National Park Service (NPS) History Collection

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

Wade Myers
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Interview conducted by Nancy Russell
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START OF RECORDING

Nancy Russell: 00:00:02 This is Nancy Russell, archivist for the NPS History Collection. Today's date is July 24th, 2019, and I'm here for our second in a series of oral history interviews with Wade Myers. Wade, before we move into other subjects today, I wanted to spend a few minutes talking about some of the things we discussed last week after the recording was off, an opportunity to circle back around on a couple things.

Nancy Russell: 00:00:31 First of all, could you remind us who Carl Degen was and some of his background?

Wade Myers: 00:00:36 Sure. Carl Degen was the head of the Audiovisual Arts department for Harpers Ferry Center. He was hired from the Protestant Radio TV Center in Atlanta, and he actually came--he was hired about 1962. He and Vince, Vince Gleason was also hired in 1962, both were hired through the Mission 66 committee and they were both hired pretty much at the same time in 1962. Carl would have been up here on what we now refer to as the main HFC campus working out of the basement of the Lewis Anthony Building with the rest of the audiovisual staff at that time.

Nancy Russell: 00:01:24 During the construction of the IDC?

Wade Myers: 00:01:24 During the construction of the IDC, they were here.

Nancy Russell: 00:01:27 Yep.

Wade Myers: 00:01:30 I didn't mention that the Design Center was - the architect for the Design Center was Ulrich Franzen out of New York, and the construction of the Design Center started in 1968 through 1969 and then was occupied by Center staff or National Parks Service staff in March 2nd of 1970. I actually have some information about how much it cost.

Nancy Russell: 00:02:03 Great.

Wade Myers: 00:02:06 In 1970, just some facts and figures here, in 1970 we had 278 park units. A GS-9 was earning $9,230 a year. A Volkswagen bug or Volkswagen Beetle car cost you $2,200--I'm sorry, $2,002. And let's see. The cost of the Center, I came across that actually in a publication called HFC on Media. This is dated March 2005. This is issue five

of that particular publication, which also featured an article on the Commissioned Art Collection.

Wade Myers: 00:02:52 The breakdown on the cost was--let me get to it here. Let me back up a bit. On April the 4th, 1964, Vincent Gleason, chief of the Publications branch, submitted a suggestion to the incentive awards committee that, quote, "The National Parks Service locate the creative functions of its Washington interpretive staff in a shop built exclusively for that purpose at Harpers Ferry, West Virginia," end quote. That proposal was accepted and Mr. Gleason received $400 for his suggestion. The building was designed by Ulrich Franzen and Associates in New York City. Construction began in April of '68 and the building was occupied March 2nd, 1970. The cost for the entire project, which included the design, the construction, the furnishings, was $1,218,000. Then the issue that I'm looking at shows photographs of the construction of the Design Center.

Nancy Russell: 00:03:59 Well, thanks for sharing that. That sort of plays into the comment that I made in our last interview about Vince really sort of being the founding father as it were, not just of Publications but of HFC.

Wade Myers: 00:04:12 Right, yes.

Nancy Russell: 00:04:14 Because the idea--

Wade Myers: 00:04:15 Yeah, he sometimes gets overlooked in the--when we're looking at the bigger picture of things, he sometimes gets overlooked. Then making that suggestion as early as 1964. This would have been roughly two years after he was hired by the Mission 66 committee in 1962.

Nancy Russell: 00:04:30 Which I think plays into some of that description of him as a visionary.

Wade Myers: 00:04:34 Yes, absolutely. Yeah.

Nancy Russell: 00:04:37 Well, great. Could you tell us a little bit about the clocks at the IDC?

Wade Myers: 00:04:44 Yeah. Originally when the building was first occupied in 1970, there were no clocks. There was an open floor concept plan at the IDC building, so there were no partitions. Everhart did not believe in clocks, in other

words keeping track of your time or being under the gun by always watching a clock, so he didn't want clocks in the building. Al Swift however wanted a clock in his office, so he discretely put a clock up in his office space, and Everhart took it down. This went on for several weeks where the clock would go up, the clock would come down. Eventually, Al took the clock apart and made a mobile out of it. He got his clock in his office space, but not the way one would think of.

Nancy Russell: 00:05:48 That's great. Was the time watching considered an impediment to creativity or something?

Wade Myers: 00:05:52 I think that was it. The idea was that your creative juices as it were would just come and you weren't worried about how much time you were taking to get to an idea, or concept, or a design. You weren't constantly looking at the clock going, "Oh, it's 4:30 and I've got to get this done in the next half hour or something terrible will happen."

Nancy Russell: 00:06:22 Presumably then the employees were all base funded, so they didn't necessarily have a project clock on them.

Wade Myers: 00:06:29 Yeah. All the staff were base funded. Yeah, nobody was having to worry about project funding or beating the bushes for work and to make sure that project funded staff are getting paid. No, everybody was base funded.

Wade Myers: 00:06:45 But I mentioned that open floor concept. On the third floor for instance, all the drafting tables were sort of lined up, one behind the other. There was a single phone on the floor, so all incoming calls came through that single phone and all outbound calls went through that single phone. Eventually they got more phones, but originally there was a single phone for the entire third floor staff.

Nancy Russell: 00:07:11 Interesting. Now, times have obviously changed in regards to smoking and public health, but what was it like working at the IDC when smoking in government buildings was legal?

Wade Myers: 00:07:23 Oh, my goodness. Yeah, it's interesting. We think about that now more than we did then. Smoking was permitted throughout the building. All the buildings on the main campus actually permitted smoking. It was not unusual for a conference room table to have an ashtray in front of every

seat. The break room had ashtrays. Again, the tables usually seated somewhere between four to six people and there was probably at least one if not two ashtrays on every table there.

Wade Myers: 00:07:57 Yeah, I mean I can recall going into the Bird-Brady Building and going downstairs to where a couple of the contracting staff were located and just literally walking down the stairs into a cloud of smoke that was coming, rising up from the two offices. They were opposite from each other and you literally descended into a cloud of smoke. If you didn't like smoke, you held your breath. Probably didn't--

Nancy Russell: 00:08:27 It kept for short meetings.

Wade Myers: 00:08:28 Kept for short meetings, absolutely. You didn't really realize that you were probably reeking of an ashtray when you got back to your office space.

Wade Myers: 00:08:40 Mac Hess, Beecher M. Hess, worked in Publications, and I always knew when he had gone downstairs to have a meeting with Vince because immediately as soon as he got back to his office, he had a Zippo lighter, and I could hear him clicking that Zippo lighter and smoking several cigarettes after having a meeting with Vince.

Wade Myers: 00:09:00 Yeah, it was just something we worked around. Those of us who were nonsmokers, it didn't bother us as much as one might think. I think about it now and how sensitive I am to smoke and I'm like, "I don't know how I--I'm not sure how I survived that," because you could have as many as six or eight people within a work group that were smoking. Because they were permitted to smoke at their workstations and not take a break and go out to a designated smoking area like they do now, you didn't lose that time. You didn't have to worry about people going out to their cars and turning on the heat and smoking and staying out there to smoke. They just smoked and worked, so there was no taking a break and going out to smoke. The productivity continued without much of a break.

Nancy Russell: 00:10:09 Great. You mentioned briefly the break room. Last week after the recording, you were talking about how much more common it was earlier in your career to have people

actually eating communally in the break room versus at their desk.

Wade Myers: 00:10:26 Right, right. Yeah. It was a place for social gathering. It gave people an opportunity to interface with other staff members from other work groups. Now there's small kitchenettes at the Design Center on different floors. People tend to fix their lunches there and then go back to their workstations rather than go upstairs or downstairs to the designated break room. Yeah, people tended to gather and meet and greet as it were and socialize.

Nancy Russell: 00:11:08 Do you have a sense of why that changed or when that changed?

Wade Myers: 00:11:12 I don't know when that changed. It may have changed actually when there was a shift from most of the staff being base funded to staff who were more project funded. I think there might have been staff that were more conscientious about their time then at that point. Also, adding the kitchenettes, although making it more convenient for staff, also then changed the dynamics of how the main break area was then used. You didn't have to go upstairs and use the stove or the microwave. You had a microwave or a coffee pot there in the kitchen area that you could use. Yeah, I think that changed the dynamics as well.

Nancy Russell: 00:11:58 Okay. It seems that HFC used to have more common employee social events in the past.

Wade Myers: 00:12:09 Yes, yes.

Nancy Russell: 00:12:11 What kinds of events did they have and how often?

Wade Myers: 00:12:16 Well, they would annually have a Center wide staff picnic, and occasionally the staff families were invited to that. There was usually a recognition about every five years of getting the staff together for a celebratory event of an anniversary of the Center, so group photos, staff photos would be taken at that time.

Wade Myers: 00:12:52 There was also a--I remember that we would--I believe this was at least once a year, have what was referred to as ethnic treats. Different staff people would make dishes and then we would all meet usually in either the lobby or the break room of the Design Center, share those treats, and

share recipes, and things of that nature. Yeah. There used to be a social activities committee here at the Center which also put on different events for different occasions.

Nancy Russell: 00:13:33 You mean like holiday parties and things like that?

Wade Myers: 00:13:34 Holiday parties and things of that nature, yes.

Nancy Russell: 00:13:37 Okay.

Wade Myers: 00:13:38 There was usually a Center wide holiday party around sometime in December.

Nancy Russell: 00:13:47 Okay. Well, switching gears a little bit, last week we talked about how Dave Wright moved you from Publications over to the Willow Springs facility. Can you talk about what the Willow Springs facility is, when it was created, and what functions operated out of here when you came over?

Wade Myers: 00:14:07 Sure. There was a need to move--well, let me back up. The primary reason that the Willow Springs facility was created and built was to move the Conservation staff out of the Shipley School building. Although they had moved into a building that had actually been condemned by the West Virginia State Department of Education, the building was purchased by the National Park Service. They continued to have problems after moving in there with parts of the building literally falling off.

Nancy Russell: 00:14:46 This is the Shipley School?

Wade Myers: 00:14:47 The Shipley School building, yeah. The façade is falling and things of that nature. There was a temporary protected entranceway to the Shipley School building to keep the staff from being--and visitors from being hit by falling debris as they were entering the front of the building.

Wade Myers: 00:15:08 But the main reason that pushed the Conservation staff out of the building was they had really high radon readings, gas readings, radon gas readings in that building, some of the highest readings anywhere in Harpers Ferry. Because a number of the staff were actually located in the basement of the Shipley School building, there was more of a pressure to get them out and get them out as quickly as possible. They constructed the Willow Springs facility and staff

began moving in here I believe in October 1992 is when the first staff people moved in here.

Nancy Russell: 00:15:47 This is a leased facility?

Wade Myers: 00:15:49 This is a GSA leased facility, yes. The first group to come in here I believe was actually the Graphics Research group under David Nathanson, although David Nathanson actually remained at the Lewis Anthony Building, which was where the library and archives were located. Conservation I believe moved in here in December of 1992.

Wade Myers: 00:16:19 The other work groups that came in here were Audiovisual Arts, so what we refer to as the AV techs were in here. They eventually moved what was referred to as the AV depot out of the Grandview School, which was up behind the post office in Harpers Ferry. That staff and that material was moved over here to the Willow Springs building as well. Then there were a few people from what we refer to as the shop, which was the shop that was on the bottom floor of the IDC building where they were building the exhibit cases and they had woodworkers and sculptors and that sort of thing.

Wade Myers: 00:17:06 Harry Harris came over here and occupied what is now room 112. He had a large laminating machine there, so he was still doing lamination, laminating of material and some other stuff. I think he had a label maker, not like what we have now, a desktop. These were like huge industrial label makers for big signage and that sort of thing. He was still doing that over here.

Nancy Russell: 00:17:34 When the Graphics Research folks moved in here, was that from the IDC or was that them coming up from Springfield?

Wade Myers: 00:17:45 Both. When Marilyn Wandrus and Doris Barber had both retired and shortly before they retired, there were plans afoot at that point to go ahead and shift that material up to Harpers Ferry Center. Tom Durant was still working for that group, so he actually came up and worked on the HFC campus. However, because of the amount of weight that this material was, they had to split it up between the Bird-Brady Building and the Lewis Anthony Building. Some of the heavier material, the lantern slides, the classified negatives and things of that nature that really had a lot of

weight to them, they couldn't put on the floors of Bird-Brady or Lewis Anthony, so most of that material, the heavier material was on the bottom floor of the Lewis Anthony Building. But because the staff and the material was split up between two facilities, it made it difficult to figure out who do I need to see and where do I need to go to find the material that I'm looking for.

Wade Myers: 00:19:00 Eventually, when the Willow Springs facility was being planned, there was a plan then to not just move the Conservation staff over to the Willow Springs facility, but also shift what would have been the Springfield office and its material and staff to the Willow Springs building as well.

Nancy Russell: 00:19:19 I think a couple of times we've referred to Springfield, but I don't know that we've ever really said what the Springfield office was. Could you tell us where that was located and what its function was?

Wade Myers: 00:19:30 Springfield was actually - Well, when they moved the photo collection for the National Parks Service off the seventh floor of the Main Interior Building, the penthouse, because they needed it for additional office spaces, that material wound up going to Springfield, Virginia, and the Springfield office was actually located in a cul-de-sac in what one could only describe as a shopping plaza, like a strip mall. It moved at least once while it was in that space, but within that shopping plaza.

Wade Myers: 00:20:13 The bulk of what we now know as the NPS History Collection historical photograph material actually came off the seventh floor penthouse of the Main Interior Building. There were at least three or four staff people that were associated with that. It was Marilyn Wandrus, Doris Barber, Gloria--I cannot think of Gloria's last name. She was an admin individual there, and then Tom Durant. When Doris Barber and Marilyn Wandrus retired, then as I mentioned earlier, Tom Durant and the collection came up to Harpers Ferry Center. They closed the Springfield offices.

Nancy Russell: 00:20:58 Was that the late 80s?

Wade Myers: 00:21:00 Oh, my goodness. That would have been--yes, that would have been in the late 80s, early 90s when that occurred, yes.

Nancy Russell: 00:21:14 Okay. Okay, well you've been the manager for the Commissioned Art Collection in one form or another, whether it was just Publications or broader than Publications, really for your entire career here at HFC. Can you speak to the significance of that collection?

Wade Myers: 00:21:34 It's a huge significance to the--it's an interpretive media tool not just for the Harpers Ferry Center staff to use for interpretive media program work, but also for the National Parks Service as a whole. If you have a small park that has not a lot in a budget and they are trying to put a few waysides together or a publication together or something like that, it's a resource that they can use. They don't have to spend additional money to redo a piece. They can actually access our collection and reuse that resource. It saves them a lot of time, a lot of money, a lot of heartache. Yeah, it's a huge valuable resource.

Wade Myers: 00:22:27 It's also a resource for third parties, the general public, people who are putting textbooks together or documentaries or something of that nature. It's not just a resource that's just a National Park Service resource or a Harpers Ferry Center resource. It's a much broader resource.

Nancy Russell: 00:22:52 Great. The Commissioned Art Collection is managed as property, not really as a museum collection. Can you talk about why that is and the accountability process for the collection?

Wade Myers: 00:23:08 Sure. The collection is managed as controlled federal property, and there were several reasons why that decision was made as opposed to having it as museum property. Part of it was that in the old days before we had Photoshop and digital manipulation and such, it was not uncommon to have the artist use the original work to make corrections, modifications, and in some cases whole pieces of artwork were completely changed in that way.

Wade Myers: 00:23:49 I recall a particular piece that was done by the artist John Dawson that went through at least four if not five changes. The first versions, the first four versions of that illustration only exist in film, in transparency film. You can't do that if you make it museum property, because you're changing the resource. But for us, at that time it was felt that it was more cost effective to do it that way rather than have the artist

redo a new piece that might have some of the plant species or some of the flora or fauna species that we wanted to include. It was just easier for them to take an existing piece and maybe change the color of the pika or change the color of a particular plant species from say white to pink or something of that nature. For that reason and because some of these illustrations also had very complicated use rights or copyrights, it was decided that we would not automatically make it museum property, but it would be managed as controlled federal property.

Wade Myers: 00:25:07 If we wanted to remove material from the collection, we had what was known as an art advisory board. It worked similarly to a board of survey. I would chair this art advisory board. I would bring works to the board for review. They could also recommend pieces that they wanted to have brought for review. Then a discussion was made and we were looking at things about whether this might serve--we would decide if the work had any informational value to the Center and that we needed to continue to maintain it, if it had informational value to the park that it was done for, if it represented something of how they were interpreting their site at a particular time.

Wade Myers: 00:26:06 We were also looking at whether in doing that we might be perpetuating stereotypes that we weren't doing anymore or weren't interpreting that way anymore. It was a checks and balance. We had representatives from each of the work groups there. The artwork that represented that particular work group, there was a little bit more weight on what they had to say about it. Then I would make those recommendations from the board to the accountable property officer for the Center, and more often than not it was rubber stamped as, "Yeah, that's fine."

Wade Myers: 00:26:47 We would then move forward with either transferring the works to the parks, park units, or destroying the works. There would be a certificate of destruction, which I would witness and then sign off on the paperwork. Then a notation was made in the master database that the work had been destroyed on such-and-such date or that it had been transferred to the park, permanently transferred to the park.

Wade Myers: 00:27:17 It's a little more difficult now that we have Photoshop to make sure that we're getting those digital derivatives. Before we had the film. We could copy the film or scan the

film, but sometimes it's difficult to make sure that when we're creating these digital corroders, we're modifying this artwork, that I'm actually getting those digital derivative scans for the collection.

Nancy Russell: 00:27:50 Are there circumstances now where one of the program areas at HFC would come to you and ask to modify the work versus a digital derivative?

Wade Myers: 00:28:05 No. Very rarely now am I asked to provide the actual artwork itself, unless they're making a scan to have the scan modified as a final product. I should back up. One of the things that the art advisory board would also decide was whether a work might have some value to the NPS History Collection, so works that are then turned over to the NPS History Collection. That material then is accessioned and cataloged as museum property. A lot of times, that is either material that predates Harpers Ferry Center but still is showing part of the interpretive media work that was being done by the National Park Service or there's some other significance that the thought is that it would be best served in the NPS History Collection as opposed to the Harpers Ferry Center Commissioned Art Collection.

Nancy Russell: 00:29:04 Do you have to do some form of regular inventory? Like what are the accountability processes that your predecessor or the next person who comes in will have to do as controlled federal property?

Wade Myers: 00:29:18 As controlled federal property, there is a delegation of authority from the Center manager or the person who is delegated as the accountable property officer for the collections management for the Commissioned Art Collection. At any time, we have to respond to a request from them, or an audit from the inspector general's office, or the general accounting office or something like that, but other than that there's not a formal--there's nothing formal in that way.

Nancy Russell: 00:30:10 Okay. Well, one of the things we talked about last week was how Vince Gleason was very quick to respond to that, I think it was a GAO audit of the artwork, by hiring you for the Publications artwork.

Wade Myers: 00:30:24 Right, right.

Nancy Russell: 00:30:27 It was proactive and really supportive of that need and that position.

Wade Myers: 00:30:32 Right.

Nancy Russell: 00:30:32 How supportive have the other program managers or the Center director been of the art collection and its preservation over time?

Wade Myers: 00:30:44 I'd have to say that Dave Wright saw the value in the collection, and it wasn't just the audit. There was value in trying to get a handle on what the Center really had, the value of what the Center had invested up to that point, and encouraging his staff as well as the parks and the regions to use this resource.

Wade Myers: 00:31:16 I would have to say that after Dave, I'm not sure that there was as much of a--what am I trying to say? Influence or importance placed on the collection. It was almost as if once it left, a lot of it left the main campus, then it was sort of out of sight, out of mind. It's been difficult probably in the last five or six years to get the Center staff to try to use the collection as they're starting up new projects. Some of the older staff still do. They still consult me about things before they start up a project, and I'm more than happy to work with individuals as they're starting up projects to say, "Here's a possibility, or here's something that might be of use as an art resource for this new art."

Wade Myers: 00:32:21 I would have to say that my perspective on this is that there's been less and less use of the collection over the years by the Center staff and more of an increased use by the park staff, which is a little odd because you would think that the Center staff would be using the collection a little bit more as they're working on projects for the parks, but the parks themselves are actually using the collection more. I see that in the increased number of requests coming from the parks and from the regions.

Wade Myers: 00:33:03 One of the things that I've also noticed is that a lot of times the park staff, particularly new park staff, aren't aware that the collection exists, and so we're trying to get them--we're trying to do more things to get them to realize that there is such a collection. One of the things we're going to be doing here shortly hopefully is transition the collection from the search database that we have currently into NPGallery.

Hopefully that will increase the number of park users. If they go into NPGallery and see that there is such a collection, they'll be curious and come in and see it.

Wade Myers: 00:33:48 Once I get new park staff to see that there is such a collection, they come back to me. They're repeat customers as it were. They spread the word to their friends and colleagues, so the word's getting out now that way at the moment.

Nancy Russell: 00:34:04 You have a new website presence on the HFC--

Wade Myers: 00:34:06 I have a new website on the HFC public webpage, so it's not so buried as it was in the old webpage. Once people found it, they often bookmarked it. But yeah, it's much more upfront now and a little bit easier for people to find and not have to go searching in various levels to find it.

Wade Myers: 00:34:33 I have noted too that since we have shifted from base funded staff to project funded staff, it became much more difficult for me to pull together an art advisory board. I did not get the support of the supervisors to allow those employees to serve on the art advisory board. We would only meet once a year and maybe only for an hour, hour and a half, so it's not like I was asking them to make a year-long commitment and we're meeting every week or we're meeting every other week or something of that nature. That has been difficult. I've had to find other ways to kind of get around that obstacle.

Nancy Russell: 00:35:19 Right. Well, without discussing valuations, because we don't want any of that to be public, can you just share some of the pieces that you think are most significant, and not necessarily by a monetary value but just most significant in the collection and why?

Wade Myers: 00:35:38 Sure. Just for the record, we do note the valuation of works, and that helps us with cost estimates for the projects, but that is obviously something that we don't make public. That's not even made public to our park service users, but that is something that we do maintain within the master database.

Wade Myers: 00:36:09 As for significant pieces in the collection, I would have to say that a couple stand out. One would be the work that Leonard Baskin did for the Custer handbook in the late 60s.

That was significant in that, as I mentioned before, this new dead Custer illustration, which was the first time Custer had ever been depicted in a non-hero format. But that also was a subject that the Native American subject was something that Baskin was not familiar with, so when he began researching that subject for the illustrations, it led to him doing more of these types of illustrations throughout his career. He probably did a series starting with the initial Custer Battlefield Handbook illustrations, probably a series, three or four different series of Native American subjects, some in just black and white pen and ink, some in watercolor. But he mentions that this sort of launched a whole new part of his artistic career that he would often come back to.

Wade Myers: 00:37:40 I would say that the Heinrich Berann panoramas were significant, because that was sort of a combination of cartography and art coming together so that visitors-- Berann did four panoramas. He did one for North Cascades, one for Yellowstone, one for Yosemite, and the final one which was Denali and specifically Mount McKinley. This gave the visitor an opportunity to see these parks from an aerial perspective. Whereas they're on the ground and they're maybe only visiting a small portion of the park, this gave them an idea of just how vast the area was, how mountainous it might be, or how many rivers and streams, or in the case of Alaska how many glaciers were there. This was hugely significant.

Wade Myers: 00:38:43 It was also significant in that the government could not purchase or contract for artwork outside of the United States, and Vince desperately wanted Heinrich Berann to do a series of panoramas for the Park Service, and specifically for the poster program. In order for us to be able to do that, we had to work through our mapping contractor, which made sense. It was sort of a cartographic thing. We actually did that through R.R. Donnally and Sons. They subcontracted the work through Heinrich Berann. That was significant in that we were able to get that work done but we were able to get it done legally and through the proper means by subcontracting through our mapping contractor. I would say that's two examples of that.

Nancy Russell: 00:39:42 Can you talk to me about the Charley Harpers and how those evolved?

Wade Myers: 00:39:47 Yeah. Those started actually in 1976. As I may have mentioned before, the Park Service was getting a lot of money for the American bicentennial and a lot of money was coming through the Design Center specifically for the American bicentennial program work. There was a lot of emphasis on the American Revolutionary War parks. A lot of posters were being done. A lot of publications were being put out. The natural history sites were sort of getting left behind, so Mark Sagan actually approached Charley Harper and asked if he would be interested in doing a series of paintings that would ultimately then be made into posters to represent the natural history parks.

Wade Myers: 00:40:39 Starting in 1976, Charley began to work on these fairly large and complicated paintings. He would work on canvas, acrylic on canvas, and then stretch these canvases over wood panels. Some of these pieces are quite heavy. The first one he did was Glacier Bay. It's also the only one that he actually bothered to put basically a wood strip frame around. The last one in the series was the Pacific Northwest. But starting in 1976 and then finishing in 1988, he would do either one to two works a year through that time period.

Nancy Russell: 00:41:30 And they're very popular.

Wade Myers: 00:41:31 They're very popular. They are still in print. The Government Printing Office has been printing them ever since the poster program started with those. As I mentioned, Sagan reached out to Charley Harper, but he was also collaborating with Vince Gleason in Publications to see to it that these would then become part of the poster program. His design staff were working on the layouts for the posters.

Wade Myers: 00:42:00 Each of the posters had a series of park units that were associated with that particular theme. There were a few of Charley's works that were site specific, but a lot of them were more theme oriented. I believe last year or perhaps the year before only seven of the ten posters were still in print because three were no longer being printed because the units had changed from national monuments to national parks. That meant having to go in and physically change the layouts for those posters. Those were done within the last year, so I believe all ten are now currently still in print.

Wade Myers: 00:42:44 But Charley did site specific ones. He did one for Hawaii Volcanoes. I mentioned Glacier Bay. He did one for Isle Royale, but then I believe the others were thematic. He did one for Atlantic barrier islands. He did one for desert. He did one for canyon country, one for the Sierra range, one for the Pacific Northwest. He did one for coral reefs, and I think that might be it. That should be ten.

Nancy Russell: 00:43:27 Do you have a favorite piece or a favorite artist in your collection?

Wade Myers: 00:43:31 Oh, wow. That's like--

Nancy Russell: 00:43:32 Which of your children would you--

Wade Myers: 00:43:34 I was going to say, that's like asking do you have a favorite child, do you have a favorite grandchild. No. Actually I mean there are several that come to mind that are like my go-to pieces that I think about often. I've had an opportunity to meet a number of these artists during my time here, which is just absolutely fantastic. Some of them unfortunately now are deceased, but my time with them, my conversations with them have been absolutely incredible.

Wade Myers: 00:44:10 A case in point, when Heinrich Berann was working on one of the panoramas for us, he didn't speak English so everything was through an interpreter. I happened to be down in Vince's office with Heinrich Berann and Herwig Schutzler, who was working for R.R. Donnally and was the translator for us. I happened to ask Berann where he started with these panoramas, because they're quite complicated. The brushstrokes are quite tiny. He would spend several years on these things from start to finish, from flying overhead and taking photographs or making sketches from the helicopter and then going back to his room and sketching things out to actually then applying the paint to the paper. That's interesting too. He worked on paper.

Wade Myers: 00:45:13 He told me he started with the clouds. He started with the sky. He would work from the top to the bottom. He put the sky in, and then he would put the clouds in, and then he'd work all the way from the top of the page down to the bottom. I thought that was interesting. His clouds in some cases are just really quite interesting in the panoramas. One

of the four panoramas he did has no clouds, and that actually might be the one he did for Denali.

Wade Myers: 00:45:48 Two that come to mind would be Jaime Quintero's illustration that he did of the Johns Hopkins Glacier in Glacier Bay National Park in Alaska. That is what we refer to as above and below the waterline. He shows the glacier above the waterline and he shows the glacier below the waterline. This is significant in that he used a technique that the Johns Hopkins Glacier when he did this, and this would have been back in the 80s, is to scale.

Wade Myers: 00:46:29 A while back, I had a request from the park staff if I could send them a digital file because they wanted to print out the image and take it onboard the tour boats. They would sometimes get on these tour boats. For scale, Quintero's actually put a tour boat in the bay. As they're passing by Johns Hopkins Glacier, the visitors obviously can see what's above the waterline, but they can't really see what's below the waterline, so at that point then they display this illustration to show them what's actually going on with that glacier below the waterline. I just think it's a phenomenal piece that he did.

Wade Myers: 00:47:08 Another piece that I've always gravitated towards is Kenneth Lloyd Townsend's Fort McHenry piece, The Bombardment of Fort McHenry, the dawn attack. Again, it's a fairly large piece done on illustration board, but the brushstrokes are so small. He had to have been using such a small brush. Again, this is a piece that took several years to complete, but it's just an incredible, incredible piece. It was used originally in the park brochure, so you don't get a real good sense of it because it's at a smaller scale, but it's just a phenomenal piece. The dawn sky is just incredible.

Wade Myers: 00:48:05 Those are two that I can think of right off the top of my head that I've always thought were really fantastic pieces. The Jaime Quintero piece is not particularly large, not particularly big. It was used as a double spread in the Glacier Bay handbook. Again, it's used at a small scale, but to see the actual piece at a larger scale, just it's really phenomenal.

Nancy Russell: 00:48:29 Can you speak to the diversity of size and media in the collection?

Wade Myers: 00:48:39 Yes. This is part of my spiel when people come through on tours to look at the collection.

Nancy Russell: 00:48:45 I know.

Wade Myers: 00:48:48 The collection size is probably just under 12,000, we might be getting close to 12,000 now with some of the art that came over to me during the renovations of the Design Center. The smallest piece I have in the collection is probably about the size of a playing card. It's a technique-- the piece is by Daniel Maffia, who used a technique of newsprint, and beeswax, and watercolor, the only artist that we have in the collection that used that technique. The colors have held up remarkably well because these were pieces that were done during or for the American bicentennial, so this is 1974, '75, '76. The colors are just as bright as they were the day he made them. He did a piece for the Fort Necessity handbook, and it's about the size of a playing card.

Wade Myers: 00:49:49 The largest piece I have in the collection at the moment is 23 1/2 feet long by 9 1/2 feet high. Because of its size, it has to remain rolled, and it's a piece that the artist Robert Hynes, H-Y-N-E-S, did. I spelled that out because there's another Robert Hines, H-I-N-E-S, who also did natural history type illustrations, but this one is Bob Hynes, H-Y-N-E-S. It was part of a tryptic, actually the center section of a tryptic that was done for one of our fossil parks. Our use was to get it reproduced for a photo mural at the park site and then we're stuck with this enormous tryptic.

Wade Myers: 00:50:45 This particular piece actually went on exhibit at the Field Museum in Chicago for probably somewhere between 10 to 15 years as part of their paleontology exhibits, and then when they were rehabbing those exhibits, they copied the works and then sent the originals back to us. They sent the originals. Before they came back here, it actually went through their conservation labs for treatment before coming back to us. But the pieces are absolutely enormous. Thankfully we have good films on those and we don't have to handle them.

Nancy Russell: 00:51:17 And the media represented?

Wade Myers: 00:51:23 I'm sorry. Media represented. We've got graphite, charcoal, pastels, unfixed pastels. We've got acrylics, and

watercolors, and I've got two bronze bas-reliefs that Baskin did for the Adams site of John and Abigail Adams in profile. I've got hand tied fish flies for fly fishing.

Nancy Russell: 00:51:52 Why?

Wade Myers: 00:51:54 Why? Those were actually done for the Great Smoky Mountains handbook. They wanted to talk about fishing as a recreation that a visitor could do in the park, and because fly fishing is fairly popular down there, they wanted to show the various types of fish flies that were available. They also took an opportunity to describe the various parts of a lure for fly fishing. They contacted the staff down in the park, they in turn contacted a couple of gentlemen down there, and we have these beautiful fishing lures, or fish lures, for Great Smoky Mountains that are using a very thin filament, are hand tied then onto a silk backing, which has then been stretched over a metal frame.

Nancy Russell: 00:53:06 It's three-dimensional art.

Wade Myers: 00:53:07 It's three-dimensional art. It's probably the only, other than the bronze bas-reliefs which are more still somewhat two-dimensional, it's probably the only three-dimensional art I actually have in the collection. But the fact that we know exactly who made them, which ones they made, and the names, each of the fish flies actually has a name, so it's all documented. It's all part of the collection. Yeah.

Wade Myers: 00:53:39 I've had pieces delivered to me on doors. I've had pieces delivered to me on Masonite. I hate Masonite. It chips too much and I just don't like the medium. I recently had a piece delivered to me on plastic, polypropylene. I don't recommend that as a support media either.

Wade Myers: 00:54:05 We did have Richard Leech a number of years ago did two pieces for the park service of the St. Louis Arch. It was a partial cutaway. He did that on I believe acrylic on photographic paper. Again, not a support I would recommend that people paint on. In those days too, it was not unusual for the artwork to go to the publisher or the printer and be put on a drum scanner. That meant that the work had to be flexed around a drum on a drum scanner. Some artists, knowing that this was going to happen to their work, would often peel the top ply off of multi-ply illustration board to make it easier to do that on the drum

scanner. When Leech's work was done that way, the media started to flake almost immediately, so there were some paint losses which we had restored a number of years ago when we sent it through the paper lab to have it rehoused properly, and then they did a little bit of in-painting to fix those losses.

Wade Myers: 00:55:27 Yeah, we don't have a say in the medium sometimes, certainly don't have a say in the support that the work is coming in on.

Nancy Russell: 00:55:41 When you say we, do you mean you or--

Wade Myers: 00:55:43 I'm sorry.

Nancy Russell: 00:55:45 Harpers Ferry Center as a contractor?

Wade Myers: 00:55:46 Harpers Ferry Center as a contractor or the National Park Service as a contractor. We don't really have a say in the support that the work is put on. We do maybe have a say in the style or technique that we want the work to be as the deliverable. We may say we want a watercolor or we want a graphite illustration, but what they put that on is completely up to them.

Nancy Russell: 00:56:11 Why?

Wade Myers: 00:56:14 I don't know.

Nancy Russell: 00:56:15 You'd think you could specify that in the contract.

Wade Myers: 00:56:17 You would think you could specify in the contract. If you're asking for a watercolor, you could say, "Please use an archival paper."

Nancy Russell: 00:56:23 Right.

Wade Myers: 00:56:24 "Please don't put this on newsprint." But no, we've never been able to specify specifically that we wanted the work to be on a particular support. We've been able to ask for a particular medium or a particular style, and that's often why we would choose a particular artist to do the work. We've asked for it to be a certain size. Within the contract, we can say this will be 150% size of the original, or it will be reduced to 75% of the final size, whatever the project is

being. We specify that in the contract, but we don't specify the support that the work is actually done on.

Wade Myers: 00:57:14 I've had pieces come in to me that were done on Masonite and the parks side, they wanted to extend the view. Literally the artist has had to then somehow sandwich two additional end pieces, again on Masonite, and then put that on a wood frame. Well, the wood frame is expanding and contracting at one rate, the Masonite's expanding at another rate, the paint surface is expanding at another one. I've literally had some pieces just sort of tear themselves apart, and I've had to call the artist and say, "You've got to fix this, because it's literally pulling itself apart."

Wade Myers: 00:57:54 Then in the case with one of the pieces that Robert Hynes, delivered, which was the case he had just delivered it and it was literally pulling itself apart when he dropped it off. He then took what appears to be some sort of a carpenter's wood glue or an epoxy of some sort and then put a three-quarter piece of plywood attached, glued the whole thing then to that, so now the thing weighs probably 50 or 60 pounds. He then literally screwed two handles on it and walked it into my office and delivered it with the handles screwed into the piece.

Wade Myers: 00:58:36 I've had several pieces delivered that way where the artist just screws a handle into the piece and then literally carries it into the Design Center and delivers it. Then it's dropped off to me with the handles still screwed into place. Yeah. Not the ideal way to deliver artwork.

Nancy Russell: 00:58:59 Well, how would you describe--you may have talked about this a little bit, but I want to give you a chance to expand on that a little bit in terms of how the use of the Commissioned Art Collection has changed over time.

Wade Myers: 00:59:14 Well, I mentioned that the Center staff seems to be using it less and less. The parks and the regions have increased their use of it, but as parks are using it and putting it say on their public webpage or something of that nature, there's also been at the same time an increased use by third parties. I might have somebody from the BBC contact me because they've seen a piece that's appeared on the parks webpage and the park has put them in touch with me and they want a particular piece for a documentary that they're working on.

Wade Myers: 01:00:05 When this was first starting up, the publications were what was getting out. Visitors would come to the United States, they would get a park brochure, they might pick up a handbook, they would take it back, and take it to their work or whatever, and then I would get calls from London or Milan or elsewhere because somebody had brought that brochure back and they were interested in that piece of artwork.

Wade Myers: 01:00:31 A lot of times, I'll get a third party who will contact me for a particular illustration, let's say a cutaway of an iron furnace, and they'll use it on their wayside exhibit panel for that park unit or that state park unit. Somebody else who has a similar park site will see that panel and then get in touch with me, so it kind of goes that way. Or they'll contact these other park sites and say, "Where did you get your illustrations from?" or, "I like that illustration." They'll say, "National Parks Service Harpers Ferry Center Commissioned Art Collection." And so it'll go that way. Sometimes it's word-of-mouth. Sometimes it's just seeing the physical wayside exhibit or the publication that gets people to contact me for it, but there's certainly been an increase by third parties. I think probably more so as we've gone more digital with things and the parks are putting more things out digitally, there's certainly been an increase in third party requests through that.

Nancy Russell: 01:01:42 What are--there's some obvious benefits from that digital use because more people seeing the art, but what are some of the risks?

Wade Myers: 01:01:50 The risks. Yes, the risks. There are several risks with that. One is that whenever I send a digital file of our artwork to whether it's a park unit or a third party, I embed that digital file with metadata. There's a description of the work, there's who the artist was, the date that it was done and so forth, and if there are any use restrictions, copyright or use restrictions. Because sometimes the work that I'm sharing with the parks can't be shared with the general public. I say that in the metadata and I say that in a transmittal, whether it's an email or a physical hard copy transmittal paperwork.

Wade Myers: 01:02:44 That does not always convey to the next staff person coming on board or the person who's managing the website for the park, so my fear is that, although I've been conscientious about embedding the metadata and

documenting what these rights are or restrictions are to the parks, that a third party sees an image on the park's webpage, which is still part of their public information and education of the public, that when somebody's asking for the use of that image, somebody's just going to blindly send that image off to them. Now, hopefully that metadata's still embedded in that file and hopefully somebody will open it and see that, "Oh, we have restrictions." But at the same time, somebody in the Park Service went ahead and let them have it. So that is one of my fears is that even though we're being conscientious about documenting our uses or our restrictions on the work, that that's not necessarily going to convey as it goes further and further out beyond here.

Wade Myers: 01:04:03 The other thing I'm concerned about too is as we're shifting away from reflective art and going more towards digital art, we have in the past been very diligent about documenting the reason for a modification to create a digital derivative. A lot of times, it's at the request of the park. A parking lot is changed, or a building has been added into the park that wasn't before, a foot bridge was a safety hazard in the park and so has been removed. That we can document and we say, "On such-and-such date, park staff requested that this foot bridge be removed. It has been removed from the park as a safety hazard," or something like that.

Wade Myers: 01:05:00 Where we run into some issues I think sometimes is where our in-house staff are creating digital derivatives because it works better with the concept of what they're doing. We can do that to a certain degree without creating a secondary digital derivative. In other words, if you want to ghost out the sky area because you're going to run text or something, that's one thing, but if you start adding things or taking things away, you're actually creating a digital derivative and you should be documenting why you're creating that digital derivative. It's important for me to know that because I'm still assuming that we're still using that reflective artwork. When I get a request for it, that's when I'm going to send the file off. I need to know if the park or some other reason there's now been a digital derivative made so that that is what I'm posting, and that's what we're delivering when we're requested.

Wade Myers: 01:06:09 There also seems to be more of a move too that we get a digital deliverable just for the project that we're working

on. For instance, if we're doing a wayside exhibit and the request is that we want the digital files to be 200 PPI, well that's fine if you're doing wayside exhibit. It's not so fine if you're doing an exhibit or a publication. They need a higher resolution digital file.

Wade Myers: 01:06:47 One of the things I've noted is since I don't review these contracts any longer, a lot of this is getting missed. Now, occasionally I will get a phone call from our acquisition management or our procurement office questioning that, and I'll say, "No, we need to make that change. We need to get a higher res digital file. We can always scale down. We can't scale up."

Wade Myers: 01:07:11 Also, by not obtaining the artwork itself, sometimes we're just getting a one-time use for something. That artwork can be sold, and I've seen this happen where the work is sold and then later we need to make a change. If we've got, say, a 200 PPI digital file and we want to use it in exhibits, we can't go back. Well, we can, but it's very, very difficult to then track down who has that original artwork that we can get the artist to agree to make another scan so that we can make a change or getting the artist to agree that these changes that we want to do, he's in agreement with. If the artist is retaining the copyright and the artwork, it sometimes make it difficult for us in the future if we want to make changes or modifications, because you have to get the permission from the artist to do that.

Wade Myers: 01:08:18 One of my concerns is that you have in-house staff then who's not going to contact the artist and understand that they're the copyright holders. You are making a digital derivative of their work. You have to contact them if you're going to do that. You can't just arbitrarily do it. You have to get their permission and say, "We want to make this." You need to I think also give them the option if they want to make that change, because you are basically changing their work, and sometimes they'll agree that it's fine for you to do that, send me a copy of it when you're done so I have it, but I think sometimes the staff now might be a little bit too cavalier about use rights and copyright. They need to understand, particularly with the digital files that we're getting, is that you can't just arbitrarily make a derivative of that work without making sure that you're not violating someone's use rights or copyright.

Nancy Russell: 01:09:24 You suggested that you previously reviewed more of those art contracts than you do now. What did you used to do, and how and why has that changed?

Wade Myers: 01:09:34 Yeah. When we had IDIQ contracts, indefinite deliverables/indefinite quantity contracts, specifically for art services, we had a stable of artists that we could go to. We guaranteed them a minimum amount of work. We had a maximum amount that we couldn't go over. These contracts were renewable every four years. After four years, we would put out an invitation to artists to submit portfolios and let them know what kind of work we had been doing, what kind of work we anticipated doing in the future, and submit portfolios accordingly.

Wade Myers: 01:10:15 Under those IDIQ contracts specifically for art services and as outlined in the Harpers Ferry Center's administrative guideline number five on the purchase and accountability of artwork, I reviewed those contracts, or I reviewed those requisitions. There would be a requisition by a work group that they wanted to move forward with a contract with such-and-such artist for a particular project. I would review those requisitions for procurement and look at the scope of work, also look at the deliverable, what we were purchasing. If I saw that we were not going to maintain the original artwork and that we were only going to have a digital file as our final deliverable, I might say to the contracting office that, one, we didn't have anything already existing in the collection, and two, if we were not going to purchase the artwork outright, then I thought that the price was too high, and we could renegotiate the price, things of that nature.

Wade Myers: 01:11:32 When we shifted from IDIQs specifically for art services and shifted more towards design build or design fabrication IDIQ contracts, that went away. I'm not sure why it went away, but my review of those contracts went away, in part because the task orders that were being written off of those types of contracts didn't always include a specific art element. I don't know whether that's because at the time that the project was moving forward whether nobody was thinking about art for that project and it came up later, was added later, but there wasn't a specific scope of work that you could review for the artwork that was going to be going into some of these contracts. That's been somewhat

problematic, because I think in some cases we already had art in the collection that would meet the needs.

Wade Myers: 01:12:36 Sometimes I think the thought is, "Well, that's old art and we want new art." Well, the old art actually might be what you need, or you could at least submit it as part of a resource package for the artist to be able to use. But I have seen some pretty inferior art coming in. Again, as I mentioned before, a lot of the artwork that's being done through these design build or design fabrication contracts is being subcontracted through that primary contractor. Because we don't have direct communication with those artists, I think the art itself suffers. There's no art direction, and a lot of times I think the CORs who are managing these larger IDIQ contracts don't have art direction skills and therefore can't direct the artist to make changes to certain things. And I think the work suffers for it. Yeah.

Wade Myers: 01:13:55 Now, if we're lucky enough to have artist Richard Schlecht or Bob Hynes as the subcontractor, or Wood Ronson Harlen as the subcontractor, they've done business with us long enough to know what our quality standards are, what we're really looking for in the end, and they can deliver that with spotty communication. Yeah.

Nancy Russell: 01:14:27 Thinking about the almost 12,000 pieces in your collection--

Wade Myers: 01:14:31 I don't like to think about it all the time.

Nancy Russell: 01:14:34 How well represented or not would you say that the work of female or minority artists are?

Wade Myers: 01:14:49 I think female and minority artists are fairly well represented in the collection, and that actually started out early on. They were part of the IDIQ art contracts for art services. We made an effort as part of the technical review process to make sure that we had female artists as part of that work group. The African-American artist Jerry Pinkney has been doing work for the Park Service and the Harpers Ferry Center for decades. Now, unfortunately we don't get to keep his artwork, but he is gracious enough to always allow unlimited use rights, non-commercial use rights, for the Park Service. It's been huge. But women have been well represented in--Celia Strain, Dorothy Michelle Novak, Whitney Sherman. I'm sure I'm leaving a

number of them out, but yeah. We're still doing that even now. We're selecting and trying to diversify the artists and the artwork as well. Yeah.

Nancy Russell: 01:16:20 Great. Can you speak to a little bit about the HFC staff artists? There's some art that has been created by--

Wade Myers: 01:16:28 Sure, yeah. When we refer to HFC staff artists, it's usually the designers that are employed here at Harpers Ferry Center. Some of the early designers like Dan Feaser, and Nick Kirilloff, and Phil Musselwhite, Mitch Zetlin, Bruce Diamond, they're all represented there, but we also make sure that, or I try to make sure that if our current Center staff are creating art pieces that they let me know or that we can identify.

Wade Myers: 01:17:14 Recently when Anita Smith retired here, it's been a number of years ago now, she called me up one day and she said, "I just wanted to let you know that I have some pieces in the collection that are not identified, and I wanted to let you know what they are." I said, "Oh, absolutely. I definitely want to know." Because we're not allowed to sign off or sign artwork, it makes it sometimes difficult to know when it's in-house art and when it's not. She identified several projects for me and several pieces, so I had gone back into the master database and made those corrections. I said, "Is there anything else?" She said, "Yes, but I don't want to admit that I did the work." You do have that problem on occasion.

Wade Myers: 01:18:06 Yeah, we have--Joe Rockwell is another one that's represented in the collection. Well, I take that back. He's represented now in the NPS History Collection, because we transferred the art to the NPS History Collection. But some of these designers were prolific in their illustration. Angie Faulkner is one. She's still illustrating for us. I'm still getting stuff from her. But yeah, some of it's just very simple black and white pen and ink work. Some of it's more involved, full color stuff. Yeah.

Nancy Russell: 01:19:00 What are some of the key things about the collection, or are there other key things about the collection, that you'd want the next collections manager to know?

Wade Myers: 01:19:13 Yes. Key things with the collection. One, we've got to keep on top of the designers and planners to get us those digital

files. I don't know what has happened. The administrative guideline number five on the purchase and accountability of artwork or illustrations includes digital files or computer generated artwork. We knew even back when that was first being worked up that we were moving away from reflective and we were heading towards computer generated, so we specifically put that in the guidelines. For some reason, I think there's been some confusion that I was only interested in getting the reflective art and I didn't need the digital files. I need the digital files. If we have purchased it or commissioned it as artwork and it's coming to us as a computer generated file, I absolutely still need that. We're still spending money on it. We still need to account for it. Yeah, I would definitely say that that's something that they need to stay on top of, because I can see that is becoming a real, real problem.

Wade Myers: 01:20:32 I would also--we've made some strides in this where we're now asking the contractor to make sure that the metadata is embedded in those digital files. I can't tell you how many files I've received that had no metadata in them. Because I'm not involved in the project, I didn't get to review the contracts and such, I'm completely clueless as to what I'm looking at. I don't know who the artist is. A lot of times, the COR on these contracts doesn't know who the artist is. Hopefully, now those things will be rectified with the new IDIQ contracts, because that is one of the things we're requesting is that they embed the metadata in there. We've actually provided them with specific things that we want in as part of that metadata, and one of them is who the artist was.

Wade Myers: 01:21:29 What else do they need to know? It's a big collection. It's a diverse collection. I don't know.

Nancy Russell: 01:21:45 What are some of the challenges that you see for continued management of the collection?

Wade Myers: 01:21:50 Challenges? Well, server space. As we go more towards computer generated artwork, I would say that server space to maintain this material is. That also goes to not just the computer generated artwork, but when we get requests for the illustrations themselves, we're creating fairly large high resolution digital files for users, and that takes up space. I mean I don't have high res digital files on all 12,000 pieces

of artwork because we just don't have the server size space for it.

Wade Myers: 01:22:33 I don't particularly like the idea of having it sitting off site somewhere, because a lot of times when we need this material, we need it like right away. I can't be in a queue waiting 12th in line for something. The Washington Office just doesn't work that way. I would say, yeah, be aware that you need to make sure that your IT staff is aware that you have server needs that need to be addressed and need to be understood that if we're going to be going down this direction of computer generated artwork and we need to maintain it, then we need to have the server space to do it.

Wade Myers: 01:23:29 They need to also be aware that there is a communications disconnect between here, here being Willow Springs, and the main campus in that we can't transfer large files between the two sites. We have timing out problems, so they have to be somewhat creative sometimes in how they get material to us. We don't for instance have access to the media development server. A lot of times, things will be put up on the media development server and they say, "You can get it off of here. I put it in such-and-such folder." I'm like, "Sorry. Don't have access to your server." They at the same time don't have access to our server either. That's something to be aware of, that sometimes it's you've got to come up with a creative way to be able to get the material that you need from media development.

Wade Myers: 01:24:33 Copyright, copyright, copyright. I can't stress that enough. That is a huge, huge concern for me that things are going up on different programs with absolutely no metadata embedded in them at all and then staff are encouraged to use those resources for other projects. We have some very complicated uses with some of this artwork in the collection, and I've been trying very hard to standardize the language with those and make it understandable so that there's no confusion about what we can and what we can't use, how we can use it and how we can't use it, how others can and can't use it.

Wade Myers: 01:25:30 Be aware that a number of the artists that we've been dealing with now are deceased and now we're dealing with representatives, or agents, or estates. Where we had a rapport with those artists, family members can be somewhat vicious. They want what they want and they

want the money. They want the money. It's a resource. That has been problematic in the past, but it hasn't been a huge issue, but I can see that being an issue in the future where the children of the artists now want their money. They want to benefit from their parents' work.

Wade Myers: 01:26:30 I've had others who were grateful that we shared the artwork with them. They knew that their father or mother had done artwork for the Park Service but didn't know the extent of the work. I recently worked with the two daughters of artist Louis Glanzman, Louis S. Glanzman, and they were trying to revive their father's website. They asked if we could provide them with some digital files of the work he'd done for us. He had worked for us for decades. I said, "Sure." I said, "I can even provide you with digital files of his preliminary drawings so you can see the progress, the process he was going through to get to the final work." We were able to provide them with all but three of the illustrations he had done for the Park Service, and there were hundreds. The three that we weren't able to provide were the three that he had retained. He kept the artwork and we simply didn't have a means to get them a digital file. But they were grateful for us being able to provide that body of work.

Nancy Russell: 01:27:54 That legacy.

Wade Myers: 01:27:54 That legacy. It also in some cases kept them from having to figure out how they could get their dad's work photographed or scanned for their needs. Yeah. But yeah, I can see in the future where this could be problematic where the children of the artists now are looking at this as a way to get more money and not why their mom or dad did the work in the first place.

Wade Myers: 01:28:30 A lot of the work that we have in the collection or acquired for the collection, the artists knew that this was going--the work that they were doing was going to go far in the sense that there were visitors from all over the world that were going to see this work. They were going to pick up the park brochure and take it back with them or whatever. This would lead to additional commissions for them.

Nancy Russell: 01:28:58 Good exposure.

Wade Myers:	01:28:58	Good exposure. They were not looking to soak the government for all it was worth and ask for exorbitant prices for the artwork. They saw benefit in doing the work for the government for the exposure and therefore getting other work. There was a lot of times where National Geographic and the National Park Service were using the same artists. We would see the work in Geographic or they would see it in the Park Service, and that would generate new work for the artists. Sometimes artists would say, "My schedule is full. I'm already doing this for so-and-so and I just don't have the time," so we would have to find another artist within the IDIQ contracts to do that.
Wade Myers:	01:29:55	But now with the families, it's more of "what can I get out of government?" "You want to use this again? Sure, but it'll cost you." We're like, "Sorry, we can't. We can't pay that," and we have to move on to something else. Yeah, I would say you just need to be aware of now as the artists are passing away and you're dealing with artist representatives or family members that things might be a little different. Where it was more of a "Sure. I have no problem with you doing that," you might find more resistance that way.
Nancy Russell:	01:30:40	I mean the reflective art, put it in a good environment, temperature, relative humidity control, light control, proper handling techniques--
Wade Myers:	01:30:50	Right, yes.
Nancy Russell:	01:30:50	It'll be around a really long time.
Wade Myers:	01:30:53	Yes, yeah. That was one of the reasons Dave Wright specifically wanted that collection here at Willow Springs was there was a temperature controlled and relative humidity controlled environment here, and he saw the value of putting it in that environment to extend its longevity.
Nancy Russell:	01:31:14	Do you have concerns about the longevity of the digital files and how to manage the various software formats that it comes into you as?
Wade Myers:	01:31:22	I do, because we're finding now as we keep changing the Adobe Photoshop software that there was a time when some of the older Photoshop files could not be read. Now, thankfully they've changed that. But yeah, there's a

concern. There's a concern for what we call digital rot, so that if you don't refresh and you don't migrate the digital files to new formats and just open them up on occasion or whatever that we do run the risk of digital rot. And that's happened.

Wade Myers: 01:32:04 I've seen that quite a bit with our wayside exhibit program work where I knew that we had a transparency of a work but I also knew that we probably had a digital file of it, or I knew we didn't have a transparency of the work and I knew that we probably had a digital file. I would go back and ask, "Do you have a digital file of this?" which would keep me from having to pull the work and try to re-scan it. They would look at it and say, "Oh, we can't send this to you. It's got digital rot." It usually shows up as a series of horizontal lines in the digital file, and you can see where there's data loss in that.

Wade Myers: 01:32:50 Yeah, that's a huge concern, because we have not been very good at the Center about migrating our digital files and keeping things fresh. I don't know why. I mean that's been a concern for a number of years and a number of staff people have raised this issue, but we still don't seem to be moving in that direction. I'm hoping we will at some point, because I think it's going to be important, because as we do more and more of our work digitally and we may go back in five or six years to rehab something, we're going to find that we're in trouble because we have not been refreshing or migrating information. Yeah.

Nancy Russell: 01:33:41 What accomplishments with the art collection are you most proud of during your time?

Wade Myers: 01:33:46 Wow!

Nancy Russell: 01:33:49 Tiny question.

Wade Myers: 01:33:49 Tiny question, yeah. Why don't you ask me to write an acceptance speech for the Nobel Peace Prize? Wow. That is really hard to say.

Wade Myers: 01:34:04 I'm proud at a number of the documentaries or programs that the work has been used in, several of which people will probably never know. The work was not used in the Ken Burns documentary on the National Parks by the way, much to my sadness.

Wade Myers: 01:34:33 Having an opportunity to meet a number of these artists and talk to them about the work, and the thought process, and the process of working through a difficult problem or an impasse or something of that nature. I had an opportunity to meet on several occasions Leonard Baskin. I got to meet Charley Harper on a couple of occasions, talk to Charley about his work. I got to speak with Heinrich Berann, Bob Hynes, Richard Schlecht. There are others though that I wish I'd been able to meet that were long gone before I even started working with the collection.

Wade Myers: 01:35:18 I don't know. I'm always excited when I can hear on the other end of the phone a park employee get really excited about finding the collection and looking at the collection and then realizing, "I can get this for free, and I can get it when?" Because I guess their thought was, "I'm desperate. I need something, but I don't know what I need. Can you help me?" and the fact that I can help you and it's not going to cost you anything. This resource you can go back to over and over and over again. If you don't see something on the website, by all means contact me, because I can't get everything up as soon as I would like and I might have something that will meet your needs.

Wade Myers: 01:36:13 Yeah, I'm satisfied with their excitement and like, "Good. Here's somebody else who will pass the word along." Sometimes I'll get people who call and say, "Hey, I heard from so-and-so about your art collection and I'm interested in it."

Wade Myers: 01:36:35 I also know that when the website would go down on occasion, I would get a lot of phone calls. People had bookmarked that, particularly people in the Washington Office had bookmarked it, and when it went down, my phone rang off the hook, my emails would blow up because they wanted to know when it was coming back, was this a permanent thing, when could they expect to get it back on there, because they were definitely using it as a resource and missed it when it wasn't available to them. It was also interesting to me too because I wouldn't necessarily be aware that the site was down, so then I could send a request into IT to see what the problem was, see if they could fix it.

Wade Myers: 01:37:22 But yeah, that's a pretty broad question.

Nancy Russell: 01:37:27 Well--

Wade Myers: 01:37:28 Because I've worked with it for so long, I just--I mean there's been so many projects. Yeah.

Nancy Russell: 01:37:38 But even things like digitizing the collection, making it available initially online, presumably that initial database was something that--which we're now transitioning to NPGallery, was a big step forward for the program.

Wade Myers: 01:37:52 It was huge. That was decided in the early 90s, that we needed to have some sort of a resource, some sort of a searchable database that not only the Center staff but the parks staff could access and use to see what we had. I mean it was one thing to know what you had in Publications, but it was something else again to know what we had in Wayside Exhibits, or Exhibits, or Historic Furnishings for that matter to see if that could be incorporated into a project. Sometimes the park staff would say as a park was being worked up, would say, "Hey, we want to use this artwork we had in our publication." That might be the first time that wayside exhibit staff even was aware that illustration existed in there. It was huge, but it was a decision that was made early on and Dave Wright was willing to make the investment in it, try to get us the equipment and the resources.

Wade Myers: 01:39:03 The way that was working originally was that I would submit the database records and the JPG files through our web manager, David Gilbert, and he was using a ColdFusion program that he had tweaked in order for this to work so that we could push this out. As I had more material come forward, I would always push that through Dave. Well, when he left the Center, that went away and I couldn't get anybody in our IT group to look at that program and be able to continue it or migrate us into something else that would work just as well. Unfortunately, it's been a number of years since we've updated the database.

Wade Myers: 01:39:55 I am somewhat excited to see this move into NPGallery, and I say that with some hesitation because the general public now will have access to this collection, which they haven't had before. They've had access to it through the various media types, publications, wayside exhibits, exhibits, and that sort of thing, and the webpages, but they haven't been able to actually search it themselves. I'm a little concerned about the number of requests that will be

coming in now from the general public as well as the Park Service, because there'll be more Park Service staff and hopefully more requests coming from the Park Service.

Wade Myers: 01:40:43 Yeah, the person coming in behind me is probably going to be a bit overwhelmed. I would suggest that they think about pushing for a cost recovery program. I think a cost recovery program, I think, will keep John Q. and Jane Q. Public from just asking for everything. "I want all the illustrations you have on Yellowstone." That's several hundred, and I maybe only have a dozen of those scanned as high res digital files. I'm hoping that a cost recovery program will focus them a little bit more about what they really want.

Wade Myers: 01:41:33 I can also see this going into things like, "I want that picture so I can blow it up and hang it in my living room." Occasionally we get those requests now. I could see that really, really increasing when we shift over to NPGallery. That's not to say that a cost recovery program is not going to deter that kind of request, but I think it will deter a number of people from making that kind of request. Yeah.

Nancy Russell: 01:42:12 Great. Well, is there anything else that you think we need to know about the art collection at this moment?

Wade Myers: 01:42:23 Yeah. We need to think about increasing the size of the painting racks, because even though we're moving away from reflective art, we are still doing reflective art. We're buying bigger pieces as opposed to smaller multiple pieces. We seem to be heading in the other direction where we're buying larger pieces. Storage of that is going to be a bit problematic. We have a limited amount of space at the moment on the painting rack, but we're getting these really large pieces when we still are doing reflective artwork. Yeah, that's something to keep in mind too.

Wade Myers: 01:43:06 A compact storage unit would be good to think about in the future for storage. That would eliminate the need for map cabinets or map files. That would also transition the material that's in the archival boxes and that storage system into a better system. It would allow for expansion of the collection as well if we continue to do reflective work. It may also be--if they decide that they want to, I don't know whether they'll do this, but they want to keep backup disks or that sort of thing for the stuff that's digital. My guess is that eventually it'll all go, the digital stuff will all go to the

Reston office and be backed up in the Reston office. But again, with our connectivity issues here at Willow Springs, that could be a problem with trying to retrieve the work when we need to be able to retrieve the work. Again, something to think about.

Wade Myers: 01:44:25 I'm not opposed to that going to the Reston office. What I'm concerned about is our connectivity issues, and how quickly we will be able to get to the material when we need to get it, and will we be able to get the material transferred completely from here to Reston and Reston and back. Can we, without getting a government vehicle and driving our stuff down there, which I'm not--that just makes no sense to me at all. That when we need to put more material up, we can do it without literally driving it down to Reston. But when we need to retrieve it, we're not having to go down to Reston and actually sit in a room somewhere and try to retrieve it and then drive it back up to the Center. Yeah. Yeah, all things to think about.

Wade Myers: 01:45:25 More staff perhaps. At least one more person, because when this goes to NPGallery, we're going to be swamped with requests. Swamped with requests. Yeah. I think maybe at least one additional person would be helpful. Yeah.

Nancy Russell: 01:45:49 Okay.

Wade Myers: 01:45:51 Okay.

Nancy Russell: 01:45:52 Well, thank you for this edition of Wednesdays with Wade.

Wade Myers: 01:45:56 You're welcome.

END OF RECORDING