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David H. Wallace
November 2, 2015

Interview conducted by Lu Ann Jones and Sarah Heald
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ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

WITH

DAVID H. WALLACE

By Lu Ann Jones and Sarah Heald

November 2, 2015

Frederick, Maryland

Transcribed by Technitype Transcripts

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

This final draft contains clarifications and corrections made by the narrator.

START OF TAPE

START OF FILE 1

Lu Ann Jones: This is Lu Ann Jones here with David Wallace and Sarah Heald. So, Mr. Wallace, how about giving us your full name.

David Wallace: David Harold Wallace.

Lu Ann Jones: And you were born when?

David Wallace: 1926, Christmas Eve, in Baltimore, although I grew up in Annville, Pennsylvania, where my father was head of the English department at Lebanon Valley College.

Lu Ann Jones: So, you grew up in an academic household.

David Wallace: Yes, very much so.

Lu Ann Jones: Mmhmm, mmhmm.

David Wallace: A very big library, and my father's study was as big as the living room beneath it, specially designed.

Lu Ann Jones: Mmhmm, mmhmm.

David Wallace: I went to the local schools, and I went from high school directly into the army during the last months of World War II. I was drafted in June of '45 and finished my basic training in middle of August 1945. In fact, we were on the final bivouac when the Japanese surrender was announced. So, I'm a bona fide veteran of World War II, although I never saw any action or even went overseas. I spent my eighteen months in the States.

Lu Ann Jones: Let's see how that sounds.

END OF FILE 1

START OF FILE 2

Lu Ann Jones: So today is November 2nd, 2015, and we're in Frederick, Maryland, at the home of Sarah Heald. This is Lu Ann Jones with the Park History Program, and we're here with David H. Wallace, who was a longtime curator, held many titles, I'm sure, with the National Park Service, to talk about his career, and Sarah is a—

Sarah Heald: A staff curator and planner at Harpers Ferry Center.

Lu Ann Jones: So, we're really glad to be here today. We're going to ask you to sign a release form at the end of the interview, but let me just ask at the beginning, did we have your permission to record the interview?

David Wallace: Yes, indeed.

Lu Ann Jones: Yes. Then I always tell people I don't think I'm going to ask people a question that they don't want to answer, but should I ask you a question you don't want to answer, you certainly have the right to say you want to take a pass on that.

Lu Ann Jones: Well, we spoke in the previous short recording there about growing up in an academic household, and I would like to know a little bit, before we get to your Park Service career, about your own thinking about your formal training in history and what you had in mind that you would like to do with that formal training in history as you undertook it.

David Wallace: Well, when I was in college, I was a double major in history and English. My father was a professor of English, but he was also a local historian working on Pennsylvania history, mainly, and Indian history. I had no desire to be a teacher, for some reason. My uncle, my grandfather, my father, my brother were all teachers, and for some reason I just didn't want to be a teacher. So, when I finished at Lebanon Valley College with a degree in history and English, I went straight to Columbia University as a history major, initially in English constitutional history. I switched very quickly to American history after the first year, and I was particularly interested in research on diplomatic history.

David Wallace: At the end of my first year, I went to a summer school in Edinburgh University in Scotland and fell in love with Edinburgh. Being on the GI Bill, I was able to stay over there for the whole following school year, auditing, mainly, courses in European history, prehistoric archaeology, and participated in three digs. I had a very interesting course in Imperial and American history which treated American history as one aspect of British Imperial history. It was very illuminating, taught by a confirmed socialist. [laughs]

David Wallace: When I came back, I already had a job at the New York Historical Society. During the previous year at Columbia, I'd taken a three-hour-credit course on the administration of an American historical society from Dr. R.W.G. Vail, the director. There were only three of us in the class, and at the end of the year, he hired one of them, and while I was in Edinburgh, he hired me. [laughs] So two out of the three got jobs. Apparently, it was really a recruitment effort on his part.

David Wallace: So, when I came back from Edinburgh, I went to work as the assistant editor at the New York Historical Society, again, not having to teach, and I began work on my Ph.D., which I was able to do using materials at the Historical Society, for a biography of John Rogers, the early American sculptor.

David Wallace: But my main job at the Historical Society was putting together the Dictionary of Artists in America, 1564 to 1860, the initial work for which had been done mainly by Dr. George Groce, starting actually with the WPA [Works Progress Administration], and it consisted of about twenty boxes of five-by-eight cards.

David Wallace: So, it took about three years, mixing in with other editorial work with the Society, quite a bit of indexing, but it mainly was simply sitting at a manual typewriter, going through these cards one by one, and very quickly I found that the initial idea was to stop in 1860, so all the biographies stopped in 1860, which I felt was basically ridiculous. So, I not only had to type up what had already been written, I had to do research for most of the entries, which I could do in the Historical Society, which had a remarkable collection of city directories, particularly, and local histories from all across the country. So, I spent much of my time for those three years writing the entries and typing them myself, and it amounted in the end to about 11,000 entries.

David Wallace: I finished my work there on the dictionary in the middle of 1956 and started looking for another job in the historical society field, and none of the ones that I applied for panned out, luckily, because I was not really prepared. I resigned from the Society at the end of ’56 to work on reading up for my Ph.D. orals, and in the meantime, I heard about this possibility of a job in Philadelphia with the National Park Service. I took the civil service entrance exam and did very well, apparently. Early in 1957, I got word that somebody was leaving, and people were shifting jobs, and there would be an opening for me as a GS-7 ranger historian at a salary of $4,500 a year.

David Wallace: When I told my advisor, who was Henry Steele Commager, “You can’t possibly live on that.”

David Wallace: And I said, “Well, I’ve been living on 3,600 for several years in New York,” married, with, by that time, two children.

David Wallace: So, I got the job and started in Philadelphia in the summer of 1957.

Lu Ann Jones: So, what were your duties? Well, first of all, what did you think of the Park Service when you actually became an employee and you began to get behind the scenes as opposed to visiting sites?

David Wallace: Well, I was impressed with the quality of the people I initially met. My first supervisor was Bill Everhart, who was then the chief of Interpretation, I guess, at Independence. He left that same year to join [George] Hartzog in St. Louis.

David Wallace: There were two or three other historians on the staff, and I felt that they were fully capable of doing what research was required, because we were in the initial stages. This park had been established I think in '52, perhaps, and this was '57, so a lot of the very basic research on the buildings, particularly, and the events was being carried out. So, I got to do quite a bit of the research as an historian, but I also had duties as an interpreter. I never did get the entire uniform, never did get the hat, for which I was grateful, because it made me look like a mushroom. [laughter] At that time, we took our hats off at the Liberty Bell.

Lu Ann Jones: So, what portion of your job was spent on the tour side, the dealing with the visitor services side versus the research portion of your job?

David Wallace: I think more than half was the research, and I was doing a lot of reading of eighteenth-century and early nineteenth-century newspapers. In fact, my wife used to say that she never knew when I said, "I saw in the paper today—," whether it was going to be contemporary or historical. [Jones laughs.] I did not do the title searches. Fortunately, there was someone else who was doing that.

Sarah Heald: Was it your choice to start with the newspapers, David, or how did that come to pass? And what types of things at that point were you looking for in the newspapers? Do you even remember?

David Wallace: No, I don't, really.

Sarah Heald: Okay. I just think it's a great thing to have started with.

David Wallace: The Assembly Room furnishing project, sponsored by the Garden Clubs of America, I think, had pretty much been done, and that research was pretty much completed. So, I guess we were working on Congress Hall, Bishop White House, that sort of thing, Second Bank, the First Bank, just all kinds of background information for use in planning furnishings and also for interpretation.

David Wallace: But one reason they were anxious to get me was my knowledge of American art, which I knew from A to Z, although I never took an art history course, but I literally knew it A to Z. But Independence had a remarkable collection of primarily portraits, many of them by the Peale family, but a lot of others, and they were anxious to do a catalog, and with my background, they figured that was one of the things I could do. In fact, during the first couple of weeks I was there, I had to prepare basically an article about the portrait collection for training the summer interpreters, and I still have that. [laughs] That's my first Park Service publication.

David Wallace: As it turned out, I never got to do the catalog, and the reason for that, because the Assembly Room furnishing project was pretty much

completed, led by Jim Mulcahy, who was an exhibit designer from the museum lab in Washington, who was advised by a committee of non-Park Service people like Montgomery at Winterthur and people like that, and they had done the research or he had done the research and a lot of the acquisition already. But he wanted to get back to Washington because he lived there, so he asked if I perhaps could be transferred to the curatorial department to help him, and that's what happened about a year after I joined the staff at Independence.

David Wallace: Then he left, and they investigated a couple of people as possible curators, and then finally decided that I would do. [laughs] So by that time, I'd been acting curator, and I decided I would like to do it, so I became a museum curator instead of an historian, without any curatorial training.

Lu Ann Jones: Well, I was going to ask you about that. You seem pretty good at training yourself at many things, I take it, so how did you begin to train yourself to be a curator, and how would you define the difference in perspective there?

David Wallace: Well, I'd had a very slight exposure to it in the Lebanon County Historical Society when I was in college. I helped my professor in the collection of things for the Society, but never any formal training. Basically, what I was doing was acting as a registrar. I was going through the existing collection at Independence and identifying things, trying to get them somewhat organized. So, I was interested in the recording of the collections, but I had no experience at all in the maintenance of collections and conservation, that sort of thing.

David Wallace: But it happened that just at that point, the push to furnish the other buildings on the Square, Congress Hall particularly, started, and I was able to hire professionally trained curators. The first one was Fred Hanson, who was a Winterthur graduate. Next, I think, was Charlie Dorman, who was not a trained curator, but a very expert connoisseur in eighteenth-century furniture of the East Coast. Then we had Ruth Matzkin, who was a graduate of Winterthur, and John Milley was a graduate of Winterthur, and the only other one was a Park Service employee, Agnes Downey at Arlington, who was, like me, not a trained curator but a good researcher.

David Wallace: So, I had a cadre of artifact-oriented people, none of whom were particularly involved in the maintenance of the collection, which was in very, very sad shape.

David Wallace: The portraits had been taken off display in Independence Hall because of the work on the building itself, so they were hanging on wire racks in the basement of the Second Bank, which were the old bank vaults from the 1820s. It was really in pretty sad shape, and a large artifact collection

inherited from the city. So really my only contribution to that was inventorying and identifying a lot of the collections.

Lu Ann Jones: Well, if I'm remembering correctly, I think you actually called those conditions primitive in your diary. [laughs] So how did you go about changing that?

David Wallace: Didn't change very much. In fact, it was very shortly before I left I, was there for eleven years. Shortly before I left, I found one last missing piece of the collection, which was a gold-headed cane owned by George Read, the Signer from Delaware, which we found behind the caretaker's couch in the Second Bank. He was the caretaker for the German American Society and apparently had latched onto this, and it was there when he moved out.

David Wallace: No, I can't say that I was able to accomplish very much in the improvement of conditions. We did have a resident conservator, Anne Clapp, from the museum lab in Washington, who kept an eye on the paintings, at least, and did some work on some of them.

Sarah Heald: So, were they prepared for after the buildings were finished, to be reinstalled in better condition than when they were taken off?

David Wallace: Right.

Sarah Heald: Okay. And they didn't have to remain in those storage areas for very long then.

David Wallace: Well, they were there for most of the time that I was there. We did get a lot of the better paintings on display in the Second Bank before I left. We had a couple of exhibits: presidents before Washington (presidents of the Continental Congress) and revolutionary officers and the Sharples Collection of pastel portraits. They did receive some attention. But otherwise, there was some moving of storage into better quarters. I don't remember the details, though.

Sarah Heald: I was thinking about your Meritorious Service Award, talking about the acquisition of the Benjamin Franklin desk. Would that have been at the same time period then, or after Independence?

David Wallace: It was halfway through, when they were planning the exhibits relating to Franklin, after they decided not to reconstruct the house and they decided to design exhibits instead. Of course, the desk would be a prime, and is a prime, exhibit. It just came up at auction in Philadelphia, with no previous warning. We weren't looking for it. It just turned up.

David Wallace: So, we did some very hurried research, trying to establish whether or not it really was Franklin's desk. The crucial bit of information, which was not

its provenance — it only went back about a couple of generations in private collections as Franklin's desk, but the crucial thing was that there was a letter that Franklin wrote from London to his wife, in which he told her to get something out of his desk. It was in the little drawer under the desk, the desk, we assume, being the flap that dropped down, and there was a candle drawer. There are two or three other Franklin desks in existence, and none of them have that feature, so that was really the strongest evidence that we had at that point.

David Wallace: The estimate was $5,000 at the auction house as a piece of furniture of the period, and we thought, well, we ought to expect it to go for a good bit more than that. We got money from Eastern National Monument Association. I had to go to the NPS regional director, who was Ronnie Lee, historian, and he asked how much we thought it would go for, and we said, well, you know, probably 20,000, but to be on the safe side, we really ought to think maybe forty, and he gave us the okay.

David Wallace: At the auction, I was the bidder, and there was another bidder that we did not know who it was. We had spoken to other museums, which we shouldn't have done, telling them to keep off. [Jones laughs.] It went up past 20,000, and I developed absolute tunnel vision. It was the most frightening experience I think I've ever had. I couldn't see or hear anything but looking straight ahead. It went up by 2,000, 2,000, 2,000, and finally I bid 40,000, followed by silence.

David Wallace: After I got past the newspaper reporters, I went home and went to bed. [laughter] We discovered afterwards it was a descendent of a business colleague of Franklin's who was bidding against us. A private person.

David Wallace: We did discover some additional evidence a little bit later, auction catalogs that I saw at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York which took it back a couple more generations, still not to the eighteenth century, so we're satisfied that we did the right thing. But that was one of my most exciting moments.

Lu Ann Jones: Sarah, are there other questions here? We've asked some questions about the other responsibilities at Independence, the furnishings in Congress Hall, the Bishop White House, and the Todd House. So, would you be able to tell us about some of those projects?

David Wallace: I was intrigued by what you picked up in the Distinguished Service Award where I was credited with being responsible for the "accurate but highly imaginative furnishings at Congress Hall." [laughter] And I did not write that, and I'm not quite sure what they meant by it.

David Wallace: It was, by and large, extremely carefully documented in the case particularly of Congress Hall where there was a lot of evidence. One of the particular things I remember about the Congress Hall furnishings on the first floor of the House of Representatives was the need to design reproduction desks, because none of those had survived. We had the dimensions and the number of members and that sort of thing. Fred Hanson did the planning for that. After we had already probably even received the reproduction furnishings, another historian found a document in New York, I think, which utterly destroyed the plan, because we had one central aisle dividing the room into two sections of desks. There were two aisles. And, of course, at that point, we couldn't do anything about it. I don't know whether they have ever — I think they have changed it.

Sarah Heald: I'm not sure, but it'd be a question to ask [unclear].

David Wallace: It was a great embarrassment which we did not advertise, assuming that at some time it would probably be corrected.

David Wallace: One of the most imaginative things, I guess, was the Senate Chamber rug, which actually was designed, after I left, by John Milley, based on a very, very detailed description and reproduced in India, and it really is a very spectacular piece and, to some degree, imaginative. It's an interpretation of words.

David Wallace: In the case of the Bishop White House, we had some furnishings and pictorial evidence to go by, so that imagination was not required for much of it, but things like the wallpaper were based on other comparable houses of the period which were better documented. We tried to be imaginative by having little things like a partially unmade bed, indicating the bishop had just gotten up from bed, and having the smell of coffee in the kitchen.

Lu Ann Jones: Ah!

David Wallace: But these were things that we could prescribe but interpreters had to carry out, and I'm not sure whether they were carried out for very long. I remember we had bread on the table, and, of course, it got moldy very quickly. [laughter] But there was an attempt to make it look somewhat lived in. The Todd House was pretty much all from contemporary houses of comparable quality.

David Wallace: My own particular contribution to the furnishings in all three of them was in the libraries. I got interested in recreating the Library of Congress, which I could do from documentary evidence and then trying to find copies, contemporary copies of the same titles in original bindings, which was a lot of fun. The same with the Todd House. He, being a lawyer, I was looking for eighteenth-century law books, and back in the 1960s, it was

still possible to get books of that period in original binding for not really unreasonable prices. It would be extremely difficult now, I think. That particular specialty of mine I carried through later when I was at—

END OF FILE 2

START OF FILE 3

David Wallace: — at Harpers Ferry Center.

David Wallace: The other particularly exciting thing I was involved in there was the repair or at least the new housing for the Liberty Bell, which, of course, when I first went was sitting in the center hall of Independence Hall. I can remember the Boy Scout Jamboree at Valley Forge. We had Boy Scouts marching by twos in the front door, around the bell, and out the back door for two days. [laughter] There were about ten thousand of them.

David Wallace: My particular involvement was when the Philadelphia Orchestra was making a recording of some patriotic music and they wanted the sound of the Liberty Bell. They had the timpanist with a felt-covered mallet to tap it, and this was done at night when the building, of course, was closed. A tinny kind of sound appeared, and it scared me, and I had enough authority to stop them. They already had the recording they needed. That resulted in the Franklin Institute being called in to do a report on the bell itself, and then that involved the replacement of the yoke, which was in danger of collapsing. So, I felt that I'd been involved in something pretty big with that.

Lu Ann Jones: Well, one of the questions was about just approaches to exhibits and the exhibits philosophy. You were talking about, you know, real bread and the smell of coffee. I mean, what was going on in terms of the exhibit design? Was that a new idea at that point, or kind of how were you incorporating what was happening in the museum world about exhibit design?

David Wallace: Well, exhibits other than furnishings, Independence was pretty independent of the Eastern Museum Lab, which was responsible for exhibit design throughout the Mission 66. So, we had to put together rather primitive, amateurish exhibits, and these involved mainly the portraits. It was a matter of designing the structures on which they would be displayed. The only other one that I specifically remember was an exhibit of furnishings illustrating the furnishing program, and I can still see — this is in the main room at the Second Bank — a very large panel with chairs hanging on it, illustrating the various types of chairs that were required for particularly the Assembly Room and Congress to some extent. With Congress, particularly in the Senate Chamber, we had a few of the original chairs and we were able to acquire a couple more.

David Wallace: They mention twelve temporary exhibits, and I just cannot remember what they were, but they were all homegrown, except the two they do mention, New Hall and the Pemberton House, which were the Marine Corps and Army exhibits. Those were planned out of Washington, and our role was completely secondary.

Sarah Heald: So, did they have a different approach to exhibitry, one I guess because they were a larger office?

David Wallace: Well, there was much more concern about aesthetics, exhibit design. Mission 66 exhibits were famous for being "books on the wall," because Ralph Lewis, who was the chief of the Museum Division at that time and was a very well-trained museum curator, was very artifact oriented, but he was also very interested in the quality of the labeling, and they tended to be wordy. The design element was by that time a little old-fashioned, but he was under pressure to produce, and he did. I mean, the Mission 66 exhibits were not like the original museum collections like at Valley Forge, just cases full of artifacts and tiny labels. So, it was a pretty efficient operation. It accomplished what it was designed to do.

David Wallace: The change came while I was at Independence in the mid-sixties and largely a result of Freeman Tilden's Interpreting Our Heritage, I think, for one thing, and the other was the New York World's Fair had a tremendous influence. Aesthetics came to become, I felt, the dominant aspect of the post-1966 exhibit design.

Lu Ann Jones: Can you explain kind of the, for me, the connection between the New York World's Fair and how it changed exhibits? And I noticed in the diary there's somebody who leaves Harpers Ferry, I believe, that doesn't agree with that change. So, what was the connection there?

David Wallace: Well, it was a — what shall I say — a modernistic design concept. The example that I particularly remember was a very beautiful photograph of one of the waterfalls at Yellowstone, I guess, floor to ceiling, which was cut through with like a lightning strike of white shattering it into two pieces. It was very dramatic, but it just annoyed the hell out of me. [laughter]

Sarah Heald: So, David, these were exhibits at the '64 World's Fair in New York of Park Service places—

David Wallace: No.

Sarah Heald: — or was it by state? Because that was in the '64 World's Fair, the Yosemite Falls?

David Wallace: No, no, no.

Sarah Heald: Oh, okay. It was later.

David Wallace: That was post '64. No, it was just the whole aesthetics of that period which were exemplified in the New York World's Fair. Of course, there was a change in the administration. This was when Mr. Hartzog became the director, who was not a landscape architect like all the previous directors, [laughs] and Bill Everhart was assistant director for Interpretation. So, the same movement affected audiovisual, exhibits, publications. They were all brought up to date to the aesthetic.

Lu Ann Jones: Well, at your level at that point in your location, were you aware of the change in a new director? Did that have a direct effect on you or how — well, you had known Bill Everhart because he was colleagues with Hartzog. But in terms of your day-to-day work, did that matter?

David Wallace: It didn't particularly at Independence because we were not part of the Eastern Museum Lab. I was involved in at least two interpretive prospectuses and two master plans, so obviously there were changes, and I don't have any really clear memory of how that affected us, with one exception, and that's the so-called Graff House where Jefferson wrote the Declaration of Independence, and it was offsite, just offsite.

David Wallace: But there was a strong local movement to reconstruct the building, and M.O. Anderson, the superintendent, had me draw up an estimate of the cost of — not of reconstructing the building, but of reconstructing the room where Jefferson wrote the Declaration of Independence, and it was quite deliberately exaggerated in an effort to prevent it being possible. However, after both of us left, it was actually carried out, and that was not part of the change in the aesthetics of Park Service exhibits.

Lu Ann Jones: Mmhmm. Well, do you — I think Sarah and I were talking soon after I got here about just — this is in your Harpers Ferry years when you're just so kind of overwhelmed with the amount of travel you did, the number of people you were seeing, etc., and I guess I'm curious how you began to learn to operate within the National Park Service. I mean, fairly early in your career there at Independence, you become a supervisor yourself. You're hiring people. You're reporting to certain people. How did you just learn to understand and maneuver in this vast agency?

David Wallace: Well, when I first went to Harpers Ferry, every day I read the publications, the folders, interpretive folders for the park, starting from A. I don't think I ever got through the alphabet, but I was just learning something about each of the parks as I went along. The travel was, I found, very valuable to me, and I always felt that it was valuable to the parks to have some personal attention, not just designers coming in and telling them how it's going to be, because I was not involved in that. I found myself being a

listener as much as an advisor to the parks, and they were pleased to have someone visit.

David Wallace: It reminded me of a visit to one of the parks in northern Arizona, I can't remember, the little Mormon settlement [Pipe Spring National Monument]. Anyway, it was one of the very smallest parks. The diary of the superintendent is in the NPS Archives, and the high point of his year or years there was the day the director of the National Park Service came and spent a couple of hours. [laughs] Like General Halftrack in the comics when he came to visit. So, my visits were, I think, morale boosters, and, of course, I learned a lot from them and I got to such a great variety, but I was not a specialist, other than furnishings, and that was not always involved.

Lu Ann Jones: Well, how did you learn to deal with the bureaucracy? I mean, you're doing this even at Independence, where you're in what's an important park, a big park, a park that has scrutiny. You've got to get resources for your people. How did you begin to figure out how to get things done, which I think is a challenge in the Park Service?

David Wallace: Well, one of the few things that I was involved in a change of policy, I think, was getting construction money for furnishings into the estimates for reconstruction of buildings or renovation of buildings. That was a very important thing and that happened while I was at Independence.

David Wallace: The other one I was particularly involved in later was the division of labor between the historians in the Eastern and Western Museum Labs or Service Centers and the historic furnishing planners at Harpers Ferry.

David Wallace: The historians were supposed to do the — when this all started, they were supposed to do the initial research for furnishings, but I found that they didn't know anything much about furnishings and they misread evidence and that sort of thing. I was able to persuade the powers-that-be that the historic furnishing planners, the curators, should also do their own research. At one point, I suggested moving all that to Denver, but it didn't happen.

David Wallace: These were two times that my influence, I think, had some real effect. I was often very frustrated. [laughs] I can't remember very specifically about what. I did not enjoy the planning for two or three years ahead. I'm not inclined that way. That was always a chore.

David Wallace: The reason for my becoming the chief of the branch of the Museum Operations was because Mr. Lewis, who had been the chief of Museum Services, of all of the museum operations, under Hartzog, became only the chief of Museum Operations, which involved training, a curatorial

methods course, and various operational things like conservation and recordkeeping and so on. But he was upset by the, he felt, the insensitive handling of objects in some of the exhibits, and it was particularly the C&O Canal, Great Falls, where they had a surviving wooden post of some sort that was too big for the exhibit that it had been designed for, so they wanted to cut off the bottom, and that's when he resigned.

Lu Ann Jones: That's the straw that broke the camel's back. [laughs]

David Wallace: Yes, because when he interviewed me before he asked me to be his assistant, he told me that he was fifty-five or something and had no intention of retiring anytime soon, so I was being hired as his assistant, not his successor, and yet it was only three years after that he resigned, although he remained intimately involved with the Harpers Ferry Collection. He worked with that to upgrade the collection for years afterwards. So, he didn't wash his hand of the Park Service, but he registered his disapproval of some of their policies. I never got to that point.

Sarah Heald: David, is that an example of the sort of change — I'm not sure about the dates of this — that you're talking about, with a more modernist approach to interpretation?

David Wallace: Well, his retirement was 1971, so they were well into the new atmosphere, yes.

Sarah Heald: This is jumping ahead a little, I think, but I was intrigued, in looking at your diary from when you were at HFC, how you sort of were first navigating having contract or short-term people doing furnishings plans, and then you managed to create some positions. Can you speak to that?

David Wallace: You know, I don't remember how that happened. We had two or three people who did furnishing research and plans for us, for like two and three thousand dollars. One of them, at least, was a former Park Service employee who had retired to raise children. But I don't really remember how I came to have the ability to hire, as I had at Independence, hire professional furnishing planners. There was more interest higher up in furnishings at that time than there obviously is now. I mean, it was really recognized as a different — one of the kinds of exhibits that needed to be professionally designed, and we were able to do that past the time when I finally retired.

Lu Ann Jones: Well, I would like to ask — well, you come to Harpers Ferry Center. I mean, you got to help set up this whole new place. I mean, again, we said that we were just exhausted reading all that you were doing in the early years here. [Wallace laughs.] There's the Bicentennial. The museum's

going up at Statue of Liberty. I mean, how did you — well, one, how did you manage handling all of those many, many projects and number of people you're dealing with? And kind of, out of those years, what do you think of as key projects that you still hold onto?

David Wallace: Well, initially when I was at Harpers Ferry, and even before the Center was built, the Western Museum Lab had just closed in San Francisco, and some of the people had come to Harpers Ferry along with the collections that were stored in San Francisco, notably particularly the Colter Bay collection of Indian artifacts from Grand Teton, which had been stored in San Francisco for quite a while. One of the exhibit designers was particularly involved with designing the museum, and we had the artifacts in Harpers Ferry. I didn't personally have to do anything. There were a couple of leftover employees from San Francisco whose main job was working on preserving them and cataloging them, so I had kind of minimal supervisory responsibility for that.

David Wallace: The Museum of Immigration at the Statue of Liberty, I was involved in the planning, along with particularly Alan Kent, who was the Interpretive Planning Division head, and we were heavily involved in making decisions about which ethnic groups were going to be represented and how they were going to be represented, and we were under quite a bit of pressure on that.

David Wallace: How I divided my time, I really don't remember, and what prompted the many trips I made, sometimes it was in connection with particular exhibit projects, sometimes it was part of my vacation time, I would spend visiting parks and, you know, be paid for the time that I spent with park staff, and I got to see particularly the western and southwestern ones that way. Then, of course, later it was the furnishing projects that took me out into the field.

David Wallace: One of the responsibilities I had under Mr. Lewis was running the Curatorial Methods course, which was something I never enjoyed. It was teaching. [laughs] And it was kind of frustrating, you know. In his day when he was head of the Museum Division, that was a six-week course and very intensive. He used to exhaust them. He was a very, very hardy individual, and he would take them on field trips that really left an impression on them, and I think they learned a lot from those courses. By the time I came along, it was two weeks, so it wasn't, I think, very effective. I'm sure it was not very effective.

Lu Ann Jones: Is there any kind of training involved these days? [laughs]

David Wallace: I don't know.

Sarah Heald: It's Curatorial Methods.

David Wallace: Is it still—

Sarah Heald: Yes, but I think, if I'm understanding what you're saying about Ralph Lewis' approach, it was covering curatorial work in a broader way.

David Wallace: Yes.

Sarah Heald: Yes. Looking at it with interpretation.

David Wallace: Yes. It probably was most effective in teaching local rangers how to accession and catalog. Of course, one of his major contributions was designing the accessioning and cataloging procedures, which have probably now changed somewhat, but probably not basically.

Sarah Heald: Well, just having that backbone, the Museum Handbook.

David Wallace: Yes. The Museum Handbook itself was largely his creation. In fact, he's one of the people that ought to be memorialized in the Centennial. I don't know much about his predecessor, who was an exhibit designer particularly of dioramas, but Ralph, from the late forties until his retirement, had a very profound effect on the quality of Park Service museums and was very active in the Association of State and Local history and the American Association of Museums, in which I don't think we're very active now.

Sarah Heald: I was thinking that, reading your diaries again, the degree to which you and others who you worked with were involved with the National Trust for Historic Preservation, AAM, AASLH [American Association for State and Local History], and I don't know if there's more that you could speak to on that in terms of how that helped you or influenced you in your thinking about working in the Park Service.

David Wallace: Well, it made us at least feel part of a much larger community and that we were listened to. I can remember participating in a symposium on atmospheric controls in which the curator of, I think it was Mount Vernon, was totally opposed to any kind of atmospheric controls other than opening and closing windows, and I was speaking on the other side without knowing much about the subject, actually.

David Wallace: No, there was quite a bit of Park Service participation at that time. Even Bill Everhart briefly was on the board, I think, of the American Association of Museums, but he didn't go to the meetings. He really wasn't interested.

Lu Ann Jones: Well, I think that — I mean, I guess one question I have when thinking about your involvement with professional societies, did you consider yourself a scholar still or how did you think it — what was—

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Lu Ann Jones: — your professional conception of yourself?

David Wallace: I think during those years I considered myself a museum curator, and I suppose, like many museum directors, I didn't have specific curatorial training but an interest in artifacts and the interpretation of them.

Lu Ann Jones: I guess one of the reasons I was thinking along those lines is that this is a period when there's beginning to be discussion of what we call public history now, people who were academically trained and work outside of academia. I guess I'm just wondering if there was any kind of consciousness of that or whether it was like "This is just what I do," you know, didn't have that distinction in your head.

David Wallace: Well, I was not aware of the term "public history," that's for sure. No, you were either an historian or you weren't, but you could be an historian and a curator.

Lu Ann Jones: Mmhmm.

Sarah Heald: Well, that sort of, I think, leads to one of these other questions we had on here — maybe we've covered it — about the two different skill sets, one doing historic research and the other, the term we use now, "material culture," which I don't think we thought of until relatively recently. But to what degree are those really distinct skill sets and how do you find people who are able to do both? What types of people can do that?

David Wallace: Well, I don't know. I guess you have to be an historian who has a feeling for artifacts, to whom artifacts speak. I had at least one curator who was good on research but hopeless on handling artifacts, and he was not trained as a curator. He was just a person who fell in love with furniture and knew it as a historical subject but was no use in taking care of the collections.

David Wallace: I probably would have been particularly good as a registrar because I'm a lister by nature. So, I enjoyed the museum records program, and that I could talk about to Park Service people. I can remember some who simply could not understand the difference between an accession record and a catalog. [laughs] But it was one of the few ways, really, that you could, in my position, influence what happened in the park collections, was at least to get them inventoried.

Sarah Heald: David, were there very many other people in not literally positions like yours, but in the Park Service who traveled to so many different parks at this time, other than the very high-up?

David Wallace: Well, probably most of them would make a visit to a particular park and then come back to Harpers Ferry: Publications, Audiovisual, and Exhibit Design. It was all project oriented. Mine was more consultative. So, I don't think there were, unless in the regional offices there might have been people who made sort of circle tours. Of course, we dealt with the regional curators quite a bit and depended upon them for carrying the message to the field, and particularly in the Curatorial Methods course, they were the teachers.

Sarah Heald: We were talking, and you were speaking a little earlier about the American Museum of Immigration, if I have the word right for the time. Are there more things that you could tell us about in terms of the different ethnic groups? I think in one of your diaries you mentioned a session discussing about the role as the period term "Negro representation" there. Could you speak to that more?

David Wallace: Well, one of the main problems for the designers of the museum was what ethnic groups had to be included and the proportion of their exhibit spaces that were, and we had — or we didn't, but the powers-that-be had problems with particularly the Polish group, I think.

David Wallace: I guess that the problem was most critical in New York where these groups were making donations, and it was our job to see that the things got into the exhibits or decide if not, why not, and that sort of thing. It was pretty intense for a while.

David Wallace: It didn't affect us, though, all that much, but it certainly did to whoever was the resident in New York.

Lu Ann Jones: Is that because people were making donations for the exhibit? Is that the source of the pressure?

David Wallace: Yes, because the donations were coming in, and not all of them, of course, could be used.

Lu Ann Jones: Mmhmm, Mmhmm. Do you have a question now?

Sarah Heald: Not right now.

Lu Ann Jones: Well, kind of some of the bigger questions that we had put out there, and I'll get to this big question about the time in your career that you felt most excited and most kind of interested in your work, where there might have been particular moments throughout what was a very long career that had different types of satisfactions in it.

David Wallace: Well, the most satisfying part of my career was after I retired the first time and came back as an historian. [laughter]

Lu Ann Jones: You said that in your diary.

David Wallace: Yes. It was very definitely the case. Each of those historic furnishing reports was exciting in itself, and it gave me a personal satisfaction that most of the time being a supervisor I didn't have.

Lu Ann Jones: Mmhmm.

David Wallace: I'm trying to think of those pre-1981 years. Of course, I was heavily involved with the furnishing planning even then, but I was also responsible for the Conservation Lab, for which I was really not qualified, and I basically unloaded that as soon as I could. But then the two projects that I was involved in fairly early, one was building the historic Harpers Ferry Center Library. At the time when the Center was established, each of the divisions had little libraries and the Mather Training Center had a library, and I felt the need for pooling these resources and developing a library for the Center, and I was able to get advice and help from the Interior Library. They were very helpful. They even offered us the Rachel Carson Library at one point — I don't know why that didn't happen — and, of course, we got the Harold Peterson Library.

David Wallace: I built a historic furnishings library which I think was pretty good, largely one big purchase for which I got two or three thousand dollars, the Spinning Wheel. The editor of the Spinning Wheel retired and offered her library for sale, and I was able to buy it, and the removal of that library in recent years to an offsite location is, I think, a very unfortunate thing.

David Wallace: One of the funny things connected with that, it was in the old Anthony Library Building at Storer College, and somebody, after I'd gotten it established, suggested it should be called the Anthony Wallace Library, and I said, "No, because that's my brother's name." [laughter]

David Wallace: Then the other thing was the establishment of the so-called National Park Service Archives or Historical Collection, although the idea did not originate with me. I don't know how far back it goes, but there was a sort of a fairly longtime Park Service employee, Con Heine, He-i-n-e, who was assigned by Mr. Hartzog to work on the National Archives. He was an employee who had been put on the shelf, and this was a harmless thing that he could do, and he worked with Herb Evison on the early interviews. So Hartzog and Everhart got me involved, and I worked with Heine and with Evison and talked with the National Archives and made it clear that we weren't a records agency. We would collect things relating to the parks but not the official records. So, it's really a historical collection.

David Wallace: One of the very first things we collected was the papers of Ronnie Lee, the regional director in what was then Region Five, Northeast Region, or Mid-Atlantic Region, and those things were brought to Harpers Ferry, and I was able to hire a second-generation Park Service, Dick Russell, who knew a great deal about the National Park Service but was not a well-organized individual. I had difficulty in managing his management of the Archives, so it rather languished for quite a while, but has in recent years taken on new life, and I'm very, very pleased with it now. They now have Horace Albright's papers, which makes it a must-see thing.

David Wallace: Actually, the young man, academic historian who did the History of the National Trust, made very good use of the Ronnie Lee Collection, because, of course, he was one of the founders of the National Trust. I don't know what other use has been made of it, but it's a pretty big collection now.

Lu Ann Jones: Mmhmm. Well, at some point, this interview will go to that collection.

David Wallace: Well, my diary's already there.

Lu Ann Jones: Oh, yes. Okay. Well, that's good to know.

David Wallace: Yes.

Lu Ann Jones: So, you've mentioned these, again, management, managing people, and there was, again, a reference in your diary about going to some course about the managerial grid or something like that. So, what kind of training were you getting in those aspects of your job of managing, supervision, leadership?

David Wallace: Well, there were a couple of courses like the managerial grid, and I can remember being very surprised at — I don't know if this is in my diary, but I viewed myself as not very managerial by nature, and yet I discovered in one of these courses that I was the one that kept things moving when everyone else was going off in all kinds of directions and winding up just conversing instead of dealing with the problem we were supposed to solve, and I found myself much more directional than I realized. So, it was valuable in that respect.

David Wallace: I had difficulty with a number of secretaries, partly because they resented being only secretaries. This was at a time when the — what did they call it — movement to upgrade the position of secretaries particularly and women in general in the Park Service, and there were attempts to offer opportunities to get into more professional work. I can remember one of our secretaries, long before your time, who was offered the chance to be a registrar and turned it down, and I don't know why, and was a rather bitter character and finally left. But in other cases, like Mary Herber, who went

from being low woman on the totem pole, got to be head of the division before she retired. So that was a very conscious effort, and, of course, part of that was Dorothy Huyck's project to record interviews with women in professional positions in the Park Service and how they got there, which I guess was completed by somebody else. She died while she was doing it. Are you familiar with that?

Lu Ann Jones: I guess her material was used by Polly Welts Kaufman in The Woman's Voice in the National Park Service.

David Wallace: Yes. Now, she was not herself a Park Service person, but she interviewed — and this was in the days when the first woman superintendent was superintendent of Perry's Victory but had been secretary in the same park. So, it was an interesting time for her project, and I'm glad that was completed. I've never seen it, actually.

Lu Ann Jones: Yes. Well, if we meet again, I'll bring you a copy of it so you can take a look at it. Well, so you figured out and other people helped you figure out that you were a pretty deliberate person in terms of being a supervisor, a manager. When you did have problematic employees, how did you deal with that? That always seems very tough to me.

David Wallace: I can remember only once actually telling a person — in this case, it was a secretary — that she did not cut the mustard. In the other cases, a couple of times I was able to get people shifted into other positions or they just left, but I was never a hard-nosed supervisor. The only time that I can remember really getting mad was at Independence when the two people who lived within five blocks of the park were the ones who were always late for work [laughter], and I really startled them by reading them the riot act. Didn't have any permanent effect, of course. But I was a pretty easygoing supervisor, I expect.

Lu Ann Jones: Mmhmm. Well, what did you hope for in somebody who was supervising you? Who was your ideal supervisor and who was perhaps your nightmare?

David Wallace: My ideal was Al Swift, who was the assistant to Mark Sagan. He was fair and understanding but hard-nosed when he had to be. When he wrote a performance description or evaluation, I always felt that he understood me. He never gave me an A-plus but would encourage my strong points and pointed out my weak points.

Lu Ann Jones: Mmhmm. Well, I mean, I don't want to pry too much, but do you remember what, according to him, a weak point was and what you needed to work on?

David Wallace: Well, I think it was mostly getting the most out of my workers, yes.

Lu Ann Jones: One of the reasons I ask questions like that is because in addition to documenting a career, I'm really interested in kind of using these interviews to — you know, as people are building their own Park Service careers, to think about how other people made decisions about their careers, lessons learned along the way. So, I don't mean to probe just to be nosy, but to think about kind of how did you just grow as a professional within the Park Service.

David Wallace: Well, I think it was primarily because of the historic-furnishing angle, which was where I found complete satisfaction from the research, and also the most curatorial part of me was in how to use the furnishings as an interpretive tool, and it did not involve actually dealing with the furnishings physically, which was not my strong point.

David Wallace: I always felt that Ralph, probably was a little disappointed that I did not emphasize as strongly as he did the conservation and maintenance, the hands-on aspect of the curatorial work, although he never, never expressed that to me. He was a very hands-off administrator, but he was such a dedicated professional.

David Wallace: That, incidentally, is, I think, one of my major contributions, was in working with him on the Museum Handbook, on particularly the historic furnishings section of it, because he began working on a format for historic furnishing planning with Vera Craig, who was his right-hand woman, registrar, and did one of the early furnishing plans for Andrew Johnson [National Historic Site], which was very informal, but it involved basically the same sort of combination of research and handling in an existing collection and dealing with an onsite manager.

David Wallace: It was much less formal than what we were working on at Independence more or less simultaneously, but the actual format that we worked out was pretty much what got into the Museum Handbook at that conference at Vanderbilt Mansion in 1971, was it? Big year. That was a conference of the regional curators and a couple of other people, I think. I think Fred Hanson was there from Independence and people who were really working in the field, and we firmed up the format that has been followed ever since.

David Wallace: I had an interesting experience with that — it's again 1971 — when I went to University of Leicester in England as a visiting lecturer in lieu of Mr. Lewis, who very kindly gave me the opportunity to do it, where my main function was to talk about historic furnishing programming to this British collection of potential curators, and it was a rather frustrating experience because I ran head-on into students who really disliked our Germanic approach to historic furnishing planning by the numbers.

David Wallace: I can remember one young Welshman who had worked on furnishing a Welsh miner's cottage or something. He said, "You know, this is all nonsense. Everybody knows what was in a Welsh cottage. You just talk to the people and put it together." Of course, many of them were — also, again, the idea of adopting a specific time period to which you would take back a building and preferring the stately homes approach, preserving whatever has survived. Of course, we do both, but our plan sounded like you just nailed it down and removed what was nonconforming. So that was quite a frustrating experience.

David Wallace: I've been amused with all this to-do about Richard II's skeleton being found in Leicester. One of the exercises that I led was to go to the Bosworth battlefield, what they thought was Bosworth battlefield at the time, and look it over and explain how the National Park Service would evaluate the site and how they would go about doing a master plan and then an interpretive prospectus and so on, and, of course, ran immediately into the problem of nonconforming buildings, later buildings like sixteenth-century buildings, and getting lost in the woods.

David Wallace: It was a privately owned property, and the owner was going to interpret it, and our role was to give him sort of a plan on how to interpret it. So, it was not our choice to decide whether it was to be done; it was how it was to be done. So, we, of course, got no consensus whatsoever, and I often wonder what happened. I'm sure the park was set up in the wrong spot. They now think it's several miles away. [laughter]

Sarah Heald: Dave, that makes me think also about in your work here with Park Service parks, were your findings always well received? And can you speak to some of those experiences?

David Wallace: Yes. Well, the first one I did, the first historic furnishing plan I did after my retirement in 1980, was Carl Sandburg, and I spent a lot of time down there. I was under contract at first and then later a reemployed annuitant. I had the opportunity there of talking with all three of Sandburg's children and his granddaughter, and a lot of photographs, but mostly from the later years of his life at Connemara. The house, as it was when I went down there, was as his widow—

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David Wallace: — and granddaughter had set it up, hopefully to show how it was in the earlier years when he was in his prime and as his granddaughter remembered it. Mrs. Sandburg, I remember, had always wanted curtains on the windows. Sandburg did not like curtains on the windows, so there

were none until after he died, and she put up curtains. [laughs] There were a number of changes like that. In other words, it was set up to please her and the granddaughter.

David Wallace: Now, my plan, which was based more on the photographs that existed, taken by one of the daughters, included, particularly on the first floor, the way it was when he worked on the first floor. The tour included the entire house, and the upper floor where he had his study was pretty much as he left it, but downstairs it was somewhat different because no curtains and some furnishings that related to his need to avoid going up the stairs. The plan, as I drafted it, was approved by the park and the region, but not by the Sandburgs, the granddaughter particularly. I'm not sure — I've never been back. I'm not sure whether I got my way or not.

Sarah Heald: You did.

David Wallace: Did I?

Sarah Heald: Yes, you did. The bedroom downstairs is set up as his sort of sickroom, and his study is there in the front center of the house.

David Wallace: Good. Well, the same thing happened at Martin Luther King Birth Home.

Lu Ann Jones: Tell us about that.

David Wallace: Again, after the death of Martin Luther King, Jr., Mrs. King, the mother, and his sister set it up the way they wanted it to be, and I found during my research — I was able to talk to his uncle, who was a resident of the house when Martin was a young boy, and the thing that interested me and I found good evidence for, was that all the bedrooms were occupied by adults, and the two boys had a bed in the hall on the landing above the stairs, which I thought was very interesting, and it helped explain also how he happened to fall over the railing on the landing and dropped to the first floor when a group of people were visiting.

David Wallace: I never got to talk to his sister. She was writing a book and she wouldn't let me see any of the photographs she had, and she wouldn't talk to me. But I did talk, as I said, to the uncle. So, I planned it my way to show it as it was when he was a boy, not later, and the park supported me. But at one point, I think they changed it under her pressure, but then they came back to it.

Sarah Heald: I think that's what they've done more recently. I'm trying to remember if there's a bed in the hallway now or not. I'm afraid it's been too long since I've been there, too.

David Wallace: Well, I understood that it was in the hallway. That was a particularly fun project, as Sandburg was, because it's my own lifetime, so I knew the

furnishings. I never did nineteenth-century buildings because I'm not a furniture expert. But after it's mass-produced furniture, the sources are so readily available, I always felt I could do it, and particularly Martin Luther King because he was born a couple years after I was. So, Mrs. King's kitchen was not unlike my mother's kitchen, had a Hoosier cabinet and that sort of thing, so I particularly enjoyed that.

David Wallace: The other one that I particularly enjoyed was Faraway Ranch at Chiricahua National Monument in southeastern Arizona, which is 1920s, thirties, forties. That was a case where when the owner died, the furnishings were simply packed up and put in storage. It was a wonderful research project because there were a number of people still living who had lived in the house, including the wife of a Park Service employee and an Englishwoman who'd been the assistant to the owner, so I got a lot of information. Oh, and she kept a diary. This blind woman kept a typed diary—

Lu Ann Jones: Oh, wow.

David Wallace: — and it included things like inventories of the china cabinet. She had a little notebook and she typed, and at one point the notebook she happened to type over what she had already typed, fortunately at an angle. So, I was sort of dealing with a palimpsest. It was great fun and I was able to decipher it.

David Wallace: The high point was the last box we opened in storage in Tucson turned out to be the curtains that were visible in the photographs, one of the few things that appeared to be missing. Then I was involved in the actual putting back together, physically, with the woman who'd been the assistant to the owner of the ranch, and she knew how the curtains worked and that sort of thing, a different set of curtains.

Lu Ann Jones: So, when you start — I mean, I'm not the historic furnishings person, just a regular historian. So, when you start a historic furnishings report, do you start the — is there a usual starting place or does each evolve on its own? Kind of how do you begin?

David Wallace: Well, we begin with who used the building. Someone else made the decision about what period, if it was limited or if it was to include the whole span of the use of the building, who used the building and how did they use it, and it involved biography of each of the individuals and then a room-by-room analysis of how a specific room was used at different times. Even if we limit the period, we'd tend to get the entire history as much as we can, so that may involve interviews or photographs or documentary evidence. Then depending on what the decision has been on

how it's going to be interpreted, decisions of an inventory of what's going to be in the room.

David Wallace: In the case of Sandburg, Sagamore Hill, Faraway Ranch, they were all already furnished. It was a matter of do you keep everything that's in there now or do you take some of it out. Of course, with Sagamore Hill, there was a tendency to want to show it as it was when he [Theodore Roosevelt] was president and the kids were young, but to do that, you would have had to take out all of the African animals and things like that. It would mean, you know, stripping it of much of its character, so there was no question what we were going to do.

David Wallace: But it did affect one room in Sagamore Hill; that was the nursery. It was basically a toy exhibit of late nineteenth-century toys, with no attempt to make it look like a nursery. But I had evidence of what it was like when his grandchildren were growing up and including — what was it called? [A kiddie coop.] It was basically a wagon with screening around it.

David Wallace: Anyway, we had a photograph of it, and I was able to find one at an antique shop in Gettysburg from the World War I period, not a go-kart, but kiddie-kart, you know. So, I was able to set the nursery up as a nursery, still with some toys but looking actually like a nursery with a bed in it and so on. I was really thrilled, after it was totally put back together, I never met any of the family, but I heard that they had been in to see it, one of the granddaughters, and they were pleased with the nursery specifically.

David Wallace: So, in all three of those cases — well, in two of the cases, the family was against my plan, and the third one they accepted it. At Chiricahua, Faraway Ranch, there was no question; we just put it back together, had to buy practically nothing.

Sarah Heald: So, you never really encountered a situation where your proposals, other than descendants of family members, where park staff, you weren't on the same page with them and had to go through any process of discussion and negotiating?

David Wallace: I can't remember any. Most of the ones that I've done have not been implemented. That's one of the frustrations. Lighthouse Keepers' Quarters at Cape Hatteras, for instance, they had the ability to get some of the furnishings, but the family left after a hurricane in 1930-something, and the building has been moved, and the decision was that the climate is so unsatisfactory, it just would not be a good idea to furnish, so it's never going to be furnished.

David Wallace: However, my feeling about furnishing reports is they're a very valuable interpretive tool because it's research that the park staff could never do to

the degree that we do it, and it provides all kinds of information. Little Kinnakeet Lifesaving Station at Cape Hatteras will never be refurnished, but the lifesaving station in one of the nearby towns has used my report, and they're refurnishing. Just as I also drew on Ed Bearss's report on another lifesaving station, not Passamaquoddy — it's something like that — on the Eastern Shore, I was able to use his research to supplement mine, and the park's depended on it. I don't know how often the furnishing plan remains out where anyone could read it, but it's very valuable research information.

Lu Ann Jones: Well, I was going to ask you — I mean, there's been recent conversation about how information often doesn't reach the interpretive staff, and I was wondering if there was any particular effort to or did you know if there was an effort from the curatorial side to talk with Interpretation, say, "Here's all this great information. How are you going to incorporate it into your talks?"

David Wallace: No, I think we always just assumed that it would be read by the current interpreters with whom we had worked, and it probably was, but whether it ever got to the next generation or not is something I don't know. I know at Little Kinnakeet when we visited, there was work going on in the building, and the guy in charge came over. We were outside the fence. He came over to talk to us, and I explained that I had written the furnishing plan and had done a lot of research on the interior, and he had never seen it and was interested.

David Wallace: One I'm always curious about is the — one of the last ones I did was the first ranger cabin at Mount McKinley, which is very, very simple, of course, but it was fairly well documented, and it could have been put together by Park staff because, as it was originally, it was just handmade, bunks and so on. But whether it has been done, I have no idea, because it's a site that's a little off the — I mean, you have to get out of the bus and walk up a hill to get to it, and whether it would survive the winters and that sort of thing. I know at Raspberry Island in Lake Superior, or Lake Huron, I'm not sure, anyway, Wisconsin, they couldn't leave furnishings in the building over the winter. For one thing, people can get out on the ice and vandalize, so they weren't sure whether they were going to furnish it or not. The interior building lobby, I believe they did.

Lu Ann Jones: Mmhmm.

Sarah Heald: And Weir Farm.

David Wallace: Weir Farm.

Sarah Heald: Can you speak to your research and work there or any different stories there?

David Wallace: Well, yes, that's an odd one because it had to include some of the later additions by the last residents, which were decidedly nonconforming. My plan really took it back to when the Weir family and the daughter was there. But I think they have included some of the later owners' things as well, but I haven't seen that one. But other than that, my plan was acceptable, but I didn't do any research on their furnishings, as I remember. I think I researched up through the Young occupancy.

Sarah Heald: Mahonri Young.

David Wallace: Yes. And through all of this runs the theme of books, libraries. I continued that with the furnishings, so there were a few projects where I did only books, like the O'Neill House in California where there was wonderful photograph, where you could read the names of record albums, for one thing, and some of the library.

David Wallace: So, I've had a lot of fun going out, trying to reconstitute the library and the record collection, and I got, oh, I suppose, maybe a dozen record albums that matched from the 1930s. Then afterwards, after the whole project was over, it turned out that the O'Neills had sold the collection or whoever had the — the heirs sold the collection of records to somebody who recently donated the entire collection. But they can leave what I bought on display and not worry about conditions.

David Wallace: The same thing happened at Eisenhower Farm. This was all modern books. We had a list of what should be there, and I'd made a good start on buying them. Then Eisenhower College in New York State went bust, and it donated back Eisenhower's library, so they also have, I guess, on display the ones that weren't his.

David Wallace: What was the other one? Oh, I also did Eleanor Roosevelt, some of her library at ValKill, again from a photograph, but there's also a partial inventory because her books were given away, I think, to local libraries, and they probably have gotten some of those back.

David Wallace: I think the best library was the Library of Congress up on the second floor of Congress Hall. I was able to get a substantial number of the same titles that we know they had.

Lu Ann Jones: So, you did that exhibit?

David Wallace: I bought the books.

Lu Ann Jones: Yes.

David Wallace: Yes. They didn't have any in the art collection.

Lu Ann Jones: Mmhmm.

David Wallace: There are several shelves, at least enough to be convincingly represented.

Lu Ann Jones: Mmhmm, mmhmm, mmhmm. Did you develop a network of book dealers who just know to be looking for certain things for you, or how did you go about such precise work?

David Wallace: By and large, I simply went to old used book shops in Baltimore, Washington, New York somewhat, read catalogs, and in a few cases, I gave lists. Particularly the record albums, I gave a few dealers the list of things I was looking for. But it was mostly just shopping, which is why it was so much fun. Like going to the antique shows looking for artifacts, I was always looking for twentieth-century artifacts for my twentieth-century projects, where expertise was not required.

Lu Ann Jones: Do you have other questions? Want to see what you have?

Sarah Heald: Yes. I'm trying to look at what we have and have not touched on. I guess one thing, David, with the cutback in historic furnishings projects in the Park Service, but with a number of parks still growing, I don't know if you could offer any advice that basically would be to the park staff at historic properties if they don't have a furnishings report done and they don't have the money for it. Any tips or just a thought?

David Wallace: Very hard, not knowing, really knowing what the situation is in the parks now. Where there is a curator — and I guess there are more curators now than there used to be — presumably they would have some of the skills necessary to at least keep things more or less stable, and I doubt that they would have any time to do any particular research. If they're twentieth-century parks, they may be able to interview people, particularly if someone comes to the park unannounced and the interpreter is aware enough to let the curator know that there's somebody there who could tell you things, which often is not the case. Even at like the Historical Society here [in Frederick], they'll come and go, and then you hear about it later that so-and-so was there.

David Wallace: I had that experience with John Rogers. Somebody came from Missouri. An elderly couple from Missouri came to look at the John Rogers Collection and they even said they had a collection. Reading over my diary now, I realize who it was. It was the Hawkins from Hannibal, Missouri, but I didn't find out about it until after they were gone, although later I did get to see that collection in Hannibal.

David Wallace: That's where my curatorial sense was exercised quite early. When I visited this collection in Missouri, private collection, I made an inventory for my own information, and several years later, they were robbed and most of their collection was stolen, and the only record they had was mine, which went systematically around the room, and maybe there were some clues, and they were able to trace them to Kansas City, I think. But my inventory was the only record they had to prove that they were their things.

David Wallace: The same thing happened at the Frederick County Historical Society. I'd made a partial inventory of the collection once years and years ago, and they had a theft, and the only way they knew what they lost was my inventory. That's why I say I should have been a registrar. [laughter]

Sarah Heald: David, maybe I could flip my question the other way. The parks that you, particularly early on, did furnishings reports for, how did they find you? What was their motivation and their knowledge to say, "We'd like to have a furnishings report done"?

David Wallace: Well, the first one I did was the schoolroom at Harpers Ferry. That was self-generated. [laughter] The Sandburg, I'm sure the master plan called for that, I would assume, and Harpers Ferry was asked to do it, Sarah Olsen, and she called me when I was in retirement at that point and I was available, and it was twentieth century, so she knew that I didn't have to have a Winterthur degree to qualify. After that, I guess it was simply that they were all generated by either master plans or interpretive prospectuses.

Lu Ann Jones: Well, I think one of the questions, and maybe you've touched on this some, is just the idea of the legacy you felt like you left at the National Park Service and your best accomplishments to your way of thinking.

David Wallace: Well, my part in developing the historic furnishing process, I certainly would think is one of them as enshrined in the Museum Handbook, and the individual reports themselves I look on as permanent monuments.

David Wallace: Even if they're not being read anymore, they're still there. The National Park Service Historical Collection, certainly, which has now achieved some real respectability and usefulness, although I really only got it started. I did not devise the cataloging system or anything of that sort, and the library, which I hope maybe will be resuscitated sometime. But on a larger scale, I don't think—

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David Wallace: — the curatorial side of the Park Service has had any very great influence on the development of the Service.

Lu Ann Jones: You don't think so? [laughs]

David Wallace: Well, I think we certainly improved the standards to which it should aspire, and in individual cases we certainly have improved from what previously existed.

Lu Ann Jones: Mmhmm.

David Wallace: But we haven't made any major impact on the choice of parks or the ways of interpreting, [although we were fairly represented on interpretive planning teams that visited parks with historic structures, such as Tuskegee Institute, Hot Springs, William Howard Taft, Fort Donelson, Maggie L. Walker, Colonial (Yorktown) and Fire Island (Floyd House), where our input influenced decisions for or against refurnishing.]

Sarah Heald: What about — I'm not sure when we started doing this in exhibits — the use of, in traditional exhibits, Visitor Center, museum exhibits, the use of historic vignettes, which are like little mini-historic furnishings installations. Were they doing those prior to your first retirement? So, it would be part of an exhibit experience. There might be things on the wall, but then there might also be—

David Wallace: A corner.

Sarah Heald: — a corner, yes. I don't know when those first started.

David Wallace: I think possibly the Lemon Hill.

Sarah Heald: Mmhmm. Pennsylvania.

David Wallace: Allegheny Portage. It seems to me that's a combination. The Poe House in Philadelphia, where we decided against furnishing but having — I don't know how they interpreted, actually, but our suggestion was simply like for a bedroom, since it's a house tour, that they have a bed, not a furnished room, but something to indicate function, combined with, obviously, exhibits somewhere in the house because there's no Visitor Center.

David Wallace: I think at Independence, the Supreme Court Building, I think, never was furnished but had exhibits in it. So, there was, I think, a mixture. But of the vignettes, I can't quite picture—

Sarah Heald: I'm trying to think of where you would have seen one recently around here. It's certainly something — for example, at the Visitor Center at Martin Luther King now, in that exhibit, as you go through, there's just a scene evoking him in a Birmingham jail cell, and it's just one little element, and we have worked to encourage the Exhibits Planning staff to make those historically accurate. So, it's a way — that may be something that's relatively new, and I haven't realized that.

David Wallace: I don't know.

Sarah Heald: How about — we talked about Mission 66 and what it was and Ralph Lewis' feelings about it, but what was it like just in general to be working in the Park Service then?

David Wallace: When I arrived in Philadelphia in '57, they'd been at it for about five years, and, of course, at that time, the director was Connie Wirth, who was a landscape architect by training, and there was this puristic notion that all that needed to be preserved were the eighteenth-century buildings and the three nineteenth-century buildings that were so important they simply couldn't be taken down. But otherwise, it was turned into a park with trees, many, many trees, and it involved tearing down everything that was nonconforming, which included one of the very earliest skyscrapers.

Lu Ann Jones: Where was that exactly?

David Wallace: Philadelphia.

Lu Ann Jones: Right.

David Wallace: A bank building in front of Carpenters' Hall, which today would be considered a very important nineteenth-century building, Furness Bank. So, they wiped out a lot of buildings that today they could not have done. I can remember one specific instance. There was what they called Area B, which was sort of off on a tangent, because there was an eighteenth-century building that had to be preserved, but it had had an original cobbled street, and the director wanted to get rid of that because it just didn't fit into his landscape; the view wasn't quite right. He was overruled on that one.

David Wallace: They even wanted to tear down the Customs Building in Philadelphia because it was in the park and 1930-ish, enormous building, and they had torn down another one that was almost as big. That has certainly changed, that there are a lot of nonconforming buildings within parks now, and that's a positive change.

David Wallace: Of course, in Mission 66, it was a very rushed program, because 100 or more museums or Visitor Centers went up and exhibits, most of which have now been removed. There are a few left, I think, and they really should save at least one of them. And the scope of the Park Service coverage of American history has vastly improved.

Sarah Heald: What do you mean by that?

David Wallace: Well, the emphasis on women's history, black history, particularly those two, and then Indians, the attitude toward Indians. They were not called

Native Americans when I started, or African Americans either. That's all within my lifetime.

Sarah Heald: It's interesting, too, what's happened at Independence in the last five to ten years. I don't know the degree to which when you were there, did people talk about enslaved people as part of the story of anything going on with George Washington or Independence? Just wasn't even—

David Wallace: No, they had not at that time excavated the first Executive Mansion or the second. No. We had a slave harness in the city collection, but it was just in the collection. It wasn't used for any purpose. No, there was none of that. I don't think there were any specific African American parks at the time.

Lu Ann Jones: Well, in terms of — I mean, that's interesting that you bring that up, and so how did expanding these types of stories that we're telling, how did that affect your job in historic furnishings? I mean, it goes simplistically from kind of high-end to kind of more everyday people? What challenges did that break open?

David Wallace: I guess I don't think of any particular change during the twenty or thirty, almost thirty years that I was involved in the historic furnishing field, because the projects I worked on varied from high-end like Sagamore Hill and Sandburg, to Faraway Ranch, which was very, very ordinary people. We didn't deal there with the ranch hands at all. They were not part of the story, as far as I remember. Of course, Martin Luther King must have been one of the — well, the George Washington Carver, Booker T. Washington, and Martin Luther King sites were all within my time. But I can't think of anything that I dealt with that involved the servants' quarters.

David Wallace: Now, Vanderbilt Mansion would have been, but I was not involved in that. When we had the Vanderbilt Conference, we stayed in the servants' quarters, which had been also the Secret Service quarters, and the furnishings that we slept on, the beds we slept on were the maple furniture that the Secret Service slept on during the war when Roosevelt was at Hyde Park, and my kids slept on when they visited later for two dollars a night and had the midnight tour of Vanderbilt Mansion

Lu Ann Jones: Well, I think that I have asked about all the questions that I wanted to ask. Do you have others, Sarah?

Sarah Heald: I'm just going to look over our list. And, of course, David, if you—

Lu Ann Jones: Would it be — what if we took our break for lunch, and we can kind of take stock at this point?

Sarah Heald: Yes.

Lu Ann Jones: What about that?

Sarah Heald: We might come up with some other questions.

Lu Ann Jones: Yes.

David Wallace: One thing that I brought along that I think you haven't seen was my list of National Park Service reports—

Lu Ann Jones: Oh, wow.

David Wallace: — which I think you should have.

Lu Ann Jones: Okay.

David Wallace: I should have copied it.

Sarah Heald: I can make a copy of it.

David Wallace: Oh, okay. They run through to the top here.

Sarah Heald: Okay. So those three pages?

David Wallace: Yes.

Lu Ann Jones: What time is it?

Sarah Heald: Oh, well, no wonder we're hungry.

Lu Ann Jones: Yes, we'll take a break. Don't want to lose it.

BREAK IN INTERVIEW

Lu Ann Jones: So, we've taken a break for lunch here today, and now we're back, we're fresh. So, some topics that we talked about over lunch that we were talking about — maybe we'll start with this notion of — I see that there was an entry in your diary probably from the late sixties where you were on a trip to Colorado, and you talked about it was an evening with wine and laughter and good music and just the camaraderie that got built in the Park Service. So, I wonder if you could speak to that sense.

David Wallace: Yes, and that's something, of course, I didn't experience until I worked at Harpers Ferry Center and had to visit parks all over the country, and it really was like a family. I remember the Park Service newspaper at the time was Steve Mathers' Family Newspaper. On more than one of my trips out there, particularly to the West, where there would be somebody from the regional office and a couple people from the park, maybe an archaeologist who was working in the park, and we would get together in the evening. I particularly remember at the trading post in—

Sarah Heald: Hubbell Trading?

David Wallace: Hubbell Trading Post, where I actually slept in the hogan and we sat around by the campfire at night, and it was really a wonderfully warm feeling of belonging to something together, although we were all doing completely different things. We had nothing in common, really, except we worked for the National Park Service, some of them for a long time and some, like me, quite new.

Lu Ann Jones: Mmhmm.

David Wallace: I really felt that throughout my career in the Park Service, not so much at Independence, of course, because it was much more limited, but it was one of the particular pleasures of working for the Park Service through what really was a feeling of a common cause.

David Wallace: As my wife used to say when I came home depressed because of administrative problems, "It is, after all, a good cause." [laughs] And we did feel that way.

Lu Ann Jones: Yes. It's hard to beat the mission.

David Wallace: Yes.

Lu Ann Jones: Mmhmm. Well, another topic that we were talking about was your relationship with Lyndon Johnson and "Lady Bird" Johnson, about their home and the Park Service. So, could you tell us about those visits there?

David Wallace: Well, it was in early 1970s, so it was just about a year after LBJ left the White House, and I went down as part of a group from Harpers Ferry Center and the regional office; Jean Swearingen, regional curator; Doug Hubbard from Harpers Ferry Center. One of the purposes was to discuss with Mrs. Johnson the possibility of taking an inventory of the furnishings of the ranch house, which they were turning over to the Park Service with, of course, a reservation of life-term tenancy. It was a very, very successful visit. Mrs. Johnson was exceedingly cooperative and listened to us. She served lunch, and we just talked about the procedure to be followed in taking this photographic inventory, as well as an actual listing of the furnishings and their placement, with the implication that she could make changes because we would have a record of how it was toward at least the end of his presidency. He himself was suffering from a very heavy cold at the time, but he gave us a personal tour of the various buildings on the grounds, which was quite interesting. I particularly remember seeing an embroidered pillow on one of the sofas that said, "It's my house and I'll do with it what I damn well please." [laughter]

Lu Ann Jones: I wonder if she had that embroidered just for the Park Service. [laughs]

David Wallace: Well, she did, of course, what she pleased, and there were many changes after that, but we had the record of what it was originally during his presidency.

Lu Ann Jones: Well, I guess she remodeled the kitchen in the 1970s, is that—

David Wallace: And I think his office also, turned it back into a parlor.

Lu Ann Jones: Now, I can't remember if you were personally involved with this or it was somebody else with Mamie Eisenhower gave the Park Service a different greeting, as I recall.

David Wallace: Right. It was not me. Vera Craig, who was the registrar for the Division of Museum Operations, was to take an inventory of the Eisenhower farm after his death, but while she was still living there. She was allowed to take an inventory of the farm buildings, the outbuildings, but not the house. So, Vera was not able to get in. Mrs. Eisenhower was known to be giving things away to friends, but there was no real record of what it was. Of course, later I got to do sort of an inventory of the books that were in the house. I don't remember whether I've already covered that.

Sarah Heald: The Eisenhower books?

Lu Ann Jones: Yes. I'm not sure that you—

Sarah Heald: I don't think you have.

David Wallace: Well, I guess there was a listing and there was some photographs that showed the books, not a large collection, all contemporary books, and I was in the process of buying copies of similar books to display when Eisenhower College and New York State, to which his books had been given, went bankrupt and gave the books back. So, the park now has duplicates of quite a number of those books.

Lu Ann Jones: Well, I can't — was there another—

Sarah Heald: I was going to ask, so what was — I know you said President Johnson was feeling under the weather when you were there. Did you walk around the area or did you actually get in a vehicle and go around with him?

David Wallace: We were walking around. They were all very close together, even the schoolhouse where the Education Act was signed in the schoolhouse, and I think the birthplace home was a reconstruction.

Sarah Heald: It just sounds like that would have been an incredible experience.

David Wallace: It was. It was, yes.

Sarah Heald: Did he speak with a sense of posterity or how did he seem talking about things, if you can—

David Wallace: I don't really remember, and he was not really feeling very well.

Lu Ann Jones: Mmhmm.

David Wallace: But I was very much impressed with her businesslike approach to our mission, which was to arrange for the inventory.

Lu Ann Jones: Mmhmm. Well, I think the only other thing that I have on my list is birding. Well, I also want — before birding, maybe we'll do Earth Day, which you said that — you did mention that in your diary that you were—

David Wallace: It just happened that I was at Minute Man National Historic Park at the time of the first Earth Day in 1970, and we attended the ceremony in Concord with some very well-known speaker, whose name I no longer remember.

Lu Ann Jones: Well, do you think being in Concord, I mean the connection with [Henry David] Thoreau and the transcendentalists and that whole movement, do you think that had any particular resonance with you?

David Wallace: Yes, it seemed a very pleasant coincidence that I happened to be there, and I was interested in nature myself.

Lu Ann Jones: So, is birding the main way that an interest in nature manifests itself?

David Wallace: Oh, absolutely.

Lu Ann Jones: So, tell me about that pastime.

David Wallace: A lifetime interest. My interest goes back at least to third grade where I remember a teacher gave me a book called "Our Bird Friends and Foes" in the days when it was legal to shoot crows and hawks and owls because they were predators and stealing chickens. My earliest bird list is from 1937 when I was ten years old, and it continued through school, but then when I got into college, I kind of drifted away from it. It was 1978 when I all of a sudden renewed my active interest after a trip to the Southwest, which had re-sparked my interest.

Lu Ann Jones: Why, in particular, did that—

David Wallace: Why?

Lu Ann Jones: Mmhmm.

David Wallace: Seeing birds that I'd never seen before. So, I got interested and started keeping daily lists in Frederick, where I lived, and it grew on me. I can remember probably the year before I took my first early retirement in 1980, my lunch hours in Harpers Ferry were getting considerably longer than they had originally been, as I was out birding and not watching the clock very well. Then, of course, when I went back to work for the Park

Service and started doing the historic furnishing projects, which took me to various parts of the country, I was able to continue on the lunch hours and weekends, things like that, and particularly in the Southwest. The Faraway Ranch project was absolute godsend to a birder.

David Wallace: It's a really hot country in the Chiricahua Mountains, and I got to make at least three visits there for research and finally the installation, so I was really able to add to my list.

Lu Ann Jones: So, what kind of birds did you see there?

David Wallace: Well, really exotic Mexican birds that could not be seen anywhere else except the extreme Southwest. I can remember at Big Bend National Park when I was visiting with my wife, we walked about twenty miles to see a particular bird that had been mentioned in the Park Service evening lecture, and actually did hear it and saw it, a bird that could be seen nowhere else in the country.

Lu Ann Jones: Wow.

David Wallace: So that added to the enjoyment of working.

Lu Ann Jones: Mmhmm. Well, are there other topics that we haven't put on the table that you think is important for us to talk about?

David Wallace: I can't think of anything else.

Lu Ann Jones: Well, if you — do you, Sarah, have—

Sarah Heald: I can't think of anything else right now, either. There's always more, David. You are such a wealth of knowledge and travel.

David Wallace: Well, a lot of it's documented in my copy of extracts from my diaries that are in the National Park Service Historical Collection.

Lu Ann Jones: Mmhmm.

Sarah Heald: You know, this is actually something that struck me, and I don't know if it's the most important thing for this interview, but how you have kept a diary yourself and your bird lists all these years that are such wonderful references, do you think — I'm thinking about the Engelbrecht diary here in Frederick. Did one inspire the other, your interest in editing it or that you just picked that up as — because you do a lot of editing, also, David.

David Wallace: Yes. I suppose that might. It certainly didn't inspire the diary-keeping. I started that when I was ten years old.

Sarah Heald: Younger than that.

David Wallace: Yes. Yes, my tenth birthday, I asked for a diary, and I got five five-year diaries, one of which I have. My father used the other four. He was writing a biography, and it was very convenient to use it for that purpose. But I've kept a diary not consistently since that time, and I have transcribed a lot of them and deposited them.

David Wallace: For instance, my high school diary, a couple of years at least, they have a copy in my hometown in their archives, because I've used diaries in my research and I realize how valuable they are, even if the person is not important or what they say is not terribly important, but it's a voice from the past, and they weren't that self-conscious that they aren't valuable.

David Wallace: But the editing of them, the annotating, explaining who people were and that sort of thing, that I probably picked up after using the Engelbrecht diary in Frederick or the Miller diary from York, Pennsylvania, which is a similar sort of diary. Mine is not an introspective diary, never was, once in a while, but — my wife kept one, too, throughout her married life, my first wife.

Sarah Heald: Yes, there's a wonderful symmetry to that, that you've been able to use diaries so much, and you're passing it on.

David Wallace: Yes, it just — when we were in New York last week, I went into the New York Historical Society and introduced myself as the author of the New York Historical Society's Dictionary of Artists in America, and they were excited to see the person in the flesh, and I'm just completing extracts from diaries and my wife's diaries relating to whatever I did at the Historical Society, not because what I did was important, other than the dictionary. Others are just little insights into what goes on inside a historical society.

David Wallace: I even — my year in Britain, I was on three digs, and the last one was up in the Highlands of Scotland, and I also took some snapshots, and a few years ago, it occurred to me that—

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David Wallace: — they might be interested in the diary of a digger from the 1950s. So, I typed it up and sent copies of the photographs. In fact, I sent the originals, I guess, to the archaeological society that was running the dig, and they were so pleased because they said, "We never get anything about the diggers," what goes on between the diggers. So, they were very pleased.

David Wallace: Then my daughter Edie and her husband saw a cairn where I did my last dig.

Lu Ann Jones: Well, I think your diaries are really great, too, and Sarah and I were talking about, you know, you're using these words like "work was an eggbeater." There's another—

Sarah Heald: You said — it was just striking me, after a couple of years at Harpers Ferry when you were moving more into supervisory positions, some of the comments were, "Read a lot of mail. Didn't get a lot done. Answered mail. Didn't get a lot done." Then some days, you said it was a "real meat-grinder of a day," fifteen things you're juggling, and those were pretty crazy days that you had.

David Wallace: Yes.

Sarah Heald: I also — just, again, it's not necessarily Park Service, but I'm struck by, David, what you do with the historic newspapers in Frederick now and how you've continued to use historic papers as resources, not just in your furnishings report work—

David Wallace: Well, that started with transcribing a couple of local diaries, one covering partly the Civil War years, diary of a Confederate sympathizer's wife, and then another, a young man's diary from the late forties, early 1850s, young man who was a young man about town. He was accepted in the best circles, was interested in all the girls, and also apparently was involved with the red-light district, which he called Texas, which I think around 1850 was very logical, north of 4th Street in Frederick, which is still Texas.

David Wallace: Then I have most recently been working on going through the daily newspaper from the 1880s — I'm up to 1948 now — extracting or indexing, basically, the obituaries, death notices of black citizens of Frederick, which is something that's never been done. There are extensive lists of white burials, but no one has done the same for African Americans. So, I now have well over five thousand names on the list, which is being shared with the historical society and the library in the AARCH, which is the local African-American historical group, and any individual who wants it, I just email copies of it. I hope to carry it through until I get to the point where they no longer identify people as "colored," which is probably around in 1960.

Sarah Heald: Wow.

David Wallace: I've been doing family search research for the Mormon Church.

Sarah Heald: And our church research in the Archive.

David Wallace: Oh, yes. Right. I've been the church archivist at All Saints Church and, again, recording newspaper articles or actually copying those, so that

there's a consistent record of comments about the church, not just the vestry minutes, from the 1740s to the current years.

Lu Ann Jones: So, what's the name of the church again?

David Wallace: All Saints Episcopal Church.

Sarah Heald: David was instrumental in helping in a group last year with transcribing some letters that Dean and I had gotten at the diocesan office in Baltimore, correspondence between the rectors during the Civil War and basically their supervisors in Baltimore. We couldn't have gotten through it if David hadn't read that handwriting and transcribed it. It made it so much easier to use.

David Wallace: Yes.

Lu Ann Jones: Well, this has been a great session, so far as I'm concerned. So, I hope you've enjoyed it as I have.

David Wallace: Oh, I've enjoyed it, yes.

Sarah Heald: Absolutely.

Lu Ann Jones: So, thank you so much for doing this. When you review the transcript, I mean, if there are areas where you want to amplify or we left things out, that's always a possibility. So, it doesn't have to be the absolute end of the conversation here.

David Wallace: Good. And so, I can correct errors.

Lu Ann Jones: Exactly. Right.

David Wallace: Yes. And add things I want.

Lu Ann Jones: Right. So that would be great.

David Wallace: Well, I've enjoyed it too.

Sarah Heald: Good.

Lu Ann Jones: Well, thank you so much.

Sarah Heald: Yes, thank you, David.

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