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**Interviewee: Richard Borden**

**Interviewer: Gyongyver "Kitty" Beuchert**

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**Project: Boone and Crockett Club Oral History Project**

Gyongyver "Kitty" Beuchert: The following is an oral history interview with Richard Borden on March 6, 1977, at the Peachtree Plaza Hotel, Atlanta, Georgia, where he was attending an executive committee and a conservation committee meeting of the Boone and Crockett Club being held in conjunction with the 42nd North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference. The Interviewer is Gyongyver "Kitty" Beuchert, office administrator of the Boone and Crockett Club interviewing in behalf of the club.

Mr. Borden, could you give us a little bit of biographical background such as your birthdate and place of birth?

Richard Borden: Yes, I was born in Fall River, Massachusetts, in 1910. Lived on an island in the reservoir of the city of Fall River, became interested in the out of doors though trapping muskrats in the swamp behind the house. This interest continued and I first started shooting big game when I killed my first deer when I was 15 years old in Corbin Park in Newport, New Hampshire. I later became a member there. It was a park of eight miles long by four miles wide, so it wasn't shooting in any of the so-called "enclosures" that they talk about today. And that interest carried along, and then I met Bill Sheldon and became a great friend of his. We had hunted together in Corbin Park and then we organized an expedition, of which I was sort of the prime mover on, to collect for the U.S. National Museum in British Columbia. Just prior to that, actually, in the year 1930 we went to Banff, Alberta to test ourselves on bighorn. That was about a two week hunt up onto the Clearwater River and Sheldon and I were both fortunate enough to kill *Ovis canadensis* rams that were in the 42 inch curl area and were recorded in Prentiss Gray's first *Records of North American Big Game*. Then in 1931, to cast back to that time, we went into northern British Columbia with a pack string of 12 horses and a guide cook for 87 days and it was one of the most fabulous experiences in my life, and I think had a lot to do with where I went further in the field of conservation because we hunted alone. The guide cook stayed in camp and we covered approximately 200 miles from the Peace River up to the Profit River collecting eight sheep, two grizzly bear, two caribou, a moose, and about 150 small mammals and birds all of which went to the U.S. National Museum.

That was so successful that we decided, we were testing, and the museum was interested in what the southern boundary of the Stone's sheep was and we found and collected Stone's sheep on the Otter Tail River about 30 miles north of the Peace River. But they had no knowledge of where the Stone's sheep went south of the Peace River and where they might intermingle with the *canadensis* further down. So in the summer of 1932 we went to Prince Rupert, bought a canoe from a barber for 20 dollars, loaded our gear in and paddled down 200 miles from Summit Lake down through the Crooked River, the Pack and the Parsnip River to the confluence of the Parsnip

and the Finley and down the Peace River to Hudson's Hope. From there we picked up our outfit and went south into the mountains for about 40 days looking for the northern end of the canadensis range. We found and collected moose and grizzly but no sheep, and did collect 2 or 3 goats down there.

So that was the early, young man hunting as far as I was concerned and, of course, as far as Sheldon was concerned. See, in 1930 when I first went out with Billy, I was only 20 years old, and so those were fairly long expeditions. Just as historical fact of interest, the trip in 1931 out and back for 87 days cost us each 800 dollars. We rode on the Tourist Sleeper—the Canadian National Railroad Tourist Sleeper—from Montreal to Edmonton, then went up on the One Line Railroad to the end of steel and went in from there, so it was a magnificent hunting opportunity, and collecting, and we worked hard and we kept full journals of those expeditions. Some of the basis of my early interest was that I went to Harvard and majored in biology and in the course of doing that took courses in mammalogy and ornithology under Glover Allen who was a great professor. So I graduated in 1933 with a B.S. in science. I had taken naval science at college, so was an ensign in the Reserve in 1933. In 1941 I was called on active duty and we worked prior to Pearl Harbor in the Boston Navy Yard. As soon as Pearl Harbor took place, I requested transfer to sea duty, and was advised by my commanding officer that I'd spend the whole war in the Boston Navy Yard. It didn't work out that way (through friends that I knew in Washington that my father knew) and I was assigned to the battleship New York in February, 1941 for convoy duty across the Atlantic. I made two trips, one to Iceland and one to Scotland with troop transports as a qualified officer of the deck of the battleship New York. The on coming back, the New York was then assigned to the invasion of North Africa, in 1942, '43 I believe, and we went in on the invasion of North Africa, and I was number 4 turret officer and fired the main battery of the New York for the first time in anger against the French in North Africa.

On our way back to the United States I got orders to amphibious forces afloat and found out that I was a prospective commanding officer of an LST, a ship that I had never seen. To make a long story short, I took the LST 318—brand new 318 foot landing craft, landing ship / tank—out of the Brooklyn Navy Yard and across to the Mediterranean where we trained for the invasion of Sicily. Mine was a 6 davit LST with assault troop boats, 6 LCVP's on davits, so we were in on the invasion at H hour of Sicily landing approximately 165 assault troopers just at first light. We went then into a resupply echelon back and forth from Bizerte back to Sicily and then I volunteered for a task force 77 on the north coast of Sicily which was going to land troops behind Jerry's [German] lines on the north slope of Sicily as Patton pushed the Germans back. That was a busy time. We were bombed nine times by German planes operating from Italy and finally we were sunk, so I was returned to the United States and then assigned to amphibious forces as amphibious planning officer for a COM [commander] 7th fleet in Brisbane, Australia and spent the last year and a half down there in war plans for the invasion and continued expansion through New Guinea and up into the Philippines. Finally in 1945 I came back to the Naval War College and was at home for the first time for any length of period during the war.

One of the things I came out of the war with was the Bronze Star and the Purple Heart which was

the result of a wound when we were bombed and sunk on the north coast of Sicily.

GB: All right, could you tell us a little bit about your career and how you selected it?

RB: Yes, that's easy. After the war, having been overseas as much and away from home, I had been in the textile business which I liked, I liked manufacturing and the physical aspect of taking something, raw materials and refining them and passing them on and the whole production line, but I wondered if I wanted to stay in the textile business. I didn't think I could make up my mind in a hurry, and I've always been one that liked to work with my hands. I was always working in the shop building furniture and working with wood, so I took six months to decide what I was going to do while I worked in the shop building dining room tables and furniture for the house, sorting my thinking out. I finally decided that I wasn't going to go back into the textile business and I applied for a job with the National Audubon Society and I worked in New York for a year commuting back to Boston on weekends, [and] served in their membership department.

Then I met a friend of mine, who became a very good friend, David Aylward who was President of the National Wildlife Federation, and he asked me if I would consider coming on as the executive director of the National Wildlife Federation, which I did. So, I worked from their Boston office commuting to Washington quite frequently and served with the National Wildlife Federation for about a year and a half. Then when they decided to transfer all their Boston office to Washington, I decided I didn't want to go to Washington and I resigned. That was the time that I started my film company, Borden Productions.

In connection with working with my hands and being an upland bird hunter as well as a big game hunter, I had bought a second hand camera, a movie camera and a second-hand, six-inch telephoto lens which is six magnification. I wanted to try to photograph ruffed grouse. They're a very unpredictable subject and they're difficult to follow, so I built a camera gun in wood with an external sight and it handled just like a shotgun. Finally a friend of mine who was a lawyer said, you should patent it. So I patented it as the Borden Camera Gun. It has since been refined to a camera gun that weighs approximately 18 pounds and will run film from 24 frames a second to 500 frames a second and has influenced my ability to produce films in the wildlife area and [I] finally worked for Walt Disney and other people such as that.

GB: Thank you. What led you to become a member of the Boone and Crockett Club? How did you become interested in it? How did the progression develop?

RB: Well, that's quite simple because Bill Sheldon being the son of Charles Sheldon who was probably one of our most illustrious members in my opinion was taken in...whatever year, 1935, and we had talked to Tex Weems who was a member before we went to British Columbia as young fellows and so Billy Sheldon nominated me and Tex Weems seconded me, so I came in in 1938, and you see at that time I was 28 years old.

It was about at that time that the controversy over wolves in Mount McKinley National Park arose.

This was fundamentally my first exposure to the club and what sort of things we were involved in. In this particular instance there were two members, who should remain unnamed, [but] they were strongly advocating the club making strong representation to the National Park Service urging them to start a wolf control program in McKinley National Park because of the sudden and drastic decline in Dall sheep. Both Sheldon and I had enough biological background to know that this was an exercise in futility. It had two negative aspects. The first was that the Boone and Crockett Club shouldn't be asking the National Park Service to go against their fundamental policy of not controlling a National Park, which I endorse and will continue to endorse, and the second thing is that the decline in sheep had practically nothing to do with the wolves. The sheep had gone through two or three hard winters and had big winter losses and that happened to correspond with a time when the wolf packs were in pretty good shape. So it would have been a very foolish thing for us to do and I think would have lessened our prestige with anybody that ever heard of it. Fortunately this resolution was turned down

[Break in audio]

GB: Mr. Borden, in 1947 you wrote a letter to the executive committee urging them to reappoint a new conservation committee, do you remember that letter and what prompted you to write it?

RB: Yes, very distinctly. That was as a result of that wolf fiasco, and I felt that the club could get itself in an awkward position if we took off [on] a non-biological program such as this wolf control. I wrote a letter to the President and suggested that the conservation committee should be reconstituted and should have members on that were biologically able to evaluate some of these various projects that would be presented to us. It was a result of this letter that I was appointed chairman of the conservation committee in 1947.

GB: Thank you. Now before we go on further into the conservation committee, I would like to ask one question. What other conservation organizations have you belonged to and did they in anyway affect your activity in the club or was there a correlation?

RB: Yes, there was quite a distinct correlation. I was a director of the Massachusetts Audubon Society in Boston at about this time, and they asked me if I would serve as President, so I actually served as President of the Massachusetts Audubon Society for a period of 14 years. So this sort of collateral interest in wildlife conservation of course, helped support me and perhaps make me a somewhat better chairman of the Boone and Crockett Club Conservation Committee as well as serving on other conservation groups in my area.

GB: As you stated before, the conservation committee as we know it now was formed in 1947, and the members along with your chairmanship were Harold E. Anthony, T. Carrington Weems, Harold Coolidge and Archibald Roosevelt. Can you tell us about its formation and its original purposes, a little more than what you have?

RB: Yes, well, Harold Anthony was in the American Museum of Natural History and Tex Weems

had made collecting expeditions and had a good deal of biological background. This was actually a much smaller conservation committee than later developed, we have much larger committees now. But the main purpose of this was to screen proposals that came to the club involving requests for Club support, to be sure that we were, again, biologically literate, and knew what sort of programs to back and which ones we should turn down.

GB: Was the game preservation committee the forerunner of the conservation committee as we know it now? I know this was a little before your time, but I thought that maybe you would remember the progression.

RB: Well I believe it was before my time, but I believe that the game preservation committee had a connotation of not hunting to a certain extent and at this period conservation as we now understand it, where it includes utilization, was coming to the fore. I think that's the main reason for the name being changed from game preservation to conservation committee.

GB: In June and September of 1957, the reconstituted conservation committee held a meeting to discuss the entire field of conservation of wildlife, forests, National Parks, and other wilderness preserves and particularly the pending legislation affecting these topics. So one by one I'd like to go through the topics that were discussed and see if you have anything that you would tell us about them. One was the National Game Preserves in Alaska when it first joined the Union.

RB: I remember some of the discussion of that, and of course there are these vast lands up there in Alaska, and we were concerned that as Alaska developed that parks and forests and national wildlife refuges be created at that time when these areas were easily acquired.

GB: The next one was Dinosaur National Monument.

RB: I only remember sort of vaguely about that. I know it was in connection with an Army Engineer dam that would have flooded the whole Dinosaur National Park out and like everything else, this wasn't big game, but the club was against the desecration of a National Park.

GB: The Recreation Survey Bill.

RB: I remember very little about that.

GB: The Club endorsed the establishment of proposed Arctic Wildlife Refuge having to do with Alaska North Brooks Range.

RB: Yes, I remember that. Of course that was this great big area on the north slope of Alaska, the Brooks Range, and Alaska was beginning to be developed, and we felt at that time that it was most important that a large area be set aside that would have bought an equivalent area in Canada, and we gave our good offices in support to that.

GB: The threat to polar bears on the edge of the Alaskan ice pack was discussed.

RB: Yes, that's the subject that came up over and over again, and of course I think, number one, the number of polar bears being brought in was quite large and the idea of fair chase was absolutely wanting—where they fly out on the ice and land and kill a polar bear. So the Boone and Crockett Club has been consistently against that as they should have been. In the course of this, the big game competition committee decided that the polar bear should be taken off its list which was exactly the right thing to do because then the temptation to go out and get these bears and get them in the competition was removed.

GB: Dillon Ripley discussed the status of four threatened species of birds at this meeting. Do you remember?

RB: I remember that, yes. I don't remember all the birds, but the one I remember in particular was the whooping crane, and he felt, and I supported him very strongly that the whooping crane should be protected in more ways than just the Aransas Wildlife Refuge in Texas. We felt that the cranes should be brought into captivity to try to create a captive flock which would be a hedge against any natural calamity that might decimate the wild birds. Incidentally that has recently worked through the 17 cranes that Patuxant Research Endangered Species Laboratory, there are 59 cranes now at Aransas where, when I first went there 30 years ago, there were 24; and there are 8 young whooping cranes that have been raised by sandhill cranes at Grays Lake National Wildlife Refuge in Idaho that have migrated down to New Mexico and are wintering in New Mexico which gives us two separate flocks and a good hedge against a calamity.

GB: What did the club have to do with the following two things—and you can take them separately: the establishment of the National Bison Range and the establishment of Mt. McKinley National Park?

RB: The Bison Range, of course, was well before my time, but the club was very active in preserving and conserving the bison. I don't know the actual details about the creation of the bison range, but I know quite a little about Mt. McKinley National Park. Again, through my association with Bill Sheldon and my admiration for his father. It was nearly a single handed effort on the part of Charles Sheldon who went there, in I believe, 1903, built a cabin and spent the winter and, of course, wrote the book, *The Wilderness of Denali*. It was Sheldon's continued effort as conservation chairman of the Boone and Crockett Club that finally accomplished the creation of McKinley National Park, a magnificent area! The Club doesn't need to be modest, they should take the major credit for the creation of this wonderful area.

GB: The bighorn sheep transplant project was undertaken by the club in 1954, and I would like you to tell us the details about that.

RB: Yes, now that's one I remember quite a lot about. I was going to a North American Wildlife conference I believe it was in San Antonio and I was talking to Billy Sheldon and Vic Cahalain (?)

who was the chief biologist for the Park Service and we got discussing desert bighorn sheep and the fact that there were no desert bighorns any longer in Texas. Texas used to have a desert bighorn population but wool growers and sheep overran the range of the Texas desert sheep and they were shot off and so finally Texas had no desert sheep whatsoever. So, we talked over the idea, Billy Sheldon and Vic Cahalain and myself, I believe in a plane, the idea of transplanting sheep from Arizona to Texas and what would be the difficulties and whether it was feasible or not. Well, to make a long story short, I talked to Clarence Cottam who was then Assistant Director of the Fish and Wildlife Service, of course a Boone and Crockett Club member, and [Clinton] "Pink" Gutermuth, and we developed it to such an extent that the club asked me to go to make an inspection trip to Texas, down to the Big Bend National Park. We were joined by Caleb Glasner of the Texas Game, Fish and Oyster Commission and flew first to Yuma, Arizona to look at the Kofa Game Range which would be the source of desert big horn, and then back to Big Bend and we climbed up into the Chisos Mountains to look at the range and see whether we thought it would be suitable. Bear in mind now, we had Cahalain who was the chief biologist for the Park Service and Clarence Cottam who is probably the most knowledgeable field biologist that I've ever gone abroad with.

In this connection I could tell a little anecdote that is interesting because I was a great admirer of Clarence. He was a Mormon and a gentleman. Just before we took off, he helped his wife move a damn refrigerator and strained his back and he was wearing a woman's corset on this particular trip. When we got down in to the Big Bend to climb up from the jeep up to look at the upper range—he had low Navy shoes on—I said, "Clarence, how the hell are you going to climb up there with those sort of shoes and a bad back and the corset?"

He said "I'll cut myself a letchagia (?) cane." So Clarence went over and cut a nice, tough letchagia [?] cane, and he and I were actually the only ones that climbed up to the upper slope. The others stayed down below.

So, what happened to continue with the transplant program, Pink Gutermuth, with his usual enthusiasm and knowledge of how to do things, got it set up as a P.R. project, a Pittman-Robertson project which was a collaborate effort between the Arizona Fish and Game Department, the Texas Game Fish and Oyster Commission, the Wildlife Management Institute, the Park Service and the Boone and Crockett Club. It finally was funded to approximately 40,000 dollars. We all knew that you couldn't turn these transplanted sheep loose anywhere without protecting them for a while, so an enclosure was built by the Texas Game Department of approximately one square mile in the Black Cat Game Management Area which was 10 or 15 miles from Big Bend. There was difficulty of trapping sheep at the water holes in Arizona, and then they had to be flown very quickly because they had to trap them in the summer when it was hot and they were forced to [go to] water. That's a hot time to handle animals. I think we lost two and finally we got two rams and three ewes over to this enclosure and those were kept in this enclosure for several years. As of now there are some 57 sheep and the gates to the enclosures have been open for a natural release of quite a few of these sheep with a hope that they will migrate back into the Big Bend Park.

There was the question of predator control involved in that. The Park Service would not go in to mountain lion control. We completely accepted their position on that and after these sheep became acclimated in the enclosure, and given the general release, then they would have to go back and survive whatever predator problem they may have in the Park. But this was the first time that the desert mountain sheep had been in Texas since approximately 1910.

GB: The record shows that this program was very successful in the long run, right?

RB: Yes, it's definitely successful in that they have a viable sheep population in Texas now and it looks as if these sheep will move back into the park.

GB: Somewhat earlier in this project we'd just been discussing, somewhere around the 1950's, the club became very concerned about the situation of the key deer. Can you tell us what they did about it?

RB: Yes. I remember that very well. Jim Silver, who was the regional director in Atlanta for the Fish and Wildlife Service, was the first one to sound the alarm that Cubans were coming over in boats and running key deer on Big Pine Island.

[End of Tape 1, Side A]



[Tape 1, Side B]

RB: The Cubans had been coming over in boats with dogs and hunting and chasing down and shooting in the water these small whitetail deer on Big Pine Key in the Florida Chain. Jim Silver became very alarmed, that alarm passed to Clarence Cottam who was then Assistant Director of the Fish and Wildlife Service, Clarence passed it on to me as chairman of the conservation committee of the Boone and Crockett Club, and I thought this was an ideal project for the club to involve itself in. The immediate need was for a warden to protect this area against this incursion of poaching. In the course of this I happened to be working then for the National Wildlife Federation in Washington as Executive Director, and I went to see a friend of mine, Chauncy Stillman [?] who knew nothing or could care less really about big game. But I mentioned this key deer problem in the course of dinner one evening and he said, "Dick, if this is a project that you think is a good one, I'm writing you a check right now for 1,000 dollars."

So I went back reinforced to the conservation committee with 1,000 dollars as lead money and the conservation committee discussed it and the club approved it, the executive committee approved it, and we took on the salary and the travel expense of Jim Watson who was the warden. He lived right out in the Florida Keys and protected these deer for a period of about 2 or 3 years under our aegis. Then the National Wildlife Federation got interested and they carried on the patrol. Meanwhile the federal government, the Fish and Wildlife Service, were trying to acquire portions of Big Pine Key. Pink Gutermuth and the North American Wildlife Foundation raised money and bought a big portion of Big Pine Key. Then they also needed Howe Key, which was an adjacent attached key that the deer used, so the Boone and Crockett Club helped with that. I think that Fair Osborn contributed also. Then to make a long story short, some seven or eight years later it was created as the Key Deer National Wildlife Refuge which exists now.

[Break in audio]

There were some 24 key deer when we started and I think the present population is estimated to be about 500. Again, I think this was an area where the club was using its good offices effectively, because we were protecting and giving habitat refuge for one of our big game species.

GB: All right, in 1962, the club did a study called "The Sole Study on Wild Burro and Desert Sheep".

RB: Yes, I remember that. Lyle Sole was a friend of mine. He was the cooperative wildlife research unit leader at the University of Arizona, and I had gotten to know him through waterfowl biology. He had this study to see what the competition was between farrow burros and wild horses as opposed to sheep. What he discovered and wanted to research was that these burros would use the same watering holes as the sheep and, of course, they not only grazed in the area of the water hole, but they also urinated all around the water hole and made it so unsavory that the sheep wouldn't drink there. The Club, having been involved with the desert sheep transplant, felt it was important that we learn more about how important it might be to control burros in an area of the desert where sheep were sharing the same pot holes, the same forage and the same drinking hole.

Of course, I like to use a phrase that Roger Peterson told me once. He said, "Sometimes you're dealing with biological illiterates," and when you get into an emotional program about controlling little horses or burros or wild horses, all these human emotions flow forward and biology goes down the chute. Burros are not native and horses are not native and the thought that we should let these compete with our indigenous wildlife is ridiculous in my opinion and control is absolutely the right way to do it and get the emotions out of it.

GB: Also in 1962, the club supported the Craighead grizzly bear study in Montana and you were very involved in that –

RB: Yes, yes, I was chairman, again, of the conservation committee off and on for I don't remember how many years, some 20-25 years, and at that time John Craighead had interested the National Geographic Society in underwriting part of a study on grizzly bears. He and his brother Frank were both friends of mine and I had admired them through their whole career and I felt, as did many other members of the conservation committee, that here was one of the finest examples of big game, a grizzly in Yellowstone Park where they could be carefully studied. So it wasn't hard at all to sell the conservation committee on underwriting John and Frank Craighead's bear study which extended over a period, I believe, of four or five years, and then when our support was no longer needed, was carried on and it is one of the finest examples of conscientious field research into the habits and behavior of a big game animal that's ever been done.

GB: Incidentally, this brings a question that we haven't discussed to my mind. Just for the record I'd like to get it in. The Club very often started a project or started interest in something that was necessary, funded the beginning of it, and then from that point on other people picked it up, isn't that true?

RB: Well, that's what we always felt we had to do because the club's finances couldn't undertake some of these more expensive research projects and we considered ourselves a catalyst. As a matter of fact, [in] the desert sheep transplant, we were a catalyst. We put up 1,000 dollars, I believe, at one time, and beyond that it ran on under the aegis of others, and the same thing with the Craighead grizzly bear study, there were others that picked it up. So we like to feel that we sort of led in and got the thing underway and then due to our own limited resources, we would withdraw but these programs would be continued.

GB: Also in 1962, the "Predator / Prey Study" by Vic Cahalain was undertaken by the club.

RB: Yes, of course the matter of predator/prey relationship is also an inflammatory one and not always well understood, and Vic Cahalain who was a well-trained field biologist was asked to do the study. As I remember we covered the mountain lion and the wolf and maybe some other species of animal and Vic pulled all together, all the literature that there was, and tried to get for us a status report of how many wolves there were in the lower 48. Also, mountain lions were being bountied at that time by the federal government and by the state and we wanted to see

what this bounty system was doing to the lion population. It was a good but not extensive study.

GB: Changing the subject a little from conservation, can you tell us about the Francis T. Colby Room at the Boston Museum of Science?

RB: Yes, being a Bostonian, I do know quite a little bit about that. Frannie Colby was a rip-roaring bachelor had acquired a certain amount of affluence and had spent quite a lot of time hunting in Africa and he was one of the noisiest members, along with Archie Roosevelt, at most of our dinners. And Alfie Ely. When he [Colby] died, he had about a million and a half dollars, and in his will he cited the Museum of Science in Boston as the recipient of these funds. But, if they did not carry out his wishes, which was to move his gun room from the North Shore—I believe it was in Hamilton—and recreate it in the office, that they couldn't get this million bucks. So you can be damn sure that the Museum of Science saw fit to move it in.

Incidentally the director of the Museum of Science is a classmate of mine, Brad Washburn, and Brad moved it in, sure as Hell, and moved it in just the way it was. But in Frank Colby's will, he also stated that if the Museum didn't handle it right, that all this million dollars would go to us. That scared Brad Washburn, so he handled it right. And another condition that was set by Colby was that his gun collection would be in the gun rack in his gun room in the museum, and if any regular member of the Boone and Crockett Club wanted to use his rifles, all they had to do was go in and take one. So I remind Brad Washburn, not infrequently, that he'd better keep them oiled up.

In this connection, of course, I was a member of the Board of Trustees of the Museum of Science, so I was a little on the inside on this thing from both ends. But it's a fine museum and it's carrying out Colby's wishes.

GB: The next topic I'd like you to cover is the Rampart Dam Study.

RB: I can cover that briefly. This was the idea of damming the Yukon River and creating a lake that I think was something like 800 miles long and flooding all the lowlands of the Yukon. The Club's idea—not mine alone—the conservation committee and everybody else in the club, thought in order to head off the legislation that would permit the engineers to go ahead and do it, that we should make a study to head it off. Pink Gutermuth sort of spearheaded that, and I believe the club raised 15,000 dollars right off the bat, and of course, there was a case where, again, as a catalyst, we headed off something that could have been a very bad project. We put up money in a hurry to get the study made and to show some of the side effects that would be so unwelcome from such a dam.

GB: Well one of the reasons why this was unfeasible—I'd like to check this if this is true—wasn't this lake going to be built on the permafrost area where in fact the lake would be frozen over most of the year?

RB: Yes, I think it was and it's an extremely cold area to be talking about hydroelectric which they

were talking then, and the use of hydroelectric in Alaska is so limited. It was just a big government boondoggle, and fortunately we were able to head it off or be one of the groups that helped head it off.

GB: In a conservation committee meeting that was held in Washington in 1968, Maurice Hornocker's study of the mountain lion was discussed. Can you tell us about that?

RB: Yes, having been involved with the Craighead brothers and having as much admiration as the club and the conservation committee had, when Maurice Hornocker's study came to my desk, the first thing I did was to call up John Craighead because Hornocker had worked under Craigheads on the grizzly bear study. I asked John, I said, "John, what sort of a fellow is this Maurice Hornocker?"

He said, "He's an excellent field researcher and if the club can underwrite it or help it, I think it would be excellent." So, it was not difficult at all to get the conservation committee's approval for the early underwriting of Hornocker. He was receiving support from other conservation groups, but I think we were the first one, and we supported him for, 3 or 4 years, perhaps up to 4,500 dollars, so it kept him going. I talked to Maurice last night here in the hotel and he said that the Boone and Crockett Club deserved the credit for giving him his first impetus into his whole life work in research. The Wolverine Study is a tough one because it's a wild, wide ranging animal and he's doing a fine job. Again, the club showed its ability to work down the level from big game to some of the smaller predator scavengers.

GB: Now, just getting back one moment to the mountain lion, wasn't—

[Break in audio]

RB: In discussing Hornocker, I drifted on into the wolverine study which came after the mountain lion study. I was chairman of the committee at the beginning of both of these projects, and the mountain lion study that he conducted in northern Idaho was a superb study and ended up in a monograph, articles in the National Geographic, and so forth. As a by-product of this the big game competition committee became involved and refused to measure a mountain lion skull that was taken in any state in which the mountain lion was being bountied. So, indirectly, as a result of our efforts, the mountain lion has been reconstituted as a game animal and I believe at the present time there is no state whatsoever that allows them to be bountied. They have to be considered as a game animal, which is proper.

GB: Could you mention some of the great men in the club with whom you've had the opportunity to work and maybe relate a little bit about them?

RB: Yes, I can. I've mentioned Clarence Cottam, and again, a gentleman. I don't know if he ever hunted in his life. He certainly collected specimens off and on. But he was the most honest, straightforward man you could possibly ask to work with in any endeavor whatsoever, and to go afield with him, he could identify every bird, mammal, every plant, flower, everything he saw, it

was a liberal education, even using his " letchagia " cane.

Then a fellow of quite a different caste that I admired was Fair Osborn. He was president of the Conservation Foundation and also head of the New York Zoological Society, and I can remember many meetings where, as chairman of the conservation committee, I'd come in with some project and we'd sit around and chat and it could be the Craigheads or Hornocker and Fair would say, "Well, how much is this going to cost, Dick?"

I'd say, "Oh, I don't know. Maybe 3,000 or 4,000 dollars."

He'd say, "Well, count us in for a 1,000 dollars."

Those days, when these projects could be cracked right up, another man I have to salute, of course, is [Ira N.] Gabrielson, who is called "Mr. Conservation". He's a broad-gauged, wonderful man that served down throughout the years, encouraging young men in the field and a thoroughly competent administrator.

And Pink as Vice President is unique. Pink was given the reputation of talking abundantly, which he did, but most of the time he was talking he knew what the Hell he was talking about, which is important, and was a very energetic supporter of all our conservation projects and the Wildlife Management Institute supported this along with the Zoological Society and the Conservation Foundation on many of these projects.

GB: There were two men that come to my mind that seem to have supported many of the projects personally through their own means. One was Dick Mellon and the other DeForest Grant and in fact, DeForest Grant left quite a bit of money as a bequest to the club. Could you explain some of that?

RB: Yes, I'll skip over Dick Mellon because he was able to support us any time we called on him and we called on him very sparingly which I think was right. Most of his interest was with the big game competition and he supported that very well and consistently.

DeForest Grant, I was very impressed by him as a young member in the club, lovely old gentleman, and he actually was the man that was most interested in the Atlantic Salmon Study and put up 1,000 dollars right away to get that going. But while he was still alive, he wanted to help the club in memory of his brother Madison Grant who was president of the club when I came in in 1938, and he gave the club 90,000-odd dollars. I remember talking with him personally about it and he said, "Dick, I like what the conservation committee is doing. I want you and the club to realize that this money can be used in any way for any project at any time you see fit." He said, "If you see a big project, [and] you want to use it all on one project, go ahead." He said, "I don't want it just tucked away in securities and try to live off the income. This money is earmarked entirely for conservation, in any way the conservation committee and the executive committee decide." One thing he did say was that none of it could ever be used on the big game competition.

GB: Okay, can you tell me a little bit about how the club came to have written and published *Crusade for Wildlife*, by James Trefethen?

RB: Yes. The executive committee decided under (unintelligible) and Dick as president that they should have a history of the club. This is a major operation to create a book about an organization such as the Boone and Crockett Club. After a couple of false starts where money was invested to research the project, and the writer was expensive, the thing started to bog down. At one of the executive committee meetings, I said, "Well, this is a little like a military engagement, we've been thrown back on the first assault of the battlements. Let's regroup and try again."

They said, "Okay, you're chairman of the history committee." I knew Jim Trefethen, and asked him if he would research it and do the writing. He said he would, and he was an excellent researcher and writer. We got Bob Hines of the Fish and Wildlife Service to do the black and white illustrations, and the frontispiece color picture is my Carl Rungius (?) stone sheep oil painting.

GB: In 1937, which was a little bit before you joined the club, the executive committee voted 10,000 dollars to be used to prepare an Alaskan brown bear group in the new North American Hall of the American Museum. How did the club become interested in this project, and did the members donate trophy animals?

RB: Yes, it was very logical, actually. The American Museum of Natural History was creating this Theodore Roosevelt Hall of North American mammals and big game, and with all the overlap there was between Boone and Crockett Club members and the American Museum of Natural History, it was easy to see that the club would volunteer to take on one of the groups and underwrite it. So, Frank Colby was the one that went to Alaska to collect this big brown bear group. This was not unusual, of course, for Boone and Crockett Club members to collect for museums. Sheldon and I collected some 150-odd in northern British Columbia, and many other members [collected also], so we were always interested not only going afield to hunt, but to collect and have the specimens serve scientific purpose, not just adorn walls. In this connection, also, I was a trustee of the American Museum of Natural History, so it wasn't illogical that we'd have a further tie-in.

GB: This leads me naturally into my next question. From the very beginning, most of the club members have held a high ranking position or several high ranking positions in other conservation organizations also, so that at any given Boone and Crockett Club meeting, many other organizations are also represented. Do you feel that this is an important factor in the strength and effectiveness of the club?

RB: Absolutely. As we've discussed so far today, you can see when the Wildlife Management Institute, the Conservation Foundation, the New York Zoological Society, even the Audubon Society, and the Sheldon Antelope Refuge, give you a mix of those people all meeting under the good fellowship of a club like the Boone and Crockett Club, it's quite easy to pull support and technical information from these diverse organizations. Without them we'd be nothing but a

bunch of straight big game hunters, and that wouldn't amount to very much.

GB: In November, 1948, a special committee was appointed to study the problem of strengthening the club to its full membership. Now, 30 years later, the club seems to have the same problem. What do you think should be done to attract new members of the right caliber?

RB: That's the 64-dollar question anybody asks, because in the early days, to try to bring the club up to full membership, they were searching for young qualified men, and in this day and age, it's a little hard to find young men that have got the background in the field of hunting and also biology, hopefully, that could afford to be members of the club. But the club, in order to survive, has got to attract the type of men that historically have served in advancing wildlife conservation, not in the broad area, but principally big game. I can remember time and time again trying to keep us on the track towards supporting programs that would be directly involved with big game. We can't cover the whole waterfront, and big game is our primary responsibility and area where we can function, I believe. Now as far as getting members is concerned, we know we want a broad geographical distribution, with Bob Reeve up in Alaska and fellows on the West Coast. It's not easy, but if the club is going to continue to be viable, they've got to get men, fairly big, broad-gauged men that will become members and will work in the vineyards of the programs of conservation, and I think the club's future is going to rise or fall with the conservation aspect more than any competition aspect.

GB: Why have there been so many resignations just recently?

RB: Well, of course, that all spins out from Douglas Burden's letter of protest about having the big game competition go to NRA and I respect a lot of the position Douglas Burden took, but on the other hand, I did not respect the fact that he was sitting outside the greenhouse throwing rocks at it and he'd never been inside working and getting hot and sweaty. So that was the weakest part of his position. But I never felt that the big game competition had any real conservation aspect to it. It's a fine operation for those—and I'm also interested, I'm in the book—who want to shoot a head and have it compared to something else, but the idea that any species of big game is improved by having a competition to measure its head is extremely doubtful. I think it's soft ground, and we know that there are instances where it can have a very detrimental effect. In the Scottish red deer herds, the big heads are not taken. So in my own personal opinion, and this is shared by probably the majority of the Boone and Crockett Club members, I would feel that the big game competition should be delivered to the NRA lock, stock and barrel. I'd just as soon see our identification with it gradually disappear and be eliminated. Then you raise the question: Well, who's going to carry on the records and will they do it legitimately? As far as I'm concerned, amen. You can't control it, but let's disassociate ourselves from it. It served a very useful purpose when it was started back under Prentiss Gray, there was nothing like it and it was a chance to sort of compare head sizes and so forth and then it blew up to such a degree now that men go afield and will shoot illegally to try to get in the book and it nauseates me.

GB: Well, there's just one thing that I'd like to ask you on that subject, don't you feel that by its association, the Boone and Crockett Club has helped to control the integrity of the program?

RB: Oh absolutely, yes, and I think it's easily argued, if we pull out, we have friends in the NRA and so forth, will they do it legitimately and well? I would hope so, but as a major project of the club, I don't believe we should hold our identification as closely as some of the members would like to.

GB: Well, then again the question arises, the records keeping program is one of the important things that has made the Boone and Crockett Club a well-known club among the area of hunter and sportsman. Many of its prominent members have resigned because they feel the club should no longer be associated with the Records. What could take its place to keep the club as a unique club, separate from just another conservation organization?

RB: I don't know. I think it can be unique in its dedication to the conservation of big game and actually, there's a reverse English to this big game competition publicity that we get, because you say, that's how the club has become well-known. The Club has served its greatest purpose when it was little known. A group of hunting sportsmen, great camaraderie and geniality, able to implement various projects on big game -- you don't need a lot of publicity about that, you get the job done. This being nationally known for a small club of 100 men in New York is probably more of a disadvantage than an advantage. If they come and want to join, how the Hell are you going to take a whole bunch of the fellows from the outside?

GB: Should the Boone and Crockett Club be involved in trophy hunting in today's conservation minded world?

[End of Tape 1, Side B]



[Tape 2, Side A]

RB: Yes, I think so. After all big game is being killed. We're a big game club. We don't need to apologize for trying to kill a large animal. I think the thing I struggle with the most is the competition aspect whereby we keep records and award people for going out and getting a big head. That encourages all the undesirable aspects of real fair chase and what not and my feeling, very distinctly, is that the competition has served its purpose. We should divorce ourselves from it gradually. I wouldn't cut our identification with it right off, but I would certainly drift away from it and get back into conservation which this is definitely not. As hunters we don't need to be ashamed of killing a big head, but let's not run a competition to award those that happen to do so.

GB: Could you elaborate a little on the role of the hunter in conservation?

RB: Yes. I think I can. Of course, the hunters have been the back bone of conservation and a lot of people on the outside say, "Well, the hunters only interest in conservation is so you have more to shoot." That's unadulterated hogwash. As far as the hunter is concerned, he has the real gut feeling about the out of doors and the wild inhabitants thereof. Down through the whole records of conservation, the hunters have been the primary supporters—the underwriters financially, the whole works. Hunting and conservation are not incompatible at all. There is a harvestable crop. It can be removed if you know how much can be removed and you don't degrade or debase or lessen the survivability of the remainder.

GB: Do you feel that it's a fact that the hunters very often are the ones that get a gauge or picture of what is happening out there, because they're actively involved in the outdoor world?

RB: Yes, it's not academic with them. They're up before daylight and out and involved, and they're participants, and when you deal with people that are participants and have a gut feeling about something, you can activate them to do something more than satisfy their particular impulse to kill a certain species. I think that the present trend of sort of down-grading a hunter and that sportsmanship is a sad business, and I think it can be corrected. But it only can be corrected by our policing our own ranks and get the goon hunters out of the field, because any group is bound to have some sour apples in it and you better get them out before they contaminate the whole barrel.

GB: Do you feel that the conservation committee today is as active and effective as in years past in regards to importance and scope of issues?

RB: It's a little hard to answer that. I remember it over a very long and extended period of time, and I think we probably had more opportunities during my tenure than may be available now. There are many more organizations in the field serving the function that we did in earlier days. However, I think that, again, that the conservation aspect of the club's activity is the most important one of all, and I think the club is going to ride or fall on what it's able to contribute in the area of conservation.

I think I'd like to finally say a little bit about how that was done in the old days—perhaps more easily than now—where you'd get a group of men together and calmly discuss something, and you'd say, "Gee, we think this is a pretty good project."

They'd say, "I sure as hell agree with you." It would be underwritten then and away we'd go! Being chairman of the conservation committee is not an easy job because you can't circularize every member of the committee with every proposal that comes in, you'd have to be doing nothing else, so the chairman of the conservation committee has to take a good deal of initiative and the other members of the club better have confidence in him or fire him out.

GB: Are there areas of conservation that the club should become more active in at the present time, do you think?

RB: I don't think so. I think, again, I'd like to keep our sites, I think our sites should be narrowed to big game. You can wander off into the shrubbery and get involved in whooping crane and salmon and whatnot. We should consider ourselves the little self-appointed custodians of big game in North America, not all over the world, just North America, and there will be opportunities to make a contribution through the years ahead, but we've got to be prepared and organized to take advantage of those opportunities, and that can only be accomplished through a strong conservation committee that has the support of the executive committee.

GB: What do you think of the species workshops that the club is starting to support?

RB: I think they are excellent. I think they are excellent because they're contributing to the knowledge and getting it in a form that it can be used on individual species like the sheep and the bear, and I think they're very worthwhile projects that should get the financial support of the club wherever we can do it.

GB: What do you feel were the true original purposes of the club? Was it formed more as a social club in the beginning or was it meant to be a very powerful group of individuals who could really effect the direction of conservation?

RB: No. I think, from my understanding of the history, Teddy Roosevelt started it as nothing more than a social club of compatible big game hunters. This was when he was an assemblyman in New York. Then he expanded on and became President, and with him came a lot more clout for the club and so the club just evolved like Topsy from just a fraternity of hunting sportsman with a lot of camaraderie into an organization that packed a certain amount of clout which I think we still do.

GB: How can the Boone and Crockett Club best continue to carry out its original purposes and retain its position of influence and prominence?

RB: Well number one, you've got to keep a flow of good members coming in, men that are

qualified and knowledgeable and able to not only give some money but time. That's a hard process, we know it, we have watched it over the years, but we can continue in the field of big game conservation, which I've emphasized all the way along. I think if we don't do that successfully that it will finally lose its effectiveness and then may have to slip out of the scene.

[End of Interview]