

**National Park Service (NPS) History Collection**

---

NPS Oral History Collection (HFCA 1817)  
Harpers Ferry Center's 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Oral History Project



Jack Spinnler  
December 19, 2019

Interview conducted by Betsy Ehrlich  
Transcribed by Rev.com

This digital transcript has been edited for accessibility and compliance with Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act. Interview content has not been altered.

The release form for this interview is on file at the NPS History Collection.

NPS History Collection  
Harpers Ferry Center  
P.O. Box 50  
Harpers Ferry, WV 25425  
HFC\_Archivist@nps.gov

Narrator: John R. "Jack" Spinnler

Interview Date: December 19, 2019

Interviewer: Betsy Ehrlich

Transcription by: Rev.com

Release Form: Yes

Transcript Status: Final

The narrator has not reviewed this transcript.

START OF RECORDING

START OF PART I

Betsy Ehrlich:	00:00	All right then this seems to be loud enough for all the little red dots to show up. I'm going to move it over this way a little bit more. Okay, so I'm going to start off by introducing us here today. I'm Betsy Ehrlich from Harpers Ferry Center, and we also have a guest of honor today, Jack Spinnler, if you'd like to introduce yourself.
Jack Spinnler:	00:24	I'm Jack Spinnler. I live in Frederick, Maryland and I worked here at Harpers Ferry Center for 20 years of my 32-year career in the Park Service.
Betsy Ehrlich:	00:31	Thank you for that summary. It's December 19th, 2019. We're here at the Mather Training Center. So Jack, do we have verbal permission to do this interview today?
Jack Spinnler:	00:40	We do.
Betsy Ehrlich:	00:42	And if there's any questions that you don't want to answer, you can either say, "I'd rather not answer that." That's fine. This is totally voluntary. Or I can hit the pause button, so feel free to just decline to answer a question if there's something that you don't want to get into.
Jack Spinnler:	00:57	I'll take the fifth.
Betsy Ehrlich:	00:57	You can take the fifth. So let's get started. Can you tell us what led you to a career in the National Park Service?

Where'd you grow up, go to school, and how did your jobs lead you into the National Park Service?

- Jack Spinnler: 01:11 Well, I had no intention for the early part of my life, up until age 20, 21 of working for the National Park Service. Went to elementary school in northern New Jersey. I was born in Patterson, New Jersey, pretty good-sized industrial city, northern part of the state. But my parents bought a 12-acre farm about two miles outside the city. So I actually grew up in Wayne Township, New Jersey. Went to elementary school there, up until end of second grade, and then my parents decided to move to Maryland.
- Jack Spinnler: 01:47 So they moved in the summer of 1960 to Bethesda, Maryland. I went to school there for the next eight years. I went to elementary school there at Bannockburn, then junior high school at Thomas W. Pyle Junior High School. And then I started 10th grade at Walt Whitman High School. But in March of my 10th grade year, my father told the family that we're moving again.
- Jack Spinnler: 02:12 This time we're moving to Frederick, Maryland. He had bought a 40-acre farm on Shook's Town Road up near Gamble State Park and moved there and spent the rest of my high school years at Governor Thomas Johnson High School. Since this is sort of part of the 50th anniversary of Harpers Ferry Center, in my senior year at TJ, the name of the high school, there was a simple nickname TJ, was I heard that there was a building being constructed in Harpers Ferry and I would sometimes come out to Harpers Ferry from Frederick, Maryland. And so I sort of saw the beginnings of the construction of the building that I would someday work in.
- Betsy Ehrlich: 02:51 So when you heard about the construction of this building and you were just curious about it being built, you came up to see it?
- Jack Spinnler: 02:56 Yep.
- Betsy Ehrlich: 02:57 Interesting.
- Jack Spinnler: 02:57 Yeah. Come up. My friends hang around at the river, see some of the historic buildings, because there was a very different historical park layout than we have today. So that was my education history. And then I went to the

University of Maryland, while there I was an elementary education major. At first, I had intended to teach second or third or fourth grade for my career in the education field, but as I got to my third year at the University of Maryland and part of the education program was to go out and do student teaching, I found that the student teaching was okay. I kind of enjoyed being in the classroom with the kids, but I really enjoyed recess, much like when I was in elementary school myself, where most of the teachers at this school had no interest at all in being on playground duty I said, "I'll take it because I like being out with the kids."

- Jack Spinnler: 03:50 And after that semester, someone who knew me well, they said, "Why don't you consider being a recreation major instead of an elementary ed?" It ended up that I switched majors, became a parks and recreation major and enjoyed those courses. In the meantime, in the middle of college, I met the love of my life, my wife Anne, and we got married at the end of our sophomore year.
- Betsy Ehrlich: 04:14 Wow. And was still in school.
- Jack Spinnler: 04:16 Still in school. So by then we were in an apartment, and so it took me five years to graduate instead of the usual four because of getting married and other things I needed to make some money on the side to pay for the apartment, et cetera. So it ended up that the summer of 1975, which was the end of my fifth year, I had to do an internship as a parks and recreation major.
- Jack Spinnler: 04:42 Thinking that I want to work for a small city recreation department, I apply for paid internships at Gaithersburg, Rockville, Montgomery Village, but didn't get any of those because there are a lot of other rec majors who are looking for the same situation. So I went to my guidance counselor in the parks and rec department, a guy named Craig Colton. I said, "Craig, what do you suggest that I do? I needed to get this internship in order to graduate." He said, "I have a contract with the National Park Service and they'll let you do an unpaid internship as a volunteer, and a guy named Rex Derr, the park ranger in charge of interpretation for C&O Canal, so you could do that if you want."
- Jack Spinnler: 05:23 So I really didn't have much choice at that point. I contacted Rex Derr and he said, "Yeah, come on up and I'll

get you set up and you can help me with the walks and tours along the canal, help me write press releases for the newspaper, articles for the park newspaper." And so I thought, "Well that sounds like a good experience." So that's how I kind of got initially involved with the National Park Service.

- Jack Spinnler: 05:46 But here's the opposite of what usually happens to a Park Service person who eventually works in the Park Service. Usually, you have a mentor who encourages you. Well, Rex Derr was not that person. He was very matter of fact. During that summer he said, "You know, I'm helping you get this internship so you can graduate from University of Maryland, but I got to tell you there's very little chance of you ever working for the National Park Service, so I would just forget about that if I were you."
- Betsy Ehrlich: 06:10 Great advice.
- Jack Spinnler: 06:11 So I looked at him and I said, "Well that's fine with me because I have no intention of working for the National Park Service. I want to work for a small city rec department. I'm just trying to get my degree." He said, "Good, as long as we understand each other." So that's how my first initiation was [crosstalk].
- Betsy Ehrlich: 06:26 Was there some basis for that, or he was just not an encouraging person?
- Jack Spinnler: 06:30 Well, I think he was just trying to tell me the facts of life in the Park Service, that--
- Betsy Ehrlich: 06:35 It would be hard to get in.
- Jack Spinnler: 06:36 It would be difficult to get in. Yeah. Now, during that summer though, summer of '75, showing me around the park early on in the summer, he said, "I need to stop off at this building in Harpers Ferry and visit a friend of mine." So I'm in the car with him and we ended up parking in the parking lot right here next to Mather Training Center, and going into this building that I had kind of seen being built five years earlier.
- Betsy Ehrlich: 07:01 The Interpretive Design Center.

- Jack Spinnler: 07:03 Interpretive Design Center. And we're going in to visit a guy named David Guiney, who I'd never met before. David was in his mid-twenties, he had graduated from college and had gotten a couple of seasonal jobs with the C&O Canal, and that's where he knew Rex from. So Rex was just stopping by to give some papers to someone, and I remember they were talking about something called an Interpretive Prospectus, which I had no idea what it was. And then David showed him some of the work that he was working on in this Department of Wayside Exhibits. So that was like my initial introduction during that summer of 1975 that this building existed. Rex was introducing somebody he knew, and then that all kind of came together a few years later. So let's see now. So that's--
- Betsy Ehrlich: 07:48 So early previews, it got you to Harpers Ferry before you ever had a job here. You were on the ground while the building was being built, had no employee connection to it.
- Jack Spinnler: 07:59 No.
- Betsy Ehrlich: 08:00 Yeah. Okay. So you finished school.
- Jack Spinnler: 08:03 Finished school in late August, and Anne and I--well, she had graduated a year earlier. She actually graduated on time. Her major was Speech and Hearing, but in order to really practice as a Speech and Hearing Specialist you need to go to grad school, and we didn't have the money to do that. So for the year while I was finishing up my degree, she was working for Blue Cross Blue Shield in Washington, D.C. as a claims adjuster. In other words, someone to listen to everybody else's complaints, try to adjust their expectations. So she really hated her job. And at the end of that one year, as I'm graduating at the end of my internship during the summer of 1975, we said, "Well, we really didn't have a honeymoon." When we got married we had a two-day trip to Ocean City. We stayed in a motel on the boardwalk for two nights. Rainy weekend. Came back and went to our jobs in contentment.
- Betsy Ehrlich: 09:00 That was that.
- Jack Spinnler: 09:01 So we decided to give up our respective jobs, what we had. And I was working at Safeway, a part-time job at a Safeway Food Store on Route 1 in College Park and got permission from my parents who lived in Hagerstown,

Maryland at that time, to store our furniture in their basement. And we took the \$2,000 that we had saved up over that first two years of marriage, and we put it all into traveler's checks. If you're going to go traveling back in those days, the idea to keep your money safe was put it all on traveler's checks. And we did, \$2,000 worth, and we went traveling in our little Honda Civic Sedan with a bike rack on the back with our bicycles. And we traveled for the next three and a half months on \$2,000. Actually, just about ran out of money, but we had a great time.

- Jack Spinnler: 09:59 Every day we kept a diary. Every other day the other person was in charge of writing the diary entry. So I have all those diary entries of our trip. And got back to Rockville in mid-December of 1975 with literally a dollar and some coins in my pocket and a quarter tank of gas. And we pulled up in front of my in-laws' house, Mr. and Mrs. Walsh, Anne's maiden name was Anne Walsh. And we called them from the road and said, "When we get home, can we live in your house for a while?" Okay. We had nowhere else to go. So we lived there and it got into January of 1976. I went to the unemployment office figuring--well, I knew I wasn't going to get unemployment but I wanted at least to look for a job through that.
- Jack Spinnler: 10:46 And back in the days where you look through microfiche under a big machine and I'm looking and looking at possible parks jobs, and found the National Park Service was looking for employees for the Bicentennial year, 1976, 180-day appointments, which I found out in talking to folks in personnel, meant that you worked for about nine months. And so I said, "Yeah, I'd like to at least interview for that." And I drove down to Washington, D.C. to the regional office, which eventually I worked in years later, and interviewed with someone from the National Mall. And while I was down there, interviewing for that job, I saw on a clipboard there was a job open at President's Park and I made arrangements to interview for that. And that's the job that I was offered and accepted. Because I thought to myself, "It sounds more prestigious to work at the White House than it does in the National Mall." So I took the job with the White House.
- Betsy Ehrlich: 11:51 White House.

- Jack Spinnler: 11:51 So I tell people today I started with the Park Service at the top and worked my way down. So that was my beginning at the Park Service, how I got my foot in the door.
- Betsy Ehrlich: 12:02 With a nine month--
- Jack Spinnler: 12:02 Nine-month appointments.
- Betsy Ehrlich: 12:03 Nine-month appointment.
- Jack Spinnler: 12:05 And then I was laid off, well furloughed, essentially. Or just the end of my appointment.
- Betsy Ehrlich: 12:11 The end of the job.
- Jack Spinnler: 12:12 Yeah, the end of the appointment. But my supervisor was Joe Lawler, who eventually became the regional director of National Capital Region, years later, and Bob Miller worked under Joe, and they said, "Well, you can keep your uniform. If you want to volunteer for us, we'll put you in one of those little kiosks in downtown Washington and you can be there near the White House for us." So I did. In fact, that was during--Jimmy Carter was elected president in November of 1976. He took office, inauguration there in January of '77 and he was going from department to department trying to introduce himself to his new employees, so to speak.
- Jack Spinnler: 12:56 And I asked Joe and Bob, "Gee, do you think I could go over there to the Department of the Interior to their big auditorium?" They said, "No, I'm afraid not." But on the morning of Carter's going there, Joe and Bob called me at the kiosk and said, "All right, we got an extra ticket for you, but you need to be at the auditorium by this time." It was kind of running late so I locked up the kiosk, went over to the Interior Department, got in. There are no seats involved, and there's just standing room.
- Jack Spinnler: 13:26 And so in the very back of the auditorium I'm in my uniform, and Jimmy Carter's coming down with the Secret Service agents, and the Secret Service agents are like parting the crowd and I'm like right there where Jimmy Carter is going to walk right by. And I can see that, as he's going down, that no one's saying anything to him. I thought, "I got to say something to him when he comes by." So he comes by and he's shaking hands on this side,



and shaking hands on that side, and he comes toward me, puts his hand out toward me and I shake his hand. I said, "Hello, Mr. President" in this louder than normal voice because I was probably really excited, and I could see the Secret Service agents react.

- Jack Spinnler: 14:11 But then they saw the uniform and thought, "Well, I guess he's okay."
- Betsy Ehrlich: 14:15 He's a park ranger.
- Jack Spinnler: 14:16 But yeah, he's a park ranger. But Carter looked at me like, "Well yeah, good to be here." Hello, Mr. President. And he went up and gave a speech and I went back to the kiosk in the afternoon so--
- Jack Spinnler: 14:27 But Joe and Bob, my supervisors, were impressed with my first year there as a 180-day appointment so they arranged that I would get a career seasonal, actually get my foot in the door, in a permanent appointment. Now it was the same number of days working at President's Park, but now, instead of being a 180-day appointment, now I was a career seasonal, which is important because then you can apply for jobs that normally wouldn't be available to me. So that was important.
- Jack Spinnler: 14:59 Here's a big, big thing. Somewhere in the ninth, 19--no, I guess probably 1976 there were a lot of park rangers who were heading toward the end of their career and wanted to leave at the end of 1976. They wanted to be there for the Bicentennial year, but then they exit. Right. And so there were 80 vacant positions, eight, zero, 80 vacant positions. And so when an announcement was issued in the old days, not digitally obviously, like today, it was the old clipboards with the metal hooks and you flipped through and so I thought, "Well, I might as well apply. I'll apply." Which I did, along with 3,200 other people--
- Betsy Ehrlich: 15:48 Oh my gosh.
- Jack Spinnler: 15:48 --who are--
- Betsy Ehrlich: 15:50 For 80 positions.
- Jack Spinnler: 15:51 For 80 positions. And the odds are, I do the math, it's 40 to one odds, but they realized they had to whittle it down

somehow from 3,200 applicants. And so they rated the application, and then they got only 800 people that were going to be interviewed. Now 800 people, it's still a lot of people.

- Betsy Ehrlich: 16:12 A lot of people.
- Jack Spinnler: 16:12 And so now it's 10 to 1 odds. And so I was selected to be one of the people to be interviewed. And when I went to the interview, somewhere in mid- to late-August of 1977, he's talking to the other people I knew in the region. "Gee, what do you think they're going to ask us?" Well you know they're going to ask you about your thoughts on use versus preservation. What do you think the future of the Park Service is?
- Jack Spinnler: 16:37 So I went to my interview and ended up that it was a team interview, a woman and two men. The woman I found out later Anne Castellina, a friend of mine who eventually became a good friend of mine, but we didn't know each other at all. And I'm there in front of the three people, and they asked me the questions I sort of expected, and then they pause at one point and one of the men said, "So, in your life priorities, where does the National Park Service fit in?" That one I wasn't expecting.
- Betsy Ehrlich: 17:10 Yeah. Wow.
- Jack Spinnler: 17:12 That one I wasn't expecting. Although, I'd put some thought, generally, to that area. So I took a deep breath and said, "Well, I'm a Christian so God is my number one priority. I've been married for two years now, so my wife is number two priority. Just found out that I'm going to be a father." Anne told me a month or so earlier. I said, "Oh, we're expecting now. So my child is my number three priority. My mom and dad are starting to get to be the age where they need help. So they're my number four priority."
- Jack Spinnler: 17:41 Anyway, I went down the list and I said National Park Service comes in at about number seven. I could tell that that was not an answer that they typically get because I'm actually sure a lot of these people would say, "Oh, I bleed green and gray. I love the Park Service. They are my number one priority." Or maybe number two, number three, not number seven. So I left the room and it was about six weeks later that I got a phone call when I was working in

that little kiosk again, right outside the White House because we would do hard duties. One of the things that we were in charge of was the very first timed tour ticket system for getting people into the White House without having to wait in long lines.

Jack Spinnler: 18:27 So I got this call and they said, "Well, Mr. Spindler, if you were accepted into the Ranger Intake Program, would you prefer to be assigned to Boston National Historical Park or Whitman Mission National Historic Site outside of Walla Walla, Washington? And it just so happened that I had been--

#### END OF PART I

[Archivist's note: The recorder unintentionally stopped between PART I and PART II, causing a gap in the recording.]

#### START OF PART II

Betsy Ehrlich: 00:01 So, the power went off, but we're back on with Jack Spinnler and Betsy Ehrlich.

Jack Spinnler: 00:09 So, I just finished talking about my going to Edison National Historic Site, and I was the chief ranger there and chief of interpretation and protection. So, I supervised a staff ranging between 12 and 16 people leading the tours, and also, I supervised three park guards. They weren't with law enforcement, but they were there on a 16-hour basis. As the park closed up in late afternoon, one person worked from then until about midnight and then someone worked the graveyard shift from just 11:45, so there'd be a little overlap there, to 7:45 AM when the park opened up again. So, I was supervising those folks as well.

Betsy Ehrlich: 00:56 And when you were in your intake program at Whitman Mission, did you have that training to deal with and manage law enforcement, other people in general? Was that part of your training?

Jack Spinnler: 01:10 Well, that's a good question because they wanted to give me a well-rounded experience in my intake park, and Whitman Mission, you can imagine, had very little law enforcement situations.

Betsy Ehrlich: 01:19 Very small park.

- Jack Spinnler: 01:20 Very small park. But my supervisor there, Dave McGinnis, who was a great park ranger and still a friend of mine, he had just transferred from Andersonville up to Whitman Mission, and he had a pretty good amount of law enforcement in his background. So, he taught me some things there, and they sent me to a one-week seasonal law enforcement training at Lake Roosevelt, formerly Coulee Dam National Recreation Area. So, I had a little bit of that there. But Whitman Mission's staff, the entire staff, was six people. Two maintenance people, two of us in interpretation, a superintendent, and an administrative clerk, and that was it. So, when going to Edison, even though Edison is a small fish within the larger fishbowl of the National Park Service, it was still a step up in responsibility for me to understand that.
- Jack Spinnler: 02:15 And we did have some law enforcement trouble, we had break-ins, we had people who were inebriated climb over the fence. We had a historic water tower that Edison had built in the early 1900s. There were like four bar taverns around the perimeter of Edison National Historic Site. So, you can imagine, once in a while, somebody was--"They're closing up. Hey, I dare you to jump over that fence and climb that water tower". Or "maybe we could break in." And there was a break-in at Edison's home, Glenmont, because it was two units. It was the Edison Laboratory and then Edison's home, Glenmont, which is on 13 acres of landscape grounds, so that was my backyard since they lived in the chauffeur's quarters. And someone broke into the home, not knowing it was a historic site, and they stole off the walls about five gold records, because the Edison Phonograph Company, he had gold records that they stole and some of his sterling silver tea service, and they fenced them. The guy was eventually caught and admitted to what he did. He said, "I didn't know it was in a historic site." So, we never got those back, those were melted down and--
- Betsy Ehrlich: 03:34 Oh my gosh. Lost.
- Jack Spinnler: 03:36 --since lost.
- Betsy Ehrlich: 03:37 Yeah.
- Jack Spinnler: 03:38 But we installed new intrusion alarm systems. We installed Halon fire suppression systems, so it was not just supervising these three park guards but also be involved

with all of the systems of trying to make sure the place was indeed secure.

- Betsy Ehrlich: 03:55 Safe and secure. Yeah.
- Jack Spinnler: 03:56 Yeah. Good question, the law enforcement part. I was glad to get out of the law enforcement part of it, though, because six years later I transferred or got a job at Clara Barton National Historic Site, and we did have some law enforcement there but very different situation.
- Betsy Ehrlich: 04:14 So, you were at Edison for six years.
- Jack Spinnler: 04:16 Six years. And--
- Betsy Ehrlich: 04:21 How did you end up at Clara Barton?
- Jack Spinnler: 04:22 Well, I guess it was pressure packed. I mean, there was a lot of personnel issues going on. I had to fire employees. The EO committee brought me up in front of them a couple of times because of people being let go, people of color. And why did you let them go? Well, I had to document. And then, we had an attempted suicide. The superintendent I worked under there, within the first four months that I worked there, during the lunch break he had convened to talk about the budget in his office, and so I, being the chief ranger, the chief of maintenance, the administrative officer, the chief curator, because the Edison papers project was going on. So, we had a lot of issues discussed, and it was a lean year as always, pressure about how to make ends meet.
- Jack Spinnler: 05:29 And so, when we broke for lunch, and I went down to a separate building to have lunch with my staff, a phone call came in saying, "Lynn shot himself. Get back up to the admin building." And found out during this lunch break, the superintendent got into my gun locker, he and I were the only ones with a key to it, took a revolver out, put it to his chest, and put a bullet through his chest. And when I got there, he was laying on the floor, pool of blood. The chief of maintenance was starting--he had compression over the top of the wound. It was a sucking chest wound. They had called 9-1-1. Eventually, he did not die. He was brought to Newark General Hospital, which, for better or worse, was very skilled in handling gunshot wounds because of Newark, New Jersey and it's crime rate, and they saved his

life. So, he's still alive today. But you can imagine the shock of that.

- Betsy Ehrlich: 06:23 Right. Yeah. That's not a typical job experience.
- Jack Spinnler: 06:27 No. And also, within a year after that, we had what we thought was asbestos in one of the storage vaults, and we asked the Environmental Protection Agency to come over and check us out for that. And they said, "Oh, you don't have asbestos here. Everything's fine." I said, "While you're here, would you like us to show you around, give you a little tour of Edison's laboratories?" So, we do. We go into the chemistry laboratory, which we interpreted as, and we're very proud of the fact, that since Edison died on October 30th of 1931, they locked the chem lab and it was exactly the same as Edison left it. So, now, fast forward to 1981, like 50 years later, and these EPA folks are saying, "You mean, these chemicals are the original chemicals here?" We said, "Yeah!" "You mean like these bottles of nitrates and nitrites and picric acid and it's all 50 years old?" We said, "Yeah!" "You got to stop leading tours here." And ended up that we brought an environmental company to test and remove all the possible dangerous chemicals, of which most of them were.
- Betsy Ehrlich: 07:41 Dangerous.
- Jack Spinnler: 07:42 Very dangerous.
- Betsy Ehrlich: 07:42 And needed to be removed.
- Jack Spinnler: 07:44 Need to be removed. These dangerous chemicals were brought to another part of New Jersey, to the Earle Munitions Depot, where they were wired and set off, and there was a fireball 50, 60 feet high. He said, "If anytime during those years, if a maintenance person pushing a broom through that laboratory had bumped one of these jars off, that could have been the result of it." So, that was under my purview as well.
- Betsy Ehrlich: 08:11 Wow.
- Jack Spinnler: 08:12 I was near a nervous breakdown. By the way, at that point, when I got there I was 28 years old, and I left five years later when I was 33. So, when I think about my sons, as they got to be that age, I was near a nervous breakdown. I

just thought I'm dealing with all these complaints and problems and you know. So, anyway, it was a real blessing for me to get a job at small little Clara Barton National Historic Site, where things are much less intense. Enough said.

- Betsy Ehrlich: 08:47 And did your role change when you went to Clara Barton in terms of the job itself?
- Jack Spinnler: 08:52 Yeah. One reason I went there was that, and there I was the site manager. Even though I supervised fewer people than I did at Edison as the chief ranger, there I was the site manager, and I worked under the head of the George Washington Memorial Parkway. Essentially, I worked for the superintendent of the whole Parkway, but the Parkway has a lot of sites within it, and so they had these site managers and I was one of them. So, that was about two years there.
- Jack Spinnler: 09:21 And I started getting more interested in training because, while I was still at Edison, I helped create one of the earliest interpretive skills teams where we pooled together those who wanted to be teachers and put on a seasonal training course, and actually training courses for permanent employees, as well, which Mather Training Center took on as their model for the interpretive skills teams that they set up starting in 1982. So, we did that at Edison, and then I carried that over into National Capital Region. I worked with people like Corky Mayo and Dwight Madison and others to do those training courses for National Capital Region.
- Betsy Ehrlich: 10:01 Before they were happening here at Mather.
- Jack Spinnler: 10:02 Yeah. Well, kind of in conjunction with Mather because Mather was like the oversight, and at that point, Dave Dalen was here and Dale Ditmanson and Ann Castalina early on. So, I started getting involved more with training a little bit when my supervisors would allow me to, and then I'm talking to Ann about my career. I said, "You know, my next step up would be looking for a small superintendency." Now, I'm the site manager, but I really don't want to be a superintendent. That never appealed to me, to be in charge of a park and having those responsibilities. Because by then, I understood that superintendents can not only be liable if something goes

bad in their park with the National Park Service. If someone gets injured in the park, they can put a civil suit against you as the superintendent of the park, and that has happened. And I thought, "I don't ever want to be in that position." You never know what can happen out in a park. So, I said to Ann, "I think I'd like to get involved with planning and maybe look at an opportunity to work in a regional office in planning." And so, about the middle of my second year at Clara Barton National Historic Site, I started to get involved with going down to the regional office, helping with their training, but also looking for opportunities for planning.

- Jack Spinnler: 11:28 So, it just so happened that my now good friend Winnie Frost, who was my coworker in three different situations through my Park Service career, Winnie had got a split position with Jane Radford. I'm trying to think of what Jane's last name was before she got married. It'll come to me later. But Jane and Winnie split a position as the interpretive planners for National Capital Region, working in the National Capital Regional Office. They worked 20 hours each. So, Jane moved to Harpers Ferry, she found a job in Harpers Ferry, so now Winnie had half of a job, they needed someone to take the other 20 hours. Well, that's my opportunity. Let's see how this works out. And I put in for the job. Of course, hardly anybody else put in for the job. Nobody wanted a--
- Betsy Ehrlich: 12:29 A half-time job.
- Jack Spinnler: 12:31 --half-time job. And I agreed with Anne that if I can't figure a financial way to do it, then I'll look for a waiter job at one of the restaurants in Frederick or look for some other part-time job to fill in the money.
- Betsy Ehrlich: 12:44 To fill in. Yeah.
- Jack Spinnler: 12:46 Yeah. So, I did it. Bart Truesdale was the acting chief interpreter for National Capitol Region at that time, and Bart arranged it so that there was a project at Kenilworth Aquatic Gardens in developing a new exhibit for their little visitor center building and that I would be in charge of that and I could charge 12 hours a week to that project. So, I would work 20 hours here, 12 hours there, so really, I had 32 hours. Now, that would last about a year and then that



money was going away. I thought, "Okay, that buys me some time." That was fine. And that's where I was when--

Jack Spinnler: 13:23

There were other deals made. I mean, I came to find out the inner workings of the National Park Service that these deals sometimes, sometimes not written down on paper, were discussed during meetings, like they had an annual review of projects for each region to have their superintendent come to Harpers Ferry Center, meet with the manager of the Harpers Ferry Center and all the projects going on, and there were discussions going on during these meetings. And so, I was attending these meetings, and my name was being used as this bargaining chip of, "Well, you know, National Capital Region, we're making a wayside exhibit, an upright wayside exhibit for Great Falls Park, Virginia. But we know you need three of them and all you had money for was for one of them, so we'll do the other one for you for free, Harpers Ferry Center. We won't charge any more for it, but we want Jack Spinnler to come up to Harpers Ferry Center and help us with some other things that are going on up here." So, I started getting this cross mix of projects and assignments, and a number of them were wayside exhibit related and I got to meet Ray Price and Phil Myerly and Dick Hoffman and David Guiney working on these projects.

Jack Spinnler: 14:42

And so, somewhere in October or November of 1987 there was a vacancy announcement put out for two wayside exhibit planners, and I got one that I applied for. I was accepted to one of them. And Teresa Vasquez, who was working in the Southeast Region, I think she was at Biscayne at the time, got the second of the two positions. So, I came in, it was like an intake, like the old intake ranger program. Now, this was like an intake planner program. I would work under the auspices of Dick Hoffman and David Guiney. They were like the senior planners, but I would get help from some guy named Rich Helman, as well. And so, for a year, because it was a--oh, by the time I had gone into the National Capital Region, I was a GS-12, but these jobs being offered at Harpers Ferry Center were GS-9s. So, I was taking a downgrade to come to Harpers Ferry Center. But if I did well in that first year, I might get bumped back up to an 11, and if I did well in the next year or two, I might get back up to a 12. I accepted under that circumstances. I was fine with that. It was--

- Betsy Ehrlich: 15:57 And that was a full-time job. Well, back at the split position, you were at 32 hours, vying to try and fill in the other additional hours.
- Jack Spinnler: 16:06 Could have gone back to 20 hours anytime.
- Betsy Ehrlich: 16:08 Yeah. Yeah.
- Jack Spinnler: 16:09 In which case I would have been a waiter at some restaurant on Market Street. Yeah.
- Betsy Ehrlich: 16:13 Yeah.
- Jack Spinnler: 16:14 So, yeah, that was a great opportunity. I couldn't pass it up, and it was just what I was looking for.
- Betsy Ehrlich: 16:19 So, in 1987 is when you came to Harpers Ferry Center?
- Jack Spinnler: 16:21 Well, it was late January, early February, by the time the paperwork was finished and ended up that my first day of work, in 1988, was Monday, February 29th, so the pay period started on Sunday, the 28th of February, it was a leap year, and so the 29th was my first day. And fast forward 20 years later when I retired from Harpers Ferry Center, I just liked the symmetry that was, again, a leap year. It was the year 2008, and I decided February 29th is going to be my last day of work. So, I'll be working 20 years at Harpers Ferry Center, 32 years total with the park system. So, yeah, the first day was in February, and indeed, I was working under the oversight of Dick Hoffman, who taught me some of the basics of being concise and using brevity when all possible for my wayside exhibits. Dick was the master of telling a really tight little story.
- Jack Spinnler: 17:28 And then, I worked under David Guiney as a wayside planner, and he taught me levels of information, subtitles, a lot more information than Dick would ever consider putting on a wayside exhibit, but do in such a way that visitors can, if they're really just into the topic, can read the whole thing and get a whole lot out of it or just this part or just that part. So, it was a great learning experience working under both of them. And I think I ended up melding a little something compromised for my own style somewhere in the middle. It was great learning there.

- Jack Spinnler: 18:04 So, that's how I got to Harpers Ferry Center, February of 1988, and great people to work with. All the folks at Harpers Ferry Center I thought were great to work with. One thing I found, I was curious, was that, I was excited about the possibility of traveling to parks and working on these big places around the country, and some of the older folks at Harpers Ferry Center were complaining about the amount of travel. I thought, "How could you complain about that?" Well, after two or three, four years myself, things change from, "I get to travel," to, "I have to travel. Another airport, another rental car, another motel." And yeah, it does become a little weary after a while, but those first two years I was like, "Whoa, this is great."
- Betsy Ehrlich: 18:53 So, we'll talk more about waysides specifically this afternoon when we talk with Winnie and Rich together, but I want to also give you an opportunity to talk about becoming an interpretive planner at Harpers Ferry because that was a path you took after your wayside planning experience.
- Jack Spinnler: 19:13 Yeah. But my exactly 20 years at Harpers Ferry Center, the first nine were as a wayside planner, and on occasion, as a wayside planner, I was asked to be part of an interpretive planning team. So, I would go with these interpretive planners, and that seemed like interesting work. So, I got to know folks who worked in that department, that division. Andy Cardos was the chief of interpretive planning at that time in the mid '90s, and there were some people who are leaving those positions. Sharon Brown was a really good interpretive planner, and she went back to the field. Chris Galeazzi was a good interpretive planner. He went back to the field. And so, they had a couple of vacancies. They announced them, and I applied and Tom Tankersley of Yellowstone National Park was accepted as one and I was accepted as the other. So, I was just an in-house move. Maybe I was the inexpensive move because they didn't have to relocate me from anywhere.
- Betsy Ehrlich: 20:12 Yeah. So, can you describe what an interpretive planning project looked like?
- Jack Spinnler: 20:21 Well, that was an evolving discipline of the Park Service, and continues to evolve, I'm sure.
- Betsy Ehrlich: 20:28 Yeah, for sure.

- Jack Spinnler: 20:30 Because now here I am almost exactly 12 years after I retired. This coming February is another leap year of 2020, so it'll be 12 years of retirement here. But in that first few months, certainly the first year as an interpretive planner, I thought I knew exactly what had to be done because I was on interpretive planning teams. Well, a new set of guidelines was developed of how interpretive planning was to be done in the interim, and it was out as the new NPS six guidelines, very different than the way that Michael Paskowsky or Linda Finn or Larry, I can't think of Larry's last name right now, or Tom White had done their interpretive planning. Now, they wanted more in depth workshops, they wanted more feedback, they wanted to get voices heard, not just in the park but the partnerships, the federal lands around perhaps your park or state lands and the neighbors. So, it got to be more complex. And while I was doing those first workshops in my first year, I think like anybody who switches a job, you think, "I was really comfortable back there doing that job. Why did I put myself into this really uncomfortable position here? But I can figure it out."
- Jack Spinnler: 21:56 And I'll never forget having a conversation with Tom Tankersley, the other new interpretive planner, and we were working this out together, and at one point I asked Tom, "So, Tom, I'm not sure how I'm doing these workshops." I said, "How are you going to do your workshops?" And he was kind of a free spirit, flamboyant, and he said, "Man, I don't know about you, but I'm going to make it up as I go along." And I found that that'd be the best advice that I had. I had these guidelines, we were supposed to do this, and this is the end product. But, in fact, interpretive planning workshops, once you get over the stress of being in charge of a workshop that's not just going to be a few hours, but it's going to be two days or three days, and you can meet partners from all over, and at the end of those three days you need to come up with some sort of consensus, direction of where the park wants to be in the next five, 10, 15 years.
- Jack Spinnler: 22:59 It's a whole different level than teaching training courses, which I was very familiar with. I can get in front of a group without any notes for an hour, an hour and a half, and expound on whatever. But that's different than facilitating where you're not speaking--rarely in a Mather training course or any sort of an interpretive skills course, did you

lecture. It was really a give and take, you're working with the audience, but now, in a facilitation thing, you've got to take in the input and then contradictory input from someone else and try to find a way--it's almost like at a negotiating table. I mean, you're not Henry Kissinger trying to work out the peace in the Middle East, but you're trying to make peace among park divisions and outside partners, so it can be pretty stressful. But I learned to do it and learned to do it, I think, well enough to do my job well.

- Betsy Ehrlich: 23:57 Did you learn it entirely on the job or did you take facilitation training somewhere along the line?
- Jack Spinnler: 24:01 Good question. I think I did. I don't remember taking facilitation training.
- Betsy Ehrlich: 24:08 If it had an impact.
- Jack Spinnler: 24:09 Yeah, yeah. Where would I do it? Maybe that was more like paper training and learning training. "Here, read this. Here's a book on how to--" Yeah, I think that's what it was. Yeah, it was. It was learning from a book. But not watching anybody do it and think, "Well, gee, I like that." Like when I was a wayside planner and I was watching Dick Hoffman or David Guiney, then I said, "Oh, yeah, I like that part of that, but not that." And I never went around with any other interpretive planner to find out how they did their job.
- Betsy Ehrlich: 24:43 So, you really were, as a division or as a group here at Harpers Ferry, were all really operating very independently. And there were a lot of them. I mean, we don't have a group anymore doing that sort of thing, so I think it's interesting to hear what your strategy was and how you did deal with those kinds of conflicts.
- Jack Spinnler: 25:00 Yeah. And when we couldn't keep up with the workload because of these new NPS six directions where they wanted every park to have a new LRIP, Long Range Interpretive Plan, as their final product, everybody wanted one. And you got, at that point, probably 340 units in the National Park Service. Now, we've got over 400. So, everyone wanted one, and then regional offices started getting involved and they wanted to do some of their interpretive planning. So, especially in the Intermountain Region and the Western Region, Southeast Region, and the North Atlantic, like four regions, four out of seven regions, "We

can do this. We don't necessarily need you, but we'd like to have some media experts on occasion to help us." So, that made things a little more difficult in trying to figure out, what direction is interpretive planning going? But that's a whole different story.

Betsy Ehrlich: 25:51 Well, I think, though, one of the things that would be interesting to hear about is how you put those teams together. Because the assumption that interpretive planning always happens with a group of people, I think maybe from a previous day, I don't know that interpretive plans are necessarily done with a whole team of media specialists, and how many non-HFC interpretive plans had media specialists. So, when you're leading a team, how many people did you have, and how did you guide that team? Because they're all coming from different divisions and have their own workloads.

Jack Spinnler: 26:27 Right. The first step of the interpretive planning process, or one of the first steps anyway, contact the park, talk to the superintendent, be connected to the chief interpreter. Eventually, go down to the park and do what we call the scoping--

## END OF PART II

[Archivist's note: The recorder unintentionally stopped between PART II and PART III, causing a gap in the recording.]

## START OF PART III

Betsy Ehrlich: 00:01 Okay. This is take three with Jack Spinnler and Betsy Ehrlich. The power went out again. We're starting again. Jack, we want to migrate a little bit over to talk about one, or a couple if you're interested in sharing, particular projects that were sort of favorites. What was the situation, why was it a favorite project? What stood out to you?

Jack Spinnler: 00:26 All right, well I'll actually pick out two, now that you mention that. I thought about one in advance. There was an opportunity about the third year of being in Wayside Exhibits, and by then I had been given some direction, some mentorship from Dick Hoffman and David Guiney. I went from small projects where I had really this oversight to becoming really, had my own autonomy and I felt more comfortable with slightly larger projects as things went on.

- Jack Spinnler: 01:02 At one point Ray Price as the Chief of the Wayside Division said, "Jack, I got a project I think is just right for you. It's at Edison National Historic Site. I want you to go back to your old park and work on waysides there." I said, "Well Ray, I'll tell you what. Maybe I know the park too well. Maybe you want someone with fresh eyes." I tried to do that thing. I couldn't dance out of it. Ray wouldn't let me, said, "No, you got this project."
- Jack Spinnler: 01:27 And it ended up being a fun project to do and to this day now, about 30, almost 30 years later, those waysides are, most of them are still in the ground. They're going through the planning process, I understand, of replacing them in the very near future. Every media project has its lifespan and that was--
- Jack Spinnler: 01:47 But to have, to go back to Edison years later after helping the park plan these wayside exhibits and working with Olin Nave, he was the designer on the project at the time. And we were just getting involved with applying the unigrid design system into a wayside format. That was one of the earliest prototypes of that and ended up being a lot of fun to do. The park staff was very cooperative even though old Jack Spinnler was coming back in a different capacity.
- Betsy Ehrlich: 02:18 Were there staff there that you had worked with?
- Jack Spinnler: 02:20 Yeah.
- Betsy Ehrlich: 02:20 They were still there?
- Jack Spinnler: 02:22 The chief interpreter was someone that I had hired at a lower level and risen up, and different superintendent of course. But that was a nice, small project. I probably had 15 to 20 wayside exhibits within it.
- Jack Spinnler: 02:40 The other one that jumps out in my mind, and it was fun yet really, really, really challenging. Because as I've got further into my wayside-related career, that some of the planners in the early years of me doing it, would go into really big national parks. I said, "When's my opportunity to go to a full national park?" One of the 60 national parks or 50 at that time. And at one point, I forget who was the chief, might have been Phil Musselwhite. "Well I want you to take Rocky Mountain National Park. I want you to do that one." And I worked alongside Nick Kirilloff. At that point

our process had changed a little, well actually quite a bit in that, like with the Edison project, I wrote the text and gathered the graphics and then brought it back to Harpers Ferry Center and worked with Olin Nave in his cubicle--

- Betsy Ehrlich: 03:33 Olin had not traveled to Edison?
- Jack Spinnler: 03:37 He had not traveled to Edison. Whereas now I'm going to work with Nick Kirilloff, who is really at that point the chief of the design group.
- Betsy Ehrlich: 03:42 In Waysides?
- Jack Spinnler: 03:44 In Wayside Exhibits and that was very helpful actually to work side by side early on because now it was going to be a project of about a hundred wayside exhibits. The final tally, I think was 95 wayside exhibits and it was an interesting mix between a natural history and human history and even some recreation into it. It was a wide variety of types of waysides with different situations. It was really great having an HFC wayside person there with me.
- Betsy Ehrlich: 04:13 You traveled together as a team?
- Jack Spinnler: 04:15 Yeah.
- Betsy Ehrlich: 04:15 Just the two of you?
- Jack Spinnler: 04:16 First time I went out for the scoping trip on my own and then came back. And then Nick and I went out for at least one trip together. And I think another trip we went out, that was a combination of going to Rocky Mountain National Park. We were also working on Salinas Pueblo Missions National Monument. We combined that trip.
- Jack Spinnler: 04:34 But the chief interpreter there at the time, chief interpreter was a guy named Jim Mack and he had been chief interpreter in a number of other large national parks. And he was just like the ranger's ranger. They had a media specialist working under Jim. Diane Liggett worked with us on that project and I thought we had a really strong team.
- Jack Spinnler: 04:59 At the end of it all, everybody seemed really happy. We were working with contract artists from here that--some of our natural history projects had to have that. Worked a little bit with cartography. And at that point cartography was



being done in a very different way than it was early on and when we go back to our time, Betsy--you and I started here not too many years apart. That in the days where a layout was done with this wax machine where you had wax done and you kind of applied it and reapplied it and nothing digital whatsoever.

- Betsy Ehrlich: 05:34 A pay stub.
- Jack Spinnler: 05:36 A pay stub. Yeah, it's very, very different. Things have progressed up in that way. But I felt really good at the end of that two years that we did a really good job for Rocky Mountain. And now I've been back to Rocky Mountain a number of times since those were installed.
- Jack Spinnler: 05:50 Now there's another generation or two of other waysides that diminish ours because they were done by park staff. And between the production method and what they did in their planning. But every--
- Betsy Ehrlich: 06:05 Some of them are still there?
- Jack Spinnler: 06:06 Oh yeah. Oh yeah. I would say 50 or 60 of them are still there. And on that one trip with Rich Helman, who's here in another room doing his interview. Rich and I are baseball buddies now that we're retired and on one of our baseball trips to go see the Colorado Rockies play baseball. And then we went up to Rocky Mountain National Park.
- Jack Spinnler: 06:28 We're doing it and we're talking about these wayside exhibits as we're going up there and it was somewhere in September when we were making this trip. And so visitors were there overhearing us talking about these waysides and one person asked, "Did you have something to do with these?" I said, "Well yeah, I was the planner of this and this". They said--yeah, it was like I was a rock star. They posed for a picture with me next to me and the waysides. "We've just been really appreciating these waysides and we were wondering, and you're hearing you're doing--". I was like "Wow."
- Betsy Ehrlich: 06:55 A wayside rock star, that's so cool.
- Jack Spinnler: 06:58 It was a really different feeling. I worked on probably almost 600 wayside exhibits during my nine years as a wayside exhibit planner. And on occasion I come upon

them still, surprisingly. And sometimes they've been duplicated and reused other places if they were almost generic enough. I was on Interstate 90 I think going towards Salt Lake City, went to a rest stop. Came out of the men's room looking at some folks who were there, gathered around this wayside and looked over their shoulder. And I started reading the text and I thought, wow, gee, I like the way that's written.

- Jack Spinnler: 07:35 See, it looks kind of familiar. Oh, that's right. I worked on that with Mormon Pioneer Trail for a different area, but now they put it here outside this restroom. And a couple of times that's happened to me that I'm reading I'm like, man, that looks familiar, kind of sounds familiar to my ear as I'm reading it. And yeah, they're still out there and sometimes they're replaced.
- Jack Spinnler: 07:55 And other times they look really bad and they're cracked and crazed. But you live with it.
- Betsy Ehrlich: 07:59 But the content is still strong.
- Jack Spinnler: 08:02 The content is still strong.
- Betsy Ehrlich: 08:02 Yeah, that's quite a legacy. I just want to see if there's anything that we haven't covered yet that you'd like to cover, questions that you'd like to focus on or areas that--
- Jack Spinnler: 08:17 Well, I think that some of these other things in the bottom Betsy, we're going to talk when we get into a group with Rich Helman and Winnie Frost a little later. But there was something I made note here about people who influenced my work or my career.
- Betsy Ehrlich: 08:30 Yes, thank you for bringing that up.
- Jack Spinnler: 08:32 And so going back to my early days with the White House liaison, President's Park. Joe Lawler, I think I mentioned, he eventually became Regional Director of National Capital Region and he just was calm no matter what the situation was. Dealing with the White House visitor office. And he was the point person. I mean they had a Park Service office that became known as the White House liaison.

- Jack Spinnler: 08:54 And then there was the office of the White House tour and Joe Lawler was the interface. And no matter what pressure was put on him, he was unflappable, just really admired him. And then Bob Miller, who was just under Joe and Bob eventually became the public information officer for Great Smoky Mountains National Park. And I've seen Bob over the years here and there.
- Jack Spinnler: 09:20 But he taught me a lesson and that's one of those work lessons that I'm glad I learned it early on. I was young enough and spry enough that I bicycled to work to White House liaison. The offices were near the Jefferson Memorial and I lived in Silver Spring, Maryland. And it was about a 12-mile bike ride and probably 40, 45 minute bike ride because you're slightly downhill as you're going down through Rock Creek Park.
- Jack Spinnler: 09:46 And I'm 24, 25 years old and riding down there and I would get there and they had a locker with my uniform and I would only bicycle on days where I knew I could pretty much coast almost out and didn't have to do much pedaling. And we always had a daily meeting first thing at like seven o'clock because our shift was seven to 3:30. And I've gotten to the early morning meeting at about seven o'clock.
- Jack Spinnler: 10:19 And we went through with the, what we had to think of that day and what we had to do different. And the meeting ended, Bob Miller called me out into the hallway, said "Jack I want to talk to you about something". "Oh yeah Bob, what's up?" He goes "You were late for today's meeting". I said, "Oh no, I was there at seven o'clock." He said, "Well actually you showed up at seven but by the time you actually were, it was seven o' five or seven o' seven. I need you there in uniform, ready to participate at seven o'clock."
- Jack Spinnler: 10:48 I said "You're right Bob, I need to." The times I bicycled I would make sure I left an extra 10 minutes early to make sure I arrived there, got in my uniform and was in Joe and Bob's office in time for that meeting. And for the rest of my career, it's wherever I show up anywhere, except for today, which I just put in limbo. I try to be early by at least 10 or 15 minutes. Because it was one of those early things, just because you're there on time.

- Jack Spinnler: 11:14 Even here at Harpers Ferry Center, I would think, well usually I'm going to work, eight in the morning till five o'clock and I want to make sure I'm there at eight. Well I don't want to show up in the parking lot at eight. I want to be in the building at my desk with my computer turned on ready to work at eight. And that was one of those lessons learned that supervisors, sometimes they don't realize how much they influence you for the good. Yeah. That was really good.
- Jack Spinnler: 11:42 At my years at Edison, I worked for Roy Weaver as a superintendent and he was just wonderful. I mean all that pressure that I was under, the fact that I was the acting superintendent before he arrived, I was so glad that he arrived and he understood the pressure that I was under. He was kind of like Joe Lawler in that he was just unflappable no matter what the pressure was.
- Jack Spinnler: 12:02 Because he had a lot of things to deal with between the state of New Jersey regulations and Essex County and Edison's home. Glenmont was within Llewellyn Park, which is kind of the North Jersey version of Beverly Hills. And he had to deal with all those rich people and Roy Weaver was wonderful and unflappable.
- Jack Spinnler: 12:22 In the Regional office, Cindy Christin, I really looked up to her. She was the interpreter specialist. She worked for Bruce McHenry who in his own right was this walking living history guy because he was second or third generation Park Service. His father had worked for the parks and I think maybe his grandfather had an influence in the early National Park Service history. Between Cindy Christin and Bruce McHenry I had a wonderful relationship with them and other folks I've worked with.
- Jack Spinnler: 12:52 I mean I have learned so many things from so many people. I mentioned Phil Musselwhite earlier. Phil worked with me in a lot of different divisions at Harpers Ferry Center. And after I retired in 2008 Phil kept working and got permission to work remotely from his home in North Carolina. And I didn't get a chance to, like when we retired, to be at a retirement event for him. A couple of years ago, I think two years ago, Rich Helman and I were on our way down to Florida. We usually go down in March for spring training games and we said to each other, let's look up Phil Musselwhite. Let's go visit Phil. Which we did.

- Jack Spinnler: 13:30 And we took him out to dinner and Phil said, "Oh I'll pay for myself" and I said, "No, this is your retirement dinner. This is not an expensive place, we're paying for you. This is your retirement dinner." And while we were having dinner, I said "Well Phil, you may not remember this. But in the time when we were incorporating contractors as our designers--" he said, "Oh, I know you always had a hard time with them". I said, "Well especially Paul Singer", but that's a whole different story. But working with the Dearborn guy and a couple of others.
- Jack Spinnler: 14:07 I said, Phil, I would just be at these meetings, uncooperative. I mean, I wouldn't do it. But I always had to spout off before I did it. I said "Phil, you said something to me at that time that I've always appreciated. You probably don't remember this, but you said, "Jack, I appreciate your point of view". After I spouted off about something, he said, "But if you keep this up, I'm going to have to just start writing you up for insubordination."
- Jack Spinnler: 14:33 And that word insubordination hit me like a bucket of ice water in my face. I thought, yeah, he's right. I'm being subordinate. I mean, I'm doing it, but I'm not being a team player. I'm just grousing about it too much. I said, "Phil, I really appreciate you saying that because I'm not sure if you noticed, but I really kind of shaped up after that. I said, all right, I may not like working in that situation, but I just got to do it."
- Jack Spinnler: 14:58 I mean, you learn all sorts of things through the career [crosstalk] with people about how you work and how you're affecting people.
- Betsy Ehrlich: 15:04 What was Phil's reaction when you told him that?
- Jack Spinnler: 15:06 He said, I'm glad you mentioned that story. I'm glad I had a good influence on you. Oh yeah. Yeah. I'm afraid I learned my lesson very well because at one point when we were going through one of our reorganizations. I think on one of your lists here, you had--
- Betsy Ehrlich: 15:27 The evolution of--
- Jack Spinnler: 15:28 --the Aiming for Excellence thing. Dick Hoffman and I, either we volunteered or got volunteered to be the spokespeople for the working staff to go to Gary Cummins

and express our dissatisfaction with the process or the amount of money they're spending on it, whatever. And my supervisor at the time, Sam Vaughn, called me and said, "Well, you're just going to have to stop that". I said, "Well, I was asked by my coworkers to present this". He said, "Well, apparently you don't have enough work to do so I should give you some more projects".

- Jack Spinnler: 16:12 I said, "Woah, no, no," I think. [inaudible]. It was one of those Gary Cummins was being really nice and cooperative about it, up front. But Sam was doing sort of the bad cop, the good cop, bad cop routine. And Sam and I get along famously today, now that we're both retired. But at that point I thought, man, I'm bristling under this. I don't like this ploy. But you learn all sorts of things through people working for them. And then when you're a supervisor, and I was a supervisor for eight years and I totally respect everybody who's in that position because it's a tough job to be in.
- Betsy Ehrlich: 16:52 Being a supervisor?
- Jack Spinnler: 16:53 Being a supervisor. Yeah. I never had you as my supervisor, but co-worker for a while.
- Betsy Ehrlich: 17:00 Co-worker. Yeah.
- Jack Spinnler: 17:04 As Forrest Gump would say, "And that's all I have to say about that".
- Betsy Ehrlich: 17:08 That's great. I appreciate it. We'll move on this afternoon to the group conversation, focus more on waysides. Because I know you have--
- Jack Spinnler: 17:17 Yeah I got a few notes on that.
- Betsy Ehrlich: 17:20 Got a few notes on that.
- Jack Spinnler: 17:20 I forgot that I have this and we'll bring it up this afternoon. I forgot I even had this, but early on in my wayside career I had this chart on the wall. I forget where I got it from. I think it was Ray Price. To list my projects and the month and year that I've had these very steps, this kind of helped me with remembering what the process was early on and the production. With production package, you can finally and then the production.

Betsy Ehrlich: 17:48 And then the production. Yeah. Plan, production, package and production.

Jack Spinnler: 17:52 But all of the various steps--

Betsy Ehrlich: 17:54 And the dates when you completed each one. Interesting. Yeah. I'll have to take a snapshot of that and include it in the file. Yeah, leave it out. I'll shoot it.

Jack Spinnler: 18:01 All right.

Betsy Ehrlich: 18:03 All right. Thank you, Jack.

Jack Spinnler: 18:05 Ready for lunch?

Betsy Ehrlich: 18:05 Ready for lunch.

END OF PART III

END OF RECORDING