

An Interview with
Marlin McClintock

at his home in
Van Buren, Missouri

02 April 1998

interviewed by Will Sarvis



Oral History Program
The State Historical Society of Missouri

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Missouri Environment a.c. 19, 20

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PREFACE

Marlin McClintock was born on September 13, 1929, in Mountain View, Missouri. He comes from a lengthy eastern Missouri Ozark ancestry, as his forebears were among the very first Caucasian people in the region. Mr. McClintock moved to Van Buren as an infant, and has remained there ever since. Naturally he has much knowledge concerning local land use customs now largely bygone, such as open range, periodic burning of the forest, and “grandmawing” (or, timber theft). During the 1940s, as a teenager, Mr. McClintock took tourists on guides down the Current River. During the debates of the 1950s and early 1960s over the fate of the Current and Eleven Point rivers, Mr. McClintock was a motel owner with significant involvement in the area’s tourist trade. He was part of the Ozark National Monument Association and testified before Congress in 1961 and 1963 in favor of Park Service management of the rivers. He represents one of the rare surviving participants from those Congressional hearings. After the Park Service established the Ozark National Scenic Riverways, he became one of the canoe rental concessionaires. So in addition to his knowledge of the ONSR, Mr. McClintock possesses a lengthy perspective on the lower Current River’s changing tourism. He also witnessed the ONSR Commission, all of the various ONSR superintendents, and the controversy of limiting horsepower on motorboats using the Current and Jacks Fork. For Mr. McClintock, one of the great losses in the establishment of the ONSR was the compromise that resulted in the exclusion of the Eleven Point River and the Ripley County portion of the Current. Mr. McClintock feels that this diminishment in size and a subsequent lack of advertising of the ONSR has contributed to a tourist trade less prosperous than it might have been, but that overall, Park Service management has succeeded in protecting the Current River.

The interview was recorded on a Sony type I (normal bias) audio cassette, 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 two. Begin interview.]

WS: I'm here in Van Buren, in the home of Mr. Marlin McClintock. Mr. McClintock, I thought before we got going on this Riverways, I could get some basic autobiographical information from you. Maybe you could give me your birth date.

MM: My birthday is September the 13th. I was born in 1929.

WS: Was that here in Van Buren?

MM: Mountain View, Missouri.

WS: Well maybe you could give me some of your family history, about how far back you all go in this area.

MM: Okay. Well, I'm an original. My great, great, great grandfather was the first white settler in Carter County, in this part of the Ozarks. His name was Chilton, which is the principle name in Shannon, Oregon, Reynolds, and Carter counties. He settled first just above town here, in Mill Creek. He wintered there and then moved up to Two Rivers and established a homestead there. But he was the second white man in this area, and the first settler. So our family of Chiltons goes back, actually, to the Mayflower, because there was a Chilton girl on the Mayflower. (Laughs) But most of my other family came over from Tennessee and Kentucky. My mother's maiden name was Adair, which is an old, old family in Shannon County, also. They were both born and raised in Eminence, Missouri. So, I'm about as native as you can get. (Laughs)

WS: I guess so. I guess your family must have been landowners in this area.

MM: Just small tracts of property. We weren't major landowners. As far as I know, none even

in Shannon County were *major* landowners. They were just small farmers and small businessmen. My father was a Ford dealer. The garage across the street from the [Hawthorne] Motel there [in Van Buren], he built that. He and his brother built that.

WS: Where Mr. Grassham's dealership is?

MM: Yes.

WS: Oh, okay.

MM: They were automobile dealers in this community. Then, when he sold it, he built the Lumbershed and had a lumber business here for a few years. He was kind of like me. He was kind of slow retiring. He kept (laughing) wanting to get active in business. So, he led a real active life, my father did.

WS: Were any of your ancestors involved with the industrial logging back in the early part of this century?

MM: My grandfather (my Dad's father) was a millwright. He established and helped establish the big sawmills at West Eminence. Later on, he built all of the electrical power plants in Eminence, Mountain View, Birch Tree. You know, back then, they used diesel engines to power the electricity for the towns. They'd run it in the daytime and shut it off at night, and things like this; with a combination, many times, with a grist mill operation with it and all. But my grandfather was truly an inventive mechanic. He pioneered a lot of that in this area, in these counties. He was just a good old man. He never did stay with anything long enough to make any money. (Laughs)

WS: You say you were born in Mountain View. How old were you when you came over to

Van Buren?

MM: Eleven months old.

WS: So you've pretty much lived your whole life in Van Buren.

MM: That's right. I don't know of any [place] other than Van Buren, apart from the time I was in the military.

WS: I guess when you were a boy you must have seen quite a few tourists coming up here to Big Spring and all.

MM: Yes. See, I've been involved with tourism since 1950.

WS: That's when you built the motel?

MM: Built the motel. So, my life has been spent entirely dealing with tourism. I've enjoyed it. We've had good luck. After I built the motel I built the Oasis Drive-in, which is next door there, and operated it. I also had a small motel out here at the edge of town. Then, when I sold the motel there to my kids, I went into the canoe business, and I was a concessionaire with the National Park for nine years. I sold it two years ago. I'm totally retired (laughing) now.

[Tape meter, 050]

WS: Back when you first opened the motel in the '50s, were most of the tourists coming up from St. Louis?

MM: We had an awful lot from St. Louis, and we had a lot from southeast Missouri, even, that would come up maybe three or four times a summer and just spend a couple of days. But we got to know an awful lot of people very well because of the repeat business. They'd

just come up two or three times a year in the summer, for a weekend or a few days. It was good business.

In 1950, when we opened, actually until the National Park Service was established and took over here -- to me it was a better class of business than we've got now. Because we had families. Like I say, they'd come up and spend a couple of days at a time. They'd eat several meals at restaurants, fill up their cars with gasoline, stay a couple of nights. They spent money in Van Buren. And I enjoyed that type of business a lot better than I did after it went to the National Park, because then it was an *entirely* different type of clientele, mostly day [visitors]. They just drive in and canoe or tube, and out they go. It wasn't the old family-oriented type of tourism that we'd had before. I think a lot of it is because of the lack of advertising. The National Park Service does not advertise. But the state system did. They did a real good job. In fact, Big Spring was featured most of the time on the covers of their magazines advertising Missouri.

But I noticed a big difference in the type [of visitor]. And, of course, over the years there are several more motels built around in the area to where it wasn't as lucrative a business as it was either, because of more competition, of course. I'd say the first ten, fifteen years we were in business, we didn't have a vacancy, you might say, all summer long. It was that good a business. And I think mostly it was because people did stay two, maybe three days rather than just overnight; which you have now, is almost all the business.

WS: Did that begin to change in the 1960s or '70s?

MM: Late '60s and '70s. We started really noticing a big difference in the '70s. See, we were completely fooled, when we were working for the national park to be established. We never thought of the rivers as being the major attraction. Actually, we were thinking of the Big Spring and the three state parks, plus the others that were in the area, like Greer Springs. Not for a moment did we ever think about the rivers as being the major attraction, because up until that time there had been no canoes or any of that. It was all guide fishing that you saw on the river. Then, when they featured the rivers -- with the name, even -- why, it changed completely. (Laughs) It was altogether different than we anticipated it to be.

WS: I guess you remember back in the '40s and the '50s, this concern over the [U. S.] Army Corps [of Engineers] damming the Current [River.]

MM: Yes, there was a lot of talk about that. In fact, there were some of us that went to Newport, Arkansas, to a meeting or two on the damming of Current River. It was a serious threat. They were very interested in doing it; one dam down at about Doniphan, and one up here. So, most of the natives were of the opinion that they wanted a free flowing river, like we had enjoyed before.

Actually in was 1951-1952, early '52, we heard that the National Park Service *might* be interested. I was a member of the Rotary Club along with [Walter T.] "Dunie" Bollinger, [Jr.], who was our [state] representative at the time. I talked Dunie into going down and having a meeting with Congressman A.S.J. Carnahan at Ellsinore. So we went down and were trying to encourage him to investigate the feasibility and get something

started on a national park.

[Tape meter, 100]

We knew that would head off the dam propositions. Like I say, we had heard they might be interested. Well, Congressman Carnahan wasn't interested in promoting it, so Dunie and I and a few others encouraged [Richard Howard] "Dick" Ichord, [II], to run against him. He did, of course, and defeated Mr. Carnahan. Dick was very instrumental in getting this thing off the ground, along with Dunie.

Dunie Bollinger was a real asset in getting this started. That was late 1951 or early 1952 that we started work on this. That was about a year or so before anybody else got involved in it; you might just say Dunie and I. There wasn't too much interest in it, unless you were involved in tourism or something like that. The interest wasn't there yet, for preservation. That wasn't the point of it. But it was an interesting time. (Laughs)

WS: You mention most of the natives wanted a free flowing river, but I imagine there was a group that wanted that dam.

MM: Well, no, not locally. See, there was a threat it would cover Big Spring. And nobody wanted that. Actually, you never heard -- to my remembrance, now -- I don't ever recall hearing anybody being for a dam. Now, there could have been.

WS: Maybe downstream.

MM: Maybe down at Doniphan. Maybe down there. The ones which were in the Rotary Club (which was the business community), none of them were for a dam. I know that. And, of course, that was about every businessman in Van Buren, who belonged to the Club. I

don't recall anyone being in favor of the dam. And, of course, (chuckling) not too many of the Ozarks natives were ever in favor of another government agency of *any* kind coming in. (Laughs)

WS: Yes. I've come across the old documentation would say it took that long, thirty years, to get used to the [U. S.] Forest Service.

MM: Yes. Well, the trouble with this set up was, politics entered in. You know. Mr. Bollinger, who was our representative, got competition. They had two different races. A fellow ran against him during the time we were trying to get this thing established. And, of course, they were on the opposite side. They were anti-national park. It created an awful lot of difference of opinion and animosity, really, about it. Which was unfortunate, because it downgraded the original plans.

You see, we started off as a national park. Chuck Shuster and Ted Swem and -- let's see; there was one other fellow that came in from Washington, D.C., with the Park Service, and worked with some of us local fellows, getting an idea of what they *wanted* to do here. They were here, probably, six or seven months, making a feasibility study and looking into all aspects of it. They came up with an understanding. The Irish Wilderness, for instance, out here; a great big bloc of government-owned land, would be included. We'd have enough acreage and everything for a national park. But then, when we started getting opposition, Congressman Jones from the district in Doniphan, listened to his people. They withdrew the lower Current in Ripley County; and Oregon County, of the Eleven Point River. They withdrew out of the plan. So that downsized it to a [national]

monument. Then, the more opposition grew, the smaller it got. It finally came to this designation of Ozark National River, which nobody knew anything about, and still don't.

[Tape meter, 150]

But to me, it was a big disappointment. Because we had envisioned us becoming another Gatlinburg, Tennessee. And we would have, because we were in the center of a great population of 500 miles around here. If this would have happened to have been a national park recognition, we would have developed. We would have grown. We were disappointed in that point of it. We actually stood still. We didn't grow much. The only thing that was inflated was the price of real estate, because of the government coming in and buying land. That upped the price of all the real estate.

I was secretary of the National Park Association, the thing that we established. I got our county tax officer to run a survey and list every piece of property on Current River in Carter County, and how much taxes were paid on that property, and how many people would be affected -- because of the opposition. Everybody was saying how much money we were going to lose. Well, it was just a little over \$2,500 -- was all the tax money that was coming in off of *all* of that property. And some of it was big acreages, that joined on the river. There were two families that had school children involved in the whole river in Carter County. My motel was paying as much taxes as all of that river front property, at the time. But, of course, when they came in and started buying it, the value went up.

The reason I did that, was because we were already losing control. And that was a big argument among the local people, was that we'd lose control if the Park Service

owned it. But we were already doing that, because outsiders were coming in and buying the property, giving more money than the locals thought it was worth. The first thing to go up was “No Trespassing” signs. As I said, there were two families left on the river that had school kids. We were losing already, so our argument was, “Why not get something back?” Why not get some development out of it. We were losing anyway, so let’s get some development. A couple more motels would offset any tax lose that we had. And we were right. We were right on that. I’m not a bit sorry on that part of it.

But we are just kind of disappointed in the results. And I think it’s because of the downgrading. This new designation didn’t mean anything to anybody. This was the first one, you know, in the whole country. Buffalo River [in Arkansas], they advertised all winter on Springfield that *they* (laughing) were the first ones [to be designated a Wild and Scenic River], but they weren’t. You’d think the National Park people would know the difference, wouldn’t you? But anyway, the designation itself.

I’ve been involved in tourism all my life, and worked with the Missouri Department of Resources and Development and all. Their figures were that ten percent of the traveling public was all that was interested in water or water sports. We turned around and traded perhaps a fifty percent number of people that were interested in scenery and natural wonders like our springs and things, for ten percent that were interested in the river.

So very few people in Van Buren will agree with me, but as I say, our business up until the establishment of the National Park Service was much better for Van Buren than

what we've got now.

[Tape meter, 200]

Even though their visitation numbers are quite a bit higher. But they are day [visitors]. It's just a car load of kids coming up from the Bootheel and playing on the river all day. Well, the canoe people and tube people are making some money off of them, but they're not buying gasoline for their car. They even buy their beer down from where they came from. It's a different class of people. It sure is.

WS: I guess you went to testify before Congress that first time--

MM: I went twice.

WS: The first time was 1961.

MM: Yes, that was a long time ago. (Laughs)

WS: Then, during that first time they had the Forest Service bill competition, right?

MM: Yes. Leo Drey was there with his multiple use concept for the Forest Service.

WS: What made you favor the Park Service bill compared to the Forest Service bill?

MM: At that time the Forest Service was not in the recreational business. They weren't involved, period, with recreational endeavors at all until the National Park Service came in here. And then when they [the Park Service] came in, they [the Forest Service] started developing a few campsites and things around on *their* areas. But this was a recreational thing we were heading for, not a preservation thing as much. It was a preservation, but in a different sense. We were expecting national advertising, you see. But, we've never had it. (Laughs) Never had it.

The Forest Service program was ill-conceived. It was just strictly to come into competition with the Park Service on this area. That was all it amounted to, in my opinion. I could have been wrong. The Forest Service has done a wonderful job in here; now, I'll give them their just desserts. If it hadn't been for them, we wouldn't have a timber business or anything else now. They, along with the Missouri Conservation [Department]. Why, we would have just clear cut and burned everything off here if it hadn't been for them. In fact, the major timber sales now are Forest Service. Without them, private land couldn't keep these saw millers going there at all. In their area of expertise, they're the best. (Laughs)

WS: Talking about burning makes me think of the old open range.

MM: Oh, yes.

WS: When did that close?

MM: That closed while we were in the process of working on this park. About late '58, '59, '60, along in there, it was closed.

WS: Do you think the Park Service talk had something to do with the range closing?

MM: It might have, but it was well past time for that to be over with, anyway. It was a detriment, you know, to everybody; traffic, running over cows and hogs, stock abusing other people's property, and all that. It was antiquated. It needed to be gone a long time before it was. And that, again, was a political thing. A legislator had told me that that was a dead issue; that it was going to be over with. But they still ran one more campaign after it. They loaded up a bunch of people in a bus down here and bussed them to

Jefferson City for a big demonstration, wanting open range to continue.

[Tape meter, 250]

And it was already a dead issue. But they let them play politics with it. (Laughs)

But it was a funny time. One of our major proponents of that was a school teacher here; an old school teacher who didn't have a bit of business being involved in it at all.

But just because he was raised under it he thought that was the way it ought to continue.

WS: You know, I think I've heard about this. The reference I came across, he was superintendent of schools. But maybe that's a different person.

MM: Dyro Condrey was his name. He might have been county superintendent of schools. And [James] J.S. Allen was another one. J.S. could take the credit for downsizing this thing, because he was the one that ran politics against our representative at the time. In fact, he beat him the last time. But both of them were open range people. I think Mr. Allen was just because that was where the majority of the old hill people were, still in favor of it. Being a politician, he was on [their side]. But Mr. Condrey, I think his was just because that was the way he was raised.

WS: When it closed, was that like a county referendum people voted on?

MM: No, state [law] closed it; statewide.

WS: I guess the woods burning quit after the range closed.

MM: That was a major contribution to being able to control the fire. Because these old boys would burn it off every spring and fall, and for their grass for their cattle. But the Conservation Commission heard that, as being an agent. They worked this time of year

and in the fall of the year. (Laughs) Boy, they worked almost twenty-fours a day out working fire control. I know when I was in high school I spent many a day out at the old fire tower out on the road on standby. Because we knew we were going to have fires. And they let us high school kids out of school to go on standby out in the woods.
(Laughs)

WS: Well, how was it the Riverways headquarters ended up in Van Buren?

MM: I think it was probably because we were the ones that were the main sponsors. In fact, they didn't have hardly any cooperation out of Shannon County at all. They were almost totally against it. They did have Ray Allmon and Bill Bailey, and a few fellows from Shannon County were in favor of it. But by and large, the majority of them were against it and still are. (Laughs) And so, also, in the original plan, Van Buren would have been more or less in the center of it, you see; if they had gone ahead and included Ripley County and the Eleven Point River; and on the major highway, and an airport, and all that that the Park Service wanted for their headquarters.

[Tape meter, 300]

But I think mostly it was because we were the ones that supported them.

WS: Now you've seen, probably, five or six superintendents come and go.

MM: Oh, yes.

WS: Is there one that you felt worked better with the community than the others?

MM: Well; I liked the first one, old Ted Davenport. Not too many people liked him, but I did. I thought he was a nice fellow. I enjoyed him. He was different. But I really liked old

Ted. My mind's just gone blank -- my very favorite one, I can't even think of his name now.

WS: Well, after Mr. Davenport came Vernon Hennesay.

MM: Was he superintendent or assistant?

WS: I think he was acting superintendent.

MM: Vernon was a nice guy, but he wasn't here too long.

WS: And then was it Mr. Dave Thompson?

MM: Dave Thompson. There were two Thompsons.

WS: The other one was Milton Thompson.

MM: Milton, yes. Dave was outgoing. Most everybody liked Dave. I'm mad at him yet, because he was the one who was responsible for building this airport up here on this hill. He lived right over there, in that house right over there. And he was a pilot. So he got the mayor (who was James Grassham at the time) together. They got them a government grant and leveled that hill. My dad had twenty acres here, and they took most of it up here. Now the airport is not hardly ever used. There's a private one across the river that you use almost entirely. (Laughs) That was my old hunting ground back up there. I'd go up there and squirrel hunt, turkey hunt, and deer hunt; everything, right back up there.

But, Dave was a nice guy. His wife was a musician; a drummer. She majored in drum. We started us a little band while she was here. We'd go over there to their house and practice at night. Then, we played on the courthouse yard a time or two. (Laughs) Yes, it was fun.

Now, tell me the next ones.

WS: I think it's Mr. Pope.

MM: Yes, Pope. Now Randy Pope was by far, probably, the most liked man that we've had.

Randy was really a fine, fine fellow. He'd listen to you. He wasn't overbearing. He was just one of us. He was a nice guy. Everybody related to Randy. He was *very* good friends with my wife's mother and dad. And, of course, they went to our church at the time, so we got to know them real well. In fact, I called Randy a time or two.

[Tape meter, 350]

You know, he was assistant regional director for a while. Then he was superintendent of Smoky Mountain National Park. That's a pretty big job. We called him a time or two a few (laughing) things that we needed some assistance on. I thought a lot of Randy. I think he's retired now, back up in Nebraska, I think, up about Omaha.

[Tape meter, 359. End side one, tape one of two.]

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

WS: After Mr. Pope, was that when Mr. [Arthur] Sullivan came in?

MM: The other Mr. Thompson, I think. The first Mr. Thompson [Dave], and the second Mr. Thompson [Milton] was here just a short time, and then Randy, and then Sullivan. He was an eastern, Boston man that could not relate to the local people. Just no way. He was a funny fellow. He was the least liked, I think, of the whole bunch.

WS: Now he left just a few years ago.

MM: Yes, just a couple of years ago. And I don't know the new one very well. He seems to be

a nice fellow. I have met him and talked to him a time or two, but I really don't know him.

WS: Well, it was during Mr. Sullivan's time that you had this wild horse controversy.

MM: Yes. You know, it was his baby. I went out to Theodore Roosevelt National Park, and all I saw out there was horses, *everywhere*, in that park, mixed in with buffalo. Well, I came back here. And when this horse thing got going good, all the controversy about it, I asked them if they had never been to Roosevelt National Park (I don't know whether it's South Dakota, or some place out there). They said, "Yes, that's where he came from, and he had the same thing going out there, wanting to get rid of the horses (laughing) out there too." He just didn't like horses, I don't guess.

But that was kind of silly. The whole thing was kind of silly. A bunch of guys up there in Eminence had them an issue to chew on. But I don't know that anybody is wild about wild horses, really. (Laughs)

WS: So that was mostly a Shannon County thing?

MM: Yes, that was a Shannon County thing.

WS: And they had that -- was it called, the Wild Horse League?

MM: Wild Horse League, yes. They've still go it.

WS: Who are the leaders in that?

MM: I don't know all of them. The Smith boy, I think, is pretty well involved in it. But I really haven't taken part in it. I don't know. I've seen their tracks up on the river. Below Round Springs are where they are; between Round Springs and Two Rivers. Back up

there are where the horses are. I've never seen them. But I have seen their sign. In fact, I saw where a cougar had run them into the river one time up there. But that was an issue that Carter County really didn't get (laughing) involved in.

WS: But you did have the demonstration.

MM: Oh! We had the demonstration, yes.

WS: Did you see that?

MM: Oh, yes.

WS: How many people, you reckon?

MM: Oh, I'd say there was probably two or three hundred. I don't know how many horses there were; several horses. But there was a lot of people around the area, too. Yes, that was quite a deal. (Laughs)

WS: Now recently there's been a controversy over trapping in the Riverways. Isn't that right?

MM: Well, now see, this is one of the things that helped to downgrade our park. The locals insisted on hunting on the river, like they've always done. So, they left the jurisdiction to the Missouri Conservation Commission, really; on wildlife, and fishing, and all that. So, they have never deemed it necessary to close trapping on it. The Park Service would rather not have it, of course. But the locals are still wanting to trap on it. It's not really a big issue, yet. There's not that many people, truthfully, involved in it. There are not that many people that trap anymore. It's just another right that they see taken away from them. That's the main issue there, is the right taken away rather than the activity (laughs) itself -- *I* think. You know; you can trap all winter and not make any money. It's just

more or less a hobby for these fellows.

There is a controversy brewing that I don't know but what I might be a little sympathetic to it. And that is, they've introduced otters again on the river, and they are hard on the fish population. There is getting to be quite a few of them. So if they closed the trapping on it, you see, they're going to really explode.

[Tape meter, 050]

So that's one reason why there's a lot of sympathy toward keeping the trapping going, I think.

WS: Have there been other controversies like these wild horses and the trapping?

MM: There always is controversy, from the standpoint that the Park Service closes and opens, and closes areas of access, and this, that, and the other. The biggest controversy that they've had has been the outboard motor horsepower thing. That was one that was *really* a controversy.

WS: Now when was that?

MM: Just over a couple of years ago. They've limited the size of the horsepower of your motor. From (I think) Round Springs to Acres Ferry it's twenty-five horse. Above Akers I don't think there is a motor allowed up there, maybe; a small one; I don't know. But then, from below Round Springs to Van Buren, it's forty-horse. And from Big Spring to Gooseneck (the end of Carter County) there's no horsepower limit at all on it. You can use anything you want, from Big Spring down.

A lot of the young people that just pleasure ride and others had a bunch of big

motors up here. A lot of them were really affected by it. They had to trade motors and start all over again with a smaller motor. But to me, it was one of the best moves that could be made. I had a canoe hit head-on by a boatload of drunks from Winona going as fast as they could go up the river with a 225-horse motor. They just hit my canoe head on and hurt two kids, and demolished the canoe. This river is not designed for that type of boat. Back before the advent of the jet motor, a five-horse motor is what most fishermen used, and the ten-horse was a *big* motor. The fifteen is what the guides used. Did you know that? That was a *big* motor.

But this river, when they put the jets on it, they went from a thirty-six inch bottom boat, now to fifty-four and fifty eight *barges* going up the river. Some of these narrow chutes are not made for canoes and tubes coming down and a big barge going up. There's just not room. It's dangerous. Besides, I always say, "The bigger the motor the bigger the horse's butt operating it." And that's true.

WS: Well, of course, in the Lake of the Ozarks they always have problems in the summer. So I can see how that would happen over here, and worse, being a river and not a lake.

MM: Yes. Well, you can't imagine the traffic on this river. On a hot weekend, you can almost walk across this river without getting your feet wet, on tubers and canoers. Now, that's how thick they come down that river. There are perhaps 4,000 or 5,000 people a day on a ten mile stretch. That's a crowd. You don't have room for boats. Somebody is hurt every year by a boat running into them. These kids, primarily, are not too experienced. Yet, they're out there running up and down, and up and down; pleasure riding.

They have outlawed those jet skis, which is good. Boy, I'll tell you, those things are dangerous on *this* river. They can do it in four miles here -- two miles north of town, and two miles south of town. We've got a couple of smart alecks that come up every weekend and do it. But boy, they're dangerous. You know, they go fast. They *really* go fast. It's just too crowded for that.

WS: Back when they first started the Riverways, wasn't there this Commission? The ten-person Commission?

MM: Yes.

WS: I forgot to ask Mr. McSpadden about that, because he was on it. Now they were supposed to be kind of like a liaison, weren't they?

MM: Was he one it? I thought it was Grassham and a fellow by the name of Sanders.

WS: I'm not sure, to tell you the truth.

MM: But anyway, it never did function.

WS: Oh, it didn't?

[Tape meter, 100]

MM: No! It never amounted to anything. I'll tell you one reason why it didn't, is that the county court -- this county, for instance -- was to appoint one [member]. And then the Park Service was to appoint one. Two from this county, two from Shannon, two from Dent County (maybe). But anyway, the county courts appointed people that were against it, and fought it all the way through. So they couldn't get any cooperation out of the Commission. It was to be an advisory commission, and it just never did function. I think

that was more of an appeasement thing that the Park Service had thrown in anyway. You never knew of a government bureaucracy to take an opinion from anybody else anyway. They're going to do their own thing anyway. It never amounted to anything. I don't think there ever was a reappointment of anybody on that commission. It just died.

(Chuckles)

WS: I believe Mr. Leonard Hall was on that.

MM: Leonard Hall.

WS: Of course, I'm sure you remember him.

MM: Oh yes. Leonard and I were great friends. I always liked old Leonard, because he would come down and stay at the motel and then, for the next two weekends, I could just plan on being full -- on people following his article in the St. Louis *Post-Dispatch* outlining his trip down through the Ozarks. But he was a great guy. I liked old Leonard. He was a funny fellow. And Ginny, his wife. They were nice people. Old Leonard was quite a character.

WS: I've noticed in some of his articles, starting about the late '60s and on into the '80s, he seemed like he was kind of disappointed himself with how things had turned out.

MM: Yes. Well, it was downgraded, see. We stuck our necks out. Like Mr. Grassham, and Cokie, and I, and a couple of other fellows that have died. We lost a lot of friends over this. Like I told you earlier, I researched it and knew that it was not going to be a loss population-wise or tax-wise either, to our community. And being in the tourist business, I had a little insight of what it would amount to. And Van Buren -- everybody talks

industry. Well, Van Buren does not have a *thing* to offer industry. We're too far from the market. We don't have our railroad. We don't have a surplus of labor. We don't have anything, really, to offer somebody to come in and put in a factory. But we do have some of the most beautiful natural scenery *anybody* can offer. And I always thought if we advertised it correctly and took care of it right, we could enjoy a big tourism business. We did. The major industry in Van Buren still is tourism. It's not timber or anything else. It's tourism. It could be a lot bigger. And I think it will. It will eventually grow, but it's not done anything to what we thought it would do.

WS: A little while ago you mentioned Mr. Bailey. And I understand he was, perhaps, unique in his being a native and then having the long Park Service career. And apparently he had quite a bit of influence with Congressman Ichord and all.

MM: He was a politician. He *is* a politician. (He's still alive). Old "Red" was quite a politician. He was a liaison man for Dick Ichord in Shannon County, of course. He was working all the time with us to establish the park. Then, when they established it, Dick got him a job as a ranger in the Park Service itself. So that's how he got into the Park Service. Red Bailey did more for Shannon County than any man they've had. They don't realize it, I don't guess. But Red got everybody a job in Shannon County with the National Park Service.

[Tape meter, 150]

And, the Park Service was at fault when they announced that everybody that had a canoe operation would be permitted -- would be given a permit -- when they established

the park. So Red went around and got half of his kinfolks and half of the other people to buy a few canoes and say they were going to be in the canoe business. Well then, when they established it, we had 2,000 canoes permitted in the upper Current River, and less than 200 down here, which was way off balance. Because that was supposed to be the fragile area up there, where they didn't want all the people, and this was a major area down here where they could handle more people. The river was bigger and all. But they just reversed it because of their policy establishing the Park Service. (Chuckles)

Later on, then, they re-did it. That's when I got my permit; and Bedell's and Black's. There were three permits issued. There was one here already. They gave three more. Now we've got 400 down here now, but they've still got 2,000 up there on Jacks Fork and the upper Current where they don't need them. (Laughs) But we've kind of made up for it down here, because our wide river is warm enough for tubing. It's not warm enough for tubing up at the upper Current or Jacks Fork (most of it). So tubing is a bigger thing down here than canoeing. It's a lot bigger. And that's good. You can make a lot more money on tubes. Canoes are about \$400 a piece now, and a tube is \$5 at best. (Laughs)

WS: In getting these permits for the concession, how does that happen? Is that by bid?

MM: It's by bid. It's supposed to be by bid. But you see, under the government, you have preferential rights if you're an established canoe rental. In other words, I can't bid against one of the existing permittees and *ever* expect to get it, unless they're doing a terrible job and the Park Service is mad at them. Well, that's good, because you've got to have a

continuance in your business, because you've got an investment there you've got to protect. It's to your interest to upgrade it and keep it in good condition and all the rest of it, if you know that you're going to be in business.

The way we got into it -- of course, I would admit because of my activity [supporting the Park Service, it] gave me an inside [track]. Of course, being in the tourism business, too. And I had guided on the river. I'd had experience in that. So I was able to come up with a pretty good prospectus for my offering. So we got it.

But there will be no more. They will be downgraded from now on. If a person goes out of business, they won't put another one in, unless the man has made a correct transfer on it. But they're encouraging going together and not having as many separate concessionaires. It's a lot of red tape. Gosh, that was an aggravation. My experience with the government is that I don't want anymore. (Laughs) They come up with a new idea every year that you had comply with. It was kind of a headache. They inspect you three times a year, which is good; to see that your equipment is up and in the shape that it ought to be. But it is a headache (laughing) in my opinion.

[Tape meter, 200]

WS: So you just can't come into a town like Van Buren and open up a canoe rental.

MM: Oh, no. You can open one up, but you can't rent. Now, I can open up a canoe rental and offer you to haul your own canoe. And you as an individual can put it in anyplace you want to. But I can't take you to the river and put you in.

WS: Oh, so that's what the concessionaires do.

MM: Yes. That's the concession, that you have the authority to use their places to put in and take out. That's the only way. You're only allowed so many canoes. Like my canoe concession was sixty canoes. That's all I could rent. So that's the way they control it.

WS: I guess if somebody comes up here and brings their own canoe...

MM: Oh, private stuff can go in anywhere. Yes, it's open; as it should be. But it does protect your concessionaire and his investment. Now, we've got one or two in town that like to rent tubes. Well, the only thing they can do is rent them carry out. They can't haul the people at all. So you can rent a tube for carry out at \$2 or \$3 a day. But if you rent it as a concessionaire you get \$5 to \$7 a day, if you take them to the river.

WS: You mentioned you had guided people on the river. Was that in the old johnboats?

MM: Yes.

WS: When did you get involved with that?

MM: 1946 and '7. I was just a teenager.

WS: And did you take people, like from St. Louis, down the river?

MM: Yes. You had to have a guide license through the Conservation Commission.

WS: And how long were those trips?

MM: It was an all day trip or half day trip. Most of them were all day trips. You'd leave out early of a morning, and you'd either run up so many miles, then float back all day, or you'd float all day and run back in the early evening. But it was interesting business. (Chuckles) But there were several men who made their living doing that. Of course, Bales Boating Company out of Eminence was a big time deal. They had several boats

that they would rent out, and there would be several of them that would come down at one time. They didn't have motors or anything; just flat bottom boats. That was a big business back then.

WS: Now some of them went on two and three night camping trips.

MM: Oh, yes.

WS: I guess they'd start way up.

MM: If they started, say, at Eminence, it'd take them three days.

WS: To get down to Van Buren?

MM: Yes. And Round Springs to Van Buren, three days. If they just an overnight, why, they'd take them and put them in at Powder Mill, and they'd come down and stay all night on the river someplace, and come on in here the next morning. That used to be a big business. Even as a young person, I used to go out on the river. I could be out there all day and never see another person. There just wasn't any river traffic to speak of.

(Chuckles)

WS: Well, that's certainly changed.

MM: Oh, it's changed. You bet. It *really* has changed.

[Tape meter, 250]

WS: I guess you must have met Mr. Hartzog.

MM: Oh, yes. George and I were big buddies. You see, I was an officer in the [Ozark Monument] Association. I was secretary, was what I was. The president was G.L. Davis, out of Birch Tree. But when George would come down, I'd go with him; and James

[Grassham] or Mr. McSpadden -- and maybe all of us -- would go with him. And we'd hold meetings around in all these towns around in the area. Of course, we went to Washington, D.C. And we went to Jefferson City; I don't know how many times, up there, meeting with the Missouri Legislature.

But yes, old George. We got to be real good friends. Of course, he'd stay down there with me at the motel. He was the worst driver I ever saw in my life. We drove back one night from Thomasville, Missouri, up above Birch Tree. It was so foggy you couldn't see. I mean, it was really a foggy night. Old George, he chewed a cigar. He drove like a maniac. He was bawling us out because he didn't think we were doing it quite right on (laughing) promoting this. He was chewing us out and chewing on that cigar and driving as fast as he could in that fog all the way (laughing) back to Van Buren. We were quiet. We thought we were going to meet our maker any minute. But George was quite a fellow. We enjoyed him.

WS: He took quite a personal interest in this.

MM: This was his baby. See, he was superintendent of the Jefferson Expansion [Memorial] in St. Louis. They gave him the responsibility of overseeing this down here. George wasn't in on the very first, but he came in when the legislation was introduced and all. This fellow I mentioned earlier, Ted Swem -- he was the main National Park personality down here in the beginning. And Ted grew up to big time in the National Park Service. He was head of Alaska, I think, when he retired. But he was quite a guy; a nice fellow.

He came back here to visit, after he retired, one time. Sullivan was

superintendent. So, Mr. Swem went in to visit the headquarters there. Sullivan and I just didn't jeehaw quite well. Anyway, Mr. Swem asked about me, and told him what a grand guy I was. (Laughs) And what an asset and all, and building me up. Sullivan didn't know what to think about that, that I knew anybody that big up in the Park Service.

(Laughs)

[Tape meter, 300]

But he was a nice fellow. I think he's still alive. He's retired out at Denver. It was quite a time. It was quite an experience for me, a little country boy. We got to know a lot of important people.

I'll never forget. We went to Washington, D.C., for a hearing. The first thing they did, they treated us like royalty. I mean, the Park Service got a caravan of cars and loaded us in with sirens, and here we went all over Washington visiting all their monuments and things in Washington, D.C. People would stare at us as we went down there. They thought we were a bunch of visiting presidents, I guess. But really, they treated us nice. Senator Symington, he put on a brunch for us over at a Georgetown apartment. We lived high on the hog, there for a while. (Laughs)

We got a big kick out of G.L. Davis. He was the nicest old man that ever was. He was a school man from Birch Tree. Anyway, after that tour of the Park Service, why Mr. Davis got out, reached for his billfold, and said, "I'd be glad to tip you!" It was the assistant director of the National Park Service. I mean, the second in command of the whole thing, was our driver. (Laughs) Got a little embarrassed about that. Mr. Davis, he

didn't know. He was a fine fellow, though; that guy was. We appreciated him.

WS: Would you say that having the different superintendents in over the years, has that really changed the kind of public mood toward the Riverways?

MM: I'd have to say yes, because of the degree of the people that accepted them. Like Mr. Sullivan, like I told you; he was from Boston. He wasn't used to Ozark mannerisms or anything. The reason he and I didn't jeehaw so well is, that he expected us to treat him like royalty. Well, bull. He's just one of us, if he moved here. He didn't need any special treatment. (Laughs) And he kind of resented a lot of us for that, because we didn't kowtow to him. But his mannerisms. He just didn't know how to interact with local people very well.

[Tape meter, 350. End side two, tape one of two.]

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

WS: If you were in control, what would you have them do differently that they haven't done these last thirty-some years?

MM: The main thing I would have done differently, I would have emphasized more of the natural beauty of the area, like our springs. The first thing they did, they moved everything away from the Big Spring Park, for instance. There by the bridge there used to be a boat concession there, then a concession stand. People would crowd up around there and use the boats. They'd buy things at the concession stand. Then, of an evening, the campers were just up the river a little ways. They were all down there in the early evening time -- a crowd would go on until dark.

Now you down there and shoot a cannon after five o'clock in the afternoon and not hit a soul. There's *nobody* around there because they moved the boats down by the dining lodge where nobody can see. They've taken the concession stand completely out. There's nothing there. They've moved the campers all up, way up to the old airport, away from the river. It's just not used like it used to be. There are no campers to compare at all with what used to be. To me, they have desecrated the park down there, really; to my opinion. They've cut the use down on it tremendously.

That's one thing I would change. Like I said, that was family-oriented type of things there. But they have acted like, really, that they'd rather you *didn't* come and visit. They'd rather that you wouldn't be on the river or anywhere else. They just act like that it's a preservation thing entirely; not a use thing. That concept doesn't go too well with me.

We had a storm a few years ago down below the park there. Some native timber -- I mean, some of the most beautiful, big oaks and pine in on that place -- and they were blown down. Well, they laid right there and rotted, by golly. There's where I'm a Forest Service man. I think multiple use. You know, why let that lay there and ruin? Things like that. I just don't go along with it.

Another thing is they overemphasize the employees in the office. You go in there and they're just shuffling papers from one desk over to the next. And yet they say they don't have enough people, so they close down a camping ground or two on the river because they can't have enough money to employ help. Well, I think their use is misused.

I don't know where the money *should* be spent. I don't know. I'm just not used to the bureaucracy, much. If you're not earning your keep, I don't hire you. (Laughs) But if I need you, I'm going to hire you in the areas that I need you in. But, there again, I might not know what I'm talking about, too. I'm not a bureaucrat. (Laughs)

WS: Has there been any problem or confusion over this scenic easement option, when they came in to get the land? You ever hear much about that?

MM: No. In fact, I think they used that too much, from the standpoint that there's property that's not being used at all, but yet it's tied up in estates forever.

WS: Oh, life estates?

MM: Yes. Life estates. When they could have gone in and purchased it just as cheap as they did before. But I don't know of very many cases where the life estate has really amounted to that much. People have used it, but it's in limbo.

Another thing I would have done that they didn't, I would have bought more land. They'd come down, they'd split a farm in half. Well, they ruined the farm. Why not take that hill that went with the farm back here, and add acreage to it? That, I didn't see. They limited themselves. And they didn't save that much money, either. At the time they established this, this land was cheap. They paid three times what it was going for, (chuckles) at the time, anyway. But they limited themselves, I think, too much in trying to narrow down.

And another thing they started doing that they're not doing anymore, but I thought was a really good idea, was, they were sowing wildlife plots in a lot of these old farm

fields up and down the river.

[Tape meter, 050]

And boy, that was really a game breeder. That was good. But they don't do that anymore. I think they should. There again, though, I would have been in favor of restricting hunting in that narrow strip, just because of the wildlife breeding. It would increase our wildlife a hundred fold if we would do that. But the natives wouldn't go for that restricted hunting, I don't think. They did do a good job early on in planting these food plots down the river.

But my main objection to the National Park Service is, they seem to want to limit the use. They do not advertise. There's no mention of Ozark National Scenic Riverways anywhere. I don't think that's right. I think they should advertise a little bit. If you're not a national park, you don't get any advertising. They don't even advertise *them* very much.

WS: I guess after the superintendents, the influential people would be the rangers, in terms of how they deal with the public and all.

MM: They've had some mighty fine rangers in here. And they've used a lot of local people who have gotten jobs with the National Park Service. I know there are a couple of boys now that work here that have gotten their degrees in criminal justice. They came back and got a job. There's one girl that's got a job as a ranger here. She got her degree. So naturally, the local ones get along good with the local people. Really, there's not a lot of conflict that I know of in the enforcement. The conflict is in the policy making end of it.

It's not in the enforcement. Of course, some of these hot heads want to try them on their big motors and all that. But I don't think they, even, resent the rangers. It's the policy that they're trying to buck.

We're disappointed in the National Park Service because they haven't done what we anticipated and they insinuated that it *would* amount to. But I think primarily it's because of the politics that entered in in the beginning and then caused the downsizing of it all, that really is perhaps the reason it has not developed like it should. And, I resent a lot of times the restrictions that they try to put on us. But, on the other hand, if it wasn't for the National Park Service having control of the river, the littering and abuse would be ten-fold what it is now.

So I'm grateful that we do have people out there; the Water Patrol, Conservation Commission, and National Park Service. They do a good job of policing. And it needs it. I mean, in the summertime, you get a bunch of kids up here on dope and beer, (chuckling) it *needs* policing. And they do a good job. A lot of people resent them doing such a good job, but I don't. I think without them we'd have a sewer. So I'm in favor in that. Being a concessionaire gave me an insight to that, because I was out there seeing, knowing what was going on. (Laughing) And seeing the condition of the people I hauled back after a day on the river. I knew that they needed some policing out there.

So I think we're better off with the Park Service than we'd be without them. But I'm sorry that we haven't developed as much as we should have. As much as we gave up, in my opinion, we ought to have had more development than we've gotten out of it. I

think it's the designation. Even if we'd stayed a monument, we would have tripled our business. I don't know; have any of the other boys commented on the fact that they were surprised about the river being the main source?

WS: No, you're the first one.

MM: We were all aware of that, though. Of course, when a congressman or a senator would come down, we'd take them on a boat and take them up the river. That's the way we showed them the area, most of the time. But we were shocked when it turned out to be the river.

[Tape meter, 100]

Of course, none of us were thinking in terms of day use, either. We weren't used to day use. We were used to people coming in and staying all night and spending at least two days around in the area. So this driving in, unloading, jumping in a canoe, and taking off and getting back in their car and leaving at the end of the day -- we weren't used to that kind of business. As a result, we haven't grown. We're beginning to grow a little, and I think that's because of the highway change. People are gravitating out to the highway. But more businesses have closed in Van Buren as a result of the highway moving. There have been new ones built, and so forth. But I'm sure that will change one of these days.

WS: Well, when it came to the land acquisition back in the late '60s and all, would you say the way they went about that caused hard feelings?

MM: I think they went about it as about as reasonable as they could have, under the circumstances; because of the animosity against the thing. Most everybody was against

it, that were landowners. But, they used local appraisers. They had a government appraiser that was more or less over it, that supervised. But they used local appraisers to a great extent. And, as I said, they gave more than a fair market value for this land, at that time. So, I don't know of anybody that was really felt like they were ripped off, at the time. They do now, because of course now, they can get *ten* times for it what they got for it then. But I think they gave fair market value.

And, like I say, a lot of it was non-resident owner. It didn't matter what they thought. Like Leo Drey, he owned several hundred acres that joined on Current River. Well, just about every farm that was bought or sold, every tract of land on the river was bought by a non-resident, because they would pay more money for it than locals would, of course. And, at that time, there wasn't any use for it other than farming or timber. There wasn't any recreational aspect to it. A different world back in the 1950s.

WS: I guess you remember this organization called the Current and Eleven Point River Association. I think Mr. Vincent Bucher, the reverend up in Shannon County, was --

MM: They were "agin" it. They were the "aginnners." I'll tell you one of the funniest things I ever heard in my life. There was a fellow by the name of Bolin, who lived at Eminence. I think he had a lumberyard or campground up there.

WS: Oh, Leonard Bolin. I've come across his name.

MM: Well, he was a member of the Reverend's group up there. We went to Washington, D.C., for a hearing. It was before the Senate. And old Leonard, he was testifying. He was advocating burning. He says, "Do you realize, fellars, how much water them brash take

up?” The senator said, “Mr. Bolin, what did you say?” “Do you know how much water them brash take up, from the hillsides?” He said, “What’d you say?” “Brash! Damn it! Brash!” (Laughs) He was talking about brush; underbrush. He was advocating burning it off. And those senators grabbed up the paper [*imitates pulling a newspaper up in front of himself to hide his laughter*] (Laughs), covered their face. That was the funniest thing I ever heard. But Mr. Bolin, he wanted to burn off the brash.

WS: Now, you all had an organization, didn’t you?

MM: It was the Ozark National Rivers Monument Association. Monument, we were calling ourselves. G.L. Davis at Birch Tree was the president, and I was the secretary.

[Tape meter, 150]

I think Mr. [Leo] Anderson was treasurer. I don’t remember who the vice president was; it might have been Ray Allmon. I don’t remember; back then. Boy, that’s been a long time ago. But yes, we had several thousand members. “Several thousand” -- I’d say less than, probably, two thousand. But, make it sound good. But we had a pretty good organization. It didn’t really amount to that much; only to say that we had that many. But the officers and their workers, we were the ones that went to Washington to the hearings, and to Jefferson City.

I added several bucks. Several of us did. We spent a lot of money, our own money, running around trying to do this. Of course, I was into tourism and I knew that I was going to benefit from it. So it was kind of a selfish thing, in one way; self-interest. But still, I thought at the time (and still think) that tourism is our only salvation here.

And you look now at our major payrolls, and now is federal employees; the number of federal employees we've got in here. They're all high-salaried people. As a result, we've got our school systems up. We've got excellent school systems, and good pay for teachers -- could pay them more, but for a rural area we pay them fairly well. And we've got a good health system. So, I think we've benefited from it.

WS: I get the feeling that the reaction to the Riverways, upriver and downriver, might have been somewhat different.

MM: Oh, yes. Oh, yes. The upriver was all against it.

WS: Is that right? They're stronger against it?

MM: Oh, yes.

WS: But then, on the other hand, the Ripley County people were so strongly against it.

MM: Well, they were. And that was surprising, because there were just a few miles that were going to be affected in Ripley County. I think most of it might be traced to the fact that we hill people want to be independent. We don't appreciate any government (chuckling) interference in our lives. And, there is better farming and everything else in Ripley County too. And that has something to do with it. They had a lot better farms along the river down there.

WS: Oh, I guess so.

MM: So, they had a lot of influence with their congressman at that time. And, of course, we didn't because he wasn't our congressman. Ripley County was in a different district at that time. They chose to withdraw, and that really hurt, because if we'd kept the Eleven

Point -- and now Eleven Point is under the Forest Service, you know. They've done the same thing, practically, through the Forest Service that the Park Service planned to do. And yet they haven't benefited a third from it that they would have if it would have been a national park. So Oregon County really cut their own throat when they showed doubt about it.

But the upper Current -- Shannon County was almost totally against it. And they benefited more than anybody else from it, because of the number of employees and everything else; the concessions, and all the rest of it. Shannon County has most of it. I think most of that is Red Bailey's doing, though. (Chuckles) Old Red, he did a good job for Shannon County.

[Tape meter, 200]

And more of the area is in Shannon County, too. It really is. It wouldn't have been if they'd included the rest. I think the only reason, like I said earlier, that we're the headquarters is because of our highway and because of the support we gave them, to start with. Because they tried awful hard to get it. They wanted it at Owls Bend, was where they wanted to put it out on the river, which really would have been out in the country. But they didn't have enough good will in Shannon County at the time to get it done.

WS: Well, you've kind of answered this question, but I guess you've got kind of mixed feelings on how things have turned out. But overall, would you say you were satisfied or dissatisfied?

MM: As I said earlier, without the Park Service, our quality of water and all, and control, would

be much worse than it is. So, from that standpoint only, I'm satisfied with the Park Service; because of the environmental impact that they have on it.

We've had some terrible experiences over here on Black River, of uncontrolled use over there. All terrain vehicles in the river, littering, and all the rest of it. Uncontrolled fighting, drunkenness, and all of that. We have some of that here, but not near to the extent that we would have if it wasn't controlled.

As a whole, I'm glad that we're a national park. I wish we had been designated better. And I still think that it would be to the advantage to the Park Service and to the state of Missouri to go ahead and designate this *as* a national park, and taken *in* the wilderness area; land with a lot of controversy on now anyway, on mining. So that would quiet that down. Go ahead and take in a few more thousand acres. Missouri Conservation has a lot more land, too, that could be utilized. I could tell you, there was 98,000 acres (I believe it was) owned in Carter County at the beginning of this, by the federal Forest Service and state Conservation Commission; when we established this. So, actually, they didn't have to buy as much as it seemed like they bought. The state park system gave them the parks, and some Forest Service land was taken in. But there was a lot more land available that they could have taken and used, and made it into a bigger deal. And, since the federal Forest Service is in control of the Eleven Point, they could take that into National Park Service jurisdiction and *have* a national park. And it *would* amount to something, then.

WS: Now, I understand this transfer of state parks into the Park Service didn't go as smoothly

as they thought it would.

MM: I'm not aware of any hits. Joe Jaeger, who was the superintendent of the state parks at the time, worked real good. Joe was in on all of our meetings, and went with us to Washington. I mean he was very helpful in that end of it.

[Tape meter, 250]

I don't know, there might have been some legislators that weren't in favor of it, but I wasn't aware of it. At that time, whatever Joe said pretty well went. He was well respected in government. And from the very beginning, he worked with us on it.

WS: Well, that's about all the questions I can think of in regard to the Riverways. I don't know if I've left something out that I should have asked you or not.

MM: I don't know. It seems like I've blabbered a long time here.

WS: I think it was before we had the tape player on you mentioned that you had worked with the Conservation Department some.

MM: Yes. My father-in-law was the agent, you see. So, in deer season, turkey season, and other occasions, they would hire extra help and commission them. I got a commission and worked with him in these special seasons. Plus, I had the commission, and if I was out anywhere anytime and saw a violation, I could take care of it. I don't think they do that anymore. I don't think they just let a layman gun tote. (Laughs)

WS: I'll bet you witnessed some of these examples of what they call "grandmawing," with the timber poaching.

MM: You bet. I've experienced it on *my* land. Yes. They weren't very good surveyors back

there, and they still aren't, in some cases. These [property] lines go kind of like this
[gestures to indicate a zig-zagging pattern] according to the grade of the timber they're
in. (Laughs) Yes. We had a fellow by the name of Smallwood that was with the Forest
Service, and that's what his job is yet today, is detective; to investigate grandmawing.

WS: Oh, it still goes on?

MM: Oh, yes. If they have a cut, they have people in. In fact, we've got a man stationed here
in Winona, I guess; but he lives here. That's his job, too. He investigates littering and
any violation in the forest. Mr. Smallwood, he was a top man in that. I was in Bradford,
Pennsylvania. They have some of the most beautiful, big, old, wild cherry trees. I mean
big dudes, up there. I was telling him about them. He said, "Yes, I was up there six
months ago investigating a cut." Some people had gone in there and helped themselves
to some of those good cherry trees in Bradford, Pennsylvania. He'd gone up and
investigated it.

That's interesting, the way they do that. They just take a cut off of the stump and
go to the sawmills and match them up. (Chuckles) It's easier done than a lot of people
think, thank goodness. Because some of these old boys are not too smart. (Laughs)

But you don't have as much of that as you used to have. Mostly it's the
wandering of the survey lines is about the extent of it now.

[Tape meter, 300]

I saw in the paper not long ago, though, where a couple of guys were prosecuted for that.
I believe it was up in Shannon County. So there is some of it that goes on. The biggest

problem now is marijuana in Forest Service land. These old boys go out there and plant it; government land. Quite a few of them do that around here.

WS: I imagine in the old days you had people making whiskey.

MM: Not in my lifetime. That all happened before me. I've heard about it, but it's all been legal since I've been old enough to know what's going on. But there is homebrew, yet. People make beer and stuff, around. But not much of it. It's too easy to get; too cheap at the store, I guess. Yes, I even knew of chicken stealing. They used to do a lot of that; raid the hen houses, around.

WS: Well, I'd like to let you make any closing remarks that you want to make.

MM: I don't know of any wisdom I can depart now. I'm just glad I had the experience. It was a good experience for me to be involved in it. I had a lot of good friends, a lot of people that I met that enriched my life. So I'm glad I was part of it. (Laughs) It seems like it's been a long time. It has been. Because actually, it was in about 1951 or '2 that we started this. Like I said, I'm not bragging, but I was in on the very first of it. I was one that got it started, really; from the local side. It's been interesting.

The worst part of it was, there were campaigns run on our credibility. We had some character assassination going on. It wasn't warranted, because of politics. I hated that. Our intention there wasn't to hurt anybody. We were trying to enrich the life of the people in this county. But, you know how that goes. There's always two sides.

(Chuckles)

You're misunderstood, sometimes. But I guess it was worth it. The good friends stayed.

[Tape meter, 355. End side one, tape two of two. End of interview.]