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Dorothy Huyck's National Park Service Oral History Project, 1942-1987



Margaret Littlejohn
October 21, 1978

Interview conducted by Dorothy B. Huyck
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Dorothy Huyck: 00:01 Today is October 21st, 1978. I'm Dorothy Huyck. I will be interviewing Margaret Littlejohn, who is a park ranger at Big Bend National Park. Can I ask you where and how you first became acquainted with the National Park Service?

Margaret Littlejohn: 00:21 Well, it was quite by accident. I started working as a seasonal when I was going to college and got offered a summer job at one of the national monuments in California.

Dorothy Huyck: 00:33 Where were you working at as a seasonal?

Margaret Littlejohn: 00:35 That was at Lava Beds National Monument in Northern California. I took the Civil Service exam for summer employment while I was in college and got a call from Lava Beds and began work there in 1969.

I worked there as a clerk-typist for two summers, and I really enjoyed the work during the summertime, and was hoping to get hired the third summer. However, I didn't score high enough on the exam, which I had to retake to get back on. So, they were unable to rehire me. So that third summer I didn't work for the Park Service at all.

And it was also during that year that I had graduated from college. And I was going to the University of California, Davis at that time. And so, I kept applying with different national parks and monuments around the country and finally, the following summer, got another seasonal job, with Chaco Canyon National Monument in northwestern New Mexico.

And I was hired as a park aid, which was quite similar job to the one at Lava Beds and worked there through the summer and on into the fall, since I no longer had to go back to school. And that winter, I was able to stay at Chaco Canyon and work as a volunteer in the park and continued to work as a volunteer until the following spring when they were able to rehire me as a park technician. And this time I got into the kind of work I wanted to.

As a park technician I was working as a guide through the ruins, and doing interpretation, which was what I'd been

working toward when I worked there as a park aid. So, I was giving guided walks and talks, evening programs.

And near the end of that summer, I had the chance to be considered for a permanent job at the Park Service at Wupatki National Monument, which is in Arizona. And I was on the registers at that time of course, and they were able to hire me off of the park technician register.

And so, I became a permanent park technician. However, the job was mainly administrative, and at the time I was hired, they knew I was interested in interpretation. And I was willing to work in administration as background, just as a way to get on permanent in the Park Service.

Dorothy Huyck: 03:47 What level? What grade was that?

Margaret Littlejohn: 03:47 That was the GS-4.

Dorothy Huyck: 03:47 And was this the summer of '74?

Margaret Littlejohn: 03:52 Let's see. '73. Got hired in September and worked for two years in that; got a lot of good background on how the Park Service is run, and I of course did all the payrolling, and personnel management, and property management for those two monuments. Wupatki and Sunset Crater, of course, are run as one.

During that time, I had to decide whether or not to get on the park ranger register, which they were setting up at the regional level at that time. And I decided that I would put in for it. For one thing, I do prefer fieldwork, and was not that much interested in the management level. And that was one thing I was considering when I was trying to decide whether to put in to be on the park ranger register.

And so, I decided I would do it, and figured that my chances were not that good anyway. But in the end, I got offered a park ranger intake trainee position at Carlsbad Caverns. That was about August of 1975.

So, I accepted the position when it was offered to me, and went to Carlsbad Caverns, where this was a new intake position. They had not had an intake prior to that. So, they were kind of learning along with me, how to set one of

these up and how to get the person trained, and all the different aspects of working in the park.

And they expose you to not only interpretation, which was my main interest, but also some law enforcement, and some administration, some maintenance. And I got exposed to different aspects of those in the park there.

I was also away a lot for that period of time when I was an intake trainee, to various training schools, and went to Albright for two months. I spent two months on a temporary duty assignment to Gran Quivira National Monument, which is also in New Mexico, just south of Albuquerque.

And I think that that exposure to all those different types of training was really good for me, and for my background as a park ranger. At the end of the two-year period as a ranger trainee, they decided, and I decided that I needed some more background in interpretive writing, and it was decided that Big Bend would be a good place for me to learn this.

There was a lot of interpretive writing that needed to be done here, and there was someone here who was a good writer who could supervise me. So, it was decided that I'd move to Big Bend for about six months to finish up my ranger intake trainee training, and so I moved down here in September of '77, and I have been working for the last year now on writing different pamphlets and nature trails for Big Bend National Park.

And just this past July, I finally graduated from the intake training program, and got my GS-9. [crosstalk 00:08:05] Right. I'm currently a GS-9 park naturalist now, or ranger, yeah.

Dorothy Huyck: 08:14

You've stayed on beyond the training period.

Margaret Littlejohn: 08:17

Right. Well, the minimum amount of time is two years of course. Then we decided among us that it would be better for me to get a little more background before getting my nine. Well, they put me in for the nine back in April, which was about the end of the six-month period, but we weren't able to get it approved all the way through, writing a position description and everything, until July.

Dorothy Huyck: 08:47 Will you be here for a specified length of time?

Margaret Littlejohn: 08:50 Well, it's kind of uncertain right now, though when I was put in for the nine, they said it'd probably be about a year or so, at least. So, I'll probably be here through sometime next year, although during the time following that or up to that, I probably will be able to put in for other GS-9 positions around the service that become vacant.

Dorothy Huyck: 09:21 Let me go back if I may—

Margaret Littlejohn: 09:22 Okay, sure.

Dorothy Huyck: 09:23 —Time in history, and ask you where and when you were born?

Margaret Littlejohn: 09:27 I was born in Scotland, and that was in 1948. Newton Stewart was the name of the town and Wigtownshire, the county. They seem to use counties a lot more there than here.

Dorothy Huyck: 09:44 In 19—

Margaret Littlejohn: 09:45 '48.

Dorothy Huyck: 09:48 Was your father with the Navy or some such, that you were in Scotland?

Margaret Littlejohn: 09:52 No, he wasn't with the military. He was born here in Wyoming, and his family moved back to Scotland – they were all from Scotland anyway – moved back to Scotland when he was about 10 years old. And then he met my mother while he was back there, and married her, and I was born there before they decided to come back to the United States. Because he had liked it so well, he wanted to come back.

Dorothy Huyck: 10:21 Are either of your parents college graduates?

Margaret Littlejohn: 10:25 My mother is. She's a RN.

Dorothy Huyck: 10:29 And what's your father's line of work?

Margaret Littlejohn: 10:31 He's a farmer.

Dorothy Huyck: 10:35 And are you by any chance an only child?

- Margaret Littlejohn: 10:36 No, I'm the oldest of three. I have two brothers.
- Dorothy Huyck: 10:41 How many years younger is the next brother?
- Margaret Littlejohn: 10:45 He's four years younger, and the youngest is 12 years younger than I am.
- Dorothy Huyck: 10:53 Where did you grow up?
- Margaret Littlejohn: 10:55 Well, my father settled in California when we moved back here from Scotland. And so, I grew up there in California, in several different places. We moved several times. It was near San Luis Obispo first, and spent some time, I guess, near LA, and then moved up to near Patterson, California. And my father has his own farm near Ballico, which is the closest little town. It's also near the larger towns of Merced and Modesto.
- Dorothy Huyck: 11:46 Where did you graduate from high school?
- Margaret Littlejohn: 11:49 Well I went to the local high school, which we got bussed to, Livingston High School in Livingston, California. That's about seven miles from home.
- Dorothy Huyck: 12:03 And did you graduate from Davis?
- Margaret Littlejohn: 12:06 Yes. I went to a junior college first, again near home, that was Merced Junior College.
- Dorothy Huyck: 12:13 For two years?
- Margaret Littlejohn: 12:14 For two years. So, I have an AA degree also. And then I transferred to the University of California at Davis and finished the last two and two thirds years there, with a degree in biology.
- Dorothy Huyck: 12:30 Have you done any graduate work?
- Margaret Littlejohn: 12:32 No, I haven't.
- Dorothy Huyck: 12:36 I'd like to ask about the period of your educational process. Was there someone who encouraged you, maybe a member of your family, a teacher or professor, someone in the community, who was encouraging as far as the educational process was concerned? Or maybe no one at all?

- Margaret Littlejohn: 12:55 Well, I guess I just always assumed that I would go on through college, and I wanted to get a degree. My parents seemed to just assume that too. I don't ever remember anyone actively encouraging me to continue on to a degree. And I just kind of assumed that that's what I would do.
- And my interest in biology grew during my formative years, growing up on the farm. And my parents would take us to different parks. Yosemite was one of those. And I always remember that. So that was, I guess, part of the reason that I did end up majoring in biology.
- Dorothy Huyck: 13:43 Did you travel to other national parks, as well as Yosemite?
- Margaret Littlejohn: 13:49 Well, other than national and state parks. We went to the coast, visited Pinnacles National Monument in the Big Sur area. And we went to San Francisco and visited some of the areas that is now the Gateway.
- Dorothy Huyck: 14:11 Were you traveling, or were these camping trips?
- Margaret Littlejohn: 14:17 My mother was not a camper, so we didn't do too much of that with her, as a family. But we did camp out once at Yosemite. And I did go, of course, during high school and later, camping with friends. So that was something I enjoyed.
- Dorothy Huyck: 14:38 When you were in high school, did you take math and science courses?
- Margaret Littlejohn: 14:43 Yes, I did. And I took all the college prep courses. Algebra and chemistry and biology, of course.
- Dorothy Huyck: 14:52 Advanced algebra?
- Margaret Littlejohn: 14:56 Well, I didn't have trigonometry. I went as far as the algebra courses at the high school end.
- Dorothy Huyck: 15:02 Biology, chemistry. Was there physics?
- Margaret Littlejohn: 15:05 There was physics which I didn't take.
- Dorothy Huyck: 15:09 Were these courses more frequently taken by boys?
- Margaret Littlejohn: 15:16 Well, there was a lot of girls in the classes. Again, they were all the ones that had planned to go on to college and

higher degrees. And they were all my closest friends, and we just kind of moved through as a group, through high school.

Dorothy Huyck: 15:36

When you were a child, did you play with boys?

Margaret Littlejohn: 15:42

Now, I suppose so. We just all played together, and I used to go play with female friends that lived nearby, and of course, they all had brothers too, and we'd sometimes play together.

Dorothy Huyck: 16:05

Were you by any chance considered a tomboy?

Margaret Littlejohn: 16:09

I don't think so. I mean, that's kind of a hard question to answer because I don't really know how other people thought of me then. But I suppose I did some of the normal things that little girls do, playing with dolls and such, but also used to build little houses and things, which maybe are not considered a female occupation when they're kids.

Dorothy Huyck: 16:40

As you became a teenager, were you expected to become more of a lady?

Margaret Littlejohn: 16:47

I suppose maybe to some extent, but I just did what I wanted to do. I don't remember ever thinking of being a lady, as such.

Dorothy Huyck: 17:00

Were there extracurricular activities that you were involved in, that later were helpful with your Park Service career?

Margaret Littlejohn: 17:06

Well, photography was one of those. I've always enjoyed taking pictures, and I've always – well, since I was somewhere in early teenage years – had a camera of some kind. And of course, as I started working in high school, I was able to afford to buy my own 35 millimeter.

And I've always enjoyed photography. I have thousands of slides of different parks and places I've been to. And now, bring it up to the present, have had some published.

Dorothy Huyck: 17:43

Are you combining your interest in photography with your writing efforts here at Big Bend?

Margaret Littlejohn: 17:49

Yes. In fact, I hope in this book, if I do end up writing it, to use some of my slides in it too.

- Dorothy Huyck: 17:57 Where have your pictures already been published?
- Margaret Littlejohn: 18:00 Well, I had some published first in the Carlsbad Chamber of Commerce brochure, and then had some put into the book on Guadalupe Mountains.
- Dorothy Huyck: 18:19 You worked on the written portions of that also?
- Margaret Littlejohn: 18:22 No, that one was just being revised and enlarged. And they were asking for more pictures for it, so I submitted some of mine for consideration, and they ended up picking three for it. However, the written portion's the same as the original, I believe.
- Dorothy Huyck: 18:42 Tell me a bit about your writing efforts here. You're obviously carrying on a full interpretative program, are you not?
- Margaret Littlejohn: 18:48 Right, I—
- Dorothy Huyck: 18:49 I know we were scheduled to do the walk this morning.
- Margaret Littlejohn: 18:51 That's right. Yeah, I give walks and evening programs, and other interpretive programs here. So, I manage to work on writing between those, and I've written one interpretive booklet for here, for the hot springs area, and just finally had that published. It came out last month.
- And so, I spent several months working on that, researching it, and writing drafts of it, and rewriting drafts of it, until it satisfied everybody, and it's now out for sale to the public. And I've also written the scripts for signs for a nature trail here, and those have been ordered, and should be up in about two months.
- Dorothy Huyck: 19:44 Which nature trail is that?
- Margaret Littlejohn: 19:46 Well, it's a new one at Dugout Wells. And another writing effort which came before I moved here was, I wrote scripts for a signed major trail at Carlsbad, and those signs are now up. They're on the trail to the... Well, it's right beside the entrance to the cabins there.
- Dorothy Huyck: 20:12 And you're hoping to work on a book, is that right?

- Margaret Littlejohn: 20:15 Right. There's a need here for a book on Big Bend, which is mostly pictures and some script with it. And I have talked to the business manager of the Natural History Association about writing this, and that would probably be on my own time, rather than on Park Service time.
- Dorothy Huyck: 20:41 Have you been encouraged to go ahead with that?
- Margaret Littlejohn: 20:44 Well, we haven't talked too much about it yet, although there is a need there, and they would like to get it done pretty soon. So, we haven't finalized any agreements yet, but in fact, I was going to be talking to John about that pretty soon.
- Dorothy Huyck: 21:01 Would you hope to use some of your pictures for it then?
- Margaret Littlejohn: 21:04 Yes.
- Dorothy Huyck: 21:05 Since I gather it would be primarily pictures with additional script [crosstalk 00:21:09]
- Margaret Littlejohn: 21:09 Right.
- Dorothy Huyck: 21:10 So hopefully you would do both aspects?
- Margaret Littlejohn: 21:13 Right. I'd like to, yes.
- Dorothy Huyck: 21:15 That sounds exciting.
- Margaret Littlejohn: 21:18 I think so. I enjoy writing, and of course photography as a hobby for me, along with some of the other hobbies like hiking, and I do a lot of reading and sewing. Also, like just the home things like baking, and cooking, and crocheting. Things like that.
- Dorothy Huyck: 21:44 Are there other writing efforts that you've been involved in?
- Margaret Littlejohn: 21:48 Those are the main ones. I've done some revisions of brochures, and I've written some letters. For example, one letter to the editor of "The Courier," which just came out in this past issue.
- Dorothy Huyck: 22:12 What's the subject?

Margaret Littlejohn: 22:14

I wrote about the need for skills training in the National Park Service. It seems like some of the basic skills, like for rock rescue and boating, sometimes those types of things are not learned through a training class. Instead, they're learned at the park level, from people who have done it before. And I can see the need for having classes on those types of subjects.

We get exposed to a little bit of them in some training courses, but they never spent a whole training course just teaching these skills for people that need to know them.

Dorothy Huyck: 23:00

What do you suggest in the letter?

Margaret Littlejohn: 23:00

Well, I suggest that maybe the Park Service consider adding some of these types of skills training classes to their training opportunities.

Such as the intake program at Albright?

Margaret Littlejohn: 23:15

Well, they cover a little bit of those, but I was thinking more having, say, week-long class on one particular type of skills training. And of course, it could be held at an area which has a good type of environment for that, whether it be a lake for boating skills or mountains for rock climbing rescue.

Because I've just noticed that a lot of these types of skills are not kept up by employees. They do them only once in a while when they have to rescue someone or something. And then if they don't use them all the time, they forget them very quickly.

And we had a situation here which brought this all to mind. And we did have a rescue here this past spring, a rock rescue. And at that time, we didn't have regular training sessions on rock climbing, so a few of us that had some skills in this went up and were able to rescue this person who got stuck on Casa Grande. But it was rather a dangerous situation, and we would have been better off had we had some more recent training on different types of techniques needed to rescue someone off a rock face.

Dorothy Huyck: 24:53

How recently was that?

Margaret Littlejohn: 24:55

That was in February, this year.

- Dorothy Huyck: 24:56 Have you taken any practice sessions since then?
- Margaret Littlejohn: 25:00 We've got our own climbing team here now, and we hold sessions every two or three weeks usually, or at least once a month. So, we've managed to overcome the lack of that training elsewhere. But I think in order to learn the basic skills you need, that there should be some type of training course you can go to. And not only just basic, but I think they need an intermediate and advanced level too.
- And of course, it's going to still be up to the individual park to carry on the training, to keep it going throughout the years, so that you don't forget the techniques you need. But still, I think the basic skills are needed, and they should be taught by the Park Service.
- Dorothy Huyck: 25:53 It'll be interesting to see what kind of response you get to your letter.
- Margaret Littlejohn: 25:58 Yeah, it will be. I wasn't sure if they would print it or not, but they have now.
- Dorothy Huyck: 26:07 Let me ask about the training courses that you have taken in addition to the Albright courses.
- Margaret Littlejohn: 26:14 Well, I've had a whole bunch of different kinds of training now. I went to some administrative training when I was working in that position. Also, during that time I went to law enforcement school. That was of course the longest training I've had, three and a half months. I went to various firefighting schools through the years, both structural and wildfire training.
- I've had some environmental education training, quite a bit of interpretive training. I went to basic interpretive skills, communications writing, and communications general.
- Dorothy Huyck: 27:03 Sounds like quite a smorgasbord of courses.
- Margaret Littlejohn: 27:11 Right. I've spent a lot of time at training courses it seems like. Most of them have ended up benefiting me and my ability to do my job.
- Dorothy Huyck: 27:25 I'd like to ask about supervisors, but may I suggest we not name names?

- Margaret Littlejohn: 27:31 Okay.
- Dorothy Huyck: 27:31 I'd like to ask if your Park Service supervisors have been encouraging or discouraging, or maybe you've encountered some of both?
- Margaret Littlejohn: 27:41 As far as my career, you mean?
- Dorothy Huyck: 27:44 During all the time that you've been working at the Park Service.
- Margaret Littlejohn: 27:49 Well, as a whole, they've been encouraging. Encouraging me to go farther, and to get as much training as I can. I can't really remember any that have discouraged me, as far as doing anything, except possibly law enforcement.
- Dorothy Huyck: 28:14 Did you encountered some discouragement prior to taking the law enforcement course, or during it?
- Margaret Littlejohn: 28:19 Well, prior to, and then since then. I haven't worked in law enforcement ever since I've had the training, and have not, right now, got a commission to do law enforcement. But I've thought about trying to get it back, and some people have discouraged me from doing that.
- Dorothy Huyck: 28:49 On what grounds?
- Margaret Littlejohn: 28:50 Well, partly on the grounds that I've done all my work in interpretation. That's what I'm mainly trained in. And maybe because women are still not as well received as men in law enforcement.
- Dorothy Huyck: 29:07 How do you experience that fact, that women are not as well received?
- Margaret Littlejohn: 29:10 Well, I agree with that. I think that, despite the fact that women can work just as well in law enforcement in some positions, I can still see that the good part of the population of this country would not accept a woman as well as a man in law enforcement positions.
- Dorothy Huyck: 29:34 Does this, in turn, affect your interest in your commission in practicing law enforcement?
- Margaret Littlejohn: 29:44 Well it does, because I don't know whether or not I should try to get the commission or not. I do prefer to work in

interpretation or resource management, that type of thing. But there's sometimes situations that you'll come across, that it's good to have some law enforcement background.

It was a sensitive situation too, because when I graduated from law enforcement school, there was a problem in that one of the instructors who taught in the school didn't want me to work in law enforcement, so he suggested to the Park Service, through a letter, that I not work in law enforcement.

However – I don't know – At time it was a big problem. And I, in the first place, didn't particularly want to go to law enforcement school, but several people I work with suggested that would be good background for me. So, I decided to go ahead and go, and I thought I had done as well as anyone else in the class. But in the end, although I did graduate, they said that I would not be able to work in law enforcement as a result of this one instructor.

[TAPE STOPPED TEMPORARILY]

Margaret Littlejohn: 29:44

[inaudible 00:31:32] question this whole thing, whether or not he was right in the way he went about saying that I wasn't able to work in law enforcement, since I hadn't failed any part of the class, even his portions. And so, I have gone to some of the law enforcement people in the Park Service, and asked if I couldn't possibly get the commission.

They said that I would be able to if I would take a refresher course, which is required every year, and requalify with firearms, and also take a special course to maybe correct this question in their minds about whether or not I could do the physical part of law enforcement. So right now, I haven't done any more about that, and I'm still, in my own mind, going over it.

Dorothy Huyck: 32:31

Did you ever discuss this with the instructor who made the recommendation?

Margaret Littlejohn: 32:35

Not since the course.

Dorothy Huyck: 32:36

Did you at the time?

- Margaret Littlejohn: 32:39 Yes. Well, we had several big discussions at that time. He held up his own opinion, which was that I couldn't do it. I wouldn't be able to handle it in the actual situations.
- Dorothy Huyck: 32:57 Have you in fact been in situations that came close to being law enforcement circumstances since then?
- Margaret Littlejohn: 33:06 I've been around a few situations, but not really anywhere I was there alone, or with no one else there who was qualified to do law enforcement.
- Dorothy Huyck: 33:18 One of the areas that seems most open to question for women is also one you mentioned. Namely rescue situations. You seem to have been involved in one.
- Margaret Littlejohn: 33:28 I've been involved in several rescue situations, and that, I think, is more acceptable for women. I mean, as far as how people view it. I think they don't have as much question about--
- Dorothy Huyck: 33:42 How Park Service personnel view it?
- Margaret Littlejohn: 33:45 Well, anyone.
- Dorothy Huyck: 33:47 I was thinking of the person who said, "I'd hate to be on the other end of a rope with a woman on there on my team." Dependent on that woman.
- Margaret Littlejohn: 33:54 Well, I don't know. And the people I've worked with in the Park Service, they have no qualms about that. Some women are just as qualified or more so than some of the men that do the jobs in rescue.
- Dorothy Huyck: 34:14 Are there any jobs in the Park Service that you think a woman really should not tackle?
- Margaret Littlejohn: 34:24 I don't think there's any that I can think of right now, but some women wouldn't be able to handle. Not every woman is qualified for just any kind of position.
- Dorothy Huyck: 34:39 That's probably true of most Park Service people.
- Margaret Littlejohn: 34:39 Right.
- Dorothy Huyck: 34:41 Some people think of the National Park Service as a rather male-oriented organization. Do you?

- Margaret Littlejohn: 34:49 Well, it is in that most of the employees are male, but I think women are more accepted now than they used to be. Although we still get reactions from the visitors every now and then. They'll come up and see a woman in uniform and they'll say, "Oh, I didn't know there were any park rangers" or sometimes they'll call us park rangerettes, which I don't like.
- Dorothy Huyck: 35:18 Do you see acceptance growing in the public, or are you still getting a lot of that kind of response?
- Margaret Littlejohn: 35:24 A lot less so. A lot less of that kind of response since we've changed to the same uniform as the men. Prior to that time, I've worn several different Park Service uniforms, from the stewardess-like one, back about 10 years ago, through the time when there wasn't really any established uniform, to the beige dresses, and now to the same uniform as the men.
- And I much prefer what we're wearing now. I think the public sees us more as a reputable person who they can trust the answers to their questions, now that we're in the same uniform. Although there's still some people who'll prefer the answer of a man to that of a woman.
- Dorothy Huyck: 36:25 Even when it comes to such things as identifying a flower?
- Margaret Littlejohn: 36:30 Occasionally. Not very often anymore though. They'll usually come to whoever's there at the desk, or out on the walk, or whatever.
- Dorothy Huyck: 36:42 So public acceptance is growing?
- Margaret Littlejohn: 36:43 Is changing, yes.
- Dorothy Huyck: 36:48 Do you belong to any professional societies? Do you belong to AIN?
- Margaret Littlejohn: 36:52 No, I don't belong to AIN. I do belong to the National Audubon Society and National Wildlife Federation. I also am a member of the Museum of Northern Arizona.
- Dorothy Huyck: 37:12 Would you say that your specific talents and training are being well used by the Park Service?
- Margaret Littlejohn: 37:20 I think they're being pretty well used, especially now that I'm able to use some of my photography and writing skills.

I also did some illustrations for the nature trails that have been – Well, the signs are being printed now. And the one at Carlsbad too. And I've done a few illustrations for some of the other little interpretive publications like at Guadeloupe Mountains and here.

Dorothy Huyck: 37:55

These would be drawings or sketches, as compared to photographs?

Margaret Littlejohn: 37:58

Right. Pen and ink drawings.

Dorothy Huyck: 38:02

Has anyone acted as a mentor for you during your Park Service work?

Margaret Littlejohn: 38:08

I don't know exactly what you mean by that.

Dorothy Huyck: 38:11

Well, has anybody been particularly interested in your career, and supporting, making suggestions on how to proceed, and been an encourager as well as a source of information and support?

Margaret Littlejohn: 38:26

Well, quite a few people, I guess, have encouraged me through the years. Some of them have been my supervisors, and people in the regional office have always--Some of them have taken a special interest in how my career is advancing and how things are going.

Dorothy Huyck: 38:47

How did that evolve, your relationship with the regional office?

Margaret Littlejohn: 38:50

Well, I've gone there on a number of occasions for different training courses, and at that time I've met people, and they just kind of become friends, and so they're always interested in how I'm doing. And every time I go back. Of course I've, through my career, worked almost entirely for one region, and that has kind of generated this development of a friendship there.

Dorothy Huyck: 39:20

Do you think that being a woman has in any way affected, pro or con, your opportunities for added responsibilities and promotion?

Margaret Littlejohn: 39:31

Well, possibly. I don't know if it has really in my career, but I know how much EEO is important to the National Park Service. But I don't think that I've been promoted or

anything, just because I'm a woman. And I wouldn't ever want to see that happen either.

- Dorothy Huyck: 40:02 You would prefer to see persons promoted on the basis of their abilities?
- Margaret Littlejohn: 40:05 On their skills and abilities. Right. And I definitely do not think a person should be promoted because they are a minority or a woman.
- Dorothy Huyck: 40:21 Do you see anything evolving such as an old girl network that would equate to the old boy network at the Park Service? In other words, are you aware of women getting together or keeping in touch with each other in the way that sometimes men do, with regard to job possibilities and so on?
- Margaret Littlejohn: 40:45 It doesn't seem like as much. Maybe just because there are less women. In my work in the Park Service, it seems like I've been a lot closer to the men in the organization, rather than the women.
- Dorothy Huyck: 41:07 If you look down the pike, say five years, where do you see the opportunities for women in general, in the Park Service?
- Margaret Littlejohn: 41:16 I think they'll continue to increase. I think you'll find more women in the Park Service, in all types of positions. There's still, I think, some stigma against women working, say, on a trail crew or some of the maintenance type positions. But I think you'll find them more and more in those types of jobs, and they'll continue to grow in number also in professional ranger type positions too.
- Dorothy Huyck: 41:51 Have you thought about where you would like to be in five years?
- Margaret Littlejohn: 41:56 Well, probably I'd still like to be a field ranger. I really do prefer the field work to the management type of work. I hope to stay in that type. And I really, at this point in my career anyway, have no aspirations to be superintendent or a higher level management person.
- Dorothy Huyck: 42:26 If by chance you were to marry – Well, maybe I should ask, have you any time been married?

- Margaret Littlejohn: 42:32 No.
- Dorothy Huyck: 42:34 If you were to marry, would you hope to continue a Park Service career and combine that with marriage?
- Margaret Littlejohn: 42:43 If it would work out, yes. If it were possible to work it out, I'd like to keep working for the Park Service, even if it were just, say on a seasonal basis again, I would like to do that, if we could work it out. But I would be willing to probably give up my career to get married at some time in the future.
- Dorothy Huyck: 43:16 If a person just out of college approached you about possibly working for the Park Service, would you encourage that person to consider the Park Service employment?
- Margaret Littlejohn: 43:24 Well, it's getting more and more difficult to get into the Park Service, and if they were the type of person that I thought would work out – You have to have a lot of patience to get into the Park Service. Some people are not willing to wait. I certainly would encourage anybody that thought they'd like to work the Park Service to try working as seasonal first.
- Some people find that they don't like working for the government, and it's better to find it out when you're still seasonal than to wait until you're permanent.
- Dorothy Huyck: 44:06 Have you encountered some such persons?
- Margaret Littlejohn: 44:10 Yeah.
- Dorothy Huyck: 44:10 Were there specific things about the Park Service that they had difficulty adjusting to?
- Margaret Littlejohn: 44:18 Well, not about the Park Service in particular, but rather about working for the government. There are some things that are different in working for the government than a private agency or company. And some people just don't like all the problems that are involved in that, and so they've ended up quitting as a result.
- Dorothy Huyck: 44:47 Being here at Big Bend for the better part of two years or one and a half years, you've been living in a fairly isolated situation. It's one of the more isolated national parks.

- Margaret Littlejohn: 44:56 Right.
- Dorothy Huyck: 44:59 Can you tell me how you cope with that degree of isolation when you're more than 100 miles from the nearest town? What does it call forth from you to live with that comfortably? Are there bad moments too?
- Margaret Littlejohn: 45:13 Well, there is times when it would be a lot nicer to live close to a some size town, but this is not the first time that I've lived in an isolated situation, although this is probably the most isolated I've lived in.
- I think you just have to be a certain kind of person. There are many people that would not be able to live in this situation, and you just make friends with people that are here, and do your best to get along with them, and kind of make your own activities, recreation, and have your own social activities here at the park.
- And also, another friend and I do go visit some of the larger cities around here, Odessa and El Paso, just on our days off so that we can do some of the things that you would normally, if you were closer to a city. [crosstalk 00:46:17] But we make it a once-a-month activity rather than an every week.
- Dorothy Huyck: 46:20 It must be more than a single day off [inaudible 00:46:24]
- Margaret Littlejohn: 46:24 Right. We have two days off in a row, so we're able to drive up after work one day and then come back on the second day off.
- Dorothy Huyck: 46:34 You said that some people really wouldn't get along too comfortably in this isolated situation.
- Margaret Littlejohn: 46:40 That's right.
- Dorothy Huyck: 46:41 What would be their problems? What would they be coping with, that they wouldn't deal with well?
- Margaret Littlejohn: 46:48 Well, some people just would hate the long drive, and being so far away from a doctor, or school, or whatever. Of course, we do have our own grammar school here, but high school students have to live out or board out at a school somewhere else.

Some people are just so much city oriented. They have to be closer to the town. They would not be able to stand living so far away from the city. But I've always lived on a farm. And although town was much closer at home – it was only 15 minutes away – it doesn't really bother me to live so far from town, because I don't feel the need to go to town, or there's nothing so desirable in town that I have to live close to it.

I mean, I go to town to get groceries, but that's something that you can do once every month or so. You don't have to be 20 miles or whatever from town.

Dorothy Huyck: 48:00 Did you have a pretty good idea what you were getting into when you came here, as far as isolation was concerned?

Margaret Littlejohn: 48:05 Oh yeah. I knew how far it was to town. I had some thoughts about that, but it hasn't worked out to be that bad a situation. I adjusted to it fairly easily, because I have lived in this type of situation in the past.

When I worked at Chaco Canyon, of course we were 75 miles from town, and 30 of it was dirt or mud, or whatever, and that was almost as long a drive to town as it is here. And of course, here it's all paved roads. But that really doesn't bother me that much. There are times when I wish town was a lot closer. It gets awfully tiresome driving that 220-mile round trip, but it's not that big a problem.

Dorothy Huyck: 49:03 As a single person, so you find that you fit in pretty comfortably with family situations, or other single persons, in this relatively isolated location?

Margaret Littlejohn: 49:13 Yes, I do. I've always liked living around families, and I especially enjoy their children, playing with them and everything. There are times when it would be nicer to be around more single people, and there aren't too many here because of this isolated situation. I think it's harder for a single person to live here than a married couple or a family.

Dorothy Huyck: 49:41 Is that different between single men and single women, or is it basically the same problem?

Margaret Littlejohn: 49:48 Well, I think it would probably be about the same, although maybe you'd find women and some men that it's a little

harder if they're at the age where they want to get married, or at the situation in life where they want to get married.

And it's very difficult to meet other single people here. I mean, there's only a limited number of single people here, and there's really nowhere else to meet new people unless you do go to town or something.

- Dorothy Huyck: 50:22 So in that respect, it wouldn't be that different for a man?
- Margaret Littlejohn: 50:28 Right. It'd be about the same.
- Dorothy Huyck: 50:34 Are there any other aspects of isolation that those of us who live in a city might be overlooking?
- Margaret Littlejohn: 50:44 Well, I don't know. There's advantages to the isolation too. Just the peace and solitude here. It's something that I find that is a necessary part of where I live now. In fact, when I go to a city now, it's a real strain on me personally, because just all the cars and people and everything, and all the activity. And it's such a intense environment in a city that it's difficult for me to cope with that for very long.
- In fact, that's been true of me all the way through my life. When I lived in Washington, DC to go to the law enforcement school, it was a rather difficult period of adjustment. It's kind of like cultural shock, in a way, because I just couldn't adapt to living in a city very well. All the noise and people. And I'm used to it being real quiet, and lots of room to go wherever you want. You don't always have to be in sight of another person.
- So, in that sense, I really enjoyed the isolation and the park environment. And so far, all the parks I've worked in have been pretty far removed from the city.
- Dorothy Huyck: 52:16 I'm going to ask you a] final question. Is there something we have not talked about, that you would like to comment on?
- Margaret Littlejohn: 52:28 Not that I can think of.
- Dorothy Huyck: 52:29 Okay. Thank you.

[END OF TAPE]

[END OF INTERVIEW]