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Scudder Griffing
July 29, 1972

Interview conducted by S. Herbert Evison
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HERB EVISON INTERVIEW WITH SCUDDER GRIFFING

Shelter Island Heights, New York

July 29, 1972

SCUDDER GRIFFING – 1905

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FINAL

Typed by: Beverley A. Foltz

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[START OF INTERVIEW]

Herbert Evison: This is July 29, 1972. I'm Herb Evison and today I am on Shelter Island out near the eastern end of Long Island; and with me is Scudder Griffing, a gentleman of long acquaintance. Scudder let's start this off by getting on the record when and where you were born.

Scudder Griffing: Well, Herb, I just want to say I'm glad for you to be here; and I was born on Shelter Island on May 18th, 1905.

Herbert Evison: Now you - you were born into an old Shelter Island family.

Scudder Griffing: My family has lived here continuously since 1790 when they arrived, we think, from Connecticut; my great grandfather arrived and built himself a log cabin on the southeast portion of the Island.

Herbert Evison: Uh huh.

Scudder Griffing: He had a daughter and a son, my grandfather, who was born here in the Island in 1830 and my father, Moses Bowditch Griffing, was born also on the Island in 1860. He died in 1942. My mother was born in Fort Salonga, Long Island, in Suffolk County, in 1875 and moved out here with her father to a farm. She was - Phoebe Elizabeth Smith and there was no high school at that time, which would be about 1893, so my mother had to go to Greenport to the nearest high school.

Scudder Griffing: My father at that time was running the ferry boat between Shelter Island and Greenport. It was a sailboat and that is where he met my mother. And they were married in 1899, I believe, and my mother went to the Oswego Normal School sometime before that. My family consists - my father and mother's family consists - of an older sister, Barbara, presently living on Shelter Island; an older brother, Evans K. for Kinne, K-I-N-N-E; myself, who came in the middle, and then my younger sister, Mary, who now lives in Grand Rapids with her husband Earl Hess who is a geologist and an oil engineer; and I have the younger brother, Jasper Dudley, who also was born here - as all of us were - at present living in Florida.

Scudder Griffing: My mother, having had training as a teacher, taught us our kindergarten and I started the public school, which was a wooden building where my father and grandfather went to school.

Herbert Evison: Was this a one-room school?

Scudder Griffing: No. I was - it had four - six rooms in it, I believe, two stories, but the wing where I went in the first grade was the original building - one of the original buildings. Just two rooms, one up and one down, and all the

school was there originally. So, I started in the first grade with, at the same time, my brother who had had a little difficulty in his first few years. I went on through all the eight grades through the four years of high school and I got my diploma from the high school in 1923.

Scudder Griffing: I stayed on here for another year. Took some advanced courses which weren't normally given - solid geometry, some courses I needed to get into college, although we had the Regents Exams and I could have gone into, say, Cornell. Anyway, the following fall, having sent my qualifications to Wisconsin, Michigan, Missouri School of Mines, and Cornell - at all of which places I was accepted - I decided to go to Michigan where I knew one man in pre-medicine and also a young Jewish boy with whom I had been in military camp the preceding summer.

Scudder Griffing: This was CMTC which followed World War One, when everyone was concerned about defense; and I went to camp in 1922 and 23 at Camp Dix, New Jersey - now called Fort Dix - for a month each year and was enrolled in the U.S. Engineers Corps. The next year which was '24, I went to Fort Dupont, Delaware, for a single month where I finished my three-months term for this. All during the summers here we are a totally involved town with summer people, just a summer resort. There was no other business here, no industry whatever, and it's been a summer resort since 1875.

Scudder Griffing: I went as I said to the University of Michigan in September 1924. I enrolled in the engineering college or College of Engineering and Architecture - then called - as a mechanical engineer and having graduated here in Shelter Island of a class of four students. When I entered Michigan there were 2500 freshmen. You can imagine that I was pretty well out of my water, however.

Scudder Griffing: In the engineering college there were about 250 freshmen. Many of these students had for four years been in prep school and had been taking pre-engineering courses - mechanical drawing, which no one on Shelter Island probably had ever heard of at the time; so, I had a great deal of difficulty keeping abreast of all these people. However, I went to work and stayed with it. I had a little difficulty with my mathematics all along and didn't have too good a background here at the local high school.

Scudder Griffing: I went to school in my sophomore year here, at which time I took my older brother Evans with me, and we drove to Ann Arbor in a Model-T Ford, leaving here, going by way of Albany, and without stopping except for gas or to fix flat tires, to Ann Arbor in 33 hours. On the way out, at one point near Buffalo I was driving in the middle of the night and went to sleep. Went off the road and the little old Ford ran into a corn shock and stalled so we took a nap there before going on.

Scudder Griffing: I went on at the university and just decided that I wasn't cut out for engineering, as the mathematics was just more than what was good for

me; so, I transferred to the College of Literature, Sciences and Arts in which my brother had enrolled and concentrated then on landscape design. At the same time, I was taking ROTC - the military - and I was in the Coast Artillery Anti-Aircraft Corps; and I didn't have any difficulty with the military because I had already put in three months in the CMTC, so called.

Scudder Griffing: I worked while I was in college. My freshman year - the second semester - I roomed with a pre-medic student who worked waiting tables and he said why didn't I come down to the restaurant with him and get a job. So, I went down to a local restaurant on the right - against the campus and got a job, paying for my meals washing the dishes, pots and pans; and it was really a very difficult job and dirty and greasy and I didn't much appreciate it, but I did appreciate getting my meals.

Scudder Griffing: My second year, when my brother came, we got jobs in gas stations, and we worked as many as 20 hours a week in the gas station and carried 16 to 20 hours of work while I was in school at the same time. These gas stations at that time in 1925 and '26 had only outdoor pits where oil was drained from the cars and cars were greased; and we had to do this even when it was down around the zero mark. And I can remember working on old Packards, which had 30 or 40 grease points and we didn't have power grease-guns. We worked them all by hand.

Scudder Griffing: So, I would study at the gas station until a car came; and then this would be in the evening when we went to work from five to ten every night and then from twelve noon Saturday until five and then alternating Sundays. And also, my brother and I got a job at the local arboretum, which had two gates which were closed at sunset and opened in the morning. It belonged to the university, and they had to close the gates to keep the traffic out, so we got a job, I think for a dollar a day, by going and opening the gates in the morning and closing them at night. (laughter)

Herbert Evison: (laughs) You had a variety of ways of earning your living.

Scudder Griffing: I went out for cross country and every other night would run several miles - up to four miles - but I found, with my work and my college work, that the cross country was too much for me. I made several runs just within the university and it was just more than I could do to go in for the sport and do my other work. So, my third year in college we took our younger sister along and my brother concentrated in landscape design as I did which required a master's degree, - four years preceding being concentrated on the landscape subjects. Had a year of plane surveying so that I could run a level and a transit and a plane table and alidade to take topography - which we did - and we made our problems and drew up our own topography. We had a very small school, and our class was maybe 20 students and I got through it, my four years, and got my A. B. degree in February of 1929 since I had been to one summer school, which was required to study plant material, around the whole year; and I spent one summer at Fort Monroe,

Virginia, for my ROTC work. And this gave me credit so that I was able to take my degree in 1929, originally being in the class of '28; when I transferred, I had to take additional courses that held me back some.

Herbert Evison: Well now, in that year, you got what, your master's degree?

Scudder Griffing: No, I got my A. B. I immediately started on my work for my master's degree and my brother graduated the following June. That is June 1929; and we were in graduate school together and got our master's degrees together in June of 1930. There was a friend of ours named Wendell Smith, who also got his master's degree at the same time, who went to work for the C. C. C. down in Kentucky where I believe he was with the U. S. Forest Service and I'm not sure later, but he went to the Smokies for a time.

Scudder Griffing: After graduation, being in the depression there weren't many jobs available, but I got a position with the Coryell Nursery right away in Birmingham, Michigan, just north of Detroit, and I stayed there until the following April doing planting plans for the nursery and supervising planting, and trying to sell plant material also, which, professionally, of course, we weren't supposed to do. (Both laugh) Being supposed to be above the profession to sell, or below.

Scudder Griffing: So, in April the staff money was getting thin, and I had to look around to get another job. Meanwhile my brother had a position in Cleveland Heights with Ethylwin Harrison, a landscape architect, and he was doing all right there; but money wasn't very much available there either in our profession, so I went down to Cleveland and lived in Cleveland Heights from that April until the following October. I worked for the C. A. White Construction Company, who had a contract to build a country estate, barns, and swimming pool and so forth out in Gates Mill, Ohio, east of Cleveland. This was for Leonard C. Hanna of the Hanna Coal Company family.

Scudder Griffing: I remember when I got the job, I went to see Mr. White, the construction man, and I was so glad to get a job that I didn't know what to tell him when he asked me how much I wanted to go to work. He said, "Well how much do you want, Griffing?" And I said, "Well, I ought to be worth \$100 a month." And he said, "Well, Griff, if you aren't worth \$150, I don't want you." (Evison laughs)

Scudder Griffing: I decided I was worth \$150 and went to work. My job was to help stake out the grounds and interpret the blueprints and generally give supervision. We built roads, small pools; we put in the sprinkling system, drainage system; we built the lawns, and I worked under this contractor, and also under the supervision of a landscape firm in Cleveland. Alexander was one name. I don't recall the other off hand (Strong) and I was their representative, although being hired by the contractor. I stayed there until this job was complete and I believe the whole thing cost

somewhere around a million dollars, which was a fabulous amount to spend on a place just to have fun and keep horses.

Herbert Evison: Yes. I would venture to say that that was one of the last jobs of that kind done before the depression, too.

Scudder Griffing: I really think it was, Herb, about the last. Well, I had a Model-A Ford by this time which I had gotten on graduation and was paying for \$550 total and drove out from Cleveland Heights every day. When this job was over, I did a few other supervisory jobs for the contractor where he had other work going on. Then I was through.

Scudder Griffing: I then got a job at the Kellogg Corn Flakes Company in Battle Creek, and I went there in October of 1930 and went to work in the mechanical drafting room, and I also had charge of the photostat and blueprint room, which I learned to operate when I wasn't making mechanical drawings for broken parts in the factory and so forth. I made a survey of the grounds where the old Quaker Oats silos stood. There were four of them, and the old factory; and Edward Albert Eichsteadt, landscape architect, from Grosse Point, Michigan, had the job and he took me on to do the supervisory work to make the initial survey. I did this with a transit and took the topography and located all the railroad tracks and the buildings; and Mr. Kellogg was going to make a place there for the employees to have their recreation.

Scudder Griffing: We tore down the old Quaker Oats factory and we tore down the elevators or silo-like – I mistakenly called them silos elevators. They were about 60 or 70 feet tall, and we broke holes all the way through the bottom until there was just a ring holding the elevator up, when we would set off a blast of dynamite and down would come one elevator at a time. And I have pictures of these taken at 45 degrees and I could stop the motion.

Scudder Griffing: Well, I remember old Mr. Kellogg and he had an interest in the depression - that is, financial depression - and he had some data that he had been gathering and he sent it down to the photostat shop to be photostatted; and he had a theory that these came in cycles (depressions) and he was trying to show this. And I remember keeping a copy of one of those pictures showing cycles back to a date in the 1800's sometime, which I don't remember. When this job was ended in February because they had to lay off staff, I was the youngest on the staff and I had to look for another job again.

Herbert Evison: Last on, first off, huh?

Scudder Griffing: At this time there weren't any jobs anywhere around. I had been living in a house in Battle Creek with a lawyer who graduated from the University of Michigan - his name was North, and his father had been a Supreme Court judge - and a man from Vermont, also a Michigan man named Waterman, and a couple of other fellows. So, I had to leave this and had no place then

to go. My brother at the same time was being separated in Cleveland from his employment with Ethylwin Harrison. So, we decided together that we would sell one car and take the car which I had - I had turned my Ford in on a Chevrolet - and I would go to Cleveland, pick up my brother, and we would go to Shelter Island to our home and just make some work.

Scudder Griffing: We came home and immediately started to do anything we could. We were able to get the Davey tree patents, which had run out, and the Bartlett tree-surgery patents. My father had had an orchard and we grew up in an orchard and knew about spraying and pruning; and with the help of the books, we could get on entomology and pruning and spraying and so forth we began to do this type of work. Our younger brother who was here had also gone to the university and spent two years and then had to quit. My sister, however, graduated and got her A. B. degree.

Scudder Griffing: So, we started in the construction business here and bought equipment; a truck and a tractor. We first made a tractor out of a Model-T Ford, to begin with, and got whatever work we could do and were glad to do it. We did tree surgery, tree spraying, pruning; we built tennis courts, driveways; we got some jobs to do - some more country places where we made the surveys, and the plans, and the general plan, and planting plans until the work was completed. And on one job we did we got a carload of rhododendrons which had been shipped out of Asheville, North Carolina, and I believe some other ones from Princeton, West Virginia. These were used on the place of Mr. Edwin Claude Mills, who was the manager of the American Society of Composers, Authors, and Publishers at that time.

Herbert Evison: ASCAP, huh?

Scudder Griffing: ASCAP. That's right. When work began to get a little thin here, both my brother and I received somehow - I'm not sure from the Park Service or from where - the government sent out applications for the Civilian Conservation Corps. We both made application to the Corps and we both had acceptances to go to Tupelo, Mississippi. Well, by the time the papers came through, we had more work and neither of us accepted a position which would've been a landscape foreman's position in a camp.

Scudder Griffing: Later on, in the year the work thinned out again and we both made re-application and decided that whosoever came first, he would take the job, and the other would stay here on the Island and carry on the work. Mine came first and was from Shenandoah National Park, asking, if a position were offered as a landscape foreman would I accept and I wrote back and said that if it were offered, I would accept. Later, I believe, I received a telegram instructing me to report to Shenandoah National Park project in Luray, Virginia, on January first or second 1935.

Herbert Evison: '35, huh? Well, you kept going in the face of the Depression for quite a while at that.

- Scudder Griffing: That's right. I had overlooked the fact that one summer I went to - the summer of '33 - I went to Detroit and worked for a company making surveys of different products and I worked Detroit for one summer at this, covering Hamtramck and finding out why a certain cigarette sold or didn't sell. (Evison chuckles) I had forgotten to put this in before in its proper order. Well,—
- Herbert Evison: —Now before you go into your Shenandoah job, let's get the rest of this personal history. Somewhere along the line you met a gal named Mildred Allen and you married her. Now when were you and Mildred married?
- Scudder Griffing: Well, I will go back to the university; I was at the university in summer school in 1927, at which time I was walking one day through the engineering arch and there was a good looking girl ahead of me in a red dress and high-heeled shoes and with her hair - black hair - done up on her neck; and I just followed her to a class and later had somebody introduce me to my future wife, Mildred Allen of Somerset, Kentucky.
- Scudder Griffing: She came there from the University of Louisville where she had done previous work and wanted to get a degree in education at Michigan. She graduated in '28 there and went to work teaching in East Lansing in the High School there: French and English. And we just kept up the contact and became engaged and were married in Springfield, Ohio, on June 20th, 1934. Well, we came here, that is to Shelter Island, and spent the time from when we were married until this order to go to Shenandoah. We lived in a little house and even we could see outdoors through some of the cracks; and Mildred had to cook on a kerosene stove, but we didn't consider it then a hardship.
- Scudder Griffing: So, we packed what we could get in the rumble-seat and went in the winter down to Shenandoah National Park. We arrived right after a snowstorm and the snow was about hip-deep in Luray where the headquarters was in an old building on the top of the hill above Hawksbill Creek and not far from the Mimslyn Hotel and the Luray Caverns.
- Scudder Griffing: I remember very much going in and reporting. There was an old round-bellied stove in the front office where there were a couple of clerks, including Ted Smith; James Ralph Lassiter was there, the superintendent, to whom I was introduced, and he didn't say anything after I was introduced. So, I stood around this old stove with my heavy overcoat on, getting pretty warm, and I finally said, "Mr. Lassiter, would you mind if I took my coat off?" He said, "I don't give a damn! Take your pants off if you want to!" (Evison laughing)
- Scudder Griffing: So, this was typical of Mr. Lassiter; and I will recount now the instance in which another young man arrived. He was Maynard Isett, a Dutchman from Pennsylvania who arrived to take a forestry foreman's position similar to my landscape foreman's position; and Bob Moore was then in the forestry department, but we had a senior forester over them; and he

took Isett to the superintendent and introduced him and walked back into the forestry room to his drafting and his papers and pretty soon he realized that Isett was standing there alongside of Mr. Lassiter and no discussion or talking was going on, so he went back in again and said, "Mr. Lassiter, this is the new forestry foreman." And Lassiter looked up and said, "Well, now you've got him, what the hell are you going to do with him?" (Both laugh) Hell, we got a place - you want to say something?

Herbert Evison: Sure. Yes. Yes.

Scudder Griffing: We got a place which Ralph Mims of the Mims family, kitty-corner across from the park headquarters - where they had been making apartments for a place to stay. We hadn't been there but three days when my then superior, Harvey P. Benson, who was the assistant landscape architect in charge of the landscape architects at Shenandoah and had come from Iowa State and didn't know much more about the area than I did, informed me that they would like me to move immediately to Front Royal, which was some 25 miles to the north and at the North Entrance to the Shenandoah National Park project. So, after three days in Luray, we moved to Front Royal in an apartment on the east side of town and we remained there until the following October; and I had to cover Skyline Drive, where I was put to watching the operation of three different contractors covering the 30 miles between the Front Royal entrance and Thornton Gap, or Panorama, as it was locally called.

Herbert Evison: Now you were a landscape architect, a C.C.C. Camp foreman, but assigned to supervision of a contract job on Skyline Drive, huh?

Scudder Griffing: That's right. Three contract jobs at the time and I never was - I never had to spend any official time in a camp because of my special duties, which I will enumerate shortly. We moved to Front Royal, as I said, and we were taken in nicely by the local people. It was a small town of about 1500 and when you'd walk down the streets - the main street - at night, tobacco juice would be so thick that you would slip on it and once in a while somebody would get shot and they would put the man in jail for a few months and let him out again. And this was the kind of town it was. However, I had the good fortune to meet Mr. William Carson, who had a good deal to do with helping get Shenandoah National Park started, and we met a very nice group of people, and they could see that we were just youngsters and needed all the help we could get.

Scudder Griffing: We boarded out at first and later we had to do our own cooking. At the north end of the park, we had taken over a house; that is the Park Service had and it was empty, and the man's name was Potts. It was right at the entrance to the park, two stories tall with a basement open on the side and the windowsills level with the ground on the mountain side: and Mr. Lassiter wanted to know would we be willing to move in there and occupy it to keep it from being torn up by vandals.

- Scudder Griffing: We, of course, agreed and moved out to this Potts' house. It had an old hot-air heater in it which came through the floor, and we took whatever we could get for furniture and put in it. The garage was under the front porch. And I had shipped from Shelter Island an old kerosene heater - that is one to heat the water which we had installed - to get our hot water. On the job, where we had three contracts going on, we used tons of dynamite to blast the rock to build the drive; and as the boxes would be discarded - which were made of wood - I would bring them home; nail two or three together and clinch the nails and with these we made bookcases and cases to hold kitchen utensils and so forth. We still have some of these today which our two daughters, Barbara, and Mary, very greatly relish and keep in store and still use as they remember them and grew up with them long after we were able to afford something besides a dynamite box. Well, I will now tell you what some of my duties were.
- Herbert Evison: I want to ask you a specific question though. You were concerned with the three contracts for presumably construction of three adjoining sections of Skyline Drive?
- Scudder Griffing: That's right. Yes.
- Herbert Evison: Well now, how did you get around over that route during the construction period?
- Scudder Griffing: Well, it was a very difficult thing. We had old mountain roads which had many switchbacks in them. They assigned to me a Ford pickup over the rear axle of which we put a drop-in-let cover of concrete weighing several hundred pounds held down by two U-bolts. We had to do this in order to get traction to go up some of these old roads which had 20 or 25 percent of grade. And between Luray and Front Royal on the Browntown Road, which we had to travel because we could not travel the drive, we had I think seven railroad crossings and possibly ten fords to make on this old gravel road which I almost had to do daily.
- Scudder Griffing: Now my job was to supervise the landscape features of the Drive, under these contractors, to see that the banks were sloped properly, that the parking overlooks were put where they were supposed to be. Of course, the engineers laid most of them out. And when I wasn't doing this work on the mountain, or weather was too inclement, I would be in the office in Luray drawing master plans, details of plans for picnic grounds, campgrounds, shelters, bridges for fire control roads and work of that sort. I—
- Herbert Evison: On this work on the embankments, was that done by the contractor's men or was that a C.C.C. job?
- Scudder Griffing: All - all of the contracts were done under the joint jurisdiction of the Bureau of Public Roads and the National Park Service; and the landscape architect always had equal authority with the engineer on the job in charge

of a project. That is, there would be an engineer in charge of each one of these construction projects and one engineer over a 30-mile section; and although I was only then a landscape foreman, I was given authority equivalent to his and we worked together jointly. At that time the Bureau of Public Roads and the landscape architects didn't always agree, and we had some pretty tough arguments about laying slopes back; and the engineers always wanted to do it in the most economical manner and left the slopes very steep.

Scudder Griffing: The other work I did - when I speak of trails and bridges and trail-side shelters which I had to locate and supervise the construction of - they were all done under the C.C.C., Civilian Conservation Corps program. We had five camps, - one right near Front Royal but not in the park. It was Harmony Hollow, through which ran Happy Creek, and Bob Gibbs, who was a foreman in this camp, used to build with his crew some of the trails I laid out. Later Bob came with the park and became chief ranger and I have spent many months working with him; an altogether agreeable, competent man.

Scudder Griffing: Now the middle part of the Skyline Drive was already under construction between Panorama and Swift Run Gap, another 34- mile section. I did not work there at this time. Other people had this under their jurisdiction, and we had as many as four or five landscape architects and several engineers and several foresters. However, I was the next man to the top man and shortly was appointed assistant landscape architect, when my superior, Mr. Benson, had been made associate landscape architect; and I held this title until I later went to the regional office - Region One in Richmond, Virginia.

Scudder Griffing: Well, while I was still working on the north section, they opened up the south section of the park between Swift Run Gap and Jarman Gap, the end of the park at which the Blue Ridge Parkway started with its first section and ran to the gap - Rockfish Gap - between Charlottesville and Waynesboro.

Herbert Evison: Yeah, Highway 250, if I remember rightly.

Scudder Griffing: Yeah. I'll think of the gap a little later. This was a long - another 30-mile section; and the Blue Ridge Parkway about a ten-mile section, which was given to Shenandoah for jurisdiction and administration. And so, I had this 40-mile section then to cover contracts which were shortly to start; however, I went into the woods here with the engineers on some work where the road was originally laid out right through the woods from gap to gap. I learned a great deal about engineering features, and I was - having had some engineering training - very interested; and they were helpful.

Scudder Griffing: So, I had this then to do, to drive from Luray, Virginia, where we were moved to later that year, - back to where I started. I then had 54 miles to drive to get to my job and several miles up these old mountain roads to get

up to whichever contract I was trying to get to. At the same time, I would be laying out spur trails to the Appalachian Trail; and the latter trail was pre-empted in part by Skyline Drive, at the south end, and I personally relocated several sections of the Appalachian Trail which were so pre-empted.

Scudder Griffing: I located most of the spur trails in the south end of the park - most all of the trail-side shelters - and did some work on some of the fire roads, most of which was done by the foresters, but I did at least one bridge, as I remember. This work in the south end of the park got along much better than in the first section, which was the middle, and then the north section, because the engineers finally were educated to some of our ways of thinking, - about laying the slopes back.

Scudder Griffing: This was a very hard job. We'd have to take the blueprints - the cross sections - lay the slopes back from their one-to-one usual slope down to anywhere to ten to one, so you could drive on them and walk on them. Meantime equipment - construction equipment - got better and they could lay-back the slopes, which were earth, with some of these pieces of wheeled equipment on rubber tires, rather than with shovels.

Scudder Griffing: This was all very interesting work and very hard work and I enjoyed all of it. We even went out in the midst of the winter and worked as long as the shovels could possibly move. We lost one of our biggest shovels down a 110-foot fill just south of Swift Run Gap one fall. It was a two-yard shovel and bigger shovels we had before that were only one and three-quarters cubic yards and it was quite a thing when it came on the job.

Scudder Griffing: Now, I wouldn't want you to think that all my work was in the engineering line, because we would work on master plans all the time in the office when the weather was too bad to do anything outside, and on plans for campgrounds in Big Meadows and at Skyland and other places.

Scudder Griffing: And at one time when I was working in the south end laying out a trail in the fall of 1936, I had two C.C. boys working with me. It was a Friday. I was working out of the camp at Grottoes, Virginia, where William Clore Frey was the superintendent and where there was a forester, Bruce Gordon or vice versa. (His name was Gordon, and I can't remember whether it was his first or his last.) And I was laying out trail in this section with these two C.C. boys on this Friday before the election of 1936. The following Tuesday, we stumbled on four or five barrels of mash, which I had not seen before in my lifetime, and right where this trail was going to be built.

Scudder Griffing: Well, we knew that we must have been seen by the mountaineers who had a house below, some 1000 or 1500 feet down the stream that the trail was following. We proceeded out of there and to this road where we crossed the gap which was Brown's gap, through which Jackson and his troops went back and forth during the Civil War. Of course, I had to report my

find to headquarters; and at this time R. Taylor Hoskins was chief ranger. And since the C. C. camp was here and these boys had seen it, we figured there might be trouble with the moonshine being made at the still.

Scudder Griffing: So, Taylor said that he was going to deputize me and take me down there to show him where the still was. And I said, "Well, Taylor, I'll tell you where the still is, but I've got to go back there and supervise flagging that trail and supervise all this construction, and I don't relish getting mixed up with any of these mountaineer moonshiners." He said, "Well, I can never find it and I'm deputizing you and you will have to go." (Evison chuckles)

Scudder Griffing: Whereupon Taylor gave me a .38-caliber revolver made by U. S. Arms which had been confiscated up at Skyland, where Mr. Pollock's realm was, from a Negro who had held somebody up. They had decided Monday before the election Tuesday they would raid this still and break it up. So, we proceeded to the camp at Grottoes, picked up the forester Gordon and superintendent, Mr. Frey and Taylor and I got all in one pickup with axes and the others had their revolvers for protection. We drove over the Brown Gap Road west side down to the east side against what I thought was the way to proceed. I thought we should come down on it from above quietly.

Scudder Griffing: There was a house down there where the stream crossed the road, and we assumed that the mountaineers lived there. Their name was Rossen - and I don't know how to spell it - but there were two big brothers that worked on the Skyline Drive as stone masons under me. I had to supervise them. One lived in a house right against this trail where Jackson crossed and the other one lived in a log cabin a short distance away right under the east side of Brown Gap. Well, when we parked the pickup opposite this house and got out of the car with axes, the mountaineer woman came out and let out a scream which could be heard all the way to Charlottesville, obviously warning the men something was coming.

Scudder Griffing: Well, we rushed in from below through the bushes to the site of the mash; and sure enough the still was set up and working. I didn't feel exactly comfortable; I don't know how the others felt. Anyway, Taylor said, "You stand here. You stand guard." So, I had my hands in the pocket of my hunting coat on the revolver and stood backed up to an apple tree while Taylor and Bill Frey and possibly the forestry foreman went to work cutting mash barrels. They cut several staves in each barrel and all the mash ran out. We took the - we took the still itself, made of copper, and a couple of jars - they were malted milk jars if I remember - holding about a gallon; and the material, which looked like kerosene, was flowing out of the still into these jars. Took these along for evidence, you might say, with some of the liquor in them, and left the site. Nobody was seen. Nobody bothered us.

Scudder Griffing: We got in the pickup and returned, and I took a small portion of this bootleg liquor, which was made from corn, home with me; and my wife, Mildred, later put it in a jigger and put it in the middle of fruit cake that

you make at Christmas time and put the cover on it and it would evaporate or would transpire - be absorbed into the fruit cake and give it quite a tang. And when you drank this straight, it burned all the way down and I didn't drink very much of it. (Evison chuckling)

Scudder Griffing: So that ended the experience with the bootleggers; however, these two brothers were still on my job, and I passed them many times when they were working with stone hammers close enough to knock me off. They were about six foot six and 210 pounds and I never felt comfortable; and when I went past the house flagging the trail, I always had one hand on my abney level, sighting the trail, and the other on my confiscated .38 caliber revolver which I never had to use. (Laughs and Evison chuckles)

Herbert Evison: Oh, that's beautiful stuff! Now you mentioned that you were going to list all the different things, kinds of duties. I judge that by now you have mentioned most of them.

Scudder Griffing: I have mentioned most of them; however, we had - the foremen were all supposed to go on fire duty whenever the fire season began. We had fire towers which C.C.C. constructed. The foresters had charge of manning the towers and locating the fires with their alidades and we had several of these towers; one at Turk Mountain, one at High Top in the south end, and several of these where men would be posted all during the fire season. And at this time the foremen, whether they were landscape foremen or forestry foremen, would be assigned their duty to the camps on the mountains and take their turns on duty. I never, as I said before, had to stay in a camp but we had a bad fire down south of Stanley about seven miles from Luray in April and I was sent to the mountain to help. At this time Senator Byrd—

Herbert Evison: —Senator Harry F. Byrd.

Scudder Griffing: Senator Harry F. Byrd had a - who had had a cabin at Skyland, was then staying in a cabin or in the lodge at Big Meadows, where I was going to be assigned to man telephones during this firefighting period. I even went out on the line with the fire fighters.

Scudder Griffing: Senator Byrd had two dogs - a very large dog the size of a mastiff and a small dog, a Cocker spaniel, I believe: and both dogs had gotten into some mice poison at Big Meadows Lodge somehow or other and they had come to the Big Meadows Station along the road right at the elevation 3500 where we had the telephones set up, at which time Edward Freeland was the superintendent and Peachy Menafee was his (Byrd's) secretary. He came from Luray, Virginia, and had been with Mr. Byrd a long while; he came down crying for help.

Scudder Griffing: Well, the only thing I could think of was to get something to make the dogs throw up the poison and we found some mustard bottles - bottles of mustard on the shelf in the station which were used in the summer time -

and we sent these up and it was given to both dogs, and at least the larger dog was saved and I cannot remember about the smaller dog, but the fire was going on all this time.

Scudder Griffing: I went out on the line to the East, and it was very dry, and the wind would come up and the fire would just go booming through the tops of the trees like thunder. I carried a backpack pump and a brush-axe, as the rest of us did, and went out on this ridge trail and tried to stop the fire or head it off by beating the flames and pumping what water we could on the flames.

Scudder Griffing: We finally had to withdraw, as the fire would jump from one place to another just with the heat generated or falling embers from any other fire. This was my only assignment on the mountains to fight a fire - which was interesting but very rugged, hot work, and of course, it was dangerous, because if you got caught in around by the fire and isolated, you were in a very serious position to get out, although I don't remember that anybody was ever lost.

Scudder Griffing: When we had to find the positions for these shelters which we built about - the open ones - eight miles apart, I would go out through the woods, have my United States Geological Survey quadrangles with me for the whole 30 miles and start through the woods to pick out a site where there was suitable water, a suitable site for the cabin, with nice protection and sometimes a view; and having located one of these we would then turn it over to the C. C. camp involved. They would build the shelter under my supervision or another landscape architect's supervision. They would build a fireplace and a little privy in the back; and they were very beautiful shelters; all made from local chestnut which had been killed by the chestnut blight.

Herbert Evison: Were these at intervals along the Appalachian Trail?

Scudder Griffing: These were at intervals along the Appalachian Trail, generally on an off-shoot trail; and then we had closed shelters every, I think, 12 miles one - in one of which I spent one night with Superintendent Lassiter, Harvey P. Benson, and - who was the chief landscape architect? - Thomas C. Vint.

Herbert Evison: Oh.

Scudder Griffing: We spent one night in one of these shelters in the south end. This was a locked shelter, and it could keep about eight people, which was too many for the size of it, but we had double bunk beds. It was a very comfortable place to stay. One of these shelters I located at a pool across which we dropped a log across the stream before which we dropped the log to get entrance to it and had the C.C. boys adz off the top; and from this adzed log you could dive directly into this pool in which there were trout, either local or trout which had been introduced. I don't know which. So sometimes we'd take a swim in the summertime right from this log, which I'm sure many people following the trails did later. I located one trail

down through the south end of the park, which had to go over a big gap in the rock with a drop of some 50 feet or so. We dropped a log across this and the trail proceeded with just a handrail, across this open chasm, which made at least an interesting place to go.

Herbert Evison: Did you adz that off, too?

Scudder Griffing: That was adzed off level, roughly, so that you could keep your feet on the log without much danger of falling down into the quartzite cliffs below. I had several experiences with rattle snakes. I killed 13 in the total time I was in Shenandoah, - some seven years. I never ran on one in the woods at any time and so all of them were either on the Drive, which was under construction, or in a parking overlook or on a trail.

Scudder Griffing: I have 13 rattles - or I brought 13 rattles with me to show that I had got these. I usually killed them with a jake staff which I used to hold by abney level when sighting trail. And as far as I know, I never was struck at by a rattler, but I wouldn't know, because sometimes you couldn't see your feet; you couldn't see from the waist down.

Scudder Griffing: We all wore boots for protection although a snake could strike through if your leg were against the side or through the shoe¹. And I remember one day with one of the foresters, - we went up to Thornton Gap to measure one of the biggest hemlocks in the park. We had to go down the east side below the tunnel at Mary's Rock, and we went down there the first thing in the morning with our tape and our instruments and measured the circumference of the tree and took angles to the top from a level position so we could determine its height.

Scudder Griffing: I was with Lennart Berg, a forestry foreman, and on the way up we had to climb the cliffs and I had two hands on the cliff above me and when I got my eyes level with the cliff here was a coiled rattler within four inches or so of my face.

Scudder Griffing: Well, I was literally scared to death, of course, and I know I turned white. I couldn't speak. I had my jake staff in my hand and I knew I had to be cool so I just, slowly as I could, dropped my weight away back to the point from which I had started lifting myself there, recovering to a degree; whereupon I went around the place and got up above on the cliff and killed this rattler which was still cold and trying to get warm in the sun. This is my only instance in coming that close and of course if I had been struck in the face nothing could have been done for me because you can't put a tourniquet around your face.

¹ Supplementary note by S. G., 9/29/78; if the boot is slack with space between the leg and leather, a strike may not penetrate to the leg because the movement of the slack leather toward the leg takes up part of the thrust.

- Scudder Griffing: In one other instance I sat with a group of BPR engineers one noontime eating our lunch. Sat on a pile of brush, some of us - some sitting on tree stumps - for our half-hour lunch period, during which time we kept hearing this rattler and we couldn't locate it. Finally, when I got up off the brush pile a rattler came out and my sitting there had squeezed him in the branches so that he couldn't get out. When I got up, he came out.
- Scudder Griffing: Well, this was close, but it still didn't strike me; and one other instance - on the way out of the mountains through the sides of the mountain and not down a trail, some C.C. boys had found a rattler. By the time I got there they had the rattler partly skinned and had taken out three or four partly digested rabbits, one of which was almost six inches long. Later one of these boys on this crew had caught a rattler and was holding it in his left hand and sawing chestnut logs with his right and as you can see your shoulder will move forward and back and then your other hand tends to move toward the saw. The hand with the rattler in it got close enough to the saw in the hand so that he was struck.
- Scudder Griffing: I don't think he lost any part of his hand; however, one of our ranger-naturalists did. He was fooling with a snake one time, and it struck, I think, his thumb. I can't remember his name; he lost his thumb. I had experience with only two copperheads. They were much more retiring and, of course, had no rattles to give warning. We were on a picnic one time down in South River, a group of us including Bob Moore and his wife and all our wives, Chet Brown and his wife, Ernie, who now, I believe, lives in Washington, and maybe a dozen others. I brought up the rear and Mildred was ahead of me, and I happened to note on my right hand where the trail went here was a coiled copperhead right at the level of the swinging hand.
- Scudder Griffing: Well, we killed this snake and that's the only copperhead that I ever came in such close contact with. However, in the south end one day in March we had a shovel digging through a talus slope, which is loose stone which had been splintered off by eons from the mountain by freezing and thawing and by the heat of the sun. The shovel was working through this loose talus and when he went to dump one shovelful, I noticed a whole load of snakes came out with it and they had run into a snake den where the snakes congregate. There must have been - I don't know how many, but 20 or 30 must have dripped out of the bucket; and they were very sluggish, it still being March and they weren't out, but this is a direct example of what can happen. You could walk into a den like this or near the mouth of it when it would be warmer and the snakes would be out, and you might find yourself in a hazardous position.
- Scudder Griffing: Right near this place there was a beautiful little log cabin in which a mountaineer lived with about ten children and his wife. He had some hogs, a cow; there was a spring nearby. There were some chestnuts left and wild raspberries or strawberries and chinquapins and some things that could be

used for food to live upon; and they had a boy about 12 or 14 years old. And one day I was on the top of the mountain there with my pickup in a field - not in a trail or a road - but out in the grass and in what would be called a bald in the Smokies but a deadening in Shenandoah, where the trees had been killed off long since and removed and covered with grass, where the mountaineers grazed whatever cattle they had.

Scudder Griffing: I got up on top this mountain and couldn't be sure of my precise location, although I had my map; and this boy came from the cabin and came up; and I was in the neighborhood of Ivy Creek at which later the Park Service built a development. I asked him if I was right and so forth and so he very nicely showed me around some of the local places. Later, he picked for me a shoe box full of wild mountain raspberries and I remember offering him a quarter for these and he said, "No sir. No, I thank you. I do not care for it." Now these people, some of them, spoke practically Elizabethan English and had come presumably from Jamestown long years since and this family was remains of probably some of these who came up at the time. This boy had seen railroad trains down at Elkton on the track but had never been to one and never left the mountain at all. His father had; and he was later put in jail for knocking another man's head with stones, which I can tell later after we finish with this part of the tape.

[END OF SIDE 1 OF TAPE #131]

[START OF SIDE 2 OF TAPE #131]

Herbert Evison: While we were chinning in between sides of this reel you mentioned several other incidents in your career at Shenandoah that I think we ought to get on here. One that I think of immediately is your effort to ride trail on motorcycle.

Scudder Griffing: Well, I'll be glad to tell you about that, Herb. At the time Taylor Hoskins was still the chief ranger of the park and had got motorcycles for the rangers. Later these were dispensed with as one of our rangers was hurt very seriously skidding on the loose stone on Skyline Drive; but they were nice to get along with in a hurry and weave in and out around the cars. I had decided that if I could ride the motorcycle on a trail, it would save a lot of time for me and allow me much more time to supervise than driving in in my pickup and having to walk three or four miles to get to the site where work was being done.

Scudder Griffing: So, I asked Taylor if he would instruct me on the Harley-Davidson which he very graciously did and saw that I was able to ride. I had ridden one time before and knew how to ride a bicycle, so I took off from Luray one morning with my map, lunch, and thermos bottle for the south end some 55 miles away, and I was working out of Turk Gap on the Appalachian Trail itself, if I remember correctly: a relocated portion of it. The crew was in there, having started from the camp at Grottoes.

Scudder Griffing: I didn't have any difficulty getting into the Cremora Mine area, which was an abandoned manganese mine with a lake around it where they washed the ore. But from this point on up the trail was as steep as 20 to 25 percent of grade; and I started up this one-way road right along a drop of several hundred feet into the valley. I got my front wheel in a different rut from my rear wheel, and I couldn't continue in this manner, so stopped the machine and got off and very laboriously was able to turn the machine around and get back down to the mine, realizing that I could not go through these ruts with the machine; and there was no way to stay out of them as during the rain storms several would be cut by the pickup wheels.

Scudder Griffing: So, I got back to the level area and started out from the mine back to Luray; and I ran into a hard rainstorm in the vicinity of Port Republic and the raindrops struck just like hail. I had no protection for my face, and I don't even remember whether I had goggles. In any case I got back to Luray unscathed and gave the Harley-Davidson back to Taylor with my thanks. I didn't try to ride the trail any longer or again with a motorcycle.

Scudder Griffing: My wife was going to have a baby in May of 1937 and the nearest hospital was in Harrisonburg, Virginia. We had to go from Luray over the Massanutten Mountains on the west through New Market and then up the Shenandoah Valley to Harrisonburg, where her doctor was. I was on the mountain and in the north section some place, working. Most everybody in the Service knew the situation and the call went out for me to come; that Mildred had to go to the hospital.

Scudder Griffing: So, I came down the mountain immediately in my boots and ready to go; and Mildred had the car all ready herself, and she volunteered to take the wheel while I got in the back seat and got out of my boots and breeches and put some decent clothes on to wear going into the hospital. So, I can well remember driving - her driving through the blossoming dogwoods on the side of the Massanutten Mountain while I was in the rear seat pulling off my boots and changing clothes. Well, we safely got to Harrisonburg where our first daughter Barbara was delivered shortly thereafter. I can't even remember whether it was that day or sometime later; but this I will always remember that my wife drove to her own delivery.

Herbert Evison: (chuckles) Some accouchement!

Scudder Griffing: Yes. There was an instance with Taylor Hoskins, second hand to me - I don't know whether he has recorded it, but I believe it was Taylor. When the mountain people were being moved out of the mountain we had places, the name of which I can't remember², built for them. They were given four or five acres and a little house and a barn. What was the name of those?

Herbert Evison: Well, they were subsistence homesteads, I think probably.

² Resettlement areas.

- Scudder Griffing: Yes. That's what it was. Anyway, these people - some of them were moved to those if they were available. And Taylor was on the mountain one time talking to one of the people up there - one of the old men who had been there his whole life time - and a very clear day at some 3000 feet elevation or more; and he asked this mountaineer what were the boundaries of his land and the mountaineer just took off his hat and took his arm and swung it all the way around the horizon and said, "Just as 'fur' as you can see." I figured that he must have been able to see some ten or 15,000 square miles over into West Virginia and all the way down to Washington. I don't know whether it's known that from Windham Rock, in the north end of Shenandoah, on a clear day the Washington Monument could very easily be seen with binoculars.
- Herbert Evison: Is that so. I never realized that. That's a 'fur' piece, too.
- Scudder Griffing: That certainly is a 'fur' piece.
- Herbert Evison: Do you think of any other incidents or anecdotes of Taylor Hoskins? Whom incidentally I taped several months ago up in his office at Shenandoah and who just retired as you may know.
- Scudder Griffing: I remember one which Taylor retold. He had gone up, again, to remove some mountaineer, - in this case a woman, or wife, and whatever belongings they had, and it was up in the central portion of the park, I believe, some place south of Thornton Gap and the old lady had a setting hen. And Taylor was very diplomatic with all of these people - and everybody else for that matter - and he had a way of being able to induce people to do whatever was required to be done. And finally, the old lady said if he would take along the setting hen and the eggs that they would go. So, Taylor went off with the people in his pickup, - with the old lady and the old man and the setting hen. (Both chuckle)
- Scudder Griffing: We would go to Skyland to Mr. Pollock's dances when we first were there, drive up the mountain, up the mountain road to Thornton Gap then go through the tunnel to Skyland and it was there that I had heard that Mr. Pollock used to serve broiled or fried rattlesnake meat, none of which I ever ate or was willing to as long as I could get something else to eat. We enjoyed these dances.
- Scudder Griffing: We also went to the mountain at times to ski on the sides of the hills and the mountains in Thornton Gap and had many good times and picnics. And in Luray, when it would get especially hot, we found that we could drive out east up the mountain road and soon as we had arrived about 22 or 2300 feet, we were - would find the temperature distinctly ten or 12 degrees cooler. So, when the heat was excessive, we would always repair to the mountain with our suppers and many times we did - all of us in the Park Service - to just get relief of the heat that built up between the Blue Ridge and the Massanutten Mountain.

- Scudder Griffing: In the mountains we had very severe storms and I have seen, in just a few minutes, a thunderhead build up and then break. Skyline Drive, which was then under construction, became a wash. Hail would come down; the streams would fill. And one time I was in Big Run, which drained a great area, several hundred or thousands of acres, as it had branches. I was at the site of a bridge put in there, which had a pier in the middle made of stone and concrete and was there when the thunderstorm had occurred on the upper part of the run and in short order down the mountain came rushing waters from all these branches and came tearing under the bridge almost 14 feet deep, rolling boulders half the size of pianos coming down this steep stream. It would come just as quick as that and if you were at a trail alongside you could easily be swept into the stream. So, we quickly learned to stay away.
- Scudder Griffing: Of course, the mountain wasn't as well covered then with nice timber as it is now and when I first went there, I didn't ever see a deer or bear, but later on I saw deer; and I saw bear tracks, but I didn't ever see a bear. I tracked one several miles one day and a cub along the Drive and through gap to gap but I never did see one.
- Scudder Griffing: Now, and since I have been back, I have taken pictures of deer quite close at Elk Wallow Gap just north of Thornton Gap; and the game has recovered; and it is a wonderful thing to see what was partly barren and burned for the blueberry pickers and the mountain people, recover itself and the streams get back to near their pristine condition. It was a wonderful thing that the C. C. boys did clearing the mountains and stopping the fires and pulling out the gooseberries and the currants, which were the hosts for the white pine blister rust. No one can imagine what the change was unless he was there to see it and to live through it and then go back; and it is a wonderful thing. It is also one thing to watch, to drive along the road at 30 or 45 miles an hour, on a road on which all turns are banked like the shape of a propeller blade, while you ride in a hammock. And another thing – to go back and walk through that mountain in the beginning on the side of a slope and help lay out the road and then go through the trouble of building it. It really is a marvelous thing.
- Scudder Griffing: I don't remember now much more about things you might want me to say about Shenandoah. If you have something you can think of you want me to say I will before we go to my transfer.
- Herbert Evison: Well, you spoke of this heart attack that Lassiter had during this conference of—
- Scudder Griffing: —Yes.
- Herbert Evison: I don't remember just when it was that Lassiter died. Was it as a result of that attack or did he die later?

Scudder Griffing: No, he died much later, - I don't know whether it was a period of months or years. But the heart attack occurred during a technical conference at Zion National Park at which I was fortunate enough to be present as I hadn't travelled West at all before this time; and this attack occurred one evening at the park. It must have been severe. There was no doctor there and I drove to St. George, the nearest town, to go to a drug store to get some medicine to relieve his pain and trouble until something else could be done for him. I just cannot remember the year, but it was before 1954.

Herbert Evison: Yes. Now you were transferred from your position at Shenandoah; and what was your position there at the time you transferred to Richmond?

Scudder Griffing: My position when I transferred from Shenandoah National Park to the Region One Office in Richmond was entitled assistant landscape architect, which title had been given to me some six months after I first arrived. There were several small raises in salary; and when I first went there, I got something under \$150 a month and there was a reduction due to President Roosevelt's regulating of the salaries in some of the departments. And of course, I was making more money as an assistant.

Scudder Griffing: We weren't rich, but I can remember paying five cents a quart for milk and I have a bill now that I can show where we got 30 quarts of buttermilk for 30 cents delivered to our back door in Luray. And when filet mignon would be 35 cents, a loaf of bread 5 cents, and other things all in proportion, yet we didn't then look upon it as a hardship and probably now wouldn't, as we got as much then for our money as we do for much more money now.

Scudder Griffing: I had the opportunity when war broke out to go in the service. I had a reserve commission as a second lieutenant in the anti-aircraft regiment of the Coast Artillery Corps. I was anxious to do whatever I should be able to do, and I had been registered in the draft, but my commission had run out in 1939 and this was in '42. So, I tried to get my commission back and even went to Washington and had a couple of generals, whom I had met in Luray through friends, write personal notes for me. In every instance I would get a letter back from my Second Corps area in Wall Street, New York, saying that they thanked me for my offer of my services, but under the circumstances could not appoint me at this time, therefore I would have to wait or be drafted. I tried this again and was unsuccessful. I also went down to Edenton, North Carolina, at one instance, planning to go to work on a Marine air strip and station they were building there, to use my services and knowledge of grading to help out. I went down with a local man from Luray who was also working there or going to work and when I got there, I found that a landscape architect from North Carolina had got there ahead of me and had the position which I was planning to take. I even had a place to board and so forth, so I went back to Luray. Well, at this point Edward Freeland was still in Luray and a man named Edwards had succeeded him.

Herbert Evison: Guy Edwards.

Scudder Griffing: Guy Edwards was there before, under whom I also served. I was shifted to the Region One Office in Richmond, Virginia, in October of 1942. A great many of the personnel had left or were leaving and at this time Herb Evison was there as an assistant (associate-H.E.) regional director and I believe Fred Johnson was there. I'm not sure about this.

Herbert Evison: No, I didn't get back there until 1943 - October.

Scudder Griffing: '43. Well, I guess it was Fred Johnson, then O. G. Taylor, were both there for part of the time I was there. And the office shortly was condensed. I wasn't called into service. Many of the men went and we had the office then in the Third Street Bank Building, and I went to work as usual on master plans, road system plans for the parks. We had charge of all the parks East of the Mississippi River except Michigan at that time. That was Region One, later divided. I took every sort of a duty that I could take over as people dropped out or went into the war effort.

Scudder Griffing: In the meantime, my wife had become ill the December after the October we arrived and had to go to the hospital for some seven months and I was left with my two daughters - the second of whom, Mary, was also born in Harrisonburg. These children were only - the oldest was only three years old. So, I was not drafted, and I then decided I would not try to go in the service. I had my work cut out for me and I was always just a step ahead of the age group in the draft and was fortunate in not having to go.

Scudder Griffing: Well, the staff got down to just a few people, - administrative people, and a few engineers, a couple of landscape architects, and I had all sorts of duties to perform.

Scudder Griffing: I ran the blueprint division, I had charge of the files, (plan-files) the photostat work; I was put in charge of the project construction program - whatever was left of it - and I finally was given the job to design a bridge, - a real bridge over which a highway went; and I had no training in bridge construction or design or anything. I had been in heavy construction of the roads, of course, but Ralph Emerson, who was then the regional landscape architect; said we had to design this bridge on Colonial Parkway which ran between Williamsburg and Yorktown which later was extended to Jamestown. This road was to go over this bridge which had to be designed. It was a defense access route to Norfolk.

Scudder Griffing: I cannot recall the number of the road. The Bureau of Public Roads and the National Park Service had to work this out together and I was given the job of designing the bridge. Also, the federal-aid division of Public Roads was involved, making two Public Roads offices and the National Park Service and the Navy who had charge of the parkway at the time over which they ran buses between Fenniman Annex and the Marine Barracks

and all the areas where they had their mine depot. So, we had all these people to deal with.

Scudder Griffing: Well, I had the bridge to deal with and looked at some of the ones already constructed out of hand-made brick. Got the old plans out from which these bridges had been built and went to work making preliminary sketches; and I would make these, and they would be cleared in the office, and they would go to Public Roads, and they would check them and if they were all right, they would proceed. Well, we got the preliminaries all done.

Scudder Griffing: This was in '45, '46, and finally got to the final stages on the drawings of the bridges and they were put in shape to go out to contract and they were let to contract - the plans and specifications, that is, the bridge went to contract. Camp Perry, where the Seabees were trained, was right nearby this area. And the bridge job was the hardest design job I ever did in my life not having had any training or experience in it; but it was finally done, and Emerson did one part of one drawing while I was finishing the drawings in ink.

Scudder Griffing: Every brick was drawn, and everything was on and so far, as I knew, there were no errors in the work. The bridge had to be built on a grade and on a skew and also, we had to have a curve in the guard walls to make them look like they were straight although they were not straight and level. And you call it parabolic camber (entesis) in a column and in a bridge, we had another term for it. I can't recall exactly now what it was, but we built this curve into the bridge. It turned out to be a very beautiful structure and I had to drive down from Richmond to supervise the appearances and the brick work; and the engineer took care of the guts of the structure - the steel and the concrete.

Scudder Griffing: Even as careful as they were in the work, this bridge, which spanned a three-lane road on the Colonial Parkway had to be held with false work - great big timbers and so forth - and we poured the concrete against the brick work which was first done in the arch and in the spandrel and on both the upper and lower sides; and on the upper sides, strange to say, some of the false work shifted and the concrete fluid pushed the bricks somewhat out of alignment against which the concrete had to harden.

Scudder Griffing: Well, this very severe problem - although it was only a matter of half an inch - threw a vertical plane out of the vertical against a battered line and I was very disappointed in this; and the only thing we could figure out to do, inasmuch as the bridge had to be used for defense work, was to have the contractor use emery wheels and grind down this to a facet which was not in the same plane, of course, with the other.

Scudder Griffing: Otherwise, the bridge went through perfectly to construction. I had made all the grading plans and had taken the pains to look forward to build another bridge parallel to it so, if and when it was required, it could be

built. It was already sketched out and the grade and everything worked out for it. However, a second bridge was later built but the Park Service had decided they should separate the two bridges further than we had them at the time and they built the second bridge a good many feet away instead of just a few feet away and I have - this bridge was written up in the Engineering News Record. I have that sheet torn out of 1946. I also have photographs taken at the time. I also have photographs in color which I have made within the last few years. When I go down there, I have taken these pictures just to show that I had built a bridge. (Evison chuckling)

Scudder Griffing: While I was in the Regional Office, the Navy personnel was using the Colonial Parkway between Camp Perry and their several areas of mine depots and where they fueled the aircraft carriers; the buses would carry the personnel back and forth and the planting had grown right up to the concrete on both sides of the parkway, and nobody seemed to know what to do.

Scudder Griffing: Pinky Harrington was then superintendent at Colonial and O. G. Taylor was the Regional Director; and something had to be done. I was assigned the task of going down there and opening up the plantings so that we wouldn't have this wall of foliage on both sides that the buses and trucks had clipped. Mostly buses. I believe Elbert Cox was in the Navy down there at the time, but I don't remember. I didn't know him then.

Scudder Griffing: Anyway, I went down there and with Pinky Harrington went into the commanding officer's headquarters where during this war it seemed strange to me - solid silver service brought out for us, and a beautiful secretary to the commanding officer came in and set this down on a beautiful table in a room where there were nice rugs and nice furniture on the floor, - which I looked at in astonishment. We were served coffee while we talked about this work that had to be done. The commanding officer said that he would see that the Marine Barracks there detailed a group of prisoners for me, to do the pruning and sawing - whatever needed to be done to clear this out. Well, it was 12 miles long, I believe. It made a long distance if you took in both sides.

Scudder Griffing: Well, I was finally given a crew and I arrived to supervise these people and we had a sergeant in command, with their sawed-off shotguns and rifles and .45's on their belts; and some of these men were in for murder and had all different kinds of crimes and I began to feel a little uncomfortable, as I had back in the mountains when I had been at the destruction of a still. However, I asked the sergeant to put his men at ease and gave them the instructions - told them I would be there that they would have pruning shears and saws and axes, and what the job was, and I knew they could do it and I would be of whatever assistance I could; and there was no trouble with any of them whatever.

Scudder Griffing: I seem to remember that a few calls were made of one kind or another about doing landscape work while the war was going on or whatever it

was, but they soon saw that it was doing some good so that we didn't have any trouble; and a great many bushes and plants were removed or pruned or cut back so that it looked more like a parkway than just like a burrow or a wall through the trees.

Scudder Griffing: I didn't stay there. I visited the job periodically and would go there with Pinky Harrington to inspect the work. This was the sort of thing that we had to do. As soon as the war was over, the men started coming back to the office; but in the meantime, we had been put into the Mosque and at that place we had to share some of the space with other branches and we also moved to a tobacco warehouse.

Herbert Evison: It was first the Grace Securities Building.

Scudder Griffing: That's the first one.

Herbert Evison: Then that basement office which the Reynolds Metals Company also bought out from under us. We had to go then to the Mosque.

Scudder Griffing: Then the Mosque. Then to the old tobacco warehouse.

Herbert Evison: Then the old tobacco warehouse, where they stayed for years and years and years.

Scudder Griffing: When we moved there, we had the whole floors or whatever it was there; and then the Office of Naval Officer Procurement needed space, so the government allocated them half our space. So, some diagonal lines were drawn across the areas and we moved our things out and the Navy moved in, and we shared the same space although they were doing different duties.

Scudder Griffing: And I well remember two things there while I was there. One was that there was a good-looking WAVE there that we would sometimes see - a blonde girl, who later came down with mumps; and sometime after that I came down with mumps myself and I had told my wife about this girl and had at that time a secretary and they all made fun of my catching mumps from the water fountain. (laughs) Well, I got the mumps and 21 days after I got it, my older daughter, and 21 days after that - I believe that's the incubation period - my younger daughter had it.

Scudder Griffing: I had another instance there. This one isn't funny. We had all of the security plans for El Morro at Puerto Rico where the Caribbean Command headquarters were. Since it was a Park Service area, we were jointly responsible with Army, which was in command there of the area. So, they had these plans sent up to the Region and instead of putting them in a drawer where I had charge of the plan files where everybody could go and look, I put them in some unobvious place where no one would be expected to look but me; and they were there. And also, we had the security plans for the Franklin Delano Roosevelt home in Hyde Park where they had double rows of barbed wire, telephones every four feet, and a Marine

every so many feet. These plans also we had and, in the region, and these were alike under my charge.

Herbert Evison: With no real secure place to—

Scudder Griffing: —There wasn't. If there were a secure place, somebody would go to that to look for them, but he wouldn't think of going to some obvious place where you could just lay your hands on them under some papers someplace and that's where they stayed all during the war. Let's see.

Herbert Evison: Again, Scudder, while we had this off you mentioned that you recollected two incidents in which Newton B. Drury figured and let's get those on the tape.

Scudder Griffing: Well, I heard these from Newton B. Drury directly. I had a great deal of respect for Mr. Drury in his stand on all of the conservation matters and we were having a party at the Mosque in the ballroom at which time, I think, both of these things were spoken by Mr. Drury, but I am not sure of that. In any case they were having a considerable trouble someplace in the Park Service and Mr. Drury had to handle the situation and no matter what he did it wouldn't be the right thing and I can remember his saying quite distinctly that he was in an untenable position from which he was unable to withdraw. And I have remembered it to this day. It's like the law that the Park Service started out with. We have to conserve, and we have to use and he was in the position the untenable position from which he was unable to withdraw.

Scudder Griffing: And the other one was, of course, a joke and has been heard by everybody in the Park Service, I suppose. I think it was - took place out at Yellowstone or perhaps Yosemite; anyway, this couple - cowboy couple - had arrived on their motorcycle - motorcycle cowboys - and pulled up to the headquarters where things should be going on and the girl astride on the back seat with his motor idling went over to the ranger and said, "Where's the baseball diamond." And the ranger said, "We don't have any baseball diamonds. We don't have that sort of thing here." He said, "Well where's the racetrack?" He said, "We don't have any racetrack here. This is a national park, and we are conserving the scenery and we don't have anything of that sort." And he looked up at the ranger finally, says, "Well what the hell do they do here? Look at the scenery?" Have you heard that one?

Herbert Evison: (chuckles) You were telling me a while ago - and I don't think it was on the tape - about your overload of work there in the regional office and your coming up here without having made up your mind really whether you were going to go back to the regional office or not, but your final decision just to stay up here. Now this was when? In 1954?

Scudder Griffing: That was in 1954. By that time all the men returning from the services and so forth were back in their positions. In the meantime, I was doing part of

the work of many of them, including my own, and I had been given the position of chief of the programming section which handled all the project construction programs, the priority lists; I also had charge of the plans files and the blueprinting; and all the plans and specifications which would come into the office first crossed my desk. All the technical mail for engineering, architecture, and landscape architecture would come across my desk for routing to what was formerly the regional landscape architect and now to the chief of planning and construction (I think they first called it) and then later maybe design and construction. And I believe Stan Abbott was first to take this and then Ed Zimmer took this position later. And it was in 1954 when Elbert Cox was regional director that I began to find out I had a greater load than I could carry mentally and physically and something had to give and I got myself more nervous with my duties and so forth, until I really couldn't efficiently do what I was supposed to do, and I couldn't see any way out.

Scudder Griffing: I had had no help at all except a secretary, Esther Rosen, who had been assigned to me during the war and she was a very efficient person, now recently retired. She was able to do more work and better work than any secretary I ever saw; and I remember, before I left, that I had recommended her for a meritorious raise among all the stenographers; and the regional director arranged that it be given to her, and I was very glad to see her get this.

Scudder Griffing: Now I had decided that, rather than be shifted some other place in the Park Service or go to the field or take on some other duty, I would just take my sick leave and my annual leave and just resign, but I came back to here, to my home on Shelter Island, where my brother was doing some farming, raising lima beans, and also was in the real estate and insurance business. He had been trying for several years to get me to come and take over some of this work that he couldn't handle all himself because he was also in politics and had been made the supervisor of the Island or was to be shortly after and would I come up and help.

Scudder Griffing: So, I thought, well, this is my chance to get out of what was becoming a rat race to me. So, I had permission to leave on my leave and came up here and went to work raising lima beans with my brother the summer of '54. I came up in May and my wife had had an operation shortly after that - or before that. She had to remain in Richmond. I brought my daughters up so they wouldn't be any care there and came up to see about changing my course of life and I also, at the end of the summer from raising lima beans went into the real estate work, which my brother was glad to drop with his political assignment. And I took this up with my older sister, Barbara, who had gone into the real estate business with my brother in 1946. And ever since that time I have been in the real estate business. I finally decided in October of '54 when my leave ran out to resign; even against the advice - which probably would have turned out to be good advice - of Elbert Cox and others, who would have been glad for me to come or do anything to

help me in any other part of the Service. Anyway, I resigned, and I foolishly took out my funds in the Service, which weren't great but which I needed here, 'cause I came here to start from scratch with a wife and two children, so I took it out. I had six months to go before I would have been frozen in the Civil Service. So, I took my money out and have since wished I had left it in. And I also, many a time, have wished that I had remained in the Service, because my heart and whole system was in it from the start. I couldn't think that I said "we" when they say National Park Service, just as if I were still there.

Herbert Evison: Yes.

Scudder Griffing: I went into real estate business, not to develop property in a big manner at all, but just to be an agent to sell other people's land or houses and that is all; and handle rentals and appraisals and that sort of thing. In '55 or '56 they started a planning board here and I was appointed the first chairman; and that gave me an opportunity to use my training and experience. And that same year I was put on the Suffolk County Planning Board of which I later became vice-chairman; so, I was on two planning boards at the same time from which I drew no funds whatever; and I put in four years on the local planning board, five on the county planning board when my term ran out.

Scudder Griffing: I didn't accept another term on the local planning board because most of the things that the planning board would recommend the town board would not pay much attention to. And when my term ran out on the county planning board, we were in a similar position in which we had ten towns, ten supervisors, and several local planning boards. We were able to make some headway in planning and zoning and sub-divisions and so forth; but I didn't accept reappointment to this position which I could have had.

Scudder Griffing: We went to the executive form of government then and had a legislature elected by the populace and the head of the legislature who is elected by and from its members and an executive also was elected by the legislature, but the county executive of the legislature government was elected by the county itself - the people and not by the legislature. Well, the planning board then became a planning commission and had an equivalent number of members, and I didn't take this position either although I could have had it.

Scudder Griffing: In 1966, I was put on as a member of the Fire Island National Seashore Advisory Commission and I am still a member of this. The reappointments come from the Secretary of the Interior on nomination here at the local level every two years, and our first appointment we went to Washington where we went to the secretary's office and where the meeting was held; and at that time a member - one of our members - was Dr. Robert Cushman Murphy, whom I know quite well and, of course, he is world-known authority and a crackerjack mind.

- Scudder Griffing: I have enjoyed that work very much and have brought my experiences in the Park Service to bear on problems there. We expect possibly to have Fire Island dedicated this year and then our advisory commission will automatically be phased out unless Congress passes a bill to make another one; and I understand this happens to all the advisory commissions or at least most of them. In any case, it does with Fire Island.
- Herbert Evison: I didn't realize that. I thought that these advisory commissions were something permanent to be a link between the Park Service, its local administrative and development organization and the community's—
- Scudder Griffing: Well, Herb, I'm sure there are, and I know there are some advisory commissions in some of the parks which are permanent. But it was written in the Seashore Act - in this one - that our duties would finish when the area became dedicated. I don't know why it was done that way. Several of the members have spoken about having a new commission appointed and appointing those of us with experience back on the board again; but some of it is becoming political and some members change instead of leaving a man there to use his experience and know-how; as a political situation changes in different towns, they tend to change the member from that town, but I've been fortunate. I don't say the town has or the seashore has, but to stay on the commission continuously from the beginning. There are only two other members on the commission who have been there since the beginning - the member from Southhold Town and the member from Riverhead Town - which gives us as a group an understanding the others can't immediately get and helps us keep some continuity to our work.
- Herbert Evison: Yeah. Well, I take it that even though you have occasional regrets about having left the Park Service, you've enjoyed being back up here on Shelter Island with the various interests - paid and unpaid.
- Scudder Griffing: Yes. I have and we finally - I had to rent a house when I first came here. It's a summer resort and no industry here and only a few houses to be had. So, we rented until we were able to buy a piece of land which my grandfather and great-grandfather had formerly owned and which I had to buy back because it was out of the family, and upon which we were finally able to build a house. We came here with two daughters and Barbara finished high school here and went to Randolph-Macon College for two years and then she transferred to the University of Michigan and got her degree where I did; then she went to teaching.
- Scudder Griffing: My younger daughter - by two years younger than Barbara - spent one year in school here and then one year in Friends Academy in Locust Valley, New York, from which she graduated with the last boarding class. She went to Stanford University and got her A. B. degree and then went to Harvard University and got her Master's in teaching. Both daughters are married. Barbara is married to Warren Wagner and lives in Darien, Connecticut, and has three girls - ten, eight, and six months - and a little boy about five. And Mary is married to a lawyer - Cornell and Harvard

law - and lives in Lincoln, Massachusetts, and has a little boy five and a little boy a little over one year old. Her husband is a lawyer with Hale and Dorr. And Mary is very interested in conservation being right near Walden Pond, a few blocks from which she used to live when she was in Concord, and she is on all sorts of conservation committees and committees to stop the pollution of noise from planes flying out of Hanscom, - what was Hanscom Air Force Base.

Scudder Griffing: So, both of our children and grandchildren are within three- or four-hours' drive and we find this very convenient both to them and to us. I go hunting every year - deer hunting. I hunted deer down in Virginia and killed my first deer in the Massanutten Mountains. It may not sound like conservation to some people but if you understand deer, it will quickly be seen that that is what it is. And I hunted in Maine the last - I have hunted in Maine the last three years and I quite - incidentally, I bumped into Bob Gibbs and his wife up in Maine - in Dexter, Maine, where or outside there in Garland where they had bought a place and I was hunting and found out they lived there quite by accident and went and surprised Mary and Bob, both.

Herbert Evison: Yeah, and had a wonderful reunion, I'm sure.

Scudder Griffing: That's right.

Herbert Evison: They're a couple of the nicest people that I know.

Scudder Griffing: Yes. I worked with Bob, as I might have said earlier, a long time and enjoyed knowing both of them and meeting them again. I also as I told you earlier I - Elbert Cox and Liz called from Kingston, Rhode Island, and they're headed up the coast on a visit and they had once stopped by here, Shelter Island, to see us before. That brings my story pretty much up to date. I'm now 67 years old. My wife who has been teaching ever since we left Richmond - including Richmond in the kindergarten - finished her fifteenth year here and has retired and when I decide to retire, we don't yet know exactly what we will do.

Herbert Evison: Well, I have enjoyed every word of this account, Scudder. I'm certainly glad we were able to arrange it.

Scudder Griffing: Well, I thank you for the privilege and I hope that some of what I have said will bring fond memories back to some people and some of them will remember at least who I was. (Both chuckle)

Herbert Evison: I am sure they will!

Scudder Griffing: And thank you—

Herbert Evison: And thank you again.

Scudder Griffing: And thank you so much, Herb. It's been so nice to see you again after all these almost 30 years.

[END OF SIDE 2 OF TAPE #131]

[END OF INTERVIEW]