

National Park Service (NPS) History Collection

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



Chad Beale
March 5, 2020

Interview conducted by Winnie Frost and Betsy Ehrlich
Transcribed by Rev.com

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

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

NPS History Collection
Harpers Ferry Center
PO Box 50
Harpers Ferry, WV 25425
HFC_Archivist@nps.gov

Narrator: Chad Beale

Interview Date: March 5, 2020

Interviewer: Winnie Frost and Betsy Ehrlich

Transcription by: Rev.com

Release Form: Yes

Transcript Status: Final

The narrator has not reviewed the transcript.

START OF RECORDING

Betsy Ehrlich: 00:00:00 I'm going to get this preamble started. So I'm going to start off by introducing us here today. I'm Betsy Ehrlich at Harpers Ferry Center. And we also have?

Winnie Frost: 00:00:09 Winnie Frost, a retiree with the National Park Service.

Betsy Ehrlich: 00:00:12 And our guest of honor here today is?

Chad Beale: 00:00:14 Chad Beale.

Winnie Frost: 00:00:16 Who are you?

Chad Beale: 00:00:17 As of Monday, I'm the acting chief of technical services.

Winnie Frost: 00:00:21 We'll get into that later.

Betsy Ehrlich: 00:00:23 Yeah. We'll get into it. We're here today to chronicle Chad's career. It's March 5th. We're at Storer College. So Winnie and Chad, do we have verbal permission to do this interview?

Winnie Frost: 00:00:34 Yes.

Chad Beale: 00:00:35 Yes.

Betsy Ehrlich: 00:00:35 And we also have signed agreements. If there's any questions you don't want to answer, that's fine. That's totally voluntary. We can either hit the pause button, or you can just say you don't want to answer the question. So Winnie is going to get us started.

Winnie Frost: 00:00:48 Okay. Good morning. How are you today?

Chad Beale: 00:00:49 Good morning. Great.

Winnie Frost: 00:00:50 We're here at this beautiful Storer College, in a nice quiet room. And we're going to make a lot of noise now. So first of all, I want to say I'm so glad you could do it. And also I just have to say that I had the great joy of working with Chad. Well, he was supposed to be working for me. But I really was working for him in the Pacific Northwest region.

Winnie Frost: 00:01:11 So Chad, we thought we'd start out with this is your life. And start out at the beginning. Oh! You got a cheat sheet for yourself?

Chad Beale: 00:01:17 A little bit, yeah. Just for the few challenging ones.

Winnie Frost: 00:01:20 Okay. So I'm going to start with tell me about your childhood, and where you went to school, and did you ever visit any national parks?

Chad Beale: 00:01:29 Well, I grew up in western Pennsylvania, in a small town called Boswell, which no one has ever heard of.

Winnie Frost: 00:01:35 What is it near?

Chad Beale: 00:01:36 It's near Somerset which is probably near Flight 93. So it's probably 20 minutes from Flight 93 if you head west on Route 30. So in those mountains, it's called the Allegheny Plateau.

Winnie Frost: 00:01:50 That's why you're a skier?

Chad Beale: 00:01:51 Yes.

Winnie Frost: 00:01:52 Okay.

Chad Beale: 00:01:53 So I grew up there. Didn't really visit any national parks. We didn't go much outside the state. Went to New Jersey for beach, for vacations. Johnstown Flood Museum, Flood National Historic Landmark, whatever its designation is, wasn't--

Winnie Frost: 00:02:11 Johnstown?

Chad Beale: 00:02:11 Johnstown hadn't become a park until later, until I was--

Winnie Frost: 00:02:14 You're so old.

Chad Beale: 00:02:15 Yeah. Until I was in high school. So that was probably the closest one, but never went there. So yeah. Never really had a connection with parks growing up.

Winnie Frost: 00:02:26 So do you have any siblings?

Chad Beale: 00:02:28 Yeah. I have a sister. And she is a year and a half older than me.

Winnie Frost: 00:02:33 So when you had family vacations, did you go skiing then?

Chad Beale: 00:02:37 No. So, we would go to the beach. We would camp, local campgrounds, and church camp. We'd go there on weekends and holidays, Labor Days, things like that. And then a beach week in the summer. That's pretty much it. We didn't really go much outside of the small radius.

Winnie Frost: 00:02:55 So where did you decide to go to college then after?

Chad Beale: 00:02:58 I end up going to a small school in Pittsburgh called La Roche for two years.

Winnie Frost: 00:03:06 Why?

Chad Beale: 00:03:07 Mainly because I thought I wanted to be an engineer coming out of high school. I focused on math, science. Didn't take one art class at all in high school. I knew I liked designing things. And I thought the only option was to be, other than an engineer, an architect. Looking back now, I can kind of see that design--graphic design, visual design--was one of the things I really liked. But didn't really--

Winnie Frost: 00:03:36 Connect.

Chad Beale: 00:03:37 Could put all those pieces together. Graphic design as a major really it wasn't called graphic design back then. That was called commercial art or commercial design. And I didn't really have any mentors, anyone that I could go ask. In my town, that wasn't really a job.

Winnie Frost: 00:03:54 What was in your town? What was the--

Chad Beale: 00:03:58 Well, it's a depressed area now. But it was mostly industry. Mining, coal mining, a little bit of manufacturing. But

mostly blue collar jobs. I mean, I'm sure there were people that had jobs like that. Even our guidance counselor had probably never heard of that.

- Chad Beale: 00:04:22 So I just assumed I was going to be an engineer. But the thing was I wasn't very good at math. So I was like, "I guess I have to take all this math."
- Winnie Frost: 00:04:25 I thought you said you like math.
- Chad Beale: 00:04:30 I do like it to a certain degree. But once we get to trigonometry and calculus and those advanced--I couldn't--I like math because I like that there's a finite answer. And once you got to that answer, it was kind of, "Oh! I did it." It was like accomplishment. But after that, I really had no interest in it.
- Chad Beale: 00:04:52 So I end up going to La Roche because they did not require a portfolio. Most of the other art schools required that you had some background in art, or some sort of 3D design. And I had none of that.
- Winnie Frost: 00:05:04 Oh! So this was more graphic kind of school. But you were thinking engineering.
- Chad Beale: 00:05:06 Yeah. So last minute, my senior year, I stumbled across La Roche. And their program said graphic design. And I was like, "Wow! An actual school has that as a program." I had applied to Penn State. I had applied to Pitt. I got in Pitt's Engineering School. But I still this kind of--It's not really what I wanted. And then I saw this La Roche. Like, "Wow! Graphic design." And they didn't require a portfolio. I was like, "This is my chance".
- Winnie Frost: 00:05:44 This is perfect.
- Chad Beale: 00:05:44 So that really kind of forced--and I could play soccer there too.
- Winnie Frost: 00:05:48 You could play what?
- Chad Beale: 00:05:49 I could play soccer. I played soccer in high school. And they had a small soccer team, and I got on the team. So it was kind of this perfect opportunity for both my sports interest and my career interest.

Winnie Frost: 00:06:04 Yeah, wow! So while you were in college, now you were only there?

Chad Beale: 00:06:09 I was only there two years.

Winnie Frost: 00:06:11 Two years. Was it a two year program?

Chad Beale: 00:06:13 No. It was a four year program. As much as I didn't know about design when I got to the school, I felt like I was way overpaying for what I was getting. I had many of my classes in trailers. I felt like where design was going they weren't wanting to take me there with technology.

Winnie Frost: 00:06:35 Oh, ok, technology.

Chad Beale: 00:06:37 The reason why I got in design, because I had a heavy interest in computers and computer design. And my dad got us a computer when I was 11 or 12, spent a ton of money on it. And it was my first chance to play with graphics. And I remember designing all my book covers. Remember when you had to cover your books with paper bags?

Winnie Frost: 00:07:01 Yes.

Chad Beale: 00:07:01 That wasn't good enough for me. So I would design like the history book cover, and the chemistry book cover.

Winnie Frost: 00:07:09 Wow! On the computer?

Chad Beale: 00:07:10 On the computer, with all your clip art and everything, and use the typography. And I'd design these things and that would be my book cover. So looking back, I'm like I didn't really put that together that was--I was just doing that because I was interested in it. And that's really what I wanted to do.

Chad Beale: 00:07:26 But part of that, I liked computers. I liked using computers to do that. I didn't think I had a natural ability in the arts. I can sketch. I've worked at it but it's not a natural ability I have. So the computer was the thing that, "Oh my God! This will allow me to do, to have an interest in design and use the computer, which is another interest and pick up the slack that I have as a natural artist."

Winnie Frost: 00:07:59 Fine artist.

Chad Beale: 00:08:00 Fine artist.

Betsy Ehrlich: 00:08:01 What year was that, because I'm curious about where computers were at that stage and what software were you using?

Chad Beale: 00:08:06 Well, I graduated in high school in '92. So right around '93, '94, we were starting to use Page Maker, I think was one of the first programs. I think Illustrator had come out then. Photoshop was early on. We just had begun. I had one teacher who was progressive, and teaching us some of the computer to use. You know, it's oh you can do this on a computer, but it's not really yet there. So we'll show you how to do it there, but then I'm going to show you how it's done in the actual industry.

Winnie Frost: 00:08:40 Which was cut and paste or what?

Chad Beale: 00:08:42 No. Just doing some typography. So the first uses I-

Winnie Frost: 00:08:45 I mean, no. What were you doing in the real world with graphic design?

Chad Beale: 00:08:50 Yeah. We'd do enlargements. So you'd have to take an image, and then if you want to enlarge an image, the only way to do that was to use a camera machine. And it was this huge, huge camera that half of it was in a dark room, and half of it was out here. And you put this--You'd have this big board and you put this image on. And basically would then enlarge it, and then you'd have a piece of film in the other room. That's how you did these enlargements. There was no like--You couldn't--

Winnie Frost: 00:09:20 That's technical.

Chad Beale: 00:09:21 Yeah. I mean, that kind of interested me. I had an interest in that. But-

Betsy Ehrlich: 00:09:25 That was more of the production side.

Chad Beale: 00:09:27 That was like that takes too long. That part of it didn't have--I didn't have as much interest in it. Once it got in the computer, I was like, "Oh! What can do?"

Winnie Frost: 00:09:35 You can just sit here, and play?

Chad Beale: 00:09:36 Yeah. I could play with it. And then that doesn't work. And then let's try this. It was just that timing was right for me. I always say if I'd grown up 20 years before that, I probably wouldn't have been a graphic designer, because I wouldn't have the patience. And maybe with enough time and training, I could've developed those more traditional skills but, the computer is what really got me interested in this.

Winnie Frost: 00:10:05 Wow! Okay. So you went to this school for two years. And then you were thinking, "I think there's a better place or something that will expand my interests."

Chad Beale: 00:10:14 Yes.

Winnie Frost: 00:10:15 I shouldn't be speaking for you.

Chad Beale: 00:10:19 No, you're exactly right. At that point, I had a little background in design. So I looked at California College of Arts and Crafts, I looked at SVA, I looked at some of these big schools. But at that point, I couldn't afford them. I knew I wasn't going to get any kind of major scholarship or support.

Chad Beale: 00:10:39 So I had these grand visions of going to these schools. But my parents couldn't afford to send me there. I couldn't afford it. So I ended up--which one of the regional schools I applied to was JMU. I didn't get in initially. So that's another reason I went to--I think it's because they said, "You have no background."

Winnie Frost: 00:10:57 Yeah. You didn't have a portfolio.

Chad Beale: 00:10:58 So once I developed that, La Roche gave me that opportunity to develop that portfolio. And then as a transfer student. And I was out of state at JMU.

Winnie Frost: 00:11:07 That's expensive.

Chad Beale: 00:11:08 Yeah, it was. But at the time, out of state didn't mean what it means today. I mean, I think I paid less than what even in state kids; a lot less than even the in state kids pay now in Virginia.

Winnie Frost: 00:11:21 Really?

Chad Beale: 00:11:21 Oh, yeah.

Winnie Frost: 00:11:23 That's amazing how much its increased.

Chad Beale: 00:11:24 It was actually affordable because I paid like \$8,000 a year. And in state was like four.

Winnie Frost: 00:11:31 And so where did you go?

Chad Beale: 00:11:32 James Madison University.

Winnie Frost: 00:11:34 And where is that?

Chad Beale: 00:11:34 It's in Harrisonburg, Virginia.

Winnie Frost: 00:11:37 And so you applied into the graphics art department?

Chad Beale: 00:11:40 Yes. And they did have a graphics arts department, which is another reason why I was interested in it. My sister was going to Eastern University at the time, which is a small private college, right next door to JMU. She was living there. Her husband, they'd just gotten married. And they were living there. And so I was able to live with them, and sort of commute in.

Winnie Frost: 00:12:01 How great was that?

Chad Beale: 00:12:02 That was another thing that worked out for us. I ended up graduating there.

Winnie Frost: 00:12:09 And so tell me, what did they have that really attracted you? I mean, were they really into computers and design?

Chad Beale: 00:12:15 They were. They had a 3D graphics computer. That was very expensive. I think it was SGI, the company that made it. I knew they were \$100,000 boxes. They had one. They were teaching QuarkXPress at the time, which had just sort of became a thing.

Winnie Frost: 00:12:36 That's why you were hired.

Chad Beale: 00:12:37 And they were into it. I did still have challenges at that school too. I felt like, "I'm not getting what I really want." I felt like they were still wedded to traditional techniques and processes that I'm like, "But that's not the future. I don't mind learning it. But can we combine that with what the future is?"

- Chad Beale: 00:13:02 And I remember a class that was on creativity--design methodology, that's what it was called. And so when you read the curriculum, and what's the synopsis of the class, "Oh! You'll investigate ways of brainstorming, and thinking." I'm like, "Oh! That sounds wonderful, because that's what I need. I need some processes for how I'm going to approach design."
- Chad Beale: 00:13:30 So I go to this class. And for the like the first two weeks, we do nothing but sketch this. And we're going to go out and sketch the hospital. We're going to go out--Here's a still life, sketch this. I remember in front of the class, arguing with the professor how he was not teaching what the course stated he was teaching. This is not design methodology. This is sketching 101.
- Winnie Frost: 00:13:55 Wow, chutzpah.
- Chad Beale: 00:13:55 Unfortunately, the guy had a brain tumor, and had to quit three weeks later. Talk about feeling horrible.
- Winnie Frost: 00:14:04 Oh my God! He's still feeling bad about it.
- Chad Beale: 00:14:05 I'm still feeling horrible about it. But I think it was just like-- I don't know. I felt like because I was paying for my school, I was paying half of it, I was like I'm paying \$1000 for this class, out of my pocket. I don't want to waste my money.
- Winnie Frost: 00:14:25 That's a motivator.
- Chad Beale: 00:14:25 I had goals I wanted to get out of this class. I was like I want to be taught this. The new teacher came in, because I still kept the class, because he had to leave because of the brain tumor.
- Winnie Frost: 00:14:40 You're wondering, who the new person--
- Chad Beale: 00:14:42 And this new teacher came in, who wasn't a professor, didn't have tenure, didn't have-- He worked in the print department at the university. He came in and was wonderful. He set up teams for us. We had projects. He would talk about how we're going to get from here to here. And each week we would focus on a certain process, building it out.

- Chad Beale: 00:15:05 And then at the end of the course, we had a completed project. I was like, "Finally! This is what it should be about."
- Winnie Frost: 00:15:14 So you still hadn't gone to any parks?
- Chad Beale: 00:15:16 No. I still hadn't gone to any parks. And even graduating from JMU, I felt like I still didn't get what I wanted. I kind of learned that, you know that's half of your college education is what they teach you, the other half is what you put into it. And that time that they give to sort of explore what you want to learn. And I've learned that college is about what you put into it.
- Chad Beale: 00:15:41 And it just gave me that time. And so I tell my kids college does a lot for you in terms of growing up, and also giving you that freedom to explore, because once you get into a job, it's like you don't have those many opportunities--
- Winnie Frost: 00:16:02 That luxury.
- Chad Beale: 00:16:02 Yes.
- Winnie Frost: 00:16:03 So you graduate now. Did you have a counselor, a guidance counselor?
- Chad Beale: 00:16:10 Guidance counselor? I did, but the only thing--it wasn't like a career counselor or somebody who tells to get a job. They were basically just making sure I was graduating on time. Because I transferred, I was still shy some credits. And so I had to bump up, I had to double up on some things. And I end up not graduating with a BFA, which is what traditional design students would be. It was a BS, basically.
- Winnie Frost: 00:16:34 I hope this interview won't be that.
- Chad Beale: 00:16:35 No. So it was a Bachelor of Science in graphic design is what I have. Most of the times you have a Bachelor of Fine Arts in design. But they said if you wanted a BFA, I had to be there another semester and take two more course. And I thought to myself, "Would anyone care that I have a BFA versus BS? Has anyone ever asked to see somebody's degree in graphics design? No. Then why do I care? I just want to get a job and get out of here.
- Winnie Frost: 00:17:07 So when you graduated, did you go home?

Chad Beale: 00:17:09 I did. Went home for six months.

Winnie Frost: 00:17:12 Did you work? He went to a ski resort. Did you?

Chad Beale: 00:17:18 No. I did some free--No, I actually didn't work. At the time, of course, before I graduated, I actually had a son. Ashton was born when I was a junior in college. And so I kind of still had this commitment in addition to graduating and looking for a job.

Chad Beale: 00:17:40 So I went home spent time with him. While he was in daycare, I was still looking for jobs. I did a couple freelance things. But it wasn't until the fall that actually, like October, that I got sort of more serious about it and applied to a few places.

Winnie Frost: 00:18:00 So where did you end up going?

Chad Beale: 00:18:01 I ended up working in Winchester, Virginia, which is where I live now. That's where I got the job. I had applied to two other places. One was in Chicago at a company that designed wheels and automotive equipment. I also applied for a job, a publishing job down in Gaithersburg, and actually got all three of them at the same time. I went from no jobs to three jobs.

Winnie Frost: 00:18:26 What was the Winchester job that you decided to go with?

Chad Beale: 00:18:29 Well, the easiest thing is pay. It had the highest pay.

Winnie Frost: 00:18:33 Oh! They paid you?

Chad Beale: 00:18:34 They paid me.

Winnie Frost: 00:18:34 Oh poor Jean! They didn't even get paid.

Chad Beale: 00:18:37 It had the highest salary. And second, the town. I mean, I really like Winchester. I have driven back and forth, and you've flown back and forth to Pennsylvania. And I always wanted to work in a small town. I never really wanted to work in a big city. I didn't grow up in a big city. And I had this fear that I would have to go to a big city in order to get a design job, because that's where all the design jobs were.

Chad Beale: 00:19:03 So Gaithersburg, even though it's not a big city, it's still down near DC. Chicago, it was really right outside

downtown Chicago. This kind of offered that opportunity to still be in a small town, do what I want, and get a decent salary. And they were a design marketing firm and so I was just going to be able to still use design.

- Winnie Frost: 00:19:23 And they were using computers?
- Chad Beale: 00:19:25 Yes.
- Winnie Frost: 00:19:25 Was that a criteria for you? Or was everybody going--
- Chad Beale: 00:19:29 It was pretty much the standard. I mean, I think digital publishing had sort of taken over by then. I mean, there are still a lot of things you did still by hand mechanical processes. But by and large--
- Winnie Frost: 00:19:41 And so while you're working there, did you have friends or something? Or did you go to a park?
- Chad Beale: 00:19:48 No. Still hadn't gone to a park--
- Winnie Frost: 00:19:52 Just when are we going to get you to a park?
- Chad Beale: 00:19:53 You are going to find that I fell into this.
- Winnie Frost: 00:19:56 Well, that's part of the process.
- Chad Beale: 00:19:59 I mean, I didn't have any friends in Winchester. I basically went there cold.
- Winnie Frost: 00:20:03 Even from JMU, nothing?
- Chad Beale: 00:20:10 No. I had no friends.
- Winnie Frost: 00:20:11 That's surprising.
- Chad Beale: 00:20:12 So just basically got the job, moved down there cold, and started, and didn't know anybody.
- Winnie Frost: 00:20:18 Wow! But then did you meet people at your job that you liked?
- Chad Beale: 00:20:20 Yeah. The big person who works here is Chris, Chris Dearing. He was a designer there.
- Winnie Frost: 00:20:29 Had he been to a park?

Chad Beale: 00:20:32 I'm not sure.

Winnie Frost: 00:20:35 This will just be our [inaudible].

Chad Beale: 00:20:36 Did anyone go to parks, before they worked here?

Winnie Frost: 00:20:39 I'm sorry.

Chad Beale: 00:20:43 No. I mean, I'd been to Shenandoah. I had driven through it of course as a kid--

Winnie Frost: 00:20:44 Oh, excellent!

Chad Beale: 00:20:44 But it didn't register to me, "Oh! This is a national park."

Winnie Frost: 00:20:50 Of course not. Or even the wayside probably didn't register. What the hell is that?

Chad Beale: 00:20:56 Or a wayside, yeah what do I care about waysides--

Winnie Frost: 00:20:56 Okay. I'm sorry. Go ahead.

Chad Beale: 00:20:57 No. So I met Chris, and we became friends, because he was a fellow designer. And we were having some of the same frustrations about the job that we were working at. I was out of school, what did I really know? And he, within a year, left and got a job here as an exhibit designer.

Winnie Frost: 00:21:22 Then you heard of Harpers Ferry.

Chad Beale: 00:21:24 Then I heard of Harpers Ferry. I'd never heard of it before. I think Chris knew because he grew up in Inwood.

Winnie Frost: 00:21:30 He grew up where?

Chad Beale: 00:21:30 In Inwood, West Virginia.

Winnie Frost: 00:21:32 All right. Where is that?

Chad Beale: 00:21:33 Which is near Martinsburg. So heading west from here. It's only 20 minutes from here.

Winnie Frost: 00:21:37 Yeah. And it's kind of a [crosstalk].

Chad Beale: 00:21:39 Yeah. He has family in this area. So I think he kind of had heard about it, knew about it. He worked in the sign shop

before that. So I think he had heard about it. So he got this job. And he and I remained close. We played racquetball every week. And he kept talking about this, this job, and what he did, and he got to travel, and all these cool national projects he got to work on.

- Winnie Frost: 00:22:02 National parks?
- Chad Beale: 00:22:03 Yeah. National parks. And I was just like, "Man that sounds really good." Now I'm just frustrated. I'd been there a year and a half. And I felt like there were a lot of changes. Some of the people who I had--one of the persons who hired me and hired Chris had left. And all companies have sort of yin and yang, and sort of business creative. And I felt like the creative side of it had left. And it was strictly business. And I just wasn't encouraged by the direction of the company. So I wanted to leave in a bad way. And I was like, "Boy, if they have any openings there, that sounds amazing."
- Chad Beale: 00:22:38 So that summer it just happened two wayside positions opened up. Chris told me about them. At the time, Ashton's mother, who I was living with, we were still together, she had worked at FEMA. And she worked in their HR department. And so she was used to getting resumes coming in. And so she really helped me, because the way the resumes are usually done is completely different than the way it's done in--
- Winnie Frost: 00:23:11 You think it'd be done in the private sector.
- Chad Beale: 00:23:14 Yes. Private sector is one page, very simple. You're just trying to get them interested.
- Betsy Ehrlich: 00:23:18 You have a portfolio--
- Chad Beale: 00:23:18 Here, it was like--it wasn't about brevity. It was about accuracy and making sure that all the boxes were checked.
- Winnie Frost: 00:23:26 And that you write your resume to fit the job. And I bet she knew that.
- Chad Beale: 00:23:32 She knew that. And she knew you're going to have to get through these first level before you even get to the people who are actually hiring. And so she said, "Make sure you cover those, and make those as easy as possible."

Winnie Frost: 00:23:41 And knew some of those words that were in the job announcement.

Chad Beale: 00:23:43 Exactly. She said, "Make it all together." So I made this binder, had my portfolio in the binder. I had everything tabbed, easy to find out. So I kind of sort of credit her for helping me at least apply and go through the process. And of course I wasn't used to the time that it takes a government job to go through its paces and hire. I remember I called Betsy several times.

Winnie Frost: 00:24:13 Did you know Betsy?

Chad Beale: 00:24:13 I didn't know her, I mean, she was part of the interview.

Winnie Frost: 00:24:15 Oh! During the interview. That's right. Betsy, I keep forgetting you were in Waysides.

Betsy Ehrlich: 00:24:19 Yeah.

Chad Beale: 00:24:19 Yeah.

Winnie Frost: 00:24:23 Okay. And Phil? Was Phil?

Chad Beale: 00:24:23 Phil was department head at the time.

Winnie Frost: 00:24:25 And Dick Hoffman.

Betsy Ehrlich: 00:24:28 Probably Bruce.

Chad Beale: 00:24:28 And Bruce.

Winnie Frost: 00:24:29 My stars, all of them.

Chad Beale: 00:24:31 So I had actually quit my job in Winchester.

Winnie Frost: 00:24:37 With fingers crossed?

Chad Beale: 00:24:38 With fingers crossed. I had started doing some freelance work with another company in town who actually Chris's wife now owns that company.

Winnie Frost: 00:24:47 She owns that company?

Chad Beale: 00:24:49 Yeah. She owns that company. So I'd worked for him. At the time it was a different owner. I worked with her a little

bit on the side. And I think it took probably six months, at least.

Betsy Ehrlich: 00:25:04 Because we were hiring two positions at the same time.

Chad Beale: 00:25:05 They were hiring two positions, yeah. So I had to interview.

Winnie Frost: 00:25:07 And had to get the security, right, too?

Chad Beale: 00:25:10 I don't think so.

Betsy Ehrlich: 00:25:11 I don't think we had.

Winnie Frost: 00:25:12 You didn't have to pass security?

Chad Beale: 00:25:13 No.

Winnie Frost: 00:25:13 It was before 9/11?

Chad Beale: 00:25:15 Yeah.

Betsy Ehrlich: 00:25:16 It was more of an evaluation that went on. So we looked at portfolios. You had a whole team of people who did a rating. You to score everybody. So there was a--that we were involved in. Now it's all, HR does most of that filtering before you get to the end point.

Chad Beale: 00:25:32 So again, didn't have much park service experience. I hadn't gone to many parks. Mostly my work was in identity. I had a chance to do some identity work. I'd done some trade show things.

Winnie Frost: 00:25:41 Identity work? Did you say that in you--?

Chad Beale: 00:25:43 Yeah. I did some identity work. I did logo design, and I did marketing materials, brochures. So I had done a lot of print work.

Winnie Frost: 00:25:52 They were going to hire you.

Chad Beale: 00:25:53 Yeah. I mean, I don't know what sold them on me. But-

Winnie Frost: 00:25:57 As soon as you said marketing. Branding.

Chad Beale: 00:26:00 So August 4th, 1998, is when I started with another colleague who's still in the Park Service, Roberta. That's our first start day. It was basically a year after Chris had gotten hired.

Winnie Frost: 00:26:13 That's pretty amazing.

Chad Beale: 00:26:14 Yeah.

Winnie Frost: 00:26:15 And you came in at what level?

Chad Beale: 00:26:17 GS-9.

Winnie Frost: 00:26:18 GS-9?

Chad Beale: 00:26:18 Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Winnie Frost: 00:26:19 Was that a career appointment? 9-11-12?

Chad Beale: 00:26:23 Yeah. It was a 9-11 at that point, waysides were not considered--didn't have a 12 ladder. It was just 9-11.

Winnie Frost: 00:26:30 Okay. So you were hired at Harpers Ferry Center. In what division?

Chad Beale: 00:26:34 Division of Wayside Exhibits at the time.

Winnie Frost: 00:26:37 He thinks I know this, but I'm asking the questions anyway. Okay. So you were hired as designer. How was the Wayside Division set up?

Chad Beale: 00:26:48 We had a chief and then we had sort of a planning department and a design department. And then we certainly had support staff to do contracting and admin details. And then we had a production sort of lead.

Winnie Frost: 00:27:02 So you had everything you needed?

Chad Beale: 00:27:04 Yeah, pretty much everything we needed.

Winnie Frost: 00:27:05 And did you mostly do your own work?

Chad Beale: 00:27:11 I would say yes. I mean, projects were sort of given to me. It was mostly internal work at that time. And when I say internal, I mean projects we did all in house.

Winnie Frost: 00:27:21 You did yourself?

Chad Beale: 00:27:21 I mean, yes.

Winnie Frost: 00:27:23 With a team?

Chad Beale: 00:27:23 Yeah. But they would give me--I think what was nice is I just wasn't thrown into large jobs. It was, "We're going to give you a small job."

Winnie Frost: 00:27:33 So what was your first job?

Chad Beale: 00:27:35 I think it was Cumberland Gap actually and I worked with Mark Johnson.

Winnie Frost: 00:27:39 So you went to a park?

Chad Beale: 00:27:40 Yes.

Winnie Frost: 00:27:41 And you worked with Mark Johnson?

Chad Beale: 00:27:42 That wasn't my first trip though.

Betsy Ehrlich: 00:27:45 Yeah. Talk about your first trip, Chad.

Chad Beale: 00:27:48 I think my first job was Cumberland Gap. But my first trip was Yorktown.

Winnie Frost: 00:27:54 Oh! Training experience?

Chad Beale: 00:27:56 No. Yorktown was a new job. So I'd been given small jobs, and a couple of jobs to clean up from a previous employee who had left. And so for the first maybe six months, I was doing was some like, "Here, please finish this." And I was sort of just, "Okay. Is it supposed to be like this?"

Chad Beale: 00:28:16 You go from doing branding and everything is a blank slate to being sort of thrown in this world of grids and black bands, and style, and two typefaces, and columns, and everything like that. It was really sort of--

Winnie Frost: 00:28:34 Rigid.

Chad Beale: 00:28:35 I felt rigid and restricted. And I always felt like, "Am I doing this right?" I didn't really understand. I didn't really

get it at first. It took a while for me to understand the reason for why things were set up the way they were.

- Chad Beale: 00:28:53 I think there was a lot of, "Am I doing this right? Can you take a look at this?" And of course my mentors at the time, Betsy and Phil, were great. They really, I think, helped me get through those first six months and not feel like they were making me feel stupid or saw some good things that I was doing, but also saw some things that needed work improvement.
- Chad Beale: 00:29:17 But, yeah. The first job was Yorktown. That was like my first real sort of, "You're the designer on this project."
- Winnie Frost: 00:29:23 You had a blank slate?
- Chad Beale: 00:29:24 Yes. You're the designer. You're going to work with this planner, Terry Lindsey, at the time. It was a short trip. And it was something we could drive down and come back.
- Winnie Frost: 00:29:35 So you go there, and you know it's all history?
- Chad Beale: 00:29:37 Yes.
- Winnie Frost: 00:29:39 Did you like history growing up?
- Chad Beale: 00:29:41 Not particularly. It wasn't my thing. I didn't mind it. And it could be just the teachers I had. A lot of times it's the teacher that can really get you excited about a topic. And I don't know if I just didn't have the right teachers, but I just wasn't that interested.
- Winnie Frost: 00:29:56 What happened when you went to--
- Chad Beale: 00:29:59 I don't know. And then I had a follow-up trip that was literally like a week after. And that was Hawaii. So that was-
- Winnie Frost: 00:30:07 I think I remember that.
- Chad Beale: 00:30:08 You remember that? I go from--
- Winnie Frost: 00:30:09 This guy's just got here.
- Chad Beale: 00:30:11 --Hawaii.

- Winnie Frost: 00:30:12 And you went to Haleakala?
- Chad Beale: 00:30:13 I went to Haleakala for 18 days. I remember everyone in my family, wow-
- Winnie Frost: 00:30:23 Did you like volcanoes?
- Chad Beale: 00:30:23 No. Early on, I didn't really have a specific, you know a lot of times they hire rangers, "Oh, I've always had an interest in biology or natural resources or cultural resources." I was like, "I just want to design something. I don't care what it is. Just let me design something. Let me get back in the computer and do this."
- Winnie Frost: 00:30:38 But did you have to really learn your story?
- Chad Beale: 00:30:41 Well, I will say that was an evolving process. At the beginning, I think, and I'm sure other designers are--and this process has evolved in terms of the planner, when you talk about the roles in wayside exhibits versus planner or designer role.
- Chad Beale: 00:30:58 And I think early on, the planner was sort of the content leader, because the design process has changed. So the designers were more so layout artists, I would say, where the planners collected the stories and collected the graphics. And then it was sort of handed off, and the designers would sort of lay it out according to the-
- Chad Beale: 00:31:17 You didn't have many choices in what you could do with that content back then. And so it was very- It was more formulaic back then. So I think I came in this sort of period where that was still happening.
- Betsy Ehrlich: 00:31:30 It was transitioning.
- Chad Beale: 00:31:32 It was transitioning. The designers were now coming on these planning trips. But I think it wasn't--I didn't engage as much as what I do now. I wasn't directing the content. I was sort of the person taking notes, taking pictures and trying to make sure I understood what the planner was saying, and the park was saying. But I wasn't really active in that conversation as much.
- Betsy Ehrlich: 00:31:59 And that transition, just to give a little context. When Nick Kirilloff came to Waysides, it was just a few years before

that. And so he was really bringing in the profession of design as a problem solving exercise, not just layout.

- Betsy Ehrlich: 00:32:16 And when he left and I took his position in '96, that was only two years before you started. So I was still trying to figure out how to transition this experience from having a folder of materials handed to me, to go lay something out, to working with people to try and include the design thinking, the design process.
- Betsy Ehrlich: 00:32:37 So it wasn't like there was a whole lot of that already going on before you came. So you and Roberta were really brought in as designers who think visually, as designers do. And we were just kind of making our way into this sort of new way of doing this. So it's not like you had a mentor with 10 years of experience, or 20 years of experience who'd been this. Really, it was a big transition period.
- Winnie Frost: 00:33:04 Yeah. You happened to arrive where you have people that were very engaging to you? And they wanted to include you?
- Betsy Ehrlich: 00:33:13 They wanted the transition.
- Chad Beale: 00:33:15 Exactly. I don't think our planners were resistant to it. They seemed to be open to it. It's just we were all trying to figure--We were all on that ride together. And that was great. It wasn't like planners told me to shut up and get in the car and wait for me when I'm done. I didn't experience that by anyone; even senior planners never did that. They always encouraged us to be part of it, to try to learn this, to learn what wayside exhibits were about, and why we did things the way we-
- Winnie Frost: 00:33:43 And what is a wayside exhibit?
- Chad Beale: 00:33:47 I think as a simple thing, we've always said it's captioning the landscape. It's basically taking something that's already there and pointing out something or saying something about it that isn't immediately obvious.
- Winnie Frost: 00:33:58 But graphically?
- Chad Beale: 00:33:59 Yeah, graphically. I'm glad you added that, because that's really the change I think that we saw. We went from

something that we always would say; we make sure we're saying it, to make sure we're showing it.

- Winnie Frost: 00:34:13 Well said.
- Chad Beale: 00:34:13 And I think the technology helped support that. We didn't have the option to that. I'm sure it was always in people's heads. We tried to do it with artwork, or we'd try to integrate that visual storytelling with artwork. Even then, we were sort of limited.
- Chad Beale: 00:34:32 And so some things just don't occur to you, because you're used to doing things a certain way. And the artist wasn't necessarily on this trip. The artist wasn't necessarily part of that, all the background. We kind of gave them, we'd say, "It needs to do this."
- Chad Beale: 00:34:53 And I think that transition, as Betsy pointed out, the biggest part of that was the graphics, because I go back and look at some waysides that were done even in the '80s. When I read them and I see what they're doing, I say, "This is still relevant today. It's well written. The audience is taken--It's crafted very well." But I'm like, "I would visually do that different. I would try to make that point visually first." But I think the way it was written is still fantastic.
- Winnie Frost: 00:35:32 Yeah. That's a very good point. I think you all were trying to emphasize more of this to bring in the audience, make it easier for them to get engaged, and you'd have a hierarchy of information. Maybe you'd get them on that picture, that great graphic you did with the caption.
- Chad Beale: 00:35:51 Yeah. And that definitely evolved, it took me a bunch of projects to start thinking about that. I know when we started developing--We had a piece of software, planner software, that helped to capture all the data points. And one of the things was about thumbnails. What is a thumbnail?
- Chad Beale: 00:36:16 And we had it in a proposal. Well, we never had a proposal before. In our proposal, it would just be sort of the subject, the purpose, and potentially list the graphics out. And as it is now-
- Winnie Frost: 00:36:28 And that would get reviewed by the park?
- Chad Beale: 00:36:30 And that would get reviewed by the parks.

Winnie Frost: 00:36:31 They'd never see anything visual?

Chad Beale: 00:36:31 And they would see nothing visual. And then a layout would just sort of magically happen. And I'm not sure when we sort of thought maybe a thumbnail needs to happen. But at some point, we said, "If we're going to switch to pushing this idea that waysides are visual medias, visual storytelling, shouldn't we try to show something at that preliminary stage?"

Chad Beale: 00:36:57 And initially, they were really tiny and just sort of these loose sketches that I don't think people took seriously. We maybe did take it seriously. And I think some of our contractors thought, "What is this? What's the purpose?" I'll just like chicken scratch this thing. Put a graphic in, scribble in a fake title.

Chad Beale: 00:37:18 Looking back now, I'm like, "Yeah. That was kind of probably silly." But again, it was an evolving process. It at least allowed us to say, "Well, what should that be? What should that do?"

Chad Beale: 00:37:31 And it has changed quite a bit from those early stages. It now is actually the largest thing on the page of our proposal page is the thumbnail, because we think that's just as important. It should grab you visually, just as quick as a title should grab you. And so our purpose statement, when I do a presentation of waysides, it's that purpose statement and the thumbnail. And I say, "Focus on that."

Winnie Frost: 00:37:58 And that's the proposal that you send out for review before you go any further?

Chad Beale: 00:38:03 Any further, yes.

Winnie Frost: 00:38:04 For approval by the park?

Chad Beale: 00:38:06 Yeah. It's very important to get everyone understanding what you're doing before you do it.

Winnie Frost: 00:38:12 Yes. And that was the wayside method was to send out the proposal.

Chad Beale: 00:38:16 Yeah.

- Winnie Frost: 00:38:17 To get the approval. But you happened to arrive at Harpers Ferry at a good time, because you had all these creative people already there who were trying to transition. And we were still a group for a while to do that brainstorming and that transitional effort, before-
- Betsy Ehrlich: 00:38:32 It was also--
- Winnie Frost: 00:38:32 Go ahead.
- Betsy Ehrlich: 00:38:34 It was also early in the sort of full implementation of using the unigrid look. The grid transitioned from the publication side, because Vignelli developed that later, after the unigrid program had gotten on its feet.
- Winnie Frost: 00:38:52 In publications?
- Betsy Ehrlich: 00:38:53 In publications. And so that transition into waysides was still--that was like a whole new thing to figure and develop. There were some examples. There were some fairly rigid, I think, things that we had developed that were stripped Vignelli layouts when you arrived. And so you're probably looking at a grid going, "Okay. How do I fit everything in this?"
- Betsy Ehrlich: 00:39:15 But one of the reasons I bring this up is that one of the things that came out of Ed Zahniser's interview was the involvement that he had with Massimo Vignelli in developing thumbnail sketches for handbooks. And that his sketches, while they were loose, they were so precise in their ability to render the idea, the visual idea, that designers could then follow up and execute exactly what he was going for.
- Betsy Ehrlich: 00:39:42 And so sort of when you got started, we were doing a lot of in-house work. But we were also starting to contract more. And we wanted to know what we were buying from these contractors as early as possible.
- Chad Beale: 00:39:51 Exactly.
- Betsy Ehrlich: 00:39:51 So we really pushed for them to be able to show us their visual ideas, and not just nod their heads and tell us that they would create something beautiful. So we had to approve those proposals based on some visual thinking.

- Chad Beale: 00:40:03 Yes.
- Winnie Frost: 00:40:05 That makes a lot of sense.
- Betsy Ehrlich: 00:40:06 And you really advanced it that much further, because a scribble can deceive you if it's not well thought out.
- Chad Beale: 00:40:12 Yeah. And it's really changed. As technically minded and as much as I loved the computers, going through that process, and figuring out what is a thumbnail's purpose, what we want it to do, how much does it need to convey upfront, has really shaped my whole process for design. And I don't move forward--
- Chad Beale: 00:40:39 In the past, maybe when especially in college, I would just go straight to the computer. I'm like, "Oh! The computer helped me figure this out." And I've stopped doing that. I really see the value of sketching this out, even before I touch the computer.
- Chad Beale: 00:40:53 And I'm not the best illustrator but it really helps me. And I do a lot of word association where I just write down all the ideas that associate with this story. It helps me craft titles. I don't ever send out a thumbnail without a title now, because I think that connection between the title and the graphic is so important that we might as well try to get it out immediately.
- Chad Beale: 00:41:26 If you don't get the connection right away in the thumbnail between the title and the graphic, then we're not hitting the mark, and we need to change it. And to me, it's not-- can't even do the graphic until I know what the title is. They're so dependent on each other now that I don't even think one without the other. And even if a planner may look at it and change it, to me, as a designer, I can't do it without having that title that works.
- Winnie Frost: 00:41:53 But you probably have conversations to try to get to this?
- Chad Beale: 00:41:55 Oh, yeah. And I read the purpose statements. And we have notes. And we share those ideas. And as part of the whole process when we're on the ground with the park is making sure we understand what that purpose is visually.
- Chad Beale: 00:42:07 When I'm on a site visit, I'm sketching. I'm drawing stuff out, because I want people to think visually. The natural

inclination is not to think visually. The natural inclination is to think, "Well, make sure you write down all the points." And I'm thinking, "Yeah, that's going to be great. But guess what? This is a visual story telling. And so if we can't show this graphically that doesn't make sense in like three to five seconds then maybe we're doing the wrong thing, we're going way overboard. And we shouldn't be doing it."

- Winnie Frost: 00:42:38 I agree. Especially since they're outside.
- Chad Beale: 00:42:41 Yes.
- Winnie Frost: 00:42:42 And you have bugs, you have humidity, and sun.
- Betsy Ehrlich: 00:42:44 Heat.
- Chad Beale: 00:42:48 And I attribute you know the training, the mentorship I had from the planners and Betsy about that time thing. We've always stressed it. And it's always stuck with me. And I've proven it. And we've proven it. Still to this day, I watch people look at waysides.
- Chad Beale: 00:43:04 And I think the same is true. It's probably even worse now. The attention spans of people, looking at phones, and that sort of stimulus that they get now that if they can't see something that's answering a question they have in like three to five seconds, they're walking by, they're not going to give the time to it. They've got too many distractions, and too many other ways to interface with their world now that it's really tough to compete. So that time thing has always stuck with me.
- Winnie Frost: 00:43:34 That's critical.
- Chad Beale: 00:43:35 Yeah.
- Winnie Frost: 00:43:36 Of course people do have their cell phones now. And I see so many people taking pictures of the waysides. It's like, "We'll go home, and when we show our pictures." [crosstalk]. What happened to the story? I mean, it's really amazing.
- Chad Beale: 00:43:50 Take a picture of this section. It's in tiny print. And then you blow it up on your phone. They've all changed the way we do--

Winnie Frost: 00:43:57 It's amazing. I would never forget going to the Crater Lake. And you did all the waysides.

Chad Beale: 00:44:02 Yeah. Betsy actually started them, and I helped finish them.

Winnie Frost: 00:44:03 Were you with me, Betsy, when I went out there?

Betsy Ehrlich: 00:44:06 I started the project at the proposal stage. And then I think I left and you picked up. And I don't know who finished up with that.

Winnie Frost: 00:44:19 I don't know. I was the planner originally. But--

Chad Beale: 00:44:21 Yeah. It was a mish-mash. We had PR Gabriel; I believe he was a contractor.

Betsy Ehrlich: 00:44:26 That's right. He was under contract [crosstalk] because I didn't have a planner with me when I left.

Chad Beale: 00:44:26 And he did some and the park wasn't happy with him--

Winnie Frost: 00:44:30 And so what was so funny is I remember going to the park. And I'm not sure who was--Oh! I think it was Anne Tibiola. I think we were doing a lot of different things.

Chad Beale: 00:44:38 Yeah. He had a film project there--

Winnie Frost: 00:44:39 And go into the superintendent's office. We're sitting in his office and I see a picture of an Arches' wayside, Arches National Park on his desk. And I keep looking at it. Finally, I had to say, "Why do you have that picture of that arch?" "I want my exhibits to look like that." I said "Did they know that before I came here?" Because I'd worked on it.

Winnie Frost: 00:45:04 I mean, they were old. But I'd worked on the Arches project. And I thought that is hilarious. The superintendent has it in his office. So you never know where your waysides will end up.

Chad Beale: 00:45:14 I know.

Winnie Frost: 00:45:15 Well, that's great. All right. We're talking about really the golden years of the Wayside Exhibits department, just like the golden years of the movies. And when we were all divided up by our media expertise. Then suddenly, we're

moving into this "Aiming for Excellence." And where did you go? Because we reorganized.

- Chad Beale: 00:45:38 Yeah. I went to the Pacific West Region, as you know.
- Winnie Frost: 00:45:44 No. You couldn't have gone there.
- Chad Beale: 00:45:48 Yes.
- Winnie Frost: 00:45:48 It was before that, wasn't it?
- Chad Beale: 00:45:51 Was that "Aiming for Excellence"?
- Winnie Frost: 00:45:51 That was before we got into the project management groups.
- Betsy Ehrlich: 00:45:53 Yeah. We had that short period of time when we were grouped into like design and photography.
- Chad Beale: 00:45:56 Oh, yeah. You're right. I'm skipping ahead, I apologize--
- Betsy Ehrlich: 00:46:02 Janice was like--
- Chad Beale: 00:46:02 That's right. Janice Wheeler became the head of design. We split up by sort of media, by the discipline?
- Betsy Ehrlich: 00:46:08 Profession.
- Winnie Frost: 00:46:09 Discipline, probably.
- Chad Beale: 00:46:11 Janice was the head of design.
- Winnie Frost: 00:46:15 And you were supposed to be able to do any design of anything?
- Chad Beale: 00:46:17 Yeah. I guess that was the plan. You are right. And then John Brucksch was head planning, from what I remember. I'm not sure-
- Winnie Frost: 00:46:26 Melissa.
- Betsy Ehrlich: 00:46:27 Melissa was over at Production.
- Chad Beale: 00:46:29 That's right. God! I've just blanked that out.
- Winnie Frost: 00:46:33 I know. Most people have. Every time I ask anybody--

Betsy Ehrlich: 00:46:35 It was a short period.

Winnie Frost: 00:46:36 It wasn't really that long. I just remember Jane--

Chad Beale: 00:46:38 I guess because I still remained doing waysides.

Winnie Frost: 00:46:42 Yes, you did.

Chad Beale: 00:46:44 I don't think I had, at that time, exposed or I hadn't been forced to do anything else but waysides. So I still was able to do that. At that point, I think waysides had matured to a point that was internationally known, not just NPS, but internationally.

Winnie Frost: 00:47:06 Betsy wrote the guidebook.

Chad Beale: 00:47:08 Yeah.

Betsy Ehrlich: 00:47:10 That was a team effort.

Winnie Frost: 00:47:11 It was a very, very big team effort.

Chad Beale: 00:47:13 Yeah. But I think we had done that obviously. We had some of that foundation pieces in play, thank God, before we disbanded as a division. It did feel sort of like I was a little bit in an island, I think. I think we all felt that way. We didn't have that connection anymore.

Winnie Frost: 00:47:31 It wasn't a team thing happening.

Chad Beale: 00:47:33 No. I mean, it's basically like, "Okay. Here's your--we've done--" It's like parents, "Here, we've done everything we can for you now. Go off and figure out the world. We've done everything we can for you."

Winnie Frost: 00:47:46 Well, I think most of it was a blur and then we moved into-- Then we decided to have another reorganization where we could be more customer service oriented through having a project management system. So we created a new division, right, called Media--

Betsy Ehrlich: 00:48:02 Development.

Winnie Frost: 00:48:02 Media Development.

Chad Beale: 00:48:03 Yes.

Winnie Frost: 00:48:04 And so what did you do?

Chad Beale: 00:48:08 Yeah.

Winnie Frost: 00:48:09 I think he still did some waysides.

Chad Beale: 00:48:11 I did. I mean, I retained a role as designer. But as you know, we moved into teams, regional teams that sort of was supposed to represent a role, a planner role, a design role, a production role. You were supposed to have those disciplines in each one of these teams. Project manager and then the support staff that would go along with that. AV as well.

Chad Beale: 00:48:36 Luckily, in our department, we had two designers. One focused on exhibits, and I could still focus on waysides. So for years I still was able to focus on waysides. And so not much changed for me in terms of what I was doing. Like I said, I still think I was still coasting on the knowledge and the effort that we had put forth in the Wayside Division.

Winnie Frost: 00:49:04 In the golden years.

Chad Beale: 00:49:05 Yeah. I still was riding on that cloud.

Betsy Ehrlich: 00:49:09 Doesn't it seem like the Center was coasting on that? Like Waysides Exhibits, that would just always be there.

Chad Beale: 00:49:16 Yeah. And I think--

Betsy Ehrlich: 00:49:17 And we rode on that for a long time.

Chad Beale: 00:49:18 We all rode on that cloud. I mean, a lot of departments had built up these mature processes--standards that were not only National Park standards but, like I said national standards in general from across the US and even international visitors would come here. And I think we were all riding on that cloud. I think there was some assumptions that we had reached this pinnacle, and we didn't need to do anymore work in those fields. And like, okay, there's the standards. We'd written the constitution. Now we're just going to keep going forth. And the thing we lacked was maybe some customer service and project focused attention.

Winnie Frost: 00:49:58 And budget management.

- Chad Beale: 00:49:59 And budget management. And of course some of that was because of the way the National Park Service, the backlog of maintenance that was looked at, we were asking for more money. And they said, "But you have \$300 million of unspent backlog money. Why should we give you more money?"
- Chad Beale: 00:50:16 And so that rippled through the Park Service, and even came down to Harpers Ferry. So all the timeline before we had sort of unlimited calendars in order to get this work done, went from maybe four years to like down to 24 months.
- Winnie Frost: 00:50:32 We had major rehab money. So that was like line item money that we had. So we coasted off of that. And then when that starts drying up, we started to figure out new ways to manage ourselves.
- Chad Beale: 00:50:44 Yeah. So I think it wasn't just our decision. Some of these things were being sort of coming down from above. And I think project management was a response to that. I think it's positive. I can't say that, "Oh God! Project management wrecked the Center." I think we needed that, especially the timelines and time frames were not going away. They're getting more restrictive. We went from 24 months to 18 months. And now sometimes we have 12 months windows for spending money.
- Chad Beale: 00:51:15 And so that's not going away. So having a real attention to budget and project management is critical. For projects like Harpers Ferry Center, we bill parks for projects since we're not base funded. We have to manage it like a business.
- Winnie Frost: 00:51:32 And sometimes I think we look at what is the best way to perform that project, whether we should just do it ourselves, keep the skill sets up, or contract out.
- Chad Beale: 00:51:42 Yeah. That's certainly been a challenge. The timeframes have not been kind to do in-house work. And we've worked to try to consider us, the staff here, if we do a project as spending the money. But it doesn't work that way. We can't just say, "Okay. So Harpers Ferry is going to do it therefore the money is spent and we're good."
- Chad Beale: 00:52:09 They consider us, "Well, you're not really spending. You're spending it every month, versus when of course when you

do a contract." That a committed dollars, and therefore it's spent. Yeah. So that's been a challenge. I mean, I wonder if Harpers Ferry Center can be considered that. And I think many of us have tried to advocate that, and see if there's a way we can--

- Winnie Frost: 00:52:31 Is the center is considered a contractor?
- Chad Beale: 00:52:33 Yes. That would help us. But I think those restrictions really forced a lot of contracting. We sort of didn't have many opportunities to do in-house work because of those timelines, and also because the money wasn't planned out in years. Initially, it was like park was given all this money, you have 18 months to spend it.
- Chad Beale: 00:53:02 We're like, "We can't spend it. And the only way to spend it in 18 months is to contract it." And if you had asked for this much this year, and this much last year, then we could've potentially done in house. But those early years, it was just like mad in terms of the way the money came in and had to be spent.
- Chad Beale: 00:53:21 I think we've done a much better job of trying to get ahead of that, and advise parks on how to request money so that there is potential to do it in house. But I will say that it's still predominantly--
- Winnie Frost: 00:53:35 So you are COR?
- Chad Beale: 00:53:37 Yes.
- Winnie Frost: 00:53:37 Contracting Officer Representative.
- Chad Beale: 00:53:39 Yes.
- Winnie Frost: 00:53:41 So you feel like the majority of your work is contracting out?
- Chad Beale: 00:53:46 Yes. And I would say for two reasons. One, we've had such a downsizing through attrition. And that's probably the biggest.
- Winnie Frost: 00:53:59 Retirements.
- Chad Beale: 00:54:00 Retirements, and not being able to fill those positions. Not too many people have just up and quit.

Winnie Frost: 00:54:08 Who would?

Chad Beale: 00:54:09 Yeah. This Center doesn't have--

Betsy Ehrlich: 00:54:10 Well, we have had term employees.

Chad Beale: 00:54:12 We've had term employees. Yeah. That's another--

Winnie Frost: 00:54:14 That's another solution.

Chad Beale: 00:54:15 Another solution where we weren't hiring FTEs. And so that's one reason we lost a lot of staff. And then two, my work shifted from doing mostly waysides to doing mostly exhibits.

Winnie Frost: 00:54:31 That's what I wanted to ask you about whether you've expanded and moved into some other media areas.

Chad Beale: 00:54:37 Yeah. I've never been against doing exhibits. It's just I've always felt like there's still so much work to be done in waysides. I still feel like it hasn't reached the constitution level. It hasn't.

Winnie Frost: 00:54:49 The pinnacle.

Chad Beale: 00:54:50 Yeah. We've done a lot of good things. But I've always wanted to make it easier, faster for people to get the point. I've felt like it's been a tough thing to get people to our understanding of what waysides do. And I wanted to make that an easier process. And I've done some things to try to do that.

Chad Beale: 00:55:12 But I felt like there's still things I wanted to do in the wayside department. There's still goals I had and I wanted to accomplish. And so by saying now you have to do exhibits, I felt like I'm being robbed of that chance. And then I also feel like that's what the parks want. Why won't you let me do it? But when you have two designers retire, and they have a project workload, it just naturally has to come to the person who's left.

Winnie Frost: 00:55:40 So that's some of the evolution that's happening?

Chad Beale: 00:55:42 Yeah. I would say in the last--I mean, I'm doing exhibits for the last five, six, seven years. And I've only--I actually don't know. They've all been handed over to me from

people who have retired. I don't think I've started a new one.

- Chad Beale: 00:56:09 And I've learned a ton. I even have time to design my own in-house exhibit project. And I'm not saying that that's not been a valuable experience in my growth as a designer and learning media. It's just I still have this longing, a desire to take something that's a real passion, a real like- It connects with me because it was what I started with. And I had such a good experience with the people that I worked with there, that I want to honor that, and honor those people's efforts and continue that.
- Winnie Frost: 00:56:42 Absolutely.
- Chad Beale: 00:56:43 And I feel like I don't want it to die. And I don't want people to come in, to feel like, "Oh! We already know that's a simple thing." Because it's not simple. If it's done well, it seems simple, and it's super powerful. I've seen that. I've seen the effect of what a wayside can do.
- Chad Beale: 00:57:00 And so I want to keep that going, because I think it's really powerful. And people still ask for them. It's not like it's one of these medias that people just say, "Well, it's an old thing. People don't care about them."
- Winnie Frost: 00:57:11 Put it on your phone.
- Chad Beale: 00:57:13 People still want them. They still want that. There's still many people that have come to parks that want that disconnect experience. But yes. They want to learn. They want to know why that's like that. They want to participate in the story.
- Winnie Frost: 00:57:27 So how do you handle--I know you've done some new things. So how do you deal with people with some sight impairment or other kinds of disabilities?
- Chad Beale: 00:57:39 Speaking of something that hasn't been done, that's something we never even really considered back in the day. And it's not because we didn't want to, we were purposely doing it. It's just an audience that you just didn't really make part of your daily thinking. It's not experience that I've had. It's not experience that--it's not something I brought to the table. That's why we have different designers that bring different backgrounds.

Chad Beale: 00:58:03 I did not have any background of anybody having a disability like that. So it never really was part of my design thinking. But since it has come to the Center, and since it's now being sort of integrated in all we do, it's one of those things I haven't looked at it being another thing I have to do.

Chad Beale: 00:58:26 It's been exciting to me, because I think it makes the design better. I love to be challenged as a designer. I love to see something that's like kind of complex, and making it work for everyone. It's like part of the excitement about design for me.

Winnie Frost: 00:58:44 You're an Einstein of design.

Chad Beale: 00:58:45 It's just that it's part of that technical side that I like. I love a good challenge. I love to say, "How can we make that easy to understand and a tactical bringing other dimensions into it as an opportunity to tell a story is exciting to me." And the new technology and the new way we can make the things is exciting to me.

Winnie Frost: 00:59:03 Like the 3D?

Chad Beale: 00:59:04 3D, and 3D design and 3D printing.

Winnie Frost: 00:59:11 Tell us about your Sitka. Didn't you do something there?

Chad Beale: 00:59:16 Yeah. So that was--

Winnie Frost: 00:59:19 A bell-ringing experience.

Chad Beale: 00:59:21 Yeah. I mean, Sitka was a chance. It was like, "Okay. Look for--" We were being directed to look for opportunities and tell stories with tactical. How can we expand accessibility in waysides? And I was sort of ignorant to it at the time.

Winnie Frost: 00:59:38 We all were.

Chad Beale: 00:59:39 But I think one of the things that just naturally fell in my lap was the fish.

Winnie Frost: 00:59:45 I know the fish was perfect.

Chad Beale: 00:59:49 It just seemed so great a fit and something that you didn't really have to think about too much. And that's too often

times when the best solutions are. It's just like, "Oh, yeah. Of course, we would do a full size fish, because nine months out of the year, there are no fish in that river." And so people have no idea what that river looks like when it's full of salmon.

- Chad Beale: 01:00:09 So I can sit there and show you, and have pictures of the life cycle and a picture of what it looks like. But how someone who can't see that, or be part of that visually, how can we get that same- The size of the fish, and what the fish feels like when it's right in front of you. It's not like a regular fish. These are damaged fish. They're getting scrapped up. They're much bigger. They shouldn't be in that river.
- Winnie Frost: 01:00:39 We'd see models of a map--
- Chad Beale: 01:00:43 So it just seemed like a natural fit. And we did video too. We were able to bring video into it, and show-
- Winnie Frost: 01:00:50 Was this with the QR code.
- Chad Beale: 01:00:52 With the QR code. And so a little video that could show people from where they're standing, and basically kept them- It got them closer until you're under the water, and then you could see the fish.
- Winnie Frost: 01:01:01 Cool.
- Chad Beale: 01:01:02 So it allowed us to sort of- It's the same idea of site specific interpretation but use other media to get that across. So it was pretty exciting. I think it was a good example of--and it taught me a lot about using 3D design.
- Betsy Ehrlich: 01:01:17 And that was an award winning project, wasn't it?
- Chad Beale: 01:01:21 I believe so. It won for the audio description. I don't think it won for the design. I'm not sure--
- Winnie Frost: 01:01:31 In NAI or NIA or whatever they call it.
- Chad Beale: 01:01:34 Yeah. I'm pretty sure it won for [crosstalk].
- Betsy Ehrlich: 01:01:36 I thought it was an accessibility award.
- Chad Beale: 01:01:38 Yeah. It won an accessibility award.

Winnie Frost: 01:01:40 Congratulations, awesome.

Chad Beale: 01:01:41 Thank you.

Winnie Frost: 01:01:44 This could be a tricky question. What are some of your favorite parks that you've gone to, and worked on projects in? I think we definitely know one. No. I think we know two.

Chad Beale: 01:01:57 Yeah. I mean, the one has a reason, personal reason. And the other one sort of project reason. I'll do the personal. I proposed to my wife, Paula Beale at Lassen Volcanic National Park. So that's one that--

Winnie Frost: 01:02:10 That's a very interesting story.

Betsy Ehrlich: 01:02:12 We'll talk about it more in a second.

Chad Beale: 01:02:15 I had a little personal connection to that when I worked on waysides there. So that one has a sort of special meaning. And a German magazine actually interviewed us. German, like National Geographic magazine wanted our story. It was probably 10 years ago.

Winnie Frost: 01:02:30 While you were there?

Chad Beale: 01:02:33 It was after we had done this. And the chief of interpretation, I guess they reached out to the chief of interpretation and wanted stories. And so she got in touch with us. I still have the magazine at home. I can't read it. It's in German.

Winnie Frost: 01:02:45 How cool is that?

Chad Beale: 01:02:48 So that's one park. But then Sequoia has a special place in my heart. It was a huge project. It spanned multiple years. And I still use some of the examples.

Winnie Frost: 01:03:01 And who did you work with?

Chad Beale: 01:03:02 I worked with Rich Helman primarily, a planner in our group. I was still relatively a young designer. But I think some of the examples I still use today as, they're my examples. But I still think they're good examples of the principles of wayside exhibits. And Rich was very open to some of my ideas.

Chad Beale: 01:03:29 And it was probably the first project that I felt like I was engaging myself beyond just taking notes and listening. I was questioning things. I was trying to figure out how can I be more active in this role as a designer upfront? How can I help guide the conversation visually?

Chad Beale: 01:03:48 And I think it made a difference, because I still use two of the examples are in my presentation today. They're great examples, I think, of you see the title, you see the graphic, you get it. If you're interested in more, you can read more.

Chad Beale: 01:04:06 But I think it's that- The wayside exhibit should look like a single design to me. It shouldn't look like a book where you're saying, "Okay. I'm going to read this over here, and then I'm going to go over here, and I'm going to have to- And it's going to be this very linear approach." I've always looked at waysides as being more like a poster approach, more of a billboard, where something is drawing you in, you get the point, and it radiates out.

Winnie Frost: 01:04:33 There's a little anecdote to that story, isn't there?

Chad Beale: 01:04:36 To the Sequoia or to the--

Betsy Ehrlich: 01:04:40 The family story?

Winnie Frost: 01:04:43 The family story.

Chad Beale: 01:04:44 Yeah. I did take my family out there. That was the first time I took my older son out there and my parents. That was the first time I was able to sort of share what I did with my family.

Winnie Frost: 01:04:56 How wonderful. And you got to see them.

Chad Beale: 01:04:58 Yeah.

Winnie Frost: 01:04:58 In place.

Chad Beale: 01:04:59 I got to see them at night.

Winnie Frost: 01:05:00 At night?

Chad Beale: 01:05:01 Well, after work they would come.

Winnie Frost: 01:05:04 Oh! What can you see at night?

Chad Beale: 01:05:08 They were in pet cages during the day--

Winnie Frost: 01:05:09 You fed them.

Chad Beale: 01:05:13 I fed them.

Winnie Frost: 01:05:14 Oh my goodness.

Chad Beale: 01:05:16 I mean, if you've ever been to Sequoia, I recommend everyone go, it's just such an other worldly experience, the trees, the giant forest. It's just like a place that you can't help but just be in awe. And it really puts you in a different state of mind every time I've walked through there. It's just very peaceful, spiritual, I think. Yeah. And I think [crosstalk].

Winnie Frost: 01:05:43 What did your son say?

Chad Beale: 01:05:44 Not that I didn't like parks. It just wasn't part of my growing up. It wasn't part of my DNA. And I think that really changed my thinking about what national parks are there for. And just luckily, got to go there early on. Now it's just one of these spectacular places. And a lot of people that still work at the Center have never had the chance to go there. And it's just so different, I think.

Winnie Frost: 01:06:04 Was it the first time your parents had gone to a park? Back on this park thing.

Chad Beale: 01:06:08 My mother had been. Back in the day, my grandfather was a pastor. And he would go to these [inaudible 01:06:15] conferences every year. And they would drive to them. So my mother had more experience with going to parks than my father had. He didn't travel much as a kid.

Winnie Frost: 01:06:23 So what did they think of that one in front of the big Sherman?

Chad Beale: 01:06:27 Sherman tree? Yeah. I mean, they were just blown away, as everyone is when they see that. It's just hard to believe that a tree can be that big and that old. This is the other thing. I mean, over 3,000 years old. I mean, how did you not die like 1,000 years ago. It's just amazing that it's still there.

Winnie Frost: 01:06:47 I saw some show about the canopy, the top of the--what life is like up there.

Chad Beale: 01:06:54 Yeah.

Winnie Frost: 01:06:55 Have you ever--it was some channel. I don't remember.

Chad Beale: 01:06:56 That was one of the things that I wanted to do 20 years ago was to- And drones weren't around then. But I'm like, "God! I'd love to take a little drone, and just have it start where the eye level is and just rise up and go to the top."

Winnie Frost: 01:07:09 Oh my God! Wouldn't that be a fabulous--?

Chad Beale: 01:07:11 And I'm like, all I want to do is put an outdoor TV and put it right on the TV, and then you can just watch this thing go up. That would be awesome.

Winnie Frost: 01:07:20 I know. That'd great. And the QR code up there. People could look at it.

Chad Beale: 01:07:24 I said you could just- That would be so--obviously the other thing is to have cameras mounted in the trees. But we're not going to do that.

Winnie Frost: 01:07:32 Do they have connectivity up there? Up at the-

Chad Beale: 01:07:36 No, they don't. They have it at the lodges but not within the park.

Winnie Frost: 01:07:38 Okay. I was concerned. So that would be impossible?

Chad Beale: 01:07:42 Yeah. So Sequoia has a special place. Again, it was one of these line item projects that--I mean, I think we were working on that for five or six years. And so I've been back a few times. And just I really got to know the park staff, and to this day still friends with some of the people out there. And I think again, that was the first--

Chad Beale: 01:07:59 It was the first time where, again, I think I actively engaged as a designer more than what I had in the past. And I really got to know the park staff, and really felt like I was part of the Park Service, and I felt like I kind of belonged. I was doing work that I was understanding. And I think I was making a difference.

Betsy Ehrlich: 01:08:21 They had a good staff in terms of they are respected and understood, and had their own designers too on staff.

Winnie Frost: 01:08:27 They do, that's right.

Chad Beale: 01:08:27 And they trusted us. I mean, they reached out to us to get our expertise, not just to do it the way we wanted. And I respected that. And again, it allowed me to grow as a designer.

Winnie Frost: 01:08:41 Yeah. And then you bring up a good point. We're almost like ambassadors of Harpers Ferry Center going out there. And you have no idea who might have gone out there and it wasn't as good of an experience. And you have to show that the trust level has to possibly be generated. And they could've had a bad experience at another park and then come there.

Chad Beale: 01:09:02 They could have. You're right. And we've had that history. And I always try to say, "Well, that's not me. I'm here to support you."

Winnie Frost: 01:09:11 No. That's not you all right, except in front of that poor teacher who had the brain tumor at the start. You got to give him credit for changing your life.

Chad Beale: 01:09:20 Terrible, wasn't it?

Winnie Frost: 01:09:22 So you're still in the Pacific West region. But I'm hearing rumors you have a new job.

Chad Beale: 01:09:28 Yes.

Winnie Frost: 01:09:30 So does that mean you're moving away from design?

Chad Beale: 01:09:34 I don't like to look at it that way.

Winnie Frost: 01:09:37 What is it?

Chad Beale: 01:09:41 I've had this technical side. It's even gone back to--

Winnie Frost: 01:09:44 Yeah. We heard about that. In college.

Chad Beale: 01:09:45 From college.

Winnie Frost: 01:09:46 Or high school.

Chad Beale: 01:09:47 And I--

Winnie Frost: 01:09:48 Oh no. Your book covers.

Chad Beale: 01:09:50 Yes. And well, just in college. And then again that computer connection with design. So it's always been- I don't want to say it's a hobby. But it's just part of me. I enjoy it. I go home and play on the computer. It's something I do for fun. I'm really into photography, and the equipment. And it's just I'm a little--I don't want to say the word nerdy.

Winnie Frost: 01:10:12 I know. I didn't want to use that four letter word either--

Chad Beale: 01:10:16 I love to try out new software. And then I love computers.

Winnie Frost: 01:10:21 You bring the books and the magazines in to show us.

Chad Beale: 01:10:25 Yes, it's just been part of my DNA. And I don't like when things don't work. It really bothers me, especially when I think there is a more efficient way of doing it, and especially when it directly affects me. I think I'm a pretty easy going guy, and easy to get along with.

Chad Beale: 01:10:47 But those things kind of bug me and I want to fix them. And so even in my position as a designer, I ended up getting involved in things that had nothing to do with graphic design and my job, but they affected me and what I could do in my job. So whether that was the computer that I was working on, the software that I was using, any other tool that I was using. I wanted to be part of that solution, fixing that, because I thought I could offer something better.

Winnie Frost: 01:11:23 So is this a new position? At the Center it's a new--

Chad Beale: 01:11:27 Yeah. Getting back to why it's not having design. So the position is chief of technical services. The position has been at the center since we organized into regions. It was designed as a position to serve things like our archive, our files, our analog files. But you had a cartographic position; head of cartography was in that position. We had wayside rehab position, a little of rehab mix in there. We had some AV management mixed in there. We had some travel people mixed in there.

Chad Beale: 01:12:13 It seemed like and I think this is well known, it was a collection of people that didn't quite fit the mold of the

regional teams. And so they thought that this program would serve all those teams in sort of an umbrella approach, and offer other services. I think at the time they were talking about quality assurance positions that would ensure things that we were missing like how do we make sure the standards are being kept up for the different media.

- Chad Beale: 01:12:44 That never really worked out like it was, I think, envisioned. And they kind of set it up, and then just kind of let it go. And so there's always been some like, "What is that division? What are they supposed to be doing? What are they doing?" They wrapped signs into it for a while. Our sign group, which got down to a very limited number when it was down to one person, because they weren't wrapped into media development. They were still separate, and today they are still separate.
- Chad Beale: 01:13:19 And I think when our current director came in he was confused by this group. He didn't quite understand what they were doing. And it was a challenge for the supervisor to understand what the focus should be. There were so many different specialties within that, and some people working in media development, some were--
- Chad Beale: 01:13:44 And I think he had a different vision for it, or has a different vision for it. And the current supervisor, I think, is close to retirement, and didn't feel like she wanted to take that on. I mean, I'm not exactly sure. But I think she, I talked to her many times about this. She's happy about it. She's not felt like this was done to her. She felt like this was something that she wanted.
- Chad Beale: 01:14:16 And I saw an opportunity to take my interest in the design, my interest in creating the technical side of what I do, and combine those, and have a greater impact. I've already been doing this at level within my current job. I've gotten involved, like I said, in things that had nothing to do with my position description.
- Winnie Frost: 01:14:39 Yeah. I know for many years people looked to you as a go to person to do lots of fancy reports.
- Chad Beale: 01:14:45 Yeah. I mean, I was specing out our hardware for all the designers. Nothing to do with my position. I've gotten involved in project collaboration software. I got involved in digital asset management; things that I just had a general

interest in early on and wanted to see happen, but never had any capacity, or resources to sort of make happen.

- Chad Beale: 01:15:05 And so when this came up, the timing it was just right for me. I've never wanted to be--I never wanted to be a project manager. I still needed to have some aspect of my job that relates around designing something or figuring something out. And not that you can't do that in project management. It just didn't have the same appeal to me. So this is the first opportunity that I've seen that really does kind of interest me. Will I miss actually doing actual design work or layout work?
- Winnie Frost: 01:15:40 It won't leave you.
- Chad Beale: 01:15:42 Who knows? It's a detail. It's not a permanent job, it's a detail.
- Winnie Frost: 01:15:47 Is it a promotion?
- Chad Beale: 01:15:47 It is a promotion.
- Winnie Frost: 01:15:50 Congratulations.
- Chad Beale: 01:15:51 Thank you. So I get to try it out. They get to try me out.
- Winnie Frost: 01:15:55 That's wonderful. I might have missed this. But will you have an IT component in there?
- Chad Beale: 01:16:02 Not that I'm supervising. But I will be definitely involved with IT.
- Winnie Frost: 01:16:06 Because it just seemed in more recent years everybody wanted to have some way of doing stuff with media, but they needed more IT kind of equipment.
- Chad Beale: 01:16:16 Yeah. And I think that's part of this job is--
- Winnie Frost: 01:16:18 Or social media.
- Chad Beale: 01:16:19 Yeah. Social media is under this job.
- Winnie Frost: 01:16:23 Oh, that's great.
- Chad Beale: 01:16:24 Web is under this job, digital is under this job, in addition to the other more in house functions that have been

traditionally under this job. But yeah. The involvement with IT, the involvement with contracting, the involvement with all the other different departments. I think it's ripe for us to-

- Chad Beale: 01:16:48 The relationships that we built are much better than they used to be. There's always this territory battle between IT, MD, contracting, which didn't allow us to sort of, I think, move forward the way we want to be.
- Winnie Frost: 01:17:06 So you have staff?
- Chad Beale: 01:17:07 I do, yes.
- Winnie Frost: 01:17:09 Got to go to supervisory school?
- Chad Beale: 01:17:10 Yes, I know.
- Winnie Frost: 01:17:11 One of the beauties of being a supervisor--
- Chad Beale: 01:17:15 Five right now, now.
- Betsy Ehrlich: 01:17:18 Five trainings?
- Chad Beale: 01:17:19 Five people.
- Winnie Frost: 01:17:20 You have five people, and you have to do at least 40 hours of training, I think.
- Chad Beale: 01:17:24 Yeah. I don't have to take while I'm acting.
- Winnie Frost: 01:17:25 I figured that.
- Chad Beale: 01:17:27 So that is kind of a good thing. I just told someone this morning I'm like, "They're letting me supervise for four months, but they're not saying I have to have any training. So you're definitely going to have to be patient."
- Winnie Frost: 01:17:40 Write your own, remember that one? Whatever you want to say about yourself.
- Chad Beale: 01:17:45 Yes.
- Winnie Frost: 01:17:47 Well, that's great. Congratulations. I think that's very exciting, because I think it is the other side of your brain. You have this creative side. And then you have this real

technical side. And you're really- I mean, it's exciting. I think it's going to be good for you.

- Chad Beale: 01:18:00 It is. I'm super excited. I've already written down a list of the things I want to do. Long term things I want to do, and working with Betsy. And she's got a new position that has similar overlaps. And Betsy and I have always had similar minds, I think. Similar ways of thinking about things. And I think it's going to be real exciting.
- Chad Beale: 01:18:22 Like I said, I think the timing is right. For attitudes about things that we do here, maybe resources that we can assign to it. So I'm excited.
- Winnie Frost: 01:18:30 Will you all be in the same area? The employees with you, or?
- Chad Beale: 01:18:35 As of now, I mean, I'm still in the same area.
- Winnie Frost: 01:18:37 I mean, will you be moving to the third floor?
- Chad Beale: 01:18:42 No. All the--
- Winnie Frost: 01:18:44 Or have those people left?
- Chad Beale: 01:18:46 All that staff is actually on the same floor that I'm at.
- Winnie Frost: 01:18:48 Okay. So you can just stay in your office almost?
- Chad Beale: 01:18:51 Yes. I can stay in my office.
- Winnie Frost: 01:18:52 You guys seem to like the garden level.
- Chad Beale: 01:18:55 I do miss upstairs.
- Winnie Frost: 01:18:56 Don't you? Oh my God--
- Chad Beale: 01:18:56 I kind of miss upstairs. And the lights so much better downstairs now that they've lowered all those.
- Winnie Frost: 01:19:03 Yeah, well that's true.
- Chad Beale: 01:19:03 But I still miss--I don't know. There was something about the high ceiling and the skylights and everything that just--I don't know. I miss it. I think some of it is just I miss that family.

Winnie Frost: 01:19:11 That family that meets at Christmas every year.

Chad Beale: 01:19:16 That meets at Christmas every year.

Winnie Frost: 01:19:16 For the quiz.

Chad Beale: 01:19:18 I don't know. We just had such- Could you still have that happen today? Could you still have that kind of family, those kind of personalities come together today, under some of the changes in government? I don't know. I'm just fortunate that I was part of it and came through it.

Winnie Frost: 01:19:36 And to think you were so young, and you were just- You just were dumped in here with all these people with very quaky personalities, and for the--

Betsy Ehrlich: 01:19:47 It was a benchmark time period. If you sort of end up measuring things against how well people worked together then and how much we were able to do, and how forward thinking we could be, and how much room we had to grow. And it was just such a great time. And it's been hard to sort of replicate that again. But I think knowing what it was like means we have the opportunity to at least try.

Chad Beale: 01:20:11 Try.

Winnie Frost: 01:20:11 And I think it also improved, because there was more of this camaraderie because people traveled together. So you had other experiences besides just being in the office. And you had to travel, you got to learn how they handled things, and going to dinner.

Chad Beale: 01:20:32 I still have that. I still travel. I travel more now than I did with waysides. So I still work with other colleagues in that. And we still have those--in my team after waysides, we've still developed, I think, close relationships. But it wasn't around that product. Each one of us was on a separate product.

Chad Beale: 01:20:50 And so we don't have the same focus, which I really enjoyed that kind of building off each other. And this person would do this part, and that person would this part. Betsy and I, we did our website at one point. And I really enjoyed that process. And both you and I just got to throw things up there and just figure this out together. We had

time to do it. And I think we end up creating a good product.

- Chad Beale: 01:21:16 And so yeah. I just feel fortunate to be able to come in at that time and basically spend my entire career here. Besides a year and a half out of school, this has been it for me.
- Winnie Frost: 01:21:29 This has been your entire career. That's quite--there are a lot of people that are--you worked here, right?
- Betsy Ehrlich: 01:21:36 Mm-hmm (affirmative).
- Winnie Frost: 01:21:36 You've been here all the time, Harpers Ferry almost?
- Betsy Ehrlich: 01:21:39 Like you, it was short stint of a couple of years before coming here. But yeah. I would say most of my professional career.
- Winnie Frost: 01:21:48 I think in the wayside department, nobody was leaving. People had been there a long time.
- Chad Beale: 01:21:54 No. I think people come in, they see what they can be part of. And it's exciting.
- Winnie Frost: 01:22:01 It's very stimulating, going to other places.
- Chad Beale: 01:22:03 Yeah, it is. On a national level. I mean, before that I did products that would be in a newspaper one day, and then that's it. They're gone. Some of the identity work that I did is actually still used today. So some of that's had some longevity.
- Chad Beale: 01:22:20 But the kind of national exposure, I think it's tough to find jobs like that. Waysides that I did at Sequoia, that I mentioned earlier, one of my projects in parks that are really dear to me, they're still there. They're the same waysides. And to know that thousands of people have gone by that, from different countries all over the world, to see that, and that you had the honor to put something in front of something that's 3,000 years old, just kind of sends a little--
- Chad Beale: 01:22:52 It's just kind of a little chilling that I was given that opportunity to do that. And that's the only thing that stands there. There's no ranger telling them anything. That wayside is their only way of understanding that majestic thing in front of them. And I get to be that conduit.

- Chad Beale: 01:23:07 It's just kind of exciting, and it was always what's interesting to me about waysides. And it just keeps- It never gets old, so to speak, that interface. And I've often wanted to go back and redo that one, because of the idea I had for it with the drone and other things that never really fleshed out. But still, I had the opportunity. And I'll always cherish that.
- Betsy Ehrlich: 01:23:34 And then the positive thing about all the changes that have happened in the Center and even with the decline in the number of people at the Center means there's just so many more opportunities that you can move around, that you didn't necessarily- You weren't necessarily aiming to be an exhibit designer. But you got to work in that arena. You get to work in apps, which you haven't mentioned at all.
- Betsy Ehrlich: 01:23:56 And so I think it'd be interesting to hear just about all the things that you've touched, because they're not divided by media type. But you've touched almost all media type in your career, and you have visions for drone things. So what other things are you going to bring to this?
- Chad Beale: 01:24:14 Yeah. I've always been willing to take risks. I've never shied away from them. I've made mistakes. I admit that. But I've always wanted to try something new. I've never said, "Oh! You know, I don't know that we should try that."
- Chad Beale: 01:24:33 I've learned, with all those experiences. But I'm willing to try something and willing to take a risk. And that's in getting involved with an app project. Again, it was that challenge, and you're like, "Don't give me a challenge because I'll take it." And apps was the same thing. It was a new product. And I felt like maybe I can use some of my design thinking in this to help shape this.
- Chad Beale: 01:24:58 And so it still excites me. It's a growth field. It's an opportunity to shape it like the early pioneers of wayside exhibits. It's kind of exciting in that way. I've gotten involved in doing virtual tours, and creating a standard for that. Print work, I've been thrown print work here and there at the national level. It was enormous.
- Winnie Frost: 01:25:21 Absolutely yeah, presentations.
- Chad Beale: 01:25:22 So I still got to use some of that skill in doing print work, poster work, exhibits, trade shows.

Winnie Frost: 01:25:31 I remember trade show displays that--

Betsy Ehrlich: 01:25:33 For the age of sea.

Winnie Frost: 01:25:36 There you go.

Betsy Ehrlich: 01:25:38 What's that big publication you did around the--

Winnie Frost: 01:25:39 Outward bound?

Chad Beale: 01:25:40 That was Call to Action.

Betsy Ehrlich: 01:25:44 Call to Action. Yeah.

Chad Beale: 01:25:46 Yeah. I got involved with that with Cindy, and helping to design the website standards for that, and some of even the marketing behind that, communication pieces behind that.

Betsy Ehrlich: 01:25:58 Identity, you've been heavily involved in that throughout your career.

Chad Beale: 01:26:02 Yeah. Some of the logos that have been developed, I've helped to develop the standards and how to distribute them. I've gotten involved with international work with the international something conversation network. It's a group that the Park Service is a partner of. And they have a conference on that, international conference.

Chad Beale: 01:26:24 They had one in Korea a few years back. And I worked with someone to design all these trade show graphics. And I had to work with people from all over the world on their logos and all their images that they wanted to use, and different time zones. I remember having meetings late at night so we could talk to somebody who was in Spain, the next day--

Winnie Frost: 01:26:47 Oh my goodness.

Chad Beale: 01:26:53 But yeah. That was exciting. I enjoyed being part of those. And again, I think also the network that you get to establish over a 20 year career in the Park Service, that's also what I'm proud of, is that positive network. When now people still call from Sequoia, and I still have people calling me from Sitka, some people--

- Chad Beale: 01:27:15 Everywhere I've been able to be a part of, that trust, I think that it encourages me because they still trust me. And often times, it's not even about waysides at all. It's about something completely different. Superintendent Paul DePrey from Valor in Pacific, a project Betsy was also involved in with waysides, a year after we put the waysides in, he calls me and tells me they're having a problem raising money now in their donation boxes, because--
- Chad Beale: 01:27:53 He did know why. He was just like, "We used to get all this money in the donation boxes. Now there's no more donation money, and that's how we survived on projects. Can you help us, Chad?" Like seriously? You're calling me, your wayside designer to help you with this. And my mind was like, "What are you doing? Leave me alone." But I was like, "I kind of feel honored because you trusted me enough—"
- Winnie Frost: 01:28:22 Is there a trip involved?
- Betsy Ehrlich: 01:28:22 He's a smart guy.
- Chad Beale: 01:28:22 Well, you trust me enough that you thought I wouldn't blow smoke up your- And I would help you out the best I could, even if I didn't know. And that's exactly what I did actually.
- Winnie Frost: 01:28:33 You went around and talked to other people? You talked to Bob Clark.
- Chad Beale: 01:28:36 I basically said, "Well, my guess the reason why you're not getting money is because you just fixed all your broken things and all your exhibits look fantastic. And they're like why do you need money for this? Whereas before, everything was falling apart, looked shabby. And they felt bad so they gave you money. That's just my guess."
- Winnie Frost: 01:28:54 Well, they should have it outside where they can't see the exhibits yet.
- Chad Beale: 01:28:58 They should.
- Winnie Frost: 01:28:58 At the entrance, not at exit.
- Chad Beale: 01:29:00 And I had, speaking of Call to Action, had been to the presentation of the launch of the Call to Action. And the National Park Foundation was there. And I met someone

there, and given me their card. I said, "Have you ever talked to the National Park Foundation." "Well, no." I said, "That's what they do. They help parks with fundraising initiatives. And they fundraise themselves."

- Chad Beale: 01:29:20 I said, "So maybe you should call--I said, "Here, I'll call this person. We'll get a meeting set up, and you can talk to her, and see if she can help you out." And that had nothing to do with me. But it just felt like I needed to at least try to help this park, even though I personally couldn't help them myself.
- Chad Beale: 01:29:43 So I like it that they call me for things that- It just shows that I've built this trust. They trust me. And I think that's what Harpers Ferry Center is about. It's having these partnerships with parks where they feel like we're their partner in getting their work done. That we're an extension of their staff, and they trust us enough, and we did a good job, and we understood them enough that they're going to keep calling us back, even if it has nothing to do with necessarily media.
- Winnie Frost: 01:30:14 Yes.
- Betsy Ehrlich: 01:30:14 The design process and the design thinking that you apply to everything is what they're looking for. It's not the product. It's the ability for you to help them--
- Winnie Frost: 01:30:21 The thought process--
- Chad Beale: 01:30:23 I never really understood that one, Valor in the Pacific. But I mean I've had parks call me back where I worked on their exhibit. And then they're asking me about waysides, and now they're asking me about apps. That happens all the time now. I'm sure you have this--you've gone out and work on brochures, and people are like, "Can we talk to you about this—"
- Winnie Frost: 01:30:41 Well, she's been in every department.
- Chad Beale: 01:30:42 Yeah. She's been in every department.
- Betsy Ehrlich: 01:30:43 Except AV.
- Winnie Frost: 01:30:44 AV, yeah.

Chad Beale: 01:30:44 Where they ask you about these things, because they just trust you, you have a rapport with them. I think that's really important.

Winnie Frost: 01:30:50 I agree. They expect you to know about everything, when you go there. Everything that goes on in the Center, you know how to do that, right?

Betsy Ehrlich: 01:30:59 Well, and it's not just the process of helping them think through whatever the problem is at hand. But it's also your connection to other parks and other people in the agency, which you have 20 years of now. And the fact that you can say, "Well, so and so does this. And I've seen an example like that. And we tried this over here." So you bring that depth of experience and connections that not everybody in the Park Service has.

Betsy Ehrlich: 01:31:27 But all that travel, and all those projects, and all those connections among all the different teams you've been on in the Center, like how many parks have you not touched? Probably very few.

Winnie Frost: 01:31:39 Are you like Jack Spinnler? Do you have a map on the wall?

Chad Beale: 01:31:41 I do pins.

Winnie Frost: 01:31:42 You got the pins?

Betsy Ehrlich: 01:31:44 He does the pins.

Winnie Frost: 01:31:44 Well, you're halfway there.

Betsy Ehrlich: 01:31:45 What's your number?

Chad Beale: 01:31:46 186.

Winnie Frost: 01:31:48 As I was mentioning to Paula earlier, the follow through is really important. And that really builds the trust.

Chad Beale: 01:31:54 Yeah. And you never know--

Winnie Frost: 01:31:56 Even if you don't know exactly the right answer. But that you follow through.

Chad Beale: 01:31:59 Exactly. And you never know who you're going to touch in the Park Service, in terms of what a difference it's going to make, and then where they're going to be later.

Winnie Frost: 01:32:09 That's true. Because we sort of move around.

Chad Beale: 01:32:10 We've had people that have been--

Betsy Ehrlich: 01:32:13 They can become your supervisor.

Chad Beale: 01:32:13 Exactly.

Winnie Frost: 01:32:13 Don't burn any bridges.

Chad Beale: 01:32:14 Don't burn any bridges. Park Service is a small family. And I've always said even if you disagree with them treat them with respect because you never know where they're going to end up.

Winnie Frost: 01:32:24 Excellent point. I mean, you're bringing up so many personal characteristics that really improve working. Not just that you have the skill set. But there--

Chad Beale: 01:32:33 Yeah. That's one thing I've learned. It's not just what I've known in my [inaudible]. It's just that experience of working with people, working with this agency. And that's the type of thing that I hope that we can pass along that I feel like we're losing. I don't feel like I've had that--

Chad Beale: 01:32:53 You guys had that opportunity with me. And I value that tremendously. I mean, maybe not at the time. But looking back, I'm a young- I think I know everything kind of, design school--

Winnie Frost: 01:33:05 I don't believe you ever came in like that.

Chad Beale: 01:33:07 I hope I didn't come in like that.

Winnie Frost: 01:33:08 No.

Chad Beale: 01:33:09 But you don't recognize it at the time that that helped and helped shape your thinking, and what you can--just like as a kid. You don't realize some of the things your parents told you. And then you get older, and like, "Oh my God! That was really smart."

Winnie Frost: 01:33:21 Paula brought that up too. It's a very good point.

Chad Beale: 01:33:26 But same thing. And I really hope I get the chance to pass that along. I'd like to give back.

Winnie Frost: 01:33:32 Well, we understand your son does know what you do now.

Chad Beale: 01:33:34 Yeah.

Winnie Frost: 01:33:35 From going to Sequoia.

Chad Beale: 01:33:36 He does.

Winnie Frost: 01:33:36 And seeing that wayside.

Chad Beale: 01:33:39 He just asked me, "Dad, you got this new position. What do you do?" And I was like, "Oh God! How do I explain this one?"

Winnie Frost: 01:33:47 How do you explain it? I know. What? You're not doing that cool thing you used to do?

Chad Beale: 01:33:50 I know. I could at least show him, and get him involved, and say, "See, this is what I did." And he would say, "I don't like that one." Or he'd say, "I like that one, dad."

Winnie Frost: 01:33:59 If you had one on Disney World, maybe he'd like that. But he saw that tree--

Chad Beale: 01:34:02 So now I'm like, "See the way I did this chart, and the way we're going to organize this, and put these groups together?" And he's like--

Winnie Frost: 01:34:08 Sounds like Chad when he was young, "What? I'm not that interested in that history or that story over there. I just have to do something." So then look--

Chad Beale: 01:34:18 I've changed. I love history now, I love the stories--

Winnie Frost: 01:34:18 Look at the evolution. Never been to a park.

Chad Beale: 01:34:22 I love the stories now. I love to understand it. I love to be a part of that.

Winnie Frost: 01:34:27 That's why I asked you that. Where you just in that, the colonial--I mean, the colonial story of Yorktown?

Chad Beale: 01:34:33 Yeah.

Winnie Frost: 01:34:34 I just wanted to get--

Chad Beale: 01:34:35 God! Those are still there. Those waysides.

Winnie Frost: 01:34:36 Oh, my stars. Well, they're only 18 years old or something. That's pretty good.

Betsy Ehrlich: 01:34:42 Especially for these days.

Winnie Frost: 01:34:43 Come on! So Chad, I'm picking up that really some of your important mentors were just the wayside department. Just the experience there.

Chad Beale: 01:34:54 Yeah. And I never had sort of any- I mean, besides park staff as mentors in leadership and watching them how they run a park or how they work with their staff. But I've never really had any big design influences. I can't point to a design style, and say, "Oh my God! I idolize that person." I mean, there's a couple that in college I was trying to emulate before I understood, well, you shouldn't emulate. You should look at the design process and not copy. It's your thing. But yeah.

Chad Beale: 01:35:24 I think here, the relationships and the opportunity to explore some ideas. I mean, when we changed the grid in 2000, we took it out. We changed that big black band. Went to the narrow black band. I remember being real hesitant to present that. It was in this particular project that I was fighting. It was like, "Oh! This heavy black band and this really subtle artwork just is not working together. Can I try something else? Can I give you some ideas?"

Chad Beale: 01:35:55 And I was really hesitant to do it. But I'm like, "I want to try this." And I don't think it--it didn't take hold right away. But I think it planted a seed, and maybe some people would've said, "Absolutely not. This is our standard. Deal with it."

Chad Beale: 01:36:17 But I didn't get that. I got some thoughtful responses, and some--but I think they thought about it. At that point, I didn't have any kind of senior position where I can just make it so. Betsy still had that senior leadership. But I think she gave me that opportunity. So I think that's what I appreciate, is that chance to grow a little bit independently,

and then work with people that gave me some guidance. So I'm proud of that moment. We still use that same idea for our same grid style.

- Winnie Frost: 01:36:56 What about the fonts?
- Chad Beale: 01:36:59 Yeah. I mean the fonts were sort of independent of me. I helped to apply them to our grids. I do cheat a little bit in waysides.
- Betsy Ehrlich: 01:37:11 We all do.
- Chad Beale: 01:37:12 You all do? I think I luckily was able to get a- I feel like I had a good understanding of what the grid was designed for. And I think that was just practice. And it's not--
- Winnie Frost: 01:37:31 And allowed to practice.
- Chad Beale: 01:37:32 And allowed to practice, and allowed to see reactions from things, from visitors and also from parks, if they liked a certain thing. I can try something here this time. So yeah. I'm proud of that, being able to push that envelope a little further down the road. And again simplify some of the understanding of waysides with some of the presentations that I've developed. But I'm not done yet. I don't feel like it's--
- Winnie Frost: 01:38:03 That's good.
- Chad Beale: 01:38:04 Yeah. My new position, I still have great ideas to elevate some of our standards, again, for waysides and other departments including the tech assist program and rehab, and some of these things I think are really critical to helping the parks.
- Winnie Frost: 01:38:22 Yeah. I'm sure that needs attention.
- Betsy Ehrlich: 01:38:24 We'll see if it's a receptive time period.
- Winnie Frost: 01:38:27 I was going to say--
- Betsy Ehrlich: 01:38:27 I certainly hope it is because I think we all sort of feel like we got stopped at a point of great momentum. And the feeling that there's this opportunity that haven't fulfilled yet. And I think--

Winnie Frost: 01:38:41 And it had to be articulated really well. Not your specific job. But the need, the mission, the parks wanting to do this.

Chad Beale: 01:38:53 Yeah. The justification, right? That's all.

Winnie Frost: 01:38:54 There you go.

Chad Beale: 01:38:55 What you always have to have is a justification.

Winnie Frost: 01:38:59 Right to the justification.

Betsy Ehrlich: 01:39:01 You've been able to work with what felt like rigid system to begin with, and develop very much your own style. That you had a lot of freedom, but it was within the sort of confine that sometimes felt restrictive. But over time, you find ways of working with it that respects the system, but doesn't--

Chad Beale: 01:39:21 Exactly.

Betsy Ehrlich: 01:39:21 You're not working for the sake of the change. You're working for the sake of a purpose.

Betsy Ehrlich: 01:39:33 And then I think that way of demonstrating good design and good design thinking just prevails. It will, eventually. It's just it's going to take some time. But when that begin--

Chad Beale: 01:39:46 Yeah. And I hope to help. We had an intern from CIA. And she worked on redoing the Harpers Ferry waysides that are right out front here.

Winnie Frost: 01:39:54 The Mather one?

Chad Beale: 01:39:56 Yes.

Winnie Frost: 01:39:58 They redid them? They were all porcelain.

Chad Beale: 01:39:59 They're not redone yet. But she did redesign them for me. And I'm like, Okay. I got like--

Winnie Frost: 01:40:04 How does Elizabeth feel about that?

Chad Beale: 01:40:06 I don't know.

Winnie Frost: 01:40:08 Oh! Geeze.

Betsy Ehrlich: 01:40:08 They needed to be done.

Chad Beale: 01:40:09 But it's like I have a week. Literally, you have to do these this week. How am I going to distill all this that I've taken years to understand, and get this across to you, and expect you to do a level that--?

Winnie Frost: 01:40:29 Well, you kind of said--she ought to listen to your oral history. You kind of said you really need to know the story, and then how to say it really easily, and get them right away. It's almost like your branding ability too. You put all that together, I don't know. CIA sounds like a curious--

Chad Beale: 01:40:47 She was fantastic. I used my training that I do when we go to parks. It's a little simple five bullets. And I was really impressed by what she came back with. And we went through each one. And I kind of explained what I thought needed to happen with it. And based on, again, that commonality of focus radiating out.

Chad Beale: 01:41:16 And I was pleasantly surprised. Now will that work every time? I don't know. But I hope to keep doing that. To not, as you said, because it's not done yet. It's not like I have reached the pinnacle. It never reaches the pinnacle. And I want others to take it, and then keep pushing.

Betsy Ehrlich: 01:41:36 Keep pushing, yeah.

Winnie Frost: 01:41:36 Keep it moving.

Chad Beale: 01:41:38 Waysides may change format. They may not be rigid panels sitting on a piece of metal in 20 years. I think their focus, and what they do, is still going to be important. But how they're being made and produced may change. But I don't want them to ignore the past--

Winnie Frost: 01:41:59 The thinking, the process.

Chad Beale: 01:42:01 And the process, because I think that is what's critical, and that's what I want to get across to people that come in here.

Winnie Frost: 01:42:09 So Chad, you have been amazing.

Chad Beale: 01:42:11 Thank you.

Winnie Frost: 01:42:12 It's already 1:10. You had nothing to say.

Chad Beale: 01:42:16 Nothing.

Winnie Frost: 01:42:16 Nothing. But you had never been to a park, of course.

Chad Beale: 01:42:18 Never. I hadn't been.

Winnie Frost: 01:42:21 So we're going to take a little break now, and get ready for session two, the real personal, doozey one.

Chad Beale: 01:42:31 I did not bring that up at all.

Winnie Frost: 01:42:33 Okay. So thank you. And thank you very much.

Chad Beale: 01:42:36 Thank you, Winnie.

Winnie Frost: 01:42:37 You are quite a joy.

Chad Beale: 01:42:37 Thank you, Betsy. It was a joy for me too.

Winnie Frost: 01:42:37 And I got to say one funny thing is a lot of your thoughts and thinking are kind of parallel to your wife's. It's really wonderful. Okay.

Chad Beale: 01:42:47 We talk a lot.

Winnie Frost: 01:42:49 I guess you do. No problem there.

Betsy Ehrlich: 01:42:50 There you go.

END OF RECORDING