The following transcript was provided to Archives and Special Collections by the Northwest Montana Chapter of the Forest Fire Lookout Association with its associated audio recording.
Beth Hodder: I'm Beth Hodder. I'm with the Northwest Montana Forest Fire Lookout Association, and I'm here with Tom Jones to talk with him about his experiences on Mud Lake Lookout in the Bob Marshall Wilderness, part of the Flathead National Forest.

So, welcome Tom. I hope you don't mind if I ask you a bunch of different questions, some of dealing with the lookout and some not. Can you tell me about your childhood? Where did you grow up?

Thomas Jones: I grew up in eastern Montana, in the small town of Sidney. I belonged to the Boy Scouts from grade school on into junior high, and we did a lot of hiking and camping, and two different summers of going to Flaming Arrow Boy Scout Camp outside of Bozeman in the Bridger Canyon. Out of that I decided I liked mountainous country covered with trees and as soon as I am able to, that's where I want to live. Out of that experience developed my interest in the out of doors and living and working in the mountains.

BH: So, how did you then decide to be a lookout?

TJ: I had a summer job. This was 1968-69. I was a teacher in Libby, [Montana] and had the summers off, and chose to work for the Forest Service, the Kootenai National Forest, and I loved the job. This is really what I want to do, and what I ended up making a career out of, but at that time I was still a teacher.

I worked two summers with the fire crew at the Canoe Gulch Ranger Station, and the third summer I decided I want to go for the really interesting stuff. I want to work on the trail crew in the Bob Marshall Wilderness. So, I applied to the Flathead National Forest. You had to have your application in late winter, 1971. I applied, but I heard nothing from them. I thought, “Well, okay, I didn’t get the job.” I didn’t hear anything, but I had also applied to the Kootenai and I’d already accepted a job on the Kootenai fire crew again.

All of a sudden in late March, early April 1971, I get a letter from the Flathead saying I’d been selected to be a lookout. I think their thinking was that anybody that wants to work on a trail crew in the Bob Marshall probably would also be interested in being a lookout. I looked at the letter and said, “I don’t think I want to do that,” and I talked to my wife and she said, “Why not?” I said,” I don’t know.” She kind of said basically, “Go for it.” She said, “I’ll be fine,” so a week later I sent in a letter of acceptance.
BH: Did you know anybody beforehand who had been a lookout?

TJ: Never. I had been up to old lookouts on the fire crew. We did trail maintenance. That’s when the fire crews did trail maintenance, and we’d go into these old lookouts, and I was fascinated by them. I had never been to a fire lookout before in my life. So, I thought, “Wow! That’s me.”

BH: Were you only a lookout at Mud Lake?

TJ: That’s the only time I’ve ever done it. Oh, once in a while on the Kootenai if they had a bad fire season and they needed a substitute, [they would say], “We need someone on the lookout. Tom, go up there.” So I would go. But, no I never did it again as a fulltime job.

BH: So, that was in the summer of 1971.


BH: And you worked for which agency, like a ranger station or—?

TJ: It was the Flathead National Forest, Condon Ranger District, at Condon Montana, is where I reported for work. We went into the Bob Marshall after one week of working at Condon, kind of a staging area job. Then after one week at Condon, we packed in on horseback from Holland Lake, Holland Lake Trail. I believe it was four people: myself, a man named Drew Finley who was the Jumbo Mountain Lookout, Dave Miller, and Don Bennett.

BH: Who were Dave Miller and Don Bennett?

TJ: Don Bennett was the Fire Control Officer.

BH: For Condon? Or for the Flathead, or—?

TJ: I do not know for sure. I think it was for the Bob Marshall, out of Big Prairie, but Don was in and out. I really don’t have that sorted out. But he was a major player in making things happen and a very good man to work for. Dave Miller worked for Don Bennett and Dave was a technician—I think he was seasonal. He also was good to work for and looked after us. Good man. Dave was at Big Prairie all summer; Don would come and go.

BH: Did you work for Dave then?

TJ: I was never sure who my immediate supervisor was. It was Don Bennett. I’m sure on paper my supervisor was Don Bennett.

BH: So Mud Lake, the lookout itself. Was it a tower? Did it sit on the ground?
TJ: It was a small house, a cabin if you will, on the ground.

BH: Do you know what style it was?

TJ: I don’t know those numbers [names for the lookout styles, which include numbers, such as “L-4”]. It was roughly in dimension 15'x15' square, hardwood floor, firefinder—alidade—in the middle, built in the 1940s, with a gable roof. It was one room and the outbuilding was the outhouse. Due to the remote location, it was just too difficult to have anything else up there.

BH: So, you had like a cot, or—

TJ: I slept on a simple cot, a mattress that was maybe four inches thick on just a mesh spring steel cot, military style.

BH: It had, probably, the insulators on the feet or something?

TJ: No, it didn’t. I think I had a stool made with the insulators. There were lightning rods on the roof of the lookout with big conductors.

BH: How did you communicate with headquarters and other lookouts?

TJ: My most reliable communication was a standard portable Forest Service radio, which had a larger than usual battery. But, I had one battery. Maybe I had a spare one, I don’t know, but they advised me: don’t leave this thing on. Turn it on late in the afternoon. Turn it on basically only when necessary, but at least once a day for check-in. But, I had a sound-powered antique traditional Forest Service telephone with which I could communicate with Big Prairie, and if Big Prairie did the right connections, I could talk to Jumbo Lookout, but I couldn’t if the wind was blowing for some reason, if the wind was knocking the wires around in the trees. It had to be calm for me to talk to Big Prairie on that phone. But the phone was always there as a backup. It was really nice having that phone. To call Big Prairie you’d actually turn this crank. It was a generator. It would make the bell physically ring at Big Prairie, and it worked.

BH: Like the old crank phones you used to see where the earpiece was separate and you talked into it?

TJ: No, mine was one unit [you used] with one hand. It looked like a phone, from say, the late 1940s, 1950s, a single receiver with earpiece and mouthpiece in one piece of plastic or whatever it was made out of. But it worked.

BH: I bet well probably. And what about your water? How did you get your water? How far was it?
TJ: Initially, as I showed you in the pictures, going in there [to the lookout], a mule carried two standard milk cans. The Forest Service used to use a lot of those milk cans for water. I had two of those, and I think each one carried at least 20 gallons. But after those got low, I started to run out. I had a spring, which was down alongside the trail up to the lookout, probably a ½-hour walk from the lookout. And I had a canvas water bag with shoulder straps. So I would go hike down to this spring in the evening. I couldn’t do it in the daytime because you had to be on that mountain during the day, but in the evening, I’d go down and fill the water bag out of just a dipper type pan, pour it in. The water trickled out of the ground. They had a crude spout made out of an old stovepipe, actually, and water trickled into this galvanized washtub, and then I’d dip the water out of the washtub into the water bag. I could carry up there about four gallons in this canvas bag. It turned out if I was real conservative, I could get by on a couple gallons a day for consumption and not use much for washing. I tended to make a water run about every other day—I mean it was something to do. I enjoyed doing it. Walking up the hill with four gallons of water on my back, it was a workout.

BH: Oh, yeah, because you’re looking at what? Isn’t a gallon about eight pounds? Thirty-two pounds just for the water, and plus, you got the bag.

TJ: Yeah, but it was okay. I didn’t mind doing it at all. In fact, I got so I’d time myself. Let’s see how fast I can go up today. Then the next time, I’d try to break my record. You do anything, anything for entertainment, I swear. So I’m trying to break my own record on hauling water. It was something to do. I loved it.

BH: Tell me how you cooked your meals.

TJ: Mostly my meals were very simple. I had a two-burner propane stove, and I ate a lot of soup and pasta. Occasionally in the morning if it was chilly, I would fire up the wood cook stove and make pancakes, which I enjoyed. I had a griddle, and that was fun. I tried to conserve propane, so I’d use the wood stove. I never baked anything. I tried baking bread one time and that was a disaster. I’m not that good a cook. [laughs] Suffice it to say, I ate a lot of pancakes and soup. I think my diet was pretty heavy on carbohydrates, but that’s okay.

Another item on food: In preparation for going up there [to the lookout], on a Monday in Kalispell, three days before going I’m going in, Don Bennett said, “You’re coming from Libby. Meet us at Sykes Market in Kalispell, and you’re going to buy your food for the entire summer.” This is how I got my food. Well, I wasn’t good at planning—I was 24 or 25 years old—never thought about it. So anyway, I just went to Sykes, me and the other lookout, and we bought our food, a lot of canned goods, and stuff. But I had not done any extensive planning on how much food I would need, and as a result of that, toward the end of my six weeks on the mountain, the last two weeks, I was getting pretty low on food, especially protein items. But anyway, we bought all of our food at Sykes Market, and then that was packed up. They said, “If you run low we’ll supply you.” That never happened.

Thomas Arthur “Tom” Jones Interview, OH 453-005, Archives and Special Collections, Mansfield Library, University of Montana-Missoula.
Okay. That was the extent of my food preparation. I was an amateur, and I ran out. Ran low on protein. Actually, what I did—this was, say, after a month up there—I had one of these wrist rocket things, what you’d call a slingshot, not really a slingshot, but anyway, I could kill grouse with it. It was out of season, but I didn’t care—I was hungry. I went hunting grouse, and I think I got three grouse with this wrist rocket affair. I experienced what it was like to hunt for an animal when you’re hungry. Sharpens the senses. [Both laugh]

BH: So they never resupplied you.

TJ: They never came back. You know, they were too busy; two people running the show at Big Prairie. Don Bennett coming and going, Dave Miller, and Keith Granrud, Dale Duff. There were three people there; that was it. They just didn’t have time.

Finally, I said I’ve got two weeks left, and I’m living on macaroni and instant soup by then. They said, “Give us a list. We’ll get you some food.” So I made a list, and Dale Duff, on his day off, with his own horse, rode up to Big Prairie with a goodie basket—really good stuff. They basically gave it to me. I didn’t have to pay for it or anything, which was nice. So that got me by.

BH: How often did you see other people other than agency personnel?

TJ: I had one set of three friends of mine from Libby backpack in from Meadow Creek, and they stayed two nights. That was really fun. They were enthralled with the beauty of the place, and there was a patrol point trail, and we went out there. They just loved it. And I loved it.

I got three two-day sets of days off in 36 days on the lookout. That’s six weeks from the start of my lookout tour until the end. Six weeks, subtract six days, which were in sets of two days off, three different weeks. The first two sets of days off, this was, I believe, on a Wednesday and Thursday, I hiked down to Big Prairie, you know, I don’t have to sit up here. I’m going to go down somewhere where I can talk to people. So at the end of the shift on Tuesday night, I walked down to Big Prairie.

BH: How far is that?

TJ: I don’t know. I could do it in four hours, I think. I remember, they said, “Oh yeah, forgot to tell you, Tom, you got days off.”

“Oh, good. Well, we’ll see ya.”

It took me 15 minutes to be on the trail, and all of a sudden, at 8:30 at night, I show up.

They looked and said, “How’d you get here?”

“Well, you said I could leave.”

Thomas Arthur “Tom” Jones Interview, OH 453-005, Archives and Special Collections, Mansfield Library, University of Montana-Missoula.
“Yeah, but we didn’t think you’d be here right away.” [Both laugh]

They said, “We couldn’t believe you walked down here this fast.”

I said, “Well, you just get going. The first part is downhill—you really move on that—and then you get to the South Fork Trail, which is like walking on a road. It is. It was then. I just got going.

Incidentally on one of those trips down, about a mile before I got to Big Prairie, I heard a wolf howl. A bunch of coyotes were yipping away and everything and all of a sudden this low long howl and boy, those coyotes shut up right away. I heard a wolf.

Anyway, those were two sets of my days off, and then the third one was coming up, and I called Spotted Bear, and I said, “Call my wife in Libby, and tell her I’m going to be at Meadow Creek trailhead tomorrow morning at roughly noon or something, and we can go camping.” And they did, so she and our little girl showed up. She drove over from Libby, so I got to see my family.

So I walked out. I left the lookout Tuesday night, walked to Black Bear and camped. I traveled light but had a sleeping bag and tarp—camped at Black Bear, got up in the morning, walked out to Meadow Creek.

BH: Holy cow!

TJ: I had my walking legs in those days. And then we camped, and then the second day—you had to be back at work on the lookout on Friday—so Thursday afternoon about 3:30 or so I said goodbye to my wife and little girl, took off up the trail, and walked nonstop to the lookout. I get there about 11:00 at night. It was a 23-mile walk.

BH: That’s incredible.

TJ: I look back on it. Here I am walking up this wilderness trail, one person, by myself, in the dark, no flashlight, nothing, bear country. Not the safest thing to be doing. Anyway, I did it. [Both laugh]

BH: Yeah, you lived to tell the tale. How did you reach the lookout the first time?

TJ: On horseback. From Big Prairie, it was a four-hour ride. Easy. I remember going up the trail. I had never ridden a horse up a trail that steep, and I remember Monty Kennedy was the packer, and he said, “We’re going to need to stop and rest, especially the mules carrying these heavy loads”—all my gear and water—and they said, “So when I say stop, we’re stopping.” I believe there were three rest stops on the way up, and I remember on the really steep parts, you could feel and, even, I think, hear the horse’s heartbeat, especially when you’d stop. It was just a Boom! Boom! Boom! These horses were in good shape. They didn’t complain. They didn’t stop...
until you told them to. But hauling us up that hill, that was a feat. I mean, I did it enough times on my own two feet to know. Mud Lake Trail gets your attention.

BH: I bet it does. How did they carry your gear? You had a pack string.

TJ: Yeah. Monty was a packer. They had these packsaddles, which I don’t know too much about, but the night before, Monty would make up the packs. These were old traditional packs with canvas. They wrapped cardboard boxes in canvas that they called manties and bound them with rope. Monty was a cantankerous old guy but he was a damn good packer. He knew what he was doing and was good with horses and mules. So it was very traditional.

BH: What were names of any of the other neighboring lookouts?

TJ: Jumbo, and Spotted Bear Lookout, there was somebody on it. But Jumbo was the other primary lookout that was handled out of Big Prairie, and I knew the guy that was on Jumbo. His name was Drew Finley. Just a guy like me that applied for a job and got hired.

BH: Did you keep contact with the other lookouts while you were up there?

TJ: With Jumbo.

BH: Not Spotted Bear?

TJ: No, I didn’t talk to them, but I talked to Jumbo. But most of my communication was just with Big Prairie by phone or radio.

BH: Did you have any pets up there with you?

TJ: No.

BH: What were your main duties?

TJ: Spotting fires, keeping my eyes open, and as it turned out, as a radio relay whenever there was something going on, on a fire or elsewhere. People down in the valley bottom of the South Fork didn't have very good radio communication, so they called me and asked me to get a hold somebody else that they needed, and relay messages. So I ended up being a radio relay person.

BH: Was there a particular time of day you had to do anything like scan for fires or whatever?

TJ: No, that was always. When you were there, you were always supposed to be watching. Just keep your eyes open. Common sense would say every hour, walk outside, walk around and look, scan.

Thomas Arthur “Tom” Jones Interview, OH 453-005, Archives and Special Collections, Mansfield Library, University of Montana-Missoula.
As the weather got drier, and when a smoke and fire get active, it’s going to be after 2:00 in the afternoon. That’s when, if you had lightning that day or two days before, you really had to be on your toes. But you could get a human caused fire anytime.

BH: Did you ever have to be a smoke chaser?

TJ: That was absolutely not part of my job. That was understood. You’re not going to go off on your own. No, no, no. Somebody else will do that. You stay here.

BH: Now, you spotted fires that summer?

TJ: Oh, yeah.

BH: Do you remember how many, or were there any big ones?

TJ: I can think of two lightning strike fires that I spotted and I would call them in to Big Prairie, and Flathead Dispatch would hear my radio call and they’d send up a spotter plane right away. If it’s in the Bob [Marshall Wilderness] they’d send up a spotter plane right away to verify, circle the fire. So I had about two to three lightning-caused fires, no human-caused fires that I can think of.

The one fire that really provided me some interesting watching was about six miles from the lookout across the South Fork Flathead drainage. They had sent out a three-person crew from Big Prairie or Spotted Bear into this fire that I reported. I couldn’t see the base of the smoke; all I could see was the plume. It was on the other side of a mountain from me to the northwest. After the second day they called me. They said, “This crew we sent out apparently doesn’t have radio communication. We’re not getting any reports from them. Is there still smoke coming up from this fire?” and I said, “Well, yeah.” They said, “Well, is it increasing or what’s it doing?” and I said, “Give me a minute. Let me watch it a while.” I called them back in 15 minutes and said, “It’s increasing.” They said, “Okay. A lot of smoke?” I said, “Well, it’s cookin’.”

“Okay,” they said. “I think we’re going to put [smokejumpers] on it.”

Okay. So, within a half an hour, here’s this twin-engine prop plane from Missoula comes over, and it was loaded with smokejumpers. I don’t know how many smokejumpers you can put in a DC-3, but it had 16 jumpers in it. And this plane started circling the fire. They called me. They said, “Mud Lake Lookout, are you aware—?”

I said, “Yeah, I’m in communication.”

“Okay.”
They were just radio check[ing]. And then they said, “Well, we’re going to be putting jumpers in.”

And then Spotted Bear said, “How are you going to put on it?”

And I said, “The whole plane load.”

[Both laugh.] I laugh because it was quite exciting, really. This plane put 16 smokejumpers on that fire. So then, for the next two or three days, my job became that of radio relay for these 16 jumpers, because radio communication in the Bob [Marshall Wilderness] is really bad, but they could call me and then I’d call Spotted Bear. So when they need food, they need water dropped to them, or whatever—the conditions of the fire—everything went through me. I loved it. Great boredom breaker.

BH: What about wildlife? Did you have experiences with them at all?

TJ: Not really. The wolf, coyotes. I used to almost talk to the coyotes. I perfected my coyote yell. I could get them to answer. But I never saw a bear—that’s fine. I had rodents to deal with, if you want to call that wildlife. I spent some time the first two weeks trapping mice and even packrats. There were mouse and rattraps provided for me on the lookout. The most annoying were the packrats. I despised them.

BH: Were they in or underneath?

TJ: Underneath, and then at night running around on the roof and stuff. I hated the packrats. The mice? There were plenty of mice, but I trapped them. I decimated them to near zero.

So that’s my wildlife: coyotes, and packrats, and mice, and a wolf howl. Deer, of course, but I don’t think I even saw an elk all summer.

BH: Did your lookout experiences turn out to be what you thought they’d be?

TJ: You think you are going to come up with some profound thoughts in all this solitude. You are dealing more with boredom, and you crave activity. I definitely got some reading done, read some good books, but you can get tired of reading. It was a much lonelier job than I ever expected. At one period of time I went for 10 days without seeing anybody. The only other human contact was through the phone or the radio, which really doesn’t provide much by way of human contact. But 10 days of solitude—I had never experienced that before, and you realize how much you really do crave human contact. At least I do; not everybody does, but I do.
Was it what I expected? I don’t think I went there with any great expectations. I was in it just for a unique experience and that it was. It was a wilderness experience. The solitude was very different than I expected.

BH: Do you have anything that stands out in your memory?

TJ: There was one unique incident. I am glad you asked that question. I had been busy all morning, and that excerpt from the journal mentions this. I had clothes to wash, so I had the wood cook stove heated up, hot water going, and actually having a pretty good day. I don’t know what prompted me to turn on the Forest Service radio, because I usually didn’t turn it on until late in the afternoon. But I thought, “Nah, I’m going to see what’s going on.”

I hadn’t had it on more than 15 minutes, and I hear, “Mud Lake Lookout, this is Keith.”

This is Keith Granrud, who is a wilderness ranger. He’s patrolling the area on horseback.

I said, “This is Mud Lake answering.”

He said, “Oh!” I didn’t hear him say this, but I could hear that he was very glad that I answered.

I said, “Yeah, I hear you loud and clear.”

He said, “I have something you have to report. There’s been an apparent drowning at Big Salmon Lake.”

“Whoa!” I said. “Okay, say that again. I want to make sure I got what you’re saying here.”

He said, “There’s been an apparent drowning at Big Salmon Lake. I need to have you call Big Prairie and Spotted Bear if you can get a hold of them.”

I said, “Okay. Will do, and I’ll get back to you.”

The reason Keith was so relieved, he was at Big Salmon Lake. If I hadn’t answered, he was faced with a two-hour horse ride to a cabin at Salmon Forks where there was a telephone. He was dealing with an incident, and he really didn’t want to have to leave and ride to Salmon Forks to make that phone call. And here I had the radio on. So, he could stay at the incident. So right away, I called Spotted Bear. I always called them first, because that’s where my supervisors are. I forget how it went from, but anyway, there in fact was a young man, a backpacker, with another man. They’d gone swimming and one of them had drowned in Big Salmon Lake. It was a tragedy. So the next day a helicopter on pontoons showed up at Big Salmon Lake with divers. They searched and searched, but they never found the drowning victim. But, that was, wow! I just remember that.
So, the two big events that summer were the drowning incident and the smokejumper fire, as far as work-related incidents.

BH: Did you have anything weird happen to you while you were up there?

TJ: Hearing that wolf howl was borderline weird, as far as making the hair stand up on the back of your neck. That was pretty good.

BH: What about the hardest thing while you were up there?

TJ: The loneliness. I could go without food. I think my craving for human contact—well, I've never experienced severe starvation, so I don't know what that's like, but to experience a craving for human contact was memorable.

BH: Any frightening experiences up there?

TJ: Frankly no. The lookout itself got struck by lightning once, but it was just an instantaneous flash and bang. I was in the lookout, and it took me a minute to realize what had happened, and I thought “Whoa!” But I did experience a lightning strike once, but it wasn't a big deal.

BH: What was the best thing you remember about the lookout?

TJ: Probably the best thing was my friends from Libby coming up to visit, and then hiking out to see and go camping with my family, as far as highlights. Another thing that stands out was the week I spent a Big Prairie before I went up, experiencing life at a wilderness ranger station; horses and mules as the only means of transportation. I experienced the pace of life there unlike any that I'd experienced before. I thought this is what it used to be like before people were coming and going in motorized vehicles, and I thought this is really unique. I don't know where I could experience this anywhere in the United States other than a place like the middle of the Bob Marshall. So that was neat.

BH: What did you do to keep from being bored, which must have been difficult?

TJ: I did trail maintenance. There was a trail out to the patrol point to, about a third of a mile trail, and I did a lot of maintenance on that. I did a lot of maintenance on the lookout itself: I puttied all the windows in it, which badly needed it; I painted it. They provided me with this brown paint, which the lookout restoration later had it changed back to white [laughs], but the Forest Service in the 70s decided they wanted everything brown. I was fine with that, so I did painting, puttying of windows, any maintenance around there I could think of. I think I even found something I could cut weeds with. And I spent some time hunting grouse for food. That’s what I did.

BH: You talked about a patrol point. Where was it? What location?

Thomas Arthur “Tom” Jones Interview, OH 453-005, Archives and Special Collections, Mansfield Library, University of Montana-Missoula.
TJ: It was to the south of the lookout, and it overlooked the drainage which is next to Mud Lake Mountain. It’s Phil Creek. The only way you could see down into that drainage was from this patrol point. So there was a trail. Lookouts very often had patrol points, because there are going to be blind spots, but if somebody figures out, “Oh. If you walk out here, you can see down into this.” And they’d build a crude trail out there and some trees. So I went out there every night for something to do.

You know, I just remembered another thing. You asked if I was afraid of anything. This is in a general sense, but I remember after it got dark at night or close to it, I never went far from the lookout as far as “out.” And I remember thinking this fear is kind of primal. I’m here by myself. The only protection I have is this building. But I didn’t even have to think about it. There was uneasiness if I walked very far from the lookout in dim light, and I remembered thinking that. I thought, well, primitive people would have been like this, maybe. So a thing about being afraid of the dark—I wasn’t afraid of the dark itself, but I was afraid of losing my vision due to lack of daylight, and I thought, I’m not going to go far from the lookout; I’m definitely not going to be out of sight of this thing. The only exception to that was when I hiked in from my campout with my family, hiking in there at 11:00. It was totally pitch black, and I’m going up the trail. That was an exception, but I had to get to the lookout. I had no choice.

BH: If you had it to do over again, would you do it again?

TJ: Not at that lookout. It’s more kind of like been there, done that, but would I go on another lookout? Possibly, but I never had enough interest to apply for another lookout job. I was more interested in going on fires. I like the activity of fires versus sitting around combating loneliness and boredom. So would I do it again, no.

BH: Did being a lookout change your life at all?

TJ: No, it didn't change me.

BH: Have you got any other thoughts?

TJ: I recommend it if any person gets a chance. If you’re so inclined, it’s a unique experience, especially a wilderness lookout, and that’s something I want to emphasize here: the lack of visitors. Most lookouts are accessed by a road these days. This was accessed by trail. The location of this lookout was as close to the center of the Bob Marshall Wilderness as you can get, right up above Big Salmon Lake. This is true isolation, for the lower 48 United States. This is about as geographically isolated as you can get. So it was truly a unique lookout in that sense—the isolation of it.

BH: Thank you for your time. This was marvelous, a very good interview. I appreciate it.

Thomas Arthur “Tom” Jones Interview, OH 453-005, Archives and Special Collections, Mansfield Library, University of Montana-Missoula.
TJ: I enjoyed it, too.

BH: Thank you.

[End of Interview]