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Don Castleberry  
October 22, 2015

Interview conducted by Lu Ann Jones and Thea Garrett  
Transcribed by Teresa Bergen  
Digitized by Casey Oehler

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ANPR Oral History Project

Don Castleberry

22 October 2015

Interview conducted by  
Lu Ann Jones

Transcribed by  
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The narrator reviewed, corrected, and edited the transcript.

Audiofile: CASTLEBERRY Don 22 Oct 2015

[START OF TRACK 1]

Lu Ann Jones: So, can you give me your full name, please?

Don Castleberry: It's Don Castleberry. Don H. Castleberry from Arkansas.

Lu Ann Jones: Give me, we'll just introduce ourselves here.

Thea Garrett: Thea Garrett, from Acadia National Park.

Lu Ann Jones: And this is LuAnn Jones from the Park History Program in Washington.

[END OF TRACK 1]

[START OF TRACK 2]

Lu Ann Jones: So, when I start the interview, I just introduce the recording. I'll say that this is LuAnn Jones and it is October 23<sup>rd</sup>, is today the 23<sup>rd</sup>, I think, 2015. We're here in Black Mountain, North Carolina, at the Association of National Park Rangers Ranger Rendezvous. The interview that we're doing today is part of the ANPR Oral History Project. And I'm here with Don H. Castleberry and Thea Garrett. And this is LuAnn Jones. So, Mr. Castleberry, if we could just ask you, do we have your permission to record the interview?

Don Castleberry: Yes, indeed, you do.

Lu Ann Jones: Thank you. And we'll ask you to sign a release form at the end, also. So, thank you so much for being part of this.

Lu Ann Jones: I always go back, I'm interested in people's biographies, and who they were before they ever came to the Park Service. So, can you tell me a little bit, when you were born, and something about your family background growing up?

Don Castleberry: That's my favorite subject. (Lu Ann Jones laughs) The answer, I'm an Arkansan. I was born in Arkansas in 1932, and my parents were both from farms in sort of north central Arkansas, about 40 miles north of Little Rock. My mother was from a very prosperous farm that actually had electric lights and running water and an automobile. My father's farm 10 miles away, didn't have any of those things, and was almost a subsistence farm. But he went down to Conway, the county seat, and went to college and became a teacher and then he became a principal. Then he worked for the Social Security Administration as field representative, so that caused us to move around quite a bit. my mother's father lost all of his money when the banks closed in '29, and consequently, when they married in 1925 they had to live on a teacher's salary when the school boards didn't have money so they paid you in IOUs. They lived in a little crossroads country – one-store community, called Saltillo, a couple of houses and a school. And I'll go into this

more if you ask. But trying to seek a better life for themselves and their family. I had a sister, two years younger. We moved frequently. Looking back on it, I can't believe I went to so many different schools. Anyway, that's where we started.

Lu Ann Jones: Mm hmm. Were there kind of influential people, teachers, that you had? You said you moved a lot. But can you think of people, kind of early years, what you were beginning to get interested in at that time? Or people who might have nurtured a certain interest that you had?

Don Castleberry: Yeah, I've thought of that question. And to be honest, I don't think I did have. My father was obviously the biggest influence. He was a very good man and an extremely gentle and thoughtful person. And I sort of absorbed things like osmosis through him. They weren't like overt counseling or advice giving. It's my own fault that I would never have asked or expected or even thought to ask. So it didn't happen except for little things I just picked up from hearing things he said seeing how he conducted himself, and knowing one of my grandfathers, his father. He was a farmer who didn't have much. He never owned an automobile, and he had mules and a wagon. And he even worked as an itinerant fruit picker at times to make extra money. But he was known to be a stalwart, upstanding citizen of great integrity. I think that had some influence.

Lu Ann Jones: Mm hmm. Well you mentioned that you went to, when we talked, that you went to Little Rock Central High School. Correct?

Don Castleberry: Yeah. That was an interesting thing, as it turned out.

Lu Ann Jones: Yeah. Yes, as it turned out. So, what was, now we know Little Rock gained a certain fame in the 1950s. But what kind of place was that when you were there in the 1940s, yes?

Don Castleberry: Yeah. I graduated high school in '51. I went to what we called then junior high, which was seventh, eighth and ninth grade. And then high school was 10, 11, 12. By the time I graduated high school I had been in school, you know, 12 years. I had gone to 13 schools. (laughs) But Little Rock High, then it was called Little Rock Senior High, it was segregated. Which was something we never questioned, because we didn't know anything different from that. It's an absolutely stunningly beautiful building. It was declared America's most beautiful high school by the AIA [American Institute of Architects], and still is. And I'm on their alumni board now, so I'm in the building a lot. [Of course in 1957, it was changed to be Little Rock Central, when they built Hall High]. And that was when it got integrated. That was the year of the Little Rock 9 and the school was actually closed for one year. I know people who had their lives disrupted by that closure. In fact, I know all the Little Rock 9 now, and that's a great honor. In 1957 of course, I was already graduated and working in South America, but the news of the integration crisis had a profound effect on me. I was embarrassed that my hometown, school and state were guilty of such behavior, and vowed to work toward positive change. Later, after I had retired from NPS and returned home, I

had the chance to serve on the group that worked to have the school become a NPS historic site.

Lu Ann Jones: Mm hmm. Mm hmm. Well where did you end up going to college? You went to—

Don Castleberry: University.

Lu Ann Jones: University of Arkansas. So, what was your major there?

Don Castleberry: Geology.

Lu Ann Jones: And how did you choose that?

Don Castleberry: I had a plan. (laughs)

Lu Ann Jones: Good. I'm always interested when people have plans. (laughs)

Don Castleberry: Frankly I didn't really get a very good education at school. And looking back on it, I think it was worse than I realized. But the saving grace was I liked to read and I read a lot. One day when I started 10<sup>th</sup> grade, my family bought World Book encyclopedias, and I used to sit and read them. And I saw an article and a picture about Peru. I wasn't sure where Peru was, but I decided I wanted to go there. So, I said, how does one go about doing that? And I looked around, I thought maybe I might have some inclination towards science. So I looked around at the different sciences. I wasn't very good at math. So I concluded that geology would work because I could probably get a job that would take me to exotic places. The main thing I wanted was not to have an office job. I didn't want to work in an office.

Don Castleberry: And so that plan gelled in my mind. So everything from that time on was directed towards having that happen. So I went up to Fayetteville and, well, I went into the navy for a couple of years and came back so I could go to school on the GI Bill. That was during the Korean conflict. When I got to Fayetteville I, was able to go on the GI Bill, and I didn't have to cost my parents very much to go to school there. It's a beautiful campus. So I got a Bachelor of Science degree there with a minor in zoology. Before I left the campus, and my grades were mediocre at best – I neglected to study for some reason or other – when I graduated, I had two job offers before I left the campus. And one of them was to be the geologist with the U.S. Corps of Engineers on the Table Rock Dam project they were building at Branson, Missouri. Building a big lake up there. At that time, that was the only job offer I had, so I took it. or said I would take it.

Don Castleberry: And then some time shortly after that I got an offer from an oil exploration company down in Dallas, Texas, to go down and work as an oil exploration geologist. I took that one and declined the other job. So my first job was working out of Dallas, Texas, the parent company, was Texas Instruments, which is the well-known company nowadays. But it was kind of in its infancy then. But it was a company that originally started as a seismic oil exploration company. And they

started building the instruments, seismic instruments, and selling them to other companies. The instrument part of it outgrew the oil exploration. So the parent company was TI, but I worked for their science services division GSI. We did seismic oil exploration under contract to different oil companies around the world.

- Don Castleberry: So, I started there, and I got a few months of training and worked a while in Oklahoma and Texas and Louisiana, around the Gulf Coast. And got my first offer to go overseas. And guess where it was?
- Lu Ann Jones: Peru?
- Don Castleberry: Yeah. (laughter)
- Lu Ann Jones: So that was oil and gas exploration in Peru?
- Don Castleberry: Mm hmm.
- Lu Ann Jones: What did you think of Peru once you got there?
- Don Castleberry: Oh, it was wonderful, yeah. Our crews were really impressive; it was quite primitive in those days. This is still like 1956. The first place I lived was in a big tent camp. And we had these little two-men tents that we slept in. and we had a big tent bigger than this that we would use as a kitchen tent and a sort of recreation tent where we'd read and play cards. And then another tent for the office where we did our work. We had helicopters and lived out in the jungle. We'd live out for 21 days out there, and then we'd get a week of R&R back in Lima. So we did that, and then we moved to Colombia, South America, and did that. Moved to Trinidad in the West Indies and did that. So back and forth. Short stint back to the States. I worked in Denver for about six months, and went back down. That was exactly what I wanted. And I look back on it I thought well, you know, there's something to be said for planning. (laughter)
- Lu Ann Jones: Well, how did you then wind up in the Park Service?
- Don Castleberry: The Park Service, okay.
- Lu Ann Jones: Because you graduated in what year from—
- Don Castleberry: '55.
- Lu Ann Jones: '55. So, it's about eight years before you go to the Park Service, right?
- Don Castleberry: Yeah. In 1959, I married, as people are wont to do. Married a young lady that I'd met at Trinidad. About a year after that, we were going to have our daughter. I wanted her to be born in the States. So I took a sabbatical and came up to Miami and stayed up there a couple, three months or so. She was born in Coral Gables, my daughter Cathy. While I was in south Florida, I poked around and I got familiar with Everglades. I had a couple of rangers that I met. And I began to

think about what I could do to be more conducive to family life and raising a child and everything. I didn't think that being an oil geologist and living in tents in South America was exactly the way to do that. So I wanted to do something that would retain the aspects of being somewhat adventuresome and outdoorsy. And hadn't yet gotten hold of the idea of the environmental significance of that. I'll mention something about that later. But I never would have thought of working for anybody else. I wouldn't have gone to work for the Department of Commerce, you know, or something like that. Because being a park ranger in Everglades just really gave me everything I thought I wanted. I could still do the boats and the air boats and all the stuff that rangers get to do down there. But it was still conducive to family life and so forth. And that was really before *Silent Spring* and the whole environmental movement.

Don Castleberry: But I think several places we lived when I was growing up, it was sort of either a couple of small towns and even Little Rock in those days was quite small. A few blocks away be out in in the woods then. So I evolved a kind of, what I call an environmental ethic before it was really given that name, and before it was a very popular thing to do, I think. But that was inside of me, in my DNA, these days I say I was an environmentalist before that was "really cool" I believe, which caused me to gravitate toward the Park Service as opposed to some other either private or public organization. So anyway, so while I was there I filled out the, I guess it was the, what was it called? Application form for—

Lu Ann Jones: Form 171 is what people talk about.

Don Castleberry: Federal Service Entrance Exam. I sent it in. And what I said on there was (there was a place where you could answer where do you want to work)? I just said Everglades National Park. Of course, many years later I counseled hundreds of people about how to apply for a job at the Park Service. First thing I tell them is don't do that, you know? (laughs) Make your availability as broad as possible. You're not likely to get a job if you just put one place. So I shouldn't have gotten the job in the first place. (laughter) It shouldn't have happened. And everything just fell in place.

Lu Ann Jones: So, what was your first position there?

Don Castleberry: I was a GS-5 park ranger.

Lu Ann Jones: And what were you doing as that job? What were the duties there?

Don Castleberry: Oh, that was exactly what I wanted to do. I was assigned to Flamingo, which is way down, you know deep inside the park. A lot of boating, a lot of boat rescues. Be called on a lot of times, it was just somebody broken down or a health issue or something. What I always remember, the first year I was working, and we were doing controlled burning in Pine Lands Park. My wife was home watching TV, and she saw this notice, and she called the park ranger, chief ranger's office, and said, "President Kennedy just got shot."

- Lu Ann Jones: Wow.
- Don Castleberry: So, I'll always know when that happened.
- Lu Ann Jones: Yes. Yeah, I think many of us can remember that.
- Don Castleberry: Anyway, I was just doing ranger things. I loved doing it and I loved building skills. So I was in this period where I got certified as a scuba diver. I got private pilot's license. I learned to operate boats in the most remote water in the park, and navigate day or night. And just skill building, you know. Things that park rangers like to do. To be honest, my feeling was I had arrived. That was what I liked to just do. I didn't have a plan beyond that. (laughter) I didn't have any career goal. I talked about setting goals. And I didn't, I had arrived at what I thought I wanted, and I was just going to do that.
- Don Castleberry: It's probably worth mentioning that something that happened right before that, it was actually at the time that, I got the call, it was actually a cable I got from the superintendent of the Everglades offering me a job. And I was working on an offshore oil rig at that time. I'd been out 21 days. And I got back to Port of Spain Trinidad where my wife and daughter were. And had this cable from Warren Hamilton. Warren was superintendent of Everglades Park then. He says, we're offering you a job as park ranger. Please reply by so and so date. And that date had passed. And so, there again, I shouldn't have got the job. But I sent him a cable back that said, if it's still open, I'll take it. Part of what contributed to the timing was I knew that that job that I was on then was about to end. I was going to have to move to some other place unknown to me. It could be Saudi Arabia. It could be anyplace. It could be a place that I couldn't take my family. I thought well, I think I'll jump at this while the opportunity is there.
- Don Castleberry: And I don't really want to be so crass as to talk about money, but I had, when I graduated college, I had an eight year-old convertible and 300 dollars and a college degree. I wanted to get financially secure before I did all these other things. And so working overseas and getting a pretty good salary plus foreign cost of living bonus and things, and the fact that you had no place to spend your money because you're living out in the jungle, I saved some money. I'd been investing in the stock market and the stock of my company. And it was soaring at that time. So I didn't get rich, but I had enough money that I felt I could take a cut in salary and not sacrifice my family's circumstances. So that's the last time I'll mention money. But that figured into the decision at the time.
- Don Castleberry: So, I took the job offer. And so when I got to the park, this is kind of interesting, knowing what I know now. But it's a big park with a lot of rangers and other employees in it. For some reason, Warren Hamilton took an interest in me; obviously had seen my bio and my application. When I got there, they asked me to go see the superintendent. And I went in. he said, "I'd like you to go down to Flamingo." He said, "We don't have very good quarters down there. They're just



old World War Two trailers and they're not very suitable for families. But go down and have a look and see what you think."

Don Castleberry: So, I went down there. And my family hadn't come up yet. I was going up to Little Rock to visit my family. So I went down to Flamingo and I looked at the trailer and it was dingy. (laughter) It was bad.

Don Castleberry: So, I went back, went back and stopped in to see Warren. I said, "Well, I don't think I can put my family in there." I'd be willing to stay in it during my week of working. I'd get an apartment in Homestead, and we can make that work.

Don Castleberry: So, I went on up to Little Rock and stayed about a week. I came back and stopped back in to see him. He said, "Well, we've been able to make some changes." He said, "We have a house for you down in Flamingo." And there'd been a maintenance man living in this house. It was the newest house in Flamingo, it was just a little one-bedroom, one-bath house. But it was quite new. Mission 66 house. It was right at the entrance to the campground. And so, they put me in there, moved the family in.

Don Castleberry: I don't know if you know about how Everglades in the summer, it wasn't summer right then. But the first summer we were there, there was no air conditioning. And the mosquitoes were just killers. But by the second summer they installed air conditioners and it was a lot better.

Don Castleberry: Anyway, so, that brings us to that point where I'm happy as a clam living and doing ranger things, living there, I have a family there. My daughter's not yet in school, she's only like three by this time. So I was just going to stay right there the rest of my career. I thought that nothing would suit me better than that. I was happy as could be. Everglades was different than any other park I know of at that time, and certainly as parks are now. There was little distinction between interpreters and rangers. Rangers were not cops, technically law enforcement officers, but we didn't carry guns. We were not trained. And we didn't want to be. And if it's like it is now, I probably wouldn't have ever gone to the Park Service, because I didn't want to be a cop. And I didn't really know the difference. I just thought, they're all rangers. And that's what it was like then. For example, we used to have what they called boat-a-cade on Saturday mornings, in which the rangers would always meet and take a park patrol boat and lead five or six or eight families in boats up through the intricate waterways of the park, up into Shark River and see the porpoises and stop and fish. And had a box lunch and then come back down through the intricate waterways. Spend all day doing that. And that was great. Well, that job would be an interpreter's job any other time. But that's what I did, you know. And I didn't think anything about that. I thought that was what rangers did.

Don Castleberry: I was talking to Bob Krumenaker last night who just came off of a detail as superintendent down there. He said, "It's not like that now." (laughter) The distinctions between divisions are very clean now. And of course one of the things

that had happened was the professionalization, as they called it, of the commissioned law enforcement officers.

Lu Ann Jones: Well, a couple of things I was going to ask you. Did you ever meet Marjory Stoneman Douglas? I mean, I can't remember the publication of *River of Grass*, but certainly in the late '50s, early '60s.

Don Castleberry: Oh, yeah. It was out. I guess I could say I met her. I was at maybe a couple of public functions where she spoke.

Lu Ann Jones: Yeah. And certainly had been influential in that park.

Don Castleberry: Oh, yeah. She certainly was. Yeah. I never met John Pennekamp, but he was also influential. He was a journalist down there. The Pennekamp State Park is named for him. But yeah. I did. There's been some articles in the paper recently about a black family who lived in the islands in the Keys. Their name was Jones. The two grown sons of that family, their names were Sir John Jones and, let's see, Sir John, another odd name like that. And they lived out in the Florida Keys. They were in the part that's now Biscayne National Park.

Lu Ann Jones: I've heard, yes, okay.

Don Castleberry: And they're kind of well-celebrated now—

Lu Ann Jones: Yes.

Don Castleberry: —as being early environmentalists down there, trying to protect the islands. I did meet them, but Warren Hamilton, I kind of go back to him again because if you ask who was the most influential person in my whole career, in me having a career, it was him, because he did two things. One, he hired me, he took interest in me. After I'd been at Flamingo about two years, I used to go over occasionally to the sub-district office at Key Largo where we had a ranger over there. He took care of all the eastern half of Florida. Bay and all the keys. I immediately decided that was the job for me. So when it opened up, I had let it be known I wanted to do that, and they gave it to me. So I did that over there as the Key Largo sub-district ranger. I don't know if you know that area, but it's a—

Lu Ann Jones: Little bit.

Don Castleberry: The park's developed area is 18 acres. It's owned by the Park Service. It's on the bay side of Key Largo and has a boat dock and a house, which is really a neat house. And a little shop building and a little fleet of boats, like three boats. A desk on the back porch, enclosed back porch, with a file cabinet and a phone and radio. That was my office. And beauty of it was, I didn't have a boss anywhere within 50 miles, you know. And it was just like having your own little fiefdom. You got up every day and you decided what you were going to do that day, and nobody second-guessed that. We had these gray logbooks, canvas-covered log books. Every day I wrote down the notes about what I did that day – I patrolled these

keys. And those books are still down there. Two years ago I went down there and visited the ranger who's there now. And he dug them out the bottom of a drawer. I turned and I—

[END OF TRACK 2]

[START OF TRACK 3]

Don Castleberry: —I could see what I did on a certain day in 1965, you know.

Lu Ann Jones: They've survived the Park Service's filing system. (laughs) And also the humidity of the Florida Keys.

Don Castleberry: Yeah. I'm surprised they're not all mildew. That was pretty neat. But anyway, that was, to me, like the dream job. I still look on it as the best job I ever had.

Lu Ann Jones: What kind of, were you going to ask – now, I mean, that area has been, well, today, I think a lot of what they deal with is drugs and all sorts of contraband. Also poaching. What kinds of issues were you dealing with in the early '60s?

Don Castleberry: There was a little bit of poaching, but the crime stuff hadn't really started in those days. There was some at Homestead, but down there it's not much. I made maybe a half a dozen arrests or tickets for things. I caught some guys shooting ducks in the park. Arrested them. But the main thing that happened was this sort of Cuban influx had started.

Lu Ann Jones: Oh, right.

Don Castleberry: We were getting some of these really ragged worn-out commercial fishing boats from Cuba coming up and doing some long-line fishing out there. And they were, if they did anything in the park, it was legal then. (Commercial fishing has since been ruled out). But they all had to come under permit. So that was part of my job. And some of those boats, you didn't want to get on. They were pretty scroungey. But it so happened that while I was there, it wasn't really my initiative, but it was time on the timetable they had to put everybody that was working commercially in the park under a commercial use permit. We had the long line fish guys and some net fishermen and bonefish guides. And they all had to be contacted and their boats inspected and put under permit. And that was, I did all that over about a two-and-a-half year period one day a week. Usually I would just not go out on the water. I would go up and down the Keys, talking to the different marinas, contacting the commercial guides or whoever. And I got that all done. They got that done by the time I left they were all under permit. And I ticketed some people for—

[Interruption]

Don Castleberry: Spearfishing in the park and little things like that. But we really didn't have the crime you have now. It got really bad in Homestead later. There

was no drug issue down there to speak of back then. But we did a lot of interesting things. They had the American crocodile in that part of the park, which we obviously wanted to keep healthy. Occasionally one would get out of the park and over into somebody's swimming pool or lake or something down in the Keys. They'd always call me, and I'd have to go catch a crocodile. (laughter) But we had a trap that was made out of two 50-gallon oil drums welded together with a grill on one side and a trap door over on the other side. And it floated with floats on each side. So I'd take it in the pickup truck. And it took two people to do that. So I would borrow a ranger from headquarters or somewhere. And we'd go down and dump the trap out into somebody's lake and bait it with a dead chicken or something. And when we caught the croc, then we just floated over to the shore and hefted it up into the back of the truck. Take it over into the park and release it. And that was a lot of fun.

Don Castleberry: We used to go up to Miami. There was a university professor at the University of Florida who had a big operation Costa Rica where he would get baby turtles, sea turtles, green turtles. He'd bring them and send them up by air to Miami airport. We'd go up and pick them up. And we had a flotilla of volunteers. We'd take them out to the beaches and let them out on the beach so that they'd swim down and get in the water and hopefully imprint themselves so they'd come back there to the nest. And lots of things like that. I guess you'd call it wildlife management. We had big sea turtles nesting on the beaches there. And the raccoons knew that. They would come down and steal the eggs. So we had a program where we'd take our big boat and go out to Cape Sable. Tow a smaller boat. Take a bunch of have-a-heart traps. Put them up and down the beach. Catch all the raccoons we could right before nesting season. Put them in a big cage. Take them way up someplace else and let them loose so that they couldn't get back there before the turtles lay their eggs. Just that kind of thing was just, that's exactly what I wanted to do. We had a great time doing it. And I could have stayed there forever.

Lu Ann Jones: Well, I think Butch Farrabee mentioned to me that he and you were in Ranger Intake class?

Don Castleberry: Yeah. Yeah.

Lu Ann Jones: So, can you tell me about that? On the one hand, you're kind of narrating this story about the Park Service where you're there in the Everglades. I'm wondering when you begin to see the bigger Park Service from the tip of Florida.

Don Castleberry: Well, that's perfect timing for the question. What happened there was in '65, summer of '65, I got selected as one of the class to go there as a summer class. Butch was in there. It was out at Albright Training Center. And in those days, it was three months. You went out there and they had

field trips and they taught you how to pack a mule and rappel over the edge of the Grand Canyon, and, you know, other things. It was basic introduction to the National Park Service. That was the opening of my eyes in terms of what the rest of the Park Service is like. I began to have a little bit of an understanding that there was a bigger world out there in the park system. It was interesting, you might be able to imagine this, but not everybody in the Park Service thinks going to work in the Everglades is a good thing. (laughter) So we had people there who had worked out west that just couldn't wait to get back out west. I didn't know what they were talking about, because I didn't know west then.

Don Castleberry: Going to that class was, did that for me. It still didn't make me want to move to other parks I still was expecting to stay right there in the Everglades.

Don Castleberry: How that changed was one day I'd been there about five years and the phone rang and it's Warren Hamilton. He had moved from Everglades to the Western Regional Office. He didn't like working there, so he got himself transferred to be the superintendent of Zion National Park. You know enough about Park Service, you know enough about employee policies to know that it doesn't work like that now. But he called me up and said, "I have a vacancy as my assistant superintendent at Zion. It is a joint position. You're the superintendent of Cedar Breaks National Monument, which is only open in the summertime because it's 10,000 feet in elevation and closed in winter. And you have a house down in Zion that you keep year-round. And then summertime there's an apartment at Cedar Breaks, you move up there." (It was a promotion from GS-7 to 9.)

Don Castleberry: So, my daughter was in first grade then. So frankly I said, "Let me think about it." I thought about it really long and hard because I really didn't want to leave Everglades. And I didn't grasp at all the significance of the offer. I thought, that's really interesting, but do I really want to do that? I even thought about not staying in the Park Service and just finding something else I could do in the Keys.

Don Castleberry: But at any rate, after a while, we talked it over and said well you know, it could be a nice adventure. Zion's a very pleasant place. I sure wasn't thinking career. I was thinking I'll move out here and see what this is like. My wife having been raised in the West Indies and living in south Florida had never even seen snow.

Don Castleberry: So anyway, we decided to go. So we moved out there, I think it was in June of '67. Zion, by that time, was reasonably warm. We had a nice house, this Mission 66 house. We drove into the Oak Creek residential area. I pulled into the driveway of our house. And we were met by our next door neighbors, Bob and Anita Peterson. He was the chief ranger at Zion. And they had cocktails in their hands. (laughter) That was the

beginning of a long friendship that goes on to this very day. But anyway, we moved in there.

Don Castleberry: And then, first day, we went up to Cedar Breaks. They were just opening the park with rotary snow blowers and snow banks were over your head. And snow blowers went up to the house and made a tunnel. You could go into the house through a snow tunnel.

Lu Ann Jones: And this was in June.

Don Castleberry: And the snow was over the top of the house. Neither my wife or daughter had ever seen snow before. So this was quite an introduction. So it was, but they took to it really great. They liked it. So we used to live down in Zion in winter. My daughter was in Springdale Elementary, the principal worked for the park in the summer as a seasonal. I think there were four little girls in the second grade, and they were all named Kathy. They were all daughters of Park Service people. (laughter)

Thea Garrett: When did the significance of the position you had been given, when did that start to dawn on you?

Don Castleberry: It didn't dawn on me right away. I think what happened there was, it may be over a year I'm actually performing as a superintendent. Albeit that I have all the assistance and oversight that I want from the big staff at Zion. But when I'm at Cedar Breaks, I'm just being a superintendent. I'm making all the decisions a superintendent makes. And then when I'm at Zion, I'm just doing the jobs that like an assistant superintendent would do. I was the park photographer. I did the concessions stuff. And whatever else Warren needed. The first time it really dawned on me, I think, was that, I was invited to attend the first superintendent's conference, the regional superintendent's conference. I go out there, I think it was held in Santa Fe, the regions were configured differently then. So I'm in a room with all these people, some of them iconic, well-known old names that I didn't know them at that time. It seemed like I fit in okay with them. And I was comfortable with it and they seemed to accept me. And it sort of dawned on me that I had made an epic leap there. (laughter) Without realizing it, you know.

Don Castleberry: But what also happened to underscore that was at that time, this was '67 to '69, right along in there, the Park Service was deeply engaged in a lot of really serious training. They were doing some of the kind of touchy feely stuff that was probably not too well thought out. But they were doing a lot of managerial grid and things like that that measure your leadership style and what not. And I was getting signals that I was pretty good at that. And this never had occurred to me until about that time that maybe I might have abilities in that area. So I had exposure to all these people and I'd see which ones I thought might be worth emulating and which ones not.

(laughs) And so I'd say over a period of about two years of that, I came to realize what really happened to me here, at the bottom of the pyramid, you've got all these park rangers. Then the pyramid gets more and more narrow as you go up. So, if you apply for a promotion to the management ranks, I already am one. (laughs) And all the rest of the rangers have to maybe compete just to get on the cert, you know. And so, I'd gotten that little boost, which I had not realized before.

Don Castleberry: So that was, I think between '67 and '70, that kind of came clear. The training, I think some of it was ill-advised. Some of it got a little bit over in the armchair psychology and all that. And some people were greatly intimidated by that. But I was actually kind of intrigued and invigorated by it. I kept getting signals that maybe I might be good at it.

Lu Ann Jones: What kinds of characteristics, well, one, what kinds of characteristics do you think people identified in you that they could see that you would be good as a supervisor? And what kinds of characteristics did you see in other people who you admired that you thought, oh, this is something I want to adopt as my own?

Don Castleberry: Well, you know, I guess I can't answer that without being a little self-serving. I can't analyze myself too well. But I would say primarily steadiness and responsibility. Those are characteristics I would claim. Looking back on it, having been somebody who's hired superintendents and supervised them and everything, those are the characteristics that I look for. You want somebody that's not going to embarrass the Park Service. And their integrity has got to be impeccable. Honesty. And kind of a quiet competence kind of a thing, I think.

Lu Ann Jones: Well, I'm always interested in these, as you said, the management beginning to talk about these kinds of management philosophies. Where do you think that came from in the Park Service? I mean, was there a particular person or a particular impulse? Or what was happening, do you think, to kind of be more mindful about trying to train people to be managers? Any ideas about that?

Don Castleberry: Well, you know, without having researched the history, I just have to say what I perceive. And that was Frank Kowski. Frank was the guy who, he was my regional director in Santa Fe when I went to Zion, had been the guy that had conceived, as far as I know, the idea of having the Albright Training Center. And he was first director. He was the director when I went through as a trainee. And from what I've read, heard and perceived, I think, I'm sure there were people whose shoulders he stood on. But I thought he was the one that kind of got that push. But the stuff about the touchy feely training and all that, I believe, was probably just the era we were in. I think that was probably going on in private industry and universities and government. And probably everybody was getting some

of that. Some people, as I said, would be intimidated and turned them off. But it actually inspired me, and then there was the influence of Mather, Albright, and some other luminaries from the early years, guided by the Organic Act and stated mission of NPS.

Lu Ann Jones: Was part of it, from another context, a different part of my career, looking at the DuPont Corporation, for example, in just about the same period. And there were very similar kinds of winds of management philosophy. Was some of that to just kind of change the relationship between managers and kind of rangers? Kind of different grades? I mean, was that part of the goal? Or was the goal just to make for better relationships in general at the Park Service?

Don Castleberry: Well, I wish I could answer that. I think I don't really know. But I remember about the time I started going in, beginning to feel comfortable, like I belonged in superintendents' conferences and things, it was a very real sense that there had been sort of an epic shift. And it was moving from the old time domineering, autocratic, controlling superintendents of old in which they were the king of all of their domain. And moving into an era of what I guess I would call modern participatory management styles. Who conceived that and to what extent it was a thought out strategy, I don't know. But it was definitely happening. And I know, I remember feeling that I was a part of a new breed of park managers who were not going to be autocratic, would be participatory managers. And who were going to listen to their employees as well as talk to them. And whether that was part of a strategy or a wave that was going through, or just how it happened to happen, I don't know. But it definitely was happening. So most of the people who sort of came of age in terms of being first time superintendents in about that era, they're all still friends of mine. They're people who I think consciously or subconsciously they knew that was what was happening.

Lu Ann Jones: That's really interesting. I think you're one of the first people out of all of these who kind of made that distinction. I find that really fascinating, that change in philosophy there in practice.

Don Castleberry: Yeah. Another thing that was happening was, sometime during my early years, I became aware that here were a lot of people in senior positions in the Park Service who were second generation, third generation and so forth. You always had a kind of a feeling that they were kind of special and they kind of had special advantages. And that began to melt away. Very good friends of mine fall in that category, and I think it's a great thing that they are. You know, Casey Cooke and Bill Wade and all these people who've done great things to the Park Service, a lot of them are second generation, third. Casey, I think, is fourth or something. That did help to keep traditions alive for those of us who came in, cold, from outside the NPS family.



- Thea Garrett: I'm so sorry to interrupt. I think that there's going to be exhibitors up in this room is what they were telling me.
- Lu Ann Jones: Oh, I thought that was in the room next door.
- Thea Garrett: He said that he's going to start there, but it could be as soon as the next 20 minutes.
- Lu Ann Jones: Uh oh. Well, let's stay here for another couple minutes, then we'll think about what our strategy will be at that point. Okay. All right. (laughs)
- Don Castleberry: I'm sure we can find a [unclear]
- Lu Ann Jones: Yeah. We might have to, well, we'll think about that. So, the next place you went now as a superintendent, I guess you were now, is it—?
- Don Castleberry: Timpanogos Cave?
- Lu Ann Jones: Yes. Right. So how did you make that move?
- Don Castleberry: Well, I don't think they had yet instituted the program whereby they put out announcements and you apply for a place, the way it's been for many years. But it wasn't happening that way then. I think I just got a call from the regional office asking me if I'd like to go there. But the significance of that to me in retrospect was that, if you think about it, here I am as a fledgling superintendent, assistant superintendent and superintendent at the same time. With all the assistance and oversight that I might need, and yet with as much freedom as I wanted and could handle. It was a perfect way to get introduced to being a manager in the Park Service. You could do all the things that superintendents do, but you've got the backup of the staff and the superintendent. But then the significance of Timpanogos to me was this is a full superintendency reporting directly to the regional director. Nobody in between. And it's a park that has, even though it's a relatively small park, it has all the parts of a big park. It has a concessioner and a cave guide service. We didn't have a campground, but we had a picnic area and big maintenance crews. So you had everything that any size park would have, just in that size. You were surrounded totally by a national forest so you had the dealing with a sister agency. And lots of visitation. So I was then a true, full, independent superintendent, Gaining experience. It was still at a relatively small, manageable size park that, unlike being thrown in after you've been the chief ranger at Tetons or something, you know; suddenly you're superintendent of a very large, complex park. That's done, and they can succeed. But this way, you work into it so thoroughly that by the time you get there, you've got all the skills, I think.
- Lu Ann Jones: Well maybe we should make our move now. I was told that we would be able to be in here, but we'll go ahead and make our—

Don Castleberry: Fine.

[END OF TRACK 3]

[START OF TRACK 4]

Don Castleberry: There's one activity that's kind of significant that happened back when I was at Zion/Cedar Breaks that ought to probably be mentioned.

Lu Ann Jones: Okay.

Don Castleberry: That was, as far as I know, the first foray into clustering. And, which came of interest later during Clinton administration, when they tried it again.

Lu Ann Jones: So, explain what that is, was. The clustering. What did that mean?

Don Castleberry: That was when, in our case, they set up a – what was it called? – a general superintendent's position in Cedar City, Utah, which was filled by the superintendent of Zion. And so I went with him as his assistant general superintendent of Zion, Zion Bryce Cedar Breaks, Pipe Spring and Capitol Reef. And that happened in 1969. And so, what was significant about it, and then if you want me to go through this on tape, I will. But the idea was that you'd have one general superintendent and he'd have a chief ranger and a chief of maintenance and administration and all that. And they would oversee sort of like a mini regional office over these five parks that were fairly close together in distance. So that was the decision that was made in Washington. We attempted to carry it out. That meant that instead of living in a house in Zion, I had to move into an apartment in Cedar City, and everybody else had to move up there. The interesting thing about it was, it didn't change the positions of superintendents in the park at all. So, in retrospect it was kind of difficult to figure out where the savings came in, and where the benefits came.

Don Castleberry: But it was somebody's idea about reorganizing. And so having had that experience, which I only had for about a year, because after a year I got to go up to Timpanogos. But had enough of it to see how it worked or how it didn't work. I thought that the downfall of it was that it didn't, it wasn't terrible, it didn't ruin anything. It just didn't save anything. The only way they could have really made it work is if you lowered the grades of the superintendents or did something there, so you'd have some savings to show for having taken the step of adding a new management layer.

Don Castleberry: So, we went through it. It didn't, once I moved to Timp Cave, it didn't really have any more effect on me. Then it came back again during the Clinton administration, when they tried to do something similar. I thought at the time, I was not yet retired, and I thought, well there's a dumb idea. They're doing it again. And didn't we learn anything the first time?

- Lu Ann Jones: Well, when you were making some of these moves kind of, one of the things I've talked with people about is how you did balance those family concerns with the career concerns. And how were you thinking about those, all those parts of your life?
- Don Castleberry: Well, for one thing, my wife didn't work. So I didn't have to deal with her career issues. And my daughter, I had moved so much, as I explained, I think I had something like 17 schools by the time I graduated college, that I was just used to that. It didn't affect me very much, I don't think. I didn't think it was affecting my daughter. But she changed schools a lot, too – like she went to the first grade in Islamorada, Florida. And the school bus picked her up right in front of the house and took her down there. But right before finishing the first grade, we moved to Springdale. So she went to Springdale for the second grade and the third grade. And then we moved to Cedar City, and she went there the fourth grade and 5<sup>th</sup> grade at Timpanogos Cave.
- Don Castleberry: What had happened to me I considered to be very significant. I said moving around, going to a lot of different schools I don't think hurt me and, in fact may have had some benefits. But my parents were very conscious of the idea that they wanted me to go to the same high school all the way through. And I thought that was a good idea. I wanted to, to the extent that I could control my destiny, I wanted to be someplace where when it came time for her to go into the ninth or tenth grade, that we'd be in one place. And that happened, when we went to Indiana Dunes, so she went to all four high school grades at one school, as I did. So that was the only impact that I can think of it had to the family was that she probably changed schools a little bit more than average. But not near as many times as I did. And she did get full time in one high school.
- Don Castleberry: So even though I was doing some of this for the family reasons, I felt like the benefits of living in a national park and getting to travel and see different parts of the world more or less compensated for whatever downsides there were.
- Don Castleberry: Now there were costs about non-LDS [Latter-Day Saints] person going to school in Utah that I think she did pay a little bit of a price for that. But it wasn't overt and really serious, I don't think. But she probably faced some discrimination, I suspect. Just little things, you know, like you want to be a Girl Scout, the Girl Scout meetings take place in the LDS church by an LDS minister. And everybody else in the class is probably a Mormon. I don't think she was overtly discriminated against, but there's a little bit of a price she paid, I think. That's about the only thing I can think of in that vein.
- Lu Ann Jones: When we talked before, before we came here today, you said that going to Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore was one of the significant steps in your

career. And a nice surprise, I think you might have put it. So, could you talk about that experience in particular?

Don Castleberry: Absolutely. Yeah, there's an interesting story there. I debated about how detailed I would want to get about this. But I think I'll just go ahead and tell the story as it was.

Lu Ann Jones: Okay.

Don Castleberry: When I was at Flamingo, we had a district ranger there. His name was J.R. I'll go that far. And he had problems. He was, I think he was probably bipolar. But anyway, he was very up and down. And he had a sub-district ranger who worked under him who also had some problems. They didn't get along with each other. So, all the rangers that came in there were sort of subjected to pushing and pulling about who was going to fall in who's orbit and that sort of thing. And it was kind of difficult. But I got along with J.R. fine.

Don Castleberry: So, one day after I'd been to this Timpanogos Cave about four years, three and a half years, here's an interesting thing I just thought about. The eight years I was in Utah, let's see, how's the best way to describe this? I was at Zion/Cedar Breaks for three and a half years, and Timpanogos for about four. We were under three different regions due to the regional reorganization that was taking place. So when I started out there, we were under the Southwest Region. Frank Kowski was the regional director.

Don Castleberry: They reorganized it and all the parks in Utah were put under the Midwest region. Moved in there and Dave Beal was the regional director. So, we all had to go to Omaha to get oriented to a new set of regional practices and staff.

Don Castleberry: And then, wouldn't you know it? They established the Rocky Mountain Regional Office. We were placed under Rocky Mountain Region. We had to go through there.

Don Castleberry: So, by the time I went to Indiana Dunes, I'd been in half the regions that the Park Service had already. So there were good things about that, because you got to know people in a broader range. But it's just kind of peculiar. You think how many times you see a thing like that happen. I don't know of any other time quite like that. So that was a factor.

Don Castleberry: But what happened was, the last reorganization placed Pennsylvania from the Mid-Atlantic Region into the Midwest Region. And suddenly Dave Beal, who's regional director in Omaha, is in charge of Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore. And who was the superintendent of Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore but the very same J.R. (laughs)

- Don Castleberry: So, Dave invited me into his office one day and he said, “You know, we’ve got this park over there at Indiana Dunes that’s suddenly in our region. Park Service didn’t want that park. And Hartzog said, “Well, we may have to take it but we’re not going to do anything about it. We’re just going to let it sit there.”
- Don Castleberry: And so, they had put J.R. into the superintendency to let him sit there with it, and then all of a sudden, the forces that be in Chicago Metropolitan area that were pushing the park to happen said how come the Park Service is not doing anything here? And they started rattling cages. They said, we need somebody to go over there and be a kind of a steady force. And so we’d like you to go over there. We’re going to set up a position called assistant superintendent/chief of operations. Your job is going to be to – the park was still relatively new – figure out what kind of staff you need and what kind of organization you need. More or less implement, make this a working park. And J.R.’s role will be mainly handling the politics and sort of overview stuff.
- Don Castleberry: So, I knew I could work with J.R. I knew he had shortcomings, but I figured I could deal with that. So that’s what happened.
- Don Castleberry: So, I went over there and we had a kind of skeleton staff. The park had been established a few years by that time but hardly anything had been done. So we set up an organization, decided what kind of staff we needed, recruited the staff. We had inherited a Nike missile site that was in the park. So we took that and turned it into our maintenance area. We inherited a church. We turned it into the headquarters. Working with the Save the Dunes Council, the local environmental community, we got a plan done to put the first developments down at the beach. And we basically brought it into a working park.
- Don Castleberry: Sid Yates was the congressman from Chicago who had the biggest interest in it. He was on our appropriation committee in Washington, and he had a lot of clout. And he was listening to the Save the Duners, we called them. So a lot of cages were being rattled, and the park was on everybody’s radar. To the extent that the director in Washington appointed a man on his staff, Jerry Tays, he was, to be the Indiana Dunes key man in the Washington office. So Jerry and I were on the phone almost every day, working on different issues that came up to them, or that needed to come up to them. What that did was sort of put me on the radar screen in Washington, I guess, really for the first time, where people up there began to know who I was, I think. And Nat Reed was assistant secretary of the interior. He came to the park several times, because they were trying to build a nuclear power plant on our border, which we fought. And fought successfully, too. So I was working directly with him a lot. So, I guess the upshot of all that was I sort of got to be known around there for the first time.

- Don Castleberry: But that was an extremely rewarding period. I worked there for about four years. Just under four years. We were really doing things. We were making a real park out of something that wasn't a park before. We were buying hundreds of houses, tearing them down. And fighting battles. Every year there was a park expansion bill in the hopper to make the park bigger. And every time they did that caused us a whole new set of headaches with locals who were afraid we were going to take their houses away. And we probably were. So, a lot of smoke and fire and controversy. And that was stimulating, you know, and feeling that you were really doing things that made a difference.
- Don Castleberry: We put the first developments on the ground there in the form of a beach facility. People could actually come there and do what people are supposed to do in the park like that. So that was what occupied my time there. We put in a youth YCC program, a Youth Conservation Corps Camp there, and recruited the staff for it and recruited the youth to go in it, and ran that. We were always buying new land and fighting with the locals and carrying out these, you know, the law allowed us to have these, we called them lease-backs where we could buy their house and they could buy back the use of it for so much a year. So we had a lot of people that were living in the houses that we owned for a certain period of time. Then when their time ran out, none of them wanted to leave. So they'd fight that. Things were controversial.
- Don Castleberry: Save the Dunes Council was very, very aggressive environmental organization. When the nuclear power plant issue came up, we worked really closely with them. And we fought that thing to a stop.
- Lu Ann Jones: How did you, well, you said that one of your characteristics is kind of a steady temperament. Just in terms of working with community groups, it seems like that would be such a good trait to have.
- Don Castleberry: Yeah.
- Lu Ann Jones: Was that some of the hardest kinds of community relations that you'd had to build up until that date?
- Don Castleberry: Up till that time it was, yeah. Because even though you were philosophically in step with the environmental folks, they were extremely critical of the Park Service for maybe some decisions that had been made, or for decisions that should have been made that weren't. So they felt like they had to take the lead in forcing the National Park Service to do stuff, even though, as I say, we were philosophically aligned. I actually was able to develop and maintain pretty good relationships with, there were about three people there that were big movers for what we called the Duners. I had pretty good relationships with them. After a while, they were working more with me, even though J.R. was supposed to be the one. But I think

he was kind of more up and down. And I think that was where that steady characteristic paid off a little bit.

Lu Ann Jones: Well, in previous superintendencies, how much had that political realm been part of your job? Or is that just with any superintendent's job, you're dealing with representatives and—

Don Castleberry: Well, it wasn't so much at Zion at Cedar Breaks because I had the superintendent above me there to deal with most of that. But at Timpanogos Cave we had some of it because of the Forest Service being around us. And Timpanogos Cave is up in a narrow canyon, and it's surrounded by thousands of acres of national forest. But the only access to the national forest is through the park. And we had a visitor center, and they didn't.

Don Castleberry: So, the first thing that happened when I go there was the forest supervisor came to see me and he said, "We don't have a visitors' center. You have a visitor center. We've got this huge forest. We need a place to be able to contact people when they come up the canyon. Would you be willing to enter into an agreement that said we would let them use a portion of our visitor center?" We had a Mission 66 visitor center. "And let them come in there and have a desk and be able to staff it and work with the public."

Don Castleberry: And I said, "Well, yeah. Makes good sense to me." We're supposed to be cooperating with sister agencies, you know, that's what we do. I didn't ask anybody. I didn't like think I had to ask the regional director or anything to do something like that. But the guy who I had replaced hated the Forest Service. He had formerly worked for them, and he wouldn't let them do that. So what seemed to me was a no-brainer, they were just falling all over themselves and thankful. So, stuff like that, that was a political move. But I didn't do it for political reasons. But you know, I could get anything from the Forest Service after that. (laughter) And, of course, as the superintendent, I did maintain a professional relationship with the local elected officials, for the first time.

Lu Ann Jones: I'm sure this might have changed over time, or changed from region to region or director for whom you worked as a superintendent. But what was the level of decision that you were able to make yourself. And what kind of decision would have had to have gone to the assistant or regional director?

Don Castleberry: A quick way, I think, to approach that, is to tell you that in the four years or so that I was the superintendent at Timpanogos Cave, not one time did any member of the regional office ever come there. (laughter) Regional director didn't come there and the deputy regional director didn't come there. Chief ranger didn't come there. The only person we ever had come there officially was the public safety guy that came and inspected the

facilities to make sure they were meeting all public health standards. So basically I felt that I was free to make just about any decision I wanted to. I don't remember ever going to the regional office to ask anything. That's just the way it was.

Lu Ann Jones: Now did somebody in the regional office review you, though? Did they do your performance plan, your appraisal at the end of the fiscal year? How did that work?

Don Castleberry: Well, that's a really good question. And I tried to remember this. But if they did anything at all, it was so cursory that I didn't remember it. Like I didn't go in and have a sit-down session with anybody. I don't remember ever having a grading of any sort. I mean, it happened later, but not then. So I just, you know, what I did was just use what I thought was common sense. If an issue was presented before me, to me somehow, I just tried to do what seemed like the rational thing to do. I didn't think about whether the regional director would like to know about this or not. It just, it just is how it worked.

Don Castleberry: I'll jump ahead just a second to tell you the first time I ever had a formal, sit-down evaluation was after I was – no, that's not true. When I was in Philly as the deputy regional director, the regional director did it and he always rated me very highly, but we worked so closely, that it never seemed to be 'an issue. But when Bill Mott was director and I was the Midwest regional director, we met at Isle Royale and he did a sit-down evaluation. Of course, he was relatively new and we didn't know what to make of him. So, we were going to check into, we flew to Duluth from Isle Royale and we were going to check into a hotel and fly back home the next day.

Don Castleberry: He said, "Well, I'm supposed to do an evaluation of you. As far as I know, I think you're doing a real good job." (laughter) That was it. So I guess really, in Omaha, was the first time I really had one. But that was not handled in an extremely formal way.

Lu Ann Jones: Did you have superintendents' meetings? Did you meet other superintendents with any kind of network there where you call, if you had a question you had peers that you could look to for some advice?

Don Castleberry: Well, let's see. Of course, in the Zion/Cedar Breaks period, that was built in, because I had that park and those parks that were in that little group of five. Then when I was at Timp Cave, there were regional superintendents' conferences. One a year, typically, usually in Santa Fe. That was the only time we really communicated. I don't remember like I ever called a superintendent or had one call me and ask about something. There was a, Bates Wilson was the superintendent of Canyonlands. He had an assistant superintendent who I think he was kind of an empire builder. He came up



with this idea that since they were a big park in Utah, that maybe they should sort of form an informal cluster and he would be in charge of it and the superintendents of all the small areas of Utah would kind of interact with him.

Don Castleberry: So, we were asked to all come down to Moab and talk about that. We went down there and he presented the case, this fellow Joe did. I decided that I didn't think that was something I wanted to participate in. So I just went back home and didn't ever do anything else about it. That was the last we heard of that. But so, there were little things like that. But no, there wasn't a lot of communications. There might have been among some of the old-timers that knew each other over the years. But I didn't do any of that to speak of. We often did get together at training sessions at Grand Canyon and elsewhere, and developed cooperative relations, that way.

Don Castleberry: Another thing that did happen that was kind of interesting, though, I think near the Timp days was, so I went there in 1970. So the Earth Day and all that had occurred by then. The Park Service was going on an overt environmental kick at that time. Which was fine with me, because that's where I came from to start with.

Don Castleberry: So, they set up an office in Salt Lake. I think it was just called the Utah State Office. It was filled by a guy named Phil Iverson, who'd been a superintendent of Glacier. Phil was a very good guy and very benign manager. He saw his job as interacting with state government in Utah related to parks and tourism. And he didn't see his role as overseeing the superintendents or anything. He didn't have much of a staff, a couple of people, but he brought a guy named Glen Clark in who was a trained environmental scientist. He was supposed to try to work with all the parks in Utah to get them sort of overtly involved in environmental education—

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Don Castleberry: —and promoting environmental principles. Well that was right down my alley, and I was the closest park to Salt Lake. I think I was the only one who sort of took him up on it. So it was easy for him, because he was close. And I knew Glen from before.

Don Castleberry: So, we instituted together a bunch of new environmental interpretation themes that we introduced in park interpretive programs there. Cave tours and brochures that we used to take people up the trail. And then visitor center displays and things. I was kind of proud of those. And I still am. They were, you know, they were precise and focused on what kind of environmental stories the Park Service ought to be, you know, presenting and interpreting. I thought we did some really good work.

- Don Castleberry: We had a lot of the, almost all of the staff were Mormons there. They were mostly students from BYU or professors or something. We had one guy that, after we instituted those, he left his badge and some stuff on my door with a note saying that he quit because those things were contrary to his religious teaching and so forth.
- Lu Ann Jones: Interesting.
- Don Castleberry: And that was the only overt thing that happened as a result of that. But that's kind of the long-winded answer to your question as best I can remember it, as how much sort of interaction took place, cross-fertilization kind of stuff.
- Lu Ann Jones: You were talking about you'd come there at the height of the environmental movement. Or it's really getting, you know, wind under its wings. But also the Wilderness Act, the National Historic Preservation Act, I mean, were you conscious of like, well, I mean, you talked about the management styles, that there were certain changes that were in the air. But how much did that kind of legislation, how much did that affect how you were managing the park?
- Don Castleberry: Yeah. By the time we were, I was, at least, quite aware of all that. My part, well, we all had, you know, if you were 5,000 acres or more in the Wilderness Act, you had to do a study. Or at least basically it was considered to be wilderness until a study could be done. Cedar Breaks when I was there and Zion both had that. So we had field hearings in both those parks for public comments on implementing the Wilderness Act. We completed all the documentation, sent them into Washington, where of course they moldered in there (Lu Ann Jones laughs) because political reasons up there. But we knew about them. We filled them, we agreed with them. We filled in our, filled out our responsibilities, too, I think. I know we did. Yeah. By that time I was beginning to have a picture, a more service-wide picture of things. And I was happy that it was happening.
- Don Castleberry: I don't know if you've ever come across the name of Boyd Evison, but he was kind of my role model and hero in that sense. He was a little bit older than me and had been around the service a long time. He was a second generation Park Service guy. Boyd was the first manager that I knew of to really go into his park – he was the superintendent of Great Smokies at this time – and he really went into his park and tried to be out front in implementing all these environmental themes and practices. Actually I learned something from him, too, in that sense that you couldn't push it too far, too fast, or you'd lose your effectiveness. That happened to him. He kind of, he got a lot of good stuff done, but he paid a price for it. I think he probably lost that job as a result of that. I don't know if that's actually true, but that's what I felt.

- Don Castleberry: But anyway, we knew about it, and we were in accord with it. At least, I certainly was.
- Lu Ann Jones: One of the questions, before we go on to where you go into regional offices. When you were at the park level, what difference did it make who the national director of the National Park Service was? I mean, were you aware of shifting philosophies or was it just okay, that's up there and this is where I am? You're there, enter during the Hartzog years. Did that trickle down to you?
- Don Castleberry: Yeah, I guess I'll try to dredge that up and be as precise as I can. First of all, Connie Worth was the director when I first came in the Park Service. I knew that he existed, and that was about it. But that only lasted a few months until [George] Hartzog got appointed. And I knew who Hartzog was. I didn't meet him for a long time. But we definitely knew what kind of personality we had up there and what his philosophies were.
- Don Castleberry: First overt thing that happened was while I was at Timpanogos Cave in which he abolished the handbooks. Remember we had these bookshelves full of three-ring binders with little additions to them came in so frequently you practically needed a fulltime person to just keep them edited and take stuff out, put new ones in and what not. It would have filled more than that bookshelf right there.
- Lu Ann Jones: So, what, about four feet of—
- Don Castleberry: Yeah. And he just mandated that they be destroyed and removed from the park. Well, I didn't do that. It was my first act of noncompliance, I guess, with a director. I put them in cardboard boxes and put them in a closet, but I didn't destroy them. I figured somebody could change their mind or something, you know.
- Lu Ann Jones: So how did that directive reach you?
- Don Castleberry: It came out as a written thing passed from the director down through the region. It was a written document. We did get those. But like you would think after I was at Timpanogos Cave, maybe the director or deputy director would call you up every now and then and say, "Hey, this is what Hartzog wants or doesn't want" or whatever. That never did happen. I don't think Hartzog ever came to any of our regional superintendents' conferences. So I didn't meet him for a long time. I've said this in public before, I'm candid about this, I really didn't want to meet Hartzog. Because what I saw was he'd meet a ranger at some function who maybe served as a bartender or something and liked the cut of his jib. And the next thing you know, the guy was brought into Washington in some kind of special project or something and never heard from again. And I didn't

want that to happen. (LJ laughs) So I kind of studiously avoided Hartzog for a long time, even though I admired, you know, his aggressive attitude.

Don Castleberry: Most everything we got, we either got it as a formal thing coming down from Washington through the regional office, or we got it through some kind of grapevine that we had. Which were pretty accurate sometimes. (laughter) Of course, as I moved into higher positions, I knew all the directors, and often worked directly with them.

Lu Ann Jones: So, then you come, after Indiana Dunes, so how was that transition from there to the GW Memorial Parkway? So, there you are, you are in Washington at that point.

Don Castleberry: Yeah.

Lu Ann Jones: Or close by. And what was that assignment?

Don Castleberry: Well, what happened there was, that one just came out of the blue, too. I was at Indiana Dunes and I was, how did that come about? I think the deputy regional director of the National Capitol Region called me and asked if I would come down and meet with the regional director, who was Jack Fish, and the director, who was Bill Whalen at that time. They said, "Fly on down here to Washington and we're going to be at a program over at Lincoln Memorial. We'll send a car to pick you up."

Don Castleberry: So sure enough, I was met at the airport by this car and driver. They drove me over to the Lincoln Memorial. They had a big red carpet going up the steps and little podium thing up there. And they'd just finished having the program.

Don Castleberry: So, Bill Whalen and Jack Fish and I repaired down to a park bench down there. They said, "We'd like to offer you the job as superintendent at GW Parkway." You know, it was a promotion. By this time, I guess I have to go back and say that first time it really dawned on me that I might have interest in or opportunity to have a career in the higher ranks and all was probably while I was at Indiana Dunes. So by this time I was kind of inured to the idea that yeah, you know, if I get an opportunity for promotions and bigger jobs, I'll probably take them. So, I viewed it in that line.

Don Castleberry: I accepted the job. For the first time except briefly in Cedar City for about a year, I didn't live in park housing, had to live out in the community. I bought a house in Reston – a townhouse. My daughter had graduated high school, so I'd met that obligation. And she came down to Washington and started going to Northern Virginia Community College and lived with us for a few months. So, I didn't anymore have the getting my daughter through high school issue.

- Don Castleberry: So, I took the job. And that's an extremely, extremely political and demanding job. The National Capitol Region functions differently than from all the other regions. The regional director there functions more like the general superintendent of the parks. And he makes a lot of decisions that normally are reserved to the superintendents. The difference is that GW Parkway and Antietam are more discrete parks with a little bit more autonomy than the others. Like National Capitol East or something that's all run out of the regional office. But we had a good deal of autonomy.
- Don Castleberry: So, I had an extremely talented, brilliant staff. I'm not sure now and I wasn't then sure I was quite up to the political intensity that was involved there, because it was high. But I'm sure that I was perceived as doing it well.
- Don Castleberry: I learned that one of the great things that happened there for me was that I saw Jack Fish operate.
- Lu Ann Jones: And what was good about that?
- Don Castleberry: He was the consummate political operator. (laughs) He'd been at it a long time. He was very good at it. You could see how he handled things. You couldn't have had a better teacher.
- Lu Ann Jones: Is there a particular example that you can think of of how he—
- Don Castleberry: Yeah. GW Parkway is a bunch of parks conglomerated together, you know, like Glen Echo and Mount Vernon and Fort Hunt is one. That's set up, even though it's a historic site, set up as kind of picnic areas for groups that you can reserve them and a lot of government agencies and companies will reserve a picnic site for a function. They have the US Park Police patrolling and keeping people out of it that are not reserved.
- Don Castleberry: So, there was a United States senator, I probably can't dredge up his name, but he was from Connecticut. He had gone down there, I think his mother was visiting. Anyway, had gone down there and tried to use the site before it was ready, or took down the gate or did something like that. The park policeman came down there and ran him off. He was really mad. So he called Jack Fish, and Jack Fish called me. And they called Bill Whalen.
- Don Castleberry: So, we all had to go over and see this senator in his office in Washington and try to placate him. So I'm sitting in there, you know, the low man on the totem pole in that group and kind of wondering how we were going to get out of this. So the senator, he ranted and raved at us for about 15 minutes. "Okay, sir," and we packed up and left.
- Don Castleberry: We got in the car and were going back. I said, "Well, what's the next step here? What do we need to do?"

Don Castleberry: Jack says, "Oh, nothing." (laughter) I still laugh at this. He said, "He just needed to blow off steam." (laughter) So you learn like that, you know.

Don Castleberry: We had, commuting in the morning you had, coming down the main parkway from the north, coming in from the west is what they call runs, these, and one's called Spout Run. It's got a heavily trafficked commuter route there. It's just before you start over the bridges into DC, they have to have a park policeman there during rush hour, and he lets this group go through for two minutes, and then he stops them. This group, he lets them go for three minutes, because it's more volume. That's been going, that was going on before I got there.

Don Castleberry: So, one day they were having Park Service budget hearings over in Washington. One member whose constituency came down this side got to arguing with the guy whose constituency came down this side as to which one deserved two or three minutes. (laughter) It was so funny. I'm crying laughing here, thinking about it. We were all laughing about it, because it was just so incongruous, so totally inappropriate. But they were holding up the whole Park Service budget over two minutes and three minutes. (laughter)

Lu Ann Jones: Well, I'm familiar with the parkway. I use it with some, I don't commute, but I do use it mainly as shortcuts from one place to the next. Most of the time I'm there it's a fairly pleasant drive down that parkway.

Don Castleberry: You're not there in rush hour.

Lu Ann Jones: I'm not doing it during rush hour very often. No.

Don Castleberry: Another quick example is I hadn't been there too long. All those bike trails you see going up and down the parkway, we built all those, but we had been trying to build one that went down to Mount Vernon. Like from the airport down to Mount Vernon. And the local folks that lived down on the Mount Vernon Parkway did not want that to happen, because they didn't want those bad people that lived up in DC coming down into their neighborhood. I think you might say racism could be involved there. So they had sued the Park Service and had stopped us from completing that. That actually had happened before I got there.

Don Castleberry: So, I was at my office one day and Jack called and said, "Hey, Don, we just won our lawsuit. And we're free to complete that bike trail." He says, "Get your crews on that as fast as you can and get it done before somebody else sues." (laughter)

Lu Ann Jones: And that's, I live in Alexandria. So, I know that that bike trail is used very much these days.

Don Castleberry: Very heavily.

- Lu Ann Jones: Very heavily. It's like a little highway.
- Don Castleberry: I hope you weren't one of those people that didn't want us to build it.
- Lu Ann Jones: No, no.
- Don Castleberry: So, we had a wonderful crew, maintenance crew there. Our maintenance supervisor was just a really great guy. It was a huge crew. And we did all that trail work; we built that whole trail down there. And we had to do a lot of engineering, what normally Denver Service Center or somebody would design this thing. And we just did it with eyeballs, you know. Yeah, that was a funny one.
- Don Castleberry: Let's see. I was trying to think. A lot of political stuff that happened like if a member of Congress or, you know, everybody in DC is a VIP or else they think they are. So if you're commuting on the parkway and there's a delay, a lot of times they would call Jack or they would call me and say, "What the hell's going on here? Where's your crew? You didn't get the snow plowed" or whatever. So, it's intensely political.
- Don Castleberry: I guess if you don't mind one more story on that. While I was there, we rebuilt nine of those bridges that cross those different runs on the north side going down. A million dollars a bridge, by the way. Working with the Federal Highway Administration, we had to design a process which when rush hour was coming in, we had three lanes. One lane was being worked on. We had one lane going out and two coming in, and then in the evening we reversed that and so forth. And so we had that going. And we had a contractor working on the other lane. So we had a guy, a member of Congress who'd been in the army engineers. He said, oh, we were doing it all wrong. He could have done it in half the time. And we could have used Bailey bridges and all this kind of stuff. We were getting a lot of heat for that.
- Don Castleberry: We had planned it well in advance. We had made sure working with the other communities that nobody else was going to be broken down while we were. I thought it had been handled perfectly. But this guy was on our case really bad. He was from Minnesota, and it turned out that the contractor was from Minnesota. (laughs)
- Don Castleberry: So, we talked to this contractor, and we said, "Can't you get this guy off our case?" (laughter) I don't know if I still have it but the next letter from this congressman was like essentially translated it said, "Never mind." (laughter) We never heard from him again.
- Don Castleberry: Just stuff like that went on all the time. It was very lively. I don't think I enjoyed that but must admit that the experience helped me to be more comfortable and competent, in dealing with elected officials. That was probably the assignment I had in end my career that I enjoyed the least. I

just didn't like, first of all, I wasn't crazy about living out in the community, not having my park community to live in. My daughter was growing up and moving out. She eventually went down to Arkansas and lived with my parents for a while and went to college down there. And then I bought her a condo, and she became a dental hygienist. So she was out of the picture that I had to think about for that.

Don Castleberry: And I was trying to think of another example. You've probably been to Wolf Trap.

Lu Ann Jones: Mm hmm

Don Castleberry: You remember that Wolf Trap burned one time. They had a big fire and a big stage and all that burned up. I wasn't in charge of Wolf Trap. But I went to the congressional hearings that they had on that. And Congress gave us money to build a temporary structure until they could get it done, complete it again. Jack Fish was testifying. I guess he must have anticipated this question, because one of the members of the committee said, "Director Fish," the temporary structure they made was out of some kind of like plasticized, rubberized material. He says, "How can you assure us that that's not going to burn, too?"

Don Castleberry: Jack reached into his pocket, pulled out a piece of the material. (laughter) He had a cigarette lighter. (laughter) It wouldn't burn. Who's going to think to do that?

Don Castleberry: He was a Catholic and he had gone to Catholic University, and he had 10 children. He was honest and of the highest integrity. The biggest thing I got out of working there for three and a half years was learning from Jack Fish (and his deputy, Bob Stanton.).

Lu Ann Jones: Well, you said that back at Indiana Dunes you began to get a sense that there might be more possibilities on your horizon than you might have. So was there a particular incident there that gave you that sense? Or any—

Don Castleberry: No, it was mostly just because of the people calling from Washington and the interaction with the director and deputy director. And this Jerry Tays, this fellow that was appointed, the Indiana Dunes guy. And with Nat Reed in the assistant secretary's office. You know, a lot of that subliminal stuff that comes to you kind of through means that you don't really quite remember how it did that. But it's not like official or anything.

Don Castleberry: But that does bring to mind a point that I think really is important and I probably ought to make. And that is, when I was over at Zion, I mentioned that I was met in the driveway by my next door neighbors, name was Bob Peterson and his wife, Anita. We became fast friends. The chief of maintenance lived next door to us, too. So we became three families that shared most meals, evening meals. You know, we'd come home from



work, we walked to work, and come home and have a drink or two, have dinner. We never knew whose house dinner was going to be that night.

Don Castleberry: The maintenance superintendent formerly worked at Sequoia Kings Canyon. And while he was over there, a young engineer from the regional office had been assigned to come up and work with him. And they had become good friends. And that fellow's name was Deny Galvin.

Don Castleberry: So, after a while, Deny and Martha started coming up from Santa Fe pretty often and staying at Joe's house. And we would be four families doing this, you know. We got to be all good friends. So time goes on and we get to different positions. Eventually Deny was the deputy director. By this time, I guess, I'm in Philadelphia. Well, I'm not sure exactly when Deny entered the picture in terms of having influence on me. But I know it was when I was in Philly, and it might have been a little bit before that. But I wanted to be sure and get that in there because other than Warren Hamilton, Deny Galvin is probably the person that had the most influence on my career. (I've always thought Deny was one of the smartest people in NPS, and a positive influence on the agency – aand me). But that didn't really start—

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Don Castleberry: —kicking in until I guess I was at Philadelphia.

Lu Ann Jones: How did you make that leap there to going, now operating at the regional level?

Don Castleberry: Well, I guess it's a pretty good thing to put this on tape because it's a little bit hard to explain otherwise. But I guess the uninitiated or the people who hadn't experienced it would not guess that it works this way. But there's a sort of vast undercurrent of rumor, innuendo, something floating around in the ether that you're not quite sure where you got it from, but it came to you. I started picking up, by this time, Whalen was the director. Bill Whalen lived in Reston, too; I knew him well. We went to Wolf Trap together sometimes with our families. So I began to get the informal vibes that I was being considered for a promotion, a transfer somewhere. But I didn't know anything more than that.

Don Castleberry: Jim Coleman was fairly recently appointed as regional director in Philadelphia, Mid-Atlantic Region. He called me up one day and he said, "I'm going to swing down through some of my parks in Virginia. And I wondered if I could pick you up and you'd ride down there with me."

Don Castleberry: I said okay. So we did. I think we went down to, we may have gone to Shenandoah. But I remember we went to Appomattox and probably

Fredericksburg and a couple of places. Sometime during the course of that drive, he said, "Would you be willing to come up and be my deputy?"

Don Castleberry: I thought well, there were a lot of reasons I thought that would be a good thing. As I said, I wasn't terribly happy living in Washington. I thought, you know, it was a promotion. It had upward potential. It was an experience adding to my other experiences that I'd built up by that time. I liked Jim. So, I said yeah, I would do that.

Don Castleberry: So that was in November of '79. I think Reagan had just got elected. So Jim had been the deputy in Philly. The regional director was not a good guy at all, but no one ever knew how he got that job. But anyway, he was summarily removed somehow. Jim was promoted to be the regional director. So that vacancy was there.

Don Castleberry: So, I took it and I showed up there in early '80. Of course by that time, [James] Watt was secretary. And Park Service kind of didn't know what to do with itself because we felt quite impacted by all that. We thought we were the good guys and we found out in some people's eyes we weren't.

Don Castleberry: So anyway, so Jim and I hit it off really well. I can't say enough about what a great guy he is. The way that worked was, I'd never seen it work that way anyplace else in the Park Service or anyplace else. It's all a credit to him. We worked like we were co-regional directors. I felt like if I needed to make a decision, I could just make it. I didn't have to ask him. I knew what he would agree to. There's no doubt who the regional director was, and I would never, certainly ever question that. But I think everybody in the region, certainly in the office knew that we, if I spoke it was like the regional director was speaking. So we just worked so easily together. We didn't have to strain at all. I know it's kind of self-serving, but as far as I could tell, that was the best relationship like that that existed in the Park Service. Yeah. I still feel that way about Jim. He came to Arkansas for my daughter's wedding and we remain good friends, to this day.

Don Castleberry: So that was going along. Mainly what we were trying to do was survive what we saw as assaults by the Watt administration. Of course Russ Dickinson was the director. We all admired Russ and liked him and knew he was about the only thing standing between us and catastrophe coming down from the Watt administration. We were just trying to kind of go on about our own business and avoid the worst of the stuff that was happening in Washington.

Don Castleberry: Well, we thought we had our act together. We knew what we were doing. We had a plan and things were running smoothly. One day the phone rang and I don't know who was on the other end, but it wasn't the director or the deputy director. But someone said the HCRS agency, Heritage Recreation Conservation agency, had just been abolished. There's a

regional office in Philly, and you're now in charge of it. (laughter)  
They've got about 150 people in that office, including a regional director and deputy regional director and a bunch of staffers. That was all the guidance we got. We didn't know who was doing what else related to it. Of course, they had people in Washington.

Don Castleberry: But what had happened there was, do you know that story?

Lu Ann Jones: No.

Don Castleberry: Go back just a little bit to make that whole story complete. The first year I was in the Park Service, I didn't know anything about the agency. But one day we learned that an agency called the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation had been established, and that all those external programs in the Park Service, had been removed and placed under them. All the stuff with the historic preservation, this tax act and the state and local assistance and all of that stuff was all lumped as external operations. They were all taken out of the Park Service and placed in the BOR.

Don Castleberry: Eventually, HCRS was established and took over all those functions. That agency had been established, administratively. It was not established by the Congress, even though the Congress funded it.

Don Castleberry: So, James Watt had been the first director of HCRS. So when he became secretary of the interior, nobody knew better than he that by the stroke of a pen, he had authority to abolish it. So he did. (laughs) I guess for him, that was that. But of course we had to deal with it.

Don Castleberry: We had to go over there, and I'll never forget the day we did that. Jim and I went over, it was about a three or four block walk. They were in the federal building, and we were over by Independence Hall. So we went over there. I mean, it was like walking into a house of mirrors. These people were looking out through the door and wondering who we were. They'd already heard this was happening. So we had to call a meeting and sit down with them and say, you know, we didn't do this but we've got to implement it. First thing we need to do is find out who's here and what your roles are and see how we can fit you into the process.

Don Castleberry: So, they had both a regional director and a deputy, and they didn't get along. The deputy had direct ties to, I'm being real candid here, so I don't really care, but he had ties to Watt. So, he tried to undercut his regional directors to survive, you know.

Don Castleberry: So anyway, the regional director, I may not be able to dredge up his name right now. But he went up to New York and worked as director of the New York sites up there. He was a real good guy. And their deputy director was a guy named Tony Corbisiero, came over into our office as the director of the division that had all the programs that we had now absorbed. We had a

lot of people we had to place. We had to kind of assess and figure out which ones had which skills and where we could put them.

Don Castleberry: Several of them stood out to us and we saw their potential, and we tried to fit them in wherever we could. I'm trying to think of some names. But the most prominent one in my book is Cindy McLeod, Cynthia McLeod, who is now the superintendent of the Independence National Historic Park and a very good friend of mine. We saw her potential right away. So we maneuvered things around and she ended up being the superintendent of Richmond Battlefield Park and then moved on up to Independence, as you probably know, I'd say if you're a historian manager in the Park Service, that's about as good as it gets. I'm still in contact with her and really proud of her.

Don Castleberry: We put one fellow in down at a little park in the Baltimore area, and he didn't work out. But generally they did. Some of them ended up in the Washington office and what not. Anyway, we absorbed an agency with virtually no guidance from anybody and no – people who haven't ever experienced this don't know that it works this way. They think maybe somebody's in charge and that they're giving you guidance and leadership, but they're not. (laughter) So we basically had to invent it right there.

Don Castleberry: They had an office in Washington, Jerry Rogers, the chief historian in the Park Service back then.

Lu Ann Jones: I think he was associate director of cultural resources.

Don Castleberry: Yeah. Yeah. That's his job now. So he came to us that way. And Jerry's a good friend to me today. We're all in this retirees' group together. But anyway, so that's just an episode, you know, but that was a big one. And it was something that changed the Park Service. I've asked a lot of people when I travel around the parks, meet people that work, "Do you know who HCRS was?" "No. Never heard of them." But they have been infused into the Park Service and are now part of it. All those programs, same ones we lost back in '63, we got them back with some more. So, I'm glad we did.

Lu Ann Jones: One of the things I wanted to make sure we have time to talk about is you were talking about once you became the regional manager in the Midwest that it was a time when there were many new parks that were formed.

Don Castleberry: Yeah.

Lu Ann Jones: And I thought that was really interesting. And you also made the point, I think, that the regions were kind of on their own. I mean, they weren't getting much help or guidance there from Washington, contrary to probably what many people would assume.

- Don Castleberry: People would assume.
- Lu Ann Jones: (laughs) So again, going to becoming the regional manager, I mean what do regional managers do? And who are you overseeing, and that kind of thing.
- Don Castleberry: Sure. Going back to that whole history that we went through, what I felt was that by the time I had gone through all those steps, and I'd been like acting co-regional director in Mid-Atlantic region, by the time that I was offered the regional directorship in Omaha, I felt supremely confident to do it. I just knew that not only was I qualified to do it, but I felt that was the best region for me to be the director of. That was one of the four original regions. It's very stable. It's always had high quality people working there. And they have good traditions. That was probably the best fit in my view that I could have found. You know, some people maybe would think that Rocky Mountain Region is more prestigious or something. But I never saw it that way. I thought that if I could have chosen, that would have been the one I would have chosen.
- Don Castleberry: So, when I went in there, of course, Deny Galvin was the deputy director in Washington. This is kind of important, because I mentioned that I felt he maybe more than anybody except Warren Hamilton had affected my career. But when I was going back to the period after 1980 when I was in Philly and Deny was the deputy director, every now and then the regional, the director and all regional directors and the associate directors in Washington would all go off on retreats someplace. So it became kind of the standard procedure that when that would happen, I would be called into Washington to be acting director. I mean, I sat in the director's chair and dealt with whatever came into his office. Which shocked the heck out of me, to be honest, because I had never thought about that at all. But by the time I had done that a few times, to my discredit I never fully appreciated at that time that Deny was pulling those strings. But I know he must have been. We never talked about it. But anyway, so I had that in my background.
- Don Castleberry: So, by the time I got up in Omaha there, I felt like I knew what I was doing. I'd worked in half the regions in the system. I kind of had a feel for the politics by that time. So I just, oh, and another positive thing is it so happened that when I got there in '87 that all except one of my key positions was open. So I was able to hire my deputy regional director, my chief of interpretation, my administrative officer, all of that. So they were my people, so to speak. So I just came in and sat down in my chair and started working. I felt fine. I knew what I was doing. Just the day to day running of the parks in the region was kind of under control, I felt, you know.

- Don Castleberry: Here's one comment that I think might surprise some folks is you know, when you sit down in that chair you say, well, what am I going to do next? Well, I said, I've got to go visit all the parks in this region. Well, two years later, I maybe had gotten to all of them. (Lu Ann Jones laughs) It's very hard. Because when you're regional director, you're part of the directorate. What they now call the—
- Lu Ann Jones: Is it the Leadership Council?
- Don Castleberry: Leadership Council now. We called it the directorate. But we met, you know, every few weeks or every couple of months at least, someplace. That took a lot of time. And then there'd be stuff going on in Washington or regional superintendents conferences or stuff like that. So that's a big spread out region. A lot of little parks that are way off, hard to get to. So it took me forever to get to the parks, just to know what I'm supposed to be managing. And, one of the things that takes a lot of time is performance evaluations of the superintendents and key regional office staff. This was something Jim Coleman and I took very seriously – and I continued in Midwest.
- Don Castleberry: But the first overt things that started happening was, maybe it's just that period, but we started getting all these new area proposals. Of course we were working under an administration whose policies were, "we've got more parks now than we can manage or pay for, and we're not for any new parks". But that was the political position from the administration.
- Don Castleberry: But you know, I knew something about running parks by then, and. I knew that which ones were likely to actually pass. If I was going to be the manager of this park after it passed, I was not going to be on the record of opposing that park, no matter what the administration's position was. Of course they had the control over what the official testimony was at the hearing. But the Congress didn't pay any attention to that anyway. There also were many proposals that did not pass muster, and we attempted to help them find alternatives.
- Don Castleberry: The best example, I don't want to tell war stories through all of these, but probably there were two shining examples. One of them was the Dayton Aviation National Historic Site. The secretary takes a call from a guy named Jerry Sharkey from Dayton. And he says, "We've got a site over here that we think deserves to be a national park and we'd like to talk to you about it."
- Don Castleberry: I said, well, okay, after a little discussion, I said, "Let me send a little crew over there to talk with you about it." So, I sent a historian and a planner and an interpreter over there.

- Don Castleberry: They came back and said, “You know, that park has potential. It would probably meet all the criteria.”
- Don Castleberry: So, I said, “Okay, well, I’ll work with you on that.”
- Don Castleberry: Ridenour was the director. They invited Ridenour to come over to Dayton to talk. Well, he shows up over there and makes a little speech in which he says, “That might be a nice idea, but the Park Service doesn’t want it.” (laughter) And then he goes away.
- Don Castleberry: So, I just continued to talk to those people. Because I knew that it was going to become a park. I mean, no doubt in my mind. So was that insubordination? I don’t know. But you know, I knew that I was going to be in charge of this park and I was not going to be on record as opposing it. If we were going to have it, we wanted it to be a good park that had all the credentials that it needed. So I didn’t really hide anything. If they invited me over there I would go. And we talked with them and sent crews over there.
- Don Castleberry: Of course, the first thing that happens is we advise them how that they can have an appropriation for us to do the study, and the locals secured the appropriation for that. So we did the study, and the study showed that it met all the criteria. They put in a bill and the bill passed and it became a park. Almost no input from anybody in Washington. No discussion, nobody said okay now, here’s what you need to do. We just had to figure out what to do. And so that’s the way that happened.
- Don Castleberry: Probably the one other quick story I’ll tell is Tall Grass Prairie in Kansas. At that time, the Park Service was on record as wanting a tall grass prairie park. We figured that about 200,000 acres was what we needed. So that study had been underway before I got there. But I was contacted by a group from down in Cottonwood Falls, and they had a, I think it was ten thousand, eleven thousand acres, of quality tall grass prairie with an Empire period ranch on it. We went and looked at that. I liked it a lot. I thought it had potential. I talked to Deny about it and Deny said, “Yeah, feel free to work with them. But kind of keep it under wraps as long as the larger tall grass prairie is still a viable option.” So, we kind of worked with them behind the scenes and quietly.
- Don Castleberry: But eventually the congressional delegation in Oklahoma pretty well squelched that deal of the larger park. And so I talked to Deny again and we went full blast on the other one. And we got help from, what was her name? Female senator from Kansas then, Nancy Kassebaum. We got that bill through. and it’s a fine little park right now. And of course, what’s her name was here—
- Lu Ann Jones: Oh, Wendy Lauritzen.

- Don Castleberry: Wendy's here. Anyway, that park came to be, and I'm real proud of it. We got a total of eight of them during that eight years. They're all, I think of them a little bit my legacy, even though, you know, it's the Congress that passes them and stuff like that. But we have to do a general management plan and staff them and find the money and make it all happen. Somebody has to do that on the ground. That almost all happens with little or no communication with Washington at all. Most people are surprised to hear that. That's pretty much that story. I think that and some of the equal opportunity things that involve mostly several women that I helped get into positions were probably the proudest part of my legacy.
- Lu Ann Jones: Who were some of those? I'm just going to check my time quickly, just because I'm going to have, we'll leave here.
- Don Castleberry: Yeah.
- Lu Ann Jones: Oh, it's 4:30.
- Don Castleberry: Okay.
- Lu Ann Jones: So, we're going to have to, I'm sorry, I scheduled this dinner, so I need to get there by 5:30 or so. But I would love to hear just some of, I think that's an important part, some of the women you felt like you opened doors for.
- Don Castleberry: In a way, I think it was something of a plus, that I had been raised in the South. Even though I had gone to segregated schools, I had come to an understanding, by my college days, that our history must be confronted and our future demanded commitment to racial equality. I lived in predominately black countries in the West Indies, and married there. I did not have to be convinced that equal opportunity was an essential goal. I worked very hard at that. Looking back, I feel we did not make as much progress with African Americans as we wished, and should have. We did have more success with opening up opportunities for women.
- Don Castleberry: Karen Wade was probably the first one. Karen was Bill Wade's ex-wife, and I knew her as his wife. When I was in Washington on one of my details, I went in there twice to be acting associate director for operations. That position was in charge of the Appalachian Trail, among other things, because it crosses so many other regions. I went over to an AT meeting and Karen was there working for them. She was working for the AT Commission. She wanted to ride back to Washington with me. She told me her aspirations to have a Park Service career. That's when I was in Philly, and of course it was Jim, too. But we had a vacancy come open at Fort McHenry. We were able to reach her for that and put her in that job. Of course she went on to be Rocky Mountain regional director. I still think maybe in the top two managers I ever worked with.
- Lu Ann Jones: Interesting.



Don Castleberry: Peggy O'Dell [now deputy director of the National Park Service]. We found her at Ozarks Scenic Riverways and gave her some training and detail opportunities. And you know where she is now.

Lu Ann Jones: Right.

Don Castleberry: Kitty Roberts. Does everybody know who Kitty Roberts was?

Lu Ann Jones: No.

Don Castleberry: I hired her at GW Parkway. And she ended her career as superintendent of Glen Canyon. There's some others. Flo Six, promoted from training officer to public affairs officer, and several female superintendents appointed in the Midwest region, are some specific examples that come to mind.

[END OF TRACK 6]

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Don Castleberry: I guess one interesting one, I guess I'll tell this story real quickly was right after I got to Omaha, the superintendency of Lincoln Home came open. I was always motivated to do something about the equal opportunity for a lot of reasons I don't have to go into necessarily. But I had the opportunity of appointing a black male to be the superintendent of Lincoln Home. The significance of that step, I probably don't have to explain. The guy that had been in that job was furious that he had moved into Washington and he was in the legislative training program that they had in there. I mean, he got in my face about it because he thought that he'd been insulted because the great work that he had done at that park was being denigrated by this step that I had taken. Gentry Davis did a fine job there and, later, served in the Washington office. I'm still proud of having taken that step, even though it's just one example.

Don Castleberry: But you know, I thought that he could do the job first, and that the philosophical or the significance of putting a black person in that job was just too good to pass up. So those kind of things happen.

Don Castleberry: So, in a nutshell, when I look back over my career, I think I brought a standard of quiet, competent management to the job, always looking at the objectives of preserving the parks and making them meaningful to the visitors. In doing so, I contributed to the goal of equal opportunity and I had a role in bringing in eight new units to our system. I might have done more, and some others have, but I'm satisfied that I did my best, and had some notable successes.

Lu Ann Jones: Well, I can't thank you enough for doing this interview. It was just fabulous. I'm going to ask you to sign this release form.

Don Castleberry: Oh, no. Not that. (laughter)

Lu Ann Jones: So, if you could, which talks about our possible use for educational—

Don Castleberry: Maybe, if they make a movie, I want to be played by Alan Alda.

Lu Ann Jones: Okay. (laughter)

[END OF TRACK 7]

[END OF INTERVIEW]