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Andy Chamberlain
February 18, 2020

Interview conducted by Winnie Frost and Sarah Heald
Transcribed by Rev.com
Edited by Andy Chamberlain

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Interviewers: Winnie Frost and Sarah Heald

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START OF RECORDING

BEGIN PART I

Winnie Frost:	00:00:01	Good morning, we're here in lovely downtown Carlisle, Pennsylvania.
A. Chamberlain:	00:00:06	We're not in downtown.
Winnie Frost:	00:00:08	It looks like--
A. Chamberlain:	00:00:09	It's a mile that way.
Winnie Frost:	00:00:09	Oh dear, it's a mile away, I'm already incorrect.
A. Chamberlain:	00:00:13	You're in the suburbs, the lovely suburbs of Carlisle.
Winnie Frost:	00:00:13	This is the Car City capital of the United States. We're here today with our wonderful interviewee. My name by the way is Winnie Frost, I'm a retiree with the National Park Service and I have with me today our interviewee--
A. Chamberlain:	00:00:33	Andy Chamberlain, also a retiree from the National Park Service.
Winnie Frost:	00:00:36	Great, and my other better half.
Sarah Heald:	00:00:40	Sarah Heald, also a retiree with the National Park Service.
Winnie Frost:	00:00:44	And from Historic Furnishings.

Sarah Heald: 00:00:45 And from--

Winnie Frost: 00:00:46 But you're back.

Sarah Heald: 00:00:47 --colleague of Andy's in Historic Furnishings.

A. Chamberlain: 00:00:50 And Exhibits--

Sarah Heald: 00:00:51 --and Exhibits at Harpers Ferry Center.

Winnie Frost: 00:00:53 And now you're a re-employed annuitant.

Sarah Heald: 00:00:55 I'm a rehired annuitant with the Publications department at Harpers Ferry Center.

Winnie Frost: 00:00:59 Great. We're sitting here in Andy's lovely living room and we're going to get started now. I always think the best way to get started is for you to introduce yourself. Tell us a little bit about who you are and where you came from.

A. Chamberlain: 00:01:15 Oh, who am I? Who are any of us--

Winnie Frost: 00:01:18 I'm sure you're trying to figure that out in retirement.

A. Chamberlain: 00:01:20 Yes. Right. I hadn't figured it out in the last 70 years, so I'm going to have to start now, I guess.

A. Chamberlain: 00:01:26 Well, as far as being defined by work, I was employed by the Park Service for 42 years. I'm from New Jersey. Hopped around through my career and retired in 2016. What can I fill you in on?

Winnie Frost: 00:01:43 Well, why don't we start with, you said you're from New Jersey. A little bit about where you went to school. What your particular interests were when you were at school, that might have helped lead you towards the Park Service.

A. Chamberlain: 00:01:58 Actually, they didn't at all.

Winnie Frost: 00:01:59 Is that--

A. Chamberlain: 00:02:00 My interest in college, I'm trying to remember. I guess it was probably my parents who said, "Why don't you go and do something that you can get a job doing?" So I went into biology. I was a biology major for three years.

Winnie Frost: 00:02:14 Oh.

A. Chamberlain: 00:02:14 And then, I got really tired of it. It just wasn't doing it for me.

Winnie Frost: 00:02:18 Where did you go to school?

A. Chamberlain: 00:02:21 That was Bloomfield, New Jersey, Bloomfield College. It was a church-related college and my parents were Presbyterians and I guess they got me in there.

Winnie Frost: 00:02:28 I see.

A. Chamberlain: 00:02:29 Then I transferred to Montclair State College, which is a university now, and went into the art department and got a degree in fine arts.

A. Chamberlain: 00:02:39 My parents again intervened and they said, "If you're going to get a fine arts degree, then you better get teaching credentials for something that will allow you to get the job." So I did. I got into the teaching program and came out with a BA in Fine Arts and Art Education. I tried teaching and never really liked teaching. So there, another failure again.

A. Chamberlain: 00:03:00 I just went to work for a guy for a year. You're out of college. I avoided the draft by the skin of my teeth because that was the last year they drafted.

Winnie Frost: 00:03:11 Did you have a high number?

A. Chamberlain: 00:03:13 I had a low number. 73.

Sarah Heald: 00:03:15 Oh.

Winnie Frost: 00:03:15 Oh, my, but you still got out? Oh, wow.

Sarah Heald: 00:03:17 How did you avoid--

A. Chamberlain: 00:03:17 What they did is they said--If I'm remembering this correctly, this is the last year of the draft. They said to people that still had deferments, "If you drop your deferment and you don't get drafted, then you're free and clear."

Winnie Frost: 00:03:33 Oh.

- A. Chamberlain: 00:03:34 I didn't have a deferment because I was on my fifth year of college and the deferment was only for four years. So I didn't have one anyway. And then, they didn't draft. That's the point at which they stopped. I had my physical and everything. I was 1A. I was ready to go, and then they just stopped.
- A. Chamberlain: 00:03:48 So now, I'm out of school. I've got nothing to do. I went to work for a year for a guy, an old hippie, well, he wasn't old then, who was making candles. It was close to where I had gone to school. I passed it on the way. You know, trying to find myself, right?
- Winnie Frost: 00:04:04 Sure.
- A. Chamberlain: 00:04:06 I went to work for him and then he went bankrupt.
- Winnie Frost: 00:04:08 And you made candles?
- A. Chamberlain: 00:04:11 He made candles. This was--
- Winnie Frost: 00:04:13 But you did too? He taught you how to make them?
- A. Chamberlain: 00:04:14 Yeah. This was 1973, '74.
- Winnie Frost: 00:04:15 Oh, very popular.
- A. Chamberlain: 00:04:16 Yeah. There's still--everything was swirly colors and all. We did them with a blowtorch. Interesting, because he'd mold these things in sand, then he would sprinkle powdered color on it, and he hit it with a blowtorch, and everything flowed together. It kind of was psychedelic looking.
- Winnie Frost: 00:04:32 Good for the anxiety.
- A. Chamberlain: 00:04:38 I guess. They were scented too. Each one was scented. He made these things in great big, those big washtubs, galvanized washtubs. He had three of those sitting on gas burners. They would just dump all this wax in there, which was like a time bomb. Like a gasoline bomb. Once, one of them did go up in flames. He put it out. It wasn't a long-term career choice.
- A. Chamberlain: 00:05:03 When he folded up, I went down to Morristown. I just said, "Ah, what the hell? They're not that far away. I'll drive down there." It was maybe 15 miles from where I lived.

- Winnie Frost: 00:05:15 Had you ever been to Morristown growing up?
- A. Chamberlain: 00:05:18 Yeah, of course. You had to go as a boy scout. You went to the museum. You went to the Washington's Headquarters. So I remembered the place and I went down there. I always liked history and collecting stuff. I was never a historian per se, but I just liked reading about it. Especially that period. There was something about the Rev War period that I really liked.
- A. Chamberlain: 00:05:41 I went down there, and this would've been the late summer of 1974. They said, "Yeah, we can give you a seasonal position." "Okay." I thought, "Wow. I could be a soldier. This is cool. Get a uniform and everything and I can get a gun and do this reenacting stuff." Because I really liked the idea of that, that really appealed to me.
- Winnie Frost: 00:06:03 And you don't have to be drafted.
- A. Chamberlain: 00:06:05 That's right.
- Winnie Frost: 00:06:05 You got out of that one. You did it a different way.
- A. Chamberlain: 00:06:10 Yes. I'm sorry. I hadn't thought about that before.
- Sarah Heald: 00:06:17 I hadn't thought about that either. [crosstalk]. That's really good.
- Sarah Heald: 00:06:19 Different era, though.
- Winnie Frost: 00:06:19 Different era, yeah. Right. More hands on.
- A. Chamberlain: 00:06:24 A lot more hands on. Geeze. I went in there the first day and they said, "Go down to the soldier huts and there's a couple of guys down there that are working." They didn't give me a uniform. They didn't give me anything. There were a couple of guys there and they looked like Continental Army. They were very badly dressed, and they were cooking onions wrapped in mud. They were baking them in a campfire. This was not what I signed up for.
- A. Chamberlain: 00:06:52 But things actually got better because they were starting to gear up for the Bicentennial. This is going to turn into a long story, maybe. Bill Brown had been working--there were two traveling shows that I remember going to during the Bicentennial.

- A. Chamberlain: 00:07:10 One was called "A Little Look Around" and it was- there was one called the "Raree Show" too, I think.
- Winnie Frost: 00:07:16 What was the second one called?
- A. Chamberlain: 00:07:17 I think it was called the Raree Show, which is like a- I think in the 18th century, that was a box you could look into and you'd see scenery. That sort of thing.
- Sarah Heald: 00:07:24 How do you spell? R-A-
- A. Chamberlain: 00:07:26 I think it was R-A-R-E-E. Something like that. I don't remember much about that.
- A. Chamberlain: 00:07:30 But "A Little Look Around" was this traveling production where people from that period would act as if they had come back from their time, from the Rev period, and are commenting on their time to people today.
- A. Chamberlain: 00:07:49 The other one was--
- Winnie Frost: 00:07:50 First person interpretation?
- A. Chamberlain: 00:07:52 Yeah. That was done, I think they were all in costume and everything.
- A. Chamberlain: 00:07:55 And then, Bill Brown had one called "People of '76" which was similar. It was a big traveling production and it was more, as I recall, it was little bit more theatrical.
- Winnie Frost: 00:08:05 Tell us who Bill Brown was.
- A. Chamberlain: 00:08:09 Bill Brown, well he worked with us in Historic Furnishings for years. Prior to that he had been--I think prior to him coming into the Park Service, he was hired by Harold Peterson, who was a very well-known NPS historian, collector and author of books on artillery, on you name it, anything to do with military history, Peterson was probably involved in it.
- A. Chamberlain: 00:08:37 But Bill had been working, I think as a contractor, because I think "People of '76" was an NPS production. But I think Bill was a contractor and he was organizing us. Because Bill had worked in Maryland Public Television, and he was good at that kind of thing, at productions and then organizing and managing people. So they took "People of

'76", and it had trucks and everything. It was kind of a bigger production. They put up tents and everything.

- A. Chamberlain: 00:09:09 When that was over, then Bill got a job with the Park Service. He was running the--what was he running? In Brunswick. He had an office in Brunswick. I don't remember what--
- Winnie Frost: 00:09:19 I don't know what would be in Brunswick. Maryland?
- Sarah Heald: 00:09:21 I'm not sure.
- A. Chamberlain: 00:09:22 Yeah, Brunswick, Maryland. He had a little office there. It was prior to Furnishings--
- Sarah Heald: 00:09:29 But after the Bicentennial?
- A. Chamberlain: 00:09:30 After the Bicentennial.
- Sarah Heald: 00:09:34 But you're in New Jersey in '74?
- A. Chamberlain: 00:09:37 '74 through '77.
- Sarah Heald: 00:09:39 Did you know Bill when you first went down there to see about getting a job?
- A. Chamberlain: 00:09:45 No. Well, no.
- Sarah Heald: 00:09:46 But you heard about what he was doing?
- A. Chamberlain: 00:09:47 I didn't know anything prior to having gone to Morristown to get the seasonal job. I didn't know anything about Bill or any personnel.
- Winnie Frost: 00:09:53 But Bill came to Morristown to do the show?
- A. Chamberlain: 00:09:55 Bill came to Morristown several times. He came there with the show.
- Winnie Frost: 00:09:57 Yes.
- A. Chamberlain: 00:09:58 He came through with the movie they were doing. That one that you sent me the link to.
- Sarah Heald: 00:10:02 Oh, the clip.

- A. Chamberlain: 00:10:03 Because he was involved in that, as he was at Harpers Ferry with AV all the time.
- Winnie Frost: 00:10:11 You must've met him somehow and found him curious or found him interesting.
- A. Chamberlain: 00:10:17 I think I met him during that filming. He had also been in, I think, to work on the historic furnishings plan for the Ford Mansion, which Vera Craig had done years before. I think he was fine tuning it. So I had run into him a couple times during this, because '75 was a busy year.
- A. Chamberlain: 00:10:42 They were trying to get everything done in time for the Bicentennial. Harpers Ferry was very involved. They redid all the exhibits in the museum. They did new films. They had built a new visitors' center down in Jockey Hollow across from the Wick House to serve the Wick House area and the soldiers' encampment. Everything was being done sort of at the last minute. The museum got rehabbed. The exhibits were put in.
- A. Chamberlain: 00:11:11 I think I met people like Ron Sheetz for the first time, because conservation was there installing artifacts in the exhibits. They opened a new floor in the museum in the basement so they could expand the exhibits down there. Just a ton of things going on all at once.
- A. Chamberlain: 00:11:29 So you're trying to do your job. But people are in there and they're tearing up the museum and they're tearing up the--
- Winnie Frost: 00:11:34 So you saw firsthand what it was like to get engaged with getting some big exhibit completed in time for--
- A. Chamberlain: 00:11:42 Yeah. Exactly.
- Winnie Frost: 00:11:43 Yeah, that's cool.
- A. Chamberlain: 00:11:43 So I would talk to conservators. Like I said, I met Ron. I can't remember who else was there. But there was at least two of them and they were installing guns, I remember. There was this one room that had--Morristown had a nice collection of guns.
- A. Chamberlain: 00:11:59 There was something called a Ferguson rifle, which was an early breech loader where you cranked the trigger guard down and you opened the breech and you put the powder

and a ball in there and you crank it back up. It was a flintlock, but it was a very rare gun. They were using that, and I think they had a Pennsylvania rifle or muskets. They wanted to show the different--that room was all about the weaponry in the time. Wanted to show what was available in that period and emphasize the fact that something like the Ferguson was a very rare beast. Only a few people had them.

- A. Chamberlain: 00:12:30 After Major Ferguson was killed, I think at King's Mountain, they took them out of commission. Then they had a rifle and they emphasized that rifles were also a specialist weapon, that not everybody in the Army had them. They weren't standardized and they were expensive. And that, here's muskets, this is what most people carried. And then they had a little show on loading and firing a cannon in sort of a closet next to that.
- A. Chamberlain: 00:13:00 So the guys would come in there and they would work. If I was in working the museum that day and if it was quiet, I would try to go over and just see what they were doing and talk to them. [Crosstalk].
- Winnie Frost: 00:13:12 In doing that, did you find out what Harpers Ferry Center was?
- A. Chamberlain: 00:13:16 Yeah.
- Winnie Frost: 00:13:16 Because I mean I think a lot of people had no idea what this design center was, even if it existed.
- A. Chamberlain: 00:13:22 Right. I didn't know anything about it.
- Winnie Frost: 00:13:23 Yes.
- A. Chamberlain: 00:13:24 I knew there were people putting these exhibits together, but then I put all the pieces together. It's, "Oh, it's like, well here's the film productions that they're doing." I don't remember if the visitors' center in Jockey Hollow at Harpers Ferry had much to do with--I assume it was the Denver job because it was a new construction.
- Winnie Frost: 00:13:42 Oh, probably so. Right. Right.
- A. Chamberlain: 00:13:44 But then Harpers Ferry was involved in the--

- Winnie Frost: 00:13:47 The inside, yeah. Put the exhibits in.
- A. Chamberlain: 00:13:48 Inside. So yeah, I guess it dawned on me slowly that these things were all part of this larger--but being new to the Park Service, I didn't really have a sense of that.
- Winnie Frost: 00:13:58 Right.
- A. Chamberlain: 00:13:59 Then the next thing that happened, Bill started calling Rev War parks. I don't remember when People of '76 ended. I assume it was sometime in '76, because I was only there until the fall of '77. So I think this was sometime in '76. He was calling some of the Rev War parks and he said, "Look, I've got a lot of props left over from People of '76, clothing, weapons. I'm distributing them to the parks. And of course, we needed all that stuff because we'd been just trying to get by with what we had.
- A. Chamberlain: 00:14:36 Not much of it was all that good because this was also a period when people were just starting to learn about what uniforms really looked like. Stop looking at those 19th century prints where everybody's wearing the high collars. You're trying to really get to a certain level of scholarship on this.
- Winnie Frost: 00:14:59 Yes.
- A. Chamberlain: 00:15:00 Things, a lot of stuff, are starting to happen. Those things that Bill handed out were pretty good. So we got some uniforms. We got civilian clothing. We got muskets, accoutrements. Two or three of us went down from Morristown. We drove. We got a vehicle, a van. I can't remember where we got the van because the interpretive vehicle that we had- We had two interpretive vehicles at Morristown. One was an old mail truck, which you couldn't take on the highway because the thing would go back and forth. It was just unsafe. But it was licensed, and we could use it to--it had a big box in the back where you could just unload all your living history stuff in there. If you were doing an encampment that had tents and muskets and fireplace tools and all, that was handy to throw all that in.
- A. Chamberlain: 00:15:43 The other thing was a Ford station wagon. It was so old and rusty that you had to drive it with the windows down because the back floors were all rusted out where the exhaust would get into the cabin. So I know we didn't drive

that down. Somewhere we got a van. We drove the van down to Brunswick and met with Bill. He gave us a whole bunch of stuff.

- Winnie Frost: 00:16:02 Now this stuff, you're calling, this is all not original. This is just--
- A. Chamberlain: 00:16:09 Right. Everything is reproduction.
- Winnie Frost: 00:16:09 Reproduction, but available--
- A. Chamberlain: 00:16:12 It was good reproduction.
- Winnie Frost: 00:16:12 --that maybe if you did interpretative programs you could be wearing them. Was that the--
- A. Chamberlain: 00:16:16 Right. It was all Rev War period stuff.
- Winnie Frost: 00:16:17 Got it.
- A. Chamberlain: 00:16:17 I think a lot of it had actually come from, there was a tailor shop in Harpers Ferry in Lower Town that was making stuff for the parks for the Bicentennial.
- Winnie Frost: 00:16:29 Oh. Huh?
- A. Chamberlain: 00:16:31 This is my recollection from Bill, that I think I even saw labels on stuff that it came from Harpers Ferry. I guess this also went to People of '76, because it was a Park Service production, and then it went back to us in the park.
- A. Chamberlain: 00:16:47 But I'm pretty sure there was a tailor shop in Harpers Ferry that was making uniforms, Rev War uniforms.
- Winnie Frost: 00:16:53 So this was a contractor?
- A. Chamberlain: 00:16:55 I'm assuming it was.
- Winnie Frost: 00:16:56 Yeah. Not actual--
- A. Chamberlain: 00:16:58 Yeah. Right. Right. It must've been a business.
- Winnie Frost: 00:17:00 --part of the Park Service?
- A. Chamberlain: 00:17:00 Right.

- Winnie Frost: 00:17:01 I see. Okay. Well, that makes a lot of sense, I mean especially since Harpers Ferry is right there and they needed a costume, maybe for these productions.
- A. Chamberlain: 00:17:09 Yeah.
- Winnie Frost: 00:17:10 Okay. That makes sense.
- A. Chamberlain: 00:17:12 We got some of that back again and took it back to the park. We also, I guess probably with Bill, went over to the design center and I remember this would've been, again, '76, I think. Going into the design center, going downstairs and it being an actual exhibit shop.
- Winnie Frost: 00:17:35 Yes. Harpers Ferry actually, they constructed their own exhibits back in that day. You had the great fortune of seeing them in there, like that guy you were talking about. Steele's or Fields or--I can't remember his name.
- A. Chamberlain: 00:17:51 Now you've got me blanking out.
- Winnie Frost: 00:17:53 That's all right.
- A. Chamberlain: 00:17:53 Sheetz. Ron Sheetz.
- Winnie Frost: 00:17:54 Ron Sheetz, yes. Yeah, there were a lot of very talented, highly skilled in the various crafts.
- A. Chamberlain: 00:18:02 Yeah. Right. They were actually building things. I remember, actually at Morristown, the things that Ron was hanging the weapons on. They were cutouts of soldiers. They were life sized. They were a couple inches thick. They weren't three dimensional in the sense that they had features. They were flat, but they were built onto something that was a couple of inches thick.
- A. Chamberlain: 00:18:21 I remember the day we went into the design center and they were building something for a western park that was very much the same thing. It was like cactus or something that were cut out to the shape of the plant. But again, they were this two-inch thick material and they were done in two colors. They were done in like brown on beige or something. Just like these soldiers were. That must have been a design thing of that particular period.
- Winnie Frost: 00:18:48 I think you're right.

A. Chamberlain: 00:18:48 You probably have seen them somewhere.

Winnie Frost: 00:18:49 You will go to different parks that have old installations still there. You go, "Oh, that was the '80s period. Oh, that was the Bicentennial period." Very much so, prior to getting rid of the exhibit shop.

A. Chamberlain: 00:19:03 Yeah. I don't remember what year that was. Do you?

Winnie Frost: 00:19:07 I think that was around '85, '86. Something like that. Then everything went through different contractors so the looks of all these exhibits were vastly different, because each contractor had their own proposals. But originally, when we had the actual working shop, they all kind of had a look.

A. Chamberlain: 00:19:30 Were they doing design work too then at that point, in the Center?

Winnie Frost: 00:19:32 Yes.

A. Chamberlain: 00:19:33 Sharp looking.

Winnie Frost: 00:19:33 McLean.

A. Chamberlain: 00:19:36 Dave McLean.

Winnie Frost: 00:19:38 Dave McLean, yeah.

A. Chamberlain: 00:19:39 Oh, that's right. Yeah [crosstalk].

Winnie Frost: 00:19:40 Dave would make models.

A. Chamberlain: 00:19:41 Yeah, I remember.

Winnie Frost: 00:19:41 I mean they're quite remarkable.

A. Chamberlain: 00:19:44 Dave making models. Make foam core models.

Winnie Frost: 00:19:45 Yes. Foam core models. Phil Musselwhite.

A. Chamberlain: 00:19:48 Yeah, okay. That's right. That's right.

Winnie Frost: 00:19:49 Making these foam core models and then there were also the planners. So they had planners, designers, and then the fabrication shop. And also, I think part of the fabrication shop, wasn't it even in that old schoolhouse for a while?

- A. Chamberlain: 00:20:03 It may have been.
- Sarah Heald: 00:20:05 I think it was.
- A. Chamberlain: 00:20:07 It may have been. I remember the Registrar's Office being there too and the conservators being there in the shop.
- Winnie Frost: 00:20:10 Yes. They were over there before they condemned the place.
- A. Chamberlain: 00:20:13 Right.
- Winnie Frost: 00:20:14 Right. You got to see this because of the Bicentennial, and you were right in the thick of it, in one of the most important areas of the Bicentennial.
- A. Chamberlain: 00:20:22 Yeah, so there was a lot going on.
- Winnie Frost: 00:20:24 With George over there. And he really slept there?
- A. Chamberlain: 00:20:27 Yeah. He was there.
- Winnie Frost: 00:20:29 Was Martha?
- A. Chamberlain: 00:20:30 Yes, she would come up to join him in the winter. So she was at Morristown, she was also at Valley Forge. She would come up, take a carriage up and she would join him. I don't know for how many months.
- Winnie Frost: 00:20:42 I heard that George Washington never wanted a salary while he was in charge of the Continental Army. He just wanted to be able to have his travels paid for and also have his wife come on occasion. So he ended up--they decided, "We should've just paid him because he's spending more money through all this travel."
- A. Chamberlain: 00:21:06 Yeah, yeah. No. Well, they paid all of his other expenses too.
- Winnie Frost: 00:21:09 Yeah. All of the--he just wanted all his expenses paid for. I think he was very clever.
- A. Chamberlain: 00:21:15 Yes. There's a book called "George Washington's Expense Account". I remember reading it. That is actually how Washington's Headquarters at Valley Forge was done

because--oh, who wrote that? It was done in the '80s. It'll come to me.

Winnie Frost: 00:21:30

Sure.

A. Chamberlain: 00:21:31

But the furnishings report for that site was done based on Washington's expense account. It showed things that you wouldn't have expected like carpets, which would be handy in a house, but also handy in a tent. If you're in a tent, I would imagine a carpet on would make things a little warmer.

Winnie Frost: 00:21:47

Yeah. Yeah. Sure.

A. Chamberlain: 00:21:51

He had creamware services. English. That was being reproduced so we were able to get that. Of course, all these trunks for correspondence, because it was basically a business office. There was a lot of correspondence going in and out and he had to have room, working space for probably like five aides or so.

A. Chamberlain: 00:22:19

Morristown had never really done that. But then again, I don't think the furnishings there ever reflected Washington's expenses as much as Valley Forge did.

Winnie Frost: 00:22:33

Okay. But you spent some time in Valley Forge too?

A. Chamberlain: 00:22:35

I went down there as a volunteer a lot because--

Winnie Frost: 00:22:37

As a volunteer?

A. Chamberlain: 00:22:38

When I was a Morristown, a friend--well, he wasn't a friend then. But this guy would keep coming up and he would be comparing what they were doing with what we were doing. Valley Forge was still a state park. We would talk and go back and forth. Eventually, I started going down there to volunteer. It wasn't until, I think, I was at Springfield. It was later. I didn't--I don't remember volunteering at Valley Forge while I was in Morristown.

Winnie Frost: 00:23:03

When you did volunteer, were you a reenactor?

A. Chamberlain: 00:23:07

Yeah.

- Winnie Frost: 00:23:08 Okay. Here you are at Morristown. You are seasonal. You have 180-day appointment or whatever. Whatever they called those things back then.
- A. Chamberlain: 00:23:15 Yep. 180-day appointment.
- Winnie Frost: 00:23:16 Then you had to take some time off and you could reapply for another 180-day appointment. Did you have your whole temporary career at Morristown?
- A. Chamberlain: 00:23:28 Yeah. I only had one 180-day appointment. When that was up--
- Winnie Frost: 00:23:30 That's pretty darn good.
- A. Chamberlain: 00:23:33 It was good. But I think it had a lot to do with the Bicentennial, again. Because I got one career--I was off for a few months. I was able to apply for a career conditional position. And then eventually, they were able to convert that to a permanent position. I think there were three of us there at the time who were in fairly newly created permanent positions.
- Winnie Frost: 00:23:58 Gosh. That's unheard of now. Unheard of.
- A. Chamberlain: 00:24:02 Well, it was like in Furnishings. The three of us came on, three years in a row with new positions in it. Yeah. It's almost shocking today.
- Winnie Frost: 00:24:11 It is shocking, that the downsizing has constantly been going on. Up to, almost my entire career, when I was in the Park Service, I would see like we were constantly going through downsizing. Then you got to go to Springfield? You got into the intake?
- A. Chamberlain: 00:24:25 Right. Right. I should say that I think there were more permanent positions at Morristown than that. There were only a handful really, plus law enforcement and other things.
- Winnie Frost: 00:24:34 Right.
- A. Chamberlain: 00:24:35 But I remember there were three of us who all came in at roughly the same time. Two of us went into the intake program after that. That was in '77.

Winnie Frost: 00:24:48 You went into the curatorial?

A. Chamberlain: 00:24:50 I went into curatorial. It was something they were experimenting with.

Winnie Frost: 00:24:54 That's interesting. Would you say that it's based on your experience in Morristown and also observing what was going on with the Bicentennial starting to collect all this stuff?

A. Chamberlain: 00:25:05 I don't know.

Winnie Frost: 00:25:05 Decorating, or?

A. Chamberlain: 00:25:06 I've always wondered about that because I was never really involved in any object related things other than reproductions that we were using. Sometimes I was making stuff because we didn't have a lot in the way of uniforms and stuff. So I learned to sew, and I started making uniform parts and that sort of thing.

Winnie Frost: 00:25:27 My goodness. How wonderful.

A. Chamberlain: 00:25:27 But I don't think anybody ever really knew that, so I have no idea why they gave me the job.

Winnie Frost: 00:25:32 [Crosstalk].

Sarah Heald: 00:25:32 Andy, you said--excuse me.

Winnie Frost: 00:25:33 Sure.

Sarah Heald: 00:25:34 I'm sorry because I missed part of the conversation here, but it seems to me when you were saying that when you first went to Morristown, you mentioned something about either in college or younger, you were interested in old stuff.

A. Chamberlain: 00:25:46 Oh, always.

Sarah Heald: 00:25:47 So tell us about that, because that must be--

A. Chamberlain: 00:25:49 As a kid, my cousin and I would go out. Up the road from us it was all woods. The woods belonged to the City of Newark, New Jersey, and it was watershed property. They had built reservoirs. They drained the water down into

Newark as their water supply. That had been all farmland at one point, because you could walk through the woods and see stone walls, and you'd find cellar holes. If you found a cellar hole or a dump, you'd go in there and you would start digging and pulling out old bottles and things like that. You'd find things like medicine bottles, being rectangular. You remember?

- Sarah Heald: 00:26:28 Mm-hmm (affirmative).
- A. Chamberlain: 00:26:29 The rectangular patent medicine bottles. They would always break because they were flat. But every town, I think, must have had their own brewery and their own soda works, because we would find these thick, round bottles. They would have your town on it. It's like, "Wow, this is kind of cool." They would just survive.
- A. Chamberlain: 00:26:49 So you start looking up local history. "Gee, I wonder where the bottling works was?" You go look it up. Go to the library. We were always finding crap like that.
- A. Chamberlain: 00:26:57 Or we would go to flea markets and find--
- Winnie Frost: 00:27:01 Oh, flea markets when you were a kid?
- A. Chamberlain: 00:27:03 Oh, when I was kid, yeah. 10, 12, 15 years old.
- Winnie Frost: 00:27:05 Well, obviously this is a perfect connection going on here.
- Sarah Heald: 00:27:09 That was career training.
- Winnie Frost: 00:27:10 Yeah. My goodness.
- Sarah Heald: 00:27:10 You just didn't know it.
- Winnie Frost: 00:27:10 Yeah, you didn't know it.
- A. Chamberlain: 00:27:10 You never thought of it as anything other than--
- Winnie Frost: 00:27:15 Who would've thought you could have a job doing things like that.
- A. Chamberlain: 00:27:19 Exactly. Exactly. It never occurred to you that you would do that.
- Winnie Frost: 00:27:22 Go to flea markets and get paid.

- A. Chamberlain: 00:27:22 Yeah. That's what happened. Eventually you would get paid to go to flea markets. But back then, it was just something that you did because you were interested in it.
- Winnie Frost: 00:27:30 But you must've had that interest even to decide you were going to choose a curatorial intake versus the interpretation or personnel management or--
- A. Chamberlain: 00:27:38 Yeah, that's a good point. I don't remember if I even applied for any other intake, if I applied for an interpretative one or not. But somehow, I got the curatorial one.
- Winnie Frost: 00:27:52 Good for you.
- A. Chamberlain: 00:27:52 Yeah. It was a good deal.
- Winnie Frost: 00:27:53 Then you went off to where they really have all the guns.
- A. Chamberlain: 00:27:56 Yes.
- Winnie Frost: 00:27:57 Gun City.
- Sarah Heald: 00:27:59 Springfield.
- Winnie Frost: 00:27:59 You left--
- A. Chamberlain: 00:28:00 That had just come into the Park Service, I think, the year before.
- Winnie Frost: 00:28:07 Did it come in with the Bicentennial?
- A. Chamberlain: 00:28:10 It must've come in.
- Winnie Frost: 00:28:11 It probably did.
- A. Chamberlain: 00:28:12 This was '77. I think it came in about '76. The Army had moved out in '68. They had closed Springfield. They gave the collection to the city. They gave the collection and the arsenal building to the city and they ran the museum until-- they didn't have the--Springfield is not a rich city anyway.
- Winnie Frost: 00:28:35 No.
- A. Chamberlain: 00:28:37 They didn't have the resources. They worked a deal. I don't know the details of it, but they worked a deal with Park

Service to get that. Got the arsenal building, got the master armorer's house, and got the commandant's house. It was only a couple of acres.

- A. Chamberlain: 00:28:56 But on the other hand, there was a whole city block worth of armory buildings, some of which dated back to the 1820s, I think, that were original buildings. You could still see them. They belonged, at that point, to a college. I think it was a community college.
- Winnie Frost: 00:29:12 Oh.
- A. Chamberlain: 00:29:14 Something like that.
- Winnie Frost: 00:29:16 What was your job while you were in this intake program at Springfield?
- A. Chamberlain: 00:29:20 I tried to learn curatorial, whatever that meant. I was working--
- Winnie Frost: 00:29:25 My goodness. It's amazing.
- A. Chamberlain: 00:29:27 Well, because as we talked earlier, they didn't really have a program set up like they did for the other disciplines.
- Winnie Frost: 00:29:35 No. They didn't.
- Sarah Heald: 00:29:35 No. No.
- Winnie Frost: 00:29:35 Right.
- A. Chamberlain: 00:29:35 They thought it was a good idea to do this, but they didn't have anything set up. When I got there, Bill Meuse was curator. Bill Meuse and Bill Brown worked together during the Bicentennial on another project, which was building cannons for 18th century sites, for the battle sites and the other Rev War sites to use in reenactments. Cannons that would actually shoot, brass cannons.
- A. Chamberlain: 00:30:04 They had a foundry in, I think it was New York State, that was casting the tubes. They had somebody building carriages. Parks could get these cannons and they could use them.
- Winnie Frost: 00:30:20 Unbelievable. Wow. Did you get your black powder--?

Sarah Heald: 00:30:21 Your black powder certification.

A. Chamberlain: 00:30:26 Oh you get certification, yeah. You had to have certification to shoot the firearm.

Winnie Frost: 00:30:31 Was that where you got it?

A. Chamberlain: 00:30:31 I think I had it at Morristown.

Winnie Frost: 00:30:32 Oh.

A. Chamberlain: 00:30:32 It was very loose back then.

Winnie Frost: 00:30:34 Very loose.

A. Chamberlain: 00:30:35 There had been a couple of accidents.

Winnie Frost: 00:30:36 It sounds like the good old Park Service. Don't you think?

A. Chamberlain: 00:30:40 Well, they were just starting out. Nothing had happened yet, but then there were a couple of accidents. And then they started to get more strict about that sort of thing. Not only for the loading and firing, but also for just the storage. You had to have certain conditions for storage of black powder.

Winnie Frost: 00:30:57 Right.

A. Chamberlain: 00:30:57 You could only buy so much at a time. It was that sort of thing. You had to handle it certain ways, which is, I mean, right. I mean the Army used to do that too. There were certain ways you had to handle powder back then. The Army being the Army, everything was very strictly regulated.

Winnie Frost: 00:31:13 With this intake program were you--that was going to be your permanent assignment? Or was that just a rotation?

A. Chamberlain: 00:31:23 That was three years of training, training with quotes around it, because there was no real training program.

Sarah Heald: 00:31:31 Was it Bill Meuse?

A. Chamberlain: 00:31:31 Bill Meuse.

- Sarah Heald: 00:31:33 Meuse. Did he have professional curatorial training, or do you know? How long had he been a curator for?
- A. Chamberlain: 00:31:42 That, I don't remember. As I said, he and Bill had worked on the cannon project. When that was over then Bill Meuse went to Springfield because they needed--I guess he was not a Park Service employee there. I think he must've been contracting just as Bill Brown was, when Bill was doing "The People of '76". They were both doing the cannon things. I assume they were both doing it as contractors and not as employees, but I don't know. That was a long time ago.
- A. Chamberlain: 00:32:11 I don't remember where Bill Meuse came from before that. I know he had gone to a military boarding school. I think his father was in the military, so he was one of those types. Sort of type, he sort of fit that description. But that is a good question because I don't know, I'm not sure if I ever knew where he had been before doing the cannon project.
- Sarah Heald: 00:32:36 Were there other curators who you could talk to in figuring out what you were doing in your intake program. Or how did you--
- A. Chamberlain: 00:32:43 Yeah. There were four of us who were brought in at the same time. We would get together occasionally if we saw each other at a museum conference or something.
- Winnie Frost: 00:32:51 But there wasn't really a mentor?
- A. Chamberlain: 00:32:53 No. No. There really wasn't.
- Winnie Frost: 00:32:55 You had to navigate your own course pretty much?
- A. Chamberlain: 00:32:57 Yeah. You worked with the park and then you would on your own look for museum programs and try to get into them. Not programs, but conferences and--
- Sarah Heald: 00:33:10 Workshops?
- A. Chamberlain: 00:33:11 Workshops, shorter things like that. Especially if it had to do with something very specific with like cataloging or conservation or something like that. I would get into as many of those as I possibly could. And being in Massachusetts, there were a lot of museums around and you could do that.

- Winnie Frost: 00:33:25 Right.
- A. Chamberlain: 00:33:25 Bill would always sign off on it. And then, when we weren't doing that, it was record keeping and basically gun cleaning. The record keeping was not very good because the Army, despite being the Army and being organized, when it came to that collection--
- Sarah Heald: 00:33:48 Record-
- A. Chamberlain: 00:33:49 Yeah. The Army [recorder turned off momentarily]. Oh, okay. Are we back on?
- Winnie Frost: 00:33:51 Yes. Go ahead. Take it away.
- A. Chamberlain: 00:33:52 Yeah, despite the Army being as organized as you think they might be, when it came to their collection, they had a book and the book had all the weapons in it. All listed and they were all numbered. But if something happened to something, like if something was stolen or they had to give it to some general or something- Well, they weren't supposed to give stuff away, but that's a different story. They would put a line through it. "That's not here anymore."
- A. Chamberlain: 00:34:19 So we had this big book and it had all these things. There were thousands of guns in there, and there were lines through certain things. As I said, they didn't give things away. But sometimes a general would come in. This is what Bill told me. Well, there were two guys that came from the city who had been armory employees. So when the armory closed, they went to work for the city, working on the museum and then they came to the Park Service.
- A. Chamberlain: 00:34:44 One of them told me that, "Yeah, if a general wanted something, he'd come in and say, I want a low number rifle to hang on my wall." This was before the museum. This was when the armory was still operating, of course. So they would, rather than give him the real thing, because they had the first M-1 and the first of a lot of things because that was their research collection. That's where they kept it. So they would just give him one and stamp an artificial number on it and send it over to him. So you weren't compromising the collection by dispersing it, but on the other hand, there were things that were missing, and they ran a red line through it. We had to go through. We did hire a couple of

people just to help with cataloging because it was such a massive undertaking.

- A. Chamberlain: 00:35:35 The Army had also dumped other things on us, and civilians had dumped things on us. So if a guy came back from World War II with a German Schmeisser submachine gun, he wasn't allowed to have it really, so it went to the armory. I don't know how many of those things we had.
- A. Chamberlain: 00:35:54 When they were developing the M-16, they sent all the prototypes over to the armory. So those were all in storage, and there was furniture there. Stuff that the city had dumped in the place. The upper floors in the building were just an attic. You have the museum on the first floor, the second floor was the gun collections. That was storage basically. [Crosstalk].
- Winnie Frost: 00:36:18 A huge attic, that's what it looked like.
- A. Chamberlain: 00:36:22 The third floor was a huge attic and it was just full of everything imaginable. Somebody had to sort through all that. Was this something that belonged to the Armory? Was it something that belonged to the city? Was it something that somebody was just storing here? What was it? Slowly, we went through all of that stuff.
- Winnie Frost: 00:36:39 It sounds kind of on the tedious side.
- A. Chamberlain: 00:36:40 Oh, boy.
- Winnie Frost: 00:36:41 But since you hadn't really decided what you wanted to really do in life, you enjoyed doing this?
- A. Chamberlain: 00:36:49 I kind of did.
- Winnie Frost: 00:36:50 Yeah, sounds like.
- A. Chamberlain: 00:36:51 I mean I did most of the recordkeeping work. There was a woman that they hired that was very good at that and she was good at finding the things and then--
- Winnie Frost: 00:36:59 Lugging?
- A. Chamberlain: 00:37:03 Trying to reconcile them with the records and all that, and doing that. We set up a little--we were trying to work with the existing--there was no money to update the existing

exhibits. We tried to work with what's there and just tweaking things where we could.

- A. Chamberlain: 00:37:20 We took a little area and went into the museum and fenced it off and made a curatorial area. So if people came in, they could see people doing curatorial work, which in that site consisted of cleaning guns.
- Sarah Heald: 00:37:35 It's amazing because that's what's so trending now. The Smithsonian and other museums showing their conservation work. It's become a real draw. So you were doing that in the 1970s.
- A. Chamberlain: 00:37:46 Yes.
- Sarah Heald: 00:37:47 At Springfield. Did people come engage in conversation with you guys?
- A. Chamberlain: 00:37:51 Oh, yeah. Because that was a real specialist site, you didn't visit Springfield Armory accidentally. You went there because you--
- Winnie Frost: 00:37:57 You were a gun--
- A. Chamberlain: 00:37:58 Gun nut. Yes.
- Winnie Frost: 00:37:58 Aficionado. Old guns.
- A. Chamberlain: 00:38:02 So people would like to come talk to you about that. I heard from sources after the fact that, "Oh, those guns at Springfield, they were really over cleaned, and they did this and they did that." That's not true. All we did was to clean off the accumulated dirt and clean the rust off. Bill was very careful about that. When he took a gun apart, you had wood, you had brass, and you had iron, basically.
- A. Chamberlain: 00:38:36 A lot of times, the iron underneath the barrels would get rusty because there was moisture trapped in there. You could only clean them with something that was soft. None of this may be current curatorial practice because this was 40 years ago. We would use brass to clean rust off iron, so you didn't scratch the iron because the brass is softer. You could only use a very, very fine steel wool and things like that to clean the muskets and then you would wax them. The brass was cleaned with brass cleaners. Again, you weren't putting things to a high polish. You were just

cleaning the green off it, the crud off it. So you'd take it apart. You'd clean each piece. Wax it. Put it together and then wax it one more time. Then it would go back on display.

- A. Chamberlain: 00:39:23 Because there was this thing called the--Henry Wadsworth Longfellow called it the organ of guns or something like that. [Crosstalk]. The organ of something because it looked like a gigantic pipe organ. What it was, was I don't remember how many hundred 1861 Springfield rifles. I guess they were rifles by then, they weren't rifle muskets anymore. Arranged in several guns deep in this big--
- Winnie Frost: 00:39:53 Case?
- A. Chamberlain: 00:39:53 Gilt--it wasn't a case it was a storage unit. It looked a little like a case except it didn't have glass on it. But big heavy moldings around the bottom. It was all gold painted or gilt. The thing was probably, I don't know, six or eight feet long by a little bit longer in the other direction. It was as high as one gun. I can't remember how many deep there were. There was another layer on top of that and then there was a cap on top of that. That's how they stored the things in the arsenal building because they were building thousands and thousands of '61s for the war.
- A. Chamberlain: 00:40:30 I don't remember, since stuff was getting issued out so quickly for the Civil War, how much they actually had in storage at the armory at any one time. I just don't know. But I know that there was this one storage unit left and it was just full of these things. They hadn't been touched in years.
- Winnie Frost: 00:40:52 Wow.
- A. Chamberlain: 00:40:52 They all had to be taken out and cleaned and put back in again. It's still there. I mean you can see it.
- Winnie Frost: 00:40:56 My goodness.
- A. Chamberlain: 00:40:57 But there was everything else too. Because everything they ever experimented with was there. When they wanted to go to a breech loader, the trapdoor Springfield, they started by experimenting with the '61s and '63s and some other muzzle loaders. Seeing if they could cut the breech out. Because the breech loader, we talked about the Ferguson

that previous century, so they had, people had experimented with breech loaders before. But they were also getting into the metallic cartridge period now, in the Civil War because that was such an innovative period. They had metallic cartridges. They started experimenting with taking the breeches out of these muskets and putting various opening mechanisms in them and trying, seeing if they could retrofit them. All that stuff was there.

- A. Chamberlain: 00:41:45 When they finally came up with the trapdoor Springfield, which is just a flip open thing you put a cartridge in, you snapped it back closed, then you could fire it.
- Winnie Frost: 00:41:58 While you were doing all this curatorial efforts and this cleaning and this cataloging, did you have any engagement with how that park was operating? Or were you really off in your own little stovepipe?
- A. Chamberlain: 00:42:18 We were off in our own world. We operated the park too because there were only a couple of permanent employees. There was a historian, there was the curator, there was me, there was a museum tech, there were a couple of people in personnel and admin over in the commandant's quarters, and the superintendent.
- Winnie Frost: 00:42:35 Oh, so it was a pretty small staff.
- A. Chamberlain: 00:42:37 Yeah. Oh, maintenance guys.
- Winnie Frost: 00:42:37 You had more experiences because it was a small staff?
- A. Chamberlain: 00:42:42 Yeah.
- Winnie Frost: 00:42:43 Opportunities to maybe explore, learn about other parts of an operation?
- A. Chamberlain: 00:42:48 Yeah. Yeah. Actually we were doing the interpretation too.
- Winnie Frost: 00:42:51 You were?
- A. Chamberlain: 00:42:52 By the time I got there, I had already started working weekends and I didn't mind doing that.
- Winnie Frost: 00:42:57 Well you were a treasure then.

- A. Chamberlain: 00:43:00 Yeah. Well, or a warm body. You would during the week-- I can't remember what days off I had, but two days a week, you would just run the museum. You didn't have tours or anything. We'd just sit, keep an eye on things. And then the rest of the week work on cleaning the guns and whatever.
- Winnie Frost: 00:43:20 I see.
- A. Chamberlain: 00:43:21 Sorting through the stuff, trying to make sense of what was there. But it was quite a collection because as I said, they had prototypes for everything.
- A. Chamberlain: 00:43:31 Once, we got a call from the Army from Picatinny Arsenal in New Jersey, where my father had actually worked. My father was trained as a machinist. Unfortunately I never got any of that but-
- Winnie Frost: 00:43:42 Aha. A machinist. You didn't get any of that? Well something must've been through osmosis.
- A. Chamberlain: 00:43:47 My father could do anything. He was one of those guys who was a tinkerer. He was like the last of the American mechanics. If he needed something, he would make it.
- Winnie Frost: 00:43:56 Wow. Did you shadow him ever?
- Sarah Heald: 00:44:05 It sounds a little familiar Andy.
- A. Chamberlain: 00:44:05 Yeah.
- Winnie Frost: 00:44:05 Yes it does. It's all coming together quite lovely.
- A. Chamberlain: 00:44:07 Dad would be working on the car and I'd have to be there next to him because he didn't want to crawl out from under the car. "Get me the 5/16, the 7/16 wrench." "Okay." "Give me the socket. Give me this. Give me that."
- Winnie Frost: 00:44:19 Oh, well there you go.
- A. Chamberlain: 00:44:21 There was a lot of that.
- Winnie Frost: 00:44:23 Besides going out in the woods with your cousin there, you were helping your dad with the cars and tinkering. Tinkering, very important in the curatorial efforts.
- A. Chamberlain: 00:44:32 Yeah, he was always messing with something.

Sarah Heald: 00:44:32 Yes.

A. Chamberlain: 00:44:32 We built that from a kit, that clock.

Winnie Frost: 00:44:34 You built that clock?

A. Chamberlain: 00:44:35 Yeah. That goes back to the '60s. It was something. There were a lot of kit clocks back in that period.

Winnie Frost: 00:44:42 Wow, it's beautiful. [Crosstalk].

A. Chamberlain: 00:44:43 They sent you--all the parts were cut out and everything. You had to assemble it. But you had to sand it and finish it. He would make me do all the sanding on it. It would be like, "Okay. You've got to start with this grit, and you've got to work down to this grit and this, so that when you're done, it's perfectly smooth and shiny." So we did. It was like I had to do all the grunt work, but it was a father and son sort of thing.

Winnie Frost: 00:45:14 Yeah. Yeah. That's absolutely wonderful.

Sarah Heald: 00:45:15 [Crosstalk].

A. Chamberlain: 00:45:15 Yeah. I think I got a lot of it from that. I didn't get any machinist knowledge because that was something that he did at work. He finally bought himself a lathe after he retired. But he mostly did woodwork and that sort of stuff. That's the part I did pick up.

Sarah Heald: 00:45:29 Pick up from your father.

A. Chamberlain: 00:45:30 The other thing was when I was--this is a digression, but--

Winnie Frost: 00:45:35 It's all right. It all comes together, you know.

A. Chamberlain: 00:45:36 Do you remember in The Christmas Story, Ralph and the Red Ryder, and he would leave--

Sarah Heald: 00:45:41 The BB gun.

Winnie Frost: 00:45:41 Oh, yes. I love that story.

A. Chamberlain: 00:45:41 --the Boy's Life open with it?

Sarah Heald: 00:45:43 Yeah.

- A. Chamberlain: 00:45:43 Back in my day, everybody wanted a minibike.
- Sarah Heald: 00:45:47 Oh, yeah. Right. Yep.
- A. Chamberlain: 00:45:48 You had a bicycle but you wanted a minibike. You would leave, it was Byrd, B-Y-R-D [narrator correction: "Bird"], was the company that made most of the minibikes. You could buy kits and you could buy parts. I would leave the magazines open on the kitchen table. "Dad, I'm going to build one of these. All I've got to do is find an engine, an old lawnmower engine with a horizontal shaft." Because most lawnmowers have a vertical shaft, you can't do anything with that. If you get something with a horizontal shaft, you can attach a clutch and a chain to it, and you can run--
- Winnie Frost: 00:46:17 You'd have your own minibike.
- A. Chamberlain: 00:46:20 I'd go on and on about this. I would collect old bike parts. I thought, "Well, if I take these forks and I cut them off and I do this and I--" Eventually, I think he just got tired of that crap and he said, "Look, let's build it." We went and we bought as many parts as we needed to. He drew it up. He got the metal and had it all bent and welded. Then I, just like doing the sanding on that, it was my job to grind all of the welds smooth. Because you wouldn't want anything with a weld showing, it had to look right.
- A. Chamberlain: 00:46:57 So this damn minibike, I had to go through it with a grinding wheel and grind all of the welds smooth and then the thing could go out to be painted.
- Winnie Frost: 00:47:05 Geeze.
- A. Chamberlain: 00:47:06 But that's the kind of discipline that you--
- Winnie Frost: 00:47:09 Well, I can see. You were gaining that while you were growing up. Because a lot of people would go into this and go, "Oh, my goodness. All this cataloging and cleaning and--"
- A. Chamberlain: 00:47:19 Yeah. You have to have a certain--
- Winnie Frost: 00:47:20 If you hadn't had any exposure to that in your life, might go, "I don't know about this curatorial stuff."

- A. Chamberlain: 00:47:27 Yeah. You're right. You wouldn't know what to do with that. Too tedious.
- Sarah Heald: 00:47:30 I don't really think we should jump to this time period in your career yet, but I just can't help but toss in, I'm thinking about the bookend of your career at Harpers Ferry Center doing exhibit fabrication. You come back from an installation or reviewing deliverables and looking at all the details for how things were going to be assembled. I mean these were all things you've been thinking about for decades because [crosstalk] you had those skills when you were young.
- A. Chamberlain: 00:47:54 I think that's true.
- Winnie Frost: 00:47:56 That's a very good point.
- A. Chamberlain: 00:47:56 Yeah, because that's right. When you've got an exhibit fabrication--
- Sarah Heald: 00:48:03 Drawing.
- A. Chamberlain: 00:48:03 --contract. Yeah. You've got drawings from the designer and then the fabricator would come up with their own set of drawings and say, "Okay. This is actually how we're going to build it." Sometimes they would vary from the original design. You had to be able to judge that, yes.
- Winnie Frost: 00:48:18 Right.
- A. Chamberlain: 00:48:18 It's like, "Oh, okay. They're building it out of this instead of this then how is that going to affect how it's done?" They want to do it because it's going to save them money perhaps, or time.
- Winnie Frost: 00:48:27 It all goes back to that minibike.
- A. Chamberlain: 00:48:30 I guess it does.
- Sarah Heald: 00:48:31 That's why you were so good at that. There was no way I was ever going to do something like that.
- Winnie Frost: 00:48:36 She didn't grow up that way. I didn't either.

Sarah Heald: 00:48:37 I didn't have the technical knowledge and skill that you had. I think that's a really--I never thought about that before, Andy. That's a really cool connection.

A. Chamberlain: 00:48:47 Yeah. I guess that all sort of grows organically from-- because that is very detail oriented, he could do anything, but it had to be done right and don't screw it up. He wasn't mean about it. He was the nicest guy in the world.

Sarah Heald: 00:49:00 He just took pride in it.

A. Chamberlain: 00:49:01 Yeah.

Sarah Heald: 00:49:01 Yeah. That was passed on.

A. Chamberlain: 00:49:03 Yeah. The minibike's still in the basement.

Winnie Frost: 00:49:05 You still have it?

Sarah Heald: 00:49:06 No kidding.

Winnie Frost: 00:49:06 Can we see it?

A. Chamberlain: 00:49:07 Yes. You can.

Winnie Frost: 00:49:09 Oh, my goodness. I wish we could maybe describe it.

Sarah Heald: 00:49:11 Maybe take a picture of it too.

Winnie Frost: 00:49:14 I want to see all that stuff that's so smooth.

A. Chamberlain: 00:49:16 Oh, I'll show you the ground welds, yeah.

Sarah Heald: 00:49:19 So how about onto Lowell?

Winnie Frost: 00:49:21 Yeah. Well I was thinking we should work on getting to Lowell. I know you were there. You were at Springfield with all this really hands on experience for three years?

A. Chamberlain: 00:49:31 Three years.

Winnie Frost: 00:49:32 Three years. Now you're finished pretty much with your intake as far as them giving you money so you can go into workshops.

A. Chamberlain: 00:49:40 Yeah. Yeah. [Crosstalk] seminars.

Winnie Frost: 00:49:44 --period of time.

A. Chamberlain: 00:49:44 I guess--

Winnie Frost: 00:49:44 The training money started to dry up.

A. Chamberlain: 00:49:45 Yeah. I think we knew right from the beginning that it was a three-year term. Then they started looking for a place for me.

Winnie Frost: 00:49:53 Because that, Springfield was not to be your final destination?

A. Chamberlain: 00:49:57 Right. Right. They didn't have the positions there.

Winnie Frost: 00:50:01 Right.

A. Chamberlain: 00:50:01 They had one curator, until Harpers Ferry got in and started doing the exhibits over, there was really not that much to do other than the bookkeeping and the keeping of--trying to get the records straight. So at the end of that three years, they had to find a place for me.

Winnie Frost: 00:50:23 Did you get to be involved in the selection?

A. Chamberlain: 00:50:25 No.

Winnie Frost: 00:50:27 Or was it just what was available in the Northeast Region?

A. Chamberlain: 00:50:31 It was not within just the region. It was within the--

Winnie Frost: 00:50:35 The Park Service?

A. Chamberlain: 00:50:35 I think so. But again, it's a long time ago. I don't remember that much about it except that they said, "There's an opening at Hampton and we'd like you to take that." So I went down to Hampton and I looked, and you've got the house and all. Across the street, where the other buildings were, there was a house that was an overseer's house or something.

Sarah Heald: 00:50:58 That's right.

A. Chamberlain: 00:51:00 It was full of stuff from the family that had been relegated to that side of the street, had been taken out of the house. It

was like, "Here's all this stuff." It was like Springfield all over again.

- Winnie Frost: 00:51:11 Oh, my goodness.
- A. Chamberlain: 00:51:14 It was just--a lot of it was a lot of junk. It was just stuff that wasn't appropriate to the house and it's like, "Well, it's over here and we don't know what to do with it. We want somebody to start going through it." It's like, "Oh, I don't really like this." It's in Baltimore and I'm not a city guy anyway. Had my fill of Springfield, it's just kind of a dump. Even that was a small city. But Lowell's a city too, but not a huge city.
- A. Chamberlain: 00:51:40 Somehow or other, again my recollection on this is a little foggy, they--Lowell was beginning. Lowell had started a couple of years before. They were staffing up as well. They didn't have any collection, but they didn't have a curatorial position. But they knew that, that was one of the things they wanted. Somehow, I got into that one. Somehow, I was able to turn down Hampton and not be fired, and they offered me Lowell instead. Somebody did. I went up there and I said, "Okay." I was already in Massachusetts. Lowell is an hour this, that direction.
- Sarah Heald: 00:52:24 Right. East or something.
- A. Chamberlain: 00:52:26 Northeast. I went up there and thought, "This is pretty cool." Because again, it was a park that was starting.
- Winnie Frost: 00:52:34 It was a new park?
- A. Chamberlain: 00:52:34 New park.
- Winnie Frost: 00:52:35 Yeah. Industrial story. Right?
- A. Chamberlain: 00:52:38 Yep. That textiles.
- Winnie Frost: 00:52:39 Textiles.
- A. Chamberlain: 00:52:40 So again, it's another technological park. That was kind of interesting.
- Winnie Frost: 00:52:45 It's also a park that has a lot of partnerships, doesn't it?
- A. Chamberlain: 00:52:49 Yes. Oh, yeah.

Winnie Frost: 00:52:50 You probably learned something about that which has become more and more of a big deal in the Park Service. Since we don't seem to have a budget for anything. What was your position when you got to Lowell?

A. Chamberlain: 00:53:04 Curator.

Winnie Frost: 00:53:05 You were a curator?

A. Chamberlain: 00:53:06 Yeah.

Winnie Frost: 00:53:07 Was there curator staff?

A. Chamberlain: 00:53:09 No. No. There was just me.

Winnie Frost: 00:53:10 You were the only one?

A. Chamberlain: 00:53:11 Yeah. But there was no collection.

Sarah Heald: 00:53:15 Were they working on their exhibit plan yet? Were you tasked with building a collection? What did they envision a curator was going to do at Lowell, then?

A. Chamberlain: 00:53:25 Yes. At that point, I'm not sure they knew. When I got there, it was still a very seat of the pants operation. There was one rented building that they were running tours out of. There were plans in the works for doing a visitors' center. That came within a couple of years, I think.

Winnie Frost: 00:53:51 You had already had experience with visitor centers and exhibits.

A. Chamberlain: 00:53:55 Yeah. Yeah. Although I wasn't involved in this one because I think the planning had already been done. I remember, again as I said, it was very seat of the pants. A lot of trying to make do with what you had and trying to get into old mill buildings and giving tours, and like you said, working with various other organizations.

A. Chamberlain: 00:54:12 There was also a historical commission, which was I think funded by the Park Service, but the people weren't all Park Service employees or something like that. They were operating separately to try to get things going in the town. They were the ones who were working all the partnerships. "Let's get the buildings restored. Let's get infrastructure so we can get, expand the tours." That sort of thing. They

were working in the old city hall building, which is an interesting building. It had a market house below and then offices and things above. We worked with them. We worked with the local historical society and that sort of thing.

- A. Chamberlain: 00:54:57 It was not that long after that, and I guess the planning maybe was being done or had been done already, that they put the visitors' center exhibits in. I believe Harpers Ferry bid on it, or at least proposed, but not bid on it. But came in and proposed to do it. They were turned down.
- Sarah Heald: 00:55:17 That's Harpers Ferry Center?
- A. Chamberlain: 00:55:19 Harpers Ferry Center.
- Sarah Heald: 00:55:19 Right.
- A. Chamberlain: 00:55:21 The park basically handled it themselves.
- Winnie Frost: 00:55:24 Locally?
- A. Chamberlain: 00:55:25 They used Design and Production, D&P, which was a big firm even then. They built it. But I think it was managed out of the park. I don't remember there being any other contracting authority involved. Again, Harpers Ferry wasn't as far as I know. I don't know who designed it. Maybe D&P designed it as well.
- Winnie Frost: 00:55:47 It could've been a design/build, huh?
- A. Chamberlain: 00:55:50 It could've been. It could've been. Because again, I didn't know anything about that in that time period. But with the opening of the visitor center, there were a few artifacts that started to show up.
- Winnie Frost: 00:56:06 People were--were you assessing them? Getting them from private citizens?
- A. Chamberlain: 00:56:10 Yeah. I mean I remember working with one. A lot of the stuff--I liked this visitor center because even though they hadn't had a lot of this infrastructure built yet, they knew what their themes were going to be. Their themes were going to be labor and capital and waterpower. I think there were five in all. I think one maybe had something to do with machinery. It was very heavy on the labor because

there was a lot of labor there. So they wanted to tell that story.

- A. Chamberlain: 00:56:36 But they had symbols for each of those themes. Every island in the visitors' center talked about one of those themes. So even though they didn't have a lot of exhibits yet, they knew that whatever exhibits were built in the future would conform to one of these themes and they could expand on it. This was just sort of an intro. The power thing had a little interactive with pulleys and belts. The labor, I can't remember what was in the labor exhibit. There were very few artifacts. Maybe it was the labor exhibit, because each one was a little island. It was 360 degrees. You could walk around it and there would be various interpretive things. Maybe a case or something like that.
- A. Chamberlain: 00:57:27 There was one and it was all about this mill girl, Eliza Adams. She was the typical farm girl from the 1830s and 1840s who came to Lowell and represented that first group of workers. Cheap female labor from the farms.
- Sarah Heald: 00:57:45 How old? Teenager?
- A. Chamberlain: 00:57:47 Teenagers to early 20s. They were young as I recall. So we worked with this woman who was a descendant of Eliza Adams and got some of her items. There was a little trunk and there were a few pieces of clothing. They built a nice vitrine and had those things in there. There was a painting of her home, a copy of the painting, a reproduction of the painting, and put that on there. That was in the [exhibit] island.
- A. Chamberlain: 00:58:15 I remember working with this woman to get these things. Like all donors, they want to give it and they don't want to give it. You had to work through that.
- A. Chamberlain: 00:58:26 The painting, it said, "The Old Homestead." This was Eliza Adams' house somewhere in New England. It was a gambrel roof, 18th century house. Okay, cool. Made a copy of the painting and put it in the exhibit. And then years later, I think we were in Brimfield or someplace. I saw the same damn painting that said, "The Old Homestead." I think what it was, it was some popular print from the 19th century of the generic old homestead.

Winnie Frost: 00:58:56 Oh, no.

A. Chamberlain: 00:58:56 It was too late to do anything about it then. I should've been keyed in by the title, "The Old Homestead." That just sounds so generic. But hey, nobody had to know.

Winnie Frost: 00:59:08 Did you actually put this exhibit together?

A. Chamberlain: 00:59:12 No. We got the stuff.

Winnie Frost: 00:59:13 Oh, you just [crosstalk] the collection.

A. Chamberlain: 00:59:15 The fabricator put everything together.

Winnie Frost: 00:59:16 I see.

A. Chamberlain: 00:59:16 That, I think, was the beginning of our collection. As they started to flesh out these themes, they knew they wanted to do textile-related exhibits with machinery, so we started finding old textile machines where we could.

A. Chamberlain: 00:59:36 That stuff, there was one mill left in Lowell that was still operating period machinery, like parallels from the 1940s, the Wannalancit Mill. It was owned by a crotchety old guy who really didn't want to work with us. He ended up scrapping all his machines.

A. Chamberlain: 00:59:59 What they did in that period, if you wanted to move stuff in and move stuff out, they knocked a hole in the brick wall and everything went out. They hauled it away, and then they bricked it back up again.

Sarah Heald: 01:00:11 Because this was massive equipment?

A. Chamberlain: 01:00:13 This was, yeah. Most of the power looms, I think were on the upper floors. It was vertical integration, so everything went from floor--

Sarah Heald: 01:00:22 Oh, one floor to another.

A. Chamberlain: 01:00:23 Spot to spot.

Sarah Heald: 01:00:23 Right.

- A. Chamberlain: 01:00:25 We didn't get anything from him, but we started finding stuff in other places and would bring it up and put it in storage.
- Winnie Frost: 01:00:34 And you'd catalog it?
- A. Chamberlain: 01:00:36 We'd catalog it. And then, this is a big deal for us and for the Park Service. This was also the time when the Park Service realized they really needed to get their hands-on accountability. You started to hear that word a lot.
- Winnie Frost: 01:00:51 Aha.
- A. Chamberlain: 01:00:52 Accountability. Accountability. Okay.
- Sarah Heald: 01:00:54 Why did it happen then, Andy?
- A. Chamberlain: 01:00:56 I don't know if it was just coincidence or what. We didn't have that much stuff to be accountable for, but you were a park, you were in the mix.
- A. Chamberlain: 01:01:09 One day, a computer shows up. Now, there are no other computers in the park because everybody in the admin staff was doing their work on word processors and their print jobs were sent to a central printer. They would go and pick the stuff up. But they weren't computers. This computer shows up and then this little tag shows up. They said, "Put this tag on the computer." It said, "This computer is to be used for cataloging only." Because somebody who knew computers wouldn't have that.
- Winnie Frost: 01:01:39 Do you think it was the regional curatorial?
- A. Chamberlain: 01:01:42 I think it was the regional.
- Winnie Frost: 01:01:43 That took the lead and--
- A. Chamberlain: 01:01:44 Either that or the National Catalog. I don't know. I don't know. It's the games. My first experience with this--
- Sarah Heald: 01:01:55 Was this 1980, early '80s. You went to Lowell in 1980.
- A. Chamberlain: 01:01:59 '80. This would've been early '80s, yeah. This would have been a few years. '82, '83, something like that. You dealt mostly with the regional office out of Boston, because they were the closest. But because I think this was a national

effort, I think this may have come from the National Catalog or something.

- A. Chamberlain: 01:02:19 So a computer shows up and I don't know how to use a computer. I've never used one. Nobody in the building was using a computer.
- Winnie Frost: 01:02:27 Gee.
- A. Chamberlain: 01:02:27 You were supposed to catalog with it.
- Winnie Frost: 01:02:28 And you don't have any IT help.
- A. Chamberlain: 01:02:30 No. No.
- Sarah Heald: 01:02:31 You don't have the word, IT, yet.
- Winnie Frost: 01:02:33 Yeah, you are the IT help. Here we go back to the tinkering from the minibike.
- Sarah Heald: 01:02:39 Yeah, problem-solving.
- A. Chamberlain: 01:02:39 I think there were people who could come in and fix the printers but I don't know if they were contractors or what. Because they had these great big printers, and they had to sit in boxes because they were so loud.
- Winnie Frost: 01:02:48 Oh, they probably were contractors. Yeah.
- A. Chamberlain: 01:02:50 They must've been contractors.
- Sarah Heald: 01:02:51 That's right. They had sound buffering in them.
- A. Chamberlain: 01:02:53 Yes. Yes, they did. The boxes were all insulated inside. Yeah.
- Sarah Heald: 01:02:56 Yeah. Foam insulated. Yeah. I remember that.
- A. Chamberlain: 01:02:57 The computers were all from Wang computers because-
- Winnie Frost: 01:03:00 Wang, yes. Wang.
- A. Chamberlain: 01:03:01 They were from Lowell.
- Winnie Frost: 01:03:02 Right.

- A. Chamberlain: 01:03:03 They had a building south of town that was not really a skyscraper but it was probably seven or eight storeys.
- Winnie Frost: 01:03:11 Was that where Wang's headquarters--
- A. Chamberlain: 01:03:11 That was their headquarters. Yep. They got all their computers from them. I don't know if they provided tech support or what. But this other computer was just a regular computer.
- Winnie Frost: 01:03:22 How had you been storing your cataloging? On pieces of paper?
- A. Chamberlain: 01:03:28 Oh, yeah. Just like the National Catalog had always done, where you filled it out on a piece of paper.
- Winnie Frost: 01:03:32 Card?
- A. Chamberlain: 01:03:32 You did it in triplicate.
- Winnie Frost: 01:03:33 Oh, yeah. Those. Right.
- A. Chamberlain: 01:03:34 You kept a copy for you. You kept a copy. You sent a copy to National Catalog every year. So I could do that. I'd done that before.
- A. Chamberlain: 01:03:41 But now, the computer, and about the same time, they had another position for museum tech. Because I guess they anticipated there being more stuff, more exhibits and so we got a museum tech. He had a library degree.
- Winnie Frost: 01:04:00 Background?
- A. Chamberlain: 01:04:00 Background and degree and he knew how to use a computer.
- Winnie Frost: 01:04:03 Oh, my goodness. I swear. There's a little angel following you around. My goodness.
- A. Chamberlain: 01:04:11 There was. There was. He enjoyed it.
- Sarah Heald: 01:04:12 How perfect.
- A. Chamberlain: 01:04:14 This was like dBase I think was the program.
- Sarah Heald: 01:04:17 That sounds right.

- A. Chamberlain: 01:04:17 Something, it was--there was no Windows or anything, it was just all these lines of text and symbols and stuff. He got it and he just really--well that was his obsession. I had mine. He had his. He was very organized. He would organize things one way and then he would cross-reference it and organize it another way. Because about the same time it was like, "Well now that we are able to catalog on the computer, let's start asking the parks to send us reports." This started that whole generating reports trend. "We want you to send us a report now of everything you've got. We want you to send us a report on everything that begins with the letter, D. We want you to send us--"
- Winnie Frost: 01:05:00 This would be generated out of the region? Or do you know?
- A. Chamberlain: 01:05:04 Again, I don't know if this went to the National Catalog or if it was a regional office.
- Winnie Frost: 01:05:07 Okay. You really enjoyed having that guy there with you because he could find it.
- A. Chamberlain: 01:05:11 Oh, yeah, because he could organize it. That's it exactly. He could cross-reference it and he could grab it that way.
- Winnie Frost: 01:05:18 Well, did he already have a program in mind to put this together? Or did somebody dictate a program?
- A. Chamberlain: 01:05:26 I think it came with a program. I think it was--
- Winnie Frost: 01:05:28 It came with a program?
- Sarah Heald: 01:05:28 It might've been dBase.
- A. Chamberlain: 01:05:29 It was dBase.
- Sarah Heald: 01:05:29 Later on there was dBase III, dBase III+. But dBase sounds-
- A. Chamberlain: 01:05:34 So he must've already used it in a library context because he knew how to use it.
- Winnie Frost: 01:05:36 Wow.

- A. Chamberlain: 01:05:37 I didn't know how to turn the thing on. So I just let him go with that. As time went on and we started to get more objects then we could do a lot more cataloging.
- A. Chamberlain: 01:05:49 But this was also when, I'd say, I think the next thing that we tried to do exhibit-wise was the mill boarding house. It shows in that thing that you sent me. That link that you sent me. The Mogan Center.
- Sarah Heald: 01:06:06 Yes.
- A. Chamberlain: 01:06:10 All of the mill boarding houses in Lowell, they were blocks of connected townhouses almost, but each one was a dormitory. There was one left in town that was intact, that was in private hands. There was a whole row where there had been boarding houses for the various mills. Most of them had been torn down.
- A. Chamberlain: 01:06:36 They built these horrible, horrible cement block apartments that the locals call Flintstone Village, because that's what it looked like. It looked like houses from the Flintstones. It was concrete, slabby things. Brutalist architecture. Right in the middle of these is this one block of mill boarding house that was still, had its gable roofs and its dormers and all that sort of thing. They didn't have that. The park didn't own that. But they did own one that was right next to--or they were able to buy--one that was right next to Boott Mill that had been turned into I think a factory or I think it was a warehouse, because there's a picture of it in that same thing. It's just basically the brick skeleton and upper floors had all been torn off, but they restored it. I think that was the historical commission, again, probably got involved in doing that.
- A. Chamberlain: 01:07:32 That one became the labor exhibit. I'm trying to remember what all was in there. You went in on the first floor and it was a mill boarding house dining room and kitchen. I think there was a hallway next to it that probably had an elevator or something in it. It had probably had formal exhibits in it. You went upstairs, there was a mill boarding house bedroom. And then you went across to the next room and it was all about the other labor forces that came in after the mill girls went away. It was all the various immigrant groups and there was all sorts of objects that were associated with that.

Winnie Frost: 01:08:15 Were these rooms furnished?

A. Chamberlain: 01:08:18 The mill boarding house kitchen, dining room and bedroom were furnished rooms.

Winnie Frost: 01:08:25 Who did that?

A. Chamberlain: 01:08:26 Me.

Winnie Frost: 01:08:27 Oh, you did it.

A. Chamberlain: 01:08:29 Yeah. I mean they set out what they wanted.

Winnie Frost: 01:08:30 You started. Did you do the research?

A. Chamberlain: 01:08:34 Me and there was an exhibit firm--

Winnie Frost: 01:08:36 The guy that sits, sitting at the computer?

A. Chamberlain: 01:08:38 No. He wasn't involved.

Winnie Frost: 01:08:39 He stayed out of that completely?

Sarah Heald: 01:08:40 He just kept track of where everything went.

A. Chamberlain: 01:08:42 He helped out with that too but it was mostly me and the-- I'm not trying to take credit here. I was like the only one, plus the exhibit firm, the designers. It was decided, "Okay. There's going to be formal exhibits here. There's going to be furnished areas here."

Winnie Frost: 01:09:02 Was it reproductions or did you go out looking for--

A. Chamberlain: 01:09:04 Both. Both. But we already knew that since they restored this downstairs room that was the original dining room and that there was a kitchen behind it and that there was a bedroom upstairs, that gave you your parameters and we just had to figure out what to do.

Winnie Frost: 01:09:18 What did you do?

A. Chamberlain: 01:09:22 Just tried to do as much research as we could on--

Winnie Frost: 01:09:25 To provide to the contractor?

- A. Chamberlain: 01:09:27 Well, this was the sticking point because we knew we were going to get the stuff but nobody was sure how to pay for it. Because we didn't have a budget for acquisitions like we did at Harpers Ferry, where you got your project money and you spent against that. What we ended up doing was the exhibit designer fronted the money and we would go out and we would buy the objects and then the Park Service would pay the exhibit firm back.
- Sarah Heald: 01:10:00 A different sort of set up. It was the early '80s.
- A. Chamberlain: 01:10:02 Yeah.
- Winnie Frost: 01:10:03 Oh, okay. Okay.
- A. Chamberlain: 01:10:04 We would go up to Brimfield. I would go out with somebody from the exhibit contractors and we would decide, "Okay, we've got a dining room here. We're going to have that table, scrounge up period chairs. Going to have period chinaware and that sort of stuff."
- Winnie Frost: 01:10:21 China, yeah.
- A. Chamberlain: 01:10:21 That was all reproduction, but it was all behind a fence. You filed past that. It was over here. [Narrator correction: The china was period stuff, not a reproduction.]
- Winnie Frost: 01:10:29 Like ropes and things?
- A. Chamberlain: 01:10:29 Yeah. I think it was actually a constructed--
- Winnie Frost: 01:10:33 Barrier.
- A. Chamberlain: 01:10:34 Barrier. I think. I think it was. There was a fireplace there and there was garniture on the fireplace.
- Winnie Frost: 01:10:36 Were there any signs, like indoor way signs or something that explained?
- A. Chamberlain: 01:10:41 There was interpretation that explained on the railings I believe.
- Winnie Frost: 01:10:43 On railing?
- A. Chamberlain: 01:10:44 Yeah. I think when you got to the kitchen there was as well.

Winnie Frost: 01:10:47 Was this your first furnishing job?

A. Chamberlain: 01:10:50 Yes. Yeah. Again, it was seat of the pants because it was me and the person from the exhibit firm. We made our lists. We didn't have a historic furnishing plan or anything, but I'd never heard of that either.

Sarah Heald: 01:11:03 You didn't have--When you say you did the research for what you bought, finding what was correct for the right time period, but it wasn't like you had an inventory of the way, like you're saying, with furnishings reports later we were doing? Do you remember what sort of evidence--how did you know what would go in that room?

A. Chamberlain: 01:11:21 There was some evidence, but I don't remember now what it was.

Sarah Heald: 01:11:25 What your sources were?

A. Chamberlain: 01:11:25 There wasn't a furnishings report per se. So there was no Harpers Ferry involvement or anything like that, but I think the exhibit firm had done some of the research on that with the historic society and all, tried to pin it down as much as possible. So it came to an agreement of what would be in there. Again, it couldn't all be totally documented.

Sarah Heald: 01:11:50 Right.

A. Chamberlain: 01:11:51 It's trying to be generic to all of the boarding houses. We figured out how many people would have to be dining at one time and so how many chairs, tables and things like that.

Winnie Frost: 01:12:03 Were you the resource person of this park for this contractor? Or you were not the COR also on the contract?

A. Chamberlain: 01:12:10 No.

Winnie Frost: 01:12:10 Was the contract done by another office and then they said, "Talk to Andy and work on this?"

A. Chamberlain: 01:12:16 The COR for the contract was in the contracting office in the park.

Winnie Frost: 01:12:23 Okay. Okay. [Crosstalk]. Were you involved in creating that contract?

A. Chamberlain: 01:12:28 No.

Winnie Frost: 01:12:28 As far as some of the--

Sarah Heald: 01:12:30 Just in implementing the furnishings parts of it.

A. Chamberlain: 01:12:33 Right.

Winnie Frost: 01:12:33 Furnishings parts of it, so that fell to you once the contract was let.

A. Chamberlain: 01:12:39 Right.

Winnie Frost: 01:12:40 You were their resource?

A. Chamberlain: 01:12:41 Yep.

Winnie Frost: 01:12:41 Their contact in the park and the resource person?

A. Chamberlain: 01:12:43 Right. Yeah. I was not involved in any of the contracting work. It's just--

Winnie Frost: 01:12:47 Okay. And the administrative component?

A. Chamberlain: 01:12:48 Right. Again, they had to come up with this expedient whereby they gave the money to the exhibit firm and they gave--I mean they reimbursed them after the fact.

Winnie Frost: 01:12:56 That's hilarious.

Sarah Heald: 01:12:56 Were those furnishings cataloged into the Lowell collection?

A. Chamberlain: 01:13:00 Mm-hmm (affirmative). Yeah, because once the park had paid that back, the firm back for them, it was ours.

Winnie Frost: 01:13:07 Was it a couple of years working on that or was it--

A. Chamberlain: 01:13:09 Yeah, I think it was a couple of years.

Winnie Frost: 01:13:11 That's a great hands on experience right there.

A. Chamberlain: 01:13:14 Oh, yeah.

Winnie Frost: 01:13:14 I mean just by the seat--just doing it.

A. Chamberlain: 01:13:18 Yeah, again, I'm sure there was more that I don't remember now as far as what went into the research and making the decisions.

Winnie Frost: 01:13:24 Oh, sure.

A. Chamberlain: 01:13:25 But there was a lot of, "Okay, is this table appropriate for the 1840s?" That kind of stuff. "And these chairs--

Winnie Frost: 01:13:33 Did you get a cadre of people that you started to get to know?

A. Chamberlain: 01:13:36 The same people that we would--

Sarah Heald: 01:13:37 Sources.

A. Chamberlain: 01:13:38 --get in Historic Furnishings. It's the same. You'd talk to the dealers and the people who are experts in this, that and the other thing. Started going to shops and shows. That was my first trip to Brimfield because it was only--

Sarah Heald: 01:13:51 It was right there.

A. Chamberlain: 01:13:52 It's not even an hour ride.

Winnie Frost: 01:13:52 Is that a famous place where you can find all kinds of stuff? Get a real bad headache in there, huh?

A. Chamberlain: 01:13:59 Yeah.

Sarah Heald: 01:13:59 Outdoors.

A. Chamberlain: 01:13:59 A big outdoor show.

Winnie Frost: 01:14:00 Oh, my goodness. Oh, okay. And it was nearby?

A. Chamberlain: 01:14:04 This went for about a mile down the street.

Winnie Frost: 01:14:05 Wow. That was really convenient.

A. Chamberlain: 01:14:09 It was.

Winnie Frost: 01:14:09 This was a big learning curve you had in the first few years up there.

A. Chamberlain: 01:14:12 It was. Yeah.

- Winnie Frost: 01:14:13 Things just like when you were a kid going out to the flea markets. Amazing.
- A. Chamberlain: 01:14:18 You had to do--get your research books out and decide if this is the right kind of chinaware for the table. We found one dealer that had this great table. He was from California. I think he bought the table in New England. He'd gone back to California. But he was one of these dealers that always went to Brimfield every year. He brought it back to Brimfield and he said, "If I don't sell this thing, it's going back to California." We bought it.
- A. Chamberlain: 01:14:42 It was a drop-leaf table. Like a Pembroke table with two shallow leaves. It had two other leaves that went in from the ends that could be taken out. [Crosstalk]. So when you put all the leaves up, you had a nice size dining table. I think we got two more drop-leaf tables and that was all that we could fit in the room. And then just an assortment of chairs. We found an old cook stove for the kitchen.
- Winnie Frost: 01:15:10 Did you have an idea of a budget that you were to be working with?
- A. Chamberlain: 01:15:15 Yes. And again--
- Winnie Frost: 01:15:17 No. I'm sorry. [Crosstalk] specific, but--
- A. Chamberlain: 01:15:18 --the contracting office was involved in that more than me.
- Winnie Frost: 01:15:21 They were? Mm-hmm (affirmative).
- A. Chamberlain: 01:15:22 We may have, I think probably the person from the exhibit firm that I went with probably had a better idea than I did about what you could spend on any one thing.
- Winnie Frost: 01:15:30 Oh, yeah. Sure.
- A. Chamberlain: 01:15:32 Or had been told what they, the extent to which they would be reimbursed for objects.
- Winnie Frost: 01:15:37 How did you buy the stuff? Did you use petty cash? What did you use to buy?
- A. Chamberlain: 01:15:41 I think we used cash as much as--
- Winnie Frost: 01:15:45 Cash?

A. Chamberlain: 01:15:45 Yeah, I think the firm provided us with cash.

Sarah Heald: 01:15:48 With cash.

A. Chamberlain: 01:15:49 And then they were reimbursed as part of their contract by the contracting office in the park.

Winnie Frost: 01:15:56 You didn't actually have to have cash. They physically paid for it at the--

A. Chamberlain: 01:16:01 That person did. I didn't have cash for myself.

Winnie Frost: 01:16:02 Oh, you didn't have to have cash.

A. Chamberlain: 01:16:03 Right. Because I was at--

Winnie Frost: 01:16:05 Pretty good idea.

A. Chamberlain: 01:16:06 Yeah. Yeah. That's right. They were paying--

Winnie Frost: 01:16:09 It's less headache for you. It's a--

A. Chamberlain: 01:16:10 I wasn't handling any money. That's right. That's right.

Winnie Frost: 01:16:11 Well, that changed, certainly, down the road.

A. Chamberlain: 01:16:15 Yeah.

Winnie Frost: 01:16:16 But while you were there, did you have--I'm sorry. You were going to say something, Sarah.

Sarah Heald: 01:16:19 Well--sorry. I'm interrupting all. I'm thinking actually also back to when you were first at Lowell and collecting mill equipment. I'm thinking about other museums collecting, not Park Service units in the area like Merrimack Valley Textiles Museum.

A. Chamberlain: 01:16:35 Yes.

Sarah Heald: 01:16:36 Or Sturbridge Village for some of the things.

A. Chamberlain: 01:16:38 Yes.

Sarah Heald: 01:16:39 Did you have interaction with any of them, either competing or learning from them about things to collect?

A. Chamberlain: 01:16:48 Both. We were a cooperator and competitor with Merrimack Valley Textile Museum.

Sarah Heald: 01:16:54 Right.

A. Chamberlain: 01:16:55 And then we would go out to Sturbridge Village. I didn't have any official contacts out there, but we would just go out there and look at stuff from that same time period.

Sarah Heald: 01:17:02 Get ideas.

Winnie Frost: 01:17:02 Oh, that makes a lot of sense.

A. Chamberlain: 01:17:05 Yeah, because they had the stuff. Yeah. The textile museum was our friendly competitor.

Winnie Frost: 01:17:09 Oh, okay.

Sarah Heald: 01:17:10 Okay.

Winnie Frost: 01:17:10 They were nearby too?

A. Chamberlain: 01:17:12 They were in North Andover at that time, and they moved to Lowell.

Winnie Frost: 01:17:14 Oh, geeze.

A. Chamberlain: 01:17:15 North Andover was not that far away. But they had a big warehouse and they had a lot of stuff in it. It was a good resource. Sometimes, we could get stuff from them I think on loan.

Winnie Frost: 01:17:27 So then did you do some additional displays or furnishings as you moved--

A. Chamberlain: 01:17:32 That was it for furnishings for that. As I said, the mill girls' section was on one side. The immigrant section was on the other. That had no furniture in it, but it had a lot of objects that people brought with them. Things from the town.

Winnie Frost: 01:17:49 From where they lived in Europe?

A. Chamberlain: 01:17:51 From where they lived. Things they brought with them. Things that they used while they were here. That was mostly collected as donations.

- Winnie Frost: 01:17:58 What countries in particular were the immigrants from? Ireland, England?
- A. Chamberlain: 01:18:03 Ireland was the first. There was an area called The Acre. The Acre was a block or two from one of the mill complexes. It was the beginning of the residential area as you worked your way away from where the canals were that fed the mills. The Acre, the first church in The Acre, I think was St. Patrick's Church, and it was a Catholic church. The first laborers were the Irish. Yes. They came in to dig the canals and do the grunt work first. But then later, as they started to move up then they got into the mills. They were followed by the Greeks and the Italians and the Poles.
- Winnie Frost: 01:18:39 Oh, that's right the Poles.
- A. Chamberlain: 01:18:43 You had everybody basically taking their turn. They all moved into The Acre. By the time I was there, there was a Greek neighborhood and there was a Polish neighborhood, and there was a Hispanic neighborhood and there was even Laotian neighborhood and Thai and Vietnamese. They were all opening their restaurants and it was really-
- Winnie Frost: 01:19:03 It sounds like a lot of good food.
- Sarah Heald: 01:19:03 Yes.
- A. Chamberlain: 01:19:03 It was a lot of good food. Yeah, it was literally a real melting pot. Everybody had moved into that section of town. Then they had filtered out into their own little areas. It was a cycle. Everybody came in and then went off to do something else, and the next group came in. Yeah, I think it was the Irish, and then the Greeks and the Italians and Poles. They all went into the mill.
- Winnie Frost: 01:19:29 Well now, when you were there, you were there about 10 years?
- A. Chamberlain: 01:19:36 11 years, I think.
- Winnie Frost: 01:19:37 11 years. Did you interact a lot with some other parks that had--were heavy on the history? Of course, Northeast has a lot of history and a lot of historic homes.
- A. Chamberlain: 01:19:49 Yeah.

Winnie Frost: 01:19:49 But I mean did you ever do some details or people called on you or you called on them? Was it more revolutionary for the Northeast than the area you were working in so your skill sets would not meet?

A. Chamberlain: 01:20:03 There were other historic sites that were in--there was a corridor that they were developing along the--it ended, I think, in Pawtucket, Rhode Island and there was a mill building there. Slater Mill.

Sarah Heald: 01:20:16 Slater Mill. Right.

A. Chamberlain: 01:20:16 I can't remember who ran that.

Sarah Heald: 01:20:21 I don't know. It's in Rhode Island, right?

A. Chamberlain: 01:20:26 Mm-hmm (affirmative). I think it's in Pawtucket. It's in an old- It is an old mill building. I'm trying to think if there were other textile related--

Winnie Frost: 01:20:37 In the Park Service?

Sarah Heald: 01:20:38 Oh, the Park Service, well there's other early industry. What's at Salem? There's the furnace, but that's 18th century.

A. Chamberlain: 01:20:47 Oh, Saugus.

Sarah Heald: 01:20:47 Saugus. Sorry.

A. Chamberlain: 01:20:48 Saugus and--yeah. But I'm trying to think. I don't think there were many other industrial sites up there. Slater Mill comes to mind because I think Slater Mill's a textile mill.

Sarah Heald: 01:20:57 Yeah, it was.

A. Chamberlain: 01:20:57 Up in Vermont, there was The American Precision Museum which was devoted to precision machinery. It didn't have to be any particular type of machinery. But there were a few scattered around. It wasn't--

Winnie Frost: 01:21:10 You did have some kind of like a networking zone?

A. Chamberlain: 01:21:13 A little bit, yeah.

Winnie Frost: 01:21:15 You could learn from--

- Sarah Heald: 01:21:15 Did you go to conferences? You talked about when you were intake you did a lot of that to learn by the seat of your pants.
- A. Chamberlain: 01:21:21 Yeah. Yeah, I tried to keep going to conferences.
- Sarah Heald: 01:21:22 So you were still networking?
- A. Chamberlain: 01:21:25 Yeah, as much as possible.
- Sarah Heald: 01:21:26 Were they Park Service conferences? I don't know if you remember this or not.
- A. Chamberlain: 01:21:30 I think a lot of them were not. A lot of them were just smaller museum conferences on various topics that we thought might be useful.
- Winnie Frost: 01:21:38 Did you do any more furnishings while you were there those 11 years, after this great beginning?
- A. Chamberlain: 01:21:46 The only other furnishing was, let's see, the mill building, that was, again, that was all fabricated. We took care of the objects that were coming in and gave those to the fabricator and they would--
- Winnie Frost: 01:22:00 Integrate them?
- A. Chamberlain: 01:22:01 They would integrate them and they would hire--what was that? Sanders or some museum associates or something down in Harpers Ferry area? Bradley Sanders, I think.
- Sarah Heald: 01:22:10 I don't know that.
- Winnie Frost: 01:22:10 Gee.
- A. Chamberlain: 01:22:10 He was an exhibit, it was a small exhibit shop. I remember them going up there to take care of mounting a lot of paper in one exhibit case. So he was a subcontractor to the fabricator. I don't remember even who the fabricator was on that. I remember who the designer was, because it wasn't D&P at that point. It was Jeff Kennedy and Associates out of Boston was the designer, and I don't remember who the fabricator was.
- A. Chamberlain: 01:22:38 But that building, once the mill boarding house building was done, then their next big thing, the big final push was

to get a mill building exhibit done. So the Boott Mill was right there. B-O-O-T-T. Taking name after Kirk Boott who was one of the early investors. The boarding house was right there, so it was a boarding house for Boott Mill.

- Winnie Frost: 01:23:05 Oh, that's perfect.
- A. Chamberlain: 01:23:07 Park didn't own all of Boott Mill but it owned one of the main buildings that had a nice cupola with a bell tower and everything. Also, as you went through the gate into the mill, one of the buildings right there--of course, they're all attached basically, was the Proprietors of Locks and Canals. They had been the people responsible for creating and maintaining the canal system over the years. They were still in existence. There was no waterpower being used really at that point. They were still--they kept the canals full and they kept them in repair.
- Winnie Frost: 01:23:47 Canal rides? No?
- A. Chamberlain: 01:23:49 No. They did. Yes.
- Sarah Heald: 01:23:50 Yes. Yes.
- Winnie Frost: 01:23:50 Oh, they did do that, okay.
- A. Chamberlain: 01:23:51 Yeah, that was another Park Service thing. I was trying to think if there was anybody still using waterpower and why the proprietors would still be in business.
- Winnie Frost: 01:24:02 It's one of the main stories isn't it?
- A. Chamberlain: 01:24:08 There were still gatehouses and things that had to be maintained because of flood control.
- Winnie Frost: 01:24:13 Oh, sure.
- A. Chamberlain: 01:24:14 There was a dam on the Pawtucket. That's what created the back-up of water that enabled them to feed the canals. Then it went back into the Pawtucket. That infrastructure all had to be maintained. I think that's mostly what they were doing back then.
- A. Chamberlain: 01:24:32 But they also had a collection of drawings and papers that as they started to go out of business, which I think

eventually they did, that we were given. We would go in there anyway to do research.

- Winnie Frost: 01:24:48 Yeah, sure.
- A. Chamberlain: 01:24:48 Because there was another exhibit that was going to be going in the Suffolk Mill on the waterpower. So again, the boarding house was labor. The mill building was about the manufacturing and about capital and that sort of thing. The Suffolk Mill, which is also the Wannalancit Mill where the guy had tossed the machinery out of earlier, that was the waterpower exhibit. There were turbines in there that were still in there from the 19th century and the park had one of them restored to operate. There was a governor above that and then they were just--there was no machinery in this building but there was a wheel.
- A. Chamberlain: 01:25:37 The central flywheel, because these things were all done with belts and pulleys. This was the American System. They didn't have gears because gears were too slow and too costly. But if you could run a big pulley with a big leather belt up to line shafting with smaller pulleys and smaller leather belts, and then you kept going up to the floors of the mill, all running off each other, then you could run the whole building off a set of turbines in the basement.
- A. Chamberlain: 01:26:08 This one flywheel, I think they all had these up there. This one was still there. This thing must've been--
- Winnie Frost: 01:26:17 Heavy.
- Sarah Heald: 01:26:18 Huge.
- A. Chamberlain: 01:26:19 I'm not talking diameter, I'm talking width. The thing was like this wide [narrator indicates approximately 4-5 feet] and was probably, geeze, 15 feet tall. It was huge. Just an immense flywheel built of steel, or iron, and wood. The belt on it was this wide [narrator indicates approximately 4-5 feet]. It ran up to another central pulley and then as I said, these things all fed off each other. That's as far as this exhibit went. There was no machinery. In fact, I think the park didn't own that building but they were renting the site.
- Winnie Frost: 01:26:56 Did they do first person interpretation in there?

- A. Chamberlain: 01:26:57 I think they did some because they had people--I had done some costume research too because they wanted to eventually have people who looked like mill hands. We did some of that anyway--
- Winnie Frost: 01:27:11 Did they know you could sew?
- A. Chamberlain: 01:27:12 --for photos. I didn't--I don't--I did sew a little bit of this stuff, but it was--
- Sarah Heald: 01:27:18 That's how he knew how to do the research though.
- Winnie Frost: 01:27:22 Yeah, that's a good point.
- Sarah Heald: 01:27:22 [Crosstalk]. On costumes.
- A. Chamberlain: 01:27:22 We had costumes made up for mill girls. Not for the '40s period, but for the later immigrant period.
- Winnie Frost: 01:27:27 That would be running out of the interpretive shop?
- A. Chamberlain: 01:27:31 Yeah.
- Winnie Frost: 01:27:31 They would probably have come to you for some research?
- A. Chamberlain: 01:27:34 I would do the research on stuff like that. And then we would try to put something together.
- Winnie Frost: 01:27:38 See? There you go.
- A. Chamberlain: 01:27:39 They only had one or two. They didn't do much. They did some costume interpretation, with their own research and their own resources. But I tried to add to that a little bit with--I still had some of this stuff. I threw it out when I moved to the other house. I had boards made up with, "Okay, this is what a mechanic might look like, who was working on a turbine or something in the mill."
- Winnie Frost: 01:28:01 Oh, really? Oh, cool.
- A. Chamberlain: 01:28:02 He would be wearing overalls and this, that, and the other thing. Here's what a female mill worker might look like in the late 19th century. I guess they would make these available for interpretation. A couple of us worked on this. I did drawings and everything for it.

Winnie Frost: 01:28:18 Who was your boss? What office did you work out of?

A. Chamberlain: 01:28:25 My boss would've been--

Winnie Frost: 01:28:28 Chief of Interpretation or resource--

Sarah Heald: 01:28:30 Cultural Resources?

A. Chamberlain: 01:28:32 No. It was--what was that? Ken?

Winnie Frost: 01:28:37 You don't have to remember the person's name. Just curious about the lineup here.

Sarah Heald: 01:28:41 Yeah. What was the structure?

Winnie Frost: 01:28:41 You come in by yourself and then this other guy comes in.

A. Chamberlain: 01:28:46 There was me and the tech and the historian. We all answered to the same person. There were several of them over the years, and that person answered to the superintendent. But I can't remember what the person's title was.

Winnie Frost: 01:28:58 Do you think it could be Interpretation, Recreation and Resource Management? Interpretation?

Sarah Heald: 01:29:01 Or yeah, Cultural Resource Manager?

A. Chamberlain: 01:29:03 We didn't answer to Interpretation.

Sarah Heald: 01:29:05 You didn't answer to Interpretation?

A. Chamberlain: 01:29:06 No.

Winnie Frost: 01:29:06 But did you answer to the Chief Ranger who had all of these different disciplines under him or her?

A. Chamberlain: 01:29:12 No. That person wasn't the Chief Ranger. That's why I can't remember the name, the title, because it wasn't a ranger position.

Winnie Frost: 01:29:18 It wasn't a ranger.

A. Chamberlain: 01:29:19 It was a professional position. The person occupying it was almost always an architect.

Winnie Frost: 01:29:25 Ah, okay. Well, that makes a lot of sense.

Sarah Heald: 01:29:26 Historical Architect.

Winnie Frost: 01:29:27 Yeah, probably. That makes a lot of sense.

A. Chamberlain: 01:29:29 I think so.

Sarah Heald: 01:29:30 With all the buildings there.

Winnie Frost: 01:29:31 Because all those buildings, exactly.

A. Chamberlain: 01:29:32 Yeah. Because this wasn't really set up as a traditional park, so I don't think there was an I&RM [Interpretation and Resource Management] or anything like that.

Winnie Frost: 01:29:41 But you wore uniforms?

A. Chamberlain: 01:29:42 I didn't. No.

Winnie Frost: 01:29:43 Oh, you didn't wear a uniform?

A. Chamberlain: 01:29:44 No. No. I hadn't worn a uniform for years.

Winnie Frost: 01:29:47 Not since you were, had been at--

A. Chamberlain: 01:29:49 I wore one once in a while at Springfield. If we were just doing visitor contact, sometimes I would wear a uniform. But there was no--

Winnie Frost: 01:29:56 There was no need for you to. You weren't really with the public.

A. Chamberlain: 01:29:58 Unless I got pulled out, I wasn't even--

Winnie Frost: 01:30:00 In the public eye?

A. Chamberlain: 01:30:00 Right. I wasn't in the public eye. Wasn't given a uniform allowance--

Winnie Frost: 01:30:04 They hid you.

Sarah Heald: 01:30:04 Yeah. They hid you.

A. Chamberlain: 01:30:04 They hid me.

Winnie Frost: 01:30:04 They hid you in the back room there.

A. Chamberlain: 01:30:04 Hid me up on the second floor.

Winnie Frost: 01:30:05 With the stuff.

A. Chamberlain: 01:30:09 With the historian. We shared an office.

Sarah Heald: 01:30:10 Andy, wasn't Lowell considered a big experiment? I mean that was a new foray for the Park Service.

Winnie Frost: 01:30:17 It's a partnership park.

Sarah Heald: 01:30:17 Is an early partnership park?

A. Chamberlain: 01:30:19 Yeah.

Sarah Heald: 01:30:20 Also, tourism, heritage in a different way in the 20th century.

A. Chamberlain: 01:30:25 Yeah.

Winnie Frost: 01:30:25 Yes.

A. Chamberlain: 01:30:25 Funding it in a different way.

Sarah Heald: 01:30:27 I'm curious. Your observations or thoughts about that to the extent you remember them but also, I'm thinking you were there for 11 years. It was 11 years with a lot of change and growth.

Winnie Frost: 01:30:40 Development, really.

Sarah Heald: 01:30:41 And development.

A. Chamberlain: 01:30:42 Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah.

Sarah Heald: 01:30:44 If you have any sort of hindsight, this is how it changed, in these ways, and it was good or bad. Observations on that?

A. Chamberlain: 01:30:52 It changed in every way because Lowell was pretty much a down and out city then. The mills had mostly closed. There was a company that was making Pellon, you know, that non-woven material. There was a company making that. There were a couple of specialized. I think there was one place making auto upholstery still. They were mills in that

sense, kind of textile-y. But everything else was--there wasn't much left, but the canals were there. The canal maintenance buildings, the gatehouses were there.

- A. Chamberlain: 01:31:28 And yes, it was very much a partnership because the Park Service couldn't buy the whole city.
- Winnie Frost: 01:31:32 Right. Lots of agreements going on.
- A. Chamberlain: 01:31:35 Yes. Lots of agreements, and that's where the historical commission came in, because they were the ones who handled all that--
- Winnie Frost: 01:31:38 Oh, right.
- A. Chamberlain: 01:31:40 --on behalf of the park and on behalf of the city.
- Winnie Frost: 01:31:41 I don't suspect that there was a big developmental concept plan in development and in implementation during your tenure there?
- A. Chamberlain: 01:31:51 Yes. There and before. Yes. It was because it took in this whole city. You could see that, as time went on, you could see that being implemented as a building got restored and it came online, like the boarding house or the mill where the waterpower was.
- Winnie Frost: 01:32:08 Do you have an affection for the boarding house?
- A. Chamberlain: 01:32:10 Yeah, well, it was my first furnishing project.
- Winnie Frost: 01:32:10 You just do.
- Sarah Heald: 01:32:10 Yeah. Very cool.
- A. Chamberlain: 01:32:15 I think that was the first building that got restored to be used as a formal exhibit.
- Winnie Frost: 01:32:18 And for the public an interpretation and covering the main themes.
- A. Chamberlain: 01:32:22 Yes. But you're right. No. It was--everybody was involved, and the park got its money directly from its Senator Paul Tsongas. We were able to--that's how we were able to avoid--not avoid Harpers Ferry, but they were doing their own thing.

- Sarah Heald: 01:32:42 You were well-funded. You were well-funded and didn't--
- A. Chamberlain: 01:32:42 We were well-funded. The superintendent was always a person with connections. The first couple were lawyers. They worked the crowds. They worked the city; they worked the Senator's office. They worked everybody. It was very, very political.
- Winnie Frost: 01:32:59 It was a very well-known park. I mean everybody in the Park Service knew that there was this thing happening up at Lowell. The big thing. A new, like Sarah said, a new way of operating and it was like the testing ground for potentially--which we're still doing a lot of, this partnership seems to be a big way of operating in the National Park [Service], unless it's a self-contained place.
- A. Chamberlain: 01:33:29 Right. Yeah.
- Sarah Heald: 01:33:30 I don't mean to interrupt. I just have another question about donors. Because now you said you worked with sometimes donors would bring things, I'm wondering the degree to which you were out cultivating donors or were people knocking at your door or how did that all--
- A. Chamberlain: 01:33:44 People would usually call you if they had something. I don't remember if we ever, ever put a call out for anything, but we would try to work within the system so if the historical society had something that we wanted to borrow, we would work with them. Or the textile museum had something, we would work with them to borrow it. We tried not to step on anybody's toes because there were a lot of toes that were out there ready to be stepped on just so they could complain about it.
- A. Chamberlain: 01:34:12 But people would come in with stuff and then you'd have to make a decision about it. I think we had a scope of collections statement by then. We knew what we were collecting for.
- Sarah Heald: 01:34:21 Right.
- Winnie Frost: 01:34:22 Yeah. Nicely defined themes.
- A. Chamberlain: 01:34:27 I think we--that, I was appreciative of. I think [crosstalk].
- Sarah Heald: 01:34:27 Yeah, that really helped.

- Winnie Frost: 01:34:28 That's a big--I mean that seems unusual, in all honesty, to work in a logical process like that.
- A. Chamberlain: 01:34:34 Yes. Right from the very beginning. I always thought that was a good thing. Whoever came up with that, I think that was the right thing to do. But yeah, you could see the changes in they wanted to get people through the city and the canal system was the best way to do it because you could visit the lock houses and everything. They had a contract with a company who ran boats. Taking boats on the canals.
- Winnie Frost: 01:34:56 Oh, I see. So there was a concessionaire there doing boats.
- A. Chamberlain: 01:34:58 Yeah. There was a concessionaire.
- Sarah Heald: 01:34:58 Was that from the very beginning?
- A. Chamberlain: 01:35:01 It was from fairly early on.
- Sarah Heald: 01:35:03 You could do the canal boat? Okay.
- A. Chamberlain: 01:35:03 Yeah. And then they had to have agreements with Locks and Canals and people like that, that owned the building so you could get into the lock houses. They had a trolley system, which started out with a self-propelled rail car that they called The Whistler, because I guess it had a whistle on it. It only ran on a short piece of track, but it took you to where you could get a boat.
- A. Chamberlain: 01:35:24 They later supplemented that with, I don't remember how many there were, there were several rail cars that were actual streetcars that they had rebuilt from scratch based on running gears that they'd gotten, I think, out of Australia for antique streetcars. They had gone out to some company that builds streetcars--
- Winnie Frost: 01:35:44 Good gracious.
- A. Chamberlain: 01:35:44 --railroad cars and they built streetcars. They were electric powered. The Whistler was a gas-powered thing, but these were-
- Winnie Frost: 01:35:50 Wow.

- A. Chamberlain: 01:35:50 I'm pretty sure these were electric powered. So they needed that grid. Then it was, I mean, they'd be pretty sophisticated. I think the people that ran the streetcars, well, they may have been employees and the boats were contractors. But again, I wasn't involved in anything having to do with that--
- Winnie Frost: 01:36:08 How did you after having this great experience there and probably trying to find your way because it's all so new, and everybody's--
- A. Chamberlain: 01:36:17 Oh, everybody's trying to find their way through it at the same time.
- Winnie Frost: 01:36:21 It seems like you've got yourself a little removed from Harpers Ferry, where you'd been more attached or involved with Harpers Ferry at the prior two parks. How did you get reconnected then, to Harpers Ferry? And that you ended up going to Harpers Ferry?
- A. Chamberlain: 01:36:40 Yeah, I mean you're right. Springfield, they hadn't done anything yet, so we hadn't really had contact with them. Lowell was doing their own thing, so they--we didn't have contact then. But by the time I'd been there for 11 years, and things were pretty much done. The mill hadn't been furnished yet. There's more I can say about that because that was interesting. But we can come back to that I suppose, unless you're bored.
- A. Chamberlain: 01:37:05 You could see at the end they had pretty much built out to the extent that they were going to. It was time then to maybe to look for something else.
- Winnie Frost: 01:37:15 You felt like you might've done what you could there?
- A. Chamberlain: 01:37:18 I think so. Yeah. Because they were almost to the point where they were going to start redoing the exhibits again and taking things out and redoing them.
- Winnie Frost: 01:37:25 Oh, my gosh.
- A. Chamberlain: 01:37:26 Because it's that story of--and you could see it in the museum exhibits. It's like, "Here's the town and it gets built. And then it falls into disrepair. And then we're revitalizing it with the park and we're--". So they're telling

their own story too. Then it started to slip a little bit again after that. It's like you could just keep going on and on.

- Winnie Frost: 01:37:47 Yeah. And you're constantly learning new information too. Right?
- A. Chamberlain: 01:37:53 Yeah. Oh, yeah. And then after that--
- Winnie Frost: 01:37:54 That could potentially impact--
- A. Chamberlain: 01:37:55 --as they started to redo some of those exhibits, then Harpers Ferry did get involved finally.
- Winnie Frost: 01:37:59 Oh, they did?
- A. Chamberlain: 01:37:59 Yeah. They were involved after that, and also at Springfield.
- Winnie Frost: 01:38:03 But were you at Lowell?
- A. Chamberlain: 01:38:06 No.
- Winnie Frost: 01:38:07 Oh, you had already left by the time Harpers Ferry got there?
- A. Chamberlain: 01:38:10 Yeah. It was only after I got to Harpers Ferry that I could see the people working on rehabs of some of those earlier exhibits.
- Winnie Frost: 01:38:15 Oh, I see.
- A. Chamberlain: 01:38:16 I think they redid the visitors' center over because that had dated to the early '80s and it was ready to be done. I think they did some work in Boott Mill again after that, because we had collected a lot. That's another story, but we had collected objects for the Boott Mill as well.
- Winnie Frost: 01:38:31 If it was going to be redone or fixed up?
- A. Chamberlain: 01:38:34 Yeah, because they needed to put in--
- Winnie Frost: 01:38:35 Stuff?
- A. Chamberlain: 01:38:36 They put in a weave room in the Boott Mill. Since that was going to be the place where you talked about the--they had waterpower at Suffolk Mill, but Boott Mill was going to

talk about the manufacturing to the extent that they could. That's why we had collected these textile machines. Well, long story short, we did collect 125 power looms that were early enough. They had come from--

- Winnie Frost: 01:39:02 Geeze. Where do you put these things?
- A. Chamberlain: 01:39:02 Where?
- Winnie Frost: 01:39:04 Where do you put all this stuff?
- A. Chamberlain: 01:39:05 You put them out on the weave room floor. We had somebody who stored them--
- Sarah Heald: 01:39:08 The size of the buildings could accommodate.
- A. Chamberlain: 01:39:09 Yeah, I mean that's what it was.
- Winnie Frost: 01:39:11 Wow. [Crosstalk].
- Sarah Heald: 01:39:11 That's what it was made for.
- A. Chamberlain: 01:39:11 When you went in--
- Winnie Frost: 01:39:13 So it was just full of them?
- A. Chamberlain: 01:39:14 That was the weave room. There were 100 machines in there.
- Winnie Frost: 01:39:16 Wow.
- A. Chamberlain: 01:39:16 We bought extra so you could have--and of course, curatorial, but regional curator had no idea what to do with this. We got 100 machines that were running. We're not weaving on all of them.
- Winnie Frost: 01:39:28 No. I understand. Right.
- A. Chamberlain: 01:39:30 But you could make them look like they were running. Then we've got machines that we were using for scrap, for parts. The poor regional curator just didn't know what to do. It's like, "Well these are antiques, but we're using them consumptively, but--"
- Winnie Frost: 01:39:42 Well that's a hard world. Is that you're between two worlds?

- A. Chamberlain: 01:39:43 But there's no other way to do that because you can't reproduce a textile machine. You could if you wanted to spend \$100,000.00 on each one and you'd need 100 of them.
- Sarah Heald: 01:39:54 Yeah, right.
- Winnie Frost: 01:39:54 Right.
- A. Chamberlain: 01:39:56 They decided that they would collect, catalog a sample of them and then let the rest of them go uncatalogued.
- Winnie Frost: 01:40:03 I see. And then the uncatalogued ones would be the ones you could operate?
- A. Chamberlain: 01:40:08 Yeah. I think the cataloged ones are actually still being operated too, but it was just decided to catalog a sample of them. But these were all machines that dated to the early 20th century. They came from a Borden family, as in Lizzie Borden. A Borden family mill from Fall River, they had moved them to Kingsport, Tennessee and they, up until recently, had still been running them down there. Because a lot of, that's where the textile industry went.
- Sarah Heald: 01:40:33 Yeah, it went south.
- A. Chamberlain: 01:40:34 It went overseas or it went south.
- Winnie Frost: 01:40:35 Oh it did. I see. Makes sense. All the cotton.
- A. Chamberlain: 01:40:36 We went down--exactly. They went to where the cheap labor was.
- Sarah Heald: 01:40:41 The source.
- Winnie Frost: 01:40:41 Yeah, right.
- A. Chamberlain: 01:40:42 Cotton and the cheap labor. I was working with a textile machinery company. That's what they did, was they would go out and sold old textile machines for the whatever remained of the industry was still operating. They found this mill. We went in there. There were enough of them and they were the same type of machinery that would've been used at Lowell. They had come from New England originally. We moved them back. In the 1920s, everything went to individual electric motor power from the line

shafting. Somebody, I don't remember if it was that company or if it was another company, came in, took the motors off each one, and then put a pulley drive and a clutch on each one, so you could run them back off the line shafting.

- A. Chamberlain: 01:41:26 And then there was another company that still specialized in leather belting. They belted the whole place.
- Sarah Heald: 01:41:34 Wow.
- Winnie Frost: 01:41:35 How do you decide where to go with your historical era? You're interpreting that they keep changing these equipment.
- A. Chamberlain: 01:41:45 Oh, well we were bringing them back.
- Winnie Frost: 01:41:47 Were you showing the progress--
- A. Chamberlain: 01:41:51 We were bringing them back to the line shafting era.
- Winnie Frost: 01:41:54 Oh, you--okay. That's your--
- A. Chamberlain: 01:41:54 They were converted to individual motors.
- Winnie Frost: 01:41:56 Yes.
- A. Chamberlain: 01:41:56 We want to bring them back to early circa 1900.
- Winnie Frost: 01:42:00 1840s?
- A. Chamberlain: 01:42:00 No. No. You couldn't get machinery for that early.
- Winnie Frost: 01:42:06 Oh, what do I know.
- Sarah Heald: 01:42:06 Good question.
- A. Chamberlain: 01:42:06 No. It is a good question, because actually there were one or two wooden machines in the collection that did go back almost that far. But you couldn't do a whole weave room, again, unless you wanted to build them from scratch.
- A. Chamberlain: 01:42:17 But the mill building more represented late 19th early 20th century.
- Winnie Frost: 01:42:23 Oh, okay.

A. Chamberlain: 01:42:24 That was the height of the immigrant experience and all that.

Winnie Frost: 01:42:26 That's true.

A. Chamberlain: 01:42:27 We didn't want to do all mill girls. We wanted to--so this was just the easiest as far as getting the machinery, as far as the look of the building as it still existed. It all seemed to congeal around that time period. By putting the machines back to belt drive then, it represented that circa 1900. And again the machines were of that era originally anyway.

Winnie Frost: 01:42:52 Got it. So we're going to need to move a little bit forward here.

A. Chamberlain: 01:42:56 Okay. Sure. Sure.

Winnie Frost: 01:42:57 I don't know whether you guys would like to take a break at this time?

A. Chamberlain: 01:43:02 Well, it's after 1:00. If you want to do lunch?

Sarah Heald: 01:43:04 1:00. Should we take a break and have lunch?

Winnie Frost: 01:43:06 It's up to the interviewee.

A. Chamberlain: 01:43:07 That's fine. Yeah. I could stand a break. Get a drink of water or something.

Winnie Frost: 01:43:09 Is that okay with you?

Sarah Heald: 01:43:10 He might need a drink of water too.

Winnie Frost: 01:43:11 Yeah, okay. We're going to take a little break now. We'll be back in a little bit.

Sarah Heald: 01:43:17 Thank you Winnie Louise Kelly.

END PART I

BEGIN PART II

Winnie Frost: 00:00:01 This is Winnie Frost. And this is act two of Andy Chamberlain's interview on February 18th, 2020. Oh, we had to take a little break, get a little refreshment and get our strength up again.

A. Chamberlain: 00:00:17 For acts three, four, five and six.

Winnie Frost: 00:00:18 Yeah, and we left off where Andy was finishing up on his tour there at Lowell, and he had been there for 11 years and we're starting to think maybe there are other places in the world besides the industrial story.

A. Chamberlain: 00:00:39 Right, right. Wasn't time to retire yet, so--

Winnie Frost: 00:00:42 Definitely wasn't time to retire and how to get that good pension. So you're going to stay in 30 years at least.

A. Chamberlain: 00:00:47 Thank God, this is the civil service.

Winnie Frost: 00:00:48 Thank God.

A. Chamberlain: 00:00:49 Did you?

Winnie Frost: 00:00:51 Yes.

A. Chamberlain: 00:00:51 Were you given the opportunity to change to FERS?

Winnie Frost: 00:00:54 Oh God, yes.

A. Chamberlain: 00:00:54 Yeah. Because when I was in Lowell, that's when it came out, I've got to change to FERS because this great new thing. And then word immediately went around and it's like, "Don't change to FERS because they want you to change to FERS because it's not as good."

Winnie Frost: 00:01:05 Absolutely. I got the same word. And boy, did they bother you to try to change. I mean, went on for a number of years and they kept calling, calling you.

Sarah Heald: 00:01:14 Trying to entice you.

Winnie Frost: 00:01:15 Yes.

Sarah Heald: 00:01:16 Or you could be like me and you had no choice, you are just FERS, you got in too late.

A. Chamberlain: 00:01:20 Right.

Sarah Heald: 00:01:20 Yeah.

Winnie Frost: 00:01:21 So Andy and I, we just stuck it out.

A. Chamberlain: 00:01:23 Stuck it out.

Winnie Frost: 00:01:24 Why change a good thing?

A. Chamberlain: 00:01:25 Yes.

Winnie Frost: 00:01:25 And why did they keep bothering you to change?
Something is not good.

A. Chamberlain: 00:01:29 Because it was a better deal for them than you.

Winnie Frost: 00:01:32 Exactly. So here we are at year 11. You're at the Lowell
and you start to get antsy?

A. Chamberlain: 00:01:38 Yeah, yeah. I mean the exhibits were all in except for the
Weave Room, but we had the machinery but all the major
exhibits, the rest of the Boott Mill exhibits were done, that
was pretty much it. They hadn't finished the waterpower
exhibit yet, but we knew where everything was going at
that point. And so I just started looking around and I can't
remember where I first heard about Harpers Ferry having
job openings, but that was a year after Mary got hers, a year
before you got yours. So it was right in between there, and I
must have seen an announcement or something, put it in an
application. And-

Winnie Frost: 00:02:17 And you hadn't been seeing Bob, I mean Bill Brown at all
and goes--

A. Chamberlain: 00:02:24 No, I had not in the intervening years [crosstalk].

Winnie Frost: 00:02:26 Right. Because he also ended up at Harpers Ferry.

A. Chamberlain: 00:02:29 Right.

Sarah Heald: 00:02:29 And he was in Historic Furnishings at the time that you--

A. Chamberlain: 00:02:31 Right. By the time I got to Harpers Ferry, he had been in
Historic Furnishings [inaudible] for a while.

Winnie Frost: 00:02:36 He was already there.

A. Chamberlain: 00:02:36 Right.

Winnie Frost: 00:02:37 Okay. So this is 1990 or '91.

A. Chamberlain: 00:02:38 '91.

Winnie Frost: 00:02:38 Okay.

A. Chamberlain: 00:02:39 Fall of '91. I do all my moving in the fall.

Winnie Frost: 00:02:42 Excellent.

A. Chamberlain: 00:02:43 So yeah, somehow I found out about this, I applied for, I talked to Sarah Olsen.

Winnie Frost: 00:02:53 Who was the Division Chief of Historic Furnishings.

A. Chamberlain: 00:02:59 And the job was offered at a 9, 11, 12, right. Wasn't it all three at once?

Sarah Heald: 00:03:05 Yep.

A. Chamberlain: 00:03:05 And because I was an 11 and Sarah made me take it as a 9, because it was written as a 9, 11, and 12. And everybody else said, "Hey, we've got plenty of time and grade, you should be able to go directly lateral into an 11." But she wouldn't let me.

Winnie Frost: 00:03:20 Did you get the pay at the 11 level and so you were a 9.

A. Chamberlain: 00:03:23 I got paid at the 9, at the whatever, the highest step.

Winnie Frost: 00:03:26 7, and that is 9, and 10.

A. Chamberlain: 00:03:29 Yeah. And then as soon as I could, they switched me over. But by then Sarah was gone, John was in place. I got along with John better than Sarah for some reasons. Sarah I always found a little prickly, but you know.

Sarah Heald: 00:03:40 I never worked with her because--

A. Chamberlain: 00:03:41 Yeah.

Sarah Heald: 00:03:42 John was the one who hired me. Yeah.

A. Chamberlain: 00:03:44 But so after that, I had to figure out what historic furnishings was, why I didn't know exactly how Historic Furnishings at HFC ran, but the first thing I was given was a job to do a furnishings report for Fort Union Trading Post in North Dakota.

- A. Chamberlain: 00:04:05 So they sent me out there to look at the resource and to see what the park had in the way of books or whatever. Went out there November of '91, it was like 25 below zero, and this is in Williston, which at that point--you know now Williston is a big deal because of the drilling-- and back then it was nothing. There was a hotel and a few other places, but it was a real nowhere place that was like 25 miles to the park, and you had to plug your car in at night, so it didn't freeze.
- Winnie Frost: 00:04:36 Oh, wow.
- A. Chamberlain: 00:04:36 But it was an interesting job. Came back, started working on the report, but I didn't have a sense of budgeting, how much money had been allotted, how much I should use it, because every job I'd had before that you just got paid. You got paid, every two weeks you got paid.
- A. Chamberlain: 00:04:57 But here you're keeping track of project money and how you're apportioning it, and I think I only had one project to start with. So Sarah was trying to keep me within bounds, but I didn't have a frame of reference. It's like I don't know how much money you got and how that translates into hours, and I just figured you did it until it was done. And so I got it finished and it got printed--and in the park--the park produced it themselves. We didn't produce it. But then right after that they decided to implement the furnishing plan for Valley Forge, which had been written in the '80s, and I'm still trying to think of the name of the woman who wrote it.
- Sarah Heald: 00:05:39 Vera Craig?
- A. Chamberlain: 00:05:40 No it wasn't Vera.
- Sarah Heald: 00:05:41 Katharine Menz was it, or somebody?
- A. Chamberlain: 00:05:45 Kathy Menz.
- Sarah Heald: 00:05:45 Kathy Menz.
- Winnie Frost: 00:05:46 Oh, Kathy Menz, I know [inaudible].
- A. Chamberlain: 00:05:47 Kathy Menz. I'm pretty sure she was the one that wrote it, and then I worked with Bill on implementing that one. So it had been partly done. They did, they built the secretary desk and things like that, we had to use a lot of

reproductions at that site because--18th century originals being very expensive. You could blow your whole exhibit budget on one item. And so it was a lot, it was very heavy on reproduction, except for some of the small items, but as I said before, they were following Washington's expense account or at least Kathy's report did, so that pretty much laid out what we needed to do. And that was fun because I had already volunteered at the park, I knew the park and it was just a really cool project.

- Winnie Frost: 00:06:30 So when you did come to Harpers Ferry and you started working there, you really didn't have, except for having visited the exhibit shop, you didn't really have a feel of-
- A. Chamberlain: 00:06:41 Right, right.
- Winnie Frost: 00:06:42 And was there any orientation that was really done for you when you got there at all, were you escorted around, so you can know where different departments were.
- A. Chamberlain: 00:06:49 I probably was. I don't remember it.
- Winnie Frost: 00:06:54 Sure.
- A. Chamberlain: 00:06:55 But I probably was. I remember there being various events, like I think there was a Christmas party not long after I got there. So I got to meet a lot of people, because people from conservation came over for that and-
- Winnie Frost: 00:07:07 And of course you did know Bill. Bill Brown.
- A. Chamberlain: 00:07:10 Yeah. Yeah. After I saw him, I realized that I did know him, and of course the group, it was a nice group to work with. So it was yeah, it was just perfect.
- Sarah Heald: 00:07:23 So you knew about CORs from having worked at Lowell with contractors, but at HFC being a COR was part of our furnishings jobs. Did you have COR training early on, or do you remember any of that?
- A. Chamberlain: 00:07:37 None until I got to HFC.
- Sarah Heald: 00:07:39 But at HFC, did you get COR training early on? Do you remember?
- A. Chamberlain: 00:07:43 Fairly early on.

Sarah Heald: 00:07:44 October.

A. Chamberlain: 00:07:46 At Hilltop, not Hilltop. What's the one up--Cliffside, Cliffside.

Sarah Heald: 00:07:51 Cliffside.

A. Chamberlain: 00:07:51 And there were two people in class that were always cutting up and making jokes, and being really--

Winnie Frost: 00:07:57 Was this the guy from New York?

Sarah Heald: 00:07:58 Ben Flammy [Flammey]?

Winnie Frost: 00:08:00 Ben Flammy [Flammey].

A. Chamberlain: 00:08:00 Yeah. Ben Flammy [Flammey], and the two people that were always cutting up, were you and Jack Spinnler.

Winnie Frost: 00:08:09 Get smooth with the contractor, schmoozing.

Sarah Heald: 00:08:16 You can speak Ben's language when--

Winnie Frost: 00:08:16 Yeah. Oh, dear, I'm getting chastised.

Sarah Heald: 00:08:21 That's a long class, you need some people to help lighten it up. I think Ben was very--

A. Chamberlain: 00:08:25 They did their best.

Winnie Frost: 00:08:25 You need some serious levity. It was a George and Gracie Allen performing.

Sarah Heald: 00:08:30 Yeah pretty much.

Sarah Heald: 00:08:32 So that's when you learned about waysides contracting or something, they were doing waysides jokes.

A. Chamberlain: 00:08:39 Yeah. Everything was a joke to those two.

Sarah Heald: 00:08:43 Still is.

Winnie Frost: 00:08:43 Yep.

Winnie Frost: 00:08:48 So why don't you tell us a little bit about how, well, let's put it this way. Which projects that you worked on those, over what, 20 years did they, 18, 15 years.

A. Chamberlain: 00:08:58 Well, let's say they're '91 to 2016.

Winnie Frost: 00:09:02 Yeah, about--

A. Chamberlain: 00:09:03 25.

Sarah Heald: 00:09:05 And somewhere in there you transitioned more to doing exhibit fabrication though.

A. Chamberlain: 00:09:10 Yeah, from furnishings. Yeah, that was about 2006.

Winnie Frost: 00:09:13 Yeah.

A. Chamberlain: 00:09:13 Because it seemed like the furnishings was drying up.

Winnie Frost: 00:09:16 But at the beginning for the first maybe almost 8 to 10 years, you were doing--

A. Chamberlain: 00:09:21 Oh everybody had business. Yeah.

Sarah Heald: 00:09:22 For the first 15 years, you were doing Historic Furnishings, and last 10 doing exhibits.

Winnie Frost: 00:09:27 Why don't you share with us exactly what it means to do Historic Furnishings. We're saying that, but what does it mean?

A. Chamberlain: 00:09:36 Okay. Well.

Winnie Frost: 00:09:37 What was your job description?

A. Chamberlain: 00:09:38 My job description was mostly production. I did two Historic Furnishings reports, one for Fort Union Trading Post--the Indian Trade House--and the other for the Hadlock Store at Acadia, which is the ship's store.

Winnie Frost: 00:09:52 That sounds wonderful.

A. Chamberlain: 00:09:53 Oh and it's out there too. It is out there.

Winnie Frost: 00:09:55 Oh, is that on one of the Islands?

A. Chamberlain: 00:09:56 It's on Little Cranberry Island.

Winnie Frost: 00:09:58 Oh, I know it. Yes.

A. Chamberlain: 00:09:59 So, you take the mail boat out.

Winnie Frost: 00:10:00 Take the mail boat. Right.

A. Chamberlain: 00:10:02 And it was always cold when we were out there for some reason, but it was an interesting project, but those are the only two that I actually did research on. But at least that got me to understand, because the first project I had was a research report, to know what went into it and what I needed to do to create something that could be produced.

Winnie Frost: 00:10:22 Got it.

A. Chamberlain: 00:10:23 What was the standard of research that was involved, and what was you know, how you generated the list so that when I did go into production and I was producing somebody else's work, then I knew, what had gone into that.

Winnie Frost: 00:10:36 And when you produce this list, are there usually some estimates of costs, in the furnishing plan that relates- So then just lists.

A. Chamberlain: 00:10:49 Yeah. And then you would figure out how best to do it. Now a lot of times it'd be a recommendation. So if it was something that would be expensive, as an original one, maybe the recommended furnishing there, would be a reproduction. So it gave you a sense of that, but you had the leeway within that to acquire any way you wanted it.

Sarah Heald: 00:11:09 You had a list of rec--the list Andy is referring to is a list of recommended furnishings and then the evidence that you base that recommendation on, and then I can't remember what that third column was called, but basically it was you acquire an antique, you acquire a reproduction.

A. Chamberlain: 00:11:25 Right.

Sarah Heald: 00:11:25 You use something from the park's collection.

A. Chamberlain: 00:11:28 Right. That's right, because if the park had it in their collection you'd use it.

Winnie Frost: 00:11:28 Right.

Sarah Heald: 00:11:28 Where that item was going to come from, but it did not go to that step of this will cost \$3,000.

A. Chamberlain: 00:11:34 Right.

Sarah Heald: 00:11:34 Or this will cost \$50. That's the sort of thing, because furnishings was always done as a two-step project, the planning and production, and before production, before one got money for production, you would do a cost estimate. And the cost estimate was done based on that list of recommended furnishings in the furnishings report.

Winnie Frost: 00:11:57 I see.

A. Chamberlain: 00:11:57 Right.

Winnie Frost: 00:11:58 Very good. Shucks, I had a question it just--

Sarah Heald: 00:12:03 Sorry.

Winnie Frost: 00:12:03 Just went out of my head. No, no, no, no. Gosh, I just totally-so anyways, so you got familiar with the process and then you became more of the producer in the furnishings department.

A. Chamberlain: 00:12:18 Yeah.

Winnie Frost: 00:12:19 But you're--

A. Chamberlain: 00:12:19 Yeah, Bill and I seemed to work a lot together.

Winnie Frost: 00:12:21 Yeah, I sensed that when I was over there that you and Bill were always doing something together.

A. Chamberlain: 00:12:24 And I think that dated back to Valley Forge, and we had that in common, you know, the re-enacting and all that, and we seemed to work well together.

Winnie Frost: 00:12:34 So production required you to actually go out and securing all these items.

A. Chamberlain: 00:12:38 Right.

- Winnie Frost: 00:12:38 And then now I remember my question, in the furnishing report, was it identified whether the people could walk through this room or how would you treat the originals? If you had to use, like if the park had some originals they wanted on display, I mean, would they have to be displayed differently than things that were reproductions?
- A. Chamberlain: 00:12:59 Yes, and I don't remember that being really how much detailed treated in the reports, but that's definitely an operational issue.
- Sarah Heald: 00:13:07 That I don't want to take too much of Andy's time.
- A. Chamberlain: 00:13:10 No. Go ahead.
- Sarah Heald: 00:13:10 But so because I did more furnishing reports, I did both furnishings and--
- Winnie Frost: 00:13:15 Installation.
- Sarah Heald: 00:13:16 Reports and production. So because I did a lot of the reports also, I remember it depended on what the park knew. And I think parks got better about this over the course of time. I came just a year after Andy over the course of the time I was doing these reports. But you would know, okay, this is a room that people are going to walk into. So it's sort of like what you're saying at Lowell, you had a reader rail, or a cordoned off area. So then you knew you could put antiques because nobody could touch those.
- Winnie Frost: 00:13:43 Yes that's what I was wondering.
- Sarah Heald: 00:13:44 But you also, when you did your list of recommended furnishings, it might also play into, as Andy was saying, the price of acquiring something by buying an antique. If it's 18th century and it's going to cost \$30,000, versus having a reproduction of it made. So that you're factoring budget and security, whether a visitor can touch something or not, or something could be stolen easily, lifted off of a table within reach, then you're not going to put anything valuable there.
- Sarah Heald: 00:14:11 So all of that, you would work out with a park before in writing your furnishings report, you did that final list of recommended furnishings and what to put in the recommendation column about what you buy.

Winnie Frost: 00:14:24 Because that's really important. I mean, that's the [inaudible].

A. Chamberlain: 00:14:27 Yeah.

Sarah Heald: 00:14:27 You had to know the interpretive set up for your furnishings installations.

Winnie Frost: 00:14:33 Right, right. Whether it's roped off, or it's accessible.

Sarah Heald: 00:14:37 Right.

Winnie Frost: 00:14:37 Or to touch.

Sarah Heald: 00:14:38 Or if it's just a room that people are going to look into.

Winnie Frost: 00:14:40 Look into. Well. Yeah, yeah, with the glass. Okay. So, were you hired to be more in the production or was it just that's where you felt most comfortable?

A. Chamberlain: 00:14:51 I think that's where it kind of drifted, because as I said, I did do a report first. You were just hired with the understanding that you could do either one.

Winnie Frost: 00:14:59 I got you. Yes.

A. Chamberlain: 00:15:01 And then I sort of drifted into the production because that seemed to work.

Winnie Frost: 00:15:04 And had Historic Furnishings been an active division for a while since the 1970s, when the Harpers Ferry Center was created or did that seem to evolve out of exhibits? Or do you guys have any knowledge of that? I don't know.

A. Chamberlain: 00:15:21 I don't remember that. I mean it's before my time, but I remember when they were down in, what's the house down further down the street?

Sarah Heald: 00:15:29 Yeah, in the park.

Winnie Frost: 00:15:30 Oh, yes.

Sarah Heald: 00:15:31 The Superintendent's Lockwood house.

Winnie Frost: 00:15:34 Lockwood house.

Sarah Heald: 00:15:36 We can cross reference the interview with David Wallace.

A. Chamberlain: 00:15:41 There you go.

Sarah Heald: 00:15:41 Who was at Harpers Ferry Center if not at the beginning in 1970, shortly thereafter, and he did Historic Furnishings. He and John Brucksch were the ones who did furnishings the longest I believe. But David was there first and at that point I think, I don't know if he developed the furnishings report. So there is an interview that's been transcribed, and someone can listen to that. But basically there was at some point along the way, I believe John Demer may have introduced the format that Andy described with the columns in the furnishings report.

A. Chamberlain: 00:16:18 That's right, but Demer was involved fairly early wasn't he.

Sarah Heald: 00:16:20 With trying to document the decision making because there was a recognition that we weren't just pulling these furnishings out of a hat, they were based on historical evidence and the furnishings report was meant to show that and capture that. Is that good?

Winnie Frost: 00:16:37 Yes. It is very clear, yes.

Sarah Heald: 00:16:39 So at some point along the way what Andy walked into and I walked into the next year after was a well-established--

Winnie Frost: 00:16:44 Protocol.

Sarah Heald: 00:16:44 I would guess if that was early nineties, I'd say at least 10 years--you'd have to ask Carol Petravage maybe, or John Demer, when that transition took place.

Winnie Frost: 00:16:59 But you had a definite process. This is like the first time you've been somewhere where they had a process.

A. Chamberlain: 00:17:05 A process that somebody else had developed that you could follow.

Winnie Frost: 00:17:07 Somebody else had developed before you got there because every other park was either in the midst of being just created or trying to develop itself. And--

A. Chamberlain: 00:17:17 That's true.

Winnie Frost: 00:17:17 Now you could walk into something so you could really, you know, you were ahead of the game.

Sarah Heald: 00:17:22 So Andy, when you were hired, who else was in Historic Furnishings? Sarah was--

A. Chamberlain: 00:17:29 Sarah.

Sarah Heald: 00:17:30 The chief.

A. Chamberlain: 00:17:32 John [Demer].

Sarah Heald: 00:17:33 John, was he assistant in charge of production I think?

A. Chamberlain: 00:17:35 I think he was. Yes. Bill.

Sarah Heald: 00:17:38 Bill Brown.

A. Chamberlain: 00:17:38 Carol [Petravage] was there, Mary [Grassick] was there, Brenda was there, Kam was there.

Sarah Heald: 00:17:43 Okay. So Kam, was an editor.

A. Chamberlain: 00:17:44 And David had come back.

Sarah Heald: 00:17:46 He was a rehired annuitant I think working on-

Winnie Frost: 00:17:49 I remember seeing him when I first got there. He's an elderly gentleman. He wasn't there all the time, but--

A. Chamberlain: 00:17:57 Did he work part time?

Sarah Heald: 00:17:58 He was a rehired annuitant I think.

Winnie Frost: 00:18:01 You know what you are right. Because I remember I had never hired or rehired an annuitant and then he was the first one.

Sarah Heald: 00:18:07 Oh, okay.

Winnie Frost: 00:18:08 Yeah, that's, I had heard that also.

A. Chamberlain: 00:18:08 All right.

- Winnie Frost: 00:18:11 So you moved into the production and then Bill was in the production end too, seems like the guys were in the production. And the women were--
- A. Chamberlain: 00:18:20 Bill of course was involved, Bill was involved in everything in Harpers Ferry.
- Winnie Frost: 00:18:22 He was all over the center.
- A. Chamberlain: 00:18:22 He was working with David McLean on exhibits; he was working with AV. He had his fingers in everything.
- Winnie Frost: 00:18:27 Okay. So tell us about a couple of your favorite opportunities in doing production and Historic Furnishings before we move into all the changes that happened at Harpers Ferry.
- A. Chamberlain: 00:18:40 Well, of course Valley Forge, that was a big one because I've always loved that period and I love that site. So, that was a real honor to be able to work on that.
- Winnie Frost: 00:18:47 That's wonderful.
- A. Chamberlain: 00:18:49 And that was, and a lot of fun. And then every one was different. I mean, that's the thing about it. You moved from that to something like Wright Brothers, completely different century, and completely different story. Or then you'd go back to the 19th century and you'd be working on a store, several stores.
- Winnie Frost: 00:19:08 Did you do a lot of Harpers Ferry?
- A. Chamberlain: 00:19:10 We all did a lot in the Harpers Ferry. Yeah, Carol did the watch shop, the clothing store. I did the general store, what others?
- Sarah Heald: 00:19:19 The Tavern, Whitehall Tavern.
- A. Chamberlain: 00:19:20 Whitehall Tavern. You and I--
- Sarah Heald: 00:19:21 Worked on that together.
- A. Chamberlain: 00:19:22 Right. So yeah, there was a lot going on in Harpers Ferry Park.

Winnie Frost: 00:19:29 Harpers Ferry Park was considered a showcase, right. Tried to show what we do in the Park Service by really having that as the demonstration.

A. Chamberlain: 00:19:37 I guess it was, especially originally it was considered that.

Sarah Heald: 00:19:40 Yeah, I think by the '90s when Andy and I were hired we were maybe not so aware of that, but I think you're right Winnie, that was the idea, was, "Let's put it, let's put Harpers Ferry Center right by this park, and it can be an opportunity to--"

A. Chamberlain: 00:19:56 Yeah.

Sarah Heald: 00:19:57 Test out--

Winnie Frost: 00:19:58 Test out.

Sarah Heald: 00:19:59 --how to do exhibits, how to do historic furnishings, how to do waysides.

Winnie Frost: 00:20:03 Because it is very rich in exhibitry, outdoor exhibitry, furnishings.

Sarah Heald: 00:20:09 Right.

Winnie Frost: 00:20:09 Of course.

Sarah Heald: 00:20:09 Right.

Winnie Frost: 00:20:10 I mean it's...

Sarah Heald: 00:20:11 Yeah.

Winnie Frost: 00:20:11 And they just don't have an armory there.

A. Chamberlain: 00:20:13 Not anymore.

Sarah Heald: 00:20:14 They got some foundations of one.

Winnie Frost: 00:20:16 Yeah. They have only a little trail where you can walk and see some glimpses of it on the water there. So that's a good point that you made, mentioned that how every job is different even, so you had a process, but you're dealing with all these different centuries. And I find it so amazing

how you guys can do that. Jumping all over, over two to three, to four centuries.

- A. Chamberlain: 00:20:42 I know. I don't know.
- Winnie Frost: 00:20:43 De Soto, I mean come on, or the other place down in Florida, there near Jacksonville, whatever it's called over there. What does it where Terry, Terry and Mark lived--
- Sarah Heald: 00:20:56 I can't think of the name--worked?
- A. Chamberlain: 00:20:57 Oh, St. Augustine?
- Winnie Frost: 00:20:59 St. Augustine.
- A. Chamberlain: 00:21:00 Castillo de San Marcos.
- Winnie Frost: 00:21:01 Yes, there. There you got what; the 1500s and the very, very hot uniforms.
- A. Chamberlain: 00:21:05 Yeah.
- Winnie Frost: 00:21:06 Wool uniforms in the summer.
- A. Chamberlain: 00:21:11 We did an exhibit down there a few years ago, and for some reason everything is pirates now. You know, pirate [inaudible].
- Winnie Frost: 00:21:18 Oh, yeah. Yeah. Pirates of the Caribbean.
- A. Chamberlain: 00:21:18 And everybody is-- these poor reenactors in their Spanish uniforms. Everybody thinks they're pirates.
- Sarah Heald: 00:21:24 Oh my goodness.
- A. Chamberlain: 00:21:25 It's just so sad.
- Winnie Frost: 00:21:27 Well, we're not doing a very good job doing interpretation there.
- A. Chamberlain: 00:21:29 No, we're not.
- Sarah Heald: 00:21:30 So Andy. Oh, sorry.

- A. Chamberlain: 00:21:32 No, just an aside. We did an exhibit, a small exhibit in Beaufort which is Outer Banks. And what's the name of the park that it's attached to? The one below.
- Sarah Heald: 00:21:46 Cape Hatteras?
- A. Chamberlain: 00:21:47 The one below Hatteras.
- Sarah Heald: 00:21:49 One below Cape Hatteras?
- A. Chamberlain: 00:21:50 Cape Lookout, something like that.
- Sarah Heald: 00:21:51 Cape I can't remember.
- Winnie Frost: 00:21:52 Cape Lookout is below Cape Hatteras.
- A. Chamberlain: 00:21:54 I think that's it. And we did, it was an old post office building that they were using as a visitor center. And so we, you know this had all been planned out. We just did production. The production company was in, they put the exhibits in. Across the road were three--cause right across from, there's sort of an inlet there, and right across from that was an island that's part of the Rachel Carson Preserve, and there's wild horses and stuff there--and we had three exhibit waysides, and the exhibit firm was in the process of planting the waysides, and this guy comes up, apparently he owned the property and it had been leased to the park to put these waysides in, and there was like a park there. They had performances and stuff.
- A. Chamberlain: 00:22:33 And he said, "You can't put those there." "Why? It's in our plan, we got permission." "That's where the pirate invasion takes place."
- Winnie Frost: 00:22:40 Oh my goodness. That's sad.
- A. Chamberlain: 00:22:43 Pirates come up the inlet apparently. And they attack the town every year. So I think what they did was they decided to put them in, in a way that they can be taken out.
- Sarah Heald: 00:22:54 Removable.
- A. Chamberlain: 00:22:54 And then put back again after the pirate invasions.
- Sarah Heald: 00:22:57 The pirates running it.

- A. Chamberlain: 00:22:59 Just kill me.
- Winnie Frost: 00:23:00 Now while you were actually in Historic Furnishings, before you went through the transitions, did you request specifically, work on any particular project that you might've been hearing about, or was your forte, more the Civil War era, or people come to you because they thought you kind of knew this or that or, were you just all over the place?
- A. Chamberlain: 00:23:24 I think I would take just about anything.
- Winnie Frost: 00:23:25 You'd say you would take anything.
- A. Chamberlain: 00:23:26 If something interesting came in the office, I guess you'd sniff around, and see if you could get in on it.
- Winnie Frost: 00:23:31 Yeah.
- A. Chamberlain: 00:23:31 But I think I pretty much, I think all of us pretty much took anything because it was all good, it seemed.
- Winnie Frost: 00:23:37 And so all the projects were funded by the parks or, or did Harpers Ferry have a degree of funding available.
- A. Chamberlain: 00:23:45 I think they had.
- Winnie Frost: 00:23:46 The major rehab, wasn't there a major rehab for a while back in those days that the Center had a portion of the major rehab money and...
- A. Chamberlain: 00:23:54 There was, but I don't, I think most of what we did for Furnishings was park funding, wasn't it?
- Sarah Heald: 00:23:59 Yeah. I think the reports initially were funded by either major rehab or by HFC base funding. But when the base funding was lost and production I think was always supplied by the park, the funds for that.
- A. Chamberlain: 00:24:14 I think so.
- Sarah Heald: 00:24:17 It does occur to me that one way to get at your work in Historic Furnishings could be to talk, Andy, about the different ways that things were purchased. So either out in the field, and then maybe the transition to online purchasing also. And then also the research and the trade

catalog collection, because there was research done in production. It just wasn't put into a furnishings report in the same way, there was a level of detail. That's a couple of questions at once.

- Winnie Frost: 00:24:43 Yeah.
- A. Chamberlain: 00:24:45 That's true. That's a good point because yes, the furnishing report could say, could reference something, it might be an illustration or might reference something the park owned, but you might end up having to do a lot of object research to really nail down that particular piece. Is it the right period? Is it the right geographical area? And that's when you'd go into the trade catalog collection [inaudible].
- Winnie Frost: 00:25:09 That's kind of like, in exhibits also you put your plan together but then there's all those details that have to be worked out during the production phase as we all know too well.
- A. Chamberlain: 00:25:19 Yes. And there wasn't always anybody that knows about it.
- Winnie Frost: 00:25:22 Yes.
- A. Chamberlain: 00:25:22 Parks have their expertise, but then that always falls off at some point. And then you've got to come in and find somebody who does know about it so that you can do the right thing.
- Winnie Frost: 00:25:33 And while you were in Historic Furnishings, I keep referencing it that way because we will be going into transitions, did you have a team that you worked with or were you just, you had this project Andy, you're on your own?
- A. Chamberlain: 00:25:48 Well-
- Winnie Frost: 00:25:48 But did you work closely with the parks when on the project?
- A. Chamberlain: 00:25:51 Oh, sure. You work with the parks.
- Winnie Frost: 00:25:54 Did you ever contact people in park? Was it in interpretation? Was it in curatorial?

- A. Chamberlain: 00:25:57 It would depend on what kind of staffing the park had, it varied all over the place.
- Winnie Frost: 00:26:01 It varied.
- A. Chamberlain: 00:26:02 Yeah. I mean they didn't get too involved in, unless you were dealing with a park collection. I don't remember them getting too terribly involved in selecting items. That was our specialty. You know, what, as he's going, I don't remember really ever going out with anybody from the parks to do purchasing or anything like that. It may have happened once, but they pretty much left that to us being kind of the specialists.
- Winnie Frost: 00:26:24 Like you did at Lowell.
- A. Chamberlain: 00:26:27 Lowell. Right. Yeah. And that was mostly because of the funding.
- Winnie Frost: 00:26:30 The funding, yeah. I think everything kind of is driven by that funding.
- A. Chamberlain: 00:26:32 Yeah.
- Winnie Frost: 00:26:33 So they, mostly the parks kind of left you alone except the people that had some artifacts that may be part of the--
- A. Chamberlain: 00:26:41 I think we were left more alone with furnishings, than we were with exhibits, because with exhibits you always had, you were always going to the park for editing, and for proofing, because you will always have the scripts and things.
- Winnie Frost: 00:26:55 That's a good point you don't have typically scripts with except maybe saying what the name of the room is.
- A. Chamberlain: 00:27:01 Right. Right.
- Winnie Frost: 00:27:01 Or what it is.
- A. Chamberlain: 00:27:04 Yeah.
- Winnie Frost: 00:27:04 That's Martha Washington's--

- A. Chamberlain: 00:27:07 Typically the parks didn't have that kind of expertise. Some of them did, but in a lot of cases, it seemed like the parks did not.
- Winnie Frost: 00:27:15 Did you ever feel that the parks wanted to do something that just didn't seem like it was a good idea?
- A. Chamberlain: 00:27:20 Oh, I know. Yeah, yeah.
- Winnie Frost: 00:27:22 If the parks were insistent, we want to do this room and you questioned its--
- A. Chamberlain: 00:27:28 Yeah, I'm not, I don't know that I remember anything specific, but you get that sometimes. Right I may, I think we can probably make--
- Sarah Heald: 00:27:36 I think especially when doing the furnishings report, you might encounter that kind of conversation because that's what generated the list of recommended furnishings. And then I think, yeah, just like you're saying Andy, when you're actually in production and acquiring things, it just depends on if the park had anybody with that expertise and usually, they did not.
- A. Chamberlain: 00:27:57 Yeah. And those decisions had already been made about what period you're going to do and all that. Like I'm lucky with Longfellow, right.
- Sarah Heald: 00:28:03 Right.
- A. Chamberlain: 00:28:04 That's not something like that where you just keep going back and forth, but by the time it got to production, those decisions had been made and you just pretty much go and get the stuff.
- Sarah Heald: 00:28:16 So--
- Winnie Frost: 00:28:16 But. Okay.
- Sarah Heald: 00:28:17 Well, Winnie asked a question about if we had teams, and we didn't really, but there were times when there were multiple projects. Well, there were always multiple projects going on in the office and say there was a big buying trip. So, we would go to Atlantic City, and some people you had the list for the Garfield Project, and you had the list for the something else project. So there were, the lead person on

each project was there, but everybody shared the lists and maybe you could speak to, because I think there was an interesting transition from in the '90s when we came in, you had your field purchase order book, and you've got a cash advance, and by the time you're on your last furnishings purchase trip it was credit cards. So what was that all like? And having to deal with dealers in the field with a field purchase order and--

- A. Chamberlain: 00:29:13 Oh, involves a lot of explaining. Yeah, but just trying to think of something else before that and it's fine, but yes, you've got the field purchase order book and it was essentially a promise to pay somebody in 30 days. You're out there in the field--
- Winnie Frost: 00:29:33 They're supposed to release it to you.
- A. Chamberlain: 00:29:35 Yep. Sometimes they did, sometimes they didn't but--
- Winnie Frost: 00:29:39 You're kidding me.
- A. Chamberlain: 00:29:41 You know, antiques is a cash and carry business.
- Winnie Frost: 00:29:43 Yes it is.
- A. Chamberlain: 00:29:43 People carry wads of cash if there's a serious buying, and then a lot of checks. Surprisingly enough a lot of checks still pass in the antiques field even outdoors. And so they're not set up for credit cards and things like that. And yeah, we've got the field purchase order book, and you would write down there all the information, and the guy's, dealer's name and everything, and you promised them that they were going to get a check from the government within 30 days and here's my ID, here's my government vehicle, the government tags on it and here's this, what else do you want? And sometimes they would, they were usually pretty good about it, but it was a very awkward situation. And then they would start giving us cash. Right? We get like 2,500, I think.
- Sarah Heald: 00:30:24 I think we could get, was it that much we could get to take out? So then it was an art of, if this person won't take the field purchase order, then you've got to use some of your cash, to make that purchase.
- A. Chamberlain: 00:30:36 That's right [crosstalk].

Sarah Heald: 00:30:37 You were trying not to spend too much cash because you didn't want to--

Winnie Frost: 00:30:40 So, you had different lines of defense.

A. Chamberlain: 00:30:42 Yes.

Winnie Frost: 00:30:42 So if the first line of defense would you take that piece of paper, the government IOU?

A. Chamberlain: 00:30:47 Yes.

Sarah Heald: 00:30:48 But then X number of days into a buying trip, if you still had a lot of cash left, you want to start spending that, because you don't want to come back and have to return cash because that's a waste of everybody's time.

A. Chamberlain: 00:30:59 Right.

Winnie Frost: 00:30:59 It's not only a waste, but it just causes some administrative issues.

Sarah Heald: 00:31:03 Right.

A. Chamberlain: 00:31:04 Yeah.

Winnie Frost: 00:31:04 People they're saying, "Well why do you want the cash, if you didn't spend it before."

Sarah Heald: 00:31:06 Exactly. Exactly.

Winnie Frost: 00:31:08 So you really were doing a balancing act, serious balancing act.

A. Chamberlain: 00:31:12 That's right. I've gotten that, there was that overlap period. And yeah, they were giving you a check and you take it to your bank, and you'd get the money. And then if you had money left over, then you had to write a check to the government back again, and so, but at least you had cash.

Sarah Heald: 00:31:27 Yeah.

A. Chamberlain: 00:31:27 And that was something. And then there were the checks, the convenience checks or had I only--I never really used those.

Winnie Frost: 00:31:31 And those were government checks. Right. That you got.

Sarah Heald: 00:31:35 We only get those once we had credit cards?

A. Chamberlain: 00:31:38 Yeah. Because it was tied to the credit card account.

Sarah Heald: 00:31:40 Yeah.

Winnie Frost: 00:31:42 So administratively, it was just so--

A. Chamberlain: 00:31:44 They just kind of try to make it harder and harder.

Winnie Frost: 00:31:47 Control to make it harder and harder. Yeah.

A. Chamberlain: 00:31:49 Yeah. And then it got to the point where they said, where they only wanted you to like use, and I never really used the convenience checks, but where they, it's like only in the direst emergency can you use the convenience check, and you have to get this and this from the dealer. And it's like you really don't want us to do this do you? Well, you can use credit cards. We still have credit cards and you can't explain to them that a lot of people in this world aren't set up for that, especially if you're outdoors. Now some of them are now, they've got the square on their phone.

Sarah Heald: 00:32:17 Yeah. But this was before the smart phones.

Winnie Frost: 00:32:17 But that was really before smart phones, and squares.

Sarah Heald: 00:32:19 Right.

A. Chamberlain: 00:32:19 Right. Because that's so recent.

Winnie Frost: 00:32:20 Yeah. Yeah. And plus they had to pay on those transactions.

A. Chamberlain: 00:32:23 Right. That's right.

Sarah Heald: 00:32:24 Right.

Winnie Frost: 00:32:24 And you hear their, you know, this is their livelihoods, their small vendors. Yeah. Now, I agree. I think it was a very, very cumbersome process.

- A. Chamberlain: 00:32:32 Yeah. They weren't trying to make it easy for you. It's like I'm trying to do my job and you don't care if I'm trying to do my job, so what's it going to be?
- Winnie Frost: 00:32:39 Yeah, that's my point and I--
- A. Chamberlain: 00:32:42 It's like administration for administration's sake.
- Winnie Frost: 00:32:43 Sake. Right, right. Just to so they don't have to go, and I do remember myself even going to the head of the administration saying, "Can't we make this simpler and streamline this?" I mean these people need to get this work done, and it seemed like, are you speaking a foreign language?
- A. Chamberlain: 00:33:00 Yeah. They don't care. They're there for their own purposes, not yours.
- Sarah Heald: 00:33:04 The other thing, just to quickly insert that always struck me as touching actually when out in the field buying stuff, was when people realized you were buying for the National Park Service, they were so flattered.
- A. Chamberlain: 00:33:17 Yes.
- Sarah Heald: 00:33:18 And they would actually give reductions in price. You say, you know we're working, I know we're the federal government, but we're working on this budget and is that your best price? And they would, they were so tickled because they could turn around and say to somebody, they sold something to the National Park Service.
- Winnie Frost: 00:33:34 Yeah. And also that it was going to be exhibited possibly.
- Sarah Heald: 00:33:37 Yeah.
- Winnie Frost: 00:33:37 And especially if they have an interest in that artifact--
- A. Chamberlain: 00:33:40 A lot of them do.
- New Speaker: 00:33:40 --they have a love for it they wanted, they'd like to see it out there, and say it.
- A. Chamberlain: 00:33:47 And a lot of history anyway.
- Winnie Frost: 00:33:48 Right.

Sarah Heald: 00:33:48 Right.

A. Chamberlain: 00:33:50 And they say, well when is, where is it? When did they open? It wasn't open yet. "All right. Well, I want to know because I want to go there when it's open." You're right. They would get really psyched about it; it was cool.

Winnie Frost: 00:33:59 That's a really good point. So that was your good defense to get the artifact.

A. Chamberlain: 00:34:05 Yeah.

Winnie Frost: 00:34:05 But still, I mean when I think about the challenges of your job with this administrative hassle after you've spent so much time researching things, and then you've got this massive shopping list. I hate that 10 things I have to go to the grocery store and buy and find.

A. Chamberlain: 00:34:20 Yeah.

Winnie Frost: 00:34:21 And I went with Mary and Carol, a lot on a trip and I had the worst headache.

A. Chamberlain: 00:34:28 Yep.

Winnie Frost: 00:34:28 They were so wonderful, but they were all over the place buying things and they had, I don't know, 20-30 pages of things.

Sarah Heald: 00:34:35 Yeah, you've got pages.

Winnie Frost: 00:34:36 How can you do this? You guys going out, you're dealing with different centuries, you have this massive list of stuff.

A. Chamberlain: 00:34:44 Right.

Winnie Frost: 00:34:44 And you got a limited amount of time to buy it. It's like you know the door opened at midnight and people started rushing in and buying stuff.

Sarah Heald: 00:34:52 And you have to get the right thing.

Winnie Frost: 00:34:53 And you have to get the right thing.

A. Chamberlain: 00:34:54 And if it's a group trip, you've also got everybody else's list.

Winnie Frost: 00:34:58 You got everybody. Oh my God.

A. Chamberlain: 00:34:59 You can't memorize it.

Winnie Frost: 00:35:00 No, and you may not even know that particular story well enough to know the specifics of what that thing is.

A. Chamberlain: 00:35:08 But if you remember something from that list and say, "Oh she needs a lantern for this site." And you may not know if it's right, but there's a lantern, "Carol, is that the right one or not?"

Sarah Heald: 00:35:18 Right. So you're shopping together.

Winnie Frost: 00:35:20 Yes.

Sarah Heald: 00:35:21 As well as authenticating things we could help each other out with "is this the right piece" because usually the dealer would know, but you had to suss out whether the dealer really knew.

A. Chamberlain: 00:35:30 Right. And sometimes they didn't.

Winnie Frost: 00:35:32 And then you had the beauty of that old dumpy van, that you drive it around in and then tried to cram all this stuff in it?

Sarah Heald: 00:35:41 Right.

Winnie Frost: 00:35:42 I mean the logistic work does really crack me up, when I went on this one day trip, I said, "Oh my God, I have the most respect for these people."

A. Chamberlain: 00:35:50 The vans got less dumpy over time.

Sarah Heald: 00:35:55 But it got smaller too.

Winnie Frost: 00:35:57 Yeah, but I thought that I want a nicer one, but it didn't have as much room in it.

Sarah Heald: 00:36:01 Right. They didn't get smaller, the minivans.

Winnie Frost: 00:36:02 They took out the seats, I think, or something.

- A. Chamberlain: 00:36:04 Yeah. We always took the seats out and we always tried to keep one full size van so that we could--so you'd get as much as you could.
- Sarah Heald: 00:36:13 Yeah.
- A. Chamberlain: 00:36:13 And I remember once coming back from Brimfield with, I think there were three of us in the van, the seats had been taken, there was one seat, and they had to turn it sideways so it couldn't be left in the position. It had to be turned sideways so that furniture could be set in there. And then I think John Brucksch was sitting on that and it was a certain, it wasn't tied down or anything.
- Winnie Frost: 00:36:31 Oh, my God.
- A. Chamberlain: 00:36:32 It's just up against the window of the van, and then once when we were doing and we did sort of work on teams, like when we were working on the History House at Fort Wadsworth in Staten Island, Mary and I were working on that and I think Bill was along for one trip, and maybe you were on--
- Sarah Heald: 00:36:48 No, I wasn't on that.
- A. Chamberlain: 00:36:50 And we got a U-Haul van.
- Winnie Frost: 00:36:52 Oh, you got a U-Haul.
- A. Chamberlain: 00:36:54 We had the furnishings van, drove that up there, got a U-Haul van, I think we got it in Massachusetts, left it at the hotel and then would go over to Brimfield with the furnishings van, load it up, bring it back and put it into the bigger U-Haul van.
- Winnie Frost: 00:37:10 Wow.
- A. Chamberlain: 00:37:10 And then Bill drove that to Fort Wadsworth, and I think I drove the other one down. And because Fort Wadsworth, they wanted to do an officer's quarters, not military. It's a house and you know there were some military--
- Winnie Frost: 00:37:27 Is that in Staten Island?
- A. Chamberlain: 00:37:28 Yeah.

Winnie Frost: 00:37:29 Yeah.

A. Chamberlain: 00:37:29 There were military items in it, but it was mostly just late 19th century furnishings, like you'd have in anybody's house.

Winnie Frost: 00:37:37 Yeah.

A. Chamberlain: 00:37:38 And there were a lot of civilian furnishings because these were people living with their families in a house, so it might reflect, there might be Indian artifacts or something that reflected time out West. And we tried to do things like that, but it wasn't based on a particular person or a particular inventory. It was probably the freest one we ever had where we could sort of run with it, because that's what the park wanted. And so you could go to a place like Brimfield and just buy.

Winnie Frost: 00:38:03 Stuff.

A. Chamberlain: 00:38:04 You could just buy, buy, buy, buy, buy, buy.

Sarah Heald: 00:38:07 You knew on that trip that you had big stuff you needed to buy in, that you'd be able to fill in two vehicles.

Winnie Frost: 00:38:13 Yeah. Yeah.

A. Chamberlain: 00:38:14 Because late 19th century stuff was all over the place.

Winnie Frost: 00:38:15 Just keeping all that paperwork with you on your trip. Then you come back and do your travel voucher. Oh, my goodness.

A. Chamberlain: 00:38:20 All receipts for all the stuff.

Sarah Heald: 00:38:22 All the receipts for the registrar's office. Yeah.

Winnie Frost: 00:38:25 Yes. Oh my God. And then everything that you just brought up a good point. Once you returned in this van, or this U-Haul truck, or whatever you're coming back in, you had to go straight to the registrar's office. Right?

A. Chamberlain: 00:38:37 Usually.

Winnie Frost: 00:38:37 And then you have to have that all registered there.

A. Chamberlain: 00:38:42 Yes. Now with that one trip to Fort Wadsworth--

Winnie Frost: 00:38:44 Right.

A. Chamberlain: 00:38:44 That was different because we drove directly to Fort Wadsworth and unloaded all the stuff.

Winnie Frost: 00:38:48 Oh, that's right you did.

A. Chamberlain: 00:38:49 And then I think we had to do.

Sarah Heald: 00:38:51 Did you do the paperwork from there, or something?

A. Chamberlain: 00:38:53 I think we did the paperwork from there, but Alice [Newton] went to that site too. Alice made a trip to that site when we were doing the installation, and she may have done some of that paperwork at that time.

Winnie Frost: 00:39:04 But now you're doing paperwork because it's Harpers Ferry that now owns this stuff.

A. Chamberlain: 00:39:08 It is until you transfer it to the park. Well, we never really own it because we're spending their money on it.

Winnie Frost: 00:39:14 Right.

A. Chamberlain: 00:39:14 But, yes. It has to be transferred to them.

Winnie Frost: 00:39:16 And then who takes care of that administrative nightmare to start off with?

Sarah Heald: 00:39:22 Yeah. So, things would come to the registrar in Harpers Ferry Center and be checked in and some things needed conservation work. Right?

A. Chamberlain: 00:39:31 Right.

Sarah Heald: 00:39:31 And then, but meanwhile it was usually an installation that had an opening date, and so the park didn't want the stuff to trickle in. They want to have it all at once. So after all that, say there's an installation date of, I don't know, what's the big installation that you did Andy? I can't basically besides Wadsworth, there may be Wadsworth's--no, they took stuff there.

- A. Chamberlain: 00:39:53 Oh, there were a couple of big ones. Dayton was a big one. Tuskegee was a big one, because they were those ones where you're trying to coordinate with a formal exhibit installation going on at the same time where they want everything finished at once.
- Winnie Frost: 00:40:06 Yes.
- Sarah Heald: 00:40:06 Would you talk about the Tuskegee one, because you, and Mary, and Carol did most of that, right?
- A. Chamberlain: 00:40:10 We all worked on that. Yeah.
- Sarah Heald: 00:40:12 And, and so was stuff packed and shipped down there and you guys by the registrar's office, or were you guys-
- A. Chamberlain: 00:40:20 Yeah, I think that's it.
- Sarah Heald: 00:40:21 Okay.
- Winnie Frost: 00:40:22 So when stuff comes in, they have the registrar's office has them a place to store it, and then you review it to make sure--Who do you work with to say, "Hey, I need conservation, Theresa, I need you to do some on this, or Alice, or what." Who coordinates that component of this massive job when it arrives at the--
- A. Chamberlain: 00:40:45 I mean that's a judgment call you make when you buy the object, because you don't want to get too involved in expensive conservation work, but sometimes you have to because the object is perfect, but you need it. I mean it's not perfect, but you need it.
- Winnie Frost: 00:40:56 Yeah.
- A. Chamberlain: 00:40:56 And I guess I don't remember if on the form, if there was ever a spot to put--
- Sarah Heald: 00:41:02 Yeah, I don't remember that either, if the conservators came in and assessed, and obviously anything that was clear to us, we would just, you'd just let the conservator know once you got back that this was something, and they were often working on park collections and doing conservation work on them at the same time.
- A. Chamberlain: 00:41:18 Right.

Sarah Heald: 00:41:19 That would all get returned for the installation at the same time.

Winnie Frost: 00:41:22 Wow. It's amazing. Amazing. Yeah. It's like a ballet, you know. Goodness gracious.

A. Chamberlain: 00:41:30 A lot of moving parts.

Winnie Frost: 00:41:31 Yeah, a lot of moving parts. So, I'm sure Lowell seemed simple compared--

A. Chamberlain: 00:41:39 Paperwork wise it did. Yeah.

Winnie Frost: 00:41:41 Coming to Harpers Ferry and supposedly they had a system, but it still was pretty cumbersome.

A. Chamberlain: 00:41:46 Yeah. And if you were on a trip, say you're going to Brimfield, you've got a group of people, everybody's got your list now you may have lists for more than one project, because back in the old days we did and it made it worth going to someplace that far away.

Winnie Frost: 00:41:59 Yes.

A. Chamberlain: 00:41:59 If you could take a bunch of people and each person had more than one project, you're getting the most bang for your buck that way. So you might come back and not only have to sort out all these objects according to where they're going, but then your time. Your time--all is spent. How many hours in that eight hours did I spend on this project, and how many of those eight hours that I spend on that project? You'd have to kind of sort that out as well, and then do your travel.

Winnie Frost: 00:42:23 And then of course, we didn't have the most sophisticated systems or tools to help you achieve that end.

A. Chamberlain: 00:42:31 Right.

Sarah Heald: 00:42:32 Right.

Winnie Frost: 00:42:32 So, you know, your administrative time could be extensive.

A. Chamberlain: 00:42:37 Yeah. Time sheets, doing time sheets was always awful.

Winnie Frost: 00:42:41 It's lovely not to do those anymore, isn't it?

- A. Chamberlain: 00:42:44 Oh, you don't have to do one? I do one every day.
- Sarah Heald: 00:42:48 Andy, how about contracting for things? Acquiring, getting a piece of furniture upholstered, buying the fabric for that, or custom wallpaper. Any production stuff like that.
- A. Chamberlain: 00:43:00 Wallpaper was of course always a nightmare as we know. Furniture, you could always find somebody building high-style furniture, or somebody building Windsor chairs, that kind of stuff. It was when you got to the weird things that it was hard to find specialists.
- Winnie Frost: 00:43:18 Yeah.
- A. Chamberlain: 00:43:19 When we did, where was the site that needed those army lamps? Was it the one Carol was working on at Texas?
- Sarah Heald: 00:43:28 Fort Davis?
- A. Chamberlain: 00:43:30 Fort Davis.
- Sarah Heald: 00:43:31 Yeah. Fort Davis.
- A. Chamberlain: 00:43:31 I think it's Fort Davis. We had these very specific army lamps that were used in quarters. There was a kerosene lamp, but it wasn't just kerosene lamp, it was specific army design, and I think Jerry Green, was it Jerry Green that had done that? Or was that the park?
- Sarah Heald: 00:43:50 I'm not sure.
- A. Chamberlain: 00:43:51 Jerry had done research on another couple of other projects, military projects, and he was real expert in that period. But yeah, the drawing is right there. You can't use any regular oil lamp. It's got to be that oil lamp, because that was the specified oil lamp in 1880, whenever that was. We found one guy who would make those lamps, and he charged us a gazillion dollars to do it, but boy they were gorgeous.
- Winnie Frost: 00:44:16 Wow.
- A. Chamberlain: 00:44:16 And they had to be electrified too.
- Winnie Frost: 00:44:19 Oh, my goodness.
- A. Chamberlain: 00:44:20 So sometimes there was only one person.

- Winnie Frost: 00:44:22 Yeah.
- A. Chamberlain: 00:44:22 And there was one person that was really good at gas lighting. He did Dayton for us. And you know, sometimes there's only one person, you got to find that person, and then sometimes you need something really weird and nobody wants to make it. So that's how I knew about Bob Kelly because he had built, they--for Hopewell Furnace, they had these benches where the guys do it, because they did stove plates.
- Winnie Frost: 00:44:48 Yeah sure.
- A. Chamberlain: 00:44:48 You might have a stove door and you make a sand mold for it, and each of these guys had a bench, and they had some old benches and we needed somebody to reproduce them. And some of the furniture makers, they don't want to mess with something like that because they're very crude. And Bob said he'd do that. So he made those, and then when we were doing Dayton we had a press--a lot of the jobbing presses then were run with a treadmill on a flywheel, and a plate that came down and up and down probably good at cutting your hand off, because you have to put a piece of paper and then come down, go back up and ink itself. Put another piece of paper and it would come down, and then by the time you got the flywheel going, it was kind of operating itself. So it had this rhythm.
- A. Chamberlain: 00:45:28 But so we had one of those presses we got, but Orville Wright had built a cylinder press. He and a friend had built a cylinder press years earlier, and they probably weren't using it. So let's put a cylinder press in there. We don't have a cylinder press, we don't even know exactly what the thing would have looked like, especially a homemade cylinder press.
- A. Chamberlain: 00:45:48 So you don't want to go out on a limb with something like that. So I talked to Bob, and we built this thing, or he built this thing, it had 4x4 legs, and he had like a cardboard sonotube, or two of the things that they cast the concrete in for a cylinder.
- Sarah Heald: 00:46:03 Right.

A. Chamberlain: 00:46:04 So it didn't look like a press, but what we did, we threw a muslin drop cloth over it like people used to do with their furniture, and put it in a back room.

Winnie Frost: 00:46:13 Yeah.

A. Chamberlain: 00:46:13 So you got the impression of a press without having to have the detail of something that you didn't know exactly what it looked like.

Winnie Frost: 00:46:20 Well that's pretty darn clever.

Sarah Heald: 00:46:23 That's a very good solution.

Winnie Frost: 00:46:24 Yeah.

Sarah Heald: 00:46:24 I never knew that.

Sarah Heald: 00:46:25 How about--speaking of Dayton and thinking about all of your stores, Andy--labels and packaging, because that became something, the tea containers, coffee containers.

Winnie Frost: 00:46:37 Tomatoes, tomato soup or something.

Sarah Heald: 00:46:39 Progresso cans.

Winnie Frost: 00:46:40 Yeah.

A. Chamberlain: 00:46:40 A lot of tomato soup, a lot of canned tomatoes.

Winnie Frost: 00:46:43 Yeah, canned tomatoes. You had some gorgeous labels.

A. Chamberlain: 00:46:47 Yes. They were all from the National Archives, all from the patent label collection, which had been up at Conservation until Martin Burke got rid of it, sent it to the National Archives, which already had copies. This was like a whole separate copy of them, and I don't even know how we got it.

Sarah Heald: 00:47:04 I'm not sure.

A. Chamberlain: 00:47:05 And I don't remember.

Sarah Heald: 00:47:05 Somebody collected.

Winnie Frost: 00:47:06 And I think it was so cool how you put the word out to everybody. "Hey, bring in your Progresso empty cans, because we have to make all these labels that we have to--"

A. Chamberlain: 00:47:17 That's right. And they had to be only certain sizes.

Winnie Frost: 00:47:19 I saw it and thought, "That's so cool."

A. Chamberlain: 00:47:20 Only certain sizes. Yeah.

Winnie Frost: 00:47:23 Yeah. Certain sizes, and it seemed like the--

A. Chamberlain: 00:47:23 Yeah.

Winnie Frost: 00:47:23 That, that worked.

A. Chamberlain: 00:47:23 Right.

Sarah Heald: 00:47:26 The labels fit on those, yup.

Winnie Frost: 00:47:29 Yeah. And the cutting of the corners and making things happen where you guys were so ingenious about, you can't get it in a book.

A. Chamberlain: 00:47:36 Right. It's something like that---

Winnie Frost: 00:47:37 It's not in the procedures.

A. Chamberlain: 00:47:39 Something like Dayton was almost a stage set because--

Winnie Frost: 00:47:42 Yes.

A. Chamberlain: 00:47:42 You know the cans weren't exactly like cans today, they're made differently. But the labels were correct because they were scanned from original labels of the period.

Winnie Frost: 00:47:52 Right. That was beautiful.

A. Chamberlain: 00:47:52 And every one was dated, every single one of those in the patent label questions was dated with the application documents with it, so you knew what date it was, and then making cereal boxes out of pieces of foam covered with paper. Because if they were patenting a box label, they'd take a whole box, and they'd flatten it, they--not a box that had been glued together yet--and it was in there with the application.

- A. Chamberlain: 00:48:19 So if you took enough scans of it, then you could just print it out on paper and assemble it as if it was a box.
- Winnie Frost: 00:48:26 Well, I could see you guys assembling over there in the back of the Harpers Ferry Center there, third floor, back there.
- A. Chamberlain: 00:48:34 That was a lot of fun. That was our biggest store.
- Winnie Frost: 00:48:36 Yeah. Yeah.
- A. Chamberlain: 00:48:37 A guy who had worked for--had he worked for conservation? No, he'd worked for, I think he'd worked for the training center, the architectural training center that's in Frederick.
- Winnie Frost: 00:48:48 Oh, Williamsport.
- Sarah Heald: 00:48:49 Williamsport.
- A. Chamberlain: 00:48:50 He had gone out to the West Coast and was working on his own and he bid on building the shelving for the Dayton store, and he built that and sent it out, knocked down the shelving and the counter so we can reassemble it onsite.
- A. Chamberlain: 00:49:05 Found a cash register guy who had the right cash register, went to Heinz in Pittsburgh, and got Heinz Labels because there was a whole Heinz display there.
- Sarah Heald: 00:49:15 So we had historic photographs.
- A. Chamberlain: 00:49:17 Right.
- Sarah Heald: 00:49:18 You said Heinz. So you knew about their display, and what-
- A. Chamberlain: 00:49:21 Right, there were plate photos of that. They were taken by National Cash Register and the first one is a shot right down the store, which is a long narrow store. And at the back is the guy with the cash register, and it was one of those top of the line ones, where the--it's a bronze cash register but sitting on the oak base, it's this high with all the drawers in it, one for each cashier.
- Winnie Frost: 00:49:43 Oh, wow.

- A. Chamberlain: 00:49:43 And so apparently National Cash Register, the systems data company, they must've gotten--had sent a photographer out to photograph their machines as they were installed in the store. That's the only thing I could think of. But there was something, I can't remember what clued us in first about the Heinz stuff, whether something appeared just in the corner, and these glass plates were so good, you could read the brand names on the cans going fairly far back into the store.
- Winnie Frost: 00:50:13 Wow.
- A. Chamberlain: 00:50:14 Cameras were so good at capturing that level of detail. But then a second photograph turned up, and the guy had turned to the left, and this whole wall was all Heinz. There was a tasting display. They must've been trying to push the brand out because there was a little sign there, and it said Heinz 57 varieties on a brass stand. And it was all of these different Heinz products, and then on the shelf behind was all Heinz products. And then there were, there were bowls that had crackers and pickles and things so you could actually walk in and taste the Heinz products.
- A. Chamberlain: 00:50:48 So we duplicated all that too. And the weird thing was this would have been 1904.
- Sarah Heald: 00:50:53 Yeah, it was early, very early twentieth century.
- A. Chamberlain: 00:50:58 Because the photographs were dated, I think it was '03 or '04; one of the two. Heinz wasn't using any one standard label. They had a label that had been patented very recently, but they were using some labels that went back to the 1880s. They were using them all at the same time. And that's so counter-intuitive to us today.
- Winnie Frost: 00:51:17 Yeah.
- A. Chamberlain: 00:51:18 And you could see it in their records. It's that, yeah, here's this label one. We use it here to here and here to here. And so we had to go out and get not just one label but all these different labels, and then they had to be for the same things that were in the display in the photograph, which was kind of difficult.
- Winnie Frost: 00:51:37 I think I remember you even show, did you make a big wall that-

Sarah Heald: 00:51:40 Yeah.

A. Chamberlain: 00:51:41 Yeah. We made--

Sarah Heald: 00:51:42 It was on the wall on the opposite side of Waysides.

A. Chamberlain: 00:51:43 The wall was all together.

Winnie Frost: 00:51:45 Yeah. I thought that was so cool. I remember you telling us about that.

Sarah Heald: 00:51:47 It was a mock-up.

A. Chamberlain: 00:51:49 It was my reference photo.

Winnie Frost: 00:51:50 Yeah. Yeah. That was a great--that was--and it looked good too.

A. Chamberlain: 00:51:52 Yeah it did.

Sarah Heald: 00:51:52 Because you had to figure out how many you had to make, fill the shelving to have it look like a fully stocked store.

A. Chamberlain: 00:52:00 And as it was we didn't have quite as much space to deal with as they did because the store was contracted a little bit, but we did and I think we've got most of it. I think I may have had to fake a couple of labels by taking the right label background, and then Photoshopping the right brand name, but there was nothing incorrect about it. It's just the right--

Winnie Frost: 00:52:18 But the precision to detail, to amazing detail, to be able to present something that's so nice, and accurate for the public to--or visitors to enjoy. It's quite the talent. And--

A. Chamberlain: 00:52:32 You got to have those contractors. I mean I can assemble cans and boxes, but--

Winnie Frost: 00:52:37 Yeah.

A. Chamberlain: 00:52:37 Like the spice, the tea tins where this big, the spice tins were smaller on the shelves above. The first photograph only showed these black tins. And some you could read a little bit of the--

Winnie Frost: 00:52:54 Label.

- A. Chamberlain: 00:52:55 The label on the lid that said oolong, or you know, whatever the type of tea was, the second photo was the Heinz photo. When you're looking straight on to the tins, it said, Frank Hale Fine Teas; it had all this decoration and everything around it. It only showed up in the second photo.
- A. Chamberlain: 00:53:15 So we found a contractor to make the tins, and I found General Graphics in Hagerstown; they made vinyl decals, and they installed them all--and this was so nice because he did, he was extrapolating from black and white photographs, so he didn't know exactly the colors, but they were done in gold, and red, and it's just gorgeous, and it looked dead on from the photo.
- Winnie Frost: 00:53:41 That is really--
- A. Chamberlain: 00:53:44 So when you can find people who can do that for you so much.
- Winnie Frost: 00:53:45 Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.
- A. Chamberlain: 00:53:46 Oh, I had to go someplace else that--auto body place to have the tins painted first because they had to be black, and then brought them back and had the details put on.
- Winnie Frost: 00:53:53 I think once in a while I think you would bring things in to show.
- A. Chamberlain: 00:53:58 Yeah. We would usually bring stuff [crosstalk].
- Sarah Heald: 00:54:01 We're coming through on a tour.
- Winnie Frost: 00:54:03 Yeah. Yeah.
- Sarah Heald: 00:54:03 To explain our process.
- Winnie Frost: 00:54:05 And maybe there was a drum one time or something.
- A. Chamberlain: 00:54:07 There probably was.
- Winnie Frost: 00:54:08 It is the different things. So it to me from listening to this, it sounds like it was very fulfilling for you.
- A. Chamberlain: 00:54:13 Oh that was.

Winnie Frost: 00:54:15 That component of your job.

A. Chamberlain: 00:54:16 That was. Yeah. That was it. I think that's where I finally felt that I was doing what I was--it meant, you know "meant"--to do.

Winnie Frost: 00:54:23 Finally, after all these years and then some, and then--

A. Chamberlain: 00:54:25 I could make stuff.

Winnie Frost: 00:54:27 Perfect leading, then we go through whatever, we went through some kind of reorganization, Harpers Ferry Center, Aiming for Excellence.

A. Chamberlain: 00:54:39 Aiming for Excellence and the regional--

Winnie Frost: 00:54:42 Alignment.

A. Chamberlain: 00:54:43 Alignments and all of that, and the drawing up of furnishings work and going into exhibits. And I remember Janice [Wheeler] trying to fit everybody into a niche.

Winnie Frost: 00:54:51 Janice had like a hundred people that worked for her.

A. Chamberlain: 00:54:54 Yeah. She's tried to find them--

Winnie Frost: 00:54:57 All she did was run around with a piece of paper and everybody's name trying to find out what they were doing. She was like, this little the Ever-Ready battery. But when we went through the Aiming for Excellence, did you end up in Melissa's shop? Were you in production, where were you?

A. Chamberlain: 00:55:18 I was in exhibit production at that point.

Winnie Frost: 00:55:21 Was that with Melissa?

A. Chamberlain: 00:55:23 Who was I working for, I was working for PJ [Lewis]?

Sarah Heald: 00:55:25 PJ trained you basically. Right?

A. Chamberlain: 00:55:28 Yeah, I think it was PJ right from the beginning because he had, somebody had to teach me how to estimate for exhibit production, and how to read the drawings and all that the fabricators were coming up with, and do the government estimate for fabrication because I had never done anything

like that before. And so PJ walked me through all that. And I would be in his office all the time, like, "PJ, how do I do this?"

- Winnie Frost: 00:55:54 I know I was right next to you. I know you, I learned stuff by osmosis.
- A. Chamberlain: 00:56:01 Well, the interesting thing was--
- Winnie Frost: 00:56:04 You were always in his office.
- A. Chamberlain: 00:56:05 Yes, I was. I needed to be though, because I had nobody else to train me.
- Winnie Frost: 00:56:08 He was a great trainer. He was very, very down to earth and specific.
- A. Chamberlain: 00:56:12 Yes. And like in Furnishings it's like, well how much is this worth? I need one of these, what's it worth? In Exhibits, you're building something out of material. So it's like, "Okay, I need tin ware for this, this, and this. I need Formica, I need plywood." So you can't go through and say, "Oh, what's that exhibit going to cost? What that's exhibit going to cost because they're built out of the same stuff."
- A. Chamberlain: 00:56:39 So it's like okay, if I deconstruct the exhibit--and this is what PJ taught me, because I never would've thought of this (if I deconstruct this exhibit into materials).
- Winnie Frost: 00:56:47 Elements. Oh, okay.
- A. Chamberlain: 00:56:49 I'll say, okay well if I get X number of exhibit islands, each one of them has X number of square feet of plywood in it, times the number of exhibit islands and plywood comes in a four by eight sheet normally, how many sheets plywood do I need? Put that down, look up the cost of it. Write that down. We need plexiglass to build vitrines. Well, okay we're not pricing the plexiglass because we're going to contract, subcontract the vitrine probably to somebody else. So that one we're not going to base it on the material costs, we're going to base it on how much it costs to build the vitrine. Okay. How many do you need? What size are they? Put that down.

- A. Chamberlain: 00:57:29 And it's the same with everything else. Every kind of material that goes into the thing.
- Winnie Frost: 00:57:33 But you were with PJ, when we went into the project management system, is that correct? It didn't, wasn't he your project manager, right?
- A. Chamberlain: 00:57:42 Our project manager. Yeah.
- Winnie Frost: 00:57:42 But there was an interim before that, that is very, very foggy for me.
- Sarah Heald: 00:57:49 Yeah. It's foggy for me too.
- Winnie Frost: 00:57:51 If it was for Aiming for Excellence and it seemed like that's when Janice came in and the guy in the theater, the AV department came in and didn't they make John in charge of all the writers, and there was Janice the designers. And--
- Sarah Heald: 00:58:07 There was a period there when we were all Historic Furnishings still, and you're right Winnie, because there was a point where Melissa Cronyn was John Brucksch's supervisor. We still work for John, but John had a bunch of people besides Historic Furnishings. It's at that point is what Historic Furnishings sort of became the, I don't know what, a different sort of appendage, and you started transitioning to one of the other divisions before any of the rest of us in Historic Furnishings did.
- Winnie Frost: 00:58:38 It seemed like, the three women were doing more writing.
- Sarah Heald: 00:58:43 Yeah. But I started doing some waysides then.
- Winnie Frost: 00:58:47 You did.
- Sarah Heald: 00:58:47 And I did the Erie Canal wayside with Betsy [Ehrlich], but John Demer was still there, so he was doing more reports. But I think because Andy did so much production and not so much writing is why you started segueing sooner.
- A. Chamberlain: 00:59:02 Maybe. Yeah.
- Winnie Frost: 00:59:03 But your little group, which was always extremely tight and incredible teamwork to help each other out. And you know, I was always very impressed by that. And you're a small

group, but they, it's almost like they didn't know how to get you somewhere, get you in one of those little holes.

- A. Chamberlain: 00:59:24 Right. Yeah.
- Winnie Frost: 00:59:27 You know.
- A. Chamberlain: 00:59:27 Yeah. That's kind of fair.
- Winnie Frost: 00:59:28 And it was a challenge. So consequently, and then I think that, that really--operation wasn't really working, Melissa, she wasn't a production person. So I think it does--
- A. Chamberlain: 00:59:41 There's a lot that could be said about that whole period; most of it not good.
- Winnie Frost: 00:59:45 That wasn't just, well I got like Jay and I were saying was like, you know, moving the chairs around the Titanic.
- A. Chamberlain: 00:59:49 Yeah.
- Winnie Frost: 00:59:49 And so that going to save anything.
- A. Chamberlain: 00:59:56 Yeah.
- Winnie Frost: 00:59:56 So then I think there was so much feedback and frustration that, and then of course we had this team of people right that came in, they were going to organize us. That was a bunch of, about three, four years of total confusion.
- A. Chamberlain: 01:00:12 Yeah. They tried that like three different times, didn't they?
- Winnie Frost: 01:00:13 Yes.
- A. Chamberlain: 01:00:14 Before they finally got that.
- Winnie Frost: 01:00:15 Yes. I was in workflow management.
- A. Chamberlain: 01:00:18 Yeah.
- Winnie Frost: 01:00:18 So I'd gotten kind of removed from everybody actually doing things. But then we moved into the project management because there was this idea that each region wanted to have a direct connection.
- A. Chamberlain: 01:00:33 And that wasn't all bad.

Winnie Frost: 01:00:34 And I think that worked a lot better because this front door idea--call the front desk, and we had a lady that knew nothing about answering the phone. That moving into the project management where you got intimate with your region seems to be maybe a better way.

A. Chamberlain: 01:00:50 I think so, and if you had a good project manager like--

Winnie Frost: 01:00:53 Oh, PJ was a great one.

A. Chamberlain: 01:00:54 Justin [Radford] was good at beating the bushes and PJ was good. Northeast.

Winnie Frost: 01:01:01 Oh, Michael Paskowsky.

A. Chamberlain: 01:01:03 Michael and then Kurt [Gaul].

Winnie Frost: 01:01:05 Kurt. Yes.

A. Chamberlain: 01:01:06 They were all good. Yeah.

Winnie Frost: 01:01:07 You didn't say my name. No.

A. Chamberlain: 01:01:08 No, you weren't. Who's the project manager before you?

Sarah Heald: 01:01:13 Carol worked for Winnie.

Winnie Frost: 01:01:18 How would you?

A. Chamberlain: 01:01:18 I don't remember everything that happened.

Winnie Frost: 01:01:18 I was sitting right next to PJ, and I was project manager. It was on project management row.

Sarah Heald: 01:01:20 He didn't work for you.

A. Chamberlain: 01:01:23 A very confusing period. So a lot of things changed there. I don't remember them all.

Winnie Frost: 01:01:30 It did but I thought the good part was to have teams, and those teams brought different disciplines.

A. Chamberlain: 01:01:36 Yes. Yeah.

Winnie Frost: 01:01:36 So you had a production discipline as well as historic furnishings, and then--

A. Chamberlain: 01:01:41 Right. You'd have an AV person.

Winnie Frost: 01:01:43 Yeah, yeah. We even had an AV tech we had, you had Ed Boutte.

A. Chamberlain: 01:01:49 Right, right.

Winnie Frost: 01:01:50 Who's always a trip to go and trip with.

A. Chamberlain: 01:01:53 I never travelled with him.

Winnie Frost: 01:01:54 You never did?

A. Chamberlain: 01:01:55 No.

Winnie Frost: 01:01:55 Oh, I did. Oh, my goodness, are you still breathing? [Reference to Boutte's cigar smoking?] But I thought the idea, that it was a good concept, I don't know if everybody liked where they might've ended up, but--

A. Chamberlain: 01:02:12 No. You're right the concept was good, then those people started to retire, and nobody was hired, then your team dissolved.

Winnie Frost: 01:02:19 Yes. Your team.

A. Chamberlain: 01:02:19 By the time I retired, my team was like two people.

Winnie Frost: 01:02:24 Yeah. Did you even have a project manager?

A. Chamberlain: 01:02:29 I worked for Janice.

Sarah Heald: 01:02:29 You had Toni [Dufficy] at the end.

A. Chamberlain: 01:02:29 Toni. Right.

Sarah Heald: 01:02:29 When PJ retired.

A. Chamberlain: 01:02:29 Right worked for Toni.

Sarah Heald: 01:02:31 You worked for Janice for a while.

A. Chamberlain: 01:02:35 Had Janice.

Sarah Heald: 01:02:36 And then did Toni...

A. Chamberlain: 01:02:37 And then?

Winnie Frost: 01:02:38 Who's Toni?

A. Chamberlain: 01:02:39 Toni Dufficy.

Winnie Frost: 01:02:40 Oh, Toni Dufficy.

Sarah Heald: 01:02:41 Who had been an LRIP.

Winnie Frost: 01:02:42 Sure, sure. I know who she is.

Sarah Heald: 01:02:44 But then had gone to Gettysburg but then came back and as a project manager.

A. Chamberlain: 01:02:48 But then a project manager again. Right.

Sarah Heald: 01:02:50 So then did you have somebody else acting at the end when you retired? Maybe it was Janice at the end. Was she your supervisor?

A. Chamberlain: 01:02:56 I think it was Janice again at the end. Like I said, this was a confusing 10 years.

Winnie Frost: 01:03:04 That will poor Janice. You know, she was always like the fifth wheel.

Sarah Heald: 01:03:08 The closer.

Winnie Frost: 01:03:09 They put her--she got all the stuff that was left over poor thing.

A. Chamberlain: 01:03:14 Yeah, I guess, yeah, they dumped a lot of stuff on her.

Sarah Heald: 01:03:17 So for purposes of time--

Winnie Frost: 01:03:19 Yes.

Sarah Heald: 01:03:20 Since you described PJ's training and that, how about speaking to when you were doing these exhibits contracts and I think without backtracking, but just to maybe inform your comments now. I think one part of the HFC transition that we've left out is when the Center started moving more towards doing all contract work, because HFC originally was conceived of as a place for all this work would be done in house.

- Sarah Heald: 01:03:49 So now in your last 10 years at HFC, you're still doing some furnishings production, which we've talked about, but you were doing more and more exhibits fabrication. So can you speak to some of those projects and then the nature of doing that once you've been trained up by PJ, how did it work and what projects stand out against this.
- Winnie Frost: 01:04:12 He kept going to PJ.
- Sarah Heald: 01:04:13 But PJ retired eventually, I remember that.
- A. Chamberlain: 01:04:15 Yeah.
- Winnie Frost: 01:04:17 He did. But you had another few years after--PJ retired before I did.
- A. Chamberlain: 01:04:21 Yeah. And there were a lot of visitors' centers in that period. There were a couple of projects like Olmstead that were more of a, well it's a house, but it wasn't, they decided not to furnish it, so it became an exhibit. But there were a lot of visitor centers, a lot of visitor centers that are rehab [projects], a lot of forts. Because then by then I'm Southeast.
- Winnie Frost: 01:04:47 Yes.
- A. Chamberlain: 01:04:47 There was a lot of forts and--
- Winnie Frost: 01:04:49 And so let me just share regarding this reorganization project management approach by region, was that part of the mission, as Sarah said, was to take these specialties, these people that all these specialties for them to oversee contracts and contractors would do the work. So you pretty much now have really moved away.
- A. Chamberlain: 01:05:12 Oh, yeah.
- Winnie Frost: 01:05:13 From where you started when you arrived, where it was so organized and you knew what to do to this totally new level and you had to constantly get your COR training, otherwise you're out the door.
- A. Chamberlain: 01:05:24 Right, right. Yeah. So that was, anyway, it was interesting, but it wasn't as gratifying as doing the work yourself because you're just basically watching somebody else do the work and making sure that they're doing it right. And

that they're getting paid, and yeah, it had its good and it had its bad because there's always something that the park had an issue with and it's like, well, we discussed this before, and we've signed off on this. You can't change that text now because it's already been, you know, everything's been set. And then something screws up anyway and something gets printed incorrectly and it's nobody's fault, but it's going to be done over. And there's all these little things that keep showing up. It's like, "oh, we thought this door was going to open this direction but instead it opens that direction," and little things like that. But by the time you get down to the very end of production, you've hoped they've all been worked out, but there's still the little things that keep cropping up.

- A. Chamberlain: 01:06:22 And then you'd go to the final inspection with somebody from the park, and most of it is okay, but then there's this and this, and this, and they've got to fix that before it gets shipped to the park. And then you've got to oversee the installation and hopefully that all goes okay. And then somebody from the park says, "Oh, I didn't know that was going to go there. I thought it was going to go here." And you know, and there's just so many, even though you think you've got everything all nailed down through all these discussions, there's just so many--
- Winnie Frost: 01:06:50 Details.
- A. Chamberlain: 01:06:51 Details and so many chances for something to be just a little bit off. It's like, "Oh, we didn't know the alligator's eyes were going to look like that." They built an alligator, for Everglades. And "well you signed off on it." I don't know what an alligator's eyes look like. You're supposed to be the experts and then they see it. "Oh the alligator's eyes don't really look like that." And then it's like, well I got a contractor here. He wants his subcontractor; he wants to get paid for his alligator. So I need to know if you're going to change the alli--and the contract is.
- Winnie Frost: 01:07:28 Do you know how you sound?
- A. Chamberlain: 01:07:30 I don't know, I can't get the eyes of the alligator at this point because it's all done. Can we paint them or--?
- Winnie Frost: 01:07:35 And all you had to have happen with this alligator thing is somebody left the park and the new person came in.

Sarah Heald: 01:07:43 And they had a different idea.

Winnie Frost: 01:07:46 And they have a different idea about the alligator's eyes.

A. Chamberlain: 01:07:50 Well, and that happens too, yeah.

Winnie Frost: 01:07:54 And then finally you got to bring the project manager in who says, "Do you have money so that we can make this change?"

A. Chamberlain: 01:07:59 Right, right. And there's some little detail. It's like, "Well, here's the thing that has the interactive, it has the seashells that people can pick the seashells out. Well, how many seashells was the contractor supposed to provide?" It's not in the document. I don't know how the hell how many seashells they're supposed to provide.

Winnie Frost: 01:08:20 How many seashells on the seashore? Okay. Got it. Sorry, we're trying to be serious.

A. Chamberlain: 01:08:27 But it's that and it's that kind of stuff, and you're like, six hours away from being done and trying to pack this thing up and go home.

Winnie Frost: 01:08:34 And go home.

A. Chamberlain: 01:08:35 And there's something like that.

Winnie Frost: 01:08:38 And you're staying in probably a really fun spot.

A. Chamberlain: 01:08:40 Yeah. Yeah.

Winnie Frost: 01:08:42 A lot of these places are nowheresville and you got to go find yourself a little place, or the best is if you get to stay in park housing.

A. Chamberlain: 01:08:50 Oh, God.

Winnie Frost: 01:08:50 And it's rodent infested or in tents.

A. Chamberlain: 01:08:56 Done that. Done that.

Winnie Frost: 01:08:56 If you don't, we've tried all.

Sarah Heald: 01:08:56 Wild mountain lions in the area, in a remote area.

Winnie Frost: 01:09:00 Yeah, in the remote area.

Sarah Heald: 01:09:01 That happened to Abby for one of the Jewel Cave install.

Winnie Frost: 01:09:05 Oh my God. Well, there were a lot of adventures in the Park Service.

A. Chamberlain: 01:09:09 There are.

Winnie Frost: 01:09:12 Do you have anybody that stands out that you really admired and you really tried to learn a lot from?

A. Chamberlain: 01:09:19 In the Park Service?

Winnie Frost: 01:09:20 Yeah. In the Park Service. I know you admired your dad, but can we get beyond that?

A. Chamberlain: 01:09:28 My parents were the ones that said you better--

Winnie Frost: 01:09:33 Get a job.

A. Chamberlain: 01:09:34 When they realized there wasn't going to be a teacher and I wasn't going to be a fine artist, my dad who worked for the government and was on a government pension said, "You should work for the government."

Winnie Frost: 01:09:43 You can always work for the government.

A. Chamberlain: 01:09:45 He said--no, that's what they both said. They said, "You should get a government job."

Winnie Frost: 01:09:50 There you go.

Sarah Heald: 01:09:50 That's why you went to Morristown.

A. Chamberlain: 01:09:51 That's why probably I went to Morristown.

Winnie Frost: 01:09:53 Yup. Yup. Yeah, that's probably why. Because you didn't want to go back to see your parents because they weren't going to give you a hard time, well at least I went over to Morristown.

A. Chamberlain: 01:10:01 I didn't want to go back to making candles and clearly they were absolutely right.

Winnie Frost: 01:10:04 You hated making candles?

- A. Chamberlain: 01:10:06 Absolutely right.
- Winnie Frost: 01:10:07 Hippie candles. Not just any candle. Oh my goodness. What did he end up, you ended up with trying to figure out what kind of eyes a crocodile has?
- A. Chamberlain: 01:10:15 Yeah, and that was the last project too, that was my last project.
- Winnie Frost: 01:10:18 Was that your last project before you finally said, "The eyes have it. I'm out of here."
- A. Chamberlain: 01:10:23 Well, I knew I was going to retire at that point anyway, so it was going to happen at some point and they're going to get paid for it.
- Winnie Frost: 01:10:29 Oh my goodness.
- A. Chamberlain: 01:10:30 And they kept--like they acid etched these--there's a lot of things that seemed like good ideas at the time. Like they had acid etched these crocodile prints from the parking lot into the--
- Sarah Heald: 01:10:40 Footprints following into--
- A. Chamberlain: 01:10:42 To the concrete of the sidewalk, and they weren't etched deep enough or something like that and they just weren't showing up, so the contractor had to come back and re-etch them, and it's stuff like that. That's--it really is more trouble than it's worth and it takes you away from maybe some other things. So I don't think we always know how to prioritize. And somebody said, "Boy, won't this look cool?" I don't know if it was the park, or the contractor, or designer. Oh wouldn't it look cool to have these alligator tracks that lead you into the exhibit. That is cool. But when you're there and it's the Everglades and it's 90 something degrees, and it's summer, and this poor person is trying to etch these things into the concrete and the visitors are walking around. It's like, was that worth it or not?
- Winnie Frost: 01:11:24 Oh my God. Yeah.
- A. Chamberlain: 01:11:26 I don't know. Everything looks good on paper.
- Sarah Heald: 01:11:30 But you know, I think that also speaks to what you were saying at the beginning when we were organized by teams,

and in the initial plan and design of an exhibit, if you had a fabricator on your team, telling you things like that, like this is going to work, this isn't going to work and why, then you leverage that expertise and put it in at the beginning of a project.

- Winnie Frost: 01:11:55 Right.
- Sarah Heald: 01:11:55 Which hopefully minimizes some of those surprises at the end.
- A. Chamberlain: 01:12:00 Yeah. Yeah.
- Sarah Heald: 01:12:00 Some of them are always inevitable, but when the staffing dropped to a point where you couldn't operate like that anymore, it became--
- A. Chamberlain: 01:12:07 Right.
- Sarah Heald: 01:12:08 Those problems multiplied.
- Winnie Frost: 01:12:09 Absolutely. Yes. That's a very, that's a really good point. The idea of the teams where we had all the expertise.
- A. Chamberlain: 01:12:15 And then we could bounce ideas off--
- Winnie Frost: 01:12:18 And we could bounce ideas, just like Paul. And then Paul Kohler was quite the person that always wanted to help and say "Hey, I don't think this will work out." Maybe [inaudible].
- Sarah Heald: 01:12:26 You had him on my team.
- Winnie Frost: 01:12:28 He was on my team, and he would go look, and he and Michael Lacombe, really got along. So he would go in there and say, "No, I'm going to have to install this and this, this looks too complicated or you know, or whatever". And that was kind of nice. But.
- A. Chamberlain: 01:12:42 Yeah.
- Winnie Frost: 01:12:43 That only went on a couple of years and then everything started to, people started leaving and I think did the Harpers Ferry, there's no--the attrition rate is bad. We don't bring in people to backfill.

- A. Chamberlain: 01:12:57 Right. So the institutional memory of all those people is all gone.
- Winnie Frost: 01:13:01 Is all gone. Yeah.
- A. Chamberlain: 01:13:03 Yeah. And there were people that knew everything in that place. I think there were 250 people when I got there.
- Sarah Heald: 01:13:08 Yeah.
- Winnie Frost: 01:13:08 I think you're right. And it's less than a hundred now. So you don't have any people along the way that really you felt gave you some--
- A. Chamberlain: 01:13:16 Oh, well, yeah, I've worked with some really good people. I mean, the first person that hired me, that was nice and people that helped me along--
- Winnie Frost: 01:13:23 At Morristown.
- A. Chamberlain: 01:13:24 Yeah. Morristown, Springfield Armory, the historian there was good, and he helped me along a lot. And there are a couple of people at Lowell that I really relied on. But I don't know that there was any one person that I looked up to as my god or goddess.
- Winnie Frost: 01:13:40 Yeah. Sure. But you feel like you've met a lot of really great people along the way who all had their own interests, and-
- A. Chamberlain: 01:13:48 Yeah.
- Winnie Frost: 01:13:49 Sharing, and that's good.
- A. Chamberlain: 01:13:51 Yeah. I wish I could say there was any one person, but I don't think there was.
- Winnie Frost: 01:13:53 Well, that's good. And then how about since you've retired, which is, and we're about 43 years.
- A. Chamberlain: 01:14:00 My team was the people I looked up to.
- Winnie Frost: 01:14:02 Yeah I know you had an amazing team, amazing camaraderie.
- A. Chamberlain: 01:14:06 Yeah.

Winnie Frost: 01:14:06 And you did a lot together.

Sarah Heald: 01:14:10 I think it was inherent to the way the work was done and also perhaps because we all recognized it was different time periods. No one can be an instant expert.

A. Chamberlain: 01:14:18 Right.

Sarah Heald: 01:14:18 So you had to learn together.

A. Chamberlain: 01:14:21 Yup.

Sarah Heald: 01:14:21 I am reminded--just because I'm not getting interviewed--of something that Bill Brown used to say about how we tend to think we have to be accurate in the stories we tell. But he kept always talking about we had a responsibility to be visually accurate, to present visually to the viewers things that were done right. And I think we all embrace that approach and tried to integrate that into what we were doing. I think John Brucksch I can remember when I was first doing some buying and John Brucksch, "Oh, do I buy this or not? It's pretty close to this is." He said he had enough buying experience to say, "You can wait another year before that, when is the installation? Wait another year, if you're not finding this in the next nine months and you see it again, buy it."

Sarah Heald: 01:15:10 So there was a communication, camaraderie, and expertise that we all respected each other for.

Winnie Frost: 01:15:17 Yeah. Yeah.

A. Chamberlain: 01:15:18 And the other thing he would say is if you were all looking at something and you, there's a point at which it's financially not productive to keep beating something to death.

Sarah Heald: 01:15:28 Right.

A. Chamberlain: 01:15:29 If you've got something that's pretty close, because there was, you always have to weigh that one as well.

Sarah Heald: 01:15:34 It's time to buy.

A. Chamberlain: 01:15:35 You've got both of those going on at the same time.

- Winnie Frost: 01:15:36 Those are really wonderful lessons, and can really guide you as you try to make decisions because you know, there you are out there trying to make a decision and if you have some good thoughts from people that you respect.
- A. Chamberlain: 01:15:49 Yeah, yeah. John was always good at that.
- Sarah Heald: 01:15:49 Yeah.
- Winnie Frost: 01:15:51 Yeah, I always heard that John was really good at buying.
- A. Chamberlain: 01:15:53 He was.
- Sarah Heald: 01:15:55 He had a similar youth to Andy's, I think. He was just out there in stuff. And you know, looking at stuff.
- A. Chamberlain: 01:16:02 Yeah. And he knew about a lot of different things. So did Bill, but Bill also had certain specialties, he had military and all that.
- Sarah Heald: 01:16:09 Right.
- A. Chamberlain: 01:16:09 And there some things every--well it's like all of us--there's some things we know about, some things we don't know about. And so that's why it was always good to work together.
- Winnie Frost: 01:16:16 Well. In your group where people pretty much from their past and their experiences and their education, had different disciplines that they brought in or were you, I mean like you were, you said you were more industrial.
- Sarah Heald: 01:16:32 Well that's what I went to grad school and it actually, I really did more of the social history.
- Winnie Frost: 01:16:36 Social history.
- Sarah Heald: 01:16:36 No, I would say that looking at our group, Andy and Bill and John, were more production focused, that Carol, and to a slightly lesser degree I, did both the research and the production as well. Carol's better than me I think because she's had a lot of renovation experience, and fabrication stuff. And then Mary and I--and John Demer, I'm not sure how to, he did both also--but Mary was more a research person who really picked up the objects and production

stuff by working with our group and we all worked together and learned that.

- Winnie Frost: 01:17:22 Yeah, it sounds like it was a real tight group that you guys really wanted to help each other out, and it continued even after everything tried to break you guys up. You know, it really did, it continues now, and you're not even working.
- A. Chamberlain: 01:17:42 We're still going antiquing, we try to go antiquing every once in a while.
- Winnie Frost: 01:17:45 Isn't that wonderful? That is so wonderful. But it's hard as certain people at the center have probably tried to break all this up. You built those friendships, and that camaraderie, and was just not going to end.
- Sarah Heald: 01:18:01 Yup.
- A. Chamberlain: 01:18:01 Yup.
- Winnie Frost: 01:18:01 And you figured out other ways to--
- A. Chamberlain: 01:18:03 Yeah, I think that was the golden era right there, those years when we were all doing stuff together and we could get involved in each other's projects, and help out each other. That was just perfect.
- Winnie Frost: 01:18:15 It's so funny because when I first got to Harpers Ferry, I thought it was so quiet. I'm coming from the region where it was, it's chatter, chatter, chatter, and except when I went back into your area, there was always like, Bill and you, and they're talking about this and John around and making things and I said, it's a lively and you'd have to go back there to get to the little kitchen.
- A. Chamberlain: 01:18:39 Yeah.
- Winnie Frost: 01:18:41 This is a lively area. Every other place, just everybody's quiet sitting in those cubbies, I thought it was odd.
- A. Chamberlain: 01:18:48 You were always bouncing stuff off each other.
- Winnie Frost: 01:18:50 Yeah.
- A. Chamberlain: 01:18:50 I think that it was.

- Winnie Frost: 01:18:52 It was more, as much as Harpers Ferry was talking about collaboration all the time, don't have walls have except for the writers, I wasn't seeing it that much. You know, like in your group. I definitely saw it do incredibly well.
- A. Chamberlain: 01:19:07 Yeah.
- Sarah Heald: 01:19:07 Yeah.
- A. Chamberlain: 01:19:07 Yeah. That was just the nature of the group, I think, and the way we worked.
- Winnie Frost: 01:19:11 Yeah. It was just, you know, just happened to be that you guys all ended up in the same spot. It's really--and so now that you are retired why don't you share what you're bringing from your career in your retirement as far as things that you're doing. You're still antiquing?
- A. Chamberlain: 01:19:30 I'm still antiquing yeah, just working on things for the house that I'm trying to sell. I don't go, I can't drive down there with that car and you can't bring, obviously bring-
- Winnie Frost: 01:19:39 He's got a beautiful car, it's a cute little MG.
- A. Chamberlain: 01:19:41 But I have somebody who will bring me things.
- Winnie Frost: 01:19:42 Okay. That's nice.
- A. Chamberlain: 01:19:43 Like I had two doors up here that needed to be restored. So I restored the doors, repainted them, sent them back down you know, painting storm windows and all that sort of stuff, building pieces and sending them down. And that's done now. So I just, that's when I decided I could start working at the historical society.
- A. Chamberlain: 01:20:01 So, working with them on their collections and trying to nail things down a little bit.
- Winnie Frost: 01:20:05 So you're going back to your original jobs?
- A. Chamberlain: 01:20:07 I think so. Yeah, a little bit of historic furnishings though because now that I've got more of that background, I can take what's purely a catalog record and say, "Oh yeah, I've seen that kind of tin lamp before."
- Winnie Frost: 01:20:20 Wow.

- A. Chamberlain: 01:20:20 "And I may even have a book on it that just came in the mail today." I'm going to look it up and see if that is indeed a lard lamp or if it's some kind of oil lamp as they say in their catalog. A lot of things are very generic--sometimes oil lamp, gas lamp, and I saw something that was an argand lamp, was described as the gas lamp. It's not a gas lamp; argand lamp is an oil lamp and it's stuff like that that people who don't obsess about these kinds of things don't worry about.
- Winnie Frost: 01:20:48 Yes that's true, I never have.
- A. Chamberlain: 01:20:49 They found a bunch of top hats in the collection and they're all described as beaver hats. Top hats are almost never beaver hats; they are almost always silk, even though they've got fur on them. It's not beaver, it's just, it's silk, because they decimated the beavers in the 1830s. And so all I need to do was change one word in those catalog cards, and they'll be correct. But they got to, you got to reflect that.
- Winnie Frost: 01:21:10 That's great.
- A. Chamberlain: 01:21:11 So and then really working, like working here on stuff, you know, stuff for the--starting to build stuff with [narrator's note: Ikea] when I started the bookshelves.
- Winnie Frost: 01:21:20 Shelves yeah.
- A. Chamberlain: 01:21:21 In the library room, that'll keep me busy for a while.
- Winnie Frost: 01:21:24 It's wonderful. Do you catalog your books?
- A. Chamberlain: 01:21:29 I have not.
- Sarah Heald: 01:21:29 Look at the expression on his face, do you like that idea Andy?
- A. Chamberlain: 01:21:35 No, I do not like that idea.
- Sarah Heald: 01:21:35 All right.
- A. Chamberlain: 01:21:35 Yeah. But I do keep them segregated according to subject matter.
- Winnie Frost: 01:21:39 Oh, you do? Well that's very good.

A. Chamberlain: 01:21:42 Yeah.

Winnie Frost: 01:21:44 I approve of that.

Sarah Heald: 01:21:44 Yeah. It's important.

A. Chamberlain: 01:21:46 Yeah. And I've got to build some shelves because I've got probably 2000 books in Maryland that have to come up here. I've got a few hundred in the other room, but there's a lot more now. I may have to weed them out, I don't know. But I was talking to a historian at Fort Donaldson when we were building a visitor center exhibit out there and just talking about stuff because he was a real Civil War kook like a lot of these people are--

Winnie Frost: 01:22:08 Yeah.

A. Chamberlain: 01:22:09 And he said something about 6,000 books. I said 6,000 books on the Civil War? Because I know he was really into Civil War. Oh no. 6,000 books on the generals who were involved.

Sarah Heald: 01:22:20 Just that subject.

Winnie Frost: 01:22:21 6,000 books on just generals.

A. Chamberlain: 01:22:23 That's what he told me.

Winnie Frost: 01:22:24 Oh my God. Just think if he goes all the way down to the corporals and the privates.

A. Chamberlain: 01:22:27 So I'm not the worst of them.

Winnie Frost: 01:22:30 Oh my goodness.

Sarah Heald: 01:22:33 Wow.

A. Chamberlain: 01:22:33 Well I hope this house has heavily reinforced floors or something.

Sarah Heald: 01:22:36 That would be your next project. You can lift it and reinforce it.

Winnie Frost: 01:22:39 Oh my goodness.

Sarah Heald: 01:22:40 Wow.

Winnie Frost: 01:22:41 Andy, is there anything else you'd like to share? Did you come into this with any preconceived notions?

A. Chamberlain: 01:22:47 No, I think I like this list of questions. I hope we got to most of them.

Winnie Frost: 01:22:51 We got to-we definitely hit on quite a few of them. Is there any of these that you would like to expand on? I think we described enough projects. We sure talked about some cool details about projects.

Sarah Heald: 01:23:10 Yeah.

A. Chamberlain: 01:23:10 Yeah. I think we had.

Winnie Frost: 01:23:11 Dayton was a big one for you, wasn't it? And you worked on that a long--

A. Chamberlain: 01:23:15 Yeah.

Winnie Frost: 01:23:15 That was a big one for a lot of people.

A. Chamberlain: 01:23:16 Yeah.

Sarah Heald: 01:23:17 Well there were different elements to it, also, because the print shop and the store.

A. Chamberlain: 01:23:21 And it had started with the other bicycle shop that Mary had worked on that was not in the park, but it was in that other--

Winnie Frost: 01:23:27 I actually went to it.

A. Chamberlain: 01:23:27 Yeah, it was in Carillon Park and she worked on that. Then we did the print shop and the store, and the bicycle shop behind that was mostly formal exhibits, but we did a vignette in the back with the lathe and some bicycle tools and all based on a photograph of Wilbur Wright working on a lathe.

Winnie Frost: 01:23:48 Who died first. Was it Orville?

Sarah Heald: 01:23:49 Wilbur.

Winnie Frost: 01:23:50 Oh, it was Wilbur.

A. Chamberlain: 01:23:53 He died of it was a disease.

Sarah Heald: 01:23:55 He had diphtheria, or typhoid. He contracted something in France.

A. Chamberlain: 01:24:01 Right.

Sarah Heald: 01:24:01 So I did the furnishings report for Hawthorne Hill, which was the house that they were building when Wilbur died.

Winnie Frost: 01:24:07 Oh, the sister?

Sarah Heald: 01:24:07 So only Orville and their father and their sister Catherine Wright, they went there.

Winnie Frost: 01:24:12 But didn't she get married at some point and somebody was mad--

Sarah Heald: 01:24:13 Yeah, that's a great story. And let me recommend this Historic Furnishings report to you.

Winnie Frost: 01:24:17 Okay.

Sarah Heald: 01:24:18 I'm serious. You can get it online because it's a tear at your heart story. She basically eloped at age 50.

Winnie Frost: 01:24:25 That's right.

Sarah Heald: 01:24:25 She had a falling out with Orville and yeah--

Winnie Frost: 01:24:28 I did read the book on them.

Sarah Heald: 01:24:30 The one that David McCullough wrote.

Winnie Frost: 01:24:32 Yes. It was wonderful.

Sarah Heald: 01:24:34 And he didn't have all the details that we had.

Winnie Frost: 01:24:36 Ah ha, he needs to update it.

A. Chamberlain: 01:24:39 What was McCullough's book called? I don't think I've read that one.

Sarah Heald: 01:24:44 I can't remember what it was called.

Winnie Frost: 01:24:47 Well anyway, is there anything else you'd like to share with us?

A. Chamberlain: 01:24:50 I can't think of anything. I think you've talked me out or I've talked myself out.

Sarah Heald: 01:24:53 Yeah. Out of water.

Winnie Frost: 01:24:54 For the record. He didn't think he was going to be able to have much to say today. So here we are.

Sarah Heald: 01:24:59 Good job Andy.

Winnie Frost: 01:24:59 It's now twenty of four.

Sarah Heald: 01:25:03 Wow.

Winnie Frost: 01:25:03 And we started around what, 10:30, 10:45.

A. Chamberlain: 01:25:05 But we took a lunch break though.

Winnie Frost: 01:25:07 We did take a short lunch break.

Sarah Heald: 01:25:09 Yes.

Winnie Frost: 01:25:10 So thank you so very much. I have learned so much today.

A. Chamberlain: 01:25:14 Oh, thank you for coming up, it was nice to have company.

Sarah Heald: 01:25:14 Excellent Andy. Excellent.

Winnie Frost: 01:25:16 Your stories are really great, and would you recommend your career to somebody else to start today?

A. Chamberlain: 01:25:22 Not today. I would recommend it to somebody if they had the same chance to do it [as] back then. I was talking to a friend's daughter. She wanted to get into the museum work, and she had, I think she had background in either art, or library and/or museums, you know was trying to do that part of it. But I said, I don't know that there's really anything going on out there right now. The opportunities just aren't there. So she went up to Canada and had gotten into a library sciences program at McGill.

Winnie Frost: 01:25:51 Oh McGill. Yes.

- A. Chamberlain: 01:25:53 And that's what she's working on now, another package. Wow.
- Sarah Heald: 01:25:57 Boy, Andy you're shopping up a storm.
- A. Chamberlain: 01:25:58 You know, because I feel bad, because there are people out there that want to get into this field and it's just so limited. It's just--
- Winnie Frost: 01:26:06 Yeah.
- Sarah Heald: 01:26:07 It's funny because Betsy has given me the name of someone who's a recent graduate of York College who's interested in media work, history work. And I saw, I had an email from him this morning. I haven't a chance to get back to him, but I have that same problem. It's hard to be positive and yet I don't want to put a damper entirely on their interests.
- A. Chamberlain: 01:26:29 Right.
- Sarah Heald: 01:26:29 Because I think the needs are out there. You just want people to have their eyes open about the funding possibilities, the realities of the job.
- A. Chamberlain: 01:26:37 Yeah.
- Winnie Frost: 01:26:38 And the amount of time you have to put into really maybe move up and move ahead, that you really have to do some serious trenching work it seems like it.
- A. Chamberlain: 01:26:48 Yeah. Because I fell into it just at the right time.
- Winnie Frost: 01:26:50 You definitely did with the Bicentennial coming up.
- Sarah Heald: 01:26:53 Yeah.
- A. Chamberlain: 01:26:54 Yeah. It's really not like that, anything like that today. I don't think there's anybody out there putting the funding into something that would allow people to staff up in museums to do that kind of thing, as there was back then.
- Winnie Frost: 01:27:05 Not at all.
- A. Chamberlain: 01:27:06 Yeah.

Winnie Frost: 01:27:06 Yeah.

A. Chamberlain: 01:27:07 And I just say, I can only tell this person, it's just, keep your eyes open for opportunities and if it's something that you really want to do, stick with it. And hopefully the door will open, as Campbell said.

Winnie Frost: 01:27:19 I also often say to people, just go to a park and try volunteering for a little bit.

A. Chamberlain: 01:27:25 Yeah.

Winnie Frost: 01:27:26 And see if there's a, if they really like it, there's opportunities that can happen. But just going and filling out applications--

A. Chamberlain: 01:27:35 Yeah.

Winnie Frost: 01:27:35 Absolutely, forget it. Absolutely, forget it. Well, thank you very much for your wonderful time today.

A. Chamberlain: 01:27:40 Well, thanks for coming.

Winnie Frost: 01:27:40 And there was a lot of fun.

Sarah Heald: 01:27:41 Thanks Andy. Very good.

Winnie Frost: 01:27:42 So roger and out.

END PART II

END OF RECORDING