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Dorothy Huyck's National Park Service Oral History Project, 1942-1987



Ruth Ashton Nelson
June 28, 1978

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

Dorothy Huyck: 00:00 Is June 28, 1978. I am Dorothy Huyck. I will be interviewing Ruth Ashton Nelson at Rocky Mountain National Park, where she has worked in the past. Could I ask you first where and when you were born?

Ruth Ashton Nelson: 00:19 I was born in Boston in 1896. November 1896.

Dorothy Huyck: 00:31 Were are you an only child?

Ruth Ashton Nelson: 00:33 No, I have a younger sister and brother.

Dorothy Huyck: 00:37 But you were the eldest?

Ruth Ashton Nelson: 00:38 Yes.

Dorothy Huyck: 00:43 How much older are you than the younger brother and sister?

Ruth Ashton Nelson: 00:47 I'm two years older than my sister, and five years older than my brother.

Dorothy Huyck: 00:53 Did you grow up in Boston?

Ruth Ashton Nelson: 00:54 No, we traveled a great deal, but we – our home was on Martha's Vineyard Island, which is south of Boston off the coast, a little ways. We lived on a farm and my parents were separated when I was about nine and that was our home. My mother and my brother and sister and I had our home there, but we usually went away in the winter because the climate is pretty severe. And this old colonial farmhouse just had fireplaces for heating and didn't have modern conveniences. And the other reasons that we spend our winters in different places.

Dorothy Huyck: 01:44 Where, for example?

Ruth Ashton Nelson: 01:46 Well, my mother's home had been in Iowa in Des Moines, and we spent one or two winters there. And my father's home before they were separated, we had spent one or two winters in Rockford, Illinois, which was his home. And, Oh, we spent one winter in Dansville, Illinois, places that mother had been, and she was restless and we wouldn't leave the farm until late October or November. And then

we'd go back about April. I never really had a full year of schooling until about the eighth grade.

Dorothy Huyck: 02:26

Was your mother working that farm?

Ruth Ashton Nelson: 02:29

No. We usually kept the horse and a cow and used the horse to drive back and forth to the village, which was a mile and a half away and with a wagon and the sandy roads, that seemed quite a distance in those days, but we usually had a garden, but not any commercial work on the farm.

And sometimes we had a man to take care of the stock and sometimes we children took care of the stock.

Dorothy Huyck: 02:59

Was your mother a college graduate?

Ruth Ashton Nelson: 03:03

She had been at Oberlin, but she was not a graduate. And she was a graduate of the Emerson School of Oratory, which was really a school of, well, they didn't like the term elocution, but that was what was commonly called in those days.

Dorothy Huyck: 03:22

Was that in Boston?

Ruth Ashton Nelson: 03:23

Yes. That was in Boston.

Dorothy Huyck: 03:27

In addition to taking care of her family. Did your mother have any other professional interests or an outside [crosstalk 00:03:34]?

Ruth Ashton Nelson: 03:35

No, not really.

Dorothy Huyck: 03:38

Where did you attend high school?

Ruth Ashton Nelson: 03:40

I went to a boarding school on Cape Cod, Sea Pines School for Girls, which was a small boarding school on Cape Cod. And I went there the four years of my high school time.

Dorothy Huyck: 03:51

As I recall, you told me on the telephone that your mother was very interested in nature.

Ruth Ashton Nelson: 03:57

Yes.

Dorothy Huyck: 03:57

And that she had very interesting old books.

- Ruth Ashton Nelson: 03:59 Yes, she was. I don't know how we got started on this, but she would send me out to collect leaves, to bring in and compare with the illustrations in Gray's old lessons and botany. If you know Asa Gray, the old botanical authority at those times. I quite early started learning about plants and the parts of the plants and so forth and learned the wild flowers around the farm and so forth.
- Dorothy Huyck: 04:43 Did you learn this from Asa Gray's book or from your mother or from other sources, as well?
- Ruth Ashton Nelson: 04:48 Well partly. I don't remember having any other books on wildflowers, but mother was fairly knowledgeable about them. And I presume that was from what she knew and what I could glean from the Asa Gray, that's where I got my foundation.
- Dorothy Huyck: 05:17 And where did you attend college?
- Ruth Ashton Nelson: 05:19 Mount Holyoke.
- Dorothy Huyck: 05:20 Did you graduate from Mount Holyoke?
- Ruth Ashton Nelson: 05:22 Yes.
- Dorothy Huyck: 05:22 When was that?
- Ruth Ashton Nelson: 05:25 I was a member of the class of 1922. But I wasn't very well my senior year, and I didn't get my degree with my class, but I did get my degree from Mount Holyoke, but in 1924, but socially I belong to the class of 22.
- Dorothy Huyck: 05:43 What did you major in at Holyoke?
- Ruth Ashton Nelson: 05:45 English. But I had a good deal of botany. I had all the field courses that they gave in botany and some regular systematic training in botany, but I didn't have a minor in botany. I had practically typically the equivalent of a minor.
- Dorothy Huyck: 06:04 Did you do some graduate work after attending [crosstalk 00:06:08]?
- Ruth Ashton Nelson: 06:08 Yes, I did some graduate work at the University of Wisconsin where I finished up the few credits that I needed for graduation. And I had some graduate work in geology.

- Dorothy Huyck: 06:22 At Wisconsin?
- Ruth Ashton Nelson: 06:23 Hmm.
- Dorothy Huyck: 06:24 At Wisconsin? You did graduate work in geology at Wisconsin?
- Ruth Ashton Nelson: 06:28 Yes, at Wisconsin.
- Dorothy Huyck: 06:31 Had you moved to middle west then from Martha's Vineyard at that stage?
- Ruth Ashton Nelson: 06:36 No, but my father, his home was in Rockford, Illinois, and I had been there with him for a time. And then I went up to Madison, to college for that one semester. And while I was there, I always wanted to get back to the Rocky Mountains. Do you have the information that we spent the summer of 1905 in Estes Park?
- Dorothy Huyck: 07:00 How did that happen?
- Ruth Ashton Nelson: 07:02 Well, it was one of the winters that we had spent in Rockford, Illinois at my grandfather's home. And somehow my parents had gotten interested. It was a man there who was promoting vacation time in Colorado and particularly at Estes Park and they through him, rented a cottage on the Big Thompson, which is one of the main rivers, in a little area called the Boulder Greeley Colony, where people from both Boulder and Greeley had summer homes. And we spent the whole of the summer of 1905 there. And I don't know what we had to work from to learn the wildflowers, but I know that we were very much interested in them, and they were especially beautiful. And that on my mother's 40th birthday, we collected 40 different kinds of wildflowers for her birthday.
- Dorothy Huyck: 08:09 You and your brother and your sister?
- Ruth Ashton Nelson: 08:10 Yeah. And we had an overnight pack trip up to Long Lake, which is way up in the park at the end of that summer. And I had always wanted to get back to the Rocky Mountains. When I was at Madison at the University of Wisconsin, I met a couple who ran a little girls camp over south of here, down near what is now Longs Peak Inn and used to be Longs Peak Inn. And they needed a counselor for nature study and horseback riding. So, I—

- Dorothy Huyck: 08:52 That wasn't Cheley Camp, by chance.
- Ruth Ashton Nelson: 08:53 Pardon me?
- Dorothy Huyck: 08:54 Was that by any chance, the Cheley Camp?
- Ruth Ashton Nelson: 08:56 No, it was a little special, little separate camp. I think their building was eventually bought by Cheley, but I don't know whether Cheley still has it, but these people had three daughters and they just started a camp partly for their own daughters. And they took their nieces and nephews and others. And it was just a small affair and the summer of 1924, I spent there. And then that winter, I stayed in Estes Park looking for some land to homestead, but there was very little, it was even nominally available. There were a few pieces left on the land that it just what the organization was that it wasn't BLM, it was whatever was in charge of government land. I explored all of those and they were all high up on these rocky, dry ridges without any water and nothing but rocks.
- And I don't think you could have fulfilled the requirements for homesteading because they weren't arable. They weren't tillable, you see. I found out about two small homesteads that had been proved up on and then sold and were for sale again because people tried to farm and it's not really farming country up here. They were for sale, and I was able to buy this 240 acres at that time.
- Dorothy Huyck: 10:35 Where was that?
- Ruth Ashton Nelson: 10:36 That was in 1925. That was in the spring of 1925.
- Dorothy Huyck: 10:40 And where is this land?
- Ruth Ashton Nelson: 10:41 Where? It's out northeast, that's where I'm living right now. If you've been around the area, the Devil's Gulch Road and the Dry Gulch Road. Well, it's off – We can go out by either one. It is up behind what they call Eagle Rock, which is a big rocky promontory out there, if I had a map I could show you just where, and the road is pretty bad, especially bad right now because on account of this terrible pine beetle infestation that we've been having, they've had to cut so many pine trees and we've had loggers up there trying to get the trees out before the beetles fly and they have to be sprayed.

And the logging trucks have just mashed the cattle guards.
And it's bad.

Dorothy Huyck: 11:34 When you bought this property, as a homestead, were you considered a homesteader at that point?

Ruth Ashton Nelson: 11:39 No. No, I wasn't.

Dorothy Huyck: 11:40 In other words it had already been proved.

Ruth Ashton Nelson: 11:42 It had already been proved up on and on my abstract of title, it gives the dates of the patent and when the land became privately owned by the people that had homesteaded it.

Dorothy Huyck: 11:58 There was a home already on this land at the time you bought it.

Ruth Ashton Nelson: 11:58 That what?

Dorothy Huyck: 12:03 There was a house already on this land—

Ruth Ashton Nelson: 12:04 Yes. There was a four-room house on it. That was quite primitive. Though, it had been well-built out of native boards, native Ponderosa Pine lumber. And gradually over the years, I've been able to finish it inside and add on to, got an addition on each end. It was originally three rooms and a kitchen on an L. Now I have an addition on each end and largest, it's really very pleasant.

Dorothy Huyck: 12:43 Did you begin living there in 1924?

Ruth Ashton Nelson: 12:44 In 1925.

Dorothy Huyck: 12:44 1925.

Ruth Ashton Nelson: 12:45 1925 was when I bought it in the spring. I had stayed in an Estes Park during that winter of 1924, 1925. Yes. I lived there then, but I got a job in the park service. For the summer, I had a chance to go back to the camp and I could have gone back to the camp for the summer, but through a friend, a chance to work for the park service.

Dorothy Huyck: 13:14 Was this the summer of 1925?

Ruth Ashton Nelson: 13:16 Right.

- Dorothy Huyck: 13:20 What were you doing for the park service?
- Ruth Ashton Nelson: 13:23 Well, I was the information clerk, and I was up on the desk. The office was down where you come out this road from town where the road makes the bend and goes west, right on that corner. Well, up the hill from the road was the original park service office. Oh, I don't know if I should say the original because before that. And before I started working for them, they had an office downtown in one of the buildings right on the main street, but this was their headquarters and [Mr. Toll's 00:14:06] office. And then about 1928 or 1929, they built that very attractive, small building down near to the highway, which became the headquarters. And there was a lobby there for visitors and a few exhibits, not much. Then the offices, some of the offices were still in this other building that was higher up the hill.
- Dorothy Huyck: 14:48 You went to work in the park services initially in 1925.
- Ruth Ashton Nelson: 14:53 Right.
- Dorothy Huyck: 14:54 Were you there in the succeeding summers on duty?
- Ruth Ashton Nelson: 14:56 Yes, I was there 1925, 1926 and 1927. And in 1928, I wanted to get into the naturalist service. And at that time, the park service ran this training school for naturalists at Yosemite. And I decided I would go there for that summer, which I did. And it was about that time that they changed superintendents here. And [Mr. Toll 00:15:23] went to Yellowstone and Edmond Rogers who had been a banker in Denver became superintendent here.
- Dorothy Huyck: 15:33 In about 1929?
- Ruth Ashton Nelson: 15:37 1928, I think. Yes. I know because when I came back for the summer of 1929, he was the superintendent and I was very happy to be able to get my job back, which I did because they evidently didn't have anybody else to fill it. And then I served the summer of 1929, 1930 and 1931.
- Dorothy Huyck: 16:05 In every case you were an information clerk.
- Ruth Ashton Nelson: 16:08 Hmm hmm.
- Dorothy Huyck: 16:09 What about your efforts to get into the naturalist service?

- Ruth Ashton Nelson: 16:12 Well, I was much more interested in, I had started working on the collecting and making a list of the plants of the park and studying it botanically. And I had also started working for a master's degree down at Colorado State, what's now Colorado State University. It was the Aggies then Colorado A & M, but I wanted to be a naturalist work rather than just the, of course I was doing pretty much naturalist work because I was answering all the questions about the flowers and so forth right there as an information clerk, but I never achieved the appointment until later on, along about four to six, when we started the revision of Plants of Rocky Mountain, then I had a temporary appointment as naturalist for a month or two. I don't remember exactly how long.
- Dorothy Huyck: 17:06 What was the title of the first of your books that was published?
- Ruth Ashton Nelson: 17:09 What was it?
- Dorothy Huyck: 17:10 What is the title of the first of your books that have been published?
- Ruth Ashton Nelson: 17:16 Well, the first real book was Plants of Rocky Mountain National Park. I had done one or two small folder things for Girl Scouts and that sort of thing before that, but this was really the first book.
- Dorothy Huyck: 17:28 And when was that first published?
- Ruth Ashton Nelson: 17:31 It didn't come out until 1933 and it was published by the government printing office, and it's sold for 25 cents.
- Dorothy Huyck: 17:39 It came out right in the middle of the depression period.
- Ruth Ashton Nelson: 17:47 Yes.
- Dorothy Huyck: 17:48 But it did, apparently it was well received, and it sold.
- Ruth Ashton Nelson: 17:51 It was completed by the end of the summer of 1931. That was the last summer I worked for the park and a manuscript was completed, but for some reason they didn't really publish it until 1933. The date on it is 1933.
- Dorothy Huyck: 18:08 And then when did you revise it?

- Ruth Ashton Nelson: 18:11 In 1946, I started working on the revision, but then when they got it, they just filed it, the printing office. And then suddenly in 1953, I found galley proof already. They hadn't told me that they were going to do it. They hadn't given me any chance to make any corrections or things like that have to be brought up to date. And it had been about four years, anyway, it did come out then again, as a revised edition in 1953.
- Dorothy Huyck: 18:52 Any idea why they did not give you an opportunity to update it?
- Ruth Ashton Nelson: 18:56 Well, I insisted that there had to be some two changes and so forth. And I worked them up on the galley proof and they did incorporate those.
- Dorothy Huyck: 19:09 Has it been revised since then?
- Ruth Ashton Nelson: 19:11 Yes.
- Dorothy Huyck: 19:13 When was that?
- Ruth Ashton Nelson: 19:15 I don't remember, when I started working on the revision, but it came out in January of 1970. And I don't know if you've seen it, but they've got them upstairs or you got a copy from Marjorie, I guess.
- Dorothy Huyck: 19:31 Yes, I have [crosstalk 00:19:32].
- Ruth Ashton Nelson: 19:32 That was a really big revision and we put in color, and it was printed by the Nature Association, and not by the government printing office. It really is a very nice book if I do say so.
- Dorothy Huyck: 19:47 It's a very handsome book because I certainly have seen it. You also wrote a handbook, is that a separate publication?
- Ruth Ashton Nelson: 19:55 Well, yes. I did a handbook and that was published by a little printer down in Tucson and he could never make a go of it financially. He was always just operating on a shoestring. And I have now taken that over and I'm publishing it under Skyland Publishers.
- Dorothy Huyck: 20:18 Have you revised that original handbook?

- Ruth Ashton Nelson: 20:21 Yes. It was revised, we shouldn't call it a real revision, but it was corrected. There were many errors in the first printing of cross-references the wrong pages cross-references, also the most important things. And we got those fixed and it's just been a year ago last month in May, that that came out and this new edition, it was exhausted. The original printing was exhausted, and the man owed me quite a bit of money. He turned over the place to me, the negatives, and I just brought over 48 copies now for them. They sell quite a few of them up here, even in addition to their own handbook, to their own book.
- Dorothy Huyck: 21:11 Are you enjoying being your own publisher?
- Ruth Ashton Nelson: 21:15 Yeah, I really am. It's fun.
- Dorothy Huyck: 21:17 Some interesting problems attached to it?
- Ruth Ashton Nelson: 21:19 Well, one of my friends, I couldn't do it by myself unless I hired somebody, but one of my friends was so anxious. She's so distressed at the situation. And I was so anxious to have the corrections made and to bring out a better copy, that she promised to help me with it. After I got the plates negatives back from the publisher in Tucson, I went over it with a printer, a local printer, and he's really pretty good. And we made as many more corrections as we could. And then he made me up what he calls a brown line proof. And we checked that, and he had gotten bids on it from a good printing outfit in Los Angeles and he sent it out to them, and it came back the 16th of May. We got the finished copies and we already had quite a few orders on hand that had been sent to the old publisher. We had only 5,000 printed, but out of that 5,000 now in a year and a month, we've sold over 3000.
- I think that was pretty good. And it's nice to know that people are using it and finding it useful and helpful. And that's, of course, what I care the most about.
- Dorothy Huyck: 22:57 I think you've also written a book concerning Zion.
- Ruth Ashton Nelson: 23:00 Yes.
- Dorothy Huyck: 23:00 What's the title of that?
- Ruth Ashton Nelson: 23:02 Plants of Zion National Park.

Dorothy Huyck: 23:04

When did you first write that?

Ruth Ashton Nelson: 23:06

Well, I started on that, I guess it was 1970. I was down in the park with a friend, and I went into the office of the naturalists because when I go to a park, I always like to get acquainted with the naturalists and see what they've done along those lines. I went into his office and told him who I was, and he picked up this book from the desk and he said, "Are you going to do one of these for us?"

And that was, the Plants of Rocky Mountain. And he was so pleased with that and he wanted, and they needed something there because all they had was a little mimeograph pamphlet that was 40 years old almost. It was several months before we finally decided exactly what to do, but I was interested in it because I've been in the southwest a good deal. And I just love that country. And especially Zion. Have you been in Zion?

Dorothy Huyck: 24:05

Yes.

Ruth Ashton Nelson: 24:06

I think Zion is just one of the most beautiful places and it worked out real well, the first two or three years, because they had accommodations in the off season that I could live right in the park and Bob Foster, do you know him?

Dorothy Huyck: 24:20

No, I don't.

Ruth Ashton Nelson: 24:21

Well, he was the naturalist down there and he was the one that wanted it. First, we talked about doing one for the whole Colorado Plateau, which would have included Bryson and Capitol Reef and Cedar Breaks and Canyonlands and so forth.

But the rest of them didn't seem to be, they had their own ideas about what they wanted to do. And after all the Zion was a big enough undertaking just for me. It was the fall of 1970, I went down there to do some field work because we hadn't made any commitment or anything, but I said, I like the country and I'll just go down and spend some time down there. So, I did, and he had made arrangements for me to have accommodations and I was able to stay. It was after the height of the tourist season and they had room. So, I was in Capitol Reef and at Cedar Breaks and at Zion altogether about three weeks that fall collecting and starting, seeing what had been done and starting lists and so

forth. Then I went down early in the spring and February and was there for two or three months and off and on from them at different times. I spend quite a lot of time down there and that didn't get published until, let's see—

I ought to know the date exactly. Anyway, you can see it on the book, but it's three years, I think, since it came out, which would, would've made it 1975. But I put a lot of time in on that. And that was done by contract with the Natural History Association down there. See the handbook, I did on my own and it belongs to me, and I hold the copyright, but the Rocky Mountain book and the Zion book both belong to the nature associations.

Dorothy Huyck: 26:30

Have you something in the works currently?

Ruth Ashton Nelson: 26:32

You what?

Dorothy Huyck: 26:33

Have your writing going on timely, are you undertaking [crosstalk 00:26:36].

Ruth Ashton Nelson: 26:37

Not exactly. I'm still working on a few more revisions for the handbook because that's going to be out of print again, you see. We've only got about 2000 left and that won't take us through next summer, I don't think, the rate we're going, it's not any more than that.

I'm trying to make all the corrections that I think ought to be made in it before we do print another one. And then I presume I will try to finance a new edition. There are two things I have thought for quite a long time that I ought to do of the biography of my husband, but I haven't really done anything on it. I accept to accumulate and store the material and try to sort it to a certain extent. But I would also like to do a handbook on the southwest for probably the Colorado Plateau. I don't want to do the low desert, but the higher plateaus and mesas in New Mexico, Arizona, Utah, about the elevation of Zion.

Dorothy Huyck: 27:53

Have you collected any material for that content yet?

Ruth Ashton Nelson: 27:59

I didn't understand.

Dorothy Huyck: 28:00

Have you collected any material for such a handbook [crosstalk 00:28:02]?

- Ruth Ashton Nelson: 28:02 Oh well, I have the plant material. I have a good many plant collections, specimens [inaudible 00:28:08] specimens, but I haven't done anything more than the notes in my collecting books for the collections that I've made. But I've spent over a good many years, I've spent time in various areas of the Southwest because my husband and I used to go down there, and we were always collecting when we were on trips so that I have that much to start with. And the work that I did in Zion, of course, applies to a lot of the area. I'd like to do that, but I'm not sure I got what it takes.
- Dorothy Huyck: 28:50 Let's go back for a minute to 1932, the last year you work here at Rocky Mountain National Park, was it 1931?
- Ruth Ashton Nelson: 28:59 1931.
- Dorothy Huyck: 29:00 And as of 1932. Were you married in that period?
- Ruth Ashton Nelson: 29:04 I was married in November of 1931.
- Dorothy Huyck: 29:10 Had you finished your master's degree at that time?
- Ruth Ashton Nelson: 29:12 Yes. I had gotten my master's in 1930 and I went to the University of Wyoming as a graduate assistant.
- Dorothy Huyck: 29:18 When was that?
- Ruth Ashton Nelson: 29:20 That was in the fall of 1930. And then I came back to the park for the summer of 1931, but then we were married in November.
- Dorothy Huyck: 29:30 Was your husband on the faculty at Wyoming?
- Ruth Ashton Nelson: 29:33 Yes.
- Dorothy Huyck: 29:33 In what department?
- Ruth Ashton Nelson: 29:35 Well, he was head of the botany department for many years and he had been president of the university, but he had gone back to the department and he was president emeritus. And I guess he was professor of botany emeritus too.
- Dorothy Huyck: 29:52 Had you been his teaching assistant?
- Ruth Ashton Nelson: 29:55 Hmm.

Dorothy Huyck: 29:56 Have you been his teaching assistant?

Ruth Ashton Nelson: 29:58 Yes. Yes. [crosstalk 00:29:59]. Well, I had been his assistant, but more in herbarium work than in teaching because at that time what his main job was as curator of this big herbarium. Do you know what a herbarium is?

Dorothy Huyck: 30:13 Yes.

Ruth Ashton Nelson: 30:15 Most Americans wouldn't know. I don't know, but he had built this up and it became very well-known even during his lifetime. He had gone to the University of Wyoming when it opened, and it was still a territory as Wyoming wasn't even the state in 1887. And—

Dorothy Huyck: 30:39 For the sake of the record, what is your husband's full name?

Ruth Ashton Nelson: 30:43 Aven Nelson. That's all.

Dorothy Huyck: 30:46 A V E N.

Ruth Ashton Nelson: 30:48 A V E N.

Scandinavian. He was in Norway. His parents both came from Norway.

Dorothy Huyck: 30:48 And they both [crosstalk 00:30:53].

Ruth Ashton Nelson: 30:53 And he grew up on a little farm down in south—

[END OF TAPE 1 SIDE A]

[START OF TAPE 1 SIDE B]

Ruth Ashton Nelson: 00:00 Yes. As I say, he went there in 1887, and the original faculty – Most people find this very interesting. He had had a normal school training and had started teaching, of course he went to a little country school, which was even held on his father's farm at one time and started teaching just as soon as he finished the work in the country school, and then he went to the normal school, and then he went to a jury college in Springfield, Missouri. He into public school teaching and was superintendent of schools at Ferguson, Missouri. When he heard about this opening for a faculty at the University of Wyoming, he applied right away, and as

soon as he was accepted, they just moved right out there. I guess the governor had appointed a board of trustees, but they didn't have a president at that time.

He had supposed that he was going to teach English, but he'd been interested in nature, and he'd worked a little bit with groups on learning about plants. So, when they sorted out the faculty members that this board had accepted, there were two that were supposed to be teaching English, and I guess the president decided that the other man had a little more foundation in English, so he said to Aven [Nelson 00:00:01:52], "Well, if you can't have a chair of English, what would you rather have?" Well, he said he knew a little bit about nature and biology and so forth, so he said, "That settles it. You're other professor of biology." He really had very little background, but he was a very studious and very devoted student of whatever he had to do, and he started, of course, right to work, to get what information he could along the lines.

In those days, they said they didn't have a chair. They had a settee. And of course, he taught any number of things besides biology, because even to begin with the first year, the university only had about one real college student because the state didn't even have high schools, and they had to open a preparatory department and teach all of the courses that you would get in a preparatory school. But in 1891, he took a leave of absence and took his family and went to Cambridge and persuaded the faculty of Harvard University to let him become a candidate for a degree in biology. He worked very hard that whole year and he got his degree. So, then he came back, as he had a master's then, but he had a foundation. But it was not in systematic or what we call taxonomic botany. It was biology, really, and he was teaching both sociology and the fundamental courses like plant physiology and that sort of thing.

But when he got back to Wyoming, he found that while he'd been gone, this law that set up the land-grant colleges had been passed, and a man that had been taking his place while he was gone had made a collection of all the plants that grew on this experiment station farm. Somebody had to identify those, and the other man didn't seem to be going to do it, so Dr. Nelson went to work and, with a little spirit lamp, and pair of tweezers, and a pair of needles, and all he

had. I guess he had Gray's botany and [Bessey's 00:04:21]. Do you know who Dr. Bessey was?

Dorothy Huyck: 00:00

No, I don't.

Ruth Ashton Nelson: 04:24

Well, he was this very well-known botanist at the University of Nebraska, and one of the pioneers in this part of the world. Well, he had written a book on, I think it was just a textbook for college on plants. But anyway, they had that, and they worked on these plants and finally got names on them, and incidentally, of course, learned how to identify plants. So, he became very much interested in that phase of botany, and then eventually became very well known as the dean, really, of Rocky Mountain botanists. He had started building up this herbarium, and by the time I went up there, we had several hundred thousand sheets in the herbarium. So, as his assistant, I was really doing herbarium work rather than teaching.

Dorothy Huyck: 05:21

Once you were married, how long did you stay at the University of Wyoming?

Ruth Ashton Nelson: 05:26

Well, we were connected with it as long as he lived. But in 1944, he wanted to get away. He was way up in his eighties, and he wanted to get away from the severe winters of Laramie. Laramie is pretty severe in the wintertime, and he had asthma quite badly. So, he hunted around for a place where we could go and still be tied in with botany department, and he found me a job at the University of Oklahoma. So, we went to Norman, and we went in the spring of 1944, and were there about two months, and then went back in the fall and spent the winters there for several years through 1949.

Dorothy Huyck: 06:19

What were you doing at the University of Oklahoma?

Ruth Ashton Nelson: 06:22

I was the herbarium assistant. The first semester I taught, that was during the war, and they were short of teachers and I taught, but after that, my main work was herbarium work.

Dorothy Huyck: 06:35

I know that you and he did some work at Mount McKinley, but I'm not sure when that was.

Ruth Ashton Nelson: 06:40

That was in 1939. See, I had gotten to know several of these people in the park service, like Dr. Harold Bryant and Carl—

Dorothy Huyck: 06:55

Russell? Carl Russell?

Ruth Ashton Nelson: 06:57

Russell, yeah. I know the name, [inaudible 00:06:59] always say it. Carl Russell, Joe Dixon. He was a collaborator or something. But Russell and Bryant, I knew quite well, and Bert Harwell [inaudible 00:07:15]. I thought it would be just a lot of fun to go to Mount McKinley, so I started writing letters to these people and suggesting that we go spend a summer up there and work on the plants on Mount McKinley. They accepted it and arranged for us to be collaborators for the park service for the summer of 1939, and they gave us transportation from Seattle to the park.

We went up on an Indian service boat, government boat, and then on to Seward. We went all the way by boat to Seward, and then, on the government train from there that goes up to Fairbanks, so we went up as far as Mount McKinley. And they gave us a little cabin at headquarters in Mount McKinley, and we spent the summer there. We got up there, we arrived on the 23rd of June. We'd had to wait in Seattle for a week or more for the boat, and then it made a good many stops for the various schools along the way, which was all of course fun for us. We had such a lovely time on the train because since we were not on one of the tourist boats, when we got to Seward, there was no train. The trains only made two round trips a week, and they only went on two times, and we were there in the middle of that time and there was nothing for us to do in Seward.

It wasn't much of a place in those days. When we finally found it, we got there in the evening. They wouldn't even let us stay on the boat overnight. We got off and went to this funny little hotel, and we finally found out that there was to be a little diesel train go up to Anchorage in the morning and that we could go on that. So, we did, and they had trouble. They had a hot box, and they'd stop, and so when it looked like they were going to be there a few minutes, we'd get off and start looking. It was all wilderness. There were only two or three hunters on the

train, I think, besides the two of us and the brakeman and the engineer. So, it was cozy.

They got interested in what we were doing. When they saw what we wanted to do, they said, "Well, you just go around and collect, and we'll blow the whistle when we're ready to go." He had had that same sort of an experience in his very early days in Wyoming. He'd go out on the work trains, you see, and get off and collect all around and when ready to go, they'd blow the whistle and he'd come in. So, it, was really pioneering. They told us, "Now, around the next bend, you watch, because we nearly always see a moose." And we watched, but we didn't see the most. But then they said, "Now, the next bend, there's a goose's nest, and the goose will fly off and you can see the eggs." So sure enough, we watched, and the goose flew off, and there were goslings instead of eggs in the nest.

We, of course, had a good time, and that train – Have you ever been in Alaska?

Dorothy Huyck: 10:35

[inaudible 00:10:35]. Yeah.

Ruth Ashton Nelson: 10:38

Well, there's a coast range, and from Seward, you go up over this coast range and down then to Cook Inlet, where Anchorage is. You're back down to sea level, which is what we did. Now, they don't use that railroad anymore, I think because of the fact that it was built on permafrost, and it shifted every year and they had to relay the tracks, and they fly directly into Anchorage and then go by train up. Well, anyway, we went by this train, and we had a good time. And then, we were several days in Anchorage, and before the big Pullman train took off for Fairbanks. So, we had this interesting experience collecting a lot along the railroad way. In the park, everybody was cordial to us, and I guess they were just glad to see somebody from outside, as they say, and we got to be very good friends with the [Ogston 00:11:40]. I don't know if you know who Ted Ogston is?

Dorothy Huyck: 11:43

I talked to him on the phone, but I—

Ruth Ashton Nelson: 11:45

I visited them just about six weeks ago. I stayed with them in Sun City for a week, and Helen and I got to be good friends, and they were transferred from McKinley to Death Valley, and I thought that was – If anything, what could be

more extreme than that? So, we've had contact with them, and then they were in Cody for several years. In fact, they're in Cody now. They've gone up for the summer.

But anyway, we had this little log cabin to live in at the headquarters, and we had taken with us about \$40 worth of staple groceries. A little \$40 wouldn't buy you very much right now, but it was more staple than we really needed for the summer. We had to dispose of some when we left. We could order things from Fairbanks to come down on the train, but we managed pretty well with what we had brought, and we just had a little one room log cabin with a little cookstove in it and two cots, but we'd go out every day with whatever vehicle was going. It might've been a dump truck or a pickup or whatever kind of a vehicle they were sending out to work on the road or to work somewhere up the line. There was then about a hundred miles of road, and I think that's all there is now from headquarters out to the far end of the park.

It's hard to give the directions because the thing lies catty corners. The Alaska range is diagonally from Southwest to Northeast, but they'd take us along and we'd take our lunch, and lots of times, it was quite cold, and it would be raining in, and we'd wear heavy boots and rain clothes and so forth. But we collect and go as far as we could from the road, and then they'd pick us up on the way back to town. So, that was the way that we collected in McKinley, and we went out two or three times and stayed in some of these areas, particularly over the 4th of July, early July, we went up to Wonder Lake, which is way off at the far end, and has the most beautiful views of McKinley. And of course, so many people go up and never even see the mountain, but we had a week, practically, when it was just standing out in all its glory for that whole week that we were at Wonder Lake. For some reason, the blueberries were ripe, and I can't see how they could have been ripe so early, except that spring really comes early because the days get so long. Anyway, we had lots of blueberries, and we had a little tent house to live in with a floor and sides and a tent on top, and a little cookstove in there. There was a CC camp up there at the time.

Dorothy Huyck: 15:00

CCC camp.

- Ruth Ashton Nelson: 15:04 Yeah, mm-hmm (affirmative). That was the time of the CCC camps, and those men were working at various things in the park. We just had a beautiful time out there, and another time, we went out to Toklat and stayed several days in the patrol cabin. We could scout all around and see the different types of vegetation, the different kinds of areas, the meadows and the bogs and the high alpine slopes and so forth. So, we pretty well covered the area.
- Dorothy Huyck: 15:44 While you were out in the field, you were collecting?
- Ruth Ashton Nelson: 15:48 Yes.
- Dorothy Huyck: 15:49 Did you take things along with you to preserve the plants that you—
- Ruth Ashton Nelson: 15:56 I even carried a big, what's called a vasculum. Do you know what a vasculum is?
- Dorothy Huyck: 15:56 No, I don't.
- Ruth Ashton Nelson: 16:02 Well, it's a big metal can. He had one made that was huge, about that long, more or less around, and people think you're the postman when you come around with that thing. But that was before the days of plastic bags, you see. You would put a little moist grass in there and lay your collections in. Sometimes, we put them right and press in the field, but I don't think we did out there. Then, we'd get back to wherever we were staying and probably spend the next day sorting and pressing and making the notes and giving them numbers. You see, he lists them in a notebook with a number for each different collection, and put data you can as you collect it, and then when you study it later, you add maybe whatever you didn't know about the area or the elevation or whatever, and then we'd put them in press, and of course, we always had two or three big pressors about that high that would have to have the dryers changed because we pressed them in folded newspapers between blotters, and then Evan would strap them very tightly.
- They have to have those dryers taken off, the blotters. The first few days, every day, they have to be changed and put in dry ones, and then dry the others. Then of course, sometimes up there we had trouble. We put them in the oven and for a long time, we had a batch that were pretty badly scorched, but if it's sunny, you can lay them outdoors

and they dry pretty fast, but when it isn't sunny, then that's a problem. So, the park is supposed to have a complete set of those, and I think the national herbarium has a set and the herbarium at the Wyoming University has a set.

Dorothy Huyck: 18:12

How did you get this material back from Alaska?

Ruth Ashton Nelson: 18:16

Well, we had government transportation.

Dorothy Huyck: 18:18

But in what way did you carry your collection bag?

Ruth Ashton Nelson: 18:21

Well, when they're dried, we just make them up in bundles with the cartons outside and tie them. I don't know whether we brought them all back to Seattle just in bundles. We could have shipped them. I already don't seem to remember.

Dorothy Huyck: 18:41

How long were you there altogether in the Summer of 19—

Ruth Ashton Nelson: 18:43

Well, we were there a little over two months. We got to McKinley Station the night of the 23rd of June, got up there about one o'clock, and it was still daylight, and was daylight all night in June. It was misty and the birds were singing.

I wonder if they're looking at my car. I left it right out here.

Dorothy Huyck: 19:09

When did you leave Mount McKinley National Park?

Ruth Ashton Nelson: 19:12

We got word at the very last of August that the brown bear, which both belong to the biological survey, would come by and pick us up. It was not a very big bulk. So, we had a few days, and we hadn't been to Fairbanks, and we wanted to get up there because I even had friends at the University. So, we quickly made arrangements to go to Fairbanks on a train, and we're all packed up ready to leave. When we came back from Fairbanks, we just passed through McKinley and came down to Seward where we got on the boat and came to Seattle. We had driven our car to Seattle and left it there with his relatives. So, we were there just a little over two months, July and August and a week in June.

Dorothy Huyck: 20:11

After that, you returned to the University of Wyoming?

Ruth Ashton Nelson: 20:13

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

- Dorothy Huyck: 20:15 Then in 1944, you began spending time at the University of Oklahoma?
- Ruth Ashton Nelson: 20:20 Yes, and we went back to Wyoming for the summers, then, for several years, and we'd be at Oklahoma in the winters.
- Dorothy Huyck: 20:33 Then you would relay it to this park, to Rocky Mountain, again in...
- Ruth Ashton Nelson: 20:39 Well, of course I had done a book for the park service while I was working for the park, and of course, I've done an awful lot of it on my own time. During those first two or three summers, I spent practically all my days off collecting and working on the collections. He was practically 90, and he was 89 the last year we were at Norman, and he was failing. So, it was finally necessary for me to put him in an institution because I just couldn't take care of him myself any longer. That was in the fall, '49, and I stayed that winter at Norman, and then the first of the year, I moved to Colorado Springs because that's where he was. He was in an institution in Colorado Springs.
- I went there and lived with a friend of mine for two or three years and then built my own little house there, and I lived in Colorado Springs until 1964, and then I came back up here to live. But during that time, I was at the ranch a good deal in the summers. While Evan was living, we didn't spend much time up at the ranch because he always wanted to go farther a field where there was more interesting botanical collecting. So, if there was something we had to do, like fix the roof, why, that was fine. He was willing to go and do what he could do to fix the place up. But as far as just enjoying it, staying to enjoy it, that wasn't his idea. So, I was not there very much between the time I was married, in '31, until, oh, in the '50s.
- Dorothy Huyck: 22:44 But I believe you said that you worked here in the park on a temporary basis in 1946.
- Ruth Ashton Nelson: 22:50 Yes, for a month or two.
- Dorothy Huyck: 22:52 Just that one summer?
- Ruth Ashton Nelson: 22:54 Well, I don't remember exactly. I know I worked on that revision more than one season, but I don't remember exactly how much of a time I was. I know I wasn't on the

payroll very long. I didn't get much money for it, but maybe one or two months.

- Dorothy Huyck: 23:14 Were you ever, then, a ranger naturalist in this park as you had hoped to be?
- Ruth Ashton Nelson: 23:19 No, except that that appointment, which was temporary, was as a naturalist.
- Dorothy Huyck: 23:26 That's why I asked you. But in fact, you were working on your book.
- Ruth Ashton Nelson: 23:30 Yes. I never worked as a naturalist here. I used to go out and give talks as a naturalist, because part of the time, there wasn't anybody else to do it.
- Dorothy Huyck: 23:40 During that time that you were really labeled information clerk.
- Ruth Ashton Nelson: 23:43 Yeah, I was labeled information clerk. I think I said, and this is more or less than fun, but anyway, it did seem that they were getting all naturalist service for information clerks.
- Dorothy Huyck: 23:59 It seems to me that you told me on the telephone that as an information clerk, you were responsible for counting horses and cars and vehicles and [crosstalk 00:24:05].
- Ruth Ashton Nelson: 24:05 Yeah. Every evening, I had to take over the telephone the reports from the rangers at the entrances. There were three entrances, Fall River and Moraine Park and Grand Lake.
- Dorothy Huyck: 24:18 This was in the '20s? There were three entrances during the 1920s.
- Ruth Ashton Nelson: 24:22 Yes, and in the early '30s, I guess. The rangers at the stations, checking stations, had to make a record of how many vehicles, and we had forms, for automobiles and carriages and [inaudible 00:24:44] pedestrians, and how many in each category you see, and you totaled up at the bottom of that sheet for the day. And then, at the end of the month, I had to total up for the total travel figures. They would keep the number of people in each vehicle and deduct. For instance, if it was a bus, then you had to deduct the driver. At the end of the season, that was a bugbear for me because I am terrible as far as arithmetic goes, and I'd

have an awful time at them, always. Finally, Tom Allen, chief ranger, went and got me a big adding machine, and even that went on the blink. But I had to turn in, and we kept track of the cars by states so that we know how many cars from each state we'd had, and that was always interesting, and the number of people and so forth. All that data, I compiled during those years.

- Dorothy Huyck: 25:55 You led naturalist walks in addition to the information clerk duties?
- Ruth Ashton Nelson: 25:59 Sometimes, if there was some special group or something. I didn't do very much of that.
- Dorothy Huyck: 26:05 Do you remember Dr. Margaret Fuller?
- Ruth Ashton Nelson: 26:08 Yes, very well. I understand she passed on not long ago. Somebody said it was in the Denver paper, but I didn't see it. Yes, she was a naturalist while I was here.
- Dorothy Huyck: 26:18 What do you remember about her? I had hoped to interview her, but I didn't get here quite soon enough.
- Ruth Ashton Nelson: 26:31 Well, she was very earnest and interested. Of course, geology was her main subject and she put more emphasis on that. I don't know how well acquainted she was with the plants and animals of the park, but I think her walks and talks were quite popular.
- Dorothy Huyck: 27:04 Going back even further, did you know Enos Mills?
- Ruth Ashton Nelson: 27:08 Yes. As a child, I knew him because we spent time up at Longs Peak Inn when he was running it. We children used to call him a chipmunk.
- Dorothy Huyck: 27:20 Why?
- Ruth Ashton Nelson: 27:21 He was small and very agile, and he wore knickers and he was bald, but what hair he had was reddish. I don't know. We thought that he just acted like a chipmunk. Maybe you should delete that. You really should delete that.
- Dorothy Huyck: 27:43 That's a child's eye view.
- Ruth Ashton Nelson: 27:45 It was a child's eyes view, all right. We spent time up there at the inn and heard him lecture, and he was a very

interesting lecturer. Then later, when I came back, the winter that I was here in '24, '25, I knew Esther, his widow, and I babysat Edna, Enda is her name, and I see her occasionally now. She lives up there near Longs Peak Inn, in the house that her mother built.

Dorothy Huyck: 28:17

In his own way, apparently Enos Mills did quite an interpretation here at—

Ruth Ashton Nelson: 28:22

Yes. Oh, yes, he did.

Dorothy Huyck: 28:23

As well as his wife.

Ruth Ashton Nelson: 28:24

And lots of conservation. He preached the philosophy that one columbine flower in a vase was just as good as a whole bouquet, and on the tables in the dining room, they'd just have one or two or three flowers. He made quite a point of the fact that you didn't need to go out and get a great bunch and throw them away and whatever. He was preaching conservation even way back then, and also, he was very, almost rabid on the question of carelessness with fire. I know that a couple of miners had gotten a little fire started somewhere, and he was all for prosecuting them, and I guess they were. I don't know what the outcome was because that was back when I was nine years old, so I don't know too much about it.

I have, out at the ranch, a picture of my sister and brother and me on three burros. Two of them belonged to Enos Mills and the third one belonged to Sam [Service 00:00:29:38], who had rented us this burro. He had the general store here in Estes Park.

Dorothy Huyck: 29:44

Did Enos Mills's wife and his sister-in-law also do some interpretive work?

Ruth Ashton Nelson: 29:52

Yes.

Dorothy Huyck: 29:52

Did you ever hear them?

Ruth Ashton Nelson: 29:55

Did what?

Dorothy Huyck: 29:55

Did you ever hear either of them talk to the public?

Ruth Ashton Nelson: 30:00

No. I don't remember, but I knew Esther quite well.

- Dorothy Huyck: 30:05 Esther Burnell?
- Ruth Ashton Nelson: 30:06 Esther Mills. Esther Burnell-Mills. She and her sister had homestead at a joining homestead. It's over here somewhere near McGregor mountain. Then later, Esther became secretary to Enos. She helped him, then, with much of his writing and so forth.
- Dorothy Huyck: 30:38 You have been back in this area now for some years. For 10 years?
- Ruth Ashton Nelson: 30:44 Well, I moved up here from Colorado Springs, bought a house in town, and moved up here permanently in 1964, and I've been living here since then.
- Dorothy Huyck: 30:55 Over these years, you must have observed many changes in Rocky Mountain National Park.
- Ruth Ashton Nelson: 31:00 Yes.
- [END OF TAPE 1 SIDE B]
- [START OF TAPE 1 SIDE C]
- Ruth Ashton Nelson: 00:00 Even when Mr. Toll was still superintendent, and that would have been in '27. And of course, he was one of the very enthusiastic promoters of that road, he wanted it built, and I feel that it has been really a wonderful thing for the whole country, to have that kind of a road. I was up there yesterday, or the day before I guess. But of course, the original road to Moraine Park went right up the river, didn't come around this way and then across [inaudible 00:00:46]. We went up to Bear Lake by the other road. And the inns, the Bear Lake Lodge and Fern Lake Lodge were in operation, and Fall River Lodge and the Brentwood and Spragues, and they were all in operation.
- Dorothy Huyck: 01:12 You must've seen many accommodations removed from Rocky Mountain National Park.
- Ruth Ashton Nelson: 01:17 Yes. Oh, they've all been – And the [inaudible 00:01:18], which is a great big place up in the middle of Moraine Park. I have felt that those smaller lodges really were a service to the public that they can't get now, but [inaudible 00:01:36] was such a great big thing. Like a big sore thumb

standing up in the middle of Moraine Park. It's, from my point of view, rather nice to have it removed.

- Dorothy Huyck: 01:47 What other changes? There have certainly been changes in the road system and in the removal of lodges.
- Ruth Ashton Nelson: 01:55 The restrictions on camping, limitations on how long you can camp, and especially on the backpacking and the areas that have been closed because of over use or so forth. So many restrictions on Trail Ridge now. And you used to be able to just go where you wanted to. You can't do that anymore.
- Dorothy Huyck: 02:20 Are you doing any further collecting of plant material that he [inaudible 00:02:24]?
- Ruth Ashton Nelson: 02:25 Well, if I see something that I think is definitely different, that isn't in the book, I try to collect it. I haven't had a collecting permit now for a couple of years, because I think I've got practically everything, but every once in a while, a weed appears that hasn't been here before, that this has come in, you see. Either with the hay, or with the animals, or people, or in some way. And I usually try to spot that and talk to the naturalist or the superintendent about it. See we did try to eliminate the wheat that got started over on the Fall River Road, which was entirely foreign to the area up here. And I have been doing a little collecting in the Southwest, with this idea that I might do something with that eventually.
- Dorothy Huyck: 03:31 I've been asking you a lot of questions. Is there some area of interest that you have, that I may not have asked about, that we should talk about?
- Ruth Ashton Nelson: 03:45 Well, yes. I'd like to know a little bit more about what it is that you are planning to do?
- Dorothy Huyck: 03:49 All right, fine. Thank you.
- Ruth Ashton Nelson: 03:52 —Park Service, and I think that's the reason why, but I've probably never gotten an appointment as a naturalist.
- Dorothy Huyck: 03:58 You were saying that there was a strong prejudice against women in those days, and that's why you were not making headlines.

- Ruth Ashton Nelson: 04:01 Yes, as naturalists. There were just two or three, Herma Bagley and Yellowstone, and Enid Michael and Yosemite. And they were about the only ones back in those days. And of course, they were both very good. And I know Herma very well, and I of course knew Enid Michael pretty well when I was up at Yosemite that summer.
- Dorothy Huyck: 04:28 Would you tell me about Enid Michael?
- Ruth Ashton Nelson: 04:30 Well, she was small and dainty, and she was enthusiastic, but I don't mean by that, that she was effusive at all. And she was a very good naturalist, I think.
- Dorothy Huyck: 04:54 She too had a substantial collection of material in her [inaudible 00:04:57].
- Ruth Ashton Nelson: 04:57 Yes, I'm sure she did. And I really didn't know her, except as an instructor in the school. And as I met her that summer, the few weeks that I was there for that summer of '28 for the training School.
- Dorothy Huyck: 05:18 What was she teaching then?
- Ruth Ashton Nelson: 05:20 Well, she would take us on walks and demonstrate how to interpret what we heard and saw. And I can remember that I thought she was really very kind, in that one time she called on me to tell what a certain bird call was, and it was a thing that – I was sort of hesitant about things like that, but anyway, it happened to be something that was very easy, and I thought, I appreciated the fact that something that she knew I knew, and so she was considerate. And I think she really gave quite a contribution.
- Dorothy Huyck: 06:11 Did she live right with those of you who were at the school?
- Ruth Ashton Nelson: 06:16 She wasn't in the camp with us, but she lived in Yosemite, I'm quite sure. I'm sure she lived in Yosemite. I think she had her home there.
- Dorothy Huyck: 06:25 What about Herma Albertson? What do you remember about her?
- Ruth Ashton Nelson: 06:29 Well, I didn't know Herma until after they had left... Well after George—

Dorothy Huyck: 06:39

George Bagley.

Ruth Ashton Nelson: 06:40

George Bagley, her husband. Let's see. I don't know when the first time I met Herma was, but anyway, I, in those days, would go by myself to some of the parks, Glacier for instance. And I remember being with them in Glacier at one time, for two or three days. And Herma and I had some correspondence, and I visited them briefly in their home. And it's in Idaho, Boise or Boise. When I was driving up there, oh about in '68 maybe. I was driving out to Oregon and I stopped, may have been later than that. Anyway, I stayed overnight with them. And she was instrumental in getting me in touch with some people in Greece, who have a little botanical museum. And I had wanted to go into the near East, because I wanted to see the wild species.

So many of our horticultural forms, especially the bulbs, come from that area. And I just wanted to see those. And I had written to her, they were in Amon at the time, and asked if—

Dorothy Huyck: 08:14

They were where?

Ruth Ashton Nelson: 08:15

In Amon, and Jordan. And I wrote and asked if we couldn't get together for a little botanizing over there. Well, by the time she got the letter and could write back, things had gotten pretty ticklish politically, and they were pulled out of Amon, and George was sent to Turkey, and she was sent to Greece to wait for him, you see. And she found out about this little museum out in Kifisia, which is a suburb of Athens, and talked to those people and told them something about me.

And by that time, I was lined up to go on a trip around the world. So, it worked out that our trip terminated in Istanbul. And my friend that I was traveling with went to Switzerland for Christmas, with her relatives. And I went on to Greece and spent two months in this museum in Kifisia. And that all came about through Herma's kind arrangements.

Dorothy Huyck: 09:23

When was this?

Ruth Ashton Nelson: 09:25

This was '69, and spring – Let's see. No, '67 and '68.

Dorothy Huyck: 09:41 Did you actually see the Bagleys then, when you were in Greece?

Ruth Ashton Nelson: 09:41 Did I what?

Dorothy Huyck: 09:45 Did you actually see the Bagleys when you were in Greece?

Ruth Ashton Nelson: 09:48 No, no. Because by that time she was gone. See, because we started in the fall of '67, and went around from – Went to Japan first and then around that way. And then I stopped off and stayed in Greece, but the Bagleys had come home.

Dorothy Huyck: 10:11 Going back to people in Yellowstone for a minute. Did you ever know Marguerite Lindsley Arnold, who was a naturalist in Yellowstone?

Ruth Ashton Nelson: 10:19 Marjorie who?

Dorothy Huyck: 10:20 Marguerite Lindsley Arnold?

Ruth Ashton Nelson: 10:24 No.

Dorothy Huyck: 10:26 She too was a naturalist in Yellowstone.

Ruth Ashton Nelson: 10:29 I am very bad at remembering people that I meet just casually, and don't have any more contacts with. And I know that sometimes very likely I had met her sometime, but I don't remember. I'm sorry.

Dorothy Huyck: 10:45 Anything else we should talk about?

Ruth Ashton Nelson: 10:48 I don't think so.

Dorothy Huyck: 10:49 All right. Thank you again.

[END OF TAPE 1 SIDE C]

[END OF INTERVIEW]