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Mathew E. "Ed" Beatty
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MATTHEW E. BEATTY

REEL XVII

Incorporating changes suggested
by Beatty
March 6, 1964

[START OF INTERVIEW]

Herbert Evison: This is Herb Evison, and the place the Midwest Regional Office of the National Park Service, actually the office of Matthew E. Beatty, who is better known to most Park Service people as Ed. Ed is now the regional chief of natural history for the Midwest Region. His career extends back to January 1932 when he went to work in Yosemite National Park as a junior park naturalist. He was there in various naturalist capacities from 1932 to 1944. He transferred to Glacier in 1944 and was there for a little more than eleven years as park naturalist and later with the title of chief park naturalist, but all the time that he was there he was the top man in the natural history interpretation. Late in 1955 he went to Region I, as it was then, as regional naturalist, and was there until the beginning of 1960. At that time, he transferred to Region II to take over the job of regional chief of interpretation. He remained in that position until the reorganization of 1961 started, which abolished a division of interpretation and also abolished the regional positions of chief of interpretation; hence we now have him as regional chief of natural history. And in January 1963, Ed will have had thirty-one years of service with the National Park Service, and it has been a pretty varied experience, as this record shows.

Herbert Evison: Ed, I wish you might cast your mind back over some of the most interesting experiences you have had in the Park Service, or the most interesting events that you have lived through as an employee of the Park Service.

Ed Beatty: Well, that's quite a task, Herb, because one of my earliest recollections shortly after going to work in Yosemite was the depression days in which my magnificent salary of $2000 was cut first 5%, then 10%, then 15%, I think I lived better in those days than I do at present on my GS-14 salary.

Ed Beatty: But I think one of the most interesting things I can recall in my Yosemite days was the second year I was there. I had the privilege of going with Bert Harwell, who was then the chief park naturalist, in the fall of 1933 to measure the Lyell Glacier. And it was there, when we were climbing up over the ice, that I spotted what appeared to be a mountain sheep on the ice. Well, I knew that my eyes were deceiving me, because mountain sheep have been extinct for at least fifty years, although John Muir had talked about mountain sheep in the Sierras, of course. There had been no records for at least fifty years.

Ed Beatty: So, I asked Bert Harwell if he could believe what I was seeing, and he says, "Why, yes, it does look like a mountain sheep."

Ed Beatty: So we worked our way across the ice, and sure enough, here was this mummified mountain sheep standing nearly erect, with his neck completely broken but his head twisted so it appeared to be looking at us from where we had first observed it; and his body was supported by a pedestal of ice that the body had shielded from the melting action of the sun; the surface had lowered, you see, and exposed the mountain sheep, but the body furnished enough shade that gave us this pedestal, so it appeared to be in a lifelike position.

Ed Beatty: Well, that was only about fifty feet from the edge of the ice, and we worked our way down to the moraine, and we were fortunate enough to find the shells of the bighorns, and even a few of the toenails. The body of course had no hair on it; it was just dried skin. And believe me, we had some job in packing it back to the pack animal over the rocks; in fact, jumping from one morainal rock to another we broke one of the legs, which were quite brittle, but we were able to repair it later.

Ed Beatty: We got it to the pack-horse and back down to Tuolumne Meadows and Yosemite Valley, and just as we were taking it into the museum a little fellow in broken English ran up and he says, "What have you here? I am Doctor Wassman of Germany. I am an expert in animals that have been found in lake bottoms in Europe, and that white patch on the rump is lichen wax, which is corpse wax, which means that that animal has been in this state for at least a hundred years." We knew we had a marvelous find.

Ed Beatty: Well, the whole upshot of this discovery of the mountain sheep led to a complete revision in glacier measuring, not only in Yosemite but throughout the Service. And the reason for that was that we wanted to trace down the story of this mountain sheep to get some idea of when it had been killed and how long it had been in the ice. So Adrey Borell, who was one of the seasonal naturalists at the time, and I went back in October and put in stakes in the ice. First, we surveyed a line across from one rock ridge to another. Then bored into the ice and put in long stakes to measure the ablation of the ice and the rate of movement.

Herbert Evison: Now wait a minute. Let me have that word again, ablation?

Ed Beatty: Ablation, the melting of the surface, the loss of ice through melting. And also, the stakes would indicate the rate of movement of the ice.

Ed Beatty: Well, of course that was probably at the period of maximum movement during the year, and we found after going back about two or three weeks later that the ice had been moving a little less than an inch a day.

Ed Beatty: Strangely, later we found in some of John Muir's early writing where he had put wooden stakes in and found that the rate of movement was just about an inch a day. So, we verified some of his earlier findings, because John Muir was very interested, you know, in the glaciers.

Ed Beatty: Well, to make that phase of the story rather short, we estimated that the mountain sheep had probably been walking along the mountain crest and had got in a rock slide or a snow slide, and became entombed or entrapped in the bergschrund, which is that main crevasse that separates the glacier headwall from the mountain; and the body had frozen quickly and been carried down about 2,000 feet to the point where we found it. And we estimated that it would have taken at least 200 years for the animal to reach that position and to be exposed. We were fortunate in being just at the right time to see it before the coyotes or mountain lions or other predators got hold of the animal.

Ed Beatty: Although the meat was very dry, and most of the publicity unfortunately was through a newspaper reporter who asked Bert Harwell if he tasted the flesh, and Bert said, "Yes, but it tastes like chewing dry string, had no flavor possibly due to lack of salt." So, we lost a scientific part of the discovery by this rather foolish report on the taste of the animal.

Ed Beatty: Well, from then on, we began to run across profiles on the ice and put in stakes, and that led to a new type of measuring. Previously in these parks they had taken and painted a red mark or a yellow mark on the bedrock and then measured from that to the ice; but at the Lyell Glacier the ice terminated against these high moraines, and we found out that those moraines were actually a part of the glacier, because it was just a scree of rock on top of solid shade ice, and we weren't measuring the true front at all.

Ed Beatty: So, we started plane-table mapping the entire front, and then measuring the rate of movement, and that technique is in use now in practically all the parks.

Ed Beatty: So when I went to Glacier National Park there in 1945, I got together with Arthur Johnson, of the U.S. Geological Survey, who was mapping the Nisqually Glacier in Mount Rainier National Park with a plane table, and I got together with the head of the Weather Bureau in Montana, and we originated a joint project, a cooperative project of measuring the glaciers. Through the auspices of the Weather Bureau we were able to get them to install high-altitude precipitation gauges to measure the snowfall right up by the Grinnell Glacier; we got the Survey to put in stream gauging stations down below to measure the run-off, so we have a tie-in between the snowfall, the melt, and the run-off.

Ed Beatty: And then we started making aerial maps of the glaciers, and the Survey helped us, and the Forest Service helped us also in making the aerial flights with their planes to take the aerial photographs. So, actually every five years from then on, we had good comparative maps of the amount of loss of the ice area, and with our stakes we could tell the ablation loss, the loss of volume. Strangely, during that time, these glaciers lost about 50% of their volume in just the few decades that we have accurate records of them.

Ed Beatty: You see, Jim Dyson – you remember Jim Dyson, I think; he is the geology professor at Lafayette – he made a plane table map of the glacier originally on his own efforts, but our aerial maps were a little more accurate, because we had the aerial photographs to go on; but Jim made the first study, and it is from his maps in the early 40's and aerial maps that we could determine that 50% loss.

Ed Beatty: So, it changed the whole complexion, you see, of our glacial measurements in a number of our national parks.

Herbert Evison: Now, where would I have gotten the impression, Ed, that there at Glacier they found evidences of a slowing up of the melt, or even a growth in the glaciers again?

Ed Beatty: You are quite right. In fact, Mr. Dightman, who is the state climatologist for the Weather Bureau in Montana, and I wrote a paper that appeared in the monthly Weather Review of May '52, in which we introduced the proposition that possibly we were coming into a cycle in which our glaciers were increasing, because there for a period of four or five years we actually had a cease in the recession and an actual advance of the ice. And that corresponded to similar observations they found in Europe and also in Alaska. But then that changed again. In other words, we shouldn't think of cycles as being four or five-year periods; they are several hundreds of years, and we have variations within the cycles.

Ed Beatty: Weathermen now still think that we may be coming into a colder weather period of our winters. In fact, we have had a rather cold summer all over the Pacific Northwest, and they are thinking that we are going to have rather a cold winter. So maybe there is something to this cycle change, which worldwide might vary only a degree or so, but still indicating a colder weather period in the up and down cycle I am speaking of.

Herbert Evison: I like that story, because for one thing it reveals a very special and very interesting phase of a Park Service job.

Ed Beatty: Yes, and it is not normally anything you would think of in connection with the field of interpretation, and yet it is a valuable research thing. And the only reason we are able to do it as a naturalist is because it is something we could do off-season when we didn't have our heavy visitation. Normally we can't do much, because we have to do it just at the time our visitors are there. A historian can do his research in winter; he is more fortunate in that respect.

Herbert Evison: I think that's a swell account, Ed.

Herbert Evison: Looking at your notes here, I notice a mention of something that interests me, too. You have down here "Forty-eight and forty-four-hour work weeks," which I presume refers back to your Yosemite days, but as I remember it, that existed among field people right up until the beginning of World War II.

Ed Beatty: That's right. I can remember in the 30's, all through the 30's, Herb, that, well, when the summer season came along – and I mean the summer season in those days was probably from April to October, because we had heavy visitations, we didn't think anything of having a seven-day work week; we had a job to do. And I can recall the few years that we did estimate the contributed overtime, and it always ran a thousand to fifteen hundred extra contributed hours a year. We never got paid for it; I never had an hour's overtime in all my Park Service career, and I was very happy to donate that time. But it does show the change now, where so many of our new men come on, and a forty-hour week means they work their eight hours a day five days a week and they are through. In fact, we are a little that way in our regional offices, because with our carpools we hit the road just about quitting time.

Ed Beatty: But in those days, a normal summer day, I can remember getting home from the bear talks which you remember we used to have to give for about six months a year while the bears were out, if we got home by 11 o'clock every night we were pretty lucky. And we went to work at 7:30 or 8, so it made a pretty long day. And only occasionally would we get a day off in the summer when we had to go to town to get groceries or something of that nature. I never felt bad about going over and getting a haircut during the middle of the day, like I do now, because I have to sign up for leave to go to the barber now. So, it is quite a change, you'll have to admit, Herb.

Herbert Evison: It certainly is. And along with that, it seems to me, and I wonder if it doesn't to you, that there has been a change in spirit, that there is an insistence on working the 40-hour week, and by golly, nobody is going to do anything more than that unless he does get his time-and-a-half overtime.

Ed Beatty: Well, certainly there is that trend, Herb, but with due credit to the field men I wouldn't want to leave that impression, because I think a lot of it is because of the tight regulations we have by our fiscal people in which you have to have an outlined tour of duty, – this man has to work so many hours here, if he works after six o'clock he gets a night differential, and all those factors come in. We are helping to spoil a lot of these new men, but if we allow them to do the job that they would like to do, a lot of them put in hours that never show up on their time sheet. I know lots of our seasonals now – in fact, some of them started with me in Yosemite, Lloyd Parrott, who is now working every summer in Glacier, you remember his son was mauled by a grizzly bear; well, he has had about 25 summers. Well, I know Lloyd never questions the hours he has to put in, but on the time sheet it shows he works forty hours and then quits, because they don't want to pay him any over.

Ed Beatty: So, I think while there is a definite change in the spirit, mainly because I think we have sort of outgrown our britches. In the early days we used to know each other, everybody in each area, and there was one big happy family. Now it's just too darned big a family to keep track of, and we have got to have other means of keeping track of these people, I suppose. Punching a time clock seems to be the trend.

Herbert Evison: Although you don't physically do it.

Ed Beatty: That's right.

Herbert Evison: Well, I am very glad of that comment of yours, Ed.

Herbert Evison: I notice in your notes here a reference to something that interests me very much as a long-time newspaper man, and as a guy who as a very small boy smelled printer's ink in a small-town newspaper for three years, and who has had a lot of contacts with newspapers: You make a reference here in your notes to "printing press," and I wish you would give me the story on that.

Ed Beatty: Well, that was rather interesting, because it is something that I inherited from Carl Russell, who had in one of the back rooms of the Yosemite Museum a little printing press. For his monthly Nature Notes, which have always been printed, he would send the articles every week to the Stockton Record, they would print it in the nature columns, save the type, and ship it up to him, and he would use that to make up his monthly Nature Notes, and he would take them and print them on this hand press. He had a motor on it, of course, but he had to hand feed it always. And so, I inherited that.

Ed Beatty: Well, I had had some experience in a print shop, much as you had; I was a printer's devil, helped on a little weekly newspaper; I set type, and occasionally pied it all; and we went through much that same sort of experience in our youth. So, I knew a little of how to handle a press and set type. I continued the Stockton Record situation for a while, but it was pretty hard to get corrections on linotype from them; so I finally made arrangements with a place in Fresno that would set the type commercially for us and handle the corrections, and it was a little better type-face too, for Nature Notes. Then I would get the cuts made, and make up the issues, and persuade all my associates to write articles, and the seasonals; and every month we would have the job of putting out these monthly Nature Notes.

Herbert Evison: Now, this was all a Yosemite Natural History Association project?

Ed Beatty: Nature Notes of the Yosemite Natural History Association. And of course, as you know, the Association put out many special issues, several of which I authored or co-authored in the early days, such as The Birds of Yosemite, 101 Wild Flowers, the Self-Guiding Auto Caravan Tour of the Valley, and the Mariposa Grove Guide. Well, all of those special editions – the Indian number, the waterfalls, and all those – I printed on that darned press. But I got an automatic feeder on mine, the Miller automatic feeder, so that while I had to stand to watch it, you couldn't leave it, but it would take care of feeding and taking the prints out. And some of those special issues ran 48 pages, maybe up to 60 pages, 5000 of them. I bet I made three million impressions on that press while I was there.

Herbert Evison: Now, I would gather that that sort of activity involved a lot of work outside of regular hours. My guess is that you put in evenings and weekends, or generally speaking, hours off.

Ed Beatty: There was a lot of that too, Herb, and especially when we re-did the geology room. I hand-printed all the labels for the geology exhibits. We didn't have the good assistance from the museum labs in those days that we ourselves have now, and a lot of those exhibits we had to do. And all of the photographs in the geology room, labels for them, I printed on that press there with special type that we had. So, there was a lot of extra work, but we worked seven days a week, so what was the difference?

Herbert Evison: Another thing I noticed in your notes, Ed: "Colonel Thomson and his soliloquy on the sequoias," which I think is one of the finest brief statements that I know.

Ed Beatty: I agree with you there. That's a pet quote of mine used in many of my talks on "The Secret of the Big Trees," or something like that; I always end the talk with that quotation. But the thing that I will always remember about Colonel Thomson, who was a splendid man with a very interesting background in the Philippines, you know, along with his contemporaries, Colonel White and the others that you are familiar with – well, anyway, he didn't write that overnight. I think he probably took three or four years to compose that thing; and the first indication I had that he was writing it was when he would ponder over the choice of an individual word for weeks, and he would question all of us, myself included, "Is this the word I want? What does this mean to you?" And as a result of that, I think he came out with one of the most beautiful expressions on the story of the sequoias, their longevity, their impressiveness, etc., that has been written.

Herbert Evison: Do you by any chance remember that statement? Could you quote it?

Ed Beatty: "These sequoia gigantea are of a noble lineage that bridge humanity back through the eons to the age of reptiles. Here lived venerable forest kings in memories that carry back a thousand years before Jesus Christ walked the shores of Galilee. In their majestic shadows fretting men may well pause to ponder values, to consider the ironic limitations years of three score years and ten. Here, through a compelling humility, men may achieve a finer integrity of soul."

Ed Beatty: That's the expression. I might not have it word for word, because I haven't used it for some years.

Herbert Evison: Well, it sounds right; and it is a magnificent statement.

Herbert Evison: I notice a note, too, on bear feeding days, which I think goes back to a sort of interesting stage in National Park Service history.

Ed Beatty: That certainly was an era. It certainly is interesting to see the changes in philosophy that have taken place in those early days. As a matter of fact, you know that was one of the big shows for the visitor. I don't think anybody would have missed a bear feeding performance, and it worked very nicely there in Yosemite, because the firefall naturally ended all the evening programs, and immediately after the firefall there would be a tremendous rush from all over the Valley down to the lower end for the bear show. And of course we would be in a rather safe situation there, because the visitors gathered on one side of the river, and the bear display and show was on the opposite side of the river, so there wasn't the danger factor that they had in Yellowstone, for example, where they had to have an armed ranger there to make sure that one of the bears didn't go wild.

Ed Beatty: Well, you know, lots of times when we say we are naturalists, we are armchair naturalists, because we don't always have an opportunity to get out and study nature, but one of the interesting things from my standpoint, in addition to being able to talk to the people about the bears and to answer their questions, was to observe what happened over there, because there were so many different interesting encounters over the years in which the skunks would actually come in and out-bluff the bears and drive them away from the food; where a coyote would come in and never quite have the nerve to displace the bear, but he would sneak around sideways and grab a piece of food and run off and eat it. And the golden eagle that would come down even in the daytime. And of course, the fights between the bears, the rivalry between the bears; a larger bear would come in and displace a smaller one; a still larger one would come in and displace the other one. So, it was a rather interesting show, and of course some of the questions we got were pretty weird, and some of the answers we gave them were probably just as weird.

Herbert Evison: Do you remember any of them? Do you remember several years ago that Bob Yoder wrote an article in the Saturday Evening Post on the questions that people asked?

Ed Beatty: I don't recall that particular article, but there were some lulus. I remember one of the ones I had the most difficulty answering was, a young lady asked, "Do bears like cold cream?" Well, of course, I said, "Bears are omnivorous, they like most everything, and we have often said they will eat everything from paper plates to silverware, but that's stretching it a little bit. Just why do you ask that question?"

Ed Beatty: "Well," she said, "because I was awakened during the night by a bear licking my face. I was camping out, you see, and the bear came in my tent and licked my face." I think I spoiled the story, though, Herb, because she asked if bears like cold cream, and I said, "I never heard of such a thing as that. Why it licked your face was of course a nice idea, but was there any particular type of cold cream?" And she said, "Yes, it was strawberry cold cream."

Ed Beatty: "Well," I said, "you can't blame a poor bear; bears like strawberries, although I'm not so sure they'd like plain cold cream." Hell, that's typical of some of the questions we would get, of course. We had a lot of fun over the years at those bear shows.

Ed Beatty: Of course, they soon went the way of all those artificial feedings. Sometimes I wonder whether we were too smart in making the change so abruptly.

Ed Beatty: I remember that when I went to Glacier we didn't have bear shows, but we still had garbage dumps where we dumped the garbage, and I was quite amazed at Many Glacier and near Rising Sun to find that there were eight or ten grizzlies that were gathering at this dump. Then, all of a sudden, we decided through the Public Health Service complaint, to cover that material, in other words, not to have open dumps; and it was shortly after that that we had these two grizzly bear attacks on humans in Glacier. So personally, I attribute much of the problem we have had with those grizzlies during that particular period to the fact that we suddenly cut off the source of food for them at these dumps, and they were so used to depending on our handouts of that nature that they couldn't shift for themselves, and for that reason they had lost some of the fear of humans and that possibly accounts for those attacks.

Herbert Evison: From the standpoint of Park Service practice, or Park Service principle, don't you think that it's a good idea that artificial animal displays like that were abolished?

Ed Beatty: Oh, absolutely. You know, that was the time that Frank Brockman was there in Yosemite with me, and Frank Kittredge, who was a good friend of both of us – was a good friend, of course – I hate to tell this story on Frank, but I think it is interesting, because Mr. Kittredge tried to persuade both Frank Brockman and me that we should have a little place where the visitors could go now and then and see bears, because once we quit the bear feeding they didn't have quite the opportunity to see bears. We told him oh, no, that was definitely against the Park Service policy. But about six months later I was driving down the Valley and I saw a new oiled road, and I said, "What in the devil is this?" So I followed it in and I found the nicest little bear feeding place you ever imagined, and Mr. Kittredge had gone ahead and had that developed, with a nice little spring, and they dumped a can of garbage in there every day so the visitors could see the bears. Well, Joe Dixon came up and took pictures of it, and John Tellis, the old garbage man at the time, said, "Here, don't you want me to feed a bear for you, Mr. Dixon, while you take a picture?" Well, Joe said, "Sure, go right ahead." Well, that report went to Washington, and I guess that was one of the fastest jobs of tearing up a bear platform that ever happened. Poor Frank I think was pretty chagrined, because I understand he had to bear some of the cost of construction out of his own pocket. Maybe I shouldn't spill beans outside the family on that, but that is an actual incident, of the two different philosophies.

Herbert Evison: I think that's a very interesting Park Service history sidelight, because I think most people who knew Kittredge knew him as a man of very strict principles.

Ed Beatty: Yes, of course; and with due respect to Frank, he was the person who influenced me to take the job in Glacier, because he told me what a marvelous place it was; and, as you know, Frank was the man who laid out the Going-to-the-Sun road across the Continental Divide, a beautiful job, and he certainly was right in his element when he was the engineer.

Herbert Evison: Yes. I have just been doing some writing lately about that particular phase of Park Service history.

Herbert Evison: Now, I notice in your notes here there's a mention of seven-day hikes, but I notice also we are getting to the end of this side of the tape, so I think we had better just turn that over and when we get it turned we'll be on the subject of seven-day hikes, which I imagine also was a Yosemite institution.

Ed Beatty: That's right, that was strictly a Yosemite institution.

[END OF SIDE 1]

[START OF SIDE 2]

Herbert Evison: Now, you were going to say something about seven-day hikes.

Ed Beatty: Well, maybe I am old-fashioned, but I sort of hate to see this transition we are making in the Service now, giving such great emphasis to all these self-guided activities. I think the thing upon which the Service has made its reputation in the field of interpretation is through the personal contacts. And I think probably the finest service that we ever gave in our conducted trips were these six- or seven-day hikes, stopping each night with our group of 25 or 30 at one of the High Sierra camps. In that weeks' time we had a chance to get pretty well acquainted with those people, and each night we would have a campfire and would talk over Park Service policies and objectives, and we felt that at the end of that seven days we had made some very firm fast friends for the National Park Service. And when the whole naturalist program was threatened many of these people were the ones that came through with the finest letters voluntarily in support of the naturalist effort, saying how much that experience meant to them and their relations. And I even correspond with some of them today. There is one that the Director has had in his hair a little bit here lately, too, because he has been rather critical of the change in trend in our campfire programs.

Ed Beatty: He says, "Why is it that so few of these campfire programs have the old community singing that we used to have?" And I heartily endorsed his statement, because I do feel that that is an ideal way to get audience participation, and if you can make them feel that they are a part of the program, you have sold them.

Ed Beatty: But so many times we go out now and these boys say, "I can't lead singing," and so they pass it up and they just give their little formal talk with slides, and the audience goes on home feeling, "Well, it has been a nice program, but they don't seem to have the enthusiasm that they used to have." So maybe the Director has got a good point there, that the quality of our programs is dropping; it isn't quite up to the high standards that I hope we had in those early days.

Ed Beatty: And so I have been advocating to our field areas that if they can't lead singing, why, at least have a little informal period where they ask, "What State are you from?" or "Have you got some questions about anything you have seen here, before we start our program?" And there's lots of ways of getting them to feel it's their program and they are a part of it.

Ed Beatty: I think I have digressed a little bit here, because these are just some of the things that to me, I hate to see pass by the board.

Herbert Evison: I am delighted that you digressed, because that digression is exactly the kind of stuff that I hope to get on tape, Ed.

Ed Beatty: Well, that's fine. And I think it is one of the unfortunate things, because when you look at the cold statistics of one man spending six or seven days with twenty-five people, you lose sight of the overall value of that contact, which is so much better than if you talked five minutes to a thousand people, because it goes in one ear and out of the other, sometimes; but when you can sit around a campfire for six successive nights with a group, they are bound to get some of the enthusiasm that you have for the out-of-doors, and an appreciation for the need to conserve and protect these areas. And they are the fellows we are going to rely on, the future generation to carry this on forward.

Herbert Evison: Well, now, tell me this: Was fairly close track kept of the people who made those trips, and was there effort to keep in touch with them?

Ed Beatty: Unfortunately, not; there was no effort. This particular one, you may recall the individual, his name is Sterling Taylor; he lives in Berkeley, and his mother was Rose Taylor who was the librarian in the early days in the Yosemite Museum, and she would be an old friend of Harold Bryant's and Carl Russell's and Ansel Hall, all that group. And he had a primary interest in it, and it so happened that he went on three of my seven-day hikes over successive years; and as he says, we used to play nature games along the trails and make them identify the various features we had talked about, and had to know the name of this plant, etc. He says, "Ed, I can only remember two flowers, one is a rose and the other is a geranium, and you don't have either one of them along the trail." So automatically he would go to the rear of the line; that's the way you would work back.

Ed Beatty: But nevertheless, he appreciated what we were doing, and he had a great love for the mountains as did most of these people. And that's the thing that – that's the kind of support we need, when we come right down to whether we are going to preserve these areas.

Herbert Evison: How often were these trips made? Was there just one a week?

Ed Beatty: One a week, and they were so sought after that I was in a difficult position most of the time, assigning these trips. I always saw to it that I got one, as it gave me a little respite from the heavy crowds, and then I tried to see that all the older men that had been there a couple of years got a trip, because they figured that was a marvelous vacation, to get away by themselves with just a small group and out in the High Sierra. We only had on the average of eight or ten trips a summer, maybe 25 people, say 250 people a year, for maybe 15 years. See, it isn't a big group, but it was a very important group.

Herbert Evison: Now, when one of these other fellows would come back from a trip, did you as the person in charge check up to see what kind of a job those fellows had done?

Ed Beatty: Usually, I didn't have to, because you could tell by the enthusiasm of the group; they would hate to leave the Valley. Generally, always they would get together for a campfire in the Valley or go to somebody's home and they would have a little picnic outside for the whole group; they would invite the other staff members. We got a chance to see them and talk with them, and in most cases our men did an exceptional job with them, because we only sent our more experienced men and men that had been with us and appreciated what we were doing, and I don't think we ever had to worry about whether the Park Service was being sold properly; they were doing a good job.

Herbert Evison: You have several notes here, all of which are hooked in with interpretation at Yosemite, I think they are anyway, and I think it would be a good idea if you would just talk from those notes, Ed.

Ed Beatty: Well, I did mention just a few things that were interesting to me because my training was essentially in the field of geology, and yet, strangely, I conceived of the idea of a history walk and a history caravan in Yosemite. I got interested in the old village, for example, and the building that John Muir had built, the Cedar Cottage, with its rather interesting history in the early days when they used bed sheets for partitions; the people would give magic lantern shows when they disrobed, and they had to be rather careful and discreet with their conversation and action, you know. And the old Sentinel Hotel, to me it had a very rich history although over a rather short period of years.

Ed Beatty: And so, I got to be a sort of history buff in my own right, there, and I said, "I think people would like this type of thing." I found interest when I gave my illustrated talks at night at Camp 14. So, for myself, because I was arranging the programs, I scheduled a history walk. Do you know how many showed up in the old village? 180 people came out for the first history walk, and I scheduled them probably once or twice a month, and I always got 150 to 180 people; and they would walk through these old buildings with me to the old Indian site.

Ed Beatty: And then I took a history caravan, and I went to some of the old Indian rancherias down by Bridal Veil, where Roosevelt had camped with Muir, and some of the early developments during the days when they did some homesteading there; and I found people seemingly were just as interested as I was.

Ed Beatty: So those are things that have passed by the board as far as conducted trips; we just don't have the manpower; we have to man our visitor centers. Those are the things that have passed out of existence.

Ed Beatty: Another thing was the moonlight hike to Half Dome. We would always pick the night of the full moon, and we would go up so that we would be up there to see the firefall from the top of Half Dome. And believe it or not, we used to have 200 people that would go on those trips; would have to use two men. In fact, I can remember one time when a girl presumably sprained her ankle, and she insisted on being carried down from the top of Nevada Falls by this other ranger and me. That night I saw her at the dance at Camp Curry. She simply had wanted to get pretty close to a couple of young rangers, and I happened to be young in those days. Oh, well, you live and learn.

Ed Beatty: But can you imagine in this day of tort claims what would happen if you tried to conduct a moonlight hike to the top of Half Dome? You'd probably have a half dozen suits on your hands for people stumbling over obstacles in the trail or something of that nature.

Ed Beatty: Well, those are just things that probably are also part of the past, as are the auto caravans, because crowds are simply too great in most of our large areas to conduct auto caravans anymore.

Ed Beatty: And of course, I remember with a great deal of pleasure the some ten or twelve successive sessions of the Yosemite School of Field Natural History. You are familiar with that, and I suppose Carl Russell has told you about it.

Herbert Evison: Very little.

Ed Beatty: I was always automatically the business manager; I had to collect all the fees and make the physical arrangements for the camps and arrangements for the trips, and I often acted as one of the instructors, although it was the habit in those early days to bring in University of California professors, Professor Essig on insects, and Ralph Chaney the paleontologist, and Herb Mason on botany. They would come up for four or five days and handle their respective subjects with the class.

Herbert Evison: How do you spell the name of that first professor – Essex?

Ed Beatty: Essig, as I recall it. And of course, there was Doctor Blackwelder of Stanford; even John C. Merriam, Laurence Merriam's father, was up there; a very interesting group of people that contributed their knowledge to these students. Only a small percentage of them ever went into the Service, but we were advancing the idea of conservation and national park use and interpretation, and that is one of the things I hated to see go, because it was a good contribution, although it was very demanding of our time during the summer, and yet it is just something that it is impossible now to keep up. We have our training schools in Grand Canyon, and the new one proposed for Harpers Ferry, but that is for our own personnel and is not open for the general public.

Ed Beatty: But some of the finest seasonal naturalists were of course graduates of the old Yosemite school, and the criticism most of the other parks would make was that we would take the cream of the crop and they would get the dregs. But most of them were good men, regardless, and we simply picked those that interested us the most; and a lot of these people that even today are, working as seasonal naturalists in the parks are graduates of that school. I see them; they come to visit me from time to time. I have a hard time remembering their names, but at least they retain their interest, just like those on the seven-day hikes.

Ed Beatty: Well, that just about closes up most of the Yosemite days, except for one little item that might be of interest. I don't know whether it is too well known. You remember that Yosemite was one of the first cooperating associations, and Judge Oliver, who was the United States Commissioner in Yosemite, was very much concerned. He was a member of the board of directors. He was concerned that we were devoting our time to activities of the Association without any legal authority, and he was afraid that we would get into trouble from the General Accounting Office or other auditors, because we were spending our time running a printing press down there, printing these special issues, selling publications at the desk, and handling the affairs of the Association, and we had no legal basis for doing it.

Ed Beatty: So it was mainly through extensive correspondence that Oliver had with the Director at that time that they introduced into the Budget Act that authorization for field employees to devote their time to the affairs of cooperative non-profit associations such as would be designated by the Secretary of the Interior. So that was the first time we had any legal backing or authority to enter into that type of work.

Ed Beatty: Well, you know what has happened in the meantime, how these cooperative associations have grown and extended all over the Service, and we now have additional safeguards that permit the use of government facilities, the buildings, or the activities of the Association, we assist with the acquisition of lands, and the self-guiding leaflets are entirely supported by these associations, and the naturalist program – they are doing a marvelous job in things that it is difficult for the Park Service to do because of not having sufficient government funds; and sometimes where government funds could not be used for printing, because of the restrictions that you know of in the Government Printing Office.

Ed Beatty: So, I thought that was just an interesting sidelight because it was mainly through Judge Oliver's wanting to protect us as individuals so that we wouldn't be subject to any criticism or blame. He was also the one that insisted it would be best to incorporate as non-profit associations, so that we couldn't individually be held liable for any shortcomings or failures. And now most of our associations are incorporated.

Herbert Evison: Do you happen to know Judge Oliver' s full name?

Ed Beatty: No, I can't recall his first name, because we always called him Judge. I think we could get the name out of Carl Russell's book, "A Hundred Years in Yosemite." I don't recall his first name.

Ed Beatty: Well, that pretty nearly takes care, Herb, of both Yosemite and Glacier. Of course, you know that when I went to Glacier probably, we started the first land-acquisition program as a part of the association activities. It was mainly through the generosity of Maude Oastler, Frank Oastler's widow, that we got some sizeable donations earmarked especially for the acquisition of land. What we would do, on tax sales or where the individual was hard-pressed for funds and wanted an immediate cash sale, with the government it always takes a year more or less to get a check to these land owners, so we were able to step in and purchase the land and hold it until such time as the government could reimburse us.

Ed Beatty: So that was a real contribution, and it would have been very difficult to do had not we incorporated the association, because any land transfer we would have had to go to all the officers wherever they might be

transferred, to get their signatures. This way, the corporate president and the secretary could act. So that covers that phase of it.

Herbert Evison: Here's a question that occurs to me: You bought the land and held it for varying lengths of time. When it came time that the government had funds and could purchase those from you, did the Association ever have to take any loss?

Ed Beatty: They do now, Herb. In those days, through an informal understanding with Washington, we added 10% on to the price we paid for it, to cover recording fees and clearance of title, etc. But since then, they have made a ruling that the Association will be reimbursed only for their actual cash outlay for the property; and in some cases the associations have had to absorb, say in a tax claim, clearance of title costs, or in some cases the associations actually absorb the whole thing, donate it. But the thing with the Glacier situation and the Maude Oastler donation, we wanted a revolving fund that we could gradually build up to a sizeable amount, with the idea that eventually we might acquire all the private holdings in the park. We had a little clause in our by-laws that in such an event this fund could then be turned over to interpretive purposes, at Glacier maybe building a new visitor center, because in those days we didn't have money to build museums as we have now. But that since been changed and it goes into the Trust Fund of the Service in case the association has dissolved, or all the land is acquired.

Herbert Evison: As a matter of fact, I think Glacier was about one of the last of the major parks to get anything in the way of museum facilities, wasn't it?

Ed Beatty: They still don't have any, did you know that?

Herbert Evison: No, I did not.

Ed Beatty: There are no major visitor centers in Glacier, and that's one reason why it probably has the most extensive personally conducted naturalist trip programs of any area in the Service. And I have just finished writing a little memorandum for Regional Director Baker to give to the new superintendent – that's our man from Teton, Spud Bill.

Herbert Evison: Oh, Spud is going to Glacier?

Ed Beatty: (Spud is going to Glacier as superintendent.) – which outlines just a few points in that regard. And the points I tried to make there was that Glacier probably has the most extensive, the widest variety of personally-conducted interpretive activities that you will find anywhere in the Service, which includes overnight hikes to the Sperry and Granite Park chalets, its combination boat trips and hiking trips; there are daily trips to the glaciers, personally-conducted trips; and a wide variety of other nature

walks and the like. And the reason they have been able to have this very extensive program is because they have no visitor centers that demand manning, and which depletes your staff. When you have to man visitor centers for maybe sixteen hours a day, it means that the only place you can cut is on your outdoor trips. That is what has happened so much over the Service. So I am making a plea there that, with the new visitor center in the offing, that they do their best to retain these overnight trips, so that the people will have a taste of getting up in the mountains off by themselves, staying overnight in these chalets, going to the glacier the next day; because to me the chance to be out overnight without having to pack a lot of duffel, a sleeping bag, etc., is the only way that we are going to get a lot of these people into our back country. Once they get a taste of that experience, then maybe they can learn how to backpack or pack on a horse trip, etc.

Ed Beatty: So I am making a strong plea that we retain the all-day hikes to the glaciers, so the people can get up on the ice and see what a glacier is like, and retain that phase of the interpretive program in spite of the fact that they have to man all these visitor centers, because more and more I see that we are relying on these self-guiding features, self-guiding trails, and all we do is stand in the museum in the visitor center and tell them what to see outside. I hope we can change that.

Herbert Evison: Well, strength to your arm and eloquence to your tongue!

Herbert Evison: You went from a field job to a Region 1 job, and not only from one kind of job to another but to a completely different kind of area; and I think it would be awfully interesting to have some of your reactions to that complete change of job and how you found things in Region 1. Of course, I have a very warm spot in my heart for that, because—

Ed Beatty: Well, I do too, Herb, although I had some mixed feelings and some hesitation before I accepted it, because my whole life and experience – I was born in the West, on the Pacific Coast, and I had never been east of Chicago; and to go back into an area with entirely different flora and geology, history, I was just going into a foreign land. And I argued. I said, "Well, I am a westerner and I am familiar with western plants, western geology, and western animals; I know nothing about the eastern species."

Ed Beatty: Well, they said, "We don't want you to know those; we want to use your knowledge of techniques, and we will leave it to the area interpreters to know the details about the plants." So, I said, "well, that's fine." And I certainly never regretted the move, because to me previously history had been just a collection of facts that I read in a textbook, unrelated; but the opportunity to travel in the southeast region back there, I had a great

appreciation to start with for history, but after visiting these various historical spots, the stories begin to tie up, so that I was a much better interpreter, I think, from having that knowledge and appreciation of history, as well as my own field of natural history. And I enjoyed the experience of helping set up the interpretive program with Dan Beard and Ernst Christensen down at Everglades and to see that carried on.

Ed Beatty: But probably the outstanding experience was the opportunity of making two trips off the soil of the United States proper; one was to the Virgin Islands National Park on a little team to study the boundaries, the potential boundaries, and come up with recommendations there. I didn’t get to stay at Rockefeller’s plush place there at Caneel Bay.

Herbert Evison: I never have either.

Ed Beatty: I had to live with the natives, and I insisted on eating the native food while I was over there, for the experience; very enjoyable, and I was glad to have had that.

Ed Beatty: But probably the outstanding venture in that regard was the opportunity to go to Panama, at the request of the Army. There was a Colonel down in Panama that had an interest in history, and he was the Colonel in that Caribbean school that trained the South American people in jungle existence and fighting, and they spoke nothing but Spanish in the school. The Commanding General was also interested in this particular fort because they had uncovered it and re-opened it, and this was Fort San Lorenzo, right at the entrance to the Canal Zone, that has a marvelous history in connection with Columbus and of course Admiral Vernon, who was a brother-in-law of George Washington; they had all been there; the fort had been attacked and destroyed and rebuilt. And it was the end of the Las Cruces Trail, which was a gold road across the Isthmus. And of course in the early days the Spanish, you see, would take the natives and force them to build the trail in the first place, and then transport all the gold and silver from the west coast and from down in South America across where it was transshipped to Spain.

Ed Beatty: And so, the Army had a very busy 10-day schedule for us, taking us to old Panama City, to Porto Bello, which was the land end of the Las Cruces Trail where they started. Fort San Lorenzo was the water end.

Ed Beatty: In other words, the trail was half by land and then the rest was by water, but during some portions of the year they couldn’t use the land trail, so they had to use the water trail, so it was a shift between the two.

Ed Beatty: And in addition to this marvelous fort, the waters off the fort were just loaded with cannon of all makes that were just rusting in the bottom there,

needing attention. But next to it there was marvelous jungle area. So, in our estimation we made a very favorable report that it would be an ideal combination history and natural history area for the Service to develop.

Ed Beatty: Now, you might say, why would you go to the Canal Zone and Panama to develop a national monument or a national park that would embrace difficult jungle country and include portions of this old gold trail? But it was not only where the Spaniards brought gold across, but where the Americans in the gold rush to San Francisco, you know, would go across land; so, it has a marvelous history and a marvelous opportunity to see tropical vegetation and birds and animals.

Ed Beatty: Well, nothing was ever done about that.

Herbert Evison: How much of an area did you have in mind, do you remember, about?

Ed Beatty: We didn't – well, we had an estimated figure, yes, because it included some fortifications that were built in the early days to protect the area. We found the old trenches and moats, and we wanted to include them. It was down pretty near to Barro Colorado – let's see, is that the right name? Barro Colorado Island – it's run by the Smithsonian, I remember they have an island down there, a research island. And I would say it would amount to at least 5,000 acres or something like that, as a minimum, and if possible, to extend on both sides the river a further distance down so as to include some of the tropical jungle area, thus combining history and natural history.

Ed Beatty: But the thing that impressed us I think the most down there, was the interest that the natives showed in this work. And we found that the natives there had no recreation at all; there was nothing they could do; there were no parks; most of them had no pride of country, no appreciation of their natural heritage. And it seemed to me that this country was amiss in not developing an area to set an example for not only the Panamanians and the Central American countries nearby, but for South America, that would show them, "Here's a means of doing something for your people that they can enjoy and help develop an appreciation of their country." I think we now have an international park section of the Service; I think that is something that should be looked into. Now there is nobody pushing this, because the Colonel has retired and transferred; the Commanding General has also changed down there. I don't know the present status.

Ed Beatty: Regional Director Cox raised the question just a year or so before I transferred here, "Are we going to do anything with it?" But I guess we were busy planning Mission 66 then and thinking of our own country.

Ed Beatty: I certainly hope that the Service will reconsider and do something to benefit those people in Panama, and I am sure it would do us a lot of good in our relations with South American countries, and we certainly need something to offset Castro and Kruschev in that area now.

Ed Beatty: I also had the opportunity to sample roasted iguana and the iguana eggs which we were given as a special treat – we saw the animals alive, we selected our own, they were roasted for us with the eggs; it was quite a delicacy.

Herbert Evison: That was in Panama?

Ed Beatty: That was in Panama, yes.

Herbert Evison: I asked, because there are a lot of iguanas in the Virgin Islands, too. I have seen them; I saw one about so big cross the road—

Ed Beatty: Well, that's about the size of them; half tail and half body.

Herbert Evison: Well, that about mops us up. Now I notice mention here of Stupka, Herb Olson, and Beatty. You were the three who made the investigations—

Ed Beatty: That was the Virgin Islands boundary study. It was Elbert Cox and Al Manucy, who is the historian there out of the regional office, one of the historians, and myself who went to Panama.

Herbert Evison: Oh, yes. Of course, Al Manucy with lots of background on the Spanish end of American history—

Ed Beatty: Yes, that was his end of it. And we wrote – I prepared the report; they wrote their sections, Al did; I handled the natural history section, but I compiled it with the illustrations. And when I look at the old town of Panama, with the lovely buildings, the marvelous architecture of the old convents, the towers, that are just crumbling today; nobody pays any attention to it. Porto Bello, which was a beautiful port named by Columbus, and we went to that on an LST down the coast and the Army. These natives that lived there, they have built onto these precious old buildings their little lean-tos, yet nothing is being done. A marvelous opportunity down there for us to do something.

Ed Beatty: Well, that about ends it, Herb.

Herbert Evison: Maybe something quite conceivably could develop out of your plea on here, because certainly the Director is going to look at the transcriptions of all of this material, and I am glad to have had your plea.

Ed Beatty: Well, you remember it was about twenty years before anything was done with the Virgin Islands after it was originally studied? And I happen to have been right here when the study was reactivated.

[END OF INTERVIEW]