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Henry G. Schmidt
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(Tape #87 – Side 1)
H. G. Schmidt

EVISON INTERVIEW WITH HENRY G. SCHMIDT

(Tape #87 – Side 1)
H. G. Schmidt

DRAFT: 7/16/75

TYPIST: Charles Kennedy

[START OF INTERVIEW]

Herbert Evison: This is Wednesday the twenty-fifth of August 1971. I am Herb Evison and this afternoon I am in the conference room of the headquarters building of the Northeast Region of the National Park Service, a very wonderful headquarters incidentally inside of the pretty completely refitted old Philadelphia Exchange Building, and with me is Henry G. Schmidt, who is at what might be called a stage of transition right now. Just about to head for a new position in Phoenix, Arizona, which I am going to get him to tell something about in the course of the interview, but just leaving the Regional Directorship of the Northeast Region. Now Hank, let's start off by getting those basic facts about you, when and where you were born, something about the family you were born in to.

Henry Schmidt: Herb, I was born in Sheffield, Iowa, October 21st, 1910. I grew up there and lived in Sheffield until entering grammar school. My father was a hardware merchant and an implement dealer. He had a business in this small northeastern Iowa town and also worked as part of his business with the De Laval Separator Company. He had an opportunity to take over another dealership and later on become state sales manager for the De Laval Company and move to Waterloo, Iowa, when I was about seven years old.

Herbert Evison: That's the great separator company, isn't it?

Henry Schmidt: That's the great separator company, De Laval with headquarters in Poughkeepsie, New York.

Herbert Evison: Uh hmm.

Henry Schmidt: Later on, he became sales manager for seven middle western states and well I was a lad I used to travel with him to North and South Dakota, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Illinois, Missouri, and Iowa, and he did all of this out of Waterloo. I went through grade school and high school except for one year in Waterloo. Graduated from West High School and one year was the year that I spent at Roosevelt High in Des Moines, Iowa, while the family lived down there for one year. During this period of time that my mother become seriously ill; she's about forty-five years old and passed away, so we moved back to Waterloo. I went from there to uh couldn't make up my mind whether I wanted to go to college or not although my father wanted me to, but I got a job in the West Coast, Pacific National

Lumber Company through some friends of ours who were lumber dealers in the Mid-West. I worked at their Longmire plant which is just outside of Rainier National Park for a short period of time in the spring of the year and then went into the woods at Camp Six. This is above the incline right on the boundaries of Rainier National Park. My principal job was fire control. I had a Model T Ford, set it onto a railroad and hand car and buzz around the mountain looking for fires and putting out fires when they occurred. This was quite a job for me, entirely different than anything I had ever had. The trees that I looked at as a boy in the forests were mostly second growth in Minnesota and so forth, but a little bit of shock to me to see some of these great Sitka spruce and Douglas fir biting the dust up there in the logging camp. I worked there until the fall of the year and came home and decided to go to college. I matriculated at Iowa State University at Ames, Iowa, and spent little better than three and a half years at Ames; I spent about a year at the University of Arizona – never did get a degree because I could never make up my mind what I wanted to be.

Herbert Evison: ((chuckle))

Henry Schmidt: I had two and a half years of veterinary medicine and got a little bit fouled up with one of my courses. I was on a canoe trip to Saint James Bay in Canada one summer when I received word at home that I was to take a make up examination. Of course, I was gone, never even took the make up exam, so I transferred into engineering and worked at that, but as I say I never did get a degree, but I got an awful lot of good education and a lot of good experience working for the Highway Department of the state of Iowa. 1932 I went to Los Angeles to the Olympic Games and while out there the big catastrophe that kept many people uh struck the state of Iowa. The banks were going broke every day and it wiped my family out as far as finances were concerned, so I just decided to stay in the West. Started hiking for Portland, Oregon, where I had some kinfolk. I never got there. I stopped in Visalia, California. As I was hitchhiking, cars kept going past me on the Old Ridge Route in California. It was a very hot day. A man picked me up, a rather unusual man he was, he was in a limousine with a chauffeur and quite a striking looking individual. Had a patch over one eye and we rode on through the mountains into Bakersfield. He bought my lunch although I told him I wasn't hungry. He says: "I know you're hungry." He says: "You've been standing out on the road" and pretty soon he asked me: "Who I was?" He told me his name was Roy Walch. He was a director for Fox Movie Company, and they were at that time making a picture in Sequoia National Park. They changed the name of it a couple of times. I can't remember what the name of it was, but anyway I went up there and worked as a grunt on property for a while and worked as an extra.

Herbert Evison: Up where?

Henry Schmidt: In Sequoia National Park in Giant Forest. This was at the time when they had the old dance hall in Round Meadow and the old cabins up by Circle Meadow and so forth and part of my job as an extra was to ride shotgun on the stagecoach. It went down through Soldier's Grove and past the Parker Group and off in that direction and I supposed if I'd a stuck with it I might of been a movied actor because I had plenty of opportunities to work at it, but I liked the mountains very much and when they finished this picture I stayed in California, went to work for the J.C. Penney Company in Visalia. This was where in Visalia where I met my wife. She was secretary to the District Attorney in Tulare County at the time.

Herbert Evison: Yeah, well let's get the names—

Henry Schmidt: Her name—

Herbert Evison: —and dates.

Henry Schmidt: —is Marguerite Dunaway and I met her at the fall of 1932, and I decided that merchandising was a pretty good deal and was working on a commission for the Penney Company doing pretty well. This was of course during The Depression, but I guess I was doing too well because I was making more a month than the assistant manager was on a salary, and they kept cutting my commission until I finally got tired of that type of deal and quit! About a week after I quit, the Division Sales Manager for the Division Manager for the Penney Company come to Visalia looking for someone to take over the Assistant Manager's job in the Penney Store at Selma, California. The manager said: "Well I only have one man here with guts enough to do the job and that's uh he quit last week." Well, they got in touch with my girlfriend Marguerite, and she located me in some place in town. I was looking for another job and I did go to Selma. Worked as Assistant Manager of Penney Company store there for about seven months, but it was hard work. I was doing the ordering, the window trimming, sales work, everything that the manager should have been doing; but he spent most of the time in the hospital so, the burden fell on me.

Herbert Evison: ((chuckle))

Henry Schmidt: It was not very much help. I went from a hundred and sixty pounds to a hundred and eighteen pounds and got worried about myself and after a trip to the doctor, he said: "Young man," he said, "If you want to live very long, you get outside and stay outside, you've got no business working in this type of environment. You're spending too many hours working and not enough recreation." So, I went into San Francisco and applied for a job with the Bureau of Public Roads and was assigned back to Sequoia

National Park to run the L line and P Line on the general highway. This was really my second outing in Sequoia National Park, and I liked it very much. I worked for the Bureau of Public Roads there for about from 1933 into mid 1934 but during the wintertime I didn't care too much for sitting inside the Treasure Island at the B.P.R. headquarters plotting cross sections that we spent a very delighted summer taking, so I got a job with Jack Deal, Park Engineer, Sequoia National Park. I worked with Jack then and some of the bureau people on the proposed road to up below Moro Rock that replaced the General Highway something that thank God never did take become an actuality.

Herbert Evison: Yeah.

Henry Schmidt: Because a four-lane highway into that park would be particularly murder today.

Herbert Evison: Yeah, wouldn't it.

Henry Schmidt: Much nicer to drive the old highway and do it slowly. About this time the C.C.C.'s were activated in Sequoia. I think they had five camps at the time and were starting two new camps and Colonel White was Superintendent told me: "Now we're going to hire you as the Senior Foreman Engineering when the next camp comes in, but we can't do it until next April. This is when the camp really starts up, Buckeye Camp." He said: "In the meantime we want you to go to work in another camp as camp leader." This paid forty-five dollars a month and found of course.

Herbert Evison: Yeah.

Henry Schmidt: So, I joined the C.C.C.'s as an L.E.M. Had a little trouble doing it because I had not been in Tulare County long enough consecutively to—

Herbert Evison: Yeah.

Henry Schmidt: —become a resident.

Herbert Evison: You weren't a bona fide local.

Henry Schmidt: I wasn't a bona fide local. Anyway, I got on the job and worked a little while in camp and Dan Tobin called me into the office. Uh give you a I have a new job for you. He says we want to know how much these projects are costing in manpower, equipment and so forth so, you're to audit all nine camps. This happened about the same time or shortly after this when the new camp started up. I expected to be the foreman of engineering, and this was a fantastic salary of a hundred and sixty-six dollars and sixty-six cents a month. I forget the C.A.F. seven or something

like that.

Herbert Evison: Uhhmm.

Henry Schmidt: Well, I didn't get the job because I'd never voted in California.

Herbert Evison: Aah.

Henry Schmidt: Unless you were or had some political clout at that time you didn't get a foreman job in the C.C.C's. I was very disappointed about that. Kept on working 'n I had a good crew was working with working primarily for Dan Tobin and working for Ben Gibson and Spud Pehrson.

Herbert Evison: Uhhmm.

Henry Schmidt: And Spud came into the office one day. I was typing up some account. Said I'd like to have you run off this bunch of work for me. I says: "Sure, I'll run it off." I put the papers in the machine and typed away and they were appointments, Seasonal Ranger appointments and right down on the bottom was a Seasonal Ranger appointment to Henry G. Schmidt vice W. Drew Chick and I kinda looked at it and I jerked it out of the typewriter, and I ran into Dan Tobin's office and said: "I want to see the Superintendent." He said: "Now what's wrong?" I said: "You don't think you're going to get me to wear one of big hats, do you?" Well now he said: "Just quiet down a minute." Dan had a very level disposition you know and a wonderful person to work for. He talked to me, and he said: "You know these people around here. You're well known locally, and we think that you'll do a real fine job as a Park Ranger, and we'd like to have you try it and then later on if you want an engineering job why we'll get you into that." That's how I started out as a Ranger in the National Park Service.

Herbert Evison: I'll be darned.

Henry Schmidt: Now a mistake I guess because I couldn't get the other job.

Herbert Evison: Heh.

Henry Schmidt: Anyway, I worked there for Ben Packard who was District Ranger and George Biglemyer's the Chief Ranger or Assistant Chief Ranger and worked until November and then they gave me a new title and I never took off the uniform. I just kept working and next April started out again as a Seasonal Ranger. Worked until November again they laid me off for two weeks and they gave me another title and I kept right on working. This went on until I took the examination in 1936 or 37 and I passed the exam and took the oral exam which they had in those days and Dan Tobin was

one of the interviewers. He and some man from the Civil Service Commission and they told me I passed and then I was offered a job at Carlsbad Canyon or Carlsbad Caverns.

Herbert Evison: Yeah.

Henry Schmidt: And I would have been in the same group that went down there. I turned it down. I didn't particularly like holes in the ground at that time and didn't want to go down there because I had a girlfriend in California, and I didn't want to go to New Mexico. I turned that down and took my name off the list and went to work for the Auto Club of Southern California. Tricky Lewis was an old friend of the National Park Service and was the manager of the Visalia office and I worked for him for two years. Meantime—

Herbert Evison: Behind the counter?

Henry Schmidt: No, I was the field man.

Herbert Evison: Oh.

Henry Schmidt: I used to sell memberships and insurance, investigate accidents, provide membership services and everything there was what they called a field representative.

Herbert Evison: Uh hmm.

Henry Schmidt: He had a title as well as an expense account for your automobile.

Herbert Evison: Yeah.

Henry Schmidt: Uh during this period of time Marguerite and I were married. We decided we're going to get married and they started talking about a wedding here and a wedding there, so we just picked up one day and went to Yuma, Arizona, and were married in Arizona, May 18th, 1938, I guess and built a home in Visalia. Well, I worked at the job at the auto club and Marguerite was a court reporter and still worked for the District Attorney in Tulare County. Neither one of us were ever home and finally I came home one day and said: "Marguerite this is no good." Either you have to quit working, or I've got to find another job. It was good money. She was making about twelve thousand a year as court reporter and I was making about six thousand with the auto club and that was in 1938 that was a real good job. We thought about it a long time. We'd built this house and paid for it in a year and a half and a nice house out in Cross Mini Tract and uh later on Amos Coyne bought a home and lived right across the street from us.

Herbert Evison: Hmm.

Henry Schmidt: The house that I built. Well anyway I put my name back on the Civil Service register for the Park Ranger job and in two weeks got an offer from Boss Pinkley to go to work as a Park Ranger at Montezuma Castle, they wanted an updated form fifty seven, I don't know why because it seems as though at that time you always had to update every time everything every time they offered you a job.

Herbert Evison: Mmm.

Henry Schmidt: I sent it in, and it showed quite a bit more experience than the usual young Park Ranger would have.

Herbert Evison: Yeah.

Henry Schmidt: And about a week later I got an Air Mail letter from Hugh Miller saying that because of my experience they were offering me a job as Custodian at Arches National Monument. They'd never had a permanent employee there. I didn't know anything about Arches National Monument or Utah except I'd been through the state a couple of times. I went on up to see Steven Goin and Frank Oberhanly who were in Sequoia.

Herbert Evison: Uh hmm.

Henry Schmidt: Steven says: "Take the job. Be real good; you'll be good for the job and you'll love that country." Frank Oberhanly told me the same thing. So, I accepted it in August of 1939.

Herbert Evison: Mmm.

Henry Schmidt: Uh to start out in Southwest Monuments you first went to Coolidge headquarters, and you worked down there with the people in the Southwestern Monuments National Headquarters. Uh I worked with Boss Pinkley, Hugh Miller, who was Assistant Superintendent, Park Sole, administrative officer's Louie Gastellum. Young men down there working like hell at out at the monument in the Southwestern Monuments 'n playing a good game of second base for Coolidge baseball team.

Herbert Evison: Hah.

Henry Schmidt: Charlie Steam was the archeologist, 'n Dale King uh any number of people that I've known throughout my whole Park Service career.

Herbert Evison: Yeah.

- Henry Schmidt: Bill Superinall went to work the same day. Bill went to work at Organ Pipe Cactus, and I went to Arches, but we spent a month and a half or two months down there training, very good training, and good instructors.
- Herbert Evison: And—
- Henry Schmidt: And all practical work with accounts and so forth because when you get out to these little monuments you were on your own.
- Herbert Evison: Yeah. Of course, plus the tremendous experience of being associated with Boss Pinkley.
- Henry Schmidt: That's right. I'll never forget that man ah as an example one of the things that he did, what he thought of his people at the time they were building the Superintendent's Residence at Arches National Monument he sent the plans to my wife. He didn't send them to me for approval. He sent the plans to my wife for approval and said that I could look at them if I wanted to. This is the way he had of doing things, well we looked at the plans, she looked at them, made several comments and suggestions about it and they approved all of them and this is the way the house was built. As far as I know it's still being used as Superintendent's Residence.
- Herbert Evison: Yeah.
- Henry Schmidt: Uh anyway at the first or superintendents conference for or the custodians conference they called it at Coolidge, Arizona, ah Boss Pinkley was giving an opening address statement talking to what he called his boys and I was sitting in the front row with Art Thomas and Fred Beneweise I believe it was and the Boss just gasped and fell forward and I caught him when he fell and this was my introduction to Custodians or Superintendents Conference. Anyway, they agreed to have the conference and it was held. I was at Arches for about four years. Hugh Miller become Superintendent, and Chuck Ritchie came as Assistant Superintendent.
- Herbert Evison: Yeah.
- Henry Schmidt: Chuck incidentally was my roommate in college. He was a fraternity brother of mine.
- Herbert Evison: Oh, was he!
- Henry Schmidt: Phi Kappa Alpha and I was staying.
- Herbert Evison: Huh.
- Henry Schmidt: And uh he taught me how to comb my hair and which necktie to use and

so forth. And uh I'll never forget that either.

Herbert Evison: ((chuckles))

Henry Schmidt: Well anyway this job at Arches was a good job. Wonderful people up in that country and Arches was a primary and—

Herbert Evison: Mmm.

Henry Schmidt: —how. We loved it. That first year up there our first daughter was born, Margo and she is now living in Fort Clatsop National Memorials 'n the wife of the Superintendent out there, Paul Hartell.

Herbert Evison: At where?

Henry Schmidt: Fort Clatsop National Memorials—

Herbert Evison: Oh, yes.

Henry Schmidt: —at Astoria, Oregon. She met Paul one fall as a Seasonal Ranger at Isle Royal while we were stationed up there.

Herbert Evison: Uh hmm.

Henry Schmidt: Margo later went on to the Peace Corps and when she came back, they met again, and they were married. Have two grandchildren, Hank and Little Hank and Cursty. One of the things that was real interesting at Arches was the fact that I was writing the C.C.C. Camp. One of the Southwestern Monuments C.C.C. Camps and we did a lot of building and construction in there. Carl Allman came in as landscape architect and later ended up as camp superintendent. Carl and I were old friends from Iowa State. Had known each other when we were in college. One of the things that I did before I left Arches was to complete the Superintendent's Residence by day labor. The camps were disbanded at 1941 and I finished the camp in 1942 sometime between February and July in July of 1942 I transferred to Kings Canyon as District Ranger of the Cedar Grove District.

Herbert Evison: Oh yes. Well now this superintendent's residence was started as a C.C.C. project?

Henry Schmidt: Correct. A bridge, superintendent's residence, wells that were drilled and so forth. This was my part I played in the early development of the area.

Herbert Evison: Well now I was in the Arches in aw gee it would have been back about 1962 I guess, and of course followed the beautiful, paved roadway up a

long way up into it.

Henry Schmidt: That's right

Herbert Evison: Maybe then you had a nice dirt road at that time.

Henry Schmidt: We didn't have any road. The road went in through Willow Springs, but the road that you rode on I walked that P line out with Ross Maxwell and Howard Miller and Hob Miller, the engineer from Santa Fe and oh with Ward Yeager was the forester at Santa Fe at that time. He came up. We all had a little input into this road. We walked it out because there are so many things that you had to miss going in there and still keep a grade and being an engineer although not an engineer with a degree but knowing all the instruments and road alinement and road construction, why ah I did a lot of it on my own. And then it was all checked later on by our regional engineers. A great road in there, well I went to Kings Canyon and then in July, I arrived there in July 4th, 1942 and we loved it there. While I was at Kings Canyon down at Cedar Grove, they closed the C.C.C. Camp 'n with the help of a fire guard and a trail crew man I high graded all the lumber that was left and built a three-bedroom house and got chewed out a little bit about building this house by the design people from Western Region.

Herbert Evison: Yeah.

Henry Schmidt: Region Four and also by the auditors. But actually they only spent two hundred and forty dollars of government money, all of this house was constructed mostly in volunteer labor and materials that we'd high graded from C.C.C. Camp. Well, what made me mad was after we got through with the house and moved into it, they charged me eight dollars a day pay period rent. Wasn't even on Park Service grounds, it was out at Lewis Camp outside the park.

Herbert Evison: ((chuckle))

Henry Schmidt: I wasn't in Kings Canyon too long then because the following year I enlisted in the Navy. I went in as a Lieutenant J.G. and was in the Navy on the North Atlantic, South Pacific, and Far East until I believe it May of 1946. I came out a Lieutenant Commander and had some travelled a great deal of country and I enjoyed every bit of the time I was in the Navy.

Herbert Evison: Were you—

Henry Schmidt: Almost stayed in.

Herbert Evison: Were you in action?

- Henry Schmidt: I was in action at Peleliu, Okinawa, and two, two other small skirmishes. I was in the Fifth Fleet part of the time and later on came back to Pearl Harbor as the Commanding Officer of the Flag Detachment ADCOMPHIBSPAC and was Flag Lieutenant to Admiral John Wilkes.
- Herbert Evison: Uh hmm.
- Henry Schmidt: Later replaced by Admiral Hansen. That time I almost stayed in, I passed the examinations that they had including very tough personal interviews before a Board of Admirals and Captains and I was just about ready to sign the papers and had a real good friend, Commander Hunter who was Chief of Personnel for the ADCOMPHIBSPAC, 'n he told me, says: "Hank, you know, you think you're going back to Coronado and a nice assignment and you've been overseas quite a times. You're going back to Coronado but you're just going back there to pick up another ship and your orders and you're going into Military Government Service in Guam." Well, I had been in Guam. Didn't like the Portuguese men'o'war or the sand fleas or anything else they had out there and found out that I wouldn't be able to take my family out there.
- Herbert Evison: ((chuckle))
- Henry Schmidt: In-the meantime my second daughter was born, and I had only seen her when she was born. I was in we were in Kings Canyon at that time, but she was about a year old when I left home, and I hadn't seen her since that time, and she was about four years old the next time I saw her so I didn't buy that I went back to work for the Park Service. Their office was in Chicago, and I got a very nice letter from Hugh Miller saying that I was a returning veteran and would be placed in my particular job that I was in, but it had been filled and I'd have to go someplace else. I went from Kings Canyon to Sequoia which wasn't a very big jump.
- Herbert Evison: Nah.
- Henry Schmidt: Went into Giant Forest as District Ranger in 1946, and I was in Sequoia from 46 to 53. I was Assistant Chief Ranger when I left Sequoia. I had a very fine time there. I was the District Ranger of the Giant Forest District and they also worked Kings Canyon. Eivind Scoyen was the last Superintendent that I worked for there. A wonderful man to work for. From Kings Canyon there from Sequoia Kings I went to Sitka and Glacier Bay as the first Superintendent. They had never had anybody at Glacier Bay. That was another great experience with working with big construction programs and working a new area and my whole family loved it in Alaska.
- Herbert Evison: John Knight lived there — You lived in Sitka?

Henry Schmidt: Lived in Sitka and lived in Juneau. Moved the headquarters from Sitka to Juneau, but I built a house in Sitka. The contract price came to forty-nine thousand nine hundred dollars and Regional Director Lawrence Miriam agreed that we could do it day labor. I had it all figured out how it could be done day labor and I was the project supervisor on the job and hired my own men and built the house and buildings for twenty-eight thousand instead of the forty-nine thousand. Funny thing happened there as to how you can kind of go off the deep end on something yet, uh I had asked to build the garage. I had another eleven thousand dollars to build a garage and a radio shack, but I couldn't get a bid on that either, so I had requested to do this by day labor. This was the first part of August. Finally got a teletype one day delivered to my office and it said that they approved the building the garage and so forth providing it could be done by Labor Day. This was the way I read the teletype and I had a little bit of the temper at that time, and I read that and oh the inefficiency and the bureaucracy of the San Francisco Office was appalling, you know, 'n my Park Historian was in the office, and he picked up the teletype and said: "You better read this again." I read it again. Came out the same way. I had five days to build this structure that'd take two months to build, you know, and—

Herbert Evison: Heh.

Henry Schmidt: —if I could do it by Labor Day. Finally, I cooled down enough til I read it again and the Labor Day was day labor.

Herbert Evison: Yeah.

Henry Schmidt: I had just transposed it. Anyway, I stayed there until 1957. In 1957 I went to Big Bend National Park as Assistant Superintendent. Kind of a long way out of things in Alaska but we loved it. As an example, when I went to the Superintendents Conference in Great Smokies in 1955 my way was paid but I remember buying a ticket for my family there was eighteen hundred dollars and that was a lot of money in those days to take the family back to the Superintendents Conference, but they enjoyed it. Then I left—

Herbert Evison: That was from Alaska?

Henry Schmidt: That was from Alaska to Gatlinburg and then at the Superintendents Conference in Yellowstone and Grand Teton I expected to go back to Alaska and Connie had times set aside where he was meeting superintendents, so I met with Connie and Tom Vint and I said: "All I want to know Connie is I'm going to buy a house in Juneau. I can't stand this three hundred and five dollars a month rent." I says: "I can have a good chance to buy a house and I want to I just wanted to know from you that I'm going to stay in Alaska for at least another two years and he said:

“Don’t buy the house.” That was two days later when they offered me the job at Big Bend which I accepted.

Herbert Evison: Huh. ((chuckle))

Henry Schmidt: Uh.

Herbert Evison: Where you had a very nice house to move into as—

Henry Schmidt: Very nice house was brand new.

Herbert Evison: —if I remember rightly.

Henry Schmidt: Davey Jones lived in it before and had been vacant ever since he had left, but my family didn’t want to leave Alaska. They the girls loved it. Margo was a very active in school, in fact both the girls were, and they just didn’t want to leave Alaska, but they did. They moved to California from Yellowstone. Ted Thompson and Art Thomas carried us from Yellowstone to Salt Lake City where I got an airplane. I sent them to California, so they’d get in school and then I went back to Alaska in that was in September of thirty-seven and no September of fifty-seven.

Herbert Evison: Fifty-seven, yeah.

Henry Schmidt: And uh I went back to Alaska to pack, and I was there for two and a half months because the contract going up there and Marium wouldn’t let me leave. I had to stay there until the contractor shut down. Didn’t have a project supervisor. I was doing that myself. So, they went to school in California, we moved out to Texas in December and then they went back to school in California. Both the girls graduated there. Margo completed just one year and then she decided to go to she had a scholarship to Lawrence in—

Herbert Evison: Sarah Lawrence?

Henry Schmidt: No, not Sarah Lawrence, to Min—oh Doctor Gould used to be the President of it. It’s up there in Mendocito, Men, not Mankato oh a oh a—

Herbert Evison: I don’t know.

Henry Schmidt: Oh, ya know one of the schools in Minnesota. She had a scholarship there but decided to go to Sul Ross at Alpine. Loretta went back to school in California and the following year she had to go back again because she was an exchange student in Denmark as part of the obligation and part of the obligation was that she would graduate from high school there. Anyway, both the girls graduated from Sul Ross. Margo is a biology major

and Loretta who went through college in two years graduated in history degree in history.

Herbert Evison: Yeah.

Henry Schmidt: She later got her master's at Hunter College. Margo called me one day just about the time she was ready to graduate and said: "What am I going to do? I have a telegram from Frank Oberhanly offering me a job at Zion National Park as a museum curator, I have a letter from Lon Garrison offering me a job as a Park Naturalist at Yellowstone and I have a telegram from the Peace Corps offering me a job in Ghana." I said: "I'm not going to tell ya." She took the job in Ghana and shortly after that then I moved to Isle Royale as Superintendent of Isle Royale, we loved every minute in Big Bend and great country and great people there in Alpine and the other surrounding towns. In fact, we own property there that we rent, and we go back there now and then. Have a lot of friends around that country. You never get enough; you never get to see enough of the desert. This is one reason—

Herbert Evison: That's right.

Henry Schmidt: —why I'm happy to be going back to—

Henry Schmidt: —back to Phoenix. I was in Isle Royale too short a time. Loved it there. You always like the places you are and Isle Royale was a good experience, I went from there to Fire Island as the first Superintendent of Fire Island.

Herbert Evison: Uh hm.

Henry Schmidt: And was there two years, then to Superintendent of the combined Fire Island New York City Group and after six years in New York, then I came to Philadelphia as Regional Director.

Herbert Evison: Yeah. Well, that's a quick run through. That's a skeleton that needs a lot of fleshing, I think. Uh let's go back to Alaska or let's go back to Sequoia-Kings Canyon. You were assigned to an area there as I suppose District Ranger or at any rate an area which you worked under Park Service supervision on Forest Service land.

Henry Schmidt: Well, that's right, just Lewis Creek

Herbert Evison: Cedar Grove.

Henry Schmidt: Cedar Grove

Herbert Evison: Cedar Grove was still in the—

Henry Schmidt: Still in the Sequoia National Forest.

Herbert Evison: National, yes. Well, I'm wondering is did that ever off any complications?

Henry Schmidt: None whatever. There was a you had some local opposition to this type of an operation but with the Forest Service people, no, I never had a bit of problems with them. Mostly problems of because of the hunting. They didn't like to come up so far and have to stop. They wanted to use take advantage of the rest of the road and go hunting.

Herbert Evison: Yeah.

Henry Schmidt: This was with hunters and some fishermen but just a few local people never any real opposition.

Herbert Evison: Well now during the time that Cedar Grove was still part of the National Forest was it all open to hunting?

Henry Schmidt: No! It was closed!

Herbert Evison: I was wondering if that—

Henry Schmidt: That area was closed in fact you closed right at Lewis Creek. During hunting season, we put a chain across the road and from there Cedar campgrounds, four campgrounds in the Cedar Grove area.

Herbert Evison: Yeah.

Henry Schmidt: Yeah.

Herbert Evison: Wonderful ones too.

Henry Schmidt: Then there was as you went on up towards Zumwalt Meadow. Why it was beautiful country at South Fork of the Kings Canyon and the same way was true with Tehipite that area, which was outside of the park, was closed.

Herbert Evison: But which, thank the Lord, is now inside it?

Henry Schmidt: No, no outside the park, beautiful country.

Herbert Evison: —along with Cedar Grove. Yeah.

Henry Schmidt: We liked it at Cedar Grove. We lived in a log cabin down there at the old Ranger Station right at Cedar Grove.

Herbert Evison: Yeah.

Henry Schmidt: I liked it very much of course I was gone much of the time because I was District Ranger of the South Fork and Middle Fork District. Only had one District Ranger for both districts.

Herbert Evison: Oh.

Henry Schmidt: And I had two or three trail crews working all the time and several seasonal people and two permanent Rangers down there, in the summertime, but I spent half my time on horseback.

Herbert Evison: Yeah, well now did you remain in Cedar Grove year-round?

Henry Schmidt: No, we moved up to Grant in our first assignment down there then and then after the war when I went back down there for two years during my Sequoia Kings assignment, we would live at Cedar Grove in the oh from April until December and move out about the time the pass through snowed shut there at Cherry Gap. Then we lived in Ash Mountain.

Herbert Evison: Uh hmm.

Henry Schmidt: But in nineteen forty-nine when I came out I went to the F.B.I. Academy in February of forty-nine.

Herbert Evison: Ooha.

Henry Schmidt: I was out at the Athol area. A couple of winters we lived in Giant Forest because they would I would go from a District in Kings to a District in Sequoia. We moved something like within park and from area to area a Marguerite counted up the other day we'd moved forty-six times in our career.

Herbert Evison: ((chuckle))

Henry Schmidt: A thirty-five-year career.

Herbert Evison: Well, uh I'll say this you certainly ought to be able to take it in stride by now.

Henry Schmidt: Right now, I can't get a van.

Herbert Evison: ((laughs)) By gosh. I hope when you get one that they take proper care of your loweries and penapes and so on. Ah your first job at Sequoia was when a very extraordinary person in my book was Superintendent of it.

Henry Schmidt: John White?

Herbert Evison: John White, and I'm wondering what you remember of your contacts with him, if any, that it would be nice to get on this record.

Henry Schmidt: Well, he was a great man, and he was a leader. By today's standards he was not a manager, but he was a leader and—

Herbert Evison: Eh.

Henry Schmidt: —he had good managers working with him, he had Dan Tobin, he had Ben Gibson, Oscar Regan, ah people—

Herbert Evison: Yeah.

Henry Schmidt: —like that, that did the managing. Hugh Parks was general foreman, Homer Hardin was in there. These are names that you know.

Herbert Evison: Yes.

Henry Schmidt: People that I worked with, you know. Ford Spiegelsmier was the first Chief Ranger and later on Wagner came down from Yosemite and later on Irv Kerr was Chief Ranger. I was Assistant Chief Ranger for Irv when I was there.

Herbert Evison: Uh mmm.

Henry Schmidt: He was Chief Ranger at the time, but Colonel White was a great man. He had a lot of enemies, but he had a tremendous number of friends. He had a lot of enemies outside of the park and he was very outspoken. He spoke the truth as he saw it—

Herbert Evison: Yeah.

Henry Schmidt: —and he was a hundred per cent for saving the Redwoods for building a program that would make them available, but nothing more.

Herbert Evison: Uh hm.

Henry Schmidt: In fact, the service can give a lot of credit to Colonel White for what he has done. After he came back the second time you could see a difference in Colonel White. He had been as the Regional Director in the Southwest and he had been in the Washington office, Chief of Operations and so forth, but his interest wasn't as great when he came back as it was when he was first there.

Herbert Evison: Yeah.

Henry Schmidt: But as my first superintendent, why I'd have to say he's one of several people who've had the most effect on my career, that is what you learn from them.

Herbert Evison: Uh hm.

Henry Schmidt: Very fortunate in having worked for many fine people in the service. The one thing I notice growing up in the service at that time when the service was smaller was if you didn't take the opportunity to learn from people you're working from you didn't get much opportunity to learn because they didn't have a training program—

Herbert Evison: Yeah.

Henry Schmidt: —like they have nowadays and people like Eivind Scoyen and George Miller and Frank Pinkley, Hugh Miller, and those people that you worked with, you know, they meant a great deal to you because you followed their example and you listened to them. This was the way you learned.

Herbert Evison: Yeah.

Henry Schmidt: And I remember when I went to the first big training stint of all that I had opportunity to attend was the F.B.I. Academy.

Herbert Evison: Eh hm.

Henry Schmidt: Back there four months in forty-nine but my experience in Sequoia came very, very delightful. Here again my family loved it. We never lived any place that they didn't like and whenever I had a chance to transfer or move why Marguerite always said: "It's your job, we'll go with you!"

Herbert Evison: Uh hm.

Henry Schmidt: And that made it a lot easier. My family loved the service and so that made it easier.

Herbert Evison: Yeah. That was a real service family.

Henry Schmidt: My daughter, my second daughter, I didn't tell you her name but when she was born Loretta was born in the hospital at Visalia and Marguerite was quite ill during that pregnancy and I almost killed a horse coming off a fire the day Loretta was born because Marguerite was real sick. They thought I'd better get to the hospital. She was born on August 10th, 1942. I was on

a fire up at Monarch Divide and came out of that, but she's a historian. She's worked, she's gone through the training school at Albright. She worked at Edison, Morristown, and Minute Man Boston Group and she's now a trainee in the Training Division in Washington.

Herbert Evison: Oh, that new one that they've just set up under Bob Nunn?

Henry Schmidt: Uh she's working well she's working under Bob but she's going to live at Harpers Ferry and—

Herbert Evison: Oh!

Henry Schmidt: —assignment but she's a trainee working in the division.

Herbert Evison: Oh.

Henry Schmidt: I don't know what she's doing. I try to stay out of her business.

Herbert Evison: Uh mm. Yeah.

Henry Schmidt: Because kids got to make it on their own.

Herbert Evison: Yeah, well that's right too, I agree from personal experience.

Henry Schmidt: But uh so we're pretty much a Park Service family now.

Herbert Evison: Yes, I'll say you are. ((chuckle)) Well, now you went with us from Sequoia that you went to Arches?

Henry Schmidt: No, I went from the insurance job to Arches.

Herbert Evison: Oh, yes, yes, that interval, huh? Uh.

Henry Schmidt: That was the biggest financial crisis in our life because between Marguerite and I were earning about eighteen thousand dollars a year.

Herbert Evison: Ummm.

Henry Schmidt: And when I went back to work for the Park Service my salary was sixteen hundred and forty dollars.

Herbert Evison: Was it re—

Henry Schmidt: —a difference of sixteen thousand nine hundred and sixty dollars a year, but we made out all right. ((laughs))

Herbert Evison: Hey, I—

Henry Schmidt: —met a lot of great people there at Moab that helped us out when we first went in there, had to rent a house, and old Doc Williams who's, you might say, he and Doctor Gould are fathers of Arches National Monument, you know, helped us out a great deal. Bish Taylor was a newspaper editor. He was a great help. By the way he's Art Gilmore's father-in-law or he was.

Herbert Evison: Oh really!

Henry Schmidt: At least at that time, yeah. That's where I met Art and his wife.

Herbert Evison: Huh.

Henry Schmidt: But that was a great experience. We still have a lot of friends at Moab. Lived next door to Mitch Melidge who is now the solicitor for the Interior Department.

Herbert Evison: Uh huh.

Henry Schmidt: Mitch was a young, struggling attorney there at Moab at the time.

Herbert Evison: Well, then from Arches—

Henry Schmidt: Back to Kings Canyon.

Herbert Evison: —back to Kings Canyon.

Henry Schmidt: Or to Kings Canyon.

Herbert Evison: Yeah, as a—

Henry Schmidt: For first assignment.

Herbert Evison: —as a District Ranger.

Henry Schmidt: Right.

Herbert Evison: Yeah. Well now, I don't want to leave any of these places as we go along without prodding you to remember any events in which you were a participant or an observer or even any personal observations that you want to offer about situations that you were connected with.

Henry Schmidt: Well, you could almost write a book on some of this, Herb.

Herbert Evison: I know you could.

Henry Schmidt: I think one of the things that bothered me for a long while was the fact that I had the opportunity that a lot of Rangers don't get. Didn't get at that time but don't get now is a certain kind of work. I become involved to begin with on fires.

Herbert Evison: Yeah.

Henry Schmidt: And I thought after a while well I was typed. I wasn't good for anything but fires.

Herbert Evison: Yeah.

Henry Schmidt: And this is one reason that I was glad to get out of my job in Sequoia because I was about the only class D fire boss of the Western Region besides Corky Johnson and Ted Thompson, they were uh nobody just had the experience at uh—

Herbert Evison: Uh mm.

Henry Schmidt: —uh well fire is a terrible thing; I think it's a part of your National Park Service career if you're working in a forested area and in an area where you are protecting these terrific jewels that you have there in Sequoia and Kings Canyon, and the other forested areas. As part of your job and while you never wanted to see a fire it was a tremendous experience. Another thing in your larger parks you're getting more of now than in the early days because you have so many more visitors with a tremendous number of rescues and so forth, that you go out on.

Herbert Evison: Uh hm.

Henry Schmidt: I think one of the worst ones, the saddest ones I ever went on was when Bob Crawford who was Editor, Sports Editor of the Visalia Times-Delta was killed, at Yellow Falls. Uh in Sequoia in fact the team that went out and made the rescue got the Unit Citation from the Secretary's Office and all these people are still around out in not all of them are still around but many of them John Rudder, Corky Johnson, Ray Murphy, Dick Boyer, Bruce Black, Ed Thompson, this was our rescue crew—

Herbert Evison: Yeah.

Henry Schmidt: —then fourteen men out there and it was about a twenty-four-hour ordeal. We got to Bob. He was still alive. Got the doctor down to him. He died about ten minutes after he got there. Those are things that happened to me and happened to many people who had this type of—

Herbert Evison: Yeah.

Henry Schmidt: —career in the service, but too many people now a days they happen so fast and so frequently that so many people are working in them they have helicopters and it's all entirely different from what it used to be.

Herbert Evison: Uh hm.

Henry Schmidt: But it's just part of your growing up in the service. It's part of the thing if you don't learn it that way, you don't learn.

Herbert Evison: Yeah.

Henry Schmidt: And uh someday I'm maybe like a little bit like Connie with his book on conservation, the C.C.C.'s, uh I'd like to write something, but I don't know as I ever will.

Herbert Evison: No.

Henry Schmidt: Now Marguerite has written a good many things and both of our daughters have written some of their remembrances just for their own information.

Herbert Evison: Yeah.

Henry Schmidt: Is all they do it. Well, it's fantastic the number of things that happen. You don't forget them but they're back in your mind some place and—

Herbert Evison: Yeah.

Henry Schmidt: —you relate them once in a while and uh had a going away party for us here the other night and—

Herbert Evison: I heard it was quite a whing ding.

Henry Schmidt: Best one I've ever been to, very informal, very relaxed. This's the way I like it. Uh Larry Hovig was the master of ceremonies, very good. He told a story on me that he couldn't have gotten it from anybody but Marguerite. I thought I'd die laughing and I can't tell you what the story is right now, but he told this story and I laughed, because every inch of it was the truth, but I don't know the you still have to grow up by yourself in the service. You can get all the training you want and everything else—

Herbert Evison: Yeah.

Henry Schmidt: —unless you're willing to use it and grow up with it, all the education that you can get in the world's not going to do you any good. You have to like

people. You have to believe in the service goals, and you have to believe in the mission and unless you do that, all the education and training in the world won't do you any good. And I think this is one thing that we got twenty years ago, thirty years ago, that it's difficult because so many people are in a hurry these days.

Herbert Evison: Yes, and don't you think that this extensive training tends to be a crutch to lean on to a certain degree so that there's a certain loss of person's initiative. It's all put out for 'em on a platter now a days.

Henry Schmidt: Well, I can't quite agree with all of that because I think that the training is absolutely necessary now. In those days you had time. Your service was smaller. Now you don't have time in fact if you looked around the service right now and if you had to fill fifteen vacancies in grade fourteen, fifteen level right at this time you'd just have an awful time doing it. You've got to feed these people the information they need but in addition to the training they have to be able to use it. Now this is the problem, some of it get it too soon or some of 'em don't get it in sequence and I was chairman of a training task force two years ago and made a number of recommendations most of them of which are in effect now and the man we have as our Training Officer now, Frank Adell, is a dynamic young man who wants to get this training show on the road and I think he's doing a good job at it. The thing I think it is so necessary is that all of this is related to the field to the people, the ranger, the maintenance man, whoever lives down there and that the system can give this to the man when he needs it, not in such big doses that it gags him—

Herbert Evison: Uh hm.

Henry Schmidt: —but get it to him so that he can absorb it and use it on the job, and I think this way to develop. This is the way we developed in the service.

Herbert Evison: Yes, now—

Henry Schmidt: —we got a little bit at a time.

Herbert Evison: Yes, now I remember can't be more than two or three years ago now that they adopted this system of relating the training at particularly at Albright to the job to which the men went or men and women went after they got through there with a really a compulsion on the superintendent and the staff of that park to continue a training and close observation.

Henry Schmidt: Is this absolutely necessary?

Herbert Evison: Yeah, do you think it has worked?

- Henry Schmidt: I think it's worked to a point, I think the training at uh in some people agree with me and some disagree, but I think the training at Albright is too long, too long a period of time. They can take a young man or a young woman and keep them for twelve weeks and you give them too much, some of it entirely foreign to them.
- Herbert Evison: Yeah.
- Henry Schmidt: Unless they have worked in a park; they're totally confused.
- Herbert Evison: Yeah.
- Henry Schmidt: But I would like to see it in smaller doses. I think that you take a young man out of college or a young woman out of college and give them the mission, the goals, the organization, the whole thing and throw a lot of skills on top of that and actually your skill training is done better, particularly if you're an interpreter is done better to give it to them in stages, talking, writing, reading, all of these things and this is where they've had some real good schools, courses at Mather, you know.
- Herbert Evison: Yeah.
- Henry Schmidt: Bringing these on and Ray Nelson did a good job there when he was director. He had some far out innovative idea, but they all worked.
- Herbert Evison: Mmm.
- Henry Schmidt: And I think Ray did a swell job there. I think Tom Thomas is there now and—but training is sort of a, uh, almost a vocation with me.
- Herbert Evison: Yeah.
- Henry Schmidt: You might say it's an avocation, but is almost a vocation with me because I think it's part of many to see that the training the—
- Herbert Evison: Uh huh.
- Henry Schmidt: —need is given and then if you I think it's part of management's job to do this and I enjoy it immensely.
- Herbert Evison: Boy you've had so doggone many interesting assignments. You were in Alaska right at the time that well I am sure is one of the really most superb areas of the park system began to get its first development, that's Glacier Bay.
- Henry Schmidt: That's right.

Herbert Evison: And I wish you'd tell me now whatever you can remember about your experience in connection with Glacier Bay.

Henry Schmidt: Well Glacier Bay was a tough assignment and a very enjoyable one because this's tough country. You do everything by boat, and it takes six times as long and costs six times as much to do it. You're working with peanuts in those days. There was no development at all. I went up there as first superintendent. We had a fifty-five-foot boat which I ran myself and spent most of my time on the water in Glacier Bay. I had a real good Chief Ranger, Oscar Dick, was there when I first went there and then Oscar went to McKinley and Bruce Black came up and we did most of the planning and working up the plans for Glacier Bay. We had the first contracts built the pier, the airplane dock, the residences and so forth while I was there but rode from Gus Davis out to Bartlet Cove and so forth, but at the same time we had time to get around the park in the boat.

Herbert Evison: Uh hmm.

Henry Schmidt: And by air. We had a very good working relationship with the Fish and Wildlife Service there and used to fly a lot of our missions a little bit at two minutes to twelve and it's dark for three minutes then you go back and fish again, this is something NEVER happened to me before.

Herbert Evison: Yeah.

Henry Schmidt: Alaska still is a great country and it's a big country and it's going to be a long time before its potential is ever actually a fact because it's just so doggone big that and there's so much of it and Glacier Bay of course Katmai is a few acres larger, but Glacier Bay two million, two hundred and ninety-seven thousand acres. I think it has a coastline of something like six hundred miles and fingers bays and everything else. Everything by water and the plan that was laid out in those early days, the first master plan is generally being pretty well followed.

Herbert Evison: Do you think its—

Henry Schmidt: I think it's a good plan, and it's one of those areas that you're never going to get a tremendous number of people in there, but the people you're going to get in there are going to be people who are really interested in the park, in the Park Service, in Alaska because it's tough country.

Herbert Evison: Yeah.

Henry Schmidt: Tough country to get around in, but it's worth it. Almost like taking that Inland Passage ride from Seattle on up. If you haven't done it, why you'd

ought to do it.

Herbert Evison: Mmm.

Henry Schmidt: And here again working with the with the territorial people in Alaska and so forth this was a new thing for me, and it was a very good thing because right there I was close to many political things that I'd never been close to them in Sequoia or Kings Canyon. It was another step in my education as to what you're supposed to do if you're a park manager and it was a real good place to get it because I got it there and I got it in Texas, and you get it all along as you go on up the echelon but there's just as much difference between what happens in Texas and what happens in Alaska. There's night and day, you know, but—

Herbert Evison: Yeah.

Henry Schmidt: —you learn from one and then you use it in the other place.

Herbert Evison: Hank, we're right close to the end of this side of the tape and I'm nowhere near through with you, but rather than interrupt you in the middle of a sentence I'm going to run this off the rest of the way and turn it.

[END SIDE 1 of TAPE #87]

Herbert Evison: Hank, I'll tell you one of the most interesting phases of your career I think is your assignment to a completely different kind of thing and different kind of milliard than you've ever been in and that was your combination first of Fire Island and then of working with the head of a group, now you were the first Superintendent of Fire Island, weren't you?

Henry Schmidt: Right.

Herbert Evison: What was the situation when you went in there?

Henry Schmidt: It was an entirely a new situation to me because I was a oh I was a hillbilly type I mean not that type but I was a park man and had been in natural areas and so forth.

Herbert Evison: Yeah.

Henry Schmidt: And I had never even visited a seashore up to that time but oddly enough my arrival at Fire Island and my introduction to the about two thousand people attended a breakfast at Franklin Bank in Garden City was an introduction by Secretary Udall and he said that one of his purposes was to thank the people of Long Island and New York and outside of New York for helping in the battle to establish Fire Island as a National Seashore.

Herbert Evison: Uh hmm.

Henry Schmidt: And all the proponents were there and some of the opponents of course I'm sure were at the breakfast, but uh I went on up there with Ronnie Lee and two, three other people and the Secretary Udall and he said I want to introduce you to this man. His name is Henry G. Schmidt he said, but if you call him that he won't know who you're talking to he says. I call him Hank and you better call him Hank. This was my introduction to Fire Island. We started off with a bang because speculators were building. They were getting houses up overnight out there trying to get as much as they could out of it, but there was a very good decision made that day. The secretary announced in a newspaper article that and to the group that he was filing condemnation on every house in a certain area was being heavily developed that didn't have a roof on it.

Herbert Evison: Hmm.

Henry Schmidt: Well, they got about ten roofs on about ten more houses that night but left about thirty of them that didn't make it.

Herbert Evison: Hmm.

Henry Schmidt: But I started in there with myself, a secretary, and a land officer.

Herbert Evison: Yeah.

Henry Schmidt: The first eight months that I was there I think I gained about thirty-five pounds because I was speaking on the average of five nights a week all over Long Island and New York. All of them roast beef, peas and baked potatoes or chicken and beans and baked potatoes with either one martini or a three-martini dinner something like that. It put a lot of weight on me. I went up to a hundred ninety-six pounds. I looked like a roly poly, and I had to quit it. I didn't quit making the speeches, but I just quit eating when I went to dinner and so forth. That was a very interesting part of the development, the early development of Fire Island to me was the public relations, the public affairs of course that you had outside of your daily work. At the same time working on a master plan, building up your small organization and so forth and I strictly was not a big city man, but when the opportunity came to take over the combined group, I was sitting in Lon Garrison's office. Director Hartzog was talking to Lon about somebody in the job and wanted to know if I would take it and Lon said: "Well, he's sitting right here. Why don't you ask him yourself." Well George asked me over to the phone. "How would you like to take on this job?" I said: "Well I'm not afraid of it." George said to Lon: "Well, what're you waiting for?" "The man wants to go to work."

Henry Schmidt: So that's how I went into the Combined Unit, and I think that the group system in this particular area, I think this is true in many of our park areas, of the grouping of a number of areas is the best utilization of manpower and resources that you can get to perform the mission of the service because it gives you professional people, it gives you a better reach to get your resources in shape so you can do something at one area or the other and it takes more planning or our whole system today takes better planning and more sophisticated management and if anybody told me twenty years ago that I would have been happy east of the Hudson River, I'd have told them they were crazy, but I enjoyed the assignment very much. You're working with an entirely different class of people, and I think that everybody who goes into the large park as a superintendent ought to spend some time in the East so he learns how, not how the other half lives, but how ninety per cent of the rest of the people live—

Herbert Evison: Yeah.

Henry Schmidt: —because this is what you have. So many times, you have young men growing up, they go through the chair so to say and get into a park, large Western area, or large Eastern area, or one of our natural areas and they never come close to the realities of what goes on in our big urban areas. I think the urban problem couple with the urban programs that we have is very necessary part of the National Park Service. I don't mean that all of the all of the resources should be put to work in the urban areas. I think that the great parks in the West and the great monuments and historic sites and so forth they have to be maintained and they have to be protected because they are being grossly over-used in some areas.

Herbert Evison: Uh hmm.

Henry Schmidt: And the very lack, the principle that you need the money you need to operate some of these places makes it very difficult and some of our superintendents in those areas are learning this because they're learning their relationship between their job as part of the overall system and this is a big system now and a tremendous area and I found that out when I come in here as Director of Northeast Region. I've been back to New York on four or five occasions, on special meetings and so forth but principally I have oh I've been at Philadelphia actually less than eighty days since the eighteenth of last December. I've spent most of my time in the field, because I don't feel that I'm qualified to make a decision unless I see some of these places that I haven't visited so I go see them. I've enjoyed this job here very much.

Herbert Evison: How long has it been then?

Henry Schmidt: I've been here just a year and two months, but it's been a terrific challenge and very pleasant. There's a great staff here in the Northeast Region and they work hard and it as I said in a memo that I sent to the field 'n to the Regional Director that it was mixed emotions that I leave this job and take on the new one, but the new job as the Director said is principally I'll be working with the Park Superintendent and with other people in the parks to he says that this is not a closed circuit operation within the directorate. He's asked me to make myself available to all service employees in the park and so forth so that those concerned individuals and you do have concerned individuals sometimes. They want to know where they're going and how to get there, at all levels so's that I can bring problems and matters of excellence and so forth to the attention of the superintendent and the regional director and so forth and this to me is a job that needs being done in the service because the service is so large and where you had three hundred people ten years ago or twenty years ago, you now have nine hundred people, I mean it's such an operation.

Herbert Evison: Yeah.

Henry Schmidt: And he has told me that my new job will provide a channel of communications within the service that can help all of us to do a better job, that's what I'll be doing.

Herbert Evison: Yeah. You know years ago O.G. Taylor, I don't know whether you ever knew O.G.

Henry Schmidt: I knew him well.

Herbert Evison: Wonderful guy. He was my boss for a year in Richmond in forty-two, forty-three to forty-four. He and I used to discuss the situation in the parks, park system, he and I both agree that the service needed that the director needed somebody who would be an extension of his arm out into the field who could be in closer touch with what was going on in the field than the director could, but would have direct access to him and who would have everything in the area assigned to him, open to him, so that he could size up, he could get the tempo of operations, he could sense at their early stages where dissension or differences of opinion were handicapping operations and things of that kind, and I suspect that whatever it says in the directions that you will perform to a large extent just about that kind of function, won't you?

Henry Schmidt: That's right, that will be my function and I think it's going to be a very interesting function.

Herbert Evison: Yeah.

Henry Schmidt: Here again it's a part of a job that has to be done if the – if you see the director can't do his job instead of the regional directors do theirs, his directors does their job, the park superintendent do theirs and all down the line everybody has a job to do, and if you can get the matter of communication to a point where everybody understands what they're doing, why they're doing that, I think our people know why they're doing it, they have a mission and they have a job to do and even if they don't have all of the resources to do it some of the time most of them do a pretty good job. Well, what the director wants is that he wants to find not only those areas that were borderline and could develop into a problem, but he also wants to find who are these people who are doing a job of excellence.

Herbert Evison: —yes.

Henry Schmidt: And who should have an opportunity to do more. Actually I think if you take a man and get him out four steps ahead of himself all of the time—

Herbert Evison: Uh hmm.

Henry Schmidt: —so he's not stale. It's these times and these people who are just so set in one area they get set in their own way and when this happens you lack initiative you lack innovation you lack a relationship of new problems and new programs that are absolutely necessary in the way, not only the park service but in the way the nation is growing.

Herbert Evison: Yeah.

Henry Schmidt: Because it's an absolute fact and no one can deny it that things are different today than they were yesterday and a whole lot different than they were ten years ago.

Herbert Evison: ((chuckle)) Mmm.

Henry Schmidt: So, I'm looking forward to the job. It's going to mean a lot of travelling but this is one reason that we'll be happy we're living in Phoenix. We're living at Sun City and Marguerite has been ill recently and in fact she's in pretty good shape now and this will be a nice place for her to be. The winters are real tough on her and I'll be gone. I hope I'll be able to travel in the South in the wintertime and the North in the summer. But I'll have to go wherever the need arises.

Herbert Evison: Well, now you are are you assigned a specific territory?

Henry Schmidt: Uh the fifty states.

Herbert Evison: Yeah!

- Henry Schmidt: I'm the Assistant Director for Field Operations and so-called extension of the Director's arm, his eyes and ears—
- Herbert Evison: Yeah.
- Henry Schmidt: —and so forth. And as I say this is not only to try to anticipate some of these things that may develop into problems, but also to meet as many people as I can and let the superintendents, let the directors of the regions, let the director know and here's a young man I think will make be good in such and such a job. Or here's somebody who ought to move, he's a square peg in a round hole, and things like that, but I expect to do it with complete honesty and clarity and it looks to me—
- Herbert Evison: If you can't do it that way, you're going to be a fizzle.
- Henry Schmidt: That's right. You have to do it that way!
- Herbert Evison: Yeah. Also, another great and important qualification I think you possess is guts because you are going to face some you're going to have to make some very hard recommendations sometimes.
- Henry Schmidt: That's true.
- Herbert Evison: And ah it's going to be up to you to decide whether you gloss things over or grab a situation as—ought to be grabbed.
- Henry Schmidt: I think this is one thing that my past experience will help me a great deal in that. I've been particularly interested in the year and two months that I've been in this job is the meetings that the Director has with his Field Directors.
- Herbert Evison: Yeah.
- Henry Schmidt: Or the Regional Directors and so forth. The discussions are absolutely open and honest, and George Hartzog makes some hard decisions and when he does, you know why they're being made because he doesn't keep his Field Directors in the dark.
- Herbert Evison: Humph.
- Henry Schmidt: They know what they know what's going on and if I think this will be a very, very interesting job.
- Herbert Evison: Yeah. I'd like to go back to I don't want to shut you off on this new job. I'd like to tape you after you've been in it about two years.

Henry Schmidt: Well, that's a deal.

Herbert Evison: Uh but I'd like to get back to this New York Group thing and get a little more specific picture of how you operated. Now, where' did you live in New York City?

Henry Schmidt: I lived in Oyster Bay. I lived at Theodore Roosevelt for—

Herbert Evison: Oh, you did.

Henry Schmidt: —Sagmore Hill.

Herbert Evison: There was a house on the property?

Henry Schmidt: I lived in the same house that Leonard Hall lived in when he was a boy.

Herbert Evison: Oh yeah.

Henry Schmidt: And we loved living out there. A lot of commuting, I was commuting seventy miles a day, but it was worth it. Today in New York it's tough, it's tough country.

Herbert Evison: Yes.

Henry Schmidt: It's just as tough as Alaska only in a different way. It's your asphalt jungle, but there are real fine areas in New York: Hamilton Grange, Grant Memorial, Theodore Roosevelt birthplace, Federal Hall, Statue of Liberty, Castle Clinton, all of these—

Herbert Evison: Yeah.

Henry Schmidt: —are very fine and a lot of good people working there, and I was fortunate in the time that I was there to have the help of the directorate in building up a staff that was sufficient or not quite sufficient, closer to being sufficient than I was five years ago of doing the job because you're serving a great many people and a great many important people because they're people who don't get a chance to learn many things that we hope will learn from their visits to our national shrines.

Herbert Evison: Yup.

Henry Schmidt: And while they are not the great natural areas, they are areas of historic significance that belong to everybody and they're right now coming into their own.

Herbert Evison: Uh hmm.

Henry Schmidt: And this is one thing you know is particularly interesting to in the region is that so many of these are areas of similar type. I think the National Park Service has an obligation to the American people to give them the best opportunity to see our parks. In other words, this going back to this bringing-the parks to the people, you know.

Herbert Evison: Uh nun.

Henry Schmidt: And this is one of the President's goals, this is one of the Secretary's goals, this is one of the Director's goals, this is one of my goals, and it's a big job. There are a lot of people involved in it now, your Boston Group, St. Louis and so forth. We'll have some of these on the west coast and your New York Group, more or less a pilot study, and I think I was very fortunate in getting in on the ground floor and help work it up.

Herbert Evison: Yeah.

Henry Schmidt: I had a lot of good help but very good people in there as my Assistant Superintendent, Administrative Assistant, and so forth, and we all worked together as a team and made it possible for this complex to really work.

Herbert Evison: Well now what did what did your central the the group organization consist of?

Henry Schmidt: Well, the group organization consisted of three assistant superintendents; one for New York, Manhattan areas, one for Statue of Liberty, and one for Fire Island. Fire Island had their complete staff. The staff in New York then in the group staff took care of the accounting, the payrolling, the personnel work, the maintenance work, for the areas in Manhattan and the Statue of Liberty, and this involved somewhere in the neighborhood of sixty five or seventy permanent employees and probably an equal number of lo, no more than that, a hundred and some, seasonal employees, counting Fire Island there was around a hundred and sixty seasonal employees because—

Herbert Evison: Yeah.

Henry Schmidt: —had a lot of fire guards, army lifeguards and so forth. But we ran the operation to begin with out at Theodore Roosevelt Birthplace and then after the third floor of Federal Hall was completed, we moved into a very nice set of offices in that historic place.

Herbert Evison: Yeah.

- Henry Schmidt: And during the period of time that this has been in being, we've to a point of completing the American Museum of Immigration. We're almost to a point of completing Castle Clinton; Federal Hall will soon be complete. We have more work to do at Sagamore Hill and at Theodore Roosevelt Birthplace, and at Grant and Hamilton Grange, but there has been a lot of progress and a tremendous increase in public use. Our exterior programs and the programs, environmental programs, and the in the study areas, Sagamore Hill and so forth have developed. We have big need program at Fire Island and all of it is going along very well, I think, as far as I can feel it except Ellis Island, and we just haven't been able to do what we should have done at that great place.
- Herbert Evison: Well, has it been decided what should be done?
- Henry Schmidt: There is a master plan that has been approved for Ellis Island and it is about was about a seven dollar seven-million-dollar bill that completes that job now. If you were to do it today, it would probably be in excess of twelve million actually—
- Herbert Evison: Hmm.
- Henry Schmidt: —It's a shrine and it offers opportunities for presentation to the entire nation the story of the immigrants when he came to this country plus a great area for certain performing arts and so forth outside in the recreational complex that I think should be a part of the overall New York picture, and this new thing on the Gateway up there if that ever really gets off the ground is going to be one of the biggest things in not only the National Park Service, but in the country.
- Herbert Evison: Uh mm yeah. Well, I have a feeling it's going to get off the ground too—
- Henry Schmidt: I think it will.
- Herbert Evison: —it's been surprising how quickly support for it seems—
- Henry Schmidt: There's been an awful lot of work done on it by the staff up there and by members of the Washington staff.
- Herbert Evison: Uh hmm.
- Henry Schmidt: You ought to just about milk me dry. We could sit here and talk all day but—
- Herbert Evison: Yeah, well it's getting along towards the time when you need to duck and I don't think you should have to hurry at the very last minute to do it, but I

feel that I have gotten on here at least as much value from your expression of philosophy as we've talked along as I have from accounts of your experiences.

Henry Schmidt: Well, my philosophy began I guess it just grew.

Herbert Evison: Yeah, well.

Henry Schmidt: And it certainly I feel that anyone working in management position in the National Park Service, and this starts down at the lowest level of management on up. You have to believe in what you're doing.

Herbert Evison: Yeah.

Henry Schmidt: You have to be flexible. You have to be innovative. You must have to take some of your own initiative to get some of these things going in your own areas. You know the Park Superintendent's one of the most important guys in the National Park system because he is the one man that is responsible for that one area that he is assigned to. I think if you take our young people coming up and if they have the philosophy and they have the will, you've gotta have the will, you can have the philosophy, but if you don't have the will they get kicked in the tail once in a while and get out and do some of these things. You can't do it.

Herbert Evison: Yeah.

Henry Schmidt: I've had my ears knocked down two or three times.

Herbert Evison: ((chuckle))

Henry Schmidt: I suppose I will again, but there are a lot of fine people in the service today. There's a lot of good leadership and I can't see the Park Service, we're going into the second century of National Park now and National Park Service has been a leader in the world in National Parks and I think you're going to see the development and the establishment and the placing into operations many of those areas which are lacking and mean so much to our natural scene, more than our heritage. It's our whole natural scene.

Herbert Evison: Yeah.

Henry Schmidt: And one of the things that I'm thoroughly convinced in is that if our program of education in the natural environmental areas and the various programs that are opened to the school children, if this is successful and I think it will be, this is where you have to start.

Herbert Evison: Yeah.

Henry Schmidt: You've got to start—

Herbert Evison: Yes.

Henry Schmidt: —with these kids, so that they know what this is all about.

Herbert Evison: That's right and now for the first time the service is being beginning to reach the young people in quantity.

Henry Schmidt: That's right.

Herbert Evison: It's been very sporadic in the past, the contacts with—

Henry Schmidt: There are many dangers along the way that I'm sure many of us are aware of and that is that our bureaucracy don't get too big and too heavy handed it stifles the initiative and stifles the individual to a point where I'm doing this much and this is what my job description says—

Herbert Evison: Yeah.

Henry Schmidt: And this is one of the dangers, but I think if we're aware of it why we can do something about it.

Herbert Evison: Uh hm. Of course, I might add to that I don't know whether I should on the record or not, but I think the one of the things that you have to fear is increasing pressures of politics.

Henry Schmidt: That's true. This is always a danger.

Herbert Evison: Yeah.

Henry Schmidt: Well, Herb it's been nice talking with you. I hope this is not too muddled and too mixed up and I'll enjoy reading it when you send it back.

Herbert Evison: It isn't. It isn't muddled or mixed up. I think it's been a really it's been more of a conversation than an interview, but one that I have surely enjoyed and I am just delighted. I was afraid day before yesterday that your van had come, and you were on your way, and I wasn't going to get this chance.

Henry Schmidt: I'm just afraid now my van is not going to get here today, and I'll be here another day. ((chuckling))

Herbert Evison: ((chuckle)) Well I hope it comes along because it's hard to wait for a thing like this. Anyway, I'm going to cut this off with a warm thank you.

[END OF INTERVIEW]