

An Interview with
Robert E. Hedden

at his home in
Cape Girardeau, Missouri

30 January 1998

interviewed by Will Sarvis



Oral History Program
The State Historical Society of Missouri

© 1998

Collection C3966

Missouri Environment a.c. 9

NOTICE

1) This material is protected by copyright law (Title 17, U.S. Code). It may not be cited without acknowledgment to The Oral History Program of the State Historical Society of Missouri and the Western Historical Manuscript Collection, a Joint Collection of the University of Missouri and the State Historical Society of Missouri.

Citations should include: [name of interviewee], [name of the interviewer], [date and place of interview], [audio recording or transcript], and [where it can be found, for example, The Oral History Program of the State Historical Society of Missouri, Missouri Environment Oral History Project].

2) Reproductions of this transcript are available for reference use only and cannot be reproduced or published in any form (including digital formats) without written permission from the Western Historical Manuscript Collection.

3) Use of information or quotations from any Missouri Environment Oral History Project transcript indicates agreement to indemnify and hold harmless the University of Missouri, the State Historical Society of Missouri, their officers, employees, and agents, and the interviewee from and against all claims and actions arising out of the use of this material.

For further information, contact:

Western Historical Manuscript Collection
23 Ellis Library
University of Missouri
Columbia, MO 65201-5149

PREFACE

Robert E. Hedden was born on July 6, 1928, in Red Field, Arkansas. He studied forestry at University of Georgia, and later worked for Armstrong Cork Company before becoming an independent timber and real estate appraiser. Mr. Hedden was one of the timber appraisers that local landowners hired during the condemnation proceedings against them for the establishment of the Ozark National Scenic Riverways (Public Law 88-492, passed in 1964).

I first learned of Mr. Hedden through Judge Stephen Limbaugh's speech on the Riverways (published in the *Missouri Historical Review*, January 1997). From the outset, Mr. Hedden most helpfully offered to accommodate my interest in the history of this topic. Amidst fairly busy schedules, we managed to find a time mutually convenient to us both during my visit to Cape Girardeau. We met at Mr. Hedden's house early one morning and sat in easy chairs in his living room to conduct the session.

The interview was recorded on Sony type I (normal bias) audio cassettes, using a Marantz PMD-222 manual recorder (set on automatic recording level) and a Shure VP64 omnidirectional microphone attached to a floor stand. No interference compromises the good audio quality.

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 editors, Will Sarvis and N. Renae Farris.

[Tape meter, 000. Begin side one, tape one of one. Begin interview.]

WS: I'm in Cape Girardeau, Missouri, where I'm with Mr. Robert E. Hedden, who was involved with the timber appraisal of some of the tracts in what became the Ozark National Scenic Riverways. And, just to get started, I thought I'd try to get some autobiographical information from you. Maybe I could get your birth date to start with.

RH: I was born July 6, 1928, in Arkansas.

WS: Is that right? What part of Arkansas?

RH: South central, between Little Rock and Pine Bluff; a little town called Red Field. I went to grade school in Red Field, and junior high and high school in Batesville, Arkansas.

WS: When did you come to Cape Girardeau?

RH: I was working with Armstrong Cork Company in timber management with them. They purchased some 35,000 acres of land in this five state area here. They transferred me up here as timber management work in the Cape Girardeau area. I left Armstrong in 1969 and went into the consulting forestry business and real estate. Since that time I've been in real estate and the timber consulting business.

WS: I'm surprised there would be a cork operation in this part of the world. I thought they had to have special wood for making cork.

RH: It is not Armstrong Cork anymore. That's where Armstrong got their name. They were in the cork business. But, no, there's no cork grown in the U.S. It was all exported. But, they revolved from that into a multi-national company. They had a building division of the company, and that was the part that I worked in. They used wood fiber in building

their acoustical ceiling tile and building board. And that's where I came in, as a forester doing timber management work in Florida, Georgia, and then in Missouri, Arkansas, and Tennessee; Kentucky and Illinois. As I say, in 1969 I left them and went into private business of my own.

WS: Where did you learn your forestry?

RH: I graduated from the University of Georgia in 1952.

WS: Oh, I see. So you saw a lot of that southern pine down that way. (Laughs)

RH: Yes. (Laughs) I've grown quite a bit of southern pine; planted many a one.

WS: So it was after you left Armstrong Cork that you got involved with this timber appraisal [for tracts condemned for the Ozark National Scenic Riverways.]

RH: That's right. It was along about the time I left that the government was using the right of eminent domain to take that land over on the Current River. I don't know this to be a fact, but they probably had most of it already taken by the time I became involved. A friend by the name of Noel Burrows first got me involved in it. He wanted me to do some appraisal work in land that the government was taking in Carter County.

WS: Now Mr. Burrows, you say, was the abstractor in Carter County?

RH: He owned Carter County Abstract. And he did land appraisal in that general area over there, also, besides his abstract business.

WS: When the government decided a price for a piece of land, did they do the kind of appraisal you did, or not?

RH: Supposedly they did. But in the minor work, or just the few jobs that I was involved with

over there, the people that had done the timber appraisal part of it, you could hardly say that they were qualified to do that work. Of course this is my opinion. Because of the difference in trying to put a fair market value on the timber in there, the price that they were putting on it was just not fair market.

[Tape meter, 050]

In my opinion, at least. Thankfully the judge agreed in the few that I was involved with. Like I say, I didn't feel like they were qualified to be doing that work.

WS: They were doing just a more vague, or a more general appraisal.

RH: Right. The first one I recall doing -- and this is just strictly from recall -- was a 400 acre [tract]. We're talking about prices in 1969, which is probably, maybe, a tenth of what it is on today's market. But the first appraisal that I did was on the Keathley property.

There was some 400 acres; not 400 acres of timber, but there was quite a bit of timber.

Their appraisal was \$4,000 and something dollars, and mine was just under \$30,000.

WS: Quite a difference!

RH: Quite a difference. And, as I say, the judge ruled. That's what they paid on my appraisal. But this was during the deer season in 1969 that this [government] appraisal was taken place. They had several people that were ready to testify that the man did not do the appraisal out there. He was hunting while he was supposed to be (laughing) doing the appraisal.

WS: Is that right?

RH: Yes. He had his gun along, and when they saw him he was generally sitting on a stump

trying to kill him a deer.

WS: Well, when you go about appraising timber, I guess you have to take into account the market that's available in that immediate area.

RH: That's correct. And, of course, like I say, in 1969 -- it's hard to believe the difference in the price of timber in 1969 compared to 1998. Timber that was bringing \$30 then is bringing \$160 to \$200 and something a thousand [board feet] now, today.

WS: Wow. Now this would have all been saw timber, I guess.

RH: Right. In fact, in that area, that's the only thing that we took in consideration. You did have some mining props and some posts, but very little. And where the timber was appraised that could go for that product, I did put a fair market price on it. But there was very little market then. Practically saw timber is all we had. Today we have pulp wood, and we have much better utilization today than we did in 1969 in that general area around the Current River.

WS: Oh, so there is a pulp mill up--?

RH: There's a chip mill, not a pulp mill. But there is a chip mill up there now. There was no pulp market -- period -- in 1969 in that area. But today there is a chip mill at probably, oh, thirty miles of that general area over there.

WS: Now, that timber you were appraising, I guess would have been the second growth after the original timber had been cut off.

RH: Yes, it was second and third growth timber. Of course, there was some timber over in there that was what we would call original growth, but very little of it.

WS: That original growth timber, do you remember the tree species?

RH: Generally in that area you have scarlet oak, black oak. They're probably the major oak species over there, although we have some good white oak in the draws over there.

[Tape meter, 100]

Very little veneer white oak, but good stave white oak. Those are the three [main] species. Of course, you have northern red oak and quite a few other oaks that are good timber producing trees, but not the major species over there.

WS: Veneer quality white oak is unusually good quality, is that right?

RH: Right.

WS: What makes the difference between a veneer quality white oak and a stave quality white oak?

RH: Well, a veneer white oak is not a fast-growing tree, and it has no blemishes. No knots or anything. And stave white oak you can cut around that, but not in veneer, you don't cut around -- well, I say that's a positive statement when it's not true -- it just de-grades it when you a knot in a veneer. All the knots have got to be on one side of a veneer log. As I say, it's de-graded for every blemish that it has on it. That area is not known for veneer white oak. It's known for good stave white oak. And it is a slow-growing tree, which is denser and better for veneer or staves.

WS: It's a different kind of forest composition that produces a veneer type of tree.

RH: Right. We have in this immediate area, here in Cape Girardeau -- up and down each side of the river, we have good veneer white oak in this area.

WS: Better soils and all.

RH: Right.

WS: I see. Well, I've heard some people say that timber up in the highlands -- some of the original forest pine.

RH: Pine.

WS: Is that right?

RH: Yes, that's true.

WS: What kind of pine would that have been?

RH: Shortleaf. That was the native pine tree, shortleaf pine.

WS: I always thought that the forest was supposed to evolve past the softwoods into the hardwoods, so I don't understand how you can have a virgin stand of pine and not have it being taken over by hardwoods.

RH: And *not* having it being taken over? Of course, this comes in the use, the reason it has been made up in the last hundred years -- fifty years, especially. Over cutting and fire is the reason that we've got more hardwoods in this area. In the south down here you can clear cut a good pine stand and you're going to get pine back. But, there again, you're in a different climate and a different soil than our Ozarks are which, like you say, was pretty well pine forest back in the beginning. It's converted over to hardwood. Well, the U.S. Forest Service, they've done an awful lot of work since they've taken over the Mark Twain and Clark National Forest. They've tried to convert it back to pine, but they've had an awful hard (laughing) job to do.

WS: Is that right?

RH: Yes, they have. Or at least that's my opinion of what they're trying to do in a lot of areas, is convert it back to pine. But they've had a hard job.

WS: Did you have much interaction with any of those Forest Service people up there?

RH: No. Very, very little.

[Tape meter, 150]

The Ozark National Riverways, they were just opening an office over there at this general time. I never did have any -- except afterwards, trying to get an easement to go across them to get to land that I was managing. That was the only contact, really, that I had with them, personally. And they had, as far as the personnel in the Ozark National Scenic Riverways, they had very little to do with any of this, because they were coming after the land had been taken.

WS: When you were up in that area and dealing with those people, did you get an idea of what they thought about the Ozark National Scenic Riverways?

RH: Not so much what they thought of the Ozark National Scenic Riverways -- it was just the people that were handling the taking of the land. That was the big thing when I would go over in there, working. I lived over here in Cape. Unless I was going to be working over there for several days, I would go back and forth. But they were pretty adamant in their feelings against the way they were taking the land.

WS: Do you remember people that were losing a full time residency in those takings? Or was it mostly . . . ?

RH: Most of them, I would think -- at least the ones I worked on -- there was nobody that was living on the land. But in quite a few cases there were. The land that was taken, as I recall, they could live on this land [under a life estate agreement]. I just don't really recall the legal proceedings on that, myself. I'm sure that Steve [Limbaugh] or some of them could tell you about that. But most of it was wild land. Some pasture land. But no row cropping. The tracts that I worked on, they did have hunting camps, and they had their places that overlooked the river, on one of them. But other than that, it wasn't something that they were making a living on -- none of them that I worked on, anyway.

WS: So there were maybe some recreational cabins and such.

RH: Yes. Mostly recreational.

WS: You ever see any bear while you were walking in the woods up there?

RH: No! (Laughing) I didn't. A lot of turkey and deer, but no [bear]. In all my work over there for the past thirty years I've never seen a bear over in there.

WS: You mentioned clear cutting a moment ago, and I guess when you first got started in forestry it was still selective cutting, wasn't it?

RH: Yes.

WS: And so you saw the advent of clear cutting.

RH: Yes. I left the South. I was in Georgia at the time the company transferred me to Cape, in '62, I guess it was. We still were not doing any clear cutting down there then. But they did go [to clear cutting], the company that I was with. I left in '69. It was after I left before they ever went to clear cutting themselves.

[Tape meter, 200]

Clear cutting in the South is so much different than clear cutting in this area, because of the difference in your rotation of the timber, and the type of timber that you have. Their main species, of course, was pine. When I first started in forestry in the late '40s, hardwood in that general area in the South was almost a "weed" species because of the product that they were making -- paper and fiber board. We used pine in our plant in Macon, Georgia, but in Pensacola (where I started working) we didn't use anything but cottonwood and willow for the fiber. Because we didn't make paper, we made building board, the company I was with. It's Armstrong World Industries now. It was Armstrong Cork Company when I was working with them.

WS: Well now, this timber you were looking at up in Carter County, that had pretty much grown back from timbering that had cut everything, almost like clear cutting, I guess, where they had taken the whole hillside?

RH: None of the land that I worked on -- of course, I didn't consider it clear cutting. A custom in that general area in the Ozarks, was cutting to a diameter limit, which is not the best management. In my opinion, again, it's better than clear cutting because of the length of the rotation that you have over there, when you're taking about fifty-plus years in a rotation. They cut twelve, fourteen, sixteen, eighteen, and twenty inch diameter, usually twelve to sixteen inches above ground level. This was the way they cut instead of marking for a timber harvest. When you're cutting to that twelve, fourteen, sixteen inches, you can generally have a good timber harvest every fifteen to twenty-five years, in

cutting that way. In period of working in that area, I've cut over quite a few tracts of land the second time around. And one of them, the third time. If I looked over the figures (and I don't know whether I have them or not) I'm sure that second or third cut probably I didn't get as much volume. The money was probably the second and third time, but that's because of the prices, not because the timber was that much better a grade.

WS: Now this land that you were appraising, I don't suppose you might know if it had been in these families for many generations or not?

RH: The [Henrietta] Kralovec land I did just south of Van Buren -- it was a family-owned land.

[Tape meter, 250]

I did not do any research on it, but I did an appraisal on it. In fact, I bought and sold one of the tracts. The gentleman, I believe, was from Chicago. He was a lawyer, and he bought this land at a tax sale, generally. He had something like 9,000 to 10,000 acres in that Carter County area. I believe he started back in the '20s or '30s buying this land.

WS: During the Depression.

RH: Yes. So he owned it, and the family. The last tract that I had anything to do with was one of his sons. (I believe that he only had one son, Otto Kralovec). I bought his 2,300 acres -- well, I bought it for a company that was interested in the land. The land was split up. He was quite old, I think, when he died; up in his upper eighties. He left it to two daughters and a son. That was, I believe, about 726 acres on the Current River south of Van Buren. It was owned by Dorothy Pinckney, who was a daughter of Kralovec.

WS: I guess the Park Service just wanted to get that strip next to the river.

RH: About a half a mile, I believe it was; within a half a mile strip of the river.

WS: Had they surveyed that, or did they just ask you to guesstimate it?

RH: Well, no. See, all of our land is in section, township, and ranges. If they give me a quarter section, which is 160 acres, in doing a timber appraisal, that's really all I need to know. I need to know where one corner is, and normally I have to find that myself (laughs), because they don't know. But all I have to have is one corner to do a timber appraisal. I can do what we call a "line plot cruise." I can start from that one corner, and I don't need to know another line or anything else. I can stay on that 160 [acres] and do whatever percentage appraisal I'm going to do on that tract, whether it's forty acres or a section. It doesn't matter, as long as I have a starting point. I don't have to have a corner, but I have to have a starting point.

[Tape meter, 300]

And I have topographic maps of the entire (about) fifteen counties over in that area that I worked. This is generally found my corner, with using my topographic.

But as far as -- like I did 700 and some odd acres for the Kralovecs (or his descendants) over there, all I had was a description of the land. And that's what I have 90% of the time. Mostly somebody sends me a description of the land, and then I have to find it, and then do the appraisal.

WS: Do you take a transit into the field with you?

RH: No, I have a hand compass. I use a hand compass.

WS: Oh, I see. Well, one reason I was asking you about the ancestry of the landowners, was when you mentioned the custom in that area of cutting to a diameter limit. Would that have been the custom among the farming people? They were not timber companies, per se.

RH: No. Of course, there were several large timber companies over there in that area before my time, but the custom was generally from the timber buyers. Somebody, along in the past, has sold them on, "You don't want to clear cut this land. You want to cut it to a certain diameter -- *or* -- you want to mark it and take it out." There was quite a bit of timber all during the years that I was working over there that was marked timber. And I have done some myself. Where the custom started, I don't really know. But this is what they [believed] when you started talking with them, *if* they knew *anything* about their land. But then, when I get a landowner that wants me to handle their timber sales, well, I'll either do one or two things. I'll either mark it or cut it to a certain diameter. I would be the first one to say that just strictly cutting to a diameter is not the best forest management. But it's better, in my opinion, again, than clear cutting.

WS: You didn't like clear cutting.

RH: (laughing) No, I never did like clear cutting. No. And don't today. But it's a tool. It's a good management tool.

[Tape meter, 350]

In areas that *do* need clear cutting and starting over, there's no question about that. But just to clear cut and leave it for nature, I don't agree with that. Again, I do know that

clear cutting is a good forestry tool -- in certain cases that's the thing to do. I have advised two clear cuts, where we had a fire or something, where it needs to completely start over. And then, too, over-cutting in the past and the species that are left; if you need to get a new start, the best thing to do is clear cut.

[Tape meter, 367. End side one, tape one of one.]

[Tape meter, 000. Begin side two, tape one of one.]

WS: So I would guess in a clear cut situation you would want to see them go back and replant by hand.

RH: Yes.

WS: I guess that may be what the Forest Service is trying to do then, with that shortleaf pine.

RH: They did do some planting. But what they tried to do was to take out as much of the weed species and the hardwoods to let the pine come back. Pine is a prolific seeder. They have been successful in certain areas, but it's been a struggle. Because hardwood tends to sprout and come back. Unless you just continuously do timber stand improvement work on that area, you're going to have problems.

WS: Would you happen to know if the American chestnut had grown up there in the old days?

RH: I'm not familiar with any of it.

WS: You didn't see any of the old stumps or anything?

RH: No. In fact, I'm not aware of that area being a chestnut area. My father originally was from Kentucky. And in the area that grew up in, around Owensboro, Kentucky, when he was a kid they had quite a bit of chestnut. But, of course, we lost chestnut in the chestnut

blight. But as far as that area over there, I'm not that familiar. *I* have not seen any chestnut stumps over there. And in talking with talking with the settlers over there, I don't recall them mentioning chestnut.

WS: Before we had the tape on you were telling me that Mr. Burrows over there was kind of a character. Maybe you could repeat that.

RH: We called him Nellie, that was his nickname. His name was Noel Burrows. I wouldn't necessarily say that he was a character, but we all had a lot of fun with Nellie, and respected him quite highly. Because he had an instant recall of any land that he had ever abstracted. I would think that there is very land in Carter County that he hadn't abstracted at one time or other. You could ask him, down at Grandin or Hunter, about a certain tract of land -- well, as I say, he had instant recall. He could tell you the section, township, and range, and just almost the history of that particular ten acres from back when. From that respect, he was one of the better abstractors that *I've* been around. And he would sit up in the front of his office about a third of the time or maybe a little bit more, and roll his PA. (Laughs) He still rolled his own cigarettes. He had a little round table up there that was piled up with abstracts. But if you had a question about one of your abstracts, well, it was up there in that pile, and he'd pull it out. (Laughs)

WS: What did he think about the Riverways getting established?

RH: Well, Nellie felt like they were just *taking* it, really; that they were not being reasonable with the old landowners. In fact, he kind of felt like that, to start with, that they more or less used scare tactics when they came in there to try to buy the land. Personally, I

couldn't tell of any individual or individual tract where they did it. But in talking with Nellie, when they started in, they were even under \$100 an acre on some of their land. The tracts that I worked on, they really had to pay for their past inequities, I (laughing) would say.

[Tape meter, 050]

From just the way that they had handled it to begin with. And here again, as far as personally being acquainted with that situation, I was not. I had nothing to do with that end of it. I'm just talking with people that were telling me the history of what had happened over there. Because personally, somebody would just call me and ask me to do an appraisal on it. Then it would probably end up in court. This was all the first hand knowledge that I had, except just talking with other appraisers and different landowners over there, and what they felt of it. As far as just the initial project of Ozark National Scenic Riverways, you heard very little of the pros and cons. It was just what they were doing over there, and the way that they were handling it.

WS: I'll have to investigate that, just what you said, in terms of the prices going up, maybe. I'm a little bit aware of how that process works. I guess if you have the money to hire a good attorney and a timber appraiser and a land appraiser, then you can at least get some evidence to challenge that initial appraisal.

RH: Right.

WS: Whereas, if you *don't* have that wherewithal, you pretty much have to go with the government appraisal.

RH: Yes.

WS: Is that how that works?

RH: Well, here again, “ignorance” is not a good word. And, by no stretch of the imagination “ignorant.” But, as far as this particular point, they had nothing to go on. And I mean, when somebody comes in there from the government and says, “Your land is worth X-number of dollars. And if you don’t take this [offer], well, we’re going to take it [the land]. And we have the right of eminent domain.” So, what do you do? And like I say, you can’t say the people are ignorant -- and they’re *not*. But in certain things, anybody is ignorant. And this is something that had never happened to any of these people.

So, with the Kralovecs, the Keathleys -- the Keathleys owned Beamer Handle over in Van Buren. And David [Keathley] was actually a lawyer in Poplar Bluff at the time. He is not practicing law now. He is running Beamer Handle Company over at Van Buren. Well, they’re worldly. They didn’t take any of it -- and they did have a *beautiful* 400 acres up there. What they got out of it -- I don’t remember the figures -- but at the time, it still wasn’t unreasonable at all, what they got. But it was a lot more than what had been offered to them. And the government did offer more on that particular tract than they normally did on anything else.

The Kralovec tract, in my opinion, did not have the per acre value of the 400 acres that Keathley did. Although some of it, today, no telling what it would bring. But at that time, even though they had a long stretch of river down there, it still wasn’t the type of land that Keathleys’ was. And right on down below it, on the opposite side of the river,

was the Minshall land that Rush Limbaugh, Jr., was handling for the landowners. It was a beautiful place too. It was nice. It had some bottomland. It had a nice place for overlooking the river all the way down through there. And they had the worldliness.

[Tape meter, 100]

They hired some attorneys, and not just one. I believe they had one from Kansas City as well as Rush, Jr. They were absentee landowners. It wasn't like the Keathleys and most of the landowners over there. They were absentee landowners. Probably more often than not, people like that -- this is an investment to them. So, they're more likely to know the government than a local person that's been over there all of his life.

WS: For that local person, I would think the land would mean something different to them than just an investment.

RH: Right. They have a *personal* feeling about the land. Not saying that the absentee landowner doesn't -- he may have bought it for that particular reason, you know. I know the Kralovecs weren't originally from there, nor the Minshalls. I know the Keathleys had been over there for years and years and years. I know at least three generations have run that Beamer Handle over there.

WS: So were the Keathley tract and the Kralovec tract the two big ones you did?

RH: And the Minshall. There were two tracts on the Minshall, as I recall; a 500 and some acre tract, and a 100+ acre tract. Then the Kralovec, as I recall, was 700 and some odd acres, and the Keathley was about 400 acres. And I believe it was exactly 400 acres.

WS: So I guess you got contacted to do this because Judge Limbaugh knew you?

RH: When I moved to Cape, Rush Limbaugh, Sr., was counsel for Armstrong, at the time, see. So I go back. And he handled several cases when I was managing the company timber. Then, after I left the company -- the Limbaughs, we go to the same church. So I've known them ever since I've been there. Rush, Jr., was Sunday School teacher. Steve was. Of course, he was in the law firm then, before he became federal judge. And Steve, as you well know, worked [as an attorney for some of the landowners]. I worked with Steve on a case. Now I can't remember (laughing) what case it was, the one that I worked with Steve. I was trying to look at my files, but I couldn't recall what case I worked with Steve on it.

WS: A little while ago you mentioned the gentleman that lives down in Essex. Was that Mr. Crutcher?

RH: Yes. Crutcher.

WS: Okay. Now, he was a land appraiser.

RH: Right.

WS: Did you have much interaction with other appraisers besides Mr. Crutcher; other timber appraisers, maybe?

RH: As far as I know, the cases they worked, if there was any timber they called me. I was asked a time or two by appraisers that were appraising for the government to do an appraisal for the government, but I never did accept any, because I was either already working on that case or that I just didn't want to.

[Tape meter, 150]

Did not have a desire to; either that, or I was busy at something else, that I couldn't do it.
But I just really didn't have a desire to work on that side of the [fence].

WS: So the government actually contracts out their appraisal work. I thought maybe they had land staff that would handle that, as such.

RH: No, they normally do contract that out. Now, I'm sure the land appraiser on the job was the one that got the different timber appraisers. But I'm just not that familiar with the way they handled it, because I didn't work for the government.

WS: Now a land appraiser, are they trying to determine -- well, obviously the value other than the timber?

RH: Right.

WS: Would that be farming value or real estate? How does that work?

RH: Real estate is what they're doing. It's quite a bit different, I'd say, than good farm land in the delta down here. They do most of that by comparison. Other than just comparison in doing appraisal, you don't have enough information, I would think. I know all the land appraisal that I did -- and I did not get out of my field; it had to be timber land before I'd do the land *and* timber appraisal, which I've done -- and just almost by comparison with other sales, see. And that's what they had to do. They had to bring in more than one sale on this type of land. It didn't necessarily have to be on the Current River at this time; Jacks Fork, and Eleven Point -- any comparable land. Like I say, I didn't enter in to it, on any of that land over there, because I wasn't certified as a *land* appraiser in itself. But nothing but experience as I did my land comparison.

WS: Now don't those land appraisers run into another problem with what they call "project generated" increase in value? You know what I'm talking about?

RH: Yes.

WS: How do you separate (laughing) those two?

RH: (laughs) Well, you know; I'd say that you've just got to be good at your business and want to do -- it's just kind like, even though I have done appraisals for the state and federal government, still, the main idea is the *fair market value* of it. If you start wavering, you're just not good at your job. (Laughing) That's all there is to it. I don't say that you're criminal if you don't, but it's just not right. That's all there is to it. There's only one way you can put it. You've either got to do it right, or you're living a lie about what you're putting down on it [the appraisal].

[Tape meter, 200]

Now, I have run on to appraisals where there's no way that I could agree with them. And again, you don't necessarily think that this person is just raising his appraisal just because he can, you know. He feels that this is what it is. And at the same time, maybe I feel that he is not familiar with that general area, what the facts really are.

WS: I would think it would get complicated. Because, like with the timber, wouldn't you have to take into account building roads to access it, and that kind of thing?

RH: Yes. But, I don't know; I guess you've just got to want to do the job right. Again, sometimes you don't get all the facts. I mean, not the appraiser's fault, but from where he's getting his information, they're giving him false information. But, in the end, it's his

responsibility, of course, what he puts down on this paper. I have seen [appraisals] that I *knew* were blown up. Or at least, my (laughing) opinion again; most of this is opinion, anyway.

WS: Well, it's a *professional* opinion, though.

RH: Right. It's a professional opinion. And that's why I tried to stay within my field. When I said, "Well, that tree's got 400 [board] feet in it, and it's worth so-much," well, I want to be able to go out there and show him that tree, if he's so inclined. But in 99% of the time, the man that you want to impress with this, you can go out there and show him that tree and it wouldn't mean anything to him. So.

WS: When you just mentioned information coming in that may not be accurate, could you give me some examples of what kind of information? Or the nature of it?

RH: Other than the fact that I have, in experience, gone to a landowner to appraise the timber value. And first off, there is nothing, really, that he can say to me before I start cruising this (or doing a timber appraisal on it) that can have any effect, except that he can show me a corner. And that's the extent that I need to get from a landowner, or even a man that's wanting to buy this tract, or buy this timber on it, or timber and land. But so often he'll start telling you what he's got, and he really doesn't *know* what he's got. He does not know what he's got, because he hasn't got what he's saying that he's got. Well, you're working at a handicap then, because you're not going to come up [with what he's expecting.]

[Tape meter, 250]

And, not often, but at times you've got to tell the individual, "Well, this is not the way that I see this; and, I mean, you might need to get somebody else to do your appraisal."

WS: That's a fascinating topic to me, because on one hand I would think there is the science of appraisal, and there's math; but on the other hand, they're human beings.

RH: Right!

WS: And I would think, what you've kind of alluded to, is if you were sympathetic with one party or the other, that could influence your appraisal.

RH: Oh, there's no question it can influence. It sure can. And it's hard to come out -- not just timber, appraising a house, or anything else -- unless you just use your knowledge of what the volume that is in this tree, and the grade of it, you're going to be in trouble. Because that's the only thing that, really, is [important]. And, of course, the *immediate* market. This tree might be worth \$100 in Carter County. That same tree in Cape Girardeau County may be worth \$200. Because of your competition here, plus the fact that you've got a better market. I mean, the market is just that much better. Or you've got to transport that tree from 125, 150 miles to this point. Well, naturally it's not going to be worth that much 150 miles away as it is right where you've got your market. You can just pay more.

WS: Well, you really did have to get educated about the area, then.

RH: Yes, you did. I still own some land over in the Ozarks, and am still fooling with land; not doing any appraisal or anything, hardly. But when you're talking about this cutover land, a hundred acres in the Ozarks in Missouri, you can get \$200, \$250 an acre. You can

move down south of the line in Arkansas, that land is going to bring \$300 to \$500 an acre. Same land; or, in fact, in a lot of cases, not as good. Not as productive land.

Difference in area. That cutover land in Arkansas -- and I bought timber down there for years and years. I'm originally from Arkansas, but I haven't lived there in fifty years.

But the price of that land is higher. (Laughing) Nobody can tell you [why], just that the people will pay more for it. It's amazing. Almost, sometimes, you can just cross the line, from one side of the state line, it's that way.

WS: Well, in terms of these sympathies among the appraisers, I would guess, then, a bunch of the appraisals done for the government -- those people must have been swayed by the government cause or something to appraise it so low.

[Tape meter, 300]

RH: Of course, you could take that land at this time in our history, in the late '60s and early '70s -- the land *away* from the river was selling for the prices that were put on it. But whether or not they were increasing? It doesn't *seem* like they were increasing the price, because you had this. You don't have to be an appraiser, now, to know that this running stream here is going to bring more money than that old hill back over there a mile away that has no access to it. Even though your land on the river doesn't have access, you're going to be able to get there. We're going to have the right. We might have to go to court to get it, but we can get into that land. You cannot cut a person off from his land.

So, I really don't know. There was a lot of talk, but that was just talk, when I was working over in there -- I was working over there a *lot* in this period of time; not just

doing appraisal. I was buying land for a company at the time, that was moving in. So I knew a little bit about the prices of land. And of course, I was trying to buy it for as a reasonable price as I could for this company, and that was the reason they were hiring me as a buyer for them. Everybody said, "The government is saying you put this price on it." I don't know that, and I don't think they knew it either. I'm sure they didn't. Keeping the price down.

WS: Well Mr. Hedden, I guess I've run out of questions for you.

RH: (laughing) Well, I've talked more than I've talked in ten years.

WS: I'm glad to get the information; I really am. It's valuable. I don't want to leave anything out, though, in case I've forgotten or failed to ask you.

RH: I enjoyed my work over there. I just liked meeting the people that I did. I had just left Armstrong at the time that I started doing the work over in there. It really helped me, because I met people like Noel Burrows and Crutcher, and several others that I don't recall at this time.

[Tape meter, 351. End side two, tape one of one. End of interview.]