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NPS Oral History Collection (HFCA 1817)  
Dorothy Huyck's National Park Service Oral History Project, 1942-1987



Laura Wilson  
September 20, 1978

Interview conducted by Dorothy B. Huyck  
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[START OF TAPE 1, SIDE A]

Dorothy Huyck: 00:00 —1978. I'm Dorothy Huyck. I will be interviewing Laura Wilson who is a landscape architect in the Southwest Regional Office, Santa Fe. Can I ask how you first became acquainted with the National Park Service?

Laura Wilson: 00:20 The National Park Service is well known for employing landscape architects. And so, I heard about it when I was in college and I actually applied for a summer job, which I never got a response for. And so, I thought, "Well, they just don't hire women." So, I didn't try again.

Dorothy Huyck: 00:36 No one responded at all?

Laura Wilson: 00:37 No, no.

Dorothy Huyck: 00:38 When was this?

Laura Wilson: 00:39 I was in college studying landscape architecture between '49 and '53.

Dorothy Huyck: 00:49 And when did you first apply?

Laura Wilson: 00:50 It must've been the summer of '51 or '52. I'm not sure.

Dorothy Huyck: 00:58 What was that [crosstalk 00:01:02]?

Laura Wilson: 01:01 And I wrote in an application, never got an answer.

Dorothy Huyck: 01:04 Inauspicious beginning, huh? [inaudible 00:01:07].

Laura Wilson: 01:09 When I graduated, I went to work in a private office in Washington for a lady who was well in her late years, lady landscape architect. And then moved to San Francisco, worked for somebody who was a friend of hers. And a friend of my boss in San Francisco worked for the Park Service and encouraged me to come to work for the Park Service. So that's the way it happened.

Dorothy Huyck: 01:42 And when did you finally find yourself employed?

Laura Wilson: 01:46 I came to work for the Park Service in February of '57.

Dorothy Huyck: 01:53 In San Francisco?

Laura Wilson: 01:53 In San Francisco. At what then was WODC.

Dorothy Huyck: 01:58 WODC? What does it stand for?

Laura Wilson: 02:01 Western Office of Design and Construction.

Dorothy Huyck: 02:06 Where did you attend college?

Laura Wilson: 02:07 Iowa.

Dorothy Huyck: 02:08 The University of Iowa, or Iowa State?

Laura Wilson: 02:10 It's now called Iowa State University. It was Iowa State.

Dorothy Huyck: 02:13 [inaudible 00:02:16].

Laura Wilson: 02:14 Right. And my supervisor and the person who encouraged me to join the Park Service was also an Iowa State graduate.

Dorothy Huyck: 02:26 Were you born in Iowa?

Laura Wilson: 02:31 No. No.

Dorothy Huyck: 02:32 Where were you born?

Laura Wilson: 02:34 I was born in Columbus, Ohio, July 9, 1930.

Dorothy Huyck: 02:42 Where are you, by chance, an only child?

Laura Wilson: 02:44 No, I have a brother.

Dorothy Huyck: 02:46 Is he older or younger?

Laura Wilson: 02:47 Two years younger. He was born in Brazil, and I was returned to Brazil at the age of three months. So, I was raised in Brazil. Grew up there.

Dorothy Huyck: 02:59 You grew up in Brazil. Where in Brazil?

Laura Wilson: 03:00 Rio.

Dorothy Huyck: 03:03 What was your father's occupation?

Laura Wilson: 03:05 He was in business and he managed a pharmaceutical and cosmetic factory and wholesale sales, import.

Dorothy Huyck: 03:21 Was he a college graduate?

Laura Wilson: 03:22 Oh, yes.

Dorothy Huyck: 03:22 And your mom?

Laura Wilson: 03:23 Also.

Dorothy Huyck: 03:26 Was she fairly occupied keeping up with life in Rio? Or did she have some career also?

Laura Wilson: 03:31 No, she taught nursing. She was a nurse and she taught nursing some during the war. But otherwise, and I think that was volunteer. I don't believe she got paid for it. So otherwise, she wasn't employed.

Dorothy Huyck: 03:50 Did you graduate high school in Rio?

Laura Wilson: 03:52 Yes.

Dorothy Huyck: 03:53 From an American school?

Laura Wilson: 03:54 It was an American school.

Dorothy Huyck: 03:58 You're bilingual Portuguese I presume?

Laura Wilson: 04:00 Right.

Dorothy Huyck: 04:03 And then you went to Iowa state?

Laura Wilson: 04:07 Yes. And enrolled in home economics. Didn't find out about landscape architecture until I was there.

Dorothy Huyck: 04:13 Did you change your major then?

Laura Wilson: 04:14 Yes.

Dorothy Huyck: 04:20 While you were going through the American school in Rio and later on in college, your parents were still in Rio when you were in college?

Laura Wilson: 04:25 Right.

Dorothy Huyck: 04:28 Who were the people who were encouraging you in the educational process? Was it members of your family or teachers? Maybe none of them?

Laura Wilson: 04:42 Nobody really.

Dorothy Huyck: 04:42 No one. In high school, did you take math and science courses?

Laura Wilson: 04:46 Yes.

Dorothy Huyck: 04:46 Were these courses more frequently taken by boys?

Laura Wilson: 04:51 There wasn't any choice in my high school. Everybody took the same thing. They were all college prep courses.

Dorothy Huyck: 05:03 And anybody consider you a tomboy at that time?

Laura Wilson: 05:05 No.

Dorothy Huyck: 05:05 You were never thought of as a tomboy.

Laura Wilson: 05:08 No.

Dorothy Huyck: 05:08 Did you play with boys as a child?

Laura Wilson: 05:10 Yes.

Dorothy Huyck: 05:10 I'm presuming you had to travel to National Parks [inaudible 00:05:15] overseas, is that right?

Laura Wilson: 05:19 That's right, but we had a summer home in Brazil near a Brazilian national park.

Dorothy Huyck: 05:27 Which one was that?

Laura Wilson: 05:29 I don't know the name of it now.

Dorothy Huyck: 05:38 You went to work for a lady landscape architect from Washington. And then in transferring to San Francisco, you first came in contact with someone who encouraged you, I gather, to think of to think of Parks [crosstalk 00:05:49].

Laura Wilson: 05:49 Right.

Dorothy Huyck: 05:50 Did that person or any other person serve as a mentor as far as your Park Service career is concerned?

Laura Wilson: 05:56 What would a mentor be doing?

Dorothy Huyck: 05:58 Well, a supporter or encourager, a backer.

Laura Wilson: 06:03 He's very supportive.

Dorothy Huyck: 06:07 Did you work with him? When you [inaudible 00:06:09]?

Laura Wilson: 06:08 Yes, I did. His name was Al Kuehl. He's since retired. K-U-E-H-L

Dorothy Huyck: 06:16 K-U-E-H-L. So, he would be a person that provided encouragement?

Laura Wilson: 06:23 Yes, he did. He was very supportive, very encouraging.

Dorothy Huyck: 06:26 Among your supervisors, whoever they may have been since then, have these persons been encouraging or discouraging? Or maybe both?

Laura Wilson: 06:36 Or neither.

Dorothy Huyck: 06:36 Or neither.

Laura Wilson: 06:37 Yeah.

Dorothy Huyck: 06:38 Neutral.

Laura Wilson: 06:39 Somewhat neutral.

Dorothy Huyck: 06:41 Which means you really have given an awful lot of back by anybody. What grade did you enter the Park Service as?

Laura Wilson: 06:51 As a nine.

Dorothy Huyck: 06:52 And what grade are you now?

Laura Wilson: 06:53 12.

Dorothy Huyck: 06:57 How long were you in San Francisco?

Laura Wilson: 07:03 Left there in '71, the last part of the year. Arrived here on the first of '72.

Dorothy Huyck: 07:07 So you'd been there for about 14 years.

Laura Wilson: 07:09 Mm-hmm (affirmative).

- Dorothy Huyck: 07:11 What particular landscape projects would you be working on?
- Laura Wilson: 07:15 I consider myself very fortunate which also is a result of my being female and working into the position of being the landscape architect. So, I did all of the projects relating to buildings, all of the landscape architecture projects. I didn't get the field work or the supervision of construction, the guys get there. But I got what I really felt I had was strong in, which was detailed design, construction around buildings.
- Dorothy Huyck: 07:52 And what particular buildings did you work on?
- Laura Wilson: 07:57 The highlight was Cabrillo National Monument.
- Dorothy Huyck: 07:59 You worked on all... The lighthouse?
- Laura Wilson: 08:05 No, the visitor center and all of the development around it. The architect designed... Before I came in, the building was built. There are three buildings, and they were on the ground. So, I had to develop the area around it, tie it into the ground floor walks. And had a very short period of time to do that. We got a departmental award for that. And I also got a Garden Club award for that, California Garden Club award for the design. So, that was very good.
- Dorothy Huyck: 08:43 I don't remember, is there landscaping around the lighthouse itself?
- Laura Wilson: 08:47 There are plantings.
- Dorothy Huyck: 08:48 Plantings.
- Laura Wilson: 08:50 That's been there a long, long time. Some walks.
- Dorothy Huyck: 08:53 And what other sites did you work on?
- Laura Wilson: 08:59 And I worked on the Yellowstone Visitor Center and the Redwood National Park Visitor Center.
- Dorothy Huyck: 09:03 The Yellowstone Visitor Center at Old Faithful?
- Laura Wilson: 09:07 Old Faithful. The site. That's a difficult job because there are too many people involved, too many critics. And then I don't consider it really too much of a highlight in my

career. The Redwoods National Park was a nice project, that hasn't been completed totally according to the plan. That was the last one I did for the service center before service center moved and I came here.

- Dorothy Huyck: 09:40 You came here, at the time the Service Center literally went to Denver. I see. Then in coming here...
- Laura Wilson: 09:55 Another visitor center site plan I felt came out very well is Lehman Caves National Monument.
- Dorothy Huyck: 10:01 I'm sorry to say I haven't been there so I don't...
- Laura Wilson: 10:05 It's beautiful. They are beautiful [crosstalk 00:10:08].
- Dorothy Huyck: 10:06 What came out particularly about it since I've never been there?
- Laura Wilson: 10:08 It's the siting of the building to the ground and then developing the land around it through for flow. It fits very nicely. It's one cave that's accessible to handicap, they can go into the first room. And all the building is set on the side of the hill and there's steps going up to it. We've arranged it so the handicap can drive to the back and have direct access to the cave. And then if they want to go in the building, then we've provided a ramp from there down into the building. And that was a long time ago.
- Dorothy Huyck: 10:55 Are you intending to do more things of that sort for handicap access?
- Laura Wilson: 10:59 I've always provided it if I could.
- Dorothy Huyck: 11:01 Yes, because Yellowstone is [inaudible 00:11:08].
- Laura Wilson: 11:06 Yellowstone is more or less flat. So, there's no problem there. I mean the Old Faithful area.
- Dorothy Huyck: 11:16 And since you've come to Santa Fe, what in particular have you been designing?
- Laura Wilson: 11:24 There hasn't really been much in design here. Little brush firework here and there, small jobs.
- Dorothy Huyck: 11:37 For example, what are you looking at right now?

- Laura Wilson: 11:38 Right now, I just came back from a trip to Hot Springs to help the superintendent come up with a plan for utilizing a piece of property where they want to remove a building. Which was the... It's an old building, high-maintenance, and it was superintendent's residence. I was too expensive to keep up. So, he came up with the idea of using it as a place for some of the old people who live nearby or they can come and see the birds sit and enjoy it. There's some nice old trees there.
- Dorothy Huyck: 12:16 Will the inside of the building be used, therefore?
- Laura Wilson: 12:16 No, the building will be torn down.
- Dorothy Huyck: 12:17 I see.
- Laura Wilson: 12:19 He wants to do something to show the people around there. He thinks that there might be a little bit of concern about tearing down that old building. I went through it and it's not a classic. It's just a plain old building. It's old and high ceilings, but they didn't use the best materials.
- Dorothy Huyck: 12:52 In effect, then, it will become something like a park?
- Laura Wilson: 12:52 It'll become a little garden, a little park. Lawns and trees.
- Dorothy Huyck: 12:56 And who's landscaping that?
- Laura Wilson: 12:59 Just providing walks. The main thing I'm doing now is I'll come up with the drawing that can be used as a display drawing so he can show people who're coming in.
- Dorothy Huyck: 13:09 And prior to this particular project, what have you most recently been working on?
- Laura Wilson: 13:20 I done a little work for LBJ and bus loading areas. And I'm working on a project at Bandelier for moving a utility area and horse facility.
- Dorothy Huyck: 13:37 Landscape architects are obviously not limited to planting plants and trees.
- Laura Wilson: 13:41 No, I do very little in plants and trees. Very little.
- Dorothy Huyck: 13:48 You get into site planning or?

- Laura Wilson: 13:48 Right. And even on a job like in Cabrillo that was a total landscape development job, the planting's only small part of it. It's the last little cosmetic treatment. I prefer design, if possible, to leave things natural.
- Dorothy Huyck: 14:09 Does the National Parks provide particular breadth of opportunity for a landscape architect? Or is the [inaudible 00:14:17] true of many people in the profession, they're not doing solely with plants and trees but the entire site?
- Laura Wilson: 14:24 Right. There are variety of jobs that landscape architects handle. Some of them don't even get into the type of design that I do, or that I have. They do broader things. They locate roads. Do large-scale planning that doesn't get into detail at all.
- Dorothy Huyck: 14:47 So you're especially into details?
- Laura Wilson: 14:51 That's the thing I like to do.
- Dorothy Huyck: 14:54 Are there other landscape architects in this region?
- Laura Wilson: 14:58 Right here in the regional office, we have one under maintenance. It's Bob [inaudible 00:15:03]. And then my supervisor is a landscape architect. And there's another landscape architect working with me. So, there are four of us.
- Dorothy Huyck: 15:14 Speaking of supervisors. As you look at the persons who have been your supervisors in the time that you have been in the Park Service, has it made a difference that you're a woman? I know you mentioned that briefly.
- Laura Wilson: 15:27 Yes, it has.
- Dorothy Huyck: 15:28 Has that been pro or con in terms of your opportunities?
- Laura Wilson: 15:30 Both. In looking in the promotional, as they were promoting people into slots, a lot of the positions that came open were field positions.
- Dorothy Huyck: 15:46 Field positions?
- Laura Wilson: 15:49 Field positions. Yeah. People would have to go out in the field and supervise construction for a period of months. There was a lot of that on at the service. And most of the

landscape architects would go out in the field for a long time. And I was being passed over on it. So, I went to the head landscape architect in charge of design, talked to him and suggested that there might be an opportunity there to set up a position in the office for design, for the specific kind of design that I did. So, he agreed with it, and we did have a design section. So, I worked into the slack. And I think it's been a good move, or was, in the service.

- Dorothy Huyck: 16:42 So the fact you were being passed over for these field positions gave you the impetus to check out the possibility of a design slot.
- Laura Wilson: 16:56 Which they hadn't considered and hadn't come out. The design was being done, but they weren't considering it as an organization.
- Dorothy Huyck: 17:06 So you took the initiative in this regard and you got a good response. Have there been other instances in which being a female has worked to your advantage or disadvantage in terms of other opportunities?
- Laura Wilson: 17:24 Oh, it's hard to say. It's really hard to say.
- Dorothy Huyck: 17:27 Well, some people certainly consider that the Park Service is a very male-orientated organization, has that been your experience?
- Laura Wilson: 17:34 Yes, that's true.
- Dorothy Huyck: 17:38 In what way have you experienced that?
- Laura Wilson: 17:39 There seems to be an emphasis on the male, the field, because the parks are all in the country, that the male suitability for these types of positions. And all of the supervisors have always been male only.
- Dorothy Huyck: 18:03 And, of course, you were in a very urban setting in San Francisco.
- Laura Wilson: 18:05 Right.
- Dorothy Huyck: 18:06 Not in the least bit rural.
- Laura Wilson: 18:07 No. But all of the designers and landscape architects and engineers did go out in the field. The architects didn't.

They took a few trips, but they were desk. Very few of them get out in the field.

- Dorothy Huyck: 18:28 Have you been given opportunities to take additional coursework or training since you've been in the Park Service?
- Laura Wilson: 18:37 No.
- Dorothy Huyck: 18:37 Have you asked for it?
- Laura Wilson: 18:42 Well, I have had the regular Park Service training type things.
- Dorothy Huyck: 18:45 [inaudible 00:18:49].
- Laura Wilson: 18:48 In service, right. So, I have to have them.
- Dorothy Huyck: 18:51 Such as?
- Laura Wilson: 18:54 Well, I finally got into an introduction to Park Service course at Albright after it had been going for a while.
- Dorothy Huyck: 19:00 When did you [inaudible 00:19:02]?
- Laura Wilson: 19:02 I can't remember the date. And I've taken some of those supervisors'. I don't think I ever finished one of those on supervision because it was such a badly run course, in my estimation. [inaudible 00:19:22] letter-writing, these small courses, but nothing in the professional life. I'm a member of the American Society of Landscape Architects. And I have attended some of the meetings.
- Dorothy Huyck: 19:37 Have you given papers at all?
- Laura Wilson: 19:39 No, I haven't.
- Dorothy Huyck: 19:43 You've certainly been allowed to attend those, as far as the Park Service.
- Laura Wilson: 19:47 Some.
- Dorothy Huyck: 19:48 Some.
- Laura Wilson: 19:50 Out of San Francisco, up there. Of course, all of the meetings that were in San Francisco, I attended on my own.

The ones that involved travel, they sent somebody else, if they sent anybody. Unless it was close by, they did send a few of us to Yosemite a couple of times.

- Dorothy Huyck: 20:17 Would you say your particular talents and abilities are being well used by the Park Service?
- Laura Wilson: 20:20 Not really.
- Dorothy Huyck: 20:20 Why not?
- Laura Wilson: 20:26 Partly because the type of work isn't done very much around here. So, it's partly utilized. It's mostly service center function.
- Dorothy Huyck: 20:41 Does this suggest that you would really be better working in Denver?
- Laura Wilson: 20:41 For the type of work I do, yeah. I'm not sure, some of my friends who are architects, good designers, they're not doing design. So, I don't know whether I'd be that well utilized there.
- Dorothy Huyck: 20:57 Where your talents better utilized when you were in the San Francisco office?
- Laura Wilson: 21:00 Yes.
- Dorothy Huyck: 21:01 Then what happened between San Francisco and Santa Fe?
- Laura Wilson: 21:06 Well, I got moved here and that type of work isn't done here. Since I was working on the main visitor centers, big buildings.
- Dorothy Huyck: 21:19 There are no visitor centers being built in this region?
- Laura Wilson: 21:22 If they are, they're done in the Service Center. And I don't do the segment. I can comment on it.
- Dorothy Huyck: 21:30 Are there any jobs in the Park Service that you think a woman really ought not to tackle?
- Laura Wilson: 21:43 I wouldn't venture to say it because I think a woman can tackle just about anything.
- Dorothy Huyck: 21:47 So, off hand, you don't think of anything?

Laura Wilson: 21:50 Depends upon where their talents lie. There are things that I wouldn't want to do.

Dorothy Huyck: 21:55 But some other woman might [crosstalk 00:21:56].

Laura Wilson: 21:55 Some other woman might.

Dorothy Huyck: 21:57 And what do you see for women in the future as far as the Park Service is concerned, say five or ten years from now, in terms of opportunity?

Laura Wilson: 22:16 For professional women?

Dorothy Huyck: 22:17 Yes, exactly.

Laura Wilson: 22:22 Well, I think the opportunities are good. And I don't know what the general feeling is on the Park Service for hiring women yet. Because when I was working in the Service Center, there were women who applied and were turned down.

Dorothy Huyck: 22:38 For a good reason?

Laura Wilson: 22:39 No.

Dorothy Huyck: 22:41 Because they were women.

Laura Wilson: 22:45 Mainly. And in one case, they almost as much as said, "We already have one."

Dorothy Huyck: 22:51 [inaudible 00:22:53].

Laura Wilson: 22:53 Yeah.

Dorothy Huyck: 22:55 This suggests that you were the token woman?

Laura Wilson: 22:57 It seemed like it. I was the lucky one to get in. But that was through personnel. It's mainly the personnel. My supervisor was encouraging, didn't any qualms about hiring women.

Dorothy Huyck: 23:16 Is that true of your supervisors here?

Laura Wilson: 23:19 I don't really know.

Dorothy Huyck: 23:23 Well, would this person be encouraging as far as you're concerned?

Laura Wilson: 23:23 Here?

Dorothy Huyck: 23:23 Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Laura Wilson: 23:29 It's hard to say.

Dorothy Huyck: 23:34 So [inaudible 00:23:35] if you were talking to a young person just out of college, let's say, with a newly minted landscape architect degree, would you encourage her to join the National Park Service?

Laura Wilson: 23:47 No. I always encourage them to go into private practice first, because there's certain experiences that aren't gained in the Parks Service that are beneficial to the Parks Service, then come to work here.

Dorothy Huyck: 24:08 What would that include? What kind of experience would that include that they would not get in the Park Service but would get in private practice.

Laura Wilson: 24:10 In private practice, you get more of the detail, construction, residential, a lot of residential work, even small city parks, that you never do in the Park Service.

Dorothy Huyck: 24:18 [inaudible 00:24:19].

Laura Wilson: 24:21 Yes. I think people that come directly to work for the Park Service miss a lot of good experience.

Dorothy Huyck: 24:31 What about the person who has had some experience as a private practitioner or landscape architecture, would you then encourage that person if this were a woman, to think of a Park Service career? Do think there would be opportunities?

Laura Wilson: 24:48 Sure. There certainly are. Good opportunities for landscape architects in the National Park Service.

Dorothy Huyck: 24:55 And for landscape architects who are females?

Laura Wilson: 24:57 Shouldn't make a difference if they're good.

Dorothy Huyck: 25:02 Is that the point that's going to make a difference? Their being good? Is that what's going to be the first consideration rather than whether they're a man or a woman?

Laura Wilson: 25:12 I don't know. It should be the consideration, whether they're male or female, that the Park Service would hire the good ones, but I'm not sure that's true.

Dorothy Huyck: 25:24 Can I ask if you have ever been married?

Laura Wilson: 25:28 Yes, I have.

Dorothy Huyck: 25:29 When was that?

Laura Wilson: 25:30 For very short period of time.

Dorothy Huyck: 25:44 When was that?

Laura Wilson: 25:44 In '63.

Dorothy Huyck: 25:44 And you were divorced?

Laura Wilson: 25:44 '64 or something.

Dorothy Huyck: 25:44 And there were no children?

Laura Wilson: 25:44 No.

Dorothy Huyck: 25:49 Have you any responsibilities for any other person who are members of your family?

Laura Wilson: 25:50 No. My parents are both deceased.

Dorothy Huyck: 25:54 I've been asking you all these questions, quite a collection of them. Is there anything we have not talked about concerning your career in the Park Service that you'd like to comment on?

Laura Wilson: 26:12 Can't think of anything, right off. I don't know if it's interest, but while I'm working for the Park Service, I've also developed a side career as a sculptor. I did in San Francisco. I haven't done as much with it here. Just seem to be so many other things-

Dorothy Huyck: 26:30 What medium do you do your sculpting in?

Laura Wilson: 26:31 It's mainly metal welding. I contributed in my work towards a little ship that's on the sign of Cabrillo. I did that one, but that's the only thing that Parks Service has that I did.

Dorothy Huyck: 26:48 And where have others of your works ended up?

Laura Wilson: 26:51 I sold some to private parties. Otherwise, I have them.

Dorothy Huyck: 26:55 And you're continuing to pursue this side [inaudible 00:26:58].

Laura Wilson: 27:00 I'm still interested in it. I haven't really done too much work in it.

Dorothy Huyck: 27:02 Does this area provide you with subject matter for a sculpture?

Laura Wilson: 27:09 It makes a good balance because I do get some ideas from the park work.

Dorothy Huyck: 27:22 Do you maintain a studio?

Laura Wilson: 27:23 I'm in the process of having one built. It's almost finished. The contractor's dragging now so I don't know what's going to happen.

Dorothy Huyck: 27:33 Considering all the artistic community in Santa Fe, it's very appropriate.

Laura Wilson: 27:43 When I first arrived here, I had a show up here at St. John's, an exhibit of my work. But I'm kind of amazed that I haven't done more with it here because I was really active in it in San Francisco.

Dorothy Huyck: 27:53 Something you intend to go back to? [inaudible 00:27:59].

Laura Wilson: 27:58 Oh, yes.

Dorothy Huyck: 27:59 I'm glad you mentioned it. Anything else?

Laura Wilson: 28:11 I don't know [inaudible 00:28:11] interest I've also trained as religious science practitioner. So, I'm in a position to do counseling of that type, it's not really counseling, and assistance to people.

Dorothy Huyck: 28:25 And is there a group here in Santa Fe that call upon you?

Laura Wilson: 28:28 There's a group I'm associated with. That hasn't developed fully as yet.

Dorothy Huyck: 28:38 That's in process.

Laura Wilson: 28:53 That's in process. Well, my feeling right now is that there's... I'm working part time. I don't know if you know that?

Dorothy Huyck: 29:00 No, I didn't know that.

Laura Wilson: 29:01 I requested it because I had a pressure of things that I was doing on my own. Requested one day off a week, and they didn't buy that so I'm on two days off a week. Working three days. And so right now, I don't really know where my career is going in the Park Service. I have a feeling that I can handle more than I'm handling, and I don't know what changes are in store. What might open up that I could move in to.

[END OF TAPE 1, SIDE A]

[START OF TAPE 1, SIDE B]

Laura Wilson: 00:00 Western Office Design and Construction, which then became The Service Center.

Dorothy Huyck: 00:03 The Denver Service Center. [crosstalk 00:00:05].

Laura Wilson: 00:06 Became The San Francisco Service Center-

Dorothy Huyck: 00:09 Which, eventually moved to Denver—

Laura Wilson: 00:12 Which moved to Denver.

Dorothy Huyck: 00:12 Sorry. Yes.

Laura Wilson: 00:12 And then, there was a gal, Darwina-

Dorothy Huyck: 00:16 Darwina Neal.

Laura Wilson: 00:17 Neal, who was hired in Washington, so she was. And there were a couple of other lady landscape architects who were

hired in Philadelphia. I think they have since left the park service. Darwina's still with park service.

Dorothy Huyck: 00:35

But you preceded Darwina.

Laura Wilson: 00:36

Yes.

Dorothy Huyck: 00:37

So, you must've cut some new ground as the first female landscape architect.

Laura Wilson: 00:41

I hope so, I don't know. [inaudible 00:00:45]

[TAPE RESTARTS]

Laura Wilson: 00:01

But my experience is with the people in the park service, it hasn't been so much. I found some in the contractors. At least one refused to work or to do anything that I asked.

Dorothy Huyck: 00:17

These were contractors outside of the park service?

Laura Wilson: 00:20

Outside of the park service and in the field. But that didn't matter because I wasn't inspector anyway, so they didn't have to do what I asked. The inspector had to tell them.

Dorothy Huyck: 00:34

You're to be the first female landscape architect to join the park service, and therefore cutting a little new ground for females. Do you think that you were comfortably accepted by all the existing landscape architects?

Laura Wilson: 00:53

I wish I knew how they all felt. But I don't – I think I was pretty much, yeah.

Dorothy Huyck: 00:58

Great. [inaudible 00:00:58] thanks again.

Laura Wilson: 00:58

I don't really know how any of them felt about working for me every night, whether they would like that or not.

Dorothy Huyck: 01:10

In other words, you had to have people working under you?

Laura Wilson: 01:15

From time to time, I did have it.

Dorothy Huyck: 01:17

I take they got work done.

Laura Wilson: 01:19

Right. Mostly, I did supervising.

Dorothy Huyck: 01:22

[inaudible 00:01:30].

Laura Wilson: 01:30

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

[END OF TAPE 1, SIDE B]

[END OF INTERVIEW]