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Herbert Evison's National Park Service Oral History Project, 1952-1999



William John (Jack) Winter  
October 09, 1973

Interview conducted by S. Herbert Evison  
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DRAFT

(Tape #254, Side 1)

TYPED BY: Beverley A. Foltz

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[START OF INTERVIEW]

Herbert Evison: This is October 9, 1973. I am Herb Evison and this afternoon I am up near the northern tip of Anastasia Island just off St. Augustine, Florida. And with me is a gentleman named Jack Winter whose connection with the National Park Service goes back to the early 30s, and who I have just discovered is one more person who went on the Park Service roles, actually on the roles of the Civilian Conservation Corps, Emergency Conservation Work. Now Jack, as I said I would like to start this off by getting you to tell me when and where you were born and something about the family you were born into.

Jack Winter: I was born in a little town in northern Indiana called Goshen. My father was a Canadian with English parentage, and my mother was English, born in London. They had lived in Indiana for a good many years. I went through public school there. I was born in 1905 and lived in Indiana until I went off to college in 1924.

Herbert Evison: You were telling me you went to the University of Arizona. I am curious to know why a fellow born and living in northern Indiana picked the University of Arizona.

Jack Winter: Well to begin with Winter in my name was all I need. I do not like, and I never liked the winters in the mid-west and when I went off to college I was not looking for any particular kind of a school. I was trying to get a warm country. It so happened that I knew a man who had a relative in Tucson and he told me all about what a nice winter climate southern Arizona was. So, I went out there to try for one year and I stayed for four years and graduated. This was at the University of Arizona.

Herbert Evison: You finished there you told me in what year.

Jack Winter: '28.

Herbert Evison: With a Bachelor of Arts degree?

Jack Winter: Yes.

Herbert Evison: Then what did you do.

Jack Winter: I went back east, back to Indiana and worked in my father's business for about two years. I didn't – this was money; strictly for money is why I went back into that climate. By the end of two years the money was still

there but so was climate. That was too much for me and also, I didn't care too much for what I was doing and during my senior year in college I had taken a couple of courses in archeology under Dean Byron Cummings who was well known in the southwest at the time. After being away for two years I decided that that was what I wanted to do. I went back to Arizona, back to the university in the fall of 1930 and started taking graduate work in archeology. I stayed there for a year and a half then went to the University of Chicago again against the climate because I wanted the kind of work that Chicago was offering at the time. I put in another year and a half there. After I got out of there I was employed for a brief time in Chicago and then went into the National Park Service.

Herbert Evison: Now, at that time what was there about the University of Chicago that pulled you away from Arizona for further study in archeology. Anthropology, I suppose it was.

Jack Winter: The department of Arizona was called Archeology, and the University of Chicago was called the Department of Anthropology and as you doubtless know, archeology is one of several branches of anthropology. Dr. Fay Cooper Cole, a well-known anthropologist at the time was head of the department in Chicago. One of our – one of my fellow archeology students from Tucson had gone up there to take graduate work. A man named Charles Wisdom. I don't know what has become of him now, but he became active in middle American ethnology and later. I talked to Charlie, and he sold me on the idea of going to the University of Chicago because of the very different and very high quality type of work they offered in anthropology.

Herbert Evison: How about a degree. Did you get an advanced degree anywhere?

Jack Winter: No. I was over-ambitious. I decided not to bother with a master's degree which I might have had along the way, but I discovered that professional anthropologists didn't seem to get very far unless they had a doctor's degree. Consequently, I set out to get a doctor's degree and didn't bother about a masters. I finished all my work for that doctor's degree, but I never wrote a thesis. By that time, I went broke again. This sounds like a chronic occurrence and during the Depression it really was. So, I got the idea that I would go out and work a while and I would go back to school. Like many another I went out to work a while and then I got married and then I got a job, and I never went back to school. Consequently, I do not have a doctor's degree, but I do have all the course work from the University of Chicago and if I ever got ambitious enough, I might settle down and write a thesis and get a doctor's degree. Now having reached Social Security, I just don't think that is going to happen.

Herbert Evison: Probably not. Now, lets get on with the Park Service. Give me the circumstances.

Jack Winter: After I went out, got done school in Chicago and was working there there was an announcement of a Civil Service examination for an archeologist in the National Park Service. I passed that examination and, I think, two or three months later, Mr. Chatelain the Chief Historian of the Park Service was looking for an archeologist so in checking over the Civil Service roles, I mean the Civil Service examination results he picked upon certain ones and came to Chicago to talk to me and the result was that he hired me as the ECW employee an archeologist in his office in Washington.

Herbert Evison: I am curious to know, I taped Chatelain about four or five months ago at his home out in Silver Spring. I am curious to know what use he made of an archeologist in his office at that stage of the game.

Jack Winter: Well, at that time there were no other archeologists in the Park Service. I guess I was – later on the job I had was dignified by the title chief archeologist, but I wasn't that high ranking. There are a great many monuments, as you know, in parks, some parks a number of monuments in the National Park Service which are almost wholly archeological. So, somebody had to do something about it. I had a very interesting job in Chatelain's office in that anything that came into Park Service – in fact, I guess, in the Department of the Interior they shoved it onto my desk to take care of. One day after dealing with totem poles in Alaska and another day with cliff dwellings in Mesa Verde in Colorado and another day with pueblos in the southwest or Indian mounds in the east and southeast, there was a great variety and really quite a volume of work.

Herbert Evison: You had to handle quite a lot of correspondence about that.

Jack Winter: I did. I wrote all the letters on it. I wrote letters for everybody's signature from the Secretary of the Interior on down, except I never signed one myself.

Jack Winter: Also, I don't know whether it was Chatelain's idea or not, but the idea of using archeological method to determine historical fact was just getting started. We had this project at Jamestown Island which was – wherein all the records had been destroyed in the past, the written records; so, they were going into the ground to determine what had happened, what had been built. They covered all kinds of information which necessitated an archeological technician in order to get that information. Of course, it needed an architect and a historian also, but we all worked together. That was one of the things I did from the Washington office. I was sent down to Williamsburg. We had two CCC camps to do the digging and I was archeologist in charge of the Jamestown project at the time. I got that

going and I worked on that about six months and after that I went out to Arizona. It was still going, of course, when I left.

Herbert Evison: It had really just been launched when you got a Civil Service job.

Jack Winter: Yes, they had started it before I got there but they had a man in charge who was an architect. He was not an archeologist. He was not a historian, and he was destroying more evidence than he was gathering because he didn't know how to dig things up. I still remember that Chatelain took this man and I out in the field and Chatelain said, "Well, here you have a post hole filled with things; how do you dig it out." The man said, "I take trowel and dig it out." I said, "No, you don't do it that way. You dig a trench out beside it, and you work in toward the thing and go from the side and you see the profile, the size, the contents and all about it." Chatelain turned the other guy off and he said, "Out. Winter knows how to do this." Here goes the bragging.

Herbert Evison: I think everything about that really pioneer archeology dig is decidedly worth getting on the record.

Jack Winter: This was pioneer work in that like all other archeologists I had been trained when you are digging up things anything made by a white man, we would throw it aside as being of no value. We were interested in pre-history only and not history. This was a good demonstration that archeological method has its place in determining historical facts. It is still being done in various places.

Jack Winter: Chatelain and I I think were among the very foremost pioneers in that field.

Herbert Evison: As you probably know, that dig went on for years and was directed a good deal of the time by a guy named Pinky Harrington. Did you ever meet Harrington?

Jack Winter: Oh yes. I went to school with him in Chicago.

Herbert Evison: Did you.

Jack Winter: Yes. I have known him for quite some time. If you want a slight laugh out of this, I will tell you one thing that when I was there and about the time I left there was a controversy for some reason as to whether it should be an archeological project or historical project or an architectural project. There was a certain amount in intra \_\_\_\_\_ on the subject and so I went – I had good friends over in the Smithsonian Institution archeologists and various others – so I talked to them about it and I told them just what I felt should be done. I said it should be a historical project, historian in charge with an archeologist and architect on the staff. I wrote those recommendations and

gave them to the Park Service. The Park Service – I told you I was pretty low ranking – the Park Service went over to the Smithsonian for their recommendations. They wouldn't take my recommendations, but they took the Smithsonian's recommendations and the Smithsonian gave them my recommendations as theirs and they adopted both. Later I had the pleasure of telling one of the Assistant Directors that I was glad to see the Park Service had finally adopted my recommendations even though they had to come from the Smithsonian.

Herbert Evison: Well now, finally and I think you said it was about '35 late in '35 you got on the Civil Service rolls.

Jack Winter: In September of '35 I became custodian of Casa Grande National Monument.

Herbert Evison: You were the custodian.

Jack Winter: Oh, yes. I went out there. See I already knew Boss Pinkley, and I was quite familiar with the area anyhow. When this thing opened up, I talked to him about it and he said "Okay." I had seen him in Washington at a Superintendents' Conference. So, I started in there as custodian of the monument. It was a big difference there you only had two ranks in the Southwestern Monuments there at the time. You were custodian at \$1860 a year or a ranger at \$1860 a year. You got promoted from one to the other and in my case, I didn't get promoted. I started in as a custodian. The position has since been dignified by a title change to the title of superintendent. I was glad when that happened because when I was custodian I found out that was also the title of the janitor of the Federal Building and Courthouse in Tucson and I said I didn't want anybody to think I was just a janitor at Casa Grande.

Herbert Evison: We find that we were in agreement long ago on the—

Jack Winter: Of course today when somebody says, "What was your job at Casa Grande?" I say, "I was superintendent."

Herbert Evison: Now I am interested in that because, of course at that time not only was there the monument but there was the Southwestern Monuments office right in the same area with Boss Pinkley in charge. I am wondering how it worked that sort of dual arrangement there.

Jack Winter: It worked very well. Some people felt there might be a conflict between Boss Pinkley, who had been there for many years and the hostility in me because there wasn't any because Boss Pinkley had plenty to do without worrying about the local affairs. Actually, the administrative part of that monument didn't amount to a great deal. Because, of course, we had the office, the Southwestern Monuments office, to do most of our paperwork

for us and as custodian all I had was this one ranger and a maintenance man, not a custodian, janitor and so on. That's all there was to it. The ranger and I spent most of our time in guiding visitors to the monument through the ruins. Boss, he worked in the office, and he traveled quite a lot and he did not tell me how to handle the monument. We got along very well that way. Of course, that particular monument was Boss Pinkley's pet because he'd been there since about 1905 I think. He used to be out there for years all by himself.

Herbert Evison: Yes. Worked in the General Land Office.

Jack Winter: I don't know who had it in those days. But he was, I think Boss Pinkley was the best, the most dedicated public servant I ever knew. He didn't even think much of taking a day off. He thought because – he had gone out there for his health I think he had tuberculosis, and he went there for his health. He went out there in the desert and he got well, and he was happy, and he loved the place and people used to come out to keep him company looking over the ruins. That was just “the” place for Pinkley. I remember yet when they talked about moving him up to Santa Fe for a regional office, he was all against it. I said, “Well Boss don't you want to go to Santa Fe?” “Nope”, he says, “The worst thing they are trying to do.” “I don't care if they move the office, but they are trying to move me.” That was very bad indeed. He didn't want to be. He never was moved either.

Jack Winter: To get back to your original question. The monument administration there was no conflict whatever. As a matter of fact, I was glad to ask Boss Pinkley what to do in a good many cases. He didn't override me on anything at all.

Herbert Evison: You were lucky to have a guy like him to ask what to do.

Jack Winter: I should say so. He was wonderful. I think everybody loved Boss Pinkley. I never heard of anybody that didn't.

Herbert Evison: Had he instituted his mimeograph monthly reports and ruminations while you were there?

Jack Winter: Yes, he did. In fact, I recall him getting criticized from some quarters for spending so much time, as somebody said, “As a magazine publisher.” But everybody enjoyed his monthly report, and everybody wrote something for it. I would like to see some of them now. I wrote some of them.

Herbert Evison: I was just about to say when they established, shortly after they established the Park Service's training center and it was held in Yosemite, Frank Kowski who was head of it got hold of all those reports and he got a nice little pamphlet with a whole bunch of selections from Boss Pinkley's “ruminations.” I suspect that those, some of those are still available.

- Jack Winter: That would be nice to have.
- Herbert Evison: I remember getting a hold of one some years ago and reading it. Reading stuff that I had read 20 years earlier with a great deal of enjoyment.
- Jack Winter: We spent a good deal of time getting this report out, this monthly report. I used to write, everybody wrote quite a piece for it, you know; and the Boss used to run the mimeograph machine himself.
- Herbert Evison: Isn't that something. What do you remember that outside of the ordinary procedures and events of that period that we ought to get on the record.
- Jack Winter: Well, I don't think so. The work was largely routine, and we had thousands of visitors and that, as I say, most of our time guiding visitors through the ruins. Visitors were not permitted on the ruins unaccompanied cause of possible vandalism and that sort of thing.
- Herbert Evison: Well, now before we started taping you and I were talking together about some of the other people there who were there at the monument while you were. I would like to get on here any thoughts you have about any of those people. People like Hugh Miller, Luis Gastellum and others.
- Jack Winter: Well, when I came there Boss Pinkley was the superintendent of Southwestern Monuments. Hugh Miller was chief clerk of Southwestern Monuments. Dale King was park naturalist. I was custodian. I am going down the scale of rank. Charlie Steen was a ranger. Then, I am not sure whether they had a clerk in the office or not. While I was there there were two clerks, I believe, showed up, Luis Gastellum and Bill Sharp. Later Hugh Miller was promoted to assistant superintendent and Jim Luther, came in from Carlsbad to be chief clerk. Bob Rose was also, Bob Rose was also park naturalist come to think about it, when I first came there. Most of them moved out to various places some of which I know and some I do not.
- Herbert Evison: As I remembered, you spoke in very high terms of Hugh Miller, and I would be glad to have any of that on here.
- Jack Winter: I thought more of Hugh Miller I believe, personally, than anybody I ever knew in the Park Service. I think everybody else thought highly of him also. He moved on to Washington to a higher ranking job, Washington and Chicago. I believe he was last in the regional office Santa Fe.
- Herbert Evison: That's right. He was regional director.
- Jack Winter: He retired before he died. We were greatly saddened to hear of his death. We hear from Christine Miller at Christmastime. One time I had the pleasure of seeing them here in St. Augustine some years back. I also visited them in Chicago when the office was there, but I never have gotten

to see them in Santa Fe. I had not been in Santa Fe since that office was opened.

Herbert Evison: Well, I can tell you one thing. They lived in a lovely home if ever I saw one.

Jack Winter: Is she still living?

Herbert Evison: Yes, as far as I know. I had a letter after Hugh died. As I remembered she said that she proposed to live there for at least for the time.

Jack Winter: We were very – Virginia and I were very regretful that we never got to Santa Fe to see the Millers while Hugh was alive. We still have ideas about going out there. This one of the annual affairs, we postponed a trip in the spring until fall and in the fall we postponed it until spring. We have done that so many times but now we are talking about going out there next spring. I hope we make it.

Herbert Evison: I hope you do too. What you just said reminded me of an omission. You spoke of having married after you left your first job with the Park Service. I would like to get the record the name of the lady who became Mrs. Winter and when you were married and are there any offsprings.

Jack Winter: I married Virginia Harvey, a Chicago girl I met while I was a graduate student at the University of Chicago. She had a job but she wouldn't support me, so we waited a couple of years until I got the job in Washington in the National Park Service and I went to Washington and went to work and she came to Washington. We were married in Washington in July of 1934. Her parents came with her to make sure I married the girl. We went on from there but there are no offsprings.

Herbert Evison: You left the Park Service when?

Jack Winter: I resigned from the Service at the end of 1936. This is because Dr. Chatelain had resigned from the Park Service and took the job as director of the St. Augustine Historical Program for Carnegie Institution of Washington. That was a research program aimed at restoration. The need for an archeologist to carry on this historic research became apparent to Chatelain immediately and, of course, he and I had worked together as I mentioned, and he offered me the job of archeologist for his program under Carnegie Institution of Washington. I was out at Casa Grande at the time and by that time I found that the Southwestern Monuments setup was rather a dead end. This is no longer the case as I understand it but in those days the custodian of a monument was supposed to settle down, take roots and stay there for the rest of his life. I couldn't quite see that. I was a little venturesome. I wanted to move around a little more and I also long had an idea that I would like it in the southeast. So, when Chatelain offered me

this job in St. Augustine, I took it. I resigned from the Service and came here and work directly. I arrived in St. Augustine on January 3, 1937, just a few days after I terminated my Park Service career.

Herbert Evison: Did you work as an archeologist for the rest of your working life?

Jack Winter: No. No, I worked for Carnegie Institution here in St. Augustine until I went in the Army in 1940. I was a reserve officer, and I went on active duty in 1940. Because of the Depression we never did have too much money for this project and with the war coming on this St. Augustine program was terminated by Carnegie about six months after I went in the Army. It never was revived. I was not a permanent employee at Carnegie Institution. I was employed only for this particular program. After I got out of the service, I become such a sucker for St. Augustine that I wanted to come back here to live. However, I didn't have very much to do here. I looked at St. Augustine and I looked at my profession of archeology and St. Augustine won out. Also, I found there was a great deal more money in selling the ground than there was in digging it up so I went into the real estate business. And I have been in St. Augustine ever since.

Herbert Evison: In the real estate business. Are you still in it?

Jack Winter: Only half way. I have a license and there is an office downtown. I told them if they needed me, they could telephone me. Very uncomplimentarily they have not telephoned me. So, I don't think I am needed very badly. We may say we don't need each other. So I am not, I retired actually. I claim to be semi-retired but that is just a nice way of putting it.

Herbert Evison: You are certainly semi-retired or retired or however you want to put it in a very pleasant place to be. You never regretted your decision to stick to St. Augustine?

Jack Winter: Not I haven't. I am afraid I am not a pure enough scholar and going back into archeology meant battling over a great many places. By that time, I had lost a lot of my ambition, and I liked it better in St. Augustine anyhow. So, I could have gone back into the field of course. In fact, as time went on I felt there was a great many good jobs that existed then but did not exist back in the Depression days when I went into that field. But I have not regretted it. Now I am very much out of touch with archeology. I know some and I see people that I know and all that but I pay no to it.

Herbert Evison: While you have been around here have you kept up acquaintances with people in the Park Service, people at the Castillo?

Jack Winter: Oh, yes. I have been friends with everybody that has passed through there since they came here. When I came Herbert Kahler was superintendent. After him was Dixon Freeland and we have one or two others. Burt

Roberts was here for a while. Ray Vinten was here for sometime. I know George Schesventer the present superintendent and Louis Arana the historian. Albert Manucy was a good friend of mine. He was up in the Richmond office for quite a while. He is retired now. He came from St. Augustine. Edward Eaton. Do you know him?

Herbert Evison: No, I am to see him before I get away from here.

Jack Winter: I think he is still living down there – I haven't seen him for a couple of years. He lives down there at the Crescent Gate Bridge with his daughter and son-in-law lives. He was at Fort Matanzas for quite a while. I keep in touch with all those people. I know Ted Davenport. He is also retired.

Herbert Evison: We had dinner with him last night.

Jack Winter: Did you.

Herbert Evison: Well, I am delighted to have gotten this dope on you on the tape and I am glad that I found you at leisure on this Friday afternoon as I could.

Jack Winter: I am not sure about the leisure. I am still working on that door.

Herbert Evison: Anyway, I am certainly obliged to you, and it has been a great pleasure to come out here and get acquainted with you.

Jack Winter: You are very welcome, and I am certainly glad to have met you again. I know its been a good many years since I had seen you but I remember we did meet some years back when you were active in the Service.

[END OF INTERVIEW]