

**Boone and Crockett Oral History Project**

**OH 297-40 and OH 297-41**

**Interviewee: William Searle**

**Interviewer: Dan Hall**

**June 25,1994**

Dan Hall: This is Saturday, June 25, 1994. This is Dan Hall. We're going to do an oral history interview with Bill Searle today. We're at the Theodore Roosevelt Memorial ranch outside of Dupuyer. Bill, I'd like to begin the interview by asking you when and where you were born.

William Searle: I was born on March 4, 1928 in Evanston, Illinois.

DH: Tell me a little bit about your family.

WS: Sally and I have three girls who are married and have children. We have nine grandchildren. My three girls, just because they followed my wife and myself around are enthusiastic and active fishermen and hunters, and so their spouses and their children have fallen along in those lines, too.

DH: Your mother and father?

WS: My mother and father did some, my father did quite a bit of hunting, and my mother did some shooting. My father was active in big game hunting just at the beginning of the war, 1939-40, some place in there. He went out to Cody, Wyoming and hunted sheep in the Thoroughfare Country. Of course, I was a little boy then, and not that old. [Chuckles] That was his activity, and not a family activity. Both my mother and father were bird shooters, ducks primarily, but they did some field bird, too.

DH: Would you say that you got your interest in wildlife and hunting from your parents?

WS: Yeah, I never thought about it, but I assume so, sure.

DH: Where did you receive your education?

WS: I have a undergraduate degree at the University of Michigan, and I have a graduate business degree at the University of Michigan.

DH: Can you give me a brief rundown on your career up to this point?

WS: (laughing) Well, yeah, sure, I'd be glad too. I thought during high school, and as a matter of fact my first couple of years in college, that I would be the world's greatest brain surgeon. I submitted my application to the University of Michigan Medical School after three years of pre-med, and was told that they were glad to have my application, but there were two or three thousand kids smarter than I. So, that took me to take serious consideration about joining the family business. My older brother had already made that decision, and my main concern was could I work with him, siblings always having some rivalries. We sat and talked about it a long time. Of course, I had worked during the war. I had worked most of my summers at our family company which was a pharmaceutical company. After getting out of the Korean War, I went to work full time with them, and I had a sales territory in New Mexico. I got married, and then I had a sales territory in New York City. The sales manager got sick, so I came back and took over as sales manager. One thing led to another, and I eventually ended up being chairman of the company for seven years. We sold the company in 1985.

DH: When did you join Boone and Crockett?

WS: I don't know, I was trying to think about that when you asked me. I joined Boone and Crockett, I believe during Fred Pullman's presidency [1971-1973], and I can't remember the years.

DH: Why did you want to join the Boone and Crockett?

WS: Actually, it was Fred that was very enthusiastic. He was really the first outside-the-New-England-New-York area that was a president. My primary interest was that, boy! I can talk to all these guys who have been around hunting, and I can find out what they've done and how they did it, and how they went about it. The interesting thing that immediately developed was that a group of club members, for their whatever reasons, decided that publishing the record book was a detriment to wild game, and they had proposed to do away with the record book. The final vote, this was during Wes Dixon following Fred Pullman was [1975-1979] Wes Dixon's term, Wes Dixon was my brother-in-law. The club voted to maintain the record book, and it seems to me that about a third of the members resigned. So, really, a very large number, and then the club had to rebuild itself.

DH: This is the first I've heard of this. How did you feel about this decision that was made?

WS: Well, I saw the problem as that those that wanted to do away with the record book were not acting out of fact, but acting out of emotion. They felt this. Once we started looking into it, and it has been proven that trophy hunting is not detrimental. As a matter of fact, it may be good. So, that was an emotional issue. Of course in those days there were a lot of emotional times relative to what is being a good citizen, what is not being a good citizen, and there were just a lot of people who were just anti-everything.

DH: And you say this happened during Wes Dixon's tenure?

WS: Yeah, Wes Dixon was the guy that put that cooled it off.

DH: Was he successful in the way he was handled?

WS: Enormously. He's a very successful and skilled person in interpersonal relationships, and did a magnificent job. Very few people could have done that job, and he just happened to be there at the right time. And, I have to complement Fred Pullman, because he knew Wes's strengths in these areas and he persuaded him to take this job on -- which was not a very popular job if you can imagine. At the same time, Wes was working for the family company and was dealing with the international organization which required an enormous amount of travel time. To have both the travel time and this problem on his plate at the same time was quite an accomplishment.

DH: Were there other individuals who were involved that really helped out Wes and Fred with this project?

WS: Yeah, I think Phil Wright was, of course, the person with the technical know-how and the technical skills, and [knew] how to build fact and not put it on an emotional basis. So Phil Wright and many others, such as Jack Parker, (and you just interviewed Phil,) and that old hard core was significant.

DH: So, how do you characterize the split of these people that left the organization? Was there animosity there or was it just a friendly parting of ways?

WS: I think some were very upset, and I think, many of them passed away. I don't know about most of them. But that became, in my opinion anyhow, the catalyst by which the renewed club started to look at itself and said, "We probably should be something more than a dinner club." And as that worked out, eventually the big overt action, of course, was buying the ranch and research station, and implementing the professorship. That caused another split, and another group of people resigned, or just stopped paying their dues in many cases. Those are the people who thought, "No, because what I want to belong to is a once a year supper club." Although why anybody wants to get dressed up in a tuxedo and sit around with a bunch of men is more than I can understand, but apparently (laughing), it was a big deal for them.

DH: So, overall, you would say then that the benefits outweighed the potential disasters?

WS: Well, I think now we have an opportunity so that you can see the contribution, and measure the contribution, that your association with this organization is. Otherwise, it was pretty nebulous, and in today's area where there are so many varied types of populations, that poor kid raised in the city doesn't know anything about agriculture or natural resources, [and] I think he's got to become part of that team. Similarly, the guy who's out in the country has to understand what the urban problems are if we are going to be a cohesive group and drive this country to its

potential.

DH: So, how do you reach this kid in the inner city that's unaware of ecosystem management theory and all that kind of thing?

WS: Well, I don't know. I think this is what Hal is just beginning to worry about. The whole inner city educational problem is a monstrous one just in itself. How we fit into that is not clear, but, I think we have the drive, the man power, and the brains, and the resources to make that happen. Now. You can't really get things done, I don't think, in today's world by passing the hat. So, the passed hat days are gone, we have to have serious fundraising, we have to have serious commitment of time by serious people, and that will drive this organization to where its potential is.

DH: A recurring theme that I've been picking up on in these interviews is the drive and the commitment by the people in this organization, and I want to touch on that. Is this something that is throughout the organization -- everyone here is equally committed and pulling hard?

WS: I don't know. I think it's the normal bell curve -- you've got the 20% on one end, you've got the 20% on the other end, and the vast majority are in the middle. Or maybe it's 10% on one end and 10% on the other. So it's a typical curve, bell curve, that you'd find in almost any organization.

DH: Are you pleased with the Boone and Crockett's spirit of volunteerism?

WS: Oh, yeah, I think that enormous strides have been made.

DH: I want to ask you about your role in the dedication of the plaque in Glacier National Park honoring George Bird Grinnell.

WS: Um, I was there, (laughing). It was a very thrilling thing to be part of. I was really just part of it because Phil Wright asked me to be part of it. I was glad to be able to provide some transportation. It was wonderful.

DH: Where is the plaque?

WS: Well, it's kind of at the bottom of a glacier that you look up at (laughing), and there it is. I can't tell you physically where it is. It was a warm, warm thing.

DH: Who were the people that were there at the dedication of the plaque?

WS: Gosh, I can't remember other than Phil and Wes Dixon, and myself, and I just don't remember now.

DH: Whose idea was this, the dedication?

WS: Sherm Gray, maybe? Phil, maybe? Or maybe a combination of those? I'm not positive. I was secretary for ten years, and in a more or less joking way I always said the minutes should reflect what should have happened at the meeting, rather than what happened at the meeting. In those days, because the organization was very informal, and most of it was individual people reacting with one another in an unofficial capacity, the secretary had enormous powers. But I said to myself, as I said with most jobs, after seven, eight years, that's enough. You're starting to get a whole bunch of barnacles, and you can't really look clearly because you're getting clouded with what's happened in the past. So, I looked around and finally found John Poston, and persuaded him to be secretary so I could get out of it. But the secretary in those days knew almost everything -- he was the membership committee, he was the "make sure" everything got circulated, and became almost the president's right hand.

DH: Would you say that the records of the secretary generated an accurate reflection of the activities of the club?

WS: Yes, but I think lots of discussion relative to opinion is left out of those minutes, in my opinion. Discussion, at least I wasn't one to put discussion in the minutes. But resolutions, yeah.

DH: The reason I ask is from the viewpoint of the historian looking at these records, I'm trying to ascertain the gaps.

WS: Yeah, I understand that. Uh, yeah, I think that a lot of what actually went on at the meeting was left out of minutes, in terms of discussion. What is there is in terms of resolution, whether it happens to be a formal vote taking, or whether it happens to be a consensus.

DH: How do you feel about the current wave of anti-hunting that's sweeping around the country right now?

WS: Well, there's two parts of it, I think. I think, number one, there, unfortunately, are plenty of ugly hunters out there. That's one of our doings. We have not communicated with these people to try to tell them, and educate them, as to what hunting is. So, first of all, the hunters have not cleaned up their own act, and a lot needs to be done. Now. So, when you have that element in a group, and people point a finger at it, as being bad, I sympathize with them. On the other hand, I think in order to understand what a hunter is, and what a hunter does, and what a hunter thinks of himself, as far as what his contributions are, you can't do that from the outside. You have to be with that person and be in that activity. There probably are a lot of good analogies, but not just because you're bored with life and want to do something, and pick hunting to be anti-. But I think a lot of this is people that either have been associated with ugliness in a hunting/fishing area and/or they need a cause and they happened to pick this one.

DH: How should the Boone and Crockett approach the hunting, the anti-hunting issue?

WS: That's one of the real reasons I think I was so anxious to get this ranch and research station started, because then, I think that you can document in a hard packed way what the hunter and fisherman's contribution is.

DH: What role did you play in the acquisition of this ranch?

WS: I was very active, you know John Hanes was the guy that actually did the have you talked to John?

DH: Not yet.

WS: John Hanes is the guy that did the actual identification of the ranch and arranged the loan and the contribution through Nature Conservancy. But Hanes was backed very, very strongly by Jack Parker and Bill Spencer who were consecutively presidents at that time. Wes Dixon and myself from our standpoint had not only our commitments to the idea, but we made serious commitments relative to supporting, money support, for the outcome of it, and this is not primarily in the ranch purchase area, but as far as setting up the professorship. I'd set myself up as chairman of the foundation to make sure that thing happened as well we knew how to do it.

DH: When you say "chairman of the foundation", explain that title and position to me.

WS: Well, we decided that we needed a separate organization in order to manage the ranch, and in order to solicit funds and set up the professorship at the University of Montana. Once that was decided, then we established the Boone and Crockett Foundation, and therefore we had a legal organization by which we could make commitments and contracts with the University and the professors and the other people that are involved in it, and we could go out as a Foundation and appeal to interested parties for capital to put the program together.

DH: So, did you personally go out and put the squeeze on people to donate to the Foundation?

WS: Oh yeah, yeah, lots of people (laughing).

DH: Would you characterize that as a success?

WS: Yeah, you know, nobody likes to raise money. It isn't something that gives you a ... that justifies doing it. You know you've done too much of it when you're walking down the sidewalk and you see a friend coming at you and he crosses the street and goes to the other side. [Laughter] But then, when you do get the money, and you and the donor (after watching what the money has done,) feel good about it, [and] that it's done the purpose for which it was donated, and that's when you get the good feeling. But to just go and ask the guy for ten, twenty, fifty thousand bucks, it's tough, it's tough work.

DH: Did the Boone and Crockett make the right selection with the choice of this ranch?

WS: Um, I think Hal's got to answer that question. We certainly have a mixture of wildlife and domestic business. Eventually, I would like to see it so that we are also concerned about what does the poor Maine farmer do who has a heck of a rabbit problem? He kind of sees us, you know, as that those bunch of Western guys, who've got elk and that kind of stuff. That's not my problem in Maine, or [the problems for] the Southern farmer. So I would like to see [attention to] that. This is perfect at this time because the big animals are the emotional animals, so it's good for raising money, it's good for getting attention, but eventually it's got to spread out so that we're talking about all wildlife, and both flora and fauna. So, I never see the operation as being able to end, because you're going to have the next question the next time, and whether it's managing whitetail deer, or whether it's managing cottontail rabbits, or whether it's managing an infestation of beetles. Whatever it happens to be, we're going to discover that there's a good way and a bad way and a better way to go about having both interests served: the conservation interest and the commercial interest.

DH: Did you get a chance to look at any other areas that the Boone and Crockett was considering moving into?

WS: No, I didn't at all, I just relied totally on John so I did not do any physical searching at all.

DH: I want to move on to the Boone and Crockett decision to move the headquarters to Missoula. Uh, did you play a role in that decision?

WS: Uh, well, not specifically Missoula. As secretary, we had taken a vote to first, get out of New York City, second, to get out of Washington, D.C., and I saw that the managing director, or whatever we called him in those days, I don't know, whatever he was, as paying no attention to this vote, and there it was on the books saying, "We will do a survey," which we did, "to identify the best places to move to, and then we will move", and this was not happening, and I was very frustrated by it. Well, there was a lot of other things going on, too, we had a centennial with a celebration in the meantime, we had financial crises, so there was a lot of stuff going on, but nonetheless, we were dedicated to do this. When Missoula came up, I wasn't emotionally involved in Missoula one way or another. There was some obvious questions: Could we get the kind of help we need in Missoula? Are there the kind of printing and other facilities needed to manage this organization there? So, there were some obvious questions like that, but whether it happened to be Boise or, Colorado Springs, Missoula, and Cody kind of came up. I wasn't too excited about Cody because, you know, it's pretty isolated. I thought you ought to be able to get in and out of a place pretty easily if you're going to have the participation, so Cody was not high on my list. Of course then came along a railroad station, and wonderful Tim, and it's spectacular, I mean it's just absolutely marvelous!

DH: Wonderful Tim, wonderful Tim meaning?

WS: Well, one of our members was, is, the reason that we have that facility, the railroad station facility, and ...

DH: Who's that?

WS: Well, you know, he was ... well, the only reason I'm hesitating is I'm not too sure he wants that ...

DH: I understand, I understand.

WS: But, he is a very active member, and a great, fairy godmother with regard to that facility.

DH: Explain to me the dissatisfaction with Dumfries, and that New York-Virginia-D.C. area.

WS: Two things, the center of the membership had moved considerably west of New York City. Well, so I thought, you know, the center, we ought to be closer to the center of membership. Also, to go to New York City and have an annual meeting, in spite of some members' big generosity relative to providing facilities, it really was only affordable by a rich man. Frank Cook up in Alaska, a wonderful, wonderful, longtime member, it was a significant sacrifice for him to come into New York City. From that standpoint, I was anxious to move it out. The managing director's idea about Washington, D.C. was that he could act as a lobbyist. I was anti- ever being a lobbyist organization. In fact, we were unskilled at it, we never did it. So why put up with Washington and all the inconveniences of Washington when you're located there to do something that you're not going to do, and not doing? The idea was to move to a place to operate the organization—

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—and, for some reason or other, it always seemed to me that it would be too easy to get lost in a big city like Denver, Chicago, Los Angeles, too big. So you would have a much better chance of being a meaningful member of the community if you went to a smaller type of city.

DH: There were concerns raised that there may be too much of a radical element in Missoula for the Boone and Crockett to be able to get along with. Is that a valid concern?

WS: I never had it. I've heard it voiced, but I never had it, because, you know, the people I knew were the Phil Wrights of this world, and if Phil was not okay, I was not right with Phil, so okay. [Laughter]

DH: I want to talk a bit about the resurrection of the National Heads and Horns collection. How do you feel about that move that was undertaken there?

WS: Well, I got very involved in that, and I went down to the old Brooklyn zoo, was it? It was

the Brooklyn zoo, or whatever it was, and I was appalled when I saw these things. I think, with the record book, it's just part of that symbol about we do and what we're all about. To have the Buffalo Bill Center in Cody, to take that collection over and display it was, I think, almost lucky.

DH: How did that come about?

WS: I don't know, I can't remember. You know, we had some members in Cody who were active with the Buffalo Bill Center. I went out there, oh, four or five times at their big annual fundraising dance, and met a lot of people and, you know, I think that they saw that we were a bunch of interested, educated, fairly well mannered people, and that we were O.K. So, I think that was part of it. Then, you know, I think that they went through on their own [to consider], "Does this make commercial sense for us?" Because they have to go through that. [And] What are we going to have a bunch of guys with Packards (?) running around outside?" And they obviously made the right decision. But they made the right decision right along with it when they took over the Winchester Museum. That all went hand in hand, and I think it was great for us, and I think it was great for Winchester, and obviously I think it's turning out very, very well for the Center.

DH: What was the reaction of the people where these things were housed before?

WS: Well, you know, I think that they were just caught in their old way of doing things, and they just saw no way, no reason to change nothing. They were just caught in that kind of a stream, and once you get caught in that kind of a stream, you can't build, and if you can't build, you've got to go backwards. There's no such thing as staying in one place. You can't do it, you go forward or backwards, but you can't stay in one place, and these poor guys, you know, they had an inbred board, and they had an inbred way of doing things, and I felt sorry for them.

DH: When you went to look at these, at this collection, how were you received?

WS: Well, it was interesting. It was, "Here it is, and we don't like it." "But we had some kind of custodial obligation here, but we don't want that either." Anyway, it was, to me it was like, you know, finding a gold mine, or an oil well in your backyard, it was spectacular.

DH: Have you ever officially represented Boone and Crockett for political reasons?

WS: No.

DH: Is this something that the Boone and Crockett ever does?

WS: I don't think that's our place. There are organizations that are set up to act for hunting and wildlife conservation that are formally set up to do that kind of thing. I think, let them do it, that's their thing, they know how to do that well, but I think we should reactively join them. In other words, I think that we do have cross representations on boards. So, I think it's something that has to be done. It's a peculiar skill all to itself and is left best to an organization that has those skills.

I guess the primary one that is now working is called the Wildlife Legislative Fund which is two parts: there's a Wildlife Conservation Fund - since you can't be a lobbyist and get contributions that are tax deductible, so that's the way they work it, and this same organization is a Wildlife Conservation Fund and Wildlife Legislative Fund, and they've got all the skills to go to either counties, states, cities, or Washington. They have all that, so, let's let those guys that are skilled doing that, do it, but keep in close contact with them.

DH: Well, the reason I ask is that Boone and Crockett has a long history of exerting pressure on politicians for example, creation of National Forest Systems.

WS: I think that was possible in those days.

DH: It's not a political reality now?

WS: I don't think it's a political reality now.

DH: There are those that claim that the record system is kept by the Safari Club International, is infringing on the copyright.

WS: I hear thieves! Out and outright thieves! And who's the guy that started that? MacIlhenny was a member of an organization called Shikar [?] Safari Club International, which I happen to be a member of, and his vision was that instead of having a membership by invitation, and exclusive, which that organization was, is that you can open up to everybody. It was a great vision, as everybody told him, and he did a wonderful job on organizing it. They told him what a great vision it is, and what a wonderful job he'd done, and he believed that he was probably the most wonderful person that ever happened. That's when things started to fall apart. The ego part of that organization is incredible! They don't mind it at all that they, quote, -- "take this from another organization or borrow that from another organization, and never give credit to it." It's all one man, and he started the thing, and now he's out. Nonetheless, his shadow is still there. I think it's a darn shame.

DH: How does Boone and Crockett organization face a challenge like that?

WS: Well, I think we're doing it the right way, we do it through our official measures and make sure that -- again, we are an organization which is concerned, which is involved in North America. Safari International does a lot of stuff all over the world. Let them do their world thing, but in doing so, of course, they plagiarize the heck out of Rowe and Ward [?] and a whole pile of other people. Like anybody else you can put up your twenty-five bucks and be a member of that organization. I primarily was an annual member just to see what the heck was going on there as little as I could see as an ordinary member. It's a very power oriented organization.

DH: How do you personally feel about the ethics driving fair chase?

WS: Well, I'm very concerned. Early on in our discussion, I talked about the ugly hunter and ugly fisherman, too. I think they act because they don't know any better. This should be a very, very strong push of the club -- ethical hunting, ethical outdoor behavior -- and I think we're a great organization to do it. I think that, darn, this is the firearms organization are doing a swell job, too, but their primary [interest] is ethical conduct with a firearm. They're doing a great job, but I think with Hope and Young [?] and Boone and Crockett working on ethical hunting will help educate a poor guy who has grown up in an environment that those, that that kind of behavior was not stressed.

DH: What have you personally done to promote the ideals of fair chase?

WS: Well, there're individual activities where, actually, I don't ever think it ever happened in North America, but worldwide, I'd get outfitters that would want to behave in one, certain way, and I just wouldn't participate. You know, it's incredible what's going on. In the Kamchatka Peninsula in Russia, my guess is only one out of ten deer, one out of ten sheep, is killed without the assistance of a helicopter. My bet is that I would get to see it myself, but, you know, I would see men go out, fly out of camp in a helicopter, and come back in four hours with a sheep, and I can't believe they fair chased it. I just don't believe it. I wasn't there to see them. Some of these guys -- well -- the couple that was in my camp, are both very, very well known members of, not of this organization, but of hunting organizations, and really should know better. But then again, he was older than me by ten years, and I had a heck of a time climbing up and down those mountains as it was. But, I shot a very, very nice sheep, and I was in a wonderful fly camp, and had a fantastic experience: but we would go along on a helicopter, and the guide would point down, and say, "There, take your rifle, and shoot, shoot," and I'd just say, "No, I don't, we don't do it that way." And of course, he couldn't understand that we had paid all this money to get this sheep. I said, "To get the sheep is not the point, the point is to hunt the sheep," and you have to realize it isn't only Americans, I've seen it in Africa, and I've seen it in Asia, and I've seen it in Russia.

DH: So, I take it, you've hunted all over the world?

WS: Yeah, pretty much. Yeah, I think I've had my last safari, though.

DH: Why is that?

WS: I'm just getting too old. (laughs) Well, to do it the way I want to do it requires plenty of physical strength and stamina, and most of it is obviously done. The rare animals because they're in the kind of climate that is a difficult climate, so you want to do it the hard way, and enjoy part of the climate, and enjoy the whole atmosphere of where the animal lives, and there's a limit to it in regard to strength and endurance.

DH: Have you ever hunted with other Boone and Crockett members?

WS: Oh, sure, lots of them.

DH: Any kind of stories that you would like to share?

WS: Oh gosh, you know, I keep a journal. I have a journal of all my hunts and I think it must be now about ten or twelve journals I think that it would be easy to go back and look them up. [Laughter] I'm going to write one up. Frank Cook. I brought a big bear rug to this meeting that Frank Cook and I shot up at Pearl Bay in the Alaska Peninsula. It was the last big bear that got shot in the left hand [?] valley which is in itself so spectacular. The ground shakes because it's active volcanically, and that's a unique experience in itself. We sat there for a week. We were there for three weeks or something. We sat there for a week looking at this one area, and we did not see anything, except small female bears. Finally we kind of gave up in disgust, so we said we'd go down and walk through the area. We were looking to see how the bears would fillet the salmon, and it's spectacular, and we're just kind of wandering around and all of a sudden out of a creek bed, comes this huge brown bear on his back legs charging us, and we weren't 30 yards away. I have a 375, 300 grain bullet, Frank has a 458 with a probably a 500 grain bullet, and we ripped that guy in the chest, four shots that you could really cover with a saucer, and he kept right on coming. I was about to try to blow his head off. I didn't want to do it, because as you well know, they score bears by the size of the skull. Frank had moved, I didn't, so he followed Frank's movement, and dropped dead about ten paces from Frank. Now we have this huge damn thing and what the heck are we going to do with it? It was late in the day. The whole thing was very interesting. Then, by the time we got done, we'd gotten weathered in the boat. I just decided I couldn't stay in this boat one more night, hence we started to walk in, and to the best knowledge we had it was supposed to be a six to eight hour walk. It turned out to be about a twenty hour walk and we arrived back in Pearl Bay about 3 o'clock in the morning in a snow storm. It was spectacular.

DH: How would you characterize Frank Cook in a hunting camp?

WS: Oh, this guy's spectacular. Number one. His knowledge of Alaska game is enormous, he knows the habitat, he understands what's going on, and so he couldn't be better. But at the same time, he isn't, "I'm the local resident up here, and I know everything". So, he's just a grand, big, wonderful person, and a great guy to be with.

DH: Do you have any trophies in the, record book?

WS: Yes, yeah, I've still got one, I've got a goat. Next time, next time they raise the bottom, I'm out. I had at one time, I had two goats, and a caribou. One goat and the caribou are gone already.

DH: What other organizations, wildlife organizations, conservation organizations do you belong to?

WS: Now I belong to the Wildlife Legislative/Wildlife Conservation Fund, I'm on their board. I belong to a thing called the Shikar [?] Safari Club International, and I'm pretty well restricted to

those.

DH: Who have you sponsored to join the Boone and Crockett?

WS: I've been very particular. Over the years I think I've only proposed about ten members. I think nine of them are still members, which I think is a pretty good record, but every time I go hunting and meet somebody, or get into a hunting situation, or conversation, or something, I'm always thinking, "would he make a good member?" I've been very, very selective. It would be easy to fill up the ranks with guys who love to hunt, but to fill up the ranks with guys that are not only good hunters and good citizens, but will donate and work and believe in the cause, that's the difficult part.

DH: When a membership opening comes up, is there stiff competition there for who the new member will be?

WS: Well, I don't think we're full. I don't think we're filled up, I think we have about eighty-six members, regular members, last time I remember, why we were authorized to have 150 members, so, I don't think we're filled, but they're really scrutinized.

DH: What's the procedure when someone's nominated for membership?

WS: He's got to have a proposer, and he's got to have two seconders, and he's got to fill out a whole bunch of stuff on, if he qualifies, he's got to shoot, or have shot two species of North American game, and then his name is filed, and goes to the membership, and they have a time when the whole membership can comment, and then the board puts him in. Well, this board meeting here, we have had to ask a guy to resign. He was a heck of a good guy, but, he flagrantly violated our hunting efforts, and that's too bad.

DH: Is this something that happens frequently, people are asked to resign?

WS: No, almost never, almost never happens. And this guy, and he's fairly prominent incidentally, would have never been made a member had we known about this incident at the time.

DH: So, this was something that occurred before he had joined your organization.

WS: Oh, yes, occurred before he joined, and we didn't know that, and it came out. Well, you know, it happens rarely, but not very often. Very rarely.

DH: So, I take it that this wasn't a case of mutual indiscretion, this was a serious.

WS: Serious thing, and then sometimes, we'd just disagree. There was a member who was very successful on a couple of hunting trips to China and brought his trophies in. The trophies were confiscated by the U.S. Fish and Game, and we thought the government was acting illegally, and

improperly. We supported the heck out of these guys, and eventually they won [who?], but (whew), to fight Uncle Sam, you'd better think twice about that alone, and then all of a sudden, the Montana Fish and Game are influenced by the Feds, and they say, "What are these rotten guys doing?", and then California gets on the team, and they say -- you know, so it's kind of clubby. They're all kind of in the same kind of business, and, if push comes to shove, they're going to stick together. Properly so, I think, but it's a tough battle.

DH: Do you think that the addition of the professional members and the associate members to the Boone and Crockett has been helpful?

WS: Oh, I think the associate is actually magnificent. If you're going to have, if you're going to have an invitation group, rather than an NIR, general membership group, that's the way you choose to go. I think that the way you get high talent is by the invitation method. Then I think you open it up so that the other people, anybody, can help join in your effort by the associate program. I think it's magnificent. I'm just surprised that almost every guy, if he can afford a big game license he can afford to join the associate's program. It will make his hunting that much more enjoyable because he'll be that much more knowledgeable about it.

DH: [What about] the professional member?

WS: Oh, these, these folks, their contribution has always been enormous, and here's a way to get a top man, top professionals, knowledgeable people, to bond with the membership who are nonprofessional. [They] exchange and share, and it's a perfect blending in my opinion.

DH: So, are various meetings that the Boone and Crockett organization has throughout the year always useful?

WS: Well, I get up at most of the meetings, and I don't attend all the meetings, but I get at most of the meetings, and I'd say that I am very much looking forward to the day when we do not talk about money or administrative matters, and we just talk about hunting [laughter] then I think we have reached our peak. It's been, because of the metamorphosis of the whole darn thing, it's been an enormous struggle and I think, finally they are almost back on their feet. To go from a group of rich hunters who, when the hat was passed to get something done, to a much larger organization where money must come from the outside, be solicited and come from the outside, is a heck of a change -- a change in attitude, a change in dedication, a change in everything. Now we include a much, much, much larger audience to participate. It was painful to get to that point, but the point was such a desirable goal and now achievable, if not achieved. I congratulate them, because they could have reverted back to a once-a-year-supper-club if they wanted to.

DH: I want to ask you a bit about the controversy with the National Park Service over the gun collection at Sagamore Hill. Can you kind of briefly outline for me the story there?

WS: Sherm, Sherm Gray is the guy that really knows about it, and another guy who's there, he

lives right there, in Long Island. I think it shows that a degree of possessiveness on the part of the Park Service that quite appalls me. I've seen it in some wildlife officers where, all of a sudden, all the deer in their area become their deer, and all the fish in the lake become their fish. It's a funny kind of a syndrome where they forget that they are supposed to be acting on behalf of the constituents. Maybe it's just one director -- maybe it isn't the Wildlife Service, it might be just one man (for all I know) that's in charge of Sagamore Hill, or one guy above him. I don't think it necessarily has to be the whole darn service, but I am quite appalled at their attitude. It seems to me that nowadays reasonable men sit down and try to find a common point. Sitting down hasn't even occurred. I've read the document...

[end of tape 1, side 2].

DH: This is tape two of our conversation with Mr. Searle. Bill, were you here at the awards ceremony when Bill Spencer was giving the Sagamore Hill Award?

WS: I sure was.

DH: Give me your impression of that ceremony.

WS: I choked up. I thought it was spectacular. I've been at three or four presentations of this award, it's got to be the pinnacle of awards to the people who have our kinds of interests and having worked with Bill [Spencer], both with regard to Boone and Crockett club matters and other matters -- we've known each other a long time. As a matter of fact, he was very helpful in getting one of my daughters into the University of Colorado. You know, he was a spectacular man who has been successful in so many of the things that he's undertaken. He's not looking for awards, he's just built that kind of guy when this came around I was just thrilled to death, not only for my friend, but my associate member, and member of the Boone and Crockett club.

DH: How do you feel about the current wave of gun control legislation that's working its way through Congress?

WS: You know, I don't know. Rationally, on a rational basis, it's really dumb. But it isn't a rational issue anymore, it's an emotional basis, and how do you deal with emotional issues? And I don't think that the NRA has done well dealing in the emotional issue part of it.

DH: Is this an appropriate forum for the Boone and Crockett to get involved in?

WS: I wouldn't guess so. Although I don't think it says it anymore, but in the original charter, it said something about "manly sport with a gun".

DH: Yeah, it does.

WS: Yeah, and today, number one, "manly" is a no-no (laughing), and there are some

appropriate sport hunting guns, and there are some inappropriate sport hunting guns, and so from that standpoint, yes. When we're talking about our sport, then we should talk about what we think is the appropriate means of taking game, and what is inappropriate. I would be the first to say that I do not think that we should not chase game with an automatic anything. But here we say, "O.K., we're going to eliminate sixteen types of auto-load weapons, and you can only have a clip of five cartridges of whatever the heck it is". It was years, and years, and years ago that we said, "In an auto-load shot gun, or in a pump shot gun you can only have three shells". That's older than heck. There's nothing new about this stuff. We've been doing it for years. So I don't understand why people, particularly NRA, gets terribly upset about that. In other words, I do not think that they're well equipped to deal with the emotional part of this. I'm not too sure that anybody is. I think that the only part that we should get into is what is appropriate to our mission and what tools of the trade are appropriate to that. Other than that we should not speak to it -- the Club should not speak to it -- because there're probably as many opinions on that as there are on a curve. So, that's my opinion. I haven't thought about it.

DH: In your opinion, is the Boone and Crockett following the original mission statement of the organization?

WS: Well in part, I think, it's broadened itself enormously compared to the original concept. It's broadened itself in its mission, (and) it's broadened itself in the kinds of people that are attracted to it. Some how, I think that it's a very, very different type of organization than was the original concept which was a few very influential people and, lobby laws weren't even invented. Probably that is one of the reasons the lobby laws were invented. [Chuckles]

DH: Well, that covers the list of questions that I have that I wanted to discuss with you, is there anything that I've missed that you would like to add, or is there something that you feel that needs to be added here?

WS: I don't know. Has somebody spoken about Bob Ferguson?

DH: No.

WS: O.K., Fred and Wes I think are the guys to really talk about Bob. Although in the early days when we'd have our annual meeting, I'd stay at Bob's apartment in New York City. This is the guy, you know after the great surge of the Grinnells and the Grays, and that era, that really kept the thing glued together. Now, he ran it as a one man organization, but he did keep it together, and I think that part of the history is kind of key. I would try to get particularly those two guys to speak on how he did this and how he managed it. I can't remember - his connection was something like an estate planner for the Roosevelts, as I remember. He may have been a stock broker, but I think he was also in estate management stuff, and I think that's his connection, and he knew Kermit Roosevelt very well, and maybe worked with him, or for him. So, I'm not sure on these details, but you know the man made a magnificent contribution, where the thing could have totally fallen apart. We were, remember, five years in the second World War, where, you know,

really nobody could do anything, you couldn't hunt, you couldn't really do anything. Well, you might shoot a rabbit in your backyard. But this guy's technique managed to keep the strings pulled together, and I think it should be part of the history.

DH: Well, I think that does it.

WS: That does it, that's about all.

DH: O.K., great. Thanks, Bill.

END