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**Harthon L. "Spud" Bill  
September 26, 1962**

Interview conducted by S. Herbert Evison  
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HARTHON L. BILL

REEL LXXXII

Including changes and corrections  
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[START OF INTERVIEW]

- Herb Evison: This is Moose, Wyoming, on the morning of September 26, 1962, and for the next hour or so we are going to be listening to Harthon L. Bill, who right now is superintendent of Grand Teton National Park! – but who is scheduled in a couple of weeks to transfer to the superintendency of Glacier National Park. He is more generally known to National Park Service people by the name of "Spud," which I propose to use in addressing him.
- Herb Evison: Spud has been with the National Park Service now for twenty-seven years and has seen service successively at Grand Canyon, Mount Rainier, and Yosemite National Parks; the Region III office in Santa Fe where he was assistant regional director; and since late in 1959 he has been here at Grand Teton.
- Herb Evison: Spud, this is quite a varied career and I am sure that as you look back over it certain things must stand out in your experience as especially interesting or noteworthy or important, and I am going to turn you loose on that experience in a minute; but I would like before we do that to get something of your pre-National Park Service history – where you hail from, where you got your education and what your education was especially in, and so on.
- Spud Bill: Herb, I am a New Englander – a New Englander in the West, one who can look back now and say that twenty-seven years ago Jane and I came to Grand Canyon with a view to spending a few months to determine whether or not we would like it. Quite a few easterners come out west and don't like it and go back to the East. We have never felt it desirable to return to eastern United States, because we became so much a part of the West.
- Spud Bill: In New England I attended high school in Bridgeport, Connecticut; college at Middlebury, Vermont; and then to the Yale School of Forestry for graduate work in forestry. This of course prepared me to be a professional forester, and it's not particularly normal for a forester, from Yale at least, to go into the National Park Service; I believe I'm the only one since John Coffman.
- Spud Bill: Looking back again, it would be normal I think for one of my position to reflect on the people with whom I started. I had the distinct honor to start my career with M. R. Tillotson at Grand Canyon. Tillie was one of the early and very able administrators in the National Park Service and it was a rare opportunity to work with him. He gave us and others the ideals of the National Park Service and helped us to become so much a part of it.

We can't forget the great contribution to our career in the West that Tillie made.

Spud Bill: Many others there at Grand Canyon on the ranger force: Bert Lauzon I remember so well and his real old-time ranger outlook. He was a great character in ranger history; Sherman Moore is another, and Sam King who is now the new superintendent – or rather project manager – of Whiskeytown Reservoir, recently from Mount McKinley in Alaska; all of those fellows I worked with and it was a great privilege to gain from them the flavor, the characteristics of the country that are so important.

Spud Bill: There were others in that Grand Canyon organization: Eddie McKee, well-known geologist, and authority on Grand Canyon geology; Louis Schellbach, who was probably the most dramatic speaker about Grand Canyon features that ever stood on the Yavapai parapet. Oh, I could go on and list many of them, but rather than dwell too long on it I would say that there were times, as I recall them now, when it's a little unusual that I'm still alive, because I've had some experiences at Grand Canyon when there could have been serious accidents.

Spud Bill: I recall one time a fine Doberman Pinscher dog that jumped over the rim of Grand Canyon and landed on a ledge below; and since it was a valuable dog the owners were most anxious that the dog be rescued. It fell our lot to go over the rim on the end of a rope and rescue that dog, and when I reached the ledge where the dog was he was so delighted to see me that he very nearly pushed me into Grand Canyon while I was attempting to put him in a harness to draw him up to the rim again.

Spud Bill: Another time I had parked my automobile on the North Rim of Grand Canyon not too far from where some men were felling trees, for logs to become a part of the Grand Canyon Lodge on the North Rim, and everything seemed to be wholly safe and quite in order, so I took off my coat and laid it on the seat and went on about some other business. I had no more than walked away when a great crash occurred and a large pine tree fell across that automobile and crushed it flat; only a matter of minutes from the time I had left it until that car was completely flattened.

Spud Bill: There were occasions on forest fires when disaster was close. I remember particularly the Dragon Fire at Grand Canyon. The year escapes me, but the events are very clear in my mind. Sam King was with me on that particular occasion. We had a large Indian firefighting crew. There had been more than a little difficulty in controlling the blaze because it was on an isolated island in Grand Canyon with steep cliffs and deep crevices in the cliffs into which the fire would work its way; and the low humidity, rather constant wind, and so on, kept it going.

- Spud Bill: We sent the Indian crew to the cliff edge one morning, mid-morning, and asked them to clean out a rather hot spot, which they were doing. Things didn't look particularly right, so we suddenly asked them to all withdraw. And just as they were at the top of the Canyon Rim and in a position where they could get away, the whole thing flared up, the blaze came roaring up over the edge of the Canyon, crowned out on top into the pine trees there; and only by the extremely quick action that was taken then were all of them able to escape practically certain death. So, you see there have been times when we have been a little bit close to the edge and this is the sort of thing that you remember.
- Spud Bill: I remember too at Grand Canyon many pleasant occasions and many wonderful people from all over the world who came there to visit that park and it was my great privilege to show a number of them around, take them on the Rim Drives and into the Canyon and other places there: Ambassadors, princes, and just common people from everywhere who came to that national park which is so well known everywhere in the world.
- Herb Evison: I judge, Spud, that you went to Grand Canyon just as a buck ranger.
- Spud Bill: That's right. I started as a buck ranger after a short period as a forestry foreman in a CCC camp. But the thing about starting as a buck ranger that is so important is that this gives one an opportunity to begin at the bottom and develop a career through the entire Service ladder.
- Spud Bill: I mentioned M. R. Tillotson with whom we worked in those early days. He was the superintendent at Grand Canyon; and he insisted that all of us who had career ideas try out all the chairs, that we try all different sorts of work to obtain a diversification of experience. And while I am typically a ranger product probably, it wouldn't be fair to overlook the fact that there was opportunity to work in the office, to participate in the business affairs of the park; there was opportunity to participate in interpretation. Many, many times I filled in at the Yavapai Observation Station and gave the interpretive talks there, and worked with Eddie McKee, Louis Schellbach, and others on those occasions. Maintenance, too, is another important phase of a well-rounded person in the National Park Service, who must understand, appreciate, and promote good maintenance practices.
- Herb Evison: You know, since I served under Tillie when he was regional director in Region I and I was associate regional director, and I loved the guy, I am delighted to hear this statement about him, because I gather from what you say he practically ran a good training school in Grand Canyon.

- Spud Bill: And this was in the days before formal training schools such as we have now at Yosemite and will shortly have at Harpers Ferry. And Tillie, realizing the value of developing men for greater responsibilities, in his own way very effectively developed people.
- Spud Bill: After the Grand Canyon experience we moved to Mount Rainier. Before that opportunities had come for advancement through the ranks, and I went to Mount Rainier as an assistant superintendent. I look back on that experience as a very live and interesting one, because there I worked for John Preston, now superintendent at Yosemite National Park; had the privilege of being with Bill Butler, the well-known and very outstanding assistant chief ranger at Mount Rainier. Preston Macy came there, and we worked together for about six months before I left to go to Yosemite to become the assistant superintendent there in 1952.
- Spud Bill: But the Mount Rainier experience was a good one, because this park has something going on most of the time. It's not wholly a year-around park but there is great summer use there and there was at that time great winter use. I think the winter use is now returning to the Mount Rainier scene. There were times when it was reduced because of outside ski developments with chair lifts and other conveniences, the people wanted more than the rope tows which we were able to provide.
- Spud Bill: You remember that in the national parks we can't put up permanent lifts and so on, and they have to be of a temporary nature so that they can be removed in the summer and not be on the landscape.
- Herb Evison: Tell me, is that so at Yosemite? Are there no permanent installations there?
- Spud Bill: Yosemite is the exception; Badger Pass is sort of an off-the-road installation as far as summer use is concerned, but quite available in the wintertime. The lifts are permanently installed, and this is an exception. A lift up the face of a mountainside in plain view is an entirely different matter, because this would involve the principal feature for which the park was established at Mount Rainier, and the idea is to have it look as nearly natural as it is possible to have it when the greater number of visitors come. And a wintertime facility looks a little out of place in the middle of the summer, unless it's possible to use it to transport people in the summertime as is so frequently done with the various chair lifts in some places, I would hate to see this happen in Mount Rainier, because the great beauty of that mountain would not be enhanced by the chair lift.
- Spud Bill: While we were at Mount Rainier the crash of the Marine Corps plane occurred in which – this was one of the great disasters in aircraft history up to that point – thirty-two men lost their lives, and this triggered a

tremendous search under very difficult conditions of heavy snowfall and generally stormy weather. It was not until the following summer that this was located by Bill Butler on a day off. Bill had continued the search largely on his own time and finally found the wreckage, which brought on a tremendous operation in an effort to recover the bodies and so on, which finally ended in having the entire group left as they should have been on the South Tahoma Glacier in that park. Later on, a memorial was placed at Round Pass to the group with appropriate ceremonies. There have been other disasters at Mount Rainier, of course, and there were various climbing incidents which are clear in my mind, but I won't dwell on them, but I will tell you about one interesting thing that happened.

Spud Bill: We were – John Preston and I were returning from a day in the office at Seattle and driving up the road in the dark, and I looked up and saw what appeared to be – and what later was, in fact – a light on the top of Mount Rainier. It flashed on and off several times and this gave an impression that there must be something wrong up there. So, we went on up to headquarters, and the next morning discovered that an individual had landed a light airplane on the summit of Mount Rainier. This person was a lieutenant in the Air Force known for various escapades. Subsequently, he attempted to fly the plane off the top of the mountain but being unable to start his motor he just flew it off and used the wind currents to take it down. I think they call this practice volplaning, but, in any event, he landed on frozen Mowich Lake, at which point rangers reached him and he was placed under arrest, later tried and fined for his escapade. A good deal of the penalty was suspended, pending good behavior, but in later years he did land in various unusual places with his aircraft. This I remember particularly well because, of course, we had a regulation which prohibited the landing of planes in the park. But there seems to be always someone who wants to try to find out whether the regulations will apply to them or not, and whether or not some of these things can be done or not.

Herb Evison: Spud, were you at Rainier when the new elevation of the mountain was determined at 14,410 instead of 14,408?

Spud Bill: I had left Mount Rainier by that time, but this reminds me that a group of people very much interested in promoting the height of Mount Rainier called on me one day and agreed to build a large cairn on the top of the mountain which would raise the elevation of the peak sufficiently high so that it would be number one in the United States.

Spud Bill: This of course was before Alaska became a State and the act would have enabled the peak to be the highest in the country, which in true chamber of commerce fashion would have been an advertising feature for the

Northwest. But the idea of resurvey and so on I think stemmed from this proposal, and it happened after I had moved down to Yosemite.

Spud Bill: Bill Butler, the assistant chief ranger at Mount Rainier, I mentioned earlier, and I speak of him again now to tell you about the appearance on nation-wide television on a "This Is Your Life" program. Several years ago Ralph Edwards telephoned to me at Grand Teton with a suggestion that they would like to do the life of Bill Butler, and asked if I would be willing to participate in the program which, because of my great admiration for Bill and his work, I was delighted to do.

Spud Bill: This chronology of Bill's life was a magnificent experience and a great tribute to a man who is dedicated to the National Park Service, to Mount Rainier in particular, and to the mountain itself. He gave his attention through the years to the safety of people on the mountain and participated in a tremendous number of rescues and helped a great many people to gain an understanding and to gain a good deal more from their experience at Mount Rainier.

Spud Bill: It seems to me quite appropriate that when a man is so wrapped up in his activities and his work, that his contribution to mankind be recorded as it was in the case of Bill Butler, and I was pleased to be able to be a part of it, because it was possible for me to make clear to everyone Bill's selflessness in connection with the \$5,000 reward which was offered for discovering the Marine Corps plane. This money was put up by the parents of the boys who were in that aircraft, and Bill, you will recall, refused to accept this monetary reward because of his feeling that the money should be retained by the parents of the young men involved. This is a good indication of Bill's character and his respect for humanity. And it's so typical, really, of a great many National Park Service people, but in particular it's typical of Bill Butler.

Herb Evison: I believe he had received specific authorization from the Secretary of the Interior to accept such a reward too, hadn't he?

Spud Bill: Perhaps so. He received honors from many sources following it, including a Public Service Award from the Navy and the Distinguished Service Award from the Department of Interior, and these things meant much more to Bill than the money would. I think actually he came out better in the long run probably for not accepting the money itself. These are things that are perhaps hard to decide at the time, whether or not you will take the reward.

Spud Bill: Generally speaking, of course, we in the National Park Service are not expected to accept gratuities, rewards, and other indications from people outside the Service.

Spud Bill: Now, we went from Mount Rainier to Yosemite, and this was again a magnificent experience.

Herb Evison: When was this, Spud?

Spud Bill: This was in 1946, the latter part of 1946. And we went there to work with Carl Russell, who only remained about six months before he retired; but Carl Russell's great interest in history and his tremendous interest in people was a part of our great experience there. Carl was succeeded by John Preston, with whom we had worked at Mount Rainier, and it was a privilege to round out a full ten years with John in two national parks.

Spud Bill: The Yosemite experience I believe was, because of our great love for that place, the outstanding one. We only remained there three-and-a-half years and this was not long enough. We always held a great desire to go back there and see some things that we had a part in starting and that have now been finished.

Herb Evison: Well, maybe you will yet.

Spud Bill: Maybe so. But in any event we – Jane and I, as you know, lived in the assistant superintendent's home in Yosemite; it looks right out on Yosemite Falls and those great cliffs, and there's nothing much more thrilling in this whole world than to be able to drink your morning coffee and look up at Yosemite Falls. This is part of the great charm of the upper Valley and this is why people like to go to Yosemite; this is why it is reputedly crowded, because there are things there which are so magnificent.

Spud Bill: I don't know; I think sometimes that we lose sight of these things when we work in the parks, really, because they are there every day; our homes normally are placed so that we don't see park features continually, but I am so happy to have had the opportunity to live right in among the wonders of that particular park, whereas at Grand Canyon and Mount Rainier we had to go a ways in order to see the feature which we were protecting and making available to the American public.

Herb Evison: Spud, I'd like to ask you a question here. You just mentioned that people come there to Yosemite Valley because of the Yosemite Valley and its grandeur and beauty. You know, of course, that there are assertions made every once in a while, that people are artificially induced to an important extent to come to Yosemite because there are other things to do there that are provided by the concessioner.

Herb Evison: I would like an honest expression of your opinion as to whether you think the man-offered, man-provided things there at Yosemite actually have any important bearing on the people coming there.

Spud Bill: The things which the concessioner provides in the way of entertainment are merely incidental to the enjoyment of the natural scene. The things that are important to the people who come into that Valley are the great, tremendous, almost overpowering cliffs, the waterfalls, and the Merced River which flows down through the Valley. I don't think we can overstate the interest people have in water; the desire to be around water, even in it, is important. The climate in the Valley is salubrious, as Carl Russell used to say; and for folks from the San Joaquin Valley, which in the summertime is oven-hot, this is an experience and this is the experience that they seek and why they come up to the park.

Spud Bill: The evening entertainments – the fire-fall and the other things the concessioner does – as I say, are incidental to the enjoyment of the river, falls, cliffs, the delightful climate and the pleasant natural surroundings which exist.

Spud Bill: Many times I've heard it said that Yosemite Valley is overcrowded. I agree that it's often crowded, but one does not have to go very far to get away from that milling crowd. And fortunately, in the Camp Curry program area, for example, the people are assembled all in one place; the rest of the Valley is kept reasonably free of the hubbub that exists right in the Curry area. And for this reason I really do not become overexercised about the concessioner's programs in the evening, because I think there's ample opportunity for those who want to be closer to Nature, if you want to put it that way, and to enjoy the Valley and the natural features of it.

Herb Evison: Then you don't feel that it's those so-called artificial things really that draw people there.

Spud Bill: No, I don't. I think it's the climate and the extremely beautiful natural scenery that exists that brings people into Yosemite.

Spud Bill: I think the time is rapidly coming when there are going to be needed recreation spots in the Sierra Nevada mountain range at appropriate places for people to go and enjoy themselves, to camp and fish and all the other things that they like to do. The Yosemite Valley isn't going to be able forever to keep holding the increasing population of the State of California.

Spud Bill: You remember of course that the travel statistics at Yosemite indicate over 85 percent of the visitation there is from the State of California. True enough, most of the people in California have come from other places in the world, but it would be a statistic that could be more appropriately defended if we had a greater spread of out-of-State travel. Nevertheless, it isn't possible, and the national parks are to serve the people of the United States whether they come from five miles from the park or whether they

come from more different places. And I think that we are doing our part in the recreation scene when we take care of the people who come regardless of their origin.

Herb Evison: One other thing that I wanted to ask you. You said you put in ten years with John Preston. I would like some expression of your experience with him as a superintendent and something about his qualities as a superintendent, if you would be willing to do that.

Spud Bill: John Preston is, in my opinion, one of the really outstanding superintendents in the whole National Park System. He is a gentleman first, and he is an able administrator second. John Preston has the great quality of permitting his people to exercise originality, resourcefulness, and to develop ability without – well, to put it right down into common language – without looking over their shoulder all the time. John gives you a job to do and expects you to do it.

[END OF SIDE 1]

[START OF SIDE 2]

Spud Bill: We were talking about John Preston. John gives one a job to do and expects you to carry on and do it to the best of your ability, occasionally sitting down and talking with him about what's going on, how you're doing and keeping him informed, in other words, of the progress that is being made. This opportunity for independent work is one of the keys to his successful administration.

Spud Bill: We should not leave John Preston's characterization without telling about his great interest in people. It's his human relations program, which is unique to him, I think, that gives him a position among park superintendents, which is not unusual, but which is a particularly strong part of his management ability.

Spud Bill: John is a keen thinker, too, and he thinks deeply about, the problems of the national parks and he expresses himself well about these things. Normally he is a little retiring about talking in public and so on, but he is a strong force among his subordinates in the park organization and he directs a very well-organized park. We enjoyed ourselves at Yosemite.

Spud Bill: We loved it there. We had many fine experiences there, and one of the aspects of that particular park which is most important and a little contrary to our experience at Mount Rainier is the strong and very well-operated concession – concessions, rather – in Yosemite. Yosemite Park and Curry Company does an outstanding job of serving the people who come to Yosemite to visit.

- Herb Evison: I would be glad if you would go on a little bit more about that and if you would include a little comment on two people that I think of – one is Hil Oehlman and the other is Mary Curry Tresidder; and perhaps the late Dr. Don Tresidder. I think you were there while he was still alive, weren't you?
- Spud Bill: Don Tresidder passed away before we moved there, I regret to say. I had met him on several occasions, and I must say I was very much impressed by him.
- Spud Bill: But the management of the Yosemite Park and Curry Company is outstanding, and this is because of Hil Oehlman. Hil Oehlman is perhaps a little Teutonic in his approach and a little direct in his methods, but he achieves results, and the facilities which they operate are really considerably above average and have always been above average. The opportunity to improve their facilities at the present time should be available to them. They have a lot of old and worn out buildings there that need to be replaced at this moment, but even so they do very well. I mentioned that we would like to go back and see some of the things that we thought should be done that have now been completed. When we moved into that park the old general store over on the east side of the Valley existed, and on the north side of the Valley was Yosemite Lodge, a great yellow monstrosity which practically straddled the highway as did the store on the other side; and you couldn't come into Yosemite without running the gauntlet through those particular installations. This we didn't like too well. We thought there was room for improvement by the removal of these two things. This has now been done. There is a new Yosemite Lodge which is a beautiful magnificent arrangement, and I am proud of the fact that I urged them to place it in a natural opening so that the lounge has from its great windows a view toward Yosemite Falls.
- Spud Bill: The general store is up in the center of the Valley pretty well located, I think; but the main thing is this, that the number of people going in and out of the Valley are not now hindered in their – the traffic is not hindered – going up and down those roads, which was the case before these new structures were built. It is an improvement we had hoped would be accomplished while we were still a part of that park organization.
- Spud Bill: It didn't work out that way, so we look back on it now as an accomplishment with which we had a little bit to do.
- Spud Bill: And these things I think reflect creditably to John Preston, because he too felt that this was a needed thing and pressed for the accomplishment of it.
- Spud Bill: You asked me about Mary Curry Tresidder, who is president of the Yosemite Park and Curry Company. While we lived in the park, we knew

Mrs. Tresidder quite well and spent some time with her. She is a very able person and a leader in her company in the provision of public accommodations in the park. Perhaps her love of people generally has had a good deal to do with the trend of the company activity toward the provision of good accommodations in Yosemite. Yet with it all Mary Tresidder has a sort of shyness that's a little difficult to describe; a shyness, a reserve, which causes her to stay a good deal to herself. This is a characteristic which is a rather sweet one in many respects, but it probably complements this quality which I mentioned of attempting to do good things. She has been very generous with the Yosemite Natural History Association with respect to grants for research work which couldn't have been done otherwise. I refer particularly to grants for studies in the investigation of the fishery resource in the park, and for historical research and for other aspects of the Yosemite scene.

Spud Bill: Her contributions were many. Whether they were in the form of money or not is immaterial. It was her influence in the park that I feel is important; and her great love, of course, for the country had a good deal to do with her interest in trying to preserve the things of the past, to make the present a better place. And she certainly has done that.

Spud Bill: Also, in the company affairs, Hil Oehlman is a strong and important factor. He represents a type of management which has been productive of good results. He drives hard for the accomplishment of the things he believes in; he works diligently to have these things achieved whether it be a new store building, the improvement of a hotel, or the development of strong managerial people in his organization. He is a definite power in concession operations outside of Yosemite also and has taken a strong position with regard to a number of aspects of providing facilities in the parks. These are contributions that he has made, and which will live after him, without a doubt.

Herb Evison: Spud, you went from Yosemite to a completely different kind of a job than you had before, as assistant regional director I believe under Hugh Miller. Wasn't he the regional director when you arrived there?

Spud Bill: That's right; in Santa Fe, New Mexico. And Hugh Miller and I had a very delightful, oh, nearly four years together before his retirement, and was a privilege to work with Hugh. As you know, Hugh had been the personnel officer of the Service after having been at Southwestern National Monuments both as assistant superintendent and superintendent; and as a person with personnel officer background I was impressed with his interest in the development of people, not in the same sense as that development which takes place under a man like Tillie or John Preston. Hugh was, I think, a little more academic about his approach to this – to

the idea of people's development. Hugh had rather strong impressions on who should serve where in various parks and monuments, based on their experience and background and so on, and he made it a point to visit with those men and draw out their inclinations and interests in the course of conversation, and from that then to form opinions on where and how best they might serve the National Park Service.

Spud Bill: His human relations was quite outstanding. He had a good understanding of human relations, which is an important phase of any good administrator's activities. One can't overlook – in fact one must almost put in a predominant position – his activities with respect to human relations if he is a regional director or a superintendent in the National Park Service.

Spud Bill: My work as assistant regional director there involved many things. I was the only one in those days; now there are three assistant regional directors in the organizations of the several regions; and it was my particular job to be a trouble shooter. Hugh had been in the same position himself and had just moved up to regional director; consequently he retained the supervision of the other people in the office – that is the division chiefs in the office and it was my job to act as his trouble shooter in various respects. This I did through the management inspections of the various field areas; and during that particular period of '55-'59 most of the management inspections, if not practically all of them were made by me, because Hugh was planning to retire and did not wish to do them; Dave Canfield, who was chief of operations, didn't really want to do them either. So, this turned into a great opportunity of being able to become intimately familiar with the workings of all the national parks and monuments in the southwestern area.

Spud Bill: But this was a stimulating thing. You gradually found out where the troubles were and rather quickly found out where the strong points were.

Spud Bill: This was the period, too, when the moving of the business operations from a good many offices into Santa Fe took place, and we ended up with a very large field finance office in Santa Fe taking care of a number of monuments. The closing of the Southwestern National Monuments office at Globe brought a number of the housekeeping responsibilities into the regional office setup.

Spud Bill: Incidentally, the closing of the Southwestern National Monuments office enabled the various monument areas to become more independent and the superintendents of those areas were enabled thus to become not the masters of their fate, so to speak, but they were given a degree of independence which enabled them to grow; and it, in my opinion, eliminated a layer of management or administration which had served its

purpose and usefulness and was not any longer needed. Accounting and timekeeping and payrolling and all that sort of thing for the multitude of small monument areas down there in the Southwest is now done in Santa Fe, and I believe this is an effective arrangement.

Spud Bill: When the time came to leave the regional office, it was not as easy as I had expected it to be. I had always wanted to have the opportunity of being a part of one of the larger mountain parks in the Rockies, and the chance to become superintendent of Grand Teton National Park was welcomed and we moved to this place with considerable anticipation, and this has certainly been a characteristic of our stay at Grand Teton. This is a fall day and there is a lot of gold in the leaves. These years have been golden years at Grand Teton.

Spud Bill: This park offered a tremendous challenge and it has been an interesting experience. We feel that we are very much a part of this whole Valley which you know is known as Jackson Hole, and the people in it are just like people anywhere else. They have their interests and their reasons for feeling as they do, but I think that along with other superintendents who have served here we have made a contribution toward the development of this whole Valley as an entity with respect to the provision of good things for tourists.

Spud Bill: As you may be aware, tourism is the most important industry in this particular place now, and even those who are in the ranching business will acknowledge this fact. And if there has been an accomplishment, I believe this is it. This is a wonderful park, Herb, and certainly it is one of the places in the United States which should remain a national park in the true sense, and we have tried to make it more a national park than it started out to be.

Herb Evison: Now, you've been here three years as superintendent. What would you say were the principal jobs of the superintendent here? Now you have been concerned with continuing land acquisition; I know that in here your relationships with the community have always been extremely important; I know of those two things that are very much the concern of a superintendent. I would be glad if you would develop those a little bit and any others that seem to you an important part of the job of being superintendent here.

Spud Bill: Public relations probably stands first in the superintendent's portfolio at this particular place; the community relations and the relationships between the whole park staff and the community are very much a responsibility of a superintendent to foster and to promote – I had the word control in the back of my head, but that's not the correct word. This

would not be a democratic way of doing it, to control it; it's rather to foster and promote it. And what we feel is the important thing to do is to channel those interests of the people in the park organization so that they are involved in those things which they feel closest to. This is by way of saying that if the assistant superintendent, as is the case presently, is interested in young people and in education, by all means he should participate in the local school affairs, not in the sense of telling the local school board what they should or should not do, but rather in the sense of being a part of it as a citizen.

Spud Bill: The same with those who like to fish and hunt: they can become an important adjunct of and contribute to the Izaak Walton League activities and the local sportsmen's groups and the Elks Club and so on. Those who are interested in fine arts can direct their interests and their energies toward the Jackson Hole Fine Arts Foundation, which has just had one season of operation here. And thus, we all, not the superintendent himself but the whole staff, can be a part of the local community and contribute to it. This is where I think we can do our best, not by one person trying to do it all himself. To put it into few words, I have so tried to organize the Grand Teton organization that I can put on my hat and walk out the door any time and the thing keeps right on going without stopping.

Spud Bill: The Grand Teton scene is one of respect for the old-timers here; the people who came into this Valley as pioneers have very, very strong feelings and interests and they have had some extremely strong reactions to the establishment of the park. A great many of them realize now, however; the importance of this place being set aside for the benefit of mankind; they also realize its importance in the scheme of the economy, too.

Spud Bill: And while I don't think that we should emphasize the latter point particularly, it is an important phase because the opportunity for us to provide stores and golf courses and all that sort of thing isn't going to be present inside the park boundaries, and these are the things which should surround the park, be a part of the community outside.

Spud Bill: The provision of many of the public accommodations in Jackson is better than for us to do it out here. These are random thoughts on the community viewpoint.

Spud Bill: The inholding situation is a serious one and one which the superintendent must give close attention to. We need to complete the land acquisition program here rapidly and wind it up and devote the lands to park purposes. I speak particularly of those lands which are located deep within the park. My experience through the years has led me to the strong feeling that there

should not be privately owned lands within the park boundaries. I have heard all kinds of theories advanced about zoning and zoning controls and so on for lands within park boundaries, but as a practical matter in these units in the far West in the Rockies and on the coast and so on, this is not a successful method of approach. The best method in the long run – and I mean for the establishment of parks for the ages, almost – it would be far better for full Federal ownership to be achieved. And this has been my objective wherever I have been and particularly in this last three years.

Herb Evison: When you came here, Spud, did you move into the situation that exists here now – I mean had the housing been completed? Had this been completed when you moved in here, this new headquarters structure?

Spud Bill: Yes, sir. This building was finished, and this office was just as it is right now. The housing here at Moose has been added to in the last three years; we have had additional residence buildings put in and there are still more to be placed, so that the whole staff can live in this little community.

Herb Evison: Now is it the idea that the superintendent's residence ultimately will be down in this community too?

Spud Bill: Yes. There's a site for a superintendent's residence not far from the building here over on the bank of the Snake River, a very pleasant site. And when I say this I can see you raise an eyebrow because you know where I live now, up in the old headquarters area in a log house which is a very beautiful building; it's a delightful and a very livable home. It's too bad that that has to be left behind, which it will be some day. Importantly, though, the development of housing for all those people who are now living in trailers, trans-a-homes, and remodeled old CCC barracks should take place before any adjustment is made in the residence for the superintendent.

Spud Bill: This, I have adhered to with great tenacity since I've been here and, in an attempt, to provide better living accommodations for the people who work with me rather than worry about where I live. This is part of a human relations program, I guess, but I think that the rangers and the people in the clerical office or the engineer and his group and the landscape architect and all those people should have their housing improved first.

Spud Bill: Now, from where we sit, we are looking out on a new and large construction job which is closely related to that old layout up on the hill where you live. And I think it would be interesting to get into the record something of the purpose and what is expected from this new and very large structure out here, Spud.

- Spud Bill: Well, this is to be a utility building in which, under one roof, we hope to place the warehouse operations, the mechanical repair shop, a sign shop, carpenter shop, a place for painting all sorts of things including vehicles, an electrical shop, offices for various maintenance people, and of tremendous importance in the climate as severe as this a place to store machines of all kinds, including snowplows, graders, and all the other things you need in the maintenance operations.
- Spud Bill: Our idea is, as I say, to get all these things under one roof so that in our operations in the future we will not be required to clear snow from a number of miscellaneous locations at Beaver Creek, that of having employees running back and forth between offices and shops; we will not be in the position of having to keep a lot of road open for access to the utility area up north. All in all, I think we will be in a much more satisfactory position to perform the functions that we must perform with efficiency and with economy when this building is completed. The old structures are outmoded, they are worn out, and in spite of pretty good maintenance through the years they are fully depreciated and have served their time. This is a great improvement to have this building underway, and I only wish that I could stay here and see it function as it is expected to do.
- Spud Bill: We have other needs here in this community. One of the greatest is a place for the employees to have some recreation. We are in the park business; we are in the business of administering to people's enjoyment; and yet our own people in the wintertime have not adequate facilities for their off-duty hours. True enough they have reasonably pleasant homes, but every once in a while, a group needs to get together and do a little square dancing or have a party, and this is one of the great needs of this place at the present time.
- Herb Evison: You need a decent community hall.
- Spud Bill: We need a decent community hall, a room which can be used for all manner of purposes including public programs in summertime, conferences, training programs, parties, potluck suppers, and all the other miscellaneous things we could put it into use for.
- Herb Evison: It's in the master plan, isn't it?
- Spud Bill: It's in the master plan and I am hopeful that we'll get it within a few years.
- Herb Evison: Spud, this has been a decidedly interesting lot of things for me to listen to. I am immensely obliged to you for giving me this time this morning.

Spud Bill: This has been my privilege. I have enjoyed visiting with you, and I look back with some fear that I have left out a lot of things that would be just as interesting as the things we talked about.

Herb Evison: That's one of the risks you run.

[END OF INTERVIEW]