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The following is an oral history interview with William G. Sheldon at the Harper Castle Hilton Hotel in Toronto, Ontario, on March 26, 1979, conducted in behalf of the Boone and Crockett Club by Gyongyver Kitty Beuchert, office administrator of the Club.

KB: Mr. Sheldon was here in Canada attending the North American Wildlife Natural Resources Conference. I'm just going to let you start talking and give me some background information and say anything that you'd like to begin the interview.

WS: I was born in New York City in 1912 and shortly thereafter my family moved to Washington and I lived as a boy in Washington for eight months out of the year. Four months of our lives were spent in northern Canada, Nova Scotia. While I was in Washington, I had the advantage of observing some of my father's activities and the people he dealt with and how he dealt with them.

I went away to school when I was 13, boarding school, in Andover, and in those years from 13 on I practically spent no time in Washington. I'd take off from there and go up to Canada, come back from Canada. This was my existence. We were taught the birds and kept a bird list and were taught all about the plants and mushrooms and all about particularly the skills you need to survive in the wilderness, how to use a compass.

When I was 11, my father took me [to a] corner of a portage. He says, "Now you go a mile." Gave me the direction. He said, "You go a mile. You'll come to the edge of a spruce swamp. You go about another half mile, same direction and you'll hit a bog, you know. You turn right around and come back." So I took off, only 11, and I went maybe a half mile and got scared, so I turned around. He, I think, was following someplace because he showed up awfully quickly when I got back. I couldn't [unclear], I knew the opposite direction, I'd pick out a tree and I'd come to a run and the next one, and I got back on the portage and there was my old man. He says, "Well, we should make it known [unclear]" and I said, "no dad, I
didn't." He said, "We'll give it a try tomorrow." I made it next time and the little experience I've got gives you great confidence. Really builds up confidence. Then he had me chuck wood all the time. I became pretty good with an axe. The thing about an axe is that it's a necessary tool for survival in our North American wild country. Anybody can hack a tree down, but you've got to be able to handle it safely so you don't chop your foot off. It's awfully easy to do if you don't know what you're doing. We swam long distances and he taught us . . . I learned more paddling from some of the Indians and guides. My old man had a little different type of stroke, but I learned from the Indians how to paddle . . . It was a beaver tail shaped blade. If you knew how to handle that you could steer a canoe; you'd never have to turn the paddle. It's the way you take it out of the water. But anyway, we went on long canoe trips alone together.

My first outside experience actually was the year before my father died in 1927. I was 15 and he sent me out West, where I met Oles Murie. He was a biologist for the Fish and Wildlife Service, but in later years became famous as president of the Wilderness Society. Great man. Strictly no bad habits. Never smoked. All these guys thought it was terrible [that] my old man smoked. Matter of fact that's what killed him, the way things happened. But I went out with Murie and this was when he initiated his first study on elk. He'd been in Alaska six years working with caribou, and this of course later he became the authority and wrote the book on elk and everything else. But his wife was terrific. Terrific person. She's written two or three books. This all had an influence on me as a young man. She had a little boy, two years old, and just before she joined her husband -- she'd been up in Seattle -- she had a little baby girl. Now she was the first woman graduate of the University of Alaska. They met up in Fairbanks. She also, I think, had gone to University of Washington, Simmons, wherever she could go. One of these girls 90 words a minute. But she was a beautiful, delightful. She was one of the wives my old man used to say, "Well, there's a girl that I could take a shine too. She's attractive." Some of these wives are a little hard to get along with.

Well anyway, we went out in the woods and I accompanied him most of the day but we were up in the Tetons and we decided to move the camp 10 miles beyond where we were, and I knew where we were
going to go. So we only had one pack horse, but we packed up the two saddle horses and the pack horse, which held our gear, which wasn't very much. I had my own little tent that weighed three pounds. Well, I led these animals and as I arrived in this little bench who should come through but a dude camp, you know all these cowboys -- dudes -- they were across the valley. They took a look at me. Their horses were very badly packed. I didn't then know how to pack them and they couldn't figure this out at all. About half an hour later out of the woods comes Murie with a baby in his arms, a little boy in a pack with his head poking out and his wife behind. And these guys, you know their drawers dropped. They probably thought they were Indians or something. Anyway we camped and I learned a lot from Murie about the woods and he was one of these early . . . Oles Murie was really an old time naturalist. He was a young man then -- he was 37 - - but he knew . . . [He was] one of these guys like Bartram and Nelson and Bailey and Prebble, the whole lot of them. He knew geology, he knew botany, he knew all the birds and did a lot of his work in mammals. And he was something of an artist. He was an artist and he could make a wonderful mammal study specimen. He taught me a lot.

Then in 1928 was the year my old man died. He died in the fall. That year I was a year behind in Latin. Graduated from school; I had to make it up. So I made up Cicero, took me a month. I had a [unclear] and was able to pass exams. So that used a month. And then Borden and I and two other friends went on a . . . discovered the idea we could go up to the head of the Connecticut River and canoe down. We saw all the dams. Actually we said to hell with it. So we camped up the Connecticut Lake for a week or two -- and there's a good example of Borden. You know there was always something going on. It was a little incident. But at that time you couldn't get explosives; it was the 4th of July [when we] came home, in Massachusetts. So he went to a drug store [unclear] his train was about ready to go, and he bought three or four [unclear] of explosives and came back, saw the train wasn't going. And there was a good looking girl, [and he decided to] go back and kiss her mug. So he was going back and the train pulls out so we all stood on the back platform and waved at him, you know. He ran around and got a guy with an old touring car and
come driving on a dirt road beside the train and he was waving at us to get the conductor to stop. Which we
intended to do, but we'd wave right back at him. He kept hollering and hollering and pretty soon the guy
stopped the train [and he] jumped over a cow pasture and got on board. But that's Borden. Then we got into
the station in Lowell and there was three guys, baggage workers, young guys, and we looked terrible. We
were dirty and had old hats and clothes on. We stood on the side of the platform and these guys tried to give
us a bad time. So Borden walks right over and the baggage master was watching. He grabs the guy, the
front guy right there, and said "Do you got anything you want to say? If you do, I'll knock you down." And
the guy melted. The baggage master laughed like hell. That's Borden. He used that same technique, couple
of jobs he resigned from. He had a temper but was never disagreeable to the people he liked. He had a lot of
casual friends but I was probably his closest friend. We always shared all our problems and I knew all of his
problems. But anyway, going on... The way the trip started, to British Columbia. We went to Alberta in 1930. In 1929 we didn't do
anything. I'll try to insert this into Dick's life. In 1929 his mother died. And she was very much of a
powerhouse, great person. But that was an important event in his life. He will remember some of this I'm
telling you. Anyway, we went on these trips which are described elsewhere.

The most important part, for example, we always headed alone, apart from each other. When we
were in British Columbia and working for the museum, covering much of the country, we were always
together if something bad went. Much better than out alone. Big game. Because you're not talking to
people and you're much more perceptive. You observe things -- when you're off by yourself -- you observe
things that you don't if you're with somebody else. We could climb that time, about the same speed. He
could out-climb me now by 60 to 1 but we climbed together okay. But we did hunt independently. Well, the
first day we went out and this was a lucky place. We went over a ridge and we had this guide with us. He
wasn't much of a guide; he taught us how to pack horses out is all. But we kept getting away from him. The
first day we went up over a ridge and there was a big ram lying there and he went down. We drew lots -- and
this is not written in his diary -- he didn't write in a diary on this part of our trip. I told him that I'd loan him these diaries of mine, which I didn't use, and anyway he shot a big ram. He drew the right lot. There was three of us together.

What happened the day before that -- it was a bad day for me -- we went out and Dick shot a goat. We were up in this high basic, a ridge here and a ridge over there. Dick went over and shot a goat and Scotty Wright, who was with me then, the guy went down to help him skin and I said to Scotty, "Well, I'll climb to the top of this pass. If I don't see anything in the next valley, expect me about lunchtime." Well I got up on top of the ridge and there were three big billy goats about a mile away. I said, "Well I gotta have a go at this. See what this is like." Goats are dumb; they're awfully easy to shoot. So I went down and eventually in about an hour or more -- hour and a half -- I shot the biggest billy goat. We weren't taking skins and I took his cape and his head and a hindquarter of meat and that is very doubtful meat to eat anyway. One of my bad characteristics [is that] I'm stubborn as an ox so I started carrying this out, stopped to clean my glasses a little bit and it began to get dark. I said, "Hell, I'm not going back over that high pass. I'm going to go around the shoulder of the mountain and get into camp." This ended up after 18 hours from the time I started in the morning. I went up over the first shoulder and came to this stream, no trail, and but I winded up it about half a mile, stumbling and falling in the dark, still carrying his coat of course. That obviously wasn't it and I said, "Must be the next valley." So, the next valley, the same story. And really, where I'd gone over the pass was like the handle of a fan and these four valleys were out, one of them was our camp valley and one was the one where I shot the goat. There were two little valleys in between; they were a mile long. So I went up that one. Finally found a trail that looked possible but it didn't seem to be going right so I left the trail and I got down below and then I got a main trail and I could tell horses had used it. We hadn't been on it but it looked all right. So I got kind of tired then, walking along with moonlight out bright. I thought of leaving the billy goat and coming back but I said, "No, I'm going to bury it." So finally I saw a ranger's cabin and I knew that was the valley where our camp was. I stumbled in the camp about one o'clock
in the morning and they were sure, absolutely positive, that a grizzly had gotten me. Positive. So Dick was much relieved. But then we went out the next day and he shot his ram. I've got the exact chronology in my diary.

So then the next day I started up these rises that I'd struggled up from below. I went right around the rimrock. The heads of them, and looked into each one. It began to rain and I got into some pretty bad places, very [unclear] not in favor at all. I got onto slippery ledges and finally it got so wet and rainy I dropped down some and started up the valley where I'd shot the goat. It was getting light. And I got into terrible brush, willows, things, I was soaking wet in no time. I might as well have stayed in the shower, but suddenly I couldn't see through my glasses because it was misty and rainy but I kept them under my coat. If I got a chance for a glimpse I'd take it but my eye caught something, 600 - 700 yards away, up on a bench. And I looked at it and thought it was another one of those grey rocks, so I put my glasses up and six big rams stood up. They'd seen me, you know. And they ran around the mountain up a ravine. And I thought, "Well, I may never see anymore [unclear]; we'll have a go at it." So I had quite a time struggling across there. I had to cross a stream and then the only way to get up possibly above them if they happened to be someplace was to go up these sharp canyons, you know, very, very steep, and I had hobnailed shoes on that I later took off, because they were too noisy. But I got up the top of one of these ravines and there was a great big rock and it looked as if it was just teetering. I got up courage and scrambled over it and nothing happened. Then I got up on a ridge and I had to climb up a lot of shale and broken rock. Got to the top of this little ridge and I started along the side of the mountain. In the meantime, it's not the best place to be when there's a lightning storm. But there was lightning and thundering and pouring like hell. And I again was stubborn. "By God, I'm gonna have a go at this." So because I [unclear] mile look down in the valley [unclear] the rams they'd been alarmed and had gone the way the hell and gone. I looked over and after a little while about 200 yards below I saw this black object. I got out my glasses and it was this big ram lying there and a smaller one right behind him. And Scotty Wright had said "If you see two, shoot them. I'm not going to come out again; I
want my sheep meat." First thing was hitting this ram, cause he was lying, looking down the valley. About all I had to shoot at was the top of his shoulder and part of his neck. And it was dark and misty and foggy but I knew I had to shoot low; you tend to shoot over. Well, I shot and as luck would have it, he rolled over dead. I hit him right in the neck. So then the other ram got excited and started running around, so I hit him twice and then killed him on the third shot. Couldn't shoot at him very accurately because he was running all over. But then I went down and cleaned them and then I didn't make the mistake of going down the goat valley; I climbed over the pass, then got into camp at 8:30 in the evening.

KB: But how did you pack out the meat?

WS: I didn't pack it out that day. We brought a ham of ram back to Massachusetts with us. We wanted meat so we took a couple of horses over and packed up ... It was bad going with the horses; we got all the meat in camp. That was that trip.

Then we got serious. We went down to Washington and we talked with the scientists and we decided to collect small mammals, which I had done all my life, which are very interesting and very important to the scientists. We collected over 200.

KB: You went on a collecting trip for 87 days the following year.

WS: This was the 87-day trip. This was the trip north of the Beart River; we had with us a guy who had been on a survey trip before and he considered himself a guide but he'd never move out of camp and all he did was some of the cooking chores. We could cook all right but he'd do that and we'd pack the horses; we rounded the horses up in the morning. I'd chop most of the wood.
KB: How old were you on this trip?

WS: Eighteen; 19 with that trip; first one was 18. I've got photographs of all this stuff. That's all there was to that trip. We came back. One funny thing happened with Borden. We got on the Union Pacific Railroad. We went down through Kicking Horse Pass; we'd gone to bed. The train moves around a little and Dick thought we were going to crash and he jumped out of bed in his pajamas and he went down and grabbed the black porter and he said, "Porter, porter, we're gonna crash!" He was half asleep I guess. I said, "Borden, get back in bed. It's perfectly safe." These funny things you remember.

Don't mention this to Dick. He didn't get along very well with Scotty Wright and he didn't get along with Keeley, who was the second guide we had on this 87-day trip. The other guides he got along with fine. But he'd get in arguments with them. I came into camp one day on the 87-day trip and Borden and Keeley had been arguing for two hours. I was always the arbiter. So Dick got right after me. He said, "I've told Keeley that a deer doesn't feel pain when the velvet is gone from the horns," which is true. It's like a fingernail. "Keeley says that it did." Dick said, "It only feels pain when it's still got blood and velvet."

They'd been arguing two hours about it and they asked me. I said, "Well, there are two schools of thought. Let's leave it at that." That usually ended it. But Keeley was all right. He wasn't one of my heroes in the woods at all. He was a little surly and he was very bad with his horse. Terrible.

Then we started hunting and the first thing that happened was a bear. Now on this I was dishonest. My old man wouldn't have done this. We were coming down with the pack train around the shoulder. Keeley said, "Whoa." And there comes a sow bear along the side right towards us. And so we drew lots and Dick got . . . Don't mention this kind of thing. He's done some rough shooting. I had a big advantage on him. He had a little carbine, same calibre as mine but an 18-inch barrel. And my gun was much more easy to sight. So I shot straight. But Dick would kind of get a little excited. Well, this bear comes along -- and here's where the dishonest part comes and I've decided to leave it out -- and a little cub. And we didn't see it.
until Dick had practically started shooting. Well, he shot and hit the bear and the bear was close to us and there was no tendency with the cub to chase us or anything. It just turned around and Dick shot three or four times and missed it and finally shot it. The little cub I think would survive all right. It bawls pathetic you know, they run off and bawl, but it was eating vegetables, so I think it was probably all right. But most people don't ever understand that. So I left [mention] of the cub out. I put in a lot of other things that weren't too good, 32, but that's all right.

But then we went down to this . . . We went down to this mountain which was only 25 miles north of the Beast River and I went up and found four rams the first day and shot a bit ram. Then Dick went up the next day -- he'd been working on his bear skin -- and saw 14 rams. He took some photographs of these.

I'd been living on fish, Dolly Borden trout, might as well eat suckers. They're terrible trout. They're very sporty looking, very pretty, but oh God, they . . . They wouldn't necessarily take a fly, but throw a piece of bacon. We caught one once -- 25 pounds. But we had these eating size fish; we made runt fish for it seemed to be a week or 10 days. You get sick of that fish. Put it in chowders and we'd eat a can of baked beans. Then we were in camp, I was cutting Dick's hair, cause we had long daylight you know, that time of year, in July, about eight o'clock. Keeley spent all his time in camp [with his] binoculars looking around at the peaks. He said, "I just saw a big ram." Now that isn't quite right. What happened was, Dick looked up at the skyline and he says, "I see a big ram up there." I'm not sure of the order of these two heads; this is the main one. And he was choking. Keeley put his glasses up and there were three rams, just coming over the surface. So Dick and I wasted no time. We jumped on a couple of horses, bareback. We galloped up the valley; they were about two miles away or more. We tied the horses in a windy place -- the flies were terrible of course -- in a windy place, timberline, and then we started climbing. It was ledgework, straight up like that. It got darker and darker and darker. Pretty soon we got where we couldn't see the sights of our rifles and I said, "Borden, we better spend the night here." Dick said, "Yeah, I guess we better." Oh we didn't have a very wide place. It was certainly no wider than the table and tipped out a little.
KB: Was it a ledge?

WS: No, it was against a rock, a steep rock. Well, we put our parkas on, raincoat jackets on. Huddled for a little while and it wasn't very comfortable. I wanted to look for a better place so I crawled along the edge and did find a better place. We got in there and I said, "Let's get this lichen and let's see if we can get a fire going." Well believe it or not, we got the lichen all smoldering nice and hot coal. Kept us warm. And then the moon came up and the sun had set. The moon came out; it was really beautiful because this mountain that we were on, the shadow of the mountain fell on the range across. It was truly beautiful. A couple of times the wind came up; croaked. So we started up and we finally found two of the rams, one pretty good sized one and one longhorn, the other one was [unclear], but we decided he was perfectly good museum specimen. So this was my turn to shoot. So I got up there and the damn ram was lying in a very bad position and the small ram was behind him. I didn't want a small ram. But he wouldn't get up. He was about 200 yards away. I said, "Borden, see if you can throw a rock and get the damn ram up." He hadn't seen us; we'd been quiet. So you probably have heard this on the radio. I know what a batter means when he gets up to hit a ball and suddenly the pitcher takes too long and he steps out to collect himself. Well that was about my position. Dick threw rocks and yelled and the damn ram didn't even budge. And then he got a real bellow and waved his hat and the ram saw him and jumped up and I shot. I shot him aft. A little aft, just back of his ribs. But I'd been holding and holding and holding and the rifle sights began to jump around a little. I'm making an excuse. But anyway. That was the only wounded animal I ever left in the north. We followed him about where he was two days. I made a mistake. He went about 700 yards away and lay down. I should've just pulled right out and left him there because I'm sure he wouldn't have died. We'd have never found him. So we still didn't have sheep meat but I think it was the next day I got another ram. I'd have to look at my own diary. But we were in sheep meat pretty quick. It's wonderful meat. We used to sit and eat it.
I didn't tell you . . . The second ram was Dick's shot way down further south. I'd seen the ram the day before and walked right up on him, within 100 yards, but I'd already gotten one and he didn't look like too hot a specimen. He was an old one. But he appeared -- we hadn't gotten anymore -- on the slope at Bow camp, about a mile away, and Dick said, "Well, I'm going after him." That was before [unclear], cause you could watch Dick and you could watch the ram and it was pretty dusky. You could see the whole thing. And of course you could see him fire and about a half an hour later you'd hear the shot. The sound travels pretty slow and the sight much faster. Well, he got the ram and brought it down to the camp. Oh, he had a terrible time. My diary tells me that. He went up the next day to get the meat. He brought a pack horse up with him. This pack horse was afraid of wild meat it turned out. Well, Dick finally got him tied and packed, but didn't have the lash rope quite tight and the horse pulled away. It pulled away and the pack [fell] at an angle and pulled him down and he might have been killed, right there. The whole thing came off but it pulled him almost 100 yards. Dick was getting madder and madder and madder. Finally he got the damn horse tied up. He had another time when he pulled away and got him. He got thoroughly mad. He had the saddle horse, and I don't know just what the story was; we'll get into that later. All I'll tell you about it is he got the meat into camp and that night he says, "That goddamn show horse." He said, "I thought I had the bullet left in my rifle in the stock thing. I should have shot him. Now on second thought I think that would've been a waste of ammunition." He was really hot about this. He could've been hurt some. Not seriously. He was only hurt seriously when a colt hooked him in the arm.

Well, the rest of this trip is all written up. There was a couple of sheep I shot as close as the side of this room. One was a stock sheep and the other one had run in the wrong direction. These were big rams. And then I shot a bear along at the head of a lake. A male grizzly, but not big; they're small species up there. Dick shot quite a few caribou rams. Then we came home.

Now I don't want to disillusion you that it was totally wild. There was another party. We were the first hunting party in there. We met two as we came out. There also was a party of a very interesting family
from Philadelphia: Dr. J. Norman Henry and his two daughters, age 18 and 20 and a couple of sons about 15 and 12. They'd gotten [unclear]; they had hundreds of horses. I think they had 75 - 80 horses and they went east of where we did. But they went further north; we hadn't met them at all but we'd come across their camp once in awhile. Keeley would go snooping around; he'd say, "Here's where the girls slept. Right here." He was a dirty minded old guy.

Well I shouldn't continue this part of it. You've already . . . . We met them at the train. We thought they were the most beautiful girls we'd ever seen. We'd been in the bush about 90 days and boy they looked wonderful. Dick got all excited; I liked one and he liked the other one, so we couldn't wait til after we got back to go down to Philadelphia and meet them. They were a very well-to-do family. They met us in a cadillac; Mary driving the cadillac. She couldn't drive worth a damn. They had a place out in Bladwin, which is a very fashionable suburb. We knew right . . . Well one thing was, Josephine . . . We'd met her on the train -- had her hair done in a braid all done up on top. Dick says, "She won't be like that." -- Well that was the first thing we noticed. We could tell right off, this is no go at all. This is [unclear]. Well we were polite. It reminds me -- I shouldn't go off on tangents like this -- but it reminds me of the story of a guy delivering rice in Siberia. At the foot of his robe was an old squaw -- you know, snaggle-toothed, greasy -- and my friend walked up to see the guy. "Where does he keep his woman Daddy?" Well, I when I walk down and she starts to look good I figure it's time for me to get back to Chicago.

Well, anyway. The next summer we went south a piece and that was bushwhacking all the way. We got very little game, shot a couple of moose. I'm wrong. First we started in Prince George and we bought a canoe for 30 bucks. We bought -- I know these figures - 10 bucks worth of food (cornmeal and different foods, maybe meat). We took Alexander McKinsey's old route and a couple of rapids we had to carry around. We came 240 miles and we'd sight places we'd gotten a rumor sheep might have crossed. We'd go in and backpack and camp a couple of days. Two, three, sometimes a week. And then we got down to the Hudson Bay post and we sold the canoe for 20 bucks. So this whole trip, except for train fare, which
was cheap in those [days], we traveled in tourist coaches, it was cheap. That part of the trip cost us 20
bucks. That part.

Then we got further north. Nobody had been in the country; the only people that knew the country
that we saw were some old Indian trappers that only trapped the valley bottoms. They were terrible. But you
know, the satisfaction in any hunting, the harder it is to get in the country, the harder it is to find the animals,
the more fascination, the more challenge. That's the whole key of it. We were challenged all right but we
never found any sheep alone.

I'm talking to the BC guys here and I've got them four different stories that now they have one or
two cheap [unclear] but I haven't got it straight yet.

KB: I want to ask you something. I know your early interest in conservation and hunting came from your
father. Did you ever go into any of the areas that he had been in alone, for instance, McKinley?

WS: I've been to McKinley.

KB: Did you hunt there?

WS: No, no. I never hunted in the same place he did.

KB: You never hunted where your father had been?

WS: No, no. He used to say, now this is before the great Depression. He used to say, "Well, son, I'm
afraid but I think sheep hunting is now a rich man's game." That's exactly what he said. He would've been
astounded to see what happened. Because he was astounded at the Depression. We were fortunate in one
way. He had probably the best sporting library in the... one of the best in the world. It was bought by Francis Garbin, a Yale benefactor, and it was all there in Yale in one room. But it sold for an average of almost $10 a book. That's say 8,000...

KB: Can you explain how you got interested and involved in the Boone and Crockett Club and how you became a member?

WS: Well, yeah. My main sponsor was Dean Sage, whom I went to China with. I'll come to that in just a second. Well, anyway '32 was the end of our trip. This is all written up. Rain, rain, rain, rain. And then down timber we lost our horse; horse didn't know how to get over logs. We had funny times, but some miserable weather. But that was good to not find a sheep around every corner. Dick shot a big bear and I shot a couple of moose and that was about all. Once we shot one for me.

Well, now things change. I've got to bring Dick in a little. Dick's family ran a bleaching business in Fall River and they had it very, very well.

KB: A bleaching business?

WS: A bleachery, cotton bleachery. And they developed the Sanforized, non-shrink stuff. During the first World War they'd made a mint of money; his grandfather had a beautiful place down in Fall River out on the big island in the reservoir connected by a causeway. Dick's family had a big house, but then the Depression hit about the time his mother died. And his father... things just weren't going well. But Dick worked for awhile. Now I can't tell you exactly how long but maybe a year. He'd go down to try to sell to these people down in New York and he was popular; they all liked him. He was a good salesman. But they'd talked it over and just finally said we're not making any money. So they sold it out. So then Dick was
at loose ends for a little while. I happened at that time to be working in a wool mill. He got interested in wool and he applied with this guy making wool tops -- it was quite technical -- for a job as superintendent at this plant. Dick, you know, is very mechanical. He's also very artistic; you know he's done a bronze of a pointer. Beautiful. He can do anything with his hands. Well, anyway he got out of that and at that time...

Was I in graduate school? Wait a minute now. No, that was all before the war. The war came, and incidentally he had always been in the Navy reserve, he commanded the first flotilla of LST's -- landing ship tanks -- that landed first in Italy and he had both sunk under him, I'm sure. Then he came back to the Pacific. He'd been in a battleship for a year. He was on staff duty the rest of the time.

KB: Were you in the service at this time?

WS: Yeah. Mine was a little different. He came back and was at loose ends. That was it. He had developed one camera gun in wood model; he developed that back around 1940. The Navy was even interested in it cause later he made the aluminum one. But he got a job -- guess it was his next job -- with the National Wildlife Federation. Kimball's job. He and this guy Dave Aylwood. Well Dick wasn't good; that wasn't . . . He's a very independent guy. He can't work with people on a job very well. He told one of the directors at one meeting . . . He was mad because they were all charging, going to these conferences and charging for their wives. He didn't like that. So he told one of the dignified old directors this and the guy talked right back at him. Dick said, "If you talk to me once more like that I'll knock you down." Dignified old Mr. Father, you know. That wasn't the thing to say. But the mistake they made, they selected Dick's successor . . . I shouldn't talk personality . . . Claude Kelly was for the birds as far as I'm concerned. He's a big Southerner; he's been on a commission down there. I certainly don't object to girl chasing but that was a constant occupation with him. Everywhere he goes. And he wasn't good. Tom Kimball [who] they eventually got is great. He has been great. But that was the first year. Then Dick got a job under John
Baker with the National Audubon Society and he was down in New York for a year. That didn't work out very well either. I can't tell you the details except Baker told him once. He said, "People shouldn't kill woodchucks. My place up the Hudson River (where he had a big farm), I fence it all in. Fence the whole thing in." Dick suggested that maybe most farmers couldn't afford that. But he got into a little bit of a hassle with John Baker [unclear] so that ended that. Then he got going in photography. Started with this guy Wilcox and he's been in photography ever since.

My history was a little different. First thing I wanted when I got out of Yale was to see the way the working man lived. So I went on the logging woods on the West Coast. I was a skidder and I surveyed logging railroads. They thought I was an Easterner. They heard [that] a Yale guy was coming out. The first thing they did was hand me an axe, figuring I didn't know one end from the other. The Texan chief was a nice guy; he did tell my boss two days later, he said, "That son of a bitch. I worked his heart out all day. I was more tired than he was." So anyway, we logged rural roads and then I went on a rigging crew. You carry these big cables all over the . . .

KB: A rigging crew?

WS: Yeah, you run up a big two-inch cable between tall trees that have been topped, 2,000 yards, put a carriage on it, cable comes down and picks up logs and you run them into the railroad. Now they have trucks. But that was rugged. That was the second time in my life I really was hungry. I couldn't eat enough. I had some friends in Tacoma and I went there for Christmas. Almost made a fool of myself. I could've eaten half that turkey. We were working in the winter and that's what happens.

Well, then I got an invitation to go to China and I couldn't resist that. I started working in October and I left in March. At the same time in March, Dick got married. This was 1964.
WS: Not '64. '34 [is when] Dick got married. At the same time he got married and went to Europe I was taking off with the Sages to go to China. Now this was a trip under the American Museum of Natural History. Howard Dean paid for it. He was a lawyer in New York. Very good and old friend of mine. They picked me out of the blue. They'd known about my experiences and when somebody that could prepare small mammals knew how to hunt and all the rest... And Willis was a wonderful guy, museum, who was older. Great guy, Don Carter. And also Dean's wife. And Dean's wife, Annie, walked 27 miles. Just a little girl. Had been a Deb in New York. She'd learned how to skin small mammals, eyes and everything. She walked 27 miles [unclear] the first day, so a lot of the rest of the time. She did struggle up some of these mountains, 17,000 feet. She had to be carried in a walker, you know, a couple of strong coolies, it was nothing to them. Lighter than the ordinary load they'd carry. Then she organized all the coolies, taught them how to skin. We got 2,700 specimens and she deserves a lot of the credit for it. And I never heard her upset the whole time, but she's a fiery girl. I see her now. She's had two husbands.

Dean was the one that proposed me to the Boone and Crockett Club. He was secretary. And also Brungius was going to propose me also but Buckaw was only an associate member. He was the one who organized the other guys. I got Dick in a couple of years later.

KB: You joined in 1935 right?

WS: I was in '35 and he was in '38. Well, where was I. I've written a book on that. You may have it down there. It's The Wilderness: Home of the Giant Panda. I got sick of all these books coming out with inaccurate accounts.
KB: I haven't seen that. I'd love to see it.

WS: Well, it's the University of Mass press. If you write me a note I can get you one cheap. They're selling them cheap now. Some of them. Woodcock's book is the first one made money for them, University Press.

KB: I wonder if somehow I could copy your journal on some of these trips that you took.

WS: I have oodles of copies.

KB: Do you?

WS: I'm going to send one to your friend in NRA.

KB: Harold?

WS: No, one's in British Columbia, being read now, in Victoria. Now I think it would be better . . . these have been edited and I've got original copies of the early journals. What's your time factor?

KB: In what way?

WS: How soon do you want this stuff? I'd kind of like to wait until I get a publisher. Then I'd send you the whole copy.
KB: Anytime. Because I'd just like to have a copy for the Club. But anyway, there's no time factor; I'd just like to have one for the Club files.

WS: Well, hopefully it will come out in a book. It will be much better. Maps are very important. I've got great maps for the book.

KB: But I don't want to take a chance on losing the chance of getting it.

WS: Oh, no. Sure I can send you some. My friend Ockman, whom I admire, is a biology writer. He says, "Spinach is never ready for the pot." What's that about "seven washings"? Mrs. Teal, who wrote Life and Death of a Salt Marsh, every heard of that? She and her husband wrote it. It was a classic. She was quite out forward. I didn't agree with some of her editing. My Bandiff story's already written.

Before I forget to tell you. Just hashing back. My old man could play a flute. Quite versatile.

KB: I heard.

WS: Well anyway, I came back from that then I . . . You know there were very few jobs in this wildlife field when I got out of college so I figured I had to be in business for awhile. Well, I went out on the West Coast [unclear] and then I finally went back on the West Coast and I worked in plywood and all, making wallboard and stuff like that. Then they wanted to put me - they had wonderful pulp mills - and they wanted me to go in one of those. And about that time my sisters got sick and my father had died probably recently and mother was having a hard time. I figured I oughta be East. I came East and I got a job in wool, sorting wool, spinning and designing wool and that lasted not . . . Well I was there a lot of it. That really started in January of '36 and I was in there four years and I was offered a job in Charleston running the whole office.
And I said I didn't know. Then the war came.

[new tape]

I might say I had been interested in this stuff because... One thing that helped me later get into Cornell... I had written an article in Journal of Mammalogy on pandas and on British Columbia; that helped me later even though it was a bottle of whiskey that finally got me into Cornell.

KB: A bottle of whiskey is what got you into Cornell?

WS: Yeah. That's another story. But anyway. I went into the ski troops and went to basic training in California. Signed into ski troops and then an opportunity came... I went into the Army in '42 as a private and then I went in March... In '43 I went into office school in Benning, came back and was signed into the ski troops and I started mountain climbing and the techniques getting these guys up the mountains. So a few of us were detached from the Tenth and were given an option to go to Italy. We didn't know where we were going. The Fifth Army, these guys, these front-line soldiers just didn't know how to put a fixed rope up or anything. So we were assigned over there and we were given the choice -- we weren't given a choice then --. We signed; we gave lessons. Dick had the officers, I had enlisted -- and we also had a captain with us, dealing in this business, Ed Mueller, nice guy -- and we trained elements of every regiment over there. The generals thought it was great training. But the main thing was we didn't get them any really technical stuff. You teach them how to climb, climb flat-footed, if you're on a steep slope lean out, don't lean in. It was as simple as that. And a lot of these guys they'd tell you, "Well, we didn't learn any lessons." Generals didn't even read the field manuals. For God's sake, they were supposed to take the high land, which they didn't do. They'd go up these mountain valleys and these Jerrys had all artillery zeroed in, every town. They'd wait till they all got bedded down for the night and they'd -- pardon the expression -- they'd shoot the shit out of 'em. And really do it. So we got upset by this but we couldn't do very much about it. However, when we had all
the elements in then we were given the choice; we could join any combat outfit we wanted. Well those of us in mountain climbing joined what is called the First Special Service Force. Famous, of course. Half Canadian and half American. They were originally organized by Roosevelt and Churchill, [unclear], the Canadian meeting, and they were supposed to first develop a weasel, a vehicle that was silent. I'd worked on that when I'd been with the mountain, go up in the Columbia, develop a weasel.

KB: Was this Franklin D. Roosevelt?

WS: Yeah. And we were supposed to drop . . . . our original mission was to drop by parachute into Sweden, cross into Norway and blow the power dams. Well, we had a combat [unclear] was low, 2,000 men and the men they got as volunteers, they called it a suicide mission. They selected trappers and guides from the north and a hell-bell for election gang of men if there ever were. They were just terrific. Oh a couple of guys who didn't have the clearest criminal records but a lot of them were just back woodsmen who could handle themselves in contrast with the regular America troops. My problem in combat [was] keeping them from getting themselves killed. You know, they were hell-bent . . . They were really a great gang. And we had a general who was the youngest ground general in the World War. They later . . . some people dramatized it and they wrote a book called Black Devil's Brigade and it's not too accurate. Part of it was. But anyway, we didn't join them . . . they were on the beachhead when we joined them. However, before the beachhead, just to give you an idea of the kind of guys they were . . . There was a big mountain, Lotta Vincent, was holding up the advance of the Fifth Army and Mark Time Clock, as we called him, General Mark Clock told Fredericks "If you take that, you'll be relieved immediately." He said, "We'll take it. We've been tacking that for two - three months and it will take you some time to get out." So Fredericks goes up at night alone with his sergeant and a couple of other guys and he looks the mountain over and he figures "Well, hell, we're not going up the main way; we're going up the cliffs on the back side." So he got a tacking
company over there another night and they had bushes but they were under German observation and if the
Germans spotted them could've shot them with artillery. They'd blackened their faces, blackened their guns
and then just lie low. Then at dark they started up. They were the best rock climbers they had, put in fixed
strokes, and they got up on top of that rim. There was one sentinel and they grabbed him and he couldn't
even yell. Got him out of the way and then they got up in the deep . . . There were a lot of Germans up
there. I wasn't with them then. That was a company of about 30 men, was all our company, no a little more
than that, maybe 50 - 60 men. And the Germans had 150 men up there. Well the guys, their captain got
shot right away and that got them mad and our first regiment was really hell bent. "Let's get them. Powder
River!" which was the name of the place they trained at in Helena. And they rushed these guys and run them
right off the mountain. Mark Time Clock was amazed and then it took a whole battalion of men to keep
them in ammunition and water. It was raining and snowing. Can't get water into those . . . So they had to
hole up there and they were relieved after a week. Then they went up the beachhead. I got up there. They'd
lost a lot of men in the mountains, quite a few. We'd make a patrol with a whole battalion, you know, and
we only had two battalions, with 120 men we'd make a patrol. Usually you have five of six. This got the
Germans a little disturbed but we got them back on our side of the anglo so we had a no man's land of 2,000
yards. In the no man's land were these Italian houses and every time you went in you'd have to clean out
every house because they could've come from the other way and occupied the house. Well we had some
characters. We got the Germans back and one of my men, climbing friend of mine, we'd have to go and see
where we were going to jump off when we attacked Rome. We went over in the 34th division I guess,
another part of the line, we'd never seen anything like this. These poor sergeants down there had never even
seen an officer and I said. "Well, I'm gonna go upstairs to get a better look." He said, "You better look out.
You'll be shot." I went upstairs. I said, "I see you have a new litter of kittens up here." And so I talked with
these guys. And our guys were traditionalists; the officer, he's in front. Even the general, he's in front. No
giving commands from behind. Our guys, you've got to go into a combat operation the right way, as if you're
going into a football game. You choke a little bit; everybody's afraid. You choke a little but you gotta be casual. I could tell you a case of a famous division that got all decimated because the company commander cried and said goodbye to his men and [unclear] all got killed. But anyway, so we jumped off. I remember smoking a pipe. Went down in the ditch and I had my first real experience in out and out combat. There was a battalion commander lying dead and three or four other dead guys. They dropped a mortar on us. And there was a guy crawling back. It's amazing what these guys can do when they're wounded. Then there was a guy. These are terrible stories to tell you. The guy sitting there, wounded badly in his hips, and the guys were bringing back four prisoners and they told the prisoners to pick this guy up with a blanket or some damn thing and he said, "You sons of bitches are gonna carry me." He shot three of them. Then they finally got him back I guess. The worst thing is going by wounded guys. I was pretty lucky, for awhile, in my company, and I got a night's sleep. No. Had to spend one night in a trench with a lot of dead Germans. Clean water was a problem. Then we advanced. . . . We had some light tanks. Tanks weren't very effective; not the German tanks as yet cause we had these guys. They realized that it was our turn to attack now. Had taken quite a few prisoners; all the front line prisoners. So we followed the tanks, partly because we didn't want to step on mines. Well they'd scare the Germans and they'd run them out here and there, but they weren't really effective. We were in front of them at the end. We got up this railroad track and eight, ten German tanks began to appear coming towards us and they shot out a tank destroyer, which is a heavy weapon, went through two walls of cement buildings. They are very strong, powerful tanks. They were attacking us. They had a bunch of infantry behind them. We had to call our own artillery in right on top of us. Take our chances.

KB: Were you wounded during the war?

WS: [unclear] but that was during training. I got nicks. I could've got a Purple Heart but to hell with
that. A guy would break his leg and get a Purple Heart. You get a nick in your hand and these guys would collect Purple Hearts. I had little use for them. But anyway, I had that whole story written up, "Anglo to Rome," and there was a lot of blood and guts. To tell you we had 640 men and by the time we got to Rome 14 days later we had 511 casualties. Of course the majority weren't... maybe 100 dead and the rest wounded, some permanently wounded and some would come back. I was the only surviving officer. My company commander lives here in Toronto; saw him last summer. He lost a leg. The last I saw of him was last summer. Anyway these guys... there are a whole lot of stories about them. There have been a couple of books written that are very poor, but we had one guy. Kraservak. He was a great character. He was out on a patrol with three men, maybe four, and he saw that a whole company of Germans had moved into one of these houses. They were in there eating breakfast, just getting daylight. And he walked right into the room with his Tommy gun and he kicked rifles right off of the floor. He said, "There's a company outside." And these three or four guys had automatic weapons and they fired them all at once and threw a couple of grenades in and the Germans all walked out. There were 40 of them. So Kraservak got them to pack beds and chickens and everything else and he came walking into camp with 40 German prisoners carrying all this. We had guys like that.

We had another guy, good friend of mine. He went over into enemy lines, spent three or four days there. He was right close to the Germans and could hear them digging but he knew what they were doing. And we took these... And we went into southern France and we took these forts. I was lucky. I got these machine gun bullets through my pants legs. And my other greatest Harvard friend, Dick Whitimore, who was with me the whole time. He never got a scratch. We were just lucky.

KB: I'm going to ask you something. During the war, the Boone and Crockett Club was almost inactive.
WS: Yeah. They cancelled. Sounds ludicrous. The age average was much higher than it is now. On the other hand, a lot of the guys were in...
KB: That's what I was going to ask. Were most of them involved . . .

WS: Also, that's when I decided, after the first shell landed near, then I lost track. You've got one time to go around. This is a platitude. But you have and you really realize it. I don't care if I'm interested in butterflies; I'm going to do what I'm most interested in the rest of my life.

So then I decided to go back to graduate school. Thirteen years.

KB: You went to graduate school for 13 years?

WS: No. After I'd been out of Yale 13 years plus the war. The war gives you credit for time. My marks at Yale weren't too high, except in what I was interested in. Some papers I researched so I did all right. But I maybe had a little below Dean's List average. I didn't work much. The last year I worked a little more. I had no idea of going to graduate school at that time. I was too young and immature. I didn't really know what I wanted to do.

KB: Let me ask you something. Were you involved in the revival of the Club, because sometime around 1948 I believe?

WS: Well, Dick Borden and Archie Roosevelt and Dick -- he's very old now, but he's still alive. He was president of the Club. I know his name but it's gone out of my head. Oh Dick Derby was one of them. A great guy. We sat on a bird cover down on the Vermont cover and started talking about the Boone and Crockett and that's when Archie sort of got reactivated in his interest. And he was very influential. And then . . . One thing they do now which I think is a great improvement. I never knew when I voted for these guys anything about them. Now they give a little sketch. Well, we had a lot of guys though that were more
the explorer/pioneer type. Guys like John Burnham, who went to Siberia and he traveled under very rough circumstances. Jimmy Clark, who was captured by the Mongols in Asia. My old man was somewhat of an explorer himself. He'd go in unknown areas. Well the exploration just adds zest to anything you're hunting. The more dangerous it is, the harder it is, the more kick there is.

KB: Can you tell a little bit about, well for instance that very informal meeting on the mountain? Do you remember any of that?

WS: I don't remember; Dick might remember more. We just discussed the Club in general, so what are we gonna do. That time, that was in the era when a lot of these guys were just about tripping over their beards. We were talking about getting new men in, trying to find guys who were real honest . . .

KB: Well, I'd like to remind you of something. You served on the Executive Committee several different times. And once it was in 1939 to '41, just before the war I guess.

WS: Yeah, cause I'd just . . . I was in Boston and I'd go down to the meetings.

KB: And then in '52 to '54.

WS: After the war.

KB: And then in '63 to '65. And I don't know if you remember specifically some of the interesting things that might have happened while you were on the board.
WS: I'd have to look at the meetings. I don't remember. Let's see now. The first fight I got into (and Borden joined me and I finally got Gabrielson and a bunch of other people) was a big hassle about wolves on Mount McKinley. Bradburn Washburn, McLean, Thelmore Brown, who was president of Campfires Club; they all wanted a law passed that the Park Service had to kill wolves on Mount McKinley. Well, they said it would be appropriate ... and I'd just come back from the war. Hadn't been back a week. So I said, "Yeah, all right." I didn't know anything about it. Then I decided to get ahold of Murie; Murie wrote one of the classic works in the whole field of biology. I said, "Gee, they had terrible winters and there aren't too many wolves there anyway, as many as there are right now." So I came back the next year and I said, "I'm sorry. I misspoke myself. I've changed my mind." And I gave them the reasons why. I said, "I have great confidence in Mr. Murie. He's a fine biologist and our Club is usually supportive to scientists." Brown and McLean resigned. But I got good support from Gabrielson, a fine doctor, a Boston doctor, and several other people. So then Brown studied a report that Murie had made, a critique, Campfire Club, and I read it and he misread the whole thing. I mean Murie would often see the same band of sheep several different times but Brown added them all together. See when Murie started, there were hundreds of sheep, then when he ended there weren't very many. But he observed one band maybe 20 different times. But Brown, who was a good explorer and a good artist, had been in the Arctic, Mount McKinley area. His son and I joked together because he thought the old boys were getting a little excited. Unfortunately George died too. Both died.

KB: I want to ask you. This has to do with the resolution to control the wolves on Mount McKinley.

WS: Yeah. We made a resolution not to control them, but they were going to send an order to the Parks to destroy wolves. I think finally the Park Service yielded to some other pressure group and they only caught one wolf at a garbage dump, but the guy that would remember that, I think he's still alive, is Newton Drury.
KB: Newton just died recently.

WS: He went with the Redwoods for awhile. Well "Pink" wasn't in the Club then. I'm trying to think who else . . .

KB: I wonder if Horace Albright would remember, because I'm going to be talking to him.

WS: Well, he's a great guy. He helped some in the history. Horace I don't think attended the Club much in those years. He was with a silk company. I don't remember him til sometime later.

KB: There's another thing I'd like to ask you about, and this is going back again before the war. There was a committee formed to examine how the Club would become more active in conservation activities. You are the only living member of that committee. Do you remember anything about that? The Club has at different times done this sort of thing and just tried to study just how they could become more effective and more active, but you were in that committee.

WS: Now, I can't . . . All I'm sure I always . . . See what really always overbalanced the Club was the head competition. I'll be honest with you. Everybody who is part of the Club has a proof of repository. Everybody got trophy conscious and I complained about that. A couple of times when I said, "Now we don't want to forget that trophy collecting is all very interesting but it's not the original mission of the Club." It was in later years it became very active as practically the only organization in conservation. Now Fred Pullman or somebody the other day said, "Of course our Club doesn't lobby."

KB: Mr. Ferguson said that.
WS: Well, he's nuts. My old man was a straight lobbyist. He knew all the senators; they were great friends of his and my house was the meeting place for guys like Will Doug and Sent Jordan and John Burnham of the American Game Society, E.W. Nelson, chief of the Fish and Wildlife Service, and people like Ammonson and all the Arctic explorers.

KB: I want to clarify that for a minute. I think that Mr. Ferguson meant that the Club as a Club didn't lobby, that the people within the Club lobbied individually.

WS: Yeah. Except my old man always had identified himself as representative of the Boone and Crockett. Now also about that time or a little later they had the Club incorporated and they made it a rule.

KB: It was a little earlier. I think it was 1932.

WS: Well, that was done at my old man's house. Well, no it was a little earlier than that. My old man died in '28.

KB: Maybe they started talk of it as early as the early '20's but I think the actual incorporation came about a little later.

WS: Well I'm not sure of the legal aspects but as far as I know there'd be nothing to stop that now [that] there are lots of professional lobbyists down there. For conservation. But I think "Pink" lobbied a couple of times where he was representing not the Institute but the Club in that Key deer business, but I could be wrong. Cause he gave out a lot of [unclear] books to the various legislators down there.
KB: Incidentally, that's something I would like to ask you about. Didn't Jim Trefethen get most of the basis for that book from your notes?

WS: Yeah, two sources. Some of the main sources were my old man's letters. A couple of thousand. I know. The depository of these letters is practically the story of conservation. About the year 1908.

KB: Where are they kept?

WS: Well, I'll tell you. I went through this and everybody was full of suggestions. Library of Congress. We could put them there, along with millions of others. The Denver Wildlife Museum. Then I went up to Alaska and I went in and talked with their librarian and they said, "We've made a special case, special depository, have students studying this." I said "This is where they oughta be." So that's where they are; they're all up there; they're all filed. There are lots of letters to Grinnell. The other great source of information are Grinnell's files, which are all in the Jennings Museum in Fairfield, Connecticut. In the sanctuary. A lot of the copies aren't too clear. Trefethen went through a lot of this. He had an amazing amount of information.

KB: Did your father ever write to Theodore Roosevelt?

WS: Yeah.

KB: And Grinnell?

WS: Oh lots of them.
KB: Because I was wondering where we could get letters that may have been back and forth between them and Theodore Roosevelt. Would they be in these collections?

WS: Well I'm not sure of the Roosevelt. There are several where Roosevelt has invited him to the White House and Sagamore Hill, with his signature. But I would suggest, if you're really interested, to write a letter to the librarian at the University of Alaska in Fairbanks and I think they'll turn themselves inside out to make it of service. You know what you oughta do is take a trip up there, spend a week looking things over.

KB: Do you know I have been up there. I wish I had known this. But I never got to Fairbanks; I went to Anchorage to interview Bob Reeve and I never got as far as Fairbanks. However, I toured Mount McKinley Park on my own and I saw the plaque that they erected to your father.

WS: It's just too expensive to go up there by air. To go up there and have the assignment that if she's screwing it up, what to look for.

KB: You know, perhaps . . . . I am supposed to go to California in June to interview Horace Albright and then possibly up to Seattle to interview Donald Hopkins and perhaps they would send me back up there and do some copying and some looking through those letters.

WS: Well, I think they'd send you. I'd write them first.

KB: Well, you know, at your recommendation, they might do so.

WS: I'd [unclear] if they were pertinent. Now, for instance. My father and Grinnell had many other
interesting... They were great bird dog men. They hunted grouse together in Vermont and they would
write about bird dogs and conservation, too, a lot. My father, I think they caught them in Alaska. No, he
was in ... You know this guy Riker who wrote the book about what sportsmen have done for
conservation?

KB: Is that George Riker?

WS: Yeah.

KB: I've never read the book but I know the man.

WS: Is it George or is it his brother? Anyway, I've met him and he got a prize last year. I sent him a ...
There was one case where ... Course really an enemy of my old man was Hank Hornaday. And Hornaday
wrote some letter and some papers raising hell with George Bird Grinnell. My old man got mad. And he
wrote a stinging rebuke someplace in the file.

KB: What was the controversy about?

WS: They had controversies about everything. That's putting it quite straight. But if you read these
letters you'd find out what happened. Hornaday, which many men are, my old man was not this ...

Hornaday was a great egotist. He was nurtured and brought along by Madison Grant, in the Club. He was
first director of the Zoological. He took some bloodletting trips shooting sheep and goats, pretty messy job
of it, down in Mexico. He forgets about all that.
KB: Was this Hornaday or Madison Grant?

WS: This is Hornaday. Now Hornaday objected to the Fish and Wildlife Service, everything about it, everybody in it. And my dad wrote the first law, which became a model law for the states, Alaska game law. And this came out and Hornaday took all credit for it. My old man just laughed. Hornaday said, "Look what I did." He'd do this all the time. And on the duck business, well he really became just like Cleveland Emery. Among other things, he'd been a hunter for certain [unclear], but my old man, cause he had a fiery pen, Hornaday did, my old man would just laugh. That would make Hornaday all the madder. But they weren't on very good terms. Hornaday did more damage than those ducks did. It was called something else, when it was first proposed, public shooting something, and Hornaday wrote all the New York papers and lectured all over the country, saying this was a license to kill more ducks than we should. That kind of thing. Everything like that. He was a menace. He probably did some good things, but if you read well, you read Trefethen's first book. There's quite a lot in there.

Albright was a good friend of mine. Albright used to come to the house. And Steven Mather, Park Service. I used to be sent to bed but I'd sneak down and listen over the banister to what was going on. I'll never forget when he talked to him. Bob Bartlett was a famous Arctic explorer and Bob Bartlett saved the life of this other famous explorer, who Bartlett thought was a fake as an Arctic traveler.

KB: Dick Cook?

WS: Oh no, Cook was a fake. No, this guy taught at Dartmouth for three or four years. He went to Durango Island, took a bunch of kids up there. I think my mind is slipping. But anyway, Bartlett had a great sense of humor. He told how he carried this guy right across the ice. Well, in his book on my father in Mexico, I objected, they said a group of men in that group were Hornaday, Beebee, who were some of the
others. I objected to two or three of them. My old man would turn over in his grave. Well, Beebee was a
great popular writer but Beebee would take a bee and if there was half a dozen bees with different habits he'd
lump them all in one, you know. The thing about Beebee, I remember, tells me a lot. He took this man
Carter, who went to China with me, looking for the bushmaster, the biggest viperous snake in Central
America. It's three times the size of a rattlesnake; big heavy thing. Well, he went down there. In his book,
Beebee never mentions Carter in the introduction or anything. And Carter went with an Indian boy and they
found a bushmaster. It was up in a limb of a tree. They got Beebee and Carter got a loop, got it over the
bushmaster and got the snake down. The only reference Beebee makes to Carter in the whole book is "Then
that man put a noose over his head." Any man that would do that... I can't see that.

KB: You know, I'd like to ask you a couple of questions that refer to now in relationship to what the Club
used to be like. Do you feel... You've always been more active on the conservation end of the Club,
actually. Do you feel that the Conservation Committee today is as active as it used to be?

WS: Well, of course I'm in favor and help to promote because of my background with the Service and the
university, this business of supporting graduate students. I think that's a great... We never had that source
of [unclear] information before. And I think that's very good. My judgement... I don't want to be critical.
I think sometimes it fits more along the wrong chap but you never can tell with young guys like that and
they've got some great guys. And I think that these contributions... Well, I like to think of conservation a
little bit as the administrators, those are the chiefs, but where the administrators depend on the Indians to get
the facts on which to back all the politicking, well I think that we've turned a little more into an Indian club.
We've trained these young men who are supplying wonderful information and I think in view of what has
happened to the Club, the numbers and so forth, I think that it may be appropriate. I was a little doubtful
sometimes about... I'd be super critical on projects because I've reviewed students' projects for 25 years,
but some men you can tell and some you can never tell until a guy really gets out on the job. I can think of
two or three that . . . But it's a good gamble and I think it's good. But whether we should be more active,
well, we should be asking if we can be any help on the Alaska land controversy. I think we should be more
active.

KB: How do you feel about that? What's your position?

WS: Well, I don't know enough. I really don't. I've heard sides of the hunters think they're taking too
much land. I think this business of establishing a lot of monuments, at least you've got the land locked up
for awhile. I don't think it's too bad, this from what I can see but I don't really feel qualified to make a
judgement. I read, we all read the stuff, but you've got to sit down and talk with these guys. That's the only
way to really find out.

KB: Do you feel that there are any other issues that the Club should be involved in now?

WS: Well I hope to hell Carter's really killed this boondoggling business, these fake dams that go up all
over. Lot of white elephants you know, cause they throw all that in the pork barrel. He killed enough of
them, got all the Congressmen screaming. Boy that's something that if it can be really put to rest in a grave it
would be fine. It's so unnecessary and inappropriate. But the great majority of them were just vote getters.

KB: I want to ask you something and I'd like to word this right so you understand what I'm asking.
You've been in the Club longer than most of the members that are in there now, and throughout the history
of the Club it appears that they drew their membership from people who were leaders in say other
conservation organizations.
WS: That's particularly true of the associate members.

KB: How do you feel that was of value to the Club, or do you feel that . . .

WS: Well, I think a lot of these guys, they didn't want to . . . Well, I'm not sure what the law is now. At one time the associate members could not vote. So associate members, they act as if they're full members, but they were used for advice and consultation. They were used, well, for the Indian information, a lot of which we're getting from students. But you'd always draw automatically [from] the superintendent of Yellowstone Park, the director of the Park Service, the director of the Fish and Wildlife Service, and all the men in the key positions. And you could always consult them or support them when they had something to do and so I think that's good, but I think they ought to clarify.

Frankly when they raised the dues from $10 to what is it now, a $100? That bothered me, not because it was $100 but some of those active members harmed associate members cause they don't pay what $15, which is practically nothing, but what used to happen, and they haven't had much success with recently I understand, when we needed like my old man's antelope refuge out in Nevada. I can think of that and I can think of a number of other things. We may not have men like that now. They needed the money, they just almost quietly put the word out that they needed money. And those were the days before we had Mellon. Mellon supported a lot of . . . he did stuff. But money would start forthcoming and we'd start getting the support for the antelope refuge. Audubon paid for half of it. And Fair Osmond with the Zoological Society helped support a number of things. There were a lot of reasons for that; I won't go into that. But I know that Fred has tried with some of these organizations. But Dick's got some opinions on that; I can't tell you exactly what they are. They haven't had any luck. But I don't know how many rich men we . . . There must be some rich men we've got.
KB: Well, the thing I was trying to ask . . . Well, basically do you feel that . . . What do you feel the main thrust of the Club has been, like to provide a forum for people that then went out to their own organizations? How do you feel the Club worked its best work?

WS: Because they did the . . . You're talking currently?

KB: No, even back . . .

WS: Well, back in the old days, they were the conservation in the country. They had guys like Pinchot. Henry Stimpson was an ardent gunner. E.U. Root was the guy that told them how to prepare the migratory bird bill so it became the Constitution. We had giants in there. We had very strong men. And of course Roosevelt was our first, most active conservation president and he was an ardent gunner and a naturalist and that had a lot to do with some of the men he was able to get. We had quite a few resignations because they haven't been active.

KB: Well, apply that question to now. How do you feel they could best serve now in this field because there a lot of conservation organizations?

WS: Well, I do think by getting good Indians and supporting that every guy that's any good makes an original contribution to science and in turn to conservation. I think that's the best work they do. Now it's very controversial you know whether the trophy heads are a conservation measure or not.

KB: Well, you know I was just going to ask you. Do you feel that there's any conservation value or could they be used as a conservation tool?
WS: A lot of people are trying to use it. We don't know. The main stuff I can get from Europe and elsewhere is that if you kill animals with the best track record you're killing important genes. I've also heard that disputed by another scientist. What I've found in rereading my old man's [unclear] during the breeding season, and no one's really brought this out, the big rams might have small rams in the same band and they had cohesive bands. And if a strange ram, big or small came from an outside band, it would drive them off. But among themselves, they would let the young rams breed along with the old ones. The old ones would have 15 to 20 ewes around them, but they're gonna wear themselves out. All these ewes get impregnated. But that's controversial. That's a damn good study for some good man.

KB: That's something I'd like to pursue a little bit.

WS: For instance. One other comment. And the red deer in Scotland, the red deer in Germany, they never allow shooting the big stags.

KB: Well, this is a point that I would like to ask you about because I'd like to know if you have an opinion at least on it. Many people feel that by the time these animals are truly trophy animals, that they're almost beyond their breeding years.

WS: I don't believe that and the reason I don't believe that is I think the kind of life the mountain sheep live, most are larger big game animals. Very few of them die of old age because they're submitted to such a rigorous winter, you know. If they can survive a winter and go on into the breeding season I think they're doing fine. I just don't think in wildlife that there are many animals that die a natural death from old age or senility. Lots of zoo animals, sure, you expect that.
KB: Do you think that there would be a way to do a study on this and find out conclusively if you know at what age they might be beyond real active . . . .

WS: Well, I can tell you this. It would be hard. To handle bad tooth disease and meld these rams, I [unclear]. And Murie found the same thing in Alaska. I mean it looks terrible. Ordinarly if I looked at the [unclear] of this old ram he's not gonna let me in. But [unclear] they were able to eat or get along. I don't know just what you'd look for because they were skin and bones. Now sheep are [unclear]. These sheep my old man shot on the mountain at Old Serio in Mexico was no . . . The only water on that . . . occasionally in the rainy season there might be a puddle or two on rocks, but a great part of the year was no water. These animals ate cactus -- the organ pipe, the big stuff -- and they got enough moisture. But they were smaller and in a different subspecies. They're just a small desert sheep. Because I don't think they get the nourishment. There's a body mechanism that works now. I found the same thing in Asia with blue sheep. Up high in the mountains were big healthy animals, but down in the canyon and the plateau of Tibet there was a whole race of blue sheep identical, about half the size. They adjusted to what their food supply was. In other words, I think these wild animals have an amazing capacity to survive if they are given a break and I don't think they get to a point where they're gonna die of malnutrition or old age. They're not gonna be around any length of time. They find hundreds of deer that die in the winter because they outeat their food supply.

KB: Yeah, you know there's another viewpoint about trophy hunting that I'd really like to ask you about. I'd like to ask what you feel about it. Is that some people feel that trophy hunting promotes selective hunting and therefore the hunters aren't killing as many animals because they don't just go out and kill whatever they see.
WS: That's a very... That's one of the arguments. However, all I can tell you is this. If a man pays the way they do today, maybe a couple thousand dollars to go and get a sheep and he's got a limited time, like maybe three weeks, he's gonna shoot the first good head, good trophy head he sees. Particularly if he goes in territories where they're allowed two sheep, and they might selectively hunt the second sheep. But I don't believe that. And it depends on where you go. If you go up in the Brooks Range, your heads are smaller. On the Rango Range you get the biggest Dahl sheep. Where we were in the Stone Sheep Range you get a lot of limestone, the biggest stone sheep. A lot of these horned animals like deer you can tell the condition of deer by the size of the antlers and the bucks.

KB: You were already a member when they started this trophy hunting. Do you know what the purpose was?

WS: Well, I knew Prentiss Gray. Was a good friend of mine. He wrote the first book, you know. I was there when he started.

KB: Do you know what the purpose was then, I mean what their idea was?

WS: Well, they just thought it would be interesting to other hunters to see if they could get in there. Cause there was a... Wordswar ran one, at the World's Fair, New York, way back. Representative heads. I don't think they really knew. I don't think anybody quite knew. There was some competition at first to get your heads in the book and the sheep that Borden and I shot were in the book, course now they're way down the list someplace. If a guy could afford the time, selective hunting for big heads, I think I'd approve of it and maybe there... Maybe this guy Hopkins out of Seattle really did some selective hunting. But I just don't know. I think the best hunter that we've got in the Club now, John Batten, I've known him since
college. He shot 25 Alberta sheep and I guess he's shot ... He shoots animals practically everywhere. He
told me when he was a young man, freshman, sophomore at Yale, he was going blind. Sure hasn't gone
blind. He was almost a hypochondriac. He got over that.

KB: I'd like to ask you. How do you feel about hunting in general now?


KB: Because so many people argue against it ...

WS: Oh well I know. There are some good articles. I'd like to get this book Clark was telling me about.
It's translated into English by my great friend Schaeffer, who was a giant Panda man and had been over in
China. He's written a book this thick translated in English, hunting, and he's a real hunter. I've been with
him and he's visited me and everything. He's a wonderful guy. And according to C.H.G. Clark, who was a
pro-hunter for a long time, this is one of the best things he's seen. May cost you 60 bucks.

KB: You know, the majority of big game herds are in better shape now than they were say 50 or 80 years
ago. Do you feel that hunting is now endangering any particular species? Sport hunting now?

WS: No, well there might be certain places at certain times and of course you'd better exclude your
endangered species right off. I was a little disturbed by what Colin told Dick. He said that the sheep were
really dropping in numbers, the Stone sheep range were. They were, but you blame it on hikers. See they
harass them in a critical period of the year. I don't know. I'd have to think about that. But I think for the
most part charters, not counting poaching in Africa and things like that, I think most game departments try to
do their best to set a reasonable season and I don't see any sign of... Now I think it was important in Massachusetts when the hide of a bobcat, foxes went from $3 to $400 they made damn sure they have careful seasons on the trapping of these animals and that each animal be submitted for inspection. They just put the law right in. So I think when something like that happens... Now I happen to be of the opinion that leopards... they've made a great hue and cry about leopards. Leopards are on a threatened species. They're all over the damn world for goodness sakes.

KB: You know, I'd like to ask you. What value do you think hunting has for a person, because you're obviously a great hunter?

WS: Well, this is a long discussion probably, but I don't think you're going to have any gays hunting. I think there is a thrill, any way you look at it. The truth is, if you went hunting for an animal, like ruffed grouse that we have in the fall, you went every day and you missed every shot and you never got a grouse, you'd lose interest damn fast. The killing is part, don't let anyone tell you anything different. It is part but it isn't the sole purpose. I mean if I was hunting sheep and I was supposed to get eight sheep and I got one with a good [unclear] I'd be happy. I'd like to get more but I'd be happy. But if it's not a challenge and if it's not difficult, it's no particular thrill. But if you spend time getting into a place, now like this giant Panda. I'd never shoot another giant Panda, but I did get a thrill out of that one. I'm climbing that mountain for months, seen a lot of sign but never seen the animal.

KB: Did the thought ever cross your mind, "Dear Lord, what am I doing here?"

WS: Because nature's pretty rough. You know animals get killed in the world by other animals; it's pretty rough. They're all gonna... In some ways it may be better if they come to a violent end when they're younger than to die away like the deer lie down and freeze to death.
KB: I didn't quite mean that way. I meant like hunters almost push themselves to the point of punishment and yet they all seem to enjoy it.

WS: Oh yeah.

KB: That's the question I was asking. Have you ever wondered to yourself, why am I doing this?

WS: This knee, I'm not pushing myself to exhaustion anymore. Well, let's put it this way. I think if a person doesn't have that feeling. I think it's a genetic set-up. I can cite lots of examples. One is there's a Baltimore family that lives next to me, great family. Five boys. One boy, the younger boy, my Persia.

KB: What's his name?

WS: Barber. He's now at Corvallis, getting 3.9 average. He's writes in the newspaper, he organized the Lacrosse team and has scheduled games. He's been on summer jobs counting bald eagles, but anyway. He met me. He was 13. He said, "Thank God I've got a neighbor who likes hunting and fishing." He's just an ardent hunter and fisherman and very skillful, very good and that's all just within him until he met somebody who could give him some guidance. Another example is John Phillips' boys. One he took to Africa and he never could care less about hunting. Young Arthur's a hunter. You've got them right in the same family. That's got to be a genetic make-up and if you love it . . . And also many . . . as you look at the list of conservationists, many of these hunters, of course these professors like to tell you, hunting and fishing isn't enough. Well that's true; it's not enough. But it's often the spark that gets these guys going on conservation. That's what got me going.
KB: I'm glad you said that because I was going to ask you that question.

WS: Oh yes.

KB: Now I'll tell you. You said there wasn't much time left but I'd like to ask you one question that I usually try to end the interviews with. And that is, how do you think the Boone and Crockett Club can best continue to carry out its original purposes and retain its position of influence and prominence?

WS: Number one, I don't think it ever will be. It's long since gone by a period where it's of such influence and prominence. I think if we could get . . . There's nothing wrong with a lot of the members we've taken but I think we're in a weak position when we have 25 open memberships. That's a sign of decadence. I don't like that. I think men could be found with sufficient search, probably. Somebody's got to make it. But a lot of guys can't afford it these days. You take a guy like Batten. He runs a big machine company and does very well. The reason I didn't hunt sheep a lot more, I didn't have the dough to do it. I just got near as I could.

KB: Well, is there anything that you'd like to finish the interview with yourself?

WS: Well, I would say, to encourage the training of these Indians, as I call them, but there are certain men that I think would be particularly critical in selecting these people. We talk about it in the committee. I think Durwood Allen is good at that. He's had some very good men, and there are others I can think of. If Honneker, who's done our mountain lion work, he's now a unit leader, he'd be a good judge, he's a younger man. In other words, my feeling is that if you had a selective committee of pros then you could get the names down and give reasons why it should or should not be supported I think you might save yourself a
little grief. Now Fred would ask me right off, he'd say, "Who for example?" And I'm not gonna go out on a limb like that; I've been part of the decision in many cases.

KB: Well I thank you very much.

WS: Okay.

[End of interview]