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DH: This is Dan Hall, December 2, 1994, conducting an oral history interview with Tim Hixon in Houston, Texas. Tim, I'd like to start by asking you when and where you were born.

TH: I was born in Jacksonville, Florida, [full birth date restricted] 1937.

DH: Where did you get your education?

TH: Started off, of course, with school in Jacksonville grade school and such and then went up to the Hotchkiss School in Lakeville, Connecticut for the high school part of my education. After that I went to Washington and Lee where I did not finish and later finished college at Trinity University in San Antonio, Texas.

DH: Can you give me a brief rundown of your career at this point?

TH: Well, after I had a gap of a couple of years where I was in the army that was between Washington and Lee and Trinity University. I spent most of my army career, about two years, in Korea. I got back and my uncle asked me to move to San Antonio and work for the family company and I've worked for various
Hixon family companies since 1962 on, in various capacities and at various jobs. It's been a wide variety of experiences in the business world.

DH: Where did your interest in hunting and conservation come from?

TH: Hunting?

DH: Yes.

TH: I think I must have been born with it. I've always liked shooting. My grandfather had a farm outside of Jacksonville, Florida, and I'd do anything to get out there and spend time with them. I had an older brother who hunted. He started taking me out with him. I've always done it since age 10 or so.

DH: Tim, how did you first become aware of the Boone and Crockett organization?

TH: I think everybody hears about it the first time through the record book, probably. We get more visibility from the record book than any way. Several of my friends were members and asked me to join. I think that was in 1974.
DH: Who sponsored your membership in the Boone and Crockett?

TH: Jim Rickoff did it. I think he is no longer a member. I'm not sure about that. I know he hasn't been to a meeting in a hell of a long time.

DH: Is he an old friend of yours?

TH: Oh, yeah. Still is.

DH: Have you sponsored others to join the Boone and Crockett?

TH: A few. I'm not sure I remember them all. I know Mark Barrett was a recent one and I have a couple I'm sponsoring right now. I'd have to look at the list to see. There have been several.

DH: Is there anything in particular that you look for when you're thinking about sponsoring someone for the Boone and Crockett?

TH: The first thing is they must be hunters and to me they must have a proved, active demonstration of conservation. No exceptions to that. And not just, 'Well, I'm a member of Ducks
Unlimited." It's got to be a whole lot more than that, hands-on, active participation in conservation. It's very important, I think, for all of us.

DH: Do you think other members take as much interest in sponsorship as you do?

TH: I'm pretty sure that a lot of them don't. We have some members who have hardly ever been to a meeting and I think we had one case where one member resigned without having attended a meeting. That's pretty poor and that sponsor's not doing his job [inaudible].

DH: It's been suggested that the sponsor is responsible for taking the new members under his wing and showing them the ropes of the organization. Do you think that's true?

TH: Yeah. I think a lot of guys do that. That's the way it should be. I'm not sure how good I've been about that, to try and help the new people around, get them actively involved. There are only a handful of jobs, unfortunately, to go around the Club. Everybody can't be a hero.

DH: What committees have you served on?

TH: Basically just one. I was chairman of the
Conservation Committee for ten years and was on it for some years before that. That was a very, very satisfying experience for me being involved with that committee. To me it’s one of the most important committees the Club has. You get to correspond, read the works of young people who are doing research. Some of the guys whom we’ve sponsored and helped through schools have gone on and become real leaders in the conservation world and I’m proud of that and proud of our Club for doing it.

DH: What is the defined role of the Conservation Committee?

TH: When I was chairman of it, it was primarily doing the grants and aids. I think that should continue. The other role (and we haven’t done much of it recently.) we ought to be looking at it or putting on symposia. (I guess that’s the word for it) on bears, on sheep and deer or whatever it might be. We did several of those in years past. I think it might be time to revisit that. That’s a way of keeping our name out in front and getting some mileage for the club.

DH: Has the role of the Committee changed during your tenure?

TH: You could say pretty basically [inaudible] some things changed a little bit but all in all, it’s stayed fairly
DH: As you look back on your ten years on the Conservation Committee, is there any research that stands out as particularly memorable?

TH: Yes, there are several. The sheep studies done by Jack Pogg. He's now with the Craighead group. A remarkable basic work, stuff that will last forever. On the other side of that, on the non-game side of it, there are a bunch of hunters whose primary goal of big sheep or big elk or what-have-you, and we've also sponsored studies on coyotes. Very satisfying are the recent studies about Texas A and I College [inaudible] with Michael Twois (?) on the size of ocelots. I'm really proud of it.

DH: How does a hunting organization get involved in nongame research?

TH: It's just as important as anything we do; it's all part of the whole; I think it's the wise approach. A lot of the non-hunting organizations won't do this sort of thing. I think basically there are some of them just hate to see us do it because [chuckle] I think they like to think of us as just out to kill stuff and that ocelots matter and I personally sponsored studies on the Idaho ground squirrel [inaudible -- scientific name] on a ranch in Idaho. It's not so that we'll have more of them to hunt, that's
for sure.

DH: Is there a consensus among the organization that nongame research is as essential as big game research?

TH: I think you take that as individual cases and who's doing the research and what the type of research is. I wouldn't draw a line that one's more important than another. Part of it is simply who submits the grant and when, the timing of it.

DH: Jack Parker said in his interview yesterday that the conservation and records committees were the two main spokes of the organization. How do you feel about that statement?

TH: I talked to Jack a little bit about that last night. I agree with him. I think Jack neglected one item, too. Publishing some of the books we've published, other than the Record Book, are important also. This new Prentice Gray book, I think, is going to do very well for us. I think it's important.

DH: Why does the Boone and Crockett publish books?

TH: To preserve the history of hunting and our members.

DH: Can you tell me something about the procedure
that the Boone and Crockett goes through when they award the Sagamore Hill Award?

TH: There are really two ways of awarding that. One is for outstanding wildlife trophies and I haven’t been directly involved in that. I’ve got world’s record trophies and stuff to win a Sagamore Hill Award. As I said, I haven’t been too involved in that end of it. The other way to win one is outstanding service to the Club and I was involved in one of those when we awarded it to Bill Spencer two or three years ago I think it was. That’s strictly the nominating committee comes up with the names of the initial review of that and it’s submitted to the entire membership to be voted on.

DH: Can you tell me a little bit about the procedure when Bill got his?

TH: Well, we took it up in the nominating committee and everybody was saying, "Yes! Why didn’t we do it years ago?"

DH: Who’s on the nominating committee?

TH: The nominating committee has been traditionally made up of past presidents. When we gave it to Bill Spencer he was probably the member who really got the Club refocused on being more active and helped push the acquisition of the Theodore Roosevelt
Memorial Ranch. He kind of turned the Club around and got us more away from the fraternal organization that drank a lot. He got us out doing stuff. He was very positive.

DH: Were you there when the Award was presented to Bill at the ranch?

TH: No, I was not. I was there when we voted on it in Chicago. Bill, unfortunately, had some personal problems and wasn't able to be present when we voted on it at the meeting so we gave it to him the next chance.

DH: Did you play any role in the acquisition of the ranch?

TH: Yeah. [laughter] I played a role in it -- a financial role. I was a big proponent of doing it. As I said, I don't financially --

DH: Why that ranch?

TH: It just made sense on that front range. There were other ranches that had been brought under some conservation agreement or purchase of that nature such as the Nature Conservancy ranch at Pine View. The eastern front, to me, is a very important area to have some sort of protection on. You look all over the
West, you can always find a ranch, one that's prettier than the next, one's a better operating ranch than the next one, and just go around in circles on it. That one came along at the right time in the right place and we did it. At first we had been looking at ranches for a lot of years. All of a sudden we just stumbled onto one and said, "That's it. That's the right one. I happened to have the money today and might not have it tomorrow so we better do it."

DH: Were there other places that the Boone and Crockett had considered?

TH: Yeah; there were two or three others and I think -- if my memory serves me on it -- there were at least two more they got narrowed down to. I'm pretty sure one of them was the Front Range ranch and I can't remember about the third.

DH: How does the research of the ranch become relevant to someone, say, who's running a place out of the Midwest, the East Coast or down South? Or is that even a goal of the ranch?

TH: I don't know how that's going to shake out. Time will tell on that. I think what we have here is that in the East or the Midwest there isn't any public land to speak of. People aren't running cattle on public lands. Here, as you know, we're trying and I think accomplishing a demonstration that
wildlife and cattle can exist on private and public lands and graze public lands without harm to them and the same for [inaudible] How it's going to translate into any sort of management for the Midwest and the East, I'm not sure that's relevant. Might be. We'll see.

DH: What's your opinion on the former headquarters the Boone and Crockett had in Dumfries?

TH: The Dumfries place wasn't much. It was as bad as might be [chuckle] pretty terrible. We had a nice office there in Arlington for awhile. The rent drove us away. I had mixed feelings about moving from the East. I think basically we're doing the right thing with our office in Missoula, finally having roots. I know a lot of our history's been lost over the years and it'll never be seen again. Now we've got a home for our libraries and collections. We can put things back together again. I think it's going to be a great home for us there. We can have a major library and a major museum of hunting and a museum of memorabilia.

DH: Was it the general consensus to move to Missoula?


DH: What was the procedure that was followed to
select a city to move to?

TH: One of our members, Lowell Baier, went through various studies ad nauseam.

DH: On what cities?

TH: If I remember correctly, it got down to Boise, Cody and Missoula, then finally Cody and Missoula. Denver was mentioned a lot in the early days too because of airplane access. We finally picked Missoula because of the connection with the University primarily. Airplane access was perhaps slightly better than Cody. All of a sudden the train station appeared on the scene. We could get it. That's what it came down to. Lowell Baier deserves a lot of credit because he spent countless hours researching what city to move to. That was very thoroughly done.

DH: Was the old Milwaukee Depot the only choice that you were presented with in office space in Missoula?

TH: That was the only one I looked at. Others might have looked at other places. But once you saw that, why look further. [Chuckle] it was pretty special. I didn’t know I was going to have to pay so damned much. I’m sure glad we have it now. I just can’t imagine a more natural fit than that old train station and the Boone and Crockett Club.
DH: There is a fit.

TH: Yeah.

DH: You envision the Boone and Crockett ever leaving that train station?

TH: No. I don't want to say "never" about anything but I can't envision it.

DH: Do you think that the Boone and Crockett's big game record book contributes in any way to illegal hunting activities?

TH: It might. That's unfortunate. I'm not sure what you can do about that except a clear demonstration that we're not going to tolerate it in the book. I'm not certain when we've eliminated trophies from the book because of illegal activities. I'm not sure we get enough publicity on it to show people we're not going to stand for it. The stigma happens. I think the book's basically pretty plain. We've had some trouble, but I think those things have got to stop. It's a problem.

DH: Is there anything that you think that the Boone and Crockett could do to change the Record Book?
TH: What, to help eliminate the illegal hunting or just in general make it better?

DH: Make it better.

TH: Not really. I think it does a pretty good job the way it is. The more inclusive you are the better our sales are. I think it's a pretty good fit where it is.

DH: When did the national collection of heads and horns get moved to its current location?

TH: When? I guess it was ten, twelve, fifteen years ago, something like that. I can't remember who really was behind that, which member. However, we moved when we were with the New York Zoological Society. They were not being maintained properly. Most of them were not being displayed at all. They were stuck away in a back room someplace. I think again that for "fit" Cody was a natural fit and a very good place for them to be. It worked well with that museum.

DH: Have you seen the collection?

TH: Oh, yes. I think we'll be improving on that collection as time passes. [inaudible] naturally, I'd guess you'd go with leaving the number one trophy of each species, but that
isn't going to happen. Get the best of each species that you can and work up.

DH: Is it difficult to get donations into that collection?

TH: It depends. If you get a really first-class one, sure, nobody wants to part with those, but maybe try to get people to leave them to you in their will and we'll continue to work them.

DH: Do you find that the meetings that the Boone and Crockett holds are generally productive in terms of getting things accomplished?

TH: [long pause] Yeah. Insofar as the recordkeeping and other [inaudible] and conservation committee which was already talked about, those kind of things. I got a little worried, the last couple of years, there seems to be a whole lot of planning and I'm not sure what we're planning for. There are a lot of planning sessions and stuff. I'm not sure which way that's all pointed. I guess this will shake out and it'll be discussed some at this meeting.

DH: What were the meetings like when you first started?
TH: There weren't as many of them and they were a lot shorter and there were probably fewer people involved on the committees. Maybe this is healthier, having larger committees. The meetings are now staggered to where, for the most part, there aren't any overlapping so everybody kind of attends every meeting. There just isn't time in the day to go back to one day, where one attends several meetings. Everybody just can't attend every meeting. It's too many people and there are too many opinions given. Not the proper way to do things.

DH: Well, how were meetings conducted when you first started?

TH: Well, there was overlap on the committee meetings. We just had one day, sometimes half a day. Two or three committee meetings were necessary. It just seemed to go a lot faster. Now we're here for, let's see, all day Thursday, most of the day Friday and most of the day Saturday. You have two and a half or three days [for meetings].

DH: Has the location of the meeting ever been static or has it rotated around?

TH: Most of them rotated pretty good ... sort of quarterly meetings. The annual meeting has always been in New York, pretty much always. I think it's good they're moving around
the country. I don’t want to lose our traditional ties with the East and I’m trying to promote our going back to New York at least every three to five years. We do have a lot of ties there. It was a great thing to go to Theodore Roosevelt’s birthplace and have all of our committee meetings there and stuff. It’s a national monument on Twenty-seventh Street in New York City. It’s just a soul-stirring experience to be there. I hate to see us lose sight of it.

DH: Is there a general consensus in the organization that these ties are important to the organization?

TH: I think it’s fading. I think it’s kind of sad. We’ve got a whole lot of people from Texas now and perhaps they just don’t have that same feeling.

DH: How do you feel about Boone and Crockett’s Associate Member program?

TH: That was something I promoted. I think it’s a great program. I’d love to see it expanded and I think George Bettas has worked very hard on that. I think that program will grow. Hope it does.

DH: Did you have any troubles in promoting that
program to other members?

TH: No. I don't think so.

DH: It's generally well received?

TH: Yeah. I think so. There might be some guys who hate change of any sort but I'm not one of them. I like to see that.

DH: Does the Boone and Crockett ever become active in the political arena?

TH: Not really. I hoped we'd become more active during the Bush administration but nothing really happened on the political stuff. We had a couple of congressmen who've been members and also when you start lobbying and stuff, you have to be very careful because there's a fine line that charitable organizations have to walk to stay away from being called a lobbying group. The last thing we want to do is get in trouble with the IRS on something like that. We've avoided -- there's never been any kind of cash thing, donations politically. I think we're okay, and safe on that. It's really a hard line to draw.

DH: I want to ask you about the 1989 annual meeting, funding for the National Collection of Heads and Horns was
under debate. I have been told some rather interesting stories about Dr. "Red" Duke and how they managed to raise the money. Were you there?

TH: Yeah, but you’re going to have to refresh my memory. Oh, when he said something about "locking the doors". [laughter] [inaudible] I can’t remember where that meeting was. Chicago? I think that’s how it happened. He just went around and got it all. I think he got some of my money on that one too. [Chuckle]

DH: Is he an effective fundraiser?

TH: Yeah, I think he helped us an awful lot on some of that.

DH: How would you characterize his presidency in the organization?

TH: He brought attention to us because he’s a nationally known TV guy. I think "Red" was a very good president. He certainly brought a lot of color. In the state of Texas he’s really well-known here. I had forgotten about that "nineteen" thing. I can’t remember all the details on it. We got the job done.
DH: What does it take to serve as a president of Boone and Crockett?

TH: Oh, boy. I don't know. Number one would be a love of the organization and of its members and I think a desire to preserve the traditions of the Club. It was pretty tough for awhile there. We had a few lean years financially. Part of it was my doing, not paying enough attention to details. I think I helped bail us out. Paul Webster brought financial discipline to the organization which we sorely needed. There were about two years of troubled times financially and we worked our way through it. It's a stronger organization now because we did go through it.

DH: Has the Boone and Crockett ever had to discipline members for any reason?

TH: Yeah. There have been a couple of people who have been asked to leave. One was voted out for game law violations of some sort. That's something we won't tolerate. We're supposed to set an example. We're not going to have any infractions or appearances of infractions or any of that stuff.

DH: How are these kinds of issues handled at meetings?

TH: They're discussed openly. We try to keep it to
the Executive Committee level and hope it can be resolved there. I think for the most part they have been.

DH: Have these instances created hard feelings from many members?

TH: Not to my knowledge. There hasn’t been a problem at all that I know about.

DH: I’ve just about gone through the list of questions here that I have this morning. There are just a couple here to wrap up. What other conservation organizations do you belong to?

TH: All of them. [laughter] I was on the national board of the Nature Conservancy for seven or eight years, then a member of the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation almost since it started; the Foundation for North American Wild Sheep; Ducks Unlimited, and local organizations.

DH: How did the Boone and Crockett compare to the other organizations you belong to?

TH: Boone and Crockett is a club; it’s a fraternity. The other organizations are big fundraising entities that put their money into land acquisitions or research and that
sort of thing more than the Boone and Crockett does.

DH: Did you have an opportunity to do a lot of hunting with other Boone and Crockett members?

TH: Some. Not a lot. There're some I hunt with and some I don't. I used to hunt Africa an awful lot. I haven't hunted North America as much as a lot of these guys have. Perhaps that's the reason.

DH: Are there any of these hunts that stand out in your mind as being particularly memorable?

TH: Not particularly, not in North America but I had some awfully nice times. Had some African hunts that sure stand out.

DH: That runs through the list of questions that I brought with me this morning, Tim. Is there anything that I've overlooked that you'd like to add at this point in time?

TH: I'll think of something as soon as you walk out the door. [laughter] I wish I'd thought about that. I think you covered a lot of it. One thing that makes me very proud of the Boone and Crockett Club is how it has included people from
different walks of life and different jobs to include a lot of
government people that are in decisionmaking areas of the
government, Department of Interior, Department of Agriculture and
the Press, the professional people, the university people. On the
other side you’ve got what used to be the old Eastern establishment
guys who put up the money and ran the Club pretty much. It’s not
the Eastern establishment doing that anymore. There are a lot of
members of the Club who say, "Jesus! Let’s go back to the old way."
[laughter] Just another Texan! I was the first Texan to ever get
in the Boone and Crockett and I still feel like I’m one of the new
kids in it but I’m afraid to count now. There are a lot of guys in
Texas that are out doing stuff in the conservation world and
hunting a lot, and they put up money for conservation too. That’s
been traditional in the Club -- people with money put money into
this thing. Preserve it.

DH: It’s got a good track record.

TH: I think there’s a lot of growth ahead of us.
I wish we had a half a million dollars to finish off this building
in Missoula [chuckles] have our little museum and a library --
we’re one day closer to that.

DH: Well, Tim, I thank you for the interview.

[End of Tape]