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**Stuart Barnette**  
**October 25, 1971**

Interview conducted by S. Herbert Evison  
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[Tape #106 – Side 1 & 2]

EIVISON INTERVIEW WITH STUART BARNETTE

York Harbor, Maine

October 25, 1971

[Tape #106 – Side 1 &amp;2]

DRAFT

Transcriber: Charles Kennedy

11-01-77

[START OF TAPE 106, SIDE 1]

Herbert Evison: This is the morning of October 25, 1971, and a very rainy morning it is. I'm Herb Evison and I am at the moment in York Harbor, Maine, at the home of Stuart Barnette who at one time more than 30 years ago was on the staff of the old Region One of the National Park Service. Stuart let's start this off by getting on the record those fundamental facts about you – just when you were born and where, for one thing.

Stuart Barnette: Well, Herb, I was born in Dover, Delaware, March the 20th, 1905 – typical blue hen's chicken.

Herbert Evison: (chuckles) What about your family? What did your father do?

Stuart Barnette: My father was in the automobile business and later he went into real estate business, and he was in the real estate business when he died.

Herbert Evison: I suppose you went to school—

Stuart Barnette: —Oh, yes, when I graduated from high school in Dover, Delaware, I then went to the Naval Academy at Annapolis. I resigned in 1926 to go to MIT (Massachusetts Institute of Technology) where I took up a work which is a little more compatible with my interest – architecture, specifically, and after I graduated from MIT I went to the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in France to study architecture and came back to Washington and when I – shortly after which, when I then became interested in the Park Service. I didn't go to work with them right at that time, but I went to Washington after my return from Europe.

Herbert Evison: Yeah. What, what first attracted your attention to the Park Service?

Stuart Barnette: Well, I was working with Wyeth and Sullivan who had the commission as architects to build an addition to the Senate Office Building and I decided about 1934 that I wanted to get married, and so I told Mr. Sullivan that I would like to resign and he consented to that but he said he had known of my interest in early American architecture because we just had been talking about this kind of thing from time to time, and he took me over to the National Park Service headquarters where I met Charlie Peterson and Dudley Bayliss and I believe Bill Carnes.

Herbert Evison: Oh yes.

- Stuart Barnette: But though they told me they could give me a job; I didn't want a job. I wanted to come back up here in Boston where I had married Ruth Stark and I wanted to spend the summer painting in Gloucester. So, I went – we went to Gloucester as newlyweds and I painted the summer away until I was down to my last \$25, then I figured I better go back to work again.
- Herbert Evison: And you did then for the Park Service?
- Stuart Barnette: No. Oh, in the interim between the time I went out, I left Washington, from the time I got married, I got a letter from the district office of the North American Building Survey and they said, "Wouldn't you like to work measuring some of these buildings before you get married?" And I didn't have anything else to do so I fooled around Delaware and Pennsylvania measuring buildings until I got married which was sometime in the middle of the summer.
- Herbert Evison: Yeah. Now we'll come back to that HABS (Historic American Building Survey) interlude but let's go ahead from there. You did get married, and you say you didn't go to work for the Park Service right after?
- Stuart Barnette: No, at the end of summer we moved into Boston, and I had a position then – I was working with an architect but I got a letter from Charlie Peterson saying – "we have an opportunity or have an opening for an architectural foreman in Fredericksburg, Virginia. Wouldn't you like to take it because this gives you an exceptional opportunity to study the Early American architecture of Virginia and meet some nice people and that sort of live it up." Since I was sort of fed up with the city and I'd enjoyed my identification with the men I had met in the Park Service I accepted the invitation and went down to live in Fredericksburg where Branch Spalding and Fred Robinson and Bill Howard and Ralph Happel and Ray Savage and oh, a heck of a lot of other nice people were working.
- Herbert Evison: Yeah. Well now let's get back now to this first plunge into the HABS program. I was thinking about that this morning and one of the things I was wondering was this, you go into a territory – a historic territory like most of Delaware – who was the guy or who were the persons who designated the historic structures that were to be photographed and measured?
- Stuart Barnette: Well, presumably the people who were selected for the HABS had identified themselves as pseudo-authorities anyway in this area before they were employed, and as a collaborative project we all more or less agreed upon the buildings because we had lived in that area. For instance, I lived in Delaware all of my life and I knew that buildings of – fairly well – and Al Crusey [pronounced Crew-zee], who was district officer, solicited our opinion and we didn't have a bit of trouble agreeing what

should be done because it was while there was a loose confederation of professional men, we were close enough together to agree on almost everything and therefore when we did measure something or no matter what we did we were all wholeheartedly right for the project. The specifics were no problem.

Herbert Evison: Yeah. Well now as I remember the American Institute of Architecture or Architects was a collaborating organization with this.

Stuart Barnette: That's right.

Herbert Evison: What part did the institute play in this, do you remember?

Stuart Barnette: I'm going to have to indulge in some conjecture here. Francis Sullivan, the member of the firm who had identified himself with the HABS program earlier, was presumably an advisor to the Historic American Building Survey officials and I think it was – he was on some sort of committee which collaborated as member as officials of the AIA (American Institute of Architects) with the National Park Service, with Tom Vint and Charlie Peterson and Dudley and Bill Carnes. And he was a sort of liaison agent, so while he I think had no specific competence I think or even I think specific interest in Early American buildings per se, he was, and I think he was probably one of the local officials in the HABS, I mean in the American Institute in Washington.

Herbert Evison: I see. I taped Charlie Peterson several months ago and that's one of the questions that I hadn't asked him because I would suppose turning a lot of – most of them were architects very much in need of employment working generally speaking in their own neighborhoods because I don't think there was in the way of travel funds available to get around. I was just wondering about how the decision was made whether an architect and a photographer should spend time on this house or not, but I think you give me a pretty satisfactory answer there. Now, when you came back with the Park Service, you came back again with HABS first, didn't you?

Stuart Barnette: No, I didn't come back as HABS. I was an architectural foreman attached to CCC (Civilian Conservation Corps).

Herbert Evison: Oh, yes. Yes, of course, in Fredericksburg. I'm sorry I—

Stuart Barnette: But they gave me my head because presumably Tom Vint and Charlie and Bill and Dudley or so forth had agreed – I'm guessing now, had agreed, probably, to pay my salary because they knew that my interest in early American architecture was pretty, was pretty sincere and pretty deep and when I went to Fredericksburg, Branch Spalding and Tapscott – Tapscott being the representative of branch of plans and design who traveled

around. They gave me my head and were very cooperative. You couldn't have had a warmer association.

Herbert Evison: Yeah. Well now you were an architectural foreman attached to a CCC camp and it wasn't your chore to design any of the structures that the CCC's were building?

Stuart Barnette: Yes. It was my responsibility, and I did in some instances do some work of that nature but I was relieved, unofficially I suppose, of any direct and continuing responsibility just because I was able to serve the objectives of the local officials by doing what I did best, which was interest in early American architecture. I was doing archeological work; the first thing I did down there, until I was asked to do something else, which was to excavate Chancellorsville where they – outside of Fredericksburg and later on I did the archeological work at Mansfield, the home of the man Page, which was a very famous house and later on, even though I was an architectural foreman I did, well, with the assistance of CCC boys, conducted the archeological work at George Washington's Birthplace where we found, Herb, something which I hope somebody will wake up and do something about. We found out a terrific mistake had been made at Wakefield which has never been rectified by the National Park Service and which historians when they come to look at the record that you and I are making now will be terrifically embarrassed.

Herbert Evison: Yeah. That's with respect to the so-called memorial mansion.

Stuart Barnette: That's right.

Herbert Evison: And its placement?

Stuart Barnette: That's right.

Herbert Evison: Ah—

Stuart Barnette: —To substantiate this, this gives me a wonderful opportunity maybe to put somebody on the spot, but to substantiate this the conclusions that were reached by me and Tom Waterman and others, probably Charlie Peterson though I'm not quoting him, but also substantiated by the Director of the National – of the Philadelphia Museum, Cys Kimball. And also, Dr. Leland of the Learned Society. They all agreed that a mistake had been made and there still exists, assuming that it hasn't been disturbed too much, evidence of where the real George Washington's birthplace stood, and it bears very little if any relationship to the memorial mansion.

Herbert Evison: Yes. Of course, the Park Service is pretty assiduous about pointing out that that is purely a memorial mansion. That it is not a replica. It doesn't

pretend to be a replica of the birthplace and I think they admit that it's not on the site.

Stuart Barnette: I'm sure they do. I'm not trying to reflect on anybody's probity, but I am reflecting – I do make an observation which I regret is that there hasn't been sufficient interest in the Park Service to tell the – all the facts – to all the people that are interested.

Herbert Evison: Yeah. Yeah. That's a very interesting sidelight that I am—

Stuart Barnette: —The point is Herb, is somebody doesn't – all the information we got from an archeological project has been covered up and has disintegrated in the meantime. I have written to the Park Service officials. I wrote to Ronnie Lee. I wrote to Charlie Porter. I've written to a chap who is now representing the historic buildings and tried to solicit information in publishing for public use the information that was in the first district office. I can't get any response from these people. They all dodge it. Are they all – what's the matter with the officials, so-called? When you and I were in the Park Service, we would have brought this stuff out and right clear and on the table, but the rascals are hiding from the public information that should be offered the whole historic world today.

Herbert Evison: Yeah. That's just fine (chuckles).

Stuart Barnette: Oh, they tell me, boy, the things the Park Service has changed but excuse me, go ahead, I'm off the beam here.

Herbert Evison: While we had this turned off you mentioned a number of – what sounded like extraordinarily interesting special assignment that you had from time to time and I think we ought to get on this record all that you can remember about those, the problems, the occasion for your making them, and what you did and what, if any, results you know of.

Stuart Barnette: Well, I hardly know where to start, but I guess the – I mentioned the things when I was located at Fredericksburg, but when I was first transferred, or plans of transferring me to Richmond were considered, I got a call from Tom Vint one night after I had come back from Salem, Massachusetts, where we had inaugurated the restoration of the National Maritime – Salem National Maritime Site and he said, "How'd you like to go to Puerto Rico?" Well, it was winter, and we had about 18 inches of snow at Richmond, and I said, "Would I like to go anyplace where there's less snow and some sunshine!" So, he said, "I have orders from Harold Ickes by the president to send somebody to Puerto Rico to see what the Army engineers are doing to La Fortaleza." Which, of course, is the governor's palace there – combination of the architecture of the Spaniards, the Dutch, and the Americans and so forth and he said, "I want you to go

down there and use whatever contacts you may have in the Navy.” He said, “I think I’ve heard you mention that you were a classmate of Admiral Leahey’s son at Annapolis.” And he said, “Maybe that will give you entry into conversations which will help us exert influence that we think the Park Service’s – influence in the area of historic sites.” So pretty soon I found myself on the boat going down. I think it was the Brinkan or the Como to Puerto Rico, and we were met at the boat by a representative of the Army and the governor’s staff and were immediately taken to the Grand Hotel or the Candada – that isn’t the only hotel, but the best hotel in the city and after we found out that the Park Service funds wouldn’t let us stay there, why, we finally located another place and I immediately contacted the governor’s office and I had a very cordial relationship with the governor who was very cooperative and very helpful in everything he in every way he could be, but he was far more interested in the problem of the war and he told me that he was going to be appointed ambassador to France and that it would behoove me to complete my work for the Park Service and get back into the – and take my responsibility in the Navy as a reserve officer as soon as I could. So, after trying to exert some restraint on the Army engineers in their remodeling of La Fortaleza which is, of course, it was a remodeling job. They didn’t know their foot from a hole in the ground about restoration. I think probably we exerted some restraint, and I went back to Philadelphia.

Herbert Evison: Well now you must have had—

Stuart Barnette: To work on the Second Bank of the United States.

Herbert Evison: Presumably at the completion of this you wrote a report.

Stuart Barnette: Oh yes, that’s right. You remember when I was back in Richmond, I wrote a report which is reputed to have been given to the president on the whole picture of restoration in Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, and the general area. And you may remember that I did that when you were my boss down in Richmond—

Herbert Evison: —Richmond.

Stuart Barnette: And it was received with considerable satisfaction I believe because it was a darned interesting report. I had a lot of collaboration and a lot of cooperation of other people.

Herbert Evison: Presumably you concerned yourself also with the – what is it, the Casablanca?

Stuart Barnette: No, I didn’t have anything to do with that, Herb. I was invited over. That’s where the – that was another thing where I think the lieutenant governor was then living, but I didn’t know anything about that. I did go around and

study – I recorded I believe hundreds of, no, there probably weren't hundreds but certainly many, many other historic buildings which I prepared HABS cards for and I sent them to Tom Waterman and they are presumably in the historic – in the HABS files. If they aren't, I have copies, fortunately, of almost everything I did for the Park Service because the thing that I saved was the rough draft of almost everything I have written, and I have—

Herbert Evison: Oh, yeah.

Stuart Barnette: If ever the Park Service is stuck, I might be able to help 'em with my files if I can find 'em.

Herbert Evison: Yeah. Yeah. Now you mentioned some other special assignments there while we had this turned off and I think that I'm interested—

Stuart Barnette: —Well, you remember—

Herbert Evison: —there. No, you said you didn't list them.

Stuart Barnette: Oh, no, I haven't listed them, but of course they're quite fresh in my mind even though it's been a good many years. I was a good friend of Ronald's and Ronnie Lee I think it was – we went to Pittsburgh one time to study the development of the civic area of Pittsburgh and the area that interested me, of course, was Fort Pitt, the old remains of the fort and while the rest of the fellows were handling the diplomatic relationships I was able to study the fort and make some recommendations to the Park Service. All these things, of course, are reports that are available or were in the files of the Park Service. I don't know if they can be found, or not. And after I came back from Puerto Rico, you remember, you sent me up to start the first of the Philadelphia projects which gave rise to the eventual development of the mall and the Independence program. I started on the work at the Second Bank of the United States, the old courthouse, you know, and I started the restoration, and I completed all of most of it, not all the plans toward completion and with – it wasn't until I left to go back in the service that I left that project.

[END OF TAPE 106, SIDE 1]

[START OF TAPE 106, SIDE 2]

Herbert Evison: Are there any other of these projects that we ought to get something about on this tape?

Stuart Barnette: Well, perhaps, you might think of, consider the Salem Maritime National Historic Site. You remember we got the Richard Derby house as a gift from the SPNEA as one of the things that initiated that program. Of course, we had the Custom House and that is one of the projects I was

working on at the beginning of the war and just before I went back into the Navy and the Richard Derby house was virtually completed by the time I did leave the service—

Herbert Evison: You mean the transfer—

Stuart Barnette: But it was a – it was I think one of the most successful things the Park Service has done, and one that gave me more satisfaction than a lot of other things I have been identified with.

Herbert Evison: Yeah. Now what just what was your function there at—

Stuart Barnette: I was in charge of the restoration – architectural restoration of all those buildings – the Hawkes House, the Richard Derby House, and the Customs House. Ed Small was then superintendent and historian there and between his able researches, efforts and results as a historian, and my contribution as an architect, why, I think we have a very fine example of the Park Service work in – demonstrated there. Oscar Bray was doing the engineering there and for the O.G. Taylor's organization, but I think he left shortly after that, see.

Herbert Evison: It's been 30 years anyway since I heard that name.

Stuart Barnette: Yes (laughing).

Herbert Evison: Almost forgotten it.

Stuart Barnette: You know I used to see Arthur Demaray in Rockport, Massachusetts, where after retirement he went down and he painted, I was painting watercolors. He was painting oil. And we renewed our warm relationship at that time because I think anybody ever worked for the Park Service remembered Arthur Demaray and had great respect and esteem.

Herbert Evison: You bet. Now, you met him down in Arizona?

Stuart Barnette: Is that where he is now?

Herbert Evison: No, he's dead.

Stuart Barnette: Is he? I didn't know that.

Herbert Evison: Yes. But he went down there not long after he retired, and I know that he became very interested in painting. He did a lot of it and enjoyed it immensely.

Stuart Barnette: A delightful man – he and Tom Vint – two of the finest men I ever knew in my life.

Herbert Evison: Yeah. You were saying that, in your jotting, that they were mostly concerned with people and that of course is one of the kind of things that I

love to get on tape – what you remember about the characteristics, the activities, the performance of the people that you were associated with. You were talking about having gone to Fredericksburg when Branch Spalding was the superintendent there and of course we saw a good deal of him in the regional office during that period. Now, I wonder, what you remember about Branch Spalding?

Stuart Barnette: Oh, I remember Branch Spalding. We got off to a good start because we met at a cocktail party and that way if you drink together you stay together or something like you stay friends together, or something like that; but Branch Spalding and I at the initial efforts didn't get along as well as we later on did. In other words, we are very warm friends now. I think he thought that the branch of plans and design and the historians were somewhat at odds in their objectives, but we soon reconciled that. Our differences, and I think that we have the warmest of friendship now, but Branch was – he ruled as the superintendent with a strong hand. I remember he used to have ins and outs with old Tapscott, and while they were both strong characters, Branch usually won and usually maintained the loyalty of his staff because Branch was right with his gang no matter what Washington or the district office said, (laughs).

Herbert Evison: Yeah. Yeah.

Stuart Barnette: He's down in Christchurch now I think, Virginia.

Herbert Evison: Well, I think he is now dead.

Stuart Barnette: Is he?

Herbert Evison: If I'm not mistaken.

Stuart Barnette: Oh, my!

Herbert Evison: Yes. Within the last year or two.

Stuart Barnette: I see.

Herbert Evison: Yeah.

Stuart Barnette: I used to hear from him time to time because he, as I said, even though we started up with some differences he used to ask me to be architect for any projects that he had even after we both left the Park Service.

Herbert Evison: Yeah. Now you – you mentioned Tom Vint who, of course, is also dead.

Stuart Barnette: Yes, yes. I think he was the one that, I guess you can't think of him without a great sentimental surge of esteem. I – he had to combine and very precious qualities of humility and competence that you can't be associated without feeling lucky.

- Herbert Evison: Yeah. Well, how what you say – what would you say about him from a professional standpoint?
- Stuart Barnette: Well, I – he being a landscape architect and me having primary interest in architecture with buildings per se, I never had a chance to obtain anything tangible about his professional competence but I can't imagine him being anything but exceptionally competent with his approach to everything. He was – he was a man's man and as I said a man of great humility and he never had any – nobody engendered the esteem and loyalty that he engendered in his staff – his own decisions in all matters. He was just tops.
- Herbert Evison: Yeah. You also mentioned another man who died while we were both together there in the regional office and that was Tapscott.
- Stuart Barnette: Oh, yes.
- Herbert Evison: And I gather that you had a good deal of contact with.
- Stuart Barnette: Yes, I did because he was the representative of the Washington Office and he felt that even that there was some sort of unwritten agreement I should be directed from the branch of plans design, even though I was attached to Branch Spalding's CCC force, and therefore that lack of decision or lack of precision in these definitions of responsibility occasioned some kind of somewhat interesting arguments between Tapscott and Branch Spalding who, both of whom, seemed to think they were my immediate boss and were trying to tell me what to do.
- Herbert Evison: (chuckling) yes.
- Stuart Barnette: But they were both gentlemen. We never – they didn't – any division of their problems they had never lasted long. They were both big men in their own right.
- Herbert Evison: Yeah. Well now you had another one that you mentioned a while ago was Oren Bullock.
- Stuart Barnette: Oh, yeah.
- Herbert Evison: And of course, I would take it that for a while he was your immediate boss.
- Stuart Barnette: In the district office.
- Herbert Evison: Yes. I'd like any, get on the record anything that you remember about Oren.
- Stuart Barnette: Well, most of my memory of these fellows has something to do with the social life. I remember coming down to Richmond that Oren was the – member of the Westmoreland Club and many pleasant evenings I spent in

the pool and drinking there with Oren and Tom Black and a, oh, a whole series of people who were architects, landscape architects down there. Oren was particularly general and genial host – generous and genial host – and we had a lot of fun, oh, out of the office but, and in the office, too, because Oren was a fine man to work with. We all enjoyed working with him. He was loyal and cordial and as I say he had his own share of humility which is in my estimation is at the neat plus ultra.

Herbert Evison: (chuckles) Well now when did you go into the back into the Navy?

Stuart Barnette: I went back I think, Herb, it must have been in around July 1941 or possibly '40. My memory is not exact. I had just come back from Puerto Rico and initiated well into the work at the Second Bank of the United States and I – the pressure of it became pretty hard to – pressure became pretty heavy on me to come back into it to make whatever contribution I could make, and I left there, I think it was July. I got a very nice letter from you when I left. Would you remember writing it, but it was a very cordial letter and I enjoyed it. It was a some one of the nice things you have done with me – together.

Herbert Evison: I seemed to have forgotten lots of such actions of mine and I'm finding going around and taping people. They credit me with doing things that I have completely forgotten. I didn't know before that I was ever such a good guy. (laughter by both)

Stuart Barnette: Oh yeah. You got – you rate high in esteem with old friends. We're still a little biased maybe.

Herbert Evison: Well one thing I remember particularly, you mentioned going down to Puerto Rico the time that Richmond was buried in snow.

Stuart Barnette: Oh, yes.

Herbert Evison: So, if you went into the service not very long after that it would have been probably 1940, because I think you're referring to the famous snow when I closed the regional office having no authority to do so. As a matter of fact, the Secretary of the Interior was the only one who could order an office closed.

Stuart Barnette: It might have been. I wouldn't contradict anybody when they start talking about dates.

Herbert Evison: Yeah. What was your rank in the Navy? And what was your experience during the war?

Stuart Barnette: Oh, I was – I went back as a lieutenant (j.g.) [junior grade] I had not kept up my—

Herbert Evison: Reserve—

Stuart Barnette: —The studies to maintain a very high rank. I retired as a commander in the civil engineer corps.

Herbert Evison: Oh, yeah.

Stuart Barnette: I built a lot of – I guess I built the first – the first of the Navy’s guided missile stations in the Southwest in Texas and Oklahoma. I remember that they gave us enough money. They had just given the Japanese 500 hundred million dollars to maintain the stability of the Chinese Yen and they had given this particular project that I was associated with – guided missiles – another 500 hundred million to develop a system to attack the French Fleet at Dakar and we were slated to wipe the French Fleet out with these guided missiles. I think I built about five or six Naval Air Stations which had guided missiles in them at that time. I – people probably don’t realize it started a – it was isolated as hell. I remember you couldn’t even land on one of our facilities there unless you had permission from the Secretary of the Navy or the Commander-in-Chief.

Herbert Evison: I was just noticing the small bird. I think it was a chickadee at your feeder.

Stuart Barnette: Yes, we have all kinds of birds here. They’re delightful –oh, chickadees and nuthatches. Oh, among – this is a lovely place to see birds and nature in its simplicity.

Herbert Evison: Yeah. Okay. You got out of the Navy, and you went back briefly with the Park Service, but in Chicago.

Stuart Barnette: Yes. At the end of the war, I returned to Kittery Point, where I had a home which I bought at the beginning of the war, and Tom Vint wrote me a very nice letter that said, “I would like you to come back as my authority on early American buildings.” And Dick Sutton was the chief architect and Tom secured the position for me as assistant chief architect, and despite all of the generous and cordial efforts to make life in Chicago or headquarters in Chicago tolerable, he said, “I just couldn’t take it.” I, he, Tom did everything to keep his staff happy you know, and they were – that’s one of his loyalties. It was so obvious, but Chicago, I couldn’t take it, so I eventually quit and I was offered a job at Alabama Polytechnic Institute as a design critic; professor of architecture and design critic where I stayed a year down there but eventually Cornell invited me to come up there as design critic in their architectural department and I went back there, and I’ve been there ever since.

Herbert Evison: Now that’s a brand-new designation of a profession – a design critic. Can you put a little flesh on that?

- Stuart Barnette: Well, it's to the – you mean the definition of the—
- Herbert Evison: Yeah.
- Stuart Barnette: Oh, you spend your time criticizing the efforts of the students, to comply with a, or to build a building, in conformance with a program – aesthetic and functional both. It's one of those jobs which is not very well – in which your criticisms aren't substantiated. In fact when it comes to aesthetics which are fairly well substantiated when you come down to functional requirements, but it's a – it's kind of a job which makes you too critical probably, too many things in, after life and right straight through your life you find you're critical of everybody and everything and to your own detriment; and to the detriment sometimes of other people's egos.
- Herbert Evison: Yes, I can believe the latter. Well now that was what you did all the time that you were at Cornell?
- Stuart Barnette: Yes.
- Herbert Evison: A design critic.
- Stuart Barnette: I'm now professor emeritus at the College of Architecture.
- Herbert Evison: Yeah. You were – you ended up as a professor? Did you start as a professor?
- Stuart Barnette: I started as an associate professor. I ended up as a professor after three, four years.
- Herbert Evison: Yeah. And you retired from there when – you said about two, three years ago?
- Stuart Barnette: Yeah, I think it was, Herb, I think it was, let's see this date – this is '41 – I think it was '69 or '70. I honestly don't know (laughs). But I guess I'd have to get Stella to answer that question (more laughter).
- Herbert Evison: Yeah.
- Stuart Barnette: Some of my friends might be interested in the fact that I've been married three times, you know, and since I don't have any secrets for anybody at this stage of my life I've had – I first married Ruth Stark of Boston. Then I married Priscilla Tucker of Portsmouth and Stella Faulkner is my present wife and a charmer. I wish she were here to make you welcome.
- Herbert Evison: Yes, well I wish so too for certainly my sake of both I gather were that the first two ended in divorces?
- Stuart Barnette: That's right, yeah. Fine women, though, I mean I have nothing except fine things to say about them. I can't, but I can't say enough for my present wife. (both chuckle)

- Herbert Evison: Well, good! Now you have quite a collection of notes there and I wonder if some of those jottings of yours shouldn't be the basis for a further account or have you pretty well covered them?
- Stuart Barnette: Well, I have. There are a lot of people that I haven't mentioned, Herb.
- Herbert Evison: Well, let's get them.
- Stuart Barnette: Under the plans and design, of course, there was Tom Vint as the chief of planning; there was Dick Sutton, Bill Carnes, and Dudley Bayliss, Tom Waterman, oh, John O'Neal, Bill Houseman, Harry Thompson, Tagert, Ralph Emerson, and so forth. These people are all in the Washington office, as I remember correctly, then down at Fredericksburg, Branch Spalding, Fred Robinson who as you probably know was a – eventually left the Park Service and is now probably with the – chairman of the board of a natural gas company or something like this.
- Herbert Evison: Oh, really.
- Stuart Barnette: In other words when I met him, knew him first, he was making about \$1800 a year. Now he's probably making 1800 thousand or something like that. He's just fairly been very successful and is just as – just as charming as with the same gentle humility he always had. And then there's Bill Howard who was a delightful country squire, and Ray Savage – I don't know what happened to him, but Rolie Taylor was a historian down there and a delightful drinking companion and Doc Northington was the historian that worked with me on the authenticity of the George Washington's birthplace.
- Herbert Evison: Of course, you know that he was – lord knows how many years – superintendent there.
- Stuart Barnette: I gathered he was.
- Herbert Evison: There at Fredericksburg.
- Stuart Barnette: Yeah, I didn't – I never – I didn't keep touch with him. Then there's Ralph Happel. I think he's probably still down there.
- Herbert Evison: He is still with the Park Service, but I don't know just where.
- Stuart Barnette: Yeah. And I ran across the name, but I didn't mean Verne Chatelaine when I was asked to go down and restore the house in Saint Augustine which is started the present restoration in that area.
- Herbert Evison: Oh, yes.
- Stuart Barnette: And I think Chatelaine was over somewhere in the middle of Florida, but he was head of the branch of history when I went in the Park Service.

- Herbert Evison: Yeah. Yeah. And probably hired more historians who stayed on permanently with the Park Service than any other three men.
- Stuart Barnette: Yeah. There was Ronnie Lee and Doc Stauffer and let's see who else was over in history – Fred, Fran Ronalds – I think he was at Morristown and over with him from plans and design was Ralph Emerson and I think he and his – I know that Naomi, his wife, is dead, but I'm pretty sure Ralph is dead. Let's see who else I have down there. Winslow – I worked with him on the addition to the White House.
- Herbert Evison: With whom?
- Stuart Barnette: I don't know; was it Horatio Winslow? I've forgotten. He was – he was, eventually, became the architect for the White House. And going to put the east wing on and Tom Vint said, "Well you're the history, the man of my – supposed to be my historian authority. You work with him on the restoration and the addition to the White House." And I did that, and I don't know what's happened to him. I think he eventually resigned and quit or something. And there's Earl Disk, I don't know what's happened to him. Fred Nichols is one of the HABS early strong men and he has now – dean at the University of Virginia.
- Herbert Evison: Oh, really.
- Stuart Barnette: And a charming individual. And Charlie Andray, you remember him?
- Herbert Evison: Yes.
- Stuart Barnette: He was in the Washington office – I don't know what happened to him. He was a baseball fan and a very enthusiastic one. The Baltimore Orioles – we used to have many interesting discussions with Charlie about them. Then there's Ned Burns, you remember his photography?
- Herbert Evison: Oh, yes.
- Stuart Barnette: Is he still around?
- Herbert Evison: No, he's dead. He was the museum – head of the museum branch there for a great many years.
- Stuart Barnette: Delightful man – delightful! Then, let's see who else I've got. Charlie Porter – I think he's resigned.
- Herbert Evison: He retired.
- Stuart Barnette: Somebody told me he is now restoring paintings or something like that. And Roy Appleman – I ran across a book in the library of his the other day. He, apparently if I remember correctly, now I'm not an authority on anything of course – especially my own memory – but I think he wrote a

book about “Vinegar Joe” Stillwell because I think he was on his staff in China, wasn’t he?

Herbert Evison: I don’t remember that.

Stuart Barnette: I think so. I had a couple of nice letters from him about different things because from time to time I would drop letters to those of my friends I remember with pleasure and hear from them.

Herbert Evison: Well, Roy is retired and living out by Washington now. He – the writing of his that I know about was of the early part of the Korean War. He returned to the Army after he came out after the war to write this, this history. It’s considered very fine piece of work as you might expect from him.

Stuart Barnette: Oh, yes, I would expect that.

Herbert Evison: He’s a very careful—

Stuart Barnette: —I met him when you fellows or somebody sent me up to Washington to work on the Analostan Island project which was the John Mason house. We studied it and did a lot of archeological work for the benefit of the CCC boys there and finally they didn’t know what to do with it and on my advice rather than take it down and cart it away because it was a fine house you know. John Mason’s house was a very fine house. The Bill of Rights – he’s the author of the Bill of Rights if I remember correctly. And instead of tearing it down and carting it off, I persuaded them to let me take down the stone work above the grade, put it in the basement of the old foundations, and cover it up with certain amount of protection against damage in the process of storage there. The Olmstead brothers or one of them was working there with me at that time because they were going to develop it as a park. A delightful, a delightful man he was. I had known him earlier in Boston and it was a nice opportunity to meet him again and see him on the operations. I don’t see any names here. Connie Wirth, of course, I – the last time I saw Connie was when he came back from the wars, and it was in Chicago, and Tom – he was in Tom Vint’s office and I walked in to discuss something with Tom and there Connie hadn’t even gotten out of uniform. Was sitting in there with Tom discussing what his plans were for the future.

Herbert Evison: Yeah. Well, of course, Connie Wirth was in uniform, but he never was in the armed forces.

Stuart Barnette: Oh, wasn’t he?

Herbert Evison: No, he went over to Austria after the war as a member of an allied commission, but he was he was not in the armed forces at all. He was given a kind of uniform to wear, – while he was over there.

Stuart Barnette: Yeah. Well, the last time I heard from him he was working for the Rockefellers up in New York state?

Herbert Evison: That's right. That's right.

Stuart Barnette: I don't believe – oh, Harry Thompson. Harry Thompson became the National Capital Parks director.

Herbert Evison: That's right.

Stuart Barnette: He offered me a job when he was going over there. I think Bill Houseman eventually went over as his architect and Bill was, as you know, decorated by the Dutch government.

Herbert Evison: No, I didn't know that.

Stuart Barnette: Oh, my, yes, he's either lord or baron or somebody because he was decorated by the queen.

Herbert Evison: Yeah. Well, he's one of those that I still have to tape.

Stuart Barnette: And how about – how about Dick, I mean Sutton Jett?

Herbert Evison: Sutton Jett has retired. Of course, he succeeded Harry Thompson when Harry died.

Stuart Barnette: Sutton was down in Fredericksburg when I got there.

Herbert Evison: Yes. Yes, he was a historian – a historical foreman.

Stuart Barnette: That's right, we were all foremen in those days.

Herbert Evison: Yes.

Stuart Barnette: At the lordly salary of \$1800 a year, I think it was.

Herbert Evison: Yes.

Stuart Barnette: Especially, I think I made about \$2000.

Herbert Evison: If that much. Yes.

Stuart Barnette: Ah, they were delightful people. I never known a finer bunch of people who worked for it with as much dedication for as little money in my life, but I have the greatest affection and esteem for every damn one of them.

Herbert Evison: Yeah. Well, I think there's a good deal of that feeling among those people who worked together at that time.

Stuart Barnette: They certainly were. It was a – you just knew you were in good company and you had to live up to not only what you thought you should do but what they thought you should do. It was a goodly company.

Herbert Evison: Yeah. Well, I don't want to cut you off but I – if you have anything more you want to get on this tape, now is the time to do it.

Stuart Barnette: I I can't think of anything. All these memories just – but of interesting work, interesting people, right going through my mind, Herb, but I would take a month of Sundays and lots of taping to put on and tell you of all the nice things that I have in my memory about all of you.

Herbert Evison: Well in that case suppose I just say, Stuart, thank you, for being willing to give me this time this morning and the opportunity to renew old acquaintance and friendship. It's been fun for me, and I hope it has for you.

Stuart Barnette: It's always fun, Herb, to see old friends I remember with a respect and esteem I feel for you and others.

Herbert Evison: After we thought we were through, Stuart, you mentioned first a Fulbright – what do you call it?

Stuart Barnette: Grant.

Herbert Evison: A Fulbright Grant and then another special assignment that you did and let's get the record – let's go into that Fulbright Grant first.

Stuart Barnette: Well, I was invited by Cornell to propose a program which reflected my interests generated by my Park Service studies in the early American architecture. I had as a result of my trip to Puerto Rico as on the governor's palace work discovered that there were in the Caribbean islands, islands of the Caribbean, other important historic sites, one of which was the shipyard of Lord Nelson and this was on the island of Antigua. And Cornell was interested in it that they asked me to propose a program under the Fulbright Grant to make a study of this and they granted me the money and the time to go to the shipyard to record it as I would do for the HABS, but before that I became sidetracked by another venture which was a result of my identification with Park Service programs. As I remember Herb Kahler and Ronnie Lee and others had become interested in the work of the Thomas and Helen Hastings fund. It's a well-heeled organization in New York City whose money came from the – several wealthy families down there and they asked me if I would delay my studies of the shipyard in order to prepare a report on the in which was slated to hopefully present studies and ways in which preservation might be perpetuated – the way a historic building might be perpetuated by informal agreements and I started that and actually spent a

year and a half on it after which the Helen Hastings fund asked the Time and Life if they would promote this thing through their own publications, but they felt that their obligation lay in other directions and the report never really got off the ground. It was taken over by the American Institute of Architects and the records are there today and I think could well found be the – these records – in these records could be found a great many, considerable information which could be helpful in an international attempt to preserve historic and other areas. The reason I think the report was not as – didn't make the splash that I hoped it would make – was because I felt that preservation cannot be accomplished by laws or by programs. It can only be implemented by educational processes that the public has to be made aware of the benefits of historic houses and historic sites which I find as which benefit I think is essentially, is a kind of refreshment of the commercial life that we are all involved in. When you go to a historic site, this is when you go to a historic park. There you find refreshment for the jaded nerves and exposure to the commercial life, but I don't know – it's hard to say.

Herbert Evison: Yeah. Well now—

Stuart Barnette: —This study went so far – I was in contact with every major preservation organization in the world.

Herbert Evison: Yeah.

Stuart Barnette: You'll find in the files of the American Institute in the Octagon House in Washington, files which represent personal correspondence with every preservation, historic preservation organization in every major country in the world.

Herbert Evison: Is that so.

Stuart Barnette: I spent 18 months on the thing. As I said it may have been my presentation techniques or it may have been the time or something, but it has never been fully exploited I feel as it should.

Herbert Evison: Now did you do this on a leave of absence from Cornell?

Stuart Barnette: From Cornell and with – under the aegis of Ronnie Lee and Herb Kahler and people who were in the Park Service. They were all interested, but operating so far away from them I couldn't take as much advantage of their advice as I would have liked to, and because I was also involved with every historical organization, historical preservation organization in every state in the Union as well as every major world power. It was quite an undertaking. Boy, you love my birds. Oh, why we have more birds here – all kinds, I mean; you aren't seeing any – you haven't any idea how many

birds that we have here being on the edge of a woods, they're here all the time.

Herbert Evison: Yeah. Now you said you did – you completed this before you did that Fulbright Fund study, or Fulbright Grant.

Stuart Barnette: No. This interfered with the Fulbright Fund.

Herbert Evison: Oh.

Stuart Barnette: I was awarded the Fulbright program to make this study of the Lord Nelson's shipyard but Ronnie – Ronnie Lee and Herb and other people who were my advisors asked me to do this so even though I got the Fulbright Grant and a very substantial tippance, you might say, or expense account, I decided to undertake this and the time I could take away from the university precluded my completion of the or even the initiation of the program of Lord Nelson's shipyard.

Herbert Evison: Oh. So that hasn't ever been done?

Stuart Barnette: Never been done. Somebody should do it because it's still there and it's not even well known. People don't even know it's there.

Herbert Evison: Now I would suppose not.

Stuart Barnette: And I think the social conditions in the Caribbean has so degenerated that it'll be a long while before anybody wants to go down there and undertake this.

Herbert Evison: (chuckles) Well I'm glad you happened to mention those and that we were able to get some little account of those on this tape, and anything to add?

Stuart Barnette: No, Herb, I can't think of anything else. I can show you later on a list of the projects that – why don't I go and get you a list of the things I did work on and you can decide whether there's anything worthwhile.

Herbert Evison: Yes, let's.

[END OF TAPE 106, SIDE 2]

[END OF INTERVIEW]