needed to acknowledge this since like it or not, the visitor is coming with all their urban 'hang-ups.' We had to learn to deal with this change professionally by better understanding the demographic shift and adapt our management to this change.

The latter years of George Hartzog's time as Director ushered in the urban park Servicewide and many of our employees learned their 'trade' in natural areas and a large percentage of these people believed the real Park Service was a natural area. Thus Bill Birdsell came up against this mindset when he arrived to set up CVNRA. Servicewide urban park managers were frustrated with the attitude that urban parks were taking funding and people away from the 'real' Service. It is interesting to note that in this country the first urban park was the Department of Public Buildings and Open Spaces established in the early 1800s and there has been a direct line from that time to the formation of the National Capital Region.

You are partially correct about Bill B's attitude when he tried to deal with MWRO. Bill was a hard charger and the problems of establishing an urban area where at best there was mixed feeling locally and on top of that deal with the MWRO and Service mindset.

Jim Dunning

I found that Bill welcomed a sympathetic ear when he decided it was 'for real.' Our working relationship, on balance, was good but I made an effort not to challenge the position he had established in the area and most importantly his rapport with Congressman Seiberling. This is not to say we didn't have our differences but with this approach I found he was more receptive to suggestion and after all if the end was accomplished and the Superintendent received the credit, so be it, as my ends were also served.

MR. COCKRELL: 5. In a March 14, 1980, letter to Director Bill Whalen, Congressman Seiberling and Senator Metzenbaum called on NPS to thoroughly reevaluate its land acquisition program at Cuyahoga and to suspend or drop all pending complaint actions against residents. As Cuyahoga's main boosters, why did they do this? What was the result?

MR. DUNNING: 5. By 1980, as stated above, the easy land acquisition had been accomplished with the remaining parcel owners resisting as their way of fighting the park. As these resisting property owners hardened their position the Service lands office began to exercise the right of eminent domain. All of this attracted a lot of adverse press and created a local political atmosphere that Sen. Metzenbaum and M.C. Seiberling wanted toned down. Let's face it, the bloom was off the formation of the park and it was time to look to plan B to finish up the land acquisition. I don't believe Sen. Metzenbaum or M.C. Seiberling had changed their position but a better political atmosphere had to be created for them.

We at MWRO looked to our options which looked to purchases that included life tenancy and any other plan that would eventually bring the property under Service control thus accomplishing the intent of the legislation. I felt we took some of the heat off yet remained in the acquisition game. You will be in a better position to judge how this plan worked since 1980.

MR. COCKRELL: 6. Bill Birdsell was furious over the series of articles Peter Almond wrote for **The Cleveland Press** in April 1980. He wrote a scathing personal letter to the publisher which got Birdsell into trouble. Was this the catalyst for Birdsell's transfer, or had the decision already been made? Was it voluntary or involuntary? Who initiated the decision?

MR. DUNNING: 6. Peter Almond's articles hit Bill hard in that he felt he had used half truths and distortions. At this point in CVNRA's history because of problems with the land acquisition as well as a wave of 'fed. bashing' took on a life of its own. Almond saw an opportunity and picked up on it.

Jim Dunning

To understand the situation surrounding CVNRA at this time, one must keep in mind that Bill worked out of his own car, typed his own correspondence so the area could be viewed by its supporters as off and running in a short time even though the Region and WASO were not as supportive as they should have been. Bill's efforts in those first months resulted in a lot of local support and a good relationship with Mr. Seiberling. Mr. Seiberling was very pleased with Bill's performance and encouraged him to contact his Washington office. Mr. Seiberling frequently called Bill to discuss progress and any problems. This was a relationship few NPS employees ever enjoy. Also keep in mind the Region and WASO were giving little more than lip service. With this type of Congressional support it has always been hard for me to understand their attitude.

With the above in mind I tried to show Bill there will always be a Peter Almond in the wings waiting for the first drop of blood. I asked Bill to cool it and lay back for a while in that the **Cleveland Press** and Almond will have to go on to other issues when they had milked this issue. The park will out live them. He had trouble accepting this because of his closeness to the park. He had become very myopic on all issues concerning CVNRA and thus had lost objectivity he had used so well in the early days. This often happens when one puts their heart and soul into a project such as this. Mr. Seiberling also realized this but wanted to be assured Bill would be treated well.

So to be more specific, Randy Pope and I had discussed that Bill may be running out some time before the Almond series but I was reluctant to move in that I felt he deserved every chance to sort this problem out. It soon became apparent a change had to be made. Bill and I went over all of the above and he accepted it with great reluctance.

MR. COCKRELL: 7. Why was Birdsell reassigned to the Washington Office? I've been told that the Midwest Regional Office had initiated plans to reactivate the Chicago Field Office and had office space designed for Birdsell there. Is this true?

MR. DUNNING: 7. The answer to this question is answered in part above but as to reactivating the Chicago Field Office I don't recall that that was very seriously considered. C.F.O. would layer (add another layer) the lines of responsibility. My management philosophy is that the less overview an established park has, the better it is run. The Region with the largest staff should be the one with the most developing parks. Honestly, what could a Regional staff do for a 'crown jewel' park that they couldn't do for themselves?

Jim Dunning

MR. COCKRELL: 8. How long was Birdsell's transfer debated? (I've learned that the park staff knew about the impending transfer in January 1980, yet it was not "officially" announced until July.

MR. DUNNING: 8. I am a little fuzzy on this point, but as I recall WASO had a great interest in this and wanted to be sure Mr. Seiberling concurred.

MR. COCKRELL: 9. In what way was Congressman John Seiberling and Director Russell Dickenson involved in the decision to transfer Birdsell?

MR. DUNNING: 9. Yes, the Director was involved and he insisted Mr. Seiberling be in the loop which he was during all of our deliberation. He wanted to be assured Bill came out 'whole' on the move.

MR. COCKRELL: 10. With the arrival of Superintendent Lew Albert in late 1980, who was responsible for switching the emphasis from a land acquisition mode to one of planning and development? Why was this done?

MR. DUNNING: 10. All of the events stated above changed the political climate and the fact we were trying to buy properties that were involved in litigation gave the park a good deal of adverse publicity. It was time to effect. The switch in emphasis was agreed upon at all levels from the Director's office, Mr. Seiberling and I most certainly agreed.

MR. COCKRELL: 11. How did the 1981 moratorium on land acquisition imposed by Secretary Watt affect CVNRA in both the short and long terms?

MR. DUNNING: 11. Here again the park had switched to an operation mode and the park staff had come up with several activities that put CVNRA well on its way to its rightful place in the community. Thus Secretary Watt's moratorium had already been discounted so the effects were not as bad as they could have been. This is not to say there weren't problems. When opportunity sales came up we missed them thus when the property was finally purchased the price had gone up considerably.

MR. COCKRELL: 12. The Office of the Inspector General investigated CVNRA. What did they find?

MR. DUNNING: 12. My recollection on this question is not so good and feel Lew Albert or Randy Pope could help you more than I.

MR. COCKRELL: 13. On December 9, 1982, Superintendent Albert attended a meeting with Cleveland Metropolitan Park District (CMPD)

Jim Dunning

officials in which they asked NPS to remove CVNRA's entrance signs and Canal Visitor Center to Summit County. In light of CMPD's past close relationship with CVNRA, why did this happen and how was this resolved?

MR. DUNNING: 13. Again on this question I will defer to Lew.

MR. COCKRELL: 14. Why was a second Assistant Superintendent added to the CVNRA staff in 1983? Was the position needed?]

MR. DUNNING: 14. The Director had a personnel problem that had to have action quickly. He gave CVNRA the position and funding. I felt, after looking over this person's personnel file, that we had a chance to turn him around. The position was treated more as a Management Assistant than Assistant Superintendent but his grade dictated the title.

MR. COCKRELL: Any additional information you care to contribute will also be greatly appreciated.

MR. DUNNING: Ron, I have enjoyed doing this and hope it helps. You did a top job on Indiana Dunes and am anxious to read CVNRA. Best of luck.

[END]

I N T E R V I E W V I A C O R R E S P O N D E N C E

**F O R T H E
A D M I N I S T R A T I V E H I S T O R Y O F
C U Y A H O G A V A L L E Y
N A T I O N A L R E C R E A T I O N A R E A
O H I O**

**Steve Elkinton
Long Distance Trails Manager, Washington Office
(former CVNRA Chief of Technical Assistance and Professional Services)
National Park Service**

**Letter
September 20, 1989
Washington, D.C.**

Interviewed by:

**Ron Cockrell
Historian
Midwest Regional Office
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior**

**Letter
August 29, 1989
Omaha, Nebraska**

Steve Elkinton

Steve Elkinton

MR. COCKRELL: I am currently researching and compiling the Administrative History of Cuyahoga Valley National Recreation Area (CVNRA), Ohio. I respectfully request your participation in this project which will document the history and development of this important NPS unit.

I have researched the park files and have conducted many oral history interviews, but I need your perspective on a number of items which are as follows:

1. What are the dates for your tour of duty at CVNRA?

MR. ELKINTON: 1. I worked at Cuyahoga Valley almost exactly 4 years, from mid-June 1981 to mid-June 1985.

MR. COCKRELL: 2. When did Technical Assistance and Professional Services (TAPS) begin and how was it originally structured? How did it change in the following years?

MR. ELKINTON: 2. The TAPS division was the brainchild of Superintendent Lew Albert as a way of combining the park's critical need for a planner-designer to implement the GMP with his successful experience at Lowell NHS, where he set up such a division, which included the traditional park maintenance functions along with a battery of architects, researchers, and people offering technical assistance to community groups. For Cuyahoga Valley, the title was always a little cumbersome, but the acronym snappy.

When I arrived on the scene, the momentum for the division had been established with the blessing of both Regional Director Dunning and his able assistant Randy Pope, a former landscape architect to get on board someone who could do both planning and design, as well as supervision. In the months before I arrived, Historian Chet Hamilton and Ranger Rod Royce, both of whom were being assigned to the new division from other positions in the park, gathered furniture, supplies, and even a vehicle. Therefore, when I arrived, all we had to do was find some space, hire a secretary, and we were off and running as a new division.

TAPS was never highly structured. We worked as a team, combining our various professions and talents when needed, since the needs were so variable and vast. My greatest frustration was that as a supervisor, I was not free to work as a landscape architect except perhaps 10% of the time--while the park needed a full-time "L.A." That is one of the reasons why I arranged upon leaving that the division chief could come from any of the relevant professions, leaving the door open for a staff LA to work full time.

Steve Elkinton

When I first arrived, the task list for TAPS was long and varied--and stayed that way as long as I was there. It included work at all scales from inter-county coordinating to trash can details. The bulk of the work was cultural resource management since no other division had responsibility for that. Other tasks which we held, until picked up by other divisions, included research coordinating and natural resource mapping. At times we had more and better experienced staff than the Regional Office for architectural design and historical research.

I tried to fit the work to available skills. For example, although Chet Hamilton was a terrible writer, he had the ability to develop personal rapport with local old timers in the valley. So I emphasized the need to collect old photographs--and by the time he left in 1985, we had the beginnings of a truly amazing set of historical photos of the valley, often gleaned from Chet's friends, often in exchange for helping them get their own collections organized. In many cases, such pictures were worth more than a thousand words--they were priceless documentation.

One of the reasons I left Cuyahoga Valley was that the workload was too massive to accomplish well. We generally had a project load of thirty-some projects a year, with priorities shifting as the need arose. Some had direct legal ramifications such as contracts inspection. Others were crisis-driven such as fire damage to historic buildings. Many reflected funding opportunities provided by the Region or Congress. Many of the plans (trail, sign, building use, etc.) were requested by the Region to show that we were approaching various complex issues systematically. In addition, most of us had collateral duties that ate up an enormous amount of time: sign coordination, board of survey, and Land Protection Plan, among others.

I was lucky to manage a division of outstanding, committed, talented people who accomplished much in little time. We prided ourselves on quality, expeditiousness, and creativity. Doggedness and patience are the principal virtues needed to see the dream of Cuyahoga come alive. After the first year there, I estimated it would take 20 people to do all the work TAPS was assigned. And once the park was developed and up to speed, the division could be abolished. Who knows when that day will come?

MR. COCKRELL: 3. What was the purpose for establishing TAPS? In what ways did TAPS succeed and fail in these goals?

MR. ELKINTON: 3. The purpose of TAPS was to provide in-park professional planning and design capabilities to implement the GMP, as well as cultural resource management. In many ways it was (and is) successful: coordinating planning documents such as SFM, 10-

Steve Elkinton

238s, etc.; providing on-site response to crises; allowing re-iterative examination of assumptions and documentation made in haste by previous planners, architects, cultural resource inventories, researchers, etc.; efficient design, A/E management, and contract supervision at much lower cost than Region or DSC; providing sound technical advice to park management when requested; establishing professional contact with sister agencies--such as highway departments and area planning bodies--as well as local firms and universities, helping raise the park's credibility and visibility; and providing sustained, committed input to such ongoing efforts as sign planning, resource management planning, trails, historic leasing, and transportation coordinating. These tasks are almost impossible to do well from a distance, such as in a Regional or DSC Office.

In terms of the GMP itself, I proved to Mr. Kawamoto within a year of arriving that it was based on flawed assumptions and did not account for some of the major issues and available developable areas facing the park. Without a park master plan, we were forced into what I called "systems plans" (trails, signs, transportation, building use, etc.) which are actually not a bad way to go, although not encouraged by NPS-2, the NPS Planning Process.

TAPS' failures were beyond its control: mostly lack of time, money, and staff to get all the desired work done. Sometimes the quality was not the same as a large private firm could produce, and sometimes priorities were misunderstood. Another area of friction occurred when the divisions would not cooperate, so that our work did not mesh as closely as it should with Interpretation's Visitor Use Plan or Resource Management's resource inventories. But in general I feel the division continues to creatively address the wide range of technical planning and design problems faced by a massive developing park, in the absence of a phased, coherent development program. One key to its success is to stay closely tuned to the Superintendent's priorities. In lieu of a funded GMP, centralized planning and design in response to crisis appeared to be the best way to proceed.

MR. COCKRELL: 4. In you various planning endeavors at Cuyahoga, did you have adequate baseline data? If not, how did this impact these efforts? Was the General Management Plan an important planning tool--why or why not?

MR. ELKINTON: 4. The baseline data available when I arrived was as good as any I know of for a park--but still inadequate in many regards. Using the SCS soils base maps and county soils surveys, I persuaded a volunteer to spend more than a year coloring in more than a dozen suitability maps for various types of development: sewerage, trails, highways, recreation, etc. Some of these proved very helpful in later planning.

Steve Elkinton

Soon thereafter Resource Management tapped into the Ohio state OCAP GIS database and generated another group of similar maps, many based on the same data I had used, only digitized. Generally the proposed projects were too small to be seriously affected by these macro scale maps. The placement of trails, small parking lots, etc. is very local. The maps did alert us, however, to the permeability of soils near the Festival site, and the limitations of soils on Oak Hill.

The topography and "grain" of the Cuyahoga landscape is made up of small units: ridges, ravines, steep slopes, small floodplains, etc. Therefore, mapping must be quite fine-grained to be useful. For preliminary planning, the most helpful base maps were 1 inch = 200 feet orthophoto county maps showing contours, structures, vegetated areas, etc. For construction, we had every project area surveyed.

By the time I arrived, the value of the GMP had diminished. Its policies and suggestions for generic actions and further study were valid. But the suggestions for specific projects had been based on a distorted assumption: that the existing metropark areas were (by definition) the most suitable areas for recreational development. Some had actually become local parks through the accident of donation. At the same time, large recently acquired federal areas (such as Oak Hill) offered large-scale opportunities for trails and other types of recreation that the metroparks could hardly match--but were unaccounted for in the GMP.

In addition it made no mention of several critical issues: historic structure preservation, cultural landscape management, different types of trails for different types of users, and large scale special-events areas. Therefore we used it for policy guidance, but rethought the actual elements. The fact that it estimated that full development would cost \$40 million (in 1978 dollars), and we were lucky to get \$1-2 million a year in Congressional add-ons, indicated to me that it would take a generation to fulfill the intent of the GMP.

MR. COCKRELL: 5. What are some of the difficulties CVNRA has encountered over managing scenic easements?

MR. ELKINTON: 5. Scenic easements are a mixed blessing at best. Fortunately I stayed away from them in my work, dealing mostly with full fee lands. Therefore I suggest you ask Brian McHugh, Chief Ranger; Mr. Blanton who headed up the Land Protection Team, for the viewpoints on this.

Steve Elkinton

MR. COCKRELL; 6. How important was the preparation of the Land Protection Plan? How did CVNRA go about compiling it? On a Servicewide basis, how does CVNRA's plan compare?

MR. ELKINTON: 6. The Cuyahoga Valley Land Protection Plan was perhaps the single most important document prepared during the years I was in the park. From a policy point of view it was a pioneer, being one of the first completed, the most extensive in terms of parcels inventoried, and articulating land management and protection alternatives as well as any other. For park management it provided a tract by tract computerized database that will always be useful. As a preliminary for the Cultural Landscape Plan, it was invaluable in establishing the park's long- and short-term protection strategy for every tract.

It was not as daring as it should have been about addressing external threats. However, the one to ask on this topic is Ed Adelman, since he ran the project on detail, while I tried to keep TAPS going. The section on land protect strategies was so good that it was used verbatim in 1985 in the NPS guidebook called "NPS Cultural Landscapes: Rural Historic Districts" by Robert Melnick.

MR. COCKRELL: 7. What were some of the complaints valley residents expressed regarding the NPS? How did the NPS respond?

MR. ELKINTON: 7. Local complaints took many forms, but their momentum was abating by the time I arrived, and they were only a minor issue four years later. They included:

--Why is the NPS destroying our communities by tearing down the houses?

--Why can't NPS fix the roads?

--Why are they buying our houses when we were promised when the park was established that they would not buy houses?

--Park development will cause more traffic, and the roads can't take it.

--Why isn't there camping?

--Why are the rangers hassling us about dogs and hunting?

--Where is the park boundary and how do I know when I'm in it?

One inherent problem with the valley is that it was everyone's backyard--a sort of green "black hole" between Cleveland and Akron that people never recognized as a unit. Instead they would dip

Steve Elkinton

into it, discover a piece, and go on, not realizing that it was an entire valley.

Our approach to counter this negativity and lack of positive identity took many forms: positive community outreach, explanations when misinformation was obvious, the observation that it took a generation for the local metroparks to get developed--so be patient, down play law enforcement with residents, open up special festivals and activities, solicit volunteers (many of whom were relatives of people who did the complaining), network closely with local communities and try to get their support for cooperative projects (such as road repair), broad public involvement in plans, and official positive publicity. We also tried hard to get Washington Office and Regional Office staff to come visit the park and see the delight of its special resources.

Probably the most effective single action was Lew Albert's decision upon arrival to halt all further condemnations. It took a couple of years for people to realize that this had changed. We tried to get people into historic structures as soon as they were acquired to avoid deterioration. We tried to get a comprehensive sign program in place to give the valley identity and keep people from getting lost.

We all dreamed of the day when there would be published a full-color coffee table of prize winning photos of the valley in all seasons--giving it the polish and recognition it deserves. Now all of these actions are combining synergistically to make the valley a positive place to be, and the early heavy-handedness of the first Superintendent and Corps of Engineers land acquisition officers fades into the dim past.

MR. COCKRELL: 8. Why is it that the Oak Hill Day Use Area evolved from a large-scale visitor use area to one that is smaller scale and sparsely used?

MR. ELKINTON: 8. When I arrived at Cuyahoga Valley I found on the table Denver Service Center's preliminary plans for Oak Hill showing several parking lots reaching almost to the edge of what is now called Sylvan Pond. About the same time I was toying around with the qualities of the park that attracted people and realized that one element was the illusion of remoteness. Even though only a tiny percentage of the valley's land was actually more than a half mile from a road, the impression in these remoter areas was of much greater remoteness.

When I mapped those few areas more than a half a mile from a road, I found that Oak Hill was the largest such area. It seemed insane to build a new road right into a prized remote area. My alternative would have been to lay the parking alongside Oak Hill Road and

Steve Elkinton

leave the fields and woods "of the interior" unpenetrated. Lew's compromise was to build only that portion funded in phase 1 and forget the rest of the plan. This is the reason why Oak Hill parking is so grandiose, when it could have been scaled down and redesigned to fit the landscape better.

We also felt that the secret to developing the park was dispersed use, rather than intensive use, such as Virginia Kendall and the ski areas. Mostly the soils are just too clayey and gummy for a lot of re-working: this certainly was borne out in the earthwork for Oak Hill. Oak Hill is sparsely used because it is hard to find and offers little except hiking and fishing. It will get more use when developed, as planned, into a competition cross-country ski trail area.

MR. COCKRELL: 9. How would you describe staff morale under Superintendent Lew Albert? How well did division chiefs work with him; with the Assistant Superintendents; together?

MR. ELKINTON: 9. Lew Albert was quite a clever and careful manager at Cuyahoga Valley. However staff morale suffered from a combination of factors: a feeling of competitiveness with the Region, the despair of losing control over manpower with the FTE crunch of 1981, the general hostility of the local communities, the impossibility of developing a new park without much funding, and uncertainty about Lew's management style.

When Lew first arrived, he seemed progressive and interested in staff teamwork. However, in a crisis, he turned out to be a typical strongman manager who liked to do things his way, whatever others said. Once we figured this out, we knew how to deal with him, although much of the original trust was lost.

His major problems with the assistant superintendents and division chiefs are attributable to personality differences. He also clearly appeared to favor his two proteges from Lowell: Ed Adelman and Brian McHugh, with whom he socialized closely. Many of the park staff distrusted him since he appeared uninterested in seeing the park's resources first hand. Instead he preferred to play golf and associate with local movers and shakers. Just as a belligerent visionary, such as Mr. Birdsell, was essential to getting the park started, so a smooth talking operator (such as Mr. Albert) was helpful in building its credibility.

He made several dramatic shifts of policy and practice, all of which helped strengthen the park: stopping all condemnations, strengthening the local Communities Council, getting staff and offices out of non-historic buildings and into historic ones, encouraging staff training and outreach to the Midwest Regional

Steve Elkinton

Office and the Washington Office, and promoting summer music festivals.

This last one was a real gamble since most of the staff didn't believe it would work. After a couple of very successful small festivals at Virginia Kendall, we obtained the National Folk Festival, prepared a special farm site, and accommodated over 10,000 people per event. Without Lew's persistence and persuasiveness, none of that would have happened.

MR. COCKRELL: Any additional information you care to contribute will also be greatly appreciated.

MR. ELKINTON: Ron, I hope this has helped your historical effort. Clearly I have strong, fond feelings about CVNRA even after 4 years away. I must admit that time has weakened some of the unpleasant memories and frustrations and leaves me with a roseate memory of pleasant struggle. So many projects seemed like they would never get accomplished.

Today they are taken for granted: the adaptive re-use of Jaite village, the Stanford Farm youth hostel, the purchase and bridge construction alongside Greenwood Village, the sign program, the trail plan and development program, an arts program in Everett village, the rebuilding of the covered bridge, Oak Hill, etc., etc. I get great pleasure in going back for a brief visit every summer and seeing the fruit borne by the seeds we sowed in the dark days of the Watt years.

[END]

I N T E R V I E W V I A C O R R E S P O N D E N C E

**F O R T H E
A D M I N I S T R A T I V E H I S T O R Y O F
C U Y A H O G A V A L L E Y
N A T I O N A L R E C R E A T I O N A R E A
O H I O**

**Gary E. Everhardt
Superintendent, Blue Ridge Parkway
(former Director, National Park Service)**

Letter
October 27, 1989
Asheville, North Carolina

Interviewed by:

**Ron Cockrell
Historian
Midwest Regional Office
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior**

Letter
August 29, 1989
Omaha, Nebraska

Gary Everhardt

Gary Everhardt

MR. COCKRELL: I am a National Park Service (NPS) historian currently researching and compiling the Administrative History of Cuyahoga Valley National Recreation Area (CVNRA), Ohio. I respectfully request your participation in this project which will document the history and development of this important NPS unit.

I have researched the park files and have conducted many oral history interviews, but I need your perspective on a number of items which are as follows:

1. When CVNRA was authorized (December 28, 1974) and established 6 months later, it showed up on a list of areas where NPS would contract with State and local authorities for operation and maintenance. Was there a plan within the Department not to make CVNRA a full-fledged NPS unit?

MR. EVERHARDT: 1. Question not answered.

I wish I were able to cover all the questions raised in your letter of August 29, 1989, but either my memory has failed or other members of the directorate were responsible for coordinating the Cuyahoga Project. I suspect the former is more accurate today. I would like however, to comment on one or two points you raised.

MR. COCKRELL: 2. From 1975 to 1977, NPS operated under a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Corps of Engineers (COE) to conduct its land acquisition program at CVNRA. During these two years, why were there so many problems with the COE program?

3. What steps, if any, did you take to correct them? What individuals were instrumental in persuading you to terminate the MOU?

MR. EVERHARDT: 2. and 3. Questions not answered.

MR. COCKRELL: 4. During your directorship, was there ever any discussion of transferring Bill Birdsell out of the superintendency at Cuyahoga?

MR. EVERHARDT: 4. There was no consideration of forcing the transferring of Bill Birdsell from the Cuyahoga Superintendency. As with all positions at the Superintendent level, there were periodic reviews and discussions as vacancies occurred at the next level as to who were the best qualified candidates. Also, there was frequent examination of career enhancement opportunities and, no doubt Bill Birdsell's name may have been reviewed. Bill was looked upon as one of the senior superintendents with many fine qualities and field experience that would have justified consideration for more responsible positions throughout the Service.

Gary Everhardt

MR. COCKRELL: 5. What was your opinion of Birdsell's close working relationship with Congressman John Seiberling? It caused a lot of friction with the Midwest Regional Office because Birdsell did not consult or brief Omaha on his contacts with Seiberling. Did you express any objections to this?

MR. EVERHARDT: 5. In the past and somewhat contrary to more recent years, Superintendents were expected to develop close and harmonious working relationships with local legislative delegations. This type of relationship is without question instrumental in achieving National Park Service goals and objectives.

Bill Birdsell had a difficult job facing him--a new concept in park areas; not the pattern of one of the more traditional areas; and very little previous example to draw upon. Given situation and strong backing by the local Congressmen, he was able to overcome many obstacles and carry out the legislative mission and accomplish the task.

I would assume that if rated today he would be classified as having performed successfully. His relationship with Congressman Seiberling may have created frictions, but I would assume in the case of strong personalities this could always be the case. Based on trust of the Superintendent's commitment and having excellent communications with the Congressional Office, I felt fully aware of most major developments at Cuyahoga.

MR. COCKRELL: 6. Considering all the units in the System, where would Cuyahoga fall if you were to draw up a list of the top 10 or 20 problem units?

MR. EVERHARDT: 6. I would say that it has never been my approach to rank the "Top Twenty" problem areas. Each and every day problems arise and solutions are found to resolve them. This phenomenon occurs at all levels--park, region, and central offices. The main point to make is problems are resolved by competent managers who see that the integrity of the National Park Service is protected and continued on.

MR. COCKRELL: Any additional information you care to contribute will also be greatly appreciated.

MR. EVERHARDT: I thank you for the opportunity to express these viewpoints regarding the management of Cuyahoga. I might further add that you consider interviewing Park employees that were present during Bill Birdsell's administration to obtain a Park perspective. Best wishes with your historical research.

[END]

I N T E R V I E W V I A C O R R E S P O N D E N C E

F O R T H E
A D M I N I S T R A T I V E H I S T O R Y O F
C U Y A H O G A V A L L E Y
N A T I O N A L R E C R E A T I O N A R E A
O H I O

Gerald R. Ford
former President of The United States of America

Letter
September 7, 1989
Rancho Mirage, California

Interviewed by:

Ron Cockrell
Historian
Midwest Regional Office
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Letter
August 29, 1989
Omaha, Nebraska

Gerald R. Ford

Gerald R. Ford

MR. COCKRELL: I am a National Park Service (NPS) historian currently researching and compiling the Administrative History of Cuyahoga Valley National Recreation Area (CVNRA), Ohio. I respectfully request your participation in this project which will document the history and development of this important NPS unit which is located between Cleveland and Akron in northeast Ohio.

Federal records (including those from the White House) fail to document your reasoning for signing the bill which authorized the establishment of the park. Before you signed the bill at Vail, Colorado, on December 28, 1974, a majority of your advisors as well as Secretary of the Interior Rogers C. B. Morton recommended that you veto it. They argued that the area lacked national significance and that it would prove to be too costly. For the purpose of clarifying the historical record, I am primarily interested in your thought processes for rejecting the negative position of your advisors in favor of signing this bill (P.L. 93-555).

Thank you in advance for your assistance on this historical research project.

P.S. As a resident of Omaha, I must tell you how much I enjoy the beautiful Gerald R. Ford Birthsite and Gardens. It was my pleasure to have worked with Jim Paxson to document the history of the site for the National Historic Landmark Study several years ago and to have prepared the new interpretive folder for this unique city park.

PRESIDENT FORD: Quite frankly, I have no specific recollection of the reason I approved P.L. 93-555, involving the Cuyahoga Valley National Recreation Area. I recall my approval and surprised there is no official White House statement at that time indicating my views. Have you checked with the files at the Gerald R. Ford Library at the University of Michigan and Ann Arbor, Michigan?

In trying to refresh my memory of 15 years ago, I would say the following. I was very familiar with the Akron/Cleveland area and had many close friends from that part of Ohio. It probably seemed to me there was a critical need for a federal recreation area in that part of the middle west. Probably thought I knew more about such a local need than the bureaucracy in Washington.

Hope the above will help. Thanks for your assistance on the Ford Birthsite and Gardens in Omaha, Nebraska.

[END]

Gerald R. Ford

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW
FOR THE
ADMINISTRATIVE HISTORY OF
CUYAHOGA VALLEY
NATIONAL RECREATION AREA
OHIO

Martin Griffith
Member
Cuyahoga Valley Homeowners and Residents Association

May 22, 1989
Peninsula, Ohio

Interviewed by:
Ron Cockrell
Historian
Midwest Regional Office
National Park Service
Omaha, Nebraska
1989

Martin Griffith

Martin Griffith

MR. COCKRELL: I thought before I got into my list of questions you could give me some background information on yourself. How did you come to live in the Cuyahoga Valley?

MR. GRIFFITH: We moved here in approximately 1965, my wife Marilyn and I. We purchased the property that we are living on right now which is approximately 5 acres with a small house on it. It has been expanded twice since that time. We came here basically because we liked the terrain. We like being out in the green area, the space, the lack of high density population. That type of thing.

MR. COCKRELL: Could you provide me an overview of the Cuyahoga Valley Homeowners and Residents Association? When and how it formed, how it has evolved over time, and who are the individuals involved who originally organized the group?

MR. GRIFFITH: Actually formation of the group was almost a spontaneous thing. I think it basically arose as a result of concern and confusion about what was going to happen to the residential community here as a result of the establishment of the park. Most of us had been to public information meetings that had been held by the National Park Service prior to that time and I think the content of most of those meetings were such to increase rather than decrease our concern.

MR. COCKRELL: How was that?

MR. GRIFFITH: Because I think that the handling in the meetings was such that people who came with real concerns and questions about their properties, and what was going to be the impact on them, found an atmosphere in which the message was: "We are bringing this park to you. It's going to be your park and we want to shape it the way you want it be. We want it to be your kind of park and we don't have a lot of answers. We just don't really know what is going to happen at this point. We are in the process of coming up with a format to the park."

Of course, these meetings were attended perhaps even more by people from outside the community than people inside the community, bearing in mind that we are not a highly populated area. A lot of interest groups came in such as motorcycle clubs, that type of thing.

I remember sitting in one meeting with a couple of elderly people who were trying to find out what was happening with that one item that was the largest portion of their net worth, their house. What was going to happen to them? Most of the discussion at that meeting concerned the interest and desire for the motorcycle club to have hill climbs scattered throughout the park. You watch this expression of horror on the faces of this older couple if they

Martin Griffith

could spot hill climbs on both sides of their house, with the realization also that from a standpoint of numbers, these groups frequently outnumber the residents!

I certainly can say that the people with these groups didn't have a right to attend the public meetings and so forth. They had intended to use the park. It was kind of a frightening experience for people who really had substantial investment there.

MR. COCKRELL: So there were a lot of special groups like the motorcyclists there, more so than the residents of the valley?

MR. GRIFFITH: The meetings that I remember in particular were attended by a lot of outside people. There were a lot of them. I don't think I really counted them at that point, but they were very much in evidence.

MR. COCKRELL: How many of those meetings did you attend? Was it the majority, or half, or less than half?

MR. GRIFFITH: I don't know how many meetings there were, but I was at probably something in the area of, I would suppose 2 or 3 of them, something like that. I think that most of the residents came out of these hearings with a real sense of frustration because they came with a lot of questions. Very few if any of the questions relating to their properties were ever answered and it seemed like an exercise in futility.

I think that the community reaction was that the Park Service had the mandate to hold a certain number of hearings. They were holding the hearings. They were doing what they were supposed to do legally, and I don't think there was a feeling that what was said at these meetings was really going to cut much ice.

MR. COCKRELL: Do you think these meetings were sponsored by the local park people or was it the planners from the Denver Service Center or, say, the Regional Office or Washington? Did you get a sense of who was in control of these meetings?

MR. GRIFFITH: Well, the planners from Denver were there. They were very much in evidence. I can't remember whether Mr. Birdsell was at all of the meetings or not or really whether he was at any of them. This I don't remember, but at some of the meetings, they ran basically to the theme of "It's going to be your park. We are creating it for you and we want to create the kind of park that you want to have here."

The other meetings that I remember specifically was one in which these huge books were passed out and everyone was supposed to fill them out. They were questionnaires as to what kind of park you

Martin Griffith

wanted, and you were supposed to fill out the book and then get it back to them and the books were to be used to provide input into the future planning of the park.

MR. COCKRELL: That must have been for the General Management Plan, the overall master plan of the park.

MR. GRIFFITH: Possibly.

MR. COCKRELL: The questions that were being asked, were they pretty comprehensive about all the different aspects of the park? Or did it deal with just specific areas within the park that they were planning on developing?

MR. GRIFFITH: I felt that the thrust of the book's discussion was basically what sort of facilities that the park would offer. There was little or no discussion of the impact of the park on the communities within the park. Of all the studies that I read, this was basically what the content of these studies were. The effect upon the wildlife, the flora and the fauna, that type of thing. Environmental impact, that sort of thing. Concern about the preservation of the community was really notable by its absence.

MR. COCKRELL: Was that the main impetus for the formation of the homeowners association then?

MR. GRIFFITH: Yes, I would say it was fear and concern.

MR. COCKRELL: Do you remember the time frame for that when that first organized, when you had your first organizational meeting?

MR. GRIFFITH: Last year we were ten years old.

MR. COCKRELL: So you organized in 1978?

MR. GRIFFITH: Plus or minus.

MR. COCKRELL: I am assuming that you were one of the organizers. Who else was involved?

MR. GRIFFITH: Not really, I kind of got drafted. The principal organizer was Pat Morse, who still lives in the area (Mrs. Orville Morse). I think she and a lot of other people sort of felt this concern and they were good enough to try to provide at least a forum where people who lived in the area could get together and could get answers as to what was planned for the area and try to come up with some sort of an organization.

I think another feeling was that people had written to their congressman and other representatives and had pretty well received

Martin Griffith

form letters. Sometimes you would write a letter and you would say, "I have real concerns about what is going to happen to our area and the park," and you would get a letter back from a congressman saying, "We are glad you are in favor of the park, we are all glad [undistinguishable.]

MR. COCKRELL: You are talking about the Congressman for this area, Seiberling, and who is it in Cuyahoga County? Vanik?

MR. GRIFFITH: Yes, Vanik.

MR. COCKRELL: They were not supportive or helpful to their constituents?

MR. GRIFFITH: No, you knew as a constituent when you wrote to your congressman about concerns that you might have about the park that you were writing the architect of the park.

MR. COCKRELL: So you knew it wasn't going to do you any good?

MR. GRIFFITH: We had different viewpoints, certainly.

MR. COCKRELL: Did Congressman Seiberling meet with your organization to discuss issues or was there any contact at all?

MR. GRIFFITH: Yes, there was contact. He was at a couple of our meetings and Superintendent Birdsell was at one or two of our meetings.

MR. COCKRELL: What was the result of that? Was there any positive outcome? Were there any questions answered?

MR. GRIFFITH: I don't think so. I remember Congressman Seiberling saying repeatedly, "Well I keep telling the National Park Service there is too much taking in fee!" Of course, as you perhaps know, the act that was passed by Congress mandated the use of scenic easements, and I believe for the first several years of the park's history, there were a very limited number of scenic easements.

So Mr. Seiberling said that "I keep telling the Park Service to use more scenic easements, and they are buying too many houses, and then he would go and say, "Well that can't be helped now. The damage has been done." Our response to this was, "Well, OK, why don't you sell them back or why don't you make the houses available to rent? Why don't you try to shift gears on that?" This was kind of an exercise in futility.

MR. COCKRELL: As a homeowner before the park was established, how did you view the proposal for a park in Cuyahoga Valley?

Martin Griffith

MR. GRIFFITH: I thought it was a good idea.

MR. COCKRELL: Why?

MR. GRIFFITH: Well, because I felt that it would perhaps help to preserve the area. I think that the residents who have been here over the years have done a good job of preserving the valley and I guess maybe the consensus was that if we had done such a poor job of conserving the valley, why did they want to make a park out of it? It was evidently nice enough that they wanted it for a park. I don't include the National Park Service in that, because I know they didn't want the area as a park.

MR. COCKRELL: Why do you think that changed? I guess originally it was going to be a state park and then the National Park Service got involved in it.

MR. GRIFFITH: Well, as I understand it, the state's comment was that they didn't really have the funding to do it and so they weren't going to do it. I think Congressman Seiberling decided it was appropriate for the National Park Service to do it.

MR. COCKRELL: How would you characterize the opposition, if any, to a park being established here before President Ford signed the bill? Was there much opposition at all, or did everyone pretty much, like you, feel that it was a pretty good idea?

MR. GRIFFITH: I think there were a lot of differences of opinion on it. I think a lot of people were less than enchanted with the idea of a park. I think they were concerned and fearful as to what might happen. In my naivety, I was not one of them. We all loved the area or we wouldn't live here. It is not an easy thing to live here.

It is much easier to go to Stow and buy a home or to go to some other development. Simply go in, drink coffee with the salesman, have a nice time with him, sign the contract, pick out your plan and so forth. Much, much easier than being concerned about wells, septic systems, building in this area, finding a piece of property. It is much harder to do that. You have to really want to come here to be here, unless you were born here. It is also not a community that has had a lot of people moving in and out. People have basically stayed here for generations. It is not a bedroom community, where you make and lose friends very quickly.

MR. COCKRELL: What would you say now are the major issues between homeowners, the residents association, and the National Park Service?

Martin Griffith

MR. GRIFFITH: I think that our concern is that the residential community be preserved. We feel that it is worthy of preservation. We feel we have been not appreciated. In other words, the residential community is really an asset to the park. It has hardly ever been considered an asset to the park.

My observation has been that with the National Park Service people that I have known, and most of them I have felt are pretty good people, I have nothing personal on this. I have really felt, particularly with the older members of the Park Service, that their perception of the community has been that it makes it more difficult for them to manage the area. I sort of have the feeling that they would like to put a fence around it, lock it up at certain times, and control it that way.

They have never said this. I think they view the residents as being somewhat of a pain in the neck and they are probably right sometimes. I am sure we are a pain in the neck from time to time. But I think at the same time that we afford them a lot of advantages. I certainly feel that when I am driving through an area--and when we moved here, we were just getting started financially. We drove older cars. Our cars weren't always that reliable. You really felt more comfortable when you were driving through an area where you know a few people and you saw a few lights and so forth. It is a very scary proposition right now. Because the valley at night is basically black. It is just deserted. There is no one there.

I have strongly felt for a long, long time that we are as much a part of the area as any of the deer or the rabbits and I think removing the people who live in this area makes about as much sense as moving the mountain people of the Alps. I understand that the park systems in Europe and other parts of the world are not run the same way that our park systems are. There has not been the removal of people there that there has been here.

MR. COCKRELL: Could you explain in your own case what negotiations you had with the National Park Service over acquisition? Has your property been acquired?

MR. GRIFFITH: No it has not. They had expressed an interest in acquiring a scenic easement at one point and we were agreeable to this with the condition that at least one or more of our children be permitted to use the property to develop a home or two on the property. This is what we had in mind right from the beginning. Perhaps one of the reasons why we continued paying taxes on five acres rather than one acre. I met with Superintendent Birdsell on two or three occasions. We walked the property. He selected some areas that he felt might be appropriate because they would not be

Martin Griffith

visible from paths. He seemed in agreement with this. He had indicated that he was in agreement with it.

MR. COCKRELL: That didn't come to pass?

MR. GRIFFITH: No, it didn't come to pass. He received a transfer after that or shortly thereafter and that was the end of it. When I asked the Park Service people about this, Sheridan Steele for example, he felt it would create a bad precedent.

MR. COCKRELL: So that was the park's position after Birdsell?

MR. GRIFFITH: Right.

MR. COCKRELL: Did this happen a lot to other valley residents in the transition of superintendents? Were certain promises made under one superintendent and then when there was a changeover, a different story being told?

MR. GRIFFITH: No, not really. I don't think that has been a problem.

MR. COCKRELL: But in your case it was?

MR. GRIFFITH: Right.

MR. COCKRELL: I have been told that after the park was established, there were some people who bought property in the valley with the sole intention of selling it to the government at the best price that they could get. That they didn't intend to live here, but they wanted to turn a quick buck. Do you have any knowledge of that at all happening? Do you know of any incidents?

MR. GRIFFITH: I have heard of it, but I don't know of any specific cases. I would also think that if it did happen, it might relate more to purchase of acreage rather than buying a house and living there. I am not really personally familiar with anything like that happening, but I have heard about it.

MR. COCKRELL: Before the park was established, the Cuyahoga Valley Association and the Park Federation worked to get the park established with a big P.R. campaign and a lot of different activities. How did you see these groups working? Here they are on one end promoting the park and then your organization a couple of years later organizes and seems to be saying, "Maybe CVA and CVPF weren't telling the whole story."

MR. GRIFFITH: Well, the people that I am aware of who were members of those groups were in most cases people that were friends and acquaintances of Congressman Seiberling. I think he had a strong

Martin Griffith

influence within that group. Of course, he was very much for the park and establishment of the park and I think that these were people who were very supportive of him.

MR. COCKRELL: When the land acquisition program began here, the Park Service didn't have the staff to do that program themselves and they contracted with the Army Corps of Engineers for two years. As a valley resident, how did you see the Corps of Engineers program differ from the National Park Service program? Or were there any differences?

MR. GRIFFITH: Yes, there were strong differences.

MR. COCKRELL: Could you elaborate on them?

MR. GRIFFITH: I would say that during the early part of the park that the National Park Service was pretty insensitive to the community. I would say the Army Corps of Engineers was even worse.

MR. COCKRELL: What sort of things happened that makes you feel that they were insensitive?

MR. GRIFFITH: Well, let's see. The lady who lived down the street, Mrs. Bear. She and her husband have a driveway that is perhaps a half-mile long. She was down at the end of her driveway with a couple of youngsters when a car drove in and she inquired as to whether she could help the people in the car or not. They said that they didn't need any help, and then they asked who she was.

She said, "Well you know that you are on private property, and you really shouldn't be back here."

Some person in the car said, "Well you mean this is your property?"

She said, "Yes."

The reply was, "Well it won't be for long!"

She was so upset she started to cry. She ended up calling her husband who is a pediatric surgeon at the hospital. She was really upset about it. It is almost like me versus the United States of America. That is kind of a scary thing.

MR. COCKRELL: Were these Corps people or Park Service people?

MR. GRIFFITH: I believe those people were Army Corps of Engineers people, but I am not positive. It was the sort of thing where they had driven back considerable distance. It wasn't just poking up

Martin Griffith

a driveway a little bit. They had a bit of a drive to get back there.

MR. COCKRELL: Are there any other instances that come to mind?

MR. GRIFFITH: Well, the first exposure that most people have was getting a letter. The letters were pretty mean letters. They said, "This is to notify you that your property is in within the boundaries of the Cuyahoga Valley National Recreational Area, and your property has been scheduled for acquisition. An appraiser will call you within, blah, blah, blank, blank days to arrange a visit to appraise your property," that type of thing. I never got one of those letters, so I really can't remember too well, but I remember having seen a number of them.

MR. COCKRELL: Do you think the National Park Service influenced homeowners to sell or move out of the valley, rather than to take a retention?

MR. GRIFFITH: Yes, I think there was a lot of pressure to sell. I know at one time there was lot of rumors flying around having to do with the new act that was proposed to provide for tax payments after the closing of the transaction. A lot of people that had talked to me had indicated that they had been told by acquisition people from the National Park Service that if they cut their deal with the Park Service relatively quickly, they might not be subject to this additional tax, but if they waited it could cost them money that way. So there was definite pressure to sell.

MR. COCKRELL: In 1977 or thereabouts, Cuyahoga Valley Homeowners and Residents Association prepared a petition asking Congress to remove Oak Hill Road from the National Recreation Area. What happened to this petition? I ran across a reference that one was being prepared but I never found any documentation that it was ever forwarded to Congress.

MR. GRIFFITH: I don't know. I had nothing to do with the petition.

MR. COCKRELL: In 1978, CVHRA filed a class action lawsuit against the Park Service and the case eventually went all the way to the Supreme Court. Why do you think the court refused to hear the case, and did this decision not to hear it affect your organization and its strategy in any way?

MR. GRIFFITH: Well, I have heard it said that all judges don't exactly have the true pioneering spirit. Of course, the thrust of the class action suit was that the National Park Service at that time had not done a number of things that had been mandated by the Congressional act. The primary thing being that the method of

Martin Griffith

acquisition was to be largely through scenic easements and that had simply not happened and had not been the case.

As I remember, there was also a requirement on the part of Congress that environmental impact studies be made and we were of the opinion that these really had not been made. Also, that a general plan be prepared that would not only show in a very hazy large-scale fashion what was planned.

We felt that Congress had mandated that there be a plan that would specifically show what was to be planned in the park on a specific use area and that the plan that was prepared should show why if there was a group of 8 or 10 or 12 houses why the owners of these houses had to lose their homes. Or conversely, why a lot of tax money would have to be spent to buy all of these homes.

We felt that there was an obligation implied by the act upon the National Park Service to show why specific homes were needed for the park. We did not feel that the fact that the house was visible from a trail was sufficient reason for people to be forced out of their homes.

MR. COCKRELL: Did the fact that the case was not heard by the Supreme Court affect your organization at all?

MR. GRIFFITH: No, I wouldn't say that it was a great effect. Because my recollection was that all of the judges that first heard the case seemed to take the position that we had questioned the legal right of the Federal Government to condemn property, which we never did. I mean obviously the Federal Government does have the right to condemn property. Our point was that they were not in harmony with the act that Congress had written. I think we felt that the act that Congress had written was by and large pretty fair to the community. We just didn't feel that the Park Service had read it too carefully.

MR. COCKRELL: What relationship did or does your organization have with the National Inholders Association and Charles Cushman?

MR. GRIFFITH: We have no direct connection whatsoever.

MR. COCKRELL: But he has been here to address your group and give advice. What type of advice was given?

MR. GRIFFITH: I think he came on a number of occasions. He was at a number of our meetings as was Superintendent Birdsell. I think that he and Birdsell were there at one particular point and both gave basically a statement of position. Superintendent Birdsell stated his position. Cushman stated his position and I

Martin Griffith

think it gave the people at the meeting an opportunity to hear both of them.

MR. COCKRELL: Is there any monetary assistance from the national group to the local group?

MR. GRIFFITH: No, none whatsoever.

MR. COCKRELL: In late 1979, NBC T.V. aired a segment on "Prime Time Sunday" to which the National Park Service objected. I guess it focused on Cuyahoga Valley and couple of other national park areas. Did you see this program and what were your views on this? Did you feel that it adequately reflected the concerns of homeowners?

MR. GRIFFITH: Well, at the time, I felt it was a good program. I don't really remember very much about it at this point.

MR. COCKRELL: Why do you think the National Park Service was objecting to it?

MR. GRIFFITH: I think it showed them in a less than flattering light.

MR. COCKRELL: When James Watt became Secretary of the Interior in 1981 was there any change in the Department of the Interior's attitude or position? Did any of that filter down through the Department to the Park Service to the local citizens? Was there any change of attitude at all?

MR. GRIFFITH: I don't know that there was a change of attitude; there was a substantial change in acquisitions because the money just wasn't available in the quantities that it had been available under President Carter.

MR. COCKRELL: How was this seen locally?

MR. GRIFFITH: Do you mean by the residents?

MR. COCKRELL: Yes.

MR. GRIFFITH: Yeah, I think most of them that I am aware of were pretty supportive of that.

MR. COCKRELL: One of the members of the Watt team was Ric Davidge who was a member of the National Inholders Association, and he was particularly vocal about the rights of citizens and communities to preserve themselves. Was he very much involved here at Cuyahoga Valley? Did you ever have any discussions with him or does that name ring a bell?

Martin Griffith

MR. GRIFFITH: The name rings a bell. I have never met the gentleman.

MR. COCKRELL: During the early months of the James Watt administration, there was some talk of deauthorizing certain National Park Service areas and Cuyahoga Valley was on that list. Did your association promote and encourage that? Would you prefer not to have the National Park or the National Park Service here, or would you prefer a state park, or no park at all?

MR. GRIFFITH: Well, I could only speak to express my own opinions on this, because all of our members have their own viewpoints which might change within the membership. We are all different individuals and we all have different ways of looking at things. My own observations have been that over the years the state of Ohio has done a better job running parks than the National Park Service has. I mean, I think Ohio is blessed with a very good system of state parks. I think they do very well. I don't think that their effect upon the residential community has been anything like the effect here in Cuyahoga Valley. They don't have as much money as you folks, so they can't do as much damage.

MR. COCKRELL: One of the groups that was set up because of the 1974 bill was the Advisory Commission, which was seen as a liaison between the national park's management and the local citizens, to get information out to the public, and to provide answers to questions. Do you think that the Advisory Commission succeeded in this?

MR. GRIFFITH: When you say Advisory Commission, are you referring to a group of people in Washington meeting or the group that met around here?

MR. COCKRELL: The local group that met here. There were different members appointed to this group.

MR. GRIFFITH: It was a joke.

MR. COCKRELL: Why do you say that?

MR. GRIFFITH: Among other things, they used to have some of their meetings at 7:30 in the morning. I think that with maybe one or two exceptions, there was no one in the group who was from this area, no one who lived here. They were basically people who had been politically very active. It was an appointed group, not an elected group. I mean, we had no more choice in the selection of that group than we do in who the park superintendent is here.

Martin Griffith

The group was, I think, very heavily biased in terms of people who had been nature historians. There was a gentleman who was involved with the State Department of Environmental Resources, and various people from the Cleveland area who had been active politically. The only one I can recall who was on that group was Jim Jackson of Bath Township. Of course, Jackson was a neighbor, and a very close friend of John Seiberling. Most supportive.

I think the park had perhaps a legal or whatever obligation to establish such a body. They established it, they observed the letter of the law. As far as anything that actually worked with the community, I don't think so.

MR. COCKRELL: Did you attend any of these Advisory Commission meetings?

MR. GRIFFITH: Yes, a number of them.

MR. COCKRELL: Basically, how did that operate? What went on at these meetings?

MR. GRIFFITH: Well, I think that they were orchestrated rather well from the standpoint of the Park Service. If I was the superintendent of the park, I probably would have hoped that the content of the meetings would have been about the same as it was, because they concerned themselves with such issues as the lighting at some of the skating areas and sled runs and the impact of a plant in Independence. They were concerned with purchasing that plant. They were concerned with landfills up in the Independence area. The concerns were basically those that might be related to the park operation, but concerns that certainly did not reflect the community involvement or particularly people who lived within the park.

MR. COCKRELL: So you would say that they were insensitive to the local citizen's concerns?

MR. GRIFFITH: I don't think they understood our concerns and I just don't think it came up. They said they were, but as I said, if you just watch the schedule of meetings, they were usually at times that anyone who was working and had to be at a job couldn't get there. Some of the meetings were in the evenings, but to my recollection there were not a lot of people from the community attending them.

I think there was really a sense of hopelessness. There was a sense of fear because a lot of people who owned property felt that, rightly or wrongly--I think wrongly--that they would suffer financially if they made waves. In fairness to the Park Service, I don't think that ever happened.

Martin Griffith

MR. COCKRELL: But there was that perception?

MR. GRIFFITH: There was that fear. I don't think it ever happened. Some people have felt that the position of the homeowners was that the government wasn't paying enough for properties. That has never been the case. It has never been money.

MR. COCKRELL: What are your feelings about the National Park Service development program here and specifically on Oak Hill Road? There is the day use area in this vicinity. What are your feelings about that?

MR. GRIFFITH: From observation, they don't appear to be used very much. That is, the day use center. I think there are some real concerns about the establishment of overnight camping areas, because I know that in our initial discussions with Superintendent Birdsell, we were told that this was to be basically a day use national recreation area. We were concerned about colonies of people spending the summer here who might have characteristics that might be threatening to the neighborhood. I think there was a concern among a lot of people that people from the outside would come in, camp here for long periods of time, and not add to the harmony of the neighborhood much.

MR. COCKRELL: Are you trying to say that maybe increased crime and vandalism and destruction of the neighborhood with traffic and things like that?

MR. GRIFFITH: Well, that type of thing and I know in the Peninsula area the number of calls that the rescue squad had to make went up substantially because there was extensive use of alcohol. I am told there was extensive use of drugs in the day use areas; that the rescue squad really did not relish going in there. These were all part of the metro park system, Virginia Kendall, and so forth. A lot of the visitor use areas had been there prior to the National Park Service and people remembered when they had visited these areas prior to the takeover by the National Park Service. There were good working family areas where there was really not a lot of problem with running into people who might tend to intimidate you, drunkenness, people who were stoned, that type of thing.

MR. COCKRELL: There wasn't much of that?

MR. GRIFFITH: No, there wasn't much of that before. Of course, under the Park Service, alcohol was permitted in these areas at that time. I believe that has changed since then.

Martin Griffith

MR. COCKRELL: So the overall development program here at the park with the National Park Service as sponsor, you don't believe that it is being used by very many people, or is that just for Oak Hill?

MR. GRIFFITH: From observation, the areas up here are not used by a lot of people. I don't see a lot of traffic in and out of there.

MR. COCKRELL: How would you characterize the three superintendents who have been here at Cuyahoga Valley in terms of their policies and their management philosophies?

MR. GRIFFITH: Well, I think Superintendent Birdsell was extremely insensitive to community thoughts. I think most people viewed him as being somewhat dictatorial. I can remember one meeting that he was in attendance at the Homeowners Association, and Jack Blanton who was head of the acquisition office was in the audience. Someone asked Superintendent Birdsell who determined which properties were to be taken in fee. He said, "I do."

Jack Blanton almost fell out of his chair. He jumped up and he said, "What the Superintendent really meant was that he would interpret the decisions;" in other words, he would pass on the decisions of the National Park Service, but Superintendent Birdsell did not indicate that he was the final voice as to whether a family would be bought out or not.

MR. COCKRELL: How about Lew Albert?

MR. GRIFFITH: I didn't really have much contact with Mr. Albert. He was not the type of person that sought a lot of contact. He seemed very aloof.

MR. COCKRELL: Did he ever attend any of your meetings?

MR. GRIFFITH: Not to my knowledge. But I know when Mr. Birdsell was here, there was a lot of confrontation. People were very emotional about it. He was just as emotional from his end.

MR. COCKRELL: But Lew Albert wasn't that type?

MR. GRIFFITH: No, he was pretty laid back.

MR. COCKRELL: And what about John Debo?

MR. GRIFFITH: John Debo was really the only superintendent that we have had extensive contact with. We wrote him a letter; it hit him just about upon his arrival in the area, indicating that we would certainly like to meet with him and have a chance to get to know him, and have him get to know us. He responded to this and we have had several meetings since then.

Martin Griffith

MR. COCKRELL: Has anything positive come out of that or anything that you would care to discuss?

MR. GRIFFITH: Yes, he seems very bright and articulate. He listens to people. He doesn't always agree with us, we don't always agree with him, but I think we respect one another. I certainly respect him. He is the least confrontational.

MR. COCKRELL: Is there something that I have not asked that you think I should ask or should be on the record? Is there anything that comes to mind?

MR. GRIFFITH: Only the thought that the people who are still here, I guess you might say it is mostly the mavericks that remain. I think a lot of us hope and view the park as being an area that can go in different directions. It has a potential of being an absolutely exquisite area to live in. On the other hand, it has the potential of being an absolute disaster to live in. Perhaps it will come out somewhere in the middle.

I don't know, but I think that in large measure it may be a reflection of how well the Park Service works with the community and I think I have the hope that we can accept and respect each other. We are not always going to agree, but I think that they have the potential of being an asset to us. I think we have the potential of being an asset to them. I think we could be good for each other.

My concerns are that the taking of our homes be stopped as much as possible, except in the rare cases where a house is needed for a park headquarters, some area of direct visitor use as opposed to just being visible from a trail. That is not enough to take someone's house. So it has to mean there is just a lot of potential there.

It can be a very, very good park. It can be a much more interesting park. It can be a park that is a lot less expensive to the taxpayer at the same time. There is strong concern with people who have taken term estates, who have discovered that they really don't want to move out of the area. I know we have talked to Mr. Debo about what will be done with these people, because the people that I have talked to have not been very able to work with the Park Service towards either extending their term estates, towards renting the houses, that type of thing.

I know from talking to John Debo that it bothers him to see houses sitting around with screens on them, boarded up windows and so forth. He tells me that he doesn't like it and I believe him. I think that there are going to be a lot more boarded up houses

Martin Griffith

unless there are improvements in the means of handling people whose term estates have expired and want to stay here. By no means do I think they should stay for free. I think that the rental should reflect market value. I don't believe in something for nothing, but I think it could be good for both the Park Service and the resident if this can happen.

I also think the person who takes the best care of a home is the person who is busting his back to pay for it. He is going to be normally the person that takes the best care. I would say that people who have raised their families, who have lived in the area for a long time, are probably going to be better tenants than somebody who simply moves in for a year or two. By virtue of the fact that they are here longer, you are not going to have the vacancy problem. It is going to be less of a problem for you. That is probably one of the largest areas remaining. Road maintenance is an area of a lot of concern. Because here we are with a decimated tax base still having basically 100% maintenance of the roads.

MR. COCKRELL: Do you see that being corrected any time soon?

MR. GRIFFITH: I hope so. I think that Mr. Debo is trying. He tells me he is and I believe him.

[END]

Martin Griffith

I N T E R V I E W V I A C O R R E S P O N D E N C E

**F O R T H E
A D M I N I S T R A T I V E H I S T O R Y O F
C U Y A H O G A V A L L E Y
N A T I O N A L R E C R E A T I O N A R E A
O H I O**

**Chester V. Hamilton
Retiree
(former Historian, Cuyahoga Valley National Recreation Area)
National Park Service**

**Letter
October 24, 1989
Zellwood Station, Florida**

Interviewed by:

**Ron Cockrell
Historian
Midwest Regional Office
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior**

**Letter
August 29, 1989
Omaha, Nebraska**

Chester V. Hamilton

MR. COCKRELL: I am a National Park Service (NPS) historian currently researching and compiling the Administrative History of Cuyahoga Valley National Recreation Area (CVNRA), Ohio. I respectfully request your participation in this project which will document the history and development of this important NPS unit.

I have researched the park files and have conducted many oral history interviews, but I need your perspective on a number of items which are as follows:

1. What are the dates for your tour of duty at CVNRA?

MR. HAMILTON: First of all, trying to recall events which took place over 10 years ago was and is quite a task. But having no other person around to discuss the events just made it even harder. I have written this letter in my mind several times so now I will try and put it down on paper.

1. I was assigned to Cuyahoga Valley in September 1977 and retired from there in May 1985.

MR. COCKRELL: 2. As the park's first historian, what specific duties occupied the majority of your time? Did you find a wealth of historical documentation on the Cuyahoga Valley readily available, or was it necessary to gather it in bit by bit? What were your principal challenges? Frustrations?

MR. HAMILTON: 2. During this time my duties as Park Historian changed quite a bit. At first, since there were only about 12 people assigned to the park and no interpretation program, I like all the rest mostly answered letters received by the park. Trying to find the requested information was only the first frustration because in 1977 the park had no established goals or directions and most of the letters pertained to desires the public wished accomplished--and accomplished immediately!

The next big challenge was to "clear" the letter through Bill Birdsell! Birdsell was very particular pertaining to paperwork leaving the park and it was very difficult to meet deadlines for correspondence which created more problems with Midwest Region. I recall once Bob Burns, the first Chief Ranger at the park, posted a letter on the bulletin board with a note "cleared through Birdsell on first try." He further stated that he had attempted other letters as many as 6 times before clearing. Birdsell would make changes, we would include the changes, and next time he would either delete the changes or modify them again.

I remember bringing a letter to him and before he saw it he stated, "Let's see how we can change it!" It got to the point that people

Chester V. Hamilton

would just send him basically a "draft copy" and let him make the changes he wanted.

As for the availability of historical documentation, there was and is very little, and what is available is mostly hearsay that has been repeated from person to person and this gets very distorted. Furthermore, the historical story of the park is very fragmented! My most productive time and events did not begin until the last 3-4 years at the park when I began to delve into the court records of the houses and the owners.

The biggest treasure find was Clayton and Nina Stanford and their documents, especially his great-grandfather's diary which I xeroxed for the park. The second was the ledgers and company records which were found in a junk room at the Jaite Paper Mill. The park was not allowed access to the plant until it was owned by the park nor were the owners very cooperative. The early years were quite trying and frustrating because we knew the park was not wanted by the general public and several residents were quite vocal regarding their displeasure.

MR. COCKRELL: 3. Was the transfer of Virginia Kendall Park a smooth one? What problems were encountered?

MR. HAMILTON: 3. The transfer of Virginia Kendall Park was rather smooth once it was "legally decided" that there would be a transfer. There was a matter of a large trust fund which the Akron Park District did not wish to loose. Furthermore, they had delayed much needed maintenance once it was decided the transfer would be accomplished. This neglect caused some bitterness between us and the Akron Park District for awhile but it soon passed. The transfer came about only after a court decision!

MR. COCKRELL: 4. Please relate how the early interpretive program called "Johnnycake Village" came to be established and include the individuals responsible for it. Was it a successful program--why or why not? How much support did the park provide in terms of funding, manpower, and supervision? Why was it not renewed?

MR. HAMILTON: 4. For the first couple of years there was no interpretive program by park personnel. The first attempt was by volunteers touring the park with school children and this program was run by Mary Kay Newton--who was running the same program before the park was established. Johnnycake Village was made possible by Bill Birdsell. Bill had seen these sets being used during the Bi-Centennial celebration and asked that they be transferred to Cuyahoga afterwards. I was asked to assist in the setting up of the sets and securing needed supplies, but once the program began it was operated by personnel assigned to the Interpretive Division.

Chester V. Hamilton

Again, Mary Kay was one of the primary personnel involved with its operation.

As for support of the program, it was mixed. Park Maintenance was reluctant and others were so-so, but Birdsell was behind it 100% and secured the needed funds by adjusting the park's budget which did not make the other divisions happy. Overall I feel Johnnycake Village did help the park establish itself with the general public. As I recall, it was not repeated the following year because the Interpretive Division was then established and the park was beginning to expand. Ron Thoman was assigned about this time and the park had two Interpretive Centers and the park felt that they should "shoulder" the interpretive responsibilities.

MR. COCKRELL: 5. You were in charge of coordinating the early volunteer program (i.e. the Cuyahoga Valley Association's guided tours). Please explain all of the mechanics of this. How important were the volunteers in these early post-authorization years? Why were the guided tours eventually phased out? How did the volunteer program evolve during your tenure at Cuyahoga?

MR. HAMILTON: 5. As previously stated I was technically in charge of the early volunteer program, but Mary Kay Newton really ran the program. I would take all the technical data from her and make the monthly reports or secure the needed equipment and supplies, but Mary Kay ran the program.

These volunteers were very important. In fact, they were essential to the park the first couple of years because they were the only interpretive program the park had. They had been established under Sheridan Steele and Mary Kay when they worked for the Cuyahoga Valley Association and when these two transferred to the Park Service they basically brought the volunteer program with them.

The original volunteer program eventually was phased out because the park wanted to establish their own interpretive centers and programs which is as it should be. However, before I left the volunteers were back and conducting hikes along and through the park, which is also as it should be--community involvement!

MR. COCKRELL: 6. How did the idea of establishing park headquarters at Jaite originate?

MR. HAMILTON: 6. The consolidation of the Park Headquarters complex at Jaite was inevitable and necessary. The park "grewed like Topsy." There were no plans for which building would be purchased next and thus the various divisions were scattered all over the park. This was highly inefficient and the park knew it. Thus, when we secured Jaite we immediately began to plan the consolidation.

Chester V. Hamilton

At first the Land Division worked independent of National Park Service control. In fact, they worked from Indiana Dunes for awhile and latter they were controlled through Minneapolis. They would purchase property according to the funds available regardless of the desires of the Park. This created many problems both in morale and it also allowed many historic buildings to deteriorate needlessly because some owners felt they could force the government to purchase their property earlier if they allowed a historic building to deteriorate because of neglected maintenance.

MR. COCKRELL: 7. How well did Superintendent Bill Birdsell work with his staff? How well did Division Chiefs work with their staffs and with each other? How would you characterize staff morale during the Birdsell and Albert superintendencies?

MR. HAMILTON: 7. As previously stated, Bill Birdsell was a very particular and detailed person when it came to paperwork. All the delays in "clearing" paperwork through Birdsell caused reports to miss deadlines established by Midwest Region which caused resentment between us and Region. Furthermore, Midwest Region had just been realigned and lost control over some major Parks--the "crown jewels" of the Midwest. They had gained what some in Region called "postage stamp" parks and this resentment caused more friction between CVNRA and Midwest Region. Some in Region told some of CVNRA personnel that the Washington Office had fought the establishment of CVNRA.

Furthermore, the temperament and attitude of Birdsell caused friction between him and the staff. When I first arrived at the park there was only one administrative building and about 12 staff. Birdsell had had the house modified so that there were two offices upstairs and a large waiting room across the front of the upstairs.

Before I arrived the other historian had occupied one of the offices and Birdsell the other and a secretary was in the waiting room. The remainder of the staff were all crowded into the basement. This arrangement led to many comments about the King and his serfdom. Birdsell kept the second office vacant awaiting the assignment of an Assistant Superintendent which he had picked out through arrangements, so the rumor mill had it, with Representative Seiberling. Soon afterwards Sheridan Steele and Mary Kay Newton both received direct assignments to the Park Service, he as a GS-9 and she as a GS-4, and immediately Sheridan Steele was assigned to this second office.

In fairness to Bill, I must say he tried to be friendly with park personnel, but he was so ingrained with National Park Service heritage and dedication to the establishment of CVNRA that he "distanced" himself from the park staff. Since he was single and

Chester V. Hamilton

he had little concept of "family life" and would talk long hours after work with staff members about his plans for the park, this would cause staff members to be late in coming home. The next day they would comment about how Birdsell caused them to be late at home and the trouble it caused at home.

The change to Lewis Albert was just that, a big change! He, like Birdsell, was distant to the staff, and he, like Birdsell, was more friendly to the local population, especially the political and influential. However, this attention to the desires and demands of the politically influential was needed at that time to further the goals of CVNRA. One big change was the loosening of controls over paperwork. Albert allowed the staff more self control and deadlines began to be met and relations with Midwest Region began to improve. About this same time the Jaite complex was purchased, not the plant, and this consolidation of the divisions improved morale immensely. Also about this same time the Lands Division had been transferred to CVNRA's control and purchase of property could be programmed to meet CVNRA's plans, which improved planning and morale.

MR. COCKRELL: 8. Please describe Cuyahoga's relations with the Midwest Regional Office (MWRO) and why communications were not good (cite some examples). Did the situation improve?

MR. HAMILTON: 8. Question already answered.

MR. COCKRELL: 9. Why do you think Bill Birdsell was transferred to the Washington Office (WASO)?

MR. HAMILTON: 9. As to why Birdsell was being transferred to WASO, I don't think anybody knows for sure but he had begun to lose favor with some of the local residents. A lot of this resentment was beyond his control such as the "helter skelter" method of land purchase which was caused by the fact that this function was operating by and through another federal bureau which had other objectives than that of the NPS and the non-availability of funds.

Also some local residents had begun to resent the long delays in park development. They thought the park should be fully developed in a couple of years and had begun to distrust any commitments or comments by park personnel. Some thought the NPS had unlimited funding and perhaps this was caused by the many public meetings which Birdsell had conducted. He painted a good picture and some time in the future it may all come to pass, but some local residents became restless and pressure was brought to bear to transfer Bill Birdsell.

MR. COCKRELL: 10. Why was there so much controversy/confusion over the rehabilitation of the Locktender's house?

Chester V. Hamilton

MR. HAMILTON: 10. The controversy over the Locktender's house was mostly a power struggle between divisions. Since there was some disagreement as to its historical authenticity some staff members thought divisional goals should be accomplished at that time. Funding restrictions had held many Divisional plans in limbo for some time and Division Chiefs wanted to complete their programs. Funds were adjusted for the Locktender's house and for awhile morale and cooperation suffered but soon all was forgiven.

MR. COCKRELL: 11. In terms of cultural resources management (CRM), how much assistance did MWRO CRM professionals provide? Denver Service Center (DSC)? What problems, if any, were encountered on any of these non-CVNRA conducted CRM studies/projects?

MR. HAMILTON: 11. As for the assistance provided by DSC and other MWRO Cultural Resources Management professionals. Their assistance was good, but infrequent and spotty. They would come for a period of time and then leave for another project and many in the park could not understand this, which caused resentment and other critical comments. Once the draft copies of their studies were received some park personnel felt that they did not understand the park's problems and no amount of discussion changed their minds, or at least not while I was there. Overall I felt the DSC and MWRO professionals did a good job under very trying conditions and treated the park's problems fairly.

MR. COCKRELL: 12. What criteria were used to identify structures for use as employee quarters?

MR. HAMILTON: 12. Question not answered.

MR. COCKRELL: 13. What did you see as the strengths and weaknesses of the General Management Plan (GMP)? What is your opinion of the effectiveness of the DSC planning team led by Michael Donnelly?

MR. HAMILTON: 13. As for the DSC planning team led by Michael Donnelly, I don't recall it. I think it occurred after I retired or else I was consulted so infrequently I have forgotten any interviews. The previous favorable comments regarding the DSC and MWRO planners apply to those who wrote the General Management Plan--a job well done under trying conditions.

MR. COCKRELL: Any additional information you care to contribute will also be greatly appreciated.

MR. HAMILTON: I have some last comments. The assignment to CVNRA was not pleasant because of the resentment of the local residents. Some of the most antagonistic were those that would profit most

Chester V. Hamilton

from the park's projects. Clayton Stanford and his brother told me how they had patched up their home, the house on the hill just before you reach the George Stanford home (the present hostel) and how run down it had been in the younger days. However, when the house was purchased by the park from Clayton's brother's daughter and husband, there appeared a "Sunday Supplement" with a long article about how the park had mistreated them; how this house had always been a historical house that had been well maintained; that the Park Service was neglecting the house; and that they had not been compensated fairly. Clayton told me how the house was once a chicken house and that his father told about moving it up the hill to its present location.

I and other park personnel would try and soothe some of the locals' feelings, but most of the time our comments would fall on deaf ears. However, some would listen and we would count it an achievement. Clayton and Nina Stanford, I found to be most understanding and a wonderful source of historical information. Furthermore, their information had a lot of documentation. They were both immersed in the valley's history! Clayton's Great-Great-Great Grandfather surveyed the valley in 1807 and the Stanford's lived there the rest of the time and Nina's Great-Great Grandfather was Capt. Howe, a canal boat captain and big landowner in the valley. Both families were quite well to do at one time. I would suggest that you contact either or both of them to get a non-biased version of the park's development from a local, long-time resident's point of view.

[END]

I N T E R V I E W V I A C O R R E S P O N D E N C E

F O R T H E
A D M I N I S T R A T I V E H I S T O R Y O F
C U Y A H O G A V A L L E Y
N A T I O N A L R E C R E A T I O N A R E A
O H I O

Robert F. Holmes
Retiree
(former CVNRA Management Assistant)
National Park Service

Letter
November 20, 1989
Bolingbrook, Illinois

Interviewed by:

Ron Cockrell
Historian
Midwest Regional Office
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Letter
August 28, 1989
Omaha, Nebraska

Robert F. Holmes

Robert F. Holmes

MR. COCKRELL: I am a National Park Service (NPS) historian currently researching and compiling the Administrative History of Cuyahoga Valley National Recreation Area (CVNRA), Ohio. I respectfully request your participation in this project which will document the history and development of this important NPS unit.

I have researched the park files and have conducted many oral history interviews, but I need your perspective on a number of items which are as follows:

1. You worked with Bill Birdsell at Mound City Group before you transferred to Gateway. You arrived at CVNRA in June 1976. Could you compare/contrast these two new National Recreation Areas in terms of staff, budget, degree of support from Regional Offices, etc.?

MR. HOLMES: I must admit that your letter regarding the preparation of the Cuyahoga NRA administrative history was misplaced until it surfaced today. It is still possible that a few comments of mine might be of some help, and so, such follows.

Reasonably enough, each comment or comments addresses points in the order listed in your letter.

1. There was little if any comparison between Gateway NRA and the recently established CVNRA (1976). At the time of my arrival at Gateway, a core staff had been created at each unit with administrative support personnel at the headquarters area. CVNRA was Bill Birdsell, a clerk-typist, a YCC (or equivalent) maintenance person and myself.

There was considerable positive support from the Regional Office for Gateway, while such support for CVNRA was uncertain, tended to be negative, and seemed to me based on the approach--Let Birdsell do it and if things don't work out, well too bad.

Obviously such attitudes were in part developed from the relationships established during Bill's tenure at the Mound City Group. My recall and the situation as I saw it at the time may be colored by a belief that many in the Regional Office were:

Unable to come to grips with their responsibility for providing assistance to Cuyahoga Valley.

Unable to accept the relationship between Bill and Congressman Seiberling, that the Regional Office encouraged and yet mistrusted and seemed to regret.

Robert F. Holmes

Bill's overpowering personality turned off many in the Regional Office and they perhaps very naturally tended to react with suspicion, resentment, and a refusal to work with him.

If this sounds pro-Birdsell, it was my belief then and is now that Bill was left to "swing in the wind" without what could have been helpful support in the areas of planning for land use, land acquisition, boundary designations and the creation of a statement of purpose for this new and different kind of park. This exasperated a beginning relationship as Bill more and more became "a lone wolf" seeking to create the necessary planning base, find funding and carry out the apparent Congressional intent for this park.

MR. COCKRELL: 2. Some have said that Superintendent Birdsell tried to build a Yellowstone National Park out of CVNRA. What are your views on this?

MR. HOLMES: 2. I don't believe that this was the case. Bill saw the need to acquire sufficient land so that "effective" management controls could be instituted for both the short and long range operations of the park. In our discussions about future park activities, we would discuss types of acquisitions needed for various areas of the park in order to provide appropriate resource protection possibilities, make possible visitor use; while not acquiring lands that could receive adequate protection under an easement or less than fee acquisition.

I thought the question of land acquisition, use planning, and related input was an area that was shamefully neglected by the Regional and Washington Offices. The result was to put Bill into a position where he often had to react rather than operate under the umbrella of a planning document. I never understood whether this resulted from Bill's peculiar relations with Region or came from an inability of the NPS in general to come to grips with the needs of CVNRA.

MR. COCKRELL: 3. How frequently did Bill Birdsell hold staff meetings? Did he delegate much authority or did you have to clear every action with him? How did this help or hinder park operations?

MR. HOLMES: 3. Bill's weakness was an inability to carry out or even see the need for positive human relationships. He did not delegate, hold staff meetings or appreciate the need to recognize individual needs. His overpowering and unfeeling personality resulted in a staff primarily concerned with CYA (cover your ass) rather than making positive contributions to park operations.

Robert F. Holmes

MR. COCKRELL: 4. What made Bill Birdsell a good manager? What drawbacks did he have which impeded park operations?

MR. HOLMES: 4. Bill was excellent in public relations and in working with individuals outside the NPS family. He could and did recognize operational and management needs and possibilities, but could not communicate to his staff in a manner that would have expedited work activities. At times he almost seemed to regard the staff as enemies rather than support personnel.

There was the case of Bill's famous paperclip memorandum. He could make small issues into mountains and surely in human relationships could not, "see the forest for the trees."

He was the personification of the 9/1 manager.

MR. COCKRELL: 5. Did Birdsell expect employees to work long hours (overtime) without compensation?

MR. HOLMES: 5. I certainly worked long hours for and with Bill. I think he simply did not recognize time and could not appreciate the way individuals might feel about those hours worked beyond designated work schedules. He did not have a family and didn't understand that an employee might have other than NPS/CVNRA responsibilities. He was an example of an individual whose life was his work.

He was also of the old school, coming from the period when NPS Directors would proudly report to Congress those hours volunteered by NPS staff.

MR. COCKRELL: 6. How was staff morale? How well did Division Chiefs work with Birdsell? With each other? What were the principal difficulties?

MR. HOLMES: 6. I can't address this since I left the park before the division chiefs had had the opportunity to develop meaningful relationships. In the early months staff morale was deplorable. Much of my time was spent in reassuring the administrative technician, secretary, and maintenance man that life could go on and that while "paperclips" were important and memoranda retyped five or six times undoubtedly was necessary, somewhere there was goodness in all things.

It became difficult to go to work each morning, not knowing what evil Bill had detected during his late evening work hours.

MR. COCKRELL: 7. Why did Birdsell prohibit any staff contacts with the Midwest Regional Office (MWRO) except for himself and you?

Robert F. Holmes

MR. HOLMES: 7. Bill neither trusted Regional or staff personnel. Unfortunately a situation developed where I became a conduit between Region and Bill. Rather than talking to Bill, Regional staff would call me to request information, to complain about him and/or ask why he did not complete some work project.

He did not trust people to accurately communicate ideas, concepts, and needs.

MR. COCKRELL: 8. I've been told that the Regional Director and his Deputy came to CVNRA and before a meeting of the staff (in the absence of Superintendent Birdsell) offered transfers to those who could not work well with Birdsell. You took them up on their offer. What were your reasons?

MR. HOLMES: 8. I only recall that I called the Regional Office and requested a transfer. The heartache experienced in being part of a situation where the staff was constantly in need of reassurance, and an inability to make Bill see or understand their anguish became too much of a burden.

This coupled with being caught between Bill and the Regional Office made for a difficult and impossible work situation.

Personally, Bill and I got along quite well, with the factor understood that he was not for whatever reasons going to allow me to perform the duties of a management assistant.

MR. COCKRELL: 9. How did Birdsell react to the very critical Operations Evaluation Report conducted in late 1976 and again in 1978?

MR. HOLMES: 9. The 1978 Evaluation was after my time. The '76 resulted in increased staff nitpicking on Bill's part. As I recall, Bill's view of Region and its personnel was so low that essentially the report was of little significance to him and his activities. He did ask for and receive words of encouragement from Congressman Seiberling. That was important.

MR. COCKRELL: 10. The 1974 Act required the Secretary to submit a land acquisition plan to Congress within 1 year of authorization. A 2-page letter from Assistant Secretary Nat Reed went to the Congressional Committees in December 1975. Congress said it was insufficient and called on the NPS to submit a detailed report and schedule. Why was this not done until years later?

MR. HOLMES: 10. As briefly mentioned earlier, Bill was on his own during those early years. Certainly, regarding the preparation of a land acquisition plan, why a team was not created to provide needed technical and manpower support to the park is a mystery.

Robert F. Holmes

The lack of a plan created unnecessary misunderstandings in the public mind and certainly delayed area development planning.

MR. COCKRELL: 11. From 1975 to 1977, the NPS operated under a Memorandum of Understanding with the Corps of Engineers (COE) to conduct its land acquisition program at CVNRA. During these two years, why were there so many problems with the COE program?

MR. HOLMES: 11. No action plan. No plan period. Land acquisition became a matter of opportunity, hit and miss. Bill recognized and agonized over this activity, but left on his own and faced with other job responsibilities (coupled with all those darn trees) could not independently handle the load. We discussed the need for a staff member to act as a liaison between the park office and the COE, but this position was not available.

MR. COCKRELL: 12. What did the park do to try to get the COE program running smoothly?

MR. HOLMES: 12. Bill tried to institute weekly meetings with the COE office manager and then to arrange for the appointment of a new COE manager. Eventually of course the COE left the scene. As I recall, there was a general belief on the part of Birdsell/Seiberling that the COE's philosophy was a negative element for an NPS land acquisition program.

MR. COCKRELL: 13. How much time per day or week did the land acquisition program require from Birdsell? From you?

MR. HOLMES: 13. 20%-30% of Bill's time and two hours a day of mine. I became the liaison between the landowners, NPS, park office and the COE. Primarily attempting to assuage the concerns and misinformation of the landowner.

MR. COCKRELL: 14. How much assistance did George Pastrick in the Chicago Field Office provide?

MR. HOLMES: 14. I was not familiar with George's work--it seemed that he provided Bill with a social break and updates on NPS gossip.

MR. COCKRELL: 15. Did the COE not provide enough manpower? Was the local COE office given much assistance from its Regional or Washington Offices?

MR. HOLMES: 15. Here again I only have an impression--that being our respective Regional and Washington Offices left CVNRA to carry on. In the beginning the COE office was severely understaffed--it seems that towards the end of their activities, a sufficient

Robert F. Holmes

staff was established. Their work was negatively effected by the lack of an overall planning document for the area.

COCKRELL: 16. Critics of CVNRA have charged that the NPS did not do enough to inform the public during the General Management Plan process about what the park was to become. This criticism intensified as the land acquisition program geared up. How would you respond to this? Was the public information campaign sufficient? What more could the NPS have done?

MR. HOLMES: 16. During the early period, I thought that Bill had established excellent media relationships in communities around the park. Before my transfer, problems were appearing as it became obvious that there was no overall plan and that specific questions would not be answered. In addition, one saw the rise of land speculators who took advantage of the lack of a comprehensive, systematic acquisition schedule and plan.

A short example of this activity: A young man came into the office and asked me if this was where he sold his land. It seems that he had been told by the seller (real estate speculator) that he could double his money by buying a few acres and then contacting those Federal people. They would buy his land immediately and he could double his money.

If CVNRA had had even a general acquisition plan during the early months with a written statement of purpose, a definition of types of land acquisition, a general identification of land uses and a broad discussion of the order in which properties would be acquired, then much heartache would have been prevented. There is no doubt in my mind that this could have been done had there been a positive working relationship with Region/WASO and local Congressional offices.

That it was not and cannot be blamed only on Birdsell. The suspicion, jealousies and misgivings found in other offices and people made such planning impossible.

MR. COCKRELL: 17. What are some of the complaints valley residents expressed regarding CVNRA? How did the NPS respond?

MR. HOLMES: 17. They weren't told when their land was to be purchased. They weren't paid enough. They weren't informed of their options. The "big wheels" got all the attention and their land was not purchased. They were told different things at different offices.

Obviously the uncertainty of the park operation created situations where questions could not be answered. In general, I thought that through media releases, particularly in the local area, public

Robert F. Holmes

meetings, and one on one contacts, the public was given considerable and appropriate responses. In this regard the COE office did not have the same regard or indeed concern for the public; had it been offered, it would have eased many reservations in the public mind.

MR. COCKRELL: 18. Was vandalism directed against the NPS a serious problem? Please cite some examples.

MR. HOLMES: 18. During the period that I was at CVNRA, there were few NPS properties to be vandalized.

MR. COCKRELL: 19. In 1975, Birdsell helped form the Cuyahoga Valley Communities Council. What was its purpose and what benefits did Birdsell hope to gain from it? Was it successful?

MR. HOLMES: 19. It was established to provide a forum for local communities to express their concerns, raise questions of common interests and create a sense of being part of this new larger entity.

Did it work? Local interests usually out-weighed broader issues, but I think in the early months it was generally effective.

MR. COCKRELL: 20. Why was building demolition/removal a problem? How did the park try to resolve it?

MR. HOLMES: 20. This was beginning to take place at the end of my tenure and I am not familiar with any particular problems. There was one instance wherein an owner was given approval to remove his house. He thereupon moved it across the road to land that he knew was also to be acquired by the park. A lack of staff to adequately patrol the park, resulted in this being accomplished and the house on its new location before being noticed.

MR. COCKRELL: 21. How much assistance did MWRO provide CVNRA in the early days following the park's authorization? What criticism do you have regarding this assistance? Praise?

MR. HOLMES: 21. I have discussed this previously. To be repetitive, I thought then and think now that the lack of Regional Office assistance was disgraceful and because of it many problems were created that were unnecessary and much that needed to be done was not because of this lack of help.

The distrust, anger, fear, hatred, paranoia that many in the Regional Office for Bill was for whatever the basis, a major reason for the lack of a coherent program at Cuyahoga Valley.

Robert F. Holmes

MR. COCKRELL: 22. Did Bill Birdsell have free reign at CVNRA? In what ways did he capitalize on his relationship with Congressman John Seiberling?

MR. HOLMES: 22. Bill had free reign at Cuyahoga Valley and effectively used his relationship with Seiberling to arrange for funding, establish media contacts, work with park supporters and obtain necessary legislation for the benefit of the park. Superintendents are encouraged to work with their congressional delegation and perhaps Bill did so, too well.

MR. COCKRELL: Any additional information you care to contribute will also be greatly appreciated.

MR. HOLMES: Bill was an interesting and fascinating individual. If he had had any abilities as a people manager, he would have made an outstanding superintendent. I admired him for his strengths and deplored his weaknesses. His inability to recognize the human element negatively impacted him, his park, and the people with whom he came into contact. My responses have been broad brush, and late, but I hope may be of some assistance to your project.

[END]

O R A L H I S T O R Y I N T E R V I E W

F O R T H E

A D M I N I S T R A T I V E H I S T O R Y O F

C U Y A H O G A V A L L E Y

N A T I O N A L R E C R E A T I O N A R E A

O H I O

Einar L. Johnson
Assistant Superintendent
Cuyahoga Valley National Recreation Area
National Park Service

May 16, 1989
Brecksville, Ohio

Interviewed by:

Ron Cockrell
Historian
Midwest Regional Office
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Omaha, Nebraska
1989

Einar L. Johnson

Einar L. Johnson

MR. COCKRELL: When you arrived here in August 1980, you first met with Superintendent William C. Birdsell on the day he died. Could you give an overview of the briefing that you received from him?

MR. JOHNSON: Well, I arrived on the eighteenth of August, 1980, and met briefly with Bill for about a half-hour. We just talked generally about the park. We were going to get together later that afternoon to discuss some specifics, but, unfortunately, at about noon Mr. Birdsell had a fatal heart attack. I never did get a chance to discuss the park with him in any detail.

MR. COCKRELL: So he didn't share with you what his philosophy of the park was?

MR. JOHNSON: No, unfortunately not.

MR. COCKRELL: When Mr. Birdsell died, you then became the Acting Superintendent. Did you initiate any new policies during this period?

MR. JOHNSON: No I really didn't because I felt that should be the prerogative of the new Superintendent whoever that might be. I was pretty much trying to operate the park on an even keel until the new Superintendent was appointed.

MR. COCKRELL: What was the reaction of the staff at Birdsell's passing and the interim period between Superintendents?

MR. JOHNSON: I'm trying to think back and don't recall anything outstanding at the time. There was a lot of shock and dismay at his passing.

MR. COCKRELL: How would you characterize the administrative organization at this park? How has it evolved since you first arrived?

MR. JOHNSON: When I first arrived there were four divisions. Shortly after Lew Albert arrived, we analyzed the basic organizational needs of the park. It was determined that we could use a professional-type staff or at least one division which would handle a lot of the professional work in the park such as landscape architecture, historical architecture, and planning. With that thought in mind, the Technical Assistance and Professional Services Division was established and staffed.

We also had just one district in the park, and subsequently established two districts, a North and South District for the Interpreters and the Rangers.

Einar L. Johnson

MR. COCKRELL: Was that all about the same time?

MR. JOHNSON: Right. It was pretty much within about the first six months or so after I arrived. We were able to come up with an original recommendation, made a trip to Region, discussed what our thoughts were with the Regional Director and his staff, and they agreed. We proceeded accordingly.

MR. COCKRELL: You didn't have any trouble getting the FTE authorized?

MR. JOHNSON: We pretty much had to operate within our existing FTE. There were a few vacant positions, and with a little bit of restructuring, we were able to reorganize.

MR. COCKRELL: What happened after Management Assistant Sheridan Steele left? Was that position filled?

MR. JOHNSON: No.

MR. COCKRELL: Was that part of the reconstructing that we talked about?

MR. JOHNSON: I would say so. He was here for a short time after the restructuring. What happened whenever there was a vacancy, we would sit down with the squad and determine where the highest priorities were. We decided if that position should be retained or if there was a higher need in a different division.

MR. COCKRELL: I know in reviewing some of the memoranda which were exchanged between this park and the Midwest Regional Office in Omaha that relations in the earlier days were very strained and sometimes hostile. Did you pick up on this feeling when you first arrived, and has the situation changed?

MR. JOHNSON: I believe that there was some of that in existence, but I looked at it as probably a result of the fact that when the park was initially proposed, there was opposition by the National Park Service and the Department of the Interior. When Congress authorized the park, there was still some resistance by various people to the management of the park. I think it filtered down to the Regional Office.

MR. COCKRELL: Do you detect any of that today?

MR. JOHNSON: No, very little. I think there has been a lot of change of personnel, not only at the park level, but also at the Regional level and the Washington Office levels. I think that the

Einar L. Johnson

Recreational Area is becoming more recognized as an excellent asset of the Park Service.

MR. COCKRELL: Were you involved in any way in the decision to locate the headquarters here at Jaite?

MR. JOHNSON: I think it pretty much was a decision of the squad when we were asked to find some type of use for the Jaite Complex. We had our division offices scattered in numerous buildings and locations throughout the park. We felt that this would be a good headquarters location and since Jaite is on the National Register of Historic Places, it seemed like the best alternative use for the historic structures.

MR. COCKRELL: How difficult was it in the early days before Jaite with the offices scattered around the park to coordinate duties and responsibilities?

MR. JOHNSON: It seemed like a lot of time was spent en route from the various offices up to the headquarters. I think one of the results if you are detached from the main headquarters is you are not consulted and vice versa on different things that come up. I think it works a lot better when you are in close proximity to the headquarters office.

MR. COCKRELL: What were some of the difficulties encountered in getting the state-owned canal lands transferred to the National Park Service?

MR. JOHNSON: I don't know if I'm the best one to answer that particular question because I haven't been working directly on it. I know there was some difficulty, a lot of misinterpretation between the Federal Government and the State Government, and that has been resolved. As you perhaps know, a bill was introduced by State Senator Roy Ray and it passed through the State Legislature. These lands are in the process now of being transferred to the National Park Service.

MR. COCKRELL: I know that U.S. Steel Corporation, now LTV Steel, that they were concerned about their water rights on the canal. Is there something being written into an agreement to preserve that?

MR. JOHNSON: I believe so, Ron. Like I said, I'm not the one that is directly working on that, but it is my understanding, however, that those water rights will be maintained or protected for LTV Steel.

MR. COCKRELL: What were some of the difficulties that the park has encountered over managing retention rights?

Einar L. Johnson

MR. JOHNSON: It depends on the situation. It depends on the owner and location of the protected retention, but basically I feel the problems have really been minimal. There may be some questions about what they can and cannot do on these properties, but that usually is spelled out in the agreement that was signed at the time the property was purchased. Once you sit down and discuss the conditions, there are very few problems. People seem to understand and accept the provisions.

MR. COCKRELL: Does it take very much staff time to oversee these retentions?

MR. JOHNSON: I think a lot depends on how much time you want to devote to this type of work or activity. You can spend a lot of time trying to oversee and keep a close eye on what is going on, but I think what we are doing involves just periodic checks on retentions. This is sufficient, unless there is a problem; then we have to devote more attention to it.

MR. COCKRELL: Are there any problems managing scenic easements?

MR. JOHNSON: I would say that's pretty much in the same category, although, the difference is that scenic easements are in perpetuity whereas retentions at some point in time will be terminated.

In scenic easements sometimes what happens is there is some construction activity on a property without prior approval. That is where you have to explain to them that this is in violation of the conditions of the scenic easement, that they should have contacted the park Superintendent to get his review and concurrence before they started construction. Once we've explained the rationale, we usually have acceptance and the issue is resolved.

MR. COCKRELL: Does that happen a lot, violating the terms of a scenic easement?

MR. JOHNSON: No, not much.

MR. COCKRELL: Do most people understand their responsibilities under an easement?

MR. JOHNSON: Yes. Usually they call and ask us and we explain a little bit over the phone. We usually tell them to submit a letter to the Superintendent and outline what they plan to do. We get back with them and have an onsite meeting to discuss it and see if it is O.K.

MR. COCKRELL: In 1981, there was a moratorium on land acquisition imposed for a short period of time by Secretary Watt. What was the

Einar L. Johnson

short and the long term affects on this park because of that and the Watt policies in general?

MR. JOHNSON: Basically, I believe our credibility suffered because we had made some commitments to landowners who were planning to sell their property. Then all of a sudden we had to say, "Sorry, we can't do it." It had quite an impact on a lot of people's plans and it took some time to restore our credibility with these people in the valley.

MR. COCKRELL: There were several investigations of CVNRA. I've been told a lot of the inspectors were sent out here to uncover wrongdoing or instances of not following policy. In all of these investigations, was anything of substance ever found?

MR. JOHNSON: To my knowledge there never was. I think they were just out looking for something that wasn't there.

MR. COCKRELL: I know that you have been personally involved in the building demolition and removal program here. Could you give me a brief overview of how that works, and how much money has been involved; how many structures have been removed; and what kind of strategies you used to get this program to go forward?

MR. JOHNSON: Oh, yes. I believe this goes back to the enabling legislation which states that we are to provide open space in the park for the various people, not only in the Cleveland/Akron area, but for the nation. In our land acquisition program we look at the various tracts to determine what uses there are for particular parcels; if there are structures, are there any identifiable uses for them.

For example, if we determine that we need a particular structure for administrative or public use, then we retain it. Also, if there is an identifiable use by another government agency in the valley or a non-profit organization, we also retain the structure. If there isn't any identifiable use, we get permission through the Report of Survey process to remove that structure.

The first step is to put it up for public sale, then remove it physically from the park. If we have no success with that procedure, we go to what is called a demolition removal contract and the structures are completely removed and the site restored. Number wise I would suspect it's probably in the neighborhood of probably 350 to 400 structures.

MR. COCKRELL: Do you have a cost estimate for that?

MR. JOHNSON: I couldn't tell you. I do not have access to all the records dating back to 1976 or 77 when it was started.

Einar L. Johnson

MR. COCKRELL: If there are historic structures identified, how does that delay demolition and removal?

MR. JOHNSON: Well, the structures cannot be removed at all unless we have an approved Report of Survey. The determination of whether or not that structure has significance is based on a recommendation by the park which then goes on to the Regional Office where they review the request. It also goes on to the State Historic Preservation Office for review. In many cases, it goes on to our Washington Office. This is particularly true on any buildings or structures which are over fifty years old.

MR. COCKRELL: Have there been any outstanding examples of controversies where a structure that the park has argued was not significant and later on up the line someone says, "Yes it is?"

MR. JOHNSON: There may have been some instances. I think a lot of it comes down to whether or not that structure is in such a condition that it is not economically feasible to reconstruct or save it. Sometimes this happens. A building may sit there for many, many years deteriorating. Maybe we will get a big snowstorm that will collapse a building. Then, of course, it is way beyond repair. There are a lot of historic structures sitting out there right now for which there are no identifiable or viable use for them. There is a difference of opinion whether or not they should stay, but we haven't reached a consensus among the park, the Region, and the Washington Office whether those should be removed.

MR. COCKRELL: Do you think there ever will be a consensus or will the buildings just fall down?

MR. JOHNSON: I think we're making progress, but time will tell.

MR. COCKRELL: This you may or may not be able to answer because it involves a specific acquisition case. In 1981, Superintendent Albert proposed elevating the 500-acre undeveloped part of Greenwood Village from the last to the first priority for acquisition. What was the eventual outcome of this? Why was Greenwood Village so important?

MR. JOHNSON: The Greenwood Village entrance is on the eastern edge of the park, south of Route 82. The developer for Greenwood Village had plans waiting for approval by the local zoning board to subdivide and sell the 500 acres and make it part of the Greenwood Village complex. There was no alternative for the park, but to proceed with a Declaration of Taking. It was approved and the development did not take place.

Einar L. Johnson

MR. COCKRELL: Cuyahoga is known for generating a lot of public opposition or publicity because you have a Homeowners and Residents Association here. What steps did this park take to counter that negative publicity?

MR. JOHNSON: I think it was just being honest with the people and presenting an objective side of this whole situation. We really weren't the bad guys kicking people out of the park. We weren't burning buildings. Instead, we were just trying to tell our story, to get people to look at it from our standpoint and not just from the homeowners.

MR. COCKRELL: Was most of the publicity this park got favorable or was it just a small percentage of people who objected?

MR. JOHNSON: I would say in the early years there was a disproportionate amount of publicity that was against the park. As time passed, a lot of those folks have left the park. For example, people like Stein-Sapir, after his property was acquired, he moved out of the park.

MR. COCKRELL: How would you characterize it today?

MR. JOHNSON: I would say the publicity is much more favorable. There are fewer and fewer adversary groups and membership in the Homeowners Association within the park has declined. I think they have found other parks or other parts of the country to direct their attention.

MR. COCKRELL: In the middle of 1984, some of the park employees voted for a bargaining unit to be organized by the National Federation of Federal Employees. Why do you believe the employees here felt that they needed a union?

MR. JOHNSON: I believe a lot of it goes back to the fact that about that time we had a lot of pressure to contract out work in the park and employees were very concerned. I think that was one of the driving forces which succeeded in getting a union established in the park.

MR. COCKRELL: I believe you were on the management team which negotiated the first contract with the union.

MR. JOHNSON: Right.

MR. COCKRELL: What were some of the basic issues which were discussed?

MR. JOHNSON: Well, it happened that Lew was gone for that three-month period. He was in Harvard so I was Acting Superintendent.

Einar L. Johnson

I was scheduled to be on the negotiating team; however, when Lew left, I couldn't be on the team so I can't tell you exactly what the specifics were.

MR. COCKRELL: Today, how would you characterize the union? Are there very many employees who belong to it? Does it have a very high profile here?

MR. JOHNSON: I would guess that maybe one-third or so of the eligible members belong to the union, and it is very low-profile. There seem to be very few issues.

MR. COCKRELL: That would appear to indicate that management is doing a pretty good job!

MR. JOHNSON: If that is an indicator, I'd say yes.

MR. COCKRELL: How important was the 1986 bill which included the Cuyahoga Valley Line within the boundaries of the park to the future development here?

MR. JOHNSON: I think from the standpoint of transportation, it was very important because it gave us ownership of a vital link. If proposals materialize for using the train for transportation into the park, it will permit staging areas for people to visit the park. They have an opportunity now to ride from Cleveland, with a stop at Hale Farm, and then on to the Quaker Square in Akron.

In the future, it may even have possibilities for stopping at the ski areas in the wintertime. Instead of just having the seasonal, three or four months in the summer, it could be running periodically throughout the whole year. Who knows what may happen in the future as time goes on and more activities are developed in the park. There is even a proposal to extend the train south to Canton. It's hard to say what will happen, but it has a lot of potential.

MR. COCKRELL: In early 1987, Superintendent Albert proposed a boundary amendment in which the need to construct trail bridges for the Old Carriage Trail would be eliminated by acquiring land from the adjacent Greenwood Village housing development. Did this come to pass? Could you outline the process involved in getting this approved?

MR. JOHNSON: It didn't come to pass, unfortunately. It was a proposal in which the developer of Greenwood Village came to us to discuss it. He was planning to do a lot of construction in that particular area and he was in favor of having the trails, not only for the park's use, but as a benefit to the residents of Greenwood Village. We reached an agreement in the park on the areas where

Einar L. Johnson

the boundary change should be made. We then submitted it to the Regional Office, they concurred, and it was sent forward.

Unfortunately the boundary revision did not materialize. You might say the window of opportunity for the developer soon passed, since we weren't able to get the boundary changed. At first he was receptive to it and really supported it, but as time went on, he saw his opportunities becoming limited. He decided that he could wait no longer and withdrew his support.

MR. COCKRELL: In 1987, Midwest Region closed its Field Land Resources Offices and the Omaha Office absorbed the workload. In CVNRA's case, should that office have closed?

MR. JOHNSON: Yes. There really wasn't enough land acquisition activity, at least in my estimation, to warrant a continuation of that office in the park.

MR. COCKRELL: Now that it is being handled out of Omaha, how is that program operating now?

MR. JOHNSON: It is working quite effectively. I think the only thing we are missing is that personal contact that the Land Acquisition Officer had with the landowners in the valley. We still have that contact when representatives of the Regional Lands Office come out, but they're not readily accessible.

MR. COCKRELL: How important would you characterize the VIP program is to CVNRA?

MR. JOHNSON: Without it we couldn't be providing the services we offer. I feel it is a good program, but sometimes it can get out of hand. I think nationwide we use it as a crutch. Initially, as I understand it, the VIP program was set up so as not to displace any current employees. It would not be used for work that is normally done by park employees. I think now that it has gotten to the point that a considerable portion of the VIP work that is being done in the parks would have been done by permanent or temporary employees if the VIP program had never been instituted. Although it is a good program, I think it is being used to the extreme.

MR. COCKRELL: Do you see that situation changing any?

MR. JOHNSON: No, I don't.

MR. COCKRELL: With such a large work force here, how well does the internal communication system work now that you are centralized at Jaite?

Einar L. Johnson

MR. JOHNSON: Good. I don't know if I can speak for the rest of the employees, but from a management level, I believe we're doing very well. We've instituted several practices to improve the communications like a morning report. Every morning a sheet goes out highlighting various work activities that are coming up in the next day or so. These are sent out each day to each division and they are either given to the employees or posted on bulletin boards. Squad meetings are held every two weeks and parkwide staff meetings are held periodically.

We pretty much try to keep an open door policy. If there are any concerns on the part of the employees, they can feel free to talk to their supervisors or even to the Superintendent. Basically, we are trying to keep the communication lines open and it seems to be working.

MR. COCKRELL: This is going to be a long one. You have responsibility over three divisions. I want you to discuss how each division has changed since the time you first arrived to today. You can choose whichever one you would like to start with.

MR. JOHNSON: Well, I could almost cover two of them together, like the Rangers and the Naturalists, because when I first got here, there were no districts and we have since split them into districts. We have a North District and a South District with Highway 303 as a dividing line. Within each district there has been an organizational structure set up with the lines of communications and allotment of funds left up to the chief of each divisions. The Rangers pretty much have equal emphasis on Visitor Protection and Resource Management, but when you get to the Interpretation Division, there is a slight difference.

In the Interpretation Division, there is a little more emphasis in the North District on history and in the South District on natural history based on the resources that are there. In the Interpretation Division, we've really seen an expansion of programs. Ron Thoman has experimented with a lot of different types of programs and approaches to the interpretive program, many of which have been very successful.

That is one thing I can say about the Interpretation Division, they do not lack for creativity. Some of the things which have materialized over the last couple of years include the Lyceum program, the Cuyahoga Valley Festival which was originated several years ago, and the National Folk Festival. There have been numerous outreach programs, the Special Winter Olympics is now held in the park in cooperation with the State of Ohio, and we have a special Junior Ranger Program. I think we are getting the message out; we are getting more people to come to the park. We are starting to get known both in Akron and Cleveland.

Einar L. Johnson

As far as the Ranger Division, we have seen a tremendous decrease in the amount of violations. That is primarily because of the Ranger staff who have done an excellent job in providing a safe place for visitors. I think one of the things that really helped was to get an alcohol prohibition ban. When I first came here, we had, you might say, the distinction of being the only recreation area in this immediate vicinity where you could consume alcohol.

I had the feeling that all the other park areas in this vicinity would send people who liked to booze and raise heck to this park! That chased out the family groups and the regular park visitors. They were displaced by people who liked to drink, use drugs, and who just liked to really party. When the alcohol prohibition ban passed, we had an educational period, and now we are very fortunate not to have alcohol. We once again have the family groups and others who feel safe coming into the park.

Resource Management programs within the Division have really come forward, too, considering the large number of oil and gas activities that we have to monitor; also the restoration of old borrow pits that's taken place, and monitoring of the water quality of the Cuyahoga River. By and large I think we have come a long way in making this park something we can all be proud of.

In the Administrative Division, there have been some big changes. I think the biggest improvement is in how we have computerized the budgeting, programming, and personnel practices. Administrative Officer Roy Beasley has an understanding of how the Park System functions and the importance of providing service to the other Divisions and management within the park.

We've come a long way in the Administrative Division and I feel fortunate to have the current personnel in the Administrative, Interpretation, and Ranger Divisions. It's a good feeling to know the employees are doing a good job, and you don't have to look over their shoulders all the time. That only comes from having good Division Chiefs and subordinate employees in those Divisions.

MR. COCKRELL: What are the most significant resource threats to the park today?

MR. JOHNSON: Well, we addressed some of those. I would say the possibility of subdivision developments not only within the park, but also on the perimeter of the park.

Air quality is a concern, especially acid rain, and also the various smokestack industries around the area.

Einar L. Johnson

Water quality of the Cuyahoga River is being addressed by getting more people involved and concerned.

The oil industry activity is low because the price for oil is way down, but that threat is also there. We are working to extinguish outstanding leases wherever we can to keep the threat to a minimum.

The hazardous waste problem at Krejci Dump, we've addressed, and it's under control. I don't believe we have any other surprises in the park.

We've acquired most of the commercial properties in the park with acquisition of the various commercial development properties on Stone Road. I'd say the largest development we have to address would be the Haydite landfill at the north end of the park.

MR. COCKRELL: What's going on with that? What's the status of it?

MR. JOHNSON: Well, as you perhaps know, there was a proposal by Mr. Boyas to put in a huge landfill. However, that was resolved recently when the Director of the Ohio EPA denied his permit application. Also State Senator Grace Drake introduced legislation to prohibit landfills within the national or state parks in the State of Ohio. That was debated back and forth in the State Legislature for a couple of years, and I believe was signed by the Governor last fall.

There are also provisions in that particular bill to provide up to \$3 million dollars for the state to buy out Mr. Boyas' interest in that property. I think it depends now on the National Park Service and the various other people involved in this case to get together. Also, the National Park Service needs to acquire the Haydite interest (about fifty acres). Once that's resolved, there should be no more threats from landfilling in the park, at least not in that area.

MR. COCKRELL: There are many organizations which make up the management mosaic here. Is it difficult for a park manager to get these partners to all act in the best interests of CVNRA?

MR. JOHNSON: I think CVNRA probably has one advantage that many other parks don't have. We have what is called the Cuyahoga Valley Communities Council which meets once a month for seven months out of the year. They address various issues within the park and are an excellent forum for us. There is no way you are ever going to get 100 percent agreement from everybody, but I think we are fortunate in having this organization. Most of the compatible users within the park have been very cooperative; we are able to work together with such groups of the golf courses, ski areas, Boston Music Center, and the Boy Scouts and the Girl Scout Camps.

Einar L. Johnson

MR. COCKRELL: Why do you feel that Cuyahoga Valley National Recreation Area should be a part of the National Park System?

MR. JOHNSON: I think it comes right down to the point that the Park Service has a responsibility to have recreation areas or park units near the large population centers in this country. I think this is one of the areas where Cuyahoga Valley meets a great need because we are located between Akron and Cleveland and we are providing green space. We are preventing commercial development in this scenic metropolitan area. I feel that is where our niche is. We are a regional type park rather than a destination park for people in Florida, New York, or elsewhere.

MR. COCKRELL: Is there anything that I have not asked you that you would like to comment on for the record; a contribution that you have made that you would like to mention?

MR. JOHNSON: Looking to the future, I'd say time is on our side. Even though as we look at progress we are making, day to day it's very slow. If you stand back and look at it from a five-year perspective, you can see where we're making progress. Within say twenty years or so, a person will see that this park really has come a long way, and it is really an asset to the National Park System.

MR. COCKRELL: Thank you very much.

[END]

Einar L. Johnson

O R A L H I S T O R Y I N T E R V I E W

F O R T H E

A D M I N I S T R A T I V E H I S T O R Y O F

C U Y A H O G A V A L L E Y

N A T I O N A L R E C R E A T I O N A R E A

O H I O

John Kawamoto
Associate Regional Director, Planning and Resource Preservation
(retired)
Midwest Regional Office
National Park Service

July 27, 1989
Omaha, Nebraska

Interviewed by:

Ron Cockrell
Historian
Midwest Regional Office
National Park Service

Omaha, Nebraska
1989

John Kawamoto

John Kawamoto

MR. COCKRELL: I thought we would begin by my asking you to give a brief overview of your National Park Service career, when you became the Associate Regional Director, and when Planning and Resource Preservation became P&RP. I know it had a different name in earlier years.

MR. KAWAMOTO: I started with the National Park Service in 1957 as a Planner in a division called Recreation Surveys. That particular division dealt with assistance and planning for states and local entities. We were not directly involved with National Park Service activities, but more the states and locals.

The first big job that I was involved with took about three years to complete. It was called a Recreation Survey of the Missouri River Basin. Evan Haynes was the Division Chief and we actually did statewide outdoor recreation plans. I did Iowa and Kansas, so I know more about those two states than a lot of people, having traveled them extensively. I think the name of the report, which I believe is still around, is called the Missouri River Basin: Recreation Today and Tomorrow or something like that.

About the time when we were still in that mode, the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation or BOR was created. Those who were involved with that aspect of the Park Service were supposed to transfer to the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation. I didn't particularly want to move to the new agency, although I worked with them and was actually on their payroll for some time. I didn't want to transfer and my papers were never actually transferred. Howard Baker was the Regional Director at that time and the Park Service tried to accommodate those who did not want to move to BOR into other positions if at all possible. Some of the people in our division became superintendents, some of them moved into administration.

I was lucky enough to get involved with what they called New Area Studies. I became a Planner in New Area Studies and that was the beginning of the big push in the National Park Service under George Hartzog and for Stewart Udall, the Secretary of the Interior, to increase the units in the System and to add nationally significant sites, because for a long time it was at kind of a standstill.

So I became a Park Planner in New Area Studies working under Harry Robinson and Glenn Bean prior to that. That is basically what I did for some time. I went out and investigated and made reports. That is probably the reason I got heavily involved with Voyageurs National Park which was first proposed back in 1964 as a national park.

Then just before they combined that activity in a central location, I was asked to become the Regional Chief of State Assistance in the Region here. In that particular capacity, we again were doing

John Kawamoto

assistance to states and local agencies in planning and design work that the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation said they couldn't do. They didn't have that kind of capability. In fact, that is not what they were geared to do. I knew all the state park directors and that kind of activity.

Then the New Area Studies function was moved by George Hartzog into two area offices in San Francisco and in Philadelphia where all of the planning studies for the Park Service were done. The major studies are now done out of Denver. That was O.K., except it left a void in the Region as to public relations, the contacts. It was impossible for the Service Center to be out there always being a spokesperson, so I think my role was enlarged into becoming the spokesperson for the National Park Service in new areas. That is why I continued on Voyageurs as an example. I went to public meetings, I went to legislative hearings and everything else dealing with anything about Voyageurs and other parks throughout the Region whether it was additions to or new proposals.

Then, the State Assistance Division for some reason, they kept enlarging it. I also became responsible for Public Affairs. About that time the National Park Service had a big push on environmental education. I believe it was in the late 1960's or early 1970. We had an environmental education program that went out and helped schools, the public and so forth. We even had these areas called National Environmental Education Landmarks. Again, even though it had to do with interpretation and conservation, because it was an outreach program, meaning outside the Park Service, that also was put in the Division of State Assistance. So I became responsible for environmental education programs in the Region.

Somewhere about that time is when the Director of the Park Service, George Hartzog, felt that we needed a group of scientific professionals in the Regional Office. This was the era when tremendous opposition to many of the things that the Forest Service and the Park Service were doing were being just jumped on by environmentalists, being critical of things we were doing.

One of the things that continued to happen, of course, were the court cases where the Forest Service people testifying were old-line foresters who did not do a very effective job as opposed to the Ph.D.'s and others from academia who were testifying against their cut policies. Because of that, Director Hartzog felt that he wasn't going to put the Park Service in that position, so what he wanted was a group of professionals with credentials who would be intimately familiar with the conditions and who could, in fact, if called upon, testify in court.

Obviously I didn't have a Ph.D., but in any event, that was the advent of a group called Professional Services. It was a small

John Kawamoto

group at that time. It was actually made up of people already in the office, but we did have the Natural Science group, so I had the Chief Scientist here within the division. I actually became an Associate Regional Director, and then we had the other usual professionals that we have now, only they weren't here at the time. So it was a small group. I can't really tell you the number, but when we first started, it was no more than 10 or 12 people at the most, counting secretaries and clerks.

Over the years, because of my good looks and charm, the entire office gradually was able to convince the Regional Directors that we needed more people and we needed to enlarge our disciplines and that is why we ended up getting more people. Andy Ketterson was the first Historian on staff. Up until that time, we did not have a Regional Historian. We began to bring in Historical Architects. We brought in people with environmental backgrounds because we felt we needed to enlarge our scope. There was also a shift in the office in which the science group was transferred to Operations and the entire Maintenance Division was transferred to this office.

In fact, this is the only Region that has this combination as I understand it. There are some Regions where Maintenance has been combined with the cultural side, but in Operations. Our office for many, many years had what I call everything from beginning to end. We had the planning end of it, so as things were planned, we had the research and the cultural aspects and the environmental aspects applied to it, and then after it was all done, we had Maintenance to make sure that the physical and natural facilities were kept up to date. So we had the whole gambit.

I think most of the field people today will tell you that they like that arrangement because they only have one basic office to deal with. Somewhere along that line--and I can't tell you when, in the mid-1970's, I think--we became Planning and Resource Preservation.

Also in keeping with the new emphasis I created another division, the Division of Cultural Resources, recognizing that that particular resource really wasn't recognized in the Regional Office as an entity that had solid high importance, as far as our responsibilities were concerned. That is why we created a Division of Cultural Resources Management.

Of course, we split that from what used to be called Planning and Development. We created Planning and Environmental Quality which dealt with that aspect, and then Cultural Resources Management, and then, of course, we had Maintenance.

Cultural Resources Management unfortunately, right at the moment, still is what I call "two-hat." In other words, you had to be advocates of preservation, but you also had a management side. You

John Kawamoto

had to wear two hats. On one hand you could be critical of what management was doing, but on the other hand, you had to give management advice on what to do, so that is a double-edged sword. I think we have done very well in the balance of when you need to be on the management side in terms of cultural resources, and when you need to be the really solid advocate of cultural resources and to some degree, head to head with management. I think it has worked out pretty well.

I guess that is my career with the Park Service. Essentially, I stayed in the Region a little over 30 years, but I did a whole bunch of things so that in essence, I wasn't doing the same job for the whole 30 years. I feel somewhat proud of the fact that I think that the Planning and Resource Preservation group has grown and I think has got a solid reputation within not only this Region, but in other places as well.

MR. COCKRELL: In 1974, there was a realignment of the Regional boundaries and this office lost some of the so-called "crown jewels" of the Park System and shifted focus toward the Great Lakes and toward the east. What were the repercussions here in this office? Was there a lot of disappointment?

MR. KAWAMOTO: I don't think so. I don't think there was really any disappointment that I know of. It hasn't been the case lately, but I think the Park Service has always been a very caring agency at the top. In fact, that is one of the things I always used to tell people who wanted a career. The management people always kind of cared for and about the employees and did what was possible to make it easy. We transferred people sometimes who had medical problems.

When the reorganization took place, we had no choice in that. That was dictated by President Nixon. There wasn't frustration or disappointment because everyone had an opportunity to decide where they wanted to go. We could either stay in Omaha or transfer to Denver because they were creating a number of new offices. Therefore, it wasn't as if you couldn't place people. So those that wanted to go to Denver, went to Denver, and those that wanted to stay here, stayed here.

I chose to stay here, although I certainly could have gone to Denver as Associate Regional Director because that position needed to be filled. In fact, they were all brand-new positions, and the head of Operations here, Ken Ashley, chose to go to Denver to head up Operations.

There may have been some secretaries and clerks who thought that it would have been nice to go to Denver, but they couldn't move because of family, spouses doing something else, or whatever. That

John Kawamoto

part I can't relate to, but I don't think that anyone really felt frustrated or disappointed because I think the opportunity to work in the mountains or with a mountain view, you could have moved, the opportunity was there. I had other reasons for wanting to stay in Omaha, so that was fine for me.

In the case of those people that had moved to Denver, they were already familiar with those states, so they didn't have to pick up new knowledge. In our case, we had to pick up new knowledge about the Great Lake states that we had never really dealt with before. So there was a period of becoming familiar with new staff, different people, different publics, all of that. It was a challenging opportunity to kind of focus on some new resources.

MR. COCKRELL: Some of the critics of this office said that the managers here looked at new areas like Cuyahoga and compared it to the "crown jewels" like Yellowstone. In other words, Omaha tried to impose those values on new areas like Cuyahoga. Did you see much of that or would you agree with that?

MR. KAWAMOTO: I guess I basically don't agree with that because of a couple of reasons. Number one is that for every time something different comes in, there is always people that say that it shouldn't be. I know there were people who said we shouldn't have many of the parks we have today, because they weren't the "crown jewels" or whatever. I go on the basis that the enabling Act of 1916 doesn't say that the National Park Service shall preserve the crown jewels only; it says, natural and cultural resources and so it is an evolving thing.

I think the issue really has to do with the fact that some of the people in the Park Service--I will call them old-line people--were used to the mountains and the big things and it was more difficult to adjust to something that is not spectacular in that sense. So Cuyahoga and Indiana Dunes and so forth looked as if they were just commonplace things. I mean, why were they important? Why should we even preserve things like that? They did not look at it from the standpoint that every resource is unique and valuable in its location. The dunes are the dunes. I mean they are there, they are not in Colorado or whatever. It is not a creation of man, it is a resource of nature.

That was one thing, but the other thing had to do with the fact that we had a very difficult task. In fact, I think we still have because the Congress, when they were creating new areas, such as Cuyahoga and Indiana Dunes, focused a lot on the outdoor recreational activities and the opportunity for recreation for masses of people.

John Kawamoto

Congress also, within the legislation and within some of the testimony, put on the Park Service the responsibilities for preservation. Now you look at Cuyahoga and you talk about both of them--even though it allows uses that are non-traditional in the Park Service, as we say traditional being the old way--it still says that the parks should be managed under the 1916 Act and so forth. Well, that puts it under the dual charge that we have which is preservation and use, but to preserve it for the enjoyment of future generations.

I think where there is any criticism, that is where it is. On the one hand, Indiana Dunes and Cuyahoga, were sold on the basis that they were going to be able to produce mass recreation, but there is no way that you could have mass recreation at Indiana Dunes and still have the natural resources preserved, which Congress said we were supposed to do. I think the most difficult task we faced was to try to find this fine balance, if there is such a thing, between over-use and preservation of the resources.

Cuyahoga was a little more difficult because of the fact that it had other managing agencies within the boundaries and they controlled its destiny, not us. I mean, we got it only if they wanted to give it to us. It also left intact private enterprise with the stipulation that we couldn't do anything about them unless they decided they were going to do something else and it was going to be detrimental to the resource, then we could go in and buy it. Even that has never come into being, like the ski area in Cuyahoga or the golf courses. I am sure it would be a great court case if someone decided to take the golf courses and make housing units out of that. I am not sure which it would be, because housing is permitted within Cuyahoga. We have private enterprise within the park.

The criticism was because we were dealing with areas that were not as familiar to the Park Service. Masses of people. We were not used to dealing with a public that was so much larger than some of the isolated national "crown jewels" as you see in the west. It was more difficult. But there are people like that all the time. There were people in the 1930's who said we ought not to be enlarging the Park System because we already had too many. So you are always going to have those.

Of course, I have been a supporter of enlarging the System for years and I continue to be. In fact, I would hope that the System continues to be enlarged. I am not too sure that I would like to go the way of the Trail Center in Council Bluffs, but on the other hand, looking at it in an objective way, I am not too sure that that is really not a function that we can't perform and perform well. But the question has to do with whether or not we should do

John Kawamoto

it, or should that be done by the states, but that is another issue.

MR. COCKRELL: In 1974, there were House subcommittee hearings at Blossom Music Center and practically everybody who testified was positive for the Cuyahoga Valley National Recreation Area. Subsequent to that, Bill Birdsell came into the Midwest Regional Office and at a meeting with the Directorate he basically said, "This park will become a reality because there is political and community support for it." Do you remember some of the things Birdsell said at this meeting? Were you there?

MR. KAWAMOTO: This was before it was authorized?

MR. COCKRELL: Yes.

MR. KAWAMOTO: That was about the time when the boundaries were being changed. Bill Birdsell was the Keyman at that time. I remember sitting in on the meeting. I think there were a couple of things that were going on at that time. I think Bill Dean was involved in the early discussions because new areas were opening up. When I was in Planning and Resource Preservation, we were out of the new area stuff and that was kind of Bill Dean's shop. He was more involved with it at the time, although I think I remember we sat in and discussed it.

There were a couple of things. One was that there was some animosity because this was not done by the Park Service. The entire study, the previous studies and all of that were done by the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation. There was always a feeling of the Park Service people that BOR people weren't planners; that they were wildlife people and so on. And to some degree, that is true, because in the early days they did not have people with planning backgrounds on their staff. That was one of the reasons.

The other was that they, BOR, were the ones that first got it going. The next thing involved Tedd McCann who was out of the Washington Office. He was attached to the Service Center and he did the study really without much consultation with the Regional Office. Human nature being what it is, if you are not involved and you think you have been bypassed, then you automatically are opposed to things because obviously it can't be any good. I am sure that was part of the background of what was going on at the time.

The other part of it was the fact that the proposal as advanced--I remember sitting here talking about it--it had too many holes in it. Number one, to have a park in which you had no control at all over the major recreational units hardly made much sense and there were a number of other things about it that just didn't make

John Kawamoto

sense, like leaving the private sector in there. It was just kind of a mishmash that did not appear to be workable and manageable. I still think the same problem exists today because of some of that.

Of course you also have to remember that no one from here had ever seen the place. This was just a year or so after the Cuyahoga River caught on fire. So when you think of Cleveland and Akron and Cuyahoga, that was the mental impression you had. We are victims of our own stereotypes. No one could convince me otherwise if I had never seen the area between Cleveland and Akron, which is less than 40 miles; between two major metropolitan areas, that there would be anything of value left. We subsequently found out the reason it was still there was because there wasn't any water. If there was an adequate supply of water, you and I wouldn't be talking about Cuyahoga today because it would have been fully developed.

So when you think of that you say, "Gee, why would anybody want something like that?" There was a tremendous feeling that you didn't want an area that was so compromised. You look at a map and there was a bunch of cities all over it. Why would we want to spend millions and millions of dollars in this?

At the same time, there was also feeling that perhaps, and that is not being critical, but maybe this was not the role of the National Park Service to be heavily involved in urban recreation for recreation's sake. Not for preservation, but for recreation, because I think this was basically the message we got that this was going to be recreation space. We didn't hear much about preservation. We didn't hear much about historical resources and all of that. It was pretty much a big chunk of land that really could provide a tremendous amount of recreation. I think there was some genuine feeling at the time when the Park Service said, "Is this something that we really want to get into?"

Also, we were beginning to realize the tremendous cost of these urban recreation areas. As with Golden Gate and Gateway today, I don't think anybody really still has come up with a dollar figure on what the total cost of rehabilitation and stabilization of the historic and other resources. I would guess we are talking about a billion dollars. We were beginning to recognize that as a tremendous drain on the dollar resources of the Park Service.

But to get back to your question about politics, I think that there was some discussion about it. I know Bill was pretty confident it was going to go anyway. I think that if I remember, the discussion revolved around, if we are going to get it, then why don't we in the Region propose what ought to be in that park or what it should consist of so that we would get a package that we could live with.

John Kawamoto

That is when, I believe if you check the records, this Region did go in with the recommendation that it be enlarged and also that the entire park be under the administration of the Park Service.

MR. COCKRELL: Before then the Metro Parks were not within the official boundaries?

MR. KAWAMOTO: I think that was the case in the beginning. Also, I don't think there was any disagreement that we were going to get it politically. I mean we were smart enough to know that Seiberling was behind it. I had been involved in legislative hearings when I was with New Area Studies when I used to go to Washington, D.C., and help with the testimony in Senate and House hearings. There is no question in my mind that if somebody really wanted something, unless there was a tremendous opposition to it, generally speaking the subcommittee would go with it. If the Subcommittee went with it, then the full committee would go with it. And if the full Committee went with it, then the whole House would go with it, the same in the Senate.

My favorite story has to do with the International Peace Garden in North Dakota and Canada with high interest of the people in North Dakota. Senator Burdick became convinced that we, the Federal Government, should have a greater role in it, meaning money. I went to a hearing and the only person that testified was Senator Burdick. Senator Allan Bible chaired the hearing. Burdick talked about this great thing and George Hartzog kind of straddled the fence, but said, "We don't object," and a few things like that. That is the way it went. It ended up with them authorizing a million dollars for the International Peace Garden and subsequent to that the appropriations were made.

That was just one Senator because none of the other Senators really cared about the International Peace Garden. In fact, if somebody asked any of them, they probably wouldn't know where it was! So I knew that if Seiberling wanted it and wanted it badly enough and was really going to push on it, that it would go. So we said, "Let's make the best of it. Let's come up with what we think would be a better proposal."

MR. COCKRELL: So that proposal was ultimately accepted?

MR. KAWAMOTO: I think so. I am not sure about what happened because, as I told you, at the time Bill Dean was handling it and I was in and out of it. Tedd McCann was heavily involved with it and Loretta Neumann was involved with it. I am not sure whether the BOR ever accepted it. I am not too sure, but somewhere along the line, I believe that is how it did come about. I really can't give you that fine detail. I know that we proposed it. In fact, the train was one of the big things. We wanted the train.

John Kawamoto

MR. COCKRELL: One of Birdsell's marching orders from this office was that he remain impartial in dealing with the Cuyahoga Valley. Do you think that he was impartial?

MR. KAWAMOTO: Now this was before authorization, right? I think so. I really think that Bill was impartial. In fact, if someone really asked me today whether he was really gung ho for it or not, I can't really give you a strong, positive answer one way or the other. I am talking about even after he became Superintendent, but I know he did the job. But whether he really was firmly convinced that that was a great park and should have been insistent prior to legislation, I am not sure.

I think he was given the instructions to be the eyes and ears and so forth, but I don't believe that Bill Birdsell played a major role in getting the area authorized. I mean, I think that the area was authorized because we had the Cuyahoga Valley Association and Sheridan Steele and those people that were pushing the heck out of it. The state of Ohio was pushing it. BOR was pushing it. Congressman Seiberling was pushing it.

My own personal feelings were that if the Park Service closed their eyes and showed no interest at all and said, "Do what you want" we would have gotten the area. I mean, I don't think anything we did really made the park's destiny. I think we were players, but we were not important players in the case of Cuyahoga. I think that was pretty well determined by others and I think all we were able to do was maybe try to shift it in focus or something.

MR. COCKRELL: Did Birdsell lobby to become the first Superintendent at Cuyahoga? Did he really want the job?

MR. KAWAMOTO: I think he wanted it, but lobby may not be the right word. I think what it boiled down to is since he was at Mound City, he was a key man for Ohio. In fact, not only that, but he was the Superintendent of the Ohio Group, so he had Taft and Perry's Victory under his jurisdiction. That was when the Park Service had these cluster areas. When he became involved with Cuyahoga and some of the public relations aspects and so forth, once the area was authorized, it almost became logical that if a person wanted the job, it would be great to just continue on as the Project Manager or the Superintendent. He was already familiar with the area and issues, rather than bringing in somebody from some other place. He had already established some contacts and knew some people.

MR. COCKRELL: You don't recall any other candidates expressing interest in the job?

John Kawamoto

MR. KAWAMOTO: I don't recall any. There may have been. My guess would be that there wouldn't have been. Let me put it this way, there may have been some, but they wouldn't have gotten the job anyway. I probably wouldn't have given them a job as dogcatcher. There was not a big rush to become a Superintendent of an urban recreation area, especially with the reputation of the burning river. Everybody referred to Cuyahoga as "The Burning River" because the river burned and so it did not have a tremendous, I think, kind of appeal to "the mountain lovers and tree lovers."

MR. COCKRELL: Was there the perception that Cuyahoga would not really become much of anything?

MR. KAWAMOTO: No, I don't think that was it. You have got to remember that in the 1970's the majority of the Park Service people were still--like they always used to say--that we had 60 or 65% of the areas east of the Mississippi and like maybe 35 or 40% west of the Mississippi. And, in terms of where you want to be, 70% of Park Service employees wanted to be west of the Mississippi and only 30% wanted to be stationed east. East was not considered in the early 1970's the place to be. You wanted to be west. So that was the reason.

There may have been some people expressing some interest in the job, but I don't recall anyone. Certainly there were always people expressing interest in a job if it meant a promotion. I think it was a wise choice to put Bill Birdsell in as Superintendent because I think he had the personality to do it. We used to call him the "friendly, big bear." He was big, but he had a very easy going, friendly nature about him, even though some of his subordinates said it was not his true self. A lot of them didn't like him. They thought he was too picky and a bunch of other things, but to the public he was a good choice. As far as I am concerned, I think it was a good choice.

MR. COCKRELL: Norman Duke, the former Chairman of the Northeast Regional Advisory Commission and then subsequently of the Midwest Regional Advisory Commission, initially opposed Cuyahoga Valley. Was the Advisory Commission for this Region also opposed? Did they go on record opposing Cuyahoga Valley?

MR. KAWAMOTO: I don't remember that. To be honest with you, I cannot answer that question. I don't think we were dealing with it at the time. I don't believe so. I don't even know that that was an issue.

MR. COCKRELL: I spoke to Russell Dickenson and he said one of the prime groups against Cuyahoga Valley at the national level was the National Park Service Advisory Board. Do you know why they would be so violently opposed to Cuyahoga?

John Kawamoto

MR. KAWAMOTO: The primary reason I believe is because in the 1970's there was a very strong feeling that the Park Service's role was not urban and that it was dissipating our resources. They could see the handwriting on the wall. The so-called crown jewels were going to suffer in terms of funding and personnel because of the urban areas. I mean, it doesn't take a genius to figure out, for instance, that Cuyahoga not only has the two Senators, but two or three Congressmen surrounding it. Gateway has got 13 Congressmen! Knowing how the Congress operates, I think that was their basic opposition, that it may be nationally significant, but it was not our role.

I think there was a very strong feeling about that time, as you mentioned earlier, within the Park Service whether or not urban recreation really was a role of the National Park Service. There was beginning to be some advocacy, I think, at that time by many who said that maybe BOR ought to be enlarged to become managers and become the urban recreational agency. I think that is probably the reason that they were opposed to it.

Plus, you have to remember that the Park Service was opposed to it. As you probably recognize, the Advisory Board for many, many years, very seldom were they ever in favor of something that the Park Service was opposed to. So at that time, the Park Service was opposed to Cuyahoga, therefore, the Advisory Board was also.

MR. COCKRELL: When the bill finally passed Congress and went to the White House in December 1974, everyone assumed that President Ford would veto the bill. What is your version of the story of why he didn't? I have heard three or four versions of this. I am interested in knowing what yours is.

MR. KAWAMOTO: I really can't recall. My only answer would be that it obviously had to do with the political aspects and recognizing that there was a trade-off. He wasn't going to veto it.

MR. COCKRELL: Was this office surprised that he signed it?

MR. KAWAMOTO: I can say I wasn't surprised. I don't know that it was a major issue to be perfectly honest with you in this office about whether he was going to sign it or not sign it. My memory bank doesn't recall heated discussions one way or another about it.

MR. COCKRELL: I ordered the records from the Gerald Ford Library and most of the advisors were recommending a veto. Of course, the Department certainly was, and OMB and a couple of other of his advisors were. There has been several different versions of why he decided to finally sign it. The most popular one is that he had a three-page list, single-spaced, of all these organizations, both

John Kawamoto

nationally and locally, saying that they were in favor of it; not only environmental groups, but industry was calling for this area. He said, "If I do not sign this, Ohio would probably not vote Republican in the next election." So politics, I guess, was the bottom line.

MR. KAWAMOTO: The election would have to be the reason. The Cuyahoga Valley started out in what was considered more of a Democratic thing with Seiberling and so forth. I am not sure whether the Republicans were supporting it.

Norm Duke, you mentioned him. His wife, Dorothy, was a power on the Republican side. So, it may be that if she thought it would help the Republican cause in Ohio, that would have been the way they would have been thinking. In other words, saying, "It is not the area, but we need Ohio." I remember, when you mention it, that there was some discussion about whether Ford would or not, but I am not sure that anybody was surprised.

MR. COCKRELL: In January 1975, the Denver Service Center planning team arrived at Cuyahoga. Part of their responsibility was to conduct a feasibility study on the Ohio and Erie Canal as well as a GMP for Cuyahoga. With the staggering job ahead at Cuyahoga was there already a predetermined result when it came to the canal?

MR. KAWAMOTO: I don't really think so. As far as I am concerned, we took the charge of Congress pretty seriously when they asked us to look at the canal. I don't think anyone had any idea one way or the other. I think that just like anything else you look at it, and because of what you know about the state and its development, the question is whether there was any integrity left or not. Those are the kind of questions asked. I don't think there was any prejudgment saying, "Let's see if we can't find it non-significant, or whatever." I just don't think that was the case.

MR. COCKRELL: I have also been told by Tedd McCann that he originally was targeted as the GMP Team Captain for Cuyahoga, but that the Region and the Denver Service Center objected. Do you recall this?

MR. KAWAMOTO: I think that is right. I believe there were a couple of reasons for this. One was that we wanted a different look at it. In other words, he was so intimately involved with it that it would be difficult for him to be objective in terms of the kind of development and the kind of things that would go on there. He had ideas that he had already expressed in the pre-authorization package. We also at that time were going into much more heavier involvement in the environmental assessment process.

John Kawamoto

That was one of the reasons, that he was already too close to it and we needed a fresh look. We needed to get somebody different. Plus, the entire planning force that would be activated was in Denver. I mean, there was Tedd McCann in Washington as Team Captain. I personally would not like to have somebody be a Team Captain in one place and the team be in another place. I believe that was the major reason. We just felt that we needed another look at it. Tedd was such an advocate of the park; if there was any change that might be desirable, there was no way that we could get it past the Team Captain! The other had to do with the special relationship (my understanding) that Tedd McCann had with Loretta Neumann.

MR. COCKRELL: So, that did enter into it?

MR. KAWAMOTO: Certainly, I mean, I am a realist. I know that if the Region wanted to do something with Cuyahoga, and the planning aspects were such that Tedd McCann didn't like that idea and didn't think that that was the way we should do it, we would have problems. If the Regional Director insisted on it, and even if the Regional Director got the Director to agree with him to insist that that was the way it was going to be, we would have problems. I am a realist. I think Tedd McCann is going to tell Loretta Neumann, who is going to tell Seiberling, and Seiberling is going to call the Director and say, "By the way, I understand you are thinking about doing this at Cuyahoga; I don't really think that is a very good idea." You know, I don't have anything against him. I don't even know the guy. I don't think I have ever met him.

I have dealt with the political realism of the Park Service when I was in New Area Studies. I personally know in the case of Voyageurs where we had a keyman, Frank Hjort, who got very close to Congressman Blatnik and Blatnik knew what the Park Service was thinking long before we officially said it. It got to be unbearable because we couldn't strategize. We couldn't strategize with the proponents of the park because this man had to be involved with us.

Then the Director decided he was going to move him. Frank got wind of it and so all I know is that day or that afternoon, before it was going to happen, George Hartzog got a personal call from John Blatnik who said he just wanted to tell George Hartzog how pleased he was with the kind of cooperation and support he was getting from the Park Service and that Frank Hjort really was doing a good job of working with the Congressman. Well that was a great message. I mean, the message to George Hartzog was, "Hey, don't move the fellow, keep him right there!"

So there was no question in my mind, having been involved in that kind of thing, that Ted McCann could have been the best planner in

John Kawamoto

the world, but if you are going to do a plan, at least objectively, you shouldn't have nine strikes against you. That was one important aspect.

The other thing was that it is kind of difficult--you probably recognize it--if somebody already has done a plan to have the same person come in and do a new plan. Especially if there is going to be changes or there was overwhelming weight of opinion that that is not a good plan. It is difficult for someone to say, "Hey, you are right! After thinking about it, I didn't do the job right the first time, and now that you have pointed it out to me, I think your ideas are better." You know, that doesn't happen very often in this world and so those are the reasons.

MR. COCKRELL: Michael Donnelly was telling me about his first meeting in Omaha when he presented the GMP team's alternatives. He said that Dave Beal left after the first hour and that soon after, one by one, the other members of the Directorate left and that only the Regional Historian and the Regional Historical Architect were left. They basically told him that the alternatives were garbage, go back and redo them. He said that this was typical of the attitude in Omaha, except for you. He said that you took a deep interest in Cuyahoga trying to think through the whole process. Was that a problem here? Were there a lot of people that weren't willing to look at Cuyahoga objectively?

MR. KAWAMOTO: I am not sure that that is the right word. Part of it has to do with Mike Donnelly himself. I mean, Mike just kept going and going. He failed to recognize that he had to be short and concise when you are presenting something to the Regional Directorate. They don't have all afternoon to sit around reminiscing. It has to be hard-hitting. That was part of the problem. They had made other commitments that needed to be taken care of. Out of courtesy, of course, they should have said, "Mike, we have two hours" and "hit the high points."

I also think sometimes there was a feeling that it didn't make a hill of beans what we wanted anyway, because it was pretty well being directed by Congressman Seiberling. If he didn't like it, then what the heck? I guess there may have been some feelings of "Why waste a lot of time on it? Put something down on paper and get it done and then we will see what happens." I think that may have been.

The other was that we were riding at that time what we called the "white horse wave." Bill Birdsell would always talk about how great it had been in the public meetings and all of that. I told him, "We haven't put anything down on paper yet and you are just on the white horse. Wait until we start saying exactly what and who is going to lose their place and who is going to do this. Then

John Kawamoto

your horse is going to be smattered with a bunch of whatever it is. You are no longer going to be on a white horse." He admitted that that was probably how it was going to be.

I realize Mike had a difficult job. I personally also don't think that Mike did as good a job as he could have. I mean at times he was kind of obstinate and stubborn. He had his mind made up and that was kind of it. From a planning standpoint it would be difficult even for me to do a good plan when in fact some of the more important recreational pieces were already being administered by somebody else and that wasn't going to be part of the park. It is like building an automobile and knowing full well that it is not going to work.

I think he was probably right, in that there was some lackadaisical feeling about Cuyahoga. You have to remember the circumstances at the time. The Service Center people at that time, and to some degree even now, were of the opinion that they were right. They were the planners and they were the people who had the great visions and so forth. People in the Regional Offices didn't know much about anything because we didn't have these grand schemes and grand ideas. There was a predisposition to look at whatever Region was saying or doing as, "Just don't pay attention to them." So they were riding a very high wave at that time, especially with environmental assessments. Hardly anybody was paying any attention to environmental assessments. It was a new way of planning. Difficult to even bring across. I think that was the whole thing.

MR. COCKRELL: Donnelly said that one of his major problems was that they had to beg for the information from the Ohio Department of Natural Resources. They would not turn it over. Do you know why it was such a problem?

MR. KAWAMOTO: The only thing I can think of right now is that we were trying. Part of it had to do with the relationship with BOR and the Ohio Department of Natural Resources. There were some difficulties there. I don't know what they were, but that had something to do with it. The other was that there was some jealousy on the part of the staff at the Ohio Department of Natural Resources. There was also a proposal that this could be done by the state and all they needed was federal money. In fact, that may have been what they might have been doing. If they had a choice, I think they would rather have had that.

In other words, the area would be authorized under the administration of the Ohio Department of Natural Resources and the Metro Parks as long as the Federal Government was willing to put up the five hundred million dollars for land acquisition. That was the major hurdle. That was basically why you had to have federal involvement because of the land acquisition costs. I think there

John Kawamoto

was some jealousy there. They kept saying, "Yes, yes" and Mike couldn't get it and Bill would try to get it.

The other part was that when BOR was created, the Park Service kind of lost contact with the state agencies and the people at that level. There was nobody I could call. As an example I couldn't pick up the phone like I used to be able to do and say, "Hey, what is going on?" We had just gotten the area, so we didn't have the opportunity to make the kind of contacts necessary with the Governor's office. Not being critical of Regional Director Dave Beal, but that was not one of Dave's great things that he liked to do, you know, to go call on the Governor and Lieutenant Governors and so forth. Dave never did that.

We didn't have enough presence in Ohio. In other words, we didn't have a big major park like Yellowstone and the Grand Tetons. Jack Stark, Superintendent of Grand Teton, is on a first-name basis, I am sure, with the Governor of Wyoming. We didn't have that kind of contacts. If we had, I don't think we would have had that difficulty. Somebody would have been able to call the Governor's office or somewhere and say, "Hey, something is going on."

MR. COCKRELL: The Park Service contracted with the Corps of Engineers in 1975 to conduct the land acquisition program at Cuyahoga. Did the National Park Service enter into the agreement enthusiastically or with some trepidation?

MR. KAWAMOTO: That was probably the biggest mistake we ever had to do, but then we had no choice in that because of the personnel ceilings. We couldn't hire people and we couldn't do all those kinds of things. We went in with it in good faith. I think we thought the Corps could do the job, they were involved with land acquisition in and around there and so forth, so we thought it was going to work out. It was not a good marriage.

MR. COCKRELL: What were some of the problems?

MR. KAWAMOTO: The problem has to do with bureaucracy. The Corps operates differently than we do. The Corps also operates on the basis that they don't care. I realize that they have this sign that says the Corps cares, but they don't have to care. When they go in to buy land, they are going to buy it. I mean, they are going to build a dam and they are going to have a reservoir and they are not going to fiddle-faddle around with willing sellers and willing buyers and all of that sort of stuff. They are just going to go in and buy it. If you don't want to sell it, they are going to condemn you.

Whereas, by the pure aspects of the law itself even, the Park Service had to be very careful in our land acquisition policies in

John Kawamoto

terms of Cuyahoga. You just cannot have what I call the ramrod approach to this. It was difficult for Bill and the Corps people to see eye-to-eye, because you are not really even on the same wave length. So, I think it created difficulties that should not have existed.

MR. COCKRELL: Wasn't there an attempt to educate the Corps about the legislation?

MR. KAWAMOTO: Sure, you could educate a lot of people, but that doesn't necessarily mean that they believe it. I think there was, but it takes a lot of training. It takes a different tact and I attribute that to just the difference in the way the agencies operate. Land acquisition officers for the Corps operate much differently than the people in the Park Service do.

MR. COCKRELL: What caused the ultimate cancellation of the agreement?

MR. KAWAMOTO: Part of it had to do with the fact that we were freed of the constrictions of personnel ceilings so that we were able to set up our own land office. The other, I think, is it was just getting to the point where, if I remember, it wasn't working. I think there were beginning to be too many problems. Problems meaning complaints from landowners. It was difficult to have a handle on it. The Superintendent wasn't quite sure what was said and how it was being said. It was not a good idea to begin with, but it was not one that we did because we wanted to do it. It was because of personnel ceilings and so forth.

MR. COCKRELL: Was it Birdsell's recommendation that it be discontinued, or was there some pressure from Congressman Seiberling?

MR. KAWAMOTO: I know that Birdsell recommended that it be discontinued, and I am assuming that he also was respecting the wishes of the Congressman who may have been tired of getting letters. No Congressman likes to get letters from irate taxpayers, so I am sure that he gently or otherwise may have said to Bill, "Is there a way in which we can make the difference?"

MR. COCKRELL: Was George Pastrick put in the Chicago Field Office in 1975 or 1976 primarily to deal with Cuyahoga Valley?

MR. KAWAMOTO: I think so, if I remember correctly.

MR. COCKRELL: Why was he put in Chicago and not at Cuyahoga?

MR. KAWAMOTO: Wasn't he one of the Corps' employees or something?

MR. COCKRELL: I don't think so.

John Kawamoto

MR. KAWAMOTO: I think it had to do with the records. I think there was some reason why he was there, but I can't remember.

MR. COCKRELL: The Corps had a Regional Office in Chicago, so he was put there.

MR. KAWAMOTO: I think it was because the records were there and he needed to work with those. I can't honestly remember, but I think that is the reason, because subsequently I know the land office was in Cuyahoga.

MR. COCKRELL: There was an Operations Evaluation Report done and one of the criticisms was that Pastrick should have been at Cuyahoga, not in Chicago.

MR. KAWAMOTO: I am sure that I would agree with that. Maybe he had some personal reasons why he wanted to be in Chicago. The records were there, but it didn't help the situation because again, the Land Acquisition Officer was not in Cuyahoga where he should be.

MR. COCKRELL: Some of the critics of Cuyahoga charged that the National Park Service did not do enough to inform the public during the GMP about what the park was to become. This criticism intensified as the land acquisition program geared up. How would you respond to that? Wasn't the public information campaign sufficient? What more could NPS have done?

MR. KAWAMOTO: My personal feeling is that I think the public information aspects were sufficient, in fact, more than sufficient. I think the problem dealt with our planning process where we switched from the traditional Master Plan to the Environmental Assessment mode. So when we went through the whole process, which took about two years, the public had all kinds of things put before them. There were all kinds of alternatives and they really never were able to really zero in on what we were going to do.

The other is that the major conflict had to do with land acquisition and that was not really something that the Master Plan deals with, if you understand what I am saying. I doesn't deal with, "We are going to buy Tract A and Tract B" and so forth. So therefore, if the public was expecting that through the planning process, that they were going to get full knowledge of everything that was going to happen within the park in terms of land acquisition, then that wasn't going to be. I don't know that we ever said that was going to be because that was never the intent.

If there was any place where we may have fallen down, it probably had to do more with land acquisition. We probably should have had

John Kawamoto

a little bit more intensive effort in terms of land acquisition and in explaining what we were about and so forth.

One of the problems with the land acquisition had to do with the legislation itself. If somebody said he was a hardship case and he wanted to sell, we had to buy regardless of whether that was a priority acquisition or not. It wasn't in our nature nor was it good politics to say, "You are not a hardship case, and we are not going to buy you." So we ended up spending a lot of our first monies not in terms of what might be more essential purchases. There were lots of people who came and said, "I am a hardship, I want to sell" and I think if I remember, the legislation says that "you are empowered to do this" or whatever it was, but gave the inference that we were supposed to buy this land.

Many people sold on that basis and then later realized they had made a mistake. They shouldn't have sold. They shouldn't have said they were a hardship. It sounded like a great way to get money right away, but in retrospect, I think they recognized that they should have waited, so I think there was some dissatisfaction by people on that.

In fact, I am positive that Bill Birdsell mentioned that somebody was on Jessica Savitch's program who said that we had a historic building and they had to sell. I am positive that what I heard from Bill was that they were begging us to buy because they wanted to get out of there. Then once they left, they realized that they really would have been better off to have stayed there and held on as long as possible. That is when they became bitter about the land acquisition policies.

MR. COCKRELL: If they had stayed on and held on, then they might have gotten a better price?

MR. KAWAMOTO: They might have, you never know. Because land acquisition is based on fair market value. If the fair market value increases, because of whatever reasons, inflation or whatever, then the possibility existed that they could have gotten more. I think it was more that they regretted the fact that they sold quickly when they should have stayed there. That particular one was a historic house that belonged to their grandparents or something. It had some sentimental value that they overlooked in their own desire to move out.

I think if we had to do it over again, not just Cuyahoga, but any Park Service area where we are buying land, I think what we need to concentrate on is the land acquisition. If you have to have meetings, and even one-on-one with every landowner, I think we need to do that because that is the only way it can be done. Even then you are not going to dissipate the opposition. You are not going

John Kawamoto

to satisfy the people who are going to be sour grapes about it or mad about it.

You and I have to understand that if you are being forced out of your place when you don't want to be, you are not going to have pleasant feelings about it. There is a certain amount of criticism of land acquisition. There is no way you can eliminate that.

Most of the people in this valley, or Indiana Dunes or any other park, didn't want to sell. They didn't want to move and they were forced to move, so therefore they are not going to have pleasant feelings. They are going to always concentrate on the dollars that they got, but also on the inconveniences.

MR. COCKRELL: How did the Midwest Regional Office get involved in the issue of adjusting the boundaries, particularly in the 1976 bill where Congressman Seiberling and the Park Federation kept pushing for immediate additions?

MR. KAWAMOTO: I think our involvement was, to put it facetiously, whatever the Congressman wanted was the way it should be done. You probably recall that in the General Management Plan, there were some areas that we suggested could be added and some that could be deleted. I think the Congressman had expressed through Bill Birdsell that there was some additional parcels that the Congressman really felt were necessary. We agreed to add these to the park, but at the time that the enabling legislation was introduced, he felt that was not an appropriate time to do it.

There were enough things going on with Cuyahoga without adding these other parcels. But once it was authorized, I think we began to take another look and so did he essentially. Most of the adjustments made some sense logically as to why the boundary should be where it is rather than when it was first drawn. The Superintendent transmitted the suggestions on the boundaries to Region saying, "These ought to be added." Most of them had to do with protection of either scenery or to prevent possible adverse development along roads of critical areas. That is how we got involved. If you are asking the direct question, "Did we initiate such things?" the answer is no.

MR. COCKRELL: I know that Seiberling and the Park Federation were a little bit impatient because the Park Service's position was "Wait until the GMP is completed and then we will address this." In 1976, the GMP wasn't quite yet finished and the bill went through Congress anyway. But most of the additions were already recognized in the GMP.

MR. KAWAMOTO: If we are telling the public that this is the way it is going to be in the Master Plan, you are not being fair with

John Kawamoto

the public to go ahead with other things when we haven't completed the plan. So that is part of the reason. The practical aspect was we knew that the Congressman could do it anytime he wanted to.

MR. COCKRELL: Earlier you mentioned that Randy Pope was Acting Superintendent when Bill Birdsell was hospitalized in 1976. Randy chaired a public meeting in Valley View which turned into a near riot. People were opposed to some of the planned additions in the north end of the park. How did this get so out of hand?

MR. KAWAMOTO: You mean in terms of the public?

MR. COCKRELL: Yes. Why were they so upset?

MR. KAWAMOTO: Because if I recall, it was taking additional lands. From the logic of resources and so forth, it made sense to have the boundary adjusted to take in those additional places. I mentioned at one time we were on the white horse. Pretty soon the white horse got a little lame. It was beginning to happen.

I used to express it to Bill a lot. Right after a park is authorized, there is a feeling of euphoria among everybody, especially the proponents, of "Oh, we finally did it!" That is the time when you really have to get things done and going because the euphoria doesn't last forever. Usually then the opponents catch their second wind. They become stronger because in essence, they no longer have a mythical target to shoot at. You see, when you are shooting at a proposal, it is kind of mythical; I mean it is not there yet, but once it is there and the lines are drawn, then you have a target you can hit really strongly and quickly.

I remember that was one of our frustrations because the GMP took longer than we had anticipated. We thought if we could get it out of the way quickly, we could make the boundary adjustments, at least propose them and move them along before what I call "reality" set in, in terms of not only the proponents, but the opponents.

Because with the opponents, in terms of the public, there is a general fear of the Federal Government, because the Federal Government is an all encompassing "monster" and so forth. So when the Federal Government speaks, in this case authorizing an area, they kind of think it is over with and there is nothing they can do about it any more. It is only after a while they begin to realize that there is and, of course, part of that is encouraged by our saying that this is public input and so forth.

Today, something like that shouldn't happen because we now have a large enough staff and you have an "ears to the ground" kind of approach. You have to remember at that time, the park staff consisted of Bill Birdsell and I don't know who else. You really

John Kawamoto

had no eyes and ears. The only eyes and ears they had were the friends, like Sheridan Steele and that group. And they are not going to tell you. First of all they are not going to listen to that kind of talk.

The eyes and ears in this case failed us. The friends of the park should have been out there alerting us to the fact that there was a storm building out there and you guys should know about this. They failed to recognize this. They felt that they were able to get the park authorized over the objections of "a number of people" so what is a few people up in the north end?

I think it was our reliance on the friends to tell us where the problems might be, because there was no way in the world that we could anticipate those things or get a handle on that with the limited staff. If you have a fair-sized staff like they have today, there shouldn't be any reason or any surprise currently in Cuyahoga from people opposed to something. We ought to pretty well have our ears to the ground on that and we have enough staff to be able to do that.

MR. COCKRELL: Was it the Denver Service Center planning team or the Midwest Regional Office or both that wanted these controversial areas omitted from the expansion bill, specifically this one up in Valley View?

MR. KAWAMOTO: If I remember, initially it came from the Service Center's planning team. After looking it over, I think they felt it was developed already and that we didn't really need it. I think that was the gist of it and we relied pretty much in this case on the Superintendent's and the Service Center's recommendations. At that time, the Region had a representative on the team, Fred Kaas.

I don't believe Fred Kaas recognized what his role was, which was that he represented the Regional Director. Therefore, he had that authority. He was not a subservient member of a team. Again that is no criticism of Fred. I think it was because we were evolving a planning process, a major one, like environmental assessment, and it was difficult to specify the role of each person.

Quite frankly at that particular time, the Service Center wouldn't have paid any attention to us anyway. The Service Center was kind of autonomous and they felt they were right and no one else really knew better, so that was the reason. We were involved in it, but it was only because we supported, in this case, the Superintendent.

I remember sitting in on a discussion with Congressman Seiberling before we put it out to the public indicating the reasons why we were adding and subtracting, so that he was aware of the reasons. They were logical reasons for additions.

John Kawamoto

MR. COCKRELL: Did Seiberling go along with this issue?

MR. KAWAMOTO: Yes, he did. At that time, anyway.

MR. COCKRELL: The proposed Independence landfill controversy resulted in the Park Service recommending in a 1977 boundary study against its inclusion in the national recreation area. During the mark-up session of the House National Parks Subcommittee on the Omnibus Parks Bill of 1978, Seiberling telephoned Birdsell and asked if he would accept the addition at this site, and at that time Birdsell said yes. What had happened in the ensuing time period to make the Park Service change its position?

MR. KAWAMOTO: Which one was the Independence one?

MR. COCKRELL: That was the one where the Hydraulic Press Brick Company was and a developer wanted to come in and make it into a landfill.

MR. KAWAMOTO: There were probably two reasons. One is that if the Congressman wanted it, we probably acceded to that. The other would be that we were beginning to recognize that in Cuyahoga, we control our own destiny. It seemed that we were better to have something inside and under our control rather than to have it not under our control, but within the boundaries. Then we would have this great hassle over the next number of years about adverse use and complaints about trucks, whatever the reason.

I think it was basically a recognition that we controlled our own destiny and we ought to be aggressive. I think our minds were beginning to change. That this is a park that has a future. I am not saying homes are adverse use, but they are adverse if you try and restore natural conditions. We really needed to have more space and we ought not to have something going on inside that really is a nonconforming use.

MR. COCKRELL: Was the Advisory Commission for Cuyahoga Valley a very effective group? How did it compare to other Advisory Commissions in the Region?

MR. KAWAMOTO: The Advisory Commission at Ozark, Indiana Dunes, and Sleeping Bear were far more active. Direct input, just all the way through. I was not directly involved because they were operational matters. In this case, Commissions were under Bill Dean's jurisdiction in the Regional Office, so you might ask Bill. He dealt with not only Cuyahoga, but all of the Commissions.

MR. COCKRELL: In 1978, Congress criticized the Park Service for not acquiring any scenic easements on improved properties at

John Kawamoto

Cuyahoga. It is said that the 1974 act intended for maximum use of easements to keep costs down. Did Cuyahoga alter its land acquisition strategy because of this and was there direction given by the Regional Office?

MR. KAWAMOTO: You mean did we change it from 1978 on?

MR. COCKRELL: Yes.

MR. KAWAMOTO: Yes, I think we did. Again, it was reacting to a decision made by Congress. You know, if Congress says that is what you are supposed to be doing, then we obviously decide we can do that. I think though that it really has to do with the general Department/Administration's position that we buy less than fee. I think those are the years when we couldn't buy land. We had to go out and get less than fee if we could and so forth, because the Administration felt that there should be more private enterprise and that type of stuff. In fact that is when we had to change our procedures or thinking.

For instance at Voyageurs National Park, where everything was going to be in fee and I think it stills is, but at that time, they were beginning to insist that we do less than fee acquisition in Voyageurs. Our position was, "No. Why should we?" I mean, national parks, they ought to be all in fee in order to manage them, but that was a strong push on the part of the Administration, that we go to less than fee.

But the other reason we were criticized in the case of Cuyahoga is because there was more and more public outcry about land acquisition and why can't we stay and so forth. Even then, Congressman Seiberling changed his position a little bit in terms of whether we should have fee or scenic. I think he was reacting again to the criticism. You have to recognize that in some things, we are our own worst enemies. We bought a bunch of properties, then we moved our own people into them, which sounds a little ridiculous. If we are buying it for restoring the natural scene, then those houses ought to come down immediately. We also bought houses and then boarded them up and left them for a long time.

There were a number of things we did that made people wonder why did we have to buy. That was on one side. The other hand, of course, was that many of those we bought even though we weren't ready to buy them because the people wanted us to buy them. Hardship cases were part of the legislation, but I also think that was just a reflection of the general mood of the Federal Government that private enterprise should be paramount and the Federal Government should be have a lesser role.

John Kawamoto

A lot of that then is reflected in some of the things we get out of Congress. It has nothing to do with the land acquisition that was going on at Cuyahoga. It did in this case a little bit because there was some opposition to our buying the land. Maybe we made some mistakes in that we bought some land that we should have had in scenic easement, especially some of the farms, which we had intended to stay in agricultural pursuits.

The other reason that we didn't go to that is that your land acquisition people will tell you that scenic easements are almost as costly as fee acquisition. By the time you buy the easements, it is going to cost you just about as much. You have basically no say about a lot of the land practices going on. If they do do something, by the time you get an injunction and do other things, the thing is wiped out anyway.

I personally don't believe that you should go to scenic easement if you can do land acquisition in fee. I think you can do a better job of resource management when you have fee ownership. Now Congress is determined that we do more scenic easements so that is what we do.

MR. COCKRELL: Plus with the scenic easement, you don't have any right of public access.

MR. KAWAMOTO: Not unless you buy it. You can buy the public access, but it costs you.

MR. COCKRELL: The 1978 bill that expanded the park also extended the Secretary's authority to assist local governments in establishing zoning ordinances or laws to include intergovernmental organizations and such assistance could take the form of payments for technical aid. The Park Service didn't take much advantage of that. Why was that?

MR. KAWAMOTO: Part of it has to do, I think, with money. You have to provide it and it has to come through the appropriations process. The other is that, if I remember, we already started or had begun some kind of a loose coalition of all of the local entities around and we felt that that was just as good a way of having input on what is going on inside the park and what is going on outside the park. We didn't push it. It is one of those things where it is in there, but we didn't ask that it be put in there. It was put in there presumably because either the Congressman or somebody thought it would be a good idea.

We weren't going to take the big lead and push all of it because, again, you are faced with a situation where if you do that, then the locals feel that you are trying to dictate to them all of the things that ought to be going on outside the boundaries. You are

John Kawamoto

usurping their authority. Essentially it is a tool that is available, one that we could use and should use, but we needed more of an impetus from the local side and there really wasn't any except for this informal one.

MR. COCKRELL: You are talking about the Communities Council?

MR. KAWAMOTO: Yes.

MR. COCKRELL: Whose idea was that?

MR. KAWAMOTO: I really can't tell you that. I know Bill Birdsell was involved with it and so was the subsequent Superintendent. I really can't tell you who decided that it would be a good idea.

MR. COCKRELL: Was there a precedent anywhere else in the System?

MR. KAWAMOTO: Only in a sense that some of the other parks have some kind of legislation; something that says we need to have a coalition. I think Cape Cod has something that says we have to work with these communities, but the Secretary has certain responsibilities and so forth.

I think the idea has been expressed in other places, but I think more importantly, it has always been my feeling and I am speaking from my own personal experience, that we as an entity need to work with our outside neighbors whoever they are, whether they are farmers or foresters or cities or whatever. Because what they do affects us and what we do affects them, so I would always be advocating, if not a formal one, at least a loose organization of all the communities and whatever around the parks to discuss whatever items need to be done. I don't know who came up with the idea.

MR. COCKRELL: In August of 1979, Regional Director Dunning instructed parks with active land acquisition programs that the Washington Office wanted each park to prepare a Land Acquisition Plan by December 31st of that year. Did this directive come primarily because of the problems at Cuyahoga or was this just a nationwide directive?

MR. KAWAMOTO: No, this was nationwide. It had to do with the Administration's position about acquisition of lands. They were opposed to our acquiring land in fee and this is just another way of saying there must be a better way of acquiring land in less than fee. So that is the reason any park that had land acquisition had to come up with a plan. It wasn't just Cuyahoga, in fact, those plans are still in existence.

John Kawamoto

MR. COCKRELL: In March of 1980, Congressman Seiberling and Senator Metzenbaum wrote a letter to Director Whalen and called on the Park Service to thoroughly reevaluate its land acquisition program at Cuyahoga, and to suspend or drop all complaint actions. As Cuyahoga's main boosters, why did they do this at that point?

MR. KAWAMOTO: I think it had to do with the growing public outcry about some of our land acquisition there. My personal feeling is, at some point, the Congressman had to indicate to his constituency that he was sympathetic to their concerns and that maybe the Park Service needs to take another look at our acquisition policy. Obviously, we weren't pursuing scenic easements vigorously.

It was always my understanding based on what Bill Birdsell said, and of course, he is dead, but that the Congressman wanted us to pursue the acquisition of lands in fee. He was just following, you know, that that is what Seiberling said we ought to do, is just buy all the land in fee. In essence, kind of giving Bill the message that he had to disregard the provisions in the legislation. That is what Bill said and there is no way that I could verify that. I was never involved in any conversation when any of that took place.

Later, when there was more and more criticism of land acquisition, I know that Seiberling indicated that we made some mistakes and that we ought to be doing more scenic easements, which I thought was contrary to what Bill Birdsell said. There are some things that have happened at Cuyahoga, that dealt with what Bill Birdsell said in conversations he had with Seiberling that we took at face value. I mean, there was no reason for us to doubt what he was saying, but if in fact Bill was saying things even though the Congressman didn't, we had no way of knowing that.

I can't verify that one way or the other, but I know that in terms of land acquisition, it was always my impression that Bill had indicated that the Congressman wanted us to pursue vigorously the fee ownership of lands.

MR. COCKRELL: In an interview shortly before his death, Birdsell said that Akron Metro Parks Director John Daily intentionally delayed the negotiations for an agreement for the transfer of Virginia Kendall Park to the Park Service. Was John Daily against the Virginia Kendall transfer?

MR. KAWAMOTO: As far as I know he was. In fact, that is one of the reasons that John Daily for some time was, in fact, still not too friendly with the Park Service, and bitter, and doesn't like us. Part of that was because we didn't pay any attention to him, and as you say now, that John Debo apparently is, that is great.

John Kawamoto

The other is that it doesn't take a genius to look at what was available there and that the Virginia Kendall Metro Park was the most attractive. It had a trust account at the moment of over \$100,000 a year. It was developed. It was an immediate recreation space and why not go for a donation of that rather than pursuing something else and trying to develop something from scratch? I believe at the time that we were able to do it, John did not have total support of his board, so he really couldn't get the board to stop it.

In fact, the board was supportive of it and Bill had worked on the board. So that is how it came about. He was in a vulnerable position and the Park Service took advantage of it. I don't think that was a wrong thing to do, because I think that if John would really think about it, there was no way that he could come up with the kind of investment that was necessary to rehab Virginia Kendall Park.

Right now, for instance we spent over half a million dollars just on that shelter in Virginia Kendall Park. We are going to be spending a million or two million dollars for the waterline and all of that. Those are the kind of major expenditures that he faced. We dredged the lake there. I forget what the cost was and there was rehab work that needed to be done. All the buildings were in need of major rehabilitation.

John would have gotten around to it in time, but it would have taken a long time and I don't know that he would have taxed the financial resources of Akron Metro Parks to really have to go into it. I think from his standpoint, he is better off to have us have it and for us to provide that recreation. I don't know that he would agree with that at the moment, or think that that is true. Realistically, we are going to be investing a lot more money into Virginia Kendall Park than that trust account is ever going to pay for.

MR. COCKRELL: Birdsell also expressed resentment that when the transfer took place, Akron Metro Parks stripped Kendall of practically everything that wasn't nailed down. Was there any warning that the Metro Park District would do this and how did the Park Service respond?

MR. KAWAMOTO: I don't know that we knew they were going to do it. Secondly, I guess I am not really sure at this point in time, what the situation was. In other words, I guess maybe it again points out the fact that there really wasn't good communication between the Park Service with Bill Birdsell and John Daily who was Executive Director of the Akron Metro Parks. That should have been agreed to before they signed papers that the movable facilities would still belong to Akron Metro and we will take over the thing

John Kawamoto

in place, or the picnic tables will stay where they are. I don't think that was ever spelled out.

If anybody researched the records, I am sure they will find that the whole thing was silent on that point. I think the assumption the Park Service made was that when it was turned over, that we would get everything, you know, picnic tables, whatever was there, including maybe even the maintenance vehicles and tractors.

The assumption that John Daily would have made was that those were like personal property. Therefore, they still belonged to Akron Metro Park. When the park was turned over, these things would be transferred to other parks within his system.

I don't believe that was ever discussed and so therefore, obviously, Bill Birdsell was mad about it and I suppose the Region was mad about it, but I am not too sure that there wasn't a duality of fault in terms of not really spelling out what the conditions were.

MR. COCKRELL: Was one of the goals of the Park Service to go into Virginia Kendall and do a better job than Akron Metro Parks had done and to really shine?

MR. KAWAMOTO: If it were, it would have been a personal goal of Bill Birdsell's. It was not ours, not that I know of. I don't remember any conversation about showing Akron what we can do and how a first-class operation ought to be.

MR. COCKRELL: Was it a goal of Bill Birdsell?

MR. KAWAMOTO: I think so, because that was where the priorities were, that is where the money went. Anything we got was there, but also, there was no reason to question that because the logic is that: O.K., here are the recreational facilities and it is our responsibility; then we need to put money into it. So there was no question at the Regional level in terms of the priorities for any of his development money or anything else. That is where it ought to go, because we had no other development at that time.

MR. COCKRELL: Why was there such a strained working relationship between Cuyahoga Valley and the Midwest Regional Office? When Lew Albert came in, his first memo said that the attitude that he perceived was that Cuyahoga Valley was the "armpit" of the Midwest Region and that he wanted to work to correct that. Why was it such a bad relationship?

MR. KAWAMOTO: I think that maybe it was their own perception of Cuyahoga. I think if you look at the record in terms of the development of Cuyahoga in terms of funding and personnel, it was a rapidly developed park in the short time that it was in

John Kawamoto

existence. Take a look at the Ozark National Scenic Riverways. It started as a park with development in terms of appropriated dollars and personnel when we took over three state parks. Compare that with Cuyahoga. Take Voyageurs, and all of these new areas in terms of the first five years.

I believe that no one can say that Cuyahoga was a lost sister. The perceived inequities were that they saw they were never high in priority in terms of funds and personnel. Cuyahoga always got add-ons. In the Region when you were looking at it, you looked at it on the basis that if they are going to be getting Congressional add-ons for these kinds of things, then the very small increase we are getting ought to go to some parks that are not getting Congressional add-ons or aren't in that position. I guess that is the logic now.

I understand that Cuyahoga never did agree with that philosophy and I can understand that. They are saying they ought to still be in priority because they are a new, growing park and so forth. But I think if you only had gotten an increase of 100 or 150 thousand dollars per year in the Region, it would be hard to indicate that Cuyahoga ought to get it when we had other new and growing parks, Pictured Rocks, Sleeping Bear, Voyageurs, etcetera, which were starting from scratch and were not getting the add-ons.

I think Cuyahoga was just a little too sensitive. I think there was a lot of response from the Region, but it was because if you are on the receiving end of cutting remarks, you never appreciate them, obviously. I think that is what it is, because there were some jokes. People instead of saying "Cuyahoga," some people would say "Cy-uge" and "Ca-hoga" and there were other things about it. There were other references made to the burning river. These are disparaging remarks, but I don't really think they had anything to do with what you thought about the park. It was just one of those things.

Cuyahoga was used as an example; sometimes unfairly, but that is what was said. You know, there are dumps there and holes in the ground and almost any ill you can think of in terms of what ought not to be done with a park. It was there. It was not something that Cuyahoga did. It was already there and it was put into the System intact with that. We got the dumps. We had this huge tire dump with millions of tires. So you always referred to that. So you say, "Well, we don't want to get into a position like where Cuyahoga's dumps are." I think that is the reason. I can understand that if you worked for Cuyahoga or for Lew Albert and you were referred to as, "We don't want something to happen here like it happened at Cuyahoga." Then you tend to think that it is a never-never land.

John Kawamoto

I really truly do not feel that we placed Cuyahoga in low priority about anything. I felt that we gave them all a fair shake. If one is to say that one should not make disparaging remarks, even in jest about the situation at Cuyahoga or any park because of something that they had no control over, then I would plead guilty. I am sure I have said the same thing about the dumps over there.

But then, I have said some things about Indiana Dunes in jest, although I personally have fought for a long time and feel very strongly that that park is going to become one of the most important parks in the National Park System, strictly because it is now preserving 26 miles of shoreline that would not otherwise be preserved. The job we are doing now where we are cutting back on development and so forth, the Dunes is going to be a great park.

I feel the same way about Cuyahoga. I think Cuyahoga will become a great park. But again, in jest, I have made remarks about Grand Teton and Yellowstone, too. I think that was the perception the people in Cuyahoga had and I don't really believe that that was a fair assessment of the Region's perception or thinking about the park. I think we genuinely were concerned about the park and tried to do what we could to help. The park also was very independent. They felt they could do it all and didn't need anybody from Region coming in and telling them what to do. I think there was a measure of that on their side.

MR. COCKRELL: One of the statements I have heard is that the people in Omaha expected too much or called for too much to be done. Here they were working in the park, trying to get programs started and here Omaha was calling for yet another report: "Well what do I do? Do I drop doing this and send in this silly report to Omaha, or do I keep doing what I think is important?"

MR. KAWAMOTO: They were no more unique in that than anyone else. Every other park said the same thing. They said, "What priorities do I choose?" You ask any park and they will say, "Our priority is cultural resources, natural resources and the visitor. They come first." If we can't get these reports done, we are not going to do them. The Region expects too much. The guy in the Region says, "Hey, my boss says I have to have these reports and they are my priorities."

Everybody's priorities are different, but we have gone through that paperwork jungle time after time about the Region asking for too much and not enough time on the part of the parks. About every five years, we go through a big survey about how many memos went out requesting things and how many responses they had to make and so forth.

John Kawamoto

I attribute that mentality to one in which you say, "Well, they" which is the one up above. So anything that is wrong, you blame up above. Like we blame Washington, and anything good, we take credit for ourselves. So therefore, if you are in a park, then you are saying, "Gee, we are doing everything right. We have happy visitors and we are doing all of these great things, and yet the damn Region always wants more or wants things that are unimportant to us and so forth." I mean, that is not true.

What I always say is that if the parks were doing such a great job, then we would never have to have letters and public relations and all that sort of stuff. Obviously it is a joint cooperative endeavor. You both have to work together, but I don't agree with them that they were castigated. That complaint, I think, is one that you can ask any park and they will tell you the same thing.

MR. COCKRELL: What do you know about Bill Birdsell's transfer? Was it a transfer or was it a involuntary reassignment?

MR. KAWAMOTO: Refresh my memory for me. When are you talking about?

MR. COCKRELL: The announcement came in the summer of 1980 that he was going to be transferred to the Washington Office as an Assistant to the Director for something. I talked to Russell Dickenson and he said the push for that came from John Seiberling; that he had several phone calls from Seiberling saying that maybe this is the time that Birdsell needs to go.

MR. KAWAMOTO: I think that basically you have the answer then. The Congressman at one time had great confidence in Bill because they were working together and things were going smoothly. As things began to go sour, the public was beginning to do more and more complaining. There were things beginning to crop up over which Bill probably had no control. The Congressman had two choices. One is that you divorce yourself from this park by becoming clean and saying, "I have nothing to do with this. That is a Park Service matter." Or you say, "We are in this together and I am going to stay with you because, after all, we both created the situation."

I personally think that Seiberling decided that this was a cancer that he wanted to get rid of by the name of Birdsell. He could say, "I had nothing to do with all of that stuff that you all are mad about; that was this guy Birdsell and I got rid of him for you and now we have somebody new and we are going to work together." And that would have worked until such time as the situation became unbearable and then he would have done the same thing. That would be my guess.

John Kawamoto

I don't know Seiberling. I only met him once or twice, but I am not saying that as a fault. I mean, that is just the politics of it. Bill should have recognized that and everybody else should have recognized that at some point in time. You may out-live your usefulness from the standpoint that it is better for everyone concerned to move because it just starts out clean and fresh and so forth. I am sure Bill knew that.

MR. COCKRELL: I have been told that there was a plan by this office to reactivate the Chicago Field Office and stick him over there. Do you know anything about this?

MR. KAWAMOTO: There was some discussion about the possibility of something like that, but again, you have to remember that all of this was a reaction to pressure from above. It was not Regional Director Jim Dunning who said, "I think we had better do something about Bill Birdsell." You can accommodate the desires of a member of Congress and still be fair to the employee. I am not taking anything away from Bill or the Congressman, but that is the way things are. There is no way in the world that we as a Service or any agency want to leave a Congressman out there to hang and dry. I mean he is too valuable to us.

MR. COCKRELL: The negative publicity campaign directed against Cuyahoga began during the last few years of the Birdsell tenure. Birdsell wanted Harper's Ferry to produce a counter program promoting what the Park Service was doing at Cuyahoga, but he learned that it was against Department policy to promote an agency or its program and his request was denied. How did NPS subsequently go about countering the negative publicity? If we couldn't promote ourselves, how did we do it?

MR. KAWAMOTO: I don't know that we did. Because the only way that you counteract anything negative is by an active public relations program in which you go out and discuss this and discuss that and all of those kinds of things. Obviously the answer is that you cannot do that with Bill Birdsell because regardless of what you felt about it one way or the other, he was perceived as the bad guy. You can't have the bad guy going back out and trying to do public relations.

Even if the Congressman hadn't asked or suggested it, we would have taken steps to transfer Bill to a new position and then bring in somebody else who could start afresh and lay out a complete new agenda about how we are going to counteract the negativeness. That is the only way you could do that and that is something we would do in any management situation like that. We tell everybody to be more active with the local community, keep them informed, all of those kind of things, but those are not unique. We did not set up

John Kawamoto

a campaign strategy, if that is what you are asking, that I know of in terms of Cuyahoga. Then, of course, Bill died.

MR. COCKRELL: What problems did that create for the Region?

MR. KAWAMOTO: I think the only problem it created was that we discovered a lot of things that we should have known about. There were a lot of things in Bill Birdsell's head that just weren't available. Of course I am a great advocate of doing administrative history; it is too bad that we weren't doing this a long time ago. There could have been interviews with Bill to help solve many of the problems we have today. There were just so many things going on. That was the nature of the person; he kept everything to himself. It left a void there that we had to pick up.

There were some things obviously that should have been done that perhaps we weren't doing because of the follow-up. I don't recall, unless Lew Albert mentions it, that there were a whole bunch of things that supposedly the Park Service made commitments on, that we didn't follow up on and that Lew had to follow up on. I doubt if that happened, but it seemed to me that most of the commitments that required follow-up, Bill had kept somebody informed. Either the Region had it or somebody had it so that it didn't fall through the cracks. I am sure there was some things that fell through the cracks.

MR. COCKRELL: There were a couple of instances where it was a little bit embarrassing. What kind of a manager was Bill Birdsell overall, if you compared him to other Superintendents?

MR. KAWAMOTO: My knowledge of Bill is that he was a good public relations person and did a great job for us in the initial part of Cuyahoga before and after authorization. That was his strong suit. He was not a good manager in a sense of people.

MR. COCKRELL: Did he have a lot of staffing problems?

MR. KAWAMOTO: I don't know if you would call them staffing problems. It is staff problems only if you consider that management style wrong and I don't consider it wrong, but there are a lot of people that do. His management style was that he wanted to be involved with everything, so he knew everything that was going on and everything had to pass over his desk, if you understand what I am saying. Therefore, he became involved in everything.

If a person can keep things moving and progressing and still not stifle the organization, that is great. But, I know that subordinates do not like that kind of stuff. Most subordinates, if they had their way, would prefer if the boss never talked to them

John Kawamoto

and never saw them and just let them do what they wanted to do. But that is not the way the world is, so there is a difference.

His management style was that he wanted to be involved with everything. When you are dealing with a smaller area or when things were smaller, that is possible, but as it got bigger and bigger, it was almost impossible for him to manage the whole thing. He didn't delegate probably as much as he should. Again, it may be that he didn't have confidence in his subordinate staff and didn't want to delegate. I don't know that. I doubt that. I think he had a pretty good staff. I think his style was great for the initial part.

In hindsight, he probably should have been transferred sooner than we talked about it. There were enough things that would indicate that he needed a different assignment. As the staff grew and grew, there were just too many little incidental problems with staff that kept coming up that meant that there was some need for a change.

MR. COCKRELL: Someone told me at one point that the Regional Director, I think it was Dave Beal at that time, called Birdsell's staff together in a meeting and said, "Anybody who wants to transfer out of here, I will accommodate that." I guess at that time there was a lot of hostility between Birdsell and some of his staff members.

MR. KAWAMOTO: If that is true, I don't know about it because I wasn't there, so I can't verify that one way or the other. If there was somebody that was there who could verify that, that is fine. I don't know that he would have. I can understand if he did it, he was saying it in a generic way because we would tell that to almost anybody. I think we would do that with any park area and staff. If there is someone that really has a problem, we would try to accommodate them.

MR. COCKRELL: Cuyahoga is not a special case then?

MR. KAWAMOTO: I don't think so. There were problems there. There is no question about that, but then there were problems in other parks, too. I can't visualize that Dave Beal would be going to each one of them saying, "If you want to transfer, we can arrange it." I think if he said that, it would have been in a generic way. It would not have been something that was going to be held against you.

In other words, if it was you and you came to me said, "I want a transfer. I don't get along with Bill Birdsell. He stifles me. I really would like a different assignment." They wouldn't have put Ron Cockrell into a little box and said, "Hey, this guy is

John Kawamoto

crazy!" They would have accommodated you and tried to find a different assignment for you and it would not be held against you. Now, Birdsell might have. He might have said, "Why, that dirty Cockrell!" but I am saying that the Region would not have looked at it that way. It would have been a generic sense coming back to the Park Service's philosophy that we are a family and we try in so far as possible to accommodate people. We do things that you normally wouldn't have to do, but you would do it because you felt about the individual, that if they have a problem, we certainly would like to accommodate them.

MR. COCKRELL: Do you remember much about the selection process for Birdsell's successor? Were there very many candidates who were interested in the job?

MR. KAWAMOTO: I can't remember how many were on the list to be honest with you. If you compared that job, which was a GS-14 job, my guess would be that we would have had ten times the applicants for Grand Teton than you did at Cuyahoga. As far as I can remember, it was a good list. I know that the selection process was pretty thorough. They were looking for a particular person who had at least a track record on the surface of working with other people and working with subordinates and working with the outside community. Lew Albert fit that.

I know I personally was asked by Randy Pope to talk to some of the other people that had worked with Lew and worked under him who knew him. I spoke to people I knew to find out his strengths and weaknesses, and passed them on to Randy. The initial screening was done by Randy on the Superintendents. He then went over it with the Regional Director and then the Regional Director made the final selection.

MR. COCKRELL: Was this a preselected thing because he did such a wonderful job at Lowell that he was needed at Cuyahoga?

MR. KAWAMOTO: Not that I know of. I think the fact that he did a good job at Lowell was one of the reasons that he was selected for Cuyahoga. Because at that time, based on what you have already discovered, Cuyahoga and its surroundings were at kind of a low ebb and we needed somebody to try to bring that whole thing back. You tried to pick somebody who was strong in public relations and perhaps not as much on the human resources side.

In other words, I don't think Lew Albert was picked because he had a great track record as being one of the top supervisors in terms of relationships with his own employees. If it were, that is a surprise to me, but I don't think that was the reason. It was because of his relationship with the town, contacts with Congress-

John Kawamoto

sional politics, because we knew that was an important part. Seiberling and others needed to continue to be involved.

MR. COCKRELL: Was he given any specific marching orders about what he should do when he got to Cuyahoga?

MR. KAWAMOTO: If he did, it would have come from Dunning and Pope. If I had to guess what it would be, it would be that we have some strange relationships there with the communities and we need to work with them. We also need to work a little bit with some of the staff, but I think that it would have been a "go see the Congressman" type of thing.

MR. COCKRELL: What would you list as Lew Albert's greatest accomplishments during his seven years there?

MR. KAWAMOTO: I think our relationships in Cuyahoga with the surrounding community are better and we have a little better contact with some of the other people and so forth. It also goes without saying that I am a little disappointed in that not just Lew, but his entire staff was not more active in terms of the surrounding communities.

Take service organizations as an example. Apparently, a couple of years ago, there wasn't one that belonged to any service organization! It surprises me that a park of that size with that kind of staff would not have some of their key people, from the Superintendent on down belong to service clubs, which is the pulse of the community. Also, he had no relationship with the Akron and Cleveland Metro Parks which I think he should have. But he had good relationships with others.

I think he improved the climate, because obviously, we didn't get nasty letters from Seiberling. He brought it back on keel. He began to sit down and prioritize the needs of the park a lot better than had been done by Bill Birdsell. There was just no way that Bill had; Bill's was almost a daily priority.

Lew began to take a longer term view. I think he allowed his staff to begin to look at things and make some decisions, recommendations and what have you, so that they essentially began to operate as they should. He began to get more funding for Cuyahoga. It would have happened anyway, but he is the one that went from strictly recreation to begin to look at more of the resources and the management of the resources, both natural and historic.

I would doubt if Birdsell would have moved, for instance, to Jaite as headquarters. Lew was willing to do that on the advice of his Historical Architect, that that is where they ought to be, toward utilization of historic buildings. Whether that is a good stroke

John Kawamoto

or not, that is something else again. I could probably take some issue with that being the headquarters, but that had nothing to do with Jaite. It is a good idea to use historical resources for ourselves, but in terms of administration, I am not sure that would be the best location for a headquarters. But those are the kinds of things he brought to the park.

I think he tended to begin to get things leveled off. We still continue to have things going on at Cuyahoga with letters of complaint and so forth, but I don't think you have the kind of volume or the force as it was when Birdsell was there. You also have to recognize that we have been acquiring land and things have been going along and the more you acquire, the less of those kinds of situation and problems you have.

We had some major things beginning to happen when Birdsell was still there. With Lew, I guess you could say it was a good calming effect. He helped to bring things back into perspective so that we didn't have to have all of the controversy about Cuyahoga. To give him credit, I think he tried, at least in his own way, to be more responsive. In a sense, recognizing that part of the problem of Cuyahoga being looked upon as he called it, the "armpit," was partly their fault.

Therefore, he wanted to make sure they weren't doing things that would continue that vein. He tried to make an effort not only himself, but through his divisions and others, to work closer, keep the Region informed. So there was never any surprise when there was a question coming from the Congressman about money, etcetera. The Region was never surprised because they knew in advance that something like that might be happening.

MR. COCKRELL: With the formation of TAPS at Cuyahoga and the maintenance people doing historic preservation work, how was the working relationship between the park and the Regional Office?

MR. KAWAMOTO: Just on TAPS? I think there were a couple of things. One is that they did a good job. They recognized some problems there in terms of resources. They attacked them. They put them in priority. They did a lot of things that probably would never have happened had they not created the TAPS organization, which is something that I had recommended in that sense. They have a pretty good priority now in terms of what they want to do with cultural resources. Those are many of the pluses. The relationship with the Regional Office I would characterize as good. I think there is pretty good discussion going back and forth between the professional staffs.

MR. COCKRELL: How about the Denver Service Center?

John Kawamoto

MR. KAWAMOTO: I am surprised that you asked me, because Bill Schenk and I were just talking about that. I think the park does not have the staff capabilities to do what they are doing. I think the work and the magnitude of the jobs are getting too big for them to be doing. I think they ought to get out of the business. I think they ought to turn them over to the Service Center, even though I know they don't like it because it costs more. But I really don't think they have that kind of expertise to be able to handle and monitor much of the new construction that is going to be going on.

That brings me to the Service Center. Their relationship with the Service Center is not very good. The Service Center has some problems with them and they in turn have problems with the Service Center that are never going to be ironed out.

MR. COCKRELL: Would you say these are professional disagreements?

MR. KAWAMOTO: Part of it has to do with money. They don't really feel they should be paying the Service Center the kinds of fees that the Service Center has when supposedly they can get it from the private sector a little cheaper. I really think they are way beyond what they have the staff capabilities for.

I could say the same when I am talking about this office, P&RP, that we do not have the capabilities to take on major jobs that the Service Center does. I mean, we just don't have that kind of staff. What you end up with is things being done one of two ways. If you do it, then you are going to tie up the entire staff for one particular job and nothing else gets done. At the Region, that is not our job. But the other is that we collectively just don't have that kind of expertise.

The Service Center does. They have everything that you can think of from Transportation Planners to Structural Engineers to Chemical and Mechanical and Electrical and the whole ball of wax. Regardless of whether you think they are competent or not, that is not the point. The point is that they do have a huge pool of people that can handle most jobs and handle them well all the way through construction.

I really think Cuyahoga should not be doing it. I think that the professional staff should just do the research, the planning and the prioritizing and maybe doing a little design work on small things, but I don't think they should be doing major work. The same reason that we didn't do it here is because we don't have that expertise. We don't even have Electrical and Mechanical Engineers on staff here and they don't have them there.

John Kawamoto

MR. COCKRELL: What historic preservation project stands out in your mind as being the most difficult at Cuyahoga, the most troublesome?

MR. KAWAMOTO: I think from the Regional prospective, the Locktender's House. That is one where I think a great deal of that was the Region's fault. We didn't think we had the time and the effort to handle some of that work and we turned it over to Cuyahoga. I just think that it was too loose. They went ahead with things that no one had really approved, but they thought we had approved. They sent it in here and somebody looked at it and then sent it back with a whole bunch of comments or thoughts. Cuyahoga chose to assume that it was approved or whatever. But there has been some problems with the whole project and I guess there is going to continue to be problems with the Locktender's House.

I think that what it boils down to, the biggest mistake was we should have started with and stayed with what it was supposed to be, which was emergency stabilization and really done the job right. Then, before anything else was started, we should have done the Historic Structure Report, the archeological investigation, the whole study so that then we could make a management decision based on the best information available as to what should we do with the building.

The gravest mistake, on the part of both the Region and park, was that we committed to a major interpretive center which included inside changes and it was arrived at through little bits of information.

The other is Everett Village which I really think is unfortunate. For some reason at one time it was "historic," and now it is not "historic." I think we should have made that decision a long time ago. I think we were the ones that perhaps made that change--we meaning the Region. I think at one time we thought it was historic, and now we say it isn't. It has no historical significance. I find that hard to believe because it is an early village. It must have some kind of significance, but I have to go with whatever the professionals here are saying.

MR. COCKRELL: Wasn't that determined by the National Register people?

MR. KAWAMOTO: I don't know. You can write things in the Register nomination form--you know that as well as I do--to make it significant, locally or otherwise, depending on what you put in there. It is still sitting there. I guess it is one that the Region ought to get off the dime. It is kind of sitting there and they are trying to get the art colony to do something. In the meantime, the buildings are continuing to deteriorate.

John Kawamoto

Either way the park and Region need to make a decision. We can wipe it out and get rid of it or whatever. That is not a recommendation, but we ought not spend money there if it isn't going to be used. There other places they can put an art colony. There are plenty of historic resources within that park where you could do that so it doesn't have to be there.

MR. COCKRELL: In 1986, the last boundary adjustment came with the addition of the Cuyahoga Valley Line. Did the Regional Office support that originally?

MR. KAWAMOTO: I know I did. That was part of the original proposal, which was the concept of having the inner-city people being able to get to natural surroundings and enjoying it and then going back. The key to that was, of course, the railroad. I think there was a great deal of reluctance by some because we are dealing with moving stock and a bunch of other costly things and there was going to be a tremendous drain on the budget.

There is no way in the world that that the railroad is going to be a paying proposition. If you look at total maintenance, there is just no way it is going to be done. That is why obviously the railroads who have been in the business a long, long time have said for years that passenger trains are not at all profitable. The railroad, which is an excursion line that only runs a certain number of times during the summer and not at all in the wintertime, can't be profitable.

So I think we have undertaken a major dollar commitment for a long, long time, but I think if done properly, it will fill the thing that we talked about for Cuyahoga, and that is that it becomes an area that the inner-city or urban population can utilize. I really think at this point in time, we need to be working very closely with the Metro Parks and so forth, so that we have a kind of joint effort. It doesn't make sense to me to have the railroad and then having people just get off in Park Service areas, when in fact, the Metro Parks have much of the recreational facilities. It seems to me that we ought to have a joint effort. But I assume that greater people are discussing it today and I don't need to worry about those things.

MR. COCKRELL: Basically that is the end of my questions. Is there another subject that we should talk about that you were involved with heavily regarding Cuyahoga?

MR. KAWAMOTO: I don't really think so in terms of Administrative History. We basically covered the events. I may have been involved with other things, but I don't know if they necessarily deal with the Administrative History. If you have other topics that come

John Kawamoto

along as you talk to other people and if you need some additional things, I will be glad to help you.

[END]

John Kawamoto

O R A L H I S T O R Y I N T E R V I E W

F O R T H E

A D M I N I S T R A T I V E H I S T O R Y O F

C U Y A H O G A V A L L E Y

N A T I O N A L R E C R E A T I O N A R E A

O H I O

Dave Linderman

Management Analyst
Midwest Regional Office
National Park Service

July 31, 1989
Omaha, Nebraska

Interviewed by:

Ron Cockrell
Historian
Midwest Regional Office
National Park Service

Omaha, Nebraska
1989

Dave Linderman

Dave Linderman

MR. COCKRELL: I thought we would begin the interview by my asking you to provide a brief summary of your National Park Service career.

MR. LINDERMAN: I began as a seasonal Park Technician at the GS-3 level in April of 1975 at Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore in Michigan. I was a long-term seasonal. I followed the next season as a GS-4 Park Technician in Law Enforcement. I worked the summer, and in the following winter of 1976, I went to Biscayne (now) National Park, (then) Monument in southeast Florida as a Law Enforcement Technician, also seasonal. I came back to Sleeping Bear in 1977 as a seasonal GS-5 Lead Park Technician, and worked again as a long-term seasonal. In January of 1978, I became a permanent GS-5 Lead Park Technician with the National Park Service at Sleeping Bear Dunes.

I was responsible at that time and had been for the previous two years with the Law Enforcement program there and pretty much public safety for the Leelanau District which is from Empire to Leland, Michigan. I was considered a Subdistrict Ranger during the operational year and had primary responsibility for subdistrict operations from Glen Arbor to Leland. I had approximately five seasonal Park Technicians working for me at that time, and three lifeguards on the Glen Lake Beach. The Dune Climb Area and primary visitation areas were under my particular purview at that time.

I went in on a detail to headquarters in Frankfort, Michigan, at Sleeping Bear Dunes in the fall of 1979, to assist them with some administrative duties because the Administrative Officer had left and gone to Isle Royale National Park following Don Brown, the previous Superintendent. I went down there and was only supposed to be there for a couple of weeks until the Midwest Regional Office could send someone down to help out. Due to my extensive administrative management background prior to coming into the National Park Service, I stayed there for four months.

My position in the field was not replaced. We were kind of suffering up there for winter patrols and some of the fun jobs like cross-country skiing. I took on all of the administrative responsibilities during that winter of 1979/80 and did the annual budget for the park and completed all of their budget documents. I assisted with preparation for sale of government property, buildings, and so forth, pretty much traditional Administrative Officer responsibilities. I was still at the GS-5 level and still had the title of Park Technician throughout.

In February of 1980, the Administrative Officer who had been hired to that position arrived on duty. Her name was Linda Hahn. Linda took over those subsequent administrative duties. I was asked by Superintendent Don Brown to stay on. I stayed on there for a while

Dave Linderman

and then Don asked me if I would start the Administrative History for the park. I began to pull some things together for that and worked on a special project paper for payments in lieu of taxes which was very popular between the counties of Leland and Benzie within the park. They submitted a position description to rewrite my position to Management Assistant GS-7 in April of 1980.

Shortly thereafter, the way I understand it, Jim Ryan, the Associate Regional Director for Administration, contacted Don Brown and asked Don if I could take a temporary assignment to Cuyahoga Valley National Recreation Area in Ohio. Don said I wasn't available. About a week later, Jimmy Dunning, then Regional Director of the Midwest Region, called Don and asked if I couldn't take a temporary detail to Cuyahoga Valley. Don called me in and asked if I could spend a few weeks in lovely Cleveland/Akron, Ohio, in a new recreation area. I said, "Certainly."

I went to Cuyahoga Valley and spent two months on a temporary assignment. I came back to Sleeping Bear and resumed my duties as a presumed Management Assistant pending approval in the Regional Office of the position description. Within a month, I was recalled to Cuyahoga Valley to assist them with the status of funds, bringing the park back up to par. That would have been about June of 1980. I just flew down for a weekend and brought the park back into fiscal soundness.

Bill Birdsell and Pete Peterson, who was then the Assistant Superintendent, were most appreciative. To show their appreciation, on my return flight from Cleveland, the Assistant Superintendent asked if I would be interested in a permanent assignment to Cuyahoga Valley as the Administrative Officer. I told him I wasn't quite sure and asked what he had in mind. They said they would be willing to re-advertise the GS-11 A.O. to a GS-7-9-11 if I would apply. I went home and thought about it. The following Monday of that week, I informed the park that I would apply for the position. The Regional Office rewrote it. It was advertised and closed within about 14 days.

I was on board as the Administrative Officer for Cuyahoga Valley, GS-7 Administrative Assistant by title, in August of 1980. I served in that capacity until October of 1983. In 1983, I transferred to the Regional Office in Omaha, Nebraska, to work for Jim Ryan at his request. He was then Associate Regional Director for Administration. I assisted him with some new Servicewide programs. Because of the newness and the uniqueness of the programs, he thought I would be the best man for the job. That was a lateral transfer with no promotion potential. But it was a new field, new assignment, and a new position in the Park Service at the time. I was a Management Analyst.

Dave Linderman

I would be the first Management Analyst in a Regional Office outside of Washington, D.C., which was a new administrative management push for field areas. This was primarily at the time to head up the productivity improvement program, which entailed OMB Circular A-76 for contracting out traditional government activities. I occupied the position of Management Analyst both as the Chief of an office and currently Chief of a branch to the present day, which is July of 1989.

MR. COCKRELL: You went back to Cuyahoga twice; the first time for two months and then over a weekend. Why were they having so many problems?

MR. LINDERMAN: Administratively, they had never quite understood what to do with the Planning and Financial Management Reports furnished from the Washington Office. When I had first gone to Cuyahoga Valley, I found all of these printouts which have the fiscal and administrative dollar history of the park in a big pile stored in a box in the basement. According to the staff at that time, that is where these had been maintained for a couple of years. This indicated to me that since those were the only "general ledger" documents to let a Park Manager know where he was, good or bad, that they were probably having some very definite fiscal difficulties.

I brought those up out of the basement. I instructed the soon-to-be Acting Administrative Officer, who was then the Personnel Officer, on how to reconcile those documents. However, they were still having difficulty with that reconciliation after I left. I came back in on a weekend, just to bring them up to date and to give them another full month of reconciliation, so that they could enter the last quarter knowing precisely where they were. Then I was back in time to make sure that the final reconciliation was handled and we finished out that year within about \$900 of their appropriation and other accounts.

MR. COCKRELL: What was your first impressions, positive and negative, of CVNRA?

MR. LINDERMAN: I hate to say this, being one who felt quite knowledgeable of the Park Service, but when Don Brown said, "They would like you to go to Cuyahoga Valley in Ohio," I had not the slightest idea what or where that was. I was familiar with Cleveland, but I wasn't quite aware of where they could have put a National Park Service area between the two cities. I got down there and was pleasantly surprised. The setting down in the valley kind of took me back to part of what I would consider a New England environment. It had lots of woodlands and rolling hills. Aside from the primary locations of a few commercial activities throughout the valley, I felt it was the type of area that would bring the

Dave Linderman

primary target visitors of an urban environment to that particular park. Being as how both the city of Cleveland and the city of Akron had their own parks well situated within the authorized boundaries and had a good start on facilities, we were going to attract the traditional park visitor to that area. So our mission was probably already well met by the time we undertook to acquire the lands.

There were areas in the park that I personally was attracted to because I liked the green, open spaces. That was the primary set-aside by Congress of that area: to create open space primarily for public recreation. The existing recreation areas consisted of two ski lifts that I recall and a number of golf courses. Those seemed to be traditional activities for the community at-large. I had a problem with them being in the park, but I guess the golf courses I could relate to more than looking at an eyesore of a seasonal facility located in the one of the three largest urban areas at that time. It was just where they were situated, both Brandywine and then the other one that I can't recall. They were on a public road, which is one of the two traverses of the park. That was a concern to me.

As far as the management and the administration, I was impressed with Bill Birdsell as a dedicated professional. Although he had a management style that was probably not easily understood by the individual who wasn't looking to find a reason for his motivations, I found him to be caring and having good, well-based management decisions for what he did. He had a particular and personal interest in furthering the mission at Cuyahoga. He surrounded himself with his professional staff, such as Sheridan Steele, whom he brought in from the outside, a particular foundation that helped bring about the legislative reality, along with John Seiberling. Bill was in there from the beginning from the position of Group Superintendent at Mound City to his position there.

Bill wasn't with us that long after my arrival. In my impression, Bill did not respect the position of the Regional Office, although they were somewhat awe-inspired because of his relationship with John Seiberling, the Congressman who also resides in the park.

MR. COCKRELL: Why was there also not a great level of respect for Bill?

MR. LINDERMAN: Bill was a large man physically. He was opinionated. This again is my opinion and impression. He had very strong convictions and he liked to control those situations that he felt strongly about. He did like me personally, and I would think on a professional basis more than a personal one, because he didn't know me personally. I turned out the work that he expected. I

Dave Linderman

found very soon what he was looking for. I produced that type of work level and quality.

It was at his invitation that I applied for the position and I am sure he had a great deal to do with my being there. I think any time you find a very strong personality in a Park Manager, and we have far more of those in the Park Service than perhaps any other management activity that I am aware of, in government anyway, you are going to find that. The resentment, I think, was put on a personal basis. That way they didn't have to deal with his professional capabilities and abilities. That served to undermine Bill's programs. I think it also contributed indirectly to his pending reassignment. He even controlled that situation up until the end.

MR. COCKRELL: What are the details that you know about that?

MR. LINDERMAN: Bill was historically a heavy drinker and smoker. This is from his own lips. Under direction from his own doctor some years earlier, before I had arrived on the scene, he was told to cease and desist smoking, and reduce alcohol to just about nothing due to a heart condition. I think he did fairly well on that. I was not aware of any abuse firsthand. Although he did have an occasional cigarette in the office, he did not smoke excessively. He started smoking heavily while I was there on temporary assignment.

MR. COCKRELL: So he knew about his reassignment early in 1980?

MR. LINDERMAN: Yes, he had been told earlier that he would be going to Chicago to open a new office and have high-level responsibilities. By the time that got rewritten--these are his after-hour discussions with me, because I was working late in those days--he told me that they were going to send him to Washington to occupy a position. Thinking back on what he was saying, I got the impression that it was a position that didn't really need to be occupied. It was a created position to get him out of where he was. He also had the option to retire at that time, I believe.

MR. COCKRELL: Was the option of going to Chicago proposed by the Regional Office?

MR. LINDERMAN: That came from the Regional Office via Washington, I believe. He had discussed that, but I am not quite sure what that office would have been. I believe it was some kind of a coordinating or state coordinating office for special projects or planning, but I am not sure. He was kind of excited about the prospect, I think, until the reality of what was really going on hit him. He had called me into his office shortly after my arrival there on a permanent basis, and selected a number of archival items in his

Dave Linderman

office and gave me specific instructions as to where they were to go. I didn't think much about it at the time because I didn't know he was going anywhere. Some of these items were an original carved arrowhead that was to go to the archives at Harpers Ferry. An original painting of the Cuyahoga Valley Railroad. There were a number of items, paintings, artifacts, other things of his personal nature. Within three weeks of that, he died in my arms, literally, on the floor of his office.

MR. COCKRELL: Were you in his office when he had his attack?

MR. LINDERMAN: I was called back to revive him and I was unable to do that. He had stopped taking his medication about a week and one-half before this occurred. He had been drinking at home, I understand. And he had been smoking just incessantly, one right after another, almost, more so than I had ever known him to do when I was there on temporary assignment earlier in the year. Einar Johnson arrived on this particular day, his first day in the park. I believe it was a Monday morning. You would have to check the date for his EOD. Einar had come from Redwoods. He was an Assistant Superintendent there and was to be the Assistant Superintendent at Cuyahoga, although he later told me that he thought he was going to be otherwise [Superintendent]. I took Einar in about 9:00 in the morning to introduce him to Bill who was then at his desk doing some paperwork. We had a small discussion. I told Bill that I needed to take Einar over and get him checked in at the Ranger Station across the street.

I got in the car with Einar and started across the street. Before I got out of the vehicle, Sheridan Steele came on over the radio, asked me by name, and asked that I return to headquarters immediately. I did and as soon as I walked in the door, my staff hurried me into the Superintendent's office where I found him in his chair behind his desk apparently unconscious. Being a qualified EMT, I immediately went through the process of checking him for what I felt was a fatal heart attack. I had seen a number of them in my years. I proceeded to put Bill on the floor off of his chair and we began cardiopulmonary resuscitation, myself and a soon-arriving ranger, Scott Lopez. We were unsuccessful in our attempts. A rescue squad came and continued CPR as they took him to the hospital where he was pronounced dead-on-arrival.

MR. COCKRELL: Would you say the use of alcohol, smoking, discontinuing the medication--that he was despondent and did not want to leave Cuyahoga?

MR. LINDERMAN: He never appeared despondent to me. I had worked for eight and one-half years in psychiatry. I had been trained to recognize, even in a state of despondency, what behavior was used to cover that up. Bill never appeared to be out of touch with

Dave Linderman

reality in my estimation, and that is just now as a casual observer. He always seemed to be in control of the situation. That is why I believe that he controlled that situation right up until it occurred. He was not really planning to go anywhere. The things he had told me were going, were the most important things in his life, as it relates to the Park Service. I am just clear in my own mind that he never planned to leave Cuyahoga. That is a strange scenario, but I feel that he controlled that situation right up until the end.

MR. COCKRELL: What was the division that you inherited from Gerald Mc Clarnon like in terms of organization, staffing and things like that? Was it recognizable as a division at that time?

MR. LINDERMAN: Not really. I wouldn't call it a division. I kind of called it my "rag-tag outfit." That is the way I saw it when I first arrived. I had five women in the division. The only two positions that were clearly identified organizationally that I could relate to as an administrative service was the Personnel Clerk and the Procurement Clerk. The other three positions were Clerk-Typists, ranging from GS-3, with the highest being a GS-5. There was very little organization and no understanding of their jobs in relationship to the park's mission, the mission of the National Park Service, and no orientation to the National Park System. I remedied that during my temporary tenure there in two months. I put on a program for them showing the history and the mission of the National Park Service.

I started one of them, the Supply Clerk, on her biggest mission ever in doing the park's first accountable inventory. I left them with all of that while I went back to Sleeping Bear Dunes. I trained the Personnel Clerk in the responsibilities and duties of an acting back-up for the Administrative Officer. I helped the Procurement Clerk with more direct assistance and input from the Regional Office in the name of Tom Looper. I helped the woman who was then responsible for the fiscal smattering of activities with her responsibilities as it related to the finance function and just what it meant to not have things in on time.

It was kind of a loose organization. They blamed everything on the previous Administrative Officer in that they didn't have this, that, or the other thing. I don't believe that is entirely accurate or it was not founded anyway in my observation. I felt that there were so many personality conflicts going on within the division and so much going on between the previous Administrative Officer and the Superintendent, which he, I understand, passed on to these individuals, which they passed on to one another, that there was more time spent on what they didn't have, what they couldn't have, and what they weren't going to get, than on the mission they had before them.

Dave Linderman

So, that is basically the way I saw my job. I had to get in and get this thing organized. I couldn't even work. I had nothing to work with. No one knew what I was talking about. I mentioned a document and I got no response. They couldn't relate to a DI Form, an SF Form, didn't know what anything was. Other than the Personnel Clerk who had some standard forms, there was no understanding of what any of that meant. They didn't understand that their bills for collection should go somewhere; just a lot of simple instruments were sitting around waiting for someone to say, "OK, you can go."

So it is my assumption that the former Administrative Officer probably took care of a lot of that by himself because he had a technical proficiency and because he was really the accountable person. There was no accountability or responsibility passed down to these people and they did not feel responsible. They felt no relationship, in my estimation, at all with what was going on around them, other than for eight hours a day when they were on-site. They were all huddled in a little garage area of which 30 square feet included the toilet and the furnace room. The garage was only 24' x 24' to begin with.

MR. COCKRELL: Do you remember some of the names of these early division members?

MR. LINDERMAN: Yes. Sherilyn Wade was the Fiscal Clerk and general Clerk-Typist. Joyce Stumbo, who is still on staff now as a GS-9 Contracting Officer, was then Procurement Clerk. Judy Copeland--she has since married--was my Supply Clerk, but was a general Clerk at that time. Audrey Mink was an retired woman; she was doing some Clerk-Typist jobs to help out the Procurement Clerk, who was also typing her own things. She is now deceased. I cannot recall the name of the Personnel Clerk, although I can see her face. That will come to me later.

MR. COCKRELL: What degree of oversight did Superintendent Birdsell exercise over your division?

MR. LINDERMAN: We received for that short period of time Bill was with us, nothing but praise for what he was beginning to see come out of the division and what was reported to him by the Assistant Superintendent, Pete Peterson, who was the immediate supervisor of my position. They left me alone. They were so pleased to have anybody that was even half way interested in being there, let alone taking on that division, that they simply left me alone.

The other Division Chiefs came by and kind of wanted to see who it was that took this on. That is how it was explained to me later. We got along fine and I immediately set up an open rapport with the

Dave Linderman

Division Chiefs. In fact, the entire staff started getting information out on the responsibilities and functional statements of the Division: what we would do, what we could do, what we couldn't do, what we had hoped to do, that type of thing. It opened channels of communication immediately.

I started looking for a new office for myself, additional staff, upgrading of positions, redescription of positions, an organization that would allow for the "basic" function of that operation so it would be responsive to the needs of the park. Also, so it could speak individually to the Regional Office, which we didn't even have that communication at the time.

MR. COCKRELL: You were not permitted to talk to people in the Regional Office?

MR. LINDERMAN: We were permitted, but no one could speak the language of the Regional Office. So aside from the Personnel Clerk and the Procurement Clerk, no one talked to the Regional Office unless they called the park and said, "Where is such and such?" There was no proaction on the part of the folks at that time to really go after something or to clarify something. They waited until Region called with a problem. And Region called with problems because they couldn't find things.

MR. COCKRELL: You had mentioned that people were a little surprised that you wanted to be at Cuyahoga. Had they advertised that position and not gotten any applicants?

MR. LINDERMAN: I never did follow up on this, but I understand it was advertised as a GS-11. In fact there were applicants for the position. I understand further from Pete Peterson--this can be validated with Pete--that certification was returned by Mr. Birdsell as soon as I indicated an interest in applying for the position.

Of course, my interest is the dedication that I have, which I don't think is blind dedication. It is very informed dedication to the National Park System, the ethics, and the mission of the National Park Service within that System. I felt wherever the job needed to be done, that is where I needed to go. It was good timing also because I had also figured at my advanced age that being a Park Technician for the next 20 years wasn't going to be in the best interest of my family, so I went from a GS-5-6 to a GS-11 in two years. And that is not a regrettable move by any means.

MR. COCKRELL: I've been told that Bill Birdsell was a perfectionist; that every piece of correspondence or purchase order had to be worded the way he wanted it, and there could be no typograph-

Dave Linderman

ical errors. Could you expound upon how this attention to detail impacted park operations and that of your division?

MR. LINDERMAN: That was a major complaint, I think, of a lot of the Division Chiefs. I did not have a Secretary at the time Bill was with us, although I did have that position later. The correspondence out of my office went through his Secretary at that time and a lot of those were composed by myself. He had no review of my work output after I arrived on a temporary assignment at all. I deferred everything to Pete. I had no technical review of anything that I had reviewed.

Correspondence to the Region were put in final for his signature, and then he did authorize me to send functional correspondence and memoranda directly to the Region to pursue or follow-up on anything that I felt was necessary to get the job done. That was between myself and Jim Ryan and any of his Division Chiefs at the time. Anything going to or requiring the attention of the Regional Director, like responses to reports, fund status reports, any other type of reports going to the Regional Director, Bill would sign. I was free to communicate openly by telephone and by correspondence with the Regional Office.

As far as review, I know firsthand that a lot of things coming out of Cuyahoga were substandard, both in documentation required and just simple documentation. It was very basic things, having the correct figures on contracting documents, having justifications on requisitions; they didn't have any of that when I got there. Requisitions would come over, if it came over at all, and often-times procurement documents were created on the word of a Maintenance man or just having to make all of the arrangements for the government on his behalf. The Procurement Clerk would type it up as dictated from the Maintenance Worker or Foreman or whoever it happened to be. Sometimes this was done after the fact--the purchase had already been made.

So there was a great basis for Bill's concern in having accuracy and effective paperwork management and for having substantiated review of documentation, be it correspondence or anything else going out of there. I took over a great part of that as it related to my division and the Assistant Superintendent felt quite comfortable with us doing that. In fact, I wasn't even aware that there was a problem before I got there in terms of this. I found these things myself. They had not been pointed out to me. As a matter of fact, both Park Managers directed me to get in there and find out what I could and make whatever changes were necessary. That is what I thought my charge was and that is what I went after. So I am not too familiar with anything going on before that, although I heard a number of complaints from the other Division Chiefs. Of

Dave Linderman

all of that, I did find a basis for those complaints and for Bill's observations.

Describing Bill as a perfectionist might be carrying it little too far. I think he had sound and reasonable expectations and I don't think they were met. I don't think they would have been met by any manager who was expecting reasonable professionalism.

MR. COCKRELL: I've heard that your predecessor was stymied because he was not allowed to change some of the systems which were in place to conform to NPS standards because they were established by Mr. Birdsell and Mr. Birdsell did not want them changed. Did you encounter any of this?

MR. LINDERMAN: I encountered some of those systems being in place when I arrived, one system being the central files. I couldn't find anything. It was Mr. Birdsell's personal filing system. There were some other systems in place that were what I would consider informal that I am sure Bill needed because he did maintain strong control. I don't know that he was a trusting man when on the job in that particular position. Perhaps he had a reason or basis for that; I am sure he did.

I found that some of my colleagues lacked a little in that regard also. They all had their own agendas and they spent a lot of time working around Bill's intentions, direction, orders, if you will, which wasted a lot of time. They weren't there too much longer after I arrived anyway, but they spent a lot of time trying to get around what he wanted. If they had spent as much time and enthusiasm doing what he asked, I think they probably could have made some positive changes. What I found with Bill, as soon as I went and told him how things should be, how they might be improved, how he might save time, how he might better the position, increase morale, any of the things that were related to my area, say from employee development all the way up to major contracts, I was always given a "Fine, let's do it."

Gerry Mc Clarnon, in particular, was the first Administrative Officer. That is an overwhelming task by any means. I think there were only two or three people in the park at the time Jerry arrived. I don't believe there was an Assistant Superintendent even at that time. He had an untenable situation. I don't know that he knew enough of what he needed to put systems in place, to even ask for them if he could have gotten them. I know he had to go through Bill to get anything. Bill made that clear to me even at the time as to why that was. That started from a personality conflict all the way up through the final ending result of that relationship. When you start out that way, there is not much you can do to save yourself.

Dave Linderman

I think Mr. Birdsell did not go out of his way to support the Administrative Officer in that position, personally or otherwise. That was a most unfortunate incident and it is unfortunate also that I learned later that a lot of that was made aware to the Regional Office a year or so before the final result ever came. I am disturbed that action wasn't taken to remove Gerry for his own good from that situation.

MR. COCKRELL: Could you be more specific when you say, "the final result?"

MR. LINDERMAN: As far as I know, Gerry was recalled to a position here in the Regional Office in Contracting.

MR. COCKRELL: I've also learned that staff morale was low because Birdsell was extremely critical of his staff and that he would type out nasty notes each night and leave them for the employees to read the next morning. I've been told that Birdsell saw himself as a puppeteer, pulling strings to make people do as he wished. Can you substantiate or comment on that?

MR. LINDERMAN: I can expand on a little of that. "Puppeteer?" I don't know. That is probably a good analogy. He liked to seek and observe reactions from people. He did it in a number of ways. Sometimes he would do it in personal and confrontational discussions. I think he was doing it--I would be purely second guessing--to stimulate or evoke some kind of response from anybody. People just sat back in awe. They waited for him to tell them what they should, when they should do it, why they should do it, if they should do it, or why not. I am sure it was like pulling teeth.

Some of his notes ceased shortly after I arrived, permanently. I did see some of them. I took them as being creative. Bill spent a lot of time writing them. He worked late at night. Oftentimes, he wouldn't leave until around 10:00 at night or so and I would still be there. He would bring down a note. Most of ours after I was there were positive notes, observations of what he had seen, changes he had seen. I think they were directed at encouraging me, which worked. I, of course, passed them on to my staff. I don't know that Gerry could have done a lot to stop those, but when an individual such as Bill has it in for one of his subordinates, it is only a matter of time before that is passed through that individual, if not directly.

I think a lot of that was Bill probably using subordinate staff of Gerry's to rebound back to Gerry, the displeasure that Bill had for him and the operation and the directions they were receiving. I think there again, it was strictly personal and Gerry was overwhelmed. His perception in that regard I believe is accurate because I did not find anything coming to me that I could not

Dave Linderman

reasonably come back to Bill and say, "I don't feel this is going to be appropriate for this situation." I was not confrontational at all with Bill. I was reasonable. I found him to be a reasonable man. He didn't miss a stitch. He knew everything that was going on. I don't know where he got most of his information, but he was pretty well informed.

MR. COCKRELL: How well did the Division Chiefs work with Bill Birdsell?

MR. LINDERMAN: I don't think at all. They didn't work with one another. From the Chief Ranger, Bob Byrne, who came from Herbert Hoover, he was brought there to make a law enforcement presence. That and the fact that he was one of the only people that applied, I understand. Bob is now at Independence. Jack Peay, who is now in the Western Regional Office in Maintenance, was the Chief of Maintenance at that time. Jack had his own agenda. Bob had his own agenda. They were both, in my estimation, divisive and not supportive of Mr. Birdsell as an individual, or as the Park Manager on any terms. They pretty much went out of their way to see to it that whatever it was that was directed to be done took as long as necessary to complete. I was aware of things we discussed at staff meetings that I expected would be on my desk the day after or the same day for me to get started on that had to be originated by, say the Chief of Maintenance, that didn't arrive for weeks.

As an impression, I can't cite anything in particular, but it seemed like I could have gotten on things a lot sooner had I had them when they were called for. There were always excuses for those things, why they didn't get done: they had to be studied, they had to be costed, whatever it was.

The Chief of Interpretation was well-suited for his job. He just sublimely sat back and did the best job possible. Interpretation was probably, and still is, one of our most viable programs there, although the others have caught up under new management over the years. Ron Thoman was a Superintendent from a small area. He came there because it was close to home. He had a reason for being there. He ran a superb program and carried out our mission, which was to provide public programs, to provide interpretation to create programs that would attract that other percentage to the valley who wouldn't ordinarily have come down there, other than to drive through on a Sunday afternoon or picnic at the Ledges.

Ron's programs are outstanding throughout the Service even today. Ron was a real asset to Bill and he was supportive of him. He understood Bill. I think he and Bill had a philosophical relationship as it relates to the National Park Service and that allowed them to work together, although there were definite differences.

Dave Linderman

MR. COCKRELL: Why didn't the three divisions work together?

MR. LINDERMAN: They were not encouraged to communicate, therefore they didn't. When the staff meetings were over, that was about the extent of it. We all went our separate ways. I didn't see them again until they needed something.

MR. COCKRELL: Could a large part of that be attributed to the fact that the administrative facilities were all spread out or in separate buildings?

MR. LINDERMAN: We weren't that spread out. I don't believe that is it. Physically, we were within a stone's throw of one another. I think it probably was Bill's divisiveness keeping them apart.

MR. COCKRELL: So he didn't want them to communicate?

MR. LINDERMAN: I think he controlled the situation. He dealt with them individually and he apparently wanted it that way. That was his management style. They also didn't appear to trust one another. It was my impression that one thought the other one talked about the other one when the other ones weren't there. Of course they all did, but they had reason not to trust one another. It was kind of interesting. If one wanted money for a particular project, he went and did whatever was necessary to gain favor, because Mr. Birdsell tied the fiscal strings very tightly in those days. I was controlling monies that should have been in the hands of the Division Chiefs, and later, within a matter of months, were. In fact, I turned over their budgets to them completely the next fiscal year and they were awestruck. They weren't quite ready to assume the responsibility either. So Bill probably didn't do himself or themselves a favor as responsible program managers, thinking back on it now.

MR. COCKRELL: Were the staff meetings that you were speaking about held on a regular basis?

MR. LINDERMAN: Yes. We met in the basement at headquarters at least once a week and they were just kind of a pro forma type of thing. Bill would tell us what was going on in Region. We all went around the table and made a little report, there were no questions asked, there was no exchange of information, and we left. Sometimes they got quite heated. Bill would use those meetings to subject an individual or a particular staff or other individuals of a subordinate Division Chief to ridicule or special mention of some note that was not generally on the positive side. He might have been out in the park over the weekend and saw an area where there was paper around the trash baskets. When he drove back by later, it was still there. It could have been within the same hour. He didn't take into account that there were only two

Dave Linderman

Maintenance people in the entire park on weekends and those types of things. That is the type of observation he made.

So after a while, they didn't listen to him at all, because what he was relating to was his personal opinion. What he was communicating was an impression. The impression was good, "Let's keep these areas picked up." How it got communicated was, "This is the way Bill wants it," therefore, everyone appeared to go in the opposite direction. If they could have emptied the entire trash can there, they probably would have done something as ridiculous, but again those are my first impressions. It was just a very adolescent environment.

MR. COCKRELL: There were two Operation Evaluation Reports conducted during the Birdsell years by the Midwest Region and both were critical of Cuyahoga's management. Was the staff permitted to see these reports and was there any attempt to correct the problems which were identified?

MR. LINDERMAN: The first one was conducted by Hugh Beattie before I arrived. I read that report when I came to the Region. It was not available in the park. In fact, I don't know what happened to it at the time. It was probably in Bill's personal possession. That one was critical. Of course, there wasn't much there at the time, and I believe most of the criticism which you will find based in your administrative review was basically what I have been saying. There were no systems in place. There wasn't a Park Service at Cuyahoga--our Park Service presence that is, other than my uniform.

The second one I was there for. This was under Lew Albert's administration. We were kind of surprised at some of it. Again, Hugh Beattie was there. Regarding some of the things, I believe this was a more close review of what was going on. My division did receive some of the only accolades provided, but that was only in terms of comparing our division from that report to the previous report. That was made by the PME, not by the Operations Evaluation team. When I was there, we had a PME and then an impromptu Operations Review of Property called for by Jim Dunning that had to do with lands and some other goings on. I did get to read the second report as it related to my division, not to the whole park.

I, of course, have read it since I have been here, since it is now in my division. I found those things not to be too useful as management tools. Again, I found them to be, generally speaking on the record, head-hunting trips. That is the way I perceive the entire Operations Evaluation process prior to what we have today, which is far more subjective, but in its own way, more objective as it deals with comparing standards. You have to show what you have done. It is not surmised or guessed at. It is either there

Dave Linderman

or it is not there. So, it is much easier to look at, much easier to assign quality to, and get away from personally imposed values of individuals. There is still some of that, but it is easier to pick out.

MR. COCKRELL: What do you know about the land acquisition policy and its implementation by Bill Birdsell? I have been told that the priorities changed on a daily basis and was governed by the Superintendent's personal likes and dislikes. Is that true?

MR. LINDERMAN: It did change frequently. As to personal likes and dislikes, I am aware that Bill had interests in seeing certain people out of the valley. I think he targeted perhaps those who had raised a voice against the park; he had a list of these people. He worked very closely with Jack Blanton, our LAO at that time, to see to it that certain properties with available funding were purchased. I can't recall that there was a particular pattern to this because that would indicate that he did it with prejudice, if you will. But I know that there were priorities and I know there were lists of priorities.

I had copies of those lists in my possession because I needed to follow up for disposition of personal property and real property in some cases. I do not recall anything adverse or outstanding in that regard. I felt it was a prerogative of management and I don't think it was consistently done. I believe there were a couple of cases that were exceptionally done, but I can't validate that impression.

MR. COCKRELL: How would you characterize the involvement of Congressman John Seiberling at CVNRA?

MR. LINDERMAN: Active. John was an active participant. He and Bill conversed regularly. He and Lew Albert conversed less frequently, but as regularly on issues going on in the park. He was very successful in getting us add-on funding and other funding that we needed to carry out our programs. I can't complain about that because it allowed me to expand my staff and raise their level of interest in working for the government and especially for the Park Service in that area and making valued improvements in positions and necessary staff positions, carrying out projects, monies, the cyclic nature to help clean up the valley to create that area called for in the legislation. We worked very hard at that, I think just in that regard, I was able with that additional funding to dispose of over 200 structures in the time I was there to help open the scene, clean up the valley so to speak.

But John was very active. He made visits to us probably as often as he came home from Washington. These were, by my impression, professional visits. His concern was not specifically for

Dave Linderman

Cuyahoga, but what was going on in the Park Service in Bill and Lew's impressions, and how he might be helpful and often times what we needed. Sometimes that was met and as often it was not, because there was still review by the Regional Director, so some of those positions and monies we did not receive per chance as they came through the appropriations process, but the add-ons we did receive without FTE.

I enjoyed John. I found him to be not only dedicated to Cuyahoga Valley, but to other Park Service areas as well in his position on the Subcommittee on Interior and Insular Affairs. I believe he did a good job for us.

MR. COCKRELL: What about Seiberling's staff?

MR. LINDERMAN: I worked closely with two individuals on Seiberling's staff to coordinate and put on the folk festivals; the first of their kind outside of Washington, D.C. We rescued the National Folk Festival after Wolf Trap burned and we brought it to Cuyahoga that first year. John's staff helped me with that to get the necessary professionals to handle some program details and some contracts. So, I worked with them, but that was strictly professional. When they were on site, we got to know them more personally, but I never saw any conflict between the relationship of the park staff, Superintendent, or the Congressional representatives or their staff. I pretty much looked at those as liaisons.

MR. COCKRELL: What about the park housing policy? How many units were there for park housing, and in an urban setting, why did Cuyahoga supply housing?

MR. LINDERMAN: Early on, we had several units. I did identify several of those when I got there and started tearing them down or selling them, removing them from where they were located. It was kind of a ridiculous, I guess you could call it, policy when I arrived. I think they had about 18 units. My understanding was that they couldn't get people to come there, so they offered them housing. Unfortunately, they had permanents in housing who could afford to buy these homes. These were GS-11's who could afford to buy outside. We had seasonals living on the economy.

So, we developed a policy in my office, since I managed housing--it was a Property Management function--to limit the housing to necessary personnel. This was backed by Lew Albert and we chose to put Park Rangers under required occupancy in the park and develop one or two dormitories and remove the rest of the housing. So when I left the park in 1983, there were three units left; two District Ranger residences were required occupancies and a dormitory in the South District.

Dave Linderman

MR. COCKRELL: What were some of the complaints the Valley residents expressed regarding the National Park Service?

MR. LINDERMAN: I guess a lot of them were directed at Bill and our land acquisition policies. I don't believe, even though Sheridan Steele tried his darnedest to get the word out, that all of our public meetings--and we had several up and down the valley and outside the valley and all around--that we were actually successful in convincing people that we weren't there merely to buy up all of the mineral rights that were available. Of course, a lot of them weren't available to us and we still don't own them. They didn't understand why they were being moved out of their ancestral homes. I don't think we ever fully communicated to them to the extent that we gained their confidence.

I think that is not only true of Cuyahoga, but of any of the acquisition areas that I have worked in coming into the System since 1968 or the early 1970's. I have worked in three parks with that acquisition policy and you just can't get around those. I think education of the public was something that we could have done a better job of, or at least gone as far as we could with or without their understanding. There is only so far you can go and people are going to react anyway. It is my feeling that and time, say about ten years, remedies most of those feelings.

MR. COCKRELL: I understand the Park's telephone system was less than ideal and that FTS service was not installed until 1979. What were some of the problems with the phone system?

MR. LINDERMAN: We had three telephone systems in the park. One of the oldest originated out of Hudson, Ohio, which was near original and close to a hollow string, but somewhat improved; I think it was probably insulated. These were bare wires designed for non-digital communication, strictly just carrying a very low frequency electrical current across and hopefully your voice carried along with it. We came in there with high tech equipment and radio equipment and tried to connect the entire park with radios from one end to the other because we couldn't communicate too well within the valley without telephone communication.

The north end of the park was on a telephone system out of Cleveland and the south end of the park was a combination of Hudson and Akron. I bought a fourth telephone system when we moved to our new headquarters up the valley in Brecksville. We put a sophisticated telephone system in there, reduced the park's telephone communications to one other telephone company with some trade-offs, and allowed the telephone company to move their switching station to the north end of the park, therefore, reducing the cost of our land line. We were paying by the land line for our radio communications. We put in a radio tower which allowed us to get

Dave Linderman

off land line communications for our radios by bouncing a signal from one end of the park to the other. So some things did improve.

But the telephone system was deplorable. It is still being complained about and that is mainly because the telephone companies cannot replace all of the lines that connect the park up and down the valley without somebody paying for it. I don't think the Park Service is going to do anytime soon in order for it to carry high frequency digital communications, microwaves, or whatever they had. They did want to do that at one time, and we were able to get a lot of our lines off on microwaves. But the valley is just kind of oddly situated.

I worked with the telephone company probably close to a year to work out what we do have now. I found out they had been mischarging us for land lines for years for residences. When the residences were converted to the rolls of the U.S. Government, the telephone companies converted their records to our ownership, but failed to note the fact that the house was gone. There were a lot of things, and we called for addresses for the first year of houses that we owned, and we came up with all of these addresses. Nobody had ever discontinued the charge of the line off of the main line to these residences. Sometimes they were a half-mile off the road. Generally, I guess the park is going to have to live with that for some time.

The new telephone communication system the park has now, and I understand they are going to invest in another one even after six years, should improve their communications with the advent of microwaves.

MR. COCKRELL: On the same topic of communication, Bill Birdsell initiated a daily activities report in February of 1980. How did this assist park communications? Was it regularly followed? Was there a daily activities report?

MR. LINDERMAN: It seems to me that there was something similar to that when I arrived there in April or May of 1980, but it is not significant enough that I recall. I can't comment on that.

MR. COCKRELL: How would you characterize the relations between Cuyahoga Valley and the Midwest Regional Office? Why was the relationship so strained?

MR. LINDERMAN: I think it had a lot to do from what I have learned since I have been here, with reports coming out of Cuyahoga from subordinate staff, Divisions Chiefs and people leaving the park. A lot of people felt it was an oppressive environment. People couldn't speak their minds. They couldn't carry out programs that they felt were important. A lot of varied impressions come to

Dave Linderman

mind, none of which I was particularly able to substantiate, nor did I go looking to validate it. I think there was a strained relationship between Randy Pope and Bill Birdsell and between Jim Dunning and Bill Birdsell. Relations between the Regional Chief of Maintenance and his counterpart here, which I am aware of first-hand, used to be a laughingstock. So the park staff probably contributed more greatly than Bill to the undoing of Cuyahoga and its reputation.

Some of the things I heard after I got there were you couldn't get people to come there because it just wasn't part of the National Park System. That being the fact that it was an urban area, it didn't really fit any particular understanding of our working knowledge of urban recreation. It was a nuance and of course, I think park professionals, other than coming there for grade advancement, looked upon it as a place they would just as soon stay away from or not be related to. That attitude was similar to Gateway or Golden Gate at the time. They still have those reputations to an extent. Cuyahoga has reversed itself.

MR. COCKRELL: When you transferred to Omaha in 1983, had the situation improved since 1980 when you first arrived?

MR. LINDERMAN: Yes, it had considerably. Lew Albert had a good personality, was sharp, and had some good ideas. He came from Lowell where he had spent a couple of years honing his skills in an urban environment. Once he took off and was rolling, his programs began to pretty much follow those that he had put into effect at Lowell. We created a professional division of TAPS (Technical and Professional Services). They facilitated my needs a great deal. I didn't have to go out and hire an A&E firm; I had the fellows right there in the next building. We created a new headquarters facility. We created the addition to the Oak Hill Recreation Area, which was kind of a farce, but nevertheless, we had the money, so we went ahead and did it anyway. I doubt that they have any visitation there today.

Lew helped to define the Park Service mission there. That is what I would give him credit for. He had a good organizational head. He and his first assistant, Einar Johnson, got off on a bad note and that did not improve all that much until probably just before Lew transferred a few months ago to the Western Region. Einar Johnson went to Cuyahoga Valley with the understanding from Randy Pope that he would be the new Superintendent. That was in Einar's words. That did not happen. Lew came in January or February of 1981. Things just kind of went downhill from there between the two of them. I found myself between the two of them on several occasions over the next two and one-half years.

Dave Linderman

Lew did a great deal and should be given considerable credit for turning Cuyahoga around and then also giving the staff its own head and allowing them to portray Cuyahoga as a place to be, as a place to identify with and as a serviceable area of the System.

MR. COCKRELL: What problems were encountered immediately upon the death of Bill Birdsell?

MR. LINDERMAN: I don't recall any. I think we got in touch with the Region quickly. We helped bring Einar up to snuff real quick. With his background and training, he brought the senior management staff together immediately and we began working as a team for the first time in the history of the park. That worked very well. When they announced the new Superintendent, of course, Einar began to take a back seat to that until Lew arrived. He did his utmost to not let that show. I believe he succeeded.

MR. COCKRELL: Did Einar Johnson institute any new policies?

MR. LINDERMAN: We revamped a lot of policies, threw out a lot of what you could probably consider policy, and just generally turned things around. We took on some new interim direction to the extent that we weren't making any great changes. It was kind of a programmatic thing. My cohorts began to express themselves in ways I had not heard before and we began to talk about the future of Cuyahoga Valley and making some progress and improvements even. Bob Byrne and Jack Peay transferred shortly thereafter.

MR. COCKRELL: What changes did Lew Albert institute within the first year of his Superintendency?

MR. LINDERMAN: We got a new organization. We revamped the old organization. He had me review all of the position descriptions which I had not had time to do previously and get those up. He allowed me to increase my staff, to redo my organization, to move my offices, to become more responsive to the needs of the park, thereby permitting me to be able to help them carry out their individual divisional missions on a daily basis. They were very supportive of my organization and my efforts and his other Division Chiefs. He brought in some of his own people, acquaintances from before and set about surrounding himself with people that were familiar with the way he worked and his personality. That, in and of itself, was a major change in direction.

Most of his other things were subtle, living within the confines of budget and appropriation restrictions and staying with our advanced planning. We set about doing some traditional Park Service planning of some 3, 5, and 20-year plans. I was just very much pleased to see he was familiar with planning documents and 10-237's and 10-238's. Although he didn't want to get involved in

Dave Linderman

any of that, he understood at least where they went and why they were necessary and how it paid off to have them in advance of anyone asking you what you needed to be doing. I was pleased and we got along very well in the beginning.

MR. COCKRELL: You said in the beginning. Did that change subsequently?

MR. LINDERMAN: Yes. We had a falling out. I got caught between the Assistant Superintendent and the Superintendent in about 1982.

MR. COCKRELL: Between Einar Johnson and Lew Albert?

MR. LINDERMAN: Yes. Einar Johnson began coming to me off and on over a period of about six weeks asking me if I was closely auditing travel vouchers. I said I audited travel vouchers to the extent they had already gone through my Fiscal Assistant and I was merely doing a cursory review. He suggested that I look at the Superintendent's voucher more closely. So I did, but I didn't find any irregularities. The next time he came in he suggested that I compare his voucher with Lew's voucher which I did.

A couple of reviews down the road, I began to notice that the Superintendent's calendar matched the Superintendent's voucher, but the Superintendent's voucher matched the Assistant Superintendent's voucher, which is to say that the Superintendent was having a voucher submitted for payment for meetings that the Assistant Superintendent attended in his place. Not a big deal. Small potatoes. Very small amounts of money, hardly worth looking into.

I told the Assistant Superintendent I did not feel comfortable in going to the Superintendent and letting him know I was looking into examining his vouchers and questioning him on \$4.80 expenditures for mileage and using his personal car to attend after-hour meetings. So I called Jim Ryan, my counterpart in the Midwest Regional Office, and told Jim what the problem was. I explained to him my reservations, told him I did not want to get caught in the middle of this, and asked for his help. He said he would handle it. That was a mistake because what they did was audit the two vouchers in the Regional Office. This was done without any real reason to do so, other than on my say-so, which otherwise wouldn't have come from me because I had no real reason to look at them.

It got out of hand and pretty soon a memorandum comes from the Regional Director to the Superintendent questioning his completion of travel vouchers for meetings which were suspected he did not attend. Needless to say, Lew came unglued and he used language I have not heard since I was in basic training. First he cleaned the Assistant Superintendent's clock. The Assistant Superintendent

Dave Linderman

told him he knew nothing of this and so he came to my office and proceeded to clean my clock. He put me on notice at that time that our relationship in the future was tenuous at best. So I lived under this for the next year and that pretty much destroyed the relationship between the three of us.

I did tell Lew. I called him back after hours and he came back in. I apologized and gave him the basis for this. I told him what had happened, why it had happened. I suggested that he and I and Einar meet the next morning. He said that was fine. We got together, and in front of me, the Assistant Superintendent denied any knowledge of my looking into this and couldn't understand why it was anything to be upset about. He did recall on one occasion he mentioned that the voucher did not agree with the program, but that didn't mean anything, and that I must have taken it upon myself to explore and investigate this. He categorically denied that it ever should have been an issue.

I really had no position of any respect after that, although I worked there for the next year. Lew and I got along very well professionally. We get along very well now that we don't work together any more. We have talked about this on several occasions over the last six years since I left, but still it hurt both of us and it was handled poorly.

MR. COCKRELL: Does Lew accept your version of it?

MR. LINDERMAN: He accepted that immediately. He accepted that before we had our meeting. He said he knew that Einar was upset over the years in not having gotten that position. He realized that Einar was probably seeking some kind of revenge or at least embarrassment to his administration and we both agreed that that would embarrass the park. I told him that was the very reason that I took it out of the park so it wouldn't come up. I should have realized earlier, as Lew pointed out, that our communication was quite open and I should have felt comfortable in going in and talking to him about it, but I saw myself getting stuck in the very situation I ended up in, so a lesson was learned.

That is significant only to the effect that it had a lot to do with our continued relationship and probably some other things that could have been done that weren't.

MR. COCKRELL: How did your Division change from 1981 when Lew Albert was in the Superintendency until you transferred in 1983? Had the introduction of computers been made by then?

MR. LINDERMAN: When I left in 1983, I had a full-time Secretary. I had a full-time Warehouse Worker. I had a full-time Fiscal Assistant, a full-time Budget Assistant, a full-time Contracting

Dave Linderman

Officer GS-9, a full-time Procurement Clerk GS-5; a full-time Personnel Assistant GS-7.

I introduced personal computers into the Midwest Region in 1981. I presented the technology for the first time to the Superintendent's Conference at Cuyahoga Valley in 1982, and gave them a physical demonstration on both the technology and the abilities from a Xerox processor. I demonstrated what it could do for them, which was exactly what AFS is producing for us today. That apparently is a nuisance, although we thought it was then, also. We introduced the technology through the other parks in Ohio and all were on-line communicating by modem by 1983 when I left. I introduced the same technology after developing it at Cuyahoga at Gateway National Recreation Area, at Shenandoah National Park, and at Big Bend National Park.

MR. COCKRELL: What system was it?

MR. LINDERMAN: A Xerox 860, which had word processing, spreadsheet, and calculative capabilities. It had 8-byte hard drive memory. We did most of our storage of major capacity items by modem to the Boeing computer in Washington where they could be retrieved as needed. So it was very successful. It was the only thing available at the time and we enjoyed it. But the technology started at Cuyahoga because Lew was interested in letting me do it and I did it.

MR. COCKRELL: So of all the parks in the National Park System, the implementation of computer technology for park purposes originated at Cuyahoga Valley National Recreation Area?

MR. LINDERMAN: At the time, we were the first park.

MR. COCKRELL: From a budgetary standpoint, how did your funding level fluctuate?

MR. LINDERMAN: I think it went from about \$1.8 million in 1980 to \$3.0 million in 1983. In addition to that, I administered a trust fund worth about \$3 million dollars.

MR. COCKRELL: Was that the Kendall Trust Fund?

MR. LINDERMAN: Yes. I brought that up. Lew had given me full control of that trust fund after he got there and I explained to him what it was. He had me work out with the bank the best ways to increase that money by divesting stock options and getting this into secured stock basis which we did. This means that no matter what the market did, we couldn't lose. We stayed pretty much with blue chip stock, large investments in AT&T, and we diversified into some major oil corporations. We still are. I took over personal

Dave Linderman

administration of the account. Originally we had only pulled off about \$100,000 a year in interest. In order to save the bank interest penalties, I worked with the bank and pulled off everything that was over and above their service charge each year. The fund may fluctuate from \$151,000 one year to \$180,000 the next.

This money was used only in the Virginia Kendall area, set aside by boundaries and it was my job to see to it that it was used only for those items specifically set aside in the original trust agreement by Mr. Kendall.

MR. COCKRELL: That is basically it. Is there anything I haven't asked you that I should or that you would like to add for the record?

MR. LINDERMAN: Only that it is a fantastic area. I am glad that the time and sequences and personalities that evolved are out of there. Because of the people who have since come from there, it has since turned itself around. I am glad to have been part of it in its developmental years. I am glad to have had an opportunity to come to the Midwest Region and help to sell Cuyahoga Valley. I feel I was successful in those contributions. I countered every "ha-ha" with a meaningful dissertation to the distraction of the individuals having to listen as to what is being offered there.

There is an exceptional staff there even today. It has turned over almost 100 percent once in the last seven years, although there are several people still on board who have grown with the park and grown into responsible positions or more responsible positions. They are good people. They feel a part of the National Park System which is their rightful place and they are dedicated Park Service employees. With that, I am pleased to have Cuyahoga Valley as one of the 350 areas of the System and I am happy to have worked there.

[END]

Dave Linderman

O R A L H I S T O R Y I N T E R V I E W

F O R T H E

A D M I N I S T R A T I V E H I S T O R Y O F

C U Y A H O G A V A L L E Y

N A T I O N A L R E C R E A T I O N A R E A

O H I O

Robert P. Martin
Assistant Superintendent
Cuyahoga Valley National Recreation Area
National Park Service

May 17, 1989
Brecksville, Ohio

Interviewed by:

Ron Cockrell
Historian
Midwest Regional Office
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Omaha, Nebraska
1989

Robert P. Martin

Robert P. Martin

MR. COCKRELL: I thought we would start by me asking you to provide a brief summary of your background and career.

MR. MARTIN: Overall career?

MR. COCKRELL: Yes.

MR. MARTIN: I am approaching twenty-nine years with the Federal Civil Service. I started my career with the U.S. Forest Service at Mount Baker National Forest in the State of Washington. I was a Forester on the Skagit Ranger District of Mount Baker which today is North Cascades National Park and Ross Lake National Recreation Area. It was the largest ranger district in the country under one District Ranger, and I was one of the district's Foresters. It was quite exciting times. It was a recreation district, obviously with tremendous wilderness values.

I left the Forest Service shortly after receiving a Master's Degree in Forest Recreation and Recreation Administration from the University of Michigan. I went to the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation (BOR) in 1965. That assignment was in San Francisco. I was with the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation all the way through to the time that it changed to the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service (HCRS), under the Carter Administration. After the Carter Administration left office and James Watt was made Secretary of the Interior under President Reagan, Watt abolished HCRS primarily with the stroke of a pen.

That's exactly how the original Bureau of Outdoor Recreation (BOR) was created: by the stroke of a pen. It did not take Congressional action to do that, and of course, that's an interesting story too, but that's beside the point. So, I was in various Regions with the BOR. I served in the Western Region in San Francisco first, and then I went out to the Mid-Continent Region, in Denver, and then I went on to the Washington, D.C. Office of BOR, and then to the Lake Central Region of the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation in Ann Arbor, Michigan.

After the HCRS was abolished, I was transferred to the National Park Service in Omaha, Nebraska. My job there was the same. I transferred as the Chief of the Division of Rivers and Trails. I have a broad background in planning in terms of Water Resources, Comprehensive River Basin Studies, and then more extensively in Special Area Studies, Resource Area Studies, Wild and Scenic Rivers, and the National Trail System. Then in 1983, I transferred from the Midwest Regional Office to Cuyahoga Valley National Recreational Area as the Assistant Superintendent for Planning and Development. That is the present position that I have today.

Robert P. Martin

MR. COCKRELL: O.K. My questions are in no particular order. When you arrived here probably the greatest amount of negative park publicity had already been accomplished, but there was still some coming out. What steps did this park take to counter that negative publicity?

MR. MARTIN: I think your observation is right that the majority of it had already taken place before I came. But I think that during my tenure here, we did more in terms of trying to make projects more publicized by keeping people informed. I became very active in the Cuyahoga Valley Communities Council, and have been ever since. I was the main representative to the Council and through that organization I tried to keep local people very much informed as to what we were doing. I think that helped a lot. I tried to bring them in to the planning process in some respects by asking for comments. I think people started seeing more positive results of the park instead of just the negative impacts.

I believe that it is really a very small handful of people that tend to continue the idea that they are opposed to whatever the Federal Government does. Some take the stand that the Federal Government has caused a tremendous impact to them in terms of economic development and not being able to do some of the things they did before. I really believe that is a small handful. Today I think it is even smaller and becoming less effective.

MR. COCKRELL: How important was the preparation of the Land Protection Plan to the park, and how did the park go about compiling it?

MR. MARTIN: I think the Land Protection Plan (LPP) was very important. It was done basically because of the Department. I was not on the land protection planning team per se, but I was here just prior to its completion. Team members literally made an on-site inspection and visited every landowner within the boundaries. There was a team set up to do this. It was led by Ed Adelman who was the Historical Architect for the park at that time, and later became Chief of the Division of Technical Assistance and Professional Services under me. Ed had been given that task of LPP team leader as an extra assignment by the Superintendent.

They went out and literally visited everybody in the park who owned property within the boundaries. They had interviews. They kept extensive notes on all of those interviews. There was a field notebook full of all of the interview notes and it was later transcribed. A lot of the stuff was put into a format whereby we have a completed Land Protection Plan consisting of five volumes. What they did is look at each tract of land, made observation as to what the landowners' plans were for the land and what the owners feelings were regarding future occupancy or sale of the land.

Robert P. Martin

We looked at it from the standpoint of whether or not it was needed for public use, or whether there were some critical resources involved. Then the recommendation was made as to whether it could best be protected through fee-title acquisition or less than fee, scenic easements, or a combination of both.

MR. COCKRELL: How does Cuyahoga Valley's report stand up to other parks? Is it unusual or did it set the standards for others?

MR. MARTIN: I don't know. I really haven't seen any other Land Protection Plans to be honest with you. I can't give an honest answer about that because I have nothing to compare it to. I've heard that ours is very good because of the fact it is so extensive. We went into much more detail by having a separate analysis for each tract.

MR. COCKRELL: You mentioned before about the Cuyahoga Valley Communities Council. Could you basically give an overview of the purpose and the function of this group?

MR. MARTIN: It's something we talk about every other year or so at the Council. The Council is a very good organization. It serves primarily as a forum for communication between the communities; other governmental interests like the metro parks, counties, and school districts; and the National Park Service.

It probably was first established because of their concern about what the National Park Service is doing. It since has evolved into a two-way thing where we have brought it around to thinking, "Hey folks, you've got to mind your own store as well. We're just as concerned about what you are doing out there as you are concerned about what we are doing."

They have produced several studies of various kinds. They take on special projects. For instance, they did one on land development guidelines and one on the Route 8 corridor. There was a new highway being developed as an extension freeway-type of thing for Route 8. That involved the east side, outside the boundaries, but still concerned various communities and the park.

I got involved in a major entranceways study which was very good because it dealt with zoning and the type of commercial developments that would be appropriate. For example, what kind of things are at our major entrances today? What would be desirable in the way of coordinating future types of developments? What would be acceptable and what wouldn't be acceptable? And, perhaps, the different zoning changes which might be in order for various communities. Now, obviously, that takes the voluntary action of the communities to do something about it. We have no hold over

Robert P. Martin

them as to adopting or enforcing such local ordinances, but I did think it was a very good project.

The most recent thing that the Communities Council is dealing with in terms of a special kind of project is coordinating what they call state Issue 2 infrastructure funding for improving utility infrastructures within communities. Primarily, the biggest issue here is the condition of our roads. In the CVNRA, there are very few roadways that we have any authority over. All of the roads within the Valley are under local jurisdiction. As a result, we can't make capital expenditures on the roads. It is not our responsibility. Even if we had the money to do road maintenance or anything like that, we could not do that. The communities have felt that the National Park Service, the Federal Government, has at least some responsibility because of the fact that we are generating traffic in the sense of promoting park visitation.

We would agree that we have a share of the responsibility regarding roads, and we are working toward that end. This particular state Issue 2 funding that has come along is for the purpose of road improvement as well as other kinds of utilities. Each community in order to participate in that funding, has to prepare a plan. Once that plan is completed, they can submit projects for funding. Obviously, there is going to be a great deal of competition for that. So the Communities Council got together on this with respect to one major project in the valley, and that is the improvement of Riverview Road which is the main north/south route in the valley. It is identified in our approved Transportation Plan as a major scenic park road.

The Communities Council has been trying to collectively and jointly agree that Riverview Road should be a high priority project for which we would try to get funding. If the communities all participate from the standpoint of identifying Riverview Road as a high priority, it's a good likelihood that that's the kind of project that could in fact be funded.

MR. COCKRELL: What's the time frame involved in this?

MR. MARTIN: Well, we've been working on it now for a year, and it's probably going to take another one to two years before all of the preliminary engineering would be completed. In order to get the funding, you have to have the preliminary engineering completed. I believe the county engineers are willing to do that. At least that's what they're working on now.

MR. COCKRELL: In mid-1984, park employees voted for a bargaining unit to be organized here. Why do you believe that these employees felt they needed a union? Does the union have a high profile at this park?

Robert P. Martin

MR. MARTIN: I can answer the last part of your questions better than the first part of the question. I don't think it has a high profile in the park. It's there and if something comes up that for some reason activates it, then at that moment it can come into play, but it really isn't a high profile situation at all. What was the first part of your question?

MR. COCKRELL: Why is there a union here to begin with?

MR. MARTIN: I'm really not sure if I understand why there is a union here. Evidently there was some dissatisfaction among some of the work force here that felt that there was a need to be organized. I guess I really don't have any more comment about that.

MR. COCKRELL: Its relations with management are pretty good?

MR. MARTIN: I think they're fine.

MR. COCKRELL: How important was the 1986 bill which included the Cuyahoga Valley Line within the boundaries of the park to the park's future development?

MR. MARTIN: I think it was very important, maybe more so than we ever dreamed it would be. The Cuyahoga Valley Line and the railroad offer an opportunity to link the metropolitan area together and it enables people to come into the park. It also will preserve the scenic and historic steam train operation which is very much a part of the history of the valley. It acts as a catalyst for the kind of corridor concept that many people outside the Park Service are promoting, and it can provide in a number of ways that transportation link, not only as a railroad itself, but possibly what they call a "rails with trails" conversion as opposed to "rails to trails." It will be rails with trails because I think there are some opportunities there to have some combined access into Cleveland using some of the railroad rights of way with perhaps parallel bike pathways and hiking pathways.

It provides an opportunity for exploring the possible operation of an inter-urban type of transportation. There may be a railbus type of service in the future, bringing people to special programs and that type of thing.

MR. COCKRELL: In 1987, the Midwest Regional Office decided to close its Field Land Resources Offices and absorb the workload into Omaha. In CVNRA's case, should that office have closed?

MR. MARTIN: Well, in my opinion, probably not since we're still pretty active in land acquisition matters. I'm sure that the

Robert P. Martin

workload is less than it was, but I think it would have been best if we had continued to have a land acquisition office here. We're still in the process of purchasing three to five million dollars worth of land every year, and we probably will be for the next five years or so. My feeling is that we could have still supported a land acquisition office here.

MR. COCKRELL: Have there been problems with people coming from Omaha, or making contacts with Omaha to do the program here?

MR. MARTIN: Not a lot of problems. It just means a lot of travel for the people in Omaha. The cooperation and communication has been very good. You could do some things quicker. We have to field questions frequently from people who call and say they'd like to sell their lands. We have to refer them to Omaha as opposed to just putting a person in contact with someone here immediately. Sometimes we do it all by long-distance. We usually get Paul Kausch or Fred Meyer to call the person making the inquiry.

MR. COCKRELL: The Gramm-Rudmann-Hollings Act passed during the Reagan Administration provides a schedule for reducing the federal budget deficit. CVNRA endured a \$131,000 cut in FY 1986. What other reductions and are there other ones being planned to meet the Gramm-Rudmann ceilings? And what has been the impact on park operations?

MR. MARTIN: Well, the impact on park operations has been that we have not had a full complement of staff that we need, particularly in the area of both Maintenance and Ranger Activities. We haven't been keeping up with the increase in terms of costs because our staff is pretty much the same as it has been for quite a few years. As a matter of fact, it was higher at one time before I got here. In 1981 or 82, I believe they had a much higher FTE ceiling. We're presently at about 83 FTE.

MR. COCKRELL: What responsibilities does the park have toward James A. Garfield NHS and the David Berger National Memorial?

MR. MARTIN: We have quite a bit of responsibility in terms of the James A. Garfield home, in the sense that we are the ones, by default, I guess, overseeing the work there. We were the ones who prepared cooperative agreements with the Western Reserve Historical Society regarding operation and maintenance of the site, and we have had to administer those cooperative agreements. We have sought funding under cyclic maintenance and repair/rehab because there is a federal responsibility there. Again, that required more cooperative agreements in order to make those funds available to WRHS.

Robert P. Martin

We provide technical assistance in the sense that we have Historical Architects who have been involved in sort of a general overview. It is a National Historic Site, a full unit of the National Park System. Therefore, somebody in effect has to be like a Superintendent and I guess the CVNRA has been acting like the Superintendent even though that is not the real arrangement. We have zero funding from our standpoint. There has been no funding for CVNRA staff input. That means we take it out of our hide to do Garfield-related work.

As for the David Berger Memorial, I'm not aware of any involvement. I just know it is listed. It is nothing more than a monument in Cleveland, that's it. We've had more involvement with various presidential memorials, specifically with respect to their rehabilitation. The first job that I was given when I arrived on the job here in August 1983, was that I had until the end of the fiscal year, before October 1, to get \$500,000 obligated through the preparation of a cooperative agreement in order to do the restoration of the James A. Garfield Memorial at the Lakeview Cemetery in Cleveland. We managed to do that and it turned out to be a beautiful restoration.

Then people started getting on the bandwagon. We got into other presidential sites because Congress authorized funding for their rehabilitation. We've been laughing about it in a way, because now we're doing McKinley's Tomb and also Harding's Tomb--and becoming the tomb restoring experts of the Park Service.

MR. COCKRELL: You have already mentioned this before, but maybe you can elaborate on it a little bit more. With such a small staff here and such a heavy workload, how do all of these external projects effect the operations within the park?

MR. MARTIN: Well, something has to give, obviously. I think we do a good job with what we have, but we don't do a good enough job. We could do better if we were able to have sufficient staff to do it. One thing you have to remember, we are a developing park. For a park to be fifteen years old, that is not old. We are really into the stage now where we are starting to implement a lot of the planning, and facilities are coming on line. Every time you bring on new facilities, you have an increased workload in the sense that more things require maintenance, and certainly you've got an increased interpretive and protection workload in the sense that Ranger and Law Enforcement activity is needed.

We are using the same staff so it just means we are getting stretched thinner, thinner, and thinner, whereby in some respects we're not able to do as good a job in some things that we would like to do.

Robert P. Martin

MR. COCKRELL: Do you have the option of saying no to any of these external projects?

MR. MARTIN: External projects?

MR. COCKRELL: Yes, like the Garfield or Harding Memorials.

MR. MARTIN: Apparently not.

MR. COCKRELL: You're told just to absorb it?

MR. MARTIN: When Congress appropriates money to the Secretary of the Interior to be administered through the National Park Service, then it just filters on down the line. We've had some help, thank goodness, in terms of the Regional Office providing assistance on some of the presidential sites. It would be impossible to do what we have been doing with these sites if we didn't have that help.

MR. COCKRELL: Any assistance from Denver Service Center?

MR. MARTIN: No.

MR. COCKRELL: I have been told that you are the manager of the park's Outline of Park Requirements process. I'm just kind of curious about why some projects have been rated high in some years and then when there is a new Superintendent it seems to juggle all around. How has this changed over the years since you've been here?

MR. MARTIN: I imagine that's somewhat human nature. Things don't remain static. Collectively we meet as a squad to deal with the Outline of Park Requirements, and there are so many thing to be done, so many different projects out there because we are looking at everything now, Maintenance, the whole business. It all goes on the OPR. There is some change in thrust, changes in direction because of a new superintendent, that's true. But also even with the same Superintendent, there would be some changes, but not as many perhaps.

Now, this last OPR go-around was John Debo's first time around. He had some different ideas he wanted to pursue and some different directions he wanted to go, and so there probably was some major changes in the OPR this year. Prior to that I don't think they were that radical. We tried to keep them at least in a relative sense of priority. Sometimes it is a matter of strategy. I don't think that's any secret. Sometimes you've got to say, "What is the likelihood of getting it funded in certain areas?" We know that the only way major projects have been getting funded is through Congressional add-on. And, so, those projects have to be on the OPR and they have to be the higher priority projects; otherwise we

Robert P. Martin

wouldn't have much justification for their funding by the Congressional delegation.

Another thing comes into play, of course, and that is the various Division Chiefs, as well as the park managers, have their own interests. So there is a certain level of competition about wanting certain concerns and projects and needs to be high in the priority list. It is somewhat of an exercise in futility after you get through the top twenty. We probably have something close to eighty items on the OPR, but really you're not going to be talking about the likelihood of funding much beyond twenty. It is a difficult thing to try to set priorities that way, but we do it!

I believe that it is not terribly unusual for things to change during the year. The emphasis may change, or a project is accomplished, but that doesn't mean that everything nicely moves up in priority ranking. Something may come up that hadn't been anticipated back when the last OPR was done, and it needs to either be inserted in lieu of a completed project or it goes down somewhere else, and you move the others up.

MR. COCKRELL: There have been investigations conducted here by the IG and GAO and others. Could you explain the procedures these investigators followed and were there ever any irregularities uncovered?

MR. MARTIN: Well, first of all, I don't think there were ever numerous investigations done here. Almost all of that was done prior to my coming here.

MR. COCKRELL: You were not actually here while that was going on?

MR. MARTIN: That was not ongoing at that time. The results had not been finalized as a result of the personnel management evaluation. Another thing when I first came, I unfortunately had the unpleasant task of having to be involved in seeing that certain disciplinary actions were followed through and that recommendations were carried out and so on. I can't really comment about how those investigations were conducted in any detail. I'm not qualified to do that.

MR. COCKRELL: With the size of the park work force here, how well does the intra-park communication system work, keeping everyone informed?

MR. MARTIN: Well, it's working a lot better in the last couple of years than it was when I first got here. It has been a steadily improving process.

MR. COCKRELL: Why was that?

Robert P. Martin

MR. MARTIN: Because we took some measures to do it. We were getting some feedback from staff that they were not being informed and so forth. So we had various kinds of supervisory meetings where we would have all the supervisory staff in the park get together, and we'd meet for a couple of days and address communication needs and things like that. How could we go about making it better? We'd talk about the responsibility of the management team in terms of keeping staff informed through having our bi-weekly squad meetings, for instance, which we have every two weeks.

It is the management team's responsibility to make sure the staff is informed as to what important things have been discussed and what actions are being taken. Then we initiated a morning report so that we could use that as a communication device, and that is used every day. If there is anything that any Division feels that needs to be communicated through the whole park and all the staff, it can be done through the morning report. It is posted so people can see it. It is circulated to all of the Divisions. Copies are posted on their bulletin boards; that's a daily thing.

Then we have general staff meetings a few times a year where everybody in the park is pulled together at Happy Days Visitor Center, and the Superintendent gives them a run down on things he thinks that are of interest to the staff. I will frequently talk about development projects and what the status of those things are, what planning is being done, and what we see on the horizon. Everyone is given an opportunity to say anything. I think communication is reasonably good. There is always somebody down there that says, "Oh, I don't think it's good enough!" I don't know what more there is to do.

MR. COCKRELL: This question is particularly good to ask you since you were in the Midwest Regional Office. I've done a lot of research through the files and I've seen that the relationship between this park and the Regional Office in the late '70s and the early '80s was pretty terrible. Why do you think that was so, and how has it evolved since you've been here?

MR. MARTIN: I guess I have the belief that the reason why there was not a good relationship or communication between the Regional Office and the park in the late '70s and early '80s stems from a broader issue, and that is that the Cuyahoga Valley National Recreation Area was still relatively new as were all of the urban national recreation areas and urban parks. In many respects I believe it has been a hard pill for people in the Park Service to swallow. I don't think they could really relate to the CVNRA. I think they had feelings that it was the step-child, it was something that was shoved down the throat of the National Park Service, and they never wanted it in the first place.

Robert P. Martin

Oh, you know, you've heard things like it was the armpit of the NPS and all that kind of stuff. I mean, that was somebody characterizing it that way. I think it was very erroneous. Many of the people in the Regional Office, and I can say this because I have seen it from both sides, had viewpoints like that and they didn't know anything about the Cuyahoga Valley. They had no understanding. They had never been here. They couldn't relate to it. It was just that place that is not a true park. Maybe there were some incidents that happened that caused some skepticism on the part of Regional staff, but as the years have gone by, particularly during the time I have been here, I believe it has changed 100 per cent. There has been a complete turnaround.

I think the Cuyahoga Valley is an extremely important unit. It is a real challenge and provides for recreational opportunities for many, many people in this area, and for people who may have never been able to experience the National Park System. They can come here and learn about the whole National Park System, and as a result of that, use it as a springboard to decide to go out and see what some of those other National Park places are like. But for the CVNRA they might otherwise have never been exposed to an NPS unit. The valley itself is very rich in both cultural and natural resources, and obviously provides for a lot of recreational type of activities because of the way we operate. This is primarily a day use area.

Its urban label is a misnomer because it is not urban in nature such as Golden Gate or Gateway. It is urban only in the sense that it is in close proximity to two major metropolitan areas serving a very large population. We are very close to a very large population in the northeastern part of the country here. I tried to address why I thought people had a negative attitude about it, because I think they were primarily misinformed. I really do believe that. I know that it has changed.

I have observed this over the years watching the Regional staff coming into the park. It almost never fails, Ron, that they say, "Why, I never realized how nice this place is" or "Gee, this is really something," and "Golly, you guys are doing a good job."

Probably one of the most interesting changes in--I don't know whether to say this or not but I'm going to--probably one of the most interesting observations and changes that I saw in the way of a person's attitude changing was with John Kawamoto.

MR. COCKRELL: Really?

MR. MARTIN: John didn't have a lot of kind words about Cuyahoga Valley and I don't think he ever thought very highly of it until

Robert P. Martin

the last couple of years of his career. The last few times that he came into the park in recent years before he retired, he was really seeing some changes, and he even said so. He was really starting to see how this area is really playing a role.

MR. COCKRELL: I'm glad you told me that because I am going to be interviewing John K.

MR. MARTIN: It will be interesting to hear what John has to say, but that is how I perceived it because I've talked to John many times. I think he was seeing Cuyahoga as not so bad after all.

Then there's the others. I guess it's just the traditional thing. It's a very hard adjustment if they are not understanding the role of a place like Cuyahoga Valley. My belief is that we're just the beginning. I think there are going to be many more units similar to Cuyahoga Valley in the future. That's where it's at. There aren't any more of those Yellowstone's and Yosemite Valley's out there to protect, but there are many other places maybe that need to be preserved and developed properly for recreation purposes to serve where the people are.

MR. COCKRELL: Tell me about the working relationship between this park and DSC. I'm sure you are the primary person who deals with this.

MR. MARTIN: I do indeed. Unless there is something I do not know, it's been great. There have been times when I've had some problems with them, but we've worked it out. It's just a matter of staying on top of things. I've had times when I felt they didn't act as quickly as I really think they could have or too much time was taken to do something. Generally the relationship is very good. We've involved DSC when we think they should be involved and I'm not afraid to use their services.

MR. COCKRELL: I know the Maintenance Division has been a valuable tool in the development program here because they have done a lot of historic preservation work, especially in the Jaite Complex right here. How has that affected its effectiveness with what Maintenance is traditionally supposed to be doing?

MR. MARTIN: We do both. That again is somewhat of a misunderstanding. It's just unique. It should be looked at as a real plus for CVNRA. We have a very talented Maintenance Division. We've got a lot of very skilled people, carpenters and other types of tradesmen. As a result we are able to do restoration and adaptive rehabilitation types of work and to accomplish some of those things with in-house labor as opposed to doing everything by contract. It has not taken away from the basic Maintenance. The reason why I say that is because the amount of work that requires that type

Robert P. Martin

of special skills has gotten less and less as it has been accomplished. Once the administrative facilities and so on were done at the Jaite Complex, our energies could be spent on other things as well.

I don't think it's taken away from the normal routine Maintenance aspect. It's not like we are doing the work to rehab a building and therefore something else is suffering. I don't think it's that way. I think in many cases we have been able to do it faster, cheaper, and better than we could have by contract. I know that because I've seen some situations where we tried to do some things by contract and it has not panned out as well. That role in direct historic preservation work is getting less in magnitude because there are fewer facilities that we are getting involved with directly for NPS purposes. Probably the new canal visitor center, the Locktender's project, may be one of the last major efforts like that that we are going to be involved in. [Note: The project was completed in December 1989.]

MR. COCKRELL: Another unique thing that you have here is the Division of Technical Assistance and Professional Services or TAPS.

MR. MARTIN: Yes, it is.

MR. COCKRELL: Could you explain the evolution of that and how it came to be?

MR. MARTIN: It was established before I got here, but it has grown under my direction. For a developing park, I can hardly understand how you can operate without it. I'm spoiled. It's the only way I know. I haven't worked in another park so to me it has been invaluable. We have a full complement of disciplines so we have been able to do many things that otherwise required the services of either Regional staff or the Denver Service Center. That would be very time consuming. We could not have completed a lot of the planning and design work to develop some of the projects, to put things on line that we have done without having the staff here. I think it is an excellent program personally. We have architectural services, a Civil Engineer, and a Landscape Architect, so we have a full area there. We had a Historian before and we are looking at that need now. We really need more historical research.

MR. COCKRELL: Now I am going to get into various projects here and basically ask you to give a brief historical overview of how these projects evolved. The first one is the Oak Hill Day Use Area.

MR. MARTIN: That's not a good one for me to deal with because the Oak Hill Day Use Area was done before I got here. The Denver Service Center was involved with that project. They designed a really extensive type of development. Somewhere along the way it

Robert P. Martin

was decided to get the water line in, and put the road and the parking area in and then hold, because there wasn't enough money to do the job. Since that time the whole idea that the Service Center had come up with was scaled way back because it was just way, way over designed and not what we want to do.

MR. COCKRELL: How could that have been? Weren't the plans reviewed?

MR. MARTIN: I can't say because I wasn't involved in that early aspect, but I'm sure they were reviewed! I think somebody later on realized that it was just way over designed in terms of the amount of development called for. There wasn't the visitation demand for the size of the area involved and the parking area and the kind of facilities that were being proposed. It was also felt that it would have been too much of an environmental impact as a result of the kind of development that was designed by DSC. That's not to put down DSC; it's just that that's the way we perceived it.

We do, however, have a need to complete Oak Hill because it's never been completed to what it should be. We need to put in a picnic pavilion, sanitation facilities, and the kind of trail development that was envisioned. We have never completed those things. The parking area and the road are just unpaved areas. Water is there. It isn't being used. That project has been very high on our list to do something with, but we have never had the funding to complete the project.

MR. COCKRELL: Here's one that you just mentioned: the restoration of the Locktender's House.

MR. MARTIN: Yes. I imagine the history of that project is something that somebody could probably get into, and spend a couple of your tapes on that one. It's been a long evolution, but it's coming through now. We really made some headway on this project and it is coming to a conclusion. Where do you want me to start on that?

MR. COCKRELL: I don't know!

MR. MARTIN: I don't know who made the decision. It was again before I came to this park. A decision was made that the Locktender's building would be preserved and used as a future visitor center to replace the existing canal visitor center. Our Maintenance staff was involved. It has been described to me that the kind of stabilization work that was done prior to 1983 was almost a reconstruction in terms of taking all the siding off, putting new siding back on the building, a whole new roof structure, chimney work, flashing, the whole business was replaced.

Robert P. Martin

The building from an exterior standpoint had been nicely stabilized and looked quite nice. It had been painted. Then it got into the planning phase. There was a contract that had been let on that project for architectural/engineering design. That had been done before I got here. The contractor's work was already underway. As years went by, we never had the funding to do the whole project, but there was some structural stabilization work done which involved Denver Service Center staff. It sounds crazy, but they came into the project and there was some structural steel work done for reasons I never understood. It has since been reversed and taken out.

MR. COCKRELL: Based on the fact of being historically inaccurate or just not what it should be?

MR. MARTIN: It was just inappropriate. I don't know what the reasoning was, but there were steel I beams placed in the second story floor that you could see from the first floor. I believe they had placed the I-beams on twenty-four-inch centers all the way through. It was incredible. As a matter of fact, the load was too much. When we really got into the project ourselves, that was all removed.

At any rate, to make a long story short, a lot of time and money went into the project over quite a few years, but it wasn't until about two-and-a-half years ago that we really decided to bite the bullet. We got the funding to do the job and we started doing some contract work for various phases of the project. After having a couple of the contracts completed such as the exterior utilities and interior stabilization work, other things like the interior utilities work were contracted.

Then we decided to take the project on ourselves as a day labor project by our own Maintenance staff here. We will be charging the labor to an add-on account. The project is progressing very well with the planned completion date of December 1989. That would be our hope to open it with a great deal of coordination, which in this case is needed because of the interfacing with the Harpers Ferry Center in terms of exhibit planning, the design, and the fabrication of those exhibits. So all of those things have got to come together.

MR. COCKRELL: The next one is the history of the Virginia Kendall Park CCC structures.

MR. MARTIN: That has just been an on going type of thing. Ever since they were turned over to the United States by the State of Ohio and the Akron Metropolitan Park District who was administering it, the CCC structures have just involved an ongoing process of continual upgrading and restoring each structure. I think it has

Robert P. Martin

happened in a logical sequence. I think we have done an excellent job there. They are in very good condition.

MR. COCKRELL: They are all in good condition now?

MR. MARTIN: Yes. And again, it is a credit to our Maintenance staff because we have the ability to do that work. They have managed to do the proper kind of historic rehab.

MR. COCKRELL: What condition were they in when they were transferred to the Park Service?

MR. MARTIN: Some of them were not in such good condition. For instance, the CCC comfort stations over at the main area--the Ledges and the Octagon and so on were in decay. They were in disuse for many, many years and it wasn't until this year that the last two are being rehabilitated.

MR. COCKRELL: Was it because the Akron Metro Parks didn't have the funding?

MR. MARTIN: I don't know.

MR. COCKRELL: What's been going on with the Indigo Lake Development?

MR. MARTIN: Well, for Indigo Lake we did the site restoration work and then we funded an architectural/engineering design contract for its development as a day use area. The plans both for the conceptual design and the actual construction drawings and specifications, title II services were completed. Unfortunately, it seems to be on the back burner in terms of the OPR. Right now it is not advancing, but it should be done.

MR. COCKRELL: What facilities are being planned for Indigo Lake?

MR. MARTIN: The facilities would consist of a picnic shelter, self-service information pavilion and associated parking area, a walkway around part of the lake on a boardwalk where the lake is close to the railroad, and a couple of fishing piers. Swimming could happen in the future and we do allow people to go out in a boat and fish on it, but swimming requires lifeguard operations. It has never been planned to use it that way, but who is to say ten to twenty years down the road? So they may say, "Hey, that's what we ought to be doing here." Then that's fine. That's where the design would be able to accommodate that type of thing.

MR. COCKRELL: What are some of the current projects underway now? You've already mentioned the Locktender's House.

Robert P. Martin

MR. MARTIN: There are a lot of things happening. The Brandywine Falls development will be a day use development to provide appropriate and safe visitor use facilities so the people can enjoy the falls area. To date, people are just making informal trails and scramble around the rocks. As a result, they get down in the falls area and they don't seem to heed the warning signs that are there telling people that the rocks are slippery. They go out there anyhow and attempt to jump across what appears as a very small stream at the top of the falls sometimes, and find out that it is very slick, and down they go. We have had some serious accidents at the falls. Our belief was that in order to provide safe and appropriate visitor use facilities, we needed some sort of development.

A couple of years back we had a Congressional add-on which allowed us, for planning purposes, to hire an engineering/architectural firm to design concepts and then after the concept planning was done, a preferred alternative was selected by the park. We proceeded to have the drawings/specifications completed for the construction of those facilities. Those facilities amount to a system of boardwalks. One is called a "rim walk." The other is called a "ledge walk" which follows a ledge along the Brandywine Falls Gorge. They will be connected by stairways and there will be 2 observation platforms. One higher and then another lower-level one that will be connected by those walkways.

There also will be a walkway going over to the old mill site in order to interpret that area to enable the visits to have a different perspective of the falls. You will be able to see the falls from the top as well as the bottom and to get very nice views of the gorge itself. So that is underway. The invitation for bids was issued just a few weeks ago.

MR. COCKRELL: So the projected completion date will be?

MR. MARTIN: The end of this year.

MR. COCKRELL: That's quick! What other development projects are underway now?

MR. MARTIN: There are a lot of exciting projects. This has been quite a year, I'll tell you. A lot of things I have been working on for a lot of years are finally coming to fruition here.

MR. COCKRELL: That must be a good feeling.

MR. MARTIN: It is a good feeling. It's been a real challenge. I've had a few setbacks where certain projects I had thought had advanced before and then for some reason or another a glitch would happen and set them back.

Robert P. Martin

The Virginia Kendall utilities infrastructure is undergoing a complete rehabilitation. That involves the water, sewer, and electricity for the entire VK area. These facilities are over fifty years old. Very old, antiquated, always a concern from a public health standpoint of a real issue happening. We've had this one in the forefront for quite a few years knowing that it is a high priority to address, and finally we got funding to do that. At this point, we are currently underway with the Denver Service Center handling this entire project.

The first phase of the project is replacement of all of the water distribution lines and then the next phase will be the actual water source. I think we have already determined that we will be using a well source. Unfortunately, there is not enough funding at this point to address the sewage. We're probably not ready for that anyhow, because our preferred alternative would be to connect with the municipal sewer system which is not close enough to the area at this time, but it is on the horizon, at least we understand it is. Maybe in the next three to five years.

Another very exciting project we are dealing with is the development of what's called the Old Carriage Trail. That has a long and varied history. What this involves is the construction of three major trail bridges to span across some large ravines. The reason for crossing the ravines instead of going to the heads of the ravines is because the heads of those ravines where the Old Carriage Trail was located were cut off as a result of private development called the Greenwood Village development. The lands had been part of the Marshall estate, of the Marshall Drug Store empire, back at the turn of the century. It was a summer estate where they developed this marvelous system of carriage trails following these ravines. This is going to be an outstanding trail development for hiking and cross-country skiing, and it needs these bridges.

We got into the design aspect of three bridges. We were going to put in some rather sophisticated, beautifully designed cable suspension bridges. They originally were going to be developed using material called bongossi (Ekki) which is a wood from Africa. The wood for these bridges would have been almost indestructible and would last forever. It is disease resistant and fire resistant.

Not to go into a long story about this, but two invitations for bids to build those bridges had been issued. The second time around there was an apparent low bidder and the DSC was going to award the contract. It turned out that a technicality disqualified the bidder, but that was even beside the issue because at the same time the wood products industry in this country and the steel

Robert P. Martin

industry issued a complaint against the project because a foreign product was going to be used.

That was beside the point, too, because frankly the product, the bongossi wood, is listed as an acceptable product under the Buy American Act. But that didn't matter because the Denver Service Center had to prepare a response to various Congressional Representatives who had inquired about the project on behalf of their steel and wood products constituents. In the course of reviewing the project in order to respond to the challenge Denver Service Center engineers determined the bridge design was flawed and inadequate, so we had to go back to the drawing board and start over.

As time passed, technology changed and we were able to determine that it was possible to use a prefabricated type of bridge. The project is underway and we are in fact putting in three bridges of considerable spans, 155-feet long, which will be steel truss, box-type bridges. That contract has been awarded and the bridges will be constructed this summer, 1989. The trail will be completed this year through a combination of some additional contract work to address some erosion problems, day labor and volunteer trail construction efforts.

We have a very, very, active volunteer group here at Cuyahoga Valley, particularly in the area of trail work. With coordination by a volunteer group called the Cuyahoga Valley Trails Council and work by our own Maintenance crew, we will finish the trail. It is an integral part of a system that will tie into the Towpath Trail.

The Ohio & Erie Canal Towpath Trail is probably the most exciting and biggest project we will be taking on here at Cuyahoga Valley. We believe the Ohio & Erie Canal is the most significant historical resource in the Valley, and the Towpath Trail will be the premiere recreational and interpretive development in the park. The Towpath project has been started and will probably continue as a three-year project. That is our target to try to finish in three years, at least the trail construction. We will then have a completed trail following the Towpath through the entire length of the park north to south.

It will be a multipurpose trail, surfaced for bicycles and accessible to the handicapped, wheelchairs, etcetera. A lot of funding is involved there. I suppose the fate of that project depends on whether we get funding for the project. I understand there is potential of that funding occurring this year. It has been in the committee reports for Congressional add-on this year--at least to do part of it. [Note: \$2.68 million was authorized in FY 1990.]

MR. COCKRELL: What about the Wetmore Bridal Trail System?

Robert P. Martin

MR. MARTIN: O.K., that's another thing. That is part of our overall trail planning implementation. The Wetmore Bridal Trail System constitutes the first bridal trails opened on federal lands in the Cuyahoga Valley. It was completed largely through the cooperative efforts of volunteer horsemen working on the project as well as the Cuyahoga Valley Trails Council. We laid out the trail system and they met our standards. We provided materials and they put in bridge structures, cleared the trail, put in fencing that we asked to be put in to help keep people on the trail, signing, and all this sort of thing.

Most of the Wetmore Trail System has been completed. They will continue to complete the entire system this summer and then they will go on to another area called the Riding Run System and will start working on that in 1990. Trail development is going to be a continuing activity in the valley. There are a lot of different trails to be developed.

MR. COCKRELL: I heard Riding Run mentioned before, but I've never seen it on a map.

MR. MARTIN: The Riding Run Trail area is over west of the Hale Farm and Village so it is on the western side of the valley. Wetmore is on the eastern side of the valley and Riding Run is on the west side.

MR. COCKRELL: That's all within the park boundaries?

MR. MARTIN: Absolutely. It involves land that used to be Akron Metro Parks, now called Metropolitan Parks Serving Summit County. They changed their name. The two trail systems involve some of their lands as well. The long range plan is to make a connection between the two systems which will require a bridge over the Cuyahoga River.

MR. COCKRELL: Are there any other development projects?

MR. MARTIN: I covered the VK utilities, Locktender's, Brandywine Falls, Towpath, and Old Carriage Trails. Those are the major type of development projects right now. We have a lot of other little things going on.

MR. COCKRELL: Those are the big ones?

MR. MARTIN: Yes, and they are all going on right now.

MR. COCKRELL: Makes your life crazy, doesn't it?

MR. MARTIN: It's great!

Robert P. Martin

MR. COCKRELL: Could you briefly describe the history of the Historic Property Leasing Program here?

MR. MARTIN: Well, we got on board right away as soon as the program surfaced. Again, we're very fortunate to have the kind of staff we have here. Historical Architect Ed Adelman took a real interest in that program, and continued on later after he became the Chief of the TAPS Division and hired Historical Architect Paulette Oswick. I think we have done pretty well. It is not an easy program to pull off. We have quite a few historic structures at Cuyahoga Valley, and a number of these are on the National Register. That is the first requirement in order for them to be eligible for leasing under the Historic Property Leasing Program.

We've had success in the fact that we now have four structures under lease. The first one was the Tilden house leased for architectural offices and I think now there is a podiatrist in there as well. There is an 1850's farm house called the Wallace house which we leased and is now a beautiful bed and breakfast inn. Then we have the Jaite Paper Mill which has been leased for use as a National Hall of Fame and Horseshoe Palladium--an indoor horse-shoe pitching facility. [Note: The lease was terminated on December 8, 1989.]

MR. COCKRELL: That's different.

MR. MARTIN: It certainly is. A interesting historical note here is that President George Bush is a horseshoe pitcher and one of the men here at the Jaite Mill is the same man who went over to the White House in recent months and designed and installed the horseshoe pits at the White House.

MR. COCKRELL: That's interesting!

MR. MARTIN: He reportedly is on a first name basis with President Bush. If this thing really works out and they are able to develop this multi-million-dollar project here at Horseshoe Palladium as they call it, it wouldn't surprise me if the first shoe will probably be pitched by the President.

MR. COCKRELL: That's great! I hope it happens.

MR. MARTIN: Wouldn't that be something?

The Packard-Doubler house, which is a small farm house, has been leased for residential use. We have several other structures which are eligible and we have not had any success at this point in time in getting them under a historical property lease. We have had people look at them and indicate a lot of interest only to later back out saying that they are no longer interested.

Robert P. Martin

It is kind of a difficult program. A lot of the incentive for that program dissolved when the Tax Reform Act of 1986 was passed because it took away the financing advantages. There was a reduction in the tax investment credit. The act also had a real effect on limited partnerships and many of these kinds of projects are funded through limited partnerships.

MR. COCKRELL: I heard that there is a possibility of some groups investigating a National Heritage Corridor extending the park into Cleveland and Akron.

MR. MARTIN: Yes, that's true, in part, but not with the intent of expanding the size of the CVNRA.

MR. COCKRELL: What impact would that have on this park?

MR. MARTIN: A very positive impact. We feel that this is something that would have to be advanced by local interests. It is not something that we are promoting in the sense of an extension of CVNRA. It is not even a Departmental or a National Park Service thrust to have it established. Instead there is a grass roots movement in the Cleveland and Akron areas and beyond to develop such a corridor. There is much to be said for that because of the local history involved. There is a tremendous amount of industrial history in the Cleveland area.

Of course the Ohio & Erie Canal is the thread of continuity for the corridor from downtown Cleveland going south through the Cuyahoga Valley National Recreation Area into Akron and then beyond down to the little historical canal villages and finally to Zoar. That happens to be where the North Country National Scenic Trail connection would be made. I think it would be a wonderful thing.

MR. COCKRELL: But if it was actually incorporated as a part of CVNRA, then this park would have to expand even more staff-wise. Right?

MR. MARTIN: Oh, yes, if that was the case, but I don't believe we are promoting that.

MR. COCKRELL: You have to take care of what you've got first.

MR. MARTIN: Sure, but I'm not sure it has to be done that way. Like the other heritage corridors, it can be done through non-federal interests and the private sector with the NPS in a coordinating role providing assistance as appropriate. You should talk to the Superintendent about that.

Robert P. Martin

MR. COCKRELL: I definitely will. I've got one last question before we get back to the one we skipped over on budget cuts. I think you probably addressed this a little bit already. Why do you believe CVNRA should be in the National Park System?

MR. MARTIN: I did discuss that. I think it's just playing a tremendous role. The valley itself would not have been protected were it not for the designation by Congress. I can guarantee that. What we see here today would have been eroded away through all kinds of development both commercial and residential. The area is rich in resources, cultural, natural, and recreational opportunities. Visitation is increasing, especially as we put facilities on line. It is a wonderful opportunity for people to become aware of what the National Park System is all about. We are playing a real good role here providing a lot of programs for a lot of people and school children.

MR. COCKRELL: The first cut under the Gramm-Rudmann-Hollings Act was something like \$130,000. How was that handled?

MR. MARTIN: We just absorbed that cut. We were able to pretty much handle it.

MR. COCKRELL: Is there a certain schedule year by year in which you continue to make more cuts?

MR. MARTIN: No, we're just about holding even, at least that is my view of it. I've got so much more to handle that I don't get deeply into the administrative end of it. I just know that we don't have a sufficient amount for operations. We are really behind in terms of a proper operating level. We need a substantial increase in operations funds.

MR. COCKRELL: Substantial, means what?

MR. MARTIN: Three or four hundred thousand dollars.

MR. COCKRELL: Is there anything that I haven't asked that I should ask for the record? Anything that you are particularly proud of?

MR. MARTIN: Well, yes. I'm surprised you didn't ask about Everett Village and the Everett Road Covered Bridge.

MR. COCKRELL: O.K.

MR. MARTIN: That's an interesting history there. One of the things that I did a year or so after I got here was literally saying, "Let's get the covered bridge back." People kept saying the covered bridge has always been a project here that we should be doing. The long and the short of it is that I contacted Jim

Robert P. Martin

Askins of the Williamsport Preservation Training Center and asked him if he would be interested in a heavy timber project, the rehabilitation of the Everett Road Covered Bridge.

That was the beginning of an interesting relationship between the park and Williamsport Preservation Training Center. The project turned into something more difficult because it was not a matter of being able to take the stored remains of the covered bridge which had been stored for more than 10 years over at Hale Farm and Village and then putting the bridge back together. That was our hope; that we could use much of the historic fabric. In reality that did not happen. We really have a reconstruction, but a very well done reconstruction.

From an engineering standpoint, it became a real difficult project because, as luck would have it, engineers won't put their stamp of approval on it unless it meets certain engineering requirements, structural load requirements. It no longer was going to be used as a vehicular bridge, but instead used as a pedestrian bridge. It turned out that the live load carrying capacity requirements for pedestrian use are higher, in terms of pounds per square inch live load rating factor, than it is for vehicular use.

What we have is a very true reconstruction, but with some amazing engineering that is hidden inside it in order for it to carry the loads required since it is called a pedestrian bridge. You could drive a tank over it and I don't think it would shake. It is an incredible bridge.

MR. COCKRELL: That's impressive.

MR. MARTIN: It took twice as long to build and twice the money that was originally estimated by the Williamsport Preservation Training Center. The same thing is true with respect to Everett Village. We had them come in at the same time and take on the Everett Village project. I thought it was going to advance along to the complete rehabilitation of the structures. The first job was stabilization of the structures and then the next thing would be to actually do more rehab work on each structure. But unfortunately, all that was ever accomplished was the stabilization of the structures. We got half of what we thought was going to be done for twice the money.

MR. COCKRELL: Now that the village is stabilized is there any activity there?

MR. MARTIN: What we have always been trying to advance for Everett Village is the establishment of an artists-in-residence community. We really have to get off dead center at Everett. We've got to utilize those structures or else we might as well get rid of them.

Robert P. Martin

We have the first presence of an artist interest there now. A year ago we entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with the Ohio Water Color Society to occupy what is known as the Osborne house. The Osborne house was one that had been occupied recently. When that occupant left, it was ready to be used. They've used it as a gallery and headquarters area.

Whether that relationship is going to continue, I'm not sure. We had hoped that that would act as a seed for other things going on, but we've never been successful in finding one outside organization that would take on the umbrella responsibility of coordinating the whole project. We always thought there would be federal funding. We wanted that to happen as we already have put federal funds into it and we would continue to seek federal funding. We wanted private sector involvement to do the actual artists-in-residence type of development. We would probably provide funds for further structural stabilization work and installation of necessary utility services.

We are presently looking at a proposal that has been made by some individuals for that type of operation. We have some concerns and reservations about it and we are going to be having a meeting in June of this year to try to pull together all the various interests who have from time to time indicated an interest in Everett. We are going to try and get them together and try to see whether or not there is something that can be done through a coalition of some kind. If nobody is willing to come forward and really take on the project, we are going to have to explore other alternatives.

MR. COCKRELL: Is there anything else you would like to add?

MR. MARTIN: Offhand I can't think of anything more right now, but I'm sure there are many other things I could talk about.

Robert P. Martin

A D D E N D U M T O I N T E R V I E W

Information supplied by
Assistant Superintendent Robert P. Martin
May 18, 1989

The Ohio & Erie Canal lands have been a concern from the beginning of the CVNRA. Collectively, they are the primary cultural resource of the park. Congress has mandated NPS to preserve the Ohio & Erie Canal within CVNRA. It will be rehabilitated and interpreted.

The problem with the canal lands involves the Ohio State Canal Lands Authority Act of 1959. Under this legislation, the canal lands can only be sold to the U.S. The 1974 CVNRA act, however, specifies that public lands can only be acquired through donation.

In the mid-1980s, Bob Martin began negotiating for an NPS hiking trail along the Canal Towpath. In 1986, NPS secured a use easement from the state.

Bob learned in April 1987, that the Ohio Department of Administrative Services wanted to dispose of the canal lands. Bob contacted the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) to see about getting the canal lands transferred to CVNRA. ODNR officials agreed it should go to NPS, but the above mentioned legislative conflict seemed to preclude it.

In September 1987, Bob sent a letter to State Senator Roy Ray explaining the significance of the canal lands to CVNRA, the inherent legal obstacles, and that NPS could not spend money on land it does not own. Bob suggested language for legislation that Senator Ray could consider introducing in Columbus. In October 1987, Senator Ray did introduce a bill to make possible the transfer of state lands to the U.S. without compensation.

Bob then approached the Ohio Department of Administrative Services (DAS) regarding a legal description of the canal lands proposed to be transferred. DAS agreed that the Silliman Survey of 1916 for the entire canal could be used for the purpose of preparing a legal description of the lands to be transferred and said it would therefore not be necessary to survey it again. (The 1987 bill also stated the same thing.) NPS still needed a good legal description so the Midwest Regional Office Land Resources personnel prepared

Robert P. Martin

one based on descriptions from adjoining properties. NPS received approval of the description from Summit County officials; Cuyahoga County will soon approve it.

After this, a request will go to the Canal Lands Authority for approval of transfer. The next step will be to have a quit claim deed prepared for the governor's signature. Bob anticipates this chain of events to be completed within the next several months. [Note: All state owned canal lands within the boundaries of the CVNRA totalling 299.7 acres were officially transferred on December 15, 1989.]

Bob Martin negotiated with Kent State University to have the land area known as Stumpy Basin also transferred to the U.S. This 17.58 acre tract of land was included in the final declaration of transfer with the understanding that the University could continue to access the area for biological research purposes. Another issue involves the donation of metropolitan park district lands to the CVNRA. Because Ohio law says these lands are for metropolitan park district purposes, they cannot be given to the Federal Government. This finding was determined by the Probate Judge of Summit County when the Akron Metropolitan Park District (AMPD) approved donating a parcel of land to CVNRA for use at the Everett Road Covered Bridge. The parcel was to accommodate a parking area and provide a buffer area near the bridge.

The implications of this decision are not good for NPS. At this time, no AMPD or Cleveland Metropolitan Park District (CMPD) lands could go be donated to NPS. State law, therefore, needs to be amended to grant this authority. Bob Martin started this process in the mid-1980s when he worked with Ohio Representative Vern Cook who introduced a generic bill in this regard. It passed the Ohio House of Representatives unanimously on February 25, 1986.

Politics, however, intervened to block its passage in the Ohio Senate. When U.S. Representative John Seiberling announced his retirement, he supported Akron Mayor Tom Sawyer to take his place in Congress. Seiberling's endorsement angered a State Senator who coveted Seiberling's seat. The Senator consequently sat on the bill in the rules committee. When the session ended, the bill died. Vern Cook has since passed away. A new legislative sponsor will have to be found.

[END]

Robert P. Martin

O R A L H I S T O R Y I N T E R V I E W

F O R T H E

A D M I N I S T R A T I V E H I S T O R Y O F

C U Y A H O G A V A L L E Y

N A T I O N A L R E C R E A T I O N A R E A

O H I O

Theodore R. McCann
former Park Planner (retired)
Washington Office
National Park Service

June 27, 1989
Washington, D.C.

Interviewed by:

Ron Cockrell
Historian
Midwest Regional Office
National Park Service

Omaha, Nebraska
1989

Theodore R. McCann

Theodore R. McCann

MR. COCKRELL: I thought we would begin the interview by you explaining your career in the National Park Service and your background information.

MR. McCANN: I came into the Park Service in February, 1963. I had worked in the Federal Government over four years prior to that for the Bureau of Reclamation in the same building as the Park Service, Department of the Interior, but I spent a couple of years in between those two jobs.

I had a construction business restoring properties on Capitol Hill and Alexandria, Virginia. Prior to that, I spent four years in the U. S. Air Force in Hampton, Virginia.

I came into the Park Service somewhat reluctantly because I was in business for myself. But at the time I was approached by Vince Gleason who had just been hired from an ad agency to set up a whole new publications program. I was very intrigued by the fact that, here was a guy that was not a government bureaucrat who had left a very lucrative job in private industry to come into the Park Service. I was very intrigued by the idea that we could literally revolutionize the publications of the Park Service and it was just too good of an opportunity to pass up. The money was not bad and so I took it.

MR. COCKRELL: What was your title?

MR. McCANN: I was called Art Director by Vince, but the personnel people said there was only one Director of the Park Service and the bureaucratic title is Visual Communications Expert, or something. It is a very long title, but essentially, that is what you do.

In a couple of years, Vince and I hired a couple of more artists, a couple more writers. We absolutely revolutionized the publications of the Park Service and also, a lot of things happened. At the same time, we got into the whole archeological hardcover book series, the handbook series, the end of the whole historical book program that started for JNEM; "Colonials and Patriots" and that whole series of books.

We completely redesigned over 300 folders of the Park System. We began the poster program which is now nationally famous. I thought up the concept of a mini-folder which was a low cost way to print a lot of folders with very little money. We went into the concept of the color folders and the four-color folders that would be sold by the government, which was a kind of indirect income to the Park Service. By the time I had left Publications, I think we were selling as much as our total budget and then some. Essentially, the government was breaking even on that operation.

Theodore R. McCann

In November 1967, George Hartzog and Joe Jensen had set up an office called the Office of Urban Affairs. It was sort of a paper office and I had been lobbying Hartzog to deal with urban things quite differently than the Park Service had up until that point. I was very interested in a lot of other things besides publications. I was getting a little tired of the publications game, so he suggested that I would be the first employee of the Office of Urban Affairs. In fact, the second employee was Jack Fish, who just recently retired as National Capital Regional Director.

Jack and I split up the work load at that point. He worked on the Zoning Commission and Planning Commission of Washington. He dealt with Wolf Trap; that was at the very beginning stages of the idea of Wolf Trap Farm Park. I dealt with the yet-unbuilt Bicentennial Building in Philadelphia and I got involved in the early days of Indiana Dunes.

About the same time, Russell Wright had come to the White House wanting to get involved with the Park Service in some capacity. I was dispatched up to see Russell Wright in his house in Garrison, New York. Out of that weekend came the idea for Summer in the Parks, which completely took my attention for the next year.

MR. COCKRELL: This individual's name was Russell Wright?

MR. McCANN: He is a famous industrial designer. I have one of his teapots in there, in fact. He was best known to most people in America for the dinnerware that he designed for Rosenthal China. However, he is also the inventor of the sectional sofa. He is the person who really started to design light-colored furniture back in the early 1930's. He is the guy who took aluminum and made it into aluminum glasses and aluminum plates that were vogue in the 1930's.

That was all his thing to take sort of ordinary materials, and he also wrote a cookbook with his wife and had very fixed ideas about the whole business of kitchens and design and ease of upkeep. His own house reflected all this. His house had stone floors, except for one bedroom which had a wooden floor. But everything else in the house was stone and was very easily cleaned. He was doing modern furniture before anybody was doing modern furniture in this country. He did a lot of stuff in the 1939 World's Fair. He also founded the Society of American Industrial Designers and the magazine that they still have today. He is a very famous man.

MR. COCKRELL: So you worked with him on designing the Summer in the Parks program?

MR. McCANN: Yes, the whole thing.

Theodore R. McCann

MR. COCKRELL: Why is that significant? I know the answer to this, but I want to hear it from you. Why is this a significant event in the history of the National Park Service?

MR. McCANN: Well, it was probably the first time that the Park Service literally went into the city and did these kinds of outreach programs quite beyond what they had ever done before and at a scale way beyond what they had ever done before.

For example, in this city for years there had been the military band concerts, and once in a while the National Symphony would play on the Capitol steps. Well, that was about it. That was your music. Now we do have something here like Carter Barron Amphitheatre which we for years and years leased out to people who ran that. In fact, the Fell Brothers also owned Barnum and Bailey Circus. They did summer programs there. But the Park Service itself per se, had never gotten into either the entertainment bag really, or all these other kinds of educational programs, sort of out in the neighborhoods. Out even away from town at our sites around the city.

I think that is the significance of Summer in the Parks, aside from modern-day connection with the year of the riot, because we had already started planning that idea before the riots happened. We just did a lot of innovative things that now everybody takes for granted.

I am sure to a very great extent the whole folk festival on the Mall by the Smithsonian is really the Smithsonian's answer to Summer in the Parks because they felt really upset that we got all the publicity we did get in 1968. They were bound and determined to do something. A lot of my ideas and a lot of Russell's ideas and others were literally picked up by the Smithsonian and carried as Smithsonian ideas, so there is a kind of rivalry there. It has always been there, I guess.

MR. COCKRELL: How quickly after the success of Summer in the Parks did the NPS act to initiate other urban-oriented programs?

MR. McCANN: Well, I was the one that did it, because that fall, Hartzog sent me two books of TR's travel vouchers to go around the country, literally, and go to what he called the riot cities, or go to people that had big park operations to spread the gospel of Summer in the Parks. We had produced rather neat looking little folders about it with some donated money.

On that trip, I also went to all of our so called urban places like, Philadelphia, St. Louis, and New York, looking at what kinds of jobs were we really doing as the Park Service in these places. When you really think about it, there are over 60 cities where

Theodore R. McCann

there is some kind of a Park Service installation, so we are very much urban, contrary to popular opinion that we are somehow western and ex-urban or certainly rural. We really are not. We have an enormous amount of facilities in a lot of little towns and not too little towns all over the United States.

So we really have always been much more urban than most people realized. At least when I got into thinking about it, I was of course, an urbanist, but I also loved the parks, and I didn't see any contradiction in that. I just thought that we had never really taken advantage of that incredible role we could have because we were like the Department of Agriculture, which is in every county in the United States. We are in every state, and Alaska and Hawaii, and we never really thought of ourselves in that role. I still feel that way, that we have a much greater national role than when we really think of "in-house."

MR. COCKRELL: You said that your Office of Urban Affairs began in late 1967. How did that office change? Who was in charge of it?

MR. McCANN: It was a strange animal. As I say, it was really a kind of paper organization under Joe Jensen who was then, I think, the Associate Director. I think he was number three in the pecking order. Joe Jensen, as you may or may not know, was the head of engineering for Saarinen Company. Hartzog met Joe when they both worked on the Arch in St. Louis. So Joe, as he referred to himself later, was part of the St. Louis Mafia, as was Bill Everhardt and a whole crew of people that were there at that time.

It acted as an office simply because Jack Fish and I fed into Hartzog. We were like the man on the spot on these things then. They were projects that turned out to be, of course, very big projects. It was quite unusual for this to happen, if you know the structure of the Park Service back at that time. Everything went through several people, several division chiefs reporting to so and so's Assistant Director, but there was never anybody who knew exactly what was going on at any one time. It was a very strange animal.

I did this for a couple of years right at that period. In 1969, the first Gateway study was done in New York. I was on that team and then the next year, we did the San Francisco/Golden Gate Study. So primarily, I got absorbed in those two studies and in between times, worked on going around setting up small-scale Summer in the Parks. Also, I worked in New York City with Jane Henze in the next year, 1971.

MR. COCKRELL: I have run across the name Ed Peetz. Was he in your shop?

Theodore R. McCann

MR. McCANN: Well, after all this office really didn't have any money. Then Hartzog changed his mind and things just changed around to the point where I was somehow attached to this. The Denver Service Center was established, but they didn't send many to Denver from Washington. Ed Peetz, who at that point was running the planning publications, ended up in what used to be the Washington Service Center. He stayed here and everybody else went to Denver. He kept a couple of people and I joined them as a kind of a planner in residence, or gadfly in residence, I guess. It was for that reason that Ed and I got a lot of strange assignments, one of which was really the beginning of Cuyahoga.

A man named Courtney Burton, who was a wealthy Cleveland businessman and a big Republican fund-raiser, raised a lot of money for Nixon. He was a very well-known figure in Cleveland and was one of those all-around nice guys that gets involved in everything civic. For some reason, he wrote a letter to William Saxbe who was a Senator at that time for Ohio. He knew Saxbe. Burton said there were two things he would like to see happen.

One was this idea of a Cuyahoga National Park. It was a way to save the city, the two park authorities and everybody else. Nobody had enough money to really buy up the land as fast as they were losing it to development on the edges of Cuyahoga. I am not sure if it was Saxbe writing or calling the Assistant Secretary of the Interior. I think what happened, as I remember it, Burton actually wrote a letter, maybe at Saxbe's urging, but he wrote a letter to the Secretary of the Interior and said, "Why don't you come out and look at this? It is really neat." The letter came down to Hartzog and we were told to go out and take a look at it, Ed Peetz and I.

So we went. It was right after the 4th of July. It was the second week of July, 1971. The one reason I know the precise date was that I found an old program. We saw Johnny Mathis at the Blossom Music Center and I had never seen Johnny Mathis before. We met him and talked to him that day. Blossom was like one of the first really new outdoor theaters in the country. He was there to do his rehearsal in the afternoon. So we were wandering around and had a nice chat with him. But I found the program and it was July 14th, so it had to be precisely the time that we were there.

MR. COCKRELL: Back in the late 1960's, Udall had visited the valley and was impressed. Evidently he had called for the Park Service and BOR to do a feasibility study. I have never come across that. Was it produced in any sort of study?

MR. McCANN: Well, what happened was this. The curious thing is that Udall did the same darn thing. He went to Sandy Hook and said the same thing the year before that and nothing ever happened. I think they ended up doing a lighthouse study or something.

Theodore R. McCann

You are right, Udall went out there. At that time, the planning arm was not the Park Service; the planning arm was BOR. They had a Regional Office in Ann Arbor which they had to the end of their life. The parks were like the north woods of Michigan. They had a very conservative guy there who sort of pooh-poohed the idea. I think he secretly thought Udall was crazy.

They floundered around and really, I have never quite gotten it straight, I have a copy of that study, but there apparently was another one when they essentially said, "Well, this is what it is and it is obviously not a park. Now if the two park authorities want to go ahead and buy some land, we will try and get them some Land and Water money."

That sort of was left at that point. That is exactly where it was for the next couple of years except the whole political structure of the Ohio Department of Natural Resources changed. They got a very dynamic guy named Bill Nye who took over that and he was like me. He was an urbanist; he wanted more urban related parks and he was a ball of fire.

When we went out there, Ed Peetz and I, for that little look-see, I think everybody was sort of laughing, saying, "Well, you know, you have to be kidding." Well, Ed Peetz, who is a very conservative guy who basically by training was a landscape architect, had most of his planning experience on the old Civil War cannonball circuit of parks. His little expedition with me, he told me later, was really an eye-opener.

So was Gateway. Ed was really the team captain of the first Gateway study, so he had all these crazy people who he said weren't even planners planning this park. We did that study in 12 weeks which was phenomenal for Gateway when I think about it now. No one had ever done anything in 12 weeks in the Park Service. They just couldn't believe it. Studies normally took a year and one-half to two years maybe. To do something in 12 weeks, produce a manuscript, a slide show and a presentation for the Secretary of the Interior was absolutely unheard of. But, to Ed's credit, he had a lot of confidence in me.

We came back and I wrote this little report. I said little; it was only six or seven pages long and gave it to Rogers Morton. I said, "This is a great place, we ought to do some more work here."

MR. COCKRELL: What was his response?

MR. McCANN: I think my date on that paper to Peetz was August 1971. We took the report up there. In fact, I think I gave it

Theodore R. McCann

orally, as I remember. He said, "Great, why don't you go look at it."

I think by the time we got some money and they figured out how we were going to work this thing out, I think I was working on something else. I think I was working in New York that summer flying back and forth doing the Summer program. It seems to me like it was the first part of October when we really first went out there and started the study.

Essentially, it was just myself at the beginning because Denver was still in a sort of state of chaos because they had lost people and people had quit and they were still transferring people in and out. It was kind of a mess. Also, Cuyahoga, in fact, went through a bunch of weird things. At one point it was under Philadelphia. Then it became a Midwest area, so it was always sort of a stepchild there for a while.

We went out, and as I say, initially, it was basically me. I did a lot of photography and lot of wandering around because it is a fairly complex park and it is over 20 miles long, so you spend a lot of time driving up and down that park. I remember the first couple of trips I stayed in downtown Cleveland, just to get a feel of what Cleveland was like and what their parks were like and I had a lot of meetings. You know how when you go into these things that everybody wants to meet you. A lot of city people, and of course, these two park authorities at either end of this park. They were a great help to me. They did a lot of legwork that I didn't have to do and I didn't have to have somebody else do. So, in that respect it was fairly simple going over into, say, a raw area where nobody even has looked at before and study it from scratch.

MR. COCKRELL: What was your initial impression of the Cuyahoga Valley?

MR. McCANN: Well, it is really ironic that I had lived in Pontiac, Michigan. That used to be my hometown. So, I must have driven from Washington to Pontiac over the Cuyahoga Valley, if you figure two times a trip, maybe 50 times, and had never gotten off the highway; there was no reason to. I had been to Cleveland before a couple of times. I had been to Akron once, but I had never honestly been to the Cuyahoga Valley. So, I was astounded, really astounded.

One, there was almost no development down in the valley and I couldn't figure out why at first. Maybe a lot of people ask the same question. There were farms down there, there was a couple of wonderful houses, and this incredible Blossom Music Center. But, as I say, very, very little development. Kind of a mixture of real scrubby growth by the river and then you get over into some of the parks of Akron. Marvelous wooded stony kinds of areas, just

Theodore R. McCann

marvelous. You felt like you were 100 miles away from anybody. This is within 20 minutes of downtown Cleveland; it is amazing. There is also a canyon that is on the National Natural Register and a lot of stuff on the National Register in that area, so it had a tremendous amount of qualities about it.

I don't know how many people know it, but it absolutely is the dividing line between essentially Appalachian and prairie vegetation east and west. It is also the dividing line between what is basically northern and what is that transitional zone for southern plant life. So, botanically, it is a fantastic area, if you are interested in botany.

MR. COCKRELL: Was Ed Peetz equally impressed by the valley?

MR. McCANN: Yes, he was. I think I was more impressed than Peetz, because, as I say, Ed's whole background as a landscape architect was basically in places like Blue Ridge Mountains, Shenandoah and the cannonball parks. So, he was sort of always looking at that perspective, although, again, Ed really enjoyed Gateway more than I would have thought. But, again, I think he was fascinated with the forts. He loved the old forts up there. I have to admit they were fascinating. The other odd thing is that Ed is from the same neck of the woods that I am from originally in Pennsylvania. I think he is from Washington, PA. So he was from there, growing up in Pittsburgh, and of course, I grew up in Jeannette, just a little ways from Pittsburgh. I think all of those things color how you look at things.

MR. COCKRELL: The conclusion of your 1971 report was that it had park potential? What reaction did you receive from within the Park Service?

MR. McCANN: Mostly raised eyebrows and a lot of jokes.

MR. COCKRELL: What were some of the things that were said?

MR. McCANN: Well, you have to remember that, I would say, basically, the Park Service did not even quite believe the Gateway thing. And at this moment the Gateways were still just Hickel's dream. You see, they were being stonewalled by OMB or whatever it is called now. The budget was holding them up. We were arguing with the Bureau of the Budget over the New York Gateway.

MR. COCKRELL: Who were some of the individuals that joined the group? Was Hartzog one of these individuals?

MR. McCANN: No. I would say almost without fail, George Hartzog backed everything that I ever did. In fact, most of the time, he sent me to do it. But when you look back now, somebody said he was

Theodore R. McCann

the right man at the right time. He was so unbelievably the right man at the right time. Even though he made a few mistakes, he absolutely understood what was happening, politically, socially, with a far better grasp of it, I think, than even today most people suspect.

He had enough people around him who were the same way. Bill Everhardt was always one of my big boosters, because, literally Vince Gleason and I thought up the idea of a Division of Interpretation and sold it. We had to really convince Bill Everhardt. We did a presentation and then we sold it to George. It is kind of odd to think about that now, but, I just recalled that this is exactly what happened.

MR. COCKRELL: Wasn't that a basic part of the organization?

MR. McCANN: I know, but it wasn't. It was just like a branch. Basically under somebody that was Visitor Services. Essentially historians ran the Park Service up until that point in time. From say below the position of Assistant Director down.

MR. COCKRELL: What were some of the things that were said about Cuyahoga?

MR. McCANN: At that point in time, there weren't too many people involved in it. Not too many people knew about it. Ed and I were reporting to somebody at the main office. Denver was so absorbed with its own problems it didn't know what we were doing, literally. There was a lot of other stuff happening at that time. These guys went out and looked at this place. There were other people doing similar things, although as it turned out, I am the only one in the Park Service who was involved in every urban park, literally, for 16 years.

MR. COCKRELL: At this point in 1971, what did you feel chances were that this would become a unit of the Park System?

MR. McCANN: Dim. I have to confess that I didn't know. In fact, when reading through some of the material this morning, I never really knew precisely when it was that Seiberling put his first bill in. But I think just for the record at the time we went out there, I had never heard of Congressman Seiberling. I certainly had never heard of a bill that he put in. But now, I remember him telling me that later.

The interesting sideline to this is, Seiberling was elected I think in 1970, so he was a freshman Congressman. He was on the Judiciary Committee and he was on some other crazy committee, like Space and Aeronautics or something. When I first met him, I asked him what committees he was on. He told me and I said, "Congressman, you are

Theodore R. McCann

on the wrong committee. If you want a park," and he told people this story years afterwards, "you have got to get on the Interior Committee." He said, "How do I do that?" I said, "There must be some ritual you have to go through." Well, it was a ritual as it turned out. But he got on the Interior Committee because I told him he better get on it. This is a true story.

MR. COCKRELL: So in 1971, you didn't meet with Seiberling during that first study? The next step was the feasibility study that began in March of 1972?

MR. McCANN: No. It started that fall really.

MR. COCKRELL: In the fall of 1971?

MR. McCANN: Yes. We went up there in October. I think that is the one that is dated March 1972. That was after it was completed. That is why it has that date.

MR. COCKRELL: So actually you did two studies? You did the first reconnaissance study and then the feasibility study? Was there any Congressional appropriation or did it come out of the general fund?

MR. McCANN: I was paid out of the Director's budget at first. I know for a long while I wasn't really paid by the Denver Service Center because I had been a Special Projects Director or some crazy title, but I was paid literally out of the Director's Office budget. Somewhere along the line, I got picked up and I was really a part of Denver's payroll from the Washington Office. It remained that way through 1976, because I worked on the National Visitors Center, my greatest fiasco of them all.

Then, I got off that right after Everhardt became Director. I wanted him to shift me, but he didn't. When Bill Whalen came in, the first day he was on the job, I went to him and said, "Bill, I want to be shifted back to the Washington Office." Then I did a whole series of things for Whalen that were very similar to the same role I played with Hartzog five years before. It was very unusual.

MR. COCKRELL: How were the boundaries determined for the second study?

MR. McCANN: That is an interesting question. There was always a boundary as defined by both the Akron and Cleveland park authorities. They had what they called their "dream boundary" which was sort of this all encompassing thing that basically followed the edges of what they owned with some open stuff in the middle that still had to be bought. So the boundary was never really a big deal, because it was pretty much set.

Theodore R. McCann

I literally walked the boundary of that park twice. That is how I knew it, because my theory was you have to know as much or more than the locals or they will kill you in a public meeting. It worked like a charm in New York because I physically had walked that thing in New York, and everybody on my team had walked it. So we knew that park. The same thing applied in Ohio because I knew I was up against all these people like Seiberling. He was born and raised there. All these people that supported the park were born and raised in that valley.

All I did was include some things from a landscape point of view, or a watershed/scenic point of view that they hadn't included, because they tended to think in terms of well, what could they afford to own that was absolutely beyond reproach sort of routine, you know. Very conservative.

I don't know if you have heard this story before, but the most incredible thing of all in terms of planning something is that we arrived at a boundary. We added some more stuff after we became acquainted with Seiberling and others in the valley. There was a wonderful man who was the editor of an Akron newspaper. He was a really big advocate for the park. There were some very wealthy people who lived in that area. A man named Saalfeld is one of them; I think he is a publisher. But they kept telling me things: "It really would be nice if you would add so and so up that little valley into the park," that "this is priceless" or "there are some wild orchids that grow over in this place, you had better add that." So you end up adding these things and it all makes sense, too.

After that preliminary, it really had pretty much kept the boundary set at this point. Everybody agrees on it, that lo and behold the state of Ohio was getting antsy that maybe this isn't going to be a national park and they had better get going. As I said, Bill Nye is a very energetic guy, so he gets a quarter of a million dollars to put out a proposal request and three companies bid this thing. They were the final bidders. A tremendous engineering company in Philadelphia, a design outfit in Columbia, Maryland and another group. A quarter of a million dollars, which is not really a lot of money. They did a beautiful study. We agreed before anyone would do that, they would never look at mine, so they would not have any influence at all over the Park Service study.

I think the most incredible thing happened at the end. I went over to the presentation at Columbus that day and somebody had blown up my map and they had a mylar overlay of their map. There was a difference of 16 acres. My study included maybe 40,000 acres. Twenty-five people looking at the same piece of landscape came to almost exactly the same conclusion. Given all the facts, profes-

Theodore R. McCann

sionals will eventually reach almost the same conclusions; I mean it is that simple. A lot of people will say, you know, you send five guys out to do it and you get five different answers. I say I don't believe in that. I don't think that is true.

MR. COCKRELL: How did the boundaries that were determined at this time change from the final bill that went to the President?

MR. McCANN: I know one day I was in on my hands and knees in John's office and I had this enormous map made in my office that literally showed everything but everybody's swimming pools. It was a huge scale thing because you had to have it at that scale to understand where the individual property lines were. We are getting down now to talking about how if you had to take somebody's house, were would they be sort of thing. So, a guy in our office made this, and that was our working map at that point. That was, of course, near the end, right before we got a bill.

But, John added some stuff, because some things happened in this interim. Two people offered to give some land free. A couple of people would sell it at very reduced rates. Somebody died and that property was up for grabs. So it was what they call an "opportunity for purchase." You had several things like that happen. I don't think anyone was consciously trying to build Yosemite Park. It was just that there were either purchases of opportunity or some land became available that we didn't know about.

Everybody then starts thinking "buffer." This was also at the time when the courts had finally decided in favor of what's his face to build his Coliseum on the edge of the park off the super highway. Everybody thought that was really going to muck up everything. As it turned out, it really didn't. It didn't really effect anything, but everybody was really worried about that.

MR. COCKRELL: How did the Metro Parks get added within the National Recreation Area's boundary? Was that your concept originally, that they would all be donated?

MR. McCANN: Yes. I think the idea we were trying to do was basically the idea of Gateway. It was really putting together the maximum park with the minimum amount of federal land purchased. I mean that was really the concept of Gateway that is kind of lost in the shuffle today, but that was the whole idea. In New York's case, the Federal Government has yet to buy one square foot of land. In the case of Golden Gate, it was only to make a connection with another park. There wasn't any federal purchase at all. So I think it was a great idea.

In Cuyahoga, there were two park systems that owned kind of wildly diversioned kinds of properties and kind of spread out. Then you

Theodore R. McCann

had some quasi-government properties, Boy Scout camps, Girl Scout camps, church camps, the Blossom Music Center, a canal running through the whole thing, a lot of acreage. You had a lot of federal, state, quasi-public lands as a tremendous beginning sort of inventory.

MR. COCKRELL: Bill Birdsell was the superintendent of the Ohio NPS Group. In an oral history interview, he said that the Northeast Regional Office's attitude on Cuyahoga was that we don't have to worry about it; it is never going to happen. Was this the NPS attitude in general--that no one had to worry about Cuyahoga?

MR. McCANN: Well, I can tell you an even funnier story. I found the memorandum that Peetz wrote saying we were going to present this to Philadelphia for their OK. Now, mind you, Seiberling had already rewritten his bill. For all intents and purposes, it was in the bag Congressionally. But I go through this pro forma visit to Philadelphia to present the thing.

Well, I give it and nobody says a word. It was really strange. I can't remember now who all even was there. There was a lot of people there. There was a man who was the Regional Historian, Regional Director, Assistant Regional Director, all these people. At the end, somebody handed me the memorandum of agreement that set up Ice Age Park, which is one of those affiliated areas. They said, "This is probably what you ought to develop for Cuyahoga."

And that was it. It was the weirdest thing. Of course, we drove up there in a car and Ed Peetz said afterward, "It was like kissing your sister," or something like that. I had to agree with him. But they didn't quite say that. Because they knew it was the pecking order. They knew George Hartzog was in favor of it, but they just thought it would never happen in a million years.

However, I was castigated by their head of PR after this meeting that I should stop holding press conferences or appearing on television without getting prior clearance from Philadelphia. At first, I thought he was joking, then I realized that he was very angry. I said, "What are you talking about?" He said, "You were interviewed and we saw the clips." I said, "I got off an elevator and here was a battery of TV cameras," and I am looking around to see who the celebrity was on the elevator and a guy says, "Mr. McCann?" So I did the stand-up thing.

It was all three networks. I couldn't believe it! This was the first week. Then the Cleveland papers got word that the Secretary of the Interior had O.K.'d the study. Then John Seiberling, who was real excited about this, decided to hold a press conference and we do this walk along the canal with helicopters and news people. We do this every ten-mile thing down the canal; we get out and do

Theodore R. McCann

this television photo opportunity. John, being a politician, talked non-stop at the drop of a hat. That was a lot of fun.

Well, I guess the Regional Office really got upset with that. I said, "Look, when a U. S. Congressman starts yakking at you and there is a cameraman, I am not going to say, 'Excuse me, I can't say a word. I am going to have to call Philadelphia and get their approval.'" But this is the kind of nonsense you get.

MR. COCKRELL: You were talking about being with Seiberling. How closely did you work with him after this second report?

MR. McCANN: Very closely. Extraordinarily close. In my personal life, right about that same time, I separated from my wife. I had known Loretta sort of vaguely and I got to know her better and I moved in with her. About this same time, Seiberling was losing his best right-hand person who was a woman. We had dinner one night when we were talking about getting into the committee, and Linda says, "Do you know anybody that would be really good working for John that knows something about parks and the Interior?"

I said, "As a matter of fact, I know just the perfect woman, but she has no Hill experience." They kept saying, "With Hill experience." I said, "No, she has none of this, but she knows the Department of the Interior. She knows the Park Service backwards and forwards and she is a good writer." They weren't too excited about that, but they said, "Send her over and we will talk to her." And that is how Loretta Neumann ended up in this funny world.

MR. COCKRELL: When Loretta got on with John's Washington office, then how did you two--you being with the Park Service and she being with the Congressional office--how did that mesh? Were there problems?

MR. McCANN: Well, there were terrific political problems. But I got them. For example, you have to remember that you are in the Morton Administration, at what was becoming the end of the Nixon Administration. Ronald Walker came in as Park Service Director. This was the end of Gateway. I remember that the Gateway bill was signed and I took one of these women that worked for Walker up there to Gateway and she didn't really want to go, but he wanted her to get involved in it.

In any case, I don't know when, but one day Peetz says, "Well, you know you are going to have to present this to Walker." By that time though, it was so sewed up on the Hill that I knew it didn't matter. We went up and I gave this presentation to Walker. About half way through it, I had a chart on all the pollution loads on the river from the stream valleys and I was giving coliform counts and all this stuff, and he asked me what the word was. I was a

Theodore R. McCann

little astounded at this. Then he asked me another word on another chart. Finally, he got sort of exasperated and he said, "Oh well, this doesn't matter, this is all crap!" Then he laughed like it was a funny joke.

He said, "Well, this is not going to happen," and I will give you two great quotes. He said, "There is no way we are going to make a national park for some rich Democrat from Cleveland!" I gathered up my little charts and poor Ed Peetz was just so embarrassed. His face was red. I remember he was so uncomfortable. It didn't bother me, because I was so confident that this was going to be a park, I didn't care what Ron Walker or President Nixon or anybody else thought about it, it was going to be a park. They had the votes. So I walked out the door and he said, "Well, thanks for coming anyhow, McCann. I will tell you one thing. This will be a park over my dead body!"

Well, two years later, I was walking across Pennsylvania Avenue and I ran into Ron Walker. He said, "How are you doing?" I said, "Fine. I am glad to see you are still alive and well, Ron." He said, "Why?" I said, "Well, we have a park in Cuyahoga Valley and you are still alive." He said, "Did I say that?" I said, "Yes!"

MR. COCKRELL: Who else was at that meeting? There was Ron Walker and who else?

MR. McCANN: I can't remember. It was his number-two guy that he brought with him, I think from the White House. And this woman whose name I can't think of. She was an all-around, girl-Friday type, very sharp. I ended up becoming very good friends with her. She was really neat. But when he left, that whole bunch left. James Watt did the same thing when he became Secretary of the Interior. They had their own little crew around them and they just absolutely did not deal with anybody else. Walker did the same thing.

MR. COCKRELL: How about Bill Birdsell's role in this? He was a little mad that he was out in Ohio supposedly in tune with everything that was going on out there, yet when you gave your presentation in Philadelphia, he wasn't even invited to go there. Why was that?

MR. McCANN: I don't know. It was all kind of strange. I think Bill's choice in the first place was just simple expediency. He was in Ohio; they needed somebody; he had been around a while; and it was literally, well, we will send Bill from down here, up there in Ohio. I don't think anyone else ever really put any tremendous amount of thought in it.

Theodore R. McCann

As I say, my relationship with the Philadelphia Region was always terrible because they hated Gateway. They fought it every step of the way. I mean, literally went out of their way to sabotage it, all the time I worked on it. Everybody else said the same thing, so I am just not saying this because they had some vendetta against me particularly, but you could imagine you do another thing and they hated that too.

No one has ever said this, but I guess now that you sort of bring it up, I have always had the feeling that they just sort of picked Birdsell out of a hat, literally, because he was in Ohio. For no other reason. I think he was a historian by background or something. Here he was at an archeological site, centrally located, very quiet, one of these odd little parks we have that gets 25 visitors a week and it is a big week. Suddenly he is in the middle of this thing and I think a little over his head all the time.

He just had fits with the press. I think part of it was, he just wasn't used to dealing with the press and being under daily scrutiny. He was a little unnerved, I think, by John at first, because he didn't have to deal with Congressmen. He didn't really have to deal with anybody down at the other place where he was at.

MR. COCKRELL: I came across a September 1972 article of The Voice, the newsletter of the Cuyahoga Valley Association, and it said that your report was completed, but that bureaucratic red tape would hold it up and its public unveiling would occur in later October or sometime after the November election. Your report was never released to the public that I could see. Would it be normal procedure for a feasibility study to be released to the public?

MR. McCANN: Not really, no. But they didn't understand all the kind of nomenclature we go through in the Park Service.

MR. COCKRELL: They were evidently looking forward to seeing it.

MR. McCANN: Right, because we had been there so much and talked to everybody in the world in that part of Ohio. So they wanted to see the end product.

MR. COCKRELL: There were a couple of copies that supposedly leaked out to the press. The Cleveland and Akron papers got ahold of a copy months after it was finished. How did that come about? Was that something that Loretta might have done?

MR. McCANN: It could have been leaked by everybody, because one of the big backers in the park was the ex-editor of the Akron Beacon Journal. A good friend of Loretta's was Scripps-Howard's star reporter who ended up being the president of the Press Club here; his name I can't remember now, but it is quite well known.

Theodore R. McCann

He was the sharpest kid on the block and the newspaper world in northern Ohio, literally. The Akron paper was just an extraordinarily, very sophisticated newspaper, very pro-park, pro-National Park Service, etc., etc.

I think John himself might have done it. He had a copy of it, and Xerox machines are everywhere. It wasn't that thick. I believe in brevity in these kinds of studies because I think if anything is wrong with the Park Service, it just over studies and kills things to death with just verbiage, particularly in an area like that where you have a lot of colleges. You have a lot of professionals that have looked at that land over and over. You don't have to go on and re-invent the wheel, which is what we tend to always somehow end up doing.

MR. COCKRELL: Was your report ever officially forwarded to the House Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs?

MR. McCANN: I think it was eventually. I think I did another version of it. I did it more like a master plan version that got sort of sanitized by Denver at one point. But essentially that is what went over there.

More importantly, when you look at this thing historically, the thing that really sold it was what sold Gateway. It wasn't the writing, it was the graphics! I had this whole graphic presentation. Loretta and I also had a marvelous slide show. I think it was the first "human" slide show. I mean, it was her voice and mine alternating and it was all done very, very lyrically, with no facts or figures, just letting the pictures come through in a nice little chatter about the valley. To everyone we showed that to, it was nice; people who lived there, people who never saw the place, it had a nice lyric quality to it. I think that is what really moves people.

MR. COCKRELL: Why do you think the Nixon Administration was against something like Cuyahoga, yet they were proceeding in areas like Big Thicket and Big Cypress?

MR. McCANN: Two reasons. You have to remember when Nixon came in during the 1968 election, he kept saying he was going to be the biggest conservation President in U.S. history. He was going to bring us together, he was going to heal the wounds, etc. The legacy of the first Nixon Administration, of course, was all these things a lot of people worked on a long time that finally came into being was the Environmental Protection Agency. It was the Clear Air and Clean Water Act. All these things that had been sort of sitting around or kicked around for a while, but nobody ever thought anyone could bring it off. It is just like it took a

Theodore R. McCann

professional anti-Communist to open the doors to try it. It is that same kind of craziness that happens politically.

I know what happened. At the end of the first term, the hardliners took over essentially in the White House, in the Republican Party, and you didn't have a Rogers Morton around anymore. You didn't have a Wally Hickel around anymore. You didn't have the old Eastern establishment Republicans around anymore. Orange County had taken over as they used to say. So you had a much tougher line. This was the first move really during that time when they (Fred Mallik and that whole crew from OMB) really started moving into the agencies to start cutting off the troops at the pass, so to speak. If they could get in and stop money requested at the origin, then they didn't have any trouble when they got over to OMB. So that is when all that business started.

Parks for some reason were known as requiring unlimited funds over a forever period of time. So, if you cut them off at the beginning, you wouldn't have that factor and that thinking. Of course, this permeated the Reagan Administration. I was told at one point, "The best planning is no planning." Someone told me that very far up in the Park Service. If you don't authorize parks, you don't have to pay for them later. You know, that sort of routine.

Then you had all that nonsense with James Watt who was going to deauthorize parks. Well, there was one critical little problem he forgot about and that is Congress authorizes them and Congress deauthorizes them. They have only done it once or twice in history. One of which was Mackinac Island.

MR. COCKRELL: In your opinion, how does Cuyahoga measure up to the two Gateways? Some people have called it Gateway Midwest.

MR. McCANN: Well, I don't think it is comparable for a good many reasons. It still is not as accessible as either of those are, simply because they are sitting right there. In San Francisco's case, literally, in the back yard and in New York's case because most of that land is pretty darn close to populations and accessibility is immediate.

At Cuyahoga, you have to go by car, go by bus, go by train to get there. A few places you can walk into some of the metro parks from nearby residential areas, but it still is an outing. There is still basically the typical Midwest summer usage parks. There is some skiing, there is some sledding, that kind of thing. Basically, they are still pretty much used the way they have always used parks in that area anyhow.

I think all of this business that you have got from the few people that were against the park (there weren't many) worried about mass

Theodore R. McCann

migration of humanity from Huff into Summit County. It just didn't happen. It won't happen. Like all parks, as their facilities increase, their visitation is going to increase. As access gets better, visitation gets better. All these things sort of build on one another. I never gave out those kinds of figures like we have done time and again in the Park Service. You know, these astronomical projections of visitation. It never happens that way. It takes all kinds of odd factors, I think, to get people used to doing something different or new.

It is what I noticed there when I first looked at that; those parks that were run by the city. It was really funny. One of the smallest little areas you couldn't even get into on a Sunday in the summer. The reason was that was the first area you hit if you drove from these two different communities. You hit that place. So there was 10,000 people crammed into this sort of picnic area, and you go two miles down the road and there is nobody; a couple of horseback riders. Very strange. Of course, people like to be together, too, you have to remember that. They are just a different animal.

MR. COCKRELL: Within the Park Service, how divisive do you think the Cuyahoga issue was?

MR. McCANN: It was a culmination of the Gateways, the Cuyahoga; at the same time we are looking at all this other stuff all over the place. It was Chattahoochie, Santa Monica, the Martin Luther King site; all these other things were happening. The Wilderness Society people hated urban parks. The NRPA had mixed emotions. The NPCA was anti-Gateway for a long time. They don't want to admit that now, but they were.

National Geographic sort of put them down at first. The most amazing thing of all when they do that big issue on the National Parks--what gets half of the pages in that? Its Cuyahoga, Gateways, you know, it is all of these urban parks. It is not the old standbys. The whole thing is practically urban parks.

I for one, took great delight in that, because I remember some long conversations defending them ten years before that, with various people in the hierarchy of the National Geographic. But, I think the real dialogue, at least in those times, was a handful of urbanists like myself against the traditionalists. You know, a national park was Yellowstone. Then I would go back historically and read the big arguments when Roosevelt just handed us over all this Civil War stuff. They went through the same thing then, like, "Oh my God, what are we going to do with all that Army junk?" You know, it is very true.

Theodore R. McCann

Then with the ascendancy of the historians, as I call it, after that and into the 40's and 50's certainly, then Connie Wirth says, "We don't want to get into the recreation business." What happened? They set up their Bureau of Outdoor Recreation. Then later in life, he says he never said that. Well, I don't know, he did say it. But all these things catch up with you.

MR. COCKRELL: Assistant Secretary Nat Reed wrote a veto message for President Ford. Did you discuss Cuyahoga with Reed at all, or did you brief him?

MR. McCANN: Not with Reed, but with Doug Wheeler. It is always the Assistant Secretary's right-hand man that is the powerhouse, whatever the position is, Deputy Assistant, has always been filled by someone that is very, very difficult usually. Although Doug Wheeler became a good friend of mine after he left and in fact, we both belong to the same organization here in the city, Committee of 100.

At the time, I will say he was sort of pleasant, but he didn't buy the pitch because I had to give it to him two days after we rather unceremoniously got booted out of Mr. Walker's office. But there were two other people that worked in Wheeler's office that were very favorable and were my guys. He was lukewarm. The Secretary that reads his agenda liked Big Thickett and Big Cypress, obviously. One was to satisfy Mr. Tower and one was to satisfy Nat Reed. That was their total agenda.

By that time, Rogers Morton really wanted a Potomac National River. We had sold them on that, but he was in favor of it anyhow. That was going to be our next big planning thing. Paul Lederer and Sylvia Cabrera who worked in the office with me and Peetz, and then they and I had our own little sort of empire at one point, doing special studies of things. They worked on the Ellis Island study with me and other stuff later on. They had already started a Master Plan of the Potomac National River, literally. Well, a master plan/study; it wasn't even a park yet.

MR. COCKRELL: Ron Walker's Deputy Director was Russell Dickenson. Did he have the same attitude about Cuyahoga?

MR. McCANN: I don't think I ever talked it over with him. I had almost nothing to do with Russ at that point. I knew him as Regional Director because he was number-two man during Summer in the Parks year, and then he was number-one man. We did an ill-fated project called Humanisphere that Ehrlichman killed. It would have flown otherwise, but Russ was then Regional Director. I have known him off and on for a long time. I don't know if I ever even had a conversation with the guy on the Gateways for that matter.

Theodore R. McCann

MR. COCKRELL: In your studies of the Cuyahoga Valley, did you encounter any opposition to the idea of a national park?

MR. McCANN: Do you mean there in Ohio?

MR. COCKRELL: Yes, in Ohio.

MR. McCANN: Almost none. I think it was the most unanimous thing I have ever seen in my life. I mean, the public hearing that day for the subcommittee was held in Blossom Music Center. The only people that even spoke against it were some right-to-life types. I don't know what in the world they were talking about. If you would have sat there and you didn't know anything at all about Ohio politics or anything at all about the park, to have the President of Republic Steel, following the President of U.A.W., following some minister, following the President of Alcoa, following the head of the baseball company, following the head of the Mellon Bank, I mean it was so extraordinary, and some Black guy that drives a cab. It was just extraordinary.

MR. COCKRELL: The problems that the Park Service ran into after the bill went through Congress and was signed by the President, I guess mainly generated from the land acquisition program. Then it seemed like the opponents came out of the woodwork and said, "Well, we were against it all along." Was that really true?

MR. McCANN: No. You know the irony is that a lot of the so-called opponents that were picked up in that 20/20 television show were people who had already gotten their money and run and were griping. It was unbelievable hypocrisy. They had been offered more than they wanted and had taken it. One guy who really absolutely screwed the Park Service, he had sold this worthless stuff for too much money and they paid for it. I wouldn't have paid the guy that much money. He was griping that they didn't take his house yet. But then in any situation like that, the crazies come out of the woodwork. They did there.

I think the biggest mistake the Park Service made there was they simply should have monitored the Corps of Engineers who are used to going in like gangbusters and just steamrolling people. Again, Bill should have monitored the heck out of that and he didn't. He was just absolutely inexperienced in that whole process. I blame Denver, I blame Washington for not really monitoring that thing closer. That is also, unfortunately, the way the Park Service does it. Hands-on supervision of things is so diffuse. People think they can solve everything by a letter; everyone signs off on a letter. That is responsibility.

Thank goodness, because of Cuyahoga, it at least taught me, and I think it taught some other people, a hell of a lesson. So when

Theodore R. McCann

Santa Monica came up, I kept screaming that before anybody does anything, get all the planners together and for God's sake, get everybody together so they all know what the game is in southern California. Don't make all these mistakes like everywhere else, because they will kill you there. Because everybody is waiting for you to fall on your face, so don't let them have the opportunity.

So, we did something unique. We said, put a planner in the top position of management. And that is what they did with John Reynolds, believe it or not. People might pooh-pooh that, but that was a significant change in Park Service attitudes, right there. You didn't get Joe Schmuck from Ivanhoe Valley that has never been in L.A. in his life and stick him there and you say, "Survive!" The guy I recommended, they didn't consider. I wanted Bob Chandler. Bob had been in the Chicago Field Office. He was a sharp, urban, sophisticated, stand-up talker, not-afraid-of-the-city-type of guy. So, Bill put Bob Chandler out there and I said, "Thank God."

MR. COCKRELL: What was the attitude within the Park Service when President Ford signed the bill?

MR. McCANN: I bet and won a lot of money on just small little bets. Even my own office didn't believe it. I kept saying, "It is going to go." They kept saying, "Not with everybody in the Park Service against it." The Director didn't like it, Reed didn't like it. I said, "It doesn't matter. They do not make national parks. They are made in the House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate."

For the life of me, I think there are still people in the National Park Service that think these things come out of God knows where. They come out of the political process. The National Park System is a creature of the political process. God didn't invent it. Maybe the original fabric is, of course, God's, but the Park System is a political animal. It always has been, it always will be.

It is really strange. Even here in Washington, as sophisticated as it is, there are a lot of people in that building that seem to have come out of a tree somewhere. Who makes these things? It is a bunch of Congressmen and Senators that make these things. At certain times, things are ripe and as Phil Burton proved, you promise enough people enough things and you can get any park you want. Because he did. He got a couple of mine that had never even been studied. No study whatsoever on these parks.

MR. COCKRELL: At the request of Director Bill Whalen, Dave Sherman, Lew Albert and you went to Cuyahoga Valley to investigate and give him an update on the problems at Cuyahoga. When was this investigation? Was it in 1979?

Theodore R. McCann

MR. McCANN: I am not sure, but it had to be in 1978 or 1979.

MR. COCKRELL: What were the results of the investigation and what were some of the things that Birdsell was saying to try to explain why there were so many problems?

MR. McCANN: I think it hinged on a couple of things. One was that they were really upset about the television thing. That was mainly it. They were upset about the bad PR that the Park Service was getting on television and in both Cleveland papers, not so much the Akron Beacon Journal.

It was bothering Seiberling. Although he liked Bill, he was worried that things weren't really moving very fast. He would tell me this very privately as more of a friend than an employee of the Park Service. I agreed with him because Birdsell's strong point was simply not developing programs. There was sort of nothing happening.

Sherman was one of those guys that had the kind of job that I used to have. You just sort of did different things and took care of things; he was an expeditor. He was very sharp. Dave used to be the State Historic Preservation Officer for Georgia. That is where he came from. He came in in the Carter Administration; a very sharp guy. He is still around. I don't know where it was initiated, but I remember a Director or somebody calling me up one day and saying that I should do this, and who would I get? Maybe it was Dave, and I said, "Well, you and I." He said, "Who else should we get?"

I happened to know Lew and unbeknownst to Sherman, at one point, somebody asked me if we had to get rid of Birdsell, who would you get. I said, "I know the perfect guy. He is in Lowell, Massachusetts right now, he is fantastic." Lew, again is another one of those people that is just a completely different breed of animal from your standard operating Park Service Superintendent-type.

So we went out and did the thing and I really had mixed feelings about, but I knew that Bill literally ought to move on to something else, to get out of there, get new blood in there. Somebody that was much more program-oriented. He had been there long enough and it would take his name off being associated with the land or the house problems. That was sort of what we recommended.

MR. COCKRELL: Did Birdsell try to defend some of his activities?

MR. McCANN: Yes, it was kind of sad. Because what had happened was we had a meeting before the House Subcommittee. I don't know if Loretta set it up or who set it up.

Theodore R. McCann

MR. COCKRELL: Was this a written report that you submitted or an oral report?

MR. McCANN: I ended up writing it, and all three of us ended up signing off on it. They made a couple of changes and we just literally gave a copy to the Director and no one else saw it. We were very careful about that. This was done for several reasons. It was a confidential thing and we wanted to protect Bill and the whole business.

MR. COCKRELL: But the bottom line of it was that you recommended that there be a new superintendent?

MR. McCANN: Yes. For a whole lot of other reasons, too. It wasn't essentially aimed at Bill. I think in all honesty he had done a reasonably good job and he had been there from the very beginning and it was time to move on. The same thing happened with the Gateways. It is the same advise I give people like Judy Hart, who was at Women's Rights, which was my last project. You get to a point where you don't want to become Miss Women's Rights Park, or Mr. Cuyahoga or Mr. Gateway. You just have to get out of there, you know, go somewhere else.

MR. COCKRELL: Director Dickenson came in the spring of 1980 and there was a real controversy in the Cleveland Press. They had done a series of articles very critical about Cuyahoga. I think even in their editorials they said it was time to get a new manager in there. I guess Birdsell went into orbit and wrote a letter to the publisher of the Cleveland Press, who got very upset and sent it on up the channel to the Secretary of the Interior and the Director of the Park Service. Was this the final straw to spark some action to remove Birdsell? Or was this process already in motion?

MR. McCANN: I couldn't say for sure, but I know it certainly was being considered. I probably would have to agree it may have been. For Bill, it was a tactical error. He should have just ignored it. He took it personally. It was very personal, but he took it even more personally. Basically, he always had kind of a defensive personality. Some people are, some people aren't. As I say, he just stayed too long.

Basically, that newspaper article was very unfair to everybody. It made much over absolutely very little. As I pointed out to a reporter that called me on the phone one night, I said, "Where were you people, for example, when the freeway system took out 950 homes of very poor blacks in south Cleveland? I never read a word of outrage about that. I will never read a word about that." So you have some middle class white or upper middle class people who didn't get \$100,000, they only got \$70,000 for their homes and they are crying. I said, "They are crying all the way to the bank."

Theodore R. McCann

I think there is bit of hypocrisy in all this. There is a lot of hypocrisy in this. I really let them have it. I wrote a letter to both Cleveland newspapers on that same theory, that "Where were you people when they were destroying south Cleveland and the whole approach to the downtown?" You know, they took out about a third of that housing stock for a bunch of nutty roads. This is true in every city, Detroit, my hometown, Pontiac, Atlanta, Cincinnati, you know all these cities. That is where they put the highway systems. They put it through the people that would beef the least and they paid them nothing, you know, peanuts. For us to take a few houses in a valley, which is really what it amounted to, it is apples and oranges.

MR. COCKRELL: Do you think that Cuyahoga Valley has lived up to your original expectations? When was the last time you were at Cuyahoga?

MR. McCANN: Just two years ago. I think Lew did a fantastic job. One, that little town was an extraordinarily well done project to make that the headquarters. That is what I really believe in and advocate. You take something that is pretty crummy, you save it, and then you make something better out of it. It is where I was terribly disappointed in the New York Gateway where they had golden opportunities to do some fantastic stuff there and they didn't. They just didn't have the vision, nobody pushed it, nobody was a godfather for it, and it doesn't look any different than when I first saw it.

It really bothers me, because San Francisco did. There was community enthusiasm that really embraced that. You simply didn't have it in New York. You had overall, better people in San Francisco on the Park Service side. Better people pushing them on the community side.

Part of that is lacking in Cuyahoga. You have that sort of wellspring of immediate support of people that live in that valley. I think part of that is tied in with the general economy. There are just other problems and issues that maybe they are more aware of. But it is also kind of what I call the "Midwest Malaise." I don't know what it is.

MR. COCKRELL: You can identify with that being from the Midwest?

MR. McCANN: Yes, that is right. It is just like a lot of our other sites there, Sleeping Bear Dunes and Pictured Rocks and Indiana Dunes. I don't know what it is. I think Lew did a great job. It really showed much more life than it had under Bill because he just had a different agenda. There is so much other stuff going on around there and in there anyhow, that to me it

Theodore R. McCann

would seem that it would be the easiest thing in the work to build on as far as program kinds of things are concerned. It is getting everybody involved in it. I guess that is what I would have done. That is what you have to do; it takes work.

MR. COCKRELL: Do you think one of Birdsell's problems was that you could not get enough funding for an adequate staff or to put on programs?

MR. McCANN: No, he did it very well on the money for two reasons. Ralph Regula was in early support of that park as a Senator in the Ohio Legislature. That is when I met Ralph. In fact, the same thing goes for Ralph. When he won, it was that off-year when there were only two or three Republicans who won seats. When he first came to Washington, he asked, "What committee should I get on?" I said, "Well, you better get on the Interior Committee."

He was on that one session and he said, "I am going to get on the Appropriations Committee. I figured John is on the Interior Committee and they don't even need me." So he got on the Appropriations Subcommittee and he is still there. I will tell you a secret. He has been the biggest backer of more money for urban parks and for park funding than almost anybody. Nobody has ever quite figured that out. He is our vote, he is the guy. He is a canal buff, he is an archeology buff, and very conservative politically.

MR. COCKRELL: As historians look back at your activities at Cuyahoga, how do you see yourself as being portrayed?

MR. McCANN: I have already gotten a taste of it in the last couple of years. I ran into somebody the other day that said, "Gee, I haven't heard a murmur about anybody wanting to do an urban park study in ten years and when you were there, that is all we ever did." I said, "Right." Maybe that is it. I think it is a little different world now than it was then certainly. Particularly from a park standpoint. I think the best that has happened is there are a lot more urbanists. It strikes me as very neat.

The National Capital Region here has produced people that are all over the United States running parks now. The guy who just walked in the door is back here as Assistant Superintendent of George Washington Parkway, but he started out in Region and went to Gateway. He ran Rees Beach the first five years, then he went to Boston and came back. He was Superintendent at Sandy Hook, *deja vu*. Now he is back here. But, Bill is very typical of essentially an urban oriented guy. He has got that niche. There are a lot of them now.

Theodore R. McCann

I can recall when I could name you maybe ten people who felt like I did in the entire Park Service. I used to teach off and on at Mather, so I knew the rank and file pretty much and had a feel for their mentality and philosophy. I went through it in the early publication years with arguing over design and art and all that. NPS was really in the 19th century then, in the 1960's. I think it has gotten by and large a lot more sophisticated.

MR. COCKRELL: Your contribution to Cuyahoga Valley was what?

MR. McCANN: I think helping give it birth and given the concept of that idea, taking a lot of desperate hunks of land owned by several kinds of people and putting it together into a national park idea and then selling it successfully. That doesn't seem like too much today, but that was a pretty good idea. It is still a good idea. It could be done.

My dream really was to do the Gateways at about 14 other cities that had the same combination you have in Boston, New Orleans, Detroit, Chicago, Seattle, Galveston, where you have military property, city property, state property, federal property on the water. And there are other rivers where you have the same kind of combination. I guess I am totally amazed that nobody has really picked that ball up.

MR. COCKRELL: Do you think that maybe someday that it will be?

MR. McCANN: In a way, but when I think of all the little reconnaissance studies that were done; I did one on Long Island Sound and the Ribacoff idea, of doing the same thing, like taking all the stuff and putting it together and calling it the Long Island Heritage Trust. For Hartzog, I went up and looked at mined and screwed up lands and the Wyoming Valley area of Pennsylvania. What do you do with a ruined landscape? You put it back and make it a park. I think that is a pretty neat idea, but it never went anywhere.

I did this Warm Springs study which forced the state of Georgia to put some money into fixing up Warm Springs, but it scared the heck out of them. They thought we were going to take over Warm Springs which I really wanted to do. But, it is that landscape there that Roosevelt saved singlehandedly. I realized in that little landscape, that 30 mile area around Warm Springs, that is the whole philosophy of the New Deal right there. That is absolutely where it came from. It didn't come from where all these other people said it came from. It all came from there.

The bank failed, he lost his money. He planted 20,000 pine trees and he saw how that transformed everything. All this stuff he did in the 20's before he was President. All that land reclamation,

Theodore R. McCann

demonstration recreation areas, all that stuff, urban resettlement; all these ideas he tried out then. It is very interesting and a lot of concepts, soil conservation, all that. He did it himself. He has his farm down there and he knew what he was doing. To just sort of discover that 50 years later is amazing.

Then you realize you are really a creature of the times you live in. Either you sort of do something about that or you don't. I just think if somebody said, "How do you feel today about it all?" I would say, "I was so lucky to be in Washington, D.C., at that time with those players, and I had the interest and the energy at that time that it all gelled." Because I could have been the most frustrated person in the world. I could have been somewhere else.

The one great advantage of government is that it is a great stage to play on if you find the right role. The joke in Washington is if you don't want credit, you can do anything you want. That is so true. I couldn't count all the people that took credit for just about everything I have ever worked on, similar parks and anything else. I also know who did it and it was fun.

MR. COCKRELL: Is there anything that I haven't asked you that I should ask? Did we leave anything out?

MR. McCANN: I think it was interesting when it really did, near the end before the bill passed or before John got his bill, that it was beginning to dawn on everybody that this thing could really be a park and what in the world would we ever do with it? I realized that it is the conceptions, misconceptions and perceptions of how nobody had ever been to Ohio or had ever heard of it. They knew exactly that there was where the river burned. With no other context at all to it.

I think that is the other thing that amazes me. When you look at things and you accept things, but to go back there ten years later (I went back there for the ten-year anniversary) and they are catching fish in that river that haven't been in that river for 150 years, that is the other flip-side of the coin. I remember people telling me in Cleveland at that time, saying that they will probably never be able to clean up Lake Erie and blah, blah, blah. They were using those kinds of words. The regenerative power of nature is just extraordinary and that valley is, of course, evidence of that.

MR. COCKRELL: Is there anything else you would like to add?

MR. McCANN: Well, I hope there are more urban parks. I am not optimistic at this point in time, but I think there has to be another generation that comes along that says what some of us were saying ten years ago.

Theodore R. McCann

MR. COCKRELL: Maybe when we get out of our budget situation and maybe put a Democrat in the Oval Office?

MR. McCANN: Well, that is what it is going to take. They really did a lot and I think that is maybe part of the problem. I think there are a lot of people that feel we have Alaska and we have all these wilderness lands and we had all this stuff when Burton was around. I got the feeling at the end of my tenure in the Park Service that everybody seemed to want to settle for a holding action. Of course, this was Dickenson's theme; that we had to take care of what we had and we had to do a better job of managing what we have, etc., etc.

Thank God for the Yellowstone fire that woke everybody up to the fact that we have a very lousy kind of research program. Professionally, we really have to rebuild the Service. I think that is our biggest problem. That was essentially the theme that I wrote for Parks and Conservation. I wrote a whole chapter for them on the history of park planning which I guess nobody has ever done before. It is kind of amazing, just what I found out myself.

The thing that I really feel is happening isn't just the politicalization of the Director and the directorship, I just feel somehow we have lost so many top professional type people and we are getting these sort of "technocrats." I really don't know what they are. I won't name names of those that fit that bill, but there are too many of them around. I don't see anybody of any great stature as we used to have in architecture and in design and in landscape architecture. We had some real heavyweights. I think if somebody had to ask me right now, I would say that is what you have to rebuild. We have to get some youth in there and some of that enthusiasm. But the talent is what the whole game is about.

MR. COCKRELL: What do you think of the new Director of the Park Service, James Ridenour?

MR. McCANN: I don't know. Loretta met him. He might do well, he might do nothing. He is a political appointee. I think I did meet him once. In fact, I know I did, a long, long time ago at one of the state things I was at in Indiana Dunes. But I can't remember him at all. I think, obviously, that is what is going to happen from here on out. I really am now beginning to doubt if we will ever see another career guy in the whole hierarchy. I think it is going to become a political thing. You might get a good one, you might get a bad one.

But, what you are going to get is just sort of what you had most of the time with the Secretary of the Interior. They come in, their work gets on their resume and they call in some people and

Theodore R. McCann

all those jobs are all by various political channels. It is like Cecil Andrus told me, that he was in that office two years before he was able to name his own first person.

MR. COCKRELL: They were already predetermined for him?

MR. McCANN: Yes, he had a guy from the Carter campaign, but that guy was appointed. All those Assistant Secretaries, all the Assistant Deputies to the Assistant; all those people come from appointments. Of course, in the Carter Administration, Loretta and I knew a lot of these people from Georgia days or from somewhere else. We knew exactly where they were coming from. Cecil Andrus didn't pick them. People don't know that.

They would say Manny Lujan is now going to be the Secretary of the Interior. You know, they come from Bush's people, Quayle's people, senator so-and-so's people, Ted Steven's people. That is how those people come there. It isn't like you get appointed to be Secretary of something or other and you have a magic list of who you are going appoint.

MR. COCKRELL: So it is no coincidence that right now it just happens to be someone from Indiana?

MR. McCANN: None whatsoever. Or William Penn Mott from California. A main California park called Malibu is where Ronald Reagan's first ranch was. Right in the center of that park.

Theodore R. McCann

A D D E N D U M T O I N T E R V I E W

Letter

November 7, 1989

Washington, D.C.

MR. McCANN: I had waited in returning my transcript thinking Loretta's would follow shortly and we could compare notes. As it turned out we pretty much agreed and each really does compliment the other. Both are enclosed with only minor corrections, spellings, etc.

Obviously, when you are done you will have something which could be titled "The Making of a National Park" because it's true. Loretta and I both agree that the impact of Cuyahoga on the Park Service and Interior wasn't as much as it was on the legislative process and techniques for "making" parks. It was Loretta's "education" of the Paul Tsongas staff that eventually led to the park in Lowell, Mass. and Phil Burton's people that led to his famous bill in 1978. While Loretta almost single-handedly added five or six units to the Park System, she also "master-minded" perhaps a dozen others. In fact, during the first five or six years of the Reagan administration all the additions were "Loretta" parks.

The real lessons of Cuyahoga are simple. They revealed "the art of the possible." They showed that a dedicated, tireless and involved "Congressional" quarterback (with a good staff) could accomplish anything.

Today, if I had to write a book about all of this, I would call it "Unfinished Legacy" because it is. We need more urban parks using the formula established by the Gateways, Cuyahoga, and Santa Monica [putting together lands already in public or semi-public ownerships in one national park]. We need more parks that honor and celebrate our cultural life, our social accomplishments, and our ethnic diversity. We have far too many which celebrate wars, battles, and the demolition of the Indian Nations. Our art, design, music, and theater contributions are peculiarly neglected.

While we have many vast Western and wilderness parks largely carved out of what was already public domain, we have added little in the way of "great American Landscapes" which are of scenic, cultural, or historical value. Other than the seashore parks, and since the Rockefellers gave us Blue Ridge, Acadia, and parts of Shenandoah, little has been added to the East.

We wish you well with your project and hope you continue on to do others now in the Park System. Thanks again.

[END]

Theodore R. McCann

Brian J. McHugh

O R A L H I S T O R Y I N T E R V I E W

F O R T H E

A D M I N I S T R A T I V E H I S T O R Y O F

C U Y A H O G A V A L L E Y

N A T I O N A L R E C R E A T I O N A R E A

O H I O

Brian J. McHugh
Chief, Resource Management and Visitor Protection
Cuyahoga Valley National Recreation Area
National Park Service

May 22, 1989
Brecksville, Ohio

Interviewed by:

Ron Cockrell
Historian
Midwest Regional Office
National Park Service

Omaha, Nebraska
1989

Brian J. McHugh

Brian J. McHugh

MR. COCKRELL: I thought we would begin the interview by asking you just to give me a brief summary of your background and your career.

MR. McHUGH: I joined the National Park Service in the winter of 1973. I have worked at the Grand Canyon, George Washington Memorial Parkway in Washington, D.C., Canyonlands National Park in Utah, Chaco Canyon, Lowell, and then here.

MR. COCKRELL: When did you come here?

MR. McHUGH: I came here in 1981.

MR. COCKRELL: Was that the beginning of the year?

MR. McHUGH: Actually, I was hired about April and didn't have to report right away. I think it was about July or August when I actually got here.

MR. COCKRELL: What were your impressions of this park when you first arrived?

MR. McHUGH: When I first saw it in April or May, it was in the spring and it was gorgeous, beautiful, lovely resources, obviously historical resources and historic towns in the area where even I could pick up the architecture. It was very pleasing.

MR. COCKRELL: Cuyahoga Valley has a certain reputation in the National Park Service, both pros and cons. When you first came here, or when you were thinking about coming here, what was the perception of your fellow employees about Cuyahoga Valley? Was it positive, negative, or a little of both?

MR. McHUGH: I am the Chief Ranger, that is, Chief of Resource Management and Visitor Protection and I was asked to come here for several fairly specific purposes. One was to increase visitation because it was low. One of the reasons it was low was that there was a visitor "drinking party" occurring quite often at the Ledges. A certain age and peer group, 16 to 24 years old, was having what we might consider a good party. The only test of the party was that you generally only did anything wrong when you were intoxicated. We know where that can go with a lot of kids out there. A lot of rangers were used to try various types of law enforcement to deal with the situation from being gentle to being strict. When I arrived, I guess it was depicted to me that we were being strict in enforcement. As many as twelve rangers at a time would be assigned in a small parking lot to deal with drugs and weapons and alcohol and drunks.

MR. COCKRELL: So it was a combination of alcohol and drugs?

Brian J. McHugh

MR. McHUGH: Yes. And the clientele--quite a few people with felony records, bikers, and quite a few things like that. It was variously depicted as rangers being excessive or visitors being excessive. It didn't matter what the point was. We did not have a National Park Service standard park here that people came to enjoy. We turned that around and doubled the visitation in a couple of years and had family groups and children coming to the place.

So the perception of the staff when I got here was it had nice resources and they were interested in the value of the park, but it was overdrawn by their assignment to day after day being in a parking lot with people abusing the rangers, with weapons, with assaults. It was the type of assignment for rangers that we just usually don't have. So the attitude toward the visitors was not very high. They were really focusing on the very small spectrum of the visitors at the Ledges.

MR. COCKRELL: How did you turn the situation around at Kendall?

MR. McHUGH: I didn't do anything alone. I had no subordinate supervisors when I arrived. I got permission from Region my first week here to reorganize into two districts. I was told that I should place more emphasis on the north end of the park so we made a North and South District. I was also told that too much emphasis was being placed on the Ledges and we needed to cover the rest of the park and protect its resources as well, which makes sense to me. The caveat being that we would have to defuse the Ledges at the same time to be able to accomplish all of those. I was hopeful we could do that. Prayer helped.

I hired Tom Cherry and Gary Pace that first week as my South and North District rangers. They got here in about September. Gary Machlis, NPS Sociological Researcher, had done a study of the Ledges the Memorial Day before any of us arrived. The circumstances that had happened in the past at the Ledges almost never occurred after Pace, Cherry, and I arrived at CVNRA. We completed the preparation of a special regulation to ban alcoholic beverages in this park.

By and large this park was the only park in the state of Ohio where you could legally drink--state, local, federal, any kind. As far as the perception of the youngsters, it was a place where it was O.K. to go and you could have beer and wine or whatever. And the only test was "Are you intoxicated?" So they could party and they did.

We concluded that this was not going to work. It was not conducive to this area and we didn't have to be the only place in Ohio that you could drink. So we got a Special Regulation prohibiting

Brian J. McHugh

alcohol. The threat of this Special Regulation that next spring started to change the pattern of visitation at the Ledges. I was told that before our arrival at CVNRA, there were clumps of visitors in the filled parking lot. Hundreds of late-teenagers and early 20-year-olds were everywhere in the parking lot, doing whatever they wanted to do. But then in the spring of 1982, the parking lot was fairly empty. There were still a lot of cars, but the people were out in the playfields, split up in small groups of four, five, or six here and there.

Before the ban on alcohol took effect, the Ledges looked different. When you drove into the Ledges with your family and your small children for a picnic, what you would see before was beer bottles flying around, people being thrown over cars, loud music, a beach party without the sand. Now when you drove in you would see a few teenagers walking around in the parking lot, but by and large you would look out on playfields and you would see little groups of people all over the place, which looks a lot better.

When the ban came into effect, the Ledges maintained that look and that appearance. The thing that was most dramatic was that little people that looked just like children appeared and they hadn't been there before! The children were more active, they run around more, and were more visible. The type of visitor changed fairly dramatically within a year as more people came to look for a place to picnic. They would see it was a park for their family. Visitation about doubled in that two- or three-year period. I think it was largely because of the way the park appeared. A lot of that was luck, some of it was forethought, we will take either one.

Additionally, the rangers started focusing on some other things, too, and getting some other things accomplished that they knew needed to be done. They weren't facing masses of drunken people every day.

MR. COCKRELL: Were they always having to draw their firearms, or were there any arrests made during the bad period?

MR. McHUGH: There were about 50 arrests a year and about 500 citations, largely for alcohol-related cases. As far as drawing weapons, it did happen. I don't know how often. I would have to say generally not that often. It has more to do with the circumstances when it is appropriate to draw weapons. I believe that before I got here they drew their weapons in appropriate circumstances; it is just that there were more appropriate circumstances, unfortunately. Since I have been here, they have always drawn their weapons in appropriate circumstances, too, but it is just not as often because there is less need. But there are times when that is the proper thing to do.

Brian J. McHugh

MR. COCKRELL: How would you characterize the morale of the park staff here when you first arrived and how has that changed over time?

MR. McHUGH: I don't know about the entire park staff. I would characterize my portion of the park staff as not having a very high morale. The former Chief Ranger was still here in a Resource Management capacity when I arrived. I was here for several months before he went to Independence. He and I had worked together in Canyonlands. I didn't detect any personal animosity from him. He is a fine ranger and does a good job.

I think my coming was perhaps viewed as not a positive occurrence, partly because some of my staff was thinking that they were being accused of doing something wrong. I certainly didn't feel they were doing anything wrong. I think they had tried various techniques over the years to solve a very sticky situation which for various reasons did not work.

All I came to do was to apply another technique and see if that would work. If it worked, fine, if it didn't, we would try something else. But they took that as the past being criticized and the future is O.K., past as hard law enforcement and future as soft law enforcement, perhaps, and not doing their job.

Some of the rangers who were here then I would say were, in my opinion, high profile law enforcement rangers. They liked doing law enforcement and termed many of the visitors as "turkeys" and "scroats" and various things like this, a verbal attitude that I didn't care for and wasn't used to in the National Park Service in relation to visitors. But as I say, I had never experienced what they had in these circumstances.

Gary Machlis' analysis was that it was an explosive situation with lots of weapons and lots of potentially violent people. So morale was not good in my division when I arrived. I came here for a week in July and I met the division and talked to them and rode around. I got a feel for what had been going on and some of the attitudes.

I presented this to Superintendent Lew Albert and said, "Well, there are a couple of ways I can do this: fast or slow. I want to go slow. It will take about six months and everything will be fine." He said, "No, I want you to do it fast." I said, "If I do it fast, I am going to be one of the most disliked people that you will ever run into. It will certainly get everybody's attention in a hurry. It will make waves."

Lew said, "I want the waves. I want it stopped. I want it stopped now, and I want you to do it immediately." I said, "O.K., it is

Brian J. McHugh

your park." So I did it fast. I wish I hadn't then. Waves were made.

MR. COCKRELL: Because of the repercussions within the staff?

MR. McHUGH: In my staff, yes.

MR. COCKRELL: How would you characterize your relationship with Lew Albert and the other management team? How did the management in this park operate on a daily routine basis? Was there a lot of team-play, esprit de corps, or was it not good?

MR. McHUGH: It was pretty busy. Lew was the Superintendent from Lowell before he came here. He left Lowell and I came to work for him here. Personally, I am a friend of Lew's and admire the man. I think he is very capable. He analyzes things very well. In my opinion, Lew is Lew and a fine manager.

When I arrived here in August, the first thing we did was go on a road trip down to a state park, Atwood Lakes, where all of the division chiefs, Lew Albert, and Einar Johnson, participated in a week of team-building exercises and training. Lew had found the proper instructor and we went off for a week and sat around, all the division chiefs, and did team-building exercises. We talked philosophy over Pac-Man, much beer, and good fellowship. We talked about what this park should be like, what flavor it should have, what type of recreational uses we should provide and what we should not provide, and the basics of what the park should be.

We came to a very good consensus in that Lew wanted to have a team approach. Decisions he offered to the entire squad would be a round-table situation. Everyone would discuss things openly together and come to common conclusions about how to act and then we would go forward with it. This offer was not received well.

MR. COCKRELL: It wasn't?

MR. McHUGH: No. Not at all. I was totally amazed because the things they had brought forth were some of the most modern management techniques that were available at that time, and offering to your staff to team-manage with you was wonderful. It was an opportunity of a lifetime to have a great deal of fun and get things accomplished. They came back with, "No, we don't want to do that. No, we won't be honest. No, we won't be open. No." I don't know why. So it didn't work.

Lew tried to continue to make that opportunity available for at least three years, but it never occurred. So what do I think of the top management? Did it work well? No. Could it have worked well? Yes. Really sharp people were involved, very competent,

Brian J. McHugh

skilled, experienced in national parks throughout the country by and large. They could have done a fantastic job of getting a lot of work done with a lot of friendship and done some things. I think it came back in Lew's face.

MR. COCKRELL: So there was just a lot of internal divisiveness between the various components and different managers here? The right mixture was not there to make it work?

MR. McHUGH: The people could be the right people. I don't know why they weren't willing to bare their souls with a little honesty and forthrightness and throw it all on the table. It is not like you are throwing your child on the table. It is work. We came here to do business and supposedly we are trying to do the best we can to preserve and protect this park. Why can't we do that together?

There were things going on that were not helpful. I suppose people wanted various people's jobs at various times and they couldn't get by that for whatever reasons.

MR. COCKRELL: What are some of the difficulties you have encountered in managing scenic easements and retentions? What are some of the problems involved with that?

MR. McHUGH: Let's take easements first. One of the problems with easements is the way they were purchased. Jack Blanton was Land Acquisition Officer. He and I were driving around taking one of our trips around the park, talking about what to do and where to do it. I said, "Jack, how is it that we have about 75 easements all over the park and not on one side of a road or something where it would make sense to me?" He said, "Bill Birdsell came in one day and said, 'I am in trouble with Congress or somebody. They are telling me I should buy more easements.'" Jack said, "Where do you want them?" Bill said, "I don't care. Anywhere. But hurry up and do it."

So he took the next row of purchases they had and made them easements instead of fee purchase and it looked like a shotgun was shot at the map to do it. So that makes it difficult to understand why easements were purchased in some locations.

I worked with Ed Adelman and others about the easements. The easements don't say what the purpose was for the easement. Whether it is the historic resource we are trying to preserve or the natural resources on the easement or what. And if you don't know what you want to preserve with the easement, it is very difficult to do anything. You end up being perhaps more heavy-handed on some things than you really need be because it is not the credible point. Of course, you have the land protection planning process

Brian J. McHugh

that tried to resolve some of those issues and recommend that some easements be bought in fee and that different things happen to try and make it a rational system.

The new easements supposedly will have a statement of their purpose and intent of why we purchased it in the easement provisions, so they know and we know. Perhaps we don't really care about the 100-foot-tall trees on one property. Maybe we would let them cut them down because they want to open up their yard for gardening and get some sunshine in. But if we bought it for the trees primarily, we shouldn't let them cut down trees.

The other problem with easements is that every single time we go out and look at an easement to see how the provisions are being followed, in just about 100% of the cases, there is something wrong. We always go gently with cajolery and talking with people and writing letters and following up with letters and phone calls. It takes 80 hours minimum to resolve each easement that you go look at.

It is basically the same with retentions, but easements are more important to the park because of their long-term nature. We want to work with the easement people, because we want to be partners with them. A lot of the people don't have the attitude they want to be partners, but eventually there will be people living there who want to be partners, or it will be purchased in fee perhaps. Easements are selling and people are moving into the park.

We sometimes get calls about easements. For example, "Your deer are eating my garden." Some of those people moved because they don't like the deer eating in the garden or their shrubbery and the people who moved in are the people that like having the deer in the backyard. So you don't get the calls as often any more because they are their deer and they care for them. That will happen, and it is a process that will take time.

Retentions are a similar matter. There is an encroachment on almost everyone where they are using park property outside of what they ever owned. In a lot of cases their neighbor was not the Federal Government, it was someone else and they never encroached on Farmer Jones. But as soon as it is ours, they take a quarter-acre for a garden. It leaves us scratching our heads wondering where we are. Are we on the right planet where people encroach upon their neighbors and use land?

In a lot of ways if you don't know what you want to protect, an easement is fine, but an easement in a lot of ways, doesn't protect anything. All it does really is give a civil recourse after somebody has taken an action that has damaged what we are there to protect. The tree is down, the historic resource is dilapidated

Brian J. McHugh

and beyond repair. Perhaps you are really dealing with the willingness of the people to be a partner and want to live in a park and think it is a fun thing to do.

MR. COCKRELL: You mentioned previously the Land Protection Plan. I noticed in the records that you were designated management's liaison with this planning group. What duties did that involve and how much staff input was placed on the Land Protection Plan other than those that were on the planning group? Was it an open planning process?

MR. McHUGH: I would say it was an open planning process. As open as it can be. You have to be open between the staff and open for the public. There is a different "open." I believe it was open to both. There were public hearings in each town. Opportunities to comment on every step of the proposals. People came from every division of the staff. Two were from my division, Rod Royce and Gary Pace, two very competent rangers knowledgeable about the land and where things are. The same could be said for a subsequent ranger, Jack Brittain, and the others on the LPP team.

People came from all divisions that were pulled together under Ed Adelman to do this. Ed did this very well. There were 700 to 1,000 landowners to be contacted and each one had to be interviewed. Each tract was supposed to be analyzed for its resources. Voluminous paper and thought and content went into each one of these. The Land Protection Planning Team took over a house, Ron Thoman's old residence down the street from where I used to live, and set up shop and did incredible amounts of work.

But was it very easy to go in there and ask, "What are you doing?" No, because in a lot of ways the process required that you go out, interview everyone, talk with them, and while you are doing that, someone is determining what is the best use of the land. That was Ed Adelman with probably I don't know who, Einar Johnson, Lew Albert, I don't know. Do the interview, find out what their intentions were for the land. If their intentions were similar for protection, then the land was going to be protected. If they were different, then we might have to purchase an easement or purchase in fee, and give our reasons for doing so.

There were lots of maps open for anyone to stop in and see. Ed Adelman always asked people to stop in. He briefed people as I recall. I am not sure how many times I saw the maps outside of his office. At some point, it went to the squad, which was the division chiefs, and then to the Superintendent, and then it went out.

MR. COCKRELL: Did you participate in that?

Brian J. McHugh

MR. McHUGH: I wasn't going out doing interviews. I wasn't going out doing the nitty gritty. I was conversing with Ed Adelman once a week about what was happening and mentioning in squad that it was proceeding and that they should look at the maps.

MR. COCKRELL: What were some of the problems or challenges with the building demolition program here? It seems there was a lack of funds for a while and there were a lot of empty buildings here.

MR. McHUGH: The first debate I know of was when I first arrived. There were about 250 empty buildings. Some people were on the side of the debate that we should preserve all of them and the reason we should preserve them all, that I understood, is because we bought them. You would ask why did we buy them? Well, I am not really sure about that. If we didn't buy them to preserve them, why buy them? And how would we preserve them? What do we put into them? What reason do we have for preserving them?

We went through a couple of different stages of looking at all of the buildings and determining which we would save and which we would get rid of doing a Building Utilization Plan. Then the decision was made for each building. Buildings, I would say, were held for two, three, or four years and no one had done any demos or determined what they would do with the buildings.

Finally the dam broke as far as "Yes, we would start taking some out." I don't know where the money came from. I think it was ONPS money that was made available to start doing building demos. Einar Johnson does building demos. The buildings were surveyed, but there was not unanimity in that regard. Some people wanted to keep all of the buildings. I still don't feel that way. I think we should just keep the historic resources. As for the 1950 split levels, I am not sure why we need to preserve those.

MR. COCKRELL: Could you give me an overview of the natural resources management program in this park and all of the different facets of it like staff, organization, funding, management's priorities and emphasis, and the people involved in the changing philosophies, things like that?

MR. McHUGH: I guess I would characterize it when I arrived that a lot of the rangers were doing resource management work in terms of cultural resource protection. We were doing building checkouts, moving people out of their buildings, making sure they were relatively clean, securing the buildings or getting them secured, patrolling them, trying to keep them from getting burned down. Occasionally, they did get burned down. Again, the problems was there were 250 buildings.

Brian J. McHugh

I would say that when I got here, there wasn't, in my opinion, much of a resource management program. I hired Garree Williamson and he went into the Resource Management Specialist training a few years ago. Garree has a Masters degree in forestry and also has been through the whole gambit of natural resource management training. He subsequently hired Jack Gulvin and Chuck Lebeda. Chuck Lebeda was a fine wildlife manager who was skilled at working as a soil conservationist, and in many other areas.

We sat down to write the first Resource Management Plan of the park and to put it into effect, to find out if we could get some baseline data. We began to focus on getting some baseline data. We had studies done for baseline for vegetation and wildlife. They are at a moderately successful stage, but, in my opinion, there is much more to do. We started getting air quality data even though we are a Class II air quality area. We worked with Denver Air Quality to do monitoring nationwide for acid rain and lots of other things.

One of the big debates early on was the Cuyahoga River. I think Dick Ketchum was the Hydrologist in Region. We had \$20,000 to do a study of the Cuyahoga River. We were working with USGS to do the study. They came back with a study proposal that would cost \$800,000. Probably adequate to what we needed was \$800,000, but we had only \$20,000. So we started to discuss what we were going to do about the Cuyahoga River. Quite a bit was known about it. In Peninsula, coliform counts were at 12 million colonies where the standard is 1,000 colonies per 100 milliliters of water. At the Jaite Mill, it was 5 to 6 million colonies. Fecal coliform was very high. Also, there were undoubtedly heavy metals and solvents and toxics coming down from the city of Akron for the last 60 to 70 years.

We discussed that and said, "What do we know about the tributary streams in the park feeding into the Cuyahoga?" We said we did not know anything. So we thought, "Why don't we go to the 21 tributary streams and find out what condition they are in. We should look at our own house first and see if we are making the Cuyahoga worse. Since we are in active land acquisition, there could be something in the park that is polluting these streams very badly. Let's acquire that element and move it out of here, be it a house and a septic system or be it some kind of industry that we are unaware of that is polluting upstream out of the park." So we decided to focus on obtaining baseline data for the 21 tributaries. As it turns out, they are in pretty good condition compared to the river.

At the same time the strategy was through land acquisition and working with other people to clean up the river. Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer was putting in an interceptor sewer. The sewer was put in 75 feet below the ground to take sewage away from small

Brian J. McHugh

treatment plants, one in Brecksville, one across the river at Greenwood. The interceptor sewer took out these treatment plants which were not operating well. Another treatment plant was removed last year that makes Brandywine Creek cleaner.

All of these things were cleaning the river during this period of time. We are actively working with people, other governmental agencies to get this done. Now the fecal coliform counts are no longer in the millions. They may be in the hundreds range, which is an incredible improvement as far as I am concerned in a six-year period. There are still hot spots. We hope to have canoeing by 1992 now.

In 1984, we were talking to the state EPA about the river and EPA went out to do a study of the fish in the Cuyahoga River and brought out researchers. There were no fish. There was nothing much alive in the Cuyahoga River. They brought out specialists from Europe to try and figure out what happened. They assumed there was a toxic spill that came through the Akron Wastewater Treatment Plant, killed the microbes in there and killed everything in the river. They could never get a sample of what it was. It only takes 19 hours to flush the river from Akron down, and it is gone. But almost everything was dead.

The tributary streams had fish in them, but there was nothing in the river that could live. We are just now starting to get back to where we were pre-1984 as far as the river is concerned. Now, of course, there had been for many years a treaty with Canada to clean up polluting rivers to the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence System and the Cuyahoga was one of those 42 sites identified. The state of Ohio and the United States had been under the gun for maybe ten years to write up a remedial action plan for how we are going to clean up the Cuyahoga River, and it hadn't been done.

A year ago, the state of Ohio finally got together public meetings in the area and the public meetings consisted of going out to communities and asking people "What do you want us to do?" The people raised their hands and said, "We want you to tell us what you should do and do it." So now John Debo is on the Remedial Action Planning Committee with other actors like the city of Akron and the Ohio Department of Natural Resources and the EPA of various kinds.

The city of Akron is now under a lawsuit by the Federal EPA for failure to meet the clean water standards. They are fined \$25,000 a day for every time their sewage overflow goes into the river. They are working very fast. I was just up there last week at their treatment plant to observe how they are trying to get on-line equipment that will, as far as they can see, keep them from getting fined \$25,000 a day. Their manager estimated to me that they

Brian J. McHugh

bypass, as it were, raw sewage into the river at about 30 million gallons a month, which is fairly low for what they do treat. But still, they want that to be zero. Once that happens, it will improve the river, too.

There are many actors in the main stem of the river and its clean-up who have to take a combined interest for it to really happen. We actually control a very small amount of the watershed. We are in the middle of it. There is a major city upstream. Early on, I guess I would say from conversations in the park, one of the questions was, should we make an issue of the river and lose the park? Or concentrate on the tributaries and wait until the issue of the river is more something that can be attacked, and do other things quieter to be more effective and still work toward cleaning up the river?

And there were those who wanted to make a big headline thing that the city of Akron is polluting the river. Well, it was during James Watt's days. And if there wasn't support in Ohio for Cuyahoga Valley National Recreation Area, there might not be one. We didn't think we had been hired to come here to get rid of a national park. It was quite the opposite. There are times to do things and times to use other procedures.

Another large aspect of the program--getting off water for a while--was oil and gas. There are oil and gas wells here. Only about 15 parks in the country have active oil and gas operations. We recognized early on that the regulations for regulating oil and gas in similar circumstances in this park were not the best they could be. We invited people from Mining and Minerals, the solicitors, and U.S. attorneys to come out for three days of meetings and talked about these things. We came up with a lot of good ideas about those regulations and how to apply them here, strategies to basically keep from having any oil and gas wells in the park.

Out of that, Mining and Minerals drafted new regulations that were clearer, stronger, and more protective of the park resources. There were clearer penalties if you did not do so. We have used the present regulations to their best advantage, had several meetings with people out here about strategies to do so. We are on the downhill slope of having oil and gas in the park. The wells are disappearing. You need a 20-acre unit to drill. After this year's acquisition, there won't be a private 20 acres in the park to drill. So there are as many wells as there will ever be and it is going downhill from here.

The wells have a short life of about 15 years maximum and they are of marginal economic viability. They are not big gushers and producers. The problem is there is about 95% probability of hitting oil or gas if you drill anywhere around here, but they

Brian J. McHugh

don't produce a lot. There are a few companies, mom-and-pop operations, that do well at drilling here, but they have to watch the market and see what it pays. We had one company do what it shouldn't do and we took it to court and won a test case for the regulations.

MR. COCKRELL: What company was that?

MR. McHUGH: Spencer Petroleum. One thing that was interesting about lawsuits is that they are incredibly time-consuming for the whole staff. Even if you are not the one getting sued, you are the one doing the suing, for good reason and for good cause--to protect the parks. It is just massive the amounts of information that have to be prepared.

The common wisdom was that a temporary restraining order could be obtained in 24 hours. We proved that temporary restraining orders could be acquired in three weeks if you hurried. A drilling company can be on the land and drilling in four hours. So, it just doesn't really work out that you are really protecting the resources. If somebody wants to come in and cut down all of the trees and put in a drilling pad and start drilling, it happens very fast.

It usually doesn't happen that fast because there is no need to. But we had some people put in 10,000 feet of pipeline in a very short amount of time. They put in pipeline before they drilled the well, which is unheard of. We think this was done to get the pipeline in before we were aware of it. But luckily our rangers were paying attention and observed a D9 Cat pulling a stripping mechanism and feeding in the pipe as it went down the side of a road. It wasn't a trencher or anything. It was just driving along, shaking the earth and putting in this 3-inch pipeline. So what was the basis of the lawsuit? We got there just in time to keep them from connecting the pipe.

MR. COCKRELL: How about sand and gravel operations here?

MR. McHUGH: The goal has been to defeat and get rid of all of the sand and gravel operations. I think by and large that has been accomplished. Some people think not fast enough. We have some people who were quarrying sand and gravel, like Mr. Kurtz. I guess that went to condemnation. Two years before I got here, it went to court to determine the price, and during that two or three years it took to get on the docket, Mr. Kurtz took his equipment and piled up piles of topsoil. And sure enough we bought the property and thought we were done.

However, his attorney said, "Gee, we think that pile of topsoil is personal property and the government pays relocation assistance for

Brian J. McHugh

personal property. Why don't we get the government to pick up all of that topsoil and pay us the cost of taking that topsoil somewhere else because it is ours?" Lo and behold, that is what it was. So, the Regional Director was faced with the prospect of paying Mr. Kurtz a million dollars to move dirt so he could sell it.

The Regional Director signed a special use permit with Mr. Kurtz allowing him, in return for reducing his claim for relocation from around \$800,000 to say \$400,000, to allow him to continue to take topsoil through normal business practices for topsoil, which means down to the water. So that is what Mr. Kurtz did for five years. Then he left. So it was an incredibly expensive, horrible-looking operation. It is now getting to be a nice wetland with lots of waterfowl.

MR. COCKRELL: It has been restored or is being restored?

MR. MCHUGH: It is just that it was cut down so low that the river flows into it. It is right next to the river. It is a river bottom. Where we are sitting now surrounding us used to be Kurtz Farm. It has all been topsoiled. They have lived here for 150 years and the family business has always been topsoil. Until it was a national park, it was an honorable profession, I am sure.

Until we buy it, you can still topsoil it. You can still do what you do with your property until we own it. There are some who say, "Well, why don't we buy it now?" When you get \$2 or \$3 million dollars a year for land acquisition, and you have \$150 million dollars in land acquisition to do, it takes a while. You take your top priorities first, whatever your Superintendent determines those are, and you get to the others later.

MR. COCKRELL: Any other resource management problems or threats or programs?

MR. MCHUGH: Certainly. There are quite a few. Garree Williamson and his staff have done an excellent job. They have a full Resource Management Plan with lots of action steps taken with what I think is a very small staff for a park this complex. What it has amounted to is juggling a bunch of balls and the spotlight goes on a ball every once in a while around here. What that means is all of the rest of them fall on the floor and you struggle to make that one fly. That is the position we have been in in the 1980's, in my opinion. Once that spotlight comes on, we have gotten into a position where we have done reasonable things with the staffing available to get toward where we need to eventually be. Of course, we are nowhere near where we want to be.

Brian J. McHugh

We are in a position where we have reasonable arguments for the Superintendent to express what we have done, where we are going, but not have any kind of staff or funding needed for resource management that this park should have in terms of natural resources. Every time the spotlight comes on, that is a lawsuit, somebody suing us, or us suing them, everything has to stop while we prepare for that, to win that, or issues to attack the river, to attack oil and gas issues, to go after the thing that is on the burner right now. It just takes so much time and personnel to do work that has to be done and nothing else much gets done.

We have done analysis of the 65 ponds in the park that we own on water quality. We've determined that a certain number were manageable ponds based upon parameters of dissolved oxygen, depth, size, and other resource reasons. Lots of ponds are pretty, but the fish won't survive a winter kill. They are too shallow, the whole thing could freeze up enough that the fish would all die out. So we determined there would be certain ponds we would manage.

Of course, there were those who said, "You should be managing all 65 of them." We don't have the money or the resources to maintain all 65, so we have gotten variably 11 to 13 ponds to manage. We had Mr. Charles Karpowitz come out and visit us. He informed us that there is a new Dam Maintenance Program in the Park Service since the Teton Dam collapse. He said that most of our primary spillways were inadequate and needed to be replaced on all of these dams. I don't know what the cost was, somewhere in the area of \$30,000 a pond. Thankfully, Mr. Karpowitz not only came with that unwelcome information, but he also came with money to get it done!

MR. COCKRELL: That is unusual!

MR. McHUGH: I know. This was very unusual. So now our primary spillways are pretty much up to date. The lifespan of a pond and its primary spillway is about 30 years, so we have got 30 years of recreational use that we can rely upon out there. The primary spillway goes right up the middle of the dam usually. You have to open up the dam and replace the pipe that it goes through and then put the dam back together again. You can't use it during that period of time, obviously. There's the discombobulation of getting these things going, these visitor use areas, and then having to close them to fix them. You live and learn. There are other large ponds that will be coming to us eventually that will make nice public recreational use. We have a fishing resource for public use.

MR. COCKRELL: It seems that this park, because of its uniqueness, has been on the leading edge within the National Park System on a number of resource management issues. In 1980, this park appeared on the first list of parks that were threatened. It was pretty

Brian J. McHugh

near the top from what I understand. In what ways is this park unique compared to other parks in the System? Why is so much attention given to Cuyahoga Valley? Or why is not enough attention given to Cuyahoga Valley?

MR. McHUGH: Were you ever in a park or ever able to see the initial requests for information for the Threats to the Park Report?

MR. COCKRELL: No. I don't think I actually have seen them.

MR. McHUGH: I filled it out as Chief I&RM at Chaco Canyon. A very interesting thing to look at is what people perceived as threats and also who filled it out. I think Chaco Canyon was also shown as one of the highest impacted areas in the country, maybe number 5 with Cuyahoga number 2 or something. That is very interesting to me. I think that maybe came from training. I am wondering how to respond. The question is, "Is this the most threatened national park in the country?" The answer is no.

I remember being out in New Mexico doing a Campfire Program. I can't remember the reasons, but for a few months, I was talking with the people who were saying what a wonderful national park they had been at all day, with nice archeological resources, and that it was awe-inspiring and all of that. I had taken them on a tour during that day. We had gone through Pueblo Bonito, and here I am seeing them at the campfire program, and we know each other a bit. We all agreed national parks are wonderful things. A lot of them were from the East and I said, "What if we made a park of your hometown?" Because there were places like Cuyahoga and others that were getting to be controversial. They said, "No, that is not good, not in my backyard. Don't use my home!"

That is what we were doing. We came in here and declared a 32,000 acre park and the place was a suburb of Cleveland and Akron. As a suburb, it had certain things going on that suburbs have going on. It had bars and saloons and lumber companies and a couple of ski areas and golf courses and some parks that were buying land. It had people living here, and people dumping their trash in the back ravine. It had people running little automotive shops and carrying the oil out back and dumping it in the creek. It had life going on at an active pace, with no foreseeing in the future for most of them that anybody would come and say this should be a national park someday.

So what is the threat? I can see something as a "threat" if we have something that is pristine. We have something that is Pueblo Bonito, we had something there initially that is perceived as important and then it is threatened. It is different here because we have something that nobody really thought was necessarily unique

Brian J. McHugh

and it carries a connotation of "There were bad people who were living here. They should have known we were going to make this into a park." That is incredible! Absolutely incredible!

So the river is polluted. The Black River is polluted. Every river with a major industry on it is polluted. All along Lake Erie is polluted as badly as the Cuyahoga because there was industry upstream. Was the canal bad? Were the railroads bad that they allowed Akron to exist? Was the water power of Akron bad that allowed canals to be built and water power to power mills that were taken over in the river? Was any of that bad that people made tires? It was history. It was what people did as far as I am concerned and it had effects.

In Lowell, our boat operator was one of the bad boys in the town, and he would laugh about people jumping into the canals to go swimming. They would laugh to see what color their hair would be when you came up out of there from the dyes from the mills. They knew it wasn't good, but what else are you going to do with it? Nobody had an answer. Nobody necessarily saw a threat, and perhaps what they were using was less of a threat than it is today, in some cases more. But we didn't know. Ignorance is bliss I suppose.

So this park has many things that need to be corrected in terms of vegetation, in terms of air quality, in terms of wildlife, in terms of water quality, oil and gas, in terms of public perception. I met with some people recently and some of us agreed that in some ways the Cuyahoga Valley is an open wound that needs to be healed. It has many things that need to be healed and healing takes time. Healing takes patience, healing takes concern and healing takes a lot of love. I don't know that the love has always been here for this valley. There has been a lot of rancor. There has been a lot of attitudinal differences about who should be here, whether it should be a park, not be a park. It is a park.

There have been attitudinal problems in the Park Service that continue to today, about whether it should be a park and any money should be put toward it or whether this place is sucking money from the Park Service that would normally go somewhere else. When I was out at other places with resources you could more clearly identify, we always badmouthed Gateway and Cuyahoga and Santa Monica. And perhaps this was for good, justifiable reasons.

We are so behind in everything in the Park Service in my opinion that it is just beyond humorous. It is sad. We have a billion-dollar budget and I think we should have a two-billion-dollar budget. Then we could begin to talk about what we need. We are so far away from it to be really doing what we pretend we do. We are the National Lip Service. We do the best we can with what we have, but it is just not there. That holds for this park as I

Brian J. McHugh

think it does around the country. There is much to do. Having much to do doesn't mean you have the wherewithal to get it done.

Our own worst enemy a lot of times is ourselves. We point at each other and say, "You are not doing enough in natural resource management. You are not doing enough in cultural resource management. No, I won't give you any of my interpreters to do it. I won't give you any of my maintenance people to do it and I won't give you any of my rangers to increase your interpretive program or your maintenance program." But, we all need it. I think John Debo has gone in for \$900,000 and who knows how many FTE. In my opinion, and I think with some other division chiefs, such a large operating increase is required to get us even then we will talk about, "Oh now you want something more." We are talking about getting done what we should be getting done right now.

MR. COCKRELL: With this park--I am interested in your philosophy or your opinion--should there be open space and preserved open fields or should this valley be allowed to revert back to forest land? I know there has been a Cultural Landscape Report prepared which advocates certain areas such as the farming areas be preserved. Was that a big controversy with the staff?

MR. McHUGH: I think the purpose of the park is to maintain recreational open space. You can define open space many different ways. I define a forest as open space. I think most people do. I don't know if you define a farm as open space. I think a lot of people do. I think they would not define an apartment complex as open space. But there are lots of things that are open space; farms, forests, ski areas, golf courses are all open space. This is a fairly large park for where it is. I think there is room for a lot.

I will kid the historians on occasion that we should go back to the conditions we had in 1890, which I think were "lovely;" that is, no forests, there were no grasses, everything was cut down and grazed over. I think most people today don't have an image of what it looked like in 1890. They think there were trees like this. So what we have in a lot of ways is a lot of resources to protect, a lot of debate about what we should perhaps interpret, what is significant. It's my saying, the "who cares factor" of why you are here. I think the "who cares factor" is the settlement of the Connecticut Western Reserve. That the Cuyahoga River was the western boundary of the United States until 1804. The Western Expansion didn't start in Missouri. It started in Connecticut and New York, Maryland and Virginia, Ohio and Kentucky, as people crossed the eastern mountain ranges.

To me the most lacking resource in the east as far as diversity is climax hardwood forest. Have you seen one? There is one down in

Brian J. McHugh

southeast Ohio called Dysert Woods. It has never been cut. There are trees in that forest that are as big around as this room. The branches first start to come out at 120 feet. They are hundreds of feet apart. In between are very few understory shrubs. No one can understand how they could bring a wagon from Connecticut through this forest we have now. They couldn't through this present forest, but they could through the climax forest that was here, in many cases.

It is a whole different world that we are talking about here. I think there should be farm fields, but I would hope personally, that we would have farm fields for a purpose. For instance, as you go along the canal towpath, they could put out a metal photo sign or whatever method we wish to use to say, "This next half-mile, mile, quarter-mile or something, depicts the farmstead that you would have seen in 1827." And further along you would run into something that was 1890, and further along you would run into something in another period of time and it would bring the story of the valley all together.

You could tell them and show them what was here. There was no canal here before 1827. There was this segment and talk about the differences. Here there was a railroad and a canal and they are both operating now. Here the canal is still here, but it is not operating, only the railroad is operating. I think people don't know much beyond paved roads.

I remember out at Chaco, I ran into a man who was walking around. I talked with him and he told me he had been here before. I asked when he had been there last and he said 1926. He said he left the pavement at Kansas. Now we can't feature leaving the pavement much, but he left it in Kansas! At that time, Chaco was still all dirt roads. There was always some point where you left the pavement, it was all dirt roads and that was probably the case here.

As far as preserving the vegetation, like I say, I think the thing that is missing the most is the climax forest. The more climax forest we can provide would be probably, in my opinion, the greatest benefit to the people here. They could see what it was like when the place was first settled. They cannot even envision what it was like. Maybe in a couple hundred years, we could do that.

Some people have even said where these houses that we took out via demolition, that we should continue to maintain the lawn as open space. I question this because in some cases we didn't need to buy that place, and it would have been maintained as lawn for habitat diversity. I don't know that our purpose has to be in preserving

Brian J. McHugh

lawns, or things that go with those houses. Did you notice as you were driving that Ohio was lacking for farms anywhere?

MR. COCKRELL: There are quite a few of them.

MR. McHUGH: There are just a whole lot of farms all over Ohio with wood lots and things all over the place. There is no scarcity of farms in Ohio, so I don't know that we necessarily have to preserve farms, or that people want farms interpreted to them here. But I think we could have some hope if we presented a series of farming types and what was being grown. At one point this was the wheat belt. At one point it was the corn belt. Times change. How you get to markets change. Urban people aren't necessarily conscious of that and what effect that had.

I think there is reason to have farmsteads here and I hope they are put in places that make sense. Part of the problem was that initially the map was drawn by a volunteer that identified from aerial photographs everything that was open in 1981 that wasn't forest. There were some people that said, "O.K., everything that was open in 1981 from this photograph should be kept open from now until perpetuity." Why? You can't even see half of those from a trail, from a road, from anywhere. You certainly can't afford to keep it open.

This year, I think for the first time, literally, Dave Humphrey is going to get maybe \$50,000 to work at keeping something open. That is wonderful because these fields lie fallow and they grow up rather quickly. It is an incredibly expensive proposition to make a farm field or to clear land. When you had those huge trees back early on, you fell four of those trees, and you had a farm field. It was hard to fell those trees, but if you could get them down, you had a field. You had sunlight coming in. You could grow things. There wasn't all of this thick undergrowth to deal with. So, I think there is plenty of room here for everything.

It would be helpful if we would sit down with a huge map and a lot of philosophy and talk about where things are going to be: Where the cultural resource zones are going to be, where the natural resource zone is going to be. We have an incredible need for developed zones so we can do the things that need to be done with the compliance necessary to develop them. What are the special use zones and where do we want special use type things to go on? We haven't done it on a scale that allows anybody to know what we want.

There has to be some willingness to understand that over here is a cultural resource farmstead, but over here are natural resources and that means it is going to be allowed to let God determine what that is going to be.

Brian J. McHugh

MR. COCKRELL: Could you give me a brief history of the Krejci Dump controversy?

MR. McHUGH: The Krejci Dump is a landfill on Hines Hill Road where early on it was one of the first identified acquisitions of the park, my reading in the tract file shows. We tried to purchase that dump in 1976 when we first started land acquisition. The sole reason to purchase that dump was to close it. As happens quite often, Mr. Krejci did not accept our offer. He owned about 250 acres--about 40 of which was dump. The rest of the acreage is very mature forest. Very beautiful. We have trails through part of it now, so it wasn't like the entire acreage was a landfill.

He wouldn't accept our offer and we went to court. Things don't go to court when you want them to go to court. You get put on a list, on a docket, and when they get time, they take you into court. It was sometime about 1980 that it finally got into condemnation in court to determine the price. At that time, through whatever type of testimony it incurred, the park was given a court-ordered special use permit to allow Mr. Krejci to remove his inventory from the park. There were a lot of provisions. The main ones were for the benefit of the park. He would have to be given five years to remove his personal property inventory, like a retention, and then we would take it over.

Mr. Krejci believed--I am being facetious--that there would be another war and he had piles of metal to build the battleships that were needed. You have seen the underground storage tanks that we are taking out of gas stations everywhere now. They are quite large. He had them as a fence end to end for a quarter of a mile across his property. Those were all gone by the time we took it over. He had school buses piled on top of one another. It was an incredible landscape.

We didn't know it until later on through subsequent testimonies taken by EPA that he had an open, burning landfill for 40 years. The people that have used that landfill and made the Krejci Dump are the communities that are right here and the people who live right here. It has to go somewhere. We took over the dump in October 1985 or so.

John Krejci came in with a man named Chester Arthur. Krejci claimed that he had held a competitive bid for his personal property out there and that he had sold all of the metal and some other items of the junk that was out there to Mr. Arthur. We had a meeting. The Superintendent determined that yes, it was personal property. Arthur bought it. Do we want it? No. We would allow Mr. Arthur to take out metal as long as he was diligently working toward it. And he did. He took out a very great deal of metal and

Brian J. McHugh

took it to his dump that he had down in Ravenna or somewhere, I can't remember.

Subsequently, Mr. Arthur sold his interest in that personal property to various people. McPeak was one. At some point, I think it was probably the spring of 1986, I am not sure, I don't have my records here. A bottle hunter who was a friend of Mr. McPeak's who was going around looking for bottles, said he had put his head into a barrel, and something was in there that made him feel nauseous.

Stepping back a minute, about 1981, Ohio EPA was here looking for Superfund sites. It was the initial look-through for Superfund sites. We took them to the Krejci Dump. They said there was nothing to worry about. When the bottle hunter put his head into a barrel and then said he felt sick, as I recall, we had Ohio EPA out again and they said, "There is nothing to worry about here."

We had our rangers go out and see if we could find full barrels of anything. We found maybe 100, as I recall, without any water in them at all, but they were open-ended and it was perhaps rainwater or perhaps who knows what. When the man was sick, I called Grosele in Michigan, which is the emergency response for EPA and said, "Gee, these guys are out here assuring us it is O.K. I don't know if they know what they are talking about. Is there any way you could help?" He said, "Sure. We will send out a team. We have a contractor in Cleveland. They will come out and take samples from barrels and test them and get back to you." I said, "That is wonderful."

So they sent a team out--the same people who are here today, as a matter of fact--for another barrel that somebody nicely dumped on Wheatley Road for us. They took their air samples and found no organics in the air which is a lot of herbicides and pesticides. You can detect them in the air. There was nothing in the air which has consistently been the case. There is nothing that you could breathe out there that would bother you.

They found PCB's in the soil. Now the level at which PCB's are reportable is like 30 parts per million. We had 50 parts per million. Love Canal and places like that were 500,000 parts per million. What we had there for PCB levels that they initially detected were the bottom range of anything they would even do anything about.

They also found paints and solvents and various things and estimated there were 10,000 barrels there. We had asked John Krejci several times if there was anything ever put out there that was bad. We actually had Channel 3 News in here at about that point in the Superintendent's office with the cameras rolling. I gave

Brian J. McHugh

this background to the reporter. EPA had agreed and they were coming out to clean up the dump and told them what we had done. He packed it in and said there was no story here: "You have done what you should have done," and he left and didn't even file the story. We didn't know what was going to be needed to clean this place up.

EPA sent out an emergency response team, which is Ed Burke--it is one person. They have hiring authorities and contracting authorities to make things happen and he made things happen. He brought out a technical assistance team from Weston, a company called May Corp. that has people in the ground to do the work, operate the equipment, move the metals, test the soil. EPA has spent about \$2 million so far--actually about \$4 million has been spent so far in total monies in stabilizing the site. Now all the contaminated soils, all the contaminated elements are stabilized and in barrels in piles and a lot of it has already been removed for decontamination or incineration or landfilling or whatever is appropriate, there is a whole lot to that.

We have about \$4 million coming next year. The total cost for the clean-up is now estimated to be about \$15.2 million. To put that in prospective, I think the entire Maintenance Management System of the Park Service we are now bringing in costs \$12 million. And this is not a large site. This is a mom-and-pop landfill. There are 200 landfills outside of the park, up drainage of this park, that Ohio EPA has taken no action to assess. They are admittedly worse, far worse than the Krejci Dump. There are something like 1,400 hazardous, toxic waste dumps in the Cuyahoga River drainage in northeast Ohio.

What we have done is we have been soiling our nest where we live for whatever reasons and we now have to clean house. It is going to be very expensive. Of those 200 dumps I was talking about, they all flow down through the reach of the river in the park. That is why we can't be alone in the cleaning up of the Cuyahoga River. There have to be an awful lot of people equally concerned.

The Krejci Dump is moving very well. We have had excellent response from the Federal EPA in this effort. The place looks so much better today than it did, but it still now looks like a war zone with all of the bare dirt. Now you don't know what was on top of that bare dirt. That dirt looks good. So our goal is being achieved with more expense and time than we thought, but still, we're going to clean up that dump.

MR. COCKRELL: How would you characterize the crime and law enforcement problems here in the park now? Is it serious considering that we are near two major urban centers?

Brian J. McHugh

MR. McHUGH: To me a good test of serious crime are the numbers kept for Part I felonies. Nobody knows what a Part I felony is. They are "little" things like rape, homicide, robbery, larceny, arson, and a few other major crimes. Law enforcement agencies throughout the country keep these statistics. Back in 1980, we had 150 part-one offenses a year. We now have five. In the last five years, we have had no crimes of violence against persons, that is, rape, homicide and robbery. I would put our record of protecting our visitors against any park in the country.

The goal of the National Park Service is to have an absence of crime in our parks. We have attempted to achieve that goal and we have come, I think, as close as we could reasonably come to achieving that goal. We are surrounded by four million people living here. Our visitors are not the visitor that comes to your park and camps or comes through for the day and is gone. Our visitor lives here. They can prey on one another if they so choose and do it repeatedly, or they can come and recreate here. Luckily, they have chosen to do the latter.

Having said that, a lot of that has to do with people that would say, "A ha! We can take out the visitor protection rangers at Cuyahoga Valley because there is no crime!" That is incredible. There is no crime at Cuyahoga Valley because there are rangers patrolling and actively deterring it, and when it occurs, trying to catch people. There is visibility. Rangers are visible. We have ten field law enforcement rangers that are on 16 hours a day and there should be 26 rangers on 24 hours a day.

What we have in terms of law enforcement that I can guarantee you right now today, is that every day of the year in the North District and the South District, you have one ranger on in each district that can do law enforcement. That is what I can guarantee you. Now to me, that doesn't sound like an excessive number of personnel to cover an area 22 miles long and 5 miles wide in suburbia surrounded by two major metropolitan areas. I think our law enforcement funding and staffing here is seriously deficient.

There is much more that could be done to work beyond the Part I offenses and the very major crime. The way that Park Service people do law enforcement and resource protection is usually not with a hammer. It is to educate people that in your national parks, you behave certain ways. Our interpreters do it, our maintenance people do it, hopefully everybody does it. But our law enforcement people are the people whose job it is to walk into the situation where people are taking their axe and Johnny is working on the sapling and say, "Hi, Johnny. Nice day isn't it?" and try and make a friend there. At the end or at some point, it might be necessary to say, "Oh, by the way, that is going to cost you \$50." Or, "I am going to warn you." Or even arrest people, I suppose.

Brian J. McHugh

But it is more important to be visible, be out, be contacting people, let them know that this is not the only national park. It is one of about 350, and you ought to go and visit some others and learn some things here so that when they go to Redwoods or wherever, they will feel comfortable, because they know how to behave. We can give them some of that comfort from here.

MR. COCKRELL: How would you characterize your working relationship with the local jurisdictions here? Are they pretty accepting of the National Park Service?

MR. McHUGH: In terms of law enforcement?

MR. COCKRELL: Yes, law enforcement or fire protection.

MR. McHUGH: I think professional entities have always behaved, in my experience, in a professional manner when we have something to talk about that is professional. Early on, I think there was a need on the part of the Park Service to be loved because we were hated for being here. That was the perception by the local populace. So there was a lot of "Go out and love me," and these people were saying, "No, I don't love you. We don't want to love you. We are not concerned. I am a fireman."

So all of our structural fire protection is done by the local jurisdictions. We don't have our own fire brigade. We are not going to have our own structural fire brigade, so we have contracts with each one of them to do that for us and we pay them for it. They are professional, they do respond, they get it done. I am very happy with the relationship.

We share information with the police when it is necessary. We help each other in emergencies. We get it done. We help each other out as is necessary and there is less need today on the part of the Park Service to say, "Please love me," I think, and more of a willingness on everybody's part to say, "Let's do something worthwhile."

MR. COCKRELL: Is there anything that I haven't asked you that I should ask you, or some accomplishment of yours that you would like to have on record?

MR. McHUGH: Tell me what the administrative history is supposed to say or be about in four words or less.

MR. COCKRELL: It is just a basic summary of the history of this park and its programs and its staff.

Brian J. McHugh

MR. MCHUGH: I guess my programs are natural resource management, visitor protection, and safety. I suppose we haven't said much about safety. The safety record here is remarkable, both for visitors and for employees, one of the best in the Region and acknowledged to be so. People don't get hurt. Again, that doesn't mean that people couldn't get hurt, it means that we are pretty proactive in going to find ways to keep you from being hurt without being too silly about it, too.

[END]

O R A L H I S T O R Y I N T E R V I E W

F O R T H E

A D M I N I S T R A T I V E H I S T O R Y O F

C U Y A H O G A V A L L E Y

N A T I O N A L R E C R E A T I O N A R E A

O H I O

Loretta Neumann
Lobbyist
(former staff assistant to Congressman John F. Seiberling)

June 27, 1989
Washington, D.C.

Interviewed by:

Ron Cockrell
Historian
Midwest Regional Office
National Park Service

Omaha, Nebraska
1989

Loretta Neumann

Loretta Neumann

MR. COCKRELL: I thought we would start by you giving a summary of your background and your career to the present day.

MS. NEUMANN: I started with the Park Service in 1969. I was editor of the Courier and the Newsletter--they were separate publications at the time --and several other publications until 1973. At that time, I started looking around for other opportunities.

My husband, Tedd, had been doing this study of the Cuyahoga Valley for the Park Service. He had been dealing with Congressman Seiberling from Ohio and he knew that Seiberling was looking for both a press person and somebody to do his work on the Interior Committee. Seiberling had gone on the House Interior Committee that previous year. Obviously I had a press background so I went and interviewed. They were actually looking for two people for two jobs; one to do the press and one to do the Interior legislation, each of which paid less than I had been making at the Park Service.

I suggested that I could do the press because obviously I had this background in writing and editing, but on the other hand, I could also help with parks and help with the legislation. Perhaps if they combined the jobs into one, I could do both and they would save money and it would be worth my while to leave my job with the Park Service. I admitted that I didn't know anything about Congress, and Seiberling said, "Well, I can tell you everything you need to know about Congress, but I don't know anything about the Park Service. I want this park going and it is real important to me." I said I would be willing to help him do that so I got the job.

I trained his whole staff into doing their own press, how to write radio scripts, how to write a press release and I ended up doing all of the legislative work. I spent an enormous amount of time just sitting in the Interior Committee when it was meeting, getting the flavor of the members, getting to know what their interests were, because I knew that Seiberling's main cause was getting this park.

I was also very disheartened. I thought it was a wonderful idea. I had seen the plans and the drawings. I had been to the area and thought it was a great opportunity. Everybody said it was crazy; no way was this park ever going to get enacted. Seiberling was just a junior Congressman anyway and "What does he think he is going to do?" I was very discouraged. I went to work for him in October 1973 and it was signed into law in December 1974.

MR. COCKRELL: That is pretty phenomenal.

Loretta Neumann

MS. NEUMANN: Several people said it was the fastest ever. Now it is not just me. Obviously it was Congressman Seiberling. He was indefatigable. He got on the Parks Subcommittee and he worked hard. He took a genuine interest in it. He personally cared about parks. He would go sit at hearings when all of the other members would go away.

Congressman Roy Taylor was the chair at the time. Congressman Taylor really appreciated this junior Congressman who was willing to sit there with him to the bitter end on all of these other park issues. So when Seiberling went to him and said, "I have this park idea, this lovely area called Cuyahoga in Ohio. Would you at least come out and look at it?" Roy said, "Well, we can at least come and look at it."

I know just from talking to Roy Taylor's staff that he did not think that there was going to be anything to see, but that he did this to humor Congressman Seiberling. I will never forget when we went out. We got the Director of the Ohio DNR and got helicopters and took a trip over it. We saw it from the air. We saw it on the ground. We saw the waterfalls and we saw the pretty areas. Seiberling gave everybody a tour through Stan Hywett Hall, his ancestral home and there was a lovely dinner at the Hale Homestead and the Western Reserve Village area.

I will never forget the change in Roy Taylor. He climbed up on a table that night and said, "I didn't realize Congressman Seiberling came from such a background, the Stan Hywett house we saw today. If I had been brought up that way, I have to tell you, I wouldn't be worth shooting." He really admired it. But he also loved the place so he went back and all of a sudden, this Congressman who didn't think that the Cuyahoga Valley was going to be worth it was very interested in it and felt it did have merit. He was a very conservative guy, too. We are not talking about somebody who did this very often. He was very conservative.

As things progressed, we had hearings and got mark-up in the Subcommittee, and we put together a film. Actually Tedd and I did a slide strip with music and a little tape on a little machine, a dissolve unit. It was really quite pretty. Seiberling would show this to other members of Congress to be able to show them that Cuyahoga was a beautiful place. We got the other environmental organizations interested. Initially they weren't. Nat Reed who was Assistant Secretary of the Interior at the time was interested in Alaska, but urban parks? He thought the Park Service had no business in that. He and I used to fight quite a bit in public forums on the whole subject of urban parks, Cuyahoga, Gateway, Golden Gate and all of the others.

Loretta Neumann

At any rate, I will never forget when the mark-up day came. I worked with the staff and Seiberling worked with the staff. We worked out boundaries and we had maps and charts and we worked out language. We took the best of different bills and all of a sudden it went through! It was like lickety-split from that point on until the Senate.

Meanwhile, the Senate had a hearing. We had enormous help from Senator Metzenbaum's office and Senator Taft's office and they got it to the Senate and then it went to the President and everybody thought, "This is all so wonderful. It has such bipartisan support. Of course the President will sign this bill." We got the local politicians. We got the state Republican Party Chairman. We got all sorts of people. We got the captains of industry to write letters. There was still nervousness because the Interior Department opposed the bill and Nat Reed opposed the bill. Seiberling tells a wonderful story about this. Did he tell it to you? You must have him tell you this story, he will tell it better than I.

MR. COCKRELL: Why don't you give me your version?

MS. NEUMANN: My version is by way of Seiberling. Apparently, Gerald Ford was up in Aspen or Vail or wherever he went for his vacations in December to ski. He was at his Winter White House and he had this bill to sign. I think, technically, he probably got it signed after a point where it probably might have been a pocket veto. It was one of those things where they fudge a little at the end. He had a stack of bills to sign and when a bill comes up for signature, attached to it will be a list of people, who is for it and who is against it. If it was noncontroversial, it will just go right through. But in this case, there was actually some discussion about it and they were saying how the Interior Department was against it and it was a bad deal and was there anybody for it?

There were these lists. There were two or three single-spaced pages of all these people that were for it, including all the Republican Party activists in Ohio, all the Cabinet members, the Chairmen of the Boards of Goodyear and Firestone and all these people from Cleveland. It was just an incredible list of people. Of course, Ford was up for reelection the next time and he said, "If I don't sign this bill, my name is going to be mud in Ohio" and he signed it. That is how Cuyahoga got enacted into law.

MR. COCKRELL: How much of your time did Cuyahoga Valley take? It probably varied from year to year, but maybe in the first year or two?

Loretta Neumann

MS. NEUMANN: In the first year it was enormous. Seiberling was on the Interior Committee at that point. I will never forget when I first went to work on the staff he said, "We have a couple of bills here that are working their way through, but you don't have to worry about them because they are almost through." One was the Strip Mining Bill which didn't get signed into law until 1977. It was after many vetoes and overrides and attempted overrides. The other was the Land Use Planning Act. That one eventually didn't pass on a rule on the House floor. Both of these bills were very controversial, so I ended up spending a lot of time on those two bills and Cuyahoga. I would say a third of my time easily was spent on Cuyahoga, but that wasn't the only thing I did.

MR. COCKRELL: The local group, the Cuyahoga Valley Association and the Park Federation, did you coordinate very closely with them?

MS. NEUMANN: Yes, I did very much. These were very important, particularly that wonderful fellow who died a few years ago, I forget his name.

MR. COCKRELL: Jim Jackson?

MS. NEUMANN: Yes, Jim Jackson was a wonderful person, and the Sierra Club, a guy from Akron University, I can't remember his name and there were several others. A lot of people from Cleveland, too, understood this whole linkage.

MR. COCKRELL: Would you say that the most support came from the Cleveland area or Akron or both?

MS. NEUMANN: I would it was the whole range. It started with the Akron people for sure and the people who lived in the area. Seiberling lived in the valley. Jim Jackson and his other friend, Sherm Shumacher, who donated some land to the park, also lived there. There was a whole bunch of them.

MR. COCKRELL: Was it necessary to intensively lobby other Congressmen and their staffs about Cuyahoga Valley? Is that a lot of what you did?

MS. NEUMANN: That is very interesting. Seiberling understood that the Members were the best lobbyists, so he did it. If a phone call needed to be made, he made it and dialed the phone himself. It was the same with me to the staff, because it was exceedingly important.

We had to go to the environmental community nationally to get them interested. I went and made friends in the Sierra Club and in all of the other organizations. They had never heard of Cuyahoga. I had a hunch that because you had this Congressman who was genuinely

Loretta Neumann

interested in something, that obviously they weren't going to be against it; this was for preservation and conservation and they were going to be for it. I had a hunch because he was also involved in these other major issues, the Strip Mining Bill, land use and other things they cared about. Mineral King. I worked on Mineral King. I worked on Indiana Dunes. All of the hot issues of the day were going through the Interior Committee at the time. I handled nuclear, he was hot on nuclear energy.

Here was a Congressman they could count on who was an intellectual and would listen to all points of view and yet had an environmental bent. He had been Chairman of the Sierra Club Chapter in that area or something. Here was somebody they could count on to at least listen. He definitely had a mind of his own, but they knew he felt the same way they did.

MR. COCKRELL: Were there some Members of Congress who were adamantly opposed to this new national recreation area that he switched their viewpoints around to voting for it?

MS. NEUMANN: I wouldn't say that there were people adamantly opposed. If they were opposed, it was only because they happened to be Republicans and if the Administration was against it, they would knee-jerk be against it. Or they might be against it on budgetary grounds.

Actually we were in good fortune because Seiberling was not alone. Ralph Regula from Canton was also on the Interior Committee at that time. He is now on the Appropriations Committee, but a lot of people forget that at that time he was on the Interior Committee. He was a big supporter and not because (to his credit) he felt this was going to be something for Canton, but he genuinely thought that this was a worthy thing to do. He and Seiberling got along fine, so having this duet on the same committee--a Republican and a Democrat--was very, very good.

MR. COCKRELL: You don't think that Cuyahoga could be stereotyped as a Democratic park?

MS. NEUMANN: Absolutely not.

MR. COCKRELL: A lot of people have said that of Indiana Dunes, that that was a Democratic park and not very much Republican support went into it.

MS. NEUMANN: That is too bad because I don't think the word conservative even should be used here. I mean, conservation ought to be both. The ones who opposed it did so because they didn't understand the issues and simply were taking the Administration line, but otherwise, we had lots of Republican support.

Loretta Neumann

MR. COCKRELL: When Tedd McCann did his report it seemed that it didn't see the light of day for quite a while and then copies did start to filter out. Six months after Ron Walker had rejected Tedd's report, the Sierra Club was still anticipating that it was going to be finished and released to the public. Was the Park Service sitting on this report not wanting it to get out to Congress or to the public?

MS. NEUMANN: That slightly predated my going to work for Seiberling, but that was my understanding. I wasn't part of that, so actually how it got out, I don't know.

MR. COCKRELL: Tedd said that he thought that Seiberling had gotten a copy of it somehow and that perhaps he was the one that was spreading it all over the place.

MS. NEUMANN: I wouldn't blame him a bit. I would have done the same thing.

MR. COCKRELL: Norman Duke, the Chairman of the National Park Service's Northeast Regional Advisory Commission, testified against Cuyahoga at both of the hearings. Were there attempts made to change his viewpoint to be positive for Cuyahoga?

MS. NEUMANN: Yes, as I recall. I remember his logic was real screwy; that this was somehow not important enough to be in the ranks with Yellowstone. But I also recall his wife was a supporter of the park.

MR. COCKRELL: Really?

MS. NEUMANN: They parted company as I recall. What was her name? I can't remember, but it wasn't that big a factor.

MR. COCKRELL: The Nixon Administration prided itself on promoting "Parks to the People." Were they contradicting themselves when they initially refused to sanction a national recreation area like Cuyahoga Valley?

MS. NEUMANN: Yes they were.

MR. COCKRELL: Who was responsible for that? Was it somebody in the White House or the OMB or both?

MS. NEUMANN: It would be speculation. Ironically, the person in the White House who was behind a lot of the good things that Nixon did was Ehrlichman. All of those wonderful environmental things that happened, even the land use bill that I worked on, it is my understanding that he was behind that. Initially, that was an

Loretta Neumann

administration initiative. They dumped it later. Realtors came out and the developers came out against it, and those were their natural allies.

I was in the Park Service at this point. I was editor of the Newsletter and Courier, and I did a story on both the Gateway National Recreation Area and the Golden Gate National Recreation Area slightly before they were enacted. I was very conversant at the time with the issues and I loved them both.

It was very exciting that you would have a President go off to see one. I remember vividly. He went off in a helicopter and toured Gateway and said how wonderful it was and this "Parks to the People" stuff, but the cynics would say, and I would have to say I am one of them, that it was all a gimmick because Nixon needed the urban vote and he needed the black vote, or so he thought. I don't think he got it. I think once the election was over, he decided either he won without it or he didn't need it or he didn't get it anyway or whatever, but that was over.

When Cuyahoga came along, it was after the election. There was no political mileage to be gotten, they thought. There was political mileage to get out of it for reasons that Seiberling said then and it is still true, and I will tell you in a minute, but they didn't see it. They only saw that particular election was over and that is all they looked at. They really didn't think in terms of the long haul. Seiberling used to say, and he is right, that by having urban parks, you build a constituency in the Congress for parks generally. Otherwise, you have nothing to appeal to them.

For example, I worked on the Payments in Lieu of Taxes Act. The primary purpose of that was to provide payments to counties to offset Federal lands that aren't taxed. That bill had been around for 20 years and never went anywhere until Seiberling. A lot of people got no credit. I mean, I was there and I worked on it and I helped draft this provision that dealt with new parks. There is a Payment in Lieu of Taxes provision that deals with newly acquired parks. It provides up to one percent a year for five years of the value of land taken off the tax rolls. Counties could get payments to offset tax losses from new Federal parks.

To evaluate the need for this, we did studies with the Park Service. There was a study that showed that there is a certain curve in values and in terms of the tax revenues over time. At first there was a loss of tax revenues because you were taking land off the tax rolls, but then they increased because of tourism and the increased property values around the park. There was a five-year cycle. We ran the numbers, ran the numbers, ran the numbers and this one percent figure kept coming up, no matter how you ran

Loretta Neumann

the numbers. So we said, "OK, just make it five years at one percent a year" and that is how we got the figure.

We had one-stop shopping with the legislative counsel for the Interior Committee. To this day, he says, "Loretta, I can't believe you did this to me. We drafted this thing and you didn't come back. You just took it." It was like that old joke that Mark Russell used to say: his jokes came out of the Ticker Tape and he read them. That is the basic idea. I took it out of the legislative counsel's hand and ran.

A lot of people attribute that provision to getting the entire bill through. Why? Because it brought in the Eastern states. All the lands where there were newly acquired parks that would benefit from it were mostly in the East; not all, but most of them. That brought in a whole wave of Congressmen, including Jack Bingham from New York, who had opposed the Payment in Lieu of Taxes Act, but Gateway would have benefitted among other parks, so we got that through. I really do feel that it is stupid not to think of the constituency-building aspect of urban parks.

MR. COCKRELL: Nat Reed drafted the Department's negative stance against the Seiberling bill in February 1974, yet Tedd McCann's report was so positive about Cuyahoga Valley.

MS. NEUMANN: That just shows the difference between the professionals and the political field.

MR. COCKRELL: That is what I was going to ask. This wasn't lost on the people in Congress at the time because they knew about Tedd's report.

MS. NEUMANN: But still today it happens all the time. It is not unusual. It was unusual probably then, but it is not unusual now.

MR. COCKRELL: How did your office feel about trying to play up Tedd's report and trying to discredit what Nat Reed was saying? You said that you debated Nat Reed all the time.

MS. NEUMANN: Yes, I did at public forums.

MR. COCKRELL: Do you feel you usually won all the arguments?

MS. NEUMANN: Yes. I am sure Nat Reed thought he did, too! I just think that even with professional politicians, they really like to hear what the merits are and not just the political things. What Nat Reed was saying was political. Tedd wasn't a politician. He was somebody that went out and looked at it as a professional and called it "a green shrouded miracle." Those words haunted over and over and over if you have read the report. If you read all of the

Loretta Neumann

press clippings, they all talk about this "green shrouded miracle." Where he came up with this term, I don't know. Tedd has this wonderful gift of language and a vision that is quite special. I don't know if Tedd told you his plan, but he went out totally independently of what the state was doing, they did overlays and...

MR. COCKRELL: There was a 16-acre difference in the boundaries?

MS. NEUMANN: Yes, that was incredible! So it really says that the professionals have a sense of topography. Now the ultimate boundaries had additional stuff in them. We have literally had maps on the floor of Seiberling's office and added areas for various reasons that had nothing to do with "professional planners," but I would say that Congressman Seiberling was as professional about it as anybody. I mean there is not a pond, there is not a river, there is not a road, there is not a house in the Cuyahoga Valley that Congressman Seiberling doesn't know. He would look at these maps and he would say, "No, that is wrong; there is a tree over in that area; you missed something; you didn't put in this pond in the back."

MR. COCKRELL: Were there any state officials that opposed the national park plan or were they all pretty much for it?

MS. NEUMANN: Yes, they were for it. Bill Nye was the head of DNR at the time and there was a Democratic governor who was. But, no, they were all for it.

MR. COCKRELL: How about local government, were they all for it?

MS. NEUMANN: For the most part. I would say Peninsula and a couple of the little communities were concerned about the tax base. When I looked at what their tax base was, and that was part of looking at this one percent in the Payment of Lieu of Taxes thing later, you are talking about a budget of about \$25,000 a year. It was real little. I am sure it is much more now, but at the time it was real little.

The opposition to the park came later through Charles Cushman. What evil, nasty things one can think about that he did. There was, I would say, a rump group of people because they are the very ones that Cushman attracted later when he came in; it was not a whole cloth that he created. There was some understanding that this was basically a very rural area. You might be between two big cities, but I come from Oklahoma and this was just about as rural as anything I have ever seen in Oklahoma. It is prettier, but it was just as backwater, uneducated kind of stuff.

MR. COCKRELL: Bill Birdsell at this time was Superintendent of the Ohio NPS Group. He was told to be impartial at all times while

Loretta Neumann

coordinating valley related matters such as the local hearings that were held. Did he pretty much follow that? Was he impartial?

MS. NEUMANN: Publicly, yes, he was impartial.

MR. COCKRELL: What about in private?

MS. NEUMANN: I think privately he made it very clear that this was something he thought was a wonderful area and he loved it, but I would say he was circumspect on it.

MR. COCKRELL: Did he have in mind being the first Superintendent of Cuyahoga?

MS. NEUMANN: I don't know.

MR. COCKRELL: Do you know if he ever asked to be? Some of his correspondence to the Regional Office during this time period said that he wished there was more local opposition expressed at the hearings and he also said he didn't think that it was going to come about. Do you think he was just telling the Regional Office people what they wanted to hear?

MS. NEUMANN: I am surprised, too. It didn't sound like him.

MR. COCKRELL: Some of the things that I read, I can't quite figure out where he was coming from, but I think maybe he was playing both sides.

MS. NEUMANN: How early? What are the dates on it?

MR. COCKRELL: Early 1974 in the spring and the summertime. How would you describe Birdsell's relationship with John Seiberling? Did they get along fairly well?

MS. NEUMANN: Yes, they did. I would say it was cordial, but I wouldn't say it was close. Seiberling is a very lovely person, but he is also sort of quiet. He was not effusive. Bill was much more gregarious. Seiberling is tall and lean, and Bill was kind of round. They were both tall, so I couldn't call them Mutt and Jeff, but they were quite different.

MR. COCKRELL: I have been told that whenever Seiberling was in the valley he and Birdsell would ride around in the car and look at different properties and talk about what the plans were for such and such. Did they do that quite a bit?

MS. NEUMANN: I wasn't watching when he was there, but I wouldn't doubt it. John had a passion about it. It had nothing to do with Birdsell. It was just that John wanted to know what was going on.

Loretta Neumann

He worked so hard to get the park and he knew every parcel. He knew who owned it. He knew what threats there were.

MR. COCKRELL: So he kept pretty close tabs then?

MS. NEUMANN: Yes, it is totally unpolitical in the normal sense when you think politics. It wasn't at all political.

MR. COCKRELL: I came across a telephone memo in the files where you were trying to get someone from the Park Service--I assume you meant Tedd--to brief Secretary Morton. You had not been successful. Why didn't they want Secretary Morton to be briefed on it? Had they already made up their minds?

MS. NEUMANN: They simply had a position. There was actually going to be some sort of briefing. It wasn't that there wasn't. I had gone to Senator Taft's person and said, "I understand there is going to be a briefing, but they are not having anybody professional attend." I said, "There is going to be a briefing. They should have both sides of the story and at least get the professional presentation as well as the political one." Taft's office agreed, but it backfired and the Department got mad, so they ended up not having the briefing at all. At least they said they didn't.

MR. COCKRELL: When the park was authorized and established six months later, it showed up on the list of areas where the Park Service was considering contracting with state and local authorities for operation and maintenance of certain park areas. Was the Park Service trying not to get deeply involved with Cuyahoga Valley?

MS. NEUMANN: I would say that was an understatement.

MR. COCKRELL: Were they set straight right away?

MS. NEUMANN: They certainly were. In fact, it was a very interesting thing, people not understanding that Seiberling did this out of great personal love and compassion and caring for that area; for the land; for the farms, for historical resources, for understanding that development would have engulfed the area and it would be gone in a real sense of leaving a legacy. It had nothing to do with normal politics as you think of somebody getting elected. I mean, the guy didn't even run for Congress until he was 52 years old. He was not a professional politician to begin with. He took such an interest that the bill got enacted.

There was an election in the meantime. There was a change in Congress and Senator Glenn was selected. Seiberling immediately had a meeting and called all of the Congressmen and Senators together. We were going to talk about how now that we have got the

Loretta Neumann

park, what are we going to do to help get it moving? It was real cute. We have got some Park Service people up there and well what do we do now?

That wasn't political; he wasn't doing that. When you think political, you normally think political to get elected. He wasn't doing that to get elected for anything. He did it because here was this wonderful area that he cared so much about--and the Park Service being so recalcitrant--he was going to make sure all of its friends protected it. I think at that point there was a changeover and Regula won a seat on the Appropriations Committee.

The irony of that was that when Secretary Watt came in, we had just vicious battles, I mean just horrible, horrible things. All the stuff we did, the fights we had, were unbelievable. Watt personally really tried his best to do in Seiberling. He knew that the way to get to Seiberling was to hurt him the most. To crush him the most would be through Cuyahoga because it was so unpolitical that you would really hit this guy at a place where he really cared.

What they stupidly never understood was that it wasn't just Seiberling. Ralph Regula also cared. They would cut the money for Cuyahoga and Ralph would make sure the money got back in. And Watt said, "How did Seiberling do that?" And I would think, "Why don't they look on the Appropriations Committee first?" I don't know because in almost every other way, Ralph Regula would do whatever Watt wanted. He was a good Republican. He was a conservative and he didn't stray from the party line very much, but he genuinely cared about Cuyahoga.

MR. COCKRELL: The land acquisition program was what set off a lot of controversy in the valley. I have heard a lot of people blame the Corps of Engineers. Would you say that that was the primary culprit?

MS. NEUMANN: It is not fair just to blame the Corps of Engineers, but the Corps' method of acquiring land is quite different from the Park Service. I mean, they didn't have things like that. Seiberling was so careful, too, crafting in all the protections for property owners, retained rights, use of occupancy and on and on and on. You can't have retained rights and use of occupancy when the land is going to be inundated with water, right? The Corps was not familiar with these scenic easements. You don't have scenic easements in the middle of a dam, right? Maybe on the sides.

And you had a rigid hierarchy. As I recall it, the Corps comes under whoever is the General for that particular area and we were in one district and then it switched to another. I can't remember if one was in Pennsylvania and then went to Chicago. Whoever was

Loretta Neumann

in Chicago was very unlike the other who was kind of a nice guy, a very laid-back kind of person. The other one was very military, very regimented and went in very heavy-handed.

I met some of the local-level people. Had they not had that kind of regimentation, I think it would have been fine because they were themselves were very personable.

MR. COCKRELL: Did your office have to deal with a lot of land acquisition complaints from the valley?

MS. NEUMANN: Ironically, no, that I recall. It was more when you have a complaint, compared to somebody being happy, people are more vocal so you hear about it. Yes, we would hear about it. I was very involved with it, but I couldn't say in proportion that it was out of hand.

MR. COCKRELL: In a March 14, 1980 letter to Director Whalen, Congressman Seiberling and Senator Metzenbaum called on the NPS to further reevaluate its land acquisition program at Cuyahoga and to suspend or drop all complaint actions against the residents. Why did they do this?

MS. NEUMANN: Again this goes back to the Corps. Seiberling's whole vision of it was that it would be a mix of ownerships and a mix of types of acquisition from scenic easements to fee, that fee would be limited to areas where there was really some threat to the property or somebody wanted to sell in fee. There was no other way. From a budgetary standpoint, they said you don't have to acquire everything in fee even when somebody wants to sell in fee.

MR. COCKRELL: But isn't that what they were doing?

MS. NEUMANN: Right. Because that was the more traditional way for the Park Service to operate. What was sad was while doing that and while acquiring certain properties in fee, there was no program there. There was no sort of Park Service presence.

I remember a meeting--perhaps you are going to ask me about it if you have any records--that we put together bringing in Bill Birdsell. Tedd was part of it and interpretive people and just a whole range to say, "What is this park going to be?" You can't just buy land. You know this is going to be a park.

That was one of the big sticklers with Bill Birdsell. I mean he was a very dear person, very caring, and he genuinely cared about the parks as much as Seiberling did and with as much vigor. But he couldn't quite get out of that mold of the traditional park ranger and see this was a natural park in an urban setting, that some of the techniques would have to be different, and you really

Loretta Neumann

had to aggressively get out and do programs. It was just like pulling hair to get him to do it. He understood how to protect the land. He was really into protecting this wonderful area, so it wasn't that what he was trying to do was wrong, it is just that it was sort of wrong in the context at the time.

MR. COCKRELL: So what was the result of this? Did it put a stop to the acquisitions?

MS. NEUMANN: I don't know if they totally did.

MR. COCKRELL: Did the Park Service change its policies at Cuyahoga?

MS. NEUMANN: I think the election changed it. What Seiberling and Metzenbaum and the gang were doing out of concern not to spend too much, to provide programs, to make this the park they sort of envisioned it to be which would be this mix of ownership. It wouldn't be an area that was all owned in fee, understanding that that is harder to manage, but that was the compromise. When Watt came in, the whole turmoil, the Ric Davidge's in the world and the Cushman's ran rampant with their ideology.

I talked to some of them and they were so right wing. One guy I will never forget told me that he did not believe that the Federal Government should be acquiring parks.

I said, "What about Yellowstone?"

He said, "Well, that is different. That is important."

I said, "But the Park Service should be going out and buying land. The Federal Government should be buying land. They do it for dams. They do it for highways. Shouldn't they buy land for this?"

"Well, that is different. Those are public purposes."

I am telling you something that was said to me and it was said by one of them. That was the attitude.

So I wasn't too surprised to find Cuyahoga on the "hit list" of Watt. We did battle with Watt and we had the hearings and I did a land acquisition report. I don't know if you have seen that. That was long, bitter, nasty and grueling, and they were brilliant. I have never seen people so vigorously mean. How somebody can be so energetically hateful, I can't understand it.

MR. COCKRELL: In 1980 there was a GAO audit that investigated Seiberling's scenic easement.

Loretta Neumann

MS. NEUMANN: Right, and they found there was nothing there.

MR. COCKRELL: What was behind that? Was somebody out to get him?

MS. NEUMANN: It was Cushman. Cushman and Watt initiated that. I was there when Seiberling was debating the dilemma before the park was enacted. Here was a Congressman who is in the park. If he somehow exempted his property, people would say, "Oh here is this Congressman who wants this park for everybody else and makes them have to sell or they have to give an easement, but he exempts himself." So to avoid anybody thinking even the perception that he would somehow benefit from this park or exempt himself from any of the problems, he would donate an easement to the Akron Metropolitan Park District before any of it happens, so it would lay to rest any of those questions.

What did Cushman do when he came along? He said, "Seiberling was the only person who was given an easement." He wasn't given anything. He gave it. He did not take the tax deduction. He did not get that. He was restricted from the use of his property. He couldn't cut his trees. He couldn't subdivide his property. He was really from a business standpoint quite nice. It was an attempt to malign him, and to discredit him, and probably to use it politically against him, but it didn't work. People who knew Seiberling knew he was just walking, talking integrity.

MR. COCKRELL: How much of the Cuyahoga controversy contributed to the removal of Bill Whalen as Director? Did that play a factor at all?

MS. NEUMANN: No, that had to do with Morris Udall and some other things that went on. It had nothing to do with Cuyahoga.

MR. COCKRELL: Did you ever talk to Charles Cushman about Cuyahoga?

MS. NEUMANN: Many times. Whenever I see him, I always threaten to punch him in the nose. He is evil. He is one of the most evil people I have met. He is consistently just evil. I don't understand what is behind it. I don't understand evilness.

MR. COCKRELL: Is it that he just hates the National Park Service and he is out to wear us down?

MS. NEUMANN: He has a vengeance. I don't know. I have heard what he says. He was in Yosemite and his family had some property or something. We could all go back in our lives to something that we have, a family feud, or a spat, and there are people who build these things out of proportion and there are other people who say, "It's life," and you go on living. I also think he has made a lot of money off of it. He attracts a certain right wing element.

Loretta Neumann

MR. COCKRELL: What about all of the negative publicity, like the Jessica Savitch reports on Cuyahoga? What was behind that? Was it Cushman and his group?

MS. NEUMANN: Yes. They pushed it and pushed it and pushed it. She had a mean streak, too. I did get to know her in this process because she came a couple of times and I talked to her. I was helping arrange an interview she had with Seiberling, supposedly on one subject. It was all sort of prearranged.

They walked in and started grilling Seiberling on his easement. So I said, "Just a minute! This wasn't what we discussed. Let's talk about this for a minute." And the cameras kept running, so I simply got up and stood in front of the cameras so they couldn't continue. I got really furious. "Let's just stop the cameras," so they did.

I do not understand people like that, so I can't speculate for you why. Actually I have friends in the news media who knew her and said that they didn't think that was unusual at all. She was very egotistical and was very aggressive and out to make her mark. She may or may not have believed in it, that wasn't the point. She had this story and she was going to milk it.

MR. COCKRELL: One of the things I came across in reading through the files was that Bill Birdsell did not always follow advice from the Midwest Regional Office in Omaha. They wanted him to do things a certain way and he had his own agenda to fulfill. The relations between the two offices was really bad for a long time. There are still repercussions to this day. Was part of this that Birdsell thought that he had a Congressman in his back pocket and that he could do what he wanted, or did he just not have the staff to do what the Regional Office was asking him to do?

MS. NEUMANN: Anything I would say would be pure speculation. I knew there was bad blood.

MR. COCKRELL: Could it be that the people in Omaha just still didn't believe that the Cuyahoga Valley should be a park?

MS. NEUMANN: I would say all of the above because I dealt with both. I dealt with people in Omaha who were terrific and I dealt with people in Omaha who were terrible. Bill could be wonderful and he could be hardheaded. He had staff that were terrific and he had staff that were stupid.

MR. COCKRELL: There was a series in the Cleveland Press in April 1980 that was very unfair toward the park. I guess Birdsell took it personally and wrote a letter to the publisher of the Press that

Loretta Neumann

eventually got to the Secretary of the Interior and all over the place. Was this one of the last straws for the decision being made that Birdsell should be transferred elsewhere? What do you know about the decision to transfer Birdsell?

MS. NEUMANN: Bill was very, very, stubborn. We would say, "Look, this is a modern park and it is a new world in a different age. We need programs and we need to have a park there and we need signs and we need a real presence," and nothing would happen!

You would say it again and nothing would happen.

You would say it again and nothing would happen.

So he lost, frankly, I think what support he had, as much as we loved him, Seiberling to this day, you bring Bill up and you talk about it for a while and it will bring a tear to his eye. He genuinely understood that this was another human being who cared as much about that area as he did. That is enough to bring that bonding, but after a while, you can only help somebody so much.

It was like Bill was almost on a self-destructive route. He just wouldn't listen and we finally couldn't do any more. I mean, there was no more you could do to help him. Even with all of that, as mad as I would get at him, it was so shocking when he passed away. It felt like it was all our fault. I think everybody felt that way.

MR. COCKRELL: Did Seiberling recommend that he be transferred and a new manager be installed, or did this come from within the Park Service?

MS. NEUMANN: As I recall, it was the Park Service. We didn't say that they shouldn't, but it was never initiated by Seiberling.

MR. COCKRELL: Did Birdsell object to the transfer or try to get out of it?

MS. NEUMANN: It was so fast I think he was stunned. I genuinely think that is why he died.

MR. COCKRELL: Of course he was working himself to death anyway, the long hours and all of that, the bad heart. I have been told by a couple of people that before it was decided that he be reassigned to the Washington Office, the Omaha Office was considering reactivating their Chicago Field Office and moving Birdsell there. Had you heard anything about that?

MS. NEUMANN: I don't remember. It may have been. It was too long ago.

Loretta Neumann

MR. COCKRELL: Lew Albert was selected to be the new Superintendent. Did Seiberling know Lew before he came to Cuyahoga?

MS. NEUMANN: No.

MR. COCKRELL: So he had no recommendation one way or the other on that?

MS. NEUMANN: No.

MR. COCKRELL: Let's talk a little bit about James Watt and the "hit list." Could you explain what happened with all of this? You say there was a "hit list" yet Watt and his people say there was never a "hit list."

MS. NEUMANN: Ask the park. They should have copies of the report I wrote in 1984. We had a series of hearings on the Park Service land acquisition program and I did a staff report. It is all in there. In fact, I have memos in there that they didn't even know we had. They didn't know we had them until we printed it.

I loved it. Including Watt's "hit list" that he claimed he didn't have. I have the memo and it is printed in there. I am down to my last copy or two. Literally, I had boxes of them. The Interior Committee might have some more, but if you want anything on that, it lays it all out. Cuyahoga is in there as well as the other parks. I did an appendix which has all of the memos.

MR. COCKRELL: So if I were to call the Interior Committee, they would send me a copy?

MS. NEUMANN: You could tell them, "I am asking about the staff reports that Loretta did on land acquisition in 1984." The Committee published a print.

MR. COCKRELL: I will probably do that because I don't think I have seen that. I have seen most everything that is in the NPS files. I don't remember seeing that one. How did Watt's policies effect Cuyahoga Valley in the long run?

MS. NEUMANN: It wasn't just Watt. You have probably heard about Ric Davidge and all of those little evil minions. I think in the long run it is not going to, but I think in the short run, it did. I think that we may have lost some properties that should have been acquired. I think there is an ill-feeling that is going to last a long time. Now I think it has moved. We were trying to get Bill to get focused on it as a park and all of the wonderful things that parks are.

Loretta Neumann

I was involved in trying to save a historic site down in Cape Canaveral, the launch pad that shot the Apollo to the moon. I was a dismal failure, but they flew us down there in a NASA jet to go see that and they thought the Congressional staff were staff going to see what a terrible piece of junk this thing is.

We go there and we freaked out. It was wonderful! They took us for a little lunch where they used to take the astronauts when they came back. Remember back in the old days they would isolate them for a while? They lived in these little cabins. Idyllic little places, let me tell you. They have dunes and beaches and I will never forget talking to guys and thinking, "Gee, this is really amazing! You have all of this land and it is so beautiful and so park-like." They said, "Oh yes, this used to be a community. There were probably 50,000 people lived there and we bought it up."

They bought it in like five years and all of a sudden, I said, "Weren't the people upset?" because this was in the midst of all of this stuff I am doing, hearings and land acquisition. They said, "Well they understood. This is NASA and the space program."

It is a much bigger area than Cuyahoga with many more people involved. They were gone without nary a whimper and no Charles Cushman, too. Hopefully, we will make all of that a park one day. It is gorgeous land.

MR. COCKRELL: Watt imposed a gag order on the Department of Interior employees, ordering them not to talk to Congressional staff.

MS. NEUMANN: I was the one they weren't supposed to talk to.

MR. COCKRELL: What was the result of that? Did it last very long?

MS. NEUMANN: It lasted for a while, but only as a public thing. About three or four of us from the Interior Committee had gone over for a meeting with the Interior Department. We took real seriously our oversight responsibilities. We were supposed to oversee this program and all of a sudden we were not allowed to be there! While we were in the meeting, we got a phone call and we were not allowed to meet with the staff. We had to leave the building. It was astonishing. We couldn't believe it was true. We were Congressional staff.

As a result of that, I had the Library of Congress research what the powers of the staff were. We did have extensive powers and they could have been exercised. We just were nicer to them than they were to us.

MR. COCKRELL: This didn't last very long, did it?

Loretta Neumann

MS. NEUMANN: It went on for a long time. It was a major source of flak. It was also at the time of Gorsuch-Burford and the EPA folks. What happened was that some other Congressional staff were going over to EPA, rifling through files, they said. Well if they were going through files, they had a legitimate right to. So we were accused of trying to go over and rifle through files. We were literally just trying to have a meeting and we were not rifling through files. I didn't have to rifle through files. People would give me whatever I wanted.

MR. COCKRELL: Did this apply only to Department employees or did it go on down the line to everyone?

MS. NEUMANN: It was supposedly everybody.

MR. COCKRELL: So if you called Cuyahoga Valley, were they not allowed to talk to you?

MS. NEUMANN: Oh no, for some reason that didn't seem to, no, it was here in Washington.

MR. COCKRELL: In 1981, Cleveland Metro Parks' Director Lou Tsipis took advantage of the deauthorization speculation and asked Congressman Mottl to support a transfer of Cuyahoga Valley lands, national park lands, to his Metro Park District. What do you recall about this?

MS. NEUMANN: I do remember it, but I wouldn't want to be quoted because Ron Mottl was not considered to be one of your more intellectually adept people. Nobody took it seriously as far as I know. We certainly didn't.

MR. COCKRELL: So nothing much came of it at all?

MS. NEUMANN: No, not that I recall.

MR. COCKRELL: James Watt resigned in late 1983. If he had not resigned, would there have been enough support in Congress to impeach him? Was there any move underway to do that?

MS. NEUMANN: Yes, but I wouldn't be fair to conjecture it. He wasn't being done in. Remember the Beach Boys? He was doing it to himself.

MR. COCKRELL: How did William Clark's programs differ from James Watt's? Was there a noticeable difference between the two?

MS. NEUMANN: The Department was more accessible. I remember that vividly. But otherwise, the staff didn't change. The Assistant

Loretta Neumann

Secretary's office is the one that really matters in these things and the attitude there didn't change as far as I could tell.

MR. COCKRELL: What about the policy toward Cuyahoga Valley?

MS. NEUMANN: I frankly don't think it still has changed.

MR. COCKRELL: Is it still the same?

MS. NEUMANN: It is not much better.

MR. COCKRELL: Was it any less hostile than under Watt?

MS. NEUMANN: Watt was so feisty. It is like the kid who is constantly picking a fight. It was like a constant effort. So to have him removed, it was just a lovely calm because Clark was a very pleasant person. He was, in fact, quite the opposite. I think he didn't give two hoots about Cuyahoga. It was not an issue. His whole purpose of being there was to calm things down. But the minions in the Assistant Secretary's shop were still there with all of these Park Protection Plans. They didn't call them Land Acquisition Plans any more. They were Park Protection Plans. They weren't protecting anything.

MR. COCKRELL: Why did they come up with that? Was that an effort to stall land acquisition programs?

MS. NEUMANN: That is exactly what it was.

MR. COCKRELL: How about Don Hodel and his administration?

MS. NEUMANN: It was more of the same. Hodel was much more of an ingratiating person, very smiley. He wasn't as remote as Clark, but he was more friendly than Watt, although he is from the same cloth. The people around the Department are not at that level except for Watt. Watt really knew what to do and the reason he did is because he came out of the Department. He had been Director of the former Bureau of Outdoor Recreation.

It would be like you or me, the grunt all of a sudden becomes the boss. You know where the bodies are buried. You know how the decisions are made. You have a lot more power in a way than somebody that comes in from the outside. They are at the beck and call of the staff--both Clark and Hodel. Hodel had worked his way up, too, so he was more savvy.

MR. COCKRELL: When Seiberling retired in January of 1987, did he feel confident that Cuyahoga Valley was being left in good hands with Ralph Regula still around and his replacement, Tom Sawyer?

Loretta Neumann

Is he as dedicated toward that park as--I am sure he is not--but to what degree?

MS. NEUMANN: I am not going to say. You can guess.

MR. COCKRELL: Is there anything that I haven't asked or talked about that you think we should?

MS. NEUMANN: Yes, I do think that there were a lot of very positive things along the way. These little bits of legislation, that is what you ought to talk to Betsy Cuthbertson about, because she worked on it much more closely than I. The grants, the funding, they got from various programs. The fact that the National Folk Life Festival was there. That is all our doing, because I knew Joe Wilson and I know the people that did this sort of thing. They looked around for another place and got sort of interested.

Betsy helped them a lot with things like the sewage treatment plant or what you do with tires or a lot of nitty-gritty stuff that nobody even knows happens, but either needs authorizing legislation or it needs appropriations.

Seiberling was always in there, just doing it and doing it and doing it. Who is doing it now, I don't know. Seiberling had the wherewithal, the intelligence, the interest to do these things, but he also had the staff that looked out for him and let him know when things were needed to be done. I don't know that there is any staff person like me or Betsy or the others; it wasn't just us that do that.

Even today, occasionally, I will come across something. I am a lobbyist and I do totally different things, but I do do some land acquisition work for other clients. I always, if I am looking for them, then I will sort of check on Cuyahoga. It is very clear to me that there is not quite that level of interest. I find things that I would have been outraged at four or five years ago that nobody seems to be outraged at because there is nobody to raise that level of outrage. I am not in the position now to do that. People malign politicians, but here is an area where an active politician genuinely cares out of personal commitment. I do think Ralph Regula cares. He has got a pretty good staff. And it is not even in his district. He doesn't live there.

MR. COCKRELL: Anything else?

MS. NEUMANN: Probably lots, but I can't think of it right now.

[END]

O R A L H I S T O R Y I N T E R V I E W

F O R T H E

A D M I N I S T R A T I V E H I S T O R Y O F

C U Y A H O G A V A L L E Y

N A T I O N A L R E C R E A T I O N A R E A

O H I O

William Nye
Attorney-At-Law
former Director, Ohio Department of Natural Resources

May 24, 1989
Akron, Ohio

Interviewed by:

Ron Cockrell
Historian
Midwest Regional Office
National Park Service

Omaha, Nebraska
1989

William Nye

William Nye

MR. NYE: How long have you been working on this project?

MR. COCKRELL: I actually started this project last year and have been working on it off and on. I have gone through all the park records and I have been doing interviews most of this two-week period. I have some more interviews outside of this area to do. One is with Lew Albert, the former superintendent, and one of the directors of the Park Service who is retired in Seattle, Russ Dickenson. Then I will be in Washington, D.C., interviewing some other people.

MR. NYE: One person you ought to interview is Nat Reed.

MR. COCKRELL: Actually, I interviewed him in 1987.

MR. NYE: About the Cuyahoga Valley?

MR. COCKRELL: Primarily for Indiana Dunes. But then, I had 10 or 15 minutes to talk about Cuyahoga Valley, so he gave me his opinions on the park.

MR. NYE: He was against it?

MR. COCKRELL: Definitely!

MR. NYE: There is another one that would be an interesting interview. You might even look for this. There was a **Wall Street Journal** full-page op ed article that was about the Congressional hearings. Seventy-five percent of it was about a debate between James Watt and I over the philosophy of national parks vis-a-vis and urban parks like the Cuyahoga Valley.

MR. COCKRELL: I will have to look for that.

MR. NYE: **Wall Street Journal**, op ed piece, sometime in late 1973 or '74. For the **Wall Street Journal** to give a full page op ed is really unusual. It was the full page with pictures in the center. It really got into it. Of course, it was supporting the administration. It was opposed to extending the national parks into urban areas.

MR. COCKRELL: I thought we would begin the interview by asking if you could give me a brief overview of your professional career and background, how you came to be involved.

MR. NYE: I should have brought you a resume. Well, I became involved because I was Director of the Ohio Department of Natural Resources at the time. John Seiberling was the sponsor of the bill to create the park. His first bill his first term in Congress,

William Nye

which was 1971, he put in a bill which would create the Cuyahoga Valley National Historical Park and Recreation Area. It didn't get anywhere and through the hearing process, I think John felt that the National Recreation Area would have more chance of success. Of course, he had been a freshman Congressman his first term and the bill was re-introduced as a National Recreation Area in his second term.

There are a lot of coincidences here. I became Natural Resources Director about the same time John became a Congressman. John and I had run against each other in the Democratic primary the year before in 1970. We had been friends before, but we became close friends afterwards when we worked together on the park.

My previous background had consisted of my being a state senator for four years in the beginning of 1979 when I became Natural Resources Director. I had been in the State Senate, a crazy situation, two terms. My first term was a two-year term. It was right when the Senate was changing over from county-wide districts to equal proportioned on the basis of population. To make the Senate staggered, half of the us ran for two-year terms, half for four years, so that there would be staggered terms not a total turnover of the Senate in any one election. I had been a member of the State House of Representatives before that for one term. I am a lawyer. The only other thing really doesn't have much to do with the park, but as a legislator, I sponsored a lot of environmental legislation. But not a lot to do with parks. It was more air quality. Some of it had to do with wildlife.

MR. COCKRELL: John Daily told me that you used to work for Akron Metropolitan Park District.

MR. NYE: Yes, I worked for Akron Metro Parks as a summer job my first summer after my freshman year in law school as a laborer. That is my park background, the summer at Akron Metropolitan Park District.

MR. COCKRELL: Were you aware of the Cuyahoga Valley and its potential?

MR. NYE: Oh yes. But the context of awareness of Cuyahoga Valley at that point in time was the parks that existed there. Virginia Kendall, maybe Brecksville, being the two biggest, the two most important. I think Virginia Kendall, because of its rock outcroppings, probably is the more important of the two. I just vaguely knew at that time that Virginia Kendall really was a state park, but in terms of ownership, it was managed by the local metro park.

When I became Natural Resources Director and John got the bill in, I didn't do much the first year other than just support the bill.

William Nye

When John got a better idea that there was a chance of passage, he also conveyed to me the ideas of a man named, I believe Roy Taylor. He was the chairman of the National Park Subcommittee of the Interior Committee at that time. He was from North Carolina. He had this philosophy that the decision to have a national park was pretty much a political decision. If there was strong support for it from the state and the locality, he didn't care too much about the National Park Service's or the Department of the Interior's philosophic concerns about whether an area should or should not be a national park. He was more concerned about the local support.

I decided when John got that idea to me, that we would obtain all the local support we could and we would contribute as much Land and Water Conservation Fund money as possible. When I say give as much local support, I meant local and state. We would get behind the idea of building support from a public opinion standpoint. We would put as much money as possible into it. Because it was not a national park, it had to be on the basis that we were expanding the state park, using Virginia Kendall as the nucleus of the state park already there and that we were then expanding the state park.

MR. COCKRELL: But the plan all along was for the national park?

MR. NYE: Yes, the plan all along was to acquire as much land for the park as possible. This is what Taylor meant by support, that the Federal Government wouldn't have to buy all the land. That the state and local governments--he didn't care which--but that there would be non-federal contributions to the land acquisition.

When I first came into the Department, I discovered that my predecessor had never let local governments know that they had a right to use, that they were supposed to get, Land and Water Conservation Fund money. He just wanted to use it for the state as much as he could and he ended up not using it. I had a \$17 million dollar backlog of Land and Water Conservation Fund entitlement. Unfortunately, Land and Water Conservation funds at that time, I don't know what the rules are now, but it had a three-year life to it. It wasn't just an annual budget life, it had a three-year life. I could still use that \$17 million dollars. So we just cranked up our ability to buy land. We used state money to match the federal money. I think we bought something like \$5 million dollars worth of land in the park before it became a federal park.

The key issue in land acquisition was Towpath Village. Towpath Village was originally a multi-use, planned unit development, with various density, residential and commercial. It was to run from the valley almost or completely to Route 8, I can't remember which. I don't remember whether it went all the way over or just very close to it. I think it went all the way over and that was the idea of the commercial. The commercial would be along Route 8.

William Nye

It was started as a bad example of an intelligent developer, a guy who loved the land too much to be a developer. I can't think of his name. He kind of had to get other partners, and by that time Towpath was actually developed, when houses had started to be built in it. Dave Brennan.

I don't know if you have seen the name, but it is in the paper all the time. He is the guy that is buying up a lot of downtown properties. He is one of the wealthy people who is also kind of an activist in doing things. He is owner of the Portage Hotel, which is an old historic hotel. It is where the United Rubber Workers was founded. Dave became the dominant interest in Towpath. I wanted to buy out Towpath to stop it from development because it would have pushed the park further north. We wouldn't have been able to bring it down as far as Bath Road if Towpath had been allowed to develop. Bath Road was somewhat controversial at the southern point anyhow, because it had a sewage treatment plant. But we still wanted to get that included down to Bath Road.

I had my people start negotiating with Dave Brennan. The background on that was after Akron Metropolitan Park District had taken two passes at acquiring Towpath, and they could have acquired it for \$300,000 the first time. That was before any development was done, before any planning was even done, before the developer had really spent any money. They rejected this. They then took a second pass at it when the price went up to \$600,000. I finally had to buy it for \$900,000, but since it was half federal money, it was not so bad.

Akron could have bought it for \$300,000 with half federal money, if we had local governments being given half federal money. When I got in there and found that Land and Water Conservation Fund money wasn't being used by local governments, I immediately made half of it available to local governments. The thing that I was trying to do as Director--it had nothing specific to do with the Cuyahoga Valley, it was just generally--was develop more parks in and around urban areas.

Parks in Ohio had always been acquired cheap. The southeast quadrant of Ohio is much like West Virginia. It is wooded ravines, so it is a great place for parks. Many of the parks are down there. Historically, the older parks are down there. It was cheap land. Wayne National Forest is down there. A lot of the state forests are down there. Because it was cheap land just made it an easy place to put parks. My theory was that you look at total cost like how long it takes people to get there, plus the time it takes. Most of the people, more than half of the population of Ohio, is in the northeast quadrant. We ought to be putting more parks in the northeast, northwest and southwest quadrant, although southwest quadrant had been treated pretty well by my predecessors because

William Nye

they were from there. There are several new state parks and state park lodges down in southwest Ohio.

With my taking the Department and reorienting it from rural to urban, or near urban, Cuyahoga Valley fit in very well with that. But on the other hand, the Cuyahoga Valley was so big that I was delighted to have the opportunity to help somebody else pay for it. The Federal Government paid for it.

My own personal view from a quality standpoint is that the area in Ohio that is most suitable for a national park, but does not have the political support, is Hocking Hills. That and Lake Erie are the two most unique natural features of Ohio. What Hocking Hills is is a scattered state park, it is not all contiguous land. It is a series of caves and waterfalls and just beautiful valleys and a lot of glacial remnant vegetation. There is a tremendous amount of hemlock, some of the southernmost hemlocks in the United States. But, I knew I had no political support. So the Cuyahoga Valley from a standpoint of serving urban people was a very good candidate for national park status.

I also didn't buy the Park Service's criteria for national parks because they didn't apply them in the city of Washington, D.C. Several years after being Director in Ohio, I was Executive Director of the Environmental Law Institute in Washington and we used to hold our Institute picnics in a federal park--I don't think it could have been more than five acres--surrounded by housing. I think one of the great things the National Park Service has done is the C & O Canal in Georgetown, I think that is the best example of what ought to be done in the Akron area with the canals.

MR. COCKRELL: What sort of support did Governor John Gilligan give you? Did he give you a blank check?

MR. NYE: Governor Gilligan gave me pretty much a blank check. This is another interesting thing. We had a cabinet meeting to decide which state project we wanted to get federal money for and should be the highest priority project for the state as a whole, not just for my Department. Well, Cuyahoga Valley came up as number two. Number one was a project that had something to do with coal. Illinois had a similar project and they won that. As soon as Illinois won that, Cuyahoga Valley became the number one project. That was close to the end of Gilligan's term. He only served one term, sometime in 1974. From that point on, it became Gilligan's number one priority for federal action.

Another thing that we did at the state level--because the Park Service was so negative about the legislation, about not having it become a national park unit--I had also greatly expanded the Department of Natural Resources planning capability. We did the

William Nye

planning for it. Nixon was President then and the Bicentennial was coming up. There were two things I was planning. One was the Bicentennial and one was the actual park plan. Nixon got this idea on his own. It was his own personal idea. For the Bicentennial he was going to create 25 new national parks and he gave the Interior Department the job of defining that and having some kind of a contest.

So Interior came up with three types of national parks. I don't remember what all three were, but one of them was urban/historical and so we did a plan that used the Cuyahoga Valley as the centerpiece and it would be the Nixon National Park. John Seiberling even made a comment in his testimony that he didn't even care if it should be a National Recreation Area or something else. He said, "I don't care if you call it the Nixon National Park." At the same time we were putting together this plan and we used the Cuyahoga Valley as a centerpiece. We also used all the history around the area, going down to Zoar. It is interesting that this national heritage trail concept is also going down to Zoar.

We put together a transportation history including water, the canal history as part of transportation history. And other kinds of history on battles and pioneer movement and things like this. The Cuyahoga Valley was at one point the western border of the United States, that kind of thing. Anyhow, we won the national competition for one of the three classifications. A slide show was put together for Nixon on the three winners, so the President actually saw our concept. When he found out how much money it would cost to do 25 national parks, he killed the whole idea!

MR. COCKRELL: That is interesting. I have never heard that account before

MR. NYE: Another interesting account was that because the National Park Service was not interested in the park, we did all the park plan. There is an article somewhere in the archives in the Beacon Journal, that the National Park Service accepted basically, our plan and decided they didn't need to do a plan. Our plan was of that good quality that they accepted it.

The Park Service, I don't know if they still have it, but there was a National Park Advisory Council with a national scope, it is not local, but there happened to be a local citizen on it who was opposed to the park. The Interior used him as a kind of a citizen spokesman from the area opposed to the park. His opposition was that it wasn't national quality and didn't deserve to be a national park. I don't remember his name, but after the bill passed, he kind of started moving over the other way and he was quoted in the Beacon Journal as saying that our planning was better than the National Park Service planning.

William Nye

The National Park Service ought to use our planning as a model for their future plans. I don't know what it was about ours that he liked. We had very good planners. The 1970's was about the time the good planners were coming out of school and there wasn't a lot of work for them in the national government and states were picking up good people. I picked up somebody from Wisconsin. We didn't invent computer mapping where you can do a land suitability analysis. Some people call it a land capability analysis using computers. It was developed either in Wisconsin or Minnesota, I think it was at the University of Wisconsin.

We were the first state to utilize and actually implement it at the state level. Then we functioned as a consultant for hire to local governments and we had at least one while I was there, a planning contract in southwest Ohio to do a regional land suitability analysis in the Dayton area. We did a lot of that with the planning for the Cuyahoga Valley and I think that is what was attractive about our planning. It was really resource based.

The other little vignette on the politics of it is that somehow or other, my support of the park endeared me to Nat Reed. That is partly why I suggested that you talk to him. Because of that, I used to let him know what I was doing. It was a very open battle, controversy, or whatever you call it when you are on different sides. We had lots of discussions and had a lot of meanings in his office.

The last time I was in his office was when the bill had passed the House and was in the Senate. He was hoping they would be able to block it in the Senate. I had scheduled a meeting with him, but it just so happens that just before that meeting, I was over in John's office over on Capitol Hill and the bill had passed the Senate. Howard Metzenbaum had taken that bill and got it from the House through the Senate in three days with no hearings. I don't know what he did, he must have sold his soul. "Scoop" Jackson was the chairman of the committee from the state of Washington. A great conservationist and also somewhat of a hawk in military matters, but a Democrat. Howard is the ultimate liberal on military matters and environment and about everything else. But somehow he had formed an alliance with Scoop Jackson. He got that thing through the Senate in three days.

When I met with Nat Reed, he started talking about the effort they were making in the Senate and how he thought it would succeed, and I said, "I hate to break this news to you, but the bill has already passed the Senate." I was the one that told the Assistant Secretary of the Interior for Fish and Wildlife and Parks that the bill had passed the Senate, rather than his own people.

William Nye

MR. COCKRELL: What was his reaction?

MR. NYE: He just couldn't believe it. One of his reactions was that he offered me a job as one of his assistants. I didn't think that that administration was going to be around very long so I didn't take the job. I asked him, "How in the hell would you ever get a Democrat on as your assistant." He said, "I am allowed a certain number of my own prerogative that don't have to have White House clearance." The other thing we did was we hired a lobbyist. The state paid for the lobbying and the lobbyist's role was to network the local support groups and the national support groups.

MR. COCKRELL: Was that Ed Baugh?

MR. NYE: Yes it was. The last I heard, Ed is the manager of the Cleveland Home and Flower Show. I supposed he does other things, probably as a promoter/consultant. Ed used to be the City Properties Director. It is a mayor's cabinet position, but that is where the city parks come under. He was the head of the city parks, and I am sure there was a park director under him who was head of that part of the properties. It is a strange way to look at parks as just another piece of property.

MR. COCKRELL: You were talking about running against Seiberling for Congress in the primary. Was the issue of preserving the valley brought up?

MR. NYE: No, John probably made that an issue. The big issue in that campaign was the Vietnam War. John was an early anti-war leader and I, as a state legislator and Democrat, with unions being supportive of the war, just sort of fudged and stayed out of the issue. It wasn't a state issue, therefore, I shouldn't get involved, which was a big mistake politically. John deserved to win because the time was right for the issues he was dealing with. I give him full credit for that.

I think he may just barely have mentioned the Cuyahoga Valley in the campaign. But he lives in the Cuyahoga Valley and he has always been strongly center-focused on the Cuyahoga Valley whereas my focus was probably the outside the valley. I live in the Portage Lakes, which is a state park. I didn't live in Portage Lakes then; I lived in Akron. As a state legislator I had a focus on state parks.

The Cuyahoga Valley is John's idea, absolutely no question about that. Although there was some movement that I think probably John was part of before he became a Congressman. There was a Cuyahoga Valley support organization. I am not sure exactly what its positions were, whether it had come up with the idea of a federal park or whether it was talking about a state park or whether it was

William Nye

talking just more metropolitan park acquisitions in the valley. There was a citizens support group doing something with the Cuyahoga Valley more than what had been done.

MR. COCKRELL: In the Rhodes administration before you were at ODNR, there had been a study done called the Rosenstock Study on the Cuyahoga Valley. How was that used by your administration?

MR. NYE: I can't even remember it. The only thing that I can tell you is that I remember the Rosenstock Study as a phrase. I don't remember ever looking at it. What we did do when the bill passed and the question was whether Ford was going to veto it, because Ford had become President in the meantime with Nixon's resignation, we tried to drum up as much Republican support as we possibly could.

One of the things that I did (it wasn't my idea, it was one of my staff member's ideas) was to give Rhodes credit for starting it. Under the Rhodes administration, and Fred Morr, my predecessor, they had acquired some land up there. I think it was along the canal. The idea of further state involvement in the Cuyahoga Valley really did start with the Rhodes administration. They didn't do much with it. They didn't move it out front. They just acquired the land and held it. They didn't do any publicity on it or anything like that or any planning of what else they were going to buy.

The guy whose idea it was is Pat Leahy. He was my personnel director. Pat was a bachelor and used to hang out in the hotel with Jim Duerk who was Rhodes' campaign manager and chief of staff in the Governor's office. He was the closest person to the former governor. Through Pat Leahy we got the idea to him of Rhodes taking credit for starting the national park and therefore, coming out in support of it in Rhodes' election bid. He came out strongly in support of it. Then he came out in support of it with a Republican President and a Republican for election as Governor of Ohio in support of it.

Plus we were able to get Ray Bliss, who was the former Republican National Chairman up until the point where Nixon took office, and then Nixon replaced him. He got Nixon elected and then Nixon replaced him. Ray was retired then, but was still serving on the Akron University Board of Directors. He came out for it. I am not sure he did publicly, but I got word that he got word to President Ford. There was a former National Treasurer of the Republican National Committee from Cincinnati who was also in support of it. Bryce Harlow a lawyer for Procter and Gamble, originally from Cincinnati, and a perennial advisor to presidents, came out for it. Those were the mainstays.

William Nye

Then, of course, we had locals. Taft was Senator. Saxbe was Senator, I believe at that time. I am sure Taft was still Senator because I remember being in his office and it was such a nothing experience. He was the most inanimate person I have ever met. He was just like a stone sitting behind a desk. He came out for it. I am not sure Saxbe was still a senator. He went from the Senate to become Attorney General under Nixon after the Watergate thing knocked the Attorney General out, John Mitchell. Somewhere in there Saxbe went from the Senate over to become Attorney General. At least he was still in Ohio when he was for it. Saxbe had always had a strong conservationist record anyhow. The guy is a hunter, fisherman, farmer, that kind of approach to conservation. He raises prize South American cattle now somewhere in South America.

We had Taft support, I guess, in 1971-72. Then Taft must have been out of there because Glenn won the election in 1972 and became Senator. I think it was Taft that he beat. It was Metzenbaum that got it through the Senate. I know that Glenn got to the Senate before Metzenbaum did, so for him to be there, Metzenbaum had to be elected in 1972, I am not sure. Maybe there was a special election that Metzenbaum won in mid-term because I know that Gilligan wanted Glenn to run as his Lieutenant Governor candidate. Maybe Metzenbaum did get in first, I just can't remember that, you are going to have to check that. Maybe I am wrong about Glenn.

I was fairly close to Glenn because three of my top people became Glenn's top people. He was chairman of Governor Gilligan's task force, the Governor's Task Force on the Environment and we were assigned to work with him. There was no EPA then. We were the only environmental conservation agency in state government for the first year-and-one-half of Gilligan's term. Taft won support while he was in office, so we had all the Republican support and there was local support also. The mayor of Akron was Republican at that time. He was supportive. One of my cousins was a Republican County Commissioner at that time. Everybody locally was in support of it.

The other thing that we did from a planning standpoint (jumping around now): the idea of citizen participation in the planning process was a fairly new idea in the early 70's. Some of my planning staff were strong advocates of that, but they hadn't sold me on it that much in previous efforts. We had a situation--before the local hearings on the Cuyahoga Valley--that involved an experience where we thought we had a park all sewed up on Kelly's Island, because we got all the political support, all the locals, the mayor, the county commissioners, and all this, and we just got burnt by the people. We hadn't gone to them in developing the plan. We just developed a plan by a noted landscape architect out of Cleveland. In fact, it won a national landscape architect society award for planning and then we unveiled it.

William Nye

This is the absolute worst way you can plan, but I had to learn my lesson the hard way on that one. The plan was to expand a small park on Kelly's Island into a much larger park, and take about half the island. Local opposition was very strong. We had to back off. I decided I would never again do major park planning without starting with no plan, getting the public involved, and have them help us develop the plan. So that became the way we did our planning.

We did that in Cuyahoga Valley and it was extremely successful. There was a lot of opposition early on from local residents who just didn't understand what was going to happen, what it meant, so we did our planning with full citizen participation. We had small meetings all over the place, no preconceptions, got their input, came back to them showing them how we used their input to develop some pieces of plans and have kept building the pieces until they finally had a plan. That was another part of the plan.

MR. COCKRELL: Did they accept the state's plan?

MR. NYE: When we finally had the hearings, there were seven people that testified in opposition. Three or four of them were just anti-groups. They weren't even from the area. They were the arch-conservative, just anti-anything that came along. You know the type. If the government was going to take land, it was against their philosophy and their policy. So we only had four citizens from the area who opposed the plan.

One of them was the guy that owned Brandywine Falls, who had always wanted to make commercial use out of the waterfalls. Particularly, the park was going to take away his opportunity to do the commercial use. Even the commercial use in the valley, like Szalays, ended up not opposing it. They were originally opposed to it and they ended up supporting it. And then that was all blown apart after the park became a reality by the National Park Service sending in, I think I am right on this, they sent in the Corps of Engineers as their initial land acquisition people and the Corps just blew the relationship with the people. So the Park Service had to dig their way out of that one.

MR. COCKRELL: The agency of the Department of the Interior that had testified against the park was not the Park Service but the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation. Why didn't anybody from the National Park Service testify? Weren't they the ones that were going to be managing it?

MR. NYE: I think because James Watt was a political animal more than anybody in the National Park Service. The other thing was that their strategy was based on the Land and Water Conservation

William Nye

Fund, which was just flush at that time. I mean, they were pouring money out.

Another thing that we did was that we were the first state, or one of the first two or three states, because of this emphasis of acquiring urban land (urban land is expensive, so we could spend money really fast) we were one of the first states to get into the contingency fund. You had to spend all of your entitlement money before you could get into the contingency fund. It was a pretty big fund. So we spent the \$17 million. We spent our entitlements that we got during our four years and got into the contingency fund every time as well. We were James Watt's shining example of the success of the 50/50 approach rather than the 100% federal money approach. Their strategy was to say you didn't need to make it a national park, because the state was doing just fine with Land and Water Conservation Fund. So Watt was the appropriate one to say that. That was his point in the **Wall Street Journal** article.

MR. COCKRELL: BOR had a Regional office in Ann Arbor, Michigan. Were they the ones that you worked primarily with?

MR. NYE: Yes. Dave Cherry was the head of that office. He was an excellent man.

MR. COCKRELL: I will be interviewing him also. He is now with the Park Service out in San Francisco.

MR. NYE: Oh, is he? That is a nice place to be. Is he in Presidio or is there just an office there?

MR. COCKRELL: No, the Western Regional Office is in downtown San Francisco, so I will be going out there fairly soon. How closely did you work with the Cuyahoga Valley Association and the Park Federation headed by Harvey Swack?

MR. NYE: Not real closely. John was working with him. Now, Baugh did; that was one of Baugh's roles, to work closely with him. I was never a Cuyahoga Valley insider in the sense that John was because I didn't live there. I am now on the Board of the Cuyahoga Valley Association, but that is a recent occurrence since I came back to the area.

MR. COCKRELL: I have read that Swack constantly pressured your department to develop campsites and canoe access points along the Cuyahoga River.

MR. NYE: It could be. I am unaware of it. I don't have a memory of Harvey Swack. I remember the name and he may have been a very good man, but I don't have a personal memory of him. A lot of people do their lobbying at low levels in a department, where the

William Nye

function is actually going to come out of. I almost never start with the Director, just because I don't want to wear out my welcome, even if he is a close friend of mine. So I go as far as I can at the lower level.

MR. COCKRELL: What role did the two Metro Park Districts play in land acquisition?

MR. NYE: They didn't play a role. My recollection is, I could be wrong on this, but I think I am right about Akron Metro Parks, that they didn't really play a role. We never got the sense that they really wanted to turn their land over to the Federal Government at that time. There was sort of an unwillingness to make that commitment. They didn't say they wouldn't, but they just were unwilling to make that commitment. So we made it all state land. We may have given some grants to metropolitan parks to expand or something like that which has now become part of the national park, I don't know, but that wasn't the intent. If that was done, it was because it was a good proposal for expanding the metro park. But we never could really feel confident that if we let them have it, that they would turn it over.

MR. COCKRELL: About 1973, or maybe early 1974 before the hearings were held, you formally announced that the state park plan was going to be abandoned and that you were fully in support of the national park plan. What prompted that?

MR. NYE: What was the date?

MR. COCKRELL: I believe it was late 1973.

MR. NYE: That was the step that was planned. The whole idea was to acquire it legally as a state park, but for the national park. But if the national park never happened, it would be a state park. What we had acquired, we wouldn't abandon, we would turn it into a state park.

It was a gamble on my part because if it had ended up being a state park, it would have been an operational budget burden. I don't think that concerned me very much because the state was flush at that point. When Gilligan went in, there was no state income tax. He made passage of state income tax his number one issue. He became Governor in January of 1971. Sometime around March, he practically shut State Government down because we were running into the red. One of the things he shut down was all the state parks. He closed the state parks. He did it because he wanted people to realize that State Government just wasn't welfare and drugs and prisons and poverty. It was also things that people really depended upon and enjoyed and he wanted them to feel that.

William Nye

Shortly after that, the income tax passed. The Republicans were divided on it. There was a group of Republicans including the Speaker of the House, from the Bowling Green Area (Wood County just southeast of Toledo) who was for the income tax, but he had a lot of older, conservative members that were anti-income tax. He was a middle-aged lawyer. We got it through. Republicans controlled both houses of the State Legislature, but we had a Democratic governor. We got it through in spite of that.

We had a lot of money at that point in time. So, I don't think I was bothered at all by taking that risk, but it was a risk and there would be a point at which we would have to decide how big we would let it become as a state park because of the cost. That was part of the strategy. If we won on the federal, then we would save that money and get out of that cost. That was part of our thinking. That is why that announcement was made. At that point I must have felt confident about it. It was either that I felt confident or I felt it was needed as a strategy to support the federal park, I don't really remember. But it would have been one or the other.

MR. COCKRELL: Did your land acquisition strategy include obtaining scenic easements on land?

MR. NYE: Yes, it did. In our citizen participation, that was one of the things that we said. It was an idea we used to show people that they could retain their homes if they wanted to. That in certain parts of the park, the concept would be just to stop more intense development and not to undo what was already done.

MR. COCKRELL: With your acquisition, the couple of years that you were involved with it, were any scenic easements obtained, or was it all in fee?

MR. NYE: I am not sure. The guy who could tell you who was number two in the real estate section is Jeff Nogowitz. He is now the head of the real estate section and they do all the land buying. He could get in his records and see what is there if they haven't been turned over to the Federal Government. They may have been turned over, but he may have a memory of it.

MR. COCKRELL: What was the reaction of James Watt and National Park Service Director Ron Walker when you got behind the national park effort and abandoned the state park plan which is what BOR wanted to be done?

MR. NYE: I didn't get any negative reaction out of it. I had a very good relationship with James Watt. Ohio was one of his shining examples so he never soured the relationship. I have a picture during the Nixon campaign where he wanted to come in and deliver a big check. I think it was for \$800,000 something. The

William Nye

picture includes the check with the figure on it (just don't remember what it is) with the mayor of Toledo. It was for a park in the area that became (I think that they call it Portside) the riverfront development area. It had some connection with that. The Republicans wanted some publicity out of it and I was quite willing to be part of that because I knew McGovern wasn't going to win.

MR. COCKRELL: Everyone thought that President Ford was going to veto the bill and that the Department had written a veto statement. You said all of these public figures were supporting it. Do you know what happened to make the President change his mind?

MR. NYE: Yes, it was all the support. I wasn't there, but it has been reported back to me. I probably got it secondhand through John. John wasn't there either. "What do you want me to do, lose Ohio?" was his comment back to the Interior. It was purely a political decision. It is a political park, there is no question about this.

MR. COCKRELL: During the hearings, you stated that Ohio would donate all or transfer all state lands to the National Park Service if the bill passed. Subsequently, I think they discovered that it would take an act of the General Assembly to do that and also the Governor's concurrence. Was that known at that time, that it would be a special process?

MR. NYE: Yes, sure. But we had extremely strong support in the General Assembly. We had to recognize and thank them. We had the Governor and his guest, who then was Governor of Georgia, a fellow named Jimmy Carter. We had a reception at Blossom after a concert. We had invited them all to the concert and a reception afterwards. Carter had just shortly before that announced his candidacy for the Presidency.

MR. COCKRELL: Did you have any dealings with Bill Birdsell?

MR. NYE: Yes, but not a lot. Bill was the Superintendent of the Mound City Group. I had a good relationship with him in that context.

MR. COCKRELL: He organized a lot of the congressional hearings in Cuyahoga Valley and his early involvement got him the job as the first Superintendent of the park. Do you think he lobbied to get that position or was it his close relationship with John Seiberling?

MR. NYE: I have no idea. Bill had a good reputation at Mound City. He knew Ohio. He was a kind of natural for the job. I have no idea how well he did either. When I left the Department of

William Nye

Natural Resources after Gilligan got defeated, I stayed in Columbus for a year. I was a member of the Environmental Board of Review. Gilligan appointed me to that just as a landing spot. Then I came back to Akron for a year to be the Director of Goals for Greater Akron, which was a citizen participation group developing future goals and objectives and strategic plans for the whole three county area: Portage, Summit and Medina County. It was one for a one year director. They had a one-year HUD grant for that and asked me to take it. I did and I left the Environmental Board of Review. Then I went back to Columbus after that year and I just kind of lost track of what was happening in terms of who was park manager and superintendent.

MR. COCKRELL: So, when you left and Bob Teater came in as Director the ODNR, did he pretty much continue your policies?

MR. NYE: As far as the park is concerned, yes. The only thing that Teater and I differed about was that I centralized planning. I took planning out of parks. I had this belief that park managers plan to reduce our own headaches rather than to best serve the public or the resource. So I took planning away from parks and put it in a centralized planning office. They could be part of the planning in a sense of critiquing, but they couldn't make final decisions. Teater reversed me on that. But one of the things that Teater did that I thought was a good move was I had developed the idea of preserves in natural areas, but I hadn't taken it as far as creating a division for it. I just left it in the parks. He created a separate division which gave more emphasis to it than I had.

Bob was the Assistant Director under Fred Morr. He left about a year or so before Morr went out and I came in to be head of the School of Natural Resources at Ohio State University which was under the School of Agriculture. Fred Morr's approach to parks was bricks and mortar: build lodges, cabins, that sort of thing. Only acquire the land you need for that particular park. That doesn't mean that his parks didn't have a lot of open area. One of the great parks (he didn't start it, but that he created) probably from a general public's perception--meaning people that don't get that into the natural uniqueness that you are preserving--Salt Fork is probably considered the greatest park in Ohio. From a state park standpoint a lot of people look to it for its cabins and lodges and campgrounds. Salt Fork is a premier park in Ohio.

Parks under Rhodes got a high priority because he felt that Ohioans were going to other states like Kentucky and Tennessee to use their parks. He wanted to build parks in Ohio that would keep people in Ohio. That was his motive. Rhodes was a bricks and mortar economics Governor. For that reason, he was a good governor. He built a lot of university facilities, a lot of state hospital

William Nye

facilities, just loved to do brick and mortar. I think primarily because of the brick and mortar people, the contractors gave a lot of contributions!

MR. COCKRELL: Right correlation there!

MR. NYE: But it did Ohio a lot of good because Ohio had been without an income tax. Rhodes didn't have an income tax, he used bonds, but the income tax then had to be part of the reason. Its need was for the operating budget for all these things he had built. Ohio has always been a very low tax state and he moved Ohio into far more services than it provided before.

Then Gilligan came along and made him work. Teater was not a bricks and mortar man. He was into trying to preserve nature. Preserve the natural heritage of Ohio. The only lodge he built in the eight years he was in, I think is the one that I had already started the planning for and made the decision to build. That was Deer Creek, south of Columbus. I had announced two lodges, one in northeast Ohio. He never built that one at West Branch. The only reason I did was because I thought northeast Ohio ought to have a lodge other than Punderson which is an old tudor mansion. It is small, not a real state park lodge. It is just a preserved mansion, which is fine, but it doesn't give the people up here what the people in southwest Ohio (the Dayton/Cincinnati area) have. So I was trying to be more equitable and have a newer home area. But Teater didn't follow through with that. He built less lodges than I would have had I stayed in the office. I wanted to do one in Kelly's Island, too.

MR. COCKRELL: Is there anything that I haven't asked that you would like to add to the record?

MR. NYE: No, I think we have covered it pretty well. If any question comes up, give me a call.

[END]

William Nye

O R A L H I S T O R Y I N T E R V I E W

F O R T H E

A D M I N I S T R A T I V E H I S T O R Y O F

C U Y A H O G A V A L L E Y

N A T I O N A L R E C R E A T I O N A R E A

O H I O

Thomas W. Offutt
Senior Project Manager/Special Project
The Trust for Public Land

May 25, 1989
The Trust for Public Land
Midwest Field Office
Cleveland, Ohio

Interviewed by:

Ron Cockrell
Historian
Midwest Regional Office
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Omaha, Nebraska
1989

Thomas W. Offutt

Thomas W. Offutt

MR. COCKRELL: I thought I would start by asking you for the record to give me a brief sketch of your background and your career--how you came to be where you are?

MR. OFFUTT: I was raised on a farm in Maryland, and was graduated from Johns Hopkins. My first real job was working for the Baltimore Zoo. I thought I was going to be a herpetologist. I also worked with the National Zoo, and was involved with one of the first zoo television shows. I had always planned to go into the natural sciences, but ended up working in a bank on Wall Street as things like that happen.

I came to Ohio because Mr. George Gund, the head of the Cleveland Trust Company (now Ameritrust), needed a Personnel Director. I was interviewed and was given the job as Assistant Personnel Director to work for a gentleman who was going to retire, and I would take his place. During the interview Mr. Gund said, "You know, your real interest seems to be the natural sciences and teaching. We need somebody at the Natural History Museum here in Cleveland." So he encouraged me to go to the museum, and I worked at the Natural History Museum in Cleveland for 5 or 6 years starting in 1965.

At that time I was involved in the early thinking about the need for a National Park between Cleveland and Akron along the Cuyahoga River.

After the Natural History Museum, I co-founded the Institute for Environmental Education. It was funded by the Environmental Protection Agency [EPA], National Science Foundation, and by the Ford Foundation. The idea was that we would involve high school students in environmental problems. This was a day when hysteria concerning environmental problems was high. There was a lot of "Lake Erie's dead! The sky is falling in!" Having an interest in the sciences, I felt it important that students find out for themselves and study the environmental problems as an educational experience.

So we put together a course of study to examine water quality in the watershed of the Cuyahoga River called the Cuyahoga Heritage Project, a demonstration project of the U.S. Office of Education. The data was collected by the high school students from the actual mouth of the Cuyahoga all the way up to the first few little streams that go into it near Middlefield, Ohio. I got to know more about the valley and involved with the schools in Akron and Kent and everywhere else in the watershed. The program became National and is now currently being operated by the University of Michigan, and internationally with UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization).

Thomas W. Offutt

In any event, about eleven years ago I was hired by The Trust for Public Land because the Cuyahoga Valley N.R.A. was getting started. The land acquisition there was being done by the Army Corps of Engineers. Some problems had arisen because of the insensitivity of those folks toward property owners. Trust for Public Land had already hired someone to initiate operations. But Superintendent Bill Birdsell said, "He just doesn't fit in with the typical Midwest personality"--referring to the fact that he carried a purse and wore sunglasses all day long. He was a very bright, competent real estate professional, but was clearly from California. So they were looking for somebody that was more "Midwest." I had gray hair, mumbled, and so I fit right in.

MR. COCKRELL: Up to this point, how much interaction had there been between the National Park Service and TPL?

MR. OFFUTT: Well, that's interesting. Actually, quite a bit. We had been instrumental at Point Reyes National Seashore doing some very complex real estate negotiations with RCA, and we had also worked in Gateway and in Golden Gate National Recreation Areas. I know that we have since worked with a number of Park Service units primarily in the West and California.

I think the TPL office in Ohio was initiated because the then Director of the Park Service went to Huey Johnson, who was then the head of TPL, and suggested that here was an area of need. TPL's mandate is to work to create public spaces near urban areas. So the whole concept of the National Recreation Areas fit. The two major foundations in Cleveland, the Gund Foundation and the Cleveland Foundation, both encouraged creation of an office here for that specific purpose.

MR. COCKRELL: Did they help financially?

MR. OFFUTT: Yes, and they continue to support our work in the CVNRA. The way that the Trust works is sort of unique. It takes a little getting used to. It is non-profit, but has no members. We accept foundation grants only when they allow us to do our narrowly-defined job. We attempt to be self-sufficient and to fund ourselves from the projects that we do. We negotiate on a piece of land that is high in the public priority. The donor benefits from selling it to us for less than fair market value and taking the difference between his sale price and fair market value as a charitable deduction. We then often share that savings with the public agency.

This has caused confusion among people that think of non-profit as being member-supported organizations that don't act in entrepreneurial fashion. However, since we don't waste time with members and fundraising and are only supported where we complete a project

Thomas W. Offutt

in the public interest, government property owners and others like to work with us.

MR. COCKRELL: Why exactly was it necessary to have a TPL office here?

MR. OFFUTT: O.K. There were a number of very, very complex real estate negotiations that were going on in the Cuyahoga Valley in Ohio. The Park Service has great competency in working on land acquisition, but another federal agency was brought in to do land acquisition early on and there were disasters. They bought one piece of property three or four times, and paid to move the house twice. Wonderful stories that make great copy in the newspaper.

MR. COCKRELL: Before we get into some of the specifics, how was your local office organized in terms of staff, and what was its degree of overview by the national organization?

MR. OFFUTT: That's a good question. Larry Stein was here before me. He lived in one of the houses that we had acquired for the Park Service, the Cochran house before it was transferred to the Park Service. He had a part-time Secretary and spent a lot of time on the phone talking to the people back in San Francisco on the projects. But there was very little direct supervision.

When I came on-board, I got a computer. Instead of having a Secretary, it was me and the computer. I typed all the stuff and sent it out. I had almost no solid real estate experience, so the first thing I did was to talk the head of the largest real estate firm in the state into helping me, giving me the technical capacity that I lacked. His name is Steve Morris, and he was Chairman of the Board of Ostendorff Morris. He is now Vice-Chairman of our board. He is a very competent real estate professional and I cannot underestimate the help that he gave, and still gives.

MR. COCKRELL: I guess one of the first purchases was the Frazee house?

MR. OFFUTT: Frazee house, yes.

MR. COCKRELL: What was the history behind that?

MR. OFFUTT: I wasn't here then. The first young man that was here was sold on the significance of this project. The idea that The Trust for Public Land could buy time and wait until Federal appropriations were available was the idea behind this. I don't want to talk about the details because I really wasn't involved with them, but I do know that we did have to pay to shore-up the house or it would have fallen down. The Trust has a prejudice in favor of buying land and not improvements on the land, and it was

Thomas W. Offutt

difficult for our board and our people in California to see why it was important that they buy an old brick house. I think there may still be.

MR. COCKRELL: So that's highly unusual?

MR. OFFUTT: It is, however, I bought quite a few houses since then and although our board doesn't like it, they've gone along with me.

MR. COCKRELL: O.K. What are some of the more significant purchases TPL has made?

MR. OFFUTT: I like to remember the thirteen acres of greenhouse that lay along the Cuyahoga River. The property was owned by a corporation that would have gone into bankruptcy and then would have been more difficult for the Park Service to acquire. It was a very interesting acquisition. A fine old gentleman, a German immigrant, was thrilled the U.S. Government wanted the land that he had worked on for 50 years and he had raised most of the poinsettias in this part of the world. But, the dollars couldn't be appropriated. Time was dragging on. It was a high priority, and he was going bankrupt. He could have saved himself by drilling for oil which was known to be there, but he didn't want to do that because the Park Service had told that they didn't want to have an oil well in the middle of the property.

In any event, that was an interesting project. Each one is interesting because of the people involved. I remember one owner that was a widow who had finally realized that she couldn't keep the property herself. She was going to California to live with her daughter. Again, the government didn't have the money. It wasn't that high of a priority, but if she had sold it, it might very well have gone to some developer who had been smart enough to try to subdivide the property and create problems and hold up the NPS for double what they paid for it.

That was happening right and left. There have been over a dozen projects that we worked on, and none of them were spectacularly beautiful, but they solved problems. I've got to mention perhaps the most humorous one was a house near the first lock on the canal called the Knapp house. It stood about a 100 yards up the hill. The village fathers had called me and said, "This property is owned by an individual who was trying to sell to the government, but the government said it was two or three years off, and he was going to sell it. He couldn't afford to hold it." It was an eyesore. They were going burn it down because it was an old clapboard house, and could we help?

We did get involved. We acquired the house and then eventually transferred it to the Park Service. I found out that it was listed

Thomas W. Offutt

on the National Register of Historic Places. It was an interesting little old house. It was originally built as a whorehouse because it took a half-an-hour for the canal boats to rise up to the proper level to move on, and so everybody just sort of ran up the hill to the Knapp house and back down. You can edit that out, but it is true.

Maybe I should complete the story. We had the editor of Barron's Magazine, a very fancy financial newspaper, who came here to interview TPL about things that we had done in creating the Lakefront State Park. Several of the corporations here in Cleveland had been a major help on that. He got very interested and he said, "What else do you do?" and I said, "We just today transferred a piece of property to the National Park Service," and it was indeed this Knapp house.

I said, "It's interesting because it was the oldest whorehouse in Cuyahoga County." And he said, "You mean to say that James Watt bought a whorehouse!"

He saw Mr. Watt the next day. Went to Washington right off and interviewed him. And of course, keeping this little piece of information back and then dropping it at the right time in the interview. It was on the front page of Barron's Magazine and made Mr. Watt out to be very stupid since he was saying that Interior was selling parkland to balance the budget and had bought no land that year. I learned that I should never tell stories to reporters!

MR. COCKRELL: You lived to regret it?

MR. OFFUTT: I did live to regret that one. Mr. Watt knows us well.

MR. COCKRELL: How would you characterize the overall significance of TPLs' activities in assisting the National Park Service to preserve the Cuyahoga Valley?

MR. OFFUTT: I would say it's moderate, quite frankly. We did everything we could. I think, however, if there had been a greater commitment on the part of TPL, if we had gotten involved a year or two earlier, and if we had come in here with an Eastern operations, it would have been better. We now have an office in New York. If that office were up and going today, and a park like this was going to be set up, it would have been better. The three-hour time difference between the East Coast and West Coast is really significant. You just can't communicate when you need to with somebody to get permission, authorization to go ahead.

Thomas W. Offutt

If we had put more people into it and if we had the kinds of support from a legal standpoint, it would have been better. Primarily, the timing was just awful. We had all kinds of problems with NPS staff in Washington who were trying to eradicate National Recreation Areas.

Bill Birdsell and his staff were under pressures from within and without, and I just think that given different times and different circumstances, we could have done a lot more. I think we helped. I think we saved the government a lot of money, but we didn't do as much as we really could have. We're still trying by the way.

MR. COCKRELL: What are some of the current projects?

MR. OFFUTT: Well, we've been trying to work with Mr. Schumacher, one of the original park supporters. He had a beautiful piece of land, and said that he was going to donate it when Congressman Seiberling brought his colleagues out here to look at it.

It is a piece of property that is essential to the park. The owners are lovely people, but they just don't like to make decisions, I guess. We have had a heck of a time and I know that John Debo has worked on this. We all feel that, "Hey, it's going to work!" But it never does. It's not a question of dollars. I don't know what it's a question of. It's a project that I've been working on for eleven years and it still won't go.

MR. COCKRELL: Still won't go?

MR. OFFUTT: The owners back out when it comes to signing an agreement.

MR. COCKRELL: It will go, sooner or later?

MR. OFFUTT: Yes. The owners sincerely want it to be part of the park.

MR. COCKRELL: How has TPL cooperated with the Cuyahoga Valley Park Federation and its Perimeter Project?

MR. OFFUTT: Back in the early days, my office was in the Cochran house in the CVNRA, and then we decided we would expand and work regionally, Michigan, West Virginia. I came up here to the Old Arcade and my office was next to the Ohio Conservation Foundation which actually initiated the concept of this Perimeter Project which was to use land trusts as a tool to protect the boundaries of the park.

TPL has had more experience than anybody in setting up land trusts nationally and we did work with the Ohio Conservation Foundation,

Thomas W. Offutt

and then again with Pete Henderson on his efforts. But it was not really a large commitment because it was one of those things where it took a thousand cups of tea to get a project done and we just didn't have time to sit down and take that long with an individual. It's a very time-consuming effort to do land trusts.

MR. COCKRELL: How would you characterize your relations with different Superintendents?

MR. OFFUTT: I have the greatest affections for Bill Birdsell. He is one of the finest men, one of the kindest, sweetest men I've ever known. I agonized through his days here and I think I understood his frustrations. He remains somebody that's very special in my memory.

Then Lew Albert came; he was exactly the right person for the park at that time, couldn't have picked a better person. We brought Standard Oil of Ohio (SOHIO) and twelve of the major corporations in this part of the country to a breakfast meeting to support the park when Lew was just confirmed. We had the Assistant Director and Lew at the breakfast. Lew impressed everybody tremendously. He was just the right person and did a great job. I didn't see as much of him as I did of Bill because I was working in different parts of the country, but Lew, Babs, and their son are still close friends.

I was lucky enough to meet with John Debo in his first weeks in office. Again, I think he is the right person. He brings a lot of energy and sophistication to the job. That's just what is needed now. I don't think you could have created three people that fit the needs of the park better, and I have been proud and pleased to know them.

MR. COCKRELL: O.K. How has the closure of the local land acquisition office affected your dealings?

MR. OFFUTT: That's a good question. We had only been working on two projects since the office closed. I had a good relationship with Jack Blanton, a very good relationship, and I respected his competency. He could have done a lot more under different circumstances in Washington. I miss him as a personal friend. Dealing with Omaha directly hasn't really affected anything. I have known and worked with Fred Meyer and his people in Omaha since day-one and they are professionals.

MR. COCKRELL: There really isn't much of an inconvenience then?

MR. OFFUTT: Not really. If I had four or five projects going, I still don't think it would be much of an inconvenience, but maybe a little easier.

Thomas W. Offutt

MR. COCKRELL: You have probably dealt with a lot of the residents in the valley. What is the general attitude towards the National Park Service?

MR. OFFUTT: It is a very disparate group of people and the primary thing is that people feel strongly. Whatever they feel, they feel strongly. The negative ones, the Stein-Sapir's, the Griffith's, the Cushman crowd are the ones that make the most noise, but there are equally dedicated people on the other side.

The most telling thing in the whole question of the Homeowners Association and their local support came about in a vote in Peninsula when Leonard Stein-Sapir, President of the Homeowners Association, ran for an elected office in the town of Peninsula. I'm not sure whether it was Mayor, City Councilman, or something like this. But at the same time that he was claiming that they had 8,000 members of their association--that's what they claimed--he got 6 votes out of 500 cast!

So I think that it is always easy to make noise and problems and damage. But that is not the overriding sentiment in the park, and I think the people in the park have benefitted. If you had a vote, you would find out there is strong, strong support. Not just in the surrounding area, but within the residents of the boundaries of the park, you'll find strong support.

MR. COCKRELL: How do you think the negative attitudes and problems could have been avoided?

MR. OFFUTT: That's really hard to say. I think there were some people there that were just bound and determined to be negative. A lot of this was caused by somebody that had enough money to buy trouble. That was Tom Rousch. That's a remarkable story. I think the record should be clear. His mother was a delightful woman who was a friend of Bill Birdsell and supported the park. She loved her land and we were actually in negotiations talking to her about taking a particular portion of her property and having it set up in a protected status, a place for nature study where the public couldn't actually destroy the plants and the things that she loved.

Just about this time she died. On the scene came her son, who was living in New York, who said, "That Bill Birdsell had driven her to an early death, and harassed her, etcetera." This just is not the truth at all. In her memory he wanted to fight the creation of the National Park in this area, and he was heir to Roadway Trucking and had the dollars to buy movies, a lawyer, and create as much trouble as he could. And with those dollars here they were able to attract Mr. Cushman who is a master of rabble rousing. I

Thomas W. Offutt

think it was probably guilt on the part of the son that he hadn't been seeing enough of his mother before she died.

Tom Rousch was a doctor in New York City and he felt very, very strongly about the valley where he grew up. One of the things that he cared about the most was a junkyard, which is opposite the Boston Mills ski area. And he remembered the nice gentleman that ran the junkyard and he didn't think he should be forced out of the park.

It's hard to understand people's motives, ideas, and understandings, but I do feel that if this particular individual hadn't gotten committed, if he hadn't been ready to put a lot of money into his personal feelings that problems wouldn't have come up as they have.

MR. COCKRELL: How has the National Park Service responded to these people who were complaining? Was there any change in policy that you are aware of?

MR. OFFUTT: It's hard to say. I think that the first thing that came up was Bill Birdsell was incredibly kind, and when a lot of the people would come to him and say, "Mr. Birdsell I have to sell my house because I want to go to California and live with my daughter. I can't keep the house up." Even if that property were way down on the list of priorities, he'd say, "I understand. Don't worry about it. We'll buy it."

This was the only thing that they could ever really hang on Bill that he did wrong. That was he didn't buy things according to the priority list. His priority took in human interest and conditions as a part of that factor. When the Jessica Savitch's and others started coming out of the woodwork, I know that after that Bill was very careful in making certain that he did everything by the book, and you lose a lot when you go by the book.

MR. COCKRELL: So he would no longer take hardships like he did before?

MR. OFFUTT: That's correct. He would tell me, "Please see what you can do. We will try to get this bought from you in three or four years, but with the appropriations getting tied up, and all the politics...."

MR. COCKRELL: Following all this negative publicity, in May of 1980, Congressman Seiberling held a meeting in Washington which I believe you were in attendance along with some of the park staff and other people. What was the purpose of this meeting? Were there any results, and what were the main discussions?

Thomas W. Offutt

MR. OFFUTT: I probably was there. I've been in a number of meetings. Most of the meetings that I went to related to specific real estate problems. This sounds like it was a meeting that was more general in nature.

MR. COCKRELL: It was specifically about the problems in Cuyahoga Valley, and what the Park Service could do to turn around the negative publicity. I was told that you were there.

MR. OFFUTT: I probably was there, I probably was. I really can't respond because I don't remember the specifics of the meeting. I am kind of a cynic about being able to handle hysteria and negative feelings in individuals with logic. And I think if there was such a meeting and I was there and people were talking about logical solutions, I probably tuned out.

MR. COCKRELL: O.K. What do you remember about the Watt years and the problems that were encountered?

MR. OFFUTT: It was so painful that you had to laugh. Every time you turned around there was another investigation going on. You'd go into the Lands Office and all of the file cabinets would be all sealed shut. I remember Jack Blanton's boss at the time. I can't remember his name; he only lasted about a couple of months of the Watt Administration and he seriously was driven to drink, rack and ruin. I know that a lot of people who had commitment and ability tried to find something else to do when it was clear that they couldn't do their jobs.

In answer to your question, it was bizarre. It was byzantine. It was unreal. All of a sudden the person in power had the opportunity to do everything he could to bring down the National Park Service, and that's exactly what he was doing. And Ric Davidge and people like this were something I never thought I would see happening to any operation that was acting in the public interest.

MR. COCKRELL: What about the so-called "hit list"? Some people say that there definitely was one and others say that there wasn't one.

MR. OFFUTT: I'm sure there was one. I'm sure there were a number of hit lists. I'm sure there were a number of people involved. That was the mentality of people like Ric Davidge. I was at a George Wright Society meeting in Washington. I'm a member. Do you know about the George Wright Society?

MR. COCKRELL: No.

MR. OFFUTT: It's made up of retired naturalists from the Park Service and the Forest Service and also the current naturalists and

Thomas W. Offutt

scientists. Ric Davidge came out and said, "You people with Ph.D.s and what not think you're so smart, but look around you because half of the people that are in this room won't be here next year, and another half of them won't be here the year after. That's how smart you are!" and walked off the stage. That was the greeting of Mr. Davidge and Mr. Watt to this George Wright Society. George Wright was the first Naturalist in the National Park Service.

MR. COCKRELL: How strange!

MR. OFFUTT: It's bizarre! It was incredible.

MR. COCKRELL: I came across some testimony that you gave to a Congressional committee in 1982 correcting some of the misinformation that Leonard Stein-Sapir had supplied. What was Stein-Sapir's motivation in making these claims in the first place?

MR. OFFUTT: I think his initial goal was to make money and he certainly did that. It seems that he corrupted the process to benefit himself financially. I think he enjoyed that and maybe as a coverup for that he began to enjoy the idea of flamboyance and being in the public eye. I think that may very well have just taken on a life of its own.

MR. COCKRELL: Relations between the Park Service and the Cleveland Metropolitan Park District with Lou Tsipis deteriorated quite dramatically in the early 1980s. Cleveland Metro Parks wanted CVNRA to turn over Cuyahoga County lands to it. Were you involved in this controversy?

MR. OFFUTT: Yes. That really wasn't a controversy if you know about Lou Tsipis. The problems that came about in the Cleveland Metropolitan Parks have been evidenced now. There have been a number of criminal indictments and horrible problems that have been growing within the park from before Lou's days. Lou was a very nice guy who didn't really have the experience for the job. He did what he was told to do by one of the active members of the board.

The incident that you're talking about came as a result of Mr. Watt making the statement that he wanted to do away with a number of National Recreation Areas. Lou Tsipis wrote a letter to Mr. Watt saying, "Cuyahoga County would be willing to accept any of the CVNRA lands." I think this was so quickly squashed by the Congress that it was just thought of as a bad joke.

MR. COCKRELL: Under the Reagan/Watt Administration, there was a land acquisition moratorium for a short time. Were you involved more actively during this time period to acquire some of the more threatened tracts or was it business as usual?

Thomas W. Offutt

MR. OFFUTT: It was pretty much business as usual. There was one tract of land that Lew Albert said was really important to acquire because it was threatened. There was no telling when the dollars would come down to take it out. Because we aren't made of money, it just didn't work out financially. We couldn't buy the property and hold it and then sell it to the Park Service for what the appraised value showed that it would be worth. It was worth more to a speculator so we lost it.

We had set up at that time a revolving loan fund with grants from the Cleveland and Gund Foundations and from the corporations that allowed me to buy options for three or four years and hold them. But that fund never got over \$45,000 so I really couldn't do any significant things. I know of two or three projects in that time where we bought properties and held them for three or four years or bought long-term options. We still own a piece of property that we've held for six years which we will probably be selling to the Park Service this year.

MR. COCKRELL: Was that part of a fund-raising drive in 1980 to raise more than one million dollars?

MR. OFFUTT: It was a result of that, but that fund-raising drive fell completely flat. I wake up at night screaming, wondering about that. Quite frankly, the reason that it fell flat was the fact that SOHIO, which had just come into a lot of money, was supporting it. They put out a challenge to the rest of the corporations in Cleveland and Akron. Every corporation that I went to said, "If SOHIO thinks it's such a good idea, they can fund the whole million dollars and it won't bother them at all. We don't like being told what to do by SOHIO or anybody else. This is a Federal park. It's the government's responsibility." There was unanimous or near-unanimous, negative support.

MR. COCKRELL: Did TPL have any involvement in negotiations to get the Cuyahoga Valley Line Railroad corridor added in 1986?

MR. OFFUTT: Quite a bit! Railroad lands are very, very difficult real estate transactions. We were involved early on in this. As a matter of fact, we brought the brightest person in TPL in from our main office in California to work on this. Lew Albert I think credits TPL as being an essential ingredient in having it work.

We had a very critical meeting in Washington in which one of the lead attorneys from Interior attended. We presented the situation and our purpose. The Interior attorney came, I'm quite certain, with authority and orders from Mr. Hodel. He said, "We do not want TPL involved in the project."

So we said, "Fine," and gave up our option.

Thomas W. Offutt

Congressman Ralph Regula then brought the Park Service back into this transaction. First of all, we had stonewalling and ignorance on the part of CSX. It wasn't a big deal for them and we couldn't get a decent appraisal. The title problems were unbelievably complicated. We paid for the title report that went to maybe three-feet high. But then as soon as we worked out all the technical, legal problems, then we came into problems from the Park Service.

TPL could have bought the entire railroad line. Then the government could have condemned the property from TPL to clear title. This is one of the ways that TPL can help. It can act as an intermediary in a number of ways. If we can't save the government money, we can help clear title. In this case, the railroad wanted to retain the right to lay fiberoptic cables. If the government buys it, they have to buy all interest in the property. Therefore, CSX could have sold us everything except the fiberoptic cables. Then when we sold it to the government, we wouldn't have those rights, and they could legally buy it from us. At the last minute, it was clear that it wasn't the Park Service, but it was Interior that didn't want us involved.

MR. COCKRELL: Was there any reason behind this?

MR. OFFUTT: Well, I don't know. I think the realistic concern that the Park Service had was that this was a liability. If the train had turned over and people were killed, the government could be sued. This was the thing that we kept hearing over and over again. However, I believe there were other feelings involved here, other concerns that were right at the top with Mr. Hodel.

I don't think he likes TPL very much, and I'm proud of that. We did a project out in California. I don't understand it, but my friends in the Park Service refer to it as "that really stupid one on Sweeny Ridge." Well that's thrown back at us every time that the Park Service doesn't want to do something, they talk about Sweeney Ridge. Have you heard about Sweeney Ridge?

MR. COCKRELL: No, I haven't.

MR. OFFUTT: Basically, it was a project that the Park Service for years had wanted. It was a ridge of land that goes down next to the Pacific from Golden Gate. We got it, and we offered it for about a third of the appraised fair value. Watt said, "No, we're going to sell off public lands to balance the budget." Coleman, who was the Regional Director, a very fine man, was carrying out this policy. TPL went to the Congressional delegation and said, "You know we're not able to sell to the Park Service, so it's up

Thomas W. Offutt

to you. If you want it to go into public hands, we have the option. Otherwise the option is going to lapse."

Well, it was down to the point where Senator Wilson and Senator Hayakawa were going to enforce a legislative taking where the Senate of the United States would buy the land from TPL, and then by mandate, force it on the Park Service. This is kind of skewing the legislative and administrative process. We got blamed for it of course. You don't blame the Senators for that; you blame us for that.

The nice thing about TPL is that it does tend to get in the middle of things that it cares about. It is not a shrinking violet kind of operation, but you really can't blame that one on us. The "legislative taking" was not our idea.

MR. COCKRELL: What do you believe the future is for TPL's activity in CVNRA?

MR. OFFUTT: That's a good question. For the pieces of property that are yet to be acquired, I don't believe there will be a problem. If the Superintendent would call up and say, "We need you," for one reason or another, I think that he knows what TPL can do. I think that if we are involved, it would be in one of those technically complicated, legally complicated project where we could help out. We certainly would try.

We are not active in the Cuyahoga Valley now at all. I am active with the Park Service in other states.

MR. COCKRELL: Primarily this office was established to help CVNRA. It has outgrown that responsibility, and now you've expanded your region. Has this become a viable TPL office in that it is self-supporting?

MR. OFFUTT: Definitely, definitely. We just turned over 45,000 acres of land to the Forest Service in West Virginia, 13,000 acres up in Michigan, really nice lands. So, yes, we're busy. We've never been busier.

MR. COCKRELL: What other Park Service units are you involved with?

MR. OFFUTT: We are trying to work with Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore on property up in Michigan, but the local Congressman will not allow the property to go to the Park Service. He wanted it to go to the Forest Service, if anywhere, and so it's probably going to the Forest Service.

I've worked with Sleeping Bear Dunes a little bit. We couldn't really work that project out, but I think we helped them.

Thomas W. Offutt

We've worked with New River Gorge in West Virginia for quite a while with Jim Currico when he was Superintendent and now with Mr. Kennedy. And we have been working early on with the Gauly River which will be going to the Park Service in West Virginia.

We worked on the Garfield home here in Mentor. I guess that's it. I can't remember any more in the three states I work in. I think that's about it.

MR. COCKRELL: Michigan, Ohio, and West Virginia.

MR. OFFUTT: I forgot one more really interesting piece of land on the Saint Croix River. We are working on a project there now. It's a fascinating piece of land that I would love to see go into the park for a number of people, Gaylord Nelson and others.

MR. COCKRELL: The Saint Croix is in Wisconsin and Minnesota. So you are not restricted to the three-state area?

MR. OFFUTT: No. We also did a fascinating project with Everglades National Park.

MR. COCKRELL: What did that involve?

MR. OFFUTT: Thirty-five thousand acres that was owned by General Tire and Rubber Company. That was the highest priority to add to the park. Jack Morehead was the Superintendent. They wanted the land desperately and we got an option on it. A very complex negotiation and this was when Mr. Watt was at his height. The land is now owned by the South Florida Water Management District. So it did go into some form of public protection.

We are working right now on a remaining 1,000 acres which is contiguous to the park. There is a bill in Congress to add some lands that are needed for protection of the Everglades. This may very well fit into that.

MR. COCKRELL: Is there something that I haven't asked you and should, or anything you would like to add?

MR. OFFUTT: No. I think we've covered everything.

[END]

Thomas W. Offutt

I N T E R V I E W V I A C O R R E S P O N D E N C E

**F O R T H E
A D M I N I S T R A T I V E H I S T O R Y O F
C U Y A H O G A V A L L E Y
N A T I O N A L R E C R E A T I O N A R E A
O H I O**

**Randall R. Pope
Superintendent, Great Smoky Mountains National Park
(former Deputy Regional Director, Midwest Region)
National Park Service**

Letter
October 25, 1989
Gatlinburg, Tennessee

Interviewed by:

**Ron Cockrell
Historian
Midwest Regional Office
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior**

Letter
August 29, 1989
Omaha, Nebraska

Randall R. Pope

Randall R. Pope

MR. COCKRELL: I am currently researching and compiling the Administrative History of Cuyahoga Valley National Recreation Area (CVNRA), Ohio. In light of your long tenure in the Midwest Regional Office (MWRO), I respectfully request your participation in this project.

I have researched the park files and have conducted many oral history interviews, but I need your perspective on a number of items which are as follows:

1. In the spring of 1976, you served as CVNRA's Acting Superintendent during the hospitalization/recovery of Bill Birdsell and presided over a tumultuous General Management Plan (GMP) meeting in Valley View. Why were the people so upset? What was the outcome of the meeting, and did any National Park Service (NPS) positions change?

MR. POPE: 1. A new addition to the Cuyahoga Valley National Recreation Area (CVNRA) was proposed by the General Management Plan (GMP) planning team. The proposed plan was a surprise to the Valley View Community. Adequate groundwork was not laid prior to the published report. During the public meetings which were scheduled and controlled by the Service, it became apparent that Valley View residents were concerned about the revised proposed boundary.

We received a request from the Valley View City Council to hold a special meeting. Although some council members supported the proposal, the Mayor, who chaired the meeting, obviously did not. In his role as chair he controlled who was called on for statements. Therefore, the meeting was not really helpful to the residents, as little information was disseminated. Most of the NPS recommendations prevailed in the final plan (i.e., boundaries were modified to include some of the additional areas in Valley View).

MR. COCKRELL: 2. How good a job was Birdsell doing at keeping the public informed about the land acquisition program and NPS planning in general?

MR. POPE: 2. Bill's overall efforts were really, really successful. Odell Hanson, Midwest Regional Public Affairs Officer, assisted Bill in developing and publishing a question/answer brochure on the land acquisition program that was very helpful. The Land Program was complicated because the Corps of Engineers was carrying out all of the Service's acquisition. The Corps was really not too familiar with NPS policies. Bill claimed their procedures in dealing with landowners was too harsh--too abrupt. In turn, Corps staff complained that Bill kept changing priorities in the acquisition program.

Randall R. Pope

Bill was a one-man show. He had no permanent employees on his staff to deal with external matters. As I recall, he had a Secretary, Administrative Officer, and a VISTA Maintenance Man on the roles during the time I was acting. About the time of our public meetings, the first Ranger came on board. He was, I think, less than full-time. Funding for staff came too slow in those early CVNRA years following establishment.

MR. COCKRELL: 3. I've learned that staff morale at CVNRA during the Birdsell years (1975-1980) was not good. Could you explain what the difficulties were?

MR. POPE: 3. Bill worked hard at external relations and had considerable support from many influential people in and around the Valley. Staff that worked for him seldom performed to his expectations. He wanted, demanded, perfection (to his standard of perfection).

MR. COCKRELL: 4. CVNRA Superintendents have enjoyed a close relationship with the local congressional delegation. Please cite some examples of how this fact caused problems for MWRO. (Because of this, did Birdsell operate independently of MWRO?)

MR. POPE: 4. The CVNRA legislation was not supported by the Department of Interior. The Ohio congressional delegation had the political clout to pass enabling legislation over Departmental objections.

With that background, influential Congressman John Seiberling was probably not inclined to deal at the Washington Office level with Secretary or Director on many Park matters. He did develop direct lines of communications with the Park Superintendent. Bill worked very closely and had excellent communications with Seiberling and other Ohio representatives.

During my tenure as Deputy (which followed my acting assignment at CVNRA), Bill did a pretty good job of keeping us informed at the Regional level. I do not recall any major surprises because of his connections.

MR. COCKRELL: 5. Two Operations Evaluation Reports were done by MWRO during the Birdsell years, and both were very negative. Birdsell did not permit his staff to see them. As you saw it, what were the principal problems at Cuyahoga Valley? What did MWRO do to try to correct them?

MR. POPE: 5. Refer to Number 3 above. His external programs were, for the most part, excellent and that is where he devoted his

Randall R. Pope

talent and most of his energy. He was totally engrossed in CVNRA and the NPS.

I request that you not quote me on the following:

Bill did not relate well to his staff and "he tended to put them down." Bill was counseled many times regarding his style and approach in dealing with employees. He tended to lack full confidence in any of his staff. As an example, all correspondence, memos and reports were personally reviewed in minute detail by Bill. Thus, 70-90 percent of material from CVNRA was received late--past deadlines. His problems with overall internal Park operations management eventually led to the proposed reassignment.

MR. COCKRELL: 6. When and from where or whom did plans to transfer Birdsell originate? (I've been told the staff knew as early as January 1980, yet the announcement of the transfer to the Washington Office was not made until July.) In what way was Congressman John Seiberling and Director Russell Dickenson involved in the decision to transfer Birdsell?

MR. POPE: 6. The Regional Director and Director reached the agreement for Bill's Washington Office "policy" assignment. I really don't recall what, if any, "agreement" was reached with Congressman Seiberling and the Director. I'm quite certain the Congressman was consulted and assured that Bill's transfer was to his and the Service's best interest. Bill knew NPS policy and was exceptionally good at articulating it. I do not remember exact dates, only that following an operations evaluation we discussed his transfer and that the Regional Director worked with the Director to find a position that would make the best use of Bill's talents.

MR. COCKRELL: 7. In your opinion, did the negative events at Cuyahoga contribute to the eventual transfer of Jimmie Dunning?

MR. POPE: 7. I don't think CVNRA had any direct relationship to Jim Dunning's transfer. I suggest Russ Dickenson answer that question.

MR. COCKRELL: 8. The Cuyahoga Valley Periphery Project (originated by the Park Federation and then adopted by the Communities Council) pointed to the proliferation of tourist-oriented honky-tonks at Gatlinburg as an example of what CVNRA might become if communities and NPS did not act to stop it. As Superintendent of Great Smoky Mountains, as well as one intimately familiar with CVNRA, is this a realistic comparison, and do you think that sufficient steps have been taken to protect the fringes of CVNRA from Gatlinburg-type development?

Randall R. Pope

MR. POPE: 8. No, I don't think it is really a good comparison. Gatlinburg is a major "gateway park community" as is Jackson, Wyoming and Estes Park, Colorado. The number of highways going to and through Cuyahoga Valley and the existing (adjacent) large cities and industrial development in Ohio makes it extremely difficult to compare the two areas. There is no question that development controls were/are needed at CVNRA and that the Communities Council was an excellent approach toward that effort. I really can't comment as to the adequacy of actions to date as it relates to controlling or directing outside boundary development. I certainly hope they have done a good job.

[END]

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

FOR THE

ADMINISTRATIVE HISTORIES OF

INDIANA DUNES NATIONAL LAKESHORE

INDIANA

AND

CUYAHOGA VALLEY

NATIONAL RECREATION AREA

OHIO

Nathaniel P. Reed
former Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks
United States Department of the Interior

March 9, 1987
Hobe Sound, Florida

Interviewed by:

Ron Cockrell
Historian
Midwest Regional Office
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Omaha, Nebraska
1987

Nathaniel P. Reed

Nathaniel P. Reed

MR. COCKRELL: I was wondering, first off, did you have any prior connection with Indiana Dunes?

MR. REED: No, none. Never seen it or heard of it until I became Assistant Secretary and immediately was thrown into a controversy over the expansion of the park. There was a very strong feeling in the Nixon Administration not to expand the park for two reasons: One, was a political reason. It was sort of a Democratic Park; it was considered a political park. Its creation had been a political decision, not on a resource basis. Secondly, it was hideously expensive real estate to acquire. I can't really remember when my first visit to Indiana Dunes took place, but it took place at the request of a remarkable man. Now come on. Fortunately, he lives on one of the Dunes, in one of the enclaves in the park. He is a lawyer. Give me his name.

MR. COCKRELL: Herb Reed?

MR. REED: No. Very, very well known lawyer who had been a tremendous activist for the creation of the park and opposed to the construction of the nuclear power plant. His son is counsel for the National Federation of Wildlife. Now come on, who's that?

MR. COCKRELL: Richard Lieber?

MR. REED: No. I met Dick when I was out there on that trip. His son is counsel right now for the National Federation of Wildlife. Wonderful, wonderful, family.

Ed Osann! Ed had invited me out and I don't think I came in '71 because I had so many other problems. I had Alaska on my hands. We wanted to try to double the size of the Refuge System very quickly. Land and Water Conservation Fund money all of a sudden was going to be mine in tremendous quantities. And '71 was such a busy year because I had the Leopold Committee, the Cain Committee, Alaska lands. I can't even remember all of them. Eagle killings.

I had a full boat in '71. I remember going once in the early spring, terribly cold, like April. I think that was my first visit. And I was dumbfounded, totally ill-prepared for the beauty and the multi-ecotones of Indiana Dunes. We walked from the Lakeshore up and over the bluff and went through the wind-swept blackjack forest and down through the sand dunes into a ponded area. Positively walked miles and miles and immediately fell in love with Indiana Dunes.

Then we went and visited various parcels of it. We visited the State Park area, I remember that. God! The most cold and dreadful day. Driving wind and we were all in long johns and turtlenecks.

Nathaniel P. Reed

And I gave a speech that night--I hadn't written a speech for the occasion--it was for the dinner for Indiana Dunes, the old boys. I had not written a speech because I did not know what I was going to say until I saw the area. I guess I gave a very thumping speech saying that I was going to return to Washington very enthusiastic about the park.

Give me the name of the Superintendent. An older superintendent.

MR. COCKRELL: J. R. Whitehouse.

MR. REED: Yes! Whitehouse. Who I got to like a great deal. Anyway, the next battles really revolved around response to the Congressional bills being entered and for the expansion. It was a constant source of great agitation. The administration was feeling very imperial after its landslide election in '72. Of course, it didn't feel like giving much to Birch Bayh and I can't remember who the senior Senator was. Birch may have been the senior Senator as a matter of fact. I can't remember who it was, but it was long before Dick Lugar was in.

Anyway, at that time I decided that I had to oppose the Bailly nuclear power plant and had to thoughtfully support parts of the expansion. The problem was the administration forecasted, and accurately forecasted, if you were for half-a-loaf, you were going to get a whole loaf. So, the battles with OMB [Office of Management and Budget] as to what could be added, should be added, and what could be managed once added bordered on internecine warfare.

My memory is so faulty now that I can't tell you what parts I supported and what parts I didn't support. We had lengthy meetings. The Sierra Club was very important. There were some marvelous citizens groups who came to lobby me in my office. Perhaps, you should go and visit with Buck Bohlen in Washington because he was my Senior Deputy for Park Expansion. He can be reached at the World Wildlife Fund. Buck and I agonized. There was a river. There were various out-parcels.

My staff was not keen to have me oppose Bailly. Bailly still had some political muscle. Quite a bit of political muscle! The Nixon Administration was admittedly, pre-Arab oil crisis, but nevertheless, the Nixon Administration was pretty strongly supporting nuclear power. I made the case at the White House with [Bob] Ehrlichman one afternoon that I was not opposed to nuclear energy, that I had licensed three nuclear power plants in Florida when I was head of DER, [Department of Environmental Resources] so that I could not be accused of having any nuclear bias. But I was absolutely determined that nuclear power plant, plus its cooling tower could not invade either the aesthetic qualities of the park or, equally important, could not affect the park adversely through

Nathaniel P. Reed

the tremendous amount of water coming out of those cooling towers.

The premise that Bailly was the only place in the world that you could build Bailly was right there, was obviously flawed.

I met the chairman of the power company--who was a very, very old man--who had a far better site, but they had stubbornly picked the site next to Bailly. They had a huge hole in the ground--which they spent, I've forgotten how many millions, but he had explained how many millions of dollars they had spent on the site--and very frankly he told me he was going to roll me!

I looked across the table at him and I said, "No, we're going to stop you from building the plant here!"

And he said, "Well, we're going to roll you!"

And I said, "Okay, the battle is engaged!" And it was no-holds barred. He tried everything in the world with the conservatives who were supporting nuclear energy wherever to have me replaced. So he joined a nice delegation of people because there were those in the Alaska delegation who wanted my scalp. Ted Stevens asked for my scalp at four separate meetings. Three were with the Secretary of Interior and one in my presence with the President of the United States, and he never got it! But he made a sensational move, pointed across the table, and said I was "evil personified."

Russ Trane was very useful to me over at EPA [Environmental Protection Agency] and he kept me informed about my flanks, who was chewing on me or trying to chew on me. All in all, we were able to put up a strong resistance.

Of course, what killed Bailly was the terrible miscalculations of the company. The tremendous cost over-runs. The decrease in need for energy. But I considered it, nevertheless, a fundamentally important struggle in the sense that the Park Service and their Assistant Secretary said, "It is not a case of being pro or con nuclear energy. We are going to fend the borders of the National Park System." Something I wish the present administration thought a little more strongly about.

MR. COCKRELL: Right. Right.

MR. REED: That, I think, is a fundamentally important decision.

MR. COCKRELL: Did Secretary Morton support that?

MR. REED: He wanted out. Rog was the greatest person in the whole world. I want that to be clearly on the record, probably as fine a man as I ever worked for. I have a picture right across from my

Nathaniel P. Reed

desk, I look at him every morning! Rog did not like hand-to-hand combat. He'd come from the Congress, he'd come from a family where diplomacy was an important part of their lives. He was a huge, genial, wonderful bear of a man. But like so many huge, immense men, they are not terribly keen about combat.

Combat is my middle name! The great thing that Rog would do would be, "Hear me out," and then he'd say, "Okay"--like the New River in North Carolina, Bailly, and terrible decisions on Alaska. He'd say, "Okay. She's yours!" And if he said that, that meant that you got all of his political support. You got all of his insight from the Hill; everything that he heard on the Hill was transmitted to you. But you didn't get Joan d'Arc running out there on a white horse saying, "My Assistant Secretary is right!"

That was not Rogers' style. His style was to walk through crowds at Yellowstone, Grand Teton, or Yosemite and engender enormously, goodwill for the Park Service! He'd put on his Park Service hat. He'd walk arm-in-arm with the Superintendent. He'd sit at a campfire at nighttime and tell stories and listen. He'd have young Rangers by the dozen come to him and have a cocktail with him in the evening and could talk in their language and lingo at their level and would say, "What's going on?" and "How are you growing?" and "This is the greatest Service on the face of the earth."

He was the personification of a leader, but he did not like hand-to-hand battle. I think he was absolutely fantastic as a leader because once he turned you loose, except in the famous Central Utah Irrigation Project, he never called the Assistant Secretary back. He would stand with you and fight with you at the White House, at OMB, and on the Hill. But, it was not his style to do it as an individual.

MR. COCKRELL: I see. Are you familiar at all with a 1983 book called *Sacred Sands*?

MR. REED: No.

MR. COCKRELL: The author claims that you were so adamant about testifying against Bailly that you threatened to resign your position.

MR. REED: I did!

MR. COCKRELL: You did?

MR. REED: That's true.

MR. COCKRELL: You felt that strongly about it?

Nathaniel P. Reed

MR. REED: Well, I did. Once the battle was enjoined over Bailly, once the Chairman of the Board said he was going to have my scalp; once I had gone and stood on the sites, stood on the edge of the park, and then gone over--I even trespassed, and I was told not to trespass--but I went and trespassed onto the site, it was irretrievable. There was no way you could say, "We'll plant some trees around the cooling tower."

[laughter]

MR. REED: There was no way that you could say that the impact on the park could be lessened by raising the Delta T in the lake and warming the lick. There were all kinds of propositions like that.

I had gone through that with Turkey Point near Everglades National Park with avocado and mango growers and had forced Florida Power and Light Company to buy a very expensive piece of mangrove land, and run the cooling water through that mangrove land through a series of lateral canals rather than build cooling towers which would have destroyed the entire economy and part of the eastern area of the park.

I knew the expressions, I knew the lingo. And the Nuclear Regulatory Commission and I met full tilt, and the Park Service produced awfully good people. I remember that as scarring, fundamentally tough.

I think the toughest ones to be honest with you--and I really wish Buck was sitting here with us--were those God-awful maps of the pieces that the citizens groups wanted. And of course, their cross figures never quite were accurate; you could add this, this, and this for only a million-and-a-half dollars, and you'd say, "Only a million-and-a-half dollars?" It would turn out to be five million dollars! [laughter] And you would turn to the Superintendent and you'd say, "How are you going to manage that thing? It's way out in the boondocks!"

I remember those decisions, and I remember the great disappointment among the citizens that I could not support more in our public testimony. I think that Buck will reflect that we probably--where we started with OMB, and what we were able to testify for, we did rather well. I remember there was agitation among the citizens that they wanted me to support more. You couldn't help but not like these people! These were marvelous people.

I went back you know, I kept going back. I kept getting lured back by them. I'd bet you no Assistant Secretary has ever been to Indiana Dunes four times before. I went four times! I slept one night on the beach, in a wonderful beach front house, with a storm going on. I came in the summer once, to see the thing properly.

Nathaniel P. Reed

I flew in a helicopter with Whitehouse and looked at a lot of different potential additions. We got back on the ground, put on sneakers and Levis and went and really looked at them to see if they could be managed, what they had inside of them.

Because, I'm telling you, the resistance at OMB--it's funny, here we were going through the greatest expansion of the Park Service--one of the "come-ons" for me when I went to see Nixon in the spring of '71 was, I asked him, "What is the future of Land and Water Conservation Fund?" And he said, "You're going to be the Assistant Secretary that's going to have the greatest amount of money in the nation's history to spend on the expansion of the parks and the refuges." And I said, "I'll take the job!" [laughter]

MR. REED: You know, we had a lot of money and we had at that time, the team of people in the Park Service who knew how to use the money. I was reading the lawsuits of the Inholders Association the other night and our response. They say that you did such terrible things as double the size of the Park Service in our years in office, and that we bought more land than we needed, too. And that we left enclaves and so on and so forth.

What we did in the '70s was one of the most fundamentally important things that could have possibly happened to the Park Service and I'm forever proud of it. And I am absolutely delighted to have had the opportunity to have been involved in it. My regret is that it has not been sustained, hard, these past eight years, and that's why I serve as an advisor on the Commission for Outdoor Recreation that has just completed this wonderful report, and I am amicus [curiae] on the lawsuit. I'm amicus to the Federal Government in defending that lawsuit against those characters--and that is using them gently.

But, back to Indiana Dunes. We really need to think about how it was created. A Senators' great wish, a diminished piece of land that everybody thought of as wasteland along the lake to be used simply for rebuilding the steel industry. Wasteland for whatever man's many purposes. In here Senator Douglas saw and understood this extraordinary piece of land and that a remnant of it should be preserved for the American people. And he was right! You have to get down on your hands and knees, you have to see little things, little changes, but it is an extraordinarily interesting area.

MR. COCKRELL: There has been a lot of criticism of the Park Service about a lack of development there.

MR. REED: I don't think Indiana Dunes should have much develop- I think the recreation should be pure and simple along the beach front to take care of the swimming needs of the area. There is a

Nathaniel P. Reed

very good State Park there and it should probably be some opening of the Federal side of the park. The rest of it should be extremely passive; it should be foot trails and it should be for those who want a truly, quiet experience.

This is not supposed to be a recreation area. It is too fragile, very frankly, to be a recreation area. Anyway, the Park Service should get out of the recreation areas. It seems to me, the rec[reation] business should be, more and more of the States and private enterprise. The truly nifty areas, those wonderful, wonderful, sand dunes, those wonderful pathways through Indiana Dunes, that's pure Park Service.

MR. COCKRELL: There was a controversy in early '73, about a Development Concept Plan for the West Beach Unit which was super development.

MR. REED: I remember it perfectly.

MR. COCKRELL: And the local people were just up in arms.

MR. REED: Well, I'll tell you. Two times in my life--you know, George Hartzog and I came apart at the seams in public. We came apart at the seams more than that, not in public because we both had fiery tempers and very strong wills. Let me say right off the bat, the Park Service was well served by George Hartzog. Fantastic, marvelous, creative man!

The two great stories of our crossing of the ways were the rec[rea-tion] area at Indiana Dunes and the first development plan of Cumberland Island. In both cases, I had the privilege of sitting with the planners well in advance of the plan. We went over philosophy, discussed sizing, discussed the State's interest in both places where the State had equal opportunity to do something much more intense, the Park Service would do something much less intense, much more creative, much more simple and with much stronger emphasis on protection of natural values than on recreation.

In both cases, the planners came back with Disney Worlds, total Disney Worlds! In both cases! I remember at Cumberland Island I threatened to throw the Chief Planner out the window! I terrorized the poor man. I screamed, "My God, what have you brought? This is the most terrible thing I have ever seen in my life!" Well, Indiana Dunes--I thought it was off--we were in a very rushed period over something else. I think Alaska. He came in, had a meeting. I said to George, "That's the most awful thing I have ever laid eyes on; and to prove to you that it is absolutely awful, I'm going to authorize you to take that to public hearing."

Nathaniel P. Reed

He said, "The people in Northern Indiana are going to love it. What are you going to do when they all are supportive?"

I said, "I'll worry about that later."

So, of course, it goes to public hearing. The Park Service officials barely get out of the room alive! I mean, you talk about the return of the massacre of a Red Indian! My God, they took one look at this. Here they had spent all these years fighting for the preservation of the sacred Indiana Dunes. And now, it was going to be defiled by masses of swimmers and cars and campers. It was going to be the rec[reation] area of all rec[reation] areas.

It wouldn't fly. So the Park Service put its tail between its legs and very wisely went back to the drawing boards. We were in trouble in that era.

George and I went to Yosemite in the summer of '71. We saw some unbelievable mistakes there which infuriated him. I mean, they were changing simple things like, marking the curb sides; at a tiny little rest stop instead of having the traditional logs they were pouring concrete logs, you know. George would hit a telephone and have it canceled on the spot. We got the Landscape Architects up from San Francisco and said, "What are you doing? What's going on here?"

They were black-topping everything that had been gravel and there was an attitude also, that the Bureau of Recreation was pushing very, very hard philosophically: The beat of recreation was extraordinarily important. We didn't get into the two Gateways without it being a very big sex appeal to a President of the United States, let's not forget that. But recreation was on the minds of the people, where, closest to home was there ever going to be a Federal interest. And I was handing out millions and millions of dollars of money to the States and to the local communities through the Land and Water Conservation Fund for recreation areas downtown. Battles were being fought.

Dan Poole at the Wildlife Management Institute was vehemently opposed to spending any of the money on swimming pools or basketball courts in the inner-city. Money should only be spent for areas where you could shoot pheasant and quail or deer. On the other side of it, the recreationists wanted more and more money into swings, playgrounds, the Green Park on the corner where you could get to quickly, etcetera, etcetera. Tremendous, dynamic period of thinking, and occasional mistakes like those two development plans.

MR. COCKRELL: There were a couple of bills that were introduced to reduce the acreage of the Lakeshore. What was the Department's

Nathaniel P. Reed

policy on that? There were a couple of enemies in Indiana that didn't want the park.

MR. REED: Oh, yes. They wanted to hurt Birch [Bayh]; they wanted to hurt Douglas. You're going to get that. You know, Indiana is a very conservative state. It's got a big split between the Democrats and the Republicans. They don't even speak in Indiana! And as I said many conservative Republicans knew Indiana Dunes as an impediment to the economic progress of the State, a threat to Bailly, a threat to automobile dealers up and down the shoreline.

MR. COCKRELL: The steel industry.

MR. REED: The steel industry, and they decided that it should be put down. It would be mostly mean bills, only they're never going to get thoughtful hearing in the Interior Committees, but they were put there to send a message.

MR. COCKRELL: I see. What about the role of the Advisory Commissions such as at Indiana Dunes? Do you feel that was a good process to have?

MR. REED: [Hesitates] Yes. Especially now that I am on the outside, I suppose! Once you say, "I think the more citizen involvement that you have, the better off that you are"--but, I'll tell you, it's extremely painful at the time. Whether it was Gateway or Indiana Dunes, there's a feeling often of hostility. The local committee usually does not have any political sense whatsoever. Has not a clue as to what can and cannot be done. They know what should be done.

They're usually expansionist. They're usually conservative as to the use. They usually live in the area they have--I'm saying this gently--they have something to gain, not financially, let's say, but aesthetically to the quality of their lives by expansion and rigorous, tight, management of the area. Let's let that be. Everybody's got a stake in the future. It's feeling mortal. They feel like they should leave some kind of legacy, and years of service to an Advisory Committee to the expansion of a park is good service. You can look back and you can see a piece of land preserved and well managed. That's not all bad. That's a pretty good legacy. That's what my life here and my family's life here in Hobe Sound is. We look at a National Wildlife Refuge, the biggest and most important nature conservancy area in the State, if not the Nation, and at the north end another National Wildlife Refuge, and a pretty good stewardship in between. You know, that's worth fighting for.

MR. COCKRELL: It is.

Nathaniel P. Reed

MR. REED: Now, you run into a young Assistant Secretary who is highly opinionated, which I am, or was, an activist who is not going to sit like most Assistant Secretaries and listen politely. Who is going to say, "Oh, come on, that's not true." Who is going to argue with you and so Advisory Committee meetings for me, were always--I would work for days ahead of time to get ready for them. Our good friends the Superintendent at Fire Island or our Superintendents at Gateway-New York or Gateway-San Francisco will tell you, I'd arrive two or three days before a committee meeting and I would work a sixteen-hour day so that when I sat down with that committee I knew what the questions were and I knew pretty well what my answers were going to be.

Sometimes they got answers they didn't like! So, we would have fair confrontations, but that's all part of the game. That's why I think in essence, the Assistant Secretary should be fairly young. I think the mauling of time, if you really work at it, it is a fatiguing, marvelous job. You have to have a tremendous love affair with resources to be a good Assistant Secretary. You know the big problem at Indiana Dunes was they didn't think that Jim Whitehouse was aggressive enough. And yet, Jim, in many cases deviated far beyond what [Midwest] Region was allowing him to do. He was much stronger than what Region was doing. In some cases I'm sure he ran afoul of George Hartzog who wanted peace in certain areas at certain times. I take my hat off. We had some excellent young people up there also who did a super job on the ground.

MR. COCKRELL: There's an author who claims that the Carter people, when they came into power, abrogated an agreement that the local power company in Indiana had with Secretary Morton that they could appeal any decision. Like if you, or Mr. Hartzog, decided to file suit against them, they could appeal directly to him. Was there any such agreement?

MR. REED: Well, it was a handshake agreement. It didn't really have to be an agreement because any decision the Assistant Secretary makes is appealable to the Secretary anyway. They made much to do that I was making decisions with Hartzog in relation to Bailly that created new policy without review by the Secretariat. I was the one who said, "Listen, any decision that I make that you want to appeal, go appeal it to Morton." Knowing full well that Morton was not going to overturn me on something like that. Further, Rog had a very strong ethic when it came to the Park Service. Let's face it. That was his favorite Service in Interior by far.

George often was pecked "bad boy" for doing something weird or odd, or transferring too many people in one week. George loved multiple transfers of personnel. It caused absolute havoc among the wives

Nathaniel P. Reed

and the children being educated and it changed people's careers overnight. Nevertheless, George was considered an absolute genius.

MR. COCKRELL: There were a couple of moves to rename Indiana Dunes after Senator Douglas. What was your position on those bills?

MR. REED: Senator Douglas's son and I served together as trustees at Deerfield Academy beginning in. . . .

MR. REED: He told about his father's long love affair with the area and his tremendous concern for it. I really don't remember taking a position on it. I'm not much for changing parks to peoples needs. No matter how wonderful. Can't we have the "Douglas Visitor Center" within Indiana Dunes National Park? That sounds to me a better way of handling it.

MR. COCKRELL: Is there any other memories that you have about Indiana Dunes?

MR. REED: My memory is faded now to specifics. I would love very much to go and walk it again with Ed Osann. I'd like to hear what we did right and I'd like to see what we did wrong. I can't imagine what it looks like. Does it look very much the same?

MR. COCKRELL: It hasn't changed all that much. They have a new Environmental Education Center there that is named after Senator Douglas.

MR. REED: Good!

MR. COCKRELL: And West Beach Unit is opened now.

MR. REED: What was on West Beach?

MR. COCKRELL: It's basically the swimming activities and then there are some dune hikes there. Do you have a couple of minutes to talk about Cuyahoga Valley?

MR. REED: Yes.

MR. COCKRELL: In 1971, Congressmen John Seiberling introduced legislation to establish the National Historic Park and Recreational Area at Cuyahoga. What was your initial reaction to that?

MR. REED: I was a great friend of John's. I didn't even know where it was. I didn't pay much attention to the park at first. As I have already told you, that was the busiest year. We worked all-day Saturdays and Sunday mornings on Alaska.

Nathaniel P. Reed

Buck Bohlen probably should take the better part of this interview but, we started with the two Gateways. We had made a commitment. Nixon had bought the Gateways in '72, I think the early winter of '72, under the condition that there would only be two of them. New York and San Francisco and that they would be experimental, and they would receive the very best of the Park Service in recreation and that they would be demonstration areas for the States.

But the warning from Ehrlichman and OMB was, "Listen, you guys are going to do this very, very well because, it would relieve John Lindsey and--I can't remember the name of the mayor in San Francisco--of millions of dollars of responsibility. You are going to be in urban renewal. You're going to be in transportation. You're going to be in minorities. You are going to be in new vistas of recreational use and how the Federal Government is going to do various things in recreation. You'll be test tubing. You'll bankrupt the Federal Government if you go and do Houston, New Orleans, and Miami because every city in the United States is going to take one look at the Gateways and say, "Hey, my gosh, my park system is costing me X-number of millions of dollars a year, and the retirement fund for the park employees is X-number of millions of dollars a year, and the tree pruning and the grass cutting, and gosh, here comes the nice Feds with their Smoky Bear hats on and take over the whole responsibility, and the Federal Government pumps in millions and millions of dollars to improve transportation. This is a dream world!"

I mean, you've never seen anything more political than John Lindsey and Nelson Rockefeller fighting for New York Gateway. They knew exactly what the sex appeal was! I went out and debated the Mayor in San Francisco about various additions. I didn't want to buy a broken-down bathhouse. They got so mad at me. I've forgotten the name of the bathhouse that would tumble down. It cost the Federal Government millions of dollars to buy this broken-down bathhouse that had this wonderful, marvelous view across the Pacific. Well, the Mayor was equally determined that I was going to buy it. By God, I bought it! [laughter]

I mean, I got rolled so badly--how that California Delegation did it to me, I will never know! I thought I had a clear majority on the Interior Committee. I thought I had an overwhelming majority on the Appropriations Committee. By golly, they must have given up every card that they had for two years. All of my pals--I had blockers everywhere, I had blockers all over the field. They all rolled over and I got to buy more vistas on Gateway West than you have ever laid eyes on.

It really was funny! Edgar Wayburn who is head of the Sierra Club and he still is--at that time, was on the board. He and I took a helicopter ride with Howard Chapman. We took off at Golden Gate

Nathaniel P. Reed

and we flew about a hundred-and-twenty miles down the coast, and I swear to God, Edgar said, "And here, here is what you're going to buy, and here is what you're going to buy!" [laughter] We flew for one hour in the helicopter, due south and picked out the whole new Federal Park System of California, much of which has come true. Cuyahoga remained on the back-burner because it was certainly not a Gateway East or West. It had a lot of in-holdings. It had a lot of opposition locally.

I sort of put it on my personal back-burner in spite of the fact that John was a very, very loyal supporter and had become a friend. Our friendship intensified, strangely enough, after I left Office as he undertook the incredible job of having the hearings on the Alaska bill, which I followed with great care around the country. I testified first in Atlanta on it, and then helped form the Larry Rockefeller Americans for Alaska and due to the tremendous lobbying effort, and then lived the last month in Washington during the long debate on the Senate side.

Anyway, back to Cuyahoga. I don't remember a lot. I don't think we were very enthusiastic about it. I would have to go back and check my testimony. Do you have my testimony?

MR. COCKRELL: Bits and pieces of it.

MR. REED: I would have it all here. Everything is here, all of my testimony is here.

MR. COCKRELL: The legend at the park is that--quoting you--Cuyahoga would enter the Park System over your dead body.

MR. REED: Well, that's probably an accurate story. I've never been there. I'd like to go back and review my testimony. We keep a complete record here and there is a record in the Ford Library, and now the Nixon Library is copying everything. Again, I would ask the same question of Buck Bohlen. He probably handled the preparation of all my testimony on Cuyahoga. I don't remember the Park Service being very enthusiastic about Cuyahoga in the start. They were very suspicious that they were getting far-a-field. I know there has been some terrible TV series on Cuyahoga, that the right wing put together and I have no idea, but on the other hand, I hear it is working out surprising well, now.

MR. COCKRELL: Yes, it really is. It's a nice area.

MR. REED: But, you know--I've got to say this very honestly and John might scalp me for saying it--I could go to most any area with the National Park Service. Denver. Omaha. You name a city that I couldn't go to, that I couldn't find some resource around it. With the expertise of the Park Service and with dough, I could do

Nathaniel P. Reed

a simply marvelous job. In hindsight from the American Treasury standpoint, President Nixon knew exactly what was going to happen from a politician's standpoint the moment that you did well in the two Gateways.

MR. COCKRELL: Everybody thought that President Ford was going to veto the Cuyahoga Valley.

MR. REED: Oh, yes. That's a wonderful story. I wrote a veto message. He asked for a veto message and he asked for a signing message. Oh, literally, only twenty-four hours ahead of the decision. The bill had come over. So I sat down. Oh, I wrote a fervent veto message. Then I had a cup of tea and something to eat. Then I wrote a glorious signing message--let's face it, it was an election year! So they were properly typed up and I looked them over and my staff said, "You are the biggest charlatan on the face of the earth," and I said, "No, I'm not. I'm facing the realities of an election year and every once in awhile you guys are going to have to accept the fact that the Park Service is somewhat like a dam, in that every fourth year you're going to get something that you many not consider absolutely as pure as driven snow and learn to smile and live with it." So I sent it over there. I can't remember. You're going to have to help me. Who was the junior Senator from Ohio? He was a Republican who was running that year.

MR. COCKRELL: Taft was one of the Senators.

MR. REED: No. It was the other Senator. You need to go through this and find it because he was the one. He was a genuinely good guy. He might not have been the world's greatest United States Senator but, he was a wonderful guy, wonderful character and had a tremendous association with Jerry Ford. The call came from Chaney's office who was the Chief of Staff under Ford: "The President looked at both of your statements. He leaned back in his chair." What the heck is the name of the Senator? "Senator so-and-so leaned across the table and said, "Mr. President, no one vetos an Ohio park bill in my election year!" [laughter]

And with that the President picked up the pen and signed the Cuyahoga into law. [laughter] Okay? And that is an absolutely true story. but you've got to find out what the name of the Senator is because it is important historically for the records to get him down. And it was not Taft; it was the other Senator. [The Ohio Senator was William Bart Saxbe.] He was beaten, by the way.

MR. COCKRELL: He was beaten?

MR. REED: He was beaten. He hadn't been terribly active on environmental affairs or anything else. It was a big year for

Nathaniel P. Reed

Carter and it came out. Cuyahoga was formed and it became the Democrats for [Assistant Secretary] Bob Herbst and [Secretary] Cecil [Andrus] to begin it. I have never been there. I remember seeing a scrapbook of photographs of it. I have a clear impression of seeing some farms and very pretty houses along the banks of a river, and I think that's about the best I can say that I've ever seen.

MR. COCKRELL: A canal going through it.

MR. REED: Canal going through it; I couldn't remember that. You know the amount of money that two Gateways were costing by that time--the election was '76--it might even be worth historically, to look at how much money our administration had put into the Gateways by '76 for you to understand the fright that OMB was running, and the Secretariat was running.

We were up into big bucks! Construction as well as acquisition. And manpower! God, look at the amount of manpower. We had made the terribly hard decision that we could not enforce the law with the local policeman, so we were bringing Park Service Policemen from Washington on temporary duty to the parks, especially in New York, to enforce law. Lordy, lordy, lordy you can imagine what that cost! They flew up and flew back, living in motels. I've forgotten what broke down with Mayor Lindsey over that but, something broke down and we had to do it that way or we decided to do it that way.

So, there was a certain amount of paranoia certainly at OMB, certainly at the Department level among the fiscal analysts and the budget preparers. And very frankly, I think there was a certain amount of real reservations at the Park Service of not biting off more than they could chew. They had these two huge urban areas and they thought they better show their stuff and have sustained funding.

What they kept impressing me at the two Gateways is, "Nat, you cannot do it; you cannot turn the spigot on and turn the spigot off, turn it on and turn it off. You've got to give us a sustained budget; you've got to let us build parking lots and visitors pavilions and changing rooms, showers, baseball fields, basketball fields, you name it! And trees--the amount of money in landscaping! These places were burned-out! They looked like the Second World War had rolled over them, and that nothing had touched them in years, and years, and years. Nothing. The grounds hadn't even been cut. There were no irrigation systems. The Park Service had put in millions, and millions, and millions of dollars in construction, and in maintenance, and in manpower.

Nathaniel P. Reed

And then here comes Cuyahoga Valley in a Congressman's backyard, and it smells! I think it probably jaundiced us before--as I say, I never even went and looked at it. That's rare for me; I went to almost everywhere of any addition to the Park Service, I saw in person. So, it came during a period where we had sort of committed ourselves.

You've got to remember also that there were many other cities that had begun the drive. Atlanta had begun on the Chattahoochee [River National Recreation Area], New Orleans with Jean Lafitte [National Historical] Park, Houston had wanted us to do this. I had persuaded President Ford to take over Valley Forge. Now, remember that. That has to be put into this equation as well. Valley Forge had gone broke. Pennsylvania had gone broke.

The two hundredth was coming up, and here was Valley Forge in terrible shape, and there was a marvelous citizens group, one of which was a fellow trustee at Trinity College. [laughter] He was absolutely determined that Valley Forge was the citadel where the American Revolution was made because those hardy men that stayed with Washington that long, terrible, cold winter, that saved the revolution. And over OMB's massive objection, I persuaded the Federal Government to take over Valley Forge and President Ford to come to rededicate it on the Fourth of July '76.

So here you've got the two Gateways. You've got Valley Forge. You've got the obvious interest of other cities and then there is Cuyahoga! Introduced by a Congressman in his own backyard.

MR. COCKRELL: Bad news! [laughter]

MR. REED: Bad news. It may turn out to be a very, very, fine area. And maybe in fifty years we'll look back and say--I suspect we will--"How wise. How wise they were." At worst, you will have spent some gold and you will have not achieved anything of great magnitude. But at best, it may surprise us all.

MR. COCKRELL: Well, that about does it for me. I really thank you for taking time out from your schedule.

MR. REED: I couldn't be more pleased to do it with you, Ron. It is an interesting assignment that you have.

MR. COCKRELL: Oh, it is. It definitely is. Would you like to see a transcript of this?

MR. REED: No, no.

[END]

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEWS
FOR THE
ADMINISTRATIVE HISTORY OF
CUYAHOGA VALLEY
NATIONAL RECREATION AREA
OHIO

John F. Seiberling
former United States Congressman
14th District of Ohio

May 22, 1989
September 7-8, 1989
January 26, 1990

Akron, Ohio

by

Ron Cockrell, Historian
Midwest Regional Office
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Omaha, Nebraska

1990

I N T R O D U C T I O N

The following is a collection of oral history interviews conducted by National Park Service (NPS) personnel with former U.S. Congressman John F. Seiberling. The interviews took place in the Seiberling home in Akron, Ohio, in the southern portion of the Cuyahoga Valley National Recreation Area (CVNRA). The Seiberling interviews are a component of a larger Oral History Project focusing on the history of this area in the context of NPS administration. The information generated from these interviews will be incorporated into the CVNRA Administrative History.

John F. Seiberling served in the United States House of Representatives from 1971 to 1987. He is a significant figure in the history of CVNRA in that he authored the park's enabling act and served in Congress as its chief advocate. Mr. Seiberling's activities regarding the Cuyahoga Valley are but a small part of his active Congressional career. As an advocate for the entire National Park System, John Seiberling's contributions will certainly be noted by future historians as having profoundly and positively influenced the history of the NPS itself.

I developed all of the questions presented in this interview. During the first session, my colleagues agreed it would be best to permit Mr. Seiberling the opportunity to summarize his experiences without interruption. The subsequent sessions were more structured with the interviews conducted by CVNRA staff, Ron Thoman and Susan Garland. To both of them I extend my gratitude in this effort to reveal how the CVNRA was, how it came to be today, and what we hope it will become tomorrow.

Ron Cockrell
National Park Service
August 17, 1990

John F. Seiberling: May 22, 1989

MR. COCKRELL: I thought I would give you an opportunity to relate in your own words the history of the park. I also have a list of questions, whatever you are most comfortable with.

MR. SEIBERLING: Well, I could go on at great length, but let me give you a sort of chronology here that goes way back before I ever got active. Back in 1925, the Olmsted Brothers firm, founded by Frederick Law Olmsted the great landscape architect, was hired by the newly created Akron Metropolitan Park Board to make a park survey of Summit County.

Interestingly enough, my grandfather, F. A. Seiberling, was one of the members of the original park board. It is no coincidence that they hired the Olmsted Brothers because Warren Manning, who had been a partner of Olmsted, was the landscape architect who laid out the grounds at Stan Hywet Hall. His assistant was Harold Wagner, who later went with the Olmsted Brothers and did the actual study of the park potential of Summit County. The report said that the Cuyahoga Valley north of Akron was the most important scenic feature and potential park feature of Summit County and should be preserved at all costs from rim to rim and from end to end.

The Akron Metro Parks Board did not have the funds to do that at that time. The report was filed and the matter lay dormant, although, of course, over the years the Akron Metro Parks did acquire some land in the valley and Cleveland Metro Parks in Cuyahoga County acquired Brecksville Reservation and Bedford Reservation, which is adjacent to the valley. Various girl scout camps and boy scout camps were founded. As a result of the state receiving what is now Virginia Kendall Park Unit of the Cuyahoga Valley National Recreation Area, but was then state land, they turned that over to the Akron Metro Parks, which managed it along with the trust fund that paid for the management until after the Park Service took over the Cuyahoga Valley.

Since then, the state, by statute enacted by the legislature, transferred it to the National Park System. There were these recreational activities and areas in the valley long before the 1960's and 70's. I grew up at Stan Hywet Hall which just overlooks the valley in the northwest end of Akron. I used to go hiking and bicycling and horseback riding down the valley and thought what a beautiful area it was. It seemed to me that it ought to be protected for everybody's enjoyment.

Back in the 60's, I learned that the Ohio Edison Company was planning to run a transmission line up through the valley from the south, through Peninsula. I started working with some friends of mine who had formed an organization called the Peninsula Valley Heritage Association. Henry Saalfeld, a longstanding friend, was at that time the president of it. Bob Hunker of Peninsula was

John F. Seiberling: May 22, 1989

active in it and a number of other people, and they were trying to oppose the high-tension line through enactment of zoning laws in Peninsula. However, there is a state law that gives public utilities a preemptive right and denies the right of local governments to block high-tension lines among other things.

I was at that time the President of the Tri-County Regional Planning Commission which covered Summit, Portage and Medina counties. I learned that under state law, no highway or utility structure could be built that was not in accordance with a Regional Land Use Plan if one was adopted by a regional planning commission. The Tri-County Regional Land Use Plan did not include a high-tension corridor going up through the valley. I persuaded the county prosecutor to bring a quo warranto action which is an action questioning the authority of, in this case, Ohio Edison Company, to run a high-tension line in violation of the Regional Land Use Plan.

Ohio Edison lost in the trial court. It appealed through the court of appeals to the Supreme Court of Ohio. This was back in the 1960's. The Supreme Court didn't question the law, but someone did their homework, because the court found that a quorum had not been present when the Regional Planning Commission had adopted the Regional Land Use Plan. Therefore, the plan was not valid and the case was dismissed.

Meanwhile, Hank Saalfeld and I were both stockholders of Ohio Edison and for two or three years running, we went to the annual stockholders meeting and raised a little Cain about the Ohio Edison Company messing up this beautiful valley. That did have an effect on the company. We met with Bruce Mansfield, the president at that time of Ohio Edison, who was a very fine man. He asked his engineers to take a look at the design of the towers. As a result, instead of the usual steel grid, oil derrick-looking type tower that we see so often, they went for a single post tower and painted it forest green so at least it was not as conspicuous as it might otherwise be.

All you have to do to see the difference is look at the valley north of the county line in Cuyahoga County and see the two atrocities that Cleveland Electric Illuminating Company ran down through that part of the valley even though some of us, including myself, met with the president of CEI and the general counsel and asked them at least to use the same kind of towers that Ohio Edison had south of there. They said they couldn't change and blah, blah, blah, and that was that. CEI's uncooperative attitude was later again shown when, after the park was created, they tried to run another big transmission line through the valley in Cuyahoga County, roughly north of that area around where Wilson's Mill is located. The Park Service had to take them to court and get an

John F. Seiberling: May 22, 1989

injunction to prevent them from doing that. The reason I mention all this is because even though our fight against the Ohio Edison line was not successful, it helped galvanize a lot of public support and recognition that the valley is a beautiful area and we ought to try to do something to save it.

The next move was that Hank Saalfeld and I and Ed Garrigan, who was a Republican state senator, went down one day to see E. J. Thomas, who had recently retired as head of The Goodyear Tire & Rubber Company and was now on the Akron Metro Parks Board. Eddie Thomas was a really public-spirited person. This was around 1965 or so, and we said we thought the Akron Metro Parks ought to support us in going down to see Governor James Rhodes to see if we couldn't get the state interested in creating a state park in this valley. Eddie Thomas said, "Well, OK", but that the person we should contact was Ben Maidenburg, the publisher of the Akron Beacon Journal.

I thought this is going to be the usual thing where someone refers us to someone else, but Eddie wasn't like that. He said, "I will go with you," so he called up Ben Maidenburg and we all went over to see him and told him what we wanted to do. Ben said, "Fine John, you draft a letter and I will sign it." I drafted a letter to the Governor, and in due course, we got an appointment with Governor Rhodes. Eddie Thomas, Ed Garrigan, Hank Saalfeld, John Daily, the Director of Akron Metro Parks, and I all went down to see the Governor in Columbus.

I had brought with me a copy of the official state map. It showed that the biggest concentration of population in the state was in northeastern Ohio and the biggest concentration of state parks was in southeastern Ohio. Southeast Ohio is beautiful, no question about it, but I pointed out to the Governor that most of the people were up here and most of the state parks were down there, and it seemed to me that we ought to put the parks where the people are. The Governor turned to Fred Morr, the Director of Natural Resources, and said, "What about that Fred?" Fred said, "Well, the land is cheaper in southern Ohio." I said, "It may be cheaper, it is very beautiful, and it's great to have those parks, but it doesn't do the people in northern Ohio much good if they can't afford the time or the money to travel." The Governor said, "OK. I want a study made."

Accordingly, the state, through Fred Morr's department, authorized a study to be made by consultants as to the park potential of Cuyahoga Valley. The consultants they hired were Rosenstock Associates, an engineering firm in Akron. Matt Rosenstock went to work and drafted a study and brought the draft over to me one day. I read over it and I thought, gee, this isn't quite what I would say. So I sat up until 3:30 in the morning writing out longhand

John F. Seiberling: May 22, 1989

on a legal pad my thoughts as to what ought to be said and I gave Rosenstock some photographs to show him areas that I thought ought to be mentioned.

Lo, and behold, when his report came out he had incorporated my scribblings, without any editorializing either! I was a little embarrassed because there were a few rough spots I would have corrected. He also used a number of my photographs in it and was kind enough to even give me credit for them. Rosenstock's report came out around 1967, as I recall. It recommended that the Cuyahoga Valley be protected as a park, but that the Akron and Cleveland Metro Parks do it using matching state and federal Land and Water Conservation Fund open space grants. Well, it wasn't all we wanted, but it was progress.

The state people asked me to preside at a meeting in Peninsula to present this report and there was quite a crowd there at the GAR Hall. A number of people got up and said, "Well, we want to protect this valley, but we don't want a park here. We want to leave it the way it is. Just leave us alone and everything will be all right."

I said, "You folks are living in a dream world if you think this valley is going to stay just the way it is without some sort of federal or state controls." I went on, "All you have to do is look around and see what is happening on the fringes. One day your neighbor will pass away and his kids who live somewhere else will say, well, let's sell this land and make some money, and they will sell it to a developer, and wham! There goes the old neighborhood! And you will see it and say, Well, I don't want to live here now with that kind of development, and you will sell it, and then the whole thing goes. That's the way it happens." Anyway the report was presented.

In the meantime, the Cleveland Orchestra had announced that they were going to build the Blossom Music Center. That of course, was a great plus in terms of recognition of the beauties of this valley. The people of the Cleveland Musical Arts Association told us that they would not have located it there were it not for the ongoing efforts to protect the valley.

So, that's where the matter stood at that time. I had concluded that only the federal government would be able to do very much for us. In 1967, Congressman Charles Vanik, then representing the Shaker Heights/East Cleveland area, who was also very interested in protecting this valley, had invited the Secretary of the Interior, Stewart Udall, to come out and visit the valley. He called me up and he and I joined Secretary Udall in Peninsula. We drove around the valley and Udall was impressed.

John F. Seiberling: May 22, 1989

After the 1968 presidential election I called up Congressman Vanik and told him that before the Democratic Administration of President Johnson left office, I would like to make one more try to see if we could get the Interior Department to at least obligate some funds or make a grant to the Metro Parks to buy some land in the valley. I felt that it would help to get such federal recognition. I knew that the Secretary had a discretionary fund that he could use for special projects.

So, Hank Saalfeld and I and Harold Groth, who was the Executive Director of the Cleveland Metro Parks, flew down to Washington in early December of 1968, as I recall, and met with Congressman Vanik who drove us over to see Secretary Udall. Secretary Udall said, "I am very interested and I will see if I can't do something."

In one of his last acts before leaving office, he announced an award of (I forget what the amount was, \$40,000 or something) to the Metro Parks to buy some land in the valley north of Boston Mills, which ultimately came through and was used for that purpose. (I forget whether it went to Cleveland or Akron Metro Parks, but it was one or the other).

That's where it stood early in 1970, when I decided to run for Congress. I didn't decide to run because I wanted to save the valley. I decided to run because I didn't like the way the Vietnam War was dragging on. A lot of people were being killed unnecessarily and young people were alienated from our government, and so forth. I ran for Congress against our incumbent Republican Congressman, Bill Ayres, and to everybody's surprise, I was elected.

The first thing I did, practically after I was sworn in 1971, was to sit down with my staff to put together a draft of a bill to create a national historical park in the Cuyahoga Valley. I included in it, the Ohio Canal lands south of Akron, because I thought that would help enlist the support of the late Congressman Frank Bow and make this a bipartisan thing. Congressman Bow was interested and became a co-sponsor of the bill. Charles Vanik was also a co-sponsor. Charlie, Frank Bow and I were the three original co-sponsors, and we also got some other support from members of the Ohio delegation. In 1973, after the 92nd Congress had convened, I reintroduced the bill with some changes. Frank Bow having passed away, his successor, Congressman Ralph Regula, joined Charlie Vanik and me as co-sponsors. However, I am getting a little ahead of things.

In 1972, I got a little concerned because after I put the bill in, the Interior Committee chairman, Wayne Aspinall of Colorado, had sent a letter to the Park Service asking for their opinion of the bill. The Secretary of Interior, in due course, wrote back saying

John F. Seiberling: May 22, 1989

that the Department opposed the bill. I was a little concerned about that and nothing seemed to be happening.

One day I was talking to John Pike who was a lawyer in Cleveland and a member of the Cleveland Metro Parks Board. He was very interested in protecting the valley. He asked, "How is your park bill coming along?" and I said, "Well, nothing much is happening." I added, "I really wish I could at least get the Department of the Interior to send a team out there to look at it. Maybe they might change their views." He said, "I will be glad to help if I can."

I said, "Well you can, as a matter of fact. Courtney Burton, who is a member of your Cleveland Metro Parks Board happens to be the Treasurer of the Republican Party in Ohio and obviously must have some influence with the Republican administration. Why don't you ask him to call the Secretary of the Interior or else George Hartzog, the Director of the Park Service, and ask them to send a team out here?"

John Pike did call Courtney Burton. Courtney Burton went down to Washington to see George Hartzog. As a result, George Hartzog sent a team to look at this valley. One of the members of the team was Ted McCann, also a young woman, and a man named Peetz. There were three of them. Later, Ted told me that all the way out here they were sort of grouching because they felt some politician had gotten them sent out on this wild goose chase and obviously they wouldn't see anything that was worth national park status. After they got here and started a tour around the valley, they were so impressed they stayed three days. They took a whole lot of pictures and they went back to Washington very enthusiastic about the valley's potential as a park.

That was the last thing the National Park Service wanted to hear; they didn't want an enthusiastic report. They just didn't want another urban area park which they felt would compete for funding with the traditional national parks, and depart from their traditional role. They felt that this was not the kind of park that the Park Service ought to be managing.

In discussion with some of the National Park Service people, I said, "Well look, what about the Gateway park and Golden Gate park? Those are in urban areas and they are supposed to be models of the future. In fact, even Nixon used the same phrase I like to use, namely, let's put the parks where the people are."

They responded, "Well those are only supposed to be models to show what the states can do; we want the states to do the others."

I said, "Well, it would be great if the states could do it, but they don't have the resources."

John F. Seiberling: May 22, 1989

In the 93rd Congress, I decided we really needed to get this thing on the road. I had tried to get on the Interior and Insular Affairs Committee my first term in Congress. I wasn't successful. In my second term, I tried again. That time I was successful. Shortly after the organizing session of the 93rd Congress, (in fact it was the night after the Democratic Party caucus, when all the committee assignments were completed and so forth) my wife and I had dinner with the late Congressman Phil Burton and his wife, later Congresswoman, Sala Burton. Phil Burton was a person I had great admiration and affection for; a real political pro. He wasn't exactly an outdoorsman. Someone said the only time he ever went outdoors was to smoke a cigarette. But he was a great supporter of parks and wilderness and outdoor recreation, because he thought that that was what the people should have to enjoy. He was a real populist.

We had dinner together, and Phil said to me, much to my surprise, "Now, what's happening on your park?"

I said, "The Park Service opposes it, but I would like to push it through the Committee anyway."

He said, "It's very simple: you get a majority of members of the committee as co-sponsors; once a majority co-sponsors it, they more or less have to support it because they have co-sponsored it." He added, "If you have any trouble getting co-sponsors, let me know and I will help you."

That was good advice. I proceeded to get a majority of the committee as co-sponsors--the majority of the National Parks Subcommittee, too, including Phil Burton. We also worked to try to get other members of Congress. I think we ended up with maybe 30 co-sponsors or something like that. That's not very many out of 435, but at least it showed local support. Most of the members of the Ohio delegation supported us, and it was a bipartisan group.

In the meantime, as though to head us off at the pass, the Interior Department's Bureau of Outdoor Recreation, which at that time was run by a man whose name I will not mention because it is one that will "live in infamy," [James Watt] signed a contract with the state of Ohio to create in the Cuyahoga Valley a state park, using matching federal funds. That was a great step forward. Of course, Governor Gilligan was then Governor of Ohio and was very sympathetic to what we were doing and he liked the idea. So did Bill Nye, his Director of Natural Resources. However, the trouble with a state park approach is that it would probably take 20 to 25 years for them to do it using annual matching grants. By that time, I feared a lot of the land would be gone, developed under condominiums and industrial parks and so forth.

John F. Seiberling: May 22, 1989

But we weren't objecting to it. I thought it was a big plus to get that kind of federal recognition. I told Roy Taylor, the Chairman of the National Parks Subcommittee, a really fine Congressman from North Carolina, that I would appreciate it very much if he would hold a hearing both in Washington and in Ohio on our bill, which Roy agreed to do. So in June of 1974, the subcommittee came out for an official set of hearings on our bill and for a tour of the valley.

I might say this was a very hectic time in my life because I was also on the House Judiciary Committee which was coming to the close of the hearings on the question of whether the President of the United States, Richard M. Nixon, should be impeached. The Committee ultimately voted that he should be impeached, and I helped draft the articles of impeachment.

Anyway, I came out with the subcommittee and we had a wonderful weekend in the valley. We had a hearing at Blossom Music Center. One hundred or so people testified and several hundred came. We took a helicopter and flew the entire length of the Cuyahoga River from Geauga County all the way up to the Cleveland Harbor; saw some wonderful scenes of the river. We went on a canal boat ride in Canal Fulton. We had a picnic at Sherm and Mary Schumacher's Farm at the south end of the valley. We had a special dinner at the Hale Farm; Roy played golf at Brandywine Golf Course. We drove around and looked at the waterfalls, and went on a hike to Stumpy Basin. Bob Hunker gave a dinner at his house in Peninsula. We had a reception on the terrace at Stan Hywet Hall.

We really pulled out all the stops. Later Cleve Pinnix, who was the Majority Staff Director on the National Parks Subcommittee, told me that on the way out on the plane from Washington, Roy Taylor was saying, "Now of course, this isn't going to be of national park caliber, but John is a good member of the committee, and we want to help him and give him a hearing at least." All the way back on the plane Roy was saying, "Now that's just a wonderful place and we've got to do all we can to save it." I knew that if he saw it he would react that way. Most people do.

We had a great hearing here. We also had a hearing in Washington. Park supporters locally had really done some grass-roots organizing. We had supporting testimony from Governor Gilligan, both of our Senators, the mayors of Akron and Cleveland and a number of the surrounding communities, and an awful lot of local organizations, such as the Garden Club of Ohio, and the Peninsula Valley Heritage Association, which later became the Cuyahoga Valley Association.

John F. Seiberling: May 22, 1989

By that time, we had gotten some foundation funds to set up a Cuyahoga Valley Park Federation which was an umbrella organization to sort of coordinate all these other local organizations. We had even gotten the League of Women Voters of the United States to endorse this park which is an unusual thing for them. So we had an excellent hearing both here and in Washington. There were some dissenting voices, including the Park Service, but on the whole, it was really very, very encouraging.

After the hearing, the Park Service, I guess, apparently concluded that maybe this bill was going to go somewhere so they better take a closer look at it. They had, at my request, drawn up the original boundaries that were specified in the map that was referred to in my bill. But they decided that it was too small and they came to me and suggested adding some other areas, including the metro parks that were in or adjacent to the valley. I thought that was fine, and we also added some other areas to protect Peninsula from any expansion of the facilities surrounding the Midwest Coliseum.

Incidentally, the Midwest Coliseum which was announced shortly after I had introduced my park bill, produced a predictable reaction from some of the people who had been at that meeting back in the 60's in Peninsula and said they didn't want a park, just leave us alone. Some of those same people came to me and said, "Oh this is terrible having this Midwest Coliseum here; it's going to ruin the neighborhood! What can we do to stop it?"

I said, "Well I told you folks that this is the kind of thing that was going to happen; now you see I wasn't off base." I said the only thing we can do to stop it is get this park moving and we will try to create some sort of buffer between Peninsula and the Coliseum, which the legislation ultimately did do.

MR. COCKRELL: Can I ask you, the map on the original bill, was that basically the Rosenstock map?

MR. SEIBERLING: Yes, I would say so roughly.

After the hearings, I thought, suppose we do pass this bill, what is going to happen in the Senate? We did have support from Senators Howard Metzenbaum and Robert Taft, who had cosponsored a bill in the Senate. However, Congressman Roy Taylor and I arranged for an appointment with Senator Allan Bible of Nevada, who was on the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee and was Chairman of the National Parks Subcommittee in the Senate. Senator Bible said, "I am tired of taking up bills and passing them and then the House doesn't do anything, but if you pass it in the House, I will guarantee that at least we will get a hearing here and see what we can do to move the bill." Well, we got the bill passed in the

John F. Seiberling: May 22, 1989

House before the Congress adjourned for the 1974 election. However, the bill hadn't passed the Senate.

After the election there was a "lame duck" session. I called up Senator Metzenbaum who had introduced the bill in the Senate. Metzenbaum had been appointed to succeed Senator Saxbe when Saxbe became Attorney General under Gerald Ford. However, he lost the primary election in 1974 to John Glenn, who was now the Senator-elect. After the start of the lame duck session I called up Senator Metzenbaum. I said, "Howard, we passed our bill in the House, now what can you do in the Senate?"

He said, "Oh gosh, John, you know I am a lame duck; I don't know whether I can get anything done, but I will try."

A week or two later the bill passed the Senate Subcommittee. The next day it passed the full Committee. The third day, it passed the Senate, on a voice vote. I was really impressed--flabbergasted in fact. I called up Senator Henry Jackson who was the Chairman of the Natural Resources Committee and said, "Gosh Scoop, that was impressive. How did you do it?"

He said, "It was very simple, I told them they weren't going to get Mr. Kleppe confirmed as Secretary of Interior until they passed your bill." So that was that!

Now the question was, was it going to get signed into law by President Gerald Ford? I was one of only 35 members of the House of Representatives who in 1973 had voted against Gerald Ford being made Vice President. But fortunately, Gerald Ford was a magnanimous, generous spirited person. He never held it against me. In fact, he invited me to a small social function at the White House the same week he became President, which I thought was a very generous gesture on his part. However, his Interior Department still opposed the bill.

Well, December came, and I went to the Christmas party that the President traditionally gives for members of Congress. Phil Burton, my good friend from California, while at the party, said to me, "Well how is your park bill?" I said, "Well it passed the Senate, but I don't know what is going to happen to it. I know the Park Service still opposes it and so maybe Ford will veto it." Burton said, "Come with me." He grabbed me by the arm and he pushed his way through the crowd until he found Rogers Morton, the Secretary of Interior. He said, "Now Rodge, why don't you give John his park?" Rogers said, "Well, gosh we would like to, but it costs so much money," whereupon Burton nudged me to go into a pitch.

John F. Seiberling: May 22, 1989

So I said, "Well Mr. Secretary, you know you have already signed an agreement to let the state of Ohio do it with matching federal funds, but that is going to take some 20 years. By that time, some of the key pieces of land will be gone and it will end up costing you just as much money, because inflation is going to cause those land values to go up and you are going to end up paying a lot more money."

"Well, we will think about it," said Secretary Morton.

Christmas went by. On the 27th of December 1974, I got an excited call from my staff in Washington, and they said, "President Ford signed your park bill." I was just absolutely overwhelmed. The news media called me up wanting my comment, and I said, "Well, all I can say is that President Ford has given a wonderful New Years gift to the people of Ohio and the United States."

That greatly pleased my uncle, J. Penfield Seiberling, who was a died-in-the-wool conservative Republican. He called me up and he said, "I'm glad you had something nice to say about President Ford."

Later on I learned from William Timmons, who was the chief congressional liaison for the White House under the Ford Administration, that President Ford was out at Vail, Colorado, on a skiing vacation right after Christmas 1974, and he took an afternoon off to review bills.

One of them was our Cuyahoga Valley park bill. When he came to that, they pointed out that Secretary Morton recommended a veto and that it was going to cost a lot of money. However, attached to the memorandum was a two-page typewritten list of all of the people and organizations that had contacted the White House urging that President Ford sign the bill. It included Senator Robert Taft, Governor James Rhodes, the mayors of Cleveland and Akron, Ray Bliss, who had been chairman of the Republican National Committee, The Goodyear Tire & Rubber Company, Firestone Tire and Rubber Company, Ohio Edison Company, the League of Women Voters of Ohio, the League of Women Voters of the United States, and many local organizations.

According to Timmons, Gerald Ford, who after all was an experienced politician, took a look at the list and said, "Everybody who is anybody in Ohio says I should sign this bill. If I don't sign it, my name is going to be mud in Ohio." He paused and thought a minute, and said, "I have to look at the overall national interest and I think this seems like a good bill or all these people wouldn't be supporting it. So I am going to sign it." And he did.

John F. Seiberling: May 22, 1989

Well, you know, it shows that grass-roots work paid off. After the bill passed the Senate, one day I got a call from the General Counsel of Goodyear, Fred Meyers. There was some tax matter that they were concerned about and I had put in my two cents worth with the Ways and Means Committee to help keep some tax law from creating an injustice at Goodyear. So Fred said, "Well John, thanks very much, we really appreciate it, let us know if there is anything I can do for you."

I said, "Fine, there is something you can do for me. How about sending a telegram to the President, asking him to sign this Cuyahoga Valley park bill?"

"Fine," says Fred. The next day I get a copy of the telegram. I thought it would be signed Fred Meyers. It was signed "The Goodyear Tire & Rubber Company!"

Harvey Swack and all these folks in the Cuyahoga Valley Park Federation really went to bat. The moral of that is: no single person can claim credit for this park. I happened to be in a key place at the right time and was able to help move it along, but I couldn't possibly say that I did it all by myself and nobody else could either. It was the result of an awful lot of people coming together and working together. I think it is a great example of the democratic process at work. I think that a lot of people in the Park Service were for it even though the official position said the Service was against it.

Nevertheless, I thought it was great when, in 1987, the Director of the Park Service, William Penn Mott, came out to the Cuyahoga Valley Folk Festival. This was his second visit to the Cuyahoga Valley. Mott made a little speech, in which he said, in so many words: "This national recreation area is just the kind of thing we should be doing and doing more of and if anybody in Washington in the Park Service thinks otherwise, I want them to know right now that that is my position." I thought, well it took a long time, but the Park Service finally has come around!

Of course, the Park Service had already come around in terms of doing a really swell job of managing this park. They sent us a wonderful person as our first superintendent, Bill Birdsell. He was a really superior person, a great soul, a great park ranger. I thought the way some of the opponents of the park treated Bill was just a shame and I think they hastened his untimely death. The only problem I had with Bill Birdsell was that he was an old-time "Smokey the Bear" ranger-type and he thought this whole valley ought to go back to nature. So he bought more houses than I think he probably had to buy. He didn't use muscle. People kept coming and saying they wanted to sell. Bill's philosophy was, if they want to sell, then we should buy.

John F. Seiberling: May 22, 1989

I became concerned around 1979, not because there were some dissidents in the park who were raising Cain, but because it seemed to me we were going to run out of money for land acquisition. I asked Bill for a briefing. Bill had this long list of additional properties that they ultimately wanted to acquire--houses. I said, "Bill, how much money do you think this is eventually going to cost?"

He said, "Well about \$160 million dollars."

I said, "If you think that I can get Congress to come up with that kind of money, even if I wanted to, which I don't, you are out of your cotton-picking mind!"

Bill said, "Well that's the way you should do it if you want to do it right."

I said, "The law that we wrote says that you are to preserve the natural and historic character of the park. Where you have historic houses, they ought to stay and the cornfields ought to stay. The only houses I think you should be buying are the ones that are eyesores or that are in the way of some particular public recreational use that you foresee." Bill finally acceded to that view.

Succeeding Bill we got another great person, Lew Albert. Lew had had experience in the Lowell National Historical Park and Lew was just what we needed at that stage. Lew added a really great dimension to this park. When Lew left to go on to the west coast, we got John Debo, who I think is an absolutely terrific park superintendent. He seems to be more enthusiastic than practically anybody I know about the Cuyahoga Valley.

I feel we have got a really great thing going here. With the help of Ralph Regula on the Interior Appropriations Subcommittee of the House, along with Sid Yates, the Chairman, has given the support on a bipartisan basis to funding this park.

The latest development, which incidently is featured on the front page of today's Beacon Journal shows how this national recreation area is making possible something else--the probable eventual creation of a historic corridor going along the Ohio Canal all the way from Cleveland Harbor south to Zoar and beyond. I think they ought to take it at least to Coshocton, where there is a very historic village and picturesque area. Anyway, that is something that we can talk about, and that is meeting with a lot of enthusiasm in northern Ohio. I think it will become a reality.

John F. Seiberling: May 22, 1989

Basically, that is about all I have to say. I am supposed to go to a meeting incidentally at noon on a project to reopen the right of way of the Canal's Cascade Locks going from downtown Akron into the valley. I am on the committee to work on that.

MR. COCKRELL: We're about out of time.

MR. SEIBERLING: That is the latest stage in this "strange eventful history" to use Shakespeare's phrase.

MR. COCKRELL: I appreciate you taking the time to give this interview. I did have some specific questions to ask and Ron said that if we ran out of time that he might get back together with you. Would that be all right?

MR. SEIBERLING: Yes, that is fine.

MR. THOMAN: If we could, John, over the next few weeks or so, I will give you a call and set up a time. Ron has a list of about four pages of questions to fill in bits and pieces that seem to be missing.

MR. SEIBERLING: Of course, that is my version of this story. I am sure other people could add to it.

MR. COCKRELL: Yes, I am interviewing other people and I have looked through all the park files.

MR. SEIBERLING: Bob Hunker would be good to interview. Incidentally, some years ago, Bob and some other people in Peninsula called me up and they were very upset because the state highway department was talking about expanding Route 303 and widening it through Peninsula to accommodate all the traffic going to the Midwest Coliseum. They thought that would ruin the character of the village and they wanted to know what I thought could be done.

I said, of course; we excluded the village from the park because we didn't want to have to acquire all of those buildings, and we didn't want to disturb the people in Peninsula. Maybe some of them didn't want to be in the park as they had indicated earlier. So, I said, "There is a solution. You get together a study of the village as to how much of it should be put into a historic district and send the application to the Ohio Historic Preservation Office and try to get it on the National Register. If you need any help I will be glad to give it to you. They did and that became a National Historic District. That has helped in preserving the character of Peninsula.

John F. Seiberling: May 22, 1989

There is one other thing I ought to mention. After we got the original boundaries established by law, we discovered it was too small. Particularly up in the northern end because we had just put the flood plain basically in the park, and the Park Service realized that we needed to get the slopes in, because otherwise there would be encroaching developments, industrial parks, and landfills and so forth.

So we did later pass some additional legislation to expand the northern boundaries of the park and also to include Boston Mills Village in the park, which had been dropped out for the same reason we dropped out Peninsula originally. Boston Mills people came to me and said, "Please put us in, we want to preserve our village." We had to pass some legislation to add it in. Phil Burton at that time was chairman of the National Parks Subcommittee. He was happy to accommodate us.

[END]

John F. Seiberling: September 7-8, 1989

MR. THOMAN: Something seems amiss with your mention of Secretary Kleppe's appointment confirmation being linked to the CVNRA bill. You had indicated that Scoop Jackson said they had threatened to hold Kleppe's confirmation up unless the Senate passed the bill. Ron Cockrell said that he found out that Rogers Morton actually continued in office until April of 1975, and then that Stanley Hathaway was in office until October of 1975, and then Kleppe came in.

MR. SEIBERLING: Maybe it was Hathaway. All I can do is tell you what I remember Scoop Jackson said to me.

MR. THOMAN: Maybe they were talking about nominating Kleppe.

MR. SEIBERLING: You can check that out again, but I can hear Scoop saying it now. However, my memory may have failed me. It may have been somebody else. But in any event, he told me there was somebody whose nomination was pending from the Ford Administration in the fall of 1974. Scoop said he told the Republican leadership they weren't going to get that nomination on the floor until they passed the Cuyahoga Valley bill. So, whatever nomination was pending, that is what Scoop told me.

MR. THOMAN: It may have been another person or they might have been just talking about Kleppe being nominated.

MR. SEIBERLING: That could be.

MR. THOMAN: In the 1960's you served on the Tri-County Regional Planning Commission and began work there to preserve the Cuyahoga Valley. Could you summarize your activities with the Commission, including the post that you held? Who were some of the other people who worked with you on the Cuyahoga Valley effort and what were the three counties?

MR. SEIBERLING: The three counties were Summit, Medina and Portage counties. That Commission was in place all through the 1960's and perhaps in the late 50's. In the 1970's it was superseded by NEFCO, which is the Northeastern Four County Area-wide Planning Agency, which covered Summit, Portage, Stark and Wayne counties. That is still in existence.

Tri-County was an agency set up in order to comply with various federal legislative guidelines covering grants to municipal, county, and other local governments in which the requirement was that before the grants could be approved, they had to be screened by a regional area-wide land use planning agency. That is what it was set up for.

John F. Seiberling: September 7-8, 1989

I was appointed to the Agency by the Summit County Commissioners around 1963 or 1964. One of the reasons I asked to be put on the Agency was because I was concerned about the Cuyahoga Valley. It seemed to me being on this land use planning agency, I could do something about it. Although I was interested generally in land use planning, it seemed to me that in a country where we no longer have the wide open spaces and where uncontrolled development could really mess up our communities, that we had to start doing a much better job of planning the use of our limited land so as to make the most of our resources and also to protect the amenities in our communities.

We did lots of work on various other things beside the Cuyahoga Valley obviously. That was just one of the small aspects of the work with the Agency. James Farmer was the Executive Director of the Agency for most of the time I was in it. I was elected by the other members as President of the Agency for two terms.

The members included the County Commissioners, the mayors of the principal cities, representatives of the township trustees, the county engineers, the members of the county planning commissions, the city planning commissions, and staff from various other planning commissions. It was a very wide cross section of people in local government, but the law required a certain number of citizen members, and that is what I was, a non-public official member, but an interested citizen. Of course, all the posts on the Commission were non-paying posts. The staff was a paid staff and a very efficient one. The Commission had a budget of several hundred thousand dollars a year.

That is basically it in a nutshell. An interesting little footnote: at one point when we learned that the State Highway Department planned to route Interstate 271 right next to Brandywine Falls, I started investigating it to see what could be done to get them to move it over because they were planning to go through the valley just above the falls, and ultimately did. That was a very beautiful little stretch of Brandywine Creek which had wonderful wild flowers and wildlife in it and it seemed to be a shame to ruin it that way. We spent a lot of time with the highway planning people and that is where I learned how rigid the highway people are in most states.

Anyway, at one point, in order to sort of mobilize public opinion and get people to realize what a beautiful resource that falls was, I walked up the stream below the falls about a quarter of a mile to the base of the falls and took pictures of it. Well, the falls and that part of the stream were private property at that time, and belonged to a gentleman named Ben Richards. He did a good job of protecting the appearance and the wild character of that area, but he had a phobia against people walking on it without signing a

John F. Seiberling: September 7-8, 1989

release so they wouldn't be suing him later for any injuries. Also, he didn't want people taking pictures of it.

When I got up to the base of the falls and was taking pictures, suddenly I looked up and there were rocks falling around me. I looked up about 100 feet above me, and there was Ben Richards and his son throwing rocks down at me! I just waved to them and went on taking pictures. When I walked back downstream and walked out where my car was on Stanford Road, there was a Deputy Sheriff and Ben Richards. Ben was demanding that I be arrested for trespassing, but he said if I would surrender my film to the Sheriff, that he wouldn't press charges. So I said O.K., because I didn't want to have an argument. I gave the film to the Sheriff.

When I got home, I called him up and I said, "Now, Sheriff, you have to understand that as a member of the Tri-County Planning Commission, I have a legal right to go on private property in connection with my business, and one of the things the Commission is doing is negotiating with the State Highway Department to reroute Interstate 271." So I demanded my film back and I got it back.

I had the pictures developed and some were displayed at the informal hearings we had in 1974 by the National Parks Subcommittee. Ben Richards came up and wrote on the placard where they were displayed, "Taken in Trespass." I would like to think that Ben Richards, who is now passed away, would be pleased to think that a lovely bed and breakfast inn is now at the site of his former home. That is a little side glimpse on some of the kinds of things I ran into.

I might say that we even got Governor Rhodes to come out and look at Brandywine Falls. When it came to the Highway Department, Rhodes never tangled with them as far as I could see. The Highway people finally said, "We can't move this because it would take us a year to redo our plans." It took over a year before they finally let the contracts, so that argument evaporated. They said another reason they had to put it there was because they wanted to bring it under a railroad trestle that crossed the ravine of Brandywine Creek and avoid having to build another overpass.

I said, "But, don't you know that the railroad has already announced plans to abandon that line?" So that argument fell by the wayside. The basic thing was they had made up their minds and they weren't going to change it. So there went what could have been a beautiful addition to the Cuyahoga Valley National Recreation Area. Nevertheless, Brandywine Falls is still a beautiful place, even though there is an interstate highway within 100 yards of it.

MR. THOMAN: When was Route 271 completed?

John F. Seiberling: September 7-8, 1989

MR. SEIBERLING: Back in the early 1970's.

MR. THOMAN: Were many of the historic houses in the village of Brandywine still there?

MR. SEIBERLING: No, there was nothing but what is there now.

MR. THOMAN: I understand there used to be a whole little community up there.

MR. SEIBERLING: Yes, but that was many, many years ago.

MR. THOMAN: You mentioned in your first narrative that you frequently used the valley as a child and a young man, bicycling and hiking and horseback riding. I would be interested in some of your earliest recollections of the valley, like the village of Everett, or other things that you might remember out here.

MR. SEIBERLING: Well, I think one of my earliest recollections was when I was a boy. One Saturday afternoon my dad and mother and my sisters and I drove out to the valley and had a picnic overlooking the valley roughly where the turnpike bridge is now, which is a very scenic spot. A friend of ours had a little piece of property that overlooked that beautiful stretch of the valley.

I can always remember what a peaceful scene it was and driving back through Everett, which at that time was a community that was where all the people still lived, I thought what a charming little place this was. Of course, as a boy I remember one day a group of us, I guess I was 12 or 13 years old, decided to ride our bicycles along the top of the big pipe that flows into the Akron Sewage Disposal Plant, now known as Water Pollution Control Center No. 1. That was quite a tricky thing. It is a huge pipe, but riding a bicycle on top if it was something else again. In retrospect, it was a rather dangerous thing to do. Not all of my recollections are as pastoral a nature scene as you might suppose.

On the whole, the valley was just a wonderful place to go hiking and biking and it still is. Another thing I remember as a very young boy, I guess I was six years old or so, my grandfather owned a number of farms in the valley at the southern end. The whole Merriman valley area and that industrial park along Akron-Peninsula Road were all farms and he was the owner of the farms. That was beautiful pastoral countryside.

I remember going out with my dad when I was a fairly young boy and driving north on what is now Akron-Peninsula Road. It was not a paved road then, it was a dirt road. To get across Mud Creek, we had to ford the creek in our car. I thought it was a great,

John F. Seiberling: September 7-8, 1989

exciting experience. My dad drove out to see a family that lived on one of the farms and then we drove back and I remember thinking of it as just an exciting place.

MR. THOMAN: The village of Everett has been used by some anti-park people as a case for what the Park Service did wrong. I get curious about your recollections of Everett and its relationship to the park. There have been those that said it was a dying community, that the park didn't kill it. There are others who say creation of the park killed it. I am interested in your recollections on this.

MR. SEIBERLING: Everett was a declining community, but I do think that the Park Service bought the land before they had any clear plan as to what they were going to do with it. They could very easily have left it alone until they had a plan for development and the funds to do it, because once those houses became vacant, they started to deteriorate more rapidly. But Bill Birdsell and the Corps of Engineers people who originally staffed the Land Acquisition Office, their philosophy was, if someone came to them and wanted to sell that that put them in a good bargaining position and it was a good time to buy.

So basically, Bill's philosophy as far as I could see was, anytime anybody came and wanted to sell and their property was inside the boundaries, they would buy if they had the money. So that is why it happened. I am quite sure that most of the people in Everett were not pressured or expedited into moving out. It was the other way around. However, once a guy's neighbor moves out and sells his house, then he is more likely to want to sell, too. So it does precipitate a kind of chain reaction. I didn't think that was very well thought through.

On the other hand, ultimately, I think having it all controlled by the Park Service was a good idea. They didn't make enough use of scenic easements. If you will notice the legislative history of the Cuyahoga Valley Park Act, I stressed the use of scenic easements on private residential and farm property. It seemed to me that it would be cheaper and that it would be less disruptive, and where they could work out a scenic easement it was much better to leave the owner there unless the property was incompatible with the historic character of the valley or the Park Service needed it for some recreational use.

Again, I have talked to Superintendent Debo and I think he agrees with me. It seems to me the best solution for the buildings in Everett is, if they can be put in shape for restoration or even if they can't by federal funds, to sell them back to private owners subject to deed restrictions that will protect the character of the village. Let the private owners restore them and put in the deed

John F. Seiberling: September 7-8, 1989

that they have to be maintained as a historic property. That way you don't need to wait for appropriations and you don't need to wait for all the bureaucratic procedures to be completed in order to restore the property. Maybe that is the way to go.

MR. THOMAN: Do you have any recollection when the idea of an artist-in-residence community evolved down there?

MR. SEIBERLING: I think that came about after they bought a lot of those properties and had to decide what to do with them. I think it was a case of the plan following the acquisition rather than the other way around. One of the things that we put into the Act when it was enacted was that the Park Service was to come up with an acquisition plan within a year or something like that of the effective date of the Act. It was a number of years before they did. In fact, they really didn't have one until the Reagan Administration came in and ordered all parks to develop a Land Protection Plan.

I originally thought that was a device by Secretary Watt to slow up land acquisition in the parks because he came in wanting to sell them all back to the private sector. As it worked out, I think it was a great thing and gave the Park Service the opportunity to do the kind of job that really needed to be done.

MR. THOMAN: Were you disappointed in Park Service land acquisition policy and practices generally?

MR. SEIBERLING: I have already indicated I thought they bought more residential properties than they needed to buy. At the same time, my concern was to see that the most important recreational and scenic land be protected by outright acquisition or by scenic easements. Where the land was undeveloped, the Park Service quickly found out that it cost just about as much to put it into scenic easement as to buy it in fee. So, they followed the right policy.

I think because of this philosophy of buying land when people wanted to sell, they started out buying land in places where it wasn't the first priority in my opinion. For example, they bought some land up along Route 303 where the park headquarters was for some years. It is now a nice picnic area, but to me that wasn't high priority land. High priority land was some of the areas that were threatened that were of great scenic value in the park.

On the whole, I think the Park Service did a good job. The only other complaint I had was that I felt their initial approaches to the landowners, particularly the residential property owners, was too rigid, too formidable and almost frightening. I remember I got a letter one day, a form letter from the Park Service saying, "As

John F. Seiberling: September 7-8, 1989

a landowner in the valley, you are now in the park; here is a copy of the Act and you will be called upon by members of the Park Service to discuss the acquisition of your property!"

I thought, I am a little puzzled because I told Bill Birdsell that if the Park Service wanted my property or any part of it, they should treat me the same as anybody else. Never mind whether I am a Congressman or not. The line was drawn by the Park Service that resulted in our house being inside the park boundaries. I wanted them to treat me as anyone else. Bill said, "Well, we don't want your house. We may want to get some of your surrounding land eventually and we will treat you the same as anybody else."

I had already given the Park Service a scenic easement on part of the land. In fact, it was not the Park Service, but the Akron Metro Parks. So it seemed to me it probably lowered the pressure to require the land in any immediate term time period.

I got this letter a year or two later. So I called up Mr. Sweeney who was the land acquisition guy and I said, "I got your letter and I am a little surprised because Bill told me they didn't want to acquire this property. Of course, if you want to, go ahead, but I don't like the tone of this letter. No wonder you have these homeowners all excited and upset." I said, "Even though I know, because I wrote the law, that I cannot be required to leave my property for my lifetime, nevertheless, this is a frightening letter. And the people who don't know that, I can see how they could easily get upset."

I said, "Can't you fellows write a simple letter that says 'Your property is in the park and we would like to sit down with you and discuss a mutually agreeable way to fit it into our future plans' or something like that, instead of scaring the hell out of people?" I said, "Did you send this to anybody else? Why did you send it to me?"

He said, "We just sent it to all the property owners in that area."

I called up Jim Jackson and he had gotten one, too. He said he was surprised because Bill told him that they didn't want to acquire his property except for a scenic easement. So it was the way of handling the public that I thought was not done as best as it could. One of the reasons was because the Corps of Engineers people, who came in first to start the land acquisition process, probably were used to going in and buying land for a reservoir or some big project and there they just buy everything in fee and kick everyone out. So their approach was a little bit heavy-handed.

I think secondly, the Park Service did not have much experience at that time in dealing with people in urbanized areas like this.

John F. Seiberling: September 7-8, 1989

They were used to running the great traditional national parks out west and in the Smokies and that sort of thing. I think that since then they have become much more sensitized to dealing with people in a more built-up area.

Bill Birdsell was a wonderful guy and it was a terrible loss when he passed away. Fortunately he was succeeded by Lew Albert who came from the Lowell National Historical Park where the whole park is a project in integrating park activities with the community as a whole, so he was a perfect person to come into that situation that had developed at that time in Cuyahoga. And John Debo has carried on exceptionally well, having come through the same channel.

MR. THOMAN: I remember Bill Birdsell telling me once of a kind of dilemma he faced in wanting to buy easements on the agricultural land, but their being almost the same as fee. Yet, to buy them in fee meant that most of the farmers would leave, and the fields would start growing up, and we wouldn't have the agricultural scene any more.

That was a real dilemma for him and when Lew Albert came in as Superintendent, he decided not to buy those lands at all so that they could continue in agricultural use. Then at various places such as the Benders and the Szalays we saw oil and gas wells and things like that popping up because the lands weren't protected. I am just curious about your views on that whole matter. Were the oil and gas wells worth not buying or perhaps should they have been bought?

MR. SEIBERLING: Of course the oil and gas wells won't be there forever, so I didn't get too excited about them. Lew Albert was much more upset than I was about them. At the same time, they are an undesirable thing in what should be a scenic and recreational area. My view is that if they needed farmland or if it was threatened by adverse development--and you could certainly argue that oil and gas wells are adverse developments--the only thing to do is to move and either acquire scenic easements or acquire it in fee. If it costs just as much as to acquire it in fee, you might as well do so. Then you do have the problem of maintaining it as farmland.

I am convinced that that is a problem that can easily be solved. There is money to be made farming and it would pay the Park Service--I have discussed this with John Debo, I think he agrees with me--it would pay the Park Service to lease the land free or for a dollar a year or something if that is the best they can do for farmers in order to farm it and grow crops on it. For one thing, it promotes the food supply, and for another thing, it

John F. Seiberling: September 7-8, 1989

preserves the historic character of the valley and avoids the expense of having to mow huge areas in order to keep them open.

It is important to keep the valley open not only for historical reasons, but for scenic reasons. If it all grows up in forest, you won't be able to see the valley for the trees. One of the delights of going through this valley is the open character of it and the views of the wooded slopes, the barns, the canal, and the whole works. So, I think it is terribly important to maintain the valley, particularly the whole length of the valley, as open as possible. The cheapest way to do that is to have it farmed so that it produces things that people can use and at the same time it saves the Park Service money.

Originally, the Park Service's rules got in the way of operating that way. For example, the Szalays had a problem at one point because they were bringing in vegetables and produce from outside the park in order to have a balanced set of things for people to come and buy at their open-air market. People would buy their corn, but they liked to buy other things. All kinds of hell was raised by the Park Service who said, "You can't sell things here without a permit and we have to have bidding and everything."

I said to Bill, "For heaven's sake, can't the Park Service adjust its rules to recognize that this is different from the ordinary situation?" which they ultimately did. But the rules were the rules and you have to go through this immensely cumbersome process, go through Omaha, and Denver, Boulder and Washington, and all around Robin Hood's barn to do something that common sense tells you should be done.

I know you have to have rules in a large organization, but nevertheless, they needed to get some more flexibility and give a little more authority to the Superintendent with a particular park. We actually had to change the law in order to allow the Superintendent to ban alcoholic beverages in the Cuyahoga Valley National Recreation Area. Because they are banned in the Akron and Cleveland Metro Parks, we found that when some of the hot rodders and other people realized that they could bring in their beer and everything at Virginia Kendall Park and other places in the Recreation Area, it was becoming a place where a lot of undesirables congregated in order to get high.

So, we actually did some legislation in order to authorize the local Superintendents to ban alcoholic beverages. Those are the normal kinds of problems you have when you have a new project and you are learning by trial and error to some extent.

MR. THOMAN: It seems quite clear from what you say that it was the Congressional intent in the organic act to have the pastoral

John F. Seiberling: September 7-8, 1989

character of the valley preserved. In retrospect, would you have written the legislation differently to specify that, since Park Service policy seems to be to let nature take its course?

MR. SEIBERLING: It says that the purpose of the park is to preserve the natural and the historic character of the Cuyahoga Valley. So, all that is needed is to do some research and fix the baseline so you can know what was the historic character and then figure out ways to implement that. I think that is what is being done now, though I suppose we might have tried to make it more precise.

I must admit that Bill Birdsell kind of caught me off guard, because when he wrote of his first proposed plan for the Cuyahoga Valley National Recreation Area, he wrote in that the objective was to preserve this area where nature would reign supreme. Well, I liked the sound of that, and so I said, "That is wonderful, Bill." But I didn't think of nature as being like a wilderness. Apparently that is what Bill had in mind. It was several years before I realized that that is what Bill was trying to do.

At one point, I said, "Bill, I want to ride around with you. We are going to take a tour of the park to look at each property and you tell me what your plans are for that property." Well, I found that some of the little historic houses, like one little 19th century house back of the Szalay's market barn, that the Park Service had acquired.

I said, "What are you planning to do with that house, Bill?"

He said, "I suppose eventually we will tear it down."

I said, "The hell you will! That is a historic house! Maybe it isn't on the National Register, but it is part of the historic character. It is a lovely little Victorian farmhouse that should be preserved. Maybe you can move it into Everett to fill one of those vacant lots, but it should be preserved!"

And Bill was very accommodating. He took that kind of criticism as constructive criticism. I knew Bill well enough so he and I would josh each other and I could say what I thought. That is really basically the way it evolved. I don't see any great changes that need to be made in the legislation.

MR. THOMAN: I am going to skip back now a few years to earlier matters and go back to the Rosenstock Study for just a moment. When the Rosenstock Study was released, you expressed disappointment that Cleveland and Akron city officials were not present for the public meetings on that report. Do you think they were

John F. Seiberling: September 7-8, 1989

indifferent to the park movement? Who specifically from the cities were involved?

MR. SEIBERLING: The Akron and Cleveland Metro Parks people were present and I guess the cities probably thought that was enough. They looked at the valley at that time as being outside their area of interest. Certainly their area of immediate interest. So, I wasn't really disappointed. I would like to have had more people there, but we had really the important people that were immediately concerned there.

It took time before Cleveland and Akron realized how important the Cuyahoga Valley was to the future of the economic development of the area: that people want to live in places where they have outdoor recreation amenities and have beautiful scenery. We are competing with a lot of places in this country that can offer that sort of thing to new businesses and to existing ones. So, the cities have gradually gotten a much more keen awareness of the importance of this to their future and their present population.

MR. THOMAN: Did the Tri-County Planning Commission take any official action on the valley?

MR. SEIBERLING: Well, they endorsed the idea of having a national park here.

MR. THOMAN: How important was the development of Midwest Coliseum to the park movement?

MR. SEIBERLING: I think it was important in that it shocked people into realizing that the protection of this beautiful valley wasn't just going to be something that automatically happened if everybody would just leave things alone. The curious thing is that some of the people in Peninsula were the ones who promoted having an interchange for Route 271 and Route 303. At the time, I said, "Do you realize that wherever you have an interchange or not, you are going to get local development?"

"Well, yes," they said, "but it will be just service stations and that sort of thing and we think it would be very convenient for people in Peninsula to be able to drive up and get on the interstate."

They were, of course, horrified when they saw that the development they were talking about wasn't just a service station. All you have to do is look at the Montrose area where Interstate 77 crosses Route 18 and the enormous development there and you begin to appreciate what happens when you have an interstate interchange near an urban area. It becomes a separate little city.

John F. Seiberling: September 7-8, 1989

So, one of the things that we did was to extend the part of the park across Route 303 east of the Coliseum to create a little buffer zone there. Apparently someone must have given Secretary Watt the idea that that was done to provide some kind of special deal for somebody and that is the reason that he sent the IG out here to investigate to see if there was any monkey-business in the preparation of the park boundaries.

I just laughed when I heard about that. He called me up one day, and he said, "I have had allegations of criminal activity in the Cuyahoga Valley." I said, "If you have, then you had better send your IG out there immediately and have a thorough investigation." Of course, they came up with nothing, as I knew they would.

MR. THOMAN: How about Towpath Village? Did that spur the park development on?

MR. SEIBERLING: Back when the Siebert Development Corporation first came up with a plan--they owned that whole area there, the Blossom Music Center, what is now Towpath Village and the land back of the Bender Farm--they had a plan to develop it.

At that time, it was when I was still the President of Tri-County, I tried to interest the Akron and Cleveland Metro Parks into buying that land from the Siebert Corporation. They could have bought it for \$1,500 an acre. Harold Groth of Cleveland Metro Parks was willing to do it. They had the money. But the Akron Metro Parks didn't want Cleveland moving farther into Summit County. They didn't want Cleveland to do it, and Akron didn't have the money and didn't want to try to raise it by bond levy or anything.

They said, "Well, Siebert is asking too much money, so it will just die on the vine."

I said, "I don't think it will."

Later on, when the state of Ohio was buying land in the park after the BOR/state of Ohio agreement to have a state park here, they paid as I recall, \$9,000 an acre for some of that property. But, of course, the Towpath Village area had already been started, so that was lost. That was sad because that would have been a beautiful picnic area and open playing field and so forth. It was a lovely area.

So they paid about \$9,000 an acre and didn't get it all protected because of Towpath Village. When we drew the boundaries, we left Towpath Village as a sort of hole in the doughnut because I thought there was no point in loading all the costs of those properties on the park. Ultimately, we did encourage scenic easements being

John F. Seiberling: September 7-8, 1989

acquired in Towpath Village. I think we even amended the statute in order to make that clear.

MR. THOMAN: I understand it was kind of a political hot potato for the state, buying that land. Didn't they stop the growth of Towpath Village by buying that land?

MR. SEIBERLING: No. Most of the land they bought was around the edges. The Towpath Village people were very unhappy because they thought ultimately they would end up being bought out, even though it was outside the boundary. I met with a bunch of them and I think I satisfied them that we would be satisfied with scenic easements, so that ultimately was done.

MR. THOMAN: So Towpath Village was not on paper planned to be much larger than it is now?

MR. SEIBERLING: I think on Steel's Corners Road, there is a whole big meadow above the valley, above what is Towpath Village today. I think Siebert had plans to develop all of that.

MR. THOMAN: But the state bought that land.

MR. SEIBERLING: Right.

MR. THOMAN: What was the impact of the CEI high tension lines in the north end of the park as far as helping the park movement? Or did that happen later?

MR. SEIBERLING: No, the first of those two transmission lines was put in in the 1960's. We met with CEI and tried to persuade them not to put them in the park. They were very hard-nosed about it and they said, "We can't. It would cost us a lot of money to change." Although they very carefully avoided coming into Summit County because of our Regional Land Use Plan and a pending lawsuit against Ohio Edison. You will notice the line comes down just north of the Summit County line and then turns and goes west in Cuyahoga County.

We said, "How about changing the design of those towers and adopting the kind of design that Ohio Edison had adopted for their line?"

They said, "Oh, no, we can't do it. It is too late. We have already ordered the towers and everything."

Some years later, after the park was authorized, they came down and put a second line in with even more atrocious-looking towers, so all that argument about how it was too late obviously didn't apply the second time around. That is a case where the arrogance of that

John F. Seiberling: September 7-8, 1989

company really showed. They finally did overplay their hand when they wanted to run a third line down through the park north of Route 82. The Park Service took them to court and won.

MR. THOMAN: Did the Park Service play the primary role in that suit or was somebody else leading the way?

MR. SEIBERLING: No, the Park Service and Bill Birdsell were very strong about that.

MR. THOMAN: How about the Cuyahoga Valley Interceptor Sewer on the north end?

MR. SEIBERLING: I don't know that that had any effect on expediting the park. It was a concern. I think the way it was finally handled, it worked out OK and the fact that we had plans to make a park in that area helped make them do it right.

MR. THOMAN: How big a role did George Watkins in the Lake Erie Watershed Conservation Foundation play in the park movement? Did you work closely with his Cuyahoga Valley Committee?

MR. SEIBERLING: Yes. George Watkins had a very important role in the early stages in the 1960's and the period up to getting the park bill passed. I worked very closely with George. I worked closely with the Sierra Club of northeastern Ohio, as well as the Cuyahoga Valley Association. Those were the three citizens groups that had the most active role in the early days of working to get a park established in the Cuyahoga Valley.

MR. THOMAN: What was Watkins' primary interest in the valley?

MR. SEIBERLING: George Watkins was interested in preserving the water quality and the water resources and the water recreational amenities of northeastern Ohio. George is a very idealistic and very able fellow. I haven't seen him in a number of years, but I have very high regard for him.

MR. THOMAN: Was there a BOR plan in the 1960's to dam the valley?

MR. SEIBERLING: Yes. I think it was the Corps of Engineers plan to put a dam in the valley. Just for what purpose, I never did understand, except that it kept the Corps of Engineers' empire going. The Corps has an idea that if there is any place you can build a dam, build it. If there is any stream that is crooked, channelize it.

When I was in Alaska back in the 1970's, looking at possible park wilderness lands, I was struck by the number of huge rivers that wind almost interminably across that beautiful landscape. I said,

John F. Seiberling: September 7-8, 1989

"Boy, the Corps of Engineers has got enough streams up here to channelize to keep them going for a thousand years."

MR. THOMAN: Do you think that was a serious proposal?

MR. SEIBERLING: I think they were serious. Somebody pointed out though that it would flood the B & O Railroad and wipe it out as a railroad and maybe that should be taken into account. I think when they realized that, they sort of backed off.

MR. THOMAN: It didn't really interact with the park movement at all then?

MR. SEIBERLING: Those of us who were concerned about protecting the valley were concerned about that. There were other people that wanted to build a series of weirs in the valley for some reason that I still don't understand. The river is no problem in the valley. The only problem is stopping all the dumping into the river of the wastes and sewage that are still going on. But the river itself wasn't creating any great problems. Sure, once every fifty years you had a flood. What did it flood? Mostly empty land.

MR. THOMAN: Were you involved in the transformation of the Peninsula Valley Heritage Association into the Cuyahoga Valley Association and how important was James Jackson's role in the park movement?

MR. SEIBERLING: The Peninsula Valley Heritage Association merely basically changed its name, but it originated with a group of people in Peninsula who wanted to preserve the historic and scenic areas around Peninsula. When I got active in it back in the 1960's, I tried to expand its focus and so did Hank Saalfeld, the President of it, to go into preserving the whole valley.

The people on the board were largely agreeable to that, although I got a little bit weary of the interminable length of time I thought they spent on things like preserving the Bronson Church, which was a very worthwhile cause, but I was interested in the valley as a whole and I didn't like spending a lot of time on things that I felt could be handled by special committees and that sort of thing. But it all fits together and the Cuyahoga Valley Association was a very important organization in getting this whole ball rolling.

Jim Jackson was also very active in the Association. Because of the fact that he had access to the Beacon Journal through his column and his know-how and his knowledge of the community, he was an invaluable person. Jim also helped shift the focus of the Peninsula Valley Heritage Association into the broader goals of

John F. Seiberling: September 7-8, 1989

protecting the valley as a whole. Jim was an indefatigable worker and talker and buttonholer to get people interested.

MR. THOMAN: It seems that when you look back that Henry Saalfield was very active for a while, but then he faded from the picture and Jim Jackson sort of took over that role as "citizen father."

MR. SEIBERLING: Henry Saalfield had his own business and it was going through some difficult times and so forth. He fulfilled his term as President and Jim Jackson took over. Basically that was a natural progression.

MR. THOMAN: When you ran for your first term in Congress, did you campaign at all on the park issue?

MR. SEIBERLING: I don't recall it was a major feature of the campaign, but of course, I pointed out that we needed to have Congressional representation that took a leadership role in preserving our amenities and keeping this a good place to live. This was one of the things that seemed to me could be done and that my background on the Tri-County Planning Commission in working for the Cuyahoga Valley showed the kind of approach I would take. I like to think that when I did get elected, that people saw that I indeed did provide that kind of leadership.

MR. THOMAN: Did you work with the National Park Service to draft your 1971 bill?

MR. SEIBERLING: I think we asked them for their comments and their technical assistance in 1971, but it was nominal. After I was reelected in 1973, they began to be more interested in providing more in-depth assistance because they could see that this was starting to get serious.

MR. THOMAN: Who drafted the primary language of the bill?

MR. SEIBERLING: My legislative assistant, Linda Billings, and I basically worked on it, but we worked with other Congressional staff. Charles Vanik's staff, Ralph Regula's staff, and the Park Service did give us some helpful comments on the first go around and we refined it in the 92nd Congress.

For example, we changed it from a national historical park to a national recreation area, which fitted more into the format that was being developed. At one time, I mentioned, after we had our hearings, the Park Service began to think that maybe this thing was going somewhere. Jim Curry came over to my office and said that they had some concerns about the way the bill was drafted and they wanted to sit down with me.

John F. Seiberling: September 7-8, 1989

We got some big maps out and basically reworked the maps. One of the things they said was, "This is too fragmented and chopped up. It would be very difficult to manage. We need to incorporate all of the metro park properties" (which I had dropped out because I thought that reduced the acreage and made it seem a little less formidable).

By that time, I could see that bigger was better from the standpoint of showing it was nationally significant. We put in Virginia Kendall and Bedford Reservation and Tinker's Creek. That added a great many significant areas to the park. We put in the Boy Scout camps and things that we could have left out. The result was a much better job. The Park Service was absolutely right.

MR. THOMAN: At what point in the process were all those added?

MR. SEIBERLING: I believe it was in 1974 when the bill was being redrafted; before we had a mark-up. They wanted a mark-up session to be based on a draft they felt they could live with.

MR. THOMAN: In your opinion, why did your 1971 bill not receive much attention in the 92nd Congress?

MR. SEIBERLING: For one thing, I was a freshman Congressman. For another, usually the first time around, if it is something that looks like it will be basically of local significance, it takes time to get other people interested and it takes time to get in a position where people want to help you because they think maybe you can help them sometime. It was also a matter of educating some of my colleagues that this indeed was worthy of national consideration.

But I think that the bill was passed in amazingly fast time. This was a major federal park legislation and there were a lot of complications because of the urban character of the surroundings. So, to get it passed into law the second term after it was introduced was just amazing. I mean, I introduced it in 1971 and by 1974 it was enacted.

One of the reasons was because from the outset, I had the support of Charles Vanik and Frank Bow. After Frank died, there was Charles Vanik and Ralph Regula, and the three of us gave it bipartisan character. Frank Bow and Charles Vanik were two real experienced hands in Congress. If they supported something, that made the other people take it seriously.

In the Senate, we had the support of Howard Metzenbaum and Bob Taft. It was taken seriously to the extent that some important people got behind it at the very outset and that helped.

John F. Seiberling: September 7-8, 1989

MR. THOMAN: Did you discuss the proposed park with George Hartzog? If so, how did he react?

MR. SEIBERLING: I talked with him on the telephone about it; I never talked with him personally about it. At first, I got nowhere in terms of their even sending somebody out to look at it. It wasn't until I got John Pike who got Courtney Burton to contact George Hartzog that they began to do something about it. Courtney Burton was an important person in the Republican Party in Ohio. When he talked to Hartzog, Hartzog listened. I guess he tried originally to talk to Rogers Morton and Rogers referred him to Hartzog.

MR. THOMAN: Did you sense that Hartzog was disinterested or that that was an administration position that he was following?

MR. SEIBERLING: I think it was the administration's position.

MR. THOMAN: George Hartzog was known as kind of a forward-thinking guy.

MR. SEIBERLING: He had his priorities and this was low on the list.

MR. THOMAN: How closely did you work with Tedd McCann? How significant was his progress report?

MR. SEIBERLING: I didn't know Tedd McCann until after he had come up here and had gone back to Washington to write his report. Then he came in to see me to ask some questions and discuss it. He was very excited and enthused about it. He just thought the Cuyahoga Valley was fabulous and I guess that is why he decided to talk to me, because he thought, "This guy, Seiberling must have something on the ball because he is really behind a worthwhile project."

Tedd and I became very good friends and have been ever since. In fact, he ended up marrying Loretta Neumann of my staff. Loretta had previously been in the Park Service before she came onto my staff. She came to me with one of her assignments. Her first assignment was to work on the Cuyahoga Valley park. She did a great job on it.

MR. THOMAN: How important was McCann's positive report, even though it was squelched by the Park Service?

MR. SEIBERLING: It certainly helped us to be able to say that the Park Service team that came out here was very supportive. It probably didn't help Tedd any in his career in the Park Service.

MR. THOMAN: That report was never released officially, was it?

John F. Seiberling: September 7-8, 1989

MR. SEIBERLING: No, but it was leaked.

MR. THOMAN: What role did you play in drawing the boundaries of the park and how did these boundaries change from the 1971 bill to the 1974 bill and the final bill that went to the President?

MR. SEIBERLING: As I explained, the Park Service ultimately came to me and wanted to expand the boundaries, which I agreed with. But, they did give us help originally in drawing the boundaries, because I asked them to tell us where they thought the boundaries ought to be. Then I made a few changes in it, like the little buffer zone east of the Coliseum and to bring in places that I knew had real value. Basically the Park Service told me where they thought the lines logically ought to go.

I said, "You tell me where you think they ought to go, regardless of the politics or anything else of it." They ended up putting my house just inside the boundaries. Of course, I knew that whether my house was just inside or just outside, it would be argued either way; one that I put it in because I wanted it and it would help and/or I put it out because it would help me.

That is one of the reasons why in 1971, after I put the park bill in, I thought, "Somebody is going to try to make an issue of this and claim I am doing it to enhance my property." So at that point, I drew up a scenic easement and gave it to the Akron Metro Parks so no one could claim that I was going to get any big bonanza in enhancing the development value of this property. But they made the argument anyway.

MR. THOMAN: The original bill proposed including the canal lands south of Akron even going on down, I think you said to generate some bipartisan support. That was dropped in the next version. Why was that?

MR. SEIBERLING: Ralph Regula felt that it wasn't at that time logically necessary. He didn't think they needed to have it; that that land was pretty well protected. The state owned most of it and so, at that point I said, "Fine, we will just drop it out." That wasn't an additional complication since it eliminated more land.

But, now of course, 20 years later, people can see that it all fits together, and now there is a great movement to develop a scenic national heritage corridor going all the way from Lake Erie down way south of the Cuyahoga Valley. If we hadn't protected the Cuyahoga Valley, the heritage corridor idea might never have gotten off the ground.

John F. Seiberling: September 7-8, 1989

MR. THOMAN: The Park Service did a study in the early 1970's on the Ohio and Erie Canal all the way to Portsmouth. I assume that was in response to that part of the legislation. It is interesting to note now that John Debo has since gotten that study back out and that is a central piece they are using for this corridor idea. It is kind of funny how things come around again.

MR. SEIBERLING: Right.

MR. THOMAN: In June of 1974, the House Subcommittee members were taken on a tour by Bill Birdsell. He pointed out that the canal segment north of Tinker's Creek Road was a national historic landmark, but was outside the boundary. Who decided that it should be included? Was it Roy Taylor or someone else?

MR. SEIBERLING: I am blank on that. Are you talking about the segment north of Rockside Road?

MR. THOMAN: No, the original bill stopped at about the Frazee house. It didn't include the canal. In fact, it didn't include the Frazee house either. Then in the 1976 legislation, that was all added and put in.

MR. SEIBERLING: I think that was a question of simply being part of the process of people pointing out that there were gaps and there were areas that needed to be added in. That is one more example. I don't recall exactly how that got in, but of course, when these things would come up and if I could see that this made sense, I would say, "All right, let's amend the bill and put it in."

MR. THOMAN: How did the Haydite property get added in 1976 or 1978?

MR. SEIBERLING: That got added in because the people of Independence were very upset at the idea that that was going to be turned into a solid waste dump. At that time, Independence, Ohio, was represented by Congressman Ron Mottl. They came to Mottl and said, "We think that if this were added to the park, it would block the idea of having a landfill there." So Mottl started promoting the idea of adding it to the park.

As you know, we had hearings pending to add certain other areas to the park that were threatened up in the north end in particular. The Park Service studied it and they recommended against putting it in the park. I went along with the Park Service position when I testified before Phil Burton's subcommittee and pointed out that the Park Service didn't want it in. But Burton was putting together his "park barrel" bill. One of the things he did was to put everybody's pet park project in one bill, which helped guaran-

John F. Seiberling: September 7-8, 1989

tee it was going to get passed. Ron Mottl also wanted this, so he put in.

I always did have a somewhat ambivalent feeling about it, although I must say that now that it is in, I think it is a good addition. I recognize that the Park Service had it low on the priorities list for land acquisition. But there were a couple of things: first, there were Indian burial sites there and that has some historical value for the Indians; secondly, that hole in the ground where they've got the quarry to dig out the haydite is a spectacular feature. And, of course, we don't want garbage trucks running around right next to the park. So I think on the whole it was a worthwhile acquisition.

MR. THOMAN: To your thinking, why did BOR Director James Watt testify against the federal park in 1974 and no one else from the Park Service or the Department of Interior? Wasn't it unusual since the National Park Service was the bureau cited in the bill?

MR. SEIBERLING: I don't know why he did it, but James Watt did a lot of things that I didn't understand the motivation for. You will have to ask him.

MR. THOMAN: Apparently nobody from the Park Service testified at all.

MR. SEIBERLING: I think the answer was that they didn't really want to oppose the bill, but at the same time the Administration was opposed to it, so they probably ordered Watt to carry that burden.

MR. THOMAN: In the final legislation, why was the stipulation inserted stating that the park must be established within six months of its authorization?

MR. SEIBERLING: I am a little hazy as to why we put that in there. We wanted to give people an opportunity to adjust mentally as well as in their personal affairs, in case it bred any dislocations. So, I guess we put an effective date six months in the future. We had to have some date and it seemed to me the fair thing to do was to not make it the day the bill was signed so as to allow people some time to make plans.

MR. THOMAN: That bill also stipulated that the Park Service could acquire other public lands only by donation. What was the reason for that?

MR. SEIBERLING: That is a standard federal policy, as I understand. There was also another reason. Roy Taylor felt very strongly that if the Federal Government was going to come in here

John F. Seiberling: September 7-8, 1989

and put a lot of money into this, that the state and local governments should also do their share. He pointed out that the state of North Carolina, where he came from, contributed a lot of the land for the Great Smokies National Park. This fitted in with federal policy anyway, and we wanted to make it clear that federal dollars were not going to be used to pay other public entities that owned some of the land.

Of course, that has paid off. The state of Ohio had already bought a lot of land under the BOR arrangement and they turned that over to the National Park Service. They have since turned over Virginia Kendall Park, which is a very extensive and valuable property. They not only turned over the park, but the trust fund that goes with it and helps pay for maintaining that unit.

They also passed legislation to turn over the canal lands in the valley to the National Park Service. That is still pending because of the title searches and that sort of thing, but that has already been approved by legislation. As a result, the Park Service acquired a rather large amount of acreage without any further cost to the federal taxpayers.

MR. THOMAN: To your knowledge, was the state of Ohio at all reluctant to transfer any of this?

MR. SEIBERLING: No, they were not reluctant.

MR. THOMAN: What was the reason for and the significance of your Federal Payments In Lieu of Taxes Act of 1976 in CVNRA?

MR. SEIBERLING: There was a lot of concern by school districts in particular, but local government in general, that when land was removed from the tax duplicate that meant that they would lose tax revenues to support their schools and local government. That seemed to me to be a legitimate argument.

Other eastern Congressmen, like Jonathan Bingham of New York, had similar concerns. They wanted to promote parks in parts of their districts and national parks and at the same time, they were sensitive to the concerns of local government when properties were removed from local taxation. The Payment In Lieu of Taxes Act was an effort to try to meet some of those concerns.

Interestingly enough, I attended a meeting of the Cuyahoga Valley Communities Council in October of 1976 in Brecksville and they were still grouching about their concerns that the Cuyahoga Valley Park was going to cause a loss of tax revenue.

I said to them, "I worked very hard to get this Payment In Lieu of Taxes Act passed. And it has passed the Congress, but President

John F. Seiberling: September 7-8, 1989

Ford still hasn't signed it. You guys are all sitting around here complaining. How many of you have written a letter to the White House or made a telephone call urging that President Ford sign that bill? Raise your hand."

Not one person raised their hand, so I said, "OK, I can't take your complaints seriously when you don't even do things to help yourselves. I have worked very hard to get some help for you and here you are just sitting here."

Some of them said, "We are glad you brought this to our attention. We will go out and write letters and make phone calls right away." Of course, Ford did sign the bill.

MR. THOMAN: In 1979, apparently as a result of the Valley Trailer Court situation, you introduced legislation giving mobile home owners certain rights in the park. This was then inserted in the National Parks and Recreation Act of 1980, but was later deleted. Why? And what was the outcome of this whole issue?

MR. SEIBERLING: Phil Burton didn't exactly play that with the kind of candor that I thought I should have received. He went along with putting it into the bill, but when it got to the floor, he just quietly took it out again, without telling me at all until after the fact.

The reason was that he was concerned (and I guess the Administration was concerned) that this was a kind of open-ended exposure because of the provisions for relocation costs being paid to people in the trailer parks. Not just in this one, but in possible other situations, of which there apparently were some.

I still think it was the fair thing to do. But since that hasn't been done, the main thing the people in the trailer park wanted was not relocation, but to stay there. They loved being in the trailer park surrounded by the Cuyahoga Valley National Recreation Area. I then conferred with Lew Albert and he developed a policy of working with those people to give them certain guarantees that they could stay there for a reasonable length of time, ten years or something like that.

I understand the Park Service still has never acquired that property so the problem has been solved for the time being, simply by leaving things alone. But at some point, the Park Service is going to have to bite that bullet. If they acquire the property, they ought to work out with those people some arrangement whereby they can stay for a reasonable length of time, say ten years. By that time, probably a lot will have moved and then you just don't lease the land again to another trailer or mobile home.

John F. Seiberling: September 7-8, 1989

Also, I had the feeling that if the Park Service would plant some spruce trees or something like that, some evergreens, along Riverview Road between the road and the actual mobile homes, that that would screen it off from the traveling public and help restore some of the natural character of that area. Those people are causing no great problem, so I am sympathetic to their situation. But obviously, in the long run, we want to get that out of there.

MR. THOMAN: On March 14, 1980, in a letter to Director Bill Whalen, you and Senator Metzenbaum called on the National Park Service to thoroughly reevaluate its land acquisition program in Cuyahoga and, pending that reevaluation, to suspend or drop all complaint actions against residents. Why did you do this, and what was the result?

MR. SEIBERLING: By complaint actions, they mean condemnation actions. At that time, the Inholders Association was kicking up a big storm and saying that all the land that had been acquired ought to be sold back to the owners and so forth and so on. Senator Metzenbaum was concerned about that, as was I. We had a meeting to discuss the situation.

I said, "Howard, you know that the Park Service has been rather heavy-handed in terms of public relations in dealing with the residents and I think they have also bought more houses than they needed to buy. We are running into budgetary problems so why don't we write a letter to the Park Service and bring to their attention as forcibly as we can our concerns that they not go overboard in acquiring improved property in fee. Secondly, that they consider the possibility that maybe some of this land could be returned to the residents with deed restrictions on it to preserve its character." That was the genesis of that letter.

MR. THOMAN: What was the impetus behind the GAO audit of 1980 in which, in part, they investigated your scenic easement and fee simple purchases by the Park Service? To your understanding, what was behind all of this?

MR. SEIBERLING: I was hearing all of this flak from the Inholders Association. They made allegations in the paper. I was concerned about it because of the things that were said in the paper. They had a young reporter on the staff of the Beacon Journal. I forget who it was that was making these charges. I guess it was the guy who organized the National Inholders Association. I believe his name was Cushman. He was interviewed by a Beacon Journal reporter and made all these slanderous charges. The reporter then called me up. After writing and publishing his story of these charges, he asked me, "What are you going to say about this?" I said, "They are obviously hogwash." The next day there was an article saying, "Seiberling Denies Charges."

John F. Seiberling: September 7-8, 1989

I was so annoyed by this that I wrote a letter to Dave Cooper. I started out saying, "This is not a letter to the editor, this is a letter to you." I said, "You know I have lived an honorable life in this community and I have tried to be open with everyone and it doesn't matter what you do, some reporter comes and listens to a bunch of malicious charges and doesn't even bother to check them out. I thought journalism meant you tried to find out the facts; you didn't just print charges and denials."

As a result, the Beacon Journal wrote an editorial in which they said that this was a lot of hogwash. I sort of pricked their conscience a little bit. I see Dick Feagler in yesterday's paper had another article on the same subject; this time dealing with this poor sailor that got killed when the Iowa blew up. He said, "They print these charges and then they print the denials and the public is left wondering what the facts really are."

I was still concerned. I told Charles Cushman that if I weren't a public official--because I have no protection under the Sullivan case decision--I would be suing him for libel right now. I decided there was only one way to put this thing to rest. I had heard that the GAO was going to come up here to make a routine audit. I wrote a letter to the Comptroller General saying that in the course of their audit I wanted them to investigate whether I received any favoritism or special treatment from the National Park Service.

They did and they came back when they finished their audit and said no, they didn't find that I had. But even so, these people went right on. They didn't care what the truth was. It was a matter of their particular line.

Cushman took that movie, that "Frontline" program that Jessica Savitch made, and took it all over the country. It helped him, I guess, a lot in his raising money for his Inholders Association, though I haven't heard much about them lately. Maybe the people have got his number by now.

MR. THOMAN: They are still using it. We still get calls from around the country about what is really going on in Cuyahoga.

MR. SEIBERLING: He started the public land's equivalent of Jim Bakker, you might say. It is the same sort of operation.

MR. THOMAN: How did you respond to NBC's late 1979 production of "Prime Time Sunday" with Jessica Savitch? How much damage do you think it did to CVNRA? And who was behind all of this?

MR. SEIBERLING: Was this "Prime Time" or "Frontline?"

John F. Seiberling: September 7-8, 1989

MR. THOMAN: "Prime Time Sunday" first; they are essentially both the same.

MR. SEIBERLING: At one point, Jessica Savitch and her sidekick who was with NBC, came in and asked to interview me about the Cuyahoga Valley. I said OK and they came and they immediately started asking these same sort of questions that Cushman had raised about, "Did I profit?" and so forth.

I told her that I thought she wanted to do "an objective interview about this park and the concepts. If you just came in to dredge up the same old canards, which have already been dispelled, by a guy who has a professional axe to grind, this interview is at an end. This reminds me of that movie, 'Network.'"

Nevertheless, they went right ahead and did their program, but they didn't run the part where I was talking. I called up the Vice-President and President of NBC and told them I thought this was very shabby journalism and that I just wanted them to know that. I guess they decided they wouldn't use that part. What was the rest of your question?

MR. THOMAN: In what way did you respond to that program and do you think it really did any damage?

MR. SEIBERLING: I didn't bother to respond much to that one. I don't think it did too much damage, although it tended to lend credence to Cushman's general charges about the Federal Government and the National Park Service in particular. The "Frontline" program did far more damage, I thought, because it was presented as objective public television and was a longer segment.

I responded to that, of course, by putting in a very lengthy statement in the Congressional Record which I presume you have a copy of. Before I had even seen the transcript, I dictated that statement and laid it out, charge by charge and my response. I think, by and large, that my position has been vindicated. Of course, the scurrilous type of journalism and editing out of words and everything in that tape was really shocking.

MR. THOMAN: Do you think Savitch had a vendetta against the Park Service or was there someone else behind all of this?

MR. SEIBERLING: The Inholders were behind it and I think Savitch saw another sensational issue to exploit. That is all she was trying to do.

MR. THOMAN: There was some indications that there was some Roush Foundation money behind all of this.

John F. Seiberling: September 7-8, 1989

MR. SEIBERLING: No, it was not Foundation funds. Tom Roush had his personal money involved in it. His brother, Jim, I know was very upset with his support of it, but he is a free agent to do that he wanted to do so that is what he did. Jim Roush was very concerned, of course. The Roushes had generally supported the integrity of the park and the whole idea of it.

MR. THOMAN: You said that it was no coincidence that the program focused on CVNRA and Buffalo National River. Why was this?

MR. SEIBERLING: Because I was the chairman of the National Parks Subcommittee in the House and Senator Dale Bumpers was the Chairman in the Senate. This fitted right in with Cushman's "stock in trade," which was to try to stir people up who lived inside the borders of federal property and get \$25.00 a year or more in dues for his organization to pay him a salary.

MR. THOMAN: Do you think the extractive industries had anything to do with all of this?

MR. SEIBERLING: I don't have any knowledge if they did, but I wouldn't be surprised.

MR. THOMAN: Bill Birdsell was furious over the series of articles by Peter Almond in the Cleveland Press in April of 1980. He wrote a scathing personal letter to the publisher, which got Birdsell in trouble. What do you recall about these events and what was the catalyst for Birdsell's transfer? Who made that decision? Did it all fit together in a package?

MR. SEIBERLING: I really don't know. It was a remarkable coincidence. I think maybe the Park Service might have decided that, through no fault of his own, Bill Birdsell had become a controversial character locally and become a favorite target of the anti-park people. One of the ways of cooling the temperature was to put somebody else in there and move Bill to a different area. I guess that must have been the thinking, but nobody ever consulted me about it.

MR. THOMAN: Former Director Dickenson said in an interview that you had called him a couple of times in the summer of 1980 to express concern about Bill's health and that maybe he should be given another assignment. Would you recall that chain of events?

MR. SEIBERLING: I do recall expressing concern about Bill's health because Bill had had a heart attack. The way he was being harassed by some of these people was just really cruel. I was concerned it would have an effect on him. I wanted Dickenson to know of that concern. That may have been the motivation also. It probably was.

John F. Seiberling: September 7-8, 1989

Incidentally, among other things, after the Savitch thing, the Wall Street Journal ran an article in which they repeated the same allegations. Not only about me, but about the Park Service. I wrote a very lengthy reply to the editors of the Wall Street Journal in which I rebutted what they said about me and what they said about the Park Service.

They printed my letter, but they only printed the part that was about me. They didn't print my defense of the Park Service. I guess they figured they had to do mine because I could sue them if they didn't, and the Park Service wasn't likely to. So if you ever want a copy of the original letter, that could probably be dug out sometime from my archives which are at the University of Akron. I might also dig out the letter I wrote to Dave Cooper after their reporter wrote all of these scurrilous things.

MR. THOMAN: In mid-1981, there was a furor over CVNRA appearing on a Watt "hit list" as it was called, of areas the Department wanted to deauthorize. Could you elaborate on the chain of events, and was there really a "hit list?"

MR. SEIBERLING: Yes, there was a "hit list," although Watt later denied it. I had a copy of the letter that Watt sent to the Director of the Park Service, which he later denied ever having sent. I am not sure if it was from him, or whether it was from the Assistant Secretary of Interior, who at that time was a man named Arnett.

He sent a letter to the Director of the Park Service saying they should come up with a program to deauthorize the Cuyahoga Valley National Recreation Area, Golden Gate National Recreation Area, and Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore, and I thought, "These guys are idiots." They were picking the favorite parks of Sid Yates who is in charge of their appropriations, of Phil Burton who was Chairman of the National Parks Subcommittee and of John Seiberling, who is the ranking Democrat on the National Parks Subcommittee, which would have to approve any such legislation.

Apparently somebody in Watt's office realized this was a political boo-boo and they denied that any such letter had ever been sent. I had a copy of the letter with Arnett's signature on it. I called up Dickenson and asked if in fact he received such a letter and he said, "Yes." So, there was a "hit list."

MR. THOMAN: Did you take any specific actions to protect CVNRA?

MR. SEIBERLING: I didn't need to. I was there sitting on the controls.

John F. Seiberling: September 7-8, 1989

MR. THOMAN: What in your opinion was the Reagan/Watt game plan for Cuyahoga or for the National Park Service for that matter?

MR. SEIBERLING: They came in with all this right-wing rhetoric. Watt, of course, was affiliated with the Heritage Foundation and I guess has since become their Director. That is a right-wing think tank and they had this right-wing agenda for action; a big, thick book. One of their ideas was to deauthorize a lot of the parks and sell a lot of federal lands.

Of course, that whole program was a complete bust. The theory was you were going to help solve the federal deficit by selling a lot of public land. Somebody realized that if you dumped all of this land on the market, all you would do was depress prices and whoever bought it would get a real bargain basement price for a lot of valuable property and it wouldn't really do much to solve the deficit anyway. So that whole program, whether it was the parks or anything else, died a natural death.

MR. THOMAN: In 1982, Leonard Stein-Sapir testified at a hearing and criticized you for not properly exercising your oversight responsibilities since the park was created. How did you respond to him and how did you handle Stein-Sapir's and the Homeowners and Residents Association's agitation?

MR. SEIBERLING: Of course, I didn't really take Stein-Sapir seriously. It seemed to me his personal interest was so obvious and his actions fitted in so closely with his own personal interests, as events subsequently had justified, in terms of the shockingly high price he got for the land that he ultimately sold.

He bought his property after the park act was law knowing exactly that it was inside the park. He then proceeded to make enough of a nuisance of himself, and went through all kind of maneuvers to enhance the value of his property, like transferring it to 12 different corporations and transferring the subsurface rights to another corporation and all that.

He maneuvered himself into a position where he got five times as much for his property as he paid for it when he sold it to the Park Service. I just felt that once he finished whatever his game plan was, that we wouldn't hear much more from Stein-Sapir. That turned out to be the case.

MR. THOMAN: Do you think there were people in that Association who were sincerely concerned and wanted to stay in the valley?

MR. SEIBERLING: Yes there were, but I don't think Stein-Sapir was one of them.

John F. Seiberling: September 7-8, 1989

MR. THOMAN: Perhaps he was using them as Cushman used the national organization?

MR. SEIBERLING: He may have had feelings about it, but I feel that he had a real conflict of interest.

[END]

John F. Seiberling: January 26, 1990

MS. GARLAND: Cuyahoga Valley Homeowners and Residents Association attorney Bart Craig prepared draft legislation mandating that the government could not acquire private land in fee if it could not provide planning documents which indicated facilities were planned for that land. The draft bill also provided for former landowners to repurchase their property from the government. Did this bill ever get out of committee?

MR. SEIBERLING: I don't recall any such bill, frankly. When was it supposed to have been introduced?

MS. GARLAND: I don't have the date. I'll have to check with Ron Cockrell. [1980].

MR. SEIBERLING: It probably never did if I never heard of it. Frankly, it seems to me there are several problems with that. For one thing, it seems to me the existing legislation, which I drafted, is quite adequate. It says nobody can be required to leave their home. They can stay for life or up to twenty-five years at their choice. Secondly, it says that the Park Service is not supposed to buy improved property; that is, a residence or working farm unless it is essential for purposes of the park.

It seems to me that is specific enough. To say that they can only buy it if they want to put facilities in it eliminates the possibility that maybe the home is being used in a way that is incompatible with the park; or the Park Service just wants to have that as open space; or the home is an eyesore; or it's falling down. There are a whole lot of possibilities.

From the standpoint of selling back to the owners, I see the same objection. On the other hand, I don't see any reason why, if the Park Service is planning to leave a particular structure there, they shouldn't sell it back subject to appropriate scenic easement restrictions. As a matter of fact, I've discussed this with the present Superintendent, John Debo, with respect to Everett Village. It seems to me that if it could be worked out, and those homes could be made habitable or useable again, the logical thing to do would be to sell them back to private owners subject to appropriate deed restrictions protecting their historic character.

There is a possibility that some flexibility in policy in Park Service ownership is desirable, but I don't see any need for additional legislation. The existing legislation is adequate, and that's my reaction to that.

MS. GARLAND: When the homeowners were active and Leonard Stein-Sapir was president, do you recall any draft legislation presented to Congress that came from them?

John F. Seiberling: January 26, 1990

MR. SEIBERLING: I don't recall any being presented to me. I had discussions with some of them. I said, in effect, that I saw no reason why they shouldn't sell back some of the homes with appropriate deed restrictions, and I told that to the Park Service at that time.

It seems to me that this whole issue has been superseded by the Land Protection Plan (LPP) that the Park Service has adopted which was based on the mandate from the Secretary of the Interior that they emphasize non-fee acquisition wherever feasible instead of acquiring out right title to the property. I haven't analyzed every parcel in that many-volume plan, but it seems to me that I haven't heard many complaints since that plan was adopted. In fact, I've heard practically none.

MS. GARLAND: What kind of role do you recall Russ Dickenson playing in protecting or buffering the National Park Service and its activities during the Watt years as Secretary.

MR. SEIBERLING: A somewhat passive role. Russ Dickenson was a real professional park man who had a long career in the Park Service, and he had the misfortune of being the Director of the Park Service at a time when Secretary Watt and his Assistant Secretary were mandating a lot of things that Russ knew were adverse to the proper management of the National Park Service.

For example, the so-called privatization of Park Service activities which were being mandated in the latter stages of the Watt Administration would have really devastated the Park Service and impaired its professional standing and its ability to really do the job for the public. I'm sure Russ understood that and yet he was ordered to come before me and present the party line at that time. The other members of the committee and I knew that and took that into account. We didn't take too seriously Russ' stating the position of the Administration.

However, we did take that position seriously, and I made a great effort in 1984 to go out and investigate the impact in the field. And between the National Parks Subcommittee and the Interior Appropriation Subcommittee we pretty well knocked that policy in the head, with a lot of assistance, I might say, from some of the Republican members, such as Congressman Ralph Regula.

MS. GARLAND: Once Watt left, his successors, William Clark and Don Hodel took over the reins of the Department. Did the Department's attitude and actions toward CVNRA change significantly?

MR. SEIBERLING: Oh, I think they did. First of all, Clark made it perfectly clear that he was going to do his level best to carry

John F. Seiberling: January 26, 1990

out the mandates of Congress, not only in respect to the CVNRA bill, but in respect to everything else such as the strip mining laws. Watt did everything he could to try to frustrate the mandates of Congress, but Bill Clark was a former judge. In conversations I had with him, he said, "I believe the law is the law, my job is to carry it out." I think he did his level best.

Under Don Hodel we had a new Park Service Director, Bill Mott. Bill Mott was an enthusiastic supporter of Cuyahoga Valley National Recreation Area and other urban national recreation areas, and so stated when he was out here on a couple of occasions. As far as Cuyahoga is concerned, I think the attitude definitely changed. It was a far cry from the mandate, in the very early days of the Watt Administration, to deauthorize Cuyahoga and some of the others. A ridiculous and foolish effort, but nevertheless it was an attempt.

MS. GARLAND: It sounds like your relationship was much easier or much friendlier.

MR. SEIBERLING: To be quite frank, Hodel shared a lot of Watt's philosophy. He was just a lot smoother and more savvy politician. I never had great confidence that Hodel was a big ally of the environmentalists, the preservationists, and the park conservationists, but at least we didn't have clashes as much as we did with Watt. The place where we had problems with Hodel was when we got into questions of wilderness areas and BLM lands and protecting them. Hodel was on the side of exploitation rather than conservation. He did have a darn good Park Service Directorate.

MS. GARLAND: They were certainly very different the two, Dickenson and Mott.

MR. SEIBERLING: Mott was not only a real pro but a person with independent standing and access directly to the President. He wasn't dependent on Civil Service status and all that.

MS. GARLAND: How involved were you in the selection of Lew Albert to succeed Bill Birdsall?

MR. SEIBERLING: Well, of course I'd gotten to know Lew Albert before Bill passed away. In 1979, I asked the Park Service to give me a briefing on their future acquisition plans in the Cuyahoga Valley including how much money they thought they were going to need to complete their land acquisition plan. The Park Service sent out Lew Albert to be present at that briefing, I guess because they felt that Lew had some sense of what it was like to run a really urban park unit.

John F. Seiberling: January 26, 1990

Lew was familiar with Cuyahoga, therefore, when Bill passed away. I'm not sure that I took any initiative about finding a replacement. It seemed to me that that was not my proper role, but when I heard that the Park Service was considering Lew Albert, I believe I put in a word urging them to select him. I was very pleased that they did.

MS. GARLAND: There was a fairly immediate distancing between Lew Albert and Bill Birdsell in terms of how they managed this park, and how they worked with the local people and the local agencies. One of the first things Lew did was to admit that the National Park Service had made some mistakes in its earlier years. How did you react to this self-criticism?

MR. SEIBERLING: I think they did make some mistakes and I so stated that at the time. They bought some improved properties that they really didn't need in the early stages and the reason was because the people came to them and said, "We want to sell!" The land acquisition team were all Corps of Engineers people. They were not Park Service people. They were used to going in and buying everything in sight, maybe for a reservoir or that sort of thing. So when people came and offered to sell, their attitude was that it means we'll probably get it at a lower price than if we wait until we want to buy it, so they simply bought the land.

That's what led to buying more improved properties than were necessary. One of the reasons was because the Park Service for whatever reason did not carry out the mandate in the enabling legislation. They were to develop a land acquisition plan within a year-and-a-half stating what their priorities were, what properties were planned for acquisition, and what they planned to do with the land. Well, maybe they didn't have enough time! They finally did when they came up with the Land Protection Plan, but that was ten years later.

I do think that criticism was correct, but unlike the charges made by Stein-Sapir and his group. They implied that people were forcibly bought out. There may be some occasions of people not wanting to sell, but I'd say that in most cases the Park Service bought properties that people wanted to sell. The only one I know of besides Stein-Sapir himself was the Natalie Florist operation; of course they didn't have to sell their house, but they had to sell their business. They decided that if they had to sell the business they might as well sell the house, too. They did pretty well. They got financed by the Federal Government for relocation expenses, and they now have a very nice shop down at the Old Portage Shopping Plaza.

John F. Seiberling: January 26, 1990

MS. GARLAND: From your constituents and the people who were involved here in the valley, how do you recall their reactions to Lew Albert?

MR. SEIBERLING: I think they reacted positively on the whole. Bill Birdsell had come from the old-style parks which were the parks like Great Smokies and the western parks, and he thought they ought to buy up everything and turn this into a wilderness area. In fact, it took me a little while to realize that Bill wanted to do that, and then a little longer to get across to Bill what it said in the enabling legislation: that they were to preserve the scenic and historic character of the valley. Bill finally got that idea. But he had been treated so meanly by some of the dissident people that Bill never did restore a cordial relationship with some of the people.

Bill had the misfortune to serve in the early days when they had to staff the land acquisition office with Corps of Engineers people. He didn't have a group of people selected who understood how to fit in with an urban area. Lew Albert understood that very well. However, Lew was a little bit defensive about the Park Service to some extent and found it hard to concede that maybe Park Service general policies, which were mandated Servicewide, might not always be quite the right thing for this particular area. So I think Lew gave the impression of being somewhat rigid in dealing with some people.

John Debo is the best Superintendent we've had so far in terms of public relations and dealing with the public, I guess because he came here from the Lowell, Massachusetts, Park. He was there in the later stages and saw how it developed. He's been able to be very flexible in dealing with people. I think we've been very fortunate. We've had three wonderful Superintendents, all different, and each one was more and more able to fit in and understand the community and the people that they were dealing with.

MS. GARLAND: Bill Birdsell was here and establishing a presence of the National Park Service, making known that this was a new National Recreation Area and part of the Federal system. Then you have a Lew Albert coming in and mending some fences, some hurt feelings, and trying to incorporate the park within the local community. That has been expanded even further by John Debo, who is extending his influence and his interests beyond even the boundaries of the park. Would you agree with that?

MR. SEIBERLING: Yes, I think that is true. I think that Lew Albert felt a little disappointed that there were people who didn't appreciate what a great thing it was to have this National Park unit here. I think he felt that the communities around the park should have been more outgoing and welcoming the Park Service, and

John F. Seiberling: January 26, 1990

welcoming the park and doing things to facilitate and encourage it. Of course the news media here, the Beacon Journal and The Plain Dealer for example, were and have always been very supportive.

I think Lew felt he should get the degree of community support here that he got when he was in Lowell, but it's a different kind of thing. Lowell was integrated with the community itself from the very outset. Anyway, I do think I can understand the reaction that Lew had to some of the unreasonable positions that some of the dissidents took. At the same time I think Lew was very effective in dealing with those people.

MS. GARLAND: Lew had to contend with a declining budget and reduced staff. How has this belt-tightening altered your vision of what CVNRA should be 15 years after its authorization? In other words, how has CVNRA fallen short of your expectations?

MR. SEIBERLING: Of course we could have moved faster, not only in land acquisitions, but in developing visitor use areas and trails and that sort of thing, if we had more money. But that is always the case. It seems to me a great deal of progress was made while Lew was Superintendent and the foundation was laid for the present excellent operation here. Lew encouraged the Volunteers in the Parks which has just been a great success in CVNRA. At no time have I felt that the Park Service was not doing its very best to operate the Cuyahoga on the best possible basis given the funds and the personnel that they had. I did my part by trying to get more funds each year out of the Appropriations Committee.

One of the things that disturbed me was when Watt came in and, in effect, ordered a suspension of land acquisition. That was very unfair to those property owners who knew that they were going to be acquired by the Park Service or maybe even had made a contract to sell, and there they sat. They couldn't sell their property to anybody else and they couldn't sell to the Park Service because the Park Service money was frozen.

I took several occasions to rake Watt, and I'm sorry to say, Russ Dickenson, over the coals at oversight hearings with my subcommittee on that very issue, which of course not only affected Cuyahoga, but the Park System all over the country. For example, Grand Teton had the same situation. We had testimony from all over the country by people who were really put in a very difficult situation as a result of that policy.

I do feel that all three Superintendents made it clear to me as long as I was in Congress that they were getting satisfactory support from me and from Congressman Regula and from the Northeastern Ohio Congressional Delegation. I certainly wanted that to be the case and I think that they felt that it was.

John F. Seiberling: January 26, 1990

MS. GARLAND: Could you detail your involvement in getting the Cuyahoga Valley Line railroad corridor added to the park?

MR. SEIBERLING: The initiative to acquire the railroad Line came when Lew Albert was Superintendent and I strongly supported that. The Line was already in operation on a permit basis each year by paying a fee to the Chessie Railroad System. I happened to know the President of Chessie, Hayes Watkins, who at that time was headquartered in Cleveland. A couple of times I would try to intercede with him to get him to reduce the rent for the railroad, because it was a non-profit operation, as well as some of the restrictions that Chessie put on them.

When the Park Service announced they were going to buy the Line, I worked with Ralph Regula and the Appropriations Subcommittee to make sure the Park Service had the money to buy it. Then they had some negotiations with CSX Corporation, which is the parent company of Chessie, which seemed to drag on unreasonably long and I would occasionally hear from Lew or call him up and find out where they stood. It seemed to me that the two bureaucracies of the Park Service, not the local one, but the National Park Service and the Chessie or CSX were functioning much too rigidly and bureaucratically.

So finally I called Hayes Watkins and I said, "I'd like to have a summit meeting in my office in Washington with you and with the top people of the Park Service's land acquisition organization to see if we can't break this log jam," and we did. I thought that if they got a mandate from the top then they would do something. Hayes Watkins and John Snow very kindly agreed to come and we had a meeting, and I think that maybe that did kind of help break the log jam because they started to make progress after that and fairly quickly finalized the agreement as to the price.

There was a problem, because it turned out that Chessie's title had a lot of gaps in it as far as the formal title was concerned. I tried to get across to the Park Service that that wasn't really a problem for them. If the Chessie was able to operate all those years and no one challenged their title, it didn't seem to me they would have a challenge either. Furthermore, even if they did, they would have the power of eminent domain. So there would not be a question about someone being able to stop the use of the Line.

The meeting resolved the impasse, but there were still technical problems like the rules of the government which required that they get guaranteed free title. I think they finally accepted some modification of that. The Park Service wanted to reduce the price to the extent that the title was deficient, and they somehow resolved that. I think that in fact the Chairman of the Board and

John F. Seiberling: January 26, 1990

President had indicated to Chessie's staff that they wanted it resolved. It gave them some flexibility on the price, too. But again you'd have to get the details from Park Service records.

In the course of the meeting I remembered that I had a photograph that I had taken in North Carolina of the Tuckasegee River, some beautiful cascades, when I was down visiting Congressman Jamie Clark one time. I had a duplicate of it. I knew that Hayes Watkins and his wife like the out-of-doors. So, during the course of our meeting, I gave one print of that to Hayes Watkins and I said, "Now, if you think I'm trying to curry favor with you, you're right!" He said, "Oh, I love it! That's a beautiful photograph." It's nice to get people in a good mood. You may not accomplish anything, but it's always nice to do.

MS. GARLAND: Was there any concern about extending the park boundary into Akron along those railroad tracks? Was that a factor at all?

MR. SEIBERLING: Not at all.

MS. GARLAND: Sheridan Steele has said that following the 1976 and 1978 park expansion bills, you began working on a third expansion bill which involved the south end. Was the land involved the...

MR. SEIBERLING: It was just immediately adjacent land in the south corner of the park.

MS. GARLAND: ...Butterfly Cliffs property owned by Sherm Schumacher?

MR. SEIBERLING: Sherm Schumacher's property is already inside the park boundaries.

MS. GARLAND: Do you know how much acreage was involved?

MR. SEIBERLING: Several hundred acres, I guess. The thing is, this was not a direct provision for a land acquisition. All the bill did was to provide with respect to the land on the south side of the boundary roughly south of Bath Road--and of course there was a boundary indicator--but basically it was the immediately adjacent lots, the parcels along the south side of Bath Road, that if that land should at some future time be developed beyond the level that was permitted by the then-existing zoning laws, the Park Service could move in and acquire scenic easements.

If the easements were not sufficient, then they could acquire the fee. Of course that was all subject to the fact that part of that land is owned by the city of Akron and it is the Akron sewage plant. As long as it is owned by the city, the Park Service could

John F. Seiberling: January 26, 1990

receive it only by donation. So the city didn't have to face any problem there as far as acquiring their land is concerned. However, if they later sold the land to a private developer, then the Park Service could bring into play this bill. So it was kind of a safety measure in case at some future date someone should come along and want to put in an industrial park, or highrise apartments, or something like that.

MS. GARLAND: Now, am I correct that this never went anywhere?

MR. SEIBERLING: Oh, no, that was enacted into law in 1986.

MS. GARLAND: O.K. It was part of the 1986 expansion effort.

MR. SEIBERLING: The Beacon Journal originally opposed it because they thought it was going to cost more money and take money away from other parts of the park, and when I pointed out to them that it didn't do any such thing, they relaxed.

MS. GARLAND: Could you elaborate on the effectiveness of Ralph Regula in getting appropriations for Cuyahoga?

MR. SEIBERLING: Of course having Ralph Regula as a supporter and one of the original sponsors of the legislation that created the park on the Appropriations Committee was a great stroke of good luck to say the least. It seemed to me that the great thing about having Ralph there was that that made the act of appropriations for this park not a partisan issue. I assumed I would always be able to get a sympathetic hearing from Chairman Sid Yates and the other Democrats on that subcommittee, but having Ralph there made it clear we were going to get a sympathetic hearing from both sides of the aisle. That has been a wonderful thing and Ralph has really carried out his commitment to this park all the way from the very beginning. That is one of the reasons that it is in as good a shape as it is.

MS. GARLAND: You worked with him for so many years, what was his basic interest in supporting CVNRA?

MR. SEIBERLING: Ralph used to be in the state senate. That's when I first met him. He had a very strong interest in conservation at that time. Of course he has a farm south of here, and Ralph loves the land just as I do. So we have that interest in common. Ralph was on the House Interior Committee for his first term or two and we worked together in trying to get strong legislation to regulate the strip mining of coal because we were both very concerned about what it was doing to our own state of Ohio among other places. Ralph and I became kind of co-workers in conservation. Our approaches weren't always the same, but we both shared the same

John F. Seiberling: January 26, 1990

basic commitment to saving our land and its wonderful natural resources.

MS. GARLAND: So you both had common ground that aided the two of you working together?

MR. SEIBERLING: Right! Ralph is a very reasonable and decent person. His philosophy politically may be somewhat more conservative than mine in some areas, but we both are basically conservationists, and in a sense, we are both conservatives because we both want to conserve rather than waste our assets. So, anyway, we both had a good personal relationship and have been friends ever since we served together.

MS. GARLAND: Every year we hear a lot of talk about "add-ons" for Cuyahoga and others. Could you describe how the "add-on" process works?

MR. SEIBERLING: The add-on process really started before the park was enacted in 1974 after we had our hearings out in Ohio. I think that the Park Service, which officially opposed the Cuyahoga park, saw the handwriting on the wall that there was a likelihood that this bill was going to pass. I had drawn the boundaries of the park so as to exclude areas like the Akron and Cleveland Metropark units, Boy Scouts/Girl Scouts camps, golf courses, and so forth on the basis that they were already in recreational use and would be preserved presumably.

I wanted the acreage to not look as big as it would if we had drawn the boundaries so as to include all these areas. The Park Service came to me in 1974 after the hearings. Dick Curry came to see me and said, "We want to enlarge the boundaries of your park." I said, "Fine." They said, "Unless we include all those units you left out, it's going to be difficult to manage. We think the park should be a more compact shape." So I said, "Fine." We added another 10,000 acres. It didn't really change the status, because most of that land would be protected anyway, but it was a more workable looking park unit.

After we enacted it, we started running into problems, particularly in the north end with the development on the slopes in Cuyahoga County. They started grading for industrial parks right on the slopes of the valley in areas that we left out. We had basically just put the valley floor in. Powerlines were threatened and there was some construction that was threatened just above the slopes, above the rim. So the Park Service and the committee and myself worked together to develop some additions, particularly in that end, to take care of that.

John F. Seiberling: January 26, 1990

We also had a situation where there were some houses near the valley rim just east of the Pinery Narrows area. They were nice houses. You couldn't see them when you were down in the valley, and those people were complaining that they really shouldn't be in the park and it was inhibiting their ability to develop their property and everything. So we dropped that area out of the park.

That was the first go around when Bill Birdsell was still Superintendent. Then when Lew Albert was Superintendent there were some areas just to the west of the park boundary up in the Independence and Brecksville area, where some developers wanted to put in a lot of condominium-type housing, and the Park Service felt that that was going to be detrimental to the development of the park so we added that to the park boundary. It was not a large area acreage-wise, but it was quite a strategic place. Then, of course, I have already discussed the buffer zone we created to the south in case we ever needed it. But that is one that doesn't allow immediate acquisition of land unless it suddenly got active in adverse development.

MS. GARLAND: How do the budget add-ons, like the recent ones for the Environmental Education Center and the sewer project, work?

MR. SEIBERLING: The Superintendent of Cuyahoga would send in his requests to the Washington Office for appropriations for operations, land acquisition, development, and other capital expenses in the coming fiscal year. The Park Service would presumably pass on that in some way or other. Then whatever they recommended had to go to the Secretary of Interior and then OMB, which we found usually cut out some of the requests. I don't know whether actually the Park Service's Washington Office did it, but the OMB certainly did. By the time the administration's budget was presented to the Congress, the actual appropriations were usually less than what the local Park Service thought was desirable.

It was very difficult, particularly in the Watt years, to get information out of the Park Service in Washington, because Watt had put out orders that nobody was even allowed to talk to members of Congress without his personal approval, which I thought was a pretty outrageous thing. It probably violates the Constitution and the law, among other things, but that didn't bother Watt. Nevertheless, we had friends inside the Park Service whom we could talk to informally and find out what had actually been requested. Then, in our hearings on the budget, my subcommittee hearings, we would add those back in to our recommendations to the House Appropriations and Budget committees. You see, the Interior Committee had budget hearings every year and we were required to make our recommendations known to the Budget committees and the Appropriations committees. So we had that mechanism of getting the stuff back before the Interior Appropriations Subcommittee. What

John F. Seiberling: January 26, 1990

we recommended often was usually more than the administration had requested. I think it was pretty close to what maybe the local people had originally asked for.

MS. GARLAND: So most of the time when "add-on" money was added-on so to speak, the impetus came from the local level through you in Congress?

MR. SEIBERLING: No, not through me! Impetus came from the local level to the Washington Park Service and then from OMB, in effect, to the Congress, but **then** we did a little end run on them and found out what they **really** needed! [laughter]

Of course we could have called Russ Dickenson before us and asked, "What was your original request and what got cut out?" and he would have to answer. We put him on the spot often enough that we didn't want to do it anymore than we had to. So, if we could find out informally, why that was sufficient reason to go in and tell Yates and company this is what we think it ought to be.

MS. GARLAND: Were you responsible for most or all of the "add-ons" for Cuyahoga?

MR. SEIBERLING: My subcommittee processed some of them through to the enacting legislation. Was I responsible? I authored all of them. One of the persons responsible was the late Congressman Philip Burton of California. His 1978 great "park barrel" bill had dozens of new parks and "add-ons" to parks all over the country. It included my bill, but also added-on the so called Haydite property in Cuyahoga County, in Independence.

Interestingly enough, Bill Birdsell did not want the Haydite property added to the park. So when Phil Burton had the hearing on the question, I testified that the Park Service did not want that property. Well, Congressman Ron Mottl represented Independence at that time, and the city of Independence wanted it included in the park because there was somebody who was threatening to put a landfill there. They didn't want a landfill.

So Burton raised his eyebrows when I said that Park Service didn't want it, and he said, "Well, the Congressman who represents the area does want it." Burton was a very political person and if the Congressman who represented the area wanted it, he'd put it in, which he did. I'm glad he did really.

Now, the "Park Barrel" bill of 1978 did something else that was very important. It provided that every unit of the Park Service could go above the authorized dollar ceiling for land acquisition by 10 percent each year indefinitely. So that meant that if because of inflation or unforeseen costs the National Park Service

John F. Seiberling: January 26, 1990

was scraping against its dollar ceiling for land acquisition, they could always go above that each year by 10 percent.

That was very important because it wasn't too long before the 70 million dollars in the authorizing legislation for land acquisition in Cuyahoga was reached. But nevertheless each year they had another 7 million that they could use, and that is more than is usually appropriated. That flexibility that Burton introduced was a lifesaver. Otherwise we'd be going back to Congress every few years to get the acquisition authorization increased.

MS. GARLAND: Within the Service, individuals have expressed resentment over the special treatment Cuyahoga has enjoyed in the appropriations game.

MR. SEIBERLING: I'm glad to hear that we got special treatment.

MS. GARLAND: How do you respond to charges that Cuyahoga has drained limited funding away from other NPS units with even less development than Cuyahoga?

MR. SEIBERLING: I can't evaluate that at this point. I'm not Chairman of the Parks Subcommittee. I don't presently have the means of looking at all the other parks' needs and determining whether they are adequate.

Of course one of the reasons the Park Service originally opposed the Cuyahoga, opposed Santa Monica, and opposed some of the other parks like Chattahoochee, etcetera, was because they were afraid it **would take money** away from the existing parks, and perhaps it has. I don't know that it has. I think overall the Park System has gotten more than it would have gotten if there were no Cuyahoga and there were no Chattahoochee and Santa Monica, etcetera. Maybe however, it hasn't gotten proportionately more.

But, my view always was that one of the dangers to the National Park System was that it was identified primarily with the big destination parks. The ones out west, the Great Smokies and that sort of thing, and did not have enough of a constituency in the areas where the bulk of the nation's population was located. So it was very important that Atlanta, Cleveland/Akron area, Los Angeles area, and others have a stake in the National Park System. So I do feel overall having parks like Cuyahoga gets more money for the Park Service in the long pull and will not detract from the other units.

MS. GARLAND: Did you see in your tenure in Congress a change in the Service's attitude about parks? The destination versus urban parks, is it slowly changing?

John F. Seiberling: January 26, 1990

MR. SEIBERLING: Yes I think so. I think they began to sense that there was a lot here. I think we have gotten some outstanding superintendents here because the Park Service recognized that this was an area that a lot of people were enthusiastic about.

I still get letters fairly frequently from people that I have never met who say, I just want to write to you and tell you I went through the valley yesterday, as I do many times, and I just think that we owe you a great debt of gratitude for hanging in there until you got this done. I got one not very long ago from some woman who said it brought tears to her eyes just driving through this valley and realizing that, but for the action we took, it wouldn't be as beautiful as it is anymore.

So, there is a lot of emotional attachment to this. When I first studied corporation law, I learned about a famous case called the "Dartmouth College case." The case involved corporation law. I forget the specifics of it, but Daniel Webster, the Senator from New Hampshire, was also a Dartmouth College graduate. He made a famous plea to the court in this case and he said, "It's only a small college, but there are those of us who love it." Well, you can apply that to Cuyahoga. It's only a small National Park, but there are an awful lot of people who love it! I think that fact was not lost on the Park Service.

I thought it was a great day when Park Service Director Bill Mott came up here for the tenth anniversary of the effective date of the Cuyahoga Valley legislation. He spoke down at the special events area and he said, "There may be some people still who aren't enthusiastic about parks like the Cuyahoga, but I'm sending a message right now. As far as I'm concerned, this is the kind of thing we should be doing and we should have a lot more of them." Ralph Regula and I both beamed when we heard that.

MS. GARLAND: What do you see happening at Cuyahoga in the next 5 to 10 years?

MR. SEIBERLING: I simply see that now that most of the land acquisition has been completed we are going to see a lot more development for public use of some of the areas. I know John Debo is very anxious to figure out some way to get Everett Village restored and lived in and used. That is a very historic little community and it could be a wonderful asset. I think the completion of the Towpath Trail throughout the length of this park is going to be a great addition. And of course there are still lots of potential trails that haven't been developed.

Each time I walk into a new area--and there are areas here that I have never been in that are inside the park, and every so often I explore a new one--I just am overcome by the marvelous pristine

John F. Seiberling: January 26, 1990

character of so much of this land, and the magnificent potential for hiking, horseback riding, and all that sort of thing. Of course, even now a lot of it doesn't have to have anything done to it. There are thousands and thousands of people in the spring and fall who just enjoy driving through the park, and we shouldn't assume that that isn't something that is appropriate for a National Park unit. I think that kind of scenic driving is a use that is there.

I'm concerned about one thing and that is that we not let too much of the valley floor grow back into a forest, because part of the charm of this valley is the openness of it and the ability to see the slopes. If we let most of it grow back into the forest, you wouldn't see the valley for the trees, and I know John Debo feels that way.

There is a plan which I've read, but I haven't seen the maps yet which are over in the office. I'm anxious to get over and look at them and see exactly which areas they plan to keep open. The best way to keep them open is to keep them in agricultural use because otherwise you are going to have to pay somebody to keep them mowed, whereas if they are in agricultural use, at least it doesn't cost the Park Service anything. They might even get some rent. I've expressed the view that the Park Service will be well advised if they can't get any rent for farm land to lease it for nothing or a dollar a year just to keep it open, and keep that historic use going because that is part of the historic character of the valley. I think John Debo shares that view.

I am hopeful that we can see more of that sort of thing. For example, there is a big field just south of Everett Road and east of the railroad track that until just a couple of years ago was planted in corn. They ought to try and find someone who is willing to take that land and plant corn because otherwise that beautiful vista there just before you get to the covered bridge is going to gradually grow up in trees.

MS. GARLAND: It sounds like you still spend a lot of time down there in the valley.

MR. SEIBERLING: Yes, I spend lots of time there. My wife and I go walking or driving through the valley all the time.

MS. GARLAND: Have you ever heard the term applied to Cuyahoga: "Yellowstone of the East?"

MR. SEIBERLING: Possibly, but it certainly isn't appropriate.

MS. GARLAND: You wouldn't characterize Cuyahoga that way?

John F. Seiberling: January 26, 1990

MR. SEIBERLING: Yellowstone is so vast and has such unique splendors that I don't think you can compare Cuyahoga to Yellowstone. But, interestingly enough, Robert Ketchum spent a couple of years taking photographs of the valley which resulted into a beautiful art exhibit at the Akron Art Museum; hopefully they will be incorporated into a book. He is from California and has been all over the world. He told me that he thinks the Cuyahoga Valley is the most beautiful place in the country.

I said, "Bob, I don't even go that far!" and he said, "Well, I do. There is a pastoral quality here and a lushness that you can't get in a lot of other places. There is a beautiful picturesque style to this valley that is absolutely unique. And coming from California I particularly appreciate it because our landscape is awfully dry most of the time. I love this valley."

So, there is an objective observer from outside. I wouldn't call it "Yellowstone of the East." You know the old saying, "comparisons are odious." It's Cuyahoga. It stands on its own feet, and it is a beautiful place.

MS. GARLAND: Is there anyway in particular that you might like to be remembered in terms of the park?

MR. SEIBERLING: You know there is an old story about the ancient Roman statesman and politician, Cato. One day he was showing a visitor around Rome, and Cato was pointing out the monuments to this and that famous person and the visitor asked, "Where's the monument to Cato?" and he said, "Look around you." As far as I'm concerned, I don't need any monument. The park and the valley being preserved as a beautiful place for people to enjoy is enough for me.

Every so often someone says, "We ought to name it for you." Over my dead body! Cuyahoga is a historical name, an Indian name that this land has had for centuries. It would be ridiculous and I would vehemently oppose doing anything to change the name. I always held the philosophy that you can accomplish a lot of things if you don't care who gets the credit. I don't care about getting credit. I just care about results. I'll let somebody else worry about that, but they better not change the name of the park!

MS. GARLAND: O.K. I forget what three things Thomas Jefferson asked to be on his tombstone: the founder of the University of Virginia, the author of the Declaration of Independence, and I can't remember the third.

MR. SEIBERLING: I think the third one was the author of the Virginia Bill of Rights.

John F. Seiberling: January 26, 1990

MS. GARLAND: Yes. I think it was something like that. Would Cuyahoga be among your three choices to be remembered for?

MR. SEIBERLING: Oh, yes! I would say there are a lot of things. I just had the opportunity in Congress to work on some wonderful projects. Cuyahoga was the first one. The strip mining law was another one, the Alaska Lands Act, and then some Wilderness Acts in the National Forests all over this country. And of course being able to participate in ending our involvement in the Vietnam War which was one of the things that caused me to run for Congress was something of great satisfaction, to me at least, ending that terrible, bloody mistake.

I spent a lot of time in Congress in efforts to try to promote arms control and disarmament. It has been a source of great gratification to me to see the Soviets and the Americans now finally starting to make some concrete moves in that direction. People say that it was because Reagan was tough. Well, it maybe was to some extent, because by spending exorbitantly on the military, Reagan forced the Soviets into competition in which both could only lose. While we and the Soviets have been losing, the Germans and the Japanese and others have been forging ahead economically. We are slowly waking up to the fact that we have to disarm and so do the Soviets, because we simply cannot afford it. I'm glad I was one of those pointing that out and worked on it.

One of the things that I have been most proud of is something I started in Congress which didn't require any legislation. I was concerned at the low intellectual level of debate every year in the House when we took up the military appropriations legislation. Some of the members would jump up and say, "We have to have the MX missile and Star Wars and everything, because the only thing the Soviets understand is military force and military threats."

I thought to myself: our military threats only produce counter threats, and this is a losing game. We really don't know anything about the Soviet Union, we members of Congress. I don't! We are all ignorant. And yet there are a lot of experts in this country that spend their lives studying the Soviets. We ought to get them down here and have them brief us on what they think we ought to know.

So I got the idea to form the Congressional Roundtable on U.S.-Soviet Relations. Once a month they get a couple of top experts from a couple of universities, the State Department, a couple of journalists and so forth. They come in and spend an evening with members of Congress. Members can bring their spouses and they get a free dinner. We got some foundations to fund this operation. This is now in its sixth year. Every time I go back to Washington, I stop in at the House, and members come up to me and say, "Oh,

John F. Seiberling: January 26, 1990

we're still having those meetings on U.S.-Soviet relations and they are the best thing we ever did!" Over a hundred members of the House and Senate have participated.

I like to think that that kind of informed, educated approach to our relations with our adversary has produced a more enlightened attitude on our part which in turn has produced a more enlightened attitude on their part. Those are the kinds of things that give a politician the satisfaction of having been in politically elected office and make up for some of the guff you take on the way.

MS. GARLAND: One last question and it is my own question. I don't know if Ron talked to you in any past interview about your roots and your concern about the environment and conservation. Do you trace that back to your grandfather?

MR. SEIBERLING: I guess so. I grew up at Stan Hywet Hall which is a beautiful place. We didn't live in the big house. We lived in the gate house. As children, we had the run of the place. So I always had a sense of how important it was to have a beautiful landscape that you could live in and enjoy. It was unconscious for a long time, just as my appreciation of the beautiful house was unconscious until I became old enough to appreciate art. I suppose that was part of it.

My grandfather felt very strongly about nature, and when he was an old man in his '90s, he was an invalid, but he liked to take drives. He had a nurse that would drive him. He always wanted to drive through Sand Run Reservation in Akron Metroparks. One day they were going through and the nurse said to him, "Mr. Seiberling, I understand you gave most of this land for this park."

He said, "That's right."

"Well, it must be very valuable land," she said. "Don't you miss all the dividends you could have had if you had sold it, and invested the money?"

And he said, "You see that family having a picnic there? You see those children playing? Those are my dividends!"

He really meant it, too. He's the guy that got the state to transfer Virginia Kendall Park's management to Akron Metroparks after the state got that gift from the Kendall family. He simply went up to see Newton D. Baker, who was a big shot in the Democratic Party back in the '20s, and said, "Mr. Baker, we'd like to have this managed by Akron Metroparks." And Newton Baker called up the Chairman of the Ohio Democratic Party and said, "We want the legislature to transfer the management to Akron Metroparks," and that was that.

John F. Seiberling: January 26, 1990

Harold Wagner, who was the Superintendent of Akron Metroparks, told me that story because he went up there with my grandfather. And I said, "Well, F.A. really knew how to get things done, didn't he?" and he said, "Yes, but there's something more important than that. He had a heart." And he did. He was a very generous, warm person. He loved to do things for other people. Anyway, the tradition of protecting the environment and the tradition of having land so that people could enjoy the outdoors was something in which I just grew up and assumed that everybody felt that way. My father felt that way. He was much of an outdoorsman and knew lots about nature, trees, and wildlife.

When I got into Congress and became Chairman of the Public Lands Subcommittee and I'd be holding hearings on wilderness in Colorado, California, or Wyoming, people would ask, "What's someone from Ohio doing here? What's your interest in this?" And I would say I happen to have the naive belief that this land, which is Federal land, belongs to all the people of the country. A lot of other people feel the same way. So I don't know why it's so extraordinary that someone from Ohio should be Chairman of this committee.

I'll always remember when I was about eight years old, my father took my sister and me on a little walk down into Sand Run Park on a beautiful Sunday morning in May and he showed us the Skunk Cabbage growing and he showed us fossils in the stream. That's the first time that anyone had pointed out to me that nature was something that we should look at as something to appreciate. I have never forgotten that experience. It made me understand that nature and wildlife was something to treasure, because my father treasured it.

Anyway, I guess that's where it comes from. And of course as you get older and you get educated, you understand the importance to our survival as a human race of having a viable environment in which to live, with all the different species of plants and animals that make it livable and make it work. In the words of Chief Seattle in the famous letter he wrote to President Abraham Lincoln, "We are all part of the Web of Life. Whatever we do to the web we do to ourselves."

[END]

John F. Seiberling: January 26, 1990

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW
FOR THE
ADMINISTRATIVE HISTORY OF
CUYAHOGA VALLEY
NATIONAL RECREATION AREA
OHIO

Sheridan S. Steele
Department of the Interior Management Program Trainee
(former Director, Cuyahoga Valley Park Federation)
(former Management Assistant, Cuyahoga Valley National Recreation Area)

June 28, 1989
Washington, D.C.

Interviewed by:
Ron Cockrell
Historian
Midwest Regional Office
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
Omaha, Nebraska
1989

Sheridan S. Steele

Sheridan S. Steele

MR. COCKRELL: Could you summarize your career with the National Park Service?

MR. STEELE: I am sure I can do that. Actually with the Park Service it is not real extensive as you probably know. I started with the National Park Service in 1978 as Management Assistant at Cuyahoga Valley. Prior to that I was the Director of the Cuyahoga Valley Park Federation which was a citizens group working in the Cuyahoga Valley. I think I was in that position for about four or five years.

I came on as a Management Assistant with the Park Service and at that time there was no Assistant Superintendent, so I kind of handled a lot of those kinds of duties until an Assistant position was created. In April of 1982, I was transferred to Fort Scott where I was Superintendent up until July of 1988, at which time I was selected for the Departmental Managers Training Program here in Washington and I moved for that one-year period. I will shortly be moving somewhere else. My destination at this time is unknown.

MR. COCKRELL: Could you summarize the significance of the Cuyahoga Valley Park Federation to the authorization of a national recreation area and highlight some of your major activities as the head of the Federation?

MR. STEELE: I think the role of the Federation was very significant in terms of getting the legislation authorized. It was one of several key factors I think that allowed that legislation to be passed. I probably have talked about these previously, but my understanding would be that the factors were John Seiberling, who lived in the area and was a member of Congress, had a very deep interest in seeing the valley preserved and a personal desire to see something done. William Nye who was the head of the Department of Natural Resources was also from the Akron area and, therefore, had an interest in the Cuyahoga Valley in a political sense that that could do him some good, so he was behind it. Those were two of the major factors.

The Cuyahoga Valley Park Federation, I think, was the third major piece of that puzzle because it was a citizen's umbrella organization with I believe 82 different groups affiliated with it. That umbrella organization helped build public support for some kind of action to preserve the Cuyahoga Valley. At the time they began getting active, they didn't really care whether it was a state park or a federal operation, they just wanted something done to preserve the valley. I was not Director of the Park Federation at that time.

I came on within a couple of months of when the legislation passed and kind of went from that point forward. I joined the Federation

Sheridan S. Steele

as the Director shortly after the legislation was passed by Congress. Obviously our objectives and thinking was changing pretty dramatically at that time. We were redefining our role and I think our initial priorities.

I guess I should back up and tell you that there was a Board of Directors for the Park Federation. I believe it was ten or twelve of the key organizations like Blossom Music Center and the State Department of Natural Resources, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, and some of the other key entities there all had members on the Board. They met periodically, maybe once every two months to kind of give some direction to the paid staff.

The paid staff included the Director and an Administrative Assistant or Secretary and then occasionally some part-time help, and also quite a number of volunteers that were used for giving tours of the valley and other kinds of activities. We began to redefine what our role ought to be and that process was really a matter of the Director putting forth ideas and the Board of Directors or Trustees endorsing or discussing and altering and what have you until there was agreement on what the goals ought to be.

During that early time of my taking over as Director, we kind of looked at working with the National Park Service during the initial start-up phases and helping them because they had a very limited staff. In fact, Bill Birdsell was the only staff member, initially. He then got a secretary, and remained pretty much a one-man operation for quite a while. Assisting the Park Service in various roles, working to help plan what the National Recreation Area was going to be once it was authorized, meant working with the public and with the government to develop the master plan. That process was just getting underway when I moved up there.

I also worked to help spread information about what the recreation area was, what it was going to be, what it should be and just trying to get the very many interested organizations, officials and individuals plugged into the process. Ultimately that role evolved into one more of helping identify issues that were going to impact the park and trying to deal with them. Some of those issues particularly focused on areas outside of the park boundaries; land use planning kinds of issues. Dealing with land use and conflicts and other really pressing issues really took a lot of my time. I did some of that in conjunction with the National Park Service and I did a lot of it on my own often with their knowledge, but really with not much direction from the National Park Service.

MR. COCKRELL: At any time when you were acting independently of the Park Service, did you come into conflict with what Bill Birdsell sought?

Sheridan S. Steele

MR. STEELE: Occasionally, although my nature is to try to work with people and particularly key people like Bill Birdsell. I recognized early on that we didn't want to become an adversary, but we wanted to be more or less a partner and we wanted to work with the Park Service as I mentioned. So, I tried to develop a good relationship with the Park Service, not only Bill Birdsell, but the Regional Office, Bill Dean, and others so that we would avoid conflict. I tried to build communications with Bill on a regular basis so I knew what they were thinking and he knew what we were thinking and we could try to work in tandem.

There were a couple of occasions though that we did have minor conflicts. I know when we first got into the land use concerns, we took some public positions that were not necessarily 100% behind the Park Service. We felt they should have been doing more in certain areas. As Director, I expressed that concern in some public meetings. Bill didn't like to have me doing that kind of thing because he didn't like to have anybody speaking out against the Park Service. But I felt that we could maintain our credibility by not necessarily being in lock step with the Park Service all the time.

MR. COCKRELL: There were two boundary expansion bills: one in 1976, and one in 1978. Did the Park Federation take a more aggressive stand on expanding the boundaries than what the Park Service was advocating?

MR. STEELE: Yes, we did. I am having a hard time now differentiating between the two, but I do recall that on the first one there was pretty much agreement on what the boundaries ought to be and a lot of those were dealt with in a General Management Plan document that suggested some boundary changes. That situation was changing dramatically all the time because the Cuyahoga Valley was a rapidly developing area before the park was established. The park slowed it, obviously within the boundaries. It certainly didn't stop it until acquisition was completed and that was particularly true outside the boundaries. So those areas that were identified early on as proposed additions were under a lot of pressure.

But I think because of the planning process, there was some consensus that certain areas ought to be added in and we, the Park Federation, helped do lobbying for that kind of thing. The Park Service really couldn't lobby. We did a lot of that, working with members of Congress and providing citizen support for those changes.

The second go around was different in that I believe there were some areas then added that were not in the official planning documents. Areas that came to our attention or my attention as I

Sheridan S. Steele

got to know the area that had either been overlooked by the planners for one reason or another, or decided against by the planners because of maybe political considerations or the need to build consensus or what have you. I remember traveling to Washington for instance on my own to meet with members of Congress and staffs to argue for additions to the park, some of which were not recommended by the National Park Service.

Ultimately, we succeeded in getting additional acreage added to the park in another bill and I forget the acreage involved, but it was a significant amount of acreage in a number of places, a significant total amount of acreage in a number of smaller places. Corrections to boundaries, problems that had cropped up, new areas that should have been protected and weren't and so forth.

There was a third attempt by the way to change the boundaries by John Seiberling. Later on it was the area just south of the park as viewed from what was called Butterfly Cliffs, land owned by Sherm Schumacher. Mr. Schumacher would take people up to Butterfly Cliffs as it was called, and it was a wonderful viewpoint to the south and everybody that went up there thought that the view ought to be protected. So Seiberling at one point started to introduce legislation to do that, but by this time, Charles Cushman's high profile efforts to build a coalition of landowners throughout the United States had really taken hold. Cushman used Cuyahoga as a case study because there was money there.

That is a really fascinating story in itself, to fight land acquisition nationwide and they produced films and stuff, and ultimately, that really impacted John Seiberling's third effort to make changes. I think that effort was totally dropped.

MR. COCKRELL: How did you come from the private sector into the National Park Service as a Management Assistant?

MR. STEELE: The Park Federation was funded through private money, mostly foundation grants. There were no membership dues per se, but there were some board members who would go out and solicit funds from foundations to support the effort. Of course, that required that we communicate with those fund-raisers on an annual basis what we were doing, what our objectives were for the next year and so forth. As we progressed through the years there, it became clear that the Park Service was adding staff to take on more and more of their responsibilities and many of the things that we were doing were either being accomplished or no longer necessary. So, it was clear that at some point the Federation would probably no longer need a paid staff, although I think in hindsight that could be argued.

Sheridan S. Steele

Anyway, ultimately the decision was made that funding was getting harder and harder to get because foundations did not like to continually fund an ongoing operation. So, the decision was made, and I was certainly supportive of that decision at the time, that we could phase out the paid staff and we could go to an all-volunteer Director, and we could continue to use the volunteers that we had who were doing various functions. We had a rented office there in Peninsula. We felt that could be given up and we could work out of somebody's house. That decision was made by the Board and we did phase out and as I said, I was in total agreement with that at the time.

I then worked for the Ohio Conservation Foundation for about a month just on a consulting basis. They wanted to take over some of the land use projects that the Federation had started and so I helped them get those started and throughout that last few months there. Of course, Bill Birdsell and I had a very good working relationship and I think he came to respect the various things that I was doing and likewise me him and so we began talking about me possibly working for the Park Service.

So Bill created this Management Assistant position and I applied for it and got it based on my experience in that area. It wasn't out of the clear blue in the sense that I was interested in the Park Service as a career before I ever went to work with the Federation. I had, in fact, tried to get into the Park Service right after I got out of college and they required that I get in right away because of some intake class and I was in the middle of graduate school and I didn't want to do that so I passed that one by. But it was something that was in the back of my mind anyway and it was a nice opportunity when it finally did come up and I took advantage of that.

MR. COCKRELL: You said that the Park Federation decided to go to a volunteer Director and to work out of somebody's home. Did that ever happen?

MR. STEELE: Yes, it did. Sue Klein took over that role. But Sue is a very active individual and I think we were obviously in a period of transition. There was turnover in board members and various things and I think what happened was Sue's interest kind of led into other directions and the momentum, if you will, of transitioning into an all-volunteer organization and then from there to a much more reduced role just kind of continued on until the Federation all but disappeared. Then as anti-park forces continued to grow, I think Sue Klein then began to get more active again somewhere down the road and I don't remember the specifics there. A few years later the Federation started making a comeback and I don't know what ultimately happened after that.

Sheridan S. Steele

MR. COCKRELL: You said that it disappeared. Did it just go out of existence, literally, or was it always there, but just not active?

MR. STEELE: It was always there, but I would call it dormant. I guess I should also explain that the most significant organization behind the Park Federation was the Cuyahoga Valley Association (called CVA). That was run by Jim and Margo Jackson. That was really the single most important organization in terms of getting the Federation started as a funded project. They really wanted the valley preserved and they were the ones that came up with idea for the Federation and getting a bunch of organizations together.

The CVA remained an intact organization after the Federation kind of went dormant. Jim and Margo Jackson remained very active and others did too. And that organization would have an annual meeting and their members (they did have a membership organization) would attend and they would report and so on and so forth. But that was a very important organization that did remain alive and I don't know whether that organization is still there or not. When Jim Jackson died, I am sure that the organization probably suffered a kind of setback there and I don't know whether it is still in existence.

MR. COCKRELL: It is. They still put out a newsletter in the same format that Jackson used. Under Birdsell, what did your duties include?

MR. STEELE: Those also evolved. At first, it was a lot of media and public relations work and there was just a tremendous amount of that kind of thing to do in Cuyahoga because there were two counties, sixteen different communities that the Park touched, several school districts (I believe there were six school districts) and there was just a tremendous need to try to communicate with those people and try to get those officials to support various park initiatives. So I worked a lot in that area: public relations, community relations, and media relations. We developed a public relations plan where we tried to say what is it we could do and how do we go about doing it. And then Bill and I worked together to actively work on accomplishing those things. I also acted as Assistant Superintendent when there wasn't one prior to one being established and that meant helping oversee the operating divisions as they organized and grew.

There were three major initiatives going on at one time at Cuyahoga and that was trying to operate in an existing park because we took over Virginia Kendall and other lands that were already publicly used and developed. We had to operate a park, we had to be planning for the future, trying to do all the 10-238's and planning

Sheridan S. Steele

documents and everything that needed to be done to get money to develop the park further. So that was the second major area.

The third area was land acquisition. Land acquisition was consuming the other biggest part of my time. Bill and I set direction for land acquisition together and I knew the resources as well as he did. We probably together were the two authorities on who owned what land, what land ought to be in the park and why, because of all the time we spent riding around and looking at land, talking to people, hiking or whatever was required to get to know the resources, both as Federation Director and then with the Park Service. So land acquisition required a tremendous amount of my time.

I wrote the first Land Acquisition Plan, the formal one. We were under a lot of political pressure for putting things on paper as acquisition was going on. Who was going to be acquired when and establishing priorities. And then you had priorities set on Friday and then on Monday they would change because your circumstances would change. Somebody would decide to cut the timber or put in a gas well or whatever, which required us to continually modify our priorities as needs arose and as information increased. So, basically, public information and land acquisition were my two biggest areas.

I also helped work with the Advisory Commission. I was in charge of just keeping that running and I also oversaw planning efforts that were done internally. For instance, we decided to expand public use; we would put in some quiet areas and some small picnic areas and I helped get those things going and helped plan those and get maintenance doing them and so forth. Then as the Assistant Superintendent came on a couple of years later, (Pete Peterson) he took over more of the operational role of things. Bill did at that point almost exclusively community relations and working with the communities on an official basis and I did too. Bill and I really shared those, although he ultimately had the responsibility for it, obviously.

There was so much work that it really required both of us really working full-time and I at that point, maintained both the public information role dealing with the media and I had numerous contacts every week with newspapers and television stations and radios and what have you. And also, the land acquisition coordination role.

MR. COCKRELL: You said that you wrote the first Land Acquisition Plan. Was this the one that was specified in the bill that was due to Congress within one or two years?

MR. STEELE: No, that was a real controversy because there was debate over whether that plan was ever done or not several years

Sheridan S. Steele

later. The National Park Service position at the time was that there was a memorandum put together that stated what the land acquisition needs were and I believe it had some cost figures attached to it and I think it had some general figures about fee and easement acquisition, but I don't remember specifics. We stated publicly that that was what was required to meet that requirement in the legislation.

MR. COCKRELL: Did it really?

MR. STEELE: I will tell you, in my own mind, it really wasn't a Land Acquisition Plan, but Congress never defined what they wanted either. Money was never provided for a full-blown plan. A team was never provided for a full-blown plan. Congress never followed up and asked for anything else, so I think there were people that assumed that technically we may have met the requirements.

In hindsight, it would have been better had there been an earlier effort to bring in some authority or some expertise to develop a full-blown plan. One of the problems with doing that right away was getting to know the park resources. I mean, you can't pass a bill in December of 1974 and in January have a Land Acquisition Plan, no matter how much you know. We were under a barrage of questions from owners, you know, "Is my land in?" "Where is it in priorities?" "When are you going to buy it?" and all those other things. It would have been very helpful to have a very well documented plan to fall back on.

MR. COCKRELL: A well documented plan--was that what you prepared several years later?

MR. STEELE: It was done over (again, my memory is fuzzy). I ended up writing the first full-blown Land Acquisition Plan. I spent an awful lot of time on that going tract by tract and putting every single tract in the park in groups that were ultimately prioritized. We were going section by section in the park. We identified one area that was particularly vulnerable and that became our number-one priority, except as I recall, the plan actually had a wide-open group that was "threatened." Anything that was threatened could be moved up to that category. We then prioritized everything else. That was the result of a number of years of Bill and I working together thinking these things through and growing pressure to put something down on paper.

We even at one point took all of the squad members I believe to a motel somewhere as a retreat and sat around for several days and talked about land acquisition, trying to get something down on paper. Ultimately, I wrote the plan that came out of that. The final Land Acquisition Plan that was approved, it is my understanding that they pretty much took the plan that I wrote and just

Sheridan S. Steele

fleshed it out in terms of more justification for every tract. So I think it pretty much survived.

MR. COCKRELL: How much of the problems that arose in the land acquisition program can be laid at the feet of the Corps of Engineers, and how much is the fault of the Park Service?

MR. STEELE: It would be hard to say exactly how much blame would fall on the Corps. But to this day, I hear negative comments, I mean, obviously not a lot, because I am not involved with it anymore, but to this day, I have heard comments about enemies that the Corps of Engineers made early on. I don't think there is any doubt that they did make enemies and they did it because in my view, those acquisition people were not sensitive to anything other than fee acquisition with no retention rights, because when they came in to flood a project, there wasn't any such thing as retention rights. You can't have a house in the middle of a pool of water. I don't think they fully understood the legislation, the requirements for retained use and occupancy, and I think early on they scared a lot of people because of their aggressive tactics and their pretty aggressive rhetoric in terms of condemnation.

The Park Service, I think, would certainly share in some of the blame partly because of not having earlier Land Acquisition Plans that could be shared with the public. Partly because our priorities were always changing, trying to deal with threats and changing circumstances. Partly because of inadequate staff to really do everything that was needed to be done at one time. Again, we go back to operating a park, buying land, and planning for the future.

When I think back now, they brought in a GS-12 Project Manager, Bill Birdsell, with really very little if any experience in starting a new park area, and they expected him to start off that thing alone and just kind of build from scratch, it really is ludicrous. I think we learned a lot from that because I know newer parks that were started since then that got much higher graded people and they brought in division chiefs all at once. Bill had no division chiefs for months. It may have been several years in some cases.

MR. COCKRELL: Do you think that is because the Park Service really did not believe in Cuyahoga Valley?

MR. STEELE: I think that is one major reason, yes.

MR. COCKRELL: And that attitude kind of carried on during the whole tenure of Bill Birdsell?

MR. STEELE: Yes, I would say to a certain extent. In some circles, it carries on today. I firmly believe that had it not

Sheridan S. Steele

been for John Seiberling, the park would have probably died on the vine or at least wilted because Seiberling pressed and pressed and pressed. He pressed for money, he pressed for staff, he pressed for development for planning, whatever was needed, he pressed for it.

He actively monitored what was going on. Bill Birdsell and/or I would talk to John frequently, mostly Bill and not I, but we would talk to John or his staff a lot. He would come to the park on weekends. He made it his business to know what was going on and then he made sure he knew what the needs were and tried to make sure those needs were met through appropriations.

Ralph Regula got involved later on and has since carried on since John left Congress, but like I say, there is no doubt that had it not been for that attention and the other politics involved, the Park Service would have probably just let Cuyahoga happen however it happened.

MR. COCKRELL: That brings me to the role of the Regional Office. The Regional boundaries changed in 1974 and Omaha suddenly got Ohio and a new park, Cuyahoga Valley. Did they know what they were going to do with it?

MR. STEELE: The Region?

MR. COCKRELL: Yes.

MR. STEELE: That is one that I don't think I can answer because I came to the Cuyahoga Valley in late 1974. I didn't understand how the Park Service worked internally in terms of Regions and what have you, so I wouldn't really be aware of what was going on at that time. I think this might be repetitive, but I certainly did, over a period of a few years, get the impression that the Midwest Region was not being supportive of Cuyahoga. I mean, they were wound up in the controversy of whether it should be in the System or not, and the fact that it could potentially be a drain on funds and a drain on everything else. I think there are some legitimate views on that.

Maybe I can editorialize here. I think my approach would have been that John Seiberling was a very powerful member of Congress who could do the Service a heck of a lot of good, and we ought to be working very closely with him to see that not only Cuyahoga's needs are met, but those of other places as well.

MR. COCKRELL: Would you say that relations between the park and the Regional Office were not good?

Sheridan S. Steele

MR. STEELE: Again, the first few years I was in the area, I was not working for the Service, so it would be harder for me to judge, but I think from what I learned after I came on with the Service, I would say yes, that is an accurate description. The relations were not good between the park and the Region and I think part of it was that there was a bias against Cuyahoga. Part of it may have been Bill Birdsell's personality and the fact that he was working so closely with Seiberling and at that time, that was viewed as undesirable, working outside the channels if you will.

MR. COCKRELL: I guess the 10-238 process was never really followed in the case of Cuyahoga Valley? You could always get add-ons and you didn't have to go through the normal process. Was that resented?

MR. STEELE: I think it was, sure. I think it was resented. Some people saw the money that Cuyahoga got as being outside of the priorities yet undercutting other priorities. Other places were suffering because we were getting funded. I am not sure that is the case, but you could argue that.

MR. COCKRELL: What kind of manager was Bill Birdsell? Did he use his staff effectively, delegate authority?

MR. STEELE: I would say Bill had a lot of skills particularly in public relations dealing with the public outside the park. He also was very strong in Park Service traditions and the "family environment," but he was not at delegating. He was a perfectionist. He liked to retain as much power over things as possible. Therefore, he required a lot of correspondence, just general correspondence, to come back through him and he made lots of changes on that kind of thing.

I think he probably gave me more leeway than anybody else on the staff. I ended up doing a lot of correspondence for him. I probably was the most successful at not having things changed, probably because I knew him well enough to know what he wanted and tried to work in that way. The other part of your question was what? What kind of manager was he?

MR. COCKRELL: Yes.

MR. STEELE: I would say if he had one fault it was that he wanted to retain so much influence over the work that went out of the office that a lot of stuff got bogged down. We continually missed deadlines to Region because he wanted to put his personal imprint on everything which, as the park grew, it became virtually impossible to do that, and he could never let go of some things, and we just got bogged down with a lot of stuff because of that.

Sheridan S. Steele

MR. COCKRELL: How about morale among the staff?

MR. STEELE: I would say overall the morale was probably pretty good. We had personality conflicts as any staff that grows to that size would have, I think. I forget how many people were there when I first started, but I would guess it was like ten or twelve and it went to 60 or 70 in a period of a few years. That rapid growth and getting into divisions and getting division chiefs and so forth, led to competition between the Ranger Division and the Interpreters and that kind of thing happens at many big parks.

But I would say overall the morale was good because there was so much to do, first of all, and it was challenging and exciting. I have always felt one year's experience at a place like Cuyahoga was worth five at many other places just because of the intensity of all the things you were doing and had to do.

There was also some negative though, because of the growing opposition to land acquisition and some of the grief you take in the community because of that. For instance, there was an increase in arson, burning vacant buildings. There were safety hazards with vacant buildings. Vacant buildings left a bad taste in people's mouths. They continually had to drive by these, that is, local residents and they saw their neighbors who had to be moved and so on and so forth.

There was also a lot of misinformation. Just as one quick example, one owner would come in and say, "I want to sell my property. I really need to do it quickly, but I don't want anybody to know that." So we would end up buying their property; their neighbors would think they were "forced out." There was a lot of that kind of misinformation around that ended up reflecting negatively on us. So if there was a morale problem, it probably related to that kind of atmosphere more than anything.

MR. COCKRELL: Why did Birdsell feel that it was necessary to create the Communities Council?

MR. STEELE: I am not sure where the idea for a Communities Council came from, but I know Bill and I talked about it early on as a way of formalizing communications to the surrounding communities. As I mentioned earlier, we had a tremendous workload trying to communicate with all of these officials and these communities and trying to monitor what they were doing in terms of zoning and land use and highway planning and everything else. So it became a real need to somehow design a system in which we could deal with that.

The end result was this Communities Council where each of the communities would appoint one or two members to it and they could meet regularly, I think it was monthly, to deal with issues related

Sheridan S. Steele

to the park and we could report to them what was going on. Bill and I were the two representatives and I think both of us felt that it was a very valuable tool.

MR. COCKRELL: So it was an effective group?

MR. STEELE: I think it could have been more effective. There is no question about that. But I think it was effective. It was better than what we had, which was nothing. It was better than trying to communicate individually with the communities. The effectiveness of the Council depended a lot on the quality of the representatives that we got. One community might take it as, "Ah, it is not very important, we will just put Joe Dokes on there who really has no standing in the community," and so on. Another community put one of their commissioners on it. You could see that the community that put their commissioner on it felt it was more important and took a more active role in communicating with us and vice versa. That is what it was all about.

So we were better off in some communities than in others. It depended a lot on how the community viewed the Council and vice versa and how cooperative they wanted to be. So we had mixed results, but I think overall, it was better than it would have been without the Council. They ultimately, as you know, hired an Executive Director and I think that was a good move. I am not sure the person who was in that job was as effective as he could have been, but I think it enabled project-type things to be accomplished and that was good.

MR. COCKRELL: What about the Advisory Commission? Was it a very effective tool for management?

MR. STEELE: Well, Advisory Commissions I think are generally looked upon--at least they were by Bill Birdsell, in my opinion--as kind of a necessary pain in the rear kind of thing. I think we (really both of us, all of us on the park staff) utilized it in some cases to our benefit and we probably missed other opportunities to use the Advisory Commission. They obviously had no legal authority other than the fact that the Act established the Commission and talked about who should be nominated.

Looking back, I think the Commission provided a forum to talk about issues and to get some input. But in my opinion, it too often ended up being a rubber-stamp kind of thing, kind of outside the loop. It was really such a complex situation. It is really virtually impossible for ten citizen members to meet once a month for three hours and to cover 30 topics and really know what is going on. So it really becomes this kind of thing: "Well, here is what we are doing." "O.K. fine. What is the next one?" It probably would have been better to take that Commission and give

Sheridan S. Steele

it certain specific projects to help with and tend to forget about the rest of them because it is just too hard to do everything.

MR. COCKRELL: Was one of the purposes of the Advisory Commission to give the community a chance to find out how the park was coming along?

MR. STEELE: Well, Congress of course established that when they authorized the area and I think certainly that was one of their desires that it offered a communications tool to get information out to the communities.

MR. COCKRELL: Was there much interest by the public?

MR. STEELE: I think it depended on what issues were foremost in the public's mind. For instance, if the Commission had a meeting that was going to deal with land acquisition, you would get a big turnout. If it was going to deal with highways, it would be a bigger turnout. But, typically, there wasn't a lot of interest in it. We would put news releases out and try to get the public interested and you know, most of the time you would get 20 people, maybe.

MR. COCKRELL: You talked a little bit about the GMP process that was underway.

MR. STEELE: It had just gotten underway.

MR. COCKRELL: How well did the team that was headed by Michael Donnelly perform?

MR. STEELE: I remember one thing in particular that really hurt the team. That is they came in and at the public meetings, they couldn't pronounce local road names and the name of Cuyahoga. They pronounced it varying ways and it really hurt their credibility. People just almost immediately turned off, that these people are from Denver; what the hell do they know about the valley? I think that really hurt them.

I think the process overall was one of these early attempts to get active public involvement, I believe. Again, I don't know what transpired before that, but my understanding was that the Park Service was really getting into this new process of public involvement and I think they made a genuine attempt to break out into small groups and get people really going on some of these issues.

Another major failing I just remembered was that the first couple of meetings, there were big turnouts, but the majority of those people, or at least the majority of the local people wanted to know, "Is my land within the boundaries, and when are you going to

Sheridan S. Steele

buy it?" I mentioned to Bill Birdsell after the first few meetings (I really think it was a good idea, looking back) they should have had public meetings that were split; Go to Room A if you want to talk about park planning; go to Room B if you want to talk about land acquisition. Because what happened was, most of the General Management Plan meetings broke down into chaos because people wanted to talk about land acquisition. They were the ones who were the most vocal. They weren't necessarily everybody in the audience, but they took over the meetings because they had an emotional involvement here. They wanted something they needed to know.

The Park Service wasn't prepared to deal with that, so the process of planning for the park really was impaired by that. I think I remember offering the idea of breaking out into separate meetings and I think they were reluctant to do that and my own theory is it was because they didn't have the answers. They couldn't face those people. They couldn't say, "We are going to have a separate meeting on land acquisition," and then go in and say, "I don't know." But as long as the meeting was on planning for the future use of the park, they could say, "Land acquisition is not our topic tonight," but it just kept coming right back to that. That was probably more important than the credibility thing that I mentioned earlier in terms of what really hurt the process.

Given those negatives, I think the end result was really a pretty good plan. It may not have been practical in the sense that it called for millions of dollars worth of development, and as we all found out, there isn't that kind of money available for development. But I still think you could argue that you want a whole plan for the ideal and then you tackle that kind of thing later and maybe you go back and revise as reality sets in.

I think given the conflict over land acquisition, they did come up with a fairly good product and I think they did utilize citizen input to a large degree. I think the meetings for instance that were held in Cleveland were better for that kind of input than the ones that were held in Akron and Peninsula. Obviously, the Peninsula meetings got everybody who was concerned about land acquisition and they were just a nightmare.

MR. COCKRELL: How much input did Bill Birdsell have in the GMP process?

MR. STEELE: Well, again at that point, I was not in the Park Service, so I have a different prospective, but my guess is knowing Bill and looking back at how things were shaped, I would say he had considerable input and probably dominated a lot of the discussions in terms of what ought to be included in the park. I think his desires were probably tempered by public input and by the planning team, but my guess is he had tremendous input. Bill knew the park

Sheridan S. Steele

surrounding area better than anyone and he had a very forceful personality that he used to make his points.

MR. COCKRELL: Do you think that the final GMP pretty much reflected Birdsell's vision of that park?

MR. STEELE: I would have to say it probably did because I think Bill was one of the few people that had a vision about that park. I really think that park was Bill's baby, if you will. It was a wonderful opportunity for him. Again, he was a GS-12 superintendent from a very small site in Ohio, suddenly to be faced with this huge challenge; a place that was very political and had a lot of interest. I mean, it was just a wonderful opportunity for him and I know he jumped right on it and very quickly became the authority on what the resources were and what the opportunities might be. I know he worked very actively at promoting his vision of the park, so I am sure it started within the planning process.

MR. COCKRELL: Do you think that the Cuyahoga GMP set any precedent Servicewide?

MR. STEELE: I don't know. I don't think I can really answer that with any authority. As I mentioned, I think it was one of those plans that was just growing with public input for the first time and I think from that standpoint, it was successful, at least for one of the early ones. I am sure that the experience that those planners had there shaped other GMP's that were done.

MR. COCKRELL: Getting back to the land acquisition program, in 1980, Seiberling called for a halt on the program and a reevaluation of it. Why did it take four years for that to happen? He was saying that his vision was not that it be almost totally fee acquisition, that they should rely more on scenic easements.

MR. STEELE: I don't think there is any question that the reason for that was growing political pressure. I mean, John Seiberling was behind what we were doing 100%. Most politicians have to take public positions that they may not necessarily agree with. I think that John Seiberling did that fewer than most in my opinion. He gave us tremendous support and would tell us over and over again, "I support what you are doing. You just let me know what you need. I am with you."

We would go into public meetings and take tremendous abuse after the Cushman phenomenon started growing. He would go in there and face down those crowds and he wouldn't say what they wanted to hear. He would say what he believed and I really admired him for that. He would walk out and he knew damn well that he had lost those people's votes, but he probably never had them to begin with. But he at least had the guts to go in there and say, "We are doing

Sheridan S. Steele

what we think is best here, and it is unfortunate if you folks don't like what is happening."

But back to your original question, I believe that the political pressure was mounting. As the anti-park forces were growing and getting more and more attention, I think that he had to take that position really, for his own political survival. I don't think he would have lost if he had not done that. I don't want to imply that because he had such a strong following, but I do think it was a political necessity.

That easement/fee issue, I don't know whether I got into that before, but I think it is real important, for me anyway, to say or get on the record that I believe what the Park Service was doing in terms of fee acquisition was the right approach. We knew early on that there were going to be easement areas in the park. We never argued that. We may have argued with the extent of it, but we never argued that there were going to be easements. We also found out quickly that easement acquisitions on either undeveloped or primarily undeveloped lands would cost 95%, plus or minus, of the fee value of the land.

The taxpayers and the Park Service would not get any value for their money to buy a lot of easement land that was either undeveloped or primarily undeveloped. They couldn't even assure public use. Or if you were going to have public use, it really didn't become an easement anymore. So anyway, that was a real stickler for us and we knew we were getting limited funds. We knew we had tremendous demands for acquisition. And so it was only natural, and in my opinion only smart, to buy the fee lands first.

The anti-park forces took that record, if you will, of buying no easements and beat us over the head with it and said, "Hey, you are not buying any easements, your records prove it." And of course, we were saying, "Well, that is right, we are not." But in the paper it looked like we had no intention of buying easements when in fact, easements were the lowest priority for very good, logical reasons, for economic reasons, and because we came to believe that easements were only going to be purchased on fully developed lands. That is where the easement value was more like 10% to 30%, which is more reasonable.

Consequently, if they were already fully developed, they weren't a threat to the park. So there was no sense in buying easements until the very last thing. As the pressure mounted, and the criticism for not buying easements, we had to start buying them for show, not because they really had any value to us.

MR. COCKRELL: So that is what happened? A list was drawn up?

Sheridan S. Steele

MR. STEELE: We had a list of easement properties. In fact in the first full-blown Land Acquisition Plan that I developed, they were all specified in there. But they were also all very low priority, so we weren't buying them. And that was taken by the enemies of the park to mean that there was this grand plan never to buy easements, but to force them out some other way.

One of the things that hurt us in that regard, looking back, was hardship cases. We were directed by the legislation to deal quickly with hardship cases in land acquisition. Consequently, somebody would come in and say, "I want to sell." They might have been an easement area. "I don't want to sell an easement, I want to sell my whole property. I have to move. I have illness in the family or, I have to leave town, or whatever. I want to sell the whole thing."

Well, we would then buy it, because we were directed to deal with hardships first of all, and secondly because, O.K., it is an opportunity to remove one more structure from the park and to create a park-like setting. Well, I still personally think that was the right decision, but that did hurt us in the sense that our easement areas got broken up, they could use that against us, too. We were buying fee properties within easement areas and it made it look like our easement areas were really just smoke screens. I could talk about land acquisition for days.

MR. COCKRELL: How did the Cuyahoga Valley Homeowners and Residents Association come to be formed?

MR. STEELE: I really don't know how they came about. I think it was the result of a growing interest on the part of homeowners to try to deal with a park that was a new reality. They began seeing that while there were benefits to being in the park in the sense that they were going to be in an undeveloped or not an over-developed area. They were going to have this nice valley environment around them preserved, so they saw benefits in it, but once it became reality, they began to also see major threats. Increases in "visitors" using the valley, maybe hiking in areas near their house, picnicking, traffic, maybe people from poorer neighborhoods; so they saw some threats in that kind of use.

They also saw major threats in terms of potential land acquisition and restrictions. For instance, if they wanted to double the size of their house and they were within the park boundaries, would the Park Service see that as a major threat? How would we react to that? So, it left a lot of uncertainties there.

I think there were various groups of homeowners. There were those who felt the park was a good thing, but they obviously had some concerns about what it meant to them, and maybe they ought to kind

Sheridan S. Steele

of organize (safety in numbers) and deal with the Park Service and maybe increase their clout in terms of communications. I think it was very legitimate.

Then there were others who saw threats to their own existence in terms of economic existence and being able to live in the valley and so forth. They were much more militant and wanted to take even a different approach. I think they all ultimately got together, because again, there was a desire to go up against the government.

Then, along comes Charles Cushman and a high profile kind of emotional attack on the fact that we were going to be throwing people out and we had thrown people out. The fact that the Corps had made threats, at least, allegedly made threats. I don't know whether they in fact did, but I certainly heard my share of horror stories. So there were probably some valid concerns early on about that. So, ultimately those folks organized.

Of course, the news media loves to have opposition to anything. That "lends balance to their story," so you could have 59,000 people in favor of something and you could have 13 sole individuals against it and the media would interview them because they liked to have that negative side. Well, they started getting a lot of media attention and whenever we brought up something in the media, the media would always go ask this anti-group what they thought of it and gave them a lot more credibility, in my opinion. So, it kind of grew like that.

There was also private money involved in that. I mentioned that earlier. I forget the names of the individuals involved, but they were members of the Roush family. The Roush family owned a big estate over near Peninsula (a big white house, lots of land). The senior Roushes, Mr. and Mrs. Roush, were very, very wealthy. Mr. Roush had started Roadway Express. His brother started Pacific Intermountain Express. Later they were both multi-millionaires. In fact, when Mr. Roush died, he left so much money that the inheritance tax alone was like \$80 million. It made national news because Boston Township got 80 million bucks! And Boston Township's entire budget was somewhere in the neighborhood of only \$30,000 a year. Suddenly, there was all this wealth in the community.

When Mr. and Mrs. Roush died, the children, of course, inherited all that money. I forget how many children were involved, but I think there were about four. One of those four was very much pro-park and another one of those four was very anti-park. For the sake of family harmony, (this is my theory), the pro-park person kind of quit talking about the park. The anti-park person became the most vocal and he began working with the anti-park forces to make changes according to whatever his particular interests were.

Sheridan S. Steele

Early on, the Roush family got Bill Birdsell and I together at one point and suggested that they would donate part of their land to the park if we would assure them there would be no public access down the road in front of their house and make some other concessions.

We didn't feel that we could make those concessions because that road in front of their house was going to be the major access from the freeway that was just up the road. I believe it was Oak Hill Road. So that kind of ended that discussion, but I think that sealed our fate in the sense that the Roush son who was anti-park became even more anti-park and began working actively behind the scenes to do what he could to stop land acquisition.

This really came into play when the Jury Brothers were hired by a foundation, I believe it was called the Liberty Foundation (but I am not sure what it had to do with liberty). It was a very conservative foundation that the Roushes supported. I am sure that Roush money was passed through the Liberty Foundation to the Jury Brothers, who were photojournalists from Pennsylvania, to do a documentary on Cuyahoga Valley, with particular emphasis on how people were being hurt in land acquisition.

It was just the first of many. The Sunday night show, "Prime Time Sunday," did a very biased story on the park as well. I often suspected that Roush connections were behind that, but I have absolutely no proof to that. But I know that Roush connections were used once the Jury film was done, which was a separate film, to get that aired on not only television, but to hire out a theater in Akron and play it down there for officials and so on and so forth.

Then, "Frontline" did a show with Jessica Savitch. Anyway, these films that were done in television pieces then became the ammunition for Charles Cushman to take nationwide, the stories of people losing their homes almost at gunpoint (at least these were the insinuations). And it was a very emotional situation obviously, and it made wonderful drama for television.

When the "Prime Time Sunday" producer came, he obviously had been prepped by the anti-park forces. He also had no interest in really hearing the other side of the story. In fact, he told us that. He said, "No, I am not interested in that right now. Maybe someday I will come back and do that." He said, "I have another story I am working on" and he wanted us to say things that would bolster whatever particular point of view they were doing.

For instance, they did a 45-minute interview with Bill Birdsell. Jim Jackson, the former editor of the **Akron Beacon Journal**, was

Sheridan S. Steele

there with me. We were watching it and we were both horrified at the approach they took. Out of that 45-minute interview, they used maybe 20 seconds of Bill's responses to augment their story about condemnation in the valley. Jim Jackson was so incensed by the "journalism" here and being a journalist himself, he wrote a very strong editorial about that in the **Beacon Journal**, and went on to write letters to the television network, all to no avail. But anyway, I guess my point here is that there was now big money behind the park opposition forces.

There was also the big money involved in land acquisition. The best example of that was a landowner right off of Oak Hill. He bought his property after the park was established. I think he might have even gotten it as a tax sale or something. But anyway, he got it cheap. (I forget the figures, but there are memos in the files that document all of this). It was really a very telling story because he bought the property, then he subdivided it to force us to buy the undeveloped portion at a big profit. He then turned around and put all that money into his house, tennis courts, party barn, he did a very nice job. He put several hundred thousand dollars into it.

Ultimately, then we ended up buying that and you could imagine he made even more money on that. So it was a very common technique of improving your property at government expense and then ultimately selling out and retaining life estate or whatever. But subdividing was used a lot. That was very typical of the kind of thing that was going on in land acquisition.

MR. COCKRELL: Leonard Stein-Sapir was one of the leaders of the Homeowners Association.

MR. STEELE: Yes, he was. He was very vocal. The paper used him a lot to quote because he wasn't afraid to say lots of negative things. But it was very gratifying to us that when he got to the point where he thought, "Wow, this is wonderful, I get all this attention," and he ran for Township Trustee in Boston Township and was soundly defeated. It really convinced us that we were right in thinking that the most vocal people were really a minority. Otherwise, I don't think there would have been any question that he would have won the election.

MR. COCKRELL: I did interview Stein-Sapir and he told me that he had a meeting with Bill Birdsell and Birdsell asked the other NPS employees who were present to leave the office. Then Stein-Sapir said that Birdsell said that if he would drop this lawsuit against the Park Service, that Birdsell would drop the condemnation action against him and give him the scenic easement. Was this true?

Sheridan S. Steele

MR. STEELE: I have no knowledge of that, but we ultimately won that suit and the judge wrote a great opinion in support of the park.

MR. COCKRELL: The Park Service's plan for Oak Hill was for the day-use facility that would include the Stein-Sapir property. Would Birdsell compromise in any way on the plan that was going to go into effect and be developed?

MR. STEELE: I think there is a possibility he would have compromised if he could have seen that the development could have taken place around Stein-Sapir's property. I think it would have been very awkward for the Service to do that, particularly if we had left only one house in there. It is interesting that you mentioned that suit. It brought back some memories on that, but as I recall, did we not ultimately win that suit? And there was a very positive statement by the court of what the park was all about. We took that as a major victory and it really supported what we had been saying. So, I am glad in a way that that never occurred, if such a compromise was offered.

One of the things that is kind of an interesting sidelight about Stein-Sapir is that he argued (By the way, they used the Freedom of Information Act against us all the time, very effectively, I am sure, from their standpoint) but one of the interesting things was, Stein-Sapir said that he was being forced out, that he didn't want to sell and in fact, we had a letter from Mrs. Stein-Sapir offering to sell to the park, and unfortunately, we lost the original.

We had a xerox copy of a xerox copy. After a while, it got to be pretty hard to read, but it was certainly a valid letter from Mrs. Stein-Sapir and it really made Mr. Stein-Sapir look bad because it contradicted what he had been saying all along.

Congress did a number on him also. He went to Washington at one point and testified and they really did a number on him because of the amount of money he made and they had all the figures on that. They really raked him over the coals. Loretta Neumann was excellent at getting that kind of information and utilizing it. If you haven't interviewed her, you really ought to.

MR. COCKRELL: I did last night. She was very interesting.

MR. STEELE: I wish I had known that; I would like to have attended. Of course, I don't know if you want an observer sitting there or not, but that would have been interesting. Maybe you will let me see the transcript someday.

MR. COCKRELL: What was the catalyst for the removal/transfer of Bill Birdsell?

Sheridan S. Steele

MR. STEELE: Again, I don't think I was privy to those kinds of decisions, but my assumption is that Bill was obtaining growing baggage, if you will. The longer he stayed the more he was a lightening rod for anti-park forces and anti-park feeling. Bill was not afraid to say what he thought and I am sure he made some enemies because of that.

I think, the Park Service typically changes managers, particularly in new areas, when the heat gets turned up too high and my guess is that that is just the nature of things. The heat was getting pretty high.

I also think that at that point there was growing morale problems with the staff. I am not sure why that was, but I think I shared in that. I don't remember really why that was. But in terms of how that process happened and who made the decisions and who had input to that decision, I really don't know.

MR. COCKRELL: I have been told that there was a plan that the Midwest Region devised that they were considering reactivating the Chicago Field Office and they were going to put Birdsell there. Did you hear about this?

MR. STEELE: I know that is true because Bill told me such. In fact, when the heat was growing, it became apparent the heat was on Bill to move, either by him applying or them finding him a spot. I know that at one point he was told that he was going to go to the Chicago Office and he told me candidly that he was pretty discouraged about that. He didn't really want to go there. He didn't think it was really a legitimate job in the sense that it really had much value and I think he really saw it as a way of them getting him out of the way and that he would just kind of rot up there.

I think for that reason he actively resisted it. He probably told the Regional Director, "No, I don't want to go" and he probably also got Seiberling to agree that that was not the appropriate place because it did die on the vine.

Ultimately, they came back with this transfer to Washington to the Office of Policy position and Bill accepted that. I was told he accepted that by Bill. Again, I don't know what his reasons were, but my guess is Bill saw that as a place that he could have some influence on the Park Service. It was a place that he could utilize his writing skills and knowledge of the System and traditions and so forth. I think he saw it as a position close to the Director. Bill had a big ego and I think that satisfied his ego as one that he could accept.

Sheridan S. Steele

I do think at the same time though that this was a real blow; the fact that he had to give up "his baby" again. He never used that phrase, but that was certainly my impression, that he had to give up this wonderful project that he had taken from infancy to whatever. I think that was really hard on him, a very stressful situation. That may very well have contributed to his heart attack.

MR. COCKRELL: How was Lew Albert selected to be the next Superintendent?

MR. STEELE: I don't know how Lew was selected. I always assumed that Seiberling had some input in that process and maybe Loretta had some also. Did you ask Loretta about this?

MR. COCKRELL: Yes, she kind of dodged the question. I am going to ask Lew that question, too. I am going to interview him in a couple of weeks.

MR. STEELE: I think Lew evidently had a pretty high profile at Lowell and given the pressures at Cuyahoga, the growing political opposition, it was maybe the thought of some people that he would be a good candidate to come down and calm the waters.

MR. COCKRELL: Einar Johnson was the Acting Superintendent during the interim period there. Did he try to make any changes?

MR. STEELE: Yes, Einar did. In fact, the staff was impressed with Einar early on, because once he took over as Acting, he took the approach he was going to take the job and run with it, for however long it took. He started setting some goals with the key staff and the key staff agreed with the approach or direction he was taking and I think was behind him. I heard later that Einar felt he had some kind of commitment for the Superintendent's position and that may have influenced why he was taking the approach he was, and then felt the rug was pulled out from under him later.

MR. COCKRELL: How did Lew Albert's approach to Cuyahoga differ from Birdsell's?

MR. STEELE: Ron, we are getting into an area here where I have some pretty strong personal opinions and I am not sure that they really are appropriate to put on tape.

MR. COCKRELL: That is fine.

MR. STEELE: I can tell you that on one of the first meetings that Lew went to was the Cuyahoga Valley Association's annual meeting. I believe it was in May and it was held at the Peninsula Nightclub. It was a group of obviously strong park supporters who were in our

Sheridan S. Steele

corner who admired Bill Birdsell a great deal, and were basically supporting the approach the Park Service had taken.

In comes new Superintendent Lew Albert who makes what I thought was an unbelievable speech about how everything that had gone on prior to his arrival had been major mistakes and that he was here to correct them.

I was just really surprised that he would take that approach, particularly in front of that audience. I didn't understand what the message was to that audience. Maybe he would have made the speech appropriately before the anti-park forces, but to go before the ones who were 100% behind us and say that kind of thing, I never understood that.

MR. COCKRELL: So he, in effect, was repudiating the actions of Birdsell?

MR. STEELE: I would say so, very clearly, yes. He made major changes in direction a lot of which some people did not agree with and it puzzled some people. Other park supporters outside the Service who didn't understand how selections are made and didn't understand changes in political whims and things just kind of thought, "Wow, this is very different!"

I know for a fact there were a lot of people who decided, well, maybe they weren't going to be involved any more because there wasn't a role for them.

MR. COCKRELL: Could you elaborate on some of the major changes that Lew Albert brought about?

MR. STEELE: Lew, for whatever reason, felt that he had to get more closely involved with some of the park opponents. Maybe that was to calm the waters. He began reducing conflicts between the National Park Service and other entities whether they be private landowners or government entities by not challenging them when they chose to do things that previously would have been considered contrary to park interests.

As an example, the park staff was working with the Cuyahoga County engineers on a major road improvement on Canal Road. They were proposing realignments and major changes that would affect not only the historic Ohio and Erie Canal, but National Register properties on the other side of the road, the aesthetics of the park, and just all kinds of things.

It was a tremendous, major impact. We had been working with the engineers to try to mitigate the changes. I think we were heading toward a reasonable compromise. Again, within a few weeks of when

Sheridan S. Steele

Lew arrived, he was thrust into a meeting with the County Engineer. In fact, we had prepared a letter with our position on it, what we were recommending and suggesting.

Lew signed that letter and we were hand-carrying it to the meeting. It was handed to the County Engineer and when it came around to Lew's opportunity to talk, one of the first things he said was, "By the way, you can forget that letter that I signed. You can tear it up because that isn't really what I think. What is it you folks want?" And they said, "Here is what we want." He said, "O.K, as far as I am concerned, that is fine."

And that was kind of the end of the meeting. We ultimately did get a few concessions about how the road improvements looked, but we lost a lot, too.

MR. COCKRELL: In October of 1981, the park made a public announcement that the buildings at Jaite were going to be torn down and six months later it was announced that Jaite was going to be the new park headquarters complex. How did this flip-flop happen from being torn down to being preserved and used as headquarters?

MR. STEELE: I don't recall the specifics of that and I am not even sure that I was there at that time. I know the developments that took place to make it a headquarters took place after I left. Whether that decision was made before or after I left, I don't remember, so I probably really can't address that one.

MR. COCKRELL: How did the park react when James Watt was the Secretary of the Interior and the "hit list" came out and was publicized? Cuyahoga was like number one or two?

MR. STEELE: Do you know when that was?

MR. COCKRELL: This was in early 1981.

MR. STEELE: I don't remember that being a big deal. At least in the circles I was in, I don't think we really gave it much credibility. I think we knew that John Seiberling really was not going to let that kind of thing happen.

Watt certainly had power, but I don't think he had the power to deauthorize a park and I don't think we really took it as a legitimate threat that was going to have a major impact on us. I think it reenforced our thinking that there were a lot of people who didn't like Cuyahoga, but that was certainly no surprise.

MR. COCKRELL: What role did the Trust for Public Lands play at Cuyahoga?

Sheridan S. Steele

MR. STEELE: I don't know what role they played after I left. It may have grown. But while I was there, I don't think it was what would be considered a major role. They certainly were helpful in trying to acquire individual tracts of land. I don't remember any specifics of cases that they really helped with. I know that they had good intentions and they were eager to help and get involved where they could, but I don't remember specifics.

MR. COCKRELL: You mentioned Charles Cushman several times. Did you ever personally meet with him to discuss Cuyahoga?

MR. STEELE: No, but he dropped in on Bill Birdsell one weekend. I forget who the woman was, I think it might have been Lilly Fleder, who was one of the anti-park leaders. Anyway, she called Bill at the office. Everybody knew Bill worked on weekends pretty regularly and said, "There is somebody here that you really need to meet. Could I bring him up?" And of course, Bill said yes. Within a few minutes, Lilly and Charles Cushman were at the door. Bill told me about it later.

The story that Bill related is kind of interesting and I will relate it to you. I don't have anything to substantiate it, but he said that Cushman was no sooner in the door, having shook Bill's hand than he asked to use the restroom. He went and used the restroom and Bill told me that he wasn't in there more than 30 seconds and he didn't flush the toilet. So, it raised Bill's suspicions. The restroom was just right next to Bill's office, so it would have been very easy to know that, particularly when nobody else is in the office and so forth.

Some of the statements that Cushman made to Bill and some of the things that he said led Bill to believe, coupled with the fact of his restroom escapade, that Cushman was tape recording the conversation. According to Bill, he made statements like, "We have enough information here to put you in jail, but we really think you are a pretty nice fellow and you don't deserve that kind of treatment, so really, if you kind of help us out here, and give us the facts, we will see that you are not dragged through this, etc." They tried to get him to make statements about "mistakes in land acquisition."

Bill really thought the whole thing was kind of funny and that Cushman was really obviously someone you couldn't trust and had very little integrity. That was borne out a number of times later when he continually used Seiberling's land acquisition situation and did not use factual information even when the GAO had substantiated Seiberling's story.

MR. COCKRELL: Is there anything that I haven't asked you that I should? Is there anything that we have left out?

Sheridan S. Steele

MR. STEELE: I don't think so. I think the land acquisition, as I mentioned once before, was a major part of the story because, not only did it influence how the Park Service started off in Cuyahoga Valley in terms of planning and development, it also influenced the choosing of sides. I think that we were well on the road to getting that behind us when the Cushman effort came with him seizing the opportunity of Cuyahoga. He seized the opportunity because of mistakes that were made by the Corps of Engineers. That, particularly, gave him really good meat to stretch. I mean, it was certainly stretched.

Also that private money that I talked about was a wonderful opportunity to do these media things that he could use in audiences around the country, which he certainly did effectively. For instance, I don't know whether you have seen those films or not, but in the early films, nowhere did those films indicate that people could elect to stay the rest of their lives: a very basic fact.

The legislation provided that they could have life estate or fixed term up to 25 years. It said that very clearly in black and white. We never, ever tried to hide that from people. We viewed it as a very nice tool, something that could ease the transition, that could make people feel better about selling their land and so forth. But nowhere in the media exposes was that pointed out. It was the Federal Government was coming in here and wrenching people from their land and they had no choice. Well, that is really not true, but it was a great tool for Cushman.

[END]

Postscript: Sheridan S. Steele subsequently left Washington, D.C., to become Assistant Superintendent of Rocky Mountain National Park.

O R A L H I S T O R Y I N T E R V I E W

F O R T H E

A D M I N I S T R A T I V E H I S T O R Y O F

C U Y A H O G A V A L L E Y

N A T I O N A L R E C R E A T I O N A R E A

O H I O

Leonard R. Stein-Sapir
former member
Cuyahoga Valley Homeowners and Residents Association

May 24, 1989
Gates Mills, Ohio

Interviewed by:

Ron Cockrell
Historian
Midwest Regional Office
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Omaha, Nebraska
1989

Leonard R. Stein-Sapir

Leonard R. Stein-Sapir

MR. COCKRELL: I thought we would begin by you providing me with an overview of the history of the Cuyahoga Valley Homeowners and Residents Association. Why was it formed?

MR. STEIN-SAPIR: This, of course, happened a long time ago. Perhaps that is good because it gives me a certain objectivity with the passage of time.

I am from Ohio, but I was living in New York back in 1974, and had an interest in a business in Cleveland. I decided at that point that I wanted to get married and raise a family in Ohio as opposed to the middle of Manhattan. I had a couple of reasons for wanting to move back to Ohio. My family was there. I wanted to get married and raise a family in an urban setting as opposed to New York City, plus I had an interest in a business based in Cleveland that was starting to blossom.

I bought a 78-acre farm in Peninsula, Ohio, at a bankruptcy action. I had no idea whatsoever that there was even a park anticipated or planned in the Cuyahoga Valley. As I said, I had been living for the past seven years in New York City. The fact that this parcel of land was available was pointed out to me by the president of a local bank who happened to live in Peninsula. He mentioned that this property was going up for sale.

I bought it with my partner--number one, so I would have a place to live, and number two, as an investment because we thought that it would probably go up in value. I moved to Ohio, got married, started living in the house and renovating it. I spent a lot of time renovating it with my own two hands.

Shortly after we moved in, I became aware of the fact that a park was planned or a bill was just signed, sometime in 1975, I believe, creating the Cuyahoga Valley National Recreation Area. Frankly, it didn't really mean anything to me one way or the other. It just seemed to me that this was great. It would preserve the country atmosphere, which I was desirous of doing.

I had just moved from the densely-populated area of New York City and the contrast of living out in the country where you could hear the birds sing and see open spaces was very appealing to me. That was one of the reasons I did it. When I found out about it, I looked at it as a positive. I think everybody in the Valley looked at it as a positive. This was going to preserve the country atmosphere in Peninsula.

Slowly, however, the perception of this being a good thing changed to it being a bad thing. It wasn't really a park, it was a recreation area, which was a new creature. Since it was between two major cities, Akron and Cleveland, this was supposed to be a

Leonard R. Stein-Sapir

way of preserving open space, but also in harmony with the existing community. My recollection was that there was something like 34,000 acres encompassing the area, of which half was already a state park. At least a large part of the balance was very sparsely populated. There were a lot of farms. I had 78 acres. My neighbor had 100 acres. My neighbor on the other side had 25 acres. It was that kind of a place. The people who lived there were desirous of preserving that.

I am an attorney. I read the Park Act probably a year after I had been living there because of what appeared to be happening. In the Park Act, it clearly said: number one, that the Park Service was supposed to prepare a plan that showed what areas were going to be used for what purposes, what was going to be taken in scenic easement, and what was going to be taken in fee (which was supposed to be very little).

That was one of the requirements of the Act and that was never done to my knowledge. There had been some attempts much later on to prepare a plan of sorts, but I don't believe it was the type of plan envisaged by the Act. And it certainly wasn't done at the time that they started their aggressive land-buying procedures.

The other thing was that the Park Act specifically talked about taking land with scenic easements, which would permit the people to continue living there, but restrict the development of the land. The legislative history clearly indicated that was supposed to be the predominant means of acquisition.

An administrator was brought in, Bill Birdsell, whose concept of the park was that trees and animals and birds should be protected, but people made the administration of the park a hassle, and he wanted to get the people out. That was clearly contrary to the provisions of the Act.

That created a tremendous amount of conflict. Here people were assured in meetings prior to the passage of the Act--as I understand it, I wasn't present at any of those meetings--that the purpose of this was to permit the community to exist. In rare instances where there was a public need, they would take property, but that was going to be rare. They were simply going to restrict use with scenic easements and preserve the community. In some cases, people lived there for five generations. That is how it was billed, but that is not how it was administered. Obviously, that created a tremendous amount of conflict.

Marty Griffith, who was a neighbor across the street, came to me about a year or a year-and-a-half into this, and asked if I would become associated with the Homeowners Association. He had asked me once before and I had said, no, I wasn't interested. But when

Leonard R. Stein-Sapir

I saw what was happening to the community and to my neighbors, I said, O.K., I would become involved.

They wanted my expertise because I was an attorney, so I agreed to become involved. As I got into things, what I consider the insidious nature of the way in which Birdsell was administering this thing prompted me to become even more involved. One by one, I saw neighbors being bought out and they didn't want to be. They had neither the sophistication nor the financial wherewithal to stand up to this government agency. The first one, by the way, came in the form of the Army Corps of Engineers in a very rough and tumble way.

I remember my next-door neighbor, Tom Bear. His wife was back at her lake and one day she looked up and there were two guys standing there. As she related, they were with the Army Corps of Engineers. She said, "What are you doing here?" In essence what they said was, "We are with the Army Corps of Engineers and you are not going to own this place for long." It was that sort of thing. The Lindleys, a family that you should speak to if you haven't, that family lived on their farm for five generations. When land is held in a family that long it almost becomes holy ground.

The Park Service went in and said, "You are either going to sell or we are going to kick you out, but we are going to get you out." And they did. They bulldozed the place. The Lindleys moved to a housing development from the holy ground that they had inhabited for the last five generations!

The tragedy of all of this was that it was so totally unnecessary. One of the charms of the area were the local farms. Take my place, for example. It was built in 1854, but the government just had to have my place. They could never demonstrate to me on a map or a plan or anything why they needed it. At one time, they wanted it for a horse trail after I started demanding a reason. When they found that only the Lone Ranger and Tonto could ride down some of the gullies, they changed it from a horse trail to a visitor center and then to something else.

They were constantly coming up with something different which were clearly manufactured reasons. This is not the way a government agency should treat its citizens. Especially when there is a Congressional bill that is supposed to prescribe the type of actions and the procedures they should be taking.

The Park Service has something going for it that the average citizen does not. First of all, it has unlimited funds because of its backing by the government. Secondly, in the public perception, parks are good. So when a man in a Smokey uniform gets up and says, "This is for all people for all time" and then a private

Leonard R. Stein-Sapir

homeowner gets up and says, "But," the battle is already lost, even though the person saying "but" is right and is standing up more for the values of our society and our country than the Park Service person in this particular instance. Once you have to start explaining your position in a mass media type of thing, you have lost the battle.

It was a maddening type of experience because we who were standing up for what we thought Congress was prescribing, standing up for what we thought were solid, American values--which were family and community--we were characterized as selfish landowners standing in the way of millions, which was so ludicrous! I think if you look at this, or anybody looks at this with the benefit of hindsight, they will see that this is true.

Peter Almond, who is a respected journalist, was contacted. I think I contacted him, or someone did, to look into the situation to get some public awareness of what was going on. He came into the situation with a bias, as he will tell you, in favor of the Park Service. After he did an in-depth analysis, he wrote a seven-part series blasting the Park Service for their methods and the things that we had been complaining about for years. He found what we knew to be true and he reported it.

I don't know if you know this, but Bill Birdsell called me into his office one day. By the way, I have no ax to grind. My house had been taken long ago. I have a new life here. We are very happy. This is as objective as I can possibly be. Bill Birdsell called me into his office and asked the other Park Service person who was in the room to leave. It was just the two of us sitting there. He laid out a map of the park, he drew a line around my place, and he said to me, "Why do you want to live here when all the niggers from Cleveland are going to be coming up here?"

I was shocked to hear him say this! He proceeded to say, "If you stop persisting in this, we will leave your property alone." I stood up and I said, "We have no more to talk about!" and I walked out shocked and a little upset that I was so naive that I didn't bring a tape recorder myself. But that happened. It absolutely happened.

MR. COCKRELL: He did this just to silence you?

MR. STEIN-SAPIR: Yes. I suppose Bill Birdsell was doing this with his view that this park was a good thing for the people and whatever means he used to accomplish that were justified by the ends. I don't happen to believe that this is the way that things should be done. I don't think that the end justified the means. Frankly, the end that he wanted to accomplish I don't think was

Leonard R. Stein-Sapir

what Congress intended or what was best for either the people living in the community or the broader community.

It has now been 13 or 14 years since the Park Act was passed. If you drive into that park, you still don't see any people. You see run-down houses; you see no people there. It is a tragedy. You see abandoned houses that haven't been bulldozed, that are boarded up, that families used to live in. If a passing motorist came by and had a flat tire, they would go out and help them. Or if they wanted to ask how to get to Hale Farm, they would get off of their tractors and they would tell them how to get to Hale Farm. It was preserving the community that had been there for hundreds of years.

The Park Service destroyed it, and of course, that created a tremendous amount of consternation and bitterness among the people. That is the best I can describe to you the problems that were created.

MR. COCKRELL: How was your organization structured and what were its goals?

MR. STEIN-SAPIR: There were written by-laws. There were written, stated goals which will speak for themselves. Birdsell constantly tried to indicate that there were very few people who were members of the Homeowners Association and, therefore, we really represented no one. We were just a small radical splinter group that didn't represent the views of the people living in the community. That is a fact. Marty Griffith can probably give you the exact numbers of the people who joined because they were dues-paying members.

There were people who attended meetings who didn't pay dues because they didn't want their names associated with the Homeowners Association. Not because they didn't believe in our cause, but because it was made clear to them that it would go hard on them if they were opposed to the park. Now can you imagine that? That a government agency with the reputation of the Park Service indicated to citizens, ordinary citizens living in that community, that it would go hard on them if they were opposed to the Park? It is mind-boggling!

I can tell you a personal experience about that. Early on, I was much more naive about this. I saw what was going on. I looked at all of the maps and I said, "Nothing is planned for Oak Hill Road (that was the original thing). Why don't I circulate a petition to the people on Oak Hill Road where we petition the Park Service to exclude us from the park?" I circulated a petition. I got a lot of names on it.

One by one, three, four, maybe five families came to me and asked me if they could cross their names off my petition. I said, "Why?"

Leonard R. Stein-Sapir

They said, "Word of your petition has gotten around and we have been informed by the Park Service land-buying office that if our name is on that petition, it is going to go hard on us in our negotiations."

I think I still have a copy of that petition with names crossed off of it in my garage. Every once in a while if I want to feel sad about the way things can happen when things go awry, I take a look at that petition with names crossed off of it.

I thought that only happened in totalitarian regimes. In many ways, the Park Service was acting as a totalitarian regime in this area that created the boundaries of the park. Bill Birdsell was the high command. Anything that went on inside that park area was his decision. It didn't seem as though you were protected by the laws of the land inside that park area.

MR. COCKRELL: Did enough people cross their names off of the petition that you didn't forward it on to the Park Service?

MR. STEIN-SAPIR: Yes. Without the support of everybody on the street, I didn't think it would work. Plus the fact I felt at that point that I had to carry this battle on a more personal basis so that I wouldn't drag other people into it and possibly hurt them. Because what they were saying was true and I knew that Birdsell would do that. I saw it happening.

I know you are probably aware that they bought some homes and they gave them to the fire department to burn down for practice. It was absolutely mind-boggling! It would have been so much less expensive and so much better for everyone if they would have just followed what Congress said they should do, which is preserve the community to the extent that they could and only use scenic easements where totally necessary for a public use area. They would have preserved the tax base. They could have preserved the community. It would have been what an urban recreation area should be. But they didn't do that.

MR. COCKRELL: Do you think when there was talk of establishing a park in the mid-1970's that people really understood what it meant? Did they know what the difference was between a metro park, a state park, or a national park?

MR. STEIN-SAPIR: As I indicated earlier, I was living in Manhattan. I had no idea about parks or the Cuyahoga Valley or anything else. I found out about that after I had purchased the property and after things had already been put in motion, so you will have to ask other people who were present at the time what their perception was on the difference between a park and a recreation area.

Leonard R. Stein-Sapir

I can tell you what I got later on when I started looking into what it was. I believe Congress felt that a recreation area which was to be established in the midst of certain high concentrations of population was supposed to be an oasis of tranquility between high density land use areas with the primary emphasis on land buying through scenic easements. Obviously that land would be much more expensive than open spaces out in the West, and you could preserve the existing communities at the same time as stopping future growth, but that wasn't what was done in the Cuyahoga Valley National Recreation Area situation. They frankly, incredibly, botched the job.

Our only recourse at the time was John Seiberling who was "The father of the park." John was almost Messianic about it. Whatever the Park Service wanted to do was fine with him. John Seiberling got a scenic easement. He was one of the first people to get a scenic easement. That was O.K., but it didn't seem to be O.K. for anybody else to get a scenic easement. It was O.K. for the Park Service to just destroy the community. So any pleas to our Congressional Representative fell on deaf ears.

MR. COCKRELL: Did you really want a scenic easement?

MR. STEIN-SAPIR: Yes. You indicated to me earlier that you read the correspondence. If you read the correspondence, you would have seen repeated letters to the Park Service requesting a scenic easement. As a matter of fact, as you probably know, my house was condemned by the Park Service and I fought a three-week jury trial. The first week of that trial, I fought the right of the government to take the property. I argued against the right to take the property. I didn't want to sell it. If you talked to the judge, Judge Dowd, a Federal District Court Judge, he will tell you that to the last minute I was arguing against the government's right to take it at all.

At the end of the first week of trial, which is not an inexpensive thing, Judge Dowd decided that under the Park Act, the Park Service did have the right to take it. He was then going to go on to the question of value, which is an issue that I did not even want to raise. I just didn't want them to take it all.

I said to him, "Let's not go on to value. Let me at appeal your decision on the right to take it to the Supreme Court so that we can get that settled before we get to value."

He said, "No, everybody is here. All the parties are here. The jury is convened. We are going to go ahead with the value and then you can appeal everything later on."

Leonard R. Stein-Sapir

I asked for a scenic easement and then I argued before a Federal District Court Judge that the government did not even have the right to take my house. I didn't want to sell it.

MR. COCKRELL: Could you explain the appeal process and what the eventual outcome was?

MR. STEIN-SAPIR: What happened was, we then went to the question of value. There was a two-week jury trial. The government was very simply out to get me because I was the head of the Homeowners Association and a real thorn in their side, arguing against what I thought was the unfair tactics they were using and the position they were taking.

They had one woman whose only job was to cross-examine my appraiser. It was something out of a television attorney series. The government used a number of comparable sales which we found out about right before the trial. They had huge posters with pictures and comparable and this and that.

As you may know, the best evidence of value is comparable sales. One of the comparable sales they used was the Cyrus Eaton estate, which on its face looked comparable. It was 20 acres. It was a house built in the 1700's. It had a swimming pool, a tennis court, fences, and barns. On the face of it, it looked comparable, but at a much lower price than my appraisers said my house was worth. They had also looked at a couple of other houses in Hudson and Bath and that sort of thing.

I called the man the night I found out about this. I called the man who owned Cyrus Eaton's house and I explained to him what was going on and asked if he would--he was in Pittsburgh at the time--I said, "The trial is going on. I don't have much time, Would you come to my place and take a look and tell me if it is in fact comparable to yours?"

He said he would stop by, which he did. He looked around and said, "This is in no way comparable to my place. The fences on my place are falling down. There is such an antiquated heating system that it is costing me \$1,800 a month to heat the place. It is in terrible shape. As a matter of fact--and the government knows this because they came out to see me--I have a lawsuit filed against Cyrus Eaton alleging that I was fraudulently sold this piece of property."

So I asked him if he would testify for me, and he said he would, which he did the next day. After he gave his testimony, Dick French, who was the government attorney, was so flustered by it, he said to him, "Do you realize that this might affect your case against Cyrus Eaton?" He said, "You know something, I didn't think

Leonard R. Stein-Sapir

about it until I was sitting here on the stand, but I came here to tell the truth and that is exactly what I am doing."

It was another place where the appraiser misrepresented the state of another property. He didn't even go in and look at it. We had the testimony from the person there. Needless to say, the jury came back with, in essence, what I was asking for. At that point, my wife and my family had gone through so much emotional trauma with this that my wife no longer wanted to live in the park.

By the way, let me explain something that became a popular misconception of people concerning this park and everything else. The government would say, "Look, no one can really be kicked out of here because under the Park Act, you have a right to stay here for your lifetime. There is a very good financial way in which we do this. We look at your life expectancy after we value your property, and then we deduct one percent a year for that life expectancy."

"So, for example, if we value your property at \$100,000 and according to a life expectancy table you and your wife have another 30 years to live, we deduct 30 percent from the purchase price or \$30,000 (in the case I'm giving you as an example) we give you the \$70,000, you get to live there for your lifetime."

It sounds great but it isn't, and I'll tell you why it isn't. Number one, it is very difficult to insure the interest that you are left with. Number two, from an emotional standpoint, if you want to leave your property to your children so they can continue living there, you can't do that. Number three, especially for an individual family with small children, the young children impacted the decision of staying or not staying. Actually, whether you had a young family or not, people do not live in isolation from other people. This is especially important when you do have a young family.

I had at the time, my son Adam was about 6, Erin was 4, and Joshua was, I think 2, in that range. We wanted to live in a growing, vibrant community with other children playing, with people taking care of their houses and having pride in their property. An area with a future. When you're living in an area where everyone is owned by scenic easement, where everybody is owned not by scenic easement, but by a term of years or "life estates," you're living in a community with no future. In every year another person is going to die or their term of years is up, and the government is going to come in and tear the house down. So it is a dying environment. It is not one that people want to live in.

In addition, fire service started falling off, taking care of the roads started falling off, because the government was not paying

Leonard R. Stein-Sapir

for it and the local municipality didn't want to bear the expense because the tax base wasn't big enough to do it. So you had deteriorating roads, deteriorating health service, deteriorating fire service. It was a tragic situation and became increasing apparent to the people that were there that it was not the type of situation that they wanted to live in.

So that at that point in time, my wife was almost demanding that we leave even though I, as a matter of principal, wanted to stay. But when you're married and you have a family to think about, you have to take their interest into account.

Talk to the people in the park right now. The roads are deteriorated even more than they were. Some roads are closed because they can't keep them up. People that are living there are finding it very difficult to get around. It's a tragedy and it didn't have to be that way.

MR. COCKRELL: What was the one case that went to the Supreme Court?

MR. STEIN-SAPIR: That was a class action suit that we filed which I financed. It was our feeling that without going through all the legal concepts that since the right of family and community is protected under the Constitution, in this particular case, before the government could interfere with the concept of family and community, they had to have a showing of specific need for the home that they were taking. We thought it was a good legal argument and even though the Supreme Court decided not to grant cert on the case, which I think they should have, it is such an important legal concept.

I think Congress should someday address it and write it into the law. They should not permit a 32,000-acre park to be created and then permit the Park Service to make their own unappealable judgement on taking people's homes away from them without a showing of specific need for those homes. That was the basis for our suit and the Supreme Court did not grant cert so that ended that unfortunately.

Obviously it was one of the only things that people had to hope for in terms of stopping the Park Service juggernaut, which was now clearly viewed as the enemy. And it was! It wasn't just viewed that way. It was viewed that way for a reason, it was the enemy.

MR. COCKRELL: Did that demoralize your group?

MR. STEIN-SAPIR: Of course it demoralized people because now they said, "Well, we gave it a shot and we have no protection. We're strictly at the mercy of people like Birdsell."

Leonard R. Stein-Sapir

MR. COCKRELL: Do you think that the basic problems which began in the land acquisition program can be contributed to the fact that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers began the program, and perhaps didn't explain it very well?

MR. STEIN-SAPIR: No, I think that is a very simplistic way of looking at it. Regardless of what was explained or not explained by the Army Corps of Engineers, the fact of the matter is that they soon left and what was left was the administration of area by the Park Service. And the Park Service is the one that embarked upon this aggressive land buying binge with no plan and without taking into account the wishes of Congress or what would have been best for the area and the people. So sure it was a mistake to let the Army Corps of Engineers go in like storm troopers and do what they did, but that was just one minor thing. The Park Service cannot lay it off on the Corps of Engineers.

MR. COCKRELL: Your organization got some assistance or advice from the National Inholders Association. Could you explain how that came to be and what assistance was provided?

MR. STEIN-SAPIR: Yes. As a matter of fact, it was quite the reverse. The National Inholders Association didn't give us any assistance or advice. Frankly, I was very leery of the National Inholders Association. I was leery of them because I felt that they were trying to leverage our situation into a power position for themselves.

Having seen what was going on at our local level, I certainly believed that it was going on at a national level, and that was demonstrated to me in various places. I felt if it was going on at a national level, there should be some national attention to it. So the extent to which the National Inholders Association was going to accomplish that purpose, I thought was a good one. On the other hand I didn't want to taint our righteous cause by being associated with people that I had no control over, and no understanding of what their motivations were.

They asked on numerous occasions if they could speak to our group, and that sort of thing. And I said, "Yes, it's a free country. You're espousing a cause that may be a good one, and if you want to speak to our group I'll be happy to make arrangements for you to do that." Which I did. If people wanted to join this organization fine. If they didn't fine. But they didn't give us anything.

The extent to which they would mention us in their releases and lobbying efforts, I had no control over them doing that. I think they did it more for their benefit than for us. We didn't give them any financial help or any other type of help.

Leonard R. Stein-Sapir

I know that Birdsell and various members of the Park Service tried to say that this National Inholders is an insidious group that has evil motives, and that our group was merely an instrument of theirs. It was crazy! It had nothing to do with anything. That was part of Birdsell's madness.

MR. COCKRELL: So they thought the national group was pulling the strings for the local group?

MR. STEIN-SAPIR: Yes. It was ridiculous.

MR. COCKRELL: I understand that Charles Cushman came here a couple of times. Did he provide any guidance or advice?

MR. STEIN-SAPIR: Absolutely none. We knew more about the situation than Cushman. If anything, I told Cushman how to do things. Cushman told us absolutely nothing. There was nothing he could tell us. We had a case pending before the Supreme Court. He had zilch. He was trying to get members and I think Cushman probably had his own beliefs that were probably valid. Cumberland Water Gap and a couple of other places were as tragic as ours in the extent to which he was representing those areas on a national level. He didn't give us any guidance. What could Cushman have told us?

MR. COCKRELL: In late 1979, the segment of "Prime Time Sunday" viewed the problems in this area. How did they come to find out about the Cuyahoga Valley? Did the homeowners contact NBC?

MR. STEIN-SAPIR: My recollection is that either I, or I authorized people, to write to "Prime Time," to "60 Minutes," to whomever we could where we might get national exposure on what we considered to be this local tragedy. We felt that it was the only thing that was going to help us in our cause at this point since our local Congressman had a deaf ear. He had a scenic easement and a deaf ear. National publicity would be helpful in correcting what we considered to be an evil. We tried everything we could to get national publicity.

MR. COCKRELL: And when that finally came about, there was a storm of protest from each side in the press that I read about. Do you think that furthered your cause or did it hinder it?

MR. STEIN-SAPIR: The extent to which anything happened to cause people to question the procedure that the government was using aided our cause. To this day I still believe it was a just cause. If I had to do it all over again I would do it all over again!

Look, you're chronicling this with a one period of objectivity. I don't know what conclusions you have come to and I'm not asking,

Leonard R. Stein-Sapir

but I can tell you that when you review all the information: Will you read the Park Act? Will you see the methods used by the Park Service? When you see the results, I can tell you right now that the conclusion you are going to come to was that they botched it up. They did not handle it properly. Everything that we were espousing at the time was absolutely correct. I know that you will come to that conclusion. Any objective, intelligent person looking at this is going to come to that conclusion because that's the truth. That's the way it is.

I don't say that with vindictiveness. I don't say it for any other reason than it is not in the best interest of this country for that sort of thing to go on. It is not in the best interest of the Park Service. I don't ascribe evil motives to the Park Service. They botched this up! They shouldn't botch in the future, and they should use this as a lesson on how not to do something, and do it right the next time.

MR. COCKRELL: You spoke earlier about **Cleveland Press** reporter Peter Almond's series. Superintendent Birdsell reacted violently against that. He wrote some letters and said some things in the press to which you took objection.

MR. STEIN-SAPIR: Well, of course I took some objection to it. Here's one of the greatest liberties in this country, freedom of the press. Birdsell was so upset by this reporter, who did his own objective analysis and was freely expressing his opinion as a newspaperman. And here Birdsell feels that freedom of the press should not be permitted to be exercised. I mean that was incredible!

As a matter of fact, his complaints and his viciousness with respect to this issue was, I think, what ultimately led to his being removed from a position of responsibility in the Park Service. And that had nothing to do with me. I believe it had to do with messages that he sent and calls and that sort of things that he directed to Vanik and various other Congressmen and Senators. They must have said to themselves, "Hey, this guy is off the wall. We can't permit a person like this to stay in a position of authority."

MR. COCKRELL: You think his transfer was a result of Congressional pressure?

MR. STEIN-SAPIR: I think it was Congressional pressure because of the crazy way in which Birdsell reacted to this.

MR. COCKRELL: I read where you had filed a personal lawsuit against Birdsell.

Leonard R. Stein-Sapir

MR. STEIN-SAPIR: I absolutely did.

MR. COCKRELL: What was the result of that?

MR. STEIN-SAPIR: What happened was that Birdsell died and with it the lawsuit.

MR. COCKRELL: I was told that it continued against his estate. Was that not the truth?

MR. STEIN-SAPIR: This goes back a long time. I was so violently opposed to Birdsell. The basis of the lawsuit was so just that even when he died I wanted to persist. My lawyers said, "Hey, look, you know, Birdsell has an 80-year-old mother and all that is left is his estate." Finally I went to them and said, "O.K., I'll drop the lawsuit." But I never would have if Birdsell would have lived.

MR. COCKRELL: When James Watt became Secretary of the Interior in 1981, did the Department of the Interiors' policies change in any way?

MR. STEIN-SAPIR: Not really. They may have on a national level, but it certainly didn't seep down to the local level. We had been led to believe that it would, but it didn't.

MR. COCKRELL: There was talk at one time of deauthorizing the park. Do you think that was a serious offer?

MR. STEIN-SAPIR: I don't know. I don't know what the internal politics or workings of the Park Service were at the time, so I really don't know. I know the highest levels were talking about it.

MR. COCKRELL: Would it be in the Valley's interest for the park to be deauthorized, or has it gone too far?

MR. STEIN-SAPIR: At this point, I don't know. The essential character of the areas have been so destroyed. I mean if they can get the old people back like the Lindleys, etcetera, and give them scenic easements and preserve the area the way they should have to begin with, it would be in the interest of the Valley and the interest of the Park Service and everybody. But I don't think that can be done at this point. I think it has been so destroyed that you can just forget about it at this point.

MR. COCKRELL: There were some of the National Inholders Association people like Cushman and Ric Davidge to get positions in the Department or on advisory committees. Did they provide any hope or assistance?

Leonard R. Stein-Sapir

MR. STEIN-SAPIR: Oh sure. We had a meeting with the Park Service and Davidge was there, etcetera, and they said they were going to change things. At that point it wouldn't have been too late. I even called up the Lindley's after they had been moved and said, "Would you move back?" Even at that point we thought that there was some hope, but nothing ever happened. It was like dropping a coin into a well and you don't even hear the plunk. At that point they could have done it, but they didn't. You see, that's what's crazy about all this. The people in the Valley, myself included, were never against the park. We loved the idea. We were strongly in favor of it. What this all was about was the way in which the Park Service did it. That's the whole deal.

MR. COCKRELL: There was an independent Advisory Commission set up under the park's authorizing Act that was supposed to be a liaison between the park's management and the local community to provide information and assistance. Did that serve the way that it should have?

MR. STEIN-SAPIR: It wasn't in place when I was there, and if it was, it didn't do anything.

MR. COCKRELL: They held quarterly meetings and it was open to the public. There were thirteen or fourteen people appointed to it.

MR. STEIN-SAPIR: I do remember something about that except the people that were appointed were fellow travelers. Everybody in the Valley said, "What's the sense of even going to these things for?" They set up this Commission, and said, "Look we have this independent Commission!" But it was made up by people with views which were basically those of the Park Service. They might have had one "radical" on it, but that's about it.

I was the head of the Homeowners Association. I was the most vocal, the strongest opponent. They never asked me to be on it.

MR. COCKRELL: Would you have served on it if you had been asked?

MR. STEIN-SAPIR: I sure would have as foolhardy as that may have been.

By the way, I have to tell you something. I remember going to one of those meetings. There were a couple of items that were of great interest to us, and I think Max Ratner was the Chairman of this, or was at the time. I wanted to present some views and they told me I could have five minutes at the end of the meeting. That is the Advisory Commission that was supposed to be such a help? It

Leonard R. Stein-Sapir

was absolutely a red herring. It was so people could say, "Well, gee, there was an Advisory Commission made up of members of the community. What are you complaining about?"

It was like from what I understand before the park was even created or after it was created they used to have meetings with people of the community to get their views. Every time they did something and people would complain about it, they'd say, "Gee, we had meetings. Why didn't you voice your objection then?" Or, they'd say, "We're just doing what the people wanted," except they never had any records of what the people wanted. It was absolutely just a political thing that they could use as a weapon. It was totally meaningless other than as a political weapon for the Park Service. It was a joke!

MR. COCKRELL: What are your views on the Park Service's development program?

MR. STEIN-SAPIR: They never had a development program as long as I was there that had any meaning. I don't know what they are doing now. The one thing that sticks in my mind about their "development program" was when they finally took all the little homes in Everett and boarded them up. They had this moronic idea, in my opinion, of turning it into a craft village.

I mean, think about the lunacy. They take homes away from people who lived there for generations, take them away, board them up, and then they are going to put money into them so people could spend the summers doing crafts! It's so crazy, it's almost funny if it wasn't so tragic.

The Park Service always appeared to me to be a bunch of little kids playing with a loaded gun. They didn't know what they were doing, and they were hurting a lot of innocent people.

MR. COCKRELL: What about the Oak Hill Day Use Area?

MR. STEIN-SAPIR: That came about way, way, way, into the Park Service's development of the park, and when we tried to find out when this had been planned, we could never find out. If you look at a map you'll see that that was put right next to my house.

It was always our feeling that that was put in there to try and force me out. I can't prove it, but I would bet that's true: "Hey, we'll put a day use area facility right next to Stein-Sapir and he'll get so aggravated that he'll leave. I think they must have spent, I don't know, three or four million dollars putting that in. I'll bet if you count the cars going in there it probably comes out to \$100,000 a car.

Leonard R. Stein-Sapir

MR. COCKRELL: How would you characterize the two Superintendents you've dealt with, Bill Birdsell and Lew Albert?

MR. STEIN-SAPIR: Birdsell, in my opinion, was a true believer who didn't know what he was doing as evidenced by his performance. He didn't follow the will of Congress. He was vindictive. He was bigoted. He was an embarrassment to the Park Service. As far as I was concerned, he was an embarrassment to humanity.

The next person I dealt with was a man by the name of Albert, and that was for a very short time. Albert, I thought, was a little more of a politician, but he was, in my opinion, not much better than Birdsell. I mean the man had his wife take a financial interest in the train that ran through the valley. Here's a person who is supposed to be above reproach, and he has his wife in a financial situation where she is dealing with a facility in the Park Service area he is administering.

That was in such bad taste, and it was evidence of such bad judgement. It was like the Park Service had a self-destructive kind of a mold. They picked one bad person after another, in my opinion. After Albert I can't comment because I don't know anything about anybody after that.

MR. COCKRELL: Did you ever have any meetings with Lew Albert?

MR. STEIN-SAPIR: I went up to Lew Albert at a meeting when he was installed, and I introduced myself. I said, "I hope that you do a better job than Birdsell did," and he was openly hostile. Yes, really.

MR. COCKRELL: Did he say anything else? He knew that you were the President of the Homeowners Association?

MR. STEIN-SAPIR: Oh, he knew very well who I was. That's why he was so hostile.

MR. COCKRELL: Do you remember the time period that you were President of the homeowner's group?

MR. STEIN-SAPIR: I believe it was about '77, '80 to '81, something like that. I can't give you the exact dates. That's documented. Marty Griffith will have the exact records for the exact time.

MR. COCKRELL: Are you still a member, and do you participate in any way?

MR. STEIN-SAPIR: No, I do not. It frankly is a part of my family's life that I do not want to dwell upon. It involved a lot of unhappy memories. On the other hand, I think it was instructive

Leonard R. Stein-Sapir

for my children. You have to stand up for what you believe, even against the government. I can always hold my head up high because I did everything that was humanly possible to right a wrong situation.

I think some things were accomplished. Birdsell was removed out of office which I thought was a plus. Sieberling left Congress which I think had a lot to do with the way he appeared to his peers based upon this park thing. I think a lot of good things happened as a result of it.

Hopefully, self-analysis like what you're doing now for the Park Service will lead to the conclusion for people who are in authority now who will say, "Gee, they really did botch this up. They really shouldn't have done it this way. We're not going to make those mistakes in the future."

And hopefully someday Congress will look at this whole situation and say, "We're not going to give an organization such as the Park Service the carte blanche to destroy communities and families without more of a showing of public need than what they've done in the past." If I'm ever in Congress, because who knows what the future holds, one of the things I will push very strongly is exactly that.

MR. COCKRELL: Do you have any aspirations for that?

MR. STEIN-SAPIR: No. It's just that my experience with life so far is that who knows what is going to happen?

MR. COCKRELL: Is there anything I haven't asked you that you think should be on the record?

MR. STEIN-SAPIR: Oh, I'll probably think of something after you leave. But, frankly, the only time I even started thinking of this again was last night when my wife said, "A gentleman from the Park Service wants to stop by and talk to you." You know, memories sort of rush back.

Just don't make the same mistakes again. It's just too tragic for this country to let that sort of thing happen.

MR. COCKRELL: Thank you very much for your time and for being so patient in answering my questions.

[END]

O R A L H I S T O R Y I N T E R V I E W

F O R T H E

A D M I N I S T R A T I V E H I S T O R Y O F

C U Y A H O G A V A L L E Y

N A T I O N A L R E C R E A T I O N A R E A

O H I O

Harvey R. Swack
Professor of Business Administration, Mount Ida College
(former Director, Cuyahoga Valley Park Federation)

Telephone Conversation
September 5, 1989
Needham, Massachusetts

Interviewed by:

Ron Cockrell
Historian
Midwest Regional Office
National Park Service

Letter
Omaha, Nebraska
August 29, 1989

Harvey R. Swack

Harvey R. Swack

MR. COCKRELL: [Summarizing the conversation]:

Mr. Swack began the telephone interview by presenting some background information.

Swack himself first conceived of establishing the Cuyahoga Valley Park Federation (CVPF) in 1969. He knew that only through organizing such a group to spearhead citizen pressure would the politicians pay any heed to the movement to create a national park in the Cuyahoga Valley. Swack began working toward this goal in the late 1960s.

Swack's background clearly reflects that he is "a professional park man." Before his employment with Cleveland Metropolitan Park District (CMPD) in the public affairs division, he was involved in managing a local park. CMPD at that time had "18 million visitors on 18 acres of land." It couldn't expand beyond Cuyahoga County. To preserve the valley, CMPD had to work with Akron Metropolitan Park District (AMPD). In 1969, Swack organized a meeting between CMPD and AMPD to tour the valley and discuss its preservation. The time was not yet right because AMPD was not ready to commit funds to the effort. There were some concerns expressed about "being overrun by Clevelanders."

In the early 1970s, two things happened to create a more favorable climate for a national park. First, the election of John Seiberling to Congress who introduced a park bill. The fact that Seiberling was from Summit County was critical in showing that the initiative was coming from this sector. Second, the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) was interested in devoting the bulk of its Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) monies to the effort.

In charge of coordinating the tax levies for CMPD, Swack discovered that citizens truly loved their parks. He constantly received calls from people who wanted to donate money. As a professor of marketing and business, he knew "how to manipulate private funds for public purposes." People continuously donated land and property to CMPD--some of which CMPD did not want. Swack worked closely with The Cleveland Foundation to set up an independent fund called the "Emerald Necklace Fund" which would channel private donations to park projects. Real and personal property would first pass through the foundation; non contiguous land that CMPD did not want could be sold and the proceeds go to CMPD. Swack also worked closely with The Gund Foundation, and this relationship paid off later when Gund began giving grants for the proposed national park.

The support of one organization with ties to both Cuyahoga and Summit counties was the Lake Erie Watershed Conservation Foundation (LEWCF). Swack initially approached Director George Watkins to

Harvey R. Swack

enlist LEWCF's support for the proposed park and to convince him that it was vital to purchase the land before developers got it. Watkins was not enthusiastic. Swack subsequently spoke to Watkins' boss, George Humphrey, and convinced Humphrey of the merits of the plan. When Humphrey threw LEWCF's full support behind the project, Watkins also became enthusiastic and worked very diligently for the national park.

In a quirk of great timing, President Richard M. Nixon announced his "parks to the people" program in the early 1970s and unveiled plans to establish national recreation areas in San Francisco and New York to be operated by the National Park Service. It sounded like a great idea and just exactly what the Cuyahoga Valley needed.

The following are Harvey Swack's responses to my written questions:

1. Could you explain how you came to be Director of the Cuyahoga Valley Park Federation (CVPF)?

MR. SWACK: [Summary of response:] 1. "Innocently." Because Swack was already promoting the goal of a national park, George Watkins suggested that Harvey take the job because he was most familiar with the valley's resources.

Previously, Swack and Watkins had organized a dinner meeting of community leaders at the CMPD Happy Hollow Golf Course to discuss the proposed park. This meeting was crucial to the park's ultimate establishment. When Swack announced to the assembled community leaders that The Gund Foundation was willing to finance the park movement, everyone jumped on the bandwagon and agreed to form a support group. Seeing that everyone was so enthusiastic, the Director of CMPD stood up and declared that Harvey Swack would lead the effort.

Swack was very concerned that the public not identify the park movement as a "Cleveland effort." He cited the traditional rivalry between Cleveland and Akron, and the inferiority complex and suspicion that Akronites have of any initiative coming from Clevelanders. He related that at one meeting in Summit County he found it necessary to disassociate himself from Cleveland. When asked where he was from, Swack replied that he was not a Cleveland, but was born and raised in West Salem, a community south of Akron.

Nonetheless, Swack was employed by CMPD. He had to be very careful not to be in the public limelight. He worked more effectively by remaining in the background. For instance, when the League of Women Voters (LWV) prepared a study of the proposed valley park, Swack contributed a significant amount of information. He pre-

Harvey R. Swack

ferred having LWV be the "spearhead group" for the study because it would lend more credence to the effort.

MR. COCKRELL: 2. What involvement did you have with George Watkins of the Lake Erie Watershed Conservation Foundation and their Cuyahoga Valley Committee? How active and significant was this group?

MR. SWACK: 2. Swack answered this question in his opening remarks. He and George Watkins were the most active participants.

MR. COCKRELL: 3. How important were the valley tours to the park movement?

MR. SWACK: 3. The tours were very important because it showed that large numbers of people were coming to see for themselves what treasures lay hidden in the Cuyahoga Valley. Swack organized the CVPF-sponsored tours after seeing how popular an attraction the Hale Farm was with community and school groups. In fact, he borrowed Hale Farm's list of addresses and invited these groups to contact CVPF for its guided bus tours.

MR. COCKRELL: 4. Do you think the community understood what national park status meant? Who were some of your opponents? What were some of the anti-park positions? Was there an element of racism involved?

MR. SWACK: 4. No, no one knew about NPS. Most assumed it would be a "glorified metropark" because their only frame of reference were the metropark districts. Valley residents (Peninsula) were the worst opponents to having any park. During ODNR's land acquisition program, Swack requested that ODNR's acquisition officers coordinate their efforts through him in order to stem any organized opposition. After the park's authorization, the Corps really messed things up. Swack tried to warn the NPS about what was happening, but NPS would not listen--as park professionals "they knew it all" and didn't think they had to listen to the locals.

There was a definite element of racism for some in opposing the park. Many feared being overrun by minorities (i.e., blacks) from Cleveland. Swack pointed out that "minorities have cars" and they will come to the valley anyway if that is what they wish to do. In this manner, the park will provide a definite place and facilities for everyone.

A lot of the opposition mushroomed following park establishment. CMPD and ODNR "paid peanuts" for land. NPS paid "far too much" and the greed compounded what dissatisfaction simmered in the valley.

Harvey R. Swack

MR. COCKRELL: 5. Was the formation of CVPF in early 1974 the primary reason why the park bill passed in late 1974?

MR. SWACK: 5. Yes, coupled with the support of key politicians. Everything Swack tried in order to drum up public support worked and generated a lot of publicity. The momentum kept building. Swack enlisted scouting groups to pick up trash along roadsides. He even got industry to donate the roadside trash barrels which were painted "park green." More than \$100,000 was saved in one year because of this volunteer litter collection program.

Swack also attended local zoning board meetings and convinced officials not to issue permits for development projects while the park proposal was before Congress. Most tried their best to comply.

MR. COCKRELL: 6. How important were these CVPF affiliates? Did they contribute much in terms of financial support or active lobbying? What were some of the most active affiliates?

MR. SWACK: 6. CVPF recruited as many affiliates as possible--81 in all. They were used primarily to publicize how many people really did want the park. Swack did not ask them for money because they were already getting sufficient foundation funding.

MR. COCKRELL: 7. Why was it that the Gund and Cleveland Foundations were your only principal supporters, and why didn't Akron sources match those from the Cleveland area?

MR. SWACK: 7. Those two foundations were the main financial supporters because they were concerned that Clevelanders needed the extra space for recreation. The Hinkley Reservation in Medina County, operated by CMPD, was nice, but it was still not large enough. There was really no money in Akron to get because Summit County was "very poor."

MR. COCKRELL: 8. Ed Baugh was hired to lobby for the park bill in Washington, D.C. Could you please explain the methods he used as well as what you thought about his activities?

MR. SWACK: 8. Baugh was ODNR's lobbyist. They were good friends. While Baugh did not infringe on CVPF's efforts, his primary duty was to look out for ODNR's interests which did include the proposed national park. In other words, their goal was the same, but Baugh limited himself to Capitol Hill and Swack covered Ohio.

MR. COCKRELL: 9. How did CVPF's advisory board (led by George Watkins) oversee your activities? Were there any problems?

Harvey R. Swack

MR. SWACK: 9. Swack regularly passed various issues by the board for approval. Swack organized the board into a speaker's bureau to help him promote the park throughout the region and attract other affiliates. Representatives on the board came from the more active groups in the CVPF.

MR. COCKRELL: 10. What relationship did you have with the Ohio Department of Natural Resources during the park movement? Were there any problems?

MR. SWACK: 10. Swack had a good relationship with ODNR Director William Nye. Nye didn't know if the effort to establish a park would succeed. There weren't any real problems. Swack wanted to get people hiking, biking, and camping in the valley. He approached Kent State University (KSU) which had a Bachelor of Arts program in parks and recreation. KSU undertook just such a program. They did not encourage anyone to canoe on the Cuyahoga River because it was too polluted. Swack got KSU to undertake an inventory of the valley's flora and fauna, too.

MR. COCKRELL: 11. What role did Bill Blair, an employee in Governor Gilligan's Office, play in the park movement?

MR. SWACK: 11. Never heard of him.

MR. COCKRELL: 12. How important was the chartered bus of park supporters to Washington, D.C., for the congressional hearing in the spring of 1974, to the park movement?

MR. SWACK: 12. It was "very critical." Swack organized the group to demonstrate local support for the park. Many wanted to go, but did not have the money to do so. Swack found the money for them and "people were hanging from the rafters" in the hearing room. While the CVPF board expressed reservations about the chartered bus, Swack said "I know what I'm doing; I'm running the show." It proved a monumental success and impressed the politicians. The board subsequently praised Swack for it.

Swack knew how to deal with people, particularly on land acquisition matters. When ODNR proposed acquiring 20-acres of land when a man proposed subdividing it among his three sons and one daughter, Swack testified against it before the zoning board. He said if a man's children wanted to live next to their parents, he was all for it and would do everything he could to accommodate them. Swack said "CMPD never tossed anybody out." All were willing sellers.

MR. COCKRELL: 13. How did CVPF use the media in promoting the park concept?

Harvey R. Swack

MR. SWACK: 13. The media was fascinated by the park movement and allowed itself to be used by CVPF. Swack kept a low profile for reasons stated above. He relied on volunteers to promote the park. Swack's primary motivation for pushing for a national park was to "take the pressure off of Cleveland." James Jackson, a former editor of the **Akron Beacon Journal**, and his wife, Margot, were very important to the park movement. Harvey's philosophy was to give other people the credit and not himself. Many people told him that it is really "Harvey's park."

MR. COCKRELL: 14. Why do you believe the bill passed through Congress so quickly during 1974? Were you concerned that President Ford would veto it?

MR. SWACK: 14. Not answered.

MR. COCKRELL: 15. Why did you want to remain CVPF Director in 1975?

MR. SWACK: 15. Swack wanted to stay one more year because everyone encouraged him to stay and help develop the new park. CMPD's board and director changed in the meantime. His leave of absence was not renewable, so he resigned his CMPD position.

MR. COCKRELL: 16. When CVNRA was established in June 1975, it showed up on a list of areas where NPS would contract with State and local authorities for operation and maintenance. Was there a plan within the Department not to make CVNRA a full-fledged NPS unit?

MR. SWACK: 16. Don't know.

MR. COCKRELL: 17. What led to your resignation and replacement by Sheridan Steele?

MR. SWACK: 17. Swack resigned after two years in the position to join a regional planning commission. He wanted "to wear a different hat" and work "on the other side of the fence." On the commission, Swack had a voice in how the valley park was developed.

Salary was an issue. Swack was paid \$25,000 a year. Once the objective was achieved, the CVPF board did not want to continue funding the position at that level. It was a mutual agreement for Swack to resign as director. He said that Sheridan Steele was a good selection as his successor.

[END]

I N T E R V I E W V I A C O R R E S P O N D E N C E

**F O R T H E
A D M I N I S T R A T I V E H I S T O R Y O F
C U Y A H O G A V A L L E Y
N A T I O N A L R E C R E A T I O N A R E A
O H I O**

**Robert Taft, Jr.
(former United States Senator from Ohio)**

**Letter
September 21, 1989
Cincinnati, Ohio**

Interviewed by:

**Ron Cockrell
Historian
Midwest Regional Office
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior**

**Letter
August 29, 1989
Omaha, Nebraska**

Robert Taft, Jr.

MR. COCKRELL: I am a National Park Service (NPS) historian currently researching and compiling the Administrative History of Cuyahoga Valley National Recreation Area (CVNRA), Ohio. I respectfully request your participation in this project which will document the history and development of this important NPS unit.

I have researched the park files and have conducted many oral history interviews, but I need your perspective on a number of items which are as follows:

1. In April 1973, Senator Saxbe and you introduced S. 1862, the companion bill to Congressman Vanik's and Seiberling's to authorize CVNRA. Was this the first Senate bill introduced--or was there one in the previous session? (John Seiberling first introduced a Cuyahoga bill in 1971.)

MR. TAFT: In answer to your letter of August 29 concerning the administrative history of the Cuyahoga Valley National Recreation Area of Ohio, I am enclosing material which you may not already have, and I hope it will be of interest to you.

To my knowledge, no Senate bill had been introduced prior to the bill Senator Saxbe and I introduced in 1973. The idea of the park, however, was spearheaded by Northern Ohio congressmen in the 1960s.

MR. COCKRELL: 2. Why were there no hearings held until 1974? 3. Were you surprised by the speed which the final bill passed through both houses? 4. I am interested in why specific actions you took to push the bill through the Senate in late 1974. (If possible, please provide the names of Senators who assisted you in your efforts.)

MR. TAFT: 2.; 3.; and 4. By 1974, passage had become pretty much a bipartisan effort in Ohio and in both House and Senate, where it passed by voice vote. I have no record in my files of writing a "Dear Colleague" letter requesting support of writing to the Secretary of the Interior, although I am sure I availed myself of opportunities to make a case for the park both in Congress and the Department.

MR. COCKRELL: 5. How much help did Senator Howard M. Metzenbaum provide in getting the bill passed?

MR. TAFT: 5. Senator Metzenbaum expedited the bill through the Interior and Insular Committee when he became a member in 1974. (There had been no Ohioan on that committee in earlier sessions.)

MR. COCKRELL: 6. What role did Ray Bliss play in the park movement? 7. The Department of the Interior recommended against enactment during the hearings, and subsequently for President Ford

Robert Taft, Jr.

to veto the bill. How did you feel about the Department's position? 8. What actions did you take to ensure that the President did not veto the bill? 9. White House records indicate that you asked to speak to Mr. Ford if he decided to veto the bill. Most of his advisors told him to veto it. Did you speak to him? If so, when; where; and what took place?

MR. TAFT: 6.; 7.; 8.; and 9. Questions not answered.

MR. COCKRELL: 10. The White House issued a statement following the President signing the bill. It cited one reservation: the issue of the Secretary of the Interior contracting for police and fire protection. The Administration did not want to pay for this and recommended the provision be amended in the next Congress. You were quoted as saying you would investigate the matter. What did you learn? Was any action taken?

MR. TAFT: 10. I recognized the Department's concern of spreading its appropriations too thinly and testified to the House Appropriations Committee in 1975 of the need for an increase to cover new parks, and increased appropriations was supported by the Senate Republican Party Committee in its June 26, 1976 notice of H.R. 14231, Department of the Interior and Related Agencies Appropriations bill.

Regarding the following session of Congress (1975-76), I have no record of introducing an amending resolution to Section 8 of the Senate bill (S. 1862), which called for a cooperative plan with State and local governments to provide adequate road maintenance, rescue, firefighting and law enforcement services in the park and relieving local governments of the cost thereof. I can only assume that the Department was able to negotiate satisfactorily with State and local officials in regard to earlier reservations on the financial burden on the Department at the time the President signed the bill.

MR. COCKRELL: 11. The Omnibus National Parks Bill of 1976 included a provision to expand CVNRA. There was some fear that President Ford might veto it. Did you speak to the President about it?

MR. TAFT: Question not answered.

[END]

Robert Taft, Jr.

O R A L H I S T O R Y I N T E R V I E W
F O R T H E
A D M I N I S T R A T I V E H I S T O R Y O F
C U Y A H O G A V A L L E Y
N A T I O N A L R E C R E A T I O N A R E A
O H I O

Ronald G. Thoman
Chief, Interpretation and Visitor Services
Cuyahoga Valley National Recreation Area
National Park Service

May 26, 1989
Brecksville, Ohio

Interviewed by:
Ron Cockrell
Historian
Midwest Regional Office
National Park Service
United States Department of the Interior

Omaha, Nebraska
1989

Ronald G. Thoman

Ronald G. Thoman

MR. COCKRELL: I would like for you to start by telling me, since you are familiar with the history of this valley, what some of the earliest preservation and recreation uses were?

MR. THOMAN: As I like to tell the story when I go out and talk to people, recreation and preservation in the valley are certainly nothing new. I would say it goes back at least to the latter quarter of the 19th century. The canal, of course, was developed through the valley because of its topography and because of the river. It was the canal that led to booming industrial and agricultural growth and consequently, the birth and growth of Cleveland and Akron as large urban industrial areas.

Interestingly enough, the valley itself stayed pretty pastoral, quiet, rural, agricultural, mainly because of soil conditions and lack of water. Consequently, as the cities grew and people started looking for ways to get away from some of the less desirable aspects of urban life, they began flowing back into the valley from whence their city sprang, I guess you might say.

We have a lot of interesting photographs going back to the 1870's, 1880's, 1890's, people on carriage rides down through the valley, boat trips down the canal and canoeing on the river. Even in the latter part of the 19th century, it was heavily used for that. Boston Ledges was well known way back then. Then right after the turn of the century or 1910 to 1920, you probably have those figures better than I do, interest in the valley peaked even more as the Cleveland and Akron Metropolitan Park Districts were developed. That was really the first formal recreational development in the valley.

So we saw the birth of the Akron and Cleveland park systems. Then we have the issue of Akron contracting with the Olmsted Brothers firm to study further possibilities for parks in Summit County. They made particular and very strong recommendations about preserving much of the Cuyahoga Valley as park land. That was circa 1925, I believe.

Interestingly enough, Hale Farm, off and on, of course it is still owned by the Hale Family, but to make ends meet, some of the Hales were using their farm as kind of a what we might call a "bed and breakfast" or a hostel today. People were riding the train out or coming out in the valley in other ways and staying at the Hale place during the summer.

I think we also saw during that period, let's say the 1920's and 30's roughly, a lot of people coming out to the valley and building weekend cabins here. There were even some people moving out into the country and building new homes, so that movement was beginning from the city.

Ronald G. Thoman

Then, of course, in the mid-1920's Cleveland industrialist, Hayward Kendall died and willed his estate around the Ritchie Ledges to the state of Ohio after trying to give it to the National Park Service. It went to the state of Ohio and ultimately became Virginia Kendall State Park in the late 20's or early 30's, so you had that growth.

Then again in the late 20's or early 30's, you had the creation of the Boy Scout camps in Maniotoc and particularly in Butler a little later; a Girl Scout camp, Ledgeood. Of course, also very important during the 30's was the Civilian Conservation Corps activity in the valley, with Happy Days Camp, in particular, developing all of the formal and extensive park facilities in Virginia Kendall and some other outlying areas. Of course, some of the Cleveland parks also had CCC work going on in them and in some of the Cleveland metro parks in the valley; Bedford and Brecksville.

Then in the 1940's, you saw the coming of Camp Mueller to the valley, which historically, I understand, is very important because it was one of the very first Black inner-city camps. It was a facility owned and operated by the Phyllis Wheatley Association out of Cleveland, a private social service organization.

Then in the 1950's, Clara Belle Ritchie, the last Hale descendent, willed Hale Farm to the Western Reserve Historical Society and it was ultimately opened as an outdoor living history museum, preserving some of the historical fabric and story of the valley.

In the 1960's, you saw the coming of Blossom Music Center as the summer home of the Cleveland Orchestra to the valley, followed shortly thereafter by Porthouse Theater, the summer theater of Kent State University on adjacent grounds. This was quickly followed by Boston Mills Ski Resort, and Brandywine Ski Center. Up into the 1970's, Dover Lake Park followed.

Then you had the opening of the Cuyahoga Valley Line. Along in there somewhere, the National Park Service came along and started this place.

The point is, and what I think is very interesting to note historically, recreation and preservation in the valley was nothing new, it was just part of a long evolution. I like to say that the Cuyahoga Valley National Recreation Area was only the sort of logical next step of all of that, and perhaps not even the last step. You talk to the Superintendent and you hear about the Heritage Corridor idea and the spreading out even further, but it is just a logical progression and I think it will continue to go that way depending on people's perception and relationship to the environment and how important they think this sort of thing is.

Ronald G. Thoman

MR. COCKRELL: That's very good background information. I wanted that to be the first question because you made a special point of pointing that out. The next question deals with your background and career; how you got to where you are now.

MR. THOMAN: I graduated from Kent State University in 1965 with degrees in English, history and education. I taught high school for three years near here in Berea, Ohio, before joining the Park Service in 1967 as a Park Historian at Chickamauga and Chattanooga National Military Park. I was there until 1970, when I transferred to New York City Group as Unit Manager of Federal Hall National Memorial and Castle Clinton National Monument. I was there until 1972 when I transferred to Cape Hatteras National Seashore as Assistant Chief of Interpretation and Unit Manager of Fort Raleigh and Wright Brothers that were managed out of Cape Hatteras.

I was there until 1973, only 14 months, and then was selected as the Superintendent of the Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site. I was there from 1973 until 1975, when I went to Point Reyes National Seashore as Chief of Interpretation. Incidentally, I might mention that was a deliberate move out of management and back into interpretation where I feel my greatest strength is. Although I enjoyed park management a lot and learned a lot, I felt I could make a better contribution in interpretation, so I came back. I was at Point Reyes until 1977, when I went to the Albright Training Center as an instructor. I was there until 1979 when I came here to Cuyahoga. So I have been here at Cuyahoga for just ten years now.

MR. COCKRELL: Before you came to Cuyahoga Valley, since you had a long history in the Park Service, you probably had heard about the establishment of this park or proposed establishment. What was the general attitude among NPS employees toward Cuyahoga Valley? What were some of the things you heard?

MR. THOMAN: I think that is interesting because I did hear things. I was on the staff at the Training Center at the time. Well, part of that time, from 1977 to 1979. Of course, the park had already been around for a while. It had been around just long enough to start generating comment. But I did hear a lot from all levels of management in the Park Service, as well as employees. I think without any question, from the very beginning in contacts that I had and things I heard from people, it was a negative attitude about Cuyahoga. It was an interesting negative attitude because probably 99.9% of the people that expressed those attitudes have never been here. If you talk to them, and I always ask because this is my home, I am from this area, so I was always interested in why. People didn't really know why.

Ronald G. Thoman

There were two or three things that came out. One was it still carried the stigma of the burning river, which as you know, became something of a catalyst for Earth Day in 1970 and one of the symbols of the environmental decade. But I think a lot of it was, "God Almighty, why would we want to have some place whose river caught fire as a unit of the National Park System?"

This was in an age, as you will recall, the latter Hartzog years, when the Park Service was becoming much more politicized, the park barrel programs. There was a lot of resistance to the Park System growing by leaps and bounds and adding a lot of areas that people felt were political; they weren't really significant. I think maybe Cuyahoga epitomized that, because most people had the idea that it really shouldn't be in the System, but political maneuvering got it here anyway.

I think Cuyahoga became a symbol of what a lot of people in the Service feared about the new urban recreation areas. I think they accepted Gateway and Golden Gate to a certain extent, first of all because they were in New York and San Francisco and secondly, because they were touted as demonstration areas. But then when Cuyahoga came along, everybody was saying, "Wait a minute! Is this becoming a trend? It has taken a lot of money away from other parks and a lot of staff and so on." So, I think people were afraid of Cuyahoga as a symbol of things to come, political, and perhaps where the System was going. But universally as I say, without fail, people had this sort of sour and nasty attitude.

I remember when I was at Point Reyes in 1975 or 1976, then Assistant Secretary Nat Reed was in San Francisco making a speech which I heard. In that speech, as an example, he talked about Cuyahoga, but his attitude was, "Well, that one slipped through on us, but I will guarantee you, there will never be another Cuyahoga in the National Park System." So it was reflected at the very highest levels of the administration on down. I think there were many in the Park Service who felt the same way, if not most. As some of your research has uncovered, there were some people, however, like Tedd McCann, who thought, "Wait a minute" after having been here and looking at it.

Interestingly, I will only add to that that I saw that same attitude after I was here. In fact, I will tell you another little anecdote. This is true; it is a fact. Bill Whalen, when he was Director, came to Albright Training Center when I was on the staff. We were sitting in the office chatting. In fact, Rick Smith was sitting in the office with me. Whalen was asking us, "So what do you guys see as your next career move? What are you interested in?"

Ronald G. Thoman

I had just met Bill Birdsell. He had come out to Albright in September of 1978 to a training course and I had met him. I was talking to him about this park because it was interesting to me, because it was back home, so to speak. Bill had actually started asking me if I would be interested in coming to Cuyahoga as the first Chief of Interpretation. I got very interested for other reasons which we won't go into here unless you want to.

I was thinking about it, so when Bill Whalen asked that question later, I said, "Well, Bill, I am thinking I might like to go to Cuyahoga," and he looked at me, his mouth dropped open, his eyes got wide and he said, "why?" I said, "I feel it would be an interesting challenge." He said to me, "Cuyahoga is the armpit of the National Park Service. Why would you want to throw away your career on a place like that?" Now I don't know if that is appropriate to use anywhere around, but that is the attitude that was reflected, even in the Director at that time. I think by then, Bill had been here and had even seen the park, so there was still that pervasive attitude.

You have uncovered how the Region felt about it, so there was no question about it. I will just finish by saying that almost without exception, people who felt that way, once they had come to the park and visited it and seen it and learned about its potential, would go away with greatly changed minds. I saw that happen time and time again. One of the big things that I spent a lot of time doing since I have been here is personally taking people on tours--VIP's and politicians and media people and whoever else I can get my hands on--giving them a tour and rhapsodizing about the park and trying to turn things around. I think it has a little bit. I don't think it has anywhere near the stigma that it used to have.

MR. COCKRELL: When you arrived here, what were your first impressions of the park?

MR. THOMAN: You know it is funny, I have been here so long, I don't remember much any more, to tell you the truth! Even though I am from this area and went to Kent State University, I don't ever remember being over in the valley very much until I actually transferred here. I remember being only miles from downtown Cleveland and Akron and how wonderfully pastoral a place it was. It was a very complex and confusing place. I remember sitting in the motel while I was house hunting, spending every night with the park map out driving around roads trying to figure out where I was. But other than that, I really don't recall many of those early times.

I am glad to be here. I certainly didn't regret it at all. I saw it as an incredible challenge and so many wonderful things in the

Ronald G. Thoman

park. All the cultural amenities, Blossom and Hale and so on. It was kind of an overwhelming feeling really.

MR. COCKRELL: When you first arrived, you lived in Park housing. Why does this park or why did it at that time provide housing for employees?

MR. THOMAN: Bill Birdsell was an old fashioned, old-line Park Ranger, Park Superintendent type. He came out of the old school of Park Service thinking when park housing was just part of the National Park Service lifestyle. The majority of the Park Service staff lived in park housing, even in urban areas.

When I was at Chickamauga for example, we were right outside Chattanooga and I lived in a park house there. I think it was only in the 1970's when this whole attitude against park housing sprung into being. I am not sure why it happened. With the kind of creeping bureaucratization of the agency and all of that, all of a sudden the attitude changed to one that housing wasn't such a good thing.

Bill had a gut feeling that park housing was part of the lifestyle. When people live in the park, they care more about it, they grow more attached to it, and they are there to protect it. Then, of course, you must remember there was a tremendous number of houses being acquired in the park and they were just sitting there so it was like "Why not?" I think also, Bill was bucking the thing about trying to recruit and bring people to Cuyahoga. Given what we just talked about, negative perceptions, he saw this as an inducement to get employees here.

In my own case, for example, when Bill sent the Chief of Interpretation job in to be classified, it was classified as a GS-11. I was already a GS-12, so I had to take a downgrade to come here. I did so willingly because Bill felt that it would go back to a 12 eventually. As part of the inducement, Bill said, "We will give you some housing." Not give you, but we will make that available. So I know he was using that as an inducement to try and get some people here. I think that is why. They certainly were available, Bill believed in it and it was a nice thing to do.

MR. COCKRELL: How did the local people feel about park employees living in former residents' homes?

MR. THOMAN: My impression was that they didn't have any problem with it at all. I never heard anybody in the community criticize that. I had heard secondhand that some people perhaps had said something about kicking local residents out to provide housing for park employees, but I never heard that directly. I am not sure I would give any credence to the fact that it ever was said.

Ronald G. Thoman

My only personal experience with it was, the house that I lived in was within the Peninsula school area. My kids (who were in elementary school) attended the Peninsula schools and got along really well with everybody. Through the PTA and things like that, I knew all of the local residents, and I felt frankly that it was a good thing. I knew several residents who felt the same way.

When I decided to buy a house for my own personal reasons and move out of government housing in 1982, the Bishop family who lives in Peninsula (old time residents of Peninsula), misunderstood and thought that I was being forced out of park housing because of Park Service policy. They actually wrote a letter to Superintendent Lew Albert, and said, "We hope there is not a park policy about doing that." They wrote graciously about me specifically, but they spread it beyond that and said, "We think it is a good idea to have park employees living in these buildings and intermingling with our community and being part of our school, rather than saying they can't live in the park and they have to go off and live in Cuyahoga Falls or Akron or some other place." So the people that I talked to felt it was a good thing as opposed to a bad thing.

In my own personal experience, I have never had a bad experience. My daughter and Marty and Marilyn Griffith's daughter were the same age, in the same class, and were close friends. My daughter stayed at their house all the time. Their daughter stayed at my house all the time when I lived in Peninsula. My daughter went with their daughter and babysat for Leonard Stein-Sapir on numerous occasions. So while some of those people may have hated the Park Service and what was going on, they were friends certainly with me and I know with other employees in the park. My feeling was that it was a good thing. Frankly, if I had my way, I would have more park employees living in park housing in these communities.

MR. COCKRELL: How did the policy evolve to today? Are there less employees in park housing?

MR. THOMAN: There are none. Zero.

MR. COCKRELL: When was that?

MR. THOMAN: Well, I think starting in the early 1980's. Actually, I think Bill Birdsell was under some pressure. I think if you want to know the truth of the matter, the real problem was that Bill Birdsell lived in a park house. I don't think the local residents gave a hang about me or people like me living in park houses, but Bill Birdsell had selected a big, fancy house, I believe that was formerly the home of a doctor and he moved into it.

Ronald G. Thoman

Bill did not have good local relationships, particularly with the Peninsula community, but he picked a house in Peninsula. I think people were more agitated about his living in that house and I think that may have been an issue. I know the Region and perhaps Washington was constantly critical of Bill living in that house and would like to have gotten him out of it. I think they were starting to put pressure on him. I don't know this for a fact, but my guess would be that obviously, rather than just coming to him and saying, "You as an individual employee have to get out of park housing," there was just pressure to get rid of him. Then Bill died.

Lew came and Lew didn't care about living in the park, and didn't want to. I think Lew was philosophically bent, although he had been in the Park Service for a long time also, against park housing and I think he concurred with the Region. He just slowly started moving people out of park housing. He never tried to toss those of us out who were in it. But through attrition, whenever a house was vacated, he wouldn't let anybody move in it again.

Then it got down to our two District Rangers living in park housing. Supposedly as a 24-hour presence in the park. Each of them moved out I think of their own accord, although rents in park housing were skyrocketing also. Those two phased out so now we have zero, no park housing with the exception of one historic structure that we have kept as a dormitory for seasonals and SCA's and volunteers, which is the old Hine house down near Hale Farm.

MR. COCKRELL: When you arrived here, what was the morale and attitudes of the staff? Who was on staff here?

MR. THOMAN: When I came in April of 1979, I don't know if I can tell you all of the staff. It was still relatively small. Bill Birdsell was Superintendent. Pete Peterson was Assistant Superintendent. Sheridan Steele was Management Assistant, I can't remember the name of the Secretary, Susan can tell you, but I can't remember. The Chief Ranger was Bob Byrne. His Assistant Chief Ranger was Lloyd Korsche. Chief of Maintenance was Jack Peay. The Administrative Officer was Gerry McClarnon who is down in the Regional Office. There was no TAPS at that time.

I was the first Chief of Interpretation. On my staff was Chester Hamilton who was the park's Historian and volunteer coordinator and a variety of other things. He did most of whatever cultural resources management was done. There was also Mary Kay Newton, who was a Park Aide. That was it, those were the only two people on my staff. Then there were some Maintenance people and some field rangers and some other administrative folks, but I just can't remember who they were. I do know that when I got here, on the Maintenance staff, Carlo Maki was here. Carlo retired just this

Ronald G. Thoman

very week. Bill Myers was here. Bill has just accepted a transfer to Gettysburg so he will be leaving soon. I believe Neal Healey on the Maintenance staff was here when I got here. Those are the three Maintenance folk that I remember.

Dave Dornfeld was here on the Ranger staff. A woman by the name of Judy Chovin was on the staff. She later married Jack Peay and they moved off to Santa Monica together. Bob McKreath, I believe was on the Ranger's staff when I got here. Fred Reese, I believe was on the staff. Anyway that is the best I can recall some of the folks. Morale, I would say, was not good as far as I could see.

MR. COCKRELL: Why was that?

MR. THOMAN: I think it was mainly because of Bill. I sensed--this is my personal opinion so be cautious how you use this--but I sensed that some of the staff, Jack Peay and Bob Byrne in particular, I could see, disliked Bill very much. I might even phrase it more strongly than that. Off the record I would tell you some other things that were actually said to me. Why this was, I don't know.

Bill was a micro-manager for one thing. He was very demanding. He could be very autocratic with his staff, a perfectionist. I think he worked people very hard. He would send work back time and time again for re-dos. Bill himself worked 14 to 16 hours a day and wasn't above and beyond pushing other people to that. Not that he asked you to work that much, but the amount of work he gave you might take that long. I think that was part of it.

The other part of it was that Cuyahoga--as I mentioned to you my first impression was it was very complex--could be almost overwhelming and I think people were just awed by the magnitude of the work and the complexity of trying to put this park together. You must remember the park was not loved by the community then. There was a lot of harsh feelings about the park, not only by the community, the local homeowners, but by the Park Service itself. You were sort of a pariah, you know. You could go off to conferences and people would say, "Oh, you work at Cuyahoga?" kind of thing. I think it was just a real uphill battle. Morale was not good, particularly at the division chief level.

MR. COCKRELL: What were the problems with the division chiefs? Peay and Byrne just didn't get along with Birdsell because he wouldn't delegate authority?

MR. THOMAN: Certainly Bill did not delegate authority very well. There was no question about that. Then the other things I mentioned. He was just very demanding. Very much of a perfectionist, very autocratic, and I think some people just didn't like

Ronald G. Thoman

him. Then the Region was always down on the park and it was just very hard I think for people to get along with him. Beyond that I don't know if I could put my finger on anything as to why that was.

MR. COCKRELL: Let's talk a little about the Region's attitude. How was that manifested? Did they pretty much let Birdsell do what he wanted to? Was that part of the problem?

MR. THOMAN: I don't know, Ron, I really don't. Frankly, I never saw many direct manifestations of the Region's not liking this park. I heard some comments from people, but nothing ever real bad. Now, I got along with my counterparts in the Regional Office just fine. Jim Schaak was the Regional Chief of Interpretation. I got along with him just fine. However, others, the Chief of Maintenance and Chief Ranger would tell me that they always had difficulties with their counterparts in Region. People were always making life tough for one reason or another. But I never knew much of the details of that. I know the Region was always after Bill for one reason or another.

MR. COCKRELL: How about the demands of the Regional Office for this park to meet all the deadlines that were set--to send in all of the reports. It seems like there was a lot of criticism that Cuyahoga wasn't getting things done like other parks in the Region.

MR. THOMAN: Again, I don't have much direct knowledge of that. I know it was talked about all the time. I know the park was criticized for that, but I just don't have much direct knowledge of it. I know my reports were always in on time, so I can't speak on that very much, although I could only say that it certainly was nothing deliberate. I know that bothered the staff here. It was that they always felt that the Regional Office did not fully understand the complexity and the difficulty of trying to manage this park.

Gerry McClarnon made a comment once that I have never forgotten. He said, "You know, working at Cuyahoga Valley is like trying to build and ride a bicycle at the same time." Here we were trying to create this park, actually create offices and stuff. When I got here, by 1979, we were still trying to find office space, establish procedures and operational things like that and yet run a park at the same.

We always felt that the Region was simply never understanding. They would do anything they could to be critical, but would never give you a break. We were short-staffed. We were short-funded. We were under fire from lots of different quarters. There were great public demands. I felt this myself very strongly. Rather than helping, the Regional Office, the "Great White Father" in

Ronald G. Thoman

Omaha, didn't do what they said they were there to do. You hear the litany all the time, "Our only reason for existing is to help the parks." Well, you could have fooled me because I never saw any help! All I saw was criticism and demands, that kind of thing. I think that contributed significantly to morale problems without exception.

Nobody can say, "It was Bill Birdsell" and all of that, because without exception, every person I knew on the staff felt that way about the Regional Office. It was a real adversarial relationship. The whole feeling was, "Why can't you guys help? So, the report is late? Who gives a damn! So what! We are out here drowning and you guys are fussing because some silly EEO report is late!" It was that kind of thing. You can draw what conclusions of it you will, but I think if anybody is around, one might ask somebody in the Regional Office, why was that. Why did you care so much about whether this EEO report or something was in on time when you had a whole park out there that was struggling and needed help?

MR. COCKRELL: Skipping ahead a little bit on this same topic, how has that attitude turned around? When did it start turning around?

MR. THOMAN: I don't know. In fact, I don't know that it has. I don't know that it hasn't. You may have a better perception of that than I do. Like I say, I never myself felt much of that pressure from the Region. What I got out of it was reflected from the other division chiefs. I got along fine with Jim Schaak and others and that has never changed for me. When Lew Albert was here, I had heard that it was beginning to change, but then I had also heard that it wasn't beginning to change. It depended on who you talked to. I think Lew liked to believe it was changing, but I had heard from others in the Regional Office that it wasn't. I hear since John has been here, that it has changed. I haven't talked to anybody in the Regional Office about that for a long time, so again, you may be a better judge of that than I am.

I sense a difference. I sense not such a nitpicking, critical attitude, but there could be a lot of reasons for that. First of all, a lot of the old-timers in the Regional Office are gone. Secondly, most of the players in the park are gone. Third, the park staff has matured. We have had time to put operational procedures in place and perhaps there is not as much slippage as there was before.

I think more people are realizing that Cuyahoga does have some values. I think Director Mott being interested in urban parks sort of helped turn things around. Don Castleberry, I think, coming out of an urban park background has helped out a lot. So, I think it probably has changed for the better, but just when and how that

Ronald G. Thoman

happened, or who you would credit for that, I don't know. Probably nobody in particular, just changing times.

MR. COCKRELL: Getting back to the park scene, did Bill Birdsell hold very many staff meetings?

MR. THOMAN: By the time I got here in 1979, I would say there was a staff meeting once a month at least. It might slip to once every two months, something like that. I never really myself, personally, saw any problems with communications in the park. People always bitched about it, but I think what they may have been more concerned about was not so much staff meetings where you would pass routine information along, but Bill operated very independently. He had all kinds of relationships with external people like John Seiberling. There were all kinds of--as people would like to think--deals being cut. I think maybe the staff felt they ought to be more a part of that, and that might have led to some of it.

MR. COCKRELL: Did he not share that information with his staff?

MR. THOMAN: He shared some things, but I think other things were probably best left unshared until they were reality. You know, what was going on, what kind of deals were being cut and that kind of thing. I can only give you this from my own perception. I think the same questions probably to Bob Byrne for example, may give you a better sense of what was going on. I only sensed it, but I never had it myself.

MR. COCKRELL: Did park management ever give special marching orders to the staff when a staff member had to talk to a member of the community, like a homeowner?

MR. THOMAN: Never that I know of. I was never given any direction on what to say to anybody, and to my knowledge, neither was anybody else.

MR. COCKRELL: What were some of the most serious problems in this park in the early years?

MR. THOMAN: Without any question, it was a shortage of staff and a shortage of money, although staff was of far more concern I think then. We were dying from a lack of staff from my view. It put incredible pressure on everybody and it just continued to deteriorate and get worse. But, of course, that was a thing that everybody was crying about.

For the park per se, the biggest problem issues, I think without any question, was land acquisition and the whole relationship with the homeowners and residents. That was probably the single biggest problem. Or let's put it this way, it was the single biggest

Ronald G. Thoman

noise. When you say problem, it depends on what you are talking about. If you want to talk about public relations; political, that was probably the hottest issue. In terms of the long-term health of the park and park resources, it may have also been the issue.

I mean, yes, people were screaming about it, but had Bill not taken that aggressive posture on land acquisition, I am convinced that this park never would be what it is today. I think Bill Birdsell needs to go down in history as having made that contribution. I for one have been really sick and tired of hearing "Birdsell bashing" because it is the thing to do to. I think some day people, if they understand, will thank Bill Birdsell for that very aggressive stand that he took to get what he could get while the getting was good. To my mind, that was the central issue.

The reason the park was created was because it was going to be eaten alive. It was being eaten alive even after the park was created. After all, the Congress just said, "Here is a boundary." That was easy. Bill had the tough part. He had to come in now and save what was within that boundary. There was only one way to save it and that was to buy it.

Subsequently, if people looked at just that aspect, zoning has not worked. Easements are a nice thing to talk about, but as Bill knew, you end up paying in many cases 90% of fee value to buy an easement. Politically, how is he ever going to do that? In reality, the way to save this land and to clean it up and to make it available for public use, was fee acquisition. I think Bill knew that and I think he went after it as aggressively and as diplomatically as he could.

Bill told me once that there was no question in his mind that someday, well beyond his years, but someday, every square inch in the boundaries of this park would be federally owned, fully in fee, including the management mosaic part. He was convinced that that was the way it should be. He was convinced that that was the way it would be, someday. I can't overemphasize the influence of Bill Birdsell's upbringing and what his background was and what kind of Park Service traditions he grew up with.

So I think that was the biggest problem, the threat to park resources from development, from dumping, from pesticides, from inappropriate agricultural reuses and erosion and run-off and you name it. And the only way to solve those problems was to buy the damned land. So, the major resource problem was that. The major political problem was what Bill was trying to do about it. There is no question that was where the fire was.

Ronald G. Thoman

Other minor problems: there was a fair amount of arson when I first got here. Some houses were being burned down, reputedly by anti-park people, but I don't think that was ever proven.

The Cuyahoga Valley Interceptor Sewer project was a big threat on the north end of the park. They had already built it down to approximately Sagamore Road and were hoping to go right through the Pinery Narrows with it when Bill waded into that fray and got it stopped. It subsequently went up the valley wall with lateral sewer lines down the east and west side instead.

An interesting dilemma on that was that one of the greatest threats to Cuyahoga has always been the poor water quality of the Cuyahoga River, primarily because of inappropriate sewage treatment. This six-foot diameter main trunk interceptor sewerline would have tied all the communities into a central, highly sophisticated sewage treatment plant and eliminated much of the water quality problems in the Cuyahoga River. Yet in order to make that happen, the spine of the park had to be ripped open and have this six-inch main sewerline put down through the middle of it, certainly not a thing we do in national parks.

That was a big dilemma that Bill confronted and he was aware of both sides of the issue and had to make those decisions. The best he could do was to push for stopping it where he did and sending these laterals up the side and let it run down outside the park boundaries.

The CEI high-tension powerlines down through the north end of the park was a big issue when I got here. The main court case had been settled where they were stopped from building those, but there was still a question of what would happen to them. Would they just stay there or what? Finally, the court ruled that CEI not only had to stop building them, but they had to take them out, too. They were all removed. I have photos of those before they were moved and after.

I think certainly a big problem was an overwhelming number, and that has gotten worse since, of cultural resources that were coming into park hands that we didn't have the staff or the budget to deal with. They started to deteriorate and decay very quickly and very seriously. We literally could not do anything about it with the small staff and resources we had. That certainly was a problem on the cultural resource side.

Law enforcement-wise, my perception was the greatest problem was the alcohol problem at the Virginia Kendall Unit of the park. Alcohol had always been prohibited in Virginia Kendall. It was in all Akron and Cleveland Metropolitan Parks. But because National Park Service policy permitted alcohol in units of the National Park

Ronald G. Thoman

System, when we came along, we said, "Oh no, that is O.K.," and every teenaged kid and other weirdo in Cuyahoga and Summit counties converged on Virginia Kendall. Particularly Kendall Ledges became a real zoo, with drinking and drug-dealing eventually. A lot of noise. Literally, the families and regular park users were driven out. Our Rangers were up there constantly, fully armed in almost battle gear. It was what I felt to be a crisis situation that was ready to explode.

I recommended about 1980 or 1981 that we bring in Dr. Gary Machlis--I don't know if he was with the University of Idaho then or not--but I had worked with Gary on other projects. He was a sociologist and it seemed to me that before we went in and made solutions to that problem, we needed to study it and figure out what was going on. Ultimately, the Superintendent agreed. We contracted with Gary. He came in and did what one might call an undercover study, dressed in ratty clothes and took his six-pack and went up and sat with the kids and talked to people and did a very, very interesting report on that situation.

As one might expect he didn't find any bad or good, but just found, "Here is the problem. If you want to solve it, just ban alcohol and it will go away. You don't need to arrest people. You don't need any other fancy stuff. If you want to get rid of that problem, just ban the alcohol. The only reason they are here is because they can socialize and it is a place to get together and drink. So without passing judgement on the behavior, if you want to solve the problem, do that."

Eventually, special regulations for Cuyahoga were written, submitted, approved, passed, and we banned alcohol. We had to enforce it of course for a while, but within a year, the problem was gone and we have never had it since. That was an interesting issue. I think it has interesting ramifications, not only for this park, but in terms of the Park Service's history itself, how these regulations that are fine for Yellowstone or some other place might not be too neat in an urban area. Those are the things that jump to mind in terms of problem areas.

MR. COCKRELL: The Congressional delegation has had a very prominent role in the development of this park. Could you kind of trace the history of that, the relations between this park, and primarily Congressman Seiberling?

MR. THOMAN: When I came here in 1979, there was no question that this was John Seiberling's park. There was no question that it was here because of him, and that much of it behind the scenes was being directed by him. He had a very, very close, intimate, personal, almost daily, working relationship with Bill Birdsell.

Ronald G. Thoman

They were on the phone a lot. Whenever John was here, he and Bill would drive around the valley together a lot.

Bill was very discrete about his relationship with John Seiberling, so I don't really know any details or specifics, but it was quite clear that John deserved the title that I mentioned to you the other day of "Legislative Father" of the park. You heard John say the other day why he was interested and what his involvement is, so I don't need to go back over that.

MR. COCKRELL: What sort of problems did that cause--a Congressman dealing directly with the Superintendent and not going through the normal chain of command?

MR. THOMAN: I don't think it caused us any problems. I think it caused the Regional Office problems or heartburn, and the Washington Office probably. Again, I guess that would be a question better addressed to them, I don't know.

My feeling is that like any bureaucracy, the Region wanted to make sure that the park was being run according to the way they thought things ought to be, and in turn, how the Washington Office expected the Region to make sure things ought to be done. The Region was trying to put together a budget; the Washington Office was trying to put together a budget to fit in with the Departmental budget to match the President's budget.

Yet here is the park out here and the Congressman deciding his own priorities. That gets into the whole debate over the executive and legislative branches of government and how budgets are formed. But that was certainly a problem. I guess it was always there.

It becomes a problem when the Superintendent participates in it and I think Bill was fully active in that. You have to understand about how Bill operated. Bill loved this place. Bill really believed in this place. He had a vision for this place. It wasn't just another job for him. Yet he was fighting upstream with the Regional Office and the Washington Office.

It made a good deal of sense to me. It was perfectly understandable that Bill would establish that very strong relationship with the Congressman who also loved the place and with a lot of the local community on the other side of the fence from the bureaucracy who, in various ways were saying, "We don't like or don't care about it."

MR. COCKRELL: Do you know of any instance where Congressman Seiberling vetoed a decision made at higher levels?

Ronald G. Thoman

MR. THOMAN: I recall some things happening, Ron, but I can't recall the details of what the issues were. I remember some minor things--they are probably major ones--but I remember little things like John would say or it would certainly be indicated that he was interested in seeing something happen in the park. I can't even think of an instance now, but a new special program, or a special thrust, or "Why don't we do this?" and Bill would propose it and the Region would come in and say, "No. Rules, regulations" or our policies are such and we don't want this done."

My understanding was John would get on the phone and call Jim Dunning directly and say, "Hey, I want this done" and various pressures like that that and they would have to back off. I heard that happened several times. A ways back I might have been able to remember a case or two, but I don't remember any specifics any more.

MR. COCKRELL: How significant a role did Loretta Neumann play?

MR. THOMAN: I think very significant. She, of course, was John's principal staff assistant for a while and then became the principal aide on the subcommittee that John chaired. As you know, in those positions, you can wield a lot of power. I think Loretta was very interested in this park personally. She was very close to Tedd McCann who had done the study. Of course the two of them then worked hand in hand trying to sell the park. I know they put slide shows together as a team and delivered them. In fact, I have a copy of one of their slide shows upstairs with the script. She campaigned for it. Frequently, it was Loretta who as on the phone with Bill Birdsell or Lew Albert rather than John.

MR. COCKRELL: Almost every Director we have ever had has come to this park. What do you recall about those visits? What were some of the highlights?

MR. THOMAN: Many of them were done before I got here. I don't know that George Hartzog was ever here. I don't think Ron Walker was ever here. Gary Everhardt was here. Bill Whalen was here. Stewart Udall was here. Cecil Andrus was here. I don't believe Russ Dickenson ever came here. Bill Mott was here. Bill Mott was the only Director that was here since I have been here. I can't really say much about Whalen and Everhardt because I don't know. I can only tell you what Whalen said to me. I already told you that, after the fact, Bill Mott was very enthusiastic about this park. He believed in it. He believed in its future. He was very supportive of everything we were doing.

MR. COCKRELL: You were talking about Director Mott's support of this park.

Ronald G. Thoman

MR. THOMAN: I don't know if there is much more to say about it. The first time he was out was for our 10th anniversary festival. I think we did it in August or September of 1985 and he came out for that, along with John Seiberling, Congressman Regula, and some other dignitaries. He gave a very nice talk to the big crowds out there that day and felt that Cuyahoga was one of the most important parks in the System. He always made all kinds of noises about the value of urban parks and education, spreading the National Park System message to urban populations through urban parks. I can't think of anything that he did specifically.

Of course, in 1988 he was the key person in getting us the donation of \$20,000 worth of Coleman camping equipment to start the Junior Ranger Program for inner-city kids, but other than that, I can't think of anything else. He was here three times. The second time he came out was when Carol Spears on my staff was selected as the National Freeman Tilden Award winner. Prior to her being selected, he flew out here to meet her and to interview her as a part of that selection process. He was flying around meeting all of the candidates who were in competition for that. That was for the national award which she subsequently won. Then the third time he was out it was to dedicate the Junior Ranger Program last July. Again, he made very strong statements about the value of the park.

MR. COCKRELL: Unless a building was historic, Birdsell didn't like to have a building identified by the former landowner's name. Why was that?

MR. THOMAN: I think primarily it had to do with the controversy and the acrimony with the Homeowners and Residents Association. Because you go around saying, "Oh, yeah, the old Smith place" and it sort of evoked those memories of those people and that sense of community. I think he was just trying to break that old hold on the valley and saw no reason to memorialize people just because they owned and lived there recently. He was very adamant about it, however. He could get quite upset if he heard you calling places by their last owner's names and would insist that if we were going to keep them, that we go back and find the historic name.

If a building wasn't historic, it was hard to know what to call it. Bill used to try to insist that we call it by its tract number, which is very difficult because most of us didn't know what the tract numbers were and Bill himself would even call it by its last owner's name! So if the building was historic, that is where he would really push it: "Let's find out what the historic name is and let's call it that."

The one National Register property up here, the Gleason Farm, which was then owned and was on retention by Edwin Carey, everybody called it the Carey farm. Bill would get very irate and insist it

Ronald G. Thoman

was the Gleason farm. Of course, the epitome of that problem was when somebody is still alive and living there and you are calling it by some other name! But I think it was primarily just to try to break that hold of the local community on these places.

MR. COCKRELL: The philosophy of the current management is supportive of the cultural landscape of this park and the contributions of the people and the land. What was Birdsell's philosophy on that? What role did residents have to play here? You said before that Bill foresaw everything would be owned in fee.

MR. THOMAN: You asked me two different questions there really, or I will separate it into two answers. Support for the cultural landscape is one thing. The other is the attitude toward local residents and whether or not a community stay in the park? I see that as two separate questions. Let's address the living community, the residents first.

I don't think Bill had any philosophical vindictiveness about people or wanting people out of the valley. I don't think Bill was anti-community or anti-people. In fact, Bill loved people and I think those locals who didn't treated him badly. I think Bill liked these people very much. Bill had a very great sense of community and people. I don't think Bill somehow could perceive how this could ever be a real park with lots of people living in it.

The other thing that you must remember about that is when we talk about, or when homeowners in particular talk about community, they are not talking about some sort of a little town. You are talking about hundreds of people scattered in individual residences all throughout the valley. That is what you are talking about in terms of community.

I think if it had been just Peninsula and a little town full of people living there, Bill would have had no problem with that town. In fact, Bill always said that he thought Peninsula, for example, was very important to the park. It would be a hub for service. Peninsula should never be empty. It was a living community. People come to the craft shops and all those little things Bill thought was a real amenity to the park. That kind of community I think would have been all right.

But the community in the sense that homeowners talked about it, and you are talking about the greater community of people scattered all over the valley. I think Bill had trouble perceiving, as I did and many others did, how this could ever be a park serving people if that community continued to exist.

Ronald G. Thoman

It would continue to be this incredible patchwork quilt of private and public ownership. Other than driving down the roads, or being corralled into picnic areas or particular use areas, people couldn't use the park as many national parks. That is, just go wherever you want to go. You couldn't run along linear trails. You couldn't do lots of things because if you walked 500 feet, you are on private property. Now imagine all of the administrative problems that creates. Do we go around then on all of these zigzagging boundary lines and put "private property" and "It is OK to go here," "Stop," "No going over here"--you see what I mean. It would be this mess of signs, trespassing problems, frustrated development in terms of long trails, all of that.

As I say, Bill very much believed in this park. He believed in his values and urban parks. He believed that it had to be a place where people could come out and be free. One of Bill's favorite phrases was "Open space and the value of open space to the human spirit." For the Akron and Cleveland urban areas, not only just open space that you could see, but open space that you could go into if you wanted to. Now with that kind of vision and the demands of that size of population, Bill could not see that kind of a park happening and the community as defined by this scattered business being compatible. I think Bill saw, as I indicated to you before, that one way or the other, sooner or later, it had to go. Maybe that answers the question in terms of community.

Quite frankly, I don't think when Lew Albert came along, or for that matter--I shouldn't speak for John Debo, he is here to speak for himself--but my feeling is that from either one of those Superintendents, their philosophy about the community isn't so much different. Their reaction to political or economic realities may be different.

I think if you ask them the question, "Do you think it is desirable?" I mean deliberately, if the Park Service were to plan whether or not these people should stay, all else being equal, if it would be just as easy to have them go as to have them stay, would you say as park Superintendent, they ought to stay because that adds value to the park. I would be very surprised if they said yes.

In terms of seeing the park as an entity and of value, I don't think there is probably that much difference between the Birdsell, Albert and Debo philosophies. I think what Bill tended to, not ignore, but fight against because he believed in the park, was the political and economic realities. He was bullheaded enough. He saw the sense of mission. He was willing to take the flak, the political heat, buck the economic trends to get this valley secured. I also think that Bill sensed the urgency of doing that. That it had to be done quickly, he had to get as much as he could

Ronald G. Thoman

while he could, because ultimately, somebody was going to come along and stop it and he needed to get as much as he could while he could.

MR. COCKRELL: So you think he foresaw the slowdown on the land acquisition program, the moratorium?

MR. THOMAN: I think he not only foresaw it, he was suffering from it, or he was beginning to. John Seiberling, the Washington Office, and the Regional Office were all on him about it. I think he was living under that. That is what drove him out of the park, one might say. That was the issue that probably got him removed from here. It was the issue that probably depleted his strength the most. There is no question about it. He saw it coming in my view.

I am probably straying from what you wanted, so just stop me whenever you want to, but I think probably more germane to, and the main difference between, the Birdsell land acquisition program and the Albert program was the acquisition of individual, single residences. Lew Albert's philosophy was, we will go after large, unoccupied tracts of land. That is where we will spend the land acquisition money we have.

Lew was no less, I could perceive, interested in fee acquisition. It was just that he felt, "Let's go after the large, unoccupied tracts of land." There was a couple of reasons for that, and you may want to talk to him at length about that when you interview him. First of all, it was less politically controversial. Second, you could get more for your money if the land was undeveloped. Third, you didn't have to deal with the problems of real property or structures. You know, what am I going to do with those after I get them? So in every way, Lew saw going after that kind of property as best and he made significant strides in that regard.

Bill was accused of going after individual residences, I think, in large part, unfairly so. I don't know that Bill ever sat down and, perhaps with some exceptions, saw that things are obviously in the way of things that I am going to go after such and such a residence. I think a lot of that happened because people came to him wanting him to buy as willing sellers or claiming a hardship. As you know our legislation said that we would deal with people who had hardships.

MR. COCKRELL: So would you say in the majority of cases these fee acquisitions were willing sellers?

MR. THOMAN: I am going to guess at that; I don't have the numbers. That is something I think you probably need to talk to Jack Blanton about or even Sheridan Steele would be good for that. My impres-

Ronald G. Thoman

sion is that by far, the majority of residential acquisitions were hardship cases or willing sellers, even though as I told you before, some of those willing sellers would later come back and lock arms with the rest of the people in the community and claim we kicked them out when the records clearly shows that they came to us wanting us to buy.

I think by far, if you counted up and got the number of condemnations and declarations of taking and compared that to the number of tracts that were bought without condemnation--we could only assume those were friendly--I think the overwhelming majority would be willing sellers or eager sellers as the case may be.

I guess we ought to clarify this. Although I don't have any evidence of the case, I am not saying that Bill didn't go after some residences once in a while. I am not saying that Bill didn't target certain residences or certain people even; I don't know that is a fact. I know that was claimed by some, that if you got on Bill's bad side your house went on his list. I have heard that claimed before. I don't have any evidence to that effect. Bill never, ever said that to me before.

I do know that he was very sensitive about how you couldn't just go out and take somebody's property. You have to have a reason for it because he told me that even people like John Seiberling would be riding around the valley with him and John would just comment, "Gee, that house is ugly. Boy it really detracts from the scene. Can we acquire that?" Not that John was being vindictive, but just not even thinking. Bill would have to correct him and say, "John, we can't go around acquiring property just because they are ugly!"

So I know Bill was sensitive for having to have a reason for those things. Yet I also happen to know for a fact in some instances that the reasons for acquiring the property post-dated the acquisition actions on the property. Again, off the record, I could share some of those with you, but I think we had better not. Bill was human and whatever there was I am convinced it was not out of pettiness or meanness of spirit that Bill did that, but out of his passion and vision for this park.

MR. COCKRELL: A lot of people say that his goal was to create a Yellowstone National Park in the Cuyahoga Valley.

MR. THOMAN: Bill used to say that Cuyahoga is not Yellowstone. That is what he said. I think in his heart and in his soul he wanted it to be. Not physically; obviously, it can't be, but that it would be every bit as federally owned, open to the public, pristine, high quality, respected a place as Yellowstone National Park. But Bill used to say when some of us would encourage him to do things, that "This is not Yellowstone."

Ronald G. Thoman

Yet the other phrase that Bill used to say the park suffered from was the "Instant Yellowstone Syndrome." Now it is a National Park Service unit, the public expects overnight the park to be like Yellowstone. It takes us a long time and a lot of money to retrieve resources here and restore them to that kind of condition, not just preserve something that is already pristine.

So he would use the name Yellowstone in two different ways. I just happen to know that because of the vision and the way that he perceived ultimately this being all federal fee land and exclusive jurisdiction. That is the way he saw it. Publicly he said it differently.

MR. COCKRELL: One of the criticisms that I have often heard is that the National Park Service thwarted the will of Congress because it did not prepare the first land acquisition plan according to the 1974 bill. Further, that this park didn't have a well-thought-out plan on development of how the lands were going to be acquired. How do you see that?

MR. THOMAN: I guess it depends on your point of view. I could argue that that is poppycock. Congress said that we would have a land acquisition plan by such and such a date. Congress did not say we would have a well-thought-out and detailed land acquisition plan. You won't find that in the language. It is true, I believe, that Congress said we should have a land acquisition plan. In fact, didn't they call specifically for a land acquisition plan in the legislation?

MR. COCKRELL: Yes. I believe it was within one year or two years or something like that.

MR. THOMAN: I think technically, Ron, we have to go back and look at this, but this is something you could find out real easily. I think technically that was met with the General Management Plan. Because the General Management Plan included a land acquisition scenario. It was not well-thought-out, it was not detailed tract by tract, but you will find in the GMP a land acquisition scenario in broad brush strokes. That land acquisition plan reflected conceptual recommendations of the GMP.

So I say in a sense it was poppycock because the GMP did spell out development and it did spell out the land acquisition, generally speaking, needed for that development. It was a land acquisition plan that was done on schedule. It was a little bit late, I think, but done remarkably quickly given the complexity of this place.

It was a GMP that was done with highly publicized public involvement. I have all the notices. I can show you. I can document how

Ronald G. Thoman

it was in the newspapers and every other way. In fact, Cuyahoga was one of the parks that pioneered that public involvement process for the GMP. That is something you will want to talk with Donnelly about. It was done in remarkably fast time with more public involvement perhaps than any other park had ever had in its GMP process.

So in that sense, there was a plan and there was a land acquisition scenario attached to it. It may have been a little late, I forget exactly, but that depends on whether you say the draft or the final approved document and then it goes back and forth. But in any event, that would be pretty petty to say you didn't meet the actual letter of the date. So there was one.

Now from the other side, you could argue if you were a homeowner or anybody else who wanted to be critical, yes, but the land acquisition plan in that GMP was so general and so conceptual, why it doesn't help me any? It doesn't tell me, and it gave Birdsell perfect freedom within that broad scenario to go out and do anything he wanted in land acquisition. In that sense it was probably true.

But you must remember, that was not Birdsell's call. That is the kind of GMP that parks were developing then: conceptual, not detailed. We used to do detailed master plans that spelled out everything. At that time we weren't doing them, so it wasn't Birdsell's doing. It was just the way the Park Service did business. Now I might tell you parenthetically that the GMP was approved with the broad brush stroke land acquisition plan and it was promptly never ever followed. That GMP was never ever, ever, ever, followed.

MR. COCKRELL: Really? Would you like to elaborate on that?

MR. THOMAN: Sure! I don't even need to elaborate, but I can tell you, look at any development in this park today, any major piece of business that we are doing: Oak Hill, Jaite, Locktender's House. You will not find a single one of those in the GMP. Indigo Lake, Brandywine Falls, Towpath Trail, Earthlore Environmental Education Center, Everett Artists-in-Residence Village, Special Events Site, Cuyahoga Valley Line Railroad, the Jaite Mill, Historic Leasing, Happy Days Visitors Center, Canal Visitors Center. Not a single one of those are in the General Management Plan.

MR. COCKRELL: So why even have the GMP--to meet the requirement of Congress and say that it was done?

MR. THOMAN: I don't know, I wasn't here then, but I would guess that Congress said something had to be done, so you do it. All

Ronald G. Thoman

parks had GMPs, so we did one. Why wasn't it followed? I think therein is perhaps a flaw in the management system of the National Park Service having a lot to do with the power and authority of Superintendents. It had a lot to do with the lack of sound working relationships from Superintendent to Regional Office to Washington Office.

You see, if Cuyahoga didn't follow its GMP, the Regional Office was tacitly complicit in that. They reviewed plans and stuff. Why didn't they look at the GMP and say, "Hey, you guys can't do that. It is not in your GMP." So to me it was like everybody in the Park Service ignored it. I am not saying that is bad necessarily, but it does allow any Superintendent to freewheel and do whatever they want.

The General Management Plan for example, calls for a brand new park visitor center in the administrative headquarters off a brand new road in the park. That GMP was approved in late 1977 or 1978, somewhere in there. I got here a year to a year-and-a-half later and one of the first things that Bill Birdsell told me was that the visitor center in the administrative complex will never happen. Not because he didn't want it to, but just because National Park Service policy ran counter to it. First of all, Bill Whalen was going around saying, "Maybe every park doesn't need a visitor center." Second, in terms of Cuyahoga, why go around building new buildings when you have all of these existing structures?

So within a year-and-one-half after that GMP being completed, already Bill was saying it was never going to happen. I think Bill would have loved to have had a brand new visitor center and administration complex, but he knew it was never going to happen.

Immediately when I got here, we started maneuvering to get Happy Days up and running as a visitor center. The GMP says that the Jaite Company Town will be an environmental education campus. Lew Albert felt that he needed a new consolidated headquarters area. He knew that Jaite was falling down and environmental education was something in never-never land off in the future, that maybe we would be able to do, but he had money and offices and uses that he could put into Jaite right now.

So, with total disregard to the GMP or anything else, he did it. And he did lots of other things because most of this development I am talking about happened during Albert's years. I am not saying it is bad. We just went out and said, "Where would it be good to have an environmental education center and where do we have existing resources to do it? Oh, over there!" So we did. I am not saying that is good or bad. I am just saying that is the way it was.

Ronald G. Thoman

MR. COCKRELL: So in theory, in a couple of years or maybe sooner, this park will undergo another GMP process. Do you think now that we have come 15-plus years, there is a bigger step, there is more of the idea of what Cuyahoga Valley's potential is? That this new GMP that comes about will be a good blueprint or will it just be another exercise in futility like the first one?

MR. THOMAN: Again, that is two or three questions there. Question one: can we do a better GMP? Yes, I think so. I think the original GMP was a good one. As a philosophical document, I think in the future a lot of people need to study that original Cuyahoga GMP because that is a wonderful philosophical document. It made some statements and it took some positions that you have never seen before, I can tell you that.

For one of the first times in writing, the Park Service said, "We are going to retrieve an entire park from degradation, our entire area, retrieve it, restore it and make it into a swell place. We are going to spend millions of dollars to buy the land to do that." A GMP with great vision, this interweaving with the management mosaic and all of that.

You could look at that existing GMP in two ways, conceptually or philosophically, and then the specific developments proposed. The specifics, forget it. The approach to resource management, the philosophical approach I think is sound and I think has been followed in large part. That part of it, I think has. It has been a good guidance and a good vision. Most of that was Bill Birdsell's incidentally, so I am told. That is something you might want to explore with Donnelly.

Imagine a park this complex, this different, this new, people coming in for six months and coming up with something comprehensive that would be locked in for ten years and that is exactly what we would do. It was unrealistic to start with. We now know the park better. We now have a much better feel for what is real and what isn't real. We have a much better handle on just what all kinds of historic resources we have, etcetera, etcetera, etcetera. Yes, I think we could much better sit down and develop a realistic GMP.

Just as on the side, although an important piece of history for you, I started working with the Harpers Ferry team on the Interpretive Prospectus for Cuyahoga in 1979. It was finally approved in 1989, ten years later. Much of the reason for that, and we can talk about that if you want to later, but much of the reason for that was dragging my own heels because I felt we didn't understand this place well enough to be writing an Interpretive Prospectus for it. The IP team that came out here, captained by John Wise, were overwhelmed by this place, too. I don't think they were prepared or capable. Not because of their own individual competence, but

Ronald G. Thoman

because of the conflict to deal with that. So I had no qualms holding back on the reigns on that. I think we are much more able to do a GMP now.

Will this GMP be useful as a guidance document, I don't know? First of all, GMP's have changed. I remember when we were at Fort Scott, for example. You can't even deal with what ought to be done at a park. All you can do is deal with these problems. Problems don't necessarily address where we ought to develop something or how we ought to develop something. It is kind of a problem resolution document. Because it is that, I am not sure that I really have much interest in this GMP at all. I am not so sure that anybody in the park has much interest in the GMP because I don't know if anybody perceives it as a useful document any more for the very reasons you heard at Fort Scott.

We can't use it to program money. We can't ask for money. We can't ask for this or that. So what is the point in doing this document? If you think about a park like Cuyahoga and all of the complexity here, this could be self-flagellation for eight weeks and then what is the end result of it? I regret that.

I really believe what Cuyahoga needs is a Master Plan of the old order, the way we used to do Master Plans that sort of stated the grand vision for the park and got a little more specific and did decide what we are going to do where. That is my perspective. I think if you ask Superintendents that perspective, Superintendents don't like documents that tie their hands because things change on a daily basis. Opportunities arise and they are able to do this and not do that so they don't like it. Is that bad or good, I don't know. I tend to think it is bad in the sense that things just develop willy-nilly. It is good in the sense that you allow people to manage; you allow them to be creative; they are not just a automaton or doing what some plan says. I don't have a lot of faith in the upcoming GMP process.

MR. COCKRELL: In March of 1980, a letter that Seiberling and Senator Metzenbaum sent to Director Whalen called on the National Park Service to thoroughly reevaluate its land acquisition program at Cuyahoga and to suspend or drop all complaint actions against residents. Why did they call on this to be done and what was the effect on the park?

MR. THOMAN: Again I don't know first-hand the details of that so I can only speculate. My perception at the time was that, first of all, Howard Metzenbaum was never really deeply involved with the park. I doubt that he really understood it that much or knew that much about it. He was always supportive and appreciative, but he was never that much involved.

Ronald G. Thoman

Seiberling obviously was very involved. I think they had a lot of constituents going to them. Not a lot, but some of the homeowners. But you must remember, the homeowners organization was backed by some big money, particularly the Roush Foundation money. They had hired some public relations people. They had done some pretty slick things. I think there were enough concerns. I don't know if that was before or after **The Cleveland Press** thing. I think that sequence of events as you sort this out might be interesting. The "Frontline" and **The Cleveland Press** series, it would be interesting to know how those pressures and when they broke, but I think there was an increasing number of complaints to the Congressional offices.

Metzenbaum has always been known as the champion of the little guy and so on. John Seiberling I think probably was getting some complaints from constituents and sensed that if the constituents were getting public sympathy, he had better be a little bit careful here. I suspect that John, genuinely wondered if the approach that the Park Service was taking in land acquisition was the right one. Whether or not they did it for strictly political reasons or because they really did have some question and quarrel that the Park Service was not following Congressional intent, I don't know. I think that is a question that needs to be put to them more directly and maybe it is a question that you ought to jot down and I will ask John that. I suspect I know what his answer will be.

MR. COCKRELL: There have been a number of investigations here specifically of the land acquisition program by the General Accounting Office and Inspector General. Assuming that you were here and aware of what was going on in the Land Acquisition Office, how did these investigations proceed and how did the park co-operate?

MR. THOMAN: I can't answer those hardly at all. I was very little involved. Yes, I was here. I knew they were going on. Nobody ever interviewed me about anything. I saw the reports when they came out. Other than that, I know very little about it.

You asked about the Seiberling and Metzenbaum letter to change our overall land acquisition policy and what its impact was. There is no question at that point that the park came under incredible pressure to start buying more easements and that kind of thing. If you think that what Bill was doing in that land acquisition approach was right--I happen to be one of those that do think it was right--then I think a lot of damage was done in the sense that we backed off and started buying a lot of easements and got ourselves into more of this predicament of not being able to own and control and properly manage all of the park lands. Some properties were actually taken out of the park. The boundaries were redrawn along Chaffee Road to take some property out of the park.

Ronald G. Thoman

An incident that just came up within the last couple of weeks illustrates the problem with this up north where Weise Road comes into Riverview Road, and it comes down out of the valley. There are five houses up there in the park that we bought easements on, instead of fee. Now as the flood plain naturally changes and as the beaver go to work and build beaver dams and so on, the yards and basements of those houses are beginning to get wet and will probably start to flood one of these days.

Those residents go to their city officials in Brecksville to complain about this and now the city of Brecksville as a public agency comes to the Park Service and wants to channelize those streams and drain those wetlands to protect those people's residences. Quite clearly, the National Park Service is not an agency in the business of draining wetlands and stuff like that and channelizing streams.

I guess I need to say no more, but you can see the problems that buying easements and having that kind of thing in a national park creates. And as we look at the options for resolving that problem, and it is a problem, it seems like one of the more logical options is to go back and buy those houses in fee so people can move and get rid of them. Rather than draining wetlands, we move the intrusions in the park. That is just one minor, but typical, illustration of why backing off and doing stuff in easement is not the way to develop and run a national park.

You must remember also, that was the beginning of the Reagan years and I think a lot of even liberal politicians like Metzenbaum and Seiberling were under the pressure of the sagebrush rebellion Reaganites and were reacting and perhaps overreacting to that kind of thing. But there was an impact. I think it did slow down the acquisition process.

MR. COCKRELL: Did Bill Birdsell come up with an immediate list of properties and say, "OK, go out and get easements on these?"

MR. THOMAN: I don't know. That is something you should ask Jack Blanton or Sheridan Steele. Sheridan was really kind of Bill's point man on land acquisition matters. I was never that deeply involved in land acquisition per se. In fact, almost never involved and what I do know about it I just know from talking to Bill or Lew or listening in squad meetings or talking to Sheridan or Jack Blanton.

MR. COCKRELL: How did the National Park Service respond to NBC's late 1979 production of "Prime Time Sunday?" Jessica Savitch subsequently did encores for "For the Good of All," and PBS's "Frontline." What was the response toward these programs?

Ronald G. Thoman

MR. THOMAN: I don't know that there was any official response. There was none that I know of. We were all quite angry about it. Those shows are classic examples of misrepresentation through creative editing and half-truths and innuendos and that type of thing. If I were a journalism professor teaching a journalism class, it would be very interesting to use those and allow students to see them and then go back and look at what the real truth of the matter was. If we had the resources, we were talking about making a counterpoint piece that would be the same length, the same approach, but fill in the rest of the story.

MR. COCKRELL: Did anything come of that?

MR. THOMAN: No. We never had the money or the resources to do it with. You must remember, a lot of the homeowners, using Roush Foundation money, had hired the Jury Brothers. A lot of that background material I understand is what really showed up on PBS and Jessica Savitch. Of course, there is that film floating around that they did, "For The Good of All" or whatever it is called. That was the one that they did.

All three of those were very similar in tone. That was the tone, the same cases, the same issues that were picked up by Peter Almond later. It was like for the homeowners, you could see it if you step back and look at it, orchestrated it, brought up these certain cases; Natalie the Florist and the Tonkins and the Lindleys, and certain cases. Creative photography and editing built this into size, because the same cases, the same issues were used over and over and over again.

So we were going to do one using the concept of "What is the other side of the story?" Natalie the Florist is now located down here in Meriman Valley with a shop that is probably making scads more money, scads more traffic as a business. Burrell Tonkin and the Lindleys now have bigger and better houses than they ever had before in the park. What those shows don't tell you about Burrell Tonkin is that he ran a junkyard down there where the beaver marsh is now. The auto junkyard was his. He was a nice old farmer in the valley, but it would look like somebody out of the depths of the Depression. It was a mess.

But there was a bigger truth to be told. To my knowledge, if something was done, there was no official response. John Seiberling entered some material in **The Congressional Record** about it, but that is the only thing I know. There was not even a letter to the editor. There was nothing.

MR. COCKRELL: Internally within the park, what did the staff decide to do to counter this tide of negative public relations?

Ronald G. Thoman

I know that there was a meeting in Washington, D.C., that Seiberling called to discuss this issue.

MR. THOMAN: There was a lot of talk on the park staff about a counter campaign if that is what you want to call it, in which we would get out there and do a lot of programs for Lion's Clubs and that kind of stuff ourselves, do a lot of press releases and feature stories, and all that kind of business. In other words, trying to get the truth out.

I think the sum and substance of that was nothing. I don't think it ever went anywhere. Nothing much ever happened. This was primarily because we just didn't have the resources to mount that kind of an effort. Remember we were trying to run a park here. We were already way in over our heads in terms of staff, budget to do things, and we just didn't have the resources to do that with.

Seiberling did call the meeting in Washington in May of 1980 on that very issue; what can we do at Cuyahoga to turn this thing around? A lot of people were trooped before the dias there and waxed eloquent about all kinds of wonderful things, environmental education and festivals and all kinds of things, most of which would require lots of money and staff and things to do. So much of that came to naught.

I would say the big thing that came out of that, however, was a Cultural Arts and Special Events Program that evolved in my staff because it was right after that in the summer of 1981 that we held our first series of summer festivals. We did that again in 1982. By 1983, we had brought the National Folk Festival to the park which was here for three years. After that, we carried on with our own Cuyahoga Valley Festival. But it was right after that--in fact it was much in response to that--that we created not only the festival program, but we started doing our May Day festivals, our art and photography competitions, our art and nature shows, our Cuyahoga Valley Lyceum programs, lots of high visibility, special interest activities. That was probably the biggest part of that.

I think the other thing that wasn't totally driven by criticism, and certainly not by that meeting, but that was our decision to open a second visitor center in the north end of park. The GMP called for only one visitor center in the park, but we quickly realized that we were dealing with two essentially different regional communities: the Cleveland region and the Akron region. We were serving primarily the Akron region and we had little visibility up north, especially after the Peter Almond series and all of that hit **The Press**.

We decided it was about time we established a presence because there was virtually nothing on the north end of the park. Bedford

Ronald G. Thoman

and Brecksville were Cleveland Metro Park units and there was really no National Park Service development or anything. Zero. Nothing. Not a sign. Nothing up there. Whereas down here, we had Virginia Kendall and we had a visitor center and we had a headquarters and all of that. So I would say that developing that visitor center was perhaps in large part, a response to negative perceptions of the park.

MR. COCKRELL: What was the reaction of the Cleveland Metroparks when the NPS presence became known?

MR. THOMAN: At first, none because we were such a little blip on the screen. I mean, we just took a little building that was up there and sort of moved into it. We never had any development money from Harpers Ferry or anybody else. It was all homemade exhibits and stuff like that. Very little in the way of signage and so on, so we were pretty negligible. In fact, the most common question asked when people came into Canal Visitor Center--in fact, that is still very much today--"What is this place?" So I don't think that visitor center has had that much impact, but at least it was something.

I don't think establishing that presence on the north end of the park had much impact. Although after Harold Schick left and Lou Tsipis came on, I think Tsipis was much more concerned about that "gobbling" you might want to call it because I am not sure it was ever a reality of a threat. I think he was probably responding, not so much to our existing visitor center as to our proposed development, with signs and trails and museums and a new visitor center and perhaps canal boat operations.

I think he was concerned that if the Park Service did go all out on the north end of the park that it could diminish his presence up there. One thing that was threatening about the north end of the park is that that was where a lot of the focus was because of the watered section of the canal of our historical story and resources.

Internally, we had decided to emphasize historical interpretation on the north end of the park. In the regional context, there are lots of metro parks and nature preserves and nature interpretation. Not so much historical interpretation and what we found is the public is sort of hungry for that. If you look back at our statistics, generally speaking, our historical interpretation programs draw far larger crowds and more interest than our natural history just because there is so much of it. So we knew on the north end that if we really did things right, develop the canal, have canal boat rides, nice museums, visitor centers and all of that kind of thing, that we would probably be much more of a unique attraction and have a lot of public attention up there.

Ronald G. Thoman

I think that Cleveland Metro Parks then may have perceived that as a threat and was a little bit concerned about it. Who knows what is related to what. But after we started doing our historical programming up there, they slowly but surely, and it has been building ever since, have started doing a lot of historical programs. At Bedford for example, they are starting to do pioneer days and little festival-type things like we do. Now whether or not they are doing that just to try and keep pace and show they can, or it is something they wanted to do, I don't know.

MR. COCKRELL: You talked about the Peter Almond series in **The Cleveland Press**. It seems that Bill Birdsell took violent exception to **The Cleveland Press** series and let his viewpoint be known to the Congressional delegation. Some of his letters got spread around and it would appear that Director Dickenson was very concerned about it. Do you think this was the final straw that led to the decision to transfer Birdsell?

MR. THOMAN: I don't know. I can't answer that. I really honestly don't know that. I think what was quite clear to all of us was that Bill was being taken out gently and that it was primarily because of the land acquisition controversy. I think Bill was glad to be going. It had been a hard five years for him. I think most people on the staff including myself felt it was time for him to go. Giving him all due credit as I said a while ago, he had almost burned up the usefulness he had because of the acrimony and that kind of stuff. So I think we all felt that it was time. What triggered it and all of that, I don't know. I don't have any information on that.

MR. COCKRELL: There was a memo that surfaced that got into the press that indicated that Cuyahoga Valley was number one, I believe, on a "hit list" for areas to be possibly deauthorized. What was the impact of something like that on the staff here? How did you react to it when you first heard it?

MR. THOMAN: I certainly think we were angry and it certainly had an impact on morale. It was sort of like what we were talking about before. We were all pretty stretched out and tired out as it was and really trying really hard to make everything work under less than ideal circumstances almost from every quarter. Now all of a sudden, there is this on top of it. There is no question it had an impact on morale. I think other than that, I don't think any of us really believed he could ever pull it off anyway. I don't think any of us were really ever concerned that it would ever happen. I know I wasn't and I can't remember anybody on the staff really being fearful for their jobs.

Ronald G. Thoman

MR. COCKRELL: What do you think is the moral and philosophical viewpoint, the short and long term impacts of James Watt on this park?

MR. THOMAN: On this park?

MR. COCKRELL: Or on the Park System as a whole, if you want to deal with that.

MR. THOMAN: On this park, I would say nil. In fact, I would say if anything Watt did this park a favor. The reaction to Watt I think gave us more visibility, made people realize some things about Cuyahoga that they might not have realized before. I think by virtue of the fact that we weathered the Watt attack and the Watt threat showed the strength and gave us greater confidence, gave us a feeling of greater legitimacy that we indeed are a part of the National Park System and even Watt couldn't take us out.

I think both short and long term impacts were nil and if anything, perhaps even positive and maybe a truce for the National Park Service as a whole. I don't know. I don't have a good feeling for that. I don't know of any specific evidence of any great damage that was done. Probably the most insidious threat is the people that he has left behind. We will see, that will be in the future how things go.

MR. COCKRELL: Could you explain the controversy over agricultural uses which were deemed to be commercial enterprises, such as the Christmas tree farm and the sweet corn farm. What steps did the park take to resolve this issue?

MR. THOMAN: That is an interesting one. First of all, we must remember that agriculture had been a part of this valley for thousands of years. Not just hundreds, thousands of years. Dave Brose at the Cleveland Museum of Natural History, the Curator of Archeology and recognized expert on pre-history in northeast Ohio and particularly in the Cuyahoga Valley, suggests that during prehistoric times going back at least a couple of thousand years, that far more of the valley was stripped in agriculture than ever was in the 19th century. Far more. This is proven apparently according to him by archeological evidence of change in faunal forms, rabbits and different kinds of animals that come into the valley once it was stripped off and various dietary things. I don't know how they figured this out, but he is quite convinced that far more of the valley was stripped in agriculture than it ever was with the whites here.

That is an important thing to understand about the valley. That it always has been an agricultural place. Now it is true that there was a period of several hundred years in there between the

Ronald G. Thoman

phasing out of the Indians and the building of the canal and the real building of the agricultural base here that the woodlands grew back up, but that was sort of an aberration over a period of a couple thousand years. The valley has always been an agricultural place in more recent history.

As a result of the canal, you went from subsistence farming to cash farming and that became more specialized a little bit later. The Depression came along. A lot of people lost their farms in the valley like everywhere else. In the Depression era we saw sort of the last of the self-sufficient family farming, and more into business kind of farming. But that was a trend that was sort of flowing along anyway. So that by the time you get up to the time of the park being created and preserved, you had pretty monocultured farming, corn, some orchards, the Christmas tree farm, more kind of specialized types of things.

Nevertheless, reflecting on the evolution of agriculture in the valley and I think it was an important "still living" part of the long agriculture story here. I think Bill Birdsell perceived the value of the agricultural scene and perceived the importance in maintaining that agricultural scene, the cultural landscape if you will.

That sort of gets back to the earlier question which we didn't follow up on that aspect of it. Bill had a couple of dilemmas. One was that the organic act for the park seemed to indicate that we should remove non-appropriate commercial enterprises. Now you get to the question of what is an appropriate commercial enterprise? Bill felt that the Szalays growing corn and so on was an appropriate activity, but was their selling corn at a retail outlet appropriate? And if he allowed that to continue, on what basis could he allow it to continue and then go to Natalie and say, "You cannot continue your flower retail business here." You must remember the Szalays also sell pumpkins and other sort of imported items, grapes and stuff like that. How could he say to one, "You can continue" and to the other "You can't?"

He felt quite clearly that Natalie was not appropriate and that was probably a case where it was a little bit more obvious than the Christmas tree farm. What do you do about that? So he was faced with a dilemma and I think Bill in dealing with that kind of came down on the side of ultimately eliminating all retail commercial agricultural activity and thus set in motion, the Natalie piece and the acquisition of the Christmas tree farm. Although you must remember, originally the entire Christmas tree farm was in the park. I think it was the 1978 legislation that carved a big part of it out and left only a strip of it in. It certainly carved out the historic house that is up there that originally was in the

Ronald G. Thoman

boundary and so on. I think that is a fair characterization of where Bill was going on that.

He started the action on the Christmas tree farm and Natalie and some others like that. What to do about the Szalays and the Benders and some of the other farms was another story because there you are dealing with some pretty large acreage. Clearly Bill had another dilemma because he wanted to see agriculture stay in the park. He knew it was important that it stay. Let's just use the Szalays as an example, but Bender and others have been similar. If he bought the Szalays out, would they just take their money and go? And then how was he going to keep farming in the valley? But we are going to go out and pay people to farm it, or could we lease the lands?

He wasn't sure. But here was Szalays, as long as they owned it, they were farming it. So you could see the dilemma he had. If he tried to buy it, he discovered, even an easement, and that is what he was going to try to do because you see the other thing is to just leave them there.

First of all you weren't protecting the land. Any moment they could say, "I changed my mind. I don't want to farm. I am going to build condominiums on it," or turn it into a junkyard or whatever. Secondly, you have no control over what kind of pesticides are used, erosion control measures, over farming, all of this stuff, you have no control. So Bill felt, well, maybe we will buy easements to give you long term protection. Yet he found out that easements on agricultural land costs up to 90% of the fee value and he just didn't realize how he could go to the public and say, "I am paying 90% of your money, but all you get is an easement" when for 10% more, he could do it and the public would actually own the property.

Yet he couldn't convince anybody in land acquisition or Congress or anybody else to give him the fee money to buy all of those lands out. So it was a real peculiar situation that he was confronted with. In the meantime, he was going to be transferred. Then he died, so that was never resolved.

When Lew Albert came in, part of his land acquisition philosophy was that he would not acquire agricultural lands, period. I guess therefore he bought into the fact that we can't control some of those other potential problems. If they decide to build condos on it, then we will take appropriate steps. History can judge the wisdom of his action, but the price we have had to pay for it is certainly, at least so far, the drilling of oil and gas wells on that land were not there before. Who knows what else will come of it?

Ronald G. Thoman

There has been a lot of internal staff disagreement about what park policy toward those agricultural lands should be based on those concerns and issues that I just defined. I think there has been a very divided staff on that. When Bill decided to acquire the Christmas tree farm, there were many of us on the staff who incidentally disagreed with Bill on that. We felt that the Christmas tree farm was an amenity for the park. For years and years, people had been driving out of the cities coming out here to buy their Christmas tree and it was part of the ambiance of the park. And in Bill's own peculiar mindset, he didn't see it that way. He made the decision otherwise, although there were some of us who felt that it ought to be kept.

Interestingly enough, when Lew Albert came, we talked to him and said, "You know, Lew, we are not convinced that that is the best thing to do, to buy that farm. Maybe we ought to back off." In the meantime, the whole thing had gone through and the check had actually been issued and Lew had it in his hand, but Lew agreed with us. So we went back to Bob Bishop, the person we were buying it from. He supposedly said he didn't want to sell anyway. Although I don't think it was a condemnation, it may have been, I can't remember.

We said, "Bob, thinking about it and all of that, maybe it would better if you did continue to farm it," and he said, "No." I guess the money there in hand, staring him in the face was like--because it was a fair sum of money, hundreds of thousands of dollars--so it was stopped anyway.

An interesting piece I think in terms of Cuyahoga is it is a different kind of park. If I could talk for just a second about this whole cultural landscape in the park which is very, very important. I think Cuyahoga may be more important for its overall cultural landscape and cultural history than anything else. As a slice of the American landscape, as a slice of American life, for literally thousands of years, twelve thousand years of uninterrupted, continuous human activity here in the valley, that is really the story I think that we are preserving and should be preserving. All of those elements of human endeavor like the Christmas tree farm are important, yet the problem we face in doing that is how far do you go? Because the junkyard was also part of that evolution of life.

So it is always this constant balancing and we are always getting criticized, but that is only our personal bias about what ought to stay and what ought not. We thought the flower shop was nice, too. We always come out in the valley to buy our flowers for Mother's Day. So it is not an easy one, but I think the cultural landscape and cultural resources of the park are certainly very, very significant. That is not to say that the natural resources aren't

Ronald G. Thoman

either, but then the natural resources aren't unique. What makes the natural resources in the park so valuable is their proximity to the urban area. That such a large block of nature would exist in such close proximity to an urbanized, industrialized region is significant.

I predict someday this park from the air will look like Central Park in New York City. I mean solid development right up the boundary, so this park will be very important in terms of green space, open space, wildlife habitat, breathing space. I am convinced that in the future, this park will be incredibly more valuable for that reason. I think Bill Birdsell will be praised and blessed for his vision in the future for wanting to save as much of that and make it available to the public.

I am not so sure that people like Lew Albert, if the truth is known, people will think their compromises and so on were so swell in the future. If you read the Interpretive Prospectus it contains a lot of the sum and substance in my thinking about the park, or at least what its interpretive themes and values are. You will see by the proposals that we call for in there what we think is important.

One of the single biggest things that we talk about in developing in the future are agricultural or farming kinds of activities, particularly demonstration farm type of thing that would sort of preserve the 1920's/1930's vintage self-sufficient family farming operation because that was sort of the end of it. I am convinced today that people, particularly urban people and urban kids don't know where eggs come from or where milk comes from and that this valley will become incredibly important for people to come out and bring the kids to see chickens and to see pigs and to see cows and horses. Maybe even kids will come out and stay overnight as part of a class and get up early in the morning and go reach underneath a chicken and pull the eggs out or grab the teat on that cow and milk it or whatever, to maintain some kind of touch with the earth and some kind of touch with those vital life processes that are disappearing.

I think again the proximity of this park, like the natural aspects, but the preserved cultural aspect, preserving those kinds of elements of our past would be incredibly important. More and more important as time goes by in the future and those things disappear. I don't know if you read Nesbitt's book, *Megatrends*, about the high tech, high touch kind of thing. I think as people are more and more distanced from that and alienated, that ability to go back and touch it, to see it, the roots of the past are very important.

Cuyahoga has often been criticized that we are not of national significance, that we don't have the monumental and superlative

Ronald G. Thoman

features in this park. I have often said that another way of talking about monumental and superlative features, talking about freaks, the Grand Canyon is a freak. It is interesting and valuable, but it is still a freak. There is something about the miracle of the common that is very important. That is what we all live with every day and we lose sense of the miraculousness of everyday life and the miraculousness and the beauty of how people lived their everyday lives.

That is what Cuyahoga preserves. If you read the IP, you will see that I tried to suggest that. That one of the very important things about Cuyahoga is the slice of life, the flow of human endeavor, the blending of human and natural activities and landscapes. This harmony of man and nature on an everyday basis. In the Cleveland of the year 2050, I am not so sure it is going to be important for that urban child to be able to go out on the weekend and see the Grand Canyon, as it is important to go out and be able to touch the earth and touch the past and see the way things were.

That is why the cultural landscape of Cuyahoga is important, that we have one covered bridge left. That we take these iron bridges that we have in the park, not just the Station Road Bridges, but some of these steel bridges which were built in the 1930's and now are being ripped out for these sort of new bogus park-like stone bridges. I think that needs to be stopped. We need to save some of those. We need to save the old railroad tracks. We need to save these vestiges of our cultural landscape and then through our interpretive program and environmental living programs, we need to preserve vestiges of the living past. That is where our Cultural Arts Program fits in; preserving the cultural arts traditions. I see that as being very important.

I see Cuyahoga as being a very important place. One of the things we are trying now is to get farmers to come out and keep crops in these fields. That is fine because people need to see that, but I predict some time we are going to keep these fields open by doing community gardening plots in them. People will live in the city and when there are no more gardens left, through lotteries and so on, give them a chance to come out here and have a garden spot in the valley.

I proposed that in the original draft of the IP; the bureaucracy said absolutely no and took it out. But if you go back and read my original draft, those community gardening plots were one of the big things that I called for in there. The other thing I called for in the IP and surprisingly it did make it through by name was what I call an alternative lifestyle farm. I said if the environment is going to be able to sustain life in the future, people have got to change their attitude toward things. They have got to change their lifestyles.

Ronald G. Thoman

One of the things that we could do here in the valley is to create a demonstration farm, not of the 1930's/1940's vintage, that is another story, but another farm, an alternative lifestyle farm that would teach people about wind power and solar power and high intensity French gardening, square foot gardening, how to raise your own fruits and berries, how to can things, how to dry things, how to raise chickens in your own back yard, how to build a fence, how to build a little pond for raising your own fish, whatever. I think this park can be valuable in that regard and I think there is a high degree of interest in it. That did slip through in the IP. That is more than you want to hear, but what I am telling you is that I think the cultural landscape and the cultural history in this park is incredibly important and maybe the most important thing.

MR. COCKRELL: Why don't we talk about the Interpretive Prospectus; how it evolved and what is its significance?

MR. THOMAN: The Interpretive Prospectus per se? The General Management Plan said that one of the desperately, urgently needed documents was an Interpretive Prospectus to guide the development of interpretive facilities and programs and that that document should be broad range, broad of scope, bold of vision. Those are not its terms, but that is the way I would characterize it. That was basically the charge to be creative. You will see that language in there.

Birdsell asked for, through the budget process and got, I believe, about \$48,000. I think it was in the Fiscal 1979 budget to do the IP. A team from Harpers Ferry was assigned. John Wise was the team captain. Linda Finn was on that time. Dale Smith was the Regional Interpretive Specialist on the team and there was somebody else, but I can't remember who it was. They came out in January of 1979 for their first reconnaissance visit. I came to the park in April of 1979. They came back for their second trip in May. That is when I joined the team and that is really when we got started.

In a nutshell--I won't go into all the details of this unless you want to--I think the team came with those standard, National Park Service negative attitudes about Cuyahoga Valley. I think they probably didn't like having to do an IP for this park. They didn't think it worth their time or effort. I just think the whole thing was very negative. They tried hard not to show it, but that is my impression, anyway.

When we got to thinking and talking about it and really looking at the park, I think they became quickly overwhelmed by the scope of this place, the potential of this place. After being here and

Ronald G. Thoman

looking at things and talking to people and collecting data and ideas, they had their initial sort of close-out session with Bill Birdsell before they went back and started writing the document. Birdsell listened to some of the initial proposals and was not at all satisfied, as I was not.

They were very limited, very meager, sort of like, "Well let's do a few waysides here and there and let's do a little of this and that and other than that, let's just forget it. Birdsell said, "No, absolutely not" because of his vision of the park. He said, "I want something creative, bold, courageous, sweeping" all that kind of stuff. So they went back with that charge knowing that that is what Bill wanted, and knowing that, either they didn't want to or they were intimidated by the task of doing it.

Now I don't remember the exact dates, but if you want them, I will get them for you. This process drug on. We never got a draft from them. I think it was because of that, that feeling of not wanting to deal with it, and of being intimidated by it, and other projects came up and this one just got put off. I can't remember the exact dates on this, but I think it was like in 1981 or so, we got a first draft from them. Almost a couple of years later anyway. This is after fussing and feuding.

I have a whole file with all of the documentation, which you probably didn't see in the central files because I have most of the original correspondence in my files. We fussed and fumed and wrote memos that said we had to get off the dime on this. They finally sent a draft out; I have got a copy of it. In my view, it was pathetic.

MR. COCKRELL: They hadn't adopted any of Birdsell's suggestions?

MR. THOMAN: Bill didn't give them any suggestions, he just told them the scope and tone and tenor of the kind of things that Cuyahoga deserved. What they finally came up with was still pretty thin. And then we got into another controversy, another conflict because it did not address a lot of the big issues. You see, the IP was going kind of the route of the GMP. So that now Harpers Ferry was saying, "Oh, no, an Interpretive Prospectus is not really a master plan for a park's interpretive program and facility. All it is a media prescription. All it does is to identify what kind of movies and brochures and exhibits ought to be done, that type of thing."

So consequently, you had these large areas of things that we were all concerned about. Here I was and of course Bill had passed on. You must remember, I am carrying the torch for Bill. I am carrying Bill's vision. I hate to characterize myself, but sort of the repository of the vision, as it were--and I am trying to carry this

Ronald G. Thoman

on. Of course, I believed in it myself as well, but things like Everett Artist-in-Residence Village, things like environmental education centers, things like canal boat operations and rides, things like alternative lifestyle farms and demonstration farms and festivals and cultural arts programs and things like that. None of that was in there. I took the position that this was not satisfactory. I took the document and threw it in the corner. I was so disgusted with it. I said, "The hell with it."

After a while, I started calling John Wise back on the phone. We tried to talk about things and it was quite obvious that it was sort of, as Ogden Nash characterized marriages, the meeting of the immovable object and the irresistible force. It wasn't going to go anywhere. Even before Bill died, we were having these problems. In fact, in the summer of 1980, Mark Sagan and Allen Kent, and I believe Al Swift, flew out here and we actually had a meeting over what the scope of this document should be and so forth. I am convinced had Bill not died and still been here, Bill would have beat it out of him, you know. But once Bill was gone, I don't think Lew felt that strongly, at least he didn't act as though he felt that strongly.

Consequently, I didn't push further development of the document because I didn't think I had the backing and the support to develop the kind of document that I felt we ought to have for this park. I felt it was better to have no document than to have something that locked us into something that was less than what it should be. This "drug" on for a couple more years and as I said, I can get you the exact dates if you want them, but a couple of years later, I can't remember what caused the thing to heat up again, but it did. And John Wise, who had gone through some personal problems also, I think he even quit the Park Service for a while, I can't remember, but anyway, we got back together on the phone and we sort of agreed that he would come out and we would try and get this thing started again and try to get it resolved.

By that time, Tom Danton had come. So between our kind of renewed effort and Danton's sort of new mediating view here, it was "Let's see what we can do." We agreed and Wise as I say, he actually even admitted that this place just overwhelmed him. Secondly, we were asking Harpers Ferry to do things that was not in the purview of the IP to do. But we all agreed we would try, so what we did is we sat down and I had developed my own table of contents of what I thought ought to be in this document.

We sat down with that and we agreed with Tom present that John would do these parts and I would write some draft material on this and send it to him and that he would use that material to incorporate it into the new draft document. There was quite a bit of

Ronald G. Thoman

stuff that I agreed to, because I felt very strongly about it and I wanted to share some information.

Anyway, I spent a considerable amount of time, I mean months, drafting material as I could find time and sending it to him in little packages, bits and pieces at a time. All the while, I was thinking he was supposed to be incorporating this stuff, editing it and playing with it. As it turns out, by the time I was done, I had sent him 500 pages of draft material. Now you must remember, this was background material, thoughts, ideas, suggestions, pretty rambling, none of it polished, just spewed out as fast as I could. Nothing happened and nothing happened and nothing happened. Finally, we pressed the issue again and they said, "O.K., your IP is on the way."

All of a sudden, one day, Lew Albert calls me. I go up to his office and he said, "Your IP is here." He threw it down on the desk and it was this thick. What they had done is they had taken all of the draft material that I had sent, polished and edited it up, and just sent it back to us as the IP. They were just saying, "Screw it, we are not putting any more time on it. If that is all that you guys want, here it is." They put a cover on it and said, "Here is your IP" and then they sent it back with a letter that says, "However, we think it is useless. We think it will never serve any good purpose, but if that is what you want, you have got it."

MR. COCKRELL: What was your reaction?

MR. THOMAN: Of course I was angry because they weren't playing the game as we agreed to play. That stuff was draft material. Furthermore, I opened myself to a lot of ridicule. I was called the most verbose person and was the butt of many kinds of jokes, which that didn't bother me so much. The whole point was that they had obscured the whole point of what we were trying to do here. I think for a couple of reasons, one was because Wise didn't want to do it and was intimidated by it. Secondly because Harpers Ferry was pissed because we were trying to push them into giving us the kind of document we needed, rather than the kind of prescription that they had arbitrarily set and said things were going to be.

So I tried to explain this to Lew, but as I say, I don't think Lew perhaps cared that much. It may be something you want to ask Lew about. Einar was the same way. In any event, neither one of them would support me on it. They essentially called me in and said, "We have got to go Harpers Ferry's way on this." Einar even called someone at Harpers Ferry and got them to send him copies of other prospectuses so that he could see what was supposed to be done.

Ronald G. Thoman

Then about that time, Warren Hill came out with the Operations Evaluation team. This came up as an issue and was one of the major things to be resolved was that--I think it was March of 1987 or 1988--that the park was now responsible for taking this 500-page document and reducing it to an IP of no more than 50 pages. This irritated me a little bit because Harpers Ferry had \$48,000 to do this, yet we still got stuck with the task. But I always have been one who thinks if someone gives you lemons, make lemonade.

I said, "O.K., at least we can write the kind of a document we want." So I took Chris Schillizzi who was my Interpretive Specialist and I said, "This is your task." I said, "I think I am too close to it to do it any more. You understand the park. You understand me. You understand the process. You take the draft material, the ideas and whittle it down into a workable Prospectus." It was a Herculean task, but he did a great job of it and he got it down to a little more than 60 pages. To make a long story short, we did submit it to the Region and Harpers Ferry looked at it, again apathetically, they didn't really care. Everybody signed off on it and I think in January of 1989, the Regional Director finally signed it and it was a completed document.

MR. COCKRELL: Was it sufficient to your needs? Was it fair to have a 500 page document squashed down into 60?

MR. THOMAN: It depends on your perspective. I think I would like to have everybody know it quite clearly. I never intended to have a 500-page document. That wasn't the point. I was just spewing out background information for somebody. All of a sudden, people were saying that I wanted a 500-page document. I didn't care what size it was. I think criticism was well put and the point was that nobody is going to read a 500-page document. I mean, think of it. You are doing the Administrative History. You aren't going to sit down and read that 500-page stuff, you don't have time. No superintendent is going to read it, nobody is going to read it, I agree. But as I say, I never intended to have a 500-page document.

Some stuff was taken out. I don't think critical stuff. I think stuff that we are not probably ready for yet, anyway. I mean, people weren't ready to accept some of those ideas yet. I intend to be here long enough to reinsert them in the next IP and maybe people will be ready for them. But, yes, I was satisfied with the document that finally went in. John Debo was the brand new Superintendent. He signed it. I think he signed it without ever reading it carefully, if at all. I think, it is my opinion, that after all of that, the document will serve no purpose because I think it is going to be ignored just like every other document was.

Ronald G. Thoman

To wit, this not being critical of the Superintendent, but just the process to wit, it was not more than a month after the document was signed and approved by everybody, that we had a meeting on the Wayside Exhibit Plan. I said to John, "We really need to put the budget request in for this Wayside Exhibit Plan" and John said, "I don't think we need a Wayside Exhibit Plan." I said, "But John, you just read and signed an Interpretive Prospectus that said that was the highest priority interpretive project." He said, "Oh yeah, I know I signed it, but I sort of had my fingers crossed when I did it!"

So, where it will go, I don't know. It was my tour de force. I felt like I fulfilled an obligation to Bill, an obligation to the dream of what Cuyahoga could be. I have no power now over park managers to influence what their decisions are. There it is, if they want to do it, fine. It is there. Superintendents tend to have their own visions, the way they see things and are going to put the emphasis and pursue things the way they see them.

MR. COCKRELL: Who is responsible for coining the term "management mosaic?"

MR. THOMAN: Me.

MR. COCKRELL: What do you mean by the management mosaic?

MR. THOMAN: That term came up with the first major piece of interpretive media business that I did after I got here. I had to draft the text and select photos and so on for the park folder that Harpers Ferry did. It was just another battle. They wanted to give us a real tiny little folder and I insisted on--as did Bill Birdsell--having something larger and they ended up finally complaining in writing that they had to give us a brochure the size of Yellowstone's, which was sort of silly for a park like this.

When I was writing the brochure for the park, I was trying to characterize the nature of Cuyahoga. That is where the term mosaic came up. It dawned on me in trying to characterize Cuyahoga as one word. Mosaic because you can talk about a natural mosaic, woodlands and meadows, or a cultural landscape mosaic of woodlands and farm fields or a historical mosaic of all of these different periods of history.

All of a sudden it dawned on me, a management mosaic as well, because there are many different organizations which manage pieces of this park. So we had the natural mosaic, the historic mosaic, the management mosaic, and the term just stuck because there was no easy term to use to talk about the way this park is managed by all of these individual owners and operators for lack of a better term.

Ronald G. Thoman

Everybody just started using this management mosaic, sometimes called management partners. In fact, that is what it is called in the brochure. If you will remember on the brochure, there is a whole section titled "Management Mosaic."

MR. COCKRELL: Do you think that all of these partners operate as a cohesive group under the greater NPS umbrella?

MR. THOMAN: No, they do not. I think one of the great failings of park management from the very beginning here, and I am not faulting any particular park manager, is the failure of leadership to pull all of these groups together into a cohesive body. For some reason, Bill Birdsell and Lew Albert, both almost deliberately resisted doing it. The current Superintendent, I don't know which way he will come down, but I can tell you that I know Sheridan Steele and maybe others, urged Bill and Lew both to form some kind of a more formal institutionalized body.

Call it what you will--the Cuyahoga Valley Management Round Table or whatever--to form these groups and have people join and have some kind of structure and chairperson and regular meetings and maybe a newsletter. By joining forces, we will understand each other better, work better as a team, perhaps avoid conflicts, improve communications, perhaps save money by putting out a joint schedule of events and joint newsletters. Maybe we could go together and contribute money to a pot and hire a joint public relations firm, because Blossom and Porthouse and the ski areas and Hale Farm, everybody is printing brochures and doing exhibits. If we pool our resources, we could probably have a five or ten person staff and printing press and everything else to do this kind of stuff; joint information centers and so on.

There seems to be so much value in doing that, but I proposed that to Bill, proposed that to Lew, and both of them almost deliberately wanted to avoid it. I never did understand why, but the fact of the matter is that it never happened. Why it never happened or what their real attitude toward it was I am not sure. You might want to ask Lew about that. You might get the answer, "Nobody would want to participate." That could be, but I don't know that anybody ever found out. I can't imagine why they wouldn't want to. It seems to me that that is a situation where everybody wins and nobody loses. We are not asking anybody to sign on. They are not guided by any legislative thing. It is just that we get together and we talk about things. We decide how best to do things.

MR. COCKRELL: What are some of the relationships with the different management mosaic partners? Maybe deal with some of the more important ones.

Ronald G. Thoman

MR. THOMAN: It is hard to characterize those relationships because they tend to vary depending on who you are dealing with. If we look at the top management level, I think all of them have improved under John Debo. I think he is very good with external contacts and working cooperatively with people. I see an improvement in all areas there. Under Lew Albert, some were good, some were not so good. I don't think Lew was as interested in constructing and maintaining positive working relationships. I just am not sure he considered that an important thing to do. I think Bill's relationship with some of the management partners was not so good because of conflicting passions and visions of what the park ought to be. So they have varied with managers.

MR. COCKRELL: But he did establish the Communities Council?

MR. THOMAN: I don't know that Bill actually established it, or it got established during his Superintendency. I really don't know how that exactly came to be. I just don't know. That is something you might ask Sheridan Steele. He might remember more. Or a note to Peter Henderson might work.

MR. COCKRELL: There is no mechanism for the management mosaic?

MR. THOMAN: No.

Relationships with Akron Metropolitan Park District are at the management level. I say that because it varies. My relationship with the Metro Parks and their interpretive staff has always been excellent. It varies. I know the Chief Ranger's relationship with his counterpart sometimes will be real good. It varies, but if we look at it overall from a management standpoint, I would say relationships with Akron Metropolitan Park District have been perhaps on the negative side during the Birdsell years, moved to a kind of neutral zone coexistence in the Albert years, and perhaps is gradually or slightly improving now. That is the way I would characterize that.

Cleveland Metropolitan Parks, I would say it was on an extremely positive and cooperative note during the Birdsell years. During the Albert years, primarily because of changes in their Executive Secretary when Lou Tsipis became Director. Those deteriorated very severely. Now that Tsipis is gone and they have a new Executive Director at the same time as we got a new Superintendent. I think those have moved back into the neutral zone and probably will improve.

Our relationship with Hale Farm and Village has consistently been outstanding. That is primarily, I think, because of Siegfried Buerling and his perception of the value of the park and his cooperative measure. Consistently, every Superintendent we have

Ronald G. Thoman

had has gotten along extremely well with him. It has just been an excellent working relationship all the way around.

Blossom Music Center has been, I would say, neutral all along. Blossom Music Center is owned and operated by the Musical Arts Association. They are a big outfit that is primarily Cleveland-based. I don't think we have ever had that many dealings with them. Their former manager was Chris Fahlman. I think we all knew him and all dealt with him once in a while. Our superintendent has met with their current manager and discussed things, but that has always been just sort of a neutral thing. We have never had any joint endeavors with them. Porthouse Theater has been pretty much the same. Kind of a neutral thing. And it has been positive. They would come to things and do things, but there weren't many dealings.

I think one of the things that threatened relationships between the National Park Service and many of the management partners, the greatest thing perhaps was oil and gas drilling. Because almost without exception, all of these management partners have gone in and drilled oil and gas wells, and much to our chagrin and disappointment that they wouldn't perceive themselves as part of a park and not do that.

It has made me angry also, yet in many ways, I can't fault them. This goes back to what we were talking about before, not forming this. I don't think that park management here has ever tried to establish a close working group and really convince these people, make them feel part of a park and part of a family and what does that mean and why we shouldn't do that.

There is hope on the horizon though that within the last month or two, our current Superintendent has met with Peter Wilson who is the headmaster at Old Trail School in the park. They indicated they were thinking about drilling some oil and gas wells. He went down and talked with them about this being a park and this may not be a really good thing to do and so on. He suggested that maybe as a result of that, they might back off with those plans, but that is the first time to my knowledge that we have ever tried that.

The Boy Scouts as well as the Girl Scouts have been pretty neutral. They coexist in the park. We do interpretive programs and work with them in that way for their scout groups and so on. Relationships with Camp Mueller have been pretty good. We have done a lot of programming with them. Phillis Wheatley's ex-Executive Director Tommie Patty retired and became the Chairman of our citizen's Advisory Commission. There has been a little more close working relationship there, although again, minimal, I am going to say.

Ronald G. Thoman

Our relationship with Brandywine Golf Course has been pretty neutral. Most recently, we have worked out some agreements with them to cross the railroad tracks to expand their golf course, add a few more holes. They were talking about perhaps some land exchanges to give them more parking capacity. Relationships with Astorhurst Golf Course on the north have been almost non-existent.

Both of the two ski areas have caused problems for the park. Or I should say there have been problems in the park because of the erosion and all of that kind of stuff. It seems to be very unpark-like. We haven't had much success. I am not sure we have tried to do much. If we did, we haven't had much success in resolving that issue. During the Albert years particularly, I think we had a pretty strong working relationship with Boston Mills Ski Resort. In fact, that has continued with Debo. Right now, we are in the midst of a land exchange with them that I think will benefit both them and the park.

Brandywine Ski Area has been a horse of another color. Mickey Dover who operates that facility has had plans and schemes ever since the beginning that have not been compatible with the park in terms of development and environmental degradation. It continues to be an on-going battle with him.

It has created really an interesting philosophical dilemma for the park because our legislation says that these recreation facilities are compatible and probably should remain until such time as they are no longer compatible. The question is, what does that mean? What was the Congressional intent? If Mickey Dover comes in and says, "I want to clear-cut, fill and totally redesign and manipulate 100 or 200 acres of wooded forested slopes in order to create a new ski slope," is that appropriate?

What was the Congressional intent in the legislation? Should we try to stop that or because it is recreational, should it be allowed to happen? That has always been a point of fact and it is a very great problem for us right now. The Superintendent is trying to figure out how to deal with that. And that may become a very, very big issue in the very near future.

I think it is symptomatic of what could happen with any of these management mosaic partners at any point in time. Hale Farm, Blossom, anybody could decide to do something. I think perhaps this is another failure of park management. I am not criticizing anybody when I say failure. I am speaking generically now, myself included in park management since the beginning of this park. We have not more vigorously pursued either cooperative agreements or scenic easements or whatever with these management mosaic partners to define just exactly what their intent was, and what we would and would not allow, and try to lock that in.

Ronald G. Thoman

We were totally unprotected in all of those areas. As you know, those areas make up damned near half of the park. When something happens and if those issues are called, it is a crisis situation every time. I think that is going to become more and more of a threat in the future.

Again you see, as the area surrounding the park builds up, land here will become more and more valuable within the park. There will be more and more potential threats to it in my view. How long for example, will Szalays be willing to farm that land and make ex-amount of money per year versus being able to sell it for millions of dollars for development or something. How long is that going to go on? It is just a time bomb ticking and so far, we have not done anything to try to get out front and in control of that issue.

Of course, there are many other management partners. The Cuyahoga Valley Line, we have gotten along with famously and worked cooperatively with. We have volunteers. We have worked very closely with the American Youth Hostel and have a very positive relationship with them. The bed and breakfast inn, the folks at Brandywine, we have worked very closely with them with cooperative programming. They do do programs for us, we do programs for them. The Humane Society of Greater Akron is in one of our buildings. We work very closely with them and do mutual programming. So I guess if I had to characterize the relationship with the mosaic partners in general, I would say that it was on a scale of one to ten--with one being the lowest and ten the highest, overall, lumped together and averaged out--I would say it is probably a seven or somewhere in that range. I think it has the potential to improve if we will provide the leadership.

MR. COCKRELL: Let's talk a little about the Land Protection Plan and why it was prepared and how this park went about compiling it.

MR. THOMAN: I think it was prepared at the mandate of the Department as I understand it. Again we are a little bit outside my realm of expertise here, but my understanding is that the Department under Watt required these Land Protection Plans. The very name, of course, implies the Watt administration. We don't want to call it land acquisition any more, but how do you protect land without acquiring it? That is the way it came about, I think by mandate. Because Cuyahoga was under such scrutiny by Watt, there was a lot of controversy and there was a lot of land acquisition going on. I think we were under even more pressure to do one, do it quickly and do it well and comprehensively.

Lew Albert, I think, took the task very seriously. He committed significant resources to it. He appointed a special Land Protection Planning Team, put one together, chaired by Ed Adelman who at

Ronald G. Thoman

that time was our permanent full-time Historical Architect. Lew pulled Ed out of that and made him chairman of that group. All of these people I will name were pulled off of their regular duties for this on a permanent basis. This wasn't just a couple of hours a week. This was like they were assigned full-time to this team and the rest of you can fill in as best you can behind it.

I know Gary Pace, our North District Ranger was a full-time member of that team. Richard Vasquez, one of my full-time Interpreters was on that team. I can't remember who else was involved, but Susan would remember who else was on it. Then several seasonal people were hired. Susan Garland was one of them and she is now my Secretary. Charlie Stockman who is now permanently on my staff was hired as a seasonal on that team. They were pulled together as a full-time team.

They were given an office in the residence where I used to live. In fact, it was between the time when I moved out and Gary Pace then moved into that house. He was the last one to live there and it was torn down after he moved out. In between then, from late 1982 or early 1983, the Land Protection Team used that house as their offices. I believe Rod Royce was on that team, as I recall, now too. There were others, but right now, I just can't remember who they were.

In terms of the proces of how they worked, you would have to talk to Susan, she was on there and she could probably shed more light on that. Ed Adelman could certainly tell you, but as I understood it, they actually requested a face to face interview with each and every property owner in the park. They examined each piece of property. They apparently assessed its features and resources and values and potentials and potential uses.

It was quite an extensive process. They took all of that material and put it together and it turned out to be, I think five, two-or three-inch binders full of materials. That was the Land Protection Plan which detailed each and every of the 700 or so tracts or maybe there is more than that in the park. Obviously, like the IP before, it was not a very manageable document so it was all whittled down into a document that is maybe 90 or 100 pages or something like that. That is the one that was finally approved and signed as the Land Protection Plan.

I don't recall when that was completed and signed. I believe it was in 1984 if I am not mistaken. After that, nobody could accuse us of not having a comprehensive land plan. Again, you might have to confirm this with somebody else, but I think somebody told me that that was the first and sort of like the pioneering Land Protection Plan in the National Park Service, but I wouldn't swear to that. Somebody had told me then that Cuyahoga was the leading

Ronald G. Thoman

edge anyway of that. Miraculously it got through the Department even though, if you go back and look at it, it called for a sizeable amount of fee acquisition. I think it is much to the credit of Ed Adelman and members of that team that they were able to develop the rationale for fee acquisition on those properties.

MR. COCKRELL: How important is the VIP Program to this park? Could you operate without it?

MR. THOMAN: I would have to say no we could not. Primarily I think in our interpretive program. I think this is a real threat to our program, but we are at the point where we are dependent on that. As much a supporter of volunteerism as I am, I think you are always running a significant risk when you become dependent on VIP's rather than seeing them as a supplement.

Other divisions in the park do work with and use volunteers. I don't think any of them are dependent. I think they are using volunteers to supplement activities, building trails and doing resource data collection and things like that, small dump clean-ups and stuff.

In Interpretation however, I think we have gotten ourselves into a position where we are dependent. For example, my Secretary who does all of the folding and Xeroxing and mailing and labeling and stapling of thousands of mailings and press releases and schedules of events every month and uses all volunteers to do that. I don't know how in the hell we could do it if we didn't have the volunteers.

I know our big events such as the Cuyahoga Valley Festival is predicated on volunteers. It simply could not be done without them. That activity requires upwards of 200 volunteers and literally thousands of volunteer hours to make it work. Several of our other events like the May Day festival and some of those also are dependent on those volunteers. We simply could not hire enough staff to do that.

Much of our school services activities, especially in our Environmental Education program, is done by volunteers. I know we only have one person in our environmental education staff and if he didn't have those volunteers giving those programs, it would be limited to what he could do himself.

The same is true of our visitor centers. Both of them extensively use volunteers to give those school programs. If we didn't have the volunteers, they simply wouldn't be given. That is just three examples.

Ronald G. Thoman

Our library is entirely managed such as it is by volunteers. Our bulletin boards throughout the park now are maintained primarily by volunteers. We have far, far exceeded our staff capability, and if for some reason the volunteer service was to wink out, we would be in a whole lot of trouble. Of course, we don't expect it to wink out, but not only is it important, but it is vital. Last year alone, we had in excess of 30,000 volunteer hours.

MR. COCKRELL: How does that rank Cuyahoga in the Park System?

MR. THOMAN: I don't know. You would have to ask Chris Schillizzi that or Tom Danton could tell you. I know three or four years ago, we were fifth in the nation. I think we have maybe slipped since that, I am not sure, but last year, we had over a thousand individual volunteers who contributed in excess of 30,000 hours.

MR. COCKRELL: Let's spend the last half hour that I have here talking about your division. Could you summarize how it has changed over the years since you have been here? What it was like when you were first here and the way it is today?

MR. THOMAN: The first part is easy. What was it like before I got here? There wasn't any. The park was authorized in December of 1974, established in June of 1975. There was no formal interpretive division or formal interpretive program until I came here in April of 1979. I was the first Chief of Interpretation. I was the first permanent interpreter in the park. Now let's go back and sketch in the intervening years, if you want this amount of detail.

A couple of interpretive things were happening. Bill Birdsell was a very big believer and supporter of interpretation. However, it took him until fiscal 1979 to get approved a Chief of Interpretation position and even then, only at GS-11. He was recruiting for it, and I have already mentioned that I met him at Albright and he talked to me about it and I was very interested in it. I felt I had been at the Training Center long enough and it was time to stop talking theoretically and get back out in the field and do some of this stuff.

Cuyahoga seemed to me the biggest possible challenge I could have and that is what I wanted, so I came here to do it. I came as a GS-11. About two years later, it was regraded at a GS-12 so it was only a temporary thing. In fact all the Division Chiefs here were GS-11's then. In fact, Bill was only a 13 himself at the time, then later that was upgraded to a 14, and the Assistant to a 13, and the Division chiefs to 12. There was a whole upgrade at that time.

In 1977, the first interpretation of any kind at all was done in the park. Three things happened that year. One, the year before-

Ronald G. Thoman

-1976--was the Bicentennial of the American Revolution and one of the things the Park Service had done for that was to commission and put together the play **The People of 1776**. It was an interactive play with the public and it was a series of L-shaped stage sets that represented little houses inside and outside and little stores that made up a little revolutionary-era village. There was a handful of five or ten actors and these actors, wearing revolutionary period costumes would learn scenarios, not text so much, but scenarios of things that would happen and then they would carry this out. The public would be there, so they would actually be talking to the public and the public would talk to them. Things would happen, but somebody would ride into town and say, "Oh my God, they just fired on the Minutemen!" Then they would react. It was kind of an interesting thing.

I am not convinced that it was all that great, because I don't think a lot of people understood what the hell was going on, but as an interpretative thing, Bill saw that and was very interested in it. He had a brilliant mind and he asked Harpers Ferry, who was sponsoring that thing, "What happens to this after 1976?" because obviously it was for the Bicentennial. They said, "Nothing, that we know of, it is dead." So he said, "Well, do you suppose I could have those sets and stuff when you are done?" They said yes.

So at the end of 1976, they shipped all of those sets here to Cuyahoga. They are huge, whole semi-trailers full of these sets. Bill, using some government funding, but going to I believe it was the Gund Foundation, got a \$10,000 grant and went to an organization called Eden Valley Enterprises, a local theatrical organization and commissioned them to put together what they eventually called "Johnnycake Village." Essentially it was to be the same kind of thing like **The People of 1776**, but it was to be an interactive drama about the opening of the Ohio and Erie Canal in the Cuyahoga Valley.

So with this commission and this money, Eden Valley developed the scenarios, researched and created the costumes, hired the actors, all of that type of business. In the summer of 1977, they staged "Johnnycake Village" for the first time all summer long, free to the public, over a long stretch of the old canal towpath near what is today the Stanford Farm Hostel. It was a pretty primitive set-up, but that was the first foray into the field of interpretation and, interestingly enough, a drama and all of that.

Now that same year, I believe it was that year, the Cuyahoga Valley Line started running. Maybe they were running before, but that was the first year that they put volunteers aboard that train to interpret to the public. Even though we didn't own the tracks at that time or have any formal relationship, but because it went primarily through the valley, Bill decided that those volunteers

Ronald G. Thoman

should be official NPS volunteers and trained and managed by the park staff. So that was the second piece of interpretive business in 1977.

Incidentally both of those activities were managed by Chet Hamilton who was the Park Historian. He was given the assignment of operating the volunteer program and Johnnycake.

Also that year, under sort of an I & RM set-up, if that is what you want to call it, it wasn't so much formal, but Bill said to the Chief Ranger, "I want you to hire a couple of seasonal workers to do interpretation." They hired at least two women. There may have been a third. I think there were three. I think it was Judy Chovin, who later became an RMVP Ranger, Shirley Hoh and Marian Eyler. They came on board in uniform and during that summer gave some nature walks and stuff like that.

We didn't own any land at the time, you must remember, in 1977 yet. Virginia Kendall wasn't turned over to us until 1978, so they were really giving walks in some of the Metro Parks and helping to staff the "Johnnycake Village" thing and odds and ends of stuff like that which didn't amount to much. That was in 1977. That was really the first Park Service foray into interpretation.

I should say also just as a little bit of background here, under the Cuyahoga Valley Park Federation, volunteers had been giving bus tours to school groups for several years. That was part of the effort to get the park established. I am going to say from 1974 on at least; maybe 1973 even under the auspices of the Cuyahoga Valley Park Federation. Volunteers were conducting school bus tours. Really, that was kind of what you may say was the first interpretation in the park.

Then when Bill came along in 1975, again, those volunteers became NPS volunteers in name only. That is about all we did until I believe 1978 when we started actually managing and training and scheduling the volunteers. We did that until I think 1979, and 1980 was the last season we ever did that. It was just too complex a job to try to manage all of that, nor did we feel it was a good educational thing for the kids to sit on a bus all day and be driven around the park so we dropped it in favor of other things.

In 1978, Bill Birdsell hired Mary Kay Newton as a part-time Park Aide. Mary Kay was formerly the Secretary to the Executive Director of the Cuyahoga Valley Park Federation who was Sheridan Steele. The Federation, I think, phased out at the end of 1977 and Bill hired both Sheridan and Mary Kay on the park staff.

It was also in January of 1978 that Virginia Kendall State Park was turned over to the National Park Service which set the stage for

Ronald G. Thoman

the summer of 1978 when Mary Kay and two of the former seasonals, Marian Eyler and Shirley Hoh came back and operated Happy Days which was a picnic shelter for Akron Metropolitan Parks, a non-winterized, summer use only picnic shelter as a visitor information center. We didn't rent it out as a picnic facility that year, but ran it as a visitor information center and did interpretative programs out of there, again under the direction more or less of the Chief Ranger's office. That year "Johnnycake Village" was done again; this time though on the lawn outside of Happy Days Visitors Center.

Incidentally I might just add since we haven't said it anywhere else here, one of the problems we had with "Johnnycake Village" and using Happy Days as a visitors center was the motorcycle track across the street. Akron Metroparks had developed on that large field across the street where we now have our parking lot and playfield, a motorcycle track. The trail that is now the Boston Run cross-country ski trail over there was originally developed as a off-road vehicle trail. There were motorcycles over there all the time, rip snorting and making noise and everything. We eventually closed that down in 1979.

1978 was pretty much a repeat of 1979, but now we had Mary Kay on as a permanent Park Aide and we now had that visitors facility in the summer, but again in the winter, it was closed down. The seasonals went away, but Mary Kay then served as an information receptionist in the main headquarters building which was on Route 303 right across from Happy Days Visitors Center where the Shady Knoll picnic area is now. She had a desk right in the front room there and worked on weekends so there was some visitor information on weekends. That was pretty much it for 1978. We had the train and the bus tours.

Then I came in 1979 and we immediately started building a bigger program. The train volunteers continued, the bus tours continued, Johnnycake Village was back again in the woods outside Happy Days. We started putting a program together. Our first offices were in a garage down on Pine Lane, right off of Route 303 outside of Peninsula, just a little ol' two-car garage that they put a furnace in for us. We sort of huddled there in a dirt parking lot with a port-a-potty, with no water. It was interesting. We were there from April of 1979 until May of 1980, about a year.

When I came, Chet Hamilton, Historian, was assigned to my staff. As I say, at that time we had responsibility for cultural resource management. With Mary Kay Newton, that was my staff. Then I had that summer of 1979 hired several seasonals. I hired Marian again and Shirley was back. We hired a girl by the name of Charlene Standring. I believe that is all that we had that summer. We

Ronald G. Thoman

operated Happy Days Visitors Center again during the summer months.

In June of 1979, I got another permanent full-time position approved, a GS-9 interpreter and I hired Dan Hand. Dan for me, really ran the interpretive program that summer, bus tours, the train guides, the visitor information center, the interpretive program. We started getting really more serious about developing some interpretive programs.

The other thing that we had in 1979 was the bus service to the park. Part of the Chattahoochie organic legislation called for a visitor access transportation experiment. I think it was a three-year program mandated by Congress that provide money to experiment with mass transit parks in urban areas and there were some monies made available. We got some and went to the Akron Transit Authority and contracted with them to run bus service to the park that summer and again the next summer. It was never very successful, incidentally. That is another whole story we could talk about later if you want to, but that was sort of a flash in the pan that never went very far, but it was an interesting attempt.

That summer, we also through our volunteer program were put in charge of the visitor survey study that was being done for the Transportation Plan. We had many of our volunteers and staff interviewing people all over the park, including at Blossom Music Center about things they had done in the park and where they wanted it and would like for it to go and that kind of stuff. That was a big workload that summer, too. 1979 was a big summer.

I failed to mention this. In the winter of 1978 and 1977, we contracted with Eden Valley who did the Johnnycake Village thing to do what they called Johnnycake Christmas. At the Ledges or Octagon Shelter, they would put on a typical 19th-century Christmas decoration and celebration with singing, sort of again, an interactive drama where people would come in and drink hot cider and eggnog and decorate the tree and sing Christmas carols and go through stuff like that. That was part of our program in 1979, too.

In May 1980, we moved our headquarters further east on Route 303 to a structure called the Homestead, which gave us a whole house for our offices. It was adaptively restored or remodeled to serve as our offices and as the park library. I got another permanent position approved for a Recreation Specialist that year and in May of 1980, hired Doug Palmer into that position. So the way we were structured at that point was that Dan Hand was kind of running traditional interpretive programs and Doug Palmer was going to put together and operate outdoor recreation programs for the park. Doug was a former Parks and Recreation Director for the City of Zanesville when he came on our staff.

Ronald G. Thoman

So Doug hired some seasonals and Dan hired some more seasonals and had the Happy Days visitor facility again. I can't remember the name of those seasonals. We will have to use the list that we will provide you for that. We expanded into recreational programming that summer.

During the winter of 1979 and 1980, with an FY 80 appropriation of let's say in the neighborhood of a half a million dollars, Happy Days picnic shelter was winterized and adaptively restored as a year-round visitor center. We moved into that in late January of 1980 as a permanent visitor center. Dan Hand's offices moved in there, and May Kay moved in as a permanent member of Dan's staff. The rest were all seasonals. We were hiring seasonals year-round, that is all we had. Chet, Doug and I stayed at the other offices.

One other thing I left out in the summer of 1979, Susan Garland came to our staff as an intern for the National Trust to do a project on the Civilian Conservation Corps in Virginia Kendall. She did that project during that summer, completed it, and wrote a report on it. In the process, she did numerous oral history interviews. We realized she was pretty good at it, so when her project was over, the Superintendent gave us funding to hire her as a one-year temporary Historian to do oral histories for the park in general. After that we got another one-year appointment and after that a seasonal appointment and off and on, etcetera.

Susan was with us up until about 1985 or so in one kind of appointment or another, off and on, until she went to work permanently for the Navy Finance Office in Cleveland. Finally in 1987, when my Secretary, Mary Kay Newton retired, we hired Susan into that position. So Susan has been with us for a long time since 1979 off and on. As Historian, she also worked with me beginning in 1980 creating the park's library. We spent a lot of time doing that; buying books and trying to establish a usable interpretive library.

We also, at Bill Birdsell's direction, started collecting all of the archival and other material we could for the park's Administrative History. We had been storing and stashing that kind of stuff for years and years. That really got underway in a big way in 1980. Again we were doing the train stuff. That kind of stuff just continued. 1981 was a big year. That is when we started getting more permanent positions established for our interpretive staff.

As I said earlier, we had decided to create a second visitor center on the north end of the park. We took what was called the TNC Building, a former engineering company. It was suitably located and our own maintenance staff rehabilitated the interior of that

Ronald G. Thoman

and built an auditorium. We put up some temporary exhibits in there. FLIP money was later used to make a parking lot for it.

But we needed staff, so at that point, we kind of reorganized. We got several additional permanent positions, subject-to-furlough. Dan Hand became Assistant Chief of Interpretation in charge of all interpretive operations and supervising all interpretive staff at GS-11. My function became one of providing oversight to the whole interpretive program, interpretive planning, interpretive media development, and cultural resource management program. Dan ran the interpretive operation.

Then we hired two District Interpreters. The first South District Interpreter was Marie Marek (now Marie Meyers, working at Nez Perce), who came to us from Indiana Dunes in October of 1981. The North District Interpreter was Frank Cucurullo (now at C & O Canal), who came to us from Castle Clinton, New York City Group in October of 1981. We hired one person on Frank's staff: Barbara Stewart (now at Shenandoah) who had been a former seasonal. He had two seasonals, so he had approximately three staff people up there.

On the South District staff, as permanents we hired in October of 1981, Richard Vasquez from Yosemite and Lisa Brohl from Perry's Victory. It seems to me there was one other person, but I forget now who it was and we also hired some additional seasonals. So now we had two districts. Doug Palmer was running the recreation program, but by that time, I had decided to change Doug's function. The recreation program and the interpretive program were just competing with each other. It didn't make sense to have two people running those, so I folded the recreation program into the interpretive program so that they did interpretation and recreation both. I reassigned Doug as Urban Outreach and Special Populations Coordinator. Doug then in 1981/1982 began the Urban Outreach and Special Populations effort that he still conducts today. It is a very popular program.

Also in October of 1981, we added an Environmental Education Specialist on the staff and hired Jeff Maugans from Redwoods. Jeff was a GS-9, Doug was a GS-9, Frank and Marie were both GS-9's, so we now had four GS-9 managers each managing kind of a separate track, North and South District Interpretive Operations, Environmental Education, and Urban Outreach Special Populations. May Kay had left Dan Hand's staff and had come on board as my permanent secretary in late 1980 or early 1981, and she remained my secretary up until 1987 when she retired.

Also in 1980, we hired a part-time GS-3 clerk-typist, Pat Johnson, to do primarily personnel and budget work on my staff. She subsequently moved over to the Administrative Division and is today our Personnel Officer. In 1981, we hired a temporary, Mark

Ronald G. Thoman

Gatewood, as a Writer/Editor to do our schedule of events and press releases and whatnot. That year he started our monthly interpretive magazine, **Where the Sidewalk Ends** in the same format as the **Courier** was, just prior to its current format, but more that black and white format. It was a very successful, very popular monthly interpretive magazine, which we put out until May of 1982 when the Reagan/Watt bunch put a stop to that. That is another whole story.

In the summer of 1981--you can see 1981 was a big year--as a result of the May 1980 meetings with Seiberling and this whole emphasis on special events, we contracted with the National Council on the Traditional Arts to conduct four summer ethnic festivals. Those were a blue grass festival, a Yiddish festival, a tambouritzen festival and a polka festival. We did that in the summer of 1981 at Kendall Hills under the umbrella of Summer Celebration, as we called it.

NCTA staff was a guy out of Columbus by the name of Tim Lloyd, who also was the Ohio State Folklorist. The person who managed our end of the operations was a seasonal by the name of Hedy Kish as our first sort of Cultural Arts Specialist. In the summer of 1981, we hired a gal by the name of Jane Wissinger as a full-time Volunteer Coordinator; she was seasonal, but full-time. So you can see our staff was pretty fleshed out that summer.

In 1982, that seasonal cultural arts position became permanent full-time. Rather than establishing a permanent full-time position as a government staff person, we initiated a \$50,000 contract with the Ohio Foundation on the Arts to develop and manage our Cultural Arts and Special Events program for us. They in turn selected the person that we wanted which was Paul Squire. He essentially was on our staff. He had an office right next to mine and essentially he worked for me, but that is the route we used because we didn't have the position to put him in. Paul was on our staff from 1982 until he left in 1986.

In 1982, he was under contract through Ohio Foundation on the Arts. In 1983, Ohio Foundation on the Arts again. In 1984 and 1985, we developed a cooperative agreement with the National Council on the Traditional Arts and he was employed by them and they did the program for us. Then in 1986, we created a permanent position and Paul applied for it and was selected and put into that position. About two months later, he resigned and took a job in Washington, D.C.

We subsequently filled that job in March of 1987 with John Reynolds who is still in that position. At that, we brought our staff kind of up to the point where it is now, with these five GS-9 managers, each managing their own tracks. When the Assistant Division Chief Dan Hand left in 1983, the Region and everybody else was down on

Ronald G. Thoman

assistant positions, so the Superintendent decided not to re-fill it as an assistant position.

It was redesigned as an Interpretive Specialist position, non-supervisory, and filled by Phil Hastings from Apostle Islands. Phil died in December 1986. All five of the GS-9 staff people, the GS-11, and the Secretary came back to me for direct supervision. The Interpretive Specialist took over the volunteer program, took over the park library, took over media development and interpretive planning and a lot things like that and I was really back in full charge of operations.

1981 was really our peak year. We had I think close to 25 positions on the staff. When Watt and Reagan really took hold, it was downhill from then on and we started losing positions right and left. We lost our Writer/Editor, we lost our separate Volunteer Coordinator, we lost our Clerk-Typist and so on. Anyway, we eroded down to today, where we have got approximately 15 positions and some seasonals now with the Junior Ranger program, but I would say we lost about 30% of our staff after 1981. Our budget, however, continued to grow fairly well. I think when I first came here it was a little over \$100,000, today it is about a half a million dollars a year, plus lots of donated money and foundation money and so on.

In 1982, we got some money. Harpers Ferry Center at the time had a program for getting new parks up and running with minimal visitor information facilities, so they provided a little bit of money and that really was our first professional exhibits in the park. They came in and built us a new information desk at Happy Days and those three black box exhibits and the ones at the Canal Visitor Center and the new sales racks. The lobby facility is at least a start at Happy Days.

It was kind of our first go at formalized exhibits and it is the same way with Canal. However, we have never since then been able to get money for exhibit development. Everything else we have done including all the existing exhibits at Canal right now are all homemade by us here in the park, primarily by Rory Robinson up there. We haven't even been able to do that down at Happy Days. We do a few temporary things. Until most recently, we got what is going to end up being about \$300,000 for exhibit planning and production for the Locktender's House, all new exhibits for that new visitor center up there.

In 1979--I have to go back and add this--Bill Whalen who was Director at that time, started a program which he called the Urban Initiative Program. Bill was very interested in urban parks and was making money available for special urban programs. We got

Ronald G. Thoman

about \$60,000 and with that money, we designed and had built through GSA a mobile visitor center vehicle.

This is a bookmobile-type transit bus style of van--very much like the bookmobiles, but instead of books, it would have exhibits in it. We had this design and had it built by a local firm, Gerstenschalguer, who builds bookmobiles down in Wooster, Ohio. They have since gone out of business. Anyway, that was designed and delivered to us. We got the money in 1979. It was designed and delivered I think in early 1981 by the time it was all done.

The idea was we would be able to take this mobile visitor center to events in downtown Cleveland and Akron and off to schools and down to the state fair in Columbus. In other words, it would be a mobile visitor center. After all of that, getting that vehicle built and delivered in 1981, I have never been able to get another dime for exhibits to go in it. We have had the vehicle, beautiful vehicle if you haven't seen it, but it just sits empty. We have made some little velcro exhibit things that we stick in it once in a while, but it has been basically empty.

I still to this very day, and under our new superintendent, ask support and dollars for finishing that thing off with exhibits and AV and everything it is supposed to have. It is a very nice vehicle, but it serves no purpose. I point that out because again, we were on a roll. Everything was great and then in 1981 or so, I think it was really when Watt and Reagan took hold that the bottom just fell out and we have been kind of down and out ever since.

In 1982, I remember I told you Jeff Maugans came as our Environmental Education Specialist in late 1981. In 1982 he moved into the first of the three structures out where he is now in what we now call the Earthlore Environmental Education Campus. We began the planning process to develop that into a residential environmental education complex which will accommodate about 120 kids a night. That is moving along well and we are about to enter into a cooperative agreement with the University of Akron to jointly operate it with us.

In the meantime, we have done a lot of smaller residential environmental education programs in one existing building we have. We have done a lot of day use environmental education programs. Doug Palmer has pursued his Special Populations and Urban Outreach program. He conducts summer day camps for senior citizens, mentally retarded youngsters, blind and deaf groups, cerebral palsy groups, any special populations.

We do day camps all summer long. We host in January/February the state of Ohio's Special Olympics: Winter Games for the mentally

Ronald G. Thoman

retarded. In the fall, working with some local groups, we have created the first ever Outdoor Sports and Recreation Festival by and for the Disabled. That is a set of outdoor competitive games for the physically disabled, bike races and all other kinds of games. That happens in the fall, so that is our two special events for special populations.

[END]

Ronald G. Thoman

I N T E R V I E W V I A C O R R E S P O N D E N C E

**F O R T H E
A D M I N I S T R A T I V E H I S T O R Y O F
C U Y A H O G A V A L L E Y
N A T I O N A L R E C R E A T I O N A R E A
O H I O**

**William J. Whalen
former Director, National Park Service**

**Telephone Conversation
September 6, 1989
Mill Valley, California**

Interviewed by:

**Ron Cockrell
Historian
Midwest Regional Office
National Park Service**

**Letter
Omaha, Nebraska
August 29, 1989**

William J. Whalen

William J. Whalen

MR. COCKRELL: [Summarizing the conversation]:

Mr. Whalen called regarding my recent letter. He highly praised Midwest Region for conducting this project now while the key players are mostly still alive as opposed to "waiting 50 years from now." He said he was pleased to participate and would look forward to being consulted on other Administrative Histories. Mr. Whalen retired from the Service 9 years ago and is now practicing law in the San Francisco area. He said he preferred to deliver his answers verbally rather than in writing.

Mr. Whalen prefaced his remarks by presenting the following background information.

Whalen's experiences as Golden Gate NRA Superintendent gave him the perspective to understand the "new area syndrome" which confronted Bill Birdsell. As a Superintendent, Birdsell did very well, but he was caught up in a tenuous situation. Birdsell was accustomed to holding on too tightly to all aspects of CVNRA's operations and was not listening to advice during the last year or two of his superintendency. Meanwhile, the problems became more pronounced. Although Birdsell devoted his life literally to CVNRA, Whalen believed the time had come that the park needed a "new perspective." This was the conclusion of the special 3-man team Whalen sent to CVNRA to investigate. Whalen left the directorship before definite plans for Birdsell's transfer were executed.

Whalen recalled visiting Cuyahoga as Director and hearing the "severe" complaints concerning the land acquisition program. The media was especially eager to publicize controversies.

The controversies brewing at Cuyahoga came at the same time that Charles Cushman and his National Inholders Association (NIA) were gaining strength and attention in the western parks of the United States. Cushman and the NIA "found fertile ground in the Cuyahoga Valley." Because the Corps of Engineers had badly handled the Service's land acquisition program at Cuyahoga, the valley communities attitude toward the Service was, to say the least, bad. Whalen acknowledged the "high handedness" of the Federal acquisition program at CVNRA. It only encouraged media exploitation, the most glaring example was Jessica Savitch's program in which Savitch and her producer had already made up their minds to "do a number on the Park Service." They refused to listen to and evaluate the facts.

One of the decisions a Director makes is when does a Regional Director or a Superintendent lose his or her effectiveness--when is it time to move on? When Whalen decided Birdsell should go, Whalen held a meeting with Congressman Seiberling to discuss it.

William J. Whalen

Although reluctant, Seiberling was not opposed to it. Whalen suspected that Seiberling had come to the same conclusion, but because he was such good friends with Birdsell, Seiberling would have found it very difficult if not impossible to tell Birdsell himself. The CVNRA staff probably knew about the impending transfer because they could "see the handwriting on the wall."

Whalen made the decision to transfer Birdsell after receiving advice from the special investigation team he sent, from the Region, and from some of the local citizens. He made the decision in the best interest of CVNRA and NPS. He stressed the point that Birdsell did a "good job--up to a point." Few NPS managers have the luxury of taking a new area from the project stage to full park operation in such a short period of time.

Where should Birdsell be transferred? He knew nothing about the plan to reactivate the Chicago Field Office, but conceded that was probably the Region's idea. Whalen favored moving Birdsell to a GS-14 position in Philadelphia at the Mid-Atlantic Regional Office.

The following are Bill Whalen's responses to my written questions:

1. Were you responsible for convincing the Trust for Public Land to open a field office in Cleveland to assist NPS in the CVNRA land acquisition program? (If so, explain the chain of events.)

MR. WHALEN: [Summary of response:] 1. Whalen said he may have made an offhand comment to TPL that CVNRA might provide some good opportunities. He said TPL officials could best answer this question and mentioned the name Marty Rosen. Whalen said he was glad to have TPL's assistance throughout the System and was pleased to have it at CVNRA. He said he was aware that NPS/TPL land acquisition officers frequently clash over "turf issues," but he viewed the relationship as mutually complimentary.

MR. COCKRELL: 2. In mid-August 1979, you instructed parks with active land acquisition programs to prepare a Land Acquisition Plan approved by the Regional Director by December 31, 1979. Why was this necessary? Did this directive come primarily because of the problems at CVNRA?

MR. WHALEN: 2. It became necessary because of Cushman and NIA. They were very effective at focusing in on areas where the Park Service was vulnerable either through simple errors or sloppy mistakes. The scale of the land acquisition program in the mid-to late-1970s was so huge that it was bound to "raise feathers." Whalen does not like or trust Cushman and questions his ethics, but Cushman was very effective in honing in on mistakes and blowing them out of proportion.

William J. Whalen

Whalen conceded that he may have helped exacerbate the situation because he took such a strong stand on using the power of condemnation especially in the western parks where property owners seemingly were "jerking around" the Service.

Most parks did not have clear cut land acquisition strategies. Phil Stewart, Chief of Land Acquisition in the Washington Office, was a "shrewd bureaucrat" who had all acquisition chiefs report directly to him. Traditionally, Regional Directors and Superintendents were more concerned with what happened on the land after it was acquired. As the program grew larger in the late 1970s, associated problems also mushroomed and Regional Directors and Superintendents "were out of the loop." Whalen wanted to force them to come to grips with their land acquisition programs by developing specific plans, thereby making them pay attention to the program. He wanted to shift power in this program area away from the Washington Office and distribute it to the Regions and field areas.

Difficulties at Cuyahoga as well as 10 to 15 other units prompted Whalen to call for the preparation of Land Acquisition Plans on a Servicewide basis.

MR. COCKRELL: 3. What was your opinion of Superintendent Bill Birdsell's close working relationship with Congressman John Seiberling? It caused a lot of friction with the Midwest Regional Office (MWRO) because Birdsell did not consult or brief Omaha on his contacts with Seiberling. Did you express any objections to this?

MR. WHALEN: 3. "Great. I did not feel threatened by it." A Superintendent should have a good relationship with his Congressman. Cuyahoga was not unusual in this regard; it was common for a Congressman to have a close interest in any NPS unit in his district. Seiberling was very important to NPS and Bill Birdsell and everyone else in the Service cultivated a great relationship with Seiberling. It was a healthy relationship.

He was unaware of any friction between Birdsell and MWRO, but if there was any, it was not for Whalen to be concerned or involved in it. It was strictly between Regional Director Jimmie Dunning and Superintendent Birdsell. It was their problem to solve if they couldn't communicate and work as a team.

MR. COCKRELL: 4. At your request, David Sherman, Lew Albert, and Tedd McCann went to CVNRA to investigate the mounting problems there. They recommended a positive public relations campaign and the introduction of more NPS programs. As a result, did you direct any changes be made?

William J. Whalen

MR. WHALEN: 4. Whalen recalled that if more public programs were developed thereby giving the Service a more visible presence, the positive public relations would be the logical result. The public had to know that the NPS was in the Cuyahoga Valley for more than just to conduct a land acquisition program.

MR. COCKRELL: 5. Was one of the recommendations the removal/-transfer of Superintendent Bill Birdsell?

MR. WHALEN: 5. Yes. The team's recommendation was one of the factors in Whalen's decision to transfer Bill Birdsell.

MR. COCKRELL: 6. In a March 14, 1980, letter to you, Congressman Seiberling and Senator Metzenbaum called on NPS to thoroughly reevaluate its land acquisition program at Cuyahoga and to suspend or drop all complaint actions against residents. There had already been several evaluations. What prompted this request? What was the result?

MR. WHALEN: 6. Whalen did not remember the letter and could not comment.

MR. COCKRELL: 7. What was your involvement with NBC-TV's late 1979 production of "Prime Time Sunday" with Jessica Savitch? How did NPS respond to this broadcast?

MR. WHALEN: 7. Savitch and her producer had already decided to "do a number on" NPS as well as John Seiberling. They wanted to find an opening in order to tie Seiberling personally to unethical conduct. They wanted to show that Seiberling benefitted personally from his dealings with NPS. Whalen said that Seiberling is such a gentleman and so far above reproach (near the category of sainthood) that their efforts were laughable. But that did not deter them.

They portrayed the Service as uncaring and unsympathetic to area residents in its zeal to grab as much land as possible, draw a line around it, and call it a national park.

Whalen said he was forewarned by others in the Washington, D.C., area who had dealt with Jessica Savitch. He was advised to be extremely careful in choosing his words; any misstatement would be used as the dynamite to help blow the lid off.

Whalen remembers the day Savitch arrived to tape her interview with him quite well. His wife came to the office with him and they planned on driving to Williamsburg after the interview. Whalen knew 99 percent of the interview would fall on the cutting room floor, and he was careful not to give her a single comment she could use against the Service. In order to protect himself, Whalen

William J. Whalen

turned on a tape recorder on his desk and recorded the entire conversation he had with Savitch and her producer while they filmed him. He immediately ordered the tape to be transcribed verbatim and distributed transcripts to all Representatives and Senators on the various Interior-related committees. Whalen wanted them to know exactly what he told Savitch in advance of the television broadcast.

When Jessica Savitch learned about Whalen's action, she called him on the telephone and angrily asked him why he did it. She did not recall seeing Whalen's tape recorder on his desk. When he explained his reasons (particularly about not wanting his words to be taken out of context), Savitch exploded and screamed: "You're nothing but a fucking prick!" She threatened to publicize his unethical behavior (claiming he didn't ask her permission to tape her) and he replied that since she taped him, he thought it was only fair that he tape her and keep a complete, unedited version of the interview. Whalen said she could do what she wanted, but he intended to hold off counter-charges of his own about her unethical behavior until he saw the broadcast.

Whalen said he had read the recent biography of the late Jessica Savitch. She committed suicide, as did her husband, several years ago, and apparently had severe emotional and drug-use problems. In this context, her behavior did not surprise him.

MR. COCKRELL: 8. Before you left the directorship, what was the status of plans to remove Birdsell from his superintendency at CVNRA and reassignment elsewhere? Did you ever discuss this matter with Congressman John Seiberling?

MR. WHALEN: 8. Whalen answered this question in his opening remarks (see above).

MR. COCKRELL: 9. I've been told that MWRO had initiated plans to reactivate the Chicago Field Office and had office space designed for Birdsell there. Is this true?

MR. WHALEN: 9. Whalen answered this question in his opening remarks (see above).

MR. COCKRELL: 10. Considering all the units in the System, where would Cuyahoga fall if you were to draw up a list of the top 10 or 20 problem units? (I'm interested in seeing if Cuyahoga makes your list!).

MR. WHALEN: 10. Whalen never considered CVNRA, or any other part of the System, as "problem units." They were not problems, but rather "challenges" to change or rectify. Cuyahoga did not particularly stand out in this regard. It was normal to have this

William J. Whalen

type of situation. The challenges at Cuyahoga permitted an ideal opportunity for the Service to cement its relationship with Congressman John Seiberling. He discounted any grumbling within the Service about CVNRA's legitimacy because once Congress said it was a unit, Cuyahoga had equal status with all the other 300-plus units.

In conclusion, Whalen again expressed pleasure at having been consulted on this historical research project and asked that he be sent a copy of the final report. He was not interested in reviewing a draft. He wanted to know who is the current Superintendent. When I responded that it is John Debo, he was very pleased because he remembered John from the "Lew Albert days at Lowell."

[END]

As the nation's principal conservation agency, the United States Department of the Interior has basic responsibilities to protect and conserve our land and water, energy and minerals, fish and wildlife, parks and recreation areas, and to ensure the wise use of all these resources. The Department also has major responsibility for American Indian reservation communities and for people who live in island territories under United States administration.

This document was prepared for reproduction by the Office of Planning and Resource Preservation, Midwest Regional Office, National Park Service.