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Steve Hastings
September 13, 2012

Interview conducted by Patricia Miller, Barbara Prettyman, Barbara Wyatt, Mark Calamia, and Michael Hosking
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NPS History Collection
Harpers Ferry Center
PO Box 50
Harpers Ferry, WV 25425
HFC_Archivist@nps.gov

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

WITH

STEVE HASTINGS

September 13, 2012

Harpers Ferry, West Virginia

Transcribed by Technitype Transcripts

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Stephen T. Mather Training Center

[START OF INTERVIEW]

Patricia Miller: This is Patricia Miller, museum technician for Ozark National Scenic Riverway. It's Thursday, September 13, 2012. We are interviewing Steve Hastings. We are going to do this as a part of the Effective Oral History course at Mather Training Center. I have four colleagues who will be asking Steve questions as well. I'll have them introduce themselves.

Barbara Prettyman: My name is Barbara Prettyman. I'm the archaeological technician at Timucuan Ecological and Historic Preserve.

Barbara Wyatt: And my name is Barbara Wyatt. I'm a historian with the National Register of National Historic Landmark Programs in Washington.

Mark Calamia: I'm Mark Calamia. I am the Cultural Resources program manager and tribal liaison at Pipestone National Monument.

Michael Hosking: And I'm Mike Hosking, and I'm museum curator at Harpers Ferry National Historical Park.

Steve Hastings: Exciting business we're in, isn't it?

Patricia Miller: Yes, indeed. We're going to start off with a couple of background questions. Where were your born?

Steve Hastings: Washington, D.C.

Patricia Miller: Were you raised there? If not, where?

Steve Hastings: Well, back then, hospitals in D.C. weren't all that good, and so family lived in Arlington, and both my sister and I – or I guess a better way to put it is my mother went across the river to go to a good hospital, so both my sister and I were born in Garfield Hospital overlooking the old Senators Stadium.

Patricia Miller: What did your parents do for a living?

Steve Hastings: Dad was a hydrologist with U.S. Geological Survey and was working at USGS Headquarters in D.C. at that point in time and transferred out to the Menlo Park office to be the regional director for the Pacific West Region in 1962, and was responsible for groundwater studies throughout the Pacific Basin, sharing that research with the people of the United States.

Steve Hastings: Interestingly enough, I ran into my wife many years later, and her father was a hydrogeologist with U.S. Geological Survey. The Survey is a very tight-knit family. They publish not only the research reports but the histories of the people, what did they do when they were with the agency, what were their milestones, and those are treasured by the retirees, and they're very active retiree organizations. In my youth, we went out to old Fort Washington Park, and I probably met my wife when she was a child, but we have no recollection of each other, because the Survey had their family gathering out there. It was just part of growing up in the D.C. area.

Patricia Miller: Very interesting. Where did you go to school?

Steve Hastings: California State Polytechnic University, San Luis Obispo, better known as Cal Poly.

Patricia Miller: What did you study there?

Steve Hastings: I started in chemistry. Dad knew a soil scientist who was a professor down there when I was in high school. I come from a family of scientists, so was leaning toward the sciences, and not necessarily excelled in chemistry but worked as a lab tech supporting the chemistry department at the high school. So, I enrolled as a chemistry major, and then hit advanced pre-chem and calculating the angle between the hydrogen molecule and the oxygen molecule or atom in a walker molecule and said, "What does this have to do with life?"

Steve Hastings: About the same time, the school was initiating a Parks and Recreation Management Program, so I dumped chemistry and moved into parks and recreation as a course of study, with an emphasis in parks management. It was actually under Department of Agriculture there at the university. They've grown primarily into a focus of range management and forestry management, but at the time they had an emphasis in parks management, so that was my emphasis.

Patricia Miller: Great. Thinking back to when you first joined the Park Service, why? Why did you join the Park Service?

Steve Hastings: It was a dream come true. I started working seasonally while I was going to school with California State Parks there in Central California and fell in love. I literally remember my first couple of seasons coming home and having to massage my face, my smile muscles were so tired.

Steve Hastings: And here I'm driving around in the truck and picking up litter and emptying garbage cans and having a grand old time. And eventually got a permanent position in California State Parks after working seasonally in a number of areas and went through an intake program, which I'm proud of to the day. It was a yearlong experience at an intake park with a group of other people who had also just joined the State Park system at that point. So, you learned everything about being a ranger.

Steve Hastings: This was a time when parks were going through a major evolution. 1968, I was working a campground in Central California when the Yosemite riots took place and the campers leaving Yosemite. San Luis Obispo is halfway between San Francisco and Los Angeles, so campers bailing from Yosemite were stopping and camping at the halfway point at the campground. I was working as a maintenance worker. And just the horror stories they brought back of lighting fires in the woods; you need to shoot up, you go over to the truck and stick your arm in the window; and the families were really [unclear], of course.

Steve Hastings: It was a beginning of a major change in the way the Park Service looked at law enforcement and protection. Parallel with that while I was working seasonally, and I went from maintenance into fee collections, environmental education as a seasonal, the country was what was later described as so close to rebellion that within the law enforcement community on a scale of one to ten, we were an eight, that the next step would be all-out rioting in the streets.

Steve Hastings: This is when the Bank of America protests were going on in Santa Barbara, and the rangers were still ranging. They cleaned the restroom if it was dirty. They didn't have any specialized training in law enforcement, so the Santa Barbara Sheriff's Office came up and did a workshop for the rangers. Because of my interests, I was allowed as a seasonal to sit in on it. They brought their helmet up and, "This is what was smashed by the brick, and you've got to arm yourself and get ready for chaos."

Steve Hastings: We literally have over the last however many years seen the evolution of specialization within the ranger ranks to where we're now isolated from the awful side of society that law enforcement is immersed in. California State Parks had a philosophy that – this was actually Bill Mott [phonetic], who was then director of State Parks, later director of National Park Service, that he did not want to see that specialization. So, if you're a ranger, you're going to be a protection ranger and you're going to get off of a car stop and do a campfire program.

Steve Hastings: So, I went through the full certification program with State Parks. I became a commissioned ranger and went through the intake and got my first permanent assignment in San Francisco. I want to work in the woods. Then San Francisco Maritime State Historic Park at Fisherman's Wharf and fell in love with a bunch of old ships.

Steve Hastings: The opportunity to join the National Park Service came when the political forces rallied around Golden Gate National Recreation Area, which had recently been created with the Nixon Parks to the People Program, Year of the Parks coming into the National Park System. It was, in a way, a lifelong dream. I grew up in a Department of Interior family, and the National Park Service was coming in, so I said, "Me too," and was one of two permanent staff that transferred from California State Parks to the National Park Service in 1977.

Steve Hastings: As I said, fell in love with a bunch of old ships and probably ruined my career because I spent fifteen years out there, but still have many fond memories of the good times and the challenge that the Park Service faces because they don't build structures like that anymore. On one historic vessel that is currently in the process of documentation for removal, the *Wapama*, the interior planking were 11-by-14 timbers, 90 feet long. They were built for the lumber industry of a bludgeoning California, West Coast, the pioneer spirit of literally going into the woods and cutting down the trees and [unclear] to build the mill and then milling the timbers to build the ship in the woods. And then loading up lumber, and two trips later, they paid for the cost of constructing, so the lumber trade up and down was heavily represented in the collection there and is represented there today.

Steve Hastings: The skills that went into those suddenly brought me into an immersion with cultural resources stewardship that I'd never enjoyed, because I was not particularly a good student, and history didn't turn me on, but it came alive. The oral histories that are being performed out there are to this day absolutely remarkable because they identified the San Francisco Maritime Museum at the time, which now has merged with National Park Service. These guys have been places no man will no longer go again, so they started an oral history program. They have an absolutely remarkable collection there in their library. So should your travels take you to San Francisco, find a friend and get into the bowels of the archives out there, because it's absolutely amazing.

Patricia Miller: Along those lines, why did you stick with the National Park Service for your whole career?

Steve Hastings: Good place to work, good people. When people ask me about a career with it, I said, "For gosh sakes, we're in the people service business." People who go to work for the National Park Service like people. What a better group of colleagues to live with.

[Unidentified]: Steve, I'd like to talk to you about your background and training at HPTC and also some of the changes you've seen in training over the years. So, my first question is, some of the previous work experience that you've talked about, how has that shaped the training programs that you've managed at HPTC?

Steve Hastings: Well, I'm going to stick with Steve for a little bit, and you can interrupt and get me back on topic. The intake program was six hundred hours of classroom, six hundred hours to become a commissioned law enforcement officer with the State Parks. I really watched the people, the instructors, and said, "Wow, that respected position, that's something that I may want to put under my portfolio at some point."

Steve Hastings: They have a training center at Asilomar Conference Center, and in '75 I signed up for a class to be an instructor so I could go back to Mott and share whatever expertise I might develop. At the time, they were married with the University of California system. So, after I took a forty-hour State Park class, I got a limited-term teaching credential from the University of California system, and I still carry that proudly today. It's the same class I took when I came to the Park Service and moved into training and development, in essence, "The Fundamentals of Training." But there was that relationship with the university that made it extremely meaningful for me and provided, I think, significant credentials to the training program that is still operating down there today.

Steve Hastings: When I left Maritime, I became immersed in a program known as Environmental Living, which is an immersion for fourth-through-sixth-grade students in history. It is a concept that has petered because of the staff time involved, and I'm not sure if anyone besides Maritime is still running it. But at the time, Fort Washington, Turkey Run, several California State Parks, and I'm drawing blank on other federal parks, applied this concept where you work with the teachers from the schools to train them on how to weave history, any location where there's been an interaction of man and the environment, into their yearlong curriculum.

Steve Hastings: We put the teachers through a twenty-four-hour workshop. They'd come down. We'd go through the exercise. We'd go through an overnight experience. They'd leave at ten o'clock the next morning. We'd set watch on the ship at Fort Point. They would set watch at the fort. They would have jailors. They would have role players throughout. We had sail makers, we had longshoremen, and so on. So, there were certain skills that were required, but the core concept was when you go back to the classroom, you start exploring what did these people do, how did they make a living, where did they get their food, how did they relate to each other, and so on.

Steve Hastings: They'd go back to the classroom after their immersion, they'd bring in parent volunteers, so suddenly you're sucking into the community on a very deep level into the mission of the National Park Service, the preservation and importance of history, the traditions and how we have grown to where we are as a society today. So, they work in the classroom with parent volunteers for a given period of time, then come back and bring the children, and they spend the night on the vessel. So that was my first exposure to education, and, again, just fell intellectually and emotionally in love with education.

Steve Hastings: When I left San Francisco, I moved to the regional office in Philadelphia and was responsible for implementing the first computerized maintenance management system through the parks and then the Mid-Atlantic Region, which was basically Pennsylvania to southern Virginia. The second day on the job, chief of maintenance says, "Oh, we've got a workshop down in Fredericksburg, down at FRED/SPOT, and I need you to come along."

Steve Hastings: "Oh, okay."

Steve Hastings: So, we go down there, we've got all the chiefs of maintenance from that area, and the contractor is making his presentation on the software system and the business practices that are woven in it. My new supervisor said, "Well, see you next week. You're in charge."

Steve Hastings: "Oh. Oh, okay."

Steve Hastings: We began developing training and delivering training reflected back on that forty-hour course I took and delivered training throughout the Mid-Atlantic Region, got into the Northeast Region, did something out of the Midwest Region, and went from there to – if you're going to move into management, you've got to be a division chief. Okay. Where's one? Ended up in southern West Virginia, chief of maintenance or facility manager down at New River Gorge, which was a growing experience to the point where I was concerned about the safety of my family.

Steve Hastings: At the same time, the Park Service was completing a significant transformation of the Learning and Development Program. That is to say, a group of two hundred people had come together prior to my involvement and developed the competencies, a new strategy for training and development. The Washington Office of Training and Development had just been developed and published and endorsed by the National Leadership Council. The concept of having a training manager who was a subject-matter expert, not an education specialist, for each of the key careers that were defined by this group of two hundred people, was embraced.

Steve Hastings: I got a phone call and said, "Are you interested?"

Steve Hastings: I said, "Sure." It was the worst transfer I've ever had. I got the offer in April, and they didn't cut a fifty until December. I had an 1860s house there in Oak Hill, West Virginia, first time it had been out of the family, had three acres of flatland, which in southern West Virginia is pretty rare. So I had this vision of advertising in the preservation magazines, "This property is available," and I couldn't because I never got my fifty, ended up just having to go through a realtor and ended up selling to a guy who owns a trucking company, and he needed a place to park his trucks.

Steve Hastings: So that's how I got into Training and Development, period. I need to stop there.

[Unidentified]: You've been at HPTC since 1996, and you mentioned before that you had previous experience with computerized training. So, since you've been at HPTC, how have you seen online training and web-based training, or distance learning really affect the programs you put together?

Steve Hastings: Well, it wasn't actually computerized training; it was training. The Park Service literally bought a computer for every chief of maintenance. About two-thirds of them got it. The rest of them, the superintendent took it, because this was a hot machine, Sperry, big [unclear] desktop.

Steve Hastings: I don't have the actual numbers. We probably lost a third of the chiefs of maintenance who said, "I'm not going to mess with that."

Steve Hastings: So, my challenge was, I was literally running a tech support desk there in Philadelphia. "It's not coming on."

Steve Hastings: I say, "Okay. Follow the cord from the back. Is it plugged in?"

Steve Hastings: "Uh, let me call you back in a little bit." That was the level of ignorance. So, it wasn't delivering training through computers; it was trying to get a basic skill set that we're still fighting today. That was 1998, 1999.

Steve Hastings: I transferred from Albright to HPTC when we went through another transformation of Training and Development, and the logical grouping of preservation skills and maintenance training, which is my title, made sense. I grew up back here. What the hey, different place. So, moved from the South Rim back here.

Steve Hastings: I had a number of programs that I've initiated in my seven years at Albright that I brought back with me and simply continued. My primary constituents are the maintenance workforce, and we're now challenged with providing a presence on the National Park Service Academy. So, we need to build a website. Are these guys going to use it? How are we going to build a construct where, one, people are comfortable going? And you look at all the young guys who ran around with a phone, and they're looking stuff up and then doing all this marvelous stuff that I haven't mastered yet. So, there's hope.

Steve Hastings: Meantime, 54 percent of the maintenance workforce is eligible for retirement by 2015, so there's a lot of us old farts around, and generally people getting into the trades are there because they're good with their hands and they enjoy seeing things, building things, and not sitting in a classroom and studying and learning. That's a gross generalization. So how we're going to touch them with computers and computerized training, I don't know. There's a tremendous opportunity. We're getting the website constructed. The core tenet that I'm espousing is we need to inspire people to want to learn and provide the resources to be able to find it there, so that when they're trying to figure it out, they've got a place to look and they can pull it up and learn. By the way, it's not going to class. It's not doing a series of exercise on the desktop or on the Smartphone.

[Unidentified]: So, are you finding that you have those resources? Do you have the funding resources?

Steve Hastings: Funding has been a challenge from the onset. National Leadership Council said, "This is a great plan." They never gave Park Service any money. I was lucky to get 20, 30,000. On a really good year, I got 70,000, and this is to serve a population of about 5,000, 6,000 people. So, when I had a really good year, I did a class back here at Mather once or twice or did a couple classes out there.

Steve Hastings: Most of the time, I was just working on that understanding that we need to inspire learning, not deliver training, because there's never going to be enough money. Currently, our funding is at a level where it looks like we are going to be able to get this website up, and I don't see us developing a maintenance training. Do a Google search. Want to be a carpenter? There's a whole bunch of people out there that would love to take your money and teach you how to be a carpenter.

Steve Hastings: How can we leverage those resources and/or inspire people who are currently in the trend of nationally losing trades? Young people, it has a bad reputation, it's hard work, it's dirty. "I don't want to go into the trades." We're approaching a crisis as a nation, as a country, because people are not choosing professions in the trades, and the people who've got a bag of skills that they've developed over their career, learning from the old people that have been doing it for a long time, are dying. That's not being passed on.

Steve Hastings: We're also going through change in skills where they used to stick build, take a bunch of lumber and put a house up. Now they component build. You brace, you take the whole unit out, you don't fix the unit. You throw it away and you buy a new unit and you put it in. That's the skill set we're promoting. Yet as the National Park Service, this is Department of Interior, we've got a wealth of buildings and other constructed pieces of the environment that can't be addressed in that fashion.

[Unidentified]: When you talk about inspiring learning, are you getting feedback from the Park Service employees that they are inspired to go back to their parks?

Steve Hastings: It's not going back to the parks. It's hitting them in their chair, it's hitting at their desk, it's hitting them in their conversations around the table in the shop, and spotted feedback. I think we're effective with the limited dollars we have. We have some good classroom offerings. The past program is probably the most visible. We've been running equipment operator safety. We're now getting into alternative fuels and maintenance of alternative fuel vehicles and photovoltaics.

Steve Hastings: So, we're still pumping classes out there, and as long as funding allows us to help split the cost of travel with the parks, we're going to fill the classes. No two ways about it. There's some really crying needs. The way the Park Service operates, it's the chief ranger, the chief of resources, or the superintendents. "We're going to put in a photovoltaic system. That's going to be my legacy."

Steve Hastings: "Oops, did it." You know, the contractor comes in and does their thirty-minute training as required by the time he leaves, and then six months later they're out of business.

Steve Hastings: "It's broken."

Steve Hastings: "Oh, well, call maintenance."

Steve Hastings: "Where'd that videotape go? It's on somebody's desk."

Steve Hastings: And these guys are getting hurt, or gals are getting hurt. They're going out there and not knowing what the converters are, what the voltage potential is, where the capacitors are, and we're going to kill somebody.

Steve Hastings: So that blinding flash of the obvious, we've started delivering that type of training. Okay, they've built it, now what are the components? How do these things work? What are the interfaces? Where do you need to be careful? Why do you wear fall protection, and so on down the line.

[Unidentified]: Okay. Thank you.

Barbara Wyatt: Steve, I'm Barbara Wyatt again, and I'm going to be asking you a few questions about how the Historic Preservation Training Center relates to historic preservation. So first I wondered if you could tell us what some of the factors were that led to development of the Historic Preservation Training Center.

Steve Hastings: Whew. Back to the Askins days. In a way, Jim Askins was the first, was the founding father, the inspiration, the driving force behind the existence of a Preservation Training Center, and I'm not all that fluent in the early days and the legislation and all of the different reports that were coming out, that are still coming out, about, "We don't have the skills to maintain."

Steve Hastings: The concept of Historic Preservation Training Center was threefold. One, preserve the skills through delivery of preservation services. Of the seventy-five people that worked there, there's five of us that are base funded, and we're on the training, the learning and development side of the house. All the rest of them, if we don't have work, we're going to have trouble making payroll.

Steve Hastings: So, we're in parks. We're in national forests. We're working with national land park properties that are privately owned or owned by municipalities, fixing stuff, and, in the process, passing some of the skills down. Askins set an extremely high standard, actually, I guess, the preservation community did, so that when you're fixing, you replace in kind. He espoused before we put it back together, we'll actually date-stamp the materials we're putting in so that for future work on the building you can identify what was the original fabric and what was replaced and when, by whom.

Steve Hastings: With that foundation in place, the concept of an Exhibit Specialist Program came into being since there is a need in all of our parks for preservation. We don't have a single park unit that I can think of that doesn't have historic elements that need maintenance and preservation. Where a journeyman-level craftsman would come to work alongside seasoned craftsmen, historic preservation professionals, and learn the skills by executing the projects, over a three-year period of time, there would be funding for them to attend classes, and that would complement their work, and at the end of three years they would go forth and do good in the National Park Service and find another job.

Steve Hastings: The other spinoff of our delivery of preservation services is as we're negotiating a project agreement with a park, we will encourage them to allow their staff to come in and work alongside as well. Since we're going to fix it and walk out, they've got to live with it, and I would say that's probably less than 10 percent of the effort. But there are a number of projects where either we'll advertise and bring people in from other parks if we can do so without impairing the project delivery schedule, or they will have built into the project delivery schedule the slowdown required to bring a less skilled worker in to work alongside the senior craftsman.

Steve Hastings: The third side or third leg of HPTC was the learning and development side, which historically has been Dorothy Printup delivering the preservation skills training.

Steve Hastings: She is the training manager for historic preservation skills with the past program and any number of other training programs for maintenance workers and now the mix with maintenance and the division of moving into modern technologies and generally increasing the skill base of the workforce.

Barbara Wyatt: Do you see any relationship between the passage of federal preservation laws like the National Historic Preservation Act, NHPA, with the development and evolution of the training center?

Steve Hastings: Oh, yes. There's some really wonderful writing from the early days. Lisa Sasser put an article out that kind of captured that history. I can't give you the name of that publication, but I stole it and got permission from her to put it on our website because it spoke to the growth, the evolution of the trades, and the actions that the preservation community at large and the National Park System in specific are taking to help fill that gap and protect the loss of the skills. But I don't have the real specifics. I'm just not schooled in it.

Barbara Wyatt: You've explained that preservation of traditional building skills. It sounds like it's part of your mission perhaps.

Steve Hastings: Most certainly.

Barbara Wyatt: So how does that influence the way you approach your work?

Steve Hastings: Not at all, other than recognizing the importance and incorporating the medium wherever possible.

Barbara Wyatt: So, is there an effect on, for example, scheduling and budgeting for projects, because you're maybe taking an approach that wouldn't be taken by kind of a modern contractor?

Steve Hastings: On the preservation service side, obviously, as you can't — and I have actually moved into the position of conservator of ships there in San Francisco where I was running the preservation program and hauling vessels out of water to do routine repairs on it, and region hated me. Oh, god, because we never knew what we were getting into until you took it apart, and it'll sink if you don't.

Steve Hastings: I walked into Philadelphia and met the controller, and he says, "You have the *Wapama*," that vessel I was describing earlier with the monster timbers, and he was cursing because we were stealing all his money.

Steve Hastings: I'd regularly go into dry dock and, "Oh, gee, it broke. We need more money," and we got the money out of region.

Steve Hastings: Our crews are much more highly skilled at the diagnostic ends of things than I was as a ranger transitioning into maintenance and preservation and project management and contract execution. So, it is inherent.

Steve Hastings: Now, the flipside of HPTC and workforce management's branch of Learning and Development is the reality that program managers recognize there's need for training people too. So you've got FLETC and you've got the seasonal rangers academies and you've got the Park Facility Management Division, who recognized and hold strongly that until we fix our facility management workforce, we're not going to get anybody else up to speed because if the chief doesn't recognize it's important, it's not going to be a priority, and these guys are going to continue to flounder and we're going to lose skills and on and on and on.

Steve Hastings: They have been very generous in their funding for the training on the facility management software system, the facility management program, which is business practices, up to and including now the Facility Manager Leaders Program, which is a yearlong course of study for an individual from the maintenance ranks who demonstrates exceptional leadership skills, to polish those skills and immerse them in the business management practices. Okay, you've got all this data. What's in there? How are you going to pull it out? Now, how are you going to articulate it so that your colleagues at the table in a park operation, other division chiefs, are going to buy into the fact that you're either not going to provide a service in the interest of carrying your program forward, or they're going to give you some money.

Steve Hastings: And helping to build the understanding of the challenge we have as stewards of the constructive environment, we use the National Park Service to construct the environment being both the brand-new Visitors Center that's got all the fancy systems in it and the historic structures. We also need to have the business management skills to be able to look back and say, "We can't do it all." We're going to need to do some documentation removal. We're going to need to look at why we still have that building.

Steve Hastings: And it's not just the National Park Service. I go down that rabbit trail because inherent in the training that park facility management does is a real basic project management principle that if you don't get compliance, you're not going to get it obligated, and at the same time fostering the skills within the facility management ranks to engage their – they want to be to be fluent in the laws and the regulation, be it NHPA or be it 106, and engage their peers and the professionals on the park staff and beyond in the conversations

early in the project planning phase so that everybody's onboard and it's executed up to the standards that can be achieved with a mutual understanding.

Steve Hastings: So, yes, there's an emphasis. No, it's not something we really push. We do deliver, and hopefully Roger's going to get it online this year, a preservation law and philosophy class, which was a TEL workshop that was absolutely deadly and was a foundational piece for a program that Roger runs for facility managers as cultural resource management stewards.

Barbara Wyatt: So, going back again to when the Albright started, I mean, it sounds like it was pretty groundbreaking, but I wonder had the Park Service tried other approaches to traditional skills training, or was this kind of a first? And then, this is kind of a two-pronged one, is there now some collaboration with other programs?

Steve Hastings: I need to send you Lisa's article. So, if you can give me your business cards or email addresses or whatever before this is over, I'll dig that out and email it to all of you because that was one of the first lessons I learned as an interpreter. You don't know the answer, you take the people's name and you write it down, and you email it to them. Or you mail it to at that point in time. She captured it very well, and I cannot. My recollection isn't clear enough to be able to answer accurately.

Barbara Wyatt: Then let me ask you the second part of that, because I can think you can help us on this. What is the relationship between your training center and other training centers within the system and particularly within Mather?

Steve Hastings: It's something that we've been trying to deal – it's been a challenge for Mike Watson and Martha Aikens and Ed Carlin [phonetic] and Gil Lusk [phonetic] and Flip Haygood and all the other leaders of training for the Park Service, is how do you get people who are geographically dispersed together as a collective whole that where you have synergy that moves the organization forward.

Steve Hastings: BLM said this is a no-brainer. Bureau of Land Management will build a training center, and all of them live there, and they've got twelve education specialists to support the subject matter, experts developing and delivering training. Fish and Wildlife Service, they built NCTC. I mean, for gosh sakes, they've got the pool of people, they've got the production lab, they've got the education [unclear], they've got the satellites. They've got all that. We're spread all over hell and creation, and we don't talk to each other nearly as

much as we should, and it's a challenge that is in the discussions and has been since I joined Training and Development in 1996, and it's not resolved.

Steve Hastings: It's compounded by the fact that a lot of the training occurs in the parks because they know what needs to be done. They know where the need is, and they don't have time to wait for the Washington office to figure it out. Besides, the Washington office doesn't have enough money to do it. We meet regularly. We talk regularly. We look for opportunities to collaborate. I mentioned the facility manager class that Roger runs for cultural resources stewardship, or Jerry Hall on interdisciplinary resource protection. We supported the development of that class. We widely advertise it. We strongly encourage our people to participate in them.

Steve Hastings: Occasionally we'll identify an opportunity to pull together and work on a course. You're going to be hearing about a division chief course that we will have in calendar year '13 where we have all of us kind of pulling together behind the development of that, because we all have a vested interest. We all have constituents who are division chiefs in parks. Did that get where you needed to go?

Barbara Wyatt: That really did answer it, yes. No, that really helped. It sounds like maybe there's been a problem, but it's been identified so there's steps towards maybe breaching the communication gaps?

Steve Hastings: We're working on it. It's a challenge, has been from day one and still is today, so we're not there, which is probably a good thing, because we're still working on it.

Barbara Wyatt: Have you had a special relationship with Harpers Ferry because of proximity?

Steve Hastings: Let me see. I came here first in 1978, one year after I joined the Park Service. I got a chance to come back and visit my folks who lived in Arlington still, and my sister who lives down in Arlington.

Steve Hastings: So I've held a warm place in my heart for Mather and Harpers Ferry from early on, not in my childhood, we didn't even come out here, I don't think, to the point where when we were relocating, we were looking at what we could afford, because we were in park housing in the Grand Canyon and looked in the Frederick area trying to keep the commute under an hour, preferably under thirty minutes.

Steve Hastings: Literally on the last day we were back here looking at housing opportunities, I said, "Well, let's look up this way." The realtor brought us up the road about ten miles, and we found a house and

fell in love with it, about twenty minutes away from Mather. So, I have a personal tie to it. The institution, what it stands for, its history, its mission, its traditions are very important to the National Park Service, and that belief was instilled in Steve by early exposure in my career.

Barbara Wyatt: Thank you very much. That's helpful.

Steve Hastings: Next.

Mark Calamia: Again, I'm Mark Calamia.

Steve Hastings: Hi, Mark.

Mark Calamia: Hi, Steve. Well, my set of questions is kind of intended to bring us full circle, in a way, but also to give you an opportunity to reflect with us more on your career on things that we might consider less tangible. So, I have a series of questions here that I'd like to invite you to consider. The first one is, what do you see as your major contributions to the National Park Service during your tenure with the organization?

Steve Hastings: I have plans to retire in January. That's a damned good question, and it's one that I haven't pondered very much. I've tried to have fun along the way. I'm proud that some of the programs that I started at Maritime are still alive and well today.

Steve Hastings: One of our challenges there was people who lived there do not go to Fisherman's Wharf. People would ask me, "Where's the best seafood restaurant?" I don't have a clue. I go home. I go to the other side of the city. I really don't know.

Steve Hastings: Because I had a love of music in my schooling years and a respect for the folk music community, we began a Festival of the Sea and just pulled out all the stops. Park Service did urban initiative. There was money available for us to do things.

Steve Hastings: So, I asked the chief of interpretation at Golden Gate, who we worked for at that time, [unclear], I said, "I need $11,000. We're going to do this sea music thing."

Steve Hastings: "Okay, here's your money."

Steve Hastings: I said, "Well, it's not much money." So, jumped out and grabbed Ghirardelli Square manager there, the manager at the Cannery, and we ended up – and the folk music community and the sea music community, and we ended up with twenty-seven performers on

eleven stages for three days. We filled Fisherman's Wharf with activity.

Steve Hastings: Part of the momentum that attracted an AV geek who recorded it and a folklorist, who said we should give this to Mo. What was it, three years ago when Smithsonian picked up the folklorist collection? They picked up the tapes from those productions, and they're now for sale through the Smithsonian.

Steve Hastings: We were crazy. I don't know how we survived. Had Anchor Steam Beer Company donating, had Ghirardelli donating. We just were going out. We went wild and pulled it off. It was just a whole bunch of people pulling together and having a good time and making it happen. That music festival still runs every year in San Francisco as a result of it. There's a weekly shanty group that started because some of the people that came in thought, "Wow, this is really neat."

Steve Hastings: In terms of since then, just people that I've touched and hopefully made a difference through some of the facility management classes I ran in the early days, they've gone on and had successful careers and moved on up in the organization. Some of the things that we've put in order and put out and they were gobbled up, but looking back, what was probably the most visible thing that I contributed was probably working in San Francisco with that Sea Music Festival and a few other programs that are still knocking around out there.

Mark Calamia: Okay. Thank you. Can you offer a couple of suggestions for improving the National Park Service's overall effectiveness in your area of expertise? Please explain your suggestions.

Steve Hastings: Please explain your question. I'm not asking you to. I need to think about that for a moment, and actually I do need you to ask that one more time for me, please.

Mark Calamia: Sure. Sure. Can you offer a couple of suggestions, please, for improving the National Park Service's overall effectiveness? Then, if you can, explain each of your suggestions.

Steve Hastings: Through the lens of the training manager?

Mark Calamia: Yes.

Steve Hastings: The organization is hard to touch in that the park superintendent is god. They get the money. Washington does not. Fish and Wildlife does. Bureau of Land Management, most other federal agencies,

Washington office speaks. Either you listen or you don't [get] your funding. You don't [unclear] very often at headquarters.

Steve Hastings: So, our ability to be effective out of the Washington office or out of a regional office is limited. When I was in the region, I penned a letter. When I got pissed off at a superintendent or park operations not achieving the standards that had been set, I penned a letter for the regional director to send to the superintendent. Well, I'm not doing that for the director. I'm now in a position I just learned, "To hell with them. I'll just pick up the phone and call the guy or gal who's running the operation down there."

Steve Hastings: So that makes our ability to improve the maintenance workforce darn hard. The park superintendent has a list of mandates longer than both of my arms put together, and they've got the not-so-envious job of picking and choosing with their team where we're going to put our effort, where we're going to put our money. When it comes to training, the maintenance folks don't get it. They're at the bottom of the rung. The superintendent and the deputy get to travel. The division chiefs go to meetings. Law enforcement had better darn well keep their commissions and be topnotch. I don't want them out there carrying guns if they're not.

Steve Hastings: Where does that leave the people in the trenches? How are we going to affect an improved sensitivity to the resources, both natural and cultural, out of the Washington office? We can't. How can we touch the superintendents with this understanding? Everybody who's got a program wants time on the superintendent's agenda to get through to him, and it simply doesn't happen. Again, there's a lot that has to be put forward, and there's not a lot of time to do it in.

Steve Hastings: So, I don't have an answer for you in terms of the specific tangible steps we could take to either improve the skill set or get improved workforce succession taking place.

Steve Hastings: I have an inkling of hope that if we can get this website designed – and why the Park Service is just ass-backwards. Private sector, we're going to do a website, you hire a company that's got specialization, you get a team together, and you say go do it. Park Service says, "We're going to have a website. Go do it."

Steve Hastings: I haven't done a website in my life, and I'm not particularly skilled at it, and I'm terribly frustrated. But if we can get people to look there and both inspire them to look further and learn, I believe there's hope that we can help change that through recruitment, through better linkages with community colleges, through more

assertiveness by the maintenance ranks, and articulating the improved business performance that can be achieved, the improved safety and health we can achieve if we – but I truly believe it's going to have to come from the bottom up. It's not going to come from the top down, because the organization is not set to do that.

Mark Calamia: When you say, "from the top down," you mean the superintendent or from the Washington level?

Steve Hastings: From the Washington level. Jarvis [phonetic] is not going to pick up the phone and call a superintendent or put an order out that you shall do this on training stuff. We did that with – what was it – the leadership thing that came around maybe '99, 2000. We're going to become better leaders, so a team was put together, and they went across the country and trained. Everybody got to go to a forty-hour leadership class that is kind of still mocked today.

Steve Hastings: It was a good idea, but because it was some harebrained idea out of headquarters, it just wasn't effective versus helping people to stop and look at the body of knowledge that's there through in-depth studies both in the private sector, the university sector, as well the Office of Personnel Management where the stuff's laid out and you read it and you go, "Oh, yeah, I never thought about that." But if we can get the frontline to stop and look and think, the organization can change. But it's not going to come from the top down in this organization.

Mark Calamia: This moves us into a more abstract question, perhaps, but it's an important one. From your perspective, Steve, as a career historic preservationist who has devoted his life, his career to training, education, in the areas of maintenance and facilities management, who do you believe owns history and why?

Steve Hastings: Ask a historian, he'd probably, he'd probably say, "We do." Ask a librarian, they would say they do. Ask somebody who's in a public service agency like the National Park Service, and we'd say, "The people do." I think that is the answer, that it is the people. The traditions in southern West Virginia run really, really deep and it was inspiring, frightening too. I was real active in the community, and I would never be a member of the community because my granddad wasn't born there. I wasn't a part of that community.

Steve Hastings: Those traditions are very, very, very important, and I think that's true of all of our communities. I think at large we have blinders on to the cultural ramifications vis-à-vis the film and the terrible things that happened in Libya over the last couple of days and are happening in Egypt today. We have our cultural blinders on.

Looking at the population of the United States and living in San Francisco, I left there in '88, and the Caucasians were in the minority then. That history is broader than we visibly display, because of those same cultural roots, those same community roots.

Steve Hastings: What's happening in the Hispanic community? What's happening in the Native American community? You're immersed in that. How are we protecting and preserving and enhancing that understanding and ownership? And the importance of not just owning it but passing it on, not throwing it out.

Mark Calamia: Thank you. Given your thirty-nine years of service to the National Park Service, where do you feel the agency needs to take historic preservation in the future?

Steve Hastings: Good golly. Don't have that vision, and to a large degree it's because of my ignorance. My career drive has been in park operations, even though I've been in headquarters operations now probably a good third, if not more, of my career. The Park Service's role is, as you know better than I, so far reaching with what I loosely call the outhouse programs, our mission to wake those movements up in the community, support the state historic preservation officers, provide research to help people in communities who want to save and protect and cause developers to pause and ponder before they make decisions. Those are all terribly important roles.

Steve Hastings: One of the reasons I've been successful in my career, I think, is regardless of who you are in your position, I view you as my peer. So, when I'm chatting with a guy leaning on a shovel next to a trench, I change my language a little bit, and I'm equally comfortable sitting in a high-level meeting in the Department of the Interior, and I view you as my peers.

Steve Hastings: I try, as I'm approaching that relationship, to try and look through the eyes of that person at that point in time with their charge and the things that they are either needing to accomplish with my help or whatever. That's a long way around to I've never put myself in a Stephanie Toothman's position and stopped and thought about, what is the role of the National Park Service's Preservation Program in historic preservation? So, I'm kind of dancing through whatever intelligence I can muster to answer your question, rather than giving you anything succinct and concise.

Mark Calamia: This has been helpful. Do you feel that the agency needs to take a more concerted role in preservation for the future?

Steve Hastings: I think we need to reexamine. We need to find efficiencies as public servants. That deficit scares the heck out of me. And we've got to find ways to both be efficient and effective in our individual charges and help the bureau find ways to bring greater efficiencies and economies to its charge. I think its mission is clear. I think looking at it from a chair of ignorance that its outhouse programs are effective in their own way. They're doing this inspiration. They're providing the technical resources. They're helping the nation succeed and make more intelligent decisions about preserving its past as a bridge to the future. But we've got to find efficiencies, we've got to find economies if we're going to be faithful public servants and provide for the future generations.

Mark Calamia: Great. Finally, is there anything else you would like to share before we end our interview.

Steve Hastings: No, I just did it, from this data dump. [laughter] And I've danced all the heck over creation, and I hope that I got to some of the core of what you were trying to achieve.

Steve Hastings: Mather is a very special place. Those of you who traveled here, I think will go home with a special place in your hearts for your time together as well as your time with the building and kind of reflecting back on its traditions.

Steve Hastings: Dave is an able representative. Roger is relatively new to the organization but brings a sparkle and a little bit of fire to his charge as training manager for Cultural Resources and that's a good thing. So, enjoy your time here, ask questions, and have fun with your careers, most of all.

Mark Calamia: Thank you very much.

Steve Hastings: You're welcome.

[Unidentified]: If you don't mind me picking your brain for a couple seconds more, there's about six items that you've said that I just want some clarifications on spellings.

Steve Hastings: Okay.

[Unidentified]: We'll see if you can help me. If you can help, if not that's fine.

Steve Hastings: [unclear] Spellcheck.

[Unidentified]: They're proper nouns, so we can't get away with that. Asilomar Conference Center.

Steve Hastings: Oh, it's a great place to hold a meeting, but you've got to plan two years out. It's next to Pebble Beach just south of Monterey on the Monterey Bay, and that Monterey Bay is a geological wonder. There's a trench that goes through the Continental Shelf, it just slices straight through, and there's a very unique ocean dynamic there.

Steve Hastings: I think it's A-s-i-l-o-m-a-r. Do a Google search. It may have two Ss. And it is the William Penn Mott, Jr. Training Center, operated by the California State Parks on Asilomar State Beach, which happens to also be a Delaware North operation where you can get lodging and meals and conference rooms and all kinds of neat stuff. It's the state's only commercial natural preservation unit that I can think of. West Virginia's got the golf courses and the motels and all these things. California State Parks mirrors the National Park system and rivals it both in the depth of the resources they protect, both historic as well as natural resources.

[Unidentified]: Then an acronym. I know the acronym. I just don't know what it stands for. PAST.

Steve Hastings: Preservation and Skills Training Program. It targets frontline maintenance workers, [unclear] supervisors. It links trainees with mentors over a two-year period of time. They must not only pass assessments in the classroom, they must demonstrate mastery of skills, and their portfolio is reviewed by a panel prior to certification. It's a commendation program. We are very proud of it there at the Historic Preservation Training Center.

[Unidentified]: And that last one, which, again, we could probably look this up. But *Wapama*?

Steve Hastings: Oh, sorry about that. That one will be a little bit harder to come up with. W-a-p-a-m-a, the steam schooner evolutionary – she was transitioned from the day of sail to the day of steam. They didn't trust them yet, so they kept masts and booms on them just in case. Last coastal steamer, and the Park Service fumbled it. We had a corporation that stops and look at [unclear], who was willing to fix it at no cost for the taxpayers. We had it down to final review by the solicitor who had already given their verbal blessings, and they said, "The only park that has that authority is Turkey Run," where the Kennedys who lived in McLean across the street from Turkey Run saw the living history farm and the benefit of selling eggs.

Steve Hastings: So, legislation was passed. Whether it's still on the books, I don't know, or whether this is a ranger myth I'm promoting. They were the only park in the system that had the authority to give

government property away and retain the profits. We couldn't make that arrangement with private sector to fix this vessel at no cost, and it's been declining for the past – '85, 2000, whatever. It was starting downhill in '85 to the point where she's no longer safe to board, and the park is in the final throes of the documentation for destruction. It's an emotional point for me. The [unclear] documents are available on nps.gov/[unclear]. It was a coastal steamer in that she had twenty-four cabins for the public to travel, as well as carrying cargo.

[Unidentified]: That's all I had.

[Unidentified]: I have one other quick question. What was the first year of your maritime festival, your music festival?

Steve Hastings: Seventy-eight. Then I think we've had a second one out, second album in '79 or something like that, but search for Festival of the Sea on the Smithsonian Collection. We literally had shantymen from the days of square-rig sail coming in from Europe and staying, coming over from England. We had people from the East Coast where there was a good concentration both up at Mystic Seaport and then down at South Street Seaport in New York. It was a big community of practitioners of sea music that are alive and well today.

[Unidentified]: Is there anyone else you could recommend that we talk with as we do our oral histories?

Steve Hastings: Mike would know the lineage of managers of Harpers Ferry better than I, as would Dave, now that I think about it. You are interviewing Dave? Good, because he's been here a good part of his career.

Steve Hastings: Dorothy, she knew I was coming over today – Dorothy Printup is my colleague, as I said, for historic preservation skills – mentioned a couple people from Harpers Ferry Center. I said, "Why?" [unclear]. They share the grounds. They've got all the scuttlebutt.

Steve Hastings: One person that Roger and Dave were looking at as a possibility is the facility manager here, Mike Alvarez [phonetic]. He's been here for forty years. Now, what insights he might share, they may be more nuts and bolts than the mission and vision and execution and growth of people and so on, I don't know. I've met Mike a couple of times, but I've not had an opportunity to work with him.

[Unidentified]: Okay. Thank you.

[Unidentified]: Thank you. I think you're off the hook.

[END OF INTERVIEW]