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William J. Halainen
June 27, 2013

Interview conducted by Lu Ann Jones
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ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

WITH

WILLIAM J. HALAINEN

By Lu Ann Jones

June 27, 2013

Washington, DC

Transcribed by Technitype Transcripts

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Lu Ann Jones corrected this transcript after the narrator's review.

[START OF TRACK 1]

Lu Ann Jones: We're starting now with wav file 024, and I'll say this is Lu Ann Jones. It's the afternoon of June 27, 2013, and I'm at the "Eye" Street building of the Park Service with Bill – and you're going to have to pronounce your last name for me.

William Halainen: Halainen.

Lu Ann Jones: Halainen. I'll just ask you, first of all, do you give me permission to do this interview?

William Halainen: I do.

Lu Ann Jones: How about if you again give me your full name for the record here on tape.

William Halainen: First name William, middle name Jon, spelled J-o-n, last name, Halainen, spelled H-a-l-a-i-n-e-n.

Lu Ann Jones: What's the origin of that?

William Halainen: Finnish. It used to be Ihalainen, but my dad took the "I" off the front. He should have taken off a few more vowels. It would have helped a lot. [laughter]

Lu Ann Jones: Okay. We'll stop.

[END OF TRACK 1]

[START OF TRACK 2]

Lu Ann Jones: So again, I'll just say this is Lu Ann Jones and Bill Halainen here in the "Eye" Street Building, June 27.

Lu Ann Jones: Even before we get to your Park Service career, I'm always interested in people's origin stories. How did you start out? So, if you could tell me a little bit about your background. I'm not supposed ask your birth date, but if you could give me your year or approximate year of when you were born and just some of the context of your family.

William Halainen: August 29, 1947. I was born and raised in northeast Connecticut. My mother was a teacher. My father worked for a power company as a lineman. I went to the University of Massachusetts. My first degree was in European history, class of 1969. I was actually more or less an ROTC major, went into the Air Force from there. After coming out, I went back and got a real education at, again, the University of Massachusetts, class of 1974, in journalism and English.

Lu Ann Jones: How were you interested in those subjects?

William Halainen: That's a good question. I always was interested in history and in writing, so the two were naturally consequential. Being a historian, as you know, sometimes is problematic in terms of employment, so I went back for

journalism and looking for that as a career, then migrated to the National Park Service.

Lu Ann Jones: Were there other things in your background that might have predicted that you would come to the Park Service, other activities as a youth?

William Halainen: Yes, an intense interest in the outdoors, a lot of time spent on a lake up in northeast Connecticut, rowing and wandering around and paddling and so forth. As an historian, where else but the Park Service? So those two both directed me, after a number of years of wondering, trying to figure out what I wanted to. Being a product of the Sixties, it took a little while to get there. [laughs]

Lu Ann Jones: Did you visit parks when you were a kid? Was that part of your consciousness?

William Halainen: No, not particularly, though I did have memorable experiences, as probably a lot of boys in my generation did, because we were teens during the centennial of the Civil War, 1961 to 1965, and if you're a usual teenage boy, you get caught up in that sort of stuff. My father, going to his Army reunions down here (in Virginia and Washington). He went to one in Roanoke, for instance, and we stopped and spent a couple days at Gettysburg and time at Antietam, time in the Shenandoah Valley, and I was totally hooked on that.

William Halainen: But I really didn't foresee a career in the Park Service until after my degree in journalism, I worked for the UMass as editor of the alumni magazine, which wasn't a course I wanted to pursue for the rest of my life. At that time I also had a romantic interest in Montana, so I thought maybe I'd try to work for the Forest Service, but they sent me to the Park Service, and in 1974 I applied as a seasonal to Little Big Horn. They had one opening, so it was remarkably lucky, fortuitous, to get in, and from thereon went on to a career with the agency.

Lu Ann Jones: What was it like being a seasonal at that point? How did you learn to do the job when you knew you were going to be there for a fairly short time?

William Halainen: Well, the Little Big Horn, which at that time was called Custer Battlefield, was in kind of an odd situation because the superintendent had left and the historian had left, and they were getting a new historian on later in the summer. So, we ended up being a self-sustaining, self-contained seasonal unit.

William Halainen: Basically, my first job was taught to me by the seasonal who'd been there the longest, a woman named Mary Ann Peckham, who later retired as superintendent out of Stones River. It wasn't the best way to start. As a seasonal interpreter, you tend to have some biases and tendencies, like talking too much, that you have to have weaned out by a good supervisor, but we did all right, I think.

Lu Ann Jones: The interpretation at that site has probably changed a good deal since you went there.

William Halainen: Oh, yes, yes.

Lu Ann Jones: So, what kind of training did you get? Were you doing reading? Was it on presentation methods, when you say she was training you?

William Halainen: Well, there was a standard sort of syllabus of reading materials. There were a number of books. You read Jay Monaghan on Custer, and you read some of the Lakota and Cheyenne accounts, and you read a few well-known – Don Rickey, Robert Utley, W. A. Graham. But there are a couple of well-known authors there, and you'd read those. As for interpretive techniques, not too much.

William Halainen: But it was an interesting time. 1974 was two years before the centennial of Little Big Horn, and it was also at the height of the American Indian Movement, and it was pretty often tense on the tours. You never knew for sure who was going to be going on. The superintendent who preceded me, who was there when I first got there but left, who comes from a long Park Service family indirectly, was named Eldon Reyer. He ended up having a confrontation with AIM, American Indian Movement, on the site, that he defused personally. So, it was an interesting time, and you had to be very careful.

William Halainen: But I digress. The more relevant question you asked was how has the interpretation changed. I don't think we were skewed in favor of the 7th Cavalry or the Army, but we did not have available to us the wealth of information that interpreters do now on the Cheyenne or Lakota version of the battle, nor were there monuments to them. I was just back there last summer with my spouse, and it's just really changed, and it's much, much better.

Lu Ann Jones: So, what was the encounter? Do you remember the encounter that your friend had there?

William Halainen: I overheard it secondhand. I think it was the year before, probably 1973. Eldon, he was good at this stuff. Rather than do an armed confrontation, which would not end up well, as we knew from what happened at second Wounded Knee, he, as I understood, just got a six-pack of beer, went up there and sat down with them. They had a few beers and talked out the options, and everybody ended up resolving it peacefully, which was probably the best option than calling in the cavalry or whatever. It would have been unpleasant.

Lu Ann Jones: You were also at Mesa Verde.

William Halainen: Yes.

Lu Ann Jones: Was that within that same span there? Were you there at the same time or different times during that '74 to '77?

William Halainen: Yes, I was at Mesa Verde for three summers, 1975, 1976, 1977, and had an extraordinary experience in one of our great parks. Using the format, you had for the last question, the interpretative training was very orchestrated. It was a big interpretative staff, thirty-five, because we had two mesas, Chapin Mesa and Wetherill Mesa, and at the time five primary cliff dwellings open, plus two Visitors Centers, so there was a lot to be done.

William Halainen: So, when you came in, my recollection was, the training was at least a week, it might have been longer, it might have been two weeks' training, which is pretty impressive for a summer season, because that's a big bite of time. But it was well done, it was well organized, and we all learned a lot from that. I think by the time we got out to the field; we were pretty ready.

Lu Ann Jones: I haven't been there, but I've been to Chaco, which is just amazing.

William Halainen: We used to call Mesa Verde the Disneyland of Anasazi archaeology, but Chaco was the mother of archaeology. If you were into what was called the Anasazi culture, which is now more correctly called the Ancient Puebloan culture, then Chaco was one of the places. That's the defining sort of center of that period.

Lu Ann Jones: When you came in, how did the community of seasonals get formed and how did seasonals get incorporated into permanent staff? I'm interested in how that all worked.

William Halainen: I'm going to back up a little bit by saying that I came into the Park Service at an interesting time. It was during that great green explosion of the Seventies when environmentalism was preeminent, and there was a lot of demand on jobs in the Park Service, and it was very hard to get in, a situation that's changed considerably now. But there was a great deal of competition, which is a way of saying that you had seasonals with Ph.D.'s and master's and lots of experience and everything, and then you had very few permanent slots. So, the competition for getting in as a permanent employee was even more intense.

William Halainen: Now, in 1977, an important moment in the lives of many careers of the Park Service was the last big intake program, where the Park Service hired, my recollection was, between 150 and 200 rangers. That may be too high, but it was a lot. They hired a lot. But you had to have already had status. But if you did, you went in as a 5-7-9 in the standard professional career progression in 025 series, and when you came out as a 9, you got placed and you went on to – I think for a while they were placing people in successive parks, and then the program sort of drifted off.

William Halainen: But I was one of those people who just missed it, because I was still a seasonal and you couldn't get in unless you were already permanent. So, the way to get into the federal government at that time was to apply to

each civil service office. There was no central hiring authority. You had to apply to individual registers by different civil service offices, and there were scores and scores of them. So, you had to sit down and literally send your 171, the standard form 171 application, with a cover letter, separate packages, to every single office that you were interested in around the country in order to get on the register.

William Halainen: Then if you had enough points, up to 100 – but if you were a vet, you could get either 105 or 110, the highest, because a five-point vet was anybody who had served, a ten-point vet was if you had served and been wounded. If you ranked high enough, you were on the register if the park was hiring off it, so that's how you'd get in.

William Halainen: So, my first permanent job was at Colonial National Historic Park, which includes Jamestown and Yorktown, and they were hiring a dispatcher. It was another one of those grunt jobs that a lot of people took to get in. There are famous parks in the Service you may have heard of, Independence is one of them, Boston National Historic Park is another, which are considered "intake parks." That's not a formal designation, that's what everybody called them, because you could get low-graded tech jobs there. Those parks had high turnover, so a lot of people would go into those jobs, work for six months, and then scoot out to wherever they wanted to go. I went in as a dispatcher at Colonial and then moved into protection, and I had been in interpretation before, and got my permanent status that way.

Lu Ann Jones: How did you qualify to be in the protection division?

William Halainen: Well, remember I started as a dispatcher, so I didn't need much for qualifications. I knew how to talk. [laughs] I was reasonably capable of keeping track of what was going on. I think all you needed was your basic 025 requirements then or a degree with a number of specialty courses in areas that the Park Service was interested in, i.e., history for historical sites, biology, botany, probably forestry a little bit. But you had to have *x* number of credit hours. I can't remember what that was. Those are sort of your core requirements. It wasn't much. But the competition was fierce. Remember this is right after Vietnam, so there were a lot of ten-point vets that ranked higher up.

Lu Ann Jones: But it says you were a law enforcement ranger.

William Halainen: Yes.

Lu Ann Jones: Did you have to do qualifications to—?

William Halainen: Yes. In spring of 1979, I think, I went to a law enforcement training academy so I could move from dispatcher to actual field patrol, law enforcement-type ranger, and I was one of the very last that was allowed to go through a regional academy. I went to a place called Thomas Nelson Community College in Hampton, Virginia, and got four hundred hours of

training there. That was the last of the local intakes. After that you had to go to FLETC [Federal Law Enforcement Training Center] in Glynco, Georgia.

William Halainen: So, I got my commission coming out of Thomas Nelson, and then I was a commissioned ranger, and I did that. Cathy and I were at Colonial until October of 1980, when I got a permanent field ranger position at Minuteman in Massachusetts.

Lu Ann Jones: So, tell me about making that transition. Park Service people have to be so mobile. Was that something that you liked, or it created some challenges?

William Halainen: No, that was something we liked and counted on, actually. We were young and we didn't have kids. The idea of moving around was a good one, you know. It was still competitive to get out. A lot of people, the popular perception is that they move you around just like they do in the military, but that's not it. You have to apply to jobs just like anywhere else. But, yes, that was a plus.

Lu Ann Jones: Was there something that was particularly appealing about the Minuteman site to make a move there?

William Halainen: For us, it was family as much as anything else. My wife's family is from western Massachusetts and mine was in southern New Hampshire at the time, and they were dealing with an array of medical issues. So as is often the case in these moves, you move for family reasons. So, I went up there for that.

Lu Ann Jones: This is also the period, these parks that you're at, the Colonial Park, Minuteman, coming off the Bicentennial too.

William Halainen: Yes.

Lu Ann Jones: How did that affect the way these parks were doing business?

William Halainen: That's a good question. First, I would say that one of the reasons why there were opportunities at these parks was because they staffed up a little bit for the Bicentennial. I don't know that there was a substantial change in operations, other than that there was an infusion of money which allowed upgrades to Visitors Centers and waysides, to staff. That was probably the most significant impact, I would think. Is that what you're getting at?

Lu Ann Jones: Yes. There's a lot of popular interest in the American history at that period, of the revolutionary era, and here you are.

William Halainen: It was a good time. Even though my major was technically European history, it was really military history. So, I went from the Little Big Horn to Yorktown, to Concord and Lexington. That was fascinating. I loved it.

Lu Ann Jones: You're doing interpretation, you're doing law enforcement, you're doing lots of different things. Did you ever do costume interpretation? What did you do?

William Halainen: I'll precede that by saying that those were the days of the generalist ranger. Even though we were commissioned, we still crossed over a lot, which doesn't happen much anymore. So, protection rangers, as we were called euphemistically, were also interpreters and also resource managers. So, I got a lot of chance to work on interpretation. But what was your question? I digressed away from it.

Lu Ann Jones: No, digressions are fine.

William Halainen: What was your original question?

Lu Ann Jones: Did you ever do costume?

William Halainen: Yes, I did want to answer that. When I started at Little Big Horn, I started doing third person living history as a 7th Cavalry trooper, which was really a lot of fun, because you didn't have to do first-person. As you know, that's a lot tougher, to drop into the period. But third person is good because you can do it in third person and talk about "they would" or whatever. But kids just loved it when you came out in costume, you know.

Lu Ann Jones: Was that something that they had been doing there?

William Halainen: They'd done it right along, and other than the fact of wearing a wool uniform in the summer on the High Plains of Montana, it was a lot of fun. [laughter] From an interpreter's perspective, it's a great opener, because you can really talk to people a lot easier, particularly kids, who are just intrigued. They think that you're left over from the engagement, you know. "Not quite that old, kid." [laughter]

Lu Ann Jones: What were the conditions on the job that made a job pleasant versus what were conditions on the job that made it difficult? What made work fun and what made work a burden sometimes?

William Halainen: I think one of the principal burdens at times is always just supervision, and it wasn't necessarily the supervisor as a person, but whether she or he had the sensitivity to do good scheduling or get you into good training offers and details, whether he or she was willing to listen to you and understand, would accept field input. And if that wasn't happening – and I've been in those types of jobs – it was not fun. But when it was happening, it really worked.

William Halainen: Shift work never bothered me. I think most of the protection rangers are used to that, rotating weekends and nights and days. It doesn't matter, adds just more to the challenge and the fun of being out there.

Lu Ann Jones: I'm also interested in mentors you might have found along the way. Again, you mentioned details, so that might have included not your own initiative but also somebody else supporting you in getting a detail. So,

were there people that you identified early on or perhaps stepped up to you early in your career?

William Halainen: Not as a seasonal or not as an early permanent ranger. There were good people, and I wouldn't take anything away from them, but as a mentor as such, no. But when I came to the Washington office, absolutely, if you're ready to segue to that.

Lu Ann Jones: That'd be great. Yes, I am.

William Halainen: So, in October of 1985, I got hired to come down here to Washington, and I worked for nine years in Ranger Activities and had the best time of my career. It was an extraordinary time. I'll tell you a little how that came about. I was a field ranger at Minuteman, and it was an interesting job, but I didn't feel I was anywhere near sufficiently challenged, and I was really interested in doing something else because of my background in journalism and prior experience as an editor and a writer.

William Halainen: The Association of National Park Rangers had just come into being in 1977, and they had a funky little print newsletter, four pages, intermittent, put out by somebody who really didn't have any editorial background, and would be the first one to admit. So, I wrote him a note. This is a great guy, a legend in the Park Service, by the name of Rick Gale, who I'm sure you've heard of before.

Lu Ann Jones: Yes, it's the memorial fund to him that's underwriting this.

William Halainen: Of course, that's underwriting this. Rick was an amazing guy. More on him later. Rick was very good at delegating, so I sent him a note saying I'd be willing to help him, and I got a call from him from Santa Monica Mountains, where he was chief ranger, and he said, "Congratulations, Mr. Editor, your first deadline is—." [laughter] S

William Halainen: So, in 1982, for ANPR, I made a proposal to transform the newsletter into a magazine, a quarterly magazine. I had some design friends of mine come up with a template for it and so forth. On a wing and a prayer and not much money, we put out a magazine. I'm patting myself on the back a little bit here, but it was an accomplishment I'm proud of. For the first time, rangers had an internal publication that they could count on to get information out about what they were doing.

William Halainen: Okay. So long way around on this is Dan Sholly, a longtime career ranger, a lot of experience, came into Washington office in 1984, probably, possibly '83, as the chief ranger for the National Park Service. Now, at that time, let's say, ranger operations was something of a backwater in the Washington office. It needed a kick in the pants. It needed somebody from the field who really knew what he was doing, and Dan was most assuredly that, ex-Marine lieutenant with Vietnam service and a very good ranger.

William Halainen: So, Dan did a lot of shaking of the tree, and one of the things he wanted was somebody who could do internal communications for rangers, and, voilà, a career opportunity appeared. He wanted me to come down. I had a P.D., position description, that covered a number of things, but communications was at the heart of it. So, I came down here to do that. The time I was here, I acquired some other duties. I ran the service wide uniform program for about a decade, and some other things as well. But communications was what I did, first by newsletter, then by email.

William Halainen: I had a number a number of outstanding mentors. I had two of the best, Walt Dabney and Rick Gale, extraordinary people.

Lu Ann Jones: Were they both here in Washington at that point?

William Halainen: Dan hired me to come to Washington in October '85, and I got here in October and he left in October, so we overlapped by only a couple of days. He went on to be a chief ranger at Yellowstone.

William Halainen: I should have mentioned a third person, Andy Ringgold, who was an outstanding field ranger. He was the deputy chief for Ranger Activities. So, I worked directly for Andy, outstanding manager, one of the best I've ever worked for. I wouldn't even say he was eclipsed by Walt. Walt and he were very much outstanding managers, but just with different attributes. Then Walt Dabney came in in 1986 and was here for five years, and I worked for both of those guys. Then by that time we had a branch under the division, and the branch was Resource and Visitor Protection, and I worked for Dick Martin, another great manager who came in from Alaska superintendency to work here.

William Halainen: The reason why these were great leaders, and really gets to the heart, I think, of what you're after, is what does it take to make a good work environment, to create a situation where you can actually do things for the agency? These guys were highly experienced field rangers, very practical and very strong and very focused on the goals of the agency, so they had a clear vision of what they wanted to do, a clear vision of what the division would do. They would line out the goals, and then you were empowered to attain them.

William Halainen: I was amazed. I had never experienced such empowerment. You know, the boss would come in in the morning and speak to you for a few minutes, say, "What's going on?" He'd basically say, "Do you need political interference or money?" And if not, "What are we doing today? Go for it. Let me know what goes on." And you had carte blanche to do the work. Walt would come in and say, "You know, we hired you for your abilities. I'm not here to micromanage you. If you have issues, you come and tell me about it, and I expect you to keep me informed, but you go forward and do right."

William Halainen: It was an extraordinary work environment. We all felt that there. People like Butch Farabee, who is one of the great field rangers, Butch will tell you his greatest experience of his career was working here in Washington, of all things.

William Halainen: Over the years that Walt was there, we enlarged the office somewhat, but more consequentially, everybody in that office, except for the clerical staff, and even some of them, came out of the field. They were all career 025 rangers. And why that was important was because they came to Washington, we all came to Washington to fix problems that we recognized in the field, and there were a lot of them: lack of professional guidance, lack of grades for rangers, lack of funding, and a lack of internal communications. And our collective mission in that office was to fix those problems. We had a great, great climate of collaboration and a great esprit de corps. Everybody was in uniform for the first time. We had a whole wing of people, 3300 corridor, in Ranger Activities. And we were all uniformed, well, most of the time anyhow. And it was a great time to be working here.

Lu Ann Jones: You used the phrase "great field rangers." So, what makes a great field ranger? And you could talk in general or about some specific people that you've known and admired.

William Halainen: Well, first of all, you look at Butch Farabee and Walt Dabney, and I can name a dozen other names. There was a whole group that came up just before the green generation, if you will. These are guys that came into the Park Service in the late Sixties and early Seventies, or early sixties in some cases, like Butch. They were all our mentors in the field sense. What did they have?

William Halainen: They had great field skills, whether you're talking about law enforcement, search and rescue, structural firefighting, wildland firefighting, emergency medical services, scuba diving, aviation, and most of them were experts in all of them. But also, they had great personal skills. It was a time when rangers were still expected to be able to do interpretative programs and talk to visitors. I think, above all, they had a tremendous sense of mission. They were all passionate about the Park Service, they were very green, and they believed that the mission was the most important thing, but in the process, you took care of your people as well. That's another important consideration. These were guys who knew how to manage people, and you managed your people by taking care of them, not just—

[END OF TRACK 2]

[START OF TRACK 3]

William Halainen: —just by ordering them. So, they brought all those skills to the Washington office, and then you had people like Walt had another dimension, and that was political skills, and I don't mean that as a

pejorative. There are certain skills that it really takes to effectively work at this level with other offices, with other agencies, with the [Capitol] Hill. We worked a lot with Hill staff, and Walt was just super at doing all those things. So, you combine all those things and you have a group of people that are all on the same wavelength and all working for the same end. It was great.

Lu Ann Jones: Tell me about Rick Gale. I wasn't here to know him, but, yes, I'm grateful to this fund that the ANPR has put together, because it's making this project, the first phase at least, possible.

William Halainen: Rick Gale was an old-line sort hard-ass ranger, but in a very good sense. He wasn't likely to back down at any challenge. He came up with the usual array of ranger skills, though his were more towards law enforcement end, but early in his career he got involved in fire, and he became very, very skilled in the fire community. He was one of the – well, right now there's eighteen of them, I think – Type 1 incident commanders for fire organizations. But he went way beyond that. He became very adept in the training functions, and he moved on into what became, I think, the hallmark of his career, outside of his fire work, which was the ICS, Incident Management System.

William Halainen: That came out of the fire community in California because of the inability to communicate due to lack of standardized language and procedures among cooperating agencies. But ICS remedied a lot of that in California, and he saw an application for that in terms of all risk management. So, the Park Service, in retrospect, people think it's kind of funny that all risk management really got its start, to my thinking, anyhow, in the Park Service and the Coast Guard. Now you can see it in the Coast Guard, but people say, "Park Service?" Well, yes, but if you stand back and look at the Park Service, we do a lot of law enforcement, we do a lot of special events, we do a lot of emergency search and rescue and everything. It was perfect to have an all-risk management system. And Rick, not singlehandedly, but he was the guiding light and the force that created all-risk management in the Park Service, and the incident management teams, all the guidance that went alongside it and so forth. He was just very good at all that.

William Halainen: He was funny, he was very clear, he was very forceful, he was direct. He would obtain the objective. He said George Patton was his role model, and it was in a sense. But Patton was not the nicest guy in the world, and Gale really was. He could be a hardheaded guy and he could be a pain in the ass to deal with, but when he was good, he was really good.

William Halainen: You wouldn't think of this from an old-line guy-type ranger; he was a mentor for a lot of women in the Park Service, and he worked really hard on that end in moving women up in, particularly in the incident management and the fire communities. He put together the first all-women

incident management team, which worked at Women's Rights [National Historical Park] when Hillary Clinton came up there for a dedication ceremony.

William Halainen: He did these things, plus he was president of the Association of National Park Rangers for a couple of terms, plus he was a principal in the International Ranger Federation with me, setting up an international ranger organization. But I think really why I was attracted more than anything else is in a bureaucracy you spend a lot of time dithering, as you well know. You spin wheels, you reinvent things, you come up with new initiatives every three or four years, and you go tangential for a while. Then you give up that, and you come back. Not Gale. You had a mission. This was your goal. This was what you were going to attain. This was when it was going to be done and how it was going to be done, and you, by golly, got there. And it was a breath of fresh air.

William Halainen: The other thing was empowerment. He empowered so many people, which was clear at his funeral. I mean, people all got up and talked about how they never would have gotten where they were in the Park Service if it hadn't been for his intercession and guidance. I raised my hand in that, too.

Lu Ann Jones: What role do you think the formation of the Association of National Park Rangers made? What difference did that make, and do you think it has made to form that organization?

William Halainen: It made a lot of difference, particularly in its early years. Now, it's been around since 1977. In all candor, it is not as strong as it once was, but times have changed, and I understand that to a degree.

William Halainen: Why it was effective? It was created by rangers to talk about issues that weren't being talked about by the agency, particularly lack of professional standards. At that time, there weren't the standards that we now have in law enforcement, EMS and so forth, not as they should have been. They were way out of date and insufficient. So, the organization pushed for a lot of those things and was an effective voice, because there were some key connections made with other rangers who were working in the Washington office in what used to be called park operations or just the associate directorship for operations, so there was an entrée there.

William Halainen: The Association of National Park Rangers was not a union, and expressly said that at all times, but was definitely advocacy for professional standards, for good housing for employees back when park housing was much bigger than it is now, for pay, for grades, all those things. So, things that the agency wouldn't or couldn't advocate, ANPR could. And when those guys – and, again, it was mostly guys, but there were some women like Maureen Finnerty that were key players in the organization – when they all got into positions of power or consequence, let's say, associate directorships, superintendents, so forth, they were able to effect a lot of

those changes, actually, particularly in the range profession, changed where the agency was going and professionalize it and do things for it.

William Halainen: Does that answer your question?

Lu Ann Jones: Yes. At what point did you join the ANPR?

William Halainen: 1982. I had joined earlier on, but then I became inactive. But when I got that offer to do their publication for them, I stepped in and become the editor/ranger. I was editor for forty-six issues, and also served a couple tours as vice president and several other things.

Lu Ann Jones: So why did you think communications was so important, and how was the kind of communications that you were doing within the Park Service different from what you were doing with *Ranger*?

William Halainen: Good question. I'm a believer in the "co" and "comm" words, you know, cooperation and communication, all those words, and collaboration and so forth. I don't believe that anybody, no individual is as effective as a group of dedicated people – as a synergistic effect, you're much better, plus you're better informed and you're much happier in your work environment. But most consequentially, you do a better job and you're much more dedicated to the work that you do. I'm passionate about that, always have been, and I was afforded that opportunity with *Ranger* magazine to do something in that, which I very much wanted to do. So, I guess that answers that end of the question.

William Halainen: How was *Ranger* magazine and what I did in the Washington office different? *Ranger* magazine, first of all, was filling a void at the time it was created, so I was covering pretty much everything, whatever the beat was, whether it was incidents or policies or the association business or whatever. But as time went on, the magazine was pretty much focused on central issues, semi-philosophically in the ranger profession, plus news of the organization, whereas in Ranger Activities Division I was dealing with the nuts and bolts of how the operation was going.

William Halainen: There were sort of two broad components to that, if you will. There was programmatic stuff. What's going on in search and rescue? What's going on in EMS? What are the plans? What are we going to do? How do we fix this problem? Then on the other side was because I had, at the director's behest through the chain of command, established incident reporting criteria, we had all those incident reports that were coming in to WASO, so we could take those and send them back out again. So, this provided information to the field about what was going on elsewhere that they hadn't had before.

William Halainen: Now, this was first done in a newsletter format, which was not an easy thing to do, particularly in Washington, to do twelve each year. We did a monthly, so we'd do twelve of them a year. This was before email. So you had to do the print newsletter, get permission from DOI to print it down in

the basement printing facility, then get the labels produced for all 350 parks, and stuff the envelopes, put the label on, and do that every month, and mail them out to the chief rangers and hoped the chief ranger shared it with somebody else.

William Halainen: I think I'll segue way to one of my favorite serendipity stories. Around 1986 or '87, I was looking for a way to communicate more quickly and broadly with the field. At the same time, the Park Service was just beginning to experiment with email with a system called CompuServe. There was a guy named Carl Zaner who came in. Nobody had any idea what email was or what could be done with it. So, he met with the then chief of public affairs, a guy by the name of George Berklacy, to see if George was interested in an email system. I heard about this and asked if I could sit in. George couldn't think of any application for email. [laughs] That's no putdown on George. He was a great public affairs guy. I mean, he was the old-school, so he wasn't thinking in terms of the potential for it yet.

William Halainen: So, I said, "Hey, Carl, I'm looking for something just like this." So here we have an IT guy, the only guy on the block who's looking for a way to show that his email system will work, then another office that's looking for a vehicle for communicating with the field. It was a marriage made in heaven.

William Halainen: So, we started the system off putting out daily reports to what were then ten regional offices, to the ranger activities/operations, our opposite numbers in the ten regions, and we mandated that they pay attention to it and read it because we were going to use it as a communications vehicle, and we want you to read it, so you've got to. But if you're a ranger in a park and you want to read it, we'll send it to you. I don't know that we even thought of this as a grassroots approach, but it sure worked. It's just like these other social media systems. You create something like that, you build it, and they will come, because they wanted it to know what was going on.

William Halainen: So, we manually built, person by person, that first email system using CompuServe. Carl Zaner would go in and add each person. You know how these things snowball if you've got something that's working. Honestly, I mean, what carried it was we put our programmatic stuff in it, but the Morning Report, as it was called, I knew that people were going to want to know what was going on with rangers in other parks, and we had that because it was coming in through the new incident reporting system. So, we took all that information and cycled it back out in almost real time. The next day they could read about what happened yesterday in Yellowstone. Man, that took off like wildfire.

William Halainen: As the time went by, pretty soon everybody was reading it, and then it migrated out of the ranger operations and started going to the other

divisions, and so we tried to start folding in other information from other divisions to help them out. So, all this, not knowing that this was all going to take off like it did, ended up being the de facto internal communications vehicle for the Park Service. It went on to another email system called cc: Mail. Then finally there was so much traffic on the Morning Report with so many readers, that they finally asked us to move off it and go to web-based.

William Halainen: There in another moment of serendipity, if I can go on on this tangent—

Lu Ann Jones: Please do.

William Halainen: In 2001 when the Park Service, I think, had already gone to Lotus Notes, and the system manager was saying, "Look, you're killing Lotus Notes. We can't carry the volume of traffic that you need to get to all these people. We need to go web-based."

William Halainen: So, I went down to the Philadelphia office, because there was a guy there who was a web-savvy guy who was doing web pages. I didn't know anything about web pages.

Lu Ann Jones: Yes, I was going to say, you're on the cutting-edge here.

William Halainen: So, I went down to meet with him to set up a Morning Report web page; at the same time the IT folks in Washington had just created *Inside NPS* and were looking for an editor. John Peterson, who put that together, came up with Tim Cash, who now oversees the contents of *Inside NPS*, and Ken Handwerger, who still works over on the tech side of it, the three of them came up and there was another meeting of a person who needed a vehicle and a vehicle that needed content. So, we wedded the two publications together, knowing that *Inside NPS*, by putting the Morning Report incidents on it, was going to create a readership because people wanted to see what was going on. At the same time, we kept the Morning Report alive, because it still had its own following.

William Halainen: So, there was a history of communication. It strikes me, looking back on it, how serendipity occurred twice, and big time, and it's almost like it was foreordained, but you know it wasn't.

Lu Ann Jones: You said that it took off like wildfire at the grassroots, but were there people who were reluctant and not as enthusiastic? Technological change is often tricky.

William Halainen: That's a good question. I suppose there were, but, like with social media, it's a force you couldn't resist. Once people have gained the ability to do it, they were going to do it.

William Halainen: Now, what's more interesting is on the other side, there was never any editorial oversight. I was conscious of that. We were always very careful not to step on anybody's toes while getting information out, but it was extraordinary that because it was a grassroots thing, it was already there

before the Park Service front office even really recognized what was going on.

Lu Ann Jones: So, it had kind of created a personality of its own by the time.

William Halainen: Yes, it was already established. I don't think there was anything inimical to it, nor did they see threats in it. As a matter of fact, they saw it as a useful tool, but it was just odd. That's not the way things normally happen in bureaucracies. It was just because of the nature of the beast.

Lu Ann Jones: I'm fascinated by this, the nature of bureaucracies, and I've worked in large institutions before, but I tell people nothing prepared me—

William Halainen: You've worked in academia. [laughter]

Lu Ann Jones: Yes, but nothing prepared for the Park Service.

William Halainen: Academia is pretty good.

Lu Ann Jones: Yes. So how do you think an agency like the Park Service makes sure that it doesn't fall victim to the worst habits of bureaucracies. Are there ways you think it's succeeded in that and ways you think it has succumbed to that? That's a big philosophical question.

William Halainen: That's a very good question, because you've probably read that old Horace Albright quote, which everybody likes to spread, "Don't ever become a bureaucracy. Stay young and fresh," and all that. Well, we have become a bureaucracy. I mean, there's no question about it. In all candor, it has all the worst aspects of a bureaucracy: too many meetings, lack of focus at times, inability to accomplish goals, tendencies to run off on initiatives and never get them done and so forth.

William Halainen: But I think what saves the Park Service – and we often think about what must it be like to work for an agency that doesn't have a mission like ours – what saves us is the esprit de corps. I write retirement notices almost every day in *Inside NPS*, and it's very rare that you don't get one where somebody says that, "The best thing about this job was the incredible people I worked with." Now, that's not always true, but, by and large, it is. Even if they're not effective at times, they are dedicated. I think that's one of the salvations of the agency. Whenever it gets too far off course, people say, "We've still got a mission to accomplish here. We need resources to protect and visitors to serve."

William Halainen: I remember back in the days when everybody was first doing vision statements. Do you remember that? It was like in the Nineties, and everybody had to have a vision statement. People came in and looked at the Park Service's, the opening statement in the Organic Act, it said, "You don't need a mission statement. You've already got one. This one is to die for." So, yes, that's a long answer to a short question.

William Halainen: I've been having a discussion with Jill Hawk. I don't know if you know Jill. She's now the superintendent of FLETC. We were talking about

organizational cultures and so forth, and Jill has done a paper on the Park Service I would love to read. I think it was her master's on organizational cultures.

Lu Ann Jones: I would love to read that too.

William Halainen: Her name is Jill Hawk, and she's now at FLETC as a superintendent.

William Halainen: There is, since we're on this subject, another book that you ought to be aware of if you haven't heard of it. It's called *Staking Out the Terrain*. You can go to Amazon and find it. I can't remember the authors. When Jill and I were talking about it, I dialed it up on Amazon. I see there have been a number of editions of it, so I'm out of touch. But the one I read was about 1996, I think.

William Halainen: What it did was analyze four or five land management agencies: Corps of Engineers, BuRec, Park Service, Forest Service, and how they were effective and why. It was a very interesting book. It didn't go anywhere near far enough on the Park Service, but I know that wasn't its mission. But, yes, it's really interesting stuff and I think somebody could really – because the question that always comes around is, these bureaucratic inefficiencies are they common in other agencies, or are we peculiar in that? The Park Service has always been famously decentralized. Robin Winks, the historian, you must know him, from Yale University.

Lu Ann Jones: Yes.

William Halainen: Winks used to have a great quote. I had a chance to sit with him at supper one night. I really miss him. He was a great historian. Winks used to say that the Park Service was like – well, let's say it was 350 units at the time. He said it was like 350 Samurai warlords paying nominal allegiance to the emperor but really going off and doing what they wanted to on their own. Well, there is a lot of truth to that.

William Halainen: I've sat in the Washington office and I've been in the field. I've written directives and I've responded to them. Now, you sit up here and you write directives, and, as somebody one said unless failure to follow them will send you to prison, or lose money for you, they aren't going to pay attention to them unless they want to. So those guys in the field, everybody knows it's the worst-kept secret in the agency, is that they all run their own shows and sometimes listen to the regional directors and sometimes not.

Lu Ann Jones: Do you think that that's as true now as it was forty or fifty years ago?

William Halainen: Well, I would say post-Hartzog, because George was famous for—he'd run a tight ship. The regional directors and the superintendents did what George told them to do. Since then, it seems much less. I wasn't in the Park Service during the Hartzog years, so I don't know that firsthand, but, sure, as they talked about that, that's the way things went.

Lu Ann Jones: This might vary according to where you are in the organization, but what difference did who the director was make, in terms of your job, in thinking about the big context in which you were doing your particular job?

William Halainen: Boy, that's a tough one. It would sound not disrespectful or whatever to say that the director doesn't make a lot of difference in day-to-day operations, but I think it really is that the directors set tone. They can be effective agents for the agency. George Hartzog – and this was a personal conversation once, probably one he's had with several people – he said, "The only three things that you need as a director is direct control of the people, control of the budget, and an ability to deal with Congress to be an effective director." That might be a paraphrase, but it's close. I think those are really the essentials, sufficient funding and so forth. It's always good, like Jon [Jarvis, current Director of the National Park Service], to have a field guy in there. Without mentioning names, there have been folks that have come in that have not worked as well because they didn't have that long perspective you get from climbing through the ranks.

Lu Ann Jones: You had other jobs here. I'm fascinated with the uniform program. What were the politics of the uniforms? (laughter)

William Halainen: There weren't any real politics. We have, depending on the time of year, up to about 20-some-odd-thousand people in uniform, or did at the time. I used to say that there were 20,000 people at least who were willing to tell you how to run the program and had no hesitation in calling you up to tell you. It was interesting. It was like walking around with a lightning rod in a thunderstorm most of the time.

Lu Ann Jones: What were they complaining about?

William Halainen: Everything, everything. I used to think about that, why is this such a hot program? Well, somebody pointed out to me – maybe J.T. [Reynolds] – said, you know, people wear the uniform. It's how they feel about the agency and how they feel about themselves. It's something that's there all the time, so it becomes very strongly associated. So, a lot of times feelings about something else go through that. Plus, people just are very personal about clothes.

William Halainen: Ask me about women's sizes. I never want to have to deal with that again – because sizing a woman is – you know, I was a guy, what do I know? That's a whole wilderness to get into. So, there are a whole array of issues, but people really got worked up about a lot of them.

Lu Ann Jones: So, what were the variables, type of fabric or cost?

William Halainen: Yes, yes, yes. We had about 160 contract line items in the program, so that's a lot of components, that somebody's pointed out, if you have that many, you're not being uni-formed anymore, you're being vari-formed. But people wanted them because we have such an array of things that we do. I had a request for a uniform mu-mu for American Samoa. I said, "No,

guys, you can work that one out yourself." So, there's that. There's the cost. People thought it was too expensive, but it wasn't. It was reasonable for what they were getting. There were always quality issues. There was also sizing issues, patterns. There were all things that came like that.

William Halainen: But as I say, it was always an interesting program to run. I was blessed by the fact that my predecessor went over to the contractor, revolving door a little bit, but she was absolutely brilliant, Linda Balatti, and so I had a contact on the other side who knew the program as well as I did. So, we were able to meet and move on a lot of changes, meet expectations, add a lot of things to the program. It was fun. I'll tell you what, uniform standards are really tough.

Lu Ann Jones: Tell me more about that, who ultimately sets that, how they enforce that.

William Halainen: That really gets down to the decentralized agency, because you can set any kind of standard you want, but if the superintendent doesn't enforce it at the park level, it's not going to happen, because the regional director is not going to sit on the superintendent, except in rare occasions. It would happen now and then. A lot of superintendents really were indifferent to uniforms, period.

William Halainen: Now, I'll tell you one of the things that's really changed in the organizational culture, for better or worse, but when I came in the service, most of the senior managers were vets and they knew how to wear the uniform. They had worn it in the military. They had come out of World War II or Korea, sometimes Vietnam, and they were very particular about it, and they made sure everybody else was. That's not the case now, and I think that really is one of the essential reasons why appearance isn't what it used to be. It is now, but selectively. The Park Service does a really good job, I think, in the place where it should do a good job, and that's in the high visitor contact areas. If you go down on the National Mall, you'd better have rangers that look good. If you're at an event with the Old Guard, the 3rd Infantry, as we do in a lot of special events, you've got to look as good. You're not going to look as good as they are, but you need to try. If you're out there with the President of the United States, by god, you need to look good. You can't have a warped brim and stains on your uniform.

William Halainen: I think it's a very good example of the agency decentralization. The director can stand up there and say that you will wear the uniform this way, but unless she or he enforces it, it's real hard to enforce.

Lu Ann Jones: So, by standards, would it be how it's cleaned, how it's pressed, in terms of size, if it fits correctly?

William Halainen: Do you wear a tie with a tie tack? Do you have things polished? Do you have a flat hat that has a warped brim, or do you have one that's straight and strac? Do you have your collar insignia on?

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William Halainen: —the right place? People say, "Well, that doesn't matter." Well, it does. A uniform is what it's all about. When you have a bunch of rangers together and they all look different and they all look bad, it tells you something about the organization. If they look, in military terms, strac, if you take a look at the Park Service Honor Guard, those guys are strac, and that tells you something about the agency, that the agency really cares. And for those guys it's usually memorial services and stuff where it's really important. They do a good job.

Lu Ann Jones: My husband worked as a seasonal down at Cape Lookout in the early Nineties, and I mentioned to him this morning—

William Halainen: What's his name?

Lu Ann Jones: His name is Bill Mansfield. He was just there as a singing ranger. He's a musician. Well, he's a historian too. He did oral histories off of Cape Lookout, too.

Lu Ann Jones: But, anyway, I was telling him this morning I was going to do the interview and that one of the things you dealt with was the uniform. He said when he went there that somebody told him that at one point there were many vendors to buy from and that was very confusing, but then it got more centralized, and they thought that was a good thing. So, he told me to ask you if that was something you were responsible for.

William Halainen: No, I wasn't. That happened before my tour of duty. Yes, there was Alvord and Ferguson and Gregory's, and I can't remember all of them that they used to have to order from. You always had quality control and standard issues.

Lu Ann Jones: He also went back to the Park Service 2001-2005 doing interviews for the Tuskegee Airmen Oral History Project.

William Halainen: That must have been great.

Lu Ann Jones: It was a job of a lifetime. When he left, this friend of his at the Park Service who qualified to get a Park Service belt gave him a Park Service belt, which he is so proud of. He really dreads the day when he wears it out.

William Halainen: That's what you always look for, you look for belts, because almost all Parkies wear their belts with their jeans. So if somebody asks you a tough question when you're on a tour, you look to see if they've got a belt on. [laughter]

Lu Ann Jones: That's the sign.

William Halainen: Yes, that's right.

Lu Ann Jones: One of the things we've talked about in doing these interviews is that so many of the people that we're talking to – you were in the Park Service when it began really its second half-century and beginning to change a lot in terms of different laws, in terms of the demographics of the workforce. As you said, more women began to come in.

William Halainen: Women, minorities. What a change, huge change.

Lu Ann Jones: Can you talk about how you saw that unfolding from your vantage point?

William Halainen: That was interesting to see it unfolding. It was with women first, I think, that can be pretty fairly said. Although it was always an across-the-board effort with minorities, it wasn't as successful as it was with getting women moved up into positions, and it took some arm-bending. It took some people in significant positions. It took some pioneers. One of the people you ought to talk to. Do you know Ginny Rousseau?

Lu Ann Jones: She's been interviewed at Yosemite. They've done a great interview. I've read it. They've done a great interview.

William Halainen: She was a breakthrough in law enforcement, but she wasn't the only one. There were several women that came up. Mona Divine, she retired out of Yellowstone, and several other women that really kicked open that door. Maria Burks, have you heard her name?

Lu Ann Jones: No.

William Halainen: Maria just retired as the commissioner of National Parks of New York Harbor. Maria, when she was a young buck ranger in Independence – have you ever seen the airline stewardess uniform?

Lu Ann Jones: Yes.

William Halainen: Well, Maria and her mates at Independence and other parks – again, that was before my tenure as uniform program manager – launched a class-action suit against the Park Service, saying, "We want to have a unisex uniform."

William Halainen: Linda Balatti was the uniform program manager at the time. She said, "Sure, I can work with that." So, there are women like that who forced the issue, and it's been interesting to see that.

William Halainen: In the early going, in protection in particular, there were very few women, and some of them I don't think were well matched. Their hearts were in the right place, but you've got to be ready to rumble, and unless you're ready to do that in protection – but that has entirely changed now. I mean, I think there's probably almost a gender – I wouldn't go that far as parity. Do you know the numbers?

Lu Ann Jones: I don't, no.

William Halainen: But it's certainly way better than it used to be. Probably even better than that is what we've done on minority recruiting. To see a black face in the

Park Service at one time was all too rare. But that's changed now. We've also done better with Asian Americans and Hispanics. We're beginning to see what Bob Stanton called for: "I want to see an agency that looks like America in terms of the diversity of the population." And we're getting there. We've made a fairly good beginning. It hasn't been easy and there has been resistance.

Lu Ann Jones: Where do you think the resistance would come from?

William Halainen: I don't think it's anything other than unknowns. It's the unknown that's often-what leads to prejudices and misperceptions and bad decision-making.

Lu Ann Jones: But I think it's really interesting, like I said, from the Sixties into now, just the kinds of various changes and challenges in terms of Wilderness Act and Historic Preservation Acts and all sort of things that the Park Service has had to respond to.

William Halainen: Yes, and I know we've done a pretty good job on those big ones. What's been a chronic challenge – and it's no revelation to say so – are these unfunded mandates from Congress, plus the areas that are created without funding and staff, which is driving the agency down. A lot of these areas, there were a lot of us who would have said, "Gateway? I don't think so. That's not a national park." But, okay, it serves its purpose, it's a good area, and it's more than lived up to what it was hoped to be, but, hey, that's one of the biggest budgets in the Park Service, one of the biggest staff draws.

William Halainen: So, some of these come in that we were all suspect of. Some of them that have come in nobody has any doubt, absolutely, but others you say, "Well, I don't know about that." And we've come around on it, but some we haven't, but there's always still the staffing and funding issues.

Lu Ann Jones: After you were here in Washington, then you went to Delaware Water Gap. How did you make that transition to a national recreation area?

William Halainen: Well, first of all, the reason for that, we probably would have stayed on here, because we all liked it. The kids liked the Arlington school system and so forth, but it was when – and people have forgotten this – it was the Democrats who started downsizing government. It was Al Gore. My son likes to say, "People say, 'Why did you move from Virginia to Pennsylvania?' I say, "Al Gore made me." [laughs] It was true. Al Gore was pushing the downsizing of the government. We went through lots of hard changes in the Nineties, cutting down on regions, cutting down on staff and so forth. A lot of it was a bad idea. We've gone right back to where we were, as we should have been, because we were not an effective organization. Some of it was a good idea.

William Halainen: But one of the things that came out of that was the diaspora out of the Washington office. We were given limits on the number of FTEs we could

have in Washington, so people had to go out to the field, and those of us who had actually worked in the field before were marketable. So, the opportunity came, and we had to go. We looked at about five parks, and we ended up there for a variety of reasons, family considerations again.

William Halainen: But from there, the transition wasn't that hard. I went to a management assistant position, so I was still in a management function, and I carried most of my P.D. [position description] from Washington with me, with a compromise with the park, so I continued to do publications. That was my great love and it still is, why I'm still doing it as a contractor, and I wasn't going to abandon that. So it wasn't that hard of a transition.

William Halainen: If you're talking about an NRA [National Recreation Area] as different from parks, they really aren't. Our management policies will tell you we manage them all the same way. The one great difference that an NRA has from most other areas is they allow hunting, and that takes a while for an old protection ranger to see people walking through the park with rifles.

Lu Ann Jones: But in addition, you said you did much of the same things as you were doing here in Washington.

William Halainen: Yes. About 40 percent of my P.D. was still given over to doing the Morning Report, and for a while I carried the uniform program, and then my P.D. as a management assistant. Management assistants in the Park Service have no job series description, so every management assistant has a different P.D. The most effective way to look at it is your P.D. is whatever's in the superintendent's outbox. In other words, whatever she or he gives to you is what you're going to be doing. So, mine varied a lot over the years, but it was always fairly interesting.

Lu Ann Jones: How do you think you evolved as a manager yourself? I assume that you were supervising people. How would you characterize yourself? What did you want to be known as, as a manager in the Park Service?

William Halainen: No, I really liked being staff, because I was doing communications. Quite honestly, being a supervisor is a pain. Any supervisor will tell you that more than half of their day is dealing with staff problems, and a lot of them are not very grounded in reality. Quite honestly, I wasn't interested in wasting my time on that. I wanted to be able to do stuff that was project-based, that you could actually see a product.

Lu Ann Jones: Yes, I like that too.

William Halainen: Nice to get the mimeograph machine going and put something out every morning; you can say, "I did that."

William Halainen: So, the question as a manager, I hadn't managed at the park level before, just on program management, and I wasn't really a manager like a superintendent is. But you do enough management, so you realize how hard it is to balance off fiscal and personnel constraints with day-to-day

operations and ever-increasing mandates from Washington central offices. It's really tough. You find out that you spend a lot more time in your day dealing with infrastructure than you'd ever thought you wanted to do. I wasn't dealing with it at the same level as the chief of maintenance, but, boy, when you're on a park management team, you're dealing with infrastructure way more of your days than you thought you'd ever have to do. The other side of it, it's really gratifying to be able to make improvements in the parks.

William Halainen: One of the questions you asked on your big question list is what do you count as a career accomplishment. Well, obviously, it's publications, which has been my life. But interesting enough, outside of that, the three biggest accomplishments all had to do with removals. I had grazing management on my portfolio when I was in Washington for a while, a heck of a thing for a vegetarian. I wanted to go up and talk to those other cowboys and say, "You know, animals are your friends. You shouldn't eat them." [laughs] But we got grazing out of Wupatki, and it never came back again.

William Halainen: When I was working with the National Incident Management Team, we blew down the tower at Gettysburg, and it never came back again. When I was at Delaware Water Gap, I tore down houses, old abandoned houses, and they never came back again. And you think about that. So, what is underlying that? Well, the reality is that anything in government that can come around again will surely come around again, except for things that you tear down and remove. You can't build it again, so it's gratifying to be able to actually take them down to make improvements that can't be undone. So, I spent a lot of time bulldozing things, and, for the record, they were not habitable houses. They were long abandoned and did not belong in the parks. They were safety hazards, risk hazards, and we took them out.

Lu Ann Jones: What was your happiest time when you were in the Park Service?

William Halainen: Here. Nine years in Ranger Activities. I wouldn't have believed you could accomplish so much. You really could accomplish things. People say, well, all you do is spin wheels in Washington. No, that's not true. You have to set the bar lower. You can't expect to recreate the agency. But if you set the bar at a reasonable level, and if you're pragmatic about your goals and you're working as a team and you are willing to go around people at times, quite honestly, you can get things done. When I say, "get around people," I'm not talking about in the Park Service; I'm talking about elsewhere in the Federal bureaucracy.

Lu Ann Jones: What is the difference between getting around things in the Park Service and in the larger department? I'm rarely aware of the larger infrastructure I'm working in in terms of the department as opposed to the agency.

William Halainen: Well, I can't say it any other way other than candidly, is that department personnel can often be obstructionist, so a lot of getting around it is not getting around it, it was moving around the obstruction whatever way you can. And on the other side, I've worked with some great people upstairs who really were dedicated to getting help to you. Some were also procedure-driven and policy-driven without seeing the goal, and that could be a challenge.

Lu Ann Jones: I don't think I sent you this [set of questions]. So, here's one of the questions. I think I'm drawing from another kind of set of questions I have. I have here, "Wisdom comes not just from success, but from failure as well. What can future leaders learn from any less-than-successful experiences that you had at this or other roles you had?"

William Halainen: I'm really not sure how to answer that. It's tough sometimes to do, but don't take on mandates that you're not prepared to support 100 percent. Sometimes we do them because Congress tell us, and we just pay lip service to them. I will give you a specific example that drove me crazy. We have an historic leasing program in the Park Service. I don't know in what shape it is now, but it wasn't anywhere when I had it, and there was no policy, there was no funding, there were no specialists, there was no guidance, there was nothing, and you had to figure your way through it, and whatever decision you made was a wrong one because it would be countered by an after-the-fact decision that was made by a central office. Policies were revised willy-nilly and applied retroactively. I spent years on a program that was doomed to failure from the outset. You should never get on that horse unless you're ready to ride. Bad metaphor, but you know what I mean.

William Halainen: You sometimes have to just go to Congress and say, "Unless you give us the money and the personnel and the will through policy and laws to do this thing, we're not going to do it." And way too often we just accede to these things, and we spend way, way too much time in the Park Service – you can look around and see lots of things, that's a nice thing to do, but are we triaging here? If we sit down and triage, then there's only one thing on the natural side that we should be working on right now, and that's climate change. The parks are being killed. The species are being decimated. Glaciers are melting. Why are we focusing on anything less than stopping that?

William Halainen: On the historical side, we need to stop taking on buildings or cultural mandates that we cannot do anything with. It's a travesty. If we're not going to be able to restore a property or manage it properly, then we shouldn't take it on.

William Halainen: I'm on the verge of a soapbox. No, I am on a soapbox.

William Halainen: I was talking with the structural fire folks out in Boise about how many buildings we've got. We couldn't remember. The guy out there says it

depends on how you count, but it's probably about 28,000 buildings. Do we have the money to manage 28,000 buildings? If we don't, well, we're going to have to figure out how to do this. People say we should take on more. Well, yeah, that's a great idea, but you're saying we're not going to spend money on it, and they say, no, we can't, so you're going to have to raise private funding. Well, no, you're not; you're not going to raise private funding. You're just hallucinating. You have to make some tough decisions here, and it's the same with climate change. You have to make some tough decisions. You just can't let these things run over you. Am I answering the question? [laughs]

Lu Ann Jones: Yes. I think one of things that we're thinking about with these interviews is also thinking not only about telling the story of the agency through individual careers, but also taking away some lessons learned, thinking back and reflecting on the wisdom of having been in the Service for a long time. One question I have is, if you were giving advice to somebody who was entering the agency today, what you might suggest to them in terms of building a career or thinking about the future of what to do in that regard.

William Halainen: Well, I'll begin with a qualifier, which is, I mean, things have changed a lot and what you can and cannot do, and I'm not even conversant with hiring and advancement, how it works now. It was a rule of thumb then and I can't imagine that it's changed much now, is that be prepared to take on jobs that don't seem like the best possibilities but afford you a new opportunity to learn something and maybe take up new grade but as a challenge.

William Halainen: You say, "No, I just want to be a backcountry ranger." I had a friend who had a great backcountry ranger job up in Katmai [National Park & Preserve]. He said, "I will take a chief ranger's job at Fort McHenry because I want to learn how to be a chief ranger and how to be a manager, I want to work in an historic site and take on that challenge."

William Halainen: Those are the things you have to be ready to do, particularly in these times. You have to be adaptable, flexible. You have to take assignments that few others want. Not always, but you have to be willing to take those on and do a good job. You have to work hard, and you have to exceed your P.D. and not just meet it. You have to communicate with people.

William Halainen: I guess the short answer to that is you have to be aggressive about your career and you have to work hard and not just sit on your hands and wait for something to happen, because it won't. I've seen a lot of careers which have worked because people were willing to take quantum jumps in what they were doing from here to there in another field and take it on.

William Halainen: I guess in tandem with what I was saying before about taking on mandates that are not going to succeed, be wary of being given a job that you are set up for failure, or maybe not set up for failure but not going to be allowed to succeed. That's the biggest thing I would change in my career. I would

never take historic leasing now. I would say, "You guys are not going to do this? I'm not going to do it either, not unless you give me the funding and the policy guidance and the support on this, because it's not going to work and I'm just going to waste my time." That's tough when you're a GS-7. [laughter]

Lu Ann Jones: I was going to ask you, in looking back, were there decisions that you might have done differently if you had it to do over again?

William Halainen: Yes. I would have worked harder and whined less. I mean as seasonals we didn't have a lot of power, so you vent by doing a lot of whining. Well, it's not that you're not justified in whining, but as Rick Gale used to say, "No sniveling is allowed here." If you have an idea for change and I'm willing to accept it, then you best be ready to do it. And if you can't make change, then maybe your line of work is elsewhere. There will be frustrations. Working in a bureaucracy is going to do that, not that it's going to be any better anywhere else.

Lu Ann Jones: Why did you continue to really continue your job in another capacity once you left the Park Service?

William Halainen: Because I love internal communications, and when it came time to retire and I found that the Park Service was willing to hire me part-time as a contractor to do what I liked most out of a diverse P.D., and I didn't have to attend any meetings and I had no GPRA goals, I said, "What's the downside of this?" There's no commute. I can do this at home. I'll do that in a heartbeat, and I have no intention of stopping until they throw me out, or my wife wants to go on an extended vacation. [laughs]

Lu Ann Jones: How many submissions do you get for consideration in a typical day, and how much is just landing in your inbox, and how much are you reporting, yourself?

William Halainen: I don't do very much reporting at all. I can't. I don't have the time. You have to get around to be able to do it, and I'm sitting up in the hills of Pennsylvania. We run about 2,500 submissions a year in *Inside NPS*, 250 editions about 10 submissions each. In truth, most of my job is editing, just to make things conform to editorial style, and be grammatically correct and to hew to policy, those that we've established for the publication. So it's not onerous at that level, but sometimes it's beating the bushes for stories, particularly lead stories which you want to capture with that image on top and finding something good, and keeping your ear to the ground, like any reporter would, to find out what's going on out there. People say, "Wow, you talk to everybody in the Park Service. You must know about everything that's going on."

William Halainen: I say, "You'd be amazed." I am amazed at times at these huge projects that I'd never even heard of, because of lot of that doesn't get out. Unfortunately, the tendency is, in an internal publication, and we all do it

and there's no fault to the organization, a lot of it is not the substantial news of the organization; it's about awards and promotions and photo contests and so forth. And those are all fine, but it's not the meat and potatoes of what goes on in the agency. I just talked with Jennifer Mummart about that at length. It's hard to do without having beat reporters down here. Did I answer the question?

Lu Ann Jones: You did answer the question, yes. So, are there other things that you wanted to talk about that I haven't prompted you on? I always like at the end to leave the door open for other directions.

William Halainen: I think one of the most amazing things that happened in my career was I was the right person at the right place at the right time. I've thought about that a hundred times. And that my wife would allow us to come down here as a GS-7, with two little kids, living in the Washington metro area, what were you thinking? It panned out, but it might not have. But why did it work? We come back to that issue of empowerment. I think that's one of the great failings of bureaucracy, is not identifying good ideas that people have and allowing them to run with them. It's not easy to do. I see that from a manager's side, because everybody's got ideas about what ought to be done. But you have to be listening and understanding. Sometimes it's hard to see because they are probably thirty years younger than you are and have an insight that you don't have. But I worked for some of the best empowerers that I've ever seen anywhere, and it made a tremendous difference. All of us who worked for Walt and Rick and Andy and those guys would say that.

Lu Ann Jones: I think they were probably doing that before the word "empowerment" became such a part of the conversation.

William Halainen: That's right, before it was a concept, before it was a buzzword. I would say that if you have a passion for the agency, you should be willing to work in central offices, because if there's a lot of frustrations and so forth in your workday, you should only program about 20 percent of that time, because the other 80 percent are going to be reacting. But if you love the agency and want to make changes, you can do it. You just have to be willing to suck up a lot of stuff you don't want to do. But you can come to Washington or you can go to the regional offices and do things and make lives better for people out in the field and meet the agency mission. Hoo-rah. Semper Fi. [laughs]

Lu Ann Jones: If that's okay, that sounds like a good place to stop. If that's okay.

William Halainen: Sure, whatever.

Lu Ann Jones: That sounds good. Thank you very much for doing this.

William Halainen: Thank you.

Lu Ann Jones: It's just like J.T. Townsend said, you're a fount of wisdom here, so I appreciate that. He promised that.

William Halainen: I don't know about that. [laughter]

Lu Ann Jones: He promised that.

[END OF TRACK 4]

[END OF INTERVIEW]