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**Fred & Amy Binnewies**  
**April 27, 1973**

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NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

Fred and Amy Binnewies

Reel #182

Sides One and Two

Washington, D.C.

March 27, 1973

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## [START OF INTERVIEW]

Herb Evison: This is April 27, 1973. I'm Herb Evison, and this morning I am in Page, Arizona, in the home of two of the best friends that the Evisons have, Fred and Amy Binnewies. Now, Fred, as I told you, I want to start this off by getting some of the, well, a sort of a thumbnail biography, really, which I failed to do when I taped you at Glacier ten years ago.

Herb Evison: So, without further ado, you might confess when and where you were born and something about the family you were born into.

Fred Binnewies: Okay, Herb. I was born in Normal, Illinois, in October of 1909.

Herb Evison: Oh, let's have the date.

Fred Binnewies: 30th.

Herb Evison: October 30th, 1909.

Fred Binnewies: 1909, I was almost a Halloween brat but not quite.

Herb Evison: Yeah.

Fred Binnewies: My dad was a coach at the Normal University in Normal, Illinois, at that time. We left Illinois, however, before I was a year old and moved to Wichita, Kansas, where Dad was a professor of sociology at what was then Fairmount College. It's now Wichita University.

Fred Binnewies: We stayed there for about nine years and then went to New Mexico. We were out in New Mexico for about four years. Dad quit teaching for a while and tried to be a surveyor with an oil company, but that didn't work out too well. So, from there we moved to South Dakota, while Dad completed his doctorate degree at the University of Nebraska.

Fred Binnewies: Then from South Dakota we went to Greeley, Colorado, where he was professor of sociology at Colorado State College. It's now the Northern Colorado University.

Herb Evison: Oh, yes, all of them have changed their names except the University of Colorado, I guess.

Fred Binnewies: I think so. I went to school at Greeley and graduated there with an A.B. degree in 1930, and there I met a very lovely gal named Amy.

Herb Evison: What was her – what was the rest of her name?

Fred Binnewies: Amy Olinger.

Herb Evison: Let's spell that, O-l-i-n-g-e-r?

Fred Binnewies: That's right.

- Herb Evison: All right. Yeah, this was 1930. You met her then—
- Fred Binnewies: Well, I met her before that, because I was going with a sorority sister of hers, so – but something happened, and the sorority sister lost out. And after we both had graduated, she was teaching school at Eaton, Colorado, and I was teaching school at Estes Park, Colorado, and we got together and decided to make it permanent, which is the best thing that ever happened to me. I don't know about her. She's had a rough time of it.
- Herb Evison: When did – she doesn't look it (laughter).
- Herb Evison: When did you – what's your marriage date?
- Fred Binnewies: August 28th, 1934.
- Herb Evison: What month?
- Fred Binnewies: August.
- Herb Evison: August 28th, 1934.
- Fred Binnewies: Yeah.
- Herb Evison: I see. Now, you might just as well go ahead and tell about the boys and girl.
- Fred Binnewies: Well, we have three children, probably the best children in the world, two boys and one girl. The boys are both red-headed, although neither of us are. And this has always elicited a little bit of comment from people (laughter).
- Fred Binnewies: We're awfully proud of them. Bill, the older boy is now superintendent of Canyon de Chelly National Monument. Bob was chief ranger at the Acadia National Park, but he has taken a couple of years' leave from the Park Service right now, and is executive director of what's called the Maine Coast Heritage Trust, which is a—
- Herb Evison: Beautiful.
- Fred Binnewies: —a private organization that is trying to save the islands along the East Coast from overdevelopment. He's quite enthusiastic about it, and they certainly are doing a fine job and have great objectives. We just hope that they can realize all of the dreams that they have for it.
- Fred Binnewies: Carolyn graduated from Northern Arizona University in Flagstaff, Arizona. She taught two years in Flagstaff, and in the meantime, she got married to Ed Gastellum. Most people in the Park Service will recognize the Gastellum name, because his father, Louis, is very well known throughout the Service, and they are quite happy.

Fred Binnewies: Both of them are in school right now at Northern Arizona University, where Ed is finishing up his degree, after having served three years in the Army, part of which was a year in Vietnam. Carolyn is working on her master's degree.

Herb Evison: One thing you didn't say was you didn't give me any dope on the education of these boys.

Fred Binnewies: Oh, okay. Bill graduated from San Jose State College in California, and Bob graduated from the ranger factory, Colorado—

Herb Evison: State University.

Fred Binnewies: State University now. And Bill—

Herb Evison: Fort Collins, Colorado.

Fred Binnewies: Bill graduated in wildlife management. Bob graduated in recreational forestry.

Herb Evison: Oh, yes. Now, Amy, let's get some of you on this record. You nodded your head in the affirmative when I said I was going to ask you not only where but when you were born.

Amy Binnewies: Sure. I was born in Montrose, Colorado, August 18th, 1909, and this was quite a memorable year because that was the year when the Gunnison Tunnel was opened. When President Teddy Roosevelt came out to the West. This was the first great Bureau of Reclamation Project in the West, and it so happened that my father was on the arrangements committee for the big celebration that took place in Montrose, Colorado. This occurred when I was six weeks old, and I rode a short distance in the parade before my father's little – I think it was – well, I'm not sure – a Maxwell, I think – broke down in the parade, and they had to shove it to the side (laughter).

Amy Binnewies: We moved to Denver some years later, and most of my life was spent in Denver and up in Greeley, Colorado.

Herb Evison: Oh, yes.

Amy Binnewies: And then after I graduated, I taught in Eaton, Colorado, prior to our marriage.

Herb Evison: Uh-huh. Well now, we have the personal history. I covered your life together in the Park Service pretty completely, I think, back in '62, but I'm particularly interested in getting on the record whatever else you might want to – either one of you might want to add about your experience at Glacier.

- Herb Evison: But even more so at Point Reyes and in the National Capital Parks, in those three places, it seems to me you got great variety of kind of area and kind of chore with which to deal.
- Herb Evison: We – I think you said, Amy, when we started this, that you and my wife were going to go on a little expedition after I had pried loose from you all of the information and commentary that I could. I think maybe we ought to take that into consideration. Perhaps I would like you to work together as a team now. Fred, you have some ideas as to some of the things that I might get from Amy on this, and I would be glad if you would sort of take my place for a minute and ask her to tell on here some of the – comments you would like to get on the record.
- Fred Binnewies: Okay. I think that Amy has been a very important part of my career. I think that we have acted together as a team because every place that we have been, she has taken quite an active part in the community activities, and I think that the success, if we had any, with developing or improving employee morale, this sort of thing, is due to a great extent to her interest and her leadership and her enthusiasm. And I think that you might say a little bit about some of the things that were done. If we can, maybe we should go back a little bit to Death Valley.
- Herb Evison: Oh, yes.
- Fred Binnewies: Where—
- Herb Evison: Please do.
- Fred Binnewies: —you helped, you organized the employee group out there.
- Herb Evison: Yeah, let her tell it.
- Amy Binnewies: Well, it was – when we went into Death Valley, morale was at a rather low ebb, and there was just hardly speaking acquaintance between the uniformed personnel and the maintenance people, and to us this has been an important thing, that we're all doing something important. Every person in the park is doing something important.
- Amy Binnewies: And it took us a while to make everyone realize that we considered each person of value. Finally, we got a great spirit of cooperation going there through our social affairs and through our booster club, which promoted such projects as a school milk fund and that sort of thing, getting everybody to work together.
- Fred Binnewies: Including some people from the concessions.

- Amy Binnewies: Oh, yes. Yes, many people from the concessions. We became friends with the concessioners as well. And to me this is important in the Park Service from the standpoint of the Park Service wives. Too many, I believe, isolate themselves in one way or another from the whole group. I have reaped rich benefits from knowing people whom I would not know, perhaps, if I lived in a city all the time, you know, people in the maintenance group level and so forth.
- Amy Binnewies: And these people have so much to contribute, and I loved all of them.
- Herb Evison: And, of course, you just barely mentioned Park Service wives, but I would take it that working through the Park Service wives is one way of bringing the whole community together.
- Amy Binnewies: Absolutely. Absolutely, Herb. That's the way to do it, because the men really can't devote their time to that. They have their own field of operations to work in.
- Herb Evison: Yeah. Well now, you mentioned the school milk fund. I'd like to get on the record any other activities, let's say, purely social, the kind of purely social activities that you were active in there.
- Amy Binnewies: Well, there in Death Valley I think we had some of the greatest social activities that we had anyplace, because they were mostly spur of the moment things. In the hot, hot summers you may recall, when we moved there, the whole Park Service was moving up to Wildrose in the summertime, up at 6,000 feet elevation, to get out of the heat.
- Amy Binnewies: Well, after the first summer there, Fred found that to be a very inefficient way to operate the place. He decided that we would stay down in the valley, that the office would stay down there, and he told the other members of the village that they could have a choice. If they wanted to move back up to Wildrose, fine. If not, they could stay down also. It turned out that everybody, with the exception of a few people who had to take care of the Wildrose area, selected to stay down in the valley.
- Amy Binnewies: So, in the summertime down there we would have picnics and parties down at the swimming pool. We played volleyball in the pool. We had the most beautiful gourmet feasts when we'd just all dig into our refrigerators and make things. And it was 100 miles to shopping, you know. So, we had some rare concoctions, but they were just beautiful.
- Herb Evison: Of course, it was in awful hot weather.
- Amy Binnewies: You bet it was hot weather.
- Herb Evison: But you were able to go through all this which in previous years all of these folks had tried to avoid.

Amy Binnewies: Yes.

[END OF SIDE 1]

[START OF SIDE 2]

Herb Evison: —in the very great heat then. Were your houses air conditioned?

Amy Binnewies: Not when we first moved down there, but the good superintendent helped us out on that pretty soon.

Herb Evison: Yeah? What did you have as substitutes? Did you run fans over dripping cloths or something of that kind to cool things off a little bit?

Amy Binnewies: Yes, an electric fan, and a few of the people had little, small window coolers of their own that they had purchased. One of the greatest survival things in the desert country that we discovered was a wet Turkish towel just hanging loosely over your head, down over your shoulders, and that worked as an evaporative cooler.

Herb Evison: Oh, yeah (laughter).

Amy Binnewies: We used it a lot.

Herb Evison: Yes. I never heard of that before, but I think I have even tried it myself in hot weather. But anyway, the experiment worked. Do you know whether they continue now to operate there the year round in the valley?

Amy Binnewies: Yes, they do.

Herb Evison: Yeah. Now,—

Amy Binnewies: May I make one comment, Herb, if you're through with — Fred may want to go back to Death Valley a minute, but I did want to mention one thing that to me was a really inspiring thing. When we moved up to Glacier, Ed and Becky Hummel were there. And I really had never had an opportunity to work with a superintendent's wife before. Becky was such an inspiration because she is a person who is concerned with the whole community too.

Amy Binnewies: And when Becky left, then we had Jane and Spud Bill there, and Jane too is exactly the same kind of wonderful person who is concerned, who cares for the people in her community. And this is I think every young wife or every old wife could be happy in any area of the Park Service if they can learn this, that they are a part of a whole community and that they can — they can make friendships with everyone there, and Becky and Jane were certainly examples of that kind of inspiring attitude.

Herb Evison: I know them. I'm not a bit surprised that you've said about them just what you have said.

- Fred Binnewies: Let me put in one little comment here, if I can, Herb. This also goes back to Death Valley, but I think that many times wives are not given recognition or credit for their contribution to the general welfare of the Park Service and park visitors. While I was in Death Valley, I proposed to recognize some of the rather outstanding contributions that they made in some manner, and I thought maybe it would be possible to give them something like an incentive award. But this, I guess, wasn't possible or anyhow it didn't catch fire at that time. The Regional Office did go so far as to say that they'd prepare a letter of recognition that would be signed by the regional director or the director. I think of the times out there that the wives, oh, prepared pots and pots of coffee that they gave to visitors and how many times they took visitors into their homes and let them cool off or let them rest or took care of them in other ways because, of course, out there it was an awful long way between filling stations or places where they could get any kind of assistance. I think most of the wives, particularly those in the outpost stations, just did a tremendous job.
- Fred Binnewies: I still wish that there was some way in which the Service could give them a little greater recognition than they have had.
- Herb Evison: I like that. I think the phrase is good Samaritan, isn't it?
- Fred Binnewies: I think so.
- Herb Evison: Isn't their kind of contribution?
- Amy Binnewies: I said it many times that the Park Service was getting two employees for the price of one, because some of those women out in the remote areas had to man the radios. They had standby duty and had to be there under emergencies, sometimes up all night. And they're pretty heroic, a lot of them.
- Herb Evison: I got a very good insight into that when I taped Matt Ryan.
- Amy Binnewies: Yes, uh-huh.
- Fred Binnewies: Yes, well, Matt is an awfully good example, because Rosemary – I don't know how many gallons of coffee she must have made every month out there and how many extra meals she gave to people, and they were just always ready to be of any assistance that they possibly could, and it was Rosemary, and it was Kathleen Parr that really—
- Amy Binnewies: Well, Mary Spalding. You can't really start naming names because there were so many.
- Fred Binnewies: Well, except that Rosemary and Kathleen were in a position at that time where they had a greater opportunity—

- Amy Binnewies: Right.
- Fred Binnewies: —as far as direct contact with the visitors were concerned, because both of them were out at isolated stations.
- Herb Evison: Matt boasted that Rosemary could make the best pitcher of cold lemonade of anybody that he'd ever known.
- Amy Binnewies: I'm sure that's true.
- Herb Evison: Dispensed rather widely up there at the station there. What else should I be getting from Amy, Fred?
- Amy Binnewies: Could we jump – we touched on Glacier and the wonderful community relationship there. And then when we went to Novato, California, and I experienced something entirely different, because we – this was when Fred was superintendent at Point Reyes National Seashore. And we lived in town. There again I think I was very fortunate in becoming acquainted with the Novato Hostess Club.
- Herb Evison: Oh, yes.
- Amy Binnewies: This was an organization to welcome new people. I became acquainted when they welcomed me. And through this club in the two years we were there in Novato we were again able to work in a community way, because the hostess club was sponsoring a proposal to create a city park for the city.
- Amy Binnewies: Fred was the first chairman of the executive committee on that, and I was working through the club. The whole thing was sponsored and promoted by the Novato Hostess Club. When we went back for a visit a little over a year ago, the park was a real thrill to see. It's a beautiful park with playgrounds, fountains and is beautifully designed. It made us feel good to know that we had a little part in the creation of this for the city of Novato.
- Herb Evison: Now, that was a city park.
- Amy Binnewies: Yes. Uh-huh, right in town.
- Herb Evison: Yeah. Oh, wonderful and hooray for you. I want to – I want to continue, Amy. You went from there to Washington, D.C.
- Amy Binnewies: Yes, uh-huh.
- Herb Evison: And that was a completely different kind of experience, and I'm interested in getting any comments or accounts of events or anything else that you want to offer on that. How long were you there, for one thing?
- Amy Binnewies: We were there four years.

Herb Evison: Oh, yes.

Amy Binnewies: We lived out in Annandale, Virginia, and moved into a neighborhood in Annandale that, fortunately, was a neighborhood. We made close, close friends. In fact, when we were over in Hawaii recently, we visited one of the couples, a young man and his family. He is now commander of communications for the South Pacific theater, for the Navy.

Herb Evison: Yes.

Amy Binnewies: And anyway, they were our neighbors. We had a wonderful neighborhood relationship there. Also, I had the opportunity to work in a day care center as a volunteer. Mary Gibbs filled my boots when we moved away. She took over there in the day care center, where I had worked. Also, we had the opportunities at that time of the Arts for Indian America program down at the Department of Interior building, to volunteer in working down there for the various Indian exhibits. That was work I enjoyed very much.

Amy Binnewies: I'd say, to be happy in the city now, (so many are going to have to take their turn living in the big cities) must get into something in their immediate community or make specific efforts to get acquainted with people.

Fred Binnewies: If I can offer one comment here, I think one of the weaknesses in the Park Service around large metropolitan areas such as Washington is the fact that the employees have so little opportunity to get together socially. Traffic is rough, and I know we tried to have a picnic every year. But it wasn't very well attended. Somehow the people in the metropolitan areas just don't seem to want to make the effort to get together socially very much. And I think this is wrong, even though it does mean passing up a golf game or doing something else in which they may be involved.

Fred Binnewies: It seems to me that it would be of benefit to all if they would make a greater effort to get together and at least two or three times a year and—

Herb Evison: Don't you think in Washington the Park Service suffers from the curse of bigness?

Amy Binnewies: Yes.

Herb Evison: There are just so many people.

Fred Binnewies: That's right, sure.

Amy Binnewies: And such great distances and such heavy traffic. They just really can hardly do any better than they're doing, I think.

Herb Evison: Yeah. I don't know about you, but I know we just hate to drive into the heart of Washington anymore no matter what the time of day.

- Fred Binnewies: Oh, we passed up many things there that we would have liked very much to go to just because we didn't want to go down and fight the traffic and fight for parking and stand in line and all that sort of thing that is part of the big city complex.
- Herb Evison: Yeah. Now, anything more that you think Amy ought to contribute or is there anything more that you want to—
- Amy Binnewies: Well, I might say now that we're in retirement, you might be interested in knowing why we moved to Page. We had not known desert living at all until we moved to Death Valley, but we decided we loved desert living, and we wanted to find a place where we were close to mountains and not too far from the ocean and yet still have a desert environment. So here we are. Page is very good. But since coming here, we have been involved in a citizen effort with other citizens in the community to put all the pressure we can on this big, ugly power plant out here, to keep it as clean as possible. For a while I think we had a few people who wanted to push us back down the hill, away from Page, because we were getting involved very deeply, and I think we did have some little success with other environmental groups in the state to get some legislation and some results in keeping this power plant as clean, I guess, as it's possible for it to be.
- Herb Evison: Yeah. At any rate, you won't you don't think that there will be such complaints about it as there have been about the power plants over at the Four Corners?
- Amy Binnewies: I don't think so. I think they're trying to make this more, quote, "the ideal plant."
- Herb Evison: Uh-huh, Well, good.
- Amy Binnewies: We'll wait and see what happens.
- Herb Evison: Yes. Now, I want to get on here everything that you, Amy, have to contribute. But maybe I should release you now.
- Amy Binnewies: All right
- Herb Evison: Is that all right?
- Amy Binnewies: That's fine. I do want to say one thing, Herb. I think I would not change my life, having lived in the national parks with Fred and rearing our children in the parks, I would not change that for any other career in the world or any other life in the world.
- Fred Binnewies: Amen.
- Herb Evison: Well, that's a wonderful concluding statement (laughter).

- Herb Evison: And I'm just – I'm just so tickled that I had you sitting here all this time and making this contribution. You know, you're a contributor.
- Amy Binnewies: Thank you.
- Herb Evison: Fred, at this point I want to go back to Glacier. When I taped you up there, you were assistant superintendent under Ed Hummel, who was absent at the time. I don't know whether that was an interval between his going to San Francisco, when you were there. I think you were acting superintendent at the time and then that he had moved to San Francisco. But you got another superintendent whom Amy mentioned a little while ago in the person of Spud Bill, under whom you served for a while, and I wonder if there's anything about that period, the rest of the time that you were at Glacier, that we ought to get on this tape.
- Fred Binnewies: I think one of the things that we might mention, Herb, is the change in the concession ownership about that time. I don't recall exactly when it was, but I think this is one of the places that the service should have taken a little longer look at it and have tried harder to buy out the concessioner and eliminate the concessions from the park. I think it was a great opportunity. The Great Northern Railroad owned the concessions there at that time, and they decided to get out of the business, and as you may recall, Don Hummel came in and took over from them.
- Fred Binnewies: Well, it was a period when, if the Service could have come up with some money, I think they could have bought out those concessions and maybe continued to operate them, say, let the National Park Concessions, Incorporated, operate them for a period of a few years while private enterprise had an opportunity to do a little more development just outside of the park.
- Fred Binnewies: The reason that I have felt quite strongly about this is that during the master plan study up there, we were considering the Many Glacier area, and it just struck all of us that we had run out of room at Many Glacier for any further development of campgrounds or other visitor facilities and that about the only alternative was to go outside of the park.
- Fred Binnewies: Now, I think, too, in keeping with the stated service policy, that concessions would not be provided inside the park if it can be provided outside, that this was a rare opportunity for the service to step in and to have eliminated those concessions inside of the park and let private enterprise take it from the outside of the area.
- Fred Binnewies: There's already a good start of development, both on the east side and the west side of the park, and the park isn't that big, but what people could very well stay at the park boundary or just outside of the park and easily

drive to any of the points of interest inside the park, and I just see no reason for continuing those concessions.

Herb Evison: Actually, the bulk of concessions there were either right at the edge of the park or in the case of East Glacier, already outside of the park. Isn't that correct? Wasn't the East Glacier hotel outside the boundaries of the park?

Fred Binnewies: That's right. East Glacier was outside the boundaries, although the park still had a responsibility for it.

Herb Evison: Yes. Yes.

Fred Binnewies: There was legislation to that effect, that the Park Service would supervise that concessions as well as those which were inside. But the Many Glacier Hotel, the McDonald Hotel and some of those others, the one up at Swift Current Lake, could just as well have been eliminated.

Fred Binnewies: Of course, you have to approach this with mixed feelings because the Many Glacier Hotel and the East Glacier I suppose East Glacier would have stayed, but the Many Glacier Hotel was a great big log structure, and there will never be another one built like it again. Or I think it's very doubtful that there ever would be. It's practically a historic structure. It would have been nice to maintain it maybe as a visitors' center or continue some use of it but not as a concession.

Fred Binnewies: You know the awful mess that was down there at the foot of Lake McDonald, where there was a mixture of private enterprise and concession operation there, and it would have been – well, it was an objective of the Park Service to try to eventually get that out of there, although I don't think much progress has been made in doing it. But I just feel rather strongly that this policy of encouraging private enterprise just outside of the areas to do the development and not have or keep the development inside the park to a bare minimum is the thing that should be adhered to and emphasized even more strongly at this time than it has been in the past.

Herb Evison: I wonder if, assuming that they have done that, you would have them take a leaf from the Yosemite experience perhaps and maybe very strictly limit where the individual's private car could go in that park and substitute for it something like they have at Yosemite of the bus service that is frequent and provides a means of getting around for everybody. I was—

Fred Binnewies: Well, I think I'm getting a little bit ahead here maybe, but we actually started that kind of a service in the National Capital Parks.

Herb Evison: Yes.

- Fred Binnewies: And it was reasonably successful there. And then Yosemite followed that. At the time I was at Glacier, we weren't faced with that kind of a problem of too many automobiles, although I suppose every year they are increasing, and it's going to come sooner or later. But I'd like to go back to Rocky Mountain as the good example of the area in which they have eliminated the concessions and really what a difference it makes.
- Fred Binnewies: It's a beautiful park now, I think, in the best tradition of what a park should be, and I see no reason why, except money, of course, we could not have accomplished the same thing in Glacier.
- Herb Evison: Yeah. Well, it's conceivable at least if they had had the vision and tried hard enough, they might have gotten the money too.
- Fred Binnewies: Yeah, I've often wished that I knew who it was that made the decision at Rocky Mountain and went ahead and were able to complete it as well as they have. I don't know whether it was – it could have been Horace. But maybe it was Arno Cammerer, because I think they – know they started, I was seasonal ranger there at the time when they were first starting to eliminate, buy out some of the private holdings and eliminate some of the concessions. And I guess they were mostly private holdings in Rocky Mountain.
- Herb Evison: Yes, they were.
- Fred Binnewies: That were eliminated, and that, of course, is a little different situation, but not a great deal because, after all, at Glacier it was the Great Northern Railroad built and owned those facilities.
- Herb Evison: Practically established the park.
- Fred Binnewies: Yeah. And we have to give a lot of credit to some of the big companies like that that in the early days took such an active part in helping to get those parks established.
- Herb Evison: Yeah. Now, anything else on Glacier before we move you to Novato, California?
- Fred Binnewies: No, I don't believe so. I think I've pretty well covered – well, you did mention, of course, the change in superintendents when I was there. When I went there in 1960, Ed Hummel was the superintendent, and then he moved to San Francisco as regional director, and Spud Bill followed him as superintendent, and I must say that for me personally it was one of the high points in my career to be able to work with both of them. They are both really outstanding park people, and it was truly an inspiration to be able to work with them.

- Fred Binnewies: I think if I had had that kind of an opportunity before I was the superintendent, I'd have been a better superintendent.
- Herb Evison: Might be (laughter). Might be.
- Fred Binnewies: Well, after spending about 3½ in Glacier, I had an opportunity to go to Point Reyes National Seashore as the first superintendent of that newly established area. At the time I went there, the Park Service didn't own any land, and so it was my responsibility to get the land acquisition program going.
- Fred Binnewies: We had all kinds of problems, principally because a small subdivider had gotten his foot in the door there and increased the value of land astronomically. We had \$16 million to start out with, and we spent that in the first year, didn't acquire too much of the land. I guess – I don't recall for sure, but I think it was about a quarter or maybe a third of the land that had been designated for Point Reyes.
- Fred Binnewies: I may have mentioned Tom Kornellis came to us from the Bureau of Reclamation, and he was an excellent negotiator and land buyer. He contributed an awful lot to the success, if we had any, there at Point Reyes.
- Herb Evison: Yeah.
- Fred Binnewies: It was a great experience, really, being in on a new area like that, because we had to do a lot of the basic planning, and we had some real local problems, as all new areas do, but one of the exciting things was when we had acquired some of the land there, we had acquired a long beach area called the Limantour Spit. People heard about it, found out it was available to the public, or at least it was in Park Service ownership, so they started coming out there. There were still a number of people living in a subdivision down there that had not sold out. They got pretty unhappy with seeing these strangers come down. So, they arranged with a private landowner just outside the park to block the road.
- Herb Evison: To block the road?
- Fred Binnewies: Yeah, they put a chain across the road, and they kept an armed guard on it. And they wouldn't let anybody out there except the people that lived there and of course, park employees. So, we had quite a donnybrook over that. It was our contention that it was a public road because it had been a farm to market road at one time, and it had been a mail route and that sort of thing. But the attorneys came up with something called overloading an easement, and they said that, when an easement was given to this private land for this farm to market road, there was no intention that they were inviting all the whole population of the United States to use it.

- Fred Binnewies: So anyhow, at the time that I left there, that was still unresolved. We had surveyed out, were starting to construct our own road that would lead to this same area, but that got into some sort of a jam too. I never found out for sure just what happened, but anyhow, that was never completed, and—
- Herb Evison: Well, was there any part of the area in federal possession and in any respect ready for public use while you were there?
- Fred Binnewies: Oh, yes. We acquired the Bear Valley Ranch, which is one of the large holdings and headquarters was located right on the edge of it. It's a very beautiful area with a lot of old ranch roads that made ideal trails. So, we did start to let people come in and hike and walk down to the seashore there. And we put in – we also acquired the Point Reyes Beach, which was a long, about 12-mile-long beach on the northern side of Point Reyes.
- Herb Evison: Oh, yes.
- Fred Binnewies: We put in one parking lot for that and were in the process of putting in a second access when I left there. Then there was a small county park that was turned over to us, and we started improving that some. That was just about the time that I left. But it was a real exciting experience, and it was a tough decision to leave there. I had an offer to go as assistant regional director of the National Capital Region. And I could hardly turn that one down, although I would have liked to have stayed at Point Reyes longer, in order to see the development get a little bit further along.
- Herb Evison: You did have a choice?
- Fred Binnewies: Well, I think so. I think I could have turned down going to National Capital Parks if I wanted to, but we thought about it several days and finally decided that that would be a fine experience too, which it turned out to be. I still think that my career has been one in the parks that was most satisfying, because I had an opportunity to work in all of the types of areas that are represented in the National Park system, cave areas, desert areas, archeological areas, mountain areas, seashore, and then historic areas as represented by the National Capital Parks.
- Herb Evison: Yes, but also in a highly urban community.
- Fred Binnewies: Yeah.
- Herb Evison: Now, you were assistant regional director there with what specific responsibilities as an assistant regional director?
- Fred Binnewies: Oh, I was responsible for the rangers, that is, protection, interpretation and maintenance and concessions with the Operations Division. I think that another thing the service should do is to arrange to transfer people in and out of an organization like the National Capital Parks a little more. We had

many people in the National Capital Parks who had been there practically their entire career, and as one fellow put it, he wished that they could get out into the real Park Service (laughter).

Fred Binnewies: Yeah, well, I think that attitude was rather widespread, and that people being sent in there felt like they were being separated from the Park Service.

Fred Binnewies: Yes and, you see, that's a fallacy, because of course, when I went back there, I had some reservations and some questions about it. But certainly the National Capital Parks are just as much a part of the National Park system as any of the other principally historic areas, and I think it's entirely proper and right that the Park Service administer the memorials and the areas in Washington, in the nation's capital that they do.

Fred Binnewies: Now, when I went there, there were something like 790 parcels of land that were included in the National Capital Parks. Many of these were just little squares and triangles and small bits of land at street intersections and things like that that really were not properly part of the park system, so we arranged before I left to transfer about half of the total number to the District of Columbia, because it's really more properly a District responsibility. But the Park Service retained, of course, the Mall area, the memorials, the larger parks, Rock Creek Park, Anacostia, and those areas that, I think, are properly the responsibility of the National Park Service.

Fred Binnewies: It was really a very rewarding and satisfying experience there. We certainly had all kinds of problems. I was there when the riots occurred and when the Army moved into our headquarters building to make that a command post during the riots and that sort of thing. You never knew from one day to the next what was going to pop. And, of course we had all kinds of relationships with Congress, congressmen, and senators. There were some of them that thought they were the managers of the National Capital Parks. But that's all right. You need something like that to kind of keep you on your toes now and then, but certainly never a dull moment.

Herb Evison: You referred to the riots. I am wondering to what extent you personally, or to what extent the National Capital Parks office, were mixed up with that or in the middle of it.

Fred Binnewies: Well, the riots themselves, we weren't involved in that very much, except providing the command post for the Army when they moved in, but we were deeply involved, of course, in all of the, practically all of the demonstrations, including Resurrection City and all of that I'd like to say mess. It was mostly – it was a mess because during the time that Resurrection City was there, it rained, and it was physically an awful mess. It was built, of course, on park land – along part of the mall area

there by the Reflection Pool, and when we finally went in to tear it down and clean it up, it was my responsibility to sort of oversee the whole thing.

Fred Binnewies: All of the – practically all of the demonstrations occurred in the Mall area, principally around the Washington Monument and Sylvan Theater. And, of course, we were directly involved with all of those.

Fred Binnewies: The National Capital Park Police, I must say, I think without doubt, are the greatest police organization in the country, and they handle crowd situations so well. They just – they do it unobtrusively. If a little bit of trouble starts, they move in quietly and take care of it, and I just can't say enough in praise of the National Capital Park Police, which were part of our organization, of course.

Herb Evison: Now, who were the heads of it? Who was the head of it during your period there?

Fred Binnewies: Well, Nash Castro was when I – let's see. No, he had been chief when I first went there. Nels Murdock came in and headed it up, and he did a wonderful job. Morale had gotten pretty low before Nash went there, and, of course, you know Nash, what an inspiration he can be. He really got it back on its feet, and Nels Murdock continued and did a wonderful job with them.

Herb Evison: Of course, it was always interesting to me that in the case of Nels Murdock they went clear out of the organization, I mean the National Capital Parks organization or the Park Police organization, to bring in a guy who had been a chief ranger and various other things out in a quite different milieu, and yet he apparently was able to adapt himself to the requirements of that job in the way that you've indicated, doing a fine job.

Fred Binnewies: Well, I think you just have to look at it as an expanded ranger force in a sense. And Nels certainly knew how to organize a ranger force, and he organized the police in much the same way. He developed a lot of pride and enthusiasm and they just were a great organization. That's all there is to it.

Fred Binnewies: Of course, when Nels left, then there were what you might call career policemen became the head of it; Walt Lang, who had been Nels' assistant, became the chief. And – the name has gotten away from me. Huh.

Herb Evison: You can't think of that name at the moment, but it may be that by the time you get the transcript of this, you'll be able to fill it in.

Fred Binnewies: Yeah, you know, Herb. I've gotten to the point, I guess, that many of us do. Instant recall takes a while longer than it used to.

- Herb Evison: Yes, not quite so instant, huh?
- Fred Binnewies: No, sometimes it's more like half an hour, half a day or maybe you have to sleep on it.
- Herb Evison: Yes, well, I find that especially so with respect to names. Fortunately, I was able to remember Binnewies without any trouble at all, but I could easily forget it for a while—
- Fred Binnewies: Sure.
- Herb Evison: —have trouble recollecting it. Some people I've known all my life, for years, I have a hard time recollecting their names.
- Fred Binnewies: Well, I'll go ahead with a little bit more, and maybe the name will come back to me. Anyway, I think he's still chief of the Park Police and doing an excellent job.
- Fred Binnewies: The other thing I want to mention about National Capital Parks, one of the biggest responsibilities is the maintenance force there. They have an excellent shop area out at Brentwood that provides services for all of the National Capital Parks, although while I was there, the National Capital Parks were divided into four different areas, each with a superintendent, and we began to build up maintenance forces for each of those areas to do the routine maintenance, with Brentwood providing the heavier and more skilled type of maintenance.
- Fred Binnewies: One thing that many people outside of the Service do not realize, and I expect many people in the service who are not familiar with the National Capital Parks don't know that it is a Park Service responsibility to maintain the White House and the White House grounds. We call it Reservation One. We don't refer to it as the White House. But, of course, all memorials and the Mall area principally are the responsibility of the Service. It required a big maintenance crew, especially during the time while I was there that Lady Bird Johnson started her beautification program. We made a great effort in the National Capital Parks to beautify, plant more flowers and to improve our quality of maintenance.
- Fred Binnewies: It got to the point where we simply could not take on any more work even with the rather large force that we had, it was still limited, and during the emphasis that was given to beautification by Lady Bird, there were a number of people who made donations like 100,000 daffodils and 10,000 trees and this sort of thing that became our responsibility to plant and maintain.
- Fred Binnewies: Well, every time you add a bunch of flowers, or you add trees, it increases your maintenance problems. So, we were really scratching and had to

make some, I think, rather tough decisions on what we were going to maintain and what we wouldn't.

Fred Binnewies: We also got involved in such things as the Mexican government donating a lot of playground equipment which we had to install because practically all the playgrounds in D.C. were on Park Service land, although they were operated by the D.C. Recreation Department.

Herb Evison: Yeah. I was going to ask you about that specifically. I remember back in the time, during the earlier days when the department began to insist on desegregation, and when Merrill Christianson was the executive of the Recreation Department, there were some rather sharp clashes. How about the relationship with the Recreation Department during the time that you were there?

Fred Binnewies: I think we had a very fine relationship. Jim Cole was the head of the Recreation Department. He was a Black man, a very fine individual, and I – well, the regional director, of course, Sutton Jett or Nash Castro was designated to be on the recreation board, although I served in that capacity for them, and I think we had a real good relationship. There was fine cooperation. Jim came in for quite a bit of criticism now and then, as anyone in that kind of position would, but I think he did a good job.

Herb Evison: Well now, the Recreation Department would actually operate, well, things like swimming pools or baseball fields, tennis courts or what have you scattered around on park lands. I take it, though, that the policing job stayed with the National Park Service in all those cases. Is that correct?

Fred Binnewies: Basically, yes. Of course, again there was excellent cooperation between the Park Police and the District of Columbia Police, and they had a working relationship where, if one of them happened to run into something, they could take care of it, notifying the others, but it was a good, cooperative effort, but the basic responsibility was the Park Police for the law enforcement in those areas.

Herb Evison: I don't remember what they call it, except I remember the phrase, "The March on Washington," or something to that effect, which preceded Resurrection City, the great assemblage there when Martin Luther King delivered his oration, "I Had a Dream." I had a dream; do you remember that?

Fred Binnewies: Yeah.

Herb Evison: Tremendous – two or 300,000 people assemblage there, out from the Lincoln Memorial, ad infinitum almost. I wonder what you remember about your activities during that – at that particular time? I'm assuming that you were in—

Fred Binnewies: No, I wasn't – I wasn't –that happened—

Herb Evison: That happened before your time? I know it happened—

Fred Binnewies: I think the one that you're referring to did, although I was there for another one that was quite comparable. They assembled at the Sylvan Theater at the base of the Washington Monument, and then moved from there down to the Lincoln Memorial. And I tell you, that is quite a sight to – you know, I was up on the Lincoln Memorial at the time, to watch that mass of humanity move like a great wave almost from the Washington Monument right down past the Reflection Pool and up to the Lincoln Memorial and, of course, come to a stop there at the Lincoln Memorial. It was really something to see.

Herb Evison: That was one of the events of your stay there, huh?

Fred Binnewies: Yeah. Those demonstrations were complicated at times because sometimes several organizations would want to get into the act. The American Nazi Party, I know, wanted to get in on one of the demonstrations, but we separated them, we insisted that they go farther down the Mall. We separated them by probably a quarter of a mile or more from the remaining group. And the other – or one of the other problems that we have were demonstrations right in front of the White House, because that's where most of them wanted to go, and in the park right across from the White House. We had to put a limit on the number of people that were allowed on the sidewalk in front of the White House. And it was the responsibility of the National Capital Park Police to see to it that no more than that number were allowed to carry their banners or their signs or whatever they were at that time.

Fred Binnewies: Of course, the District Police always cooperated on those demonstrations too. It was an exciting and interesting time. There's no question about it.

Herb Evison: Well, any other specific events of that period that you ought to get on the record?

Fred Binnewies: Maybe you better let me think just a minute.

[Recording interruption.]

Fred Binnewies: I just want to add one other thing, Herb, about the National Capital Parks. I mentioned how great I think the National Capital Park Police are. I think a great deal of credit should be given to that, the maintenance crews and the National Capital Parks too because they did a bang-up job under trying conditions, and there just wasn't anything that they couldn't do.

Fred Binnewies: And they did it under sometimes extreme—

- Herb Evison: Pressure?
- Fred Binnewies: —pressure, so far as time was concerned. I know such things as the salute to Congress. We had to go in and build stages and sets and things like that under a short deadline. When the President's daughter got married, it was part of our responsibility to provide some of the decorations and the trees and some of the greenery and flowers and things like that for that event.
- Fred Binnewies: These are the sort of things again that the Park service does very quietly and gets very little credit for, so far as the public is concerned. Of course, the people more directly involved know that the Park Service is doing it, but time after time there were requests for construction of various kinds that the Brentwood shops would come up with and do an excellent job.
- Fred Binnewies: Of course, you know that the Nation's Christmas Tree is one of the annual events, and it's a responsibility of the Park Service to put that tree up and to install extra branches and all that to give it a good shape and to put up all the facilities that are used on the Ellipse during the Nation's Christmas Tree ceremonies that are participated in by the President.
- Fred Binnewies: The actual decoration of the tree was done by a commercial firm, but it was our responsibility to maintain it. These are things that I only wish that the Service could get a little more publicity or a little more credit for doing these really excellent jobs that they do like that.
- Herb Evison: Well, I'm glad you've taken this opportunity to give a little credit on tape anyway.
- Fred Binnewies: Well, they deserve every bit of it and much more, because they certainly did a wonderful job, and they said there just wasn't any job too big. They tackled almost anything and always came up with a real topnotch quality too.
- Herb Evison: Yeah. Now, what I would like to do, Fred, you're in the position now of several years' separation from your activity as an employee of the National Park Service. You've probably taken the time or had the time during those years to sort of think back and size up the, well, for want of a better term, evolution in park practice and park policy in the National Park Service. Anyway, I would like to have you put on the record some of your ideas about the changes that have taken place, for good or bad.
- Fred Binnewies: Well, I think that there have been a good many changes within the last ten years particularly. Some of them I've been quite concerned with, thinking about it probably more in retrospect, but one is employee morale. Now, generally, or I think many places throughout the Service, morale has deteriorated. I think it is due to a combination of several factors. One thing is that promotions or transfers have been too rapid.

- Fred Binnewies: Many times a man goes into a position and is only able to stay there for a year or two before he's transferred someplace else, and he doesn't really have an opportunity to get his teeth into the job to accomplish things that he would probably like to accomplish; and this has become so prevalent throughout the service, that it's my feeling anyhow that fellows probably don't put as much effort into their job or as much enthusiasm as they might otherwise, if they thought they were going to stay there for maybe four or five years and have an opportunity to develop and do things the way they would like to do them. I'm speaking now principally of the people that are in, I suppose, managerial positions or supervisory positions. I know there was an effort at one time to have people stay at least three years before they'd be considered for a transfer, but somehow this wasn't adhered to very well.
- Fred Binnewies: There were many, many instances where fellows would be transferred and would only stay for a year or two before they'd move on to something else. I don't know too much of the details. Maybe there was good reason for it. But I just don't think there was. I think that they should have been able to stay longer.
- Fred Binnewies: Another thing that's – that was of considerable concern was the frequency of reorganizations. It seemed that almost every change of the moon there was another reorganization, and this kept people, that is, the operating people in such a state of confusion that they hardly knew what to do next. I know from personal experience, particularly in the National Capital Parks, that we worked like the dickens to work up certain programs or get certain information together, and about the time we would do it, the thing would be changed all around, and it would be asked for in a different form, or there would be some kind of a reorganization that would change the whole picture.
- Fred Binnewies: It seemed that we were just spinning our wheels. I don't think we ever got to the point where we didn't put forth our best effort to provide this information and do the job, but it was somewhat confusing, certainly you kind of thought about it. You thought, well, what the heck is the use of knocking yourself out to try to do a good job – about the time you think you've got it completed, the thing is changed around?
- Fred Binnewies: I've talked to fellows in the field about this, and many of them have the same idea. I could give a specific example of my own son, Bill. He was superintendent at Navajo National Monument, and he was asked for a program in a certain form and, of course, with the limited staff that he had over there, he had to do a great deal of the work himself, and he really worked at it. He worked nights and he worked hard to put this program – I

don't know whether it was a five-year program or something like that – put it up in good shape, justifications, and all that.

Fred Binnewies: And about the time he got it done, they changed the format on him and wanted it all changed around to some kind of a different format. And maybe I'm telling tales out of school, but he just bundled the whole thing up and sent it in to region and said, "if you want a different format, here's the information; you put it up in whatever format you want."

Fred Binnewies: Well, that's the sort of thing that is sort of discouraging to the supervisors and the managers in the field, and I felt that there was – there was just too much of that. There were so many new programs started and new efforts being made that were never allowed to go to the point where they could be proved whether they were good, bad, or indifferent or what. It seemed like a new program would get started, and about the time it sort of got rolling, why, then it was changed. And these are impressions that I've had of it, I just don't think it was good for the Service as a whole.

Fred Binnewies: I know too that I've heard fellows say, that were transferred into the Washington office, that they sat there for sometimes two or three months or some long period of time before anyone ever told them what they were supposed to do or they kind of made work during this period. They really didn't know why they were there. And this was naturally inefficient and—

Herb Evison: I heard one complaint from a man for whom I have great admiration, that the Washington office was staffed with an extraordinary number of very competent people, experts in their fields, but that his feeling in his own case was that he never was really made proper use of, that even where an expert was asked to perform a specific task, when he'd done it, it had to go through so doggone many hands before it reached the top and that very often it never even reached the top. Do you think there's—

Fred Binnewies: I think there's something to that, yes. I've heard this same thing, and that the authority was centralized too much, that it wasn't delegated, or it may have been delegated, but these people weren't allowed, to perform under their delegation in the manner and with the freedom that they should have been.

Fred Binnewies: I know there were great strides made in other ways in the Service. Appropriations, for example, were increased a great deal, although they didn't always get to the place where they were needed. But I suppose they never do. But there were many areas added to the system during this last ten years, let's say, and there were a number of very good things happened, but as I mentioned, I think the greatest concern was this sort of deterioration of morale.

Fred Binnewies: I know I've talked to some young fellows coming in, though, and they're still enthusiastic, and you find the same spirit, what we like to call the old Park Service spirit out in many of the smaller areas and some of those that are principally ones that have limited staffs and are a little bit more isolated maybe.

Fred Binnewies: And so, I think that the Service is still going to be the Service that you and I knew. There are going to be changes, of course. One of the other things that is of concern is the fact that it's becoming more politically oriented and that there are people being brought in from other agencies, principally into the Washington office, who have had no Park Service experience. Maybe they're very fine people. I don't say that they're not, but I think, as we have always looked at the Service as career service, and I know that we have excellent people in the Service who certainly deserve good consideration when it comes to filling some of these, what you might say, top jobs.

Herb Evison: Yeah.

Fred Binnewies: One other thing that's bothered me quite a bit, Herb, is this – it is the way in which the technicians series has finally developed and the policy of practically putting a ceiling on it because I know personally of a number of really very fine, enthusiastic young fellows who have come into the technician series and now they're getting disillusioned because they think there's no place to go. They think there's just a ceiling, and they can't be given consideration for a transfer into the ranger series or naturalist series or administrative series in the Service, that they're just sort of stuck as technicians. This is not what they want.

Fred Binnewies: Naturally, they're ambitious. They want a career in the Park Service. And I know that initially there was a pretty good career ladder established for technicians, where they could move up the ladder over to the ranger series or interpretation. As I understand it now, this has been pretty well stymied, I've even heard of some fellows who have quit the Service because they just see no future in the technician series. This is a really sad thing because these fellows are doing a good job, and they are learning the Service, and they should by all means have the opportunity to make a good career out of it.

Herb Evison: I take it you would like to see some definite form of reassurance to these people and one that was really meant.

Fred Binnewies: You betcha, the sooner the better, because I think it's a serious thing, and I think the Service is going to lose a bunch of good people if they don't get this thing squared around and make it a more attractive career possibility for these fellows.

Herb Evison: You feel that the original idea behind establishing the technician level was a good one in many places, making it possible to relieve rangers of more routine duties, ones that call less for their skills?

Fred Binnewies: Oh, I've never really been sold completely on this whole concept, because maybe I have old-fashioned ideas about the rangers. I've always considered them to be the primary public contact people. Now, when I say rangers, I mean the combination, Interpretation and Resource Management.

Fred Binnewies: And so, if they have to work on an entrance station, for gosh sakes: that's an excellent place to contact visitors. Sure, maybe they can only say good morning and have a nice day, but maybe they do have an opportunity to spend a little more time with visitors and talk with them a little bit more – sure, they shouldn't be stuck on an entrance station or collecting campground fees or some of these small, routine duties, practically any area in the Service has an opportunity to rotate people from one type of job to another, to give them that opportunity.

Fred Binnewies: The technician series can work, and I'm not really against it. Initially, I talked to people at Harper's Ferry about this, and I thought it was a reasonably good idea. As I say, I've never been real enthusiastic about it, but I think it can work, and it can take up the slack on some of these routine jobs.

Herb Evison: Well, I notice we're practically at the end of this tape.

[END OF INTERVIEW]