

An Interview with
William Warren Bailey

At his home in
Eminence, Missouri

20 April 1998

interviewed by Will Sarvis
transcribed and edited by Rebecca Rose



Oral History Program
The State Historical Society of Missouri
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PREFACE

The interview was recorded on equipment unknown to the editor.

The following transcript represents a faithful rendering of the entire oral history interview. Minor stylistic alterations -- none of factual consequence -- have been made as part of a general transcription policy. Any use of brackets [] indicates editorial insertions not found on the original audio recordings. Parentheses () are used to indicate laughter or a spoken aside evident from the speaker's intonation. Quotation marks [“ ”] indicate speech depicting dialogue, or words highlighted for the usual special purposes (such as indicating irony). Double dashes [--] and ellipses [. . .] are also used as a stylistic method in an attempt to capture nuances of dialogue or speech patterns. Words are *italicized* when emphasized in speech. Although substantial care has been taken to render this transcript as accurately as possible, any remaining errors are the responsibility of the editor, Rebecca Rose.

WS: For the record, I'll say my name is Will Sarvis. I'm with the State Historical Society of Missouri. Today is April 20, 1998 and I am in Eminence, Missouri where I am with Mr. William Warren Bailey and uh we are going to talk about the riverways, of course, but I thought before we got started on that, maybe you could just give me some family history about where your folks came from and grandparents and all that.

WB: Well I really don't, don't know a lot about it, my great-grandparents I know came from Tennessee and my mother and dad was natives of-- my mother was from Maries County, Missouri, and my dad, I think he was born down in Arkansas, but them back about I don't know what year it was but any way, they got married in Maries County. Of course, they are both gone—their both dead and uh that is about all the history that I can really remember about the family.

WS: Was your dad a farmer?

WB: Well he, no, he was timber man.

WS: Oh is that right?

WB: um huh.

WS: He cut timber down there in Arkansas?

WB: He had a saw—no that was after he was grown and here. He had a sawmill here for years.

WS: Oh he did.

WB: Um hum. A matter of fact, down on Shawnee he had a, had a mill and a...he sold lumber to this milling company, West Eminence ol'ah...I don't remember the

name of that milling company even, but anyway its gone, has been for years.

Framework to the old mill, everything is still over there in West Eminence.

WS: Well, did your dad come up here for the purpose of cutting timber, was that what made him come to Missouri?

WB: No, I don't think so, I don't really know. I never heard him talk too much about it one way or the other. That was just a way—a job at that time is what it was to him.

WS: Well, was that during the big industrial timber boom in Shannon County?

WB: Yes, uh-huh.

WS: How big of a mill was it?

WB: Oh, I don't know. He just, just a regular saw mill around here there's been several of them so I don't really know the size of it.

WS: Was it a circular saw or band saw?

WB: It's a circular saw.

WS: Oh I see.

WB: Yeah. Steam operated.

WS: All be darned. So, were you born here in Eminence, Mr. Bailey?

WB: I was born down on Jack's Fork about four miles below Eminence.

WS: Is that right?

WB: Uh-huh.

WS: I guess you went to school all through Shannon County.

WB: Well, no I left here when I was about ten years old I guess. Went to Rolla, my folks did. I went to, I guess sixth grade up here maybe. 'Fore I went to Rolla, [and] then I graduated from Rolla in 1937.

WS: Then what kind of work did you get into?

WB: Well, right after school there was a shoe factory there in Rolla that I worked at while I was going to school, before and after, and I worked in a grocery store while I was in school. After I graduated, why, I went out west just a little tour with a friend of mine, (laughs) we just—in other words we just took a trip just to be goin' and went over to ol' Mexico 'til we run out of money and I remember I had a nickel to walk back across the bridge into the United States and I hitchhiked a ride back and there was three of us, and we all got back within about—three or four—uh we separated so we could get a ride and we got back in about three hours in Rolla of each of each other. From old Mexico there was only about three hours difference in the time.

WS: That's amazing. (Laughs)

WB: Yeah.

WS: Didn't you work for the state for a while?

WB: Yes, I uh, after I got married I went to work for the state and I worked for the state for several years—Department of Agriculture and uh, then I came down here and opened up a little business- a tavern down at town and I owned a liquor store here for about eleven years. As a matter of fact, the one that's still here.

WS: Uh Huh.

WB: Then I...I was actually, before I took this job at the park, I was appointed, kind of schinackered upon me, post master at Rolla and just before I was gonna take over the post office they authorized this park and I called him and told him I didn't want the postmaster job, I wanted to come down here...so I did.

WS: I imagine you met Mr. [Richard Howard] Ichord [, II] when he was in the statehouse?

WB: Oh yeah, I knew him a long time before that. He and I'd been friends for year and years and years.

WS: Is that right?

WB: Uh huh.

WS: Did you go to high school together?

WB: No, he went to high school in Licking. He used to come down and visit me when I was here. Before he ever, fore he ever got in politics. No, we'd been friends for years.

WS: So, were you living in Shannon County when they authorized the park?

WB: No, I lived in Rolla.

WS: Oh, in Rolla.

WB: Uh huh. Matter of fact, I was the NCO of the new NCO club in Ft. Leonard Wood when that happened.

WS: Did you just wanna get back down here to your homeland?

WB: Yeah, that's what I wanted to do...I didn't want to stay in [Rolla]. Matter of fact I took quite a cut in salary when I first came down here.

WS: Would you happen to remember the year when you started with the park service?

WB: 1965.

WS: 1965. That was right after the legislation.

WB: Yeah, just a few weeks. Matter of fact, I was the second employee.

WS: That right.

WB: Uh huh.

WS: Do you remember who the first one was?

WB: Vernon Hennessey

WS: Oh Vernon Hennessey? I talked to him by telephone. He's out in Montana.

WB: Yeah. I saw Vernon shortly after he had this blindness in Yellowstone. He was on a rescue of snowmobiles and got snow blinded. He didn't think he's gonna ever see, but he came out of it. Then he came on a visit down here.

WS: So you started in 1965.

WB: 1965.

WS: Well, you only retired a few years ago, isn't that right?

WB: Uh huh, about, oh about '82 I think...

WS: Oh '82. Ok, so you worked uh—

WB: I worked for Congressman Ichord after that. I was a field representative here.

WS: Oh I see.

WB: For the district.

WS: So you worked for the riverways about 17 years.

WB: Uh huh.

WS: I see. Well I guess you remember the first superintendent, Mr. Davenport?

WB: Yeah, ____ (inaudible) I didn't care—(laughing)—I shouldn't say this on—yes, he's Ted I think was his name.

WS: Yeah, I understand he didn't get along real well with the local people.

WB: No, they really didn't. He's the type; he just wasn't suited for this part of the country at all.

WS: I'm really kind of surprised that director [George] Herzog would send somebody like that to get the thing started.

WB: Well, he really didn't know him, you know he was just in the—and George [Herzog] was fairly new at that time, see, he hadn't been appointed very long as the national director when this thing came on along. He was superintendent of the arch in St. Louis and he didn't know Davenport—first visit down here's all it took though... a matter of fact, a lot of the locals down here told him, you know, what kind of fella he was and they were supporters of the park too, but they just couldn't get along with him, so George moved him out.

WS: So he was only superintendent for about a year wasn't he?

WB: Yeah, somethin' like that. Not over that I don't think.

WS: And then Mr. Hennessey was acting superintendent, is that right?

WB: Uh huh...that's right. I never forgot, Dave Thompson was a wonderful superintendent, he was the best. Matter of fact he had ah, he was really the one that shaped the park. He got it started and really off the ground.

WS: Uh huh. Now after Dave Thompson, wasn't there another Thompson for a while?

WB: Yes, uh huh.

WS: Milt.

WB: Milt.

WS: Milt Thompson.

WB: Uh huh.

WS: And he wasn't here very long either was he?

WB: No, no he was another one that wasn't too suited.

WS: And then I understand you got Mr. Pope in. Randy Pope.

WB: Randy Pope, yeah.

WS: Now was he the superintendent for the last years that you were there or?

WB: No. No. After him we got, awe...trying to think of...

WS: Art Sullivan.

WB: Art Sullivan yeah, yeah, and then he was there when I retired.

WS: I see. So you think Mr. Dave Thompson was the best one of them all?

WB: By far.

WS: That right. (Laughs)

WB: Yeah.

WS: He just gets along with people better?

WB: Oh a lot better. He was just a different fellow all together he, he got down to earth with the natives around here and he could deal with them where, it made a lot of difference how you treat them whether they got along with you or not. Back then it was touch and go whether they liked you or whether they didn't and uh...No, Dave Thompson was a fine superintendent. I worked with all of 'em.

WS: Well, it seems like the superintendent's personality makes a big difference.

WB: It made a big difference. Yeah. And, I know a lot of us right now, a lot the old timers'd say "well, since you kept Dave Thompson it's been a lot better." You know, because everybody was gettin' along with Dave real well. Then he received what the South East Regional Director and he couldn't turn that down. He's been back a couple a times.

WS: Well it also seems like when it come to the personality, the most important thing is this ability to understand the local people and work with them.

WB: That's the big part of it. I worked a lot with the land division, of course I knew everybody and uh, you know I could personally go in and talk to them and kind of break the ice for the negotiators' land division. Why I did it for about two years, that's mostly what I did.

WS: Is that right?

WB: Uh huh.

WS: Now, you talkin' about when the land office was here in Eminence?

WB: Yeah.

WS: I see. Well, some people have told me the lands, some of the lands people kind of got off to a rough start around here.

WB: They did. (Laughs)

WS: Is that right?

WB: Of course it was, you know, they were just like. We've never... taking about if they turned, if they didn't sort of talk the native language, why you know, they couldn't get smart with them and get along with 'em and they were independent as you know...they didn't have to settle and if you rubbed 'em wrong well it was

the wrong thing to do. An caused some trouble but they weeded 'em out pretty fast so, they didn't last long.

WS: Is that right.

WB: Uh huh.

WS: How long was the land office here in Eminence?

WB: Oh, I don't really know.

WS: For a few years.

WB: For about two or three years.

WS: I see.

WB: Uh huh. And then they had one or two of them that would come back in independently if they had a little track of land that they hadn't bought, you know, they'd come back and appraise it and negotiate to get it.

WS: Well, I imagine some of the ranger's personalities would be pretty important too in terms of the people.

WB: Yeah, we lucked out there though, we didn't have asome of them were local though and made it easier. I started, I was a district ranger at Todermill and also at Van Buren before I went into the office. But I had some good rangers. They all, they all got along pretty well.

WS: So, when you started out you were mostly working as sort of a liaison to the land people, is that what you did at first, and then you were district ranger, and then you became, what was it a, some kind of a...

WB: Management Assistant.

WS: Management Assistant.

WB: and I was in charge of all the concessions and more or less public relations.

WS: And that's what you did until you retired from the park's service?

WB: Uh huh. Yeah.

WS: Well, people tell me you were able to help out a lot of Eminence people with jobs and such.

WB: Yes, I got several of 'em jobs.

WS: Did you?

WB: Uh huh. Of course, a lot of 'em now's retired so—it's been good for the local people, a lot of it. But, I like to do that, I like to help the local people...and that's one thing that made it go as light as it did, I mean, a lot of people come around because a lot of locals started working and they saw that it wasn't such a bad thing after all and they wasn't gonna be run over and imposed on, so it helped a lot...the local people.

WS: Well, I understand Eminence was kind of a center of opposition in the early years.

WB: It was. It was **bad**.

WS: Was it?

WB: That's how come the head quarter'd be at Van Buren really. Herzog held a meeting and on the location of the headquarters and there's one man here in Eminence that turned up, Mr. Suttan. He was...one man turned up for it, and then when they took it to Van Buren I'd say there's probably 150 people turned up for it. So, naturally, it went to Van Buren. Now, Eminence really made a bad mistake there, they...millions and millions of dollars was spent to Van Buren, shoulda been spent right here. There was gonna be a headquarters where he wanted, really, was

at the junction where the old ferryboat used to be a junction down there at Two Rivers.

WS: Hall's Bend

WB: Two Rivers.

WS: Oh I see.

WB: Hall's Bend's where the old ferryboat used to be. But anyway, that's where the two rivers run together, so really, that's where Herzog wanted the headquarters. But hell, when only one man turned up, no...that was...that was enough.

WS: Well, working with the lands people, I bet you can tell me something about these scenic easements.

WB: Well, yeah, really...If I'da had land, that's the way I'da wanted to go. They could take that scenic easement. They still kept the title to it, they could sell it, but they sold it subject to the scenic easement and, hell, the price they got was really the value of the land at that time and uh, that was the only way to go. But, a lot of them didn't want the government to have anything to do with what they had so...which was their privilege, that was the reason they had it, they could either sell it, they could life estate, or sell it in fee. But, the big majority of 'em got it in life estate, I mean, in scenic easements but now its changed hands several times. To me, as far as the park service is concerned, that was a bad mistake, I don't think they should ever have it, because by now some of the really good spots are scenic easements and that's just like an individual owns it just like it was. So I think that the park service made a—to me, that's a bad deal. If they need it for the park they shoulda bought it because they can keep people from going to the river.

You can't hunt on 'em, you can't trespass on it or anything. It's just like it's in individual ownership. They can build cabins on it, which a lot of 'em have. To me, as far as the park service is concerned, a scenic easement is a no-no. I don't think they should have 'em.

WS: Was there any confusion about what they were, because that was kind of a new idea at the time wasn't it?

WB: Well, yes, a lot of people didn't understand it. But, once they saw—the one's that really wanted to keep their property—that's the way they went. Like I say, they got practically the value of it and still they got to keep it.

WS: Well, did you ever work with any of these gentlemen that...I'm trying to think of their names...Mr. Web was one of them; he did appraisal work for the government in terms of trying to value the land. Remember that?

WB: Yeah, I don't remember him, but I remember...Web, Web...no, I don't remember Web, but there was several of 'em and Brown Foster was the first district head of the land division here. He was the first one. Course he stayed in the office sometimes. They had several appraisers.

WS: Brown Foster.

WB: Brown...Brownie.

WS: How big of a land's team was that?

WB: Well, there was about, oh I'd say six or seven of 'em...appraisers and district. I'd say probably six would count it. All total.

WS: Were those people, were any of 'em from the local region or were they from outside?

WB: They were outside.

WS: Yeah.

WB: Well they a secretary who was in, you know from here and that was the only local.

They had an attorney was from, I believe, Arkansas, they were just from every place, a lot of 'em's from, or had been, with the Army Engineers.

WS: I see. Well, one thing that kind of surprised me when I looked at some of the legal records, and this was more the late '60s and early 70's, sometimes those government appraisals were pretty low compared to what the court finally gave them.

WB: Oh yeah. (Laughs)

WS: Is there any explanation for that that you know of?

WB: No. No. No. I wouldn't know but, on the other hand, there was a few of 'em that went to court and lost money too...got less than what they'd been offered.

WS: Is that right?

WB: Uh huh. I remember John Colley was one of 'em. Course that don't mean anything to you...he was one of the land owners that held out and when he finally got through court he lost quite a bit of money. From what the appraisers had offered him. So it worked both ways.

WS: I see. Well, one thing that I'm curious about and I don't know if I can ever find the answer, but I saw in the old newspapers and such where a Mr. Ichord when he was running for Congress, he ran against the riverway, but then once he got into Congress he changed his mind and supported the riverways. I guess that woulda been the 1960 election when he ran against Mr. Carnahan.

WB: Well, actually I don't know how it happened because I had never heard of the riverways before that.

WS: Oh I see.

WB: And uh... As far as I know, no one else around here had. It must have been something else he was against because there's a dam I imagine that he was against. That was a big deal before the parks; they were trying to dam it, the engineers. Well, Dick was against that. So I imagine that's was it was cause you know he's the one that introduced the bill for the park. It don't hardly make sense that he woulda been run against it and then introduced it. It must have been the dam that he was against.

WS: I guess you also remember Mr. Bollinger who was supporting the park service?

WB: Yeah Dooney?

WS: Uh huh.

WB: Yeah real well, he's a good friend of mine.

WS: Well among the state representatives, he seems unusual because he took a very prominent stance, but as far as I can tell the other ones like Mr. Baltz, V.M. Baltz, looks like they kind of tried to avoid the controversy. I don't know if that's right or not.

WB: That's right. Merrill Baltz was the type that which ever way the ball bounced, you know, he...who he was talkin' to.

WS: I see. He's a real politician.

WB: Yeah he was a real politician, Right. Yeah, I was the first one to the plane when Dooney had the wreck and died out at Van Buren, I was the first one to the plane.

WS: I understand Mr. Herzog took a lot of personal interest in the riverways.

WB: He did. He was here a lot. I've often wondered, you know of all the times, the beautiful places he could have been, Yellowstone and everywhere in the world that he wanted to be, he'd come down here and spend his time. But, he really liked it.

WS: Well, some people have told me that you had quite a bit of influence personally with perhaps Congressman Ichord and then I don't know if you had influence with Director Herzog or...

WB: Yeah, George and I were real good friends.

WS: Is that right?

WB: Uh huh. He spent a lot, I should say a lot of—we had a VIP cabin down at the river and he and I spent a lot of time down there just the two of us and then when we's down at Wrights down on the river I stayed—I was always with him down there. Well, anytime he came here I was with him. Yeah.

WS: Do you think he kind of relied upon you as sort of a source of local information?

WB: Well I think so; he talked to me a lot about it I know. You know...information.

WS: Well, one reason I was interested in coming to see you, because I realized with the park service, they kind of have a policy of moving people around a lot, and they tend to come in from outside the area, so did you ever have any problem with the sort of standard park service employee that moves around and...they, they kind of transfer to get a promotion I guess.

WB: That's a lot of it.

WS: Yeah. So'd they ever give you a hard time because you were from the area and had not gone through the normal process?

WB: No because they knew that I had connections where it didn't do 'em any good. I had a little trouble with superintendents too like that you know.

WS: That right?

WB: The first one that was here we talked about a while ago.

WS: Uh huh.

WB: Well, he thought he should ramrod the whole damn thing, nobody should have a say but him. Course, when they moved me in over his head, he didn't know anything about it. Then I got a promotion over his head and that done it and he tried his best to give me a hard time. Matter of fact, I told George Herzog when he came down here I told him one time, I told him, "George I'm gonna have to quit, I can't take any more of him," and he said, "Just hold on, just wait," and when he left that day, the next day, he got his orders that he's moved. So, he took care of him. He was a—he was an arrogant, overbearing son of a bitch.

WS: So I understand. Mr. Hennessey told me his most important or most proud accomplishment was trying to smooth over the rough feelings that some of the people had.

WB: Oh it was terrible. Yeah. I had the same problem.

WS: Well, was he just impolite to people or what?

WB: He was impolite. He was arrogant, and he just felt himself so much above these locals that hell, he wasn't...he shouldn't lower himself enough to even visit with 'em, talk to 'em, or anything else, you know. He just...his way and that was it

and it just don't work in these old hillbillies. Lot of em, but he's the only one that I really had any troubles with that I just couldn't stomach.

[END TAPE 1 SIDE 1]

WS: Well I imagine you remember some of these prominent local people but I got here too late to talk to them personally, but C. P. Turley?

WB: Uh huh.

WS: He's down in Carter County I guess. He's a magistrate down there wasn't he?

WB: Yeah He was a judge. He was a prominent attorney down there for years.

WS: Then there was a Mr. Searcy. J. Ben Searcy.

WB: J. Ben Searcy from here yeah.

WS: Oh, he was from here?

WB: Uh huh.

WS: Oh I see.

WB: Yeah, he was an attorney and he was a circuit judge. I guess Ben was a circuit judge when he died.

WS: I guess he would be 'cause the street I turned on to here is probably named after him.

WB: Uh huh. His family. Yeah.

WS: Mr. Hennessy remembered an attorney here that kinda took after the park service named Winston Beaufort.

WB: Oh yeah, he tried to get me and the superintendent in jail.

WS: Is that right? (Laughs)

WB: Oh yeah.

WS: On what grounds?

WB: Well, he didn't have any grounds he just...what he did, I was in the land office at the time, he called and wanted me and the superintendent to meet him in his office. That was Dave Thompson. Well, they said, "Well hell, if he wants to see me he can come to my office." And that didn't set good with Winston Beaufort. He was used to people that, you know, coming to his demands, you know. Well, the first thing I knew, (laughs) and he was the prosecuting attorney, he swore out a warrant for Dave Thompson's arrest and he sent the sheriff to Van Buren to get 'im. Well, I got wind of it and I got a hold of the prominent man here and had him ready when they brought in to sign his bond. He wanted to keep him over night in jail is what he wanted to do—is the reason he waited so late to send the sheriff after him. So, when he came up, well, he had his men all ready to sign his bond and he just had to let him go. From then on, he hated me and he hated the superintendent, so he tried every way in the world but he couldn't do anything.

WS: He was just against the park service?

WB: He's against the park service. He was against—what he wanted to do, he had to be on one side or the other and he thought it would be more prominent bein' on the "monument no." They had the signs all over place, you know, "monument no," "monument no," ever place you looked. Even up and down the river. So, he was a monument no-er.

WS: (Laughs) was there anybody else similar to him that was maybe an attorney or someone that was influential that was also outstanding like that?

WB: No, not that I can recall. I can't think...he was the most prominent.

WS: I imagine you were on some of those float trips with Secretary [Stuart] Udall and all and—

WB: Yes, I was with him.

WS: That right?

WB: Uh huh. Yeah we had highway patrol along, had people stationed along the gravel bars, they...of course the monument no-ers had their people standing out there with rifles on the bar. It...I didn't think anybody'd shoot...but they...and they didn't of course. But, they tried it all.

WS: There's some people down there in Van Buren told me they thought all those signs along the river saying "Monument No" probably backfired.

WB: I think it did yeah.

WS: Yeah, they...they seemed to think maybe Secretary Udall or some of the people were worried about that very kind of thing messing up the scenery, and I don't know if you ever heard them make some kind of comment like that while you were on the trip or not.

WB: Oh, well, no...of course, Udall was just...actually I don't know who got him down—well, Dave did I guess...Ichord got him to come down and he took two floats and they had a state patrol helicopter down there. He took some trips in it and he was very impressed with the air. But, those monument no-ers kind of

aggravated him (laughs). They had him kind of aggravated I know. Of course, he took up horseback riding and he was very, very active while he was here.

WS: Well, I guess over the years, you maybe have seen the way the riverways has been accepted or not accepted. I wonder if there's been any retaliation, like—you ever have any problem with vandalism or anything like that.

WB: Uh huh. Well, yeah, we've had some houses burned...but they were just vandals, not especially against the park I don't think. It was just something for the damn kids to do. I guess we've had...there's maybe three or four buildings burned.

WS: That right.

WB: Uh huh. Well at—

WS: Park service building?

WB: You know that one I was talking about where George Herzog and I stayed a lot when he was here.

WS: The cabin?

WB: Uh huh. They burned it.

WS: They did.

WB: Uh huh. That's a...that's, oh, about six or seven years ago when they did that.

Then they burned a lodge down at...on the lower Current River. A big, well it'd been a gristmill years ago. They burned it and they burned the building "Rocky Falls." I guess that's about all, but.

WS: Well, I imagine you were working for the riverways when Mr. Herzog stopped being the director of the park service?

WB: Oh yeah.

WS: Would you happen to remember when that was, that in the 1970s?

WB: Yes, I guess it was. No, lets see, I was still with him when he did leave, but I don't remember exactly when it was. But then, I'd say about, it must have been in the early 80s because I only worked about maybe a year after that.

WS: Well, you mentioned that you had worked with concessions, maybe you can explain to me how that works in terms of people trying to get a concession with the parks service, or...

WB: Well, course, here in this park we only had the lodge at Van Buren and course its new rentals and...the ones that had the preference was the ones that was in the business before the park you know. And then, and now, later, when, if they wanted a new concession, all they could do was buy out someone that's in there already. You know if you didn't want—we limited the number of canoes that each one of 'em could operate, you know, and the only way you could get a new one was to buy one of the old ones out and of course we had to approve 'em, you know. And, the lodge at Van Buren was on a bid basis—a percentage.

WS: I bet you remember the Bail's Boat Company?

WB: Oh, yeah...*oh* yeah, real well.

WS: Were they one of a kind, or were there other's like them?

WB: No, they was the only...as far as I know, they was the...as far as the float business was concerned, they were it. They were the best. They had...they was well operated and well managed. And uh, they had quite a reputation...Bail's Boating Company did. But, they didn't really fight the park.

WS: Huh. Did they get a concession once the park started?

WB: Oh yeah. Well, he didn't because he'd got killed in the mean time—Walter, the man that owned it.

WS: Oh.

WB: That is, we gave a bully concession to his...his...no, I think they sold it to...a fella by the name of Johnny Powell and we gave him, a bully—a float concession which he eventually turned into a canoe rental.

WS: Yeah, I was gonna ask you how long they stayed with the john boats.

WB: Didn't last long.

WS: I wonder why.

WB: Well, they was just, you know, it comes and goes.

WS: Changing times.

WB: Yeah. Lot of people got, you know they got jet boats in and they're easier to handle on the shoals and everything. Lot of people bought their own and then it got—the river got crowded and the ones that used to pay a big price to come and float it didn't want to. Fishing got different. It just died out. So they turned it into a canoe rental.

WS: Talkin' about these jet boats makes me think about this horsepower limitation they got now.

WB: Yeah.

WS: Did that come after your time or before?

WB: Well, it was about...it was after. I was out when that happened.

WS: I feel sure you got to know Mr. Leonard Hall pretty well.

WB: Oh yeah. I done a lot of business with Leonard. I made several trips with him.

WS: Yeah. How bout Mr. Dry, Leo Dry?

WB: He didn't have a whole lot to do.

WS: Oh I see.

WB: Uh huh. Course, he was under negotiation for a lot of land all the time and everything, oh he, he pretty well stayed on his side of the fence, but...he was pretty cooperative though.

WS: Uh huh.

WB: But he got what he wanted mostly too. So...

WS: Did you all ever have much interaction with the forest service?

WB: No. Not really.

WS: Well, one thing I was curious about, of course everybody knows the Current and the Jacks Fork was the first kind of national river park in the country.

WB: Uh huh.

WS: An' then four years later they passed that wild and national scenic rivers act and the Eleven Point came under that with that first round of legislation and of course the forest service manages that now. So I just wondered if they ever asked you all for your advice, or your experiences, the problems you had.

WB: No. Well, George Herzog offered me the superintendency there.

WS: Over at Eleven Point?

WB: Uh huh.

WS: Really.

WB: When it first came up.

WS: With the forest service?

WB: No, it wasn't the forest service it was the national...the...

WS: Oh you mean the first time they had it included?

WB: Yeah.

WS: I see.

WB: An uh, course I didn't wanna leave here and I knew once I did that I'd be subject to move any place you know—if I took a superintendent job. So, I told him I didn't want it and now see, that was...I guess the lower end of that...part of that must be park service and some of its national forest. I don't remember how that is now. You probably know more about it than I do now but...I haven't kept up with it, but...I think its mostly along the Eleven Points...the lower Eleven Point's probably a park service and the upper, well I don't know, it may not be any of it, I don't really know.

WS: Well, I guess you were working for the riverways when they transferred these state parks into the federal management isn't that right?

WB: Yeah, I was the one that worked with Jeff City and got that done.

WS: Oh is that right? (Laughs) So'd you work with Mr. Jaeger?

WB: Uh huh.

WS: That how that worked?

WB: Yeah, Joel and I were good friends.

WS: Oh I see.

WB: But see...I had been in the state senate up there before...years ago, I was elected doorkeeper up there for it.

WS: Oh I see.

WB: --and I knew every senator up there and all the representatives so...when that came up I went up there and over in the house—Cordell Skaggs was the...his committee was handling that and my daughter was workin' for him and course I knew him real well, he's from over in Ellington...and Buck Casey and a bunch of them I knew real well, so I went up and got that done. Matter of fact, I got a letter of commendation for that, for getting that done.

WS: Well, when it actually came to transferring them, somebody told me that that didn't go as smoothly as they had hoped. Was there any problem with that?

WB: No, there was no...none that I'm ever aware of.

WS: Yeah. 'Cause I knew part of the enabling legislation was to include those parks.

WB: Uh huh. But without them, we didn't have a park really.

WS: I bet you remember old Senator Kinney, Michael Kinney.

WB: Michael Kinney—you bet ya, real well.

WS: (Laughs) did you ever hear anything about that supposed rivalry he had with the [Edward J.] "Jelly Roll" Hogan [,Jr.]?

WB: Oh yeah, I knew old "Jelly Roll" too. He was an old, grouchy old bastard but Kinney, Senator Kinney, was a nice old man, he was just as nice as he could be.

But, old "Jelly Roll" was kind of overbearing.

WS: (Laughs)

WB: Yeah...Senior Senator, old Mike.

WS: So, were you doorkeeper for the House or the Senate, or how does that work?

WB: Huh? Senate.

WS: For the whole General Assembly?

WB: No the Senate.

WS: Oh for the Senate? How long did you do that?

WB: Oh I think about three years.

WS: You remember the years?

WB: No.

WS: In the 50s?

WB: Musta been.

WS: In the 50s yeah.

WB: I know I got my picture hangin' in the hall up there.

WS: Oh.

WB: (Laughs) I guess that was...must have been the 50s.

WS: Was Senator [Albert M.] Spradling [,Jr.] there?

WB: Yeah.

WS: He must have just been elected.

WB: Yeah, he was I think.

WS: (Laughs)

WB: He was a pretty influential Senator.

WS: You remember Senator Downs? John Downs—or he came later maybe?

WB: He came later.

WS: How bout Senator [Earl R.] Blackwell, he was there?

WB: Blackwell was there.

WS: And Senator Jones, Cliffy [Clifford A.] Jones?

WB: Jones, yeah. He was the leading Republican.

WS: I see.

WB: Yeah—Old Cliffy. Sorta red headed.

WS: (Laughs)

WB: Yeah, yeah I remember him well.

WS: Well, you certainly seen the visitation rise for the riverways I imagine?

WB: Oh yeah.

WS: Compared to the 50s and 60s.

WB: Oh yeah...yeah.

WS: Has the type of visitor changed in terms of what you used have?

WB: Not really. Well, you really don't see as many...we had quite a bit of trouble with
nude canoeists and so forth and dope heads when we first started—

WS: Really?

WB: Oh yeah. They...now you don't see gangs of 'em like you did...they used to come
down and, like I say, a bunch of pot smokers and rabble rousers, but, you don't
see that anymore.

WS: Did ya ever work much with this commission—the Ozark National Scenic
Riverways Commission? Do you remember that? It's a ten person committee—I
believe Mr. Hall was on it.

WB: No.

WS: It had two people from each of the counties and then the park service appointed
one, or...

WB: That must be rather recent I...no it couldn't, Leonard, I, Leonard'da been dead.

WS: Right. They were supposed to help get it started I guess. The governor was gonna appoint two, the interior department'd appoint one, and then, uh...

WB: Oh, that was that board the judges, the...uh yeah, oh yeah.

WS: You remember that?

WB: Uh huh. I sure do.

WS: Now what kind of work did they do?

WB: Just more or less of an advisory.

WS: I see.

WB: Yeah they, (clock chimes) I'd forgotten all about that. They had, I guess two from each county and then there's the park service one and then the governor. But...I don't know whatever happened, it just died out I guess, I don't know. Maybe they served the terms and that was it, but I don't...I don't remember much about it. They didn't do much whatever it was.

WS: (Laughs) well, as you know I'm gonna go see Mr. Jim Bockman over in Birchtree today and I wonder if you and Mr. Bockman are unique in that you both had long careers with the park service and yet you are native people. Were there any other people like that?

WB: Well, Jim and I were the longest I guess...course I appointed Jim. I got Jim his job.

WS: Oh I see.

WB: And, had another native here, Doug Keeling, he was a native...he was a ranger. He worked for me for several years. He ended up going and buying out a canoe business when he quit the rangers. Let's see...another native, of course, an agreement and got the state park to agree to take over their personnel. So we got

one boy native here that's still a ranger down at Van Buren. Was with the...Alley Spring...we took him over when we took the park over, I mean the spring over, and I guess he's about the only native that's left.

WS: Oh he's still working for it?

WB: Uh huh.

WS: Oh I see.

WB: Yeah, he's in Van Buren. Jim ____ (inaudible)...everything went on on the upper river. Jim knows all about it.

WS: Oh I see.

WB: 'Cause he's about the first and stayed there 'til it...I don't know, I guess Jim's been retired two or three years.

WS: Well, when you were going around looking for someone to fill a position like Mr. Bockman's, what kind of trait were you looking for, 'cause I imagine you knew a whole lotta people.

WB: Well, actually, as far as Jim's concerned, he and I'd been friend a long time before and I knew he was capable, he was a real sportsman...and he knew the territory real well, that's what I liked about him. And we needed someone at that time that knew the area. Of course, you know, you can't just turn someone loose that never has been around the area at all, hell they wouldn'ta known where they's goin' or what they were doin' or anything else. And, there wasn't a lot of people that could use a motor on that river at that time—had to find someone that's qualified to do that. Course, most of the work was on the river at that time...in boats, so...Course, the ones they shipped in, they just had to learn as they went.

WS: Yeah, I hear they tore up some equipment learning?

WB: Oh yeah (WS laughs). That's why we needed someone like Jim to work, you know, work with them to get 'em broke in. And, Doug Keeley was good. He knew the area as well as anyone I ever knew, but...he bought out this canoe business—he died about two years ago. So...they're thinnin' down.

WS: You ever catch anybody poaching when you were a ranger?

WB: Yes, but I didn't pay much attention to it I'd just give 'em warnings most of 'em.

WS: How 'bout, you have any problem with the timber, with the grandma-ing they...

WB: No, we didn't have any trouble with that. Some of it may have went on, but we didn't have any trouble in the area. Course we only had a quarter mile strip up and down the river, you know...it'd be kind of hard to grandma that.

WS: Yeah. Would you happen to remember when open range left Shannon County?

WB: Sure do. Yeah.

WS: Was that like a county referendum to vote that out or how did that disappear?

WB: Legislation.

WS: Oh, is that right?

WB: Uh huh.

WS: And that made it a law to fence in the livestock?

WB: Made it a law to let 'em run out.

WS: To let 'em run out?

WB: Uh huh, against 'em a runnin' out. We had open range, what you call open range and hell they'd just find 'em anyplace, but after the legislature passed the law they closed it...no open range so then they either had to fence it or just keep 'em up,

you know. Oh yeah, that's when I was working at Jeff City at the Capitol over there. That night there had come a big snow storm and hell, it kept a lot of 'em snowbound and I opened up senator's office and let 'em sleep you know...the people that was stranded.

WS: Hah. Well, I talked to—you remember Fred Stutler and Ron Belt? Fred Stutler was a representative from Sullivan County and Ron Belt was from Macon County.

WB: No. No I don't remember them.

WS: Well as far as I know, they wrote the bill that became that fencing law, and they told me they had to write the bill to make it a county option...because they claim the people from the Ozarks down here—the representatives—would have voted against it if it was mandatory.

WB: Uh huh.

WS: I don't know if you have an insight on that or not?

WB: No I don't. I...no...I don't remember much about it.

WS: Well, would you say that open range was...most people around here were for that or against it? How did that...was that popular? Was open range popular?

WB: Well, it was...that was something where most people that was for it kept their mouth shut. But, the ones...you know there's a lot of farmers who wanted it. A temp open, and a lot of people wanted it really that had to travel the highways and...had land where the stock was grazing on...they were against it of course but you know it was...it was a pretty hot issue. A lot of 'em didn't voice their opinion one way or the other. And, I was one of 'em, I didn't care. (WS laughs)

WS: So, it was a pretty emotional issue I guess?

WB: Oh yeah...it got pretty hot.

WS: Well, from what they tell me, these wild horses around here go back to those days of the open range.

WB: Wild horses around just about...that's a big deal that...you can walk up as close as from here to the highway to em and they'll just turn around and walk off. During hunting season, I walked up, well, within 25 or 30 feet of 'em. They're not really wild horses, there just, just an issue that...a fact of settlement. Before there got to be as many people around, of course, they were a little skittish and different, but now they've been so used to so damn many people, they just don't pay any attention to 'em.

WS: Well, how far back do they go? Do you remember when people first started talking about this so-called "wild horses?"

WB: Well, when...that...what it is...it's the horses that people had out during that open range and a lot of 'em's moved and left the state. Left and moved other places. Had little farms around that they started out and they left 'em in the woods and course, that's all it is...horses are a reminisce of people that just moved off and left 'em and... (Laughs) now they're getting back just like old farm horses. But, they got a thing goin' on 'em, so it's somethin'...lot of 'em raise an issue.

[END OF TAPE 1 SIDE 2]

WS: Well of course this whole controversy over the wild horses came quite a bit after you'd resigned?

WB: Oh yeah. Yeah, I'm glad I didn't have that to contend with.

WS: Well I understand Mr. Sullivan, the superintendent just prior to the current one, he took kind of a personal interest against the wild horses—that he wanted to get rid of them.

WB: He did.

WS: And, I just wonder if you remember—before he came—if any of the other superintendents were ever aware of them or cared one way or the other or?

WB: It was never brought up.

WS: It was never brought up?

WB: No. No one ever paid any attention to him.

WS: So the park service people knew they were there or not?

WB: Oh yeah, they—one thing that started it—they built a big corral over on the upper Current River. They was gonna try to catch some of 'em and they gave a contract to an individual to catch 'em, you know the park service did and they didn't have too much sense of it. That's when all the local people really learned about it—that they were doin' anything with 'em, and that's what started the controversy and now they got the bill through Congress. To me, they're nothin' but a damn nuisance, but that's just my opinion against all these others, you know. Everyone [is entitled to] his own opinion but I, I can't see of any use for them, 'cause they're not really wild horses. And, they're gonna be a problem, I think anyway

because, you know, they keep increasing;’ eventually they’re gonna have to do somethin’ with ‘em.

WS: Yeah. Well this kinda reminds me of the open range topic.

WB: That’s this damn—it’s the same thing.

WS: Yeah, it’s emotional.

WB: That right.

WS: Yeah. That’s interesting.

WB: Yeah, it’s particularly emotional.

WS: Well, do you remember this group—the trappers association? Now, they filed a lawsuit against the parks service didn’t they—in the late 1980s?

WB: I don’t know if they really did or were just plannin’ on it. Maybe they settled it. I don’t remember. It’s the hound dog association.

WS: That right?

WB: Yeah, deer hunters. Some of ‘em wanted dogs to run deer, some of ‘em don’t want ‘em. That’s another one of those: hell if you do, hell if you don’t.

WS: Yeah.

WB: No. Foxhunters Association, that’s what it was.

WS: They wanted to hunt with dogs on the park service land, is that what that was?

WB: Yeah.

WS: When did that happen?

WB: It’s still a controversy right now.

WS: Oh it is?

WB: Uh-huh.

WS: Well what would you say was the biggest controversy during your time with the park service?

WB: Oh I would say the canoe operators.

WS: Is that right?

WB: Uh-huh.

WS: In what way?

WB: Well, they were never satisfied, you know—a lot of ‘em wanted in and a lot of ‘em wanted more canoes than they were allowed, and...that’s actually about the worse one that I had to deal with.

WS: Huh. Well, what’s the most important thing you got done while you worked for the park service?

WB: (Laughs) I don’t know. Actually, I would say acquiring the state parks into the system that I personally had the most to do with. –Getting’ em through legislature.

WS: Now this was in—before they ever actually created the riverways, is that what you’re talkin’ about?

WB: No, no. I’m talkin’ about takin’ over Alice and Ground Springs and Big Springs Park.

WS: While you were workin’ for the park service?

WB: Oh yeah.

WS: Oh I see.

WB: That’s when I was—that’s when I went to the state capitol and worked as at the legislature to get it passed.

WS: Well, Mr. Cordell Skaggs, he was in favor of that?

WB: Yeah.

WS: I see.

WB: Yeah. And, course Joel Jaeger was the director of the state parks and he was for it.

Joel and I were good friends and...So personally, I think that's about the most I accomplished with—

WS: Yeah, I tried to locate Mr. Jaeger. I wasn't sure if I'd gotten here too late to interview him or not. Is he still in Jefferson City?

WB: Uh-huh.

WS: I see.

WB: Yeah. I think he's had it—quite an illness though, I don't know what kind of shape he is physically right now. But—yeah, he's a very nice feller, Joel Jaeger is. He's all right.

WS: Well, if you could go back and do anything differently, is there anything that you would do differently?

WB: Well really, I don't know. I don't know of too much that coulda been done differently.

WS: Well they tell me when some of those eminent domain hearing started—the condemnation. I've heard some people say that there was a lawyer from Kansas City that came up here that was—some people thought was chasing the cases, if you know what I mean?

WB: Uh-huh.

WS: I don't know if that's true or not (laughs).

WB: Oh yeah. We had him.

WS: Is that right?

WB: Uh-huh. Yeah they—Norman Tealman handled a lot of ‘em, course hell they went to him ‘cause he was a very prominent lawyer here then, I mean in Salem. I guess he handled more than most anyone.

WS: That right?

WB: Uh-huh.

WS: I get the feeling there’s quite a bit of difference in the riverways between upstream and downstream.

WB: Oh yeah. Yeah.

WS: I wonder how you would describe that.

WB: Well, I don’t really know, its just sort of a different locality. Things are different. Actually, it’s more populated below than it is above—heavier populations on the lower end of it.

WS: I guess part of that would break down along the county lines, Shannon and Carter?

WB: Yeah, Shannon and Carter and Texas, and a very small part of it is in Howell County—a very small portion.

WS: Well, did you like working in the superintendent’s office better than you did bein’ out on the river as a ranger?

WB: Well actually no, but I was out to both places, see—I was in the office and out of the office. I wasn’t tied down any place. I was just—otherwise I was just on my own where ever I wanted to go. Even when I was in the concession, see...I

inspected, I went around and kept track of all the concessionaires, even when I was a ranger.

WS: Oh I see.

WB: No, that's the reason I didn't want the post office in Rolla. I didn't want to be tied to a desk.

WS: I see.

WB: And—

WS: Did you move down to Van Buren when you got that promotion?

WB: Uh-huh.

WS: Oh I see.

WB: No, I was livin' at Van Buren at the time.

WS: Oh I see (something falls in the background).

WB: I actually didn't live in Eminence any of the time that I was—I lived in Van Buren.

Well I first started—when I first, I think, lived at Todder Mill. They built a new building down there, and I moved—I lived there first and I went from there to Van Buren.

WS: Uh-huh.

WB: --and I lived in Van Buren the rest of the time 'til I retired.

WS: Did you remember when Mr. Thompson accidentally burned that cabin down?

(Laughs) I've heard stories about this. He was removing some of the structures and they said that, by accident, he burned one down that wasn't actually on park service land, and they teased him about it until he left (laughs).

WB: Well, that was actually me.

WS: Oh was it!

WB: Yeah (laughs). I had a couple of the maintenance boys, they—well I was in charge of it, and it was on the land but they—what happened—the old man—It was on park service land all right, but there's an old man that'd been squattin' there for a long time but he'd left out. But, he'd moved to Eminence and left that cabin—just a shack, and [there] wasn't anything in it, but after we burned it down, he claimed that he'd left some stuff in there. Tried to collect some money on it, you know, and hell, there wasn't anything in it. That's what it was. They claimed—lot of people really thought it was his, you know, when it wasn't. They got started. And that's another thing is the prosecutor tried to get me on and say—but it was actually on park service land. It had been bought and paid for, but that old man'd been a squatter. So—

WS: That was in Shannon County.

WB: Yeah. It was about ten miles out here.

WS: Oh.

WB: On the Current River.

WS: So having Winston Beaufort as the prosecutor was bad luck I guess?

WB: Yeah. He was just grasping [for] anything he wanted—anything he could get, you know the goal. He wanted—and we bought another track of land down on the current river, I'll never forget that either. Anther thing he tried to get me on—[I] had a five hundred gallon gas—butane gas tank and we sold—when we bought the property, we sold the house and they tore it down, so I had to get the five hundred gallon gas tank moved to another property—the park service property

where they had a cabin to use. Well he—somebody saw us takin' it out of there and they went up and told him. He thought I was stealin' it so he issued a warrant for my arrest for stealin' the gas tank. Hell, all I wanted [was to] take it off one government property and move it to another one, see. That made his heart beat. He really thought he had somethin' that time.

WS: Well, was he ever able to succeed at any of these things?

WB: No. No. No, he failed on every one of 'em. Well, he never had anything to go on.

WS: Well, [it] seemed like the park service could retaliate, you know, along the lines of harassment or something against somebody like that.

WB: Well, actually not much, because he never got out on any government—he didn't hunt, he didn't fish, he didn't canoe, he didn't do anything so—there wasn't much you could do to him.

WS: I mean—I was thinkin' along the lines of legal grounds, like they—

WB: Well, you're probably [right]—we probably could have, but—

WS: Like in a federal court.

WB: No one fooled with him; [we] just ignored him. Everybody knew he was just—what it was.

WS: (Laughs)

WB: He couldn't get me or Dave Thompson either one, and that was the only two he was interested in.

WS: I see.

WB: 'Cause we didn't come to his office when he sent for us. He and I got to be fairly good friends after that, you know—after years.

WS: So maybe he calmed down with his hostility toward you?

WB: Oh well, he saw he wasn't gettin' anywhere and hell, I wasn't about to violate any law.

WS: I guess you had to watch you're step pretty carefully then?

WB: Oh, [I] did then. You bet ya.

WS: (Laughs)

WB: He'da picked up on anything, but when he couldn't keep Dave in jail over night, that burned his ego more than anything, he though [for] sure he had him that night.

WS: Well, I don't imagine you had much reason to ever go down to Ripley County much once they—

WB: Not anymore, huh-uh.

WS: They cut that out.

WB: No. No more. I haven't been down there in years. Matter of fact, I sort of forgotten Mr. Wright, I forgot all about him.

WS: I guess the main reason they got that cut out was because of Congressman Jones?

WB: That's right.

WS: He'd been in the Congress for quite a while—

WB: That's right.

WS: Had a fair amount of influence?

WB: That's right. And I don't think anyone was too strong for it to start with.

WS: Yeah. Well Mr. Bailey, that's about all the questions I can think of to ask you. I don't wanna leave anything out if I failed to ask you something.

WB: Well, I can't think of anything. [We] pretty well covered it. Jim'll think of it anyway probably when you talk to him.

WS: Yeah.

WB: Course, he's done it way more recent than me and he's—probably memory's longer.

WS: Oh I see, yeah.

WB: Yeah, it's been a long time since I was through there.

WS: Right. Yeah. Well, [do you] think over all the riverways has been a good thing for the Ozarks?

WB: I think it's been a wonderful thing. Well, I was here before and I saw what it was like then, so I know. There's been a big increase in employment and its brought population and that but. It's helped the town and county, so it's been a good thing. It's furnished a lot of—I can think of lots of boy now that's retired from there that would have been in bad shape otherwise.

WS: I don't imagine the park service had a whole lot to do with the Department of Conservation did they—the state?

WB: No. They just—they cooperated real good and get along good. Work together.

WS: Did the state help you with the hunting laws, is that how that worked?

WB: Oh yeah.

WS: I see.

WB: Actually, we worked from the—rules and regulations from the other conservation commission. Pretty well the same thing.

WS: Had they reintroduced these otters when you were workin' there?

WB: No.

WS: That's more recent.

WB: No, that's just been recent. No, and I think they even realize that was a mistake,
cause all the fish are gone now where they put the otters.

WS: Yeah. Alright Mr. Bailey, I appreciate it.

WB: Well, I'm glad to help what little I could.

WS: Yeah.

[END OF TAPE 2 SIDE 1; END OF INTERVIEW]