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Dorothy Huyck's National Park Service Oral History Project, 1942-1987



**Nancy McBeen**  
**July 26, 1978**

Interview conducted by Dorothy B. Huyck  
Transcribed by Rev.com  
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NPS History Collection  
Harpers Ferry Center  
PO Box 50  
Harpers Ferry, WV 25425  
HFC\_Archivist@nps.gov

[START OF TAPE]

- Dorothy Huyck: 00:03 The date is July 26, 1978. I am Dorothy Huyck. I will be interviewing Nancy McBeen at Yellowstone National Park where she is in the personnel office.
- Dorothy Huyck: 00:17 How did you first become acquainted with the National Park Service?
- Nancy McBeen: 00:19 Oh, let's see. It was kind of by chance. My husband and I had decided we wanted to relocate to Montana and get into a more rural environment. And last summer, we took a vacation in the area and came through Yellowstone and through the Yellowstone Valley. And we really liked it. I was actually pursuing jobs with Forest Service when this one was announced pretty widely on the West Coast, and I came upon it and applied. So, it wasn't like some of our careerists who always wanted to work in the Park Service and started out in that direction. From my kind of a position, which really applies to every government agency, you're pretty flexible in moving around. So, Park Service happened to fit my personal goals and needs. And so, I ended up here.
- Dorothy Huyck: 01:23 Do you want to spell that out a little bit? What interests of the Park Service coincide with your interests?
- Nancy McBeen: 01:28 The rural environment and the location. And plus, I had reached a point in my career where I really wanted to have my own program. I was ready for that. And in a lot of your larger agencies, you are usually more specialized, and you get into one area and that's your expertise. And I wanted to get into something where I ran a total program. And Park Service and a few other of the smaller agencies do offer that opportunity, which I liked. So, it did suit my personal goals plus my personal situation too.
- Dorothy Huyck: 02:10 So you're certainly not originally from this area?
- Nancy McBeen: 02:12 No.
- Dorothy Huyck: 02:14 Where were you born?
- Nancy McBeen: 02:15 Oakland, California.

Dorothy Huyck: 02:17 Mm-hmm (affirmative). And in what year?

Nancy McBeen: 02:18 1945.

Dorothy Huyck: 02:20 Are you an only child?

Nancy McBeen: 02:22 By my parents, yes. I have half brothers and sisters.

Dorothy Huyck: 02:27 Did you grow up in Oakland?

Nancy McBeen: 02:29 Yes.

Dorothy Huyck: 02:31 Did either of your parents attend college?

Nancy McBeen: 02:34 No.

Dorothy Huyck: 02:35 And what is your father's occupation?

Nancy McBeen: 02:38 My father's been dead since I was five, but he was very active in the labor movement of the Retail Food Clerks back in the 40s. He died about 1952.

Dorothy Huyck: 02:51 And your mother, as far as occupation is concerned?

Nancy McBeen: 02:54 Well, she started out in the secretarial ranks, and she became a business agent for the Retail Food Clerks, which is where my parents met. And she ended up her career just very recently as the business manager for the junior college in Modesto, California. She ran their whole business office. So, although she was not a college graduate, she was definitely a professional woman.

Dorothy Huyck: 03:19 Mm-hmm (affirmative). And where did you attend high school? In Oakland?

Nancy McBeen: 03:24 No, I attended high school in Modesto, California.

Dorothy Huyck: 03:30 And did you attend college?

Nancy McBeen: 03:32 Yes. I went to Modesto Junior College for two years, and then transferred to San Francisco State for my last two years.

Dorothy Huyck: 03:41 And you have a degree from San Francisco State?

Nancy McBeen: 03:41 Right.

- Dorothy Huyck: 03:41 In what field?
- Nancy McBeen: 03:42 Industrial psychology.
- Dorothy Huyck: 03:44 Industrial psychology.
- Nancy McBeen: 03:44 Mm-hmm (affirmative).
- Dorothy Huyck: 03:46 What year was that?
- Nancy McBeen: 03:46 1967.
- Dorothy Huyck: 03:46 Have you done any graduate work?
- Nancy McBeen: 03:55 I took a few courses after that. In my senior year, I did take a few graduate courses in the industrial psychology department. But I took some labor relations courses and that type of thing. But in terms of going to graduate school, no.
- Dorothy Huyck: 04:12 During the educational process, both high school and college, was there someone who encouraged you? Your mother, a teacher, a professor, a community or church leader, or maybe no one encouraged you particularly?
- Nancy McBeen: 04:28 From the time I can remember, my mother always wanted me to go to college. It was something very important to her. Being a widow at 30 and having to raise a couple of kids and at that time she was more secretarial, she just told me, she said, "I don't care what you do in terms of working, but I want you to have that degree to fall back on so if you find yourself in a position of having to support a family or whatever, that you'll have something." And of course, she worked from the time I could really remember. And so, working was something that always was a part of me. And so going to college was something I just always accepted as fact. Not as will I or won't I, but it was just a matter that I would. It was a matter of what I would study. And so, she was I think of extremely strong influence to me.
- Dorothy Huyck: 05:17 Anyone else?
- Nancy McBeen: 05:19 Oh, I had college instructors that I found very encouraging. There are a couple of them I can recall that during times – You know, I think when, especially the first year or two of college are kind of rough, you're going through a transition

from being a child and part of the family to adulthood, and it can be kind of traumatic. And there were a couple of them that helped me get over hurdles in terms of adjusting to that change and getting ready to go off on my own to my last two years of college. But in terms of deciding on careers and what I was going to do, that was pretty well my own ideas.

- Dorothy Huyck: 06:00 Mm-hmm (affirmative). Back in high school, did you take math or science courses [inaudible 00:06:05]?
- Nancy McBeen: 06:05 Oh, yes. College prep.
- Dorothy Huyck: 06:09 Mm-hmm (affirmative). These were not necessarily therefore courses that might more frequently have been taken by boys?
- Nancy McBeen: 06:15 Not necessarily. We had quite a few girls in the classes that were taking the college prep too.
- Dorothy Huyck: 06:23 Were you by any chance considered a tomboy?
- Nancy McBeen: 06:27 Till I was 12 I was, yeah.
- Dorothy Huyck: 06:29 And then?
- Nancy McBeen: 06:32 Then I blossomed. I did look like a tomboy.
- Dorothy Huyck: 06:33 Did you become more of a lady?
- Nancy McBeen: 06:36 Yeah. I blossomed early.
- Dorothy Huyck: 06:38 You were expected to become a lady?
- Nancy McBeen: 06:42 You know, that subject never really came up. I never thought of it in those terms. I was never discouraged from doing what I wanted to do, whatever it was. I was athletic. And whether I was involved in athletics with the fellas or the gals, it didn't really matter. I don't recall anyone ever bringing to my attention that I was expected to perform in a certain manner. Of course, I didn't have the male role model in the house either. You know? So, I didn't really have anything to compare with.
- Dorothy Huyck: 07:18 Were there activities that you were involved in that have been helpful in your Park Service career? For instance, did

you go on camping trips? Did you become acquainted with the national parks at all?

- Nancy McBeen: 07:30 Oh, I visited a few off and on in California. I understand that when my father was alive, we used to go camping quite a bit. He was quite an outdoorsman. My mother wasn't. So, during all those years I was growing up with her, we never did any camping or anything. But when I got married, my husband and I both kind of started getting into it a little bit and go fishing. We both fly fish and things like that. And so we became more interested in farming and getting involved in that type of thing.
- Dorothy Huyck: 08:03 Now, with your BA in industrial psychology as of 1967, where did you go with that?
- Nancy McBeen: 08:09 Oh, that was interesting. Well, I wanted to work in personnel, and my college advisor thought I was crazy. You know, he thought that was a terrible field. He thought I ought to be a teacher, and I didn't want to be a teacher. I really wanted to do personnel work, but it was very hard to get into that field right out of college without experience. So, I interviewed with several companies on campus. Luckily, back in '67, things were a lot different in terms of jobs and especially with the federal government. And a federal agency happened to come on campus and interview me and liked me. And they offered me a temporary appointment. I wasn't on any registers or anything at the time. And so, I went to work for them as a quality—
- Dorothy Huyck: 08:52 Which agency was that?
- Nancy McBeen: 08:53 This was Defense Contract Administration. And I went to work as a quality control assistant. And I was the first woman to be in a staff training position. In fact, now there are a few women quality assurance specialists, but at the time I was about it. And they felt I had the qualities to break through into a male field. And it was kind of disastrous because at that time the women's program movement really hadn't gained any steam. And I unfortunately worked for a man who felt a woman's place was in the home and was very protective. And it really hindered my ability to get trained and advance in the organization. So, I left after about nine months and was very fortunate to get into personnel at that time. And I've been in personnel work ever since.

Dorothy Huyck: 09:45 Now, you got into personnel with the Defense Contract Administration?

Nancy McBeen: 09:48 Right. The personnel officer, thank heavens, took an interest in me, saw my potential, and transferred me out of the program I was in into his office.

Dorothy Huyck: 09:59 And how long did you stay in the personnel office?

Nancy McBeen: 10:02 I stayed until 1971. So, a total of four years with the agency, three years, three months with that particular agency.

Dorothy Huyck: 10:12 And as of 1971?

Nancy McBeen: 10:14 I went to work for the U.S. Civil Service Commission.

Dorothy Huyck: 10:18 Where?

Nancy McBeen: 10:19 In San Francisco at their area office. And I considered that a real opportunity because Civil Service Commission doesn't hire too many people at the 11 level. They're great ones for hiring from the register. So that was a real break for me I felt in my career in personnel to get to go to work there.

Dorothy Huyck: 10:40 Your first temporary appointment, was that a GS-what?

Nancy McBeen: 10:43 Five.

Dorothy Huyck: 10:44 And by the time you went to civil service, you were at GS-11?

Nancy McBeen: 10:46 Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Dorothy Huyck: 10:50 And how long did you stay with the San Francisco area Civil Service?

Nancy McBeen: 10:54 Until April of '74. So, it was just about three years.

Dorothy Huyck: 10:57 Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Nancy McBeen: 10:58 And by then, I'd gotten a promotion to a 12 and I was the head of the mid-level section. I handled about 15 different registers and had about 20 people working for me.

Dorothy Huyck: 11:09 And what occurred in April of '74?

Nancy McBeen: 11:12 My husband transferred to Seattle. I was really ready for a change. At that point, for three years I'd been commuting four hours a day, putting in a lot of hours, a lot of pressures. And I was to a point where I really wanted to have a family. I was by then in my late-twenties. And the working conditions I was working under at that point were such that it just wouldn't have been possible. So, a lot of things just kind of worked together.

Dorothy Huyck: 11:40 Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Nancy McBeen: 11:40 And so I went to Seattle with my husband and worked in the Seattle area office for about three months. Started out on a temporary appointment, and then after a couple of months was converted to permanent.

Dorothy Huyck: 11:52 Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Nancy McBeen: 11:54 And right about the time I got converted to permanent, I was selected by HEW for one of their senior staffing specialists in their Seattle office. So, I went to work there.

Dorothy Huyck: 12:08 Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Nancy McBeen: 12:10 Got my 12 back. I took an 11 in the Seattle area office, and then got my 12 back when I went to HEW.

Dorothy Huyck: 12:17 And how long did you stay with HEW?

Nancy McBeen: 12:20 I stayed with HEW three years and nine months.

Dorothy Huyck: 12:22 Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Nancy McBeen: 12:22 And then I came here.

Dorothy Huyck: 12:24 And that means you left when?

Nancy McBeen: 12:31 I left March of '7—.

Dorothy Huyck: 12:35 You therefore stayed in Seattle for three years and nine months until you came here to Yellowstone?

Nancy McBeen: 12:40 Right.

Dorothy Huyck: 12:41 Did you have a family during that time?

Nancy McBeen: 12:42 Yes, I did. In fact, it was kind of funny. I had just found out I was pregnant about a week or so after I was converted to permanent the Seattle area office. And when they called me – When I put in for the job at HEW, my husband just couldn't believe it. He says, "You're pregnant. What are you doing putting in for a promotion?" And he says, "You'll never get it." And when they offered me the job, I explained to them that I was pregnant. And they took me anyway. And he made some comments about how it's worse than buying a pregnant cat.

Nancy McBeen: 13:17 Of course, they did ask me are you planning to continue working? What are your plans? And I told them that I did plan to continue working. It was a financial need that I had to. We have between us five children and one in college, one still in high school and so on. So, we really, I wanted to work plus economically I needed to. So, they took me anyway.

Dorothy Huyck: 13:40 Had you been previously married?

Nancy McBeen: 13:41 No, my husband had been.

Dorothy Huyck: 13:43 And you were married to him in what year?

Nancy McBeen: 13:45 In '68.

Dorothy Huyck: 13:47 Mm-hmm (affirmative). And he had four children?

Nancy McBeen: 13:49 Right.

Dorothy Huyck: 13:51 Mm-hmm (affirmative). And you have had a child since then?

Nancy McBeen: 13:56 Right. He's three and a half now. So, I took off. I had a better sick leave record than anybody else in the office. We used to laugh about it. But I took off for a couple of months and came back and worked.

Dorothy Huyck: 14:07 How did you arrange that?

Nancy McBeen: 14:11 Well, I was extremely fortunate. I found a fantastic gal to take care of him who was recently married, loved babies, and didn't want anyone else but him. And she just loved

that little kid to death for the first year, which is something that's really critical. And she used to wash all the diapers and cook for him and do things. And she just made it so easy for me. It was really great.

- Dorothy Huyck: 14:35 And now that you're in Yellowstone, how do you provide for a three and a half year old?
- Nancy McBeen: 14:38 Well, it's really kind of interesting. My husband and I have considered him a shared responsibility. Now, with his first four, his wife was at home and he worked and he really didn't know his kids very well. This one he's really gotten involved in raising him. And during the years we were both working, we both shared the responsibility and each shared taking off when he was sick or whatever. Now, my husband has quit working, and we have bought a farm. And my son helps him farm. And the two of them are together. And it is just fantastic. They have a very close relationship and are very happy with the arrangement. So, my husband basically is at home, you could say, although he has his job. It's just his job allows him to take Ben with him. Mine doesn't.
- Dorothy Huyck: 15:27 Where is your farm?
- Nancy McBeen: 15:29 Down in Gardner. We have 80 acres down there.
- Dorothy Huyck: 15:30 What are you raising?
- Nancy McBeen: 15:34 Hay. And we have an apple orchard. And we have chickens and things like that. We're just really getting started. We've only had it for a couple months. But he's haying right now.
- Dorothy Huyck: 15:44 Mm-hmm (affirmative). Mm-hmm (affirmative). So, this means that you're here in park and he's home and farms everything.
- Nancy McBeen: 15:53 Right.
- Dorothy Huyck: 15:54 Uh-huh (affirmative). I'm curious, there are some people who think that the National Park Service is a rather male-oriented organization. Do you?
- Nancy McBeen: 16:05 Yes. I don't have any doubts about that. In fact, when I put in for the job, I felt that in terms of paper qualifications that I would not have any problems in being in the top group of candidates. I competed as far as I know with males, two

males and myself competed for this position in the final run. I felt probably the one thing that would keep me from getting the job would be my family situation and the fact that my husband was going to be quitting work and staying home with the child and having the farm and such. And I really felt that the men considering me would find that difficult to accept and would be hesitant to hire me, afraid that it wouldn't work out or that – Because they asked me an awful lot of questions about my personal life and what was my husband going to do. You know, he couldn't work here with me being personnel officer and so on.

- Nancy McBeen: 17:09 And I was glad that I did get to have a personal interview with the superintendent that lasted about four and a half hours. And he seemed convinced that I wasn't just doing something without a lot of thought. And they did finally go ahead and hire me. But I know there had to be a lot of reservations about taking a woman who was out of the mold, you might say. And I'm sure that they didn't ask that many questions about the men they hired. So, I felt that would be probably one of the things that would cause them to have reservations.
- Dorothy Huyck: 17:42 Had you moved to Gardner and bought your farm prior to applying for this position?
- Nancy McBeen: 17:46 Oh, no. That was all afterwards.
- Dorothy Huyck: 17:49 You simply explained that you expected to—
- Nancy McBeen: 17:50 This is what we planned to do. And it's kind of funny, recently at an open house the superintendent commented to everyone that I had certainly followed the exact plan that I had laid out for him that we were going to do. They've had such a terrible time keeping personnel officers here that when I had indicated we planned to settle, that really caused them to take interest.
- Dorothy Huyck: 18:14 What grade did you come here ranked?
- Nancy McBeen: 18:15 As an 11.
- Dorothy Huyck: 18:17 So you took a—
- Nancy McBeen: 18:19 I took a cut in pay of about oh, 1,500, something like that. I went from 25.5 down to 23.7. So, it was about 1,800. But

with the house that went along with it, it certainly made up for the difference.

- Dorothy Huyck: 18:37 And at this point, you would anticipate being here for some time?
- Nancy McBeen: 18:41 Yes. I planned that this would be my last job permanently, my last career position. It's turning out to be everything I had hoped for and expected. And there are a lot of good things I think I can do. And I've given a lot of people food for thought already in some of the things I've brought up. And a lot of people found it rather refreshing to have a woman in this position.
- Nancy McBeen: 19:07 It was really kind of interesting. I also had to hire an assistant because both the personnel officer and the assistant left within a few months of each other. I created a lot of talk when I hired a man. And they've gotten us mixed up and thought he was the personnel officer. This has come up a few times, and we've kind of laughed about it. But things are settling down now. And I think it's good for people to get shaken a little once in a while and given a new outlook.
- Dorothy Huyck: 19:39 What other categories of food for thought have you provided?
- Nancy McBeen: 19:44 Well, I have found in various discussions with some of the male supervisors around here you get some of the stereotypes coming out in their impressions of women. And you get the same old story. Well, women aren't mobile. They can't get ahead because they're not mobile. And yet the more I read and the more I see, there are a lot of men that aren't mobile either. You know, I think the old idea that the company way is the right way is changing. And it's not only government, it's private industry. There are more and more people unwilling to accept the fact that in order to get ahead they've got to move anywhere, wherever whether they like it or not, whether it's good for the family or not because that's part of the game in getting ahead.
- Nancy McBeen: 20:34 There are more and more people saying I don't want to move. You know, I don't want to do these things. And of course, Park Service it continually comes up. You know, that's expected. Every five or six years you move. And I've had a few comment to me that, well, they're time is about

up. They're certain something was going to be coming through pretty soon because it was five years since they arrived here. But there are a lot of others that have decided they want to stay. They don't want to move on.

Dorothy Huyck: 20:58 Is that going to call for an adjustment in attitude throughout the whole Park Service?

Nancy McBeen: 21:03 I think there needs to be. I think there needs to be a balance. I think getting new blood, fresh ideas, a new perspective is good for everyone periodically. But I've had the impression that in Park Service mobility has gotten to the point where every few years you're ready for another assignment. I've talked to several permanent employees who've moved three and four times in a two to three-year period.

Nancy McBeen: 21:35 There was one fellow who just recently was selected for a 13 level position here. And within a matter of a month, he was moved to Washington. He's very ambitious. He wants to get ahead. But somebody's got to stay around and run their organization. You know? And if you have people constantly moving in and out, you wonder how much stability you have. And then on the other end, you've got some that have been here for 30 years, and you've got to figure that after a period of time maybe a fresh outlook would've been more advantageous.

Nancy McBeen: 22:07 So I don't know. I have found that generally, a lot of the women working here are not mobile. Their husbands are usually—

Dorothy Huyck: 22:16 Are they primarily clerical women or industry-related professionals?

Nancy McBeen: 22:19 Yes, 80. At least 80 to 90% of the women here are in grades five and below. There are very few of us in the upper ranks. I just saw these statistics recently. And it was kind of disheartening, but yet a lot of the women that are employed here because of a variety of factors, you don't have a large population to draw on, there's limited housing, so a lot of the women working here have husbands working here. So, you've got two careers to think about and the women don't seem to be inclined to push to get into higher-level jobs. You know, it's kind of funny. They figure, well, my husband, he's a ranger, supervisory ranger or

something, and I'm just working because I get bored sitting up here. There isn't a lot of activity around. So, they get a job. But they want to work when they want to work. And it's just kind of something to occupy them. I haven't found a lot of women here that are really career oriented and anxious to get more responsibility.

Nancy McBeen: 23:21

Now, you hear a lot of complaining about wanting to get ahead. I get disappointed sometimes. Our women's coordinator – I had a position in here recently that went to a six. And considering that most of our women are five and below, anything that goes beyond a five to me has got to be an improvement and you've got to take one step at a time. But she discards anything that doesn't go to at least a nine or an 11, is not providing opportunity. Well, that's unrealistic because when you look at our grade structure, there aren't that many jobs going to those grades. And when they do, they require this mobility business, you've got to be willing to move. But they all want to sit on the same job where they're not terribly pressured, terribly pushed or challenged, and they want to get all this higher pay. They want their cake and eat it too. You know?

Nancy McBeen: 24:12

And so I was talking to her recently about the need to not only to provide men with some training and changed ideas in the area of women's roles, but also women need to look at their own attitudes about themselves and what they want. And I'm hoping that maybe, I'm putting together a proposal now for maybe putting on the CREW Women's Seminar here sometime during the fall. I think maybe it might give women some more awareness, some more food for thought for themselves.

Nancy McBeen: 24:50

But I can remember coming from HEW, anytime we advertised a job at five or above, we were just inundated with applications. And there were a lot of women going to college, trying to improve themselves and to prepare themselves for higher-level jobs. Here, I advertise this job that went to a six, a real opportunity. Even started at a four, so it was easier to qualify. And I only got a couple of park employees that put in for it. And when I started checking around, I thought, well, why aren't people applying? Is, well, there's too much work in personnel. You're always busy. There's always a lot of pressure. And they didn't want that.

- Dorothy Huyck: 25:26 Now, you've been talking primarily of personnel, administrative, clerical people.
- Nancy McBeen: 25:30 Mm-hmm (affirmative).
- Dorothy Huyck: 25:31 Let's look for a minute at opportunities for professional women as differentiated from office personnel.
- Nancy McBeen: 25:37 Okay.
- Dorothy Huyck: 25:38 Do you find the same problems with professional category women?
- Nancy McBeen: 25:43 We have so few for me to observe.
- Dorothy Huyck: 25:46 I ask this because not so much in this part, but in a number of other locations in the last few weeks women have commented on the fact that they're very puzzled that persons from organizations and agencies outside of the Park Service are being brought into mid-level jobs. And their question is we have a number of women in the seven, nine category, why are these persons not being considered more frequently for the mid-level positions? I'm simply reflecting on what someone else has said to me on several different occasions.
- Nancy McBeen: 26:21 Since I've been here, the only job that I've seen come up that could even fall into a mid-level category was a budget analyst position that was a 5/7/9. And our woman's coordinator was selected for the job. We don't have that many women in the 7/9 category, nor do we have vacancies that seem to come up at a park level in the middle management category. I know we have an administrative trainee over here that is a man, a white male. I know we have another intern, Mack Berg, who's also a white male. I don't know how they got into their jobs or what the selection procedures were and the numbers of women they had to consider. Usually, those kinds of jobs are filled at the regional level.
- Dorothy Huyck: 27:08 What about within the ranger ranks?
- Nancy McBeen: 27:11 We haven't even had any permanent vacancies since I've been here, so it's something I haven't really been able to delve into. My attitude generally – We had a couple of engineering tech positions this summer that we filled. I

only had one woman candidate out of 10. And I told the selecting official, if he wasn't going to select her, I would like to discuss it with him and find out why. And he came up with some good reasons for not selecting her. I hope next year to provide him with a better source of candidates, better qualified ones. But I got here so late in the season this year, I didn't have time to recruit. I'd like to see some women get into that area. We have some women, we have a couple of women that were hired in our sewage disposal operations that are sanitary engineering students at the graduate level. I would like to see some of them get into the permanent wage grade ranks. We have no women in them at the moment.

- Nancy McBeen: 28:10 And I do feel that over a period of time the opportunities will arise. But at this point, I've got to get a feel for the system in the Park Service, which I have not been able to so far. I'd like to see a woman engineer here. But those kinds of things are going to have to come from the outside. They're not resources that I observed so far that we're going to be able to draw on from the inside. The bulk of women I've noted here have limited backgrounds, limited education, limited experience.
- Dorothy Huyck: 28:41 You were talking of administrative and office personnel?
- Nancy McBeen: 28:45 Just women generally, that I have seen.
- Dorothy Huyck: 28:46 Is this also true of persons in the professional practice?
- Nancy McBeen: 28:51 Except for Mary Meagher and Margaret Short, who are already, have gotten into higher-level positions. I have seen very little, and the only ranks that we have to draw on are clerical ranks. You know, there really aren't any others here at the moment, except seasonals and they don't have any status, and there you get into a whole different ballgame. I just haven't really seen too much to draw on. And there aren't colleges around here for them to go to and it is a real problem. So, I think that in terms of getting women into higher-level positions, we're going to have to draw on other parks and on civil service registers.
- Dorothy Huyck: 29:32 Are there any kinds of jobs that you think a woman should not attempt to tackle within national parks?

- Nancy McBeen: 29:40 No. I can't think of anything. There are some jobs that because of the physical requirements women have difficulty, but that doesn't mean that I think they should cross them off the list. We hire animal packers. And we had one woman try out and she just could not get that 80-pound pack on the animal. So, she stopped right there and said, "I'm sorry. I have to withdraw." But she tried. And maybe there's a woman out there that's strong and worked on a farm and could handle it. So, I don't think there's any job that a woman should be eliminated from. We just need candidates that are qualified.
- Dorothy Huyck: 30:20 And there's no way you can pick up the seasonal people who have worked here for years possibly?
- Nancy McBeen: 30:27 They don't have any priority.
- Dorothy Huyck: 30:29 Because of Civil Service regulations.
- Nancy McBeen: 30:30 No, they don't have any priority. And this is a real problem. If we had more flexibility to where we could take a person who's been working for us seasonally and be able to convert them to permanent, we could do a lot of things.
- Nancy McBeen: 30:41 We are using some of the special programs, such as the Cooperative Education Program. I was rather disappointed, there was a woman that just started recently [inaudible 00:30:51]. So, I think there are some of these programs that we can use and the commission's coming out with more of them all the time. There's a new [inaudible 00:31:12] program that we can also get staff from the commission for one year, and then we can put them into our own staff after one year and get them into training programs. And I plan to just do that as best I can.
- Nancy McBeen: 31:18 But the problem has been over the last four or five years, we haven't had a personnel officer stay here more than six to nine months. And you really have to get know the agency a little bit, know their program, and know your job before you can start moving up in the rankings. And that's why I think that I can really do a lot because I plan to stay here at least four or five years. And I think in four or five years, I can make some headway.
- Dorothy Huyck: 31:41 Does the lack of [inaudible 00:31:41] make a difference [inaudible]?

- Nancy McBeen: 31:45 In terms of our seasonal hiring, it definitely does because in our wage grade ranks, the way the commission has set up the rating procedure, the veterans, no matter how minimally qualified they are go to the top as long as they're qualified. We did hire one woman truck driver, heavy-duty truck driver this year. I understand she has left already though.
- Nancy McBeen: 32:06 In terms of our other positions, it makes it very difficult for a woman to compete. I've already talked to our regional office and plan to submit a recommendation that we be allowed to rank them like a Civil Service register so that at least a highly qualified non-vet can be ranked higher than a minimally qualified vet and therefore have a better chance of selection.
- Dorothy Huyck: 32:27 [inaudible 00:32:27]
- Nancy McBeen: 32:30 So far, I don't know if any other agencies have requested it. The commission just in April came out saying that we could start doing this if we requested it and not commission. I'm sure this is an obstacle they didn't mean to put on us at Park Service. And of course, [inaudible 00:32:46] unique in the number of seasonals they hire compared to other agencies. So, the impact that their program had on us was drastic compared to other agencies that might only hire very few temporary employees.
- Dorothy Huyck: 33:00 [inaudible 00:33:00]
- Nancy McBeen: 33:03 So far, the wage grade registers that I've seen have had no women on them. Getting authority from the commission to recruit is difficult. And I've been talking to the commission about this problem and the poor information they give out. We need to do more recruitment. We need to let women and minorities know that we would like to hire them and that there are opportunities in the trades and crafts.
- Dorothy Huyck: 33:35 And in the professional ranks?
- Nancy McBeen: 33:37 In the professional ranks, we don't do that recruiting here. I have no control over it whatsoever.
- Dorothy Huyck: 33:41 Mm-hmm (affirmative).
- Nancy McBeen: 33:42 It's done regional office and Washington. So, I don't know what they're doing.

- Dorothy Huyck: 33:49 Where do you see the opportunities for women in the professional ranks going? I realize that there's limitations on your period of service in the Park Service. Have you yet arrived at any expectations of where the Park Service may be going in terms of providing future opportunities for women in the professional category?
- Nancy McBeen: 34:09 I think there's an awful lot of awareness. And I think that if a well-qualified woman came along, she would have a definite advantage if she was selectable. I think in the engineering area, there's a definite interest in getting some women in that area on the part of management. I think in terms of the ranger ranks, we're seeing more and more seasonal women who are therefore getting the kind of experience they need to get into the permanent ranks. I think in the interpretive area, of course, we've got Margaret now, and that was a breakthrough. And I think there are more opportunities that will be coming up.
- Nancy McBeen: 34:45 The problem is getting from seasonal to permanent through the commission process. But if you don't have any trained people that are getting the experience, you've got to start there. And I see a definite change in that area from what we've seen in the past. In the past, you never saw a woman ranger. Now you see them driving around and they're visible. And to me, that's a step in the right direction.
- Dorothy Huyck: 35:11 Do you foresee their supervisors being kind of frequently men who will encourage their performance and their assumption of responsibility?
- Nancy McBeen: 35:21 Yes.
- Dorothy Huyck: 35:24 [inaudible 00:35:24] department.
- Nancy McBeen: 35:24 I think so. Yes. And I've been pleased that the superintendent has been very supportive of the EEO program here, has gotten the division chiefs very involved in the program. Majority of them attend the monthly meetings where a lot of these issues are discussed. And I think they're very sensitive to what's going on compared to what I experienced back in 1967.
- Nancy McBeen: 35:50 And I think that there are just less and less supervisors that can survive in the system with an antiquated approach to handling women. And I think for that reason that – You

know, I think back 10 years ago and some of the comments men would make very blatantly about their ideas of where women belong have changed to the point now where now you deal more with subtleties.

Nancy McBeen: 36:22 And we recently went over our affirmative action plan. And we were talking about the status of women and minorities in the organization. And the head of maintenance made it very clear that he felt his biggest problem was the lack of candidates. And I had to agree with him. And I looked him right in the eye and I said, "I hope to remedy that problem, so next year you're going to have to deal with why didn't you select such and such rather than I didn't have anybody." And I think this is happening in all areas of professional and trades and crafts, that the women are coming up the ranks. When we get to a point where we've got some there, they're making the final list of candidates and are selectable, then we can start getting down to cases. And that's the point.

Nancy McBeen: 37:18 Like I said, I see the Park Service heading in that direction. I see women coming along, getting experience, getting opportunities. And I think eventually we're going to reach the point where they're going to have to put up or shut up in terms of are they going to select them or not. We don't have any women in the ranger supervisory ranks yet. But with the number of women, like I said, that are getting the experience, the day's going to come when they're going to have to deal with it. Right now, they've got a cop out because they don't have any to choose from. But the day's going to come when they'll have to deal with it. And I'm looking forward to it. I hope I'm here.

Dorothy Huyck: 38:05 [inaudible 00:38:05] Nancy, you have quite a collection of questions. Is there something pertinent to your experience in the Park Service that we haven't touched on but that probably should be commented on?

Nancy McBeen: 38:24 Can't really think of anything specific. I think my overall reaction, like I mentioned, when I applied for the job, I had all kinds of concerns about whether or not I would get it. I had heard that Park Service was very conservative and male-oriented. And I felt on those two counts that it would cause me a problem. I have been very encouraged having come to work here to find that the management that I'm dealing with seems to be more in tune with the current

world than I expected. And I've found them easy to deal with. I have not felt intimidated or anything else being in this position. And this was kind of a new experience for some of them. And it's really been kind of enjoyable. I'm really thoroughly enjoying it.

Dorothy Huyck: 39:21

Great.

Nancy McBeen: 39:23

But I think it's also been kind of fortunate that I'm not so terribly insecure that when a manager has asked me if my assistant minded working for a woman, that I don't get terribly offended and upset. You know, we can laugh about it, and we can deal with it lightly, but you can still drive a point home. And I've made it a point to try to get out into the park a little bit. And I went on a retreat recently with the naturalist, Margaret Short and I, and we just thoroughly enjoyed ourselves. And I found no terrible hang ups. It was really kind of nice. So, I think there is a lot of hope in the organization.

Dorothy Huyck: 40:06

Great.

Nancy McBeen: 40:07

They're not quite as progressive as HEW. And that was a lot of fun. There the tables were reversed. I'll never forget when a new classifier showed up from the Defense Department and he had never dealt with high-level women before. And of course, in HEW there are some. And that was funny. We used to really give him a bad time when he'd go deal with a GS-15 and it turn out to be a woman in her thirties that was really quite attractive. And he just had a difficult time dealing with her because he wasn't used to dealing with women on that plane. You know? So, I think there's a lot of awareness all over, a lot of changes going on. And I think in the federal government, they're making a lot of strides generally. So, I'm really encouraged.

Nancy McBeen: 40:52

I think a woman starting her career today has it a lot easier than they did 10, 15, 20 years ago. There were a lot of obstacles to come over in those days. And I look back on those first nine months and think how different it would've been if it was today, although it was good for me because growing up I'd never really had been taught to believe I was inferior. It was something my mother and I just never discussed. And it was a real shock to my system to suddenly find out that some people took a different view of women.

Nancy McBeen: 41:27

So I'm glad to see magazines like "Working Woman" coming out. I subscribe to it, and I enjoy reading it. And I've noticed a lot of other magazines are starting to carry articles about role reversals and about working women, divorced women, these types of things. So there just seems to be all kinds of information floating around. And there are a lot of men taking an interest now in discussing those kinds of things and get into discussions. So, it's good. Yeah.

Dorothy Huyck: 42:00

Thank you, Nancy.

Nancy McBeen: 42:02

Okay.

[END OF TAPE]

[END OF INTERVIEW]