

#1 Priority

- ☒ Scanned
- ☒ returned from interviewee
- ☒ corrected
- ☒ final copy to interviewee

Tape Index Sheet Reel 1

General Topic of Interview: Early Parkway Landscape Development
Cone/Price acquisition

Date: 10/7/96

Place: Boone, NC

Length: 2 hr.

Personal Data:

Narrator

Name Ted Pease

Address 192 Cherry Brook Ln.

Boone, NC 28607 (704) 264-3860

Birthplace _____

Birthdate _____

Occupation(s) Landscape

Developer and Park

horticulturalist - Blue Ridge Parkway

Interviewer

Name Julie Mullis

Address 1489-1 Brown's

Chapel Rd. Boone NC 28607

Title: Interp. Ranger

What was the occasion of the interview?

Oral History - early employee

Interview Data:

Side 1 Early days on Pkwy

Side 3 - Cone Estate

Side 2 WWII and Beyond

Side 4 - Price & Cone Parks

Estimated time
on tape:

Subjects covered, in approximate order (please
spell out names of persons & places mentioned)

1005

Civil Service Appt; Sparta NC VR Ludgate, Mattson, Abgwehl, Malcolm Bird,

1010

move to Marion

Jessie Mae, Teer, Granville, Lyles, Richard

1018

Crabtree meadows

Clark, Frank Reynolds, Gillespie Gap

1025

Parkway plantings

Pearly Toll Rd.

1032

Asteville office

1034

Arrest in Watershed

Sam weems, Dr. George Hepting

1045

Personnel after WWII

Charles Grossman, Art

1053

Ed Abgwehl

Stupka

1056

Cone & Price Parks

Lloyd Coffey

1100

Apple orchards

Charlie Coffey

Use back of sheet if necessary

(back)

1107 - Old John's River Rd/prices Dam

1117 Disposal of Cone Buildings

1120 Apple Barn contents

1125 - Cone Estate Superintendents

1129 - Asu Biology Club

1136 - Boone Fork Bog

1147 Graves by Parkway mp 293

1156 Price Park original Plans

Ben Cone

Henley House

Leo Collins

Hare mill pond.

Wade Brown

Moody

Bill Carpenter

Frank Randall, Ranger Carl
Hanson

(actually Huss)

Ted Pease

BRP Landscape Developer and Park Horticulturist 1938-1971

Interviewed 10/07/96 at his home in Boone, N.C. at 1000 hours

192 Cherry Brook Dr. Boone N.C. 28607; (704) 264-3860

Interviewed by Julie Mullis

Side 1 1A

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1000 Background/ Civil Service appt.
Smokies | (V.R.) Ludgate, Mattson,
(Edward) Abbuehl,
(Stanley Abbott |
| 1005 Blue Ridge Pkwy, Sparta, N.C., 1938 | Malcolm Byrd, Jessie Mae
(Pease), Teer |
| 1010 Bureau of Land Affairs, WWII; Move
to Marion 1940 | Granville Lyles |
| 1013 Conscientious Objector Camp | Richard Clark, Frank
Reynolds, Buck Creek
Gap (MP 245)
Gillespie Gap (MP 331) |
| 1018 Crabtree Meadows (MP 339) | |
| 1022 Black CCC Camp-Galax? | |
| 1024 Mt. Mitchell CCC Camp | |
| 1025 Parkway plantings; Land use maps | |

Side 2 1A

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1032 Pkwy during/after WWII, Asheville
Office | |
| 1034 Arrest in Asheville Watershed | Sam Weems
Dr. George Hepting
Charles Grossman
Art Stupka |
| 1039 Lumber for Doughton park | |
| 1045 Personnel after WWII | |
| 1047 Stanley Abbott's genius | |
| 1053 Ed Abbuehl | |
| 1056 Cone and Price Parks
Apple picking permits | Lloyd Coffey |

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Tape 2, Side 1 1B

1100 Apple Orchards	Charlie Coffey
1103 Charlie Coffey	
Boone Fork Railroad	
1107 Price's dam, Old John's River Rd.	
1111 Obtaining Cone Park	
1114 Ben Cone	
1117 Disposal of Cone buildings/orchards	Henley house
1120 Apple Barn contents	Leo Collins, Haremill Pond
1124 Wood house/Lathe	
1125 Cone Estate superintendants	Wade Brown
1125 Flat Top Tower	Moody
1128 Outbuildings/Garden	
1129 ASU Biology Club	Bill Carpenter
Bee Tree Creek trout project	Frank Randall, Carl Hanson

Side 2 1B

1136 Boone Fork Bog	
Boone Fork Trail construction	
1139 Smokies trails	
1140 Cranberries in bog	
Cone men	Clyde Downs
1147 Graves by Pkwy at MP 292.5	(actually 'Huss' on graves)
1150 Changes seen on Pkwy-traffic	
1156 Price Park original plans	
1159 Sandy Flat School	

192 Cherry Brook Lane
(Boone, N.C. 28607
2-19-99

Blue Ridge Parkway
Attn: Park Curator

I am returning the transcript
of the taped interview with Julia Mullis,
with a few suggested changes. I would
be glad to give you any more information I might
have, but I do not see well, or write very
well any more (as you can see)

Thank you for this opportunity.

Led Pease

RECEIVED
BLUE RIDGE PARKWAY
1999 FEB 24 AM 10:08
HEADQUARTERS
ASHEVILLE, NC

May 13, 1999

Mr. Ted Pease
192 Cherry Brook Ln.
Boone, NC 28607

Dear Mr. Pease:

Enclosed is a copy of your 1996 interview about your experiences on the Blue Ridge Parkway. This copy is for you to keep. The original transcription and tapes are being inventoried and stored in the Blue Ridge Parkway archives collection where they can be used by park staff and the public for future research.

I want to thank you for your participation in the Parkway Oral History Project and helping us to preserve the history of the Blue Ridge Parkway.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at (828) 271-4779, ext. 243.

Again, thank you for your contribution to this very important project.

Sincerely,

Jackie Holt
Park Curator

enclosure

TAPE ONE, SIDE ONE

JM: I just want to ask you just one little question that I need to put on the tape, I need to know your exact birthday. 'Cause we'll put this on the front of the tape, under your name.

TP: My birthday? November 21st, Nineteen- Nine.

JM: And where were you born at?

TP: Oswego New York.

JM: Can you spell Oswego?

TP: O-W-E-G-O.

JM: Ok. And, um, could, what year did you say that you started?

TP: Nineteen thirty-eight. In June. I started in the Parkway. And in Nineteen thirty-three, in June, I started in the Smokies.

JM: OK. And, could you, I know you just told your story about how you were called up by the Civil Service. But could you say it again so that I could get it on tape? (Laughs)

TP: Which one, the Parkway, or the Smokies?

JM: You started out with the Smokies, how you took the Civil Service exam...

TP: Well. I took the exam. I graduated in Nineteen thirty-one, from the University of Florida, and I took the Civil Service exam late in my Senior year, and passed it. And then, 'course your name just goes on an eligible list then, and, you may have been told, you (laughs) you weren't there, I'm sure. Jobs were sorta scarce, long about that time. And the CCC Program was just starting. President Roosevelt was elected in 'Thirty-two. And in the Spring of 'Thirty-three, they were getting several CCC camps in the Smokies. And they offered me a position there by mail that I never got. And on the last day, I got a telegram, from the resident landscape architect there, named um, Ludgate. And it says, "We must know today if you'll accept the position in the Smokies." So I wired back I'd accept the position, and send me some information about it. (Laughs) And anyway, they said it was in Gatlinburg, and I couldn't find Gatlinburg on the map. But I knew about the Smokies, and at that time a telegram from Gatlinburg had to go by telephone to Knoxville, and then it would come from there. And we set sail in the general direction of Knoxville, and when we got nearly there, from Atlanta on, I guess we were on detours, in the mud. And we ended up over near Maryville, on the West Side of the Park. And we came in from that end, that side of the Park, to Gatlinburg. And uh—

JM: How were you traveling? By truck?

TP: By car. We had an A-model Ford. And we had everything we owned in it, I guess. (Laughs) That's all we had. And the job was a six-month appointment, subject to renewal, or not renewal. And it was renewed, periodically then, until long in Nineteen thirty-eight. And Ludgate, he hadn't gone, yet. Yes he had, he had been transferred to the regional office in Richmond. And a fellow named Frank Mattson came from Yellowstone to be the resident landscape architect in the Smokies. And he was a nice guy. Anyway, when Abbott and Abbuehl came and talked to me, and Mattson told me that if I was interested in staying with the Park Service, this would be a good opportunity, it was a permanent appointment. And so when they, when the offer was made, and I accepted, at that time the Parkway Headquarters was in Roanoke. And so we went to Roanoke. And we were there a few days, well, just meeting people and finding out what was what and who was who. And then I was assigned to North Carolina. And at that time, let's see now, the organization was some different then than it is now. North Carolina and Virginia were more or less kept separate, so far as personnel and all that were concerned. And I was assigned to North Carolina in landscape development. And my

Interview with Mr. Ted Pease 10/7/96 Boone, NC Interviewed by Julie Mulls
immediate superior in the field was a fellow named Byrd, Malcolm Byrd, who had been

n the Smokies. And he had been, he knew Abbott from the Westchester Parkway, where Abbott had been working. And when, as soon as the Parkway started, Byrd applied for a transfer to the Parkway, and left the Smokies and came to the Parkway. And then not too long after I came up here, he decided he wanted to be a city planner, and he left, and went back to school. And I don't know where, I understand that he was a city planner, by training anyway. But I don't know where he went. But uh, then I was assigned to Sparta. But at that time, in 1938, Sparta was a pretty small town, and you couldn't get fresh meat. You couldn't get fresh vegetables in the store, everybody had a garden. And the truck came up from Mount Airy once a week with fresh meat on it. And anyway, and then besides that we couldn't find a place to live.

JM: When you say "we", is this the two of you? (Referring to wife who is also present.)

TP: Yeah.

JM: Did you have any children yet?

TP: No, not yet. No. And so, we, One night Jessie Mae had a, we'd go to Galax, on Saturday to buy whatever we needed. And we were in Sparta about a month, I guess, maybe two. And we were in Galax one Saturday, and she had a migraine headache. And it was a doctor was there, who had night office hours, like most doctors did, at that time. So we went by to see him, and he gave her a shot. And like we did everywhere we went, we asked him if he knew of any apartment that would be for rent. And he said, yes, he had an apartment that would be for rent next week. And he said, "well, I'll tell you now, if you give noisy parties or drink liquor, don't bother with it, because I'll run you out. And that's why it's being vacant next week." (Laughs) And so we wound up, uh, he lived in a nice big old colonial twenty-room house, in Galax. Columns in front, a real nice old house. He and his wife, with sixteen or twenty rooms, somethin' like that. So he had fixed two apartments upstairs with a separate outside entrance, that he rented. And we found out, as time went on, that medical attention went with the apartment rental. And so we moved ourselves from Sparta to Galax, and I still was assigned in North Carolina. And at that time, the Parkway—are you familiar with the way the Parkway section numbers went, and all that?

JM: M-hm, with the (Indecipherable) Yeah.

TP: Well, everything in Virginia was One, and then starting at the North end section, A, B, C, D. And then North Carolina was Two, and Section Two A started at the state line, near Galax, between Galax and Cumberland Knob. And Cumberland Knob, 'course is where the first contract was started on the Parkway. That was with Nello Teer, who still is one of the bigger contractors in the country, I guess.

JM: Yeah, I spoke with his son. I'm gonna be interviewing his son in Durham, in a couple of weeks. That'll be interesting.

TP: Well, that, Teer, they were and are a good contractor. They did several sections of the Parkway, I don't just offhand, I don't know how many or just which ones. But at that time, 2 A was not finished, but it was graded and graveled. And that's all the contract required. And then, the landscape development people would come on, and we would flatten the slopes if we needed to, around the tops. And seed the slopes, and do whatever planting we could. And, now in the later contracts, that finished grading was included, and the seeding was included in the original contract. But then, they were just left, the banks were raw, and that's why uh, landscape development needed to seed them and plant them. And at that time, now the engineering was handled by the Bureau of Public Roads. At that time it was

TP: (Continued) the Bureau of Public Roads. And on Section Two A, uh, the Bureau of Public Roads, at that time, had a crew, doing Landscape Development. Now this was the Bureau, not the Park Service. And Granville Liles, who became a Superintendent, later on, was the foreman of that crew. And they had a landscape architect, who worked out of the Bureau of Public Roads office in Washington. And I worked with him, and we got along well. But uh, very shortly then, the Bureau closed down their landscaping operation, and Granville met Sam Weems, and Sam liked him, and they got along well. And then Granville got on as a Park Ranger and, well, was on the Parkway for, let's see. I don't know, he left in the late forties, I guess. It was after World War Two. Anyway, the Parkway was rough graded, practically all. There were small gaps, Deep Gap out here, and uh, but not surfaced yet. And then when World War Two came along, well, before then, they moved me from Galax to Marion. And, let's see, that was in, I guess about 'Forty one, wasn't it, when we moved to Marion?

JMP: Wait just a minute. We were in Galax between 'Thirty eight and 'Forty. And we been married from 'Forty to 'Forty three and then you went in the service.

JM: Did you work with the Conscientious Objector Camp, down towards Gillespie Gap?

TP: Yeah, they were organized while...see, the CCC Program, we had a camp at Doughton Park. I was more or less, they did landscape development work, so I was looking after them, and they had a landscape architect on their staff, which was where I started in the Smokies. Um, boy named Clark, who was, I think his first name was Richard, wasn't it? And he was, he was a good landscape architect and a nice fellow. But World War Two was coming on, you could tell. Clark had a ROTC from Chapel Hill, ROTC appointment as a second lieutenant. And uh, he was called up, or he wanted to be called up; he was anxious to go. And did. They called him up, and when the war started he was killed the first day of action on Guadalcanal. And, he was, he was a good man and we missed him. But as the war came on, the CC camps were wound up. And the, they could see it coming, I guess. And so I was moved to Marion, from Galax. And there we had uh, fellow named Frank Reynolds, who was, he and his brother later started Seven Devils Development up here. But Frank was from Winston-Salem; his family were the L.A. Reynolds construction Company. And he was in charge of quite a large group, I don't know, between a hundred and two hundred men. And I guess it was an ERA, there were all sorts of the alphabet things at that time. And they were working on the Parkway, doing landscape development, out of Marion. And uh, and they were, as World War Two came on, 'course they were closed down. And their headquarters, in the field, was up on the Parkway, just toward Mount Mitchell, about a mile from Buck Creek Gap. And, if you're familiar with that, there's a Forest Service road that crosses the Parkway. And on Parkway left, 'bout a hundred yards down that road, they went up in there, and cleared an area and had several buildings built. An office, and a garage, and uh, I don't know what all. Anyway, they worked out of that. The men came in there in the morning and then went out and worked, planting bushes and seeding slopes, and rounding the slopes if they needed it, and that sort of thing. And they were, Frank did, he was a good man. 'Course he was raised on construction. His family were in construction and his family had a big nursery in Winston-Salem, so he was, moving shrubbery he'd known all his life. And he lived in Marion. But they were, they were closed down shortly after I went there. And I guess they were closed down by

Mr. Ted Pease 10/7/96

'41, I guess, 'cause when war was declared, they were gone. And anyway, then, there we found that we could get some

onscientious objectors. And so we did. And at first, we were supposed to have about a hundred. And the plan was to put them at Gillespie Gap. And that's why those buildings were hastily built there. For where the office is now was supposed to be the kitchen and dining room. But before we ever got them, we got word that instead of a hundred, we'd probably get two hundred conscientious objectors. So that was more than we could handle at Gillespie Gap. So there was a CCC camp, just below Buck Creek Gap on Forest Service land, that had been dismantled— or been, uh, terminated there. And the Park Service contacted the Forest Service and they said we could use that camp. They were through with it. And so that's where the conscientious objectors were housed, and they worked out of there. And they worked, well, they did a lot of work at Crabtree Meadows, where we were just starting that campground there. And they, they graded the road. But at that time we didn't have plans for the gas station or the restaurant. And so the road was just an entrance from the Parkway there. And they worked well, they were a nice bunch of boys. Most of 'em were Quakers. And they, they were good boys. But we had a lot of funny things happen, because they weren't used to working in the woods. You've heard the expression "sawing off the limb you're sitting on" I guess. Well, I saw that happen. One of these fellows, (Laughs) he was a great big nice boy from Philadelphia, I think. But he sat on a limb, that we were cutting dead limbs off of the trees in Crabtree Meadows. And he sat on this limb and sawed it off. (Laughs) And he said he'd learn. Slowly, but he learned, there. (Laughs)

JM: (Laughs) Guess he didn't get hurt too bad.

TP: No, he wasn't hurt. He, it bent down, of course, and it wasn't too high from the ground, anyway. But uh, they did good work. And they were a good group of people. And the people in Marion, they'd come in and go to church on Sunday. And the people in Marion had a good relationship to them. And at one time there was some apprehension, you know, that uh, conscientious objectors might not be very well received by the local people. But we never had, least as long as I was there, we never had a bit of trouble with 'em. They were nice boys. And they, in the camp there, they started a sign shop, and made quite a few of the carved signs, wooden signs, we don't have as many now as we used to have since we went to standard signs. But used to be all our signs were made in our own sign shop. And were routed out of redwood. And, I have a Parkway seal, oh 'bout that size I guess, that some of the boys made on their sign shop. On weekends they could make anything they wanted to, you know, and they made it and gave it to me. It's uh... But they were a good bunch of boys, and they worked well. Now they weren't laborers by experience or anything like that. But they were young, draft-age boys. That's why they were there. But they did the best they could, and they learned.

JM: Did you work with the black CCC camp up in Galax at all? There was a black CCC camp up in Galax, I understand.

TP: Uh, I didn't even know about it.

JM: OK. They've asked me, they put the ads in the papers asking people that worked on the Parkway in some capacity to write in. And they didn't hear anything from any of that group right there. But we have the records of the camp being there. And I didn't know whether you worked for them or not.

TP: I don't know where it would've been. Uh...

JMP: We never heard of it, and we were there ten years.

TP: The only CCC Camp that was on the Parkway that I knew anything about was the one in Doughton Park. And when they moved in, that's where this boy Clark was assigned, I took a truck and a truck driver— At that time the Parkway

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ended at Black Mountain Gap, where the road to Mount Mitchell, the old toll road crossed. But you couldn't get from the Parkway down on to the Perly

oll road, there was a grade there. And uh, there was a CCC camp on Mount Mitchell, that worked in the State Park there. And they were closed down, and had gone, just at the time that we were getting our camp at Doughton Park. And I took a dump truck, with a driver and a man to help, or a boy to help. And I wanted him in my car. And we went to Mount Mitchell, started before daylight one morning. Had to drive a state road to Black Mountain, and pick up the key to the gate on the Perly toll road. And the driver of the truck knew the man who kept the key, and 'course he'd been contacted and all like that. So he went on into Black Mountain and came back with the key. He went up to the old Perly toll road from there. All the way to Mount Mitchell, loaded the tools that were left. When that camp moved out, they left their tools. And we inherited them. And so we loaded that truck with, I guess all the tools they had that weren't worn out. And drove back to Doughton Park then. (Laughs) That was one of those days that I got home late. But that was— (Clock striking) it'll quit strikin' directly.

JM: I don't know whether this will pick that up or not, or whether it's so close to us... but we'll find out. (Laughs) Um, when you first came to the Parkway, how did it compare to what you did to it? Were there a lot of rhododendron bushes, or did you all plant the majority of the rhododendron?

TP: Well, uh, the rhododendron of course was native here, and the Parkway was built right through. Now, not many contractors, unless they're required to, most construction contractors, heavy construction, like the kind the Parkway was, and is, the contractors are interested in moving that dirt and grading that road and they (laughs) the shrubbery is the last thing they're concerned with. So that was always, the landscape architect that was assigned to that particular construction, that was always one of his worries, that they didn't back trucks all over the roadside, and then destroy what we were tryin' to save. But then, the raw construction, you might call it, these raw banks and all, that's why it was necessary to have a landscape development department, to heal that over, as much as we could. And we found, the early land use maps, do you still have land use maps?

JM: M-hm.

TP: Well, the early ones, that I made, at least, we would have a list, of plant so-and-so, and this, that. But then, later on, that got too cumbersome. And we decided uh, rather than make a list, that we wouldn't make planting lists as part of the land use maps. But whoever was assigned to that job would stake it out as it went, kind of. It worked better that way. But in the early days, we, that was Malcolm Byrd and I. He was, (laughs) he was in charge of that and Malcolm was strong for, if you were gonna plant somethin', make a list of how many, and sizes, and all like that. And it worked well, but it took a lot of time. And I, I guess I made the landscape development plans, of the land use maps. And then they became, after they were approved, and adopted, and all like that, that became part of the master plan for the Parkway. And on the land use map we had marked views, where it started, and where it should terminate, and specimen trees, and where the woods should be extended on a cut, or cut back to maintain a view. And then the maintenance people were supposed to work from the land use maps. And in this area here, I pretty well, pretty well got them made. You'd make 'em in pencil in the field, on foot, the only way I could ever do it. And show the cuts and the fills and all the rest of that. And then, in the wintertime, when the weather was bad, I'd go in to the office, and they had to be drawn up in ink on linen. Permanent prints. Prints could be made from that, but that's as permanent as you could draw it, is on linen. And I guess that in the office, they still have those linens for each one of the sections. I think I finished, let's see...

TP: (continued) then the restaurant, and the buildings there at Doughton Park. He designed them and then supervised the construction of them. And then, have you heard of EODC?

JM: M-m.

TP: That was the Eastern Office of Design and Construction. In Philadelphia. You can find, in the office somewhere, they'll have the dates, I don't remember just when. But, there was a decree that all of the architects, landscape architects and engineers, would be assembled into one office in Philadelphia in the East, and San Francisco in the West. There was an Eastern Office, and a Western Office of Design and Construction. And then we would all be re-assigned from that office, to the Parkway, or wherever we were needed. Well Charlie Grossman was from Philadelphia, and so he immediately, that made him very happy, and he asked to be moved in to the Philadelphia office permanently and they did. And Charlie was disappointed. You can't go back, you know. Charlie, Charlie died several years ago. And his wife, his widow, went back to Gatlinburg to live. Let me see now, they were very good friends of Art Stupka, the naturalist, in the Smokies. He's written a book, you may know 'bout it. But he was a good naturalist. His wife died, and anyway, Charlie's widow married Art Stupka, later, and they are living in Gatlinburg now. But Charlie was a good architect, and that's why the buildings in Doughton Park look like mountain buildings. Uh, let me see, where are we... but that, then after World War Two, 'course Stan Abbott went to the army, and the service was just about shut down. The Parkway was shut down, and it wasn't finished enough so that, there was local traffic but there wasn't, well there wasn't tourist traffic anyhow, through the war. And Mr. Weems, about everyone else went into service, and Mr. Weems went into the Air Force and then got thrown out, or turned down, on account of his eyes. His eyes were poor. And he got he was discharged from the Air Force, and so he was able to keep his finger on what was going on. And after World War Two, Stan Abbott came back, Weems was still assistant superintendent at that time. But the powers in Washington decided that the Parkway was getting too big for one man to look after all of it, and told Abbott that he could take his choice, he could either be the resident landscape architect, or superintendent. And he said, well he was a landscape architect, so he would rather stay as that, and did, and then Weems was appointed as the first superintendent. But uh, now Abbott was, he was a genius, I guess. He had ability, when I was in a meeting one time, with him, and we had representatives from the State of North Carolina, the Park Service, the Forest Service, and then, same thing from Virginia, the State of Virginia, and their Park Service, and their Forest Service, and then the National Forest Service, 'cause the Parkway goes through. And there was so many agencies that had an interest in the Parkway, and they were having a little bit of trouble in all getting together, you know. And Abbott, he said that the purpose of this meeting was to draft, if we could, a memorandum of understanding, that all of these agencies could agree to. A memorandum about the policies of the Park Service. The administration of the Park there wasn't any question, but some of the policies, both of the States had ideas that they would like to have considered. And the State Parks, and Forests, this is Sandy Flat, that little picnic next to the church, that's leased to the State. We own it, but it's leased to the State. And same way with the one out toward Deep Gap, that park there is leased to the State. State runs it, we don't have anything to do with it. But there were details of the management and like that that needed to be understood by everybody, and that was the purpose of this meeting. Well when we adjourned for lunch,

- TP: (continued) Abbott said, "Y'all go ahead, and while you're going to lunch, I'll see if I can—" he called his secretary and told her not to go to lunch (laughs) He said, "I'll see if I can gather up all of the things we've been talking about." And he did, and when we came back from lunch, that was before the days of copying machines, but she had copies made, enough to go around, a copy to everyone of a one page memorandum of agreement. And he had summarized every question that all these different agencies had, and there were little details and big details rolled into one page. And he passed a copy around to everybody. 'Course I didn't need a copy. (Laughs) 'Cause I was just there as a spectator, I guess. But after they had read it and discussed it a little bit, every agency that was represented there signed that agreement, and that was it. There aren't many people that can do that sort of thing.
- JM: And I understand that he was just as good at the architecture of the landscape, just as well. He'd see something that was marginal, and make it beautiful.
- TP: Yeah, he had uh, the vision, as we used to say. And he was a nice person, nice to work with, and his right hand man was Ed Abbuehl. And Ed stayed on to the Parkway after Abbott left. Not too long after he was made resident landscape architect, Colonial Parkway had been started, and was under construction, and uh— I have to put drops in my eyes, and then my nose'll run.
- JM: That's OK. (Laughs)
- TP: They were having some construction problems, and the Park Service, you know, at one point, Colonial Parkway goes under part of Williamsburg, through the tunnel there. It was a delicate situation, and the landscape architect who was there, I guess was not as diplomatic as Abbott was, but anyway, Abbott was asked if he would go, they'd about gotten to where things were at a standstill between the Williamsburg people and the Park Service. The only detail that I ever heard about was what to use, stone or brick for the portals of the tunnel. Which were visible, of course from... Anyway, they sent Abbott over there to reconcile things. And he did, quickly and easily. And was so well-liked that he just stayed there. And Ed Abbuehl took over the Parkway as resident landscape architect. And 'course he knew Abbott, he had worked with Abbott in Westchester, and they were good friends and they understood each other. And Ed Abbuehl, was one of the finest people that I've ever known. We think, now just a minute, that he has died, because he used to, every Christmas, after he retired, he moved to Boca Raton, Florida, and built a house there. And then his wife died, but we used to get a long letter from him every Christmas, summarizin' what they had done the previous year.
- JM: Well one of my addresses to contact is Edward H. Abbuehl, in Boca Raton, could that be him, or his son?
- TP: That's him.
- JM: Oh, OK, he's still alive maybe. 'Cause I have his name on the list to interview.
- TP: Well, he may still be alive. But the last, uh, he never failed to give us a letter at Christmas. And the last one that we had, he said the biggest event this year was my ninetieth birthday. And that was, I guess three years ago. It's been two Christmases, and we haven't heard from him.
- JM: So he may be ninety-four now.
- TP: He may. If you don't hear from him, why, that will, that'll be why.
- JM: Well I'll call you and tell you if I talk to him.
- TP: Well I wish you would, I appreciate it.
- JM: And I'll tell him hello for you.

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TP: 'Cause Ed was a good friend of mine. He was, he would be, if he's still living, he's ninety two or three right now. And that's why, we just thought— no-one else that knew him, had been able to tell me anything about it. Now,

after his wife died-- they were here, not long before she died. And 'course he called me, asked me to make a reservation for him at a motel. And we had dinner together. And she didn't live too long after they went back to Boca Raton. But after she died, then he had moved in to a retirement home of some sort there. And that's this address that you have. And he, Ed didn't retire, I don't know when it was. But we had, the Parkway was pretty well finished, well construction was finished. Let's see, we got Cone and Price in 1950. They moved me here on that account, 'cause we had just gotten the Cone land and the Price land.

JM: Could you tell me some about that? About some of the conflicts that you had with Mrs. Cone in the development of the land.

TP: Well, there weren't many Cones left, when (Laughs) 'course Mr. Cone...

JM: He died in 1908, I believe.

TP: Yeah. And he, 'course left her the use of the property for her lifetime. And the two sisters living with her. And they were here summers, and then usually went to Baltimore, their home there, for the winter. But they had a superintendent, and they had, 'course now they had established a dairy there. And the fellow who supervised the dairy, superintendent of the dairy, I guess you'd call him, he was a man named Lloyd Coffey. And he owned property, he had worked for Mr. Cone. Lloyd died several years ago, he was one of the nicest fellows you'll ever run across. And he told me that they continued the dairy after Mrs. Cone died. And it used to be in the upstairs over the carriage barn, there was a carton of, musta been thousands, of bottle-caps, (laughs) for glass milk bottles, for Flat Top Manor Dairy. They may still be there. (Laughs) But the dairy was primarily for the use of the Cones. And they, Mrs. Cone, of course, she was Jewish, and all the Jews I ever knew liked cream, rather than skim milk. And so Lloyd told me that while she was there, in the summer, and she entertained a lot, and they used quite a bit of milk and cream. I don't know whether they churned butter or not. I believe they did but I don't know. Lloyd said of course, that was the first priority, was furnishing the house with all they wanted and could use. And then the dairy, they sold, what other of the milk was left over, to people in Blowin' Rock. And I don't know whether they had a route, I don't think they delivered it, but I don't know. But then, when she went back to Baltimore, Lloyd told me that they had some chests built, out of wood, double walled, filled with sawdust, and he said, every week, 'course they had looked up, Tweetsie was still running then. And they knew the schedule of Tweetsie and they'd looked up the railroad connections to Baltimore. And he said, every week, he would put so much cream, and they had chickens there too, and so many chickens, his wife would dress for him, and they'd pack them all in ice, and so much butter. I guess they did make butter too. In one of these chests. And they'd pack it just in time for him to put it on Tweetsie, he'd bring it to Boone, and it would be in Baltimore with ice still in the box there. And he would do that every week, and she would write to him, and tell him if she wanted more or less, you know. Now Lloyd was one of these people that was absolutely dependable. If she wanted so much cream, she got exactly that much, and there'd be no misfires or anything about it. And Lloyd told me she kept that up until she died, whenever she was in Baltimore, he'd ship the cream. And they'd send the chest back on the next freight or express. And they, when we acquired the place, well, there are aerial photographs of the place in the office, if you haven't seen them. They plainly show the orchard, you can see individual trees. But the orchard had not been maintained as well as Mr. Cone kept them, because he had, in the house, a number of blue ribbons for apples

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that he had been awarded. And he was proud of that. But the orchards in general were not as

good as they were then. But besides that, 'course we were besieged by people who wanted to come and pick apples. And we had a little office in Blowing Rock, up over the drugstore there, and people would come in, you couldn't get much work done for the people coming in wantin' a permit to pick apples. And we would give em a permit, and set that up just so we could kinda keep track of who was in there. And we'd let them have as many as six bushels of apples per person. But they had to carry 'em out. (END OF TAPE)

TAPE TWO, SIDE ONE

TP: --Because Mrs. Cone didn't let anybody, she was strict—

JM: Yeah, I didn't think she— she was very strict about any vehicles being in there at all, on any carriage trail.

TP: Yeah. So, we'd let them have apples, they could go in, and pick a bushel or whatever they could carry, half a dozen times. And we thought six bushels of apples was just a number that we pulled out of the air, but that that would be enough for an ordinary family. But the orchards were still a problem. And there was one group of people that thought that we should maintain the orchards. Well if we did, that's a costly situation. There was a lot of orchard. And if we did, then you had these hundreds of bushels of apples, what're you going to do with them. If you sell them, you're competing with the commercial orchards. If you give em away, you're ruining the commercial orchards. And so it was decided that the Park Service wouldn't try to maintain the apple orchards. And they gradually went down. And some of us, I had to make a land use map for the Cone land, and Price land. And it was decided that the orchard areas, except for the China orchards, are you familiar with—

JM: Yeah, I know China, the one on the steep slope on the other side of 221—

TP: Yeah. Yeah, you ever walk down there?

JM: M-hm. I've been once down there before.

TP: If you want to back up out, it gets to be a problem. Well that, we abandoned that, period. And there were two apple barns down there. And when they had harvested the apples, in the fall, they found that a team of horses could only bring a small load of apples up from those apple barns, up to Sandy Flats, where they came out in that little picnic ground that's there now. So, I don't know whether Mr. Cone built it or not—

JM: It was Mrs. Cone, built the trolley system that went up?

TP: A little tram that went down there.

JM: M-hm. That's right. Yeah she did that.

TP: And the engine was at the upper end of it. And they used it to haul the apples from China. And the local folks just called in China, they didn't bother with China Orchards. And but all a that was abandoned right straight. Now there was a man, also named Coffey, Charlie Coffey, who you may see Charlie's name, he was a warden, a seasonal warden, and the rangers liked Charlie, because he knew that Cone land like his hand. And Charlie was a good person to have on a fire crew, for instance. If you had a fire and needed a crew, you couldn't beat Charlie Coffey. He could round up a crew if he needed to and then take 'em to the fire. Charlie had worked, uh, you familiar with the Sholes Mill, the mill down there, and you know their railroad came up through Price Park—

JM: Right, the Whiting Lumber Company —

TP: Yeah. And Charlie worked up on the side of Grandfather Mountain cuttin' timber, and then he got to be a brakeman, on that railroad that went up there. And I located the Boone Fork Trail, and part of it follow the—

JM: Yeah, the ties are still there, and I've seen some spikes still layin' on the trail.

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TP: And, if you notice, down below where Mr. Price's dam was to be, I think it's there, best I remember, alongside of the trail, there's an old bent

up railroad rail. It's still there, I'm pretty sure, 'cause people have asked me, weren't we afraid that someone would steal it. (Laughs) But, no-one's gonna steal that rail, unless there was a dozen of 'em at least. And uh, I left it there on purpose, it's somethin' that any seasonal ranger that has to take a group around there--

JM: Right. I do that, I used to do a railroad walk, and follow up the grade.

TP: Well, they wrecked right there, one load of logs, and that's why that rail's all bent up.

JM: Really? I've always wondered that. Huh.

TP: They should've known that, whoever told you about it, because, that's what Charlie told me. Because Charlie was in that wreck. And that rail was so badly bent that they just left it. When they rebuilt the road, just threw it out there. And I asked Charlie about it when I was locating the trail. But I thought that's another point of interest to whoever's having to conduct the hikes out there.

JM: Right. That information has disappeared, but I've wondered that too.

TP: That's somethin' that tourists would be interested in, the railroad out in the wild woods, here.

JM: Hm. What about the turbine that was built a little further down? There's timber that goes across the Boone Fork Stream, and I've heard that there was an old turbine built there that created power for the Appalachian Teachers College, right above the falls, just a little bit above the falls.

TP: That wasn't there, when we got the place, and if it was, it had been dismantled. Now, there's a dam, still, you know, down on the river.

JM: That may be what I'm talking about. But people have told me that it used to be part of the old turbine.

TP: Well there was a turbine there. And they generated some power. And then there was another one, out the Blowing Rock Road, down near where the old road went right down there by it. I think the dam is still there, where Appalachian has a little power plant there, to generate their power. But then, I guess it was when the REA came in, and then Appalachian didn't have to generate their own power anymore. But uh, if there was one on the Price land, I don't know about it. But Mr. Price had uh, well, when we acquired the property, on the other side of the creek, from the trail, you can go down the old John's River Road, and drive in. Well there were two or three buildings there, just wooden one-story maintenance buildings for Mr. Price, he would keep a truck there, or several trucks if he wanted to, and he had the engineers who were working on his dam project, had an office just hanging over the edge there, and they had core drilled the site of the proposed dam. And you'll find that most every old house around Blowin' Rock, you'll find a whet rock, about that long and about so big around, that's one of the core drills from (laughs) Mr. Price's dam.

JM: You can see that on the side of the trail. The big holes that have been blasted into the rock on the side. Is that where it is?

TP: Yeah. It's, you used to be able to see where they had cleaned out and they were all ready to pour the footing for the dam. They hadn't let a contract yet, but the engineers had it cleared so they could do the core drilling. And they core drilled it all the way across. There were a few big ones, but most of 'em were oh, inch and a half, or somethin' like that, that they drilled with a rotary drill.

JM: OK.

TP: And they had laid those out, they had built a thing, oh, as big as this much of the room, and they were that far along, they had built, it was flat, and they had a place where they had that laid out in the order that it came out of

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the core, and then were all labeled and marked so that the engineers could keep

track of it, and they could see the rock for so far down, and all like that. But, that was out in the open there. And all the local folks knew about that. (Laughs) And those cores disappeared by the time we got there. I don't know that there were any left—there were a few fragments, that's about all the core that was left. But their office was still there, hangin' over the bank, so that the engineers from their office could see the whole dam side, and they figured that that would be where they would supervise the construction of the dam. But Mr. Price was killed just before he was ready to let—

JM: Right, in a car accident.

TP: To let a contract, and, which was fortunate for the Park Service. Because if he had let that contract, and the dam hadn't been built, the Lake would've gone to the upper end of the present Price dam. Price Lake is about where their lake would've been, it would've complicated building the Parkway a little bit. But I don't think it was any question about location, because the process of requiring right of way was already underway, and the Parkway had been located across the Cone Land and the Price Land, to there.

JM: Right. Was Mr. Price working well with the Parkway, as it was going through his land? Did he seem receptive to that?

TP: It was, I, I'm sure he knew about it, because, where the Parkway location is, it would've been a simple bridge situation, across, about the same size bridge that the present dam has there. But, 'course that changed his plans, and his heirs, they decided that they just, instead of the Parkway was coming across it all right, and it would complicate things, and they just decided to give the whole thing, provided it was named in his memory.

JM: Julian Price Memorial Park.

TP: And the same was with Cone Park. Now, Mr. Cone, in his will, let's see, she was to have the use of the property, but then it was to become a public park. A public pleasure and ground... and that uh, 'course first, the trustees, from the Cone hospital, who were handling his estate, offered it to the State, first, as a State Park. But then, the State said one, there was a provision in there that it was to be maintained as it was. The carriage roads, and all that. And they could see that that was gonna involve a little bit of money, and like most park services, the State Parks didn't have that kinda money. Anyway, they said that was the main reason why they said they couldn't handle it. So then, they offered it to the Park Service. And there again, Sam Weems was a negotiator, and a good one. Because when they offered it to the Park Service, and Weems to negotiate with them, and most anyone else woulda said, "Sure, we'll take it," you know, and but Weems said, "Well, now all these roads to maintain is gonna cost us quite a little bit of money." And their original proposal was to preserve everything, just as it was, including the house. But the house was not to be used for anything—

JM: M-hm. That's what Mrs. Cone said in her will. (Laughs)

TP: Yeah. And it's hard to maintain a house that's kept closed all the time. And anyway, Weems pointed that out, that there was a maintenance problem, (indistinguishable) and so they wound up that the Cones agreed to set up a trust fund, that would pay the Park Service ten thousand dollars a year, that was to go toward maintenance. And, still does, far as I know. The only Cone that I ever met, that was a Ben Cone, who was Caesar's brother, or son, anyway, he was on Caesar's side of the family. And he's dead, now, I understand. But he used to come up occasionally. And everyone had instruction, I did, and the rangers all did, that if Ben Cone comes up, if he wants to ride up to Flat Top, or Rich Mountain, or wherever, put him in your car, and take him. And of course, we understood that we'd hit the bumps fast so that the maintenance, it was not too

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much money for maintenance. But anyway, he was a nice guy. I met him, but I never had to take him anywhere, or explain anything to

him. But the rangers all liked him, and said he liked to ride around on the place. But they said he never complained, and he was a nice person. But he, he liked the property, but he realized that it was a big costly thing, and I guess he wasn't interested, or if he ever had the opportunity to take it, I don't know. But he kept an eye on it, as long as he lived. I don't know when he died, but the rangers used to tell me from time to time that "Ben Cone was up the other day, and we rode around." But they all liked him. He was a pleasant sort a fellow. What I saw, of him, was from just meeting him. He was that kind a person.

JM: Right. There was a Caesar Cone the Third that came about two months ago, and was ridden around the estate.

TP: Who was that?

JM: Caesar Cone the Third. So I guess that was Caesar Cone's great grandson.

TP: Yeah.

JM: M-hm. And they did the exact same thing with him. I wasn't there, but I heard that he seemed pleased enough with the estate.

TP: Well, I don't know, as far as I know, was Ben Cone, and 'course we were all told that anything that Ben wanted done, do it unless, if it was a major thing, well that was a different proposition. But if he thought that a limb was too low on a tree, or if that bush was growing out into the road, and it ought to be taken out— But he never, that I know of, made any suggestions. He was satisfied with it the way it was going. Now, the house, 'course the original idea was that the house would not be used, that it would be preserved. And Weems said that that, he convinced the Cones, Ben, I guess, particularly, that this was no reasonable way to maintain the house. Ben was agreeable to disposing of all the outbuildings. And I wish myself that they had kept the one immediately behind the house. It was—

JM: The servant's quarter. And the laundry, and the ice house.

TP: Well, it was the laundry, the wood house, and the power plant for the gas, the gas plant. I wish that had been kept, but I didn't have anything to do with that. There were two servants houses that were kept. One of them we kept and made it into a ranger—

JM: M-hm. They're still living there. I thought I would get to live there last year but it didn't work out in the end. They hired another permanent ranger.

TP: And there were two down next to Sandy Flat. Two brick houses down there, in the field just inside of the gate. And then there's the Henley house, as we used to call it. On the Shulls Mill Road—

JM: Uh-huh, the ranger still lives there too. Green house, pretty house.

TP: Yeah, so there's four houses there. But that, Weems negotiated keeping the house closed business. Now they, and of course, Ben Cone was kept abreast of the apple orchard situation. And I think he was a smart man, he realized that if the Park Service grew hundreds of bushels of apples, what were they gonna do with them. And whatever you did with 'em, the local apple growers weren't gonna like it. And I think he was sympathetic to the idea of tearing down buildings that weren't needed. Now, the two apple barns down in China were torn down, and there was no (laughs) no argument about that. And uh, but the other apple barn is still there. We used it to store lumber and wood.

JM: And it still is used for that.

TP: And somewhere in there, you might be interested, have you heard the name Leo Collins?

JM: M-mm.

TP: Well, Leo was in maintenance. And when I left, Leo was, he'd been moved to Asheville, and I guess Leo would be the number two man, would've been, I'm sure

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he's retired by now. Well his home was up near Hare Mill Pond. Over back of the Pond there. And on the Idle Wild Road, there was a road that

went up to Benge. And it's still there, I think. But right where that road turned off from the Idle Wild Road was an old mill. Quite a large mill, with a big water wheel. But it had fallen into disrepair, and whoever owned it had given up on it. And then, I was with Leo one day, we used to work together, we'd go over maintenance needs. And anyway, someone told us that they were tearin' down that old mill, gonna tear it down or burn it up or somethin' like that. So we took off over there, and the fellow said, Yeah, they were. And Leo happened to know him. Leo knew everyone, everywhere around. And he was a big nice agreeable sort of fellow. And anyway, Leo said, "What are you going to do with the mill machinery?" And this fellow said, "Anything you want. If you want it, if you move it you're welcome to it." And so Leo sent a truck over, and gathered up the working machinery of that mill, and it was in the apple barn the last I knew. (Laughs) And I hope it's still there, because, there aren't many old mill machineries left.

JM: It's still there.

TP: And every mill will need maintenance sooner or later.

JM: You know, they just redid Mabry Mill last year. They went in and took all the timber, and restructured it at Sandy Flats. And so, it's just been done, just recently. But the old gears, and the wheels and everything, is still in the apple barn. And there's still an old cider press in there too.

TP: Well that's good. Things have a way of getting away, you know. There ought to be in there an old ice refrigerator, that was in the Cone House.

JM: I don't remember seein' it.

TP: Well, and then there used to be, Mr. Cone's bowling balls and pins. A lot of them were gone by the time I retired. They make good souvenirs.

JM: I bet. That old baluster, that was in front of the house, the timber from it is still in there. And they're redoing that, eventually, they're replacing all of the wood around the top of the house now, the old banisters. But the baluster that was in front of the house, they have the old parts of it in the apple barn, and they're supposed to be redoin' that soon.

TP: Well, when we got the place, there were a whole lot of— they kept a guy runnin' a lathe in— there was a great big building, as you go onto the Parkway to go up to the cemetery, right in that field right there, it was torn down in Parkway construction. There was a great big building there, that Cone crews took dead wood in there, Cone wouldn't allow 'em to cut a green tree, and they worked it up into firewood, wood to fire the furnaces with. The furnaces were fired with wood. And also there, they had a lathe, and a man that ran it. And he had turned a whole lot of those spools, as the boys called 'em, there were I think three different sizes, all together, and there were a lot of them there, stacked up so that they could cure 'em. Most of 'em made out of poplar, I believe. But they were, when they tore the building down, those that were left of that were taken and stored in the apple barn.

(Laughs)

JM: They're still there.

TP: Well that's good.

JM: I spoke with a fellow, Norman Eisenhower, his father was the foreman of the estate. He lives right up on Farthing Road, right down the way. And he told me about that big building. He had lived in a house that's right, where the Parkway goes right now. His grandfather had been the blacksmith, and the blacksmith shop was to the Parkway left.

TP: Yeah. Do you know Wade Brown?

JM: No, I don't.

TP: Do you know the name? He's a retired lawyer, here in Boone.

JM: I've seen the name around, but I don't really know much about him.

TP: Wade's daddy was the first superintendent that Mr. Cone had over the place. Now when we acquired the place, there was a man named Moody that was—

JM: M-hm. I've seen that name.

TP: I think, far as I know, he's dead now. He wasn't a young man then. He lived in, there was a big old two-story house, right below where you come out from Sandy Flat. Right below there, and a driveway down to it. And right up next to the highway, there was a building there that, to begin with, we'd keep a truck in there, and we had a gas pump there. I know it's all gone now. But Moody, when we, I was still living in Asheville when it was a done deal that we would get the Cone place. And Mr. Weems called me, and said for me to come up to Blowin' Rock, and get ahold of Mr. Moody. And asked him to take me over all the roads and the place. And that's all I knew about the Cone place then. And he did, and he drove lick-et-y- split over all those carriage roads. And we went up to Flat Top. And you know, Mr. Cone had a wooden tower—

JM: Chestnut Tower.

TP: Yeah. And it was then in shaky condition. But we, we climbed up it, and, there was a marvelous view from there, that's why we put that—

JM: The metal fire tower. M-hm. It's still there. (Laughs)

TP: It's still there. Yeah. And uh, we replaced, we knocked it down. We had to, it was falling down. And no-one would want to climb it, if they had good sense. But someone might, so we tore it down. And then, replaced it with that steel tower in the same spot there. And, let's see now... that, I wished that they had preserved the wood house, the ice house, and the laundry, and the acetylene gas pump (laughs) right behind the house there. I expect that the gas pipe is still stickin' out of the wall, where it came through the wall there, behind the house. But anyway, and Mr. Cone's bowling alley, I think should've been preserved.

JM: I do too.

TP: It had settled, so that you couldn't bowl in it anymore. But it could've been repaired, I thought. But that was not for me to say. I guess the foundation stones for it are still there. Now out back of the house, is that little trail, used to call it the Craftsman's Trail—

JM: Yeah, it's still there now.

TP: Now where it came back, back into the area there, the bowling alley was on the left, right along side of it. And, that's why Mr. Cone had bowling pins and balls. But, there was a tennis court there, just as you come through the rhododendron. I'm sure that there's enough still open there. There was a tennis court, a grass court. And I don't think Mrs. Cone ever played, but I think she kept it for visitors, and children to play on. And then there was a flower garden, a big flower garden. They had a little house with cans of arsenic and other spray material, just open cans sittin' there (laughs) and a patch of red raspberries down at the end. And they'll still be there.

JM: Yeah, we're thinkin' about redoin' that whole garden. We took Norman Eisenhower, he walked us through there, 'bout this time last year. And ASU biology club is interested in helping to refurbish the garden there, and in front of the house, where the rose arbor is. So maybe that'll happen sometime soon.

TP: Well, that would be— there was a big flower garden there, and I guess there was a vegetable garden there too. And, let me see, that Moody showed me, Moody showed me that, but he didn't make much comment about what went on there. But

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the biology department has always been cooperative. There were— do you know any of the people over there?

JM: I know a few of them. I know a Matthew Roe, and Dr. John Bonne just retired. And there's a fellow named Richard Henson that I know pretty well. And a Gary Walker.

TP: There's a fellow that, now, Bill, Bill Carpenter, he was chairman for a while.

JM: Right. I think he's retired now. I've heard his name.

TP: And then there was a Frank Randall.

JM: He's retired too. But he was there for a while.

TP: He's a good friend of mine. We cooked up the first cooperative programs that they had over there. There's a little creek, that runs into the Boone Fork, over there, that, as you come back up the Boone Fork trail—

JM: Is it Bee Tree Creek?

TP: Bee Tree Creek. And when, the first time I ever went around it, the railroad used to go up there, and that's why I followed it up that way, or (indistinguishable.) And anyway, I noticed, while I'd follow the creek I'd just would look to see if there were any trout in there— (TAPE OVER)

TAPE TWO, SIDE TWO

TP: Dr. Randall, the PhD, was in fish management. I mentioned to him, there was a creek over here with no fish in it. And Frank looked at me sideways, said, "No fish?" I said, "No fish." He said, "Not even any minnows?" I said, "No minnows. Nothing." And he said, "Well that I'd like to see." So, he came over there one day with me, and went over there with me. And he looked, and he looked, and he looked. And he said, "Well, I can't find any." He said, "There's got to be fish in here." And so he said, "How 'bout if I have some Seniors that need a good project for their Masters work. Supposin' I let them come over here, and really go into this and find out why there's no fish in this stream." And I told him I thought I knew, I had already looked but it would be a nice project, and we'd be— so I got official approval. From, it was still Roanoke, then I guess, for him to conduct his investigation there. And he brought a bunch of graduate students over. And they started, there were two springs that feed that branch. They started at each one of those springs. And they seined, carefully, down each one of those little creeks, and then on down Bee Tree Creek, clear on down to Boone Fork. And they didn't find a fish, of any sort. And Frank, he said well, he just couldn't understand that. He wasn't with 'em but at the very tail end. And I said, "Well, I think that the reason is, where that Bee Tree Creek empties into the Boone Fork, it's obvious that, well either the '29 flood, or the '40 flood, or both, Bee Tree Creek had rolled a lot a rock down that. And it goes down into the Boone Fork like that, and most of the creek is through those rocks. There's no open stream flowing down there. Or at least there wasn't at that time. So we went down there, and crawled through the rhododendron. It's all grown up with rhododendron over the rock. And he agreed with me, he said "That's it, it's bound to be because no fish could come" and they, they seined the pond that the Boone Fork came out into, and found Brook Trout, Brown Trout, Rainbow Trout, Suckers, all in that same pool. So, Frank said, "Well we'll let the kids do their investigation. And they finally decided that it had to be a physical thing. Because they checked the food, the water temperature, the air temperature, the ground, everything like that, you know that would go to makin' a good trout stream. They said, "It's an ideal trout stream. But there's no trout in it." (Laughs) And they finally said that was the reason, because, they went out in a flood, which is conceivable, but then couldn't get back up through those rocks. And,

TP: (continued) so then, we let them illegally go up Sim's Creek, 'cause there were, I knew of some good native Brook Trout in Sim's Creek, and the same group went up there with their seines. And we caught thirteen mature Brook Trout. Beautiful fish, they were. And we put those inside gallon buckets of water. And two of the guys, there were two or three girls in the project too, but they'd go two to a bucket, with a stick through the handle. Carried it, from there over to Sim's Creek, and down the Creek, and they stocked I think they put two, I don't know whether their nests are in pairs or not, but they stocked, anyhow, seven pools, of the best pools they thought there, with Brook Trout. And, then we had Ranger Hanson, who most of the local people think he's the best ranger we've ever had. And Carl Hanson, he was a top ranger. He's at Mannassas now, unless he's retired. He may be eligible to retire now, probably is. But anyway, he said, "I'll see to it that no-one comes over there and catches those fish after these kids have carried 'em in." So he patrolled that regularly, and put up No Fishing signs.

JM: It's still closed to fishing, Bee Tree still is, today.

TP: Well it ought to be opened as a fly stream, fly-fishing only.

JM: The Boone Fork is fly-fishing only. But Bee Tree is still closed, due to scientific experimentations, is what we say. (Laughs)

TP: That's uh, how 'bout that. (Laughs) The Park Service is slow to move sometimes. We got it closed. But I think it could easily be, because Frank told me, a year or two ago. He said, "I went over and walked down Bee Tree Creek." Now 'course, he knows fish, that was his thing. And he knows how to look for trout. He said, "I wanted to see if we'd been successful in planting that." And he said, "You wouldn't believe." He said, "There are literally thousands of Brook Trout about that long, in Bee Tree Creek." And he was pleased, and 'course I was too. And then, (Laughs) among the, well anyway, among some people, a bog is something of a primary interest. And I had told Bill Carpenter and Frank, before that, that I knew of a bog up here. And they said,

"Now, bogs in this part of the country are very, very rare. There probably aren't any."

JM: Right, the Boone Fork bog's still there. (Laughs)

TP: And, I said, "I know where one is." And I took Frank out there. And he walked right on out on that Spaghnam Moss until he was goin' down, and he said, "help, my feet are wet." (Laughs) And, down at the lower end, is there still a foot-log across the little creek that drains that bog?

JM: Mmmm...

TP: Well, there used to be a foot-log, a good big foot-log there—

JM: Not anymore.

TP: That's too bad. 'Cause that was one of the things that I left there, to help defer motorcyclists from usin' that trail. The other thing was those steps that I hope are still down there in that rocky part down there—

JM: Yeah, that's still there.

TP: Well, that's good. That's their purpose, we could've put that trail across there without any steps, but I deliberately put them there to discourage motorcyclists. 'Cause you don't need motorcyclists on a foot trail. (Laughs)

JM: M-hm. That foot trail became a bridge after a while. And it washed out in the last flood. And now there's just rocks across it.

TP: Oh? Where's that now?

JM: Um, on down the Boone Fork Trail, before you get to the second bog on your right, that's lower down than the Boone Fork?

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TP: Oh, across the Boone Fork?

JM: M-hm.

TP: Well now, that's what Leo and I had talked about, connecting the Boone Fork Trail to the old Johns River Road.

JM: Yeah, now there's big rocks, that you jump across that now.

TP: Well, Leo was the sort of fellow that would get things done. And we had talked about that before I retired. And picked a place where there were some big rocks. That was the best way to do that, I had done that in the Smokies. If there's some great big rock around, you could take a block and tackle, and move them in line, and then use them to set your bridge on. But lots of times they're not big enough or high enough to— Have you ever been in the Smokies?

JM: M-hm.

TP: Have you ever been, with 441 I guess it is, 'cause it goes up to Newfound Gap. And just above there's a Chimney's Campground, that I had whatnot to do in getting it designed and built. And then, above a tunnel, there's a parking area, and a little trail goes down to the creek, and there's a footbridge, goes across the river there, and that's the way you hike to Chimneys. If you're foolhardy enough to want to go up on the Chimney's. 'Cause at that time, when I was there, that was a real toughie, was climbin' the Chimney's.

JM: OK. Well, I've never done the Chimney's. I've done LaCont, but never done the Chimney's.

TP: How'd you go to LaCont?

JM: Urn, there was a parking lot right at the base of the trail, the Alum Creek Trail?

TP: Alum Cave.

JM: Alum Cave, that's right.

TP: I built that trail.

JM: Did you! Well I walked it. (Laughs)

TP: This— tell me now, it goes through the Arch Rock, we used to call it. And when I left there, we had a plan to build steps up through it. But we never had money enough to do it. And we had a ladder in there. Are there steps now?

JM: Yeah, must be, because I don't remember a ladder.

TP: Well, they may have gotten ahold of some money and built the steps. But, that's another story there. But anyway, in the Smokies, I did a good bit of trail location, and built some. And that's the best way to go to Mount Leconte, still. And the shortest. It's just five miles to Leconte. Up the Alum Cave. And it's nine and ten miles from most everywhere else. And, anyway, that fish project over there— but then Frank Randall set up, he went out in that bog, and they measured off, I don't know however much of it that was. And then, measured it carefully and put strings, I think they were every square yard—

JM: Somebody is re-doin' that project. Two years ago, a fellow, a graduate student, redid that, with strings and everything.

TP: Well, that's, it's amazing, how much plant material there is, in a bog like that. And now, there's native cranberries in there.

JM: Did Randall put the cranberries there? Somebody in the biology department—

TP: Well the cranberries were already there. Two plants, that we knew of. That's another one of these unofficial things. Those cranberries are native, but they were carried in. (Laughs) But they were native. And there were native cranberries already there. And he had a big old boy, a big old boy, I forget his name. Had whiskers. And he was much interested in that project there. And he laid on his stomach in that bog, and if there was a plant that high, he found it. And then, I don't know whether it was that year, or the next year, that he got married. And he spent his honeymoon in a tent, over in the campground. And he told me, that he heard a little noise, outside of their tent, one night. And he peeked out of the flap. And here was a mother skunk,

TP: (continued) and her family of little skunks. He said they were just walkin'. He said, each one of 'em with its little tail, stuck straight up in the air, following her just like a row of soldiers. Well, 'course he was a biologist, and he said he and his wife, spent most of the night, that family of skunks hung right around their campground most of the night, he said. And they watched 'em. And he said, when the mother skunk would check 'em every once in a while. And they'd go on a little, they'd line up, and I forget how many there were. But that was, you know, that was somethin'. (Laughs) Those skunks. But he was a good guy, and he made a good study of, I forget, somewhere in the files, there's a copy of the final report, if someone hasn't destroyed it.

JM: M-hm. I've seen it, it's still there.

TP: And there was one on the fish business too. And I tried to fire up a project with the history department. To get someone to really give a good goin' over to the history of Cone Park. But I never got that off the ground.

JM: That's what I would like to do the rest of this winter. I started on that last year, but this grant came up. So I decided to do it, but that would be my goal, I'd love to do that.

TP: Well that ought to be done.

JM: Right, there are so many men that are still around, I've got about twenty names of people that would like to be interviewed.

TP: Do you happen to have the name of a Clyde Downs?

JM: Yes. He has already been interviewed several times.

TP: Well, good. Is he still livin'?

JM: He is. He's still livin' on Flaherty Fork Road.

TP: Clyde will live to be a hundred and twenty.

JM: Yeah, and I hear he's still very active. His mind's still—

TP: Clyde Downs, now he and Lloyd Coffey, were the two top men for information about Cone Park. And 'course, Lloyd has died. But if you wanta know anything about Cone Park, you can ask Clyde Downs, and he can tell you, and it'll be true.

JM: Yeah, that's exactly what I hear. Well good.

TP: Yeah. Well, Clyde, I think Clyde was born on the place. I know he lived there, about all his life, and he worked there, till he retired. And there ought to be some pictures somewhere on the little one-arch stone bridge that was over the highway.

JM: M-hm, I've heard about that.

TP: Well Clyde Downs lived right next to that bridge for a long time, there. And there were two graves in the woods, on the other side of the road, that everyone knew they were graves but didn't know whose they were. But Clyde told me that when he was just a little kid, on Memorial Day, he and some other kids would decorate those two graves. But then when the state rebuilt that road, and they tore down the little bridge, and there ought to be, somewhere in the apple barn, at least it was put there, 'cause I saw it put there, there was a plaque on that little bridge, sayin' that Moses Cone had this bridge built in, nineteen eight, or whenever, I think it was nineteen eight.

JM: Huh. I haven't seen that.

TP: Well it ought to be there, 'cause I, I know it was saved, because I had a hand in putting it in the apple barn. But it's still, just a bronze, along like so, that one person could easily pick up. I hope that someone hasn't managed to carry it off, because it ought to be kept. And that's why I put it there. But when the state tore down that little bridge, widening the road, those two graves had to be moved, or covered up or something. Well you

- TP: (continued) don't cover up a grave in highway construction. It's trouble. So the State investigated from every angle that they could. And they exhausted every angle, they could not find who was buried there. But they got stories that it was a horse, it was a dog, it was an Indian, and all that kind of— but anyway, so they finally got legal approval to move those graves. And so the contractor got an undertaker from Lenore, I guess it was, he came up and dug them up. They took a bulldozer and took a swipe off, and you could plainly see that it was a grave then. And they dug down and they found a few scraps of bone and hair in each one. And they put them in a, I guess the cheapest coffin that's available, and they're reburied in the Blowing Rock Cemetery, up there, with a headstone saying Unknown. (Laughs)
- JM: That's interesting. Do you know anything about the graves on Parkway Right before you get, you're in Cone Park, but you're not quite at the Manor House, it has a chain link fence around it? And I believe Howell, it says Howell?
- TP: Uh, yeah, they've been there all the time. They were there when the Parkway came through. There was a house, let's see, as you come, on the opposite side of the Parkway, from where those graves are, there was a house. And I can't remember the name, but that property was owned by that family, you could track it down. And as I recall, it was, let me see, it was a woman and a child, buried there, in that little cemetery. And the fellow lived in, there was a log cabin that was, almost directly across from where the graves are, but on beyond where the house used to be. The newer house. But in that log cabin, lived a fellow, who I believe was the same name (Clock striking) I'm not sure of that, but anyway, his wife had a baby and then they both died. And so he buried 'em there. And the last time I saw it, I got a fence built around it, 'cause I think graves ought to be preserved. And the ground cover there, he planted, I guess it was periwinkle. And it was that deep and completely covered the— and at one time there was a stone there, a stone marker.
- JM: M-hm, it's still there.
- TP: Is it still there? Does it have a name on it?
- JM: Howell, I think.
- TP: I just can't remember. But if there's more than one grave, why— As I remember, there's just the one grave there. Because the story was that he buried his wife and the baby together. And that was not an uncommon occurrence in the log cabin days. And there's several little family cemeteries like that along the Parkway. There's one down there at Crabtree Meadows. There's another one North on the Parkway that uh-- Hm. Anyway.
- JM: We're gettin' close to the end of the tape but I just have one more question that I wanted to ask you, and that is, how have you seen the Parkway change since you were here, and the present.
- TP: Well, traffic mostly, I guess. (Laughs) When I came here, the Parkway was gravel. And there were interruptions, like, while I was here, the piers for the viaduct out here at Goshen Creek, those were built while I was still in Marion, and they stopped it right then. The Bureau Of Public Roads built those, built the Linville River Bridge, and Buck Creek Gap Bridge. They were built by the Bureau of Public Roads as a force account situation. But that's another story. But the Parkway, 'course there were gaps, like that, and it was just a gravel road too, so there was practically no tourist traffic.
- JM: Did they allow the locals to use the Parkway to transport, let's say, the vegetables on down to the flatlands?

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TP: Yeah, they could use, they were allowed to use, uh, what they could, because the Parkway usually parallels, or goes at diagonal opposites of the road that they need to use to get down. But sections of the Parkway that were finished, and graveled, were usually then used by local people. Not a great lot, but some. And now Cumberland Knob, which was the first developed area that was

built along the Parkway, on the Parkway, uh, there was a picnic ground there. And it was used by people from Galax, mostly, for picnics, and we didn't have campgrounds yet. But, but the traffic, there was not too much traffic on the Parkway, and what there was, was local. Because it didn't go anywhere yet. Particularly. And 'course, then it was interrupted again for World War Two. But it was beginning to be connected up into segments that could be, and were, a tourist attraction. And much of it was paved then. But after World War Two, then the visitor use took off then, and it's, I don't know what it is now.

JM: Yeah, it's about thirty million now, a year, I believe. It's amazing.

TP: (Laughs) It grows every year. And, I'll tell you one more joke that I've told everyone that'll listen. Before I retired, at one time there, Sam Weems put me in uniform. Mostly because I was working alongside a the road on land use maps all the time, and people were always stoppin' to ask for how you get here, or there, or whatever. So Weems thought I ought to be in uniform. I was working one day out on, we'd have a sheet of plywood about that big, with mousetraps around it to hold the paper down, and the big sheets that the original plan of the Parkway was on were twice that size. So we'd fold it once, and we could work on that with pencil. And do a whole study right there. And I was doin' something like that, and 'course I'd park my car, walk up the Parkway, oh, 'bout a quarter of a mile, cross the Parkway, and come back, walk back about a quarter of a mile to where I left off behind my car, and cross back, and back up to my car again. And then move my car on up. So here came this car down the Parkway, lick-et-y-split. Man and his wife in the front seat, and a couple—a kids and a dog in the back seat, you know, like tourists do. And he saw me, I could see him crankin' his window down. And he, he slowed down, you know, he never got completely stopped. When he got right opposite me, he leaned out and said, "Which way?" Well. He was on a straight stretch of the Parkway. (Laughs) No road in sight. I said, "Straight ahead." And he said, "Thank you." Cranked his window back up, and on he went. He was so used to askin' everyone they saw for directions, that it was automatic with him, I guess. (Laughs) But that actually happened. That's the way, at one time, that's the way it was, when a good many of the travelers, when they were still scarce, thought they were really out in the wild woods here. And they didn't know that it was just a short ways into town.

JM: That's funny. Well I've had people ask me, "Where's the Parkway?" at Julian Price campground.

TP: Yeah. Our camping situation has changed a lot. Now when we built Price Camp, on the original plan, was for a picnic ground on the other side of the Parkway from where it is now. And then a campground of thirty five units on the left of the Parkway, and nothing on the right, there. And as soon as we got that campground open, we could see that we were gonna need to expand, so we went across the road, and built what's there now. And then we had, we drilled a well out next to the— let's see, what is the, it's Church Road where it comes out down in Foscoe (?)

JM: Hollowy Mountain?

TP: Hollowy Mountain Road. Uh, almost to where it starts down out there. In the cow pasture there, there's a good well, that we drilled, to be a water supply for our extension campground, which would have to be on out that way, somewhere. But when I retired, that was as far as we had gotten with it.

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JM: Yeah, it still isn't there. But Julian Price is so busy. We fill up every weekend, just about. Hundred and ninety seven sites.

TP: When a campground, when it gets to near a couple a hundred sites, that's

about as much as can be handled, conveniently. And you need a whole other unit, a mile or two on down the road. And that's the way we had planned it. And the picnic ground, at Price Park, originally was, on the original plan, I don't know who made it. But the original Parkway plan showed the picnic ground up on the left, there. And so, they told me to investigate, and see if I had any comments, which was normal. And I walked around up there, and investigated, and then walked down the other side. And I said I thought we ought to move the picnic ground to the other side of the Parkway, with Sim's Creek runnin' through, and the Boone Fork, and water in a picnic ground, oh the kids love it every time. And I thought that was a better site. So Ed Abbuehl, and Weems, came down, and looked and agreed with me. And we developed that plan for the picnic ground. And it would be hard to enlarge it much (laughs) 'cause at the end of it jumps off into a swamp there. But it's, it's— And the old, let me see now, there's a crossing of the Boone Fork, where the footbridge is. And there's a comfort station. And there's traces of an old road that goes on up the hill, on up, let's see, to the campground. I don't know if you know whether or not they use it, there's a trail now.

JM: Right.

TP: But anyway, that is the original stagecoach route. And it goes on across Price Park, and right on back into Blowing Rock, back the other way. And, it's, I don't know what became of the location, but anyway, that's Charlie Coffey and Clyde Downs told me that, so I guarantee it's true. And, I ought to go see Clyde Downs, but I don't drive anymore, and Jessie Mae has to drive.

JMP: I don't drive much.

TP: You don't drive much. (Laughs) But Clyde was a good friend of mine. He, they, you know, Mrs. Cone, Sandy Flat church was built for a school house, you know, and they had a school there, and my neighbor next door, 'course he don't remember it, but his daddy was the first schoolteacher there. And before the term was out, he got a job in a bank, which had more future to it. So his wife, they weren't married yet, but the woman he did marry, finished out the term for him in that first year. And at that time, Wade Brown's daddy, should've been, I'm sure Wade told me his daddy was the first superintendent of the place.

JM: Yeah, I've seen the name Brown, so I wouldn't be surprised about that.

JMP: Well, Wade is a little older than we are. (END OF INTERVIEW)