

File 1-1

0:00:00.0

Then he asked me later on, two, three, four years after that, he mentioned it again. I asked him, I said, “Are you sure that’s what you want?” He said, “Yeah.” I said, “Well, I ain’t makin’ a promise that I might not be able to keep, but I’ll put some stipulations in it, a possibility.” I said—

0:00:20.8 End file 1-1.

File 1-2

0:00:00.0

—and I finished ninth grade at Stringtown [?]. Well, I said I finished it. I went. At the end of the school year I got an award for being an occasional ___ student. So the next year I quit. I had to put in the crops, and I stayed there about two years, and I went to my granddad’s. ‘Cause we walked miles one way to catch the—little over three miles, ‘bout three and a quarter miles to catch the bus and had to be there about 10 minutes to 7 in the mornin’ and then ride it several miles into school. And had three different creeks to cross, and they didn’t have bridges over ‘em, and sometimes that was ___, and sometimes I just didn’t want to go. So anyway, then I went back and I started in the tenth, and I never did go pick up my grades or report cards, so I don’t even know if I passed the ninth or not. But anyway—

(What year was that?)

0:01:03.8

That’s—I have a great memory. That would have been ’45, ’46, somewhere in there, ’47. Somewhere in that period, ‘cause I went and skipped two years and started back. I think it would have been ’47 when I started back. I finished the tenth and then I started school at ___ in eleventh, and we went one semester, then Dad sold out and we went to California. They wanted me to go with ‘em. I didn’t really want to go, but I did. I stayed out there a while, about three months or so, and I come back to ___ back to Oklahoma.

So then when I was drafted in the army, well, I took some ___ courses. When we got ready to go into the exams, come time for me to come back from overseas, and I didn’t get to take the total exams. So I passed some of ‘em, but I didn’t get through the entire exams. And I enrolled in Southeastern as a special student under the GI bill, and the only thing I could enroll in was industrial arts. So I went into industrial arts and finished, I think I had 56 hours.

0:02:49.7

Anyway, I enjoyed photography down there and I enjoyed woodwork. I enjoyed all of it, ‘cause I like different things. So if you turn that off I’ll show you somethin’ here. I want you to see this and then you can look over it and we can go from there. Just stop it for a little bit.

0:03:08.8 End file 1-2.

File 1-3

0:00:00.0

(Service history.)

You've probably got that as you came, but this'll start you back further than that.

(This is a description of the service history. "The Fish and Wildlife Service was established on June 30th, 1940 by reorganization plan 3. It was merged with the Bureau of Biological Survey and the Bureau of Fisheries." We've got some really old documents at the Center. I never really read through all of them, but this is a good synopsis. It has all the directors. Ari Gabrielson, Albert Day [?]. "The Branch of Predator and Rodent Control. This branch of service plans and directs cooperative predatory animal and rodent control operations in the states and territories in cooperation ..." I wonder if they'll let me make a photocopy of this. "Suppression of rabies and other animal-borne diseases." Now we're starting back again dealing with wildlife diseases, and this is from the '30s and '40s. It's all comin' back around. This is a good description.)

0:01:11.4

But anyway, I _____. Now, some of the pictures I have here, they had—some of it has been typed, some of it is handwritten. This one, it'll tell you—what was that? This is one of the three lambs that was killed. We had to save the scalps. So we're part Indian. [laughs]

(Those are wolves?)

No. It's the story I was gonna tell you. _____. There's some cross-breeds, mostly coyotes and some wolves, but there were some of the wolves that was in here, but mostly it was either hybrids or coyotes, somethin' crossed there. This is a little _____. That's me, and that's two of the dogs they used on the trap line. We used drag traps, mostly, you're familiar with those, I guess?

(Yeah.)

I bought that little old gig [?] and I started trappin'. It just goes through and I hear a coyote that had tangled up and the dogs had trailed it up for me. There's a bobcat they'd trailed up for me. This was what they called the old coyote getter.

(That's the old one, yeah.)

This—I had another set there, I don't know whether you can read it. Kids had taken some of these pictures, _____ or somethin' over the years, they've been misplaced. But that shows the components of it, where it sat, whatever that one said, there's another picture. This was the warning signs we put on 'em, we'd post at the gates, and then I carried my equipment in and I laid it out, what we used in the traps, and whatever that said down there.

(Setting a steel trap.)

0:03:05.0

That's part of it. Here's some more where I was setting a steel trap. There's where you put the pan cover [?]. Here's a finish set. That's unusual, to be over one of 'em and wound up caught in a tree.

(Oh, he's trying to get away.)

From the ground, he jumped up there and crawled over it and got hung up there, and here's another one. And then here's where I got a picture of—that was where they was killin' calves and used traps and the coyote-getters. That was there ___ there at ___ trail. They told me just haul 'em up somewhere. When I got to that point, well, they told me to scatter 'em out, so we're having to ___ hole to where to bury 'em, and so I started scatterin' 'em out and ___ just pulled the pickup behind and took that picture. But that's ____. And of course these others are just different. They don't amount to—I got big on that part, and these others are just different, where you'd—either different highlights and you had to have a negative and you'd have—

0:04:20.6

(Oh, this is for your photography class?)

Yeah. It was in photography class. This is a picture of my family here. That's my mother and dad, my youngest sister, and then this is my kids. That's the youngest, which is Michael, Gary, and that's the one we lost, and this is my daughter. So that's about it. The rest of it don't amount to anything as far as—well, that's another picture of—

(That's a great picture.)

That's Mike. Anyway, we had to take a picture of animals and develop 'em, and I ___ take somethin' ___ a little dangerous. And then this is some pictures of—

(That looks like sheep kill.)

Sheep kill. And that's in my younger days, with my old dogs.

(That's a great picture. What kind of dogs did you have, hound dogs?)

Yeah, I had hounds, and then I had some that was crossed. In years after, they said, "Don't show the traps." [?] And they started that, and so we put—

(Yeah, we're still at that point.)

0:05:33.6

I just told a story on it for the college, and they rolled it up and they made a bigger deal—they did that. It was a bigger deal than it was, about setting traps for predators near campus. I trapped all over the country.

(They always blow up the headline, have a big headline.)

On that one, I didn't show the traps, because it wasn't in the paper. But it was contrast, is what the picture was about, how the bobcat blended into the background.

(Do you still take pictures?)

Not in a long time. I took a lot of 'em all the way through. I was tryin' to find a picture, but I didn't—we moved, we packed stuff down, some of it's still under a bunch of—I need to go through it and get rid of it and never have, but I took a lot of slides, so I didn't make prints.

When I'd give a talk or somethin' where you could use slide prints, I sent all them to the office, I don't know if they've still got them or not. I kept a copy for myself, so if I wanted to give a talk to a group, I could use slides. That's kind of where we left it as far as that part of it was concerned.

0:06:56.2

(I was curious about your—I don't know if you got the biographical form that I sent you?)

Well, I'll show you what I've done on that. Now, I don't like to—I rather have someone else talk about me than me. But this is—I wrote down some things there, I don't know for sure—

(That's great. It's just background information. You said your family—you were from here originally, Oklahoma?)

I was borned here.

(Was your family homesteaders?)

Well, Granddad—I didn't put that in there, I didn't know how far back you wanted to go, I just went back to my parents—

(I'm just curious.)

Granddad, they come in in the South. They was living in the South durin' the Civil War. They had kind of—I don't have any idea what size it was, the story was, he had a little plantation. They had, I don't know, a few slaves, I don't know how many it was, wasn't a big deal, I don't think. But when they freed the slaves, there was one of the older—a man and woman who wanted to go when they left. They didn't want to be freed. They wanted to go with 'em. They went with 'em to Texas, volunteered, so they just lived with 'em down there. They treated them like one of the family, I guess. They helped out like other family members did.

0:08:31.0

And then Granddad, he married Grandmother when he was 27, but before he married—now, she lived around Lubbock, and I'm not sure just exactly what part of Texas his dad and him settled in. It might have been somewhere in that area. He went up to homestead on Oklahoma, there in the Panhandle around, oh, Gyman [?]. Dug him a half-dugout, fixed that deal good, and then he opened up a little store. And then he was there a while, and then he married Grandmother, and I guess they moved there in his dugout, I don't know, or lived in whatever he had built for his store. I don't know about that. His brother older than him was—he come up on a cattle drive with some company from Chicago, and they brought several thousand head of steers, and they leased this land they called Hickory Hill, Indian territory, back out north and west of ___ here. So he asked Granddaddy to come over here. So he said he moved from—he lived in Hooker, out ___. He moved from there in a covered wagon. It took him a little over a month.

0:10:08.5

He tells the story about, he kind of got off track and he was comin' down and old wagon road and he looked across there and he'd see some tents and some kind of half-throwed-up buildings,

and they had an old cowboy ridin' up, and he stopped and asked him, he says, "Say, what's that little burg down there?" He said, "That's Oklahoma City." [laughs]

([laughs] It's gotten a little bigger!)

So anyway, they come here and they rode out here where they used to farm, and it's still—the name, they put it on—it's Pitt's Crossin' on _____. They farmed that and lived here _____ and Granddad had a little place just south of town here, lived out there a few years and then back and forth down there farming. So that's the gist of how they got here.

0:10:59.7

Now, as far as I know, Daddy was borned—I think he might have been—he was borned in Oklahoma, I think maybe out around Hooker. I just put down Oklahoma, I think, on that.

(That's fine. Let me just go back over—I don't think I taped it. When you were talking about you went to school, went to California and then came back, you went to high school here and then you went to State College in _____?)

I _____ went _____ school, schoolin' I got before I passed the GED test and everything before I went to California. I might have got that mixed up there.

(I got that mixed up, I think.)

Oh, maybe I did in writin' it down. I kind of look at rememberin', and if you don't have the dates to get reference from, it's kind of like a catch basin with water comin' into it. You've got runoff and big streams and little streams, and it all catches down there, but sometimes you don't remember the date or identify the stream it came off of. [laughs]

([laughs] That's fine. When did you start trapping? Did you father teach you how to trap and hunt?)

No. I'm if correct, I believe the first—I trapped—of course, there wasn't any income back in those days, and if a kid had any money, you had to either have an old dog tree a possum or two or somethin' for the fur. So I started out, like all farm kids do, doin' a little trappin' and a little huntin' like that for makin' a few pennies for fur. But first thing I remember catchin' in a trap was a skunk, and I sold it for 75 cents.

(Someone bought it?)

[laughs] I've worked for mighty sad wages, I'll tell you, in my lifetime. My brother, he was two years younger than I, he's dead, now, too, but we cleaned out a well for a lady that lived about three miles for us, an old dug well, and I was 10 or 11 and that'd make him probably 8 or 9, close in there, because there was about not quite two years difference in us, and I let him down, we had what you call a winch, where you crank a rope up, you know. I let him down on a bucket with a rope, and he'd get down there after we'd drawed the water out and dig it out and I'd draw it up and dump it and put him back down in there. He'd _____ bucket and then she'd let us work in her garden. She'd pay us 10 cents an hour, apiece. [laughs] So I started out low wages.

(That's child labor!)

Yeah! But then when we got through cleanin' up, first time I'd ever been in a public swimming pool, she took me in, me and my brother and sister, the older sister, the other two was too small, to Sulphur, to a public swimmin' pool. We always went in naked! [laughs] One place was the boys and another the girls. It was out of sight.

(Was it a hot springs down there, or just a regular pool?)

It was just regular public pool.

(You just jumped in?)

We got bathin' suits there, wore cut-off pants or somethin'. That was the first public swimming pool. She was a good lady. Anyway, that kind of goes from there.

0:15:03.0

Far as the education part, well, I went half-time when I was goin' to Southeastern at night, and I'd go summertime if they had courses, I'd go right straight through. I had an opportunity to go ahead and finish my education when they transferred me to Centralia in the northeastern part of the state, but I had moved to Stillwater and the rent and everything was high over there, and I had built and I had at that time the three children, and I just couldn't see that I could make ____. I just told 'em, when they asked me about it, I said, "I can't do the service that's I've ____ and do justice to my grades and pay my debts if I'm gonna make it." So I chose not to go. And then I've been real fortunate all through my career, though. They sent me three different years to Utah, and where they was doin' all the research on different areas and three different summers we'd go out there and have seminars or training courses sayin' what this research showed and that.

(Was that Fred Knowlton [?]?)

It would broaden your education on what their research. The only problem I had with that, if it was actually done with the ones that was really reachin' for the right information, not correctly the right information, that's not—the true information, well, it's fine. But I found out—I used to—when I'd read that, I would take it with—you know, it's law and gospel. And then I got a little further into the program and a little bit more knowledgeable about who funded it, and if you can find out who funded it, it gives you a better chance to see if it's slanted one way or the other. So that's important when you start readin'. If it was honestly done and let the facts point the way, kind of like investigatin' a crime, it works out better than it does where somebody put up a bunch of money and they're probing you to make it show this.

0:17:22.1

(I've noticed on the Internet, I tell people when they're looking at sites on the Internet, they've got to find out who put that information there and make sure know you where the information's comin' from.)

You're right.

(When did you start trapping for the government? Did you work commercially before that? Did you start right—how did you find your first government job?)

Well, I could have found it earlier in life than I did if it hadn't been for Mama.

([laughs])

There was an old boy we knew that lived out in McGee [?] Valley, close to where I live now, by the name of Charlie Rose [?]. He started to work for the department in I believe it was '45. 'Course I'd been trappin' on my own, you know, fur trappin', tryin' to trap the ones that was most valuable. They always called me a mink trapper, because that's what I would—my targets, basically, because they brought more money than a lot of the rest of 'em. And I got acquainted with him. If he was trackin' near the home on the weekend and I didn't have to work or somethin', or I'd be up there in the summer when we was out of school, I'd always get—when we'd go to Sunday school we'd be there and I said, "Where you workin'?' Come by and pick me up and let me ride a half a day with you." And he'd do that occasionally.

0:18:56.8

So when he'd do that, well, then, I'd talk him into resettin' a trap for him or make a new set and it might be a week or two before I'd see him, but he'd say, "Oh, you missed that one," or whatever. He'd give me a rundown of what I caught or if I didn't or whatever. And so when I was 18, when Mother and them sold out and moved to California, he come by and said they were gonna start six-month program in Coal [?] County. He said that I might be able to get on, because they did hire 'em at 18. Mother said, "Oh, we're goin' to California, and if you tell him about that, he won't go." I said, "I don't need him to stay here. I won't even go out there." [?] Well, unfortunately I went, but I didn't stay. But anyway, he didn't say one word about it or anything.

So I come back then, and 'course Granddad had done carpentry work and I'd worked some with him on that, some of his jobs, and Daddy had done some carpentry work along in his earlier days, and I'd helped him on a few little deals. I'd just pick up whatever job I could, carpenter work, mostly labor, just diggin' foundations or whatever.

(You were a kid.)

Yeah. ___ that idiot ___. [laughs] Anyway, then I got tired of that and me and a couple of my friends went out to Plains, Texas, where Dad and Granddaddy built a grain elevator for some people named Krausie [?] and worked for them before the wheat harvest started and then through the wheat harvest. I didn't even know how to drive a tractor. We always farmed with teams. But he taught me how to drive his tractor and I finally got to operatin' his combine. And before we left there, and part of the time I run the elevator that come in and dumped the wheat and keep the record of it and put it in whatever silo he wanted it in, put it in the elevator.

0:21:07.4

So I just kept trappin' in the wintertime, even when I went to work at the Navy, the naval ammunition depot there at Macalester. That's my first government job. I hired in there as a laborer and I thought—they asked me where I wanted to work, and I said, "What's open?" They said, "Well, we're redoin' some underground cable and we're gonna rewire the fire alarm system

and everything and telephone,” and I said, “Yeah, that sounds good.” So they signed me to the electric shop. I thought, “I’m gonna learn somethin’ now, I’m gonna learn electrical work.”

Well, the three months I was on that idiot ___ again!

(Digging holes again?)

[laughs] ‘Cause it was all underground, and I didn’t realize that. But then before it was over with, well, I—they let me work with the inside electrician. I didn’t ever work with the plumbers any, but I worked with the fire alarm crew, telephone crew, the inside electricians and mostly with the power crew. I climbed poles and worked above ground. A lot of ‘em wouldn’t climb the towers to relamp ‘em, so every Friday, me and another one of the guys, he drove the pickup and we’d run the street lights and put in the bulbs that was burned out, and I climbed the water towers and put in the bulbs that was burned out in them.

0:22:49.0

So I was drafted after I’d work there a little more than six months. I went for 21 months. I took my engineer training and went with the engineers, I took my basic training with the 5th at Fort Lewis, Washington. Then they transferred me to the 31st and I took advanced training in explosives, layin’ mine fields, and ___ mine fields and workin’ booby traps.

(That’s dangerous.)

And disarmin’ stuff like that. Since I drove a truck some in my past experience, all of a sudden I got to be the truck driver, and of course I hauled a load of explosives all the time, a trailer load of explosives, because we’d stay out there between Russia and Germany as occupation troops, and we had our bomb ___ set up. We already had—any area that we had to either lay mine fields, either anti-tank or anti-personnel mine fields, that was already set up. Those bridges that had—I called ‘em ovens [?]. They had steel doors built in the abutments in the bridges and you’d always predetermine how much explosives it’d take, and when you had an alert, you’d see how long it took you to get to that bridge and set it up, and then all you had to do was lock it up in there, and if you needed to blow it, it was gone.

(Where were you in Germany?)

We was headquartered at Giessen, Germany.

(I went to Munich for three years. My husband was in the military, and we were stationed down there in ___.)

Then they extended me three months, and that was the longest three months of my life, I thought. I was countin’ the days to come home.

0:24:52.2

(You didn’t like Germany?)

Oh, I liked Germany, but of course, see, I’d just got married just prior to bein’ drafted, and then I went through basic and then Janice come out and stayed there with me, and then of course I went

through advanced training. And because they mobilized the 5th and they was short, went up to full strength, so they transferred me back to the 5th, and the whole 5th battalion went to Germany. I was scheduled to go to Korea, but I went to Germany. So that's where that—

So I come back and I went up to get my job again, and they said, "We're not hirin'. We're layin' off." I said, "Well, I need about a month." Janice bought a little old place out there out west of town, south, down there, and I wanted to do some work on it. I hadn't been paid for about two months or so, had all my mustering-out pay and stuff, and I thought I could get by and kind of patch that up. I said, "How 'bout comin' back to check with you in about a month?" "Yeah."

I waited about a month and he said he still wasn't hirin', so I told my brother-in-law about it, and 'course he'd been in World War II and he said, "Go down and talk to—" What was his name? I thought of it the other day when I was talkin', and now I can't recall his name. He was in charge of some of the government affairs here at Otonka [?]. It's one of those things. But anyway, he said, "Let me write you a letter." He wrote a letter that said, "This veteran has returned and served honorably and you're not rehiring him, you're reinstating him." He said, "Take that to personnel. If they turn you down, ask to see the commanding officer." Well, I got as far as them turnin' me down and I asked to see the commanding officer, and they wanted to know why, and I said, "I've got a letter here from—" Barney was his first name, Barney—Goldfield. Barney Goldfield. They said—so I guess they took the letter and read it to him, and he told 'em to tell me to show up Monday morning and go back to work.

0:27:18.1

Well, they put me out in the ___ area, and I was workin' in the primer room, where you prime and stencil the shells, and then they went to the powder room and then on down the line to loadin' 'em. And some of the boys from the electric shop, most all of 'em had been in World War II and they had come in and had all veterans. I saw one of 'em and I said, "I'd like to come back to the electric shop." So they said, "All right, we'll see what we can do." So they talked to their boss there, D.A. Smith, and about two or three days they called me back up to the electric shop. So that's some of the things that I said beforehand got into later workin' there. So I worked there I guess about three years or somewhere a little better, be about two and a half, three years. Then they had a layoff. And I'd taken some exams and stuff to try to be promoted to electrician helper and went to some classes and then I'd worked with 'em and learned a little stuff.

So anyway, I got my 30-day notice. And so I put in an application with the Fish and Wildlife Service. It kind of boiled down to, the day I was to go out, on Friday, when I started to clock out, D.A. Smith was the head of the electric shop, he come by and said, "Just clock out and come back Monday morning as usual and don't say anything." I didn't know what it was about. I told him I'd come back Monday morning, and he said, "We've got you transferred into a different department, so you didn't get the layoff." I said, "What is it?" He said, "Electrician helper. You passed all your paperwork and we got you set up." I said, "What about McKay? He was here 'fore I was, and he's a veteran." And I said, "I don't ___ even know I need the job." And he said, "When we asked you to do somethin', you've done everything you was paid for, and he'd say, 'I'm not paid for that,'" and he said, "We're gonna get fewer and fewer people, so we need smaller crews, and people are gonna have to do things sometimes they're not paid for. You work anywhere we put you, and everybody's happy with you, and that's the kind of employees we want." I said, "Well, ___ I'll stay." And he said, "Well, you're the bottom man on the rung of the ladder. You might be here quite some time, and next cut, if it's in the electrician helper, you

might be out the door.” And I said, “Well, I put in an application with Fish and Wildlife Service. I don’t know if I’ll get in or not, but if I have a chance, I’m gonna take it.” And he said, “I understand, I don’t blame you.”

0:30:23.4

A.E. Gray, I guess, was the first—I never worked under him, but I got a letter from him back some time. He was first—they called him district agent, because he was over Oklahoma and Kansas and they called it district instead of—but Bill Nelson come in just about that time. They made Gray retire. They let him work till he was 72 and then they said, “That’s it.” So he retired and we got Bill Nelson in as district agent. They come by, ‘cause they had—Fay Hardin [?] was doin’ the wildlife management animal damage control there on the Navy base at Macalester, and they come by to visit him, and I just happened to run on to ‘em and got to know Bill Nelson. But I never said a word about my application, and he never asked me nothin’ about it or anything, just waited about 15 minutes. About a week or so after that, well, Charlie got in touch with me. Charlie was the district supervisor for this area, Charlie Rose that I told you I knew as a child, and he asked me if I still wanted to go to work for him, and I said sure. Because I told ____, if I go, I’m gonna take the job. But I’ll give you a two-week notice. He understood. I said, “When do you want me to go to work?” He said, “You go to work tomorrow.” I said, “I can’t.” He said, “What do you mean, you can’t?” I said, “I promised them I’d give ‘em a two-week notice.” He said, “That’s all right, two weeks, three weeks, whatever. We’ll hold it open.” I said OK, and I went in and I told him that I was transferring. I just transferred—of course I’d got set up as career employee after you work three years, and I was payin’ federal retirement, so I just transferred over to Fish and Wildlife Service.

0:32:39.6

I had some—I’ll get to that later, but anyway, it—

(So your title was district agent? Trapper?)

Animal hunter.

(That was your title? I never heard that.)

And then a lot of people just called it government trappers.

(I’ve heard government trappers.)

Anyway, to get back to my thought, I started to work for ‘em, and it—I can’t remember now, I had it goin’, and forgot what I left out. I know I left a deal out from when I said I went to work when I was 18, when Mama—he never did tell me that until after I went to work for him. He said, “You could probably have got on when you was 18.” See then I was 20. That had been two years before that. That would have been ‘40, I guess, ‘cause I was born in 1930, 7th of April. That’s when I started to work, worked with them. And then after I’d worked for ‘em about three months, they sent one of the guys down, we didn’t have a phone in those days, you’d get a letter or word of mouth, and they had one of their men from the electric shop that I’d worked quite a bit with, the name was Smoky Lawson, Smoky was his nickname. They sent him down, and I wasn’t there, told Janice if I’d come back how much raise I’d get, of course. I ____ when thought I was gonna go out, but I got a little raise right there when I stayed on that next week, and then in

just a little bit I got another raise, and then another one right there in a short length of time. But I didn't stay with 'em, because I asked Charlie, I said, "I want a job that's secure, 'cause I've got a family to feed, I've got bills to pay." And he said, "Well, if you work for ____, you may not work in ____ County, but as long as you make 'em happy, you'll have a job somewhere. You don't have to worry about politics." Well, that was wrong. It wasn't in the hirin' and firin', but it was in—to some degree, you know, it's there, but not like it is on some of the state like it used to be, where—you know how it is.

0:35:17.3

Anyway, I learned pretty quick on that part of it. As far as the hirin' and firin', it was fine, but where you worked and the politics, that had a bearing on it.

(What did you do during your job?)

Well, it started out all week trappin' what was classified as predators, which only included coyotes and bobcats here. You didn't do any work on any furbearers or anything.

(No bear?)

No, right here just coyotes or they called 'em wolves. They was all wolves. That's one reason when we got into havin' fair exhibits, and I was lookin' for a picture of ours that we set up, I worked the fair, they moved me up to the northeast part of the state, they started workin' these little county fairs, and they would—they was tryin' to educate the people, you know, and we would save the pelts of different animals and hang 'em up there. They wanted me to set one up at Tulsa, and I think I worked that, I don't know, 12 or 15 years, I can't remember now which. You'd go in and, say, that would start by noon on Friday and go through that weekend and the next week and the next weekend, and then you'd tear out on Monday. And we tried to save—a lot of 'em say, "Oh, that was a wolf I saw, 'cause it was black." Or "That was a wolf I saw because it was more yellow than the rest of them," goin' by color phases than by anything else. We'd try to show some different phases. "Now, just because it's a different color don't mean it's a different animal. It's either a hybrid or—" Whatever you thought it was or what was involved was what you'd try to explain. And so that helped a whole lot to try to get 'em off the wolf deal. You see a wolf compared to coyotes, I don't have to tell you what the difference is.

(I've seen them in Yellowstone, and they're big.)

We had a project goin' where we collected all the skulls. It was in the wintertime, and it turned warm. My job was to go around and pick 'em up. I had a whole back end of a pickup loaded with skulls in the back of a plastic bags and maggots runnin' up and down, and I had to stay at a motel, and I tried to park my pickup ____ I had ____ wagon with the government sign on it and everything. [laughs] But anyway, they took them and cleaned 'em up some way or another, and they got pretty good results out of that as far as determining what crosses is what. 'Course they went through them to indicate more coyote or more coyote dog or whatever or wolf or what. So they found out that there wasn't as many, might be some hybrids involved one way or another, but not any wolves ____ in here.

0:38:35.3

(They say that most of the wolves were gone by the 1920s, don't they?)

Well, we caught some of the Texas red wolves in this area when I started work, occasionally, and we caught some crosses. But I think the red gray timber wolf was pretty much gone. The other one was in short supply, but everyone called them wolves 'cause that's what was initially here, years ago, more than coyotes. The coyote moved in. But it's been interesting. I've enjoyed every bit of it. I put in a lot of long hours, a lot of hours I didn't get paid for. But I've enjoyed it, so I mean, you got paid in other ways.

(Did you like working with the ranchers?)

I did.

(How did they call you? Did they call and say a rancher needs help? Did the ranchers call you directly?)

Called me direct, or wrote me and told me what their problem was. And after I got up in that area up there, well, it was difficult to keep up with everything that was ongoing up there because of the fact that we didn't have enough personnel and I got pretty well known. My wife, she was a secretary, but she didn't get paid for it, and she says to this day, I never got started runnin' and answerin' that phone. 'Course we put in our own phone eventually, had to have it. I don't know what—I tell you, here's an old map I picked up, and I marked it for some reason, but I can't tell you what it was. It was either we had some animal control to do and was to meet somebody to start it or somethin', and it was layin' there in the drawer and I looked at it, but I picked it up to show you.

(You had this whole territory?)

No—well, yeah, at one time I worked half the state as PDFA. But the half—well, it went this way, they finally changed it, but I worked the northern half. Let me see where we're at here. I was—I started out here at Atoka, and then they transferred me to Vinita, here's where I transferred to, to Sin____. The only man between—they hired another man here, and they moved me. We had one in Pittsburgh County, ____ McAlester, and we had one, Bowring, in Osage County, over here. So all this just about from Washington County, Tulsa County, down to at least—well, even I come down in here and worked some. But I had that whole corner that I was the only man there when I first moved up there.

(Two or three hundred miles? More than that? That's a lot of driving.)

Yeah, it was about—well, it would be—oh, I don't remember, less than 50 miles to the Kansas border, and sometimes I worked over on the edge of Kansas and sometimes on the edge of Arkansas, and then I worked quite a bit in Kansas when we was doin'—where they'd send me up there at different times, 'cause it took in Kansas and Oklahoma district. But if I worked in Arkansas with somebody that was involved over there in one of their programs.

(What kind of farms were they? Cattle? Damage to calving? Sheep? Goats?)

Well, we had mostly to start with, it'd be farm flocks, small farm flocks, chickens, pigs, goats, sheep, or calves. A lot of times it'd be, "They're catchin' my chickens, they're catchin' my

pigs.” You didn’t have as much losses in calves, seemed like, it’d be more smaller stuff. Also, a lot of people had goats to help control brush or whatever, and they were killin’ the goats. We worked in regard to that, mostly. And then after people started gettin’ better jobs and movin’ to town, just the ones that had small acreages moved out closer to their work, and then where they had the bigger ranches, where you got rid of all the little stuff that the coyotes generally fed on, then they started more on calves, especially on first calf heifers, where they would have maybe 50 or 500 in a pasture by themselves. They have more problems calvin’ and also have more problems with—coyotes, they’re gonna take advantage of what’s easily available, and heifers, they lose some of ‘em by just havin’ a calf hang up and they’ll eat on them. They kill the young calves because the mothers, some of ‘em, they’d leave ‘em and wouldn’t protect ‘em. Didn’t have as much trouble where you had older cows that would calve easier and would protect their calves. I worked a lot of pretty heavy calf loss areas in regard to heifers and stuff like that.

0:44:31.5

And then we got in to where we had the turkeys up in the northeast part, where they turned ‘em out on the range. I’ve had several different people that was raisin’ anywhere from 10,000 to 20,000, 30,000 turkeys, and they’d say they was turnin’ them on the range, but they’d just have, dependin’ on the number of flock acres, fives or six acres with a fence about so high and maybe a barbed wire or two over it, and soon as they got out of the brooder, they’d turn ‘em out there, and everything in world would start on ‘em when they was young, and then when they got about to market size, they’d have trouble with the coyotes. But you had problems with raccoons and stuff like that, small ones, fox. They had a lot of fox in there, red fox and gray fox both, when they was small. After they got bigger, it went more to the coyotes or the bobcats or somethin’ like that on the bigger turkeys. So we done a lot of that. That’s one of the toughest jobs. Over on the eastern side of Oklahoma, they had a lot of hunters, and they used a lot of ‘em for sport what they call fox hounds, wolf hounds, runnin’ dogs, they’d just go kick ‘em out and they’d run, run all night, and they’d go build a campfire and sit around and drink beer and tell lies, and then let the dogs come in when they would, or if they didn’t come in, pick ‘em up, and boy, they didn’t like trackin’. I broke in Delaware County, and I had more problems with them. They threatened me and everything else, but I didn’t—

0:46:20.5

(Did they kill livestock? Or they just ran?)

No, they wouldn’t—occasionally, cur dogs was ___ gettin’ involved in livestock, where you had a problem with the cur dogs and regular ol’ huntin’ dogs, once in a while you would have ___. They’d disturb ‘em runnin’ through ‘em and cause problems, or maybe scare ‘em and run ‘em through a fence, but they would be in pursuit of a coyote or somethin’ and run through the herd and get ‘em stirred up, more so than actually runnin’. The house dogs or the cur dogs, if you lived close to a little town, and they got to packin’ up goin’ out there, we had trouble out here on the ___ ranch when I worked with some dogs from town comin’ out. There’d just be all types of crazy dogs, and sometimes there might be a hound dog mixed in with that. They weren’t usin’ it for nothin’, they were doing it more for sport than somethin’ to eat. They’ll chew ‘em up. But you can tell the difference easy on dog damage and coyote damage if you know what you’re lookin’ for, just from the sign and the way they attack the animals.

(How did you approach it when the rancher called you and said, “I’ve got such-and-such happening”? What did you do? You went out to the ranch?)

I got the directions to his ranch and discussed it briefly with him on what his problem was and what he knew about it and made a date to go investigate and went out, met with him, through our conversation and what I'd seen, if it looked like it'd justify bein' worked, I'd get a release signed, go over what equipment we'd use or what he'd permit, if he'd permit usin' a trap line on his place or callin' or shootin', the whole works, documented it and had him sign it. We had a regular form for here, finally did. When I first start work we didn't. It evolved into that. And once that was—and told him if he was one of them type that wanted you to catch and release, we explained that we didn't do that, when it started killin' livestock, you're just movin' the problem to someone else, and we'd post it and we followed the rules and regulations on it and got him signed up. And then I would tell him what day I would be through with the place to where I could work him. And if he was havin' verified bad problems, once in a while, somebody they just want you to do a little preventive, then I'd slip him in ahead because he was havin' immediate problems. But most ____, I stayed right with him. It's like Janice said, that I started to tell you a while ago, she said, "I got started answerin' that phone, I was tryin' to work the garden, I come in and you've had 31 requests today." They was all the way from Muskogee County back to up in Washington County, probably 200 miles difference from one to the other the furthest apart, and it was anything from birds, coyotes, skunks, possums, or whatever, beaver. We went the whole gamut, bird roosting, squirrel genetics [?].

0:49:48.3

(So you did some urban stuff, too?)

Yeah. Yup. I didn't like that.

(I don't like dealing with skunk.)

I didn't mind that, it's just that—especially, now, if it was somethin' that you done right there on their property that you could set a live trap in the attic or somewhere right there where you didn't have to contend with the public as general, the outlying public, I didn't mind that. But the thing about it as far as where you was tryin' to trap beaver and be accessible to the public and tryin' to determine where you could set it or what you could use and protect the public, protect the pets, and to also put it out of the general public's sight to where they didn't take a picture, create a problem. I worked a place there on some of that ____ where they was tryin' to improve the runoff and they was establishing some areas where they could have some containment for the off-flow of water and everything, flood control project deal, and they had a big pond on the ____ part of the ranch. They had funnels where some water naturally drained into it and then they was workin' from there down, and beavers had got in there and they was burrowing into the dam, cutting some trees. They had built apartments all the way around it on the other private land. The city had bought this particular parcel through there. So I talked to their engineers. I got a request from the city, talked to the engineers.

0:51:39.6

We went out and looked at it, and I had visited with the main one, told him just verbally that we'd use Conibear traps and it wouldn't be live catchin' and move 'em, 'cause you'd just move 'em ____ anyway, so you was tryin' to reduce the population and work on the problem areas, and he agreed to it. So I knew that it was gonna be a situation because the apartments was right there where they could see us. But fortunately, out in the middle of it, up to where ____, there was a

sizeable island out there. I got the waders on, and they had that area open for public use to where they could fish around it or somethin'. They couldn't swim in it and they couldn't drive their vehicles on that property, they had to park in their parking lots there. But they could use it for just walkin' their dog or sightseein' or whatever. And I thought, "Well, we've got it posted and everything."

So anyway, I waded, and like about that much comin' over my waders. I mean, you had to tiptoe, and I was beginnin' to wonder if I would make it. But beavers mostly were burrowing into that island and stayin' out there on it, where there was a den. I set I think it was six or seven different Conibear traps in different burrows, and when I went back the next time, I had four beaver caught. I checked the next mornin', I go check 'em every day, 'cause I didn't want one floatin' up and it dead in the trap. So I tied 'em on a string and drug 'em across the—to where I could get 'em to my pickup and haul 'em off. I started just throwin' 'em back ____, and no, they'll get to stinkin' and some guy'll be investigatin'. I'll just haul 'em off to where I can dispose of 'em properly.

0:53:39.6

As I was loadin' 'em in the pickup, some gal was standin' out on the balcony, been watchin' me all the time, I knew she would. Oh, she saw them and she went to crowin' and hollerin', hollerin' about it. I just ignored her and went ahead and loaded up and left. But next time I come back, well, the office got a call that the Humane Society was involved.

(Oh, boy!)

I thought, "Well, here goes!" So they called me and I told 'em, I said, "Well, we're workin' request. You get hold of—" I told 'em who to get hold of, either the mayor, going up the line to wherever they wanted to go. It was done legal and we had a release on it. We was tryin' to keep 'em from burrowin' into that dam to the point where it might break and dump a bunch of water down that they didn't need below 'em. So anyway, that didn't help any.

Anyway, they filed a lawsuit. So we attended the court. It wasn't against me and ____ or the department, it was against the city. They was usin' the "cruel and inhumane" under some of the regular laws, you know. But what was kind of amusing about it, the old boy that was defendin'—that was the attorney for the Humane Society, well, he talked and talked and talked, and when we got toward time to break for lunch, they was tryin' to wind it up and the judge told him, he said, "I'm gonna give you a chance to summarize, but you better do it in about 45 minutes, 'cause we're gonna wind this up and go to lunch." So he was tellin' 'em about how bad it was, usin' animal parts for this and that, their general pitch on it.

0:55:42.0

So when he got done, he was that was it, you know, and the judge said, "Well, next time you defend somethin' like that you're usin' some of the rhetoric you used, I'd advise you to not wear leather shoes or a leather belt." [laughs] So anyway, they brought a Conibear trap in there, but they didn't know what it done or nothin'. They'd bought one somewhere. But when it neared the course of the trial, what had happened, they sent an old boy over there, and he packed in there with a boat and went out and tried, and they couldn't find the traps. They found signs, but they couldn't find my traps. So they couldn't prove from actually seein' it that there was ever a trap set there, and they couldn't prove that we even killed a beaver, because they didn't see a beaver.

Fortunately, they didn't get the old gal that seen me carryin' some of 'em out. They didn't know about her, I guess, or she hadn't been involved, but if she did, they didn't care to call her to testify, so they couldn't prove that there was anything cruel about it. And so they lost their case.

Then because he pulled in there, they fined him for tresspassin', and then he had a loaded pistol in there, and they wrote him up for carryin' a loaded gun in his vehicle and puttin' a boat on it. [laughs] What was funny about it and what was odd, too, the main one I talked to, he told me that ___ could sign a release and everything, and I went and set 'em and he did, and when they got puttin' the heat on him, he was city manager, and they got puttin' the heat on him, he said he didn't know we was goin' to kill 'em. He knew well. So next time they asked me—they wanted me to do some work around another area there, around one of their museums where they was extending some of the museum grounds, and that old boy ___, I've done a lot of work for him on some of the lakes that have worked on beaver control, knew him real well, and he was donatin' some land to 'em, and he was the one that requested it. They had some ponds there the beavers were really workin' on. He wanted to catch the beaver out, but he wanted to leave their lodge and everything there and try to preserve it some way another with walkin' trails and stuff through there to extend the museum grounds.

0:58:22.1

I told him, I said, when they run back and told me, I said, "No, I'm not gonna let the man down the line, I'm gonna talk to the top man and get his signature and makes sure he understands and he ain't got any wiggle room." So I called him and told him that I wanted a letter requesting, one in writin', from them, from the man that run backwards on me. They'd have to give it some consideration. So I told ___, I said, "I'll go look, but I won't be able to work at that until I get a letter from 'em," because I told him what had happened. I said, "I'm not gonna get my butt in a crack—my tail in a crack again over that." And so he says, "Well, I'll give 'em a call." So he give 'em a call and we was goin' out there. We was out there about a hour and forty-five minutes altogether, maybe two hours, by the time we looked at it and everything. About forty-five minutes after we got out of there, they hand-delivered that letter to me with the signature and everything. That's the kind of pull he had. So, you know, it ain't what you know, it's who you know. I never did have any more trouble with him runnin' backwards on me when I worked in Tulsa City, I done a lot of work in Tulsa City. I can tell you stories like that one after the other, but that's probably enough of that.

(No, this is—do you remember anything that was really funny, anything that was funny afterwards?)

1:00:02.2

Yeah, I can tell you a story that was funny to me, it might not be to you, kind of on some of the same lines with the Humane Society. We put an exhibit on in Osage County there at Tushka. We set it up. They wanted action, and they wanted some handouts, somethin' you could hand out, and they wanted the exhibit. We set it up. Well, we had gophers that you could put in a panel, have you ever seen that? They've just got about that much space between the glass and the back, and you—

(Oh, you see the burrow?)

Yeah, you'd see 'em diggin' the burrows and goin' down in there where they push the dirt down and it come out on top. 'Cause they clean the glass that they're pushin'. We'd always—about a week or two before we had the fair exhibits comin' up, well, we'd take those little Macabee traps and cut the points off of 'em and wrap tape around 'em and catch several gophers. We might catch 15 or 20. We had separate little compartment cages to put 'em in, and we had grass and we'd feed 'em carrots and stuff for moisture and ___ or some kind of grain and stuff and let 'em have a week or two to heal up if they was bruised or somethin'. We'd catch 'em alive. Some of 'em would pull out. You'd just ___ 'em about every 15 minutes to get out, 18 or 20 traps set, and just keep walkin' and get 'em out as quick as you could and put 'em in a container in the shade. 'Cause you'd put 'em all in one pen, they'd fight and one'd kill the other.

1:01:54.6

And then they'd heal up. So we would number 'em and set the cages under a table that was in front, had it draped with some kind of a cover, and we'd have the gophers in each cage and we'd start and we'd mark 'em. We had a marker that we put on there. We started with cage number 1. You'd put him in there and you'd let him dig, push all the dirt down and fix it up, you know, where he'd have to start on top. He'd dig until he got tired, and then he'd top that hole off and get down there and rest. When he'd do that, we'd watch him, some of 'em might work for an hour and a half. You never did know what their attitude was gonna be about their work ethic. So then you'd have to poke that down and watch him. You'd look and you'd poke it down with the stick, you'd keep workin' him up on his burrow, and then get him up there on top, and then you'd kind of get around, reach and grab him by the tail and pull him up like that and carry him back there and put him in his cage and then go ahead and tamp all that down, smooth it out, and go back and get the number two and put it in there. That was the process.

This black-headed gal about your age, she crossed over and eyeballed us. I'd watched her, 'cause I like to see what people—what's goin' on, I guess, you just get in the habit of that around the public or when you're workin' with the wildlife. But anyway, a friend that I knew, a lady, she come over and said, "You see that gal over there, dark-headed gal, kind of got long hair?" I said, "Yup." "That's watchin' us now?" I said, "Yup. I been seein' her watchin'." "Well, she's with the Humane Society. You watch her. Every time you change a gopher out, she makes a note. She's talkin' to someone over there and said that she's gonna watch you-all all day, you're just workin' that gopher to death, and she's just keepin' accurate how much time that gopher's havin' to work in there when you get up there and punch that down and put that gopher back in there." I said, "OK, I didn't know she was with the Humane Society, but thank you."

1:04:21.0

A little bit after, middle of the mornin', she came over and introduced herself, she was with the Humane Society. She said, "I'm keepin' an eye on you, and I think you're abusin' those animals." I said, "No, we're not abusin' 'em. We're stayin' accordin' to what we're expected to do to treat 'em right. We're not abusin' 'em." But I didn't go into any more explanation. I wanted to see how far she was goin' with it. "I'm watchin' now." I said, "That's all right. That's your opportunity and your privilege." She went back over there and I noticed she kept on, and then just about the middle of the evening, she probably had quite a bit of information down, she come back over and she said, "I'm gonna turn this in. That gopher has worked all day long and you won't give it hardly any rest. It'll quit and you'll punch that back down and get him out and get that back down, put him back in there," and oh, she started raisin' her voice and gatherin' a crowd.

Now, the funny part's comin' now, for me, it might not be for you. But anyway, after she got several people, they was wonderin' what was goin' on, you know how they hear it and start gatherin' in. They'd heard enough of it, and I said, that's when I started testin' her temper. I said, "Well, now, I'll tell you. You're right. We do punch that down. But we put another gopher in." No, no, no, she wouldn't go for that at all. "That's one gopher. You're not gonna pull that on me." And I said, "Well, I'll tell you, I'm gonna be honest with you. You know, when we get that gopher up by the tail?" We had a little old stick, just about so long, just a little old twig as big as your little finger, and you'd use it to kind of turn him to where when you'd reach down in there, you'd keep it from bitin' you. You get him by his tail and that way you can handle him and drop him in a separate cage. I said, "You know how we get him out, and then we'll punch that down and get it leveled out a little bit and I'll get back there behind the table where nobody can see me?" She said, "Yeah." I said, "Well, I got him like this. You see this little stick that we punch him with?" "Yeah." I said, "When I get him under that table, I ___ like that ___ put him in there, that rascal will work the next time!" [laughs]

(You're horrible!)

She hit the ceiling! I just let her explode. I said, "Come here, I want to show you." I brought her around there and I showed her the cages and I showed her how we fed 'em, I showed her the whole bit, and she was so embarrassed she walked and I never did see her any more. [laughs]

[laughs] Oh, God! Sounds mean!

But that ___.

1:07:22.3

Then another deal that was amusing to me, we was ___ on to Tulsa, and this guy that got out, I referred to him kinda hippie-like, he come by and he'd been by every day for five days in a row. He'd go through the same thing, and I tried to explain why we done it, this and that. So finally he come by, that last time he come by, well, I told him, I said, "Well, another reason that we try to control work, one of these days, the population is gonna reach a point that it you don't properly control wildlife, you're gonna have to make a decision at some point for people or for wildlife. So it may come a point you have to choose in regard to people and havin' food for them or their welfare or whatever. If it was like it was—" He kept saying, "The balance of nature." I said, "Nature ___ balanced. If you had the balance of nature, that would be good. But you're gonna have to move people out and have a vast area where nature can balance itself through starvation or whatever cycles it goes through. ___ balance it'll be high populations and then disease or somethin' hits 'em and it drops 'em down. But in order to do that, you're gonna have to move people out. If you're gonna consider people and nature together, well, maybe your deal might work, but you're gonna have to displace a bunch of people and just leave it to the animals. That's when nature takes its course accurately." "Well, that's a good idea." I said, "If people gets to heavy, we may have to start killin' people instead of animals, to kind of keep it balanced both ways. That's the way it works." "Yeah, that's all right." I said, "Are you sure?" And he said, "Yeah. I've been tryin' to find people that would be willin' to give their life up to save a coyote." I said, "Are you sure you'd be willing to go that way?" "Yeah." I said, "Would you give your life up to save a coyote?" I kind of lied to him, I said, "Where's that pad I'm puttin' names down on?"

What's your name and address where we can get hold of you if we decide we have to eliminate you to save a coyote?"

([laughs])

1:09:55.8

He turned and walked off and I never did see him again.

([laughs] That's terrible!)

Those things are amusing to me, but they wouldn't be to some people.

(That's funny!)

I had another deal like that _____. This lady, she was with the Humane Society. She owned a pretty good-sized ranch, her folks did and she'd inherited it. This boy from Inola [?], he had calves on it, a cow-calf operation. She come out there and he was actually losin' calves to coyotes. He'd called me and I'd set traps on it and I'd posted it, and she come out there seen my posted signs, and she called me. She was goin' to file charges on me for trappin' out there on her place without permission. And I said, "He's got a lease, and he signed a release on it." "I want them traps out of there." I said, "I'll call the office and tell 'em of your complaint. I'll also get hold of—" I believe Dyer [?] was his last name, I'm not sure. If I remember correctly, they lived there at Inola, and I called him and talked to him and he said, "I've done a year lease on it with the option to renew." I told him what she said. He said, "I ain't got any place to go with my cattle, but I can't let 'em eat my calves up." He had verified that he'd lost three calves and suspected another two, but three for sure. I'd had some traps set for a little while and I'd caught five coyotes and I'd use 'em kind of as a draw station, I'd put 'em off just a little ways from where my traps were set but close enough that if any older coyotes come through they was—if the wind was right, it would attract them and they'd come in and I wouldn't have to set as quite as many traps.

1:11:42.7 End file 1-3.

File 2

0:00:00.0

But anyway, I had told him about it, so she had called back and I told her, I said, "Well, you just had _____." I done talked to _____ Peterson, the state director, and he said, "_____, just tell her we'll take it to court." She said, "Well, what time are you gonna check your traps," and I told her, I said, "I'll be out there in the morning." She said, "What time?" I said, "Why do you want to know what time for?" She said, "I want to meet you out there." I said, "Well, I'll be out there at 8 o'clock." She said, "Well, could you wait till about 9 o'clock? I'll be out there at 9." I said, "Yeah, I can wait on you."

So I got up and went out there. I got up and I left early because I wanted to check my traps and make sure everything was all right, I didn't have somethin' that she might take of picture of that I didn't want in the papers. I come back and had to wait about 45 minutes till she come. She had her husband. And I took—I don't know if you've seen it or not, but they finally published a

book, it was a pretty decent book, it would show you the difference in the—and a lot of the pictures was in the cover. Have you seen it?

(On the traps?)

No, damage.

(Oh, yeah, ___ Wade [?] did that, Texas A&M? Yeah, I've got a copy somewhere.)

I took that, and so when she come, she had her husband with her. We went through the discussion. She said, "He ought to just dry lot them cows." I said, "Why would he be payin' you to lease out this place if he could just dry lot them? He'll bring 'em in sometimes when he finds a calf young, bring him in and leave it up a day or two to give a calf a chance to get up and get on its feet, but some of 'em ___ or somethin', he's got to have a grassroots cattle." So her husband was settin' there listenin'. I started showin' her through that book, and I got to this place where the cow was down and I know what had happened, they'd ate in on her while she was birthin', you know how that looks. I asked her for it, showed her that, I said, "You have any children?" "Yeah." I said, "Well, that's good. I guess you remember every time one of 'em was born, remember all about it? I'm gonna show you a picture here," and I showed her that one. "Now, how would you feel if you was layin' out there somewhere in a pasture and you had trouble havin' your child and here comes somethin' and eat in on you like that while you was layin' there?" Well, that got her. I could tell I was gettin' through to her.

0:02:50.4

Anyway, she didn't say much, but she started seein' the cow's side of it, the rancher's side, losin' the calf and the cow, too, wind up havin' to kill the cow or butcher it or somethin', whatever they decided to do. So then she wanted to go see my traps. And I told her, "All right." I went through there, and it was kind of cool weather. It was late in winter, early spring. The coyotes I'd put out there, even though the first night of cold had been about a week earlier, they hadn't started smelling or anything that much, because it had been cool enough. I walked her along there. She said, "Where's your traps?" I said, "This one's settin' out there." She said, "I can't see it." I said, "A couple of them are hid. There's one right there." We got down a little further, and she said, "You got another?" "Yup, there's one right there." I told her that's the way all of 'em were, they set down through there, just set for coyotes, the prevailing wind and everything. She said, "Oh, that's bad. Them homemade traps, somebody could step in 'em and get caught." I said, "Well, there's always that possibility, I guess, but likely as not I've had cattle step on 'em and I've caught very few cows or calves, but it happens once in a while. A person's foot's bigger than a calf's foot, and most ___ traps, you don't trip 'em till you lift your weight off it.

Oh, no, she just didn't believe that. I said, "Well, I'll show you. I'm walkin' along here," and I'm walkin' along down in through there, you know how you do, puttin' a lot of emphasis on it, and I said, "See, right there's a trap." And I stepped in it, and you can feel it when it trips. I stand on it and I yell, "Oh, I'm caught, I'm caught! It's killin' me." I made a big deal like that. And I said, "Watch as I walk out." And I walked out like that, and the trap snapped behind me. I said, "That's generally what happens." Well, that impressed her, and that's the way that happens. She said, "Does it hurt when you catch 'em?" I said, "Well, yeah, it probably hurts some, yeah, but after awhile it might not be quite so bad after it's been a while."

0:05:13.8

So then she says, “Let me see how that feels.” And said, “Well, all right, you want to see how it feels.” I set the trap back, and that loose jaw, instead of steppin’ in the—pullin’ the trigger, she started tryin’ to stick her foot under it, and I said—I had my feet on the springs, and I had to set there. I said, “No, you’ve got to stick your foot like you’re steppin’ in between the jaws.” She took her toe and she stuck it down like that, and when she mashed the springs down, I had my weight on both the springs, and I just eased up on it where it wouldn’t snap, it would just hold her. She stood there and said, “Well, that’s not so bad.” I just kept ____, just ignored her. “Well, yeah, after—you can feel a little bit more pressure.” I said, “Yeah, you probably would. You probably wouldn’t even feel it so much.” I kept talkin’ to her. I don’t know, she stayed in there, not a long time, but longer than I thought she would have. She said, “Would you get this off my foot? I believe it’s gonna start hurtin’.” I said, “Yeah, I can get it off,” so I stepped on the springs. I said, “Now, is your foot broke or anything?” “No.”

Only thing she said after that, “Well, I can understand needin’ to control them, but you need to put bigger signs warnin’ the public.” I said, “What kind of sign you’re talking about?” Well, it had a gate big enough for a vehicle to drive through, and she wanted one two-thirds as big as that gate, somethin’ like that hangin’ on, but wider and everything, where you’d see it 10 miles—hangin’ right there.

(It was private land, wasn’t it?)

Yeah, private land. I said, “We’re not supposed to be in here unless you’ve given permission anyway.” “Well, they just need to see it.” That was the end of it.

0:07:12.1

(That’s right, you did a lot of PR work, a lot of work with people?)

Oh, you have to.

(Did you ever have anybody confront you out in the field?)

Yeah.

(Try and take your traps and destroy them?)

Oh, I’ve had them steal ‘em. But I just ____, and sometimes I didn’t find ‘em, but most generally I did. A lot of times it’d be kids or somethin’ like that. Sometimes it would be grown people, and they’d generally throw ‘em in a pond or somethin’. I had that happen one time, some guys that generally run their dogs in that area, they got mad and put it down there, and I had—it was a playground that had an old female coyote ____ and three pups, they come in there. That’s the only traps they found, the one coyotes’ den. I guess they released the coyotes. I never did find out what they done on them. I guess they released them and throwed my traps in the pond there. I found out who was in there, and I knew of both of ‘em. I wasn’t acquainted—I was partially acquainted with one of ‘em. So this old boy lived four or five miles from there that was involved in it, and I went by and asked him. “Yeah, we was in there.” I said, “You seen coyotes in traps?” “No, we didn’t see anything.” And I said, “You-all was the only one that was in there, I’ve got

some traps goin'. I know some of 'em had coyotes in 'em, but I don't know what happened to them." He didn't know nothin' about it.

0:08:57.0

So anyway, I was trappin' on Bo McAlester's [?] place, he had a sheep herd. The old boy that had traps on those had had some trouble with some calves, and Bo's was just across the river, a half or three-quarters of a mile from the other guy's fence line toward the west. Every time I'd go to check the traps, I'd go by and ask him, two or three times—I might let two or three days go by, and then I'd go back and ask him again. Finally he said, "I'm gettin' tired of lyin' to you, I'll tell you where them traps are at. They're in that pond just as you go out there." So I found them traps.

Another time I was trappin' beaver and had a beaver in a trap, and these two kids, I knew these kids, I seen their tracks there, they'd rode their bicycles down to the creek and parked there on the bridge and they just went down the bridge. I tracked 'em and I measured the size of their foot on the shoe, so I knew they were small kids, teenage kids who didn't have a very, very big foot. I told the landowner, I said, "Well, them kids have been down there." He didn't know who it was. He said, "We didn't see 'em down there." I said, "They're ridin' two bicycles. I tracked 'em back up the bridge and seen their bicycle tracks. I followed 'em and I seen where one got the knobbies on the bike and went on up the road and the other one turned off at that second house up there, and the other one turned south and went into a yard there." So he said, "I know who they are. I'll talk to their folks when they come in. What are you gonna do about it?" I said, "I ain't gonna file any charges or anything, I just want to get my trap back and teach 'em not to run off with my equipment." So he talked to both the parents of them, was talkin' about that other ___ down there who had just went through a divorce and everything and he didn't want to upset her, and he thought it would be better for him to visit her. So he basically went in there and got the trap and got it back and there was no trouble ___.

(It probably freaked them out that you found them.)

0:11:27.4

I guess so. Anyway, I've had—I can tell you a bunch of ___.

(What kind of traps did you like to use?)

Most of the time I used Newhouse, double-spring, #3 and #4.

(Did you ever modify them?)

Never. I never really had to what you'd call modify 'em that much. Always when I got 'em I would set 'em and make sure that the pan was level and the height I wanted and try to tighten it up to whatever tension or strength I wanted to take to trip it, and be sure that the springs didn't hang. Newhouse made a good trap, and as long as you'd adjust it properly on the ___ and everything, there wasn't much you had to do to it. It worked well and it lasted well. You'd use it several years and it would continue without losin' the temper in the springs and such as that.

(Did you use the tranquilizer tab?)

No, I never did. Never did try that. I know some of 'em that have, but I just never did do any research or anything with that.

(What about lures? Did you make any kind of lures on your own?)

Yup, when we first started all through my trappin', I used some commercial lures, but most ___ I had—I liked the ones I used as well, and sometimes got better results out of 'em. I've stayed with natural scent mostly.

(What kind of natural scent?)

Urine. I built a case that you could catch urine from the coyotes, bobcats, whatever would save it and use it for a lure. And then on my M44s or coyote-getters, I used a combination. I've used some different things, but I've mostly tried to grind it up to where it'd make a paste. I'd use the beef liver and melt and ___ and I'd try to put just a small amount of beaver castor in it, not very much, because I'd ___ on it sometimes, and sometimes they'd roll on it and then ___, but I'd keep it in—I had my own refrigerator, I'd just keep it in it, take it out of the deep freeze and when it started thawin', just keep it in the refrigerator where I could use it fresh. I didn't like to use it when it got so rank, but I have used some of it.

0:14:43.0

(Did you ever do any aerial hunting?)

Yes.

(That's kind of scary, isn't it? Hanging out of the helicopter, or was it an airplane?)

I've done quite a bit of that. It was a helicopter.

(Do you think that's more effective than just bein' on the ground?)

Well, you cover more area, and you can have—for the time you spend, you can reduce the population, and quite often, if you happen to be where they've made a kill, get the ones that was actually involved in it, if you're there, like, it happened one day and they come back and feed on it and you're there the next day. So yeah, it has its place. Another thing it helps where you've got so much area that it's hard to actually give the proper control. You're likely to convince 'em that you can come in and sometimes just by reducing, well, say, just before denning season, if you come in and you take some of the parents that was denning in there, the females, especially, why, you reduce the amount of the population and control them that way ahead of time before they start killing to feed the pups. In some areas where it would be more of a problem tryin' to use some other control method because of political pressure, it might be accepted better. So you balance—I always try to balance with my control attempts with the general attitude of the public and ___.

0:16:28.8

(I understand you'd gone to Utah. Did you do some work for the research center out there?)

No, in Utah, when we went up there, we went up for just a briefing on the results of some of the studies they had made. I went there three different years.

(Frank Knowlton was at the Logan field station there.)

Yeah, I met him.

(Have you done any special projects, like for endangered species work?)

No, I never—not any projects, but we had to take some classes in the black-footed ferret to where we had to—when we worked in Kansas, we done prairie work in Kansas, we had to determine that there was or wasn't ferrets in the prairie dog town when we poisoned it. So I don't know that much about that, to be honest about it. But I did take the training, and I knew enough about what I was supposed to be lookin' for, I could tell. Mostly likely. I felt pretty secure in sayin', yeah, there was or there wasn't.

(You're lucky you missed out on the wildlife disease thing that's startin' to go through right now. We're doing a lot of work on that avian flu that's coming in.)

That's kind of scary.

(We're all gettin' trained.)

It's just one thing that you're just gonna have to deal with. There's no way of stoppin' it. It's gonna be here eventually if it gets in the right bird population. But it might not be as bad. It might not be a full-blown thing. It might not be as bad as we can imagine it might be. But it won't be good.

0:18:21.6

(Have you noticed a change in the trapping since you've started, what the guys are doing now?)

They don't know as much about wildlife, the new ones, they definitely don't. That's one thing—on anything you do, if you know more about the animal you're hunting or trapping or pursuing in any way, its total habits and the type of terrain it requires and not only its feeding habits but where it actually lays up during the day, the more you know about it and understand, the better acquainted you get with the species you're workin' on, the easier it is to trap it. I learned that when I was trappin' mink. I trapped mink and very seldom used bait. I just called it a blind set or trail set, learn to set your traps where they was comin' along. I done that to avoid catchin' 'coon or something I didn't want in it, because 'coon's worth 75 cents or a dollar, and mink was sellin' for about \$30, \$20 to \$30. So you'd mess up gettin' a mink for a 50-cent 'coon at that time. And it works the same way with coyotes. Coyotes don't get trap-shy, they get bait-shy. So sometimes you just switch the bait and they'll go for it.

(Were there any critters that you couldn't catch?)

Never have found one if I stay with it. If I didn't get him, I'd stay with it till I did, one way or the other. Either calling him or ____, [laughs] ____ and shoot him or something. As far as I know, I'm not braggin', I'm just sayin', 'cause as long as he was killin', you had to get him. I mean, I had a

guy one time that me and him had some words over there, too, and I was doin' all I could, and that was back when you'd use drop baits and coyote-getters and ___ or anything. I think he had 25 or 26,000 turkeys. Every time the coyote would come in, he'd kill five or six, sometimes he'd bunch some up and have some. He called me, his name was Johnny Jordan [?]. He lived in Delaware county, Whitewater [?]. I worked his place two or three years in a row because we had a country program that—that's one of the worst programs you'd try to work and keep it goin', the farmer, the rancher, the individual applies a certain amount of money to it, and it was out of the Farm Bureau, and they was sponsoring it, but some people put in \$100, some \$50, some \$25, and this particular person, he was puttin' in—of course, I knew the president of the Farm Bureau, Henry Poulsen[sp.?], and he'd tell me how much everybody had put in so I'd have a better feel for how much the individual thought the program was worth. But Jordan put in \$5 for a year. And it didn't make any difference if they put in 50 cents or what, they wanted you to work their place some time durin' the year.

0:21:47.9

And some of that put in didn't need you to work the entire year. You was workin' over here for the neighbors, and if you thinned 'em out or caught 'em, and I've had him say, "Yeah, I was hearin' those coyotes howlin', but since you got over here on So-and-so's ranch and been there a while, I don't hear 'em or see 'em any more. But they're still there. You got to get over here and get some stuff on my place." I'd say, "No, they're not here, I caught the coyotes that were usually in here, the way they travel and feed, over on the neighbor's place." "Well, I put my money in, I want you to trap them." All right, I'd go set somethin' for a few days. "Well, I don't think they're here, didn't catch 'em." Sometimes they would ___ that kind of way, but I'd try to appease 'em, 'cause we had to keep them puttin' money in. It's like keepin' your customers happy.

So back to Jordan's, I even was goin' over there, I'd get up and go over there and be there at daylight and watch for 'em, I'd go run my equipment on the other places and come back before dark and set there till midnight and try to catch 'em comin' in. And you're just comin' in, it wasn't real regular, and you'd say, well, it'd be at night, 'cause he was in five nights ago, it might be three nights between, it might be five nights between, you know how that it, but every time he'd come in, he'd kill more than he'd eat.

So anyway, I dropped baits out, I set steel traps, and I changed the baits and I done everything that I could, and I hadn't got him. I went over there one morning and I'd been up till about 1 o'clock that mornin', but anyway, I went back early. "He was back in here last night." I said, "He wasn't back in here last night. He might have been back this morning. 'Cause I was here till 1 o'clock and he hadn't come in." "He killed five more turkeys." I said, "I'm doin' the best I can." "Well, for all the good you're doin', you might as well pull your equipment." I said, "I can stay with it. I'll get him eventually. I won't give it up till I get him. But it won't take me but about 30 minutes and I can pull this and give it back to you. I'll give you \$5 back." "Oh, that ain't what I meant." I said, "Well, I hoped it wasn't, but that's the way I took it."

0:24:09.0

So anyway, lo and behold, next time he come in, I had him. I caught him in a trap. And it stopped his killin', I got the one that was doin' it. And from then on, till they quit lettin' us use the coyote-getters, outlawed the coyote-getters, I just told 'em, I said, "I can't work the area I'm workin'." They wanted me to work it a six-month program, that's what they had in Delaware

County, and I said, "I can't get to everybody usin' steel traps. I just can't do it." With the coyote-getters, you wouldn't have to run them every day or every other day. You'd set 'em and if you wouldn't produce 'em, you were waitin' for 'em to drift in, you'd run 'em once a week or somethin' like that. With traps, you've got to run 'em regular. But he put in \$25 every year after that, as long as we had the program.

(So you made an impression on him?)

I guess it did. I was fixin' to make the impression on him.

(I was talking to one of the trappers up in Minnesota, and he was dealing with a turkey farmer that lost 300 birds in one night from wolves. They just started killing, just started grabbing them. It took him a couple days, but he got that wolf.)

Before I got that one, I was after it for almost a month.

(He said it took a while to think about how to do it, but he got him finally.)

The thing about it is, if it was country, you couldn't track 'em back to where they was comin' from. I knew he was comin' from quite a ways, and that was kind of rocky, gravelly, and with vegetation, they just—the only place you'd see it once in a while would be a dust track or somethin', where the cattle had been, a trail or road. And it was difficult to know where they was comin' from. I tried callin' and either I wouldn't get in the right area to call him or whatever, but I never did get a chance at him till I actually caught him, but I knew that I'd get him eventually. But when they get right there at the area where they're goin', they're not worrying about something to track them from where they know the prey is. They're goin' right at it, and if you can get—on some of those places, the way they're set up and everything, if he's comin' in from one area, and the guy don't own that property where you can get back there to put some traps further out, well, even if you can't tell, sometimes you can guess where he might be comin' from and could offset and get him that way. But one they get right there at the turkeys and everything, they got their eyeballs set on 'em and they're lickin' their chops. They're not gonna go here and smell some urine or some kind of other bait.

0:27:03.9

(They see dinner in front of them.)

And if they've got cattle and stuff runnin' in the adjacent property or in their pasture adjacent to where they've got the turkeys penned up, sometimes even if you could find where he was crossin', you couldn't keep a blind set there or a trail set 'cause the cattle are usin' the trail.

(Did you ever use hounds to track, or did you pretty much track on your own?)

Oh, yeah, I used to den hunt and to trail up a coyote that I'd crippled when I was shootin' at it or somethin' like that, for the case, and to catch young pups after they left the den and to find the traps they drug off.

(Did you have your own dogs?)

Yeah, yeah. I had my own dogs.

(What kind were they?)

Well, most of 'em was a cross between a tree dog and some kind of cur dog. I've had different breeds, but most of 'em had some hound in 'em. And I also used an old bluetick dog I had, the bluetick hound breed. She was good at findin' them pups. I'd just either walk in canyons where I thought they was at and check the hole till I could find 'em, but when she found 'em, she'd bellow and find the den for you. I've had her find dens that I was havin' trouble finding. And I had one old dog that I got when he was three months old, I think, I got him and kept him till he died, I hauled him through miles and miles when I trapped and I could get him to just lay right down right there by me, lay there, and I'd started callin', and I watch, and a lot of times he'd see the coyote or bobcat before I would and he'd be like that, and I'd start lookin'. I had a deal over here in Choctaw County, the old boys' last names was Stubbs. They was catchin' these—he had some coyotes that was catchin' some geese that he had in a pen there, and the bobcats workin' on 'em some, too, but he had ___ pens in front of his house there, and he was losin' some pigs out of there.

0:29:32.7

So I went over there and had set some traps there south and west and had caught two or three coyotes, and I went over there one mornin', dusty road, it was just gettin' good daylight when I got there, and I was watchin'—I always watch the road before it get there for any signs of coyotes or bobcats, and I seen that cat track come across and his ___ pens was just right across the road there, and so I parked the jeep, went out there, and they had mowed a strip of Johnson grass and nailed it, but there was a little patch cut out of the middle, a few bushes, and you could set right against it and the rest of the grass had come up about that tall, maybe eight inches or somethin' like that, 10 inches.

I called and after about the second time I called, the little old ___ dog, Spot, I called him, he looked and I looked and I couldn't see a thing in the world. I kept watchin' him and I thought it was further down there in that brush line there, comin' out of that canyon. I kept watchin' down that way. I waited a little while and then I squeaked my caller again and looked again, he looked again, same direction, and I couldn't see anything. I waited a little while longer, watchin', watchin', didn't seen nothin'. Next time I done that, he started to get up. I just put my hand on his shoulder and he laid back down, but boy, he set like a bird dog. I kept a-lookin', and I thought, "Well, it's got to be somewhere out there." And I looked and that cat wasn't any further than this corner to that one from us. He had just been down in that grass sleepin', and I guess he saw part of his head or somethin', but I never had seen him till I looked right there and he ___ right at ___.

0:31:26.2

Another time I was called in to ___ in Osage County, and he'd got around the canyon just a little further from me, and there was rocks about as tall as that table here, desk, and I'd set with my back to it and I could see all down across that old canyon. I tried to call a coyote, because we'd seen quite a bit of coyote sign goin' in there on that ___ ranch, and I heard somethin' behind me, and of course I always take my hat off and lay it down when I be callin'. I turned around and I looked and there was a big old bobcat. He was right there at me. I'd been to Oklahoma City and I'd come by that morning to work with him and unloaded a round out of my gun and had it

behind the seat of the pickup, and I got out and got in his pickup, and I never had reloaded. I got the scope on him, squeezed the trigger, and it didn't do anything. I thought ___ sure as anything.

I pull that bolt back and when I let go—he was still creepin' towards me. And when I shot him, I called a little bit more, thinkin' maybe a coyote'd show up, and I finally give up on ____, and he come down there and said, "What'd you get? Coyote?" And I said, "No, a bobcat." He said, "Where's he at?" I said, "He come in at me out there at the ____." He looked out there and he said, "What'd you let him get so close for?" And I said, "I didn't want to miss him. I'm gonna hold my gun here and you step it off." He took three steps. He was within three steps of it.

(____.)

He could see my hair up there twisted-lookin'. When I turned around, he didn't give up. There wasn't somethin' set there that he could jump on, that's probably what it was.

0:33:42.7

(What's the scariest thing that ever happened to you?)

Well, I didn't have too many things that were real scary. I had some times that gave me some concern, but I was trappin' beaver, tryin' to keep 'em from floodin' some pecan orchards over there by ____, and they had built an old 33 highway that come through there, that was years before that there had been another road parallel with that one, and I guess they had—when they redone that and built the right-of-way up there a little bit, they had covered up a culvert that was to another road, or a cement abutment bridge, probably about that tall, about maybe four foot, four and a half foot. You could walk back there, but you had to hump over to get back in there. They'd covered the end of it up, and then they'd diverted the water and it come around and it would flow past it, but water would back up in there. And just below there was where the beavers had it stopped up and it was backin' water and floodin' that hard shell pecan orchard. And they were tryin' to get the water down to where they could ___ some pecans and break the dams. I was havin' trouble gettin' the beaver out of there. The beaver would avoid those Conibear traps. So you'd look back under there and about the length of this room back under there, you could see where they'd piled up a bunch of stuff.

So I started back under through, I had a pistol with me, a flashlight, I could see a burrow back in there, and I got down there, and it was just piled up to where you got almost back there to where the burrows was at, they'd piled so much stuff, it got to where you had to get on your belly and crawl on top of that. Of course, you'd generally run a snag or two of it, gettin' in there. Anyway, I got back there to where I didn't have much room, and I'd shine the flashlight back there, and I could see somethin' back in there, and it looked like a beaver, but I wasn't real sure if that's what it was. ___ had to be a beaver, ___ color and what I could see, presumably, ____, so I took the pistol and I took a shot at it. Watch out, here it come! I popped one more or two at it, and it didn't have very far to come, maybe as far as from here to the wall, and that shot or two, I didn't know where I'd hit, I just pulled another two shots at it, and it was still comin'. I ducked down, I didn't know what I was gonna do, I just ducked down like that, and it just run out on top of my back.

(Oh, my God!)

Yeah. And then just as soon as it went by me, here come a little beaver, he wasn't but about that long, tail and all, and so I shot it, and here another one come, and I shot it. Next one come out and I snapped and I was out of shells. So when he come down I got him behind the neck. [laughs] But anyway, that old beaver, I thought I heard it hit the water, and I thought he was gone.

(You didn't find her?)

Yeah, that old mama, I found her. She just went off in the water and died. I heard her hit the water, when she went off of that, she hit the water, and I thought she was gone. I didn't find her that day. I went back the next morning to check my traps and everything, because I'd set out a Conibear comin' out in there where she was bypassin' it, and she had floated up, and I seen her right there. I figured if she died, she was right there close. But she still hadn't got plumb out from under the culvert, she just went off from where they had piled that up. But that concerned me a little bit, when she come. I didn't know whether she was gonna start bitin' or go on over. But she did. She just crawled out on top of my head and my back. There wasn't even anywhere I could get away from her. I couldn't—I'm just glad she had enough room to go over me.

0:38:14.6

(It would have been your nose, probably. You've got two boys and a girl [?]. Do they trap with you? Are they interested in doing that?)

Well, the youngest one, he would have been. I got ___ with ___ when he was a little kid. He's almost six years old, and he started school when he was six. They just moved to Centralia in the spring. We moved up there in February that first denning season. I asked him if he wanted to go with me, go over there to the den huntin' place that was right there not too far from the house, and he said yes. We got over there and I'd already been readin' some sign in there and checkin' ___ that was denning in there. So I called, I called the female out and killed her, and I checked her, and she had had six pups. So of course when I called her, I tried to see if the male would come in, but I never did see him, so I went back to the jeep and pulled up there, I found the den and pulled up there where I had killed her, and got Gary out and I told him, I said, "Now, you're gonna go in and help me find that den." Well, we didn't walk very far from the direction she come from and I found a ___ and went a little further and found another one. I could tell the pups was in there. It was a pretty good-sized hole under a rock, but it was too far back for me to get in there. But I could see that they had pups in there, the way it looked, I knew before I got down there with a flashlight. I asked Gary, I said—they was just two or three days old, just real young, I could tell from the way—because ___ she was in, they wouldn't be very old, time of year, too, and I asked Gary if he could get them pups out. I said, "Now, I'm gonna hold on to you at the ankle, and I'll give you the flashlight, and you just get one of 'em and drag back out with it. If they're too far back to where you can't reach 'em with me holdin' on to you, I'll go get a stick or somethin'." We'd have to drive about a quarter mile down to where there was any brush to find a little bush to tie a hook or somethin' on to where he could reach back and get 'em. That's generally the way we do, just somethin' to hook 'em and pull 'em to you.

0:40:58.4

Anyway, he crawled back in there to get 'em, and when he got 'em out, I killed 'em. He told his mama about crawlin' in that coyote den, almost six years old, oh, she got—"What if that only mother had been in there and ate that kid up?" I said, "I could see in there, and I killed her, I

knew she wasn't in there." But it didn't help me from getting an ear-chewin'. But that tickled him. He liked to go. He went huntin' with me when he was little. I tried to walk him—he'd get tired to where he wouldn't want to go, at night or somethin'. He had it in him. After I seen he had it in him, I just ___ enjoyed to have him with me.

(What do you think trapping is gonna be like and wildlife management in 50 years?)

I don't really have any idea. I imagine there'll be some new procedures and methods developed that would fit what was needed, there should be. It'll either be that or the powers that be will change it to the point where you can't do the job and you won't have support for it, one or the other. I can't say ___ can't say if you want to manage wildlife in the right way, that it would ever change. The procedures would change, but change to do away with it, change to where you can't be effective is the change I'm referring to. I think it's an essential part, if you're going to properly control wildlife and meet the needs of the public and protect the resource. But that's what I've always told 'em. I said, "If you restrict it so that the men in the field can't figure out how to control a farmer or rancher's problem or a health problem or anything, if it get to where there's so much restriction that you can't actually accomplish the job that you're there to do, they won't support you, and there's your problem." And I think the public needs to be more educated on what we're doin' and the reason for it, to where they can see both sides of it. I don't understand the public, even in California, where they outlawed even takin' the cougars and stuff like that, the mountain lion, and it gets to killin' pets or somethin' like that, well, they get to hollerin' and wantin' somethin' done. If it kills a person, that's bad, but that's not too bad. They don't raise much Cain if they find out they killed somebody you didn't know as they do if they caught the kid's dog. So I don't understand the public's attitude. I don't understand the attitude of the organizations that goes and burns down buildings and stuff like that just because they don't want you out there.

0:44:20.4

I worked some of those areas. In Delaware County, they burned some barns and cut some fences and threatened some people. There was some fights and stuff like that. It got serious. The ones that would buck 'em and stay with it, they ___ 'em, they knew they couldn't get by with it. But if they could intimidate somebody and keep 'em from usin' the service, or put up with it. Because some of 'em said, "You have to decide what is the worst of the two evils. Put up with the coyotes killin' the calves or take the chance of bein' burned down."

(Is that because they were mad because they were bringing in Wildlife Services people to trap on their property?)

Yeah, that's when they had when they called the runnin' hound, the fox dog or what they called the wolf dog, where they'd turn 'em out and run 'em. They didn't care if it was posted or anything, a dog can't read a posted sign, you know. And he was just followin' where the wolf went or the coyote, whatever they was runnin', or the fox. So much of that that was just a sport that people was involved in that you—a lot of the elected officials had dogs. It helped their campaign. "I'm a hunter, too."

I didn't have that much trouble with the coon hunters or the bird hunters, stuff like that, the people that squirrel hunted and used cur dogs or whatever. It's the ones that just wanted the

country open and free to them to kick the dogs out anywhere they were and go where they wanted to and just say, “Well, there’s nothin’ you can do about it.”

(Oklahoma doesn’t have as much private land as Texas does, does it?)

It’s private, but years ago, when the lot of the timber companies and absentee owners owned a lot of land and people had large areas, it was open range, where you could go anywhere, and it was takin’ that away from ‘em, where you started to control who went on your property. The eastern part of Oklahoma is probably 50 years behind the west as far as private property is concerned, where that you’d honor the private property owner, his wishes. They would fight politically and anything else any effort for county support for a trappin’ program. When we started workin’ Delaware County, they had three that represented the hunters and three that represented the farmers and ranchers combined. And president of the Farm Bureau had a big meeting, and they got enough support that the farmers and ranchers reached in their own pocket and put the money in, and even the county ___ said, “If the hunters wasn’t against it, we would support a county fund, but we’re not gonna get in between that fuss.” And they didn’t like it, and that’s where you had trouble with everybody—they wanted to use you as a posted sign, “Keep the dogs off,” that wasn’t what they was there for, or they’d just want to use you to be sure you caught it if they had a coyote on it, because they’d pay \$3 or \$4 on the program. It made it difficult for an individual that was tryin’ to do the job to get the proper balance between both entities of what needed to be done and the whole thing.

0:48:23.5

But no, they’ve been quite a bit—well, I had several where they just go between about every post and it’d be a goat- or sheep-proof fence, barbed wire and net wire, cut it from top to bottom. One ranch over there, Bar Three, they cut it every three or four posts from top to bottom for a mile and a half.

(That costs a lot of money to repair something like that?)

And burn ‘em out.

(Really?)

Yeah. This time of year when it’s dry, or in wintertime especially when they need the grass, I caught an old boy settin’ a fire. He’d been in the pen for killin’ a guy, and I told the rancher who he was. I said, “Now I can’t swear that it was him, but it was his pickup, because I was puttin’ some M44s out on him, and he was over there about a quarter mile from here, maybe not that far, in ___, there at the gate where I’d posted it, and he put a match to it. It was his pickup. I’d say 100%, but I’m pretty sure ___ not positive it’s him.” I went to the ranch house over there and got him before it got started good. It burned along the right of way, just a little piece, but he got it out. And I told him who it was. Then it wound up that I had another run-in involvin’ him. These three groups, the ones that hunted, one of ‘em went to him and asked him, they said, “We’re gonna start at the south end of the county and work all the requests down there, and then the ones that commit you-all to hunt on ‘em, when I pull out and we get far enough away, we won’t have any equipment there.” So I’d let the ranchers know if anything come up, they was on that committee, and I’d let the dog in, and the individuals that lived there, I’d personally tell them, and that way they could tell when I was movin’. I’d finished about 50% of the county south, and

I would go into the north, it was just before deer season, and I'd set some coyote-getters on ___ and I told him, me and George were around, and I told everybody that was within reasonable distance, and when I say reasonable, if he knew they had coon dogs or huntin' dogs, if it was three or four miles, we told 'em. And we left word with their committee that they had.

0:51:13.6

So I went back and checked 'em two times and I told him I was goin' deer huntin' and I wouldn't be back till the middle of next week. I said, "I won't be back this ___ weekend, I'm gonna take about three days on the weekend and I'll be back." I come back and he said, "You killed three of Prader's dogs." I said, "I did? We went by and told him that we had this here and we let him know when we pulled it. I reckon how can people do it?" He said, "I don't know, but I'll find out." I said, "I'll check with you next time come back." So I went next time I come back and I said, "Who told him we pulled 'em?" He said, "You did." I said, "I did?" He said, "Yup, that's what he said, that you told him you pulled 'em." I said, "Told him personally I pulled 'em?" He said, "Well, that's what I understood." I said, "No, I didn't tell him. We're just startin' up here? Why should I tell him I was pullin' the equipment? Would you go in with me ___ your place and I'll talk to him?" "Yeah, I'll go with you."

So we went and talked to him. And he said, "Prader told me that you had said you pulled 'em." I said, "No, I didn't tell him nothin' about it." He was hangin' some wallpaper. He was in the midst of puttin' some on the ceiling, and he had paste on him, and he just dropped it, and it come down on the floor. And he said, "Yeah, I'll go with you." So we went and talked to him. He said, "No, I didn't tell him that. Yeah, I told him that they was pulled, but I didn't tell him you told me, and I can't remember that guy's name that was on the ___ who was the one. He had dogs, he told him, told Prader, that I pulled 'em."

(Misinformation all around.)

0:53:11.3

So I said, "Let's go talk to him." And the old boy that was the county attorney there, worked there for Delaware County, we went in and asked him about it, and he said, "He ain't here right now." And so he was stirred up. He said, "I'd rather pack sh-- with the chickens than to do the job you're doin'." And so I said, "Well, I can understand that. That's your privilege. Do what you want." And he just said right there, he said, "You're gonna get shot doin' that." I said, "Well, they might do it, but if they do, what'll they gain? They'll just get us all ___ and they'll move another one in, maybe crazier than I am." So he—when they finally got hold of Prader to talk to him, they found out that that other guy, I can't think of his name, it's been so long ago, that was way back there, but anyway, he had supposedly told him. So the guy that lost the dogs, thank goodness Prader didn't lose any of his dogs, but the other guy that lost the dogs, that asked him to turn them loose over there ___, when we went out, I said, "Well, what do you think?" He says, "Doggone it, I guess the chickens just come home to roost." I guess what they found out was, nobody really told him, and bottom line, Prader, they wanted to get his dogs killed 'cause he was hot-headed, and they figured that since he had been in prison for killin' one old guy, that he would blow up and probably shoot me and it'd be his problem then, but they'd get rid of the trapper. But it didn't work that way. And of course that stopped 'em from spreadin' lies around on what I'd do or wouldn't do. But I just went right back up the line and took everybody with me and let 'em make up their own mind.

0:55:22.3

Two or three years after that, Prader got some goats, and the coyotes got to killin' his goats. And he called me, and we didn't have a Program in Delaware County at that time, it was in the six-month period we didn't have 'em, but he wanted me to come and put out some poison, but he didn't want me to post at his place. I said, "What about your hound-dog-runnin' friends?" "Well, they don't need to know about it." He finally said, "Just put it out and get rid of these coyotes. They're eatin' my goats." He had mohair goats. I said, "Well, I can do it if you'll sign the release for it, and I'll post your place." "I'll sign the realize, but I don't want the place posted." I told him, I said, "I can't work without posting."

(That sounds vicious.)

"Well, I'll just get rid of my goats." I don't know what he done. I didn't ever go through with it. I said, "If you change your mind, call me, I'll work it." I told him, I said, "If you-all have guts enough to stay with it 24 hours out of the day, I've got guts enough to work it for you."

(What's the worst part of your job? Is it that kind of thing, dealing with people like that?)

0:56:33.4

Dealin' with people, I think, is one that stressed me the most, bein' fair with everybody. I was raised in the eastern part of the state, and I've always had dogs and hunted, from a kid up, so I could see both sides. I could understand where they felt like some of their rights was bein' trampled on if they didn't always—their grandpa's and their dad's right to hunt on a certain place, then somebody come and buy it up and say, "No trespassing." I could see where that would—you know, kind of go against the grain, and I try to consider that. I didn't want to kill their dogs, that wasn't what I was after. And I told 'em, I said, "If I catch a dog in a trap, it's gonna prevent me from maybe catchin' what I was after. I don't want to do that." And we turned 'em out. But it caused me more effort tryin' to do my job havin' dogs in the trap.

(Did you have to deal with a lot of paperwork?)

You do.

(That's what everybody complains about.)

One way or the other, especially if it's a reasonably heavily populated area. As far as doin' work, I enjoyed workin' these big ranches where you had six, seven miles at least to the next house. That way you get some breathin' room and you didn't have too much trouble.

(What was the best part of your work? What was the best part of the work you did?)

Well, what I—just the work itself I enjoyed. I guess it was a challenge that I enjoyed, and very close to that was meeting some remarkable good people that had been friends for a lifetime and the trust that they put in me. When I quit, I had, I don't know, I never counted 'em, but I probably had—I'm not gonna exaggerate, I'm gonna cut it down a little bit, somewhere above 1,000 keys to different ranches up in the northeast part of the state. Some of 'em would open their tack room and everything else. They just—when I'm workin' an area, a lot of 'em, I'd give 'em the keys back. And they'd say, "If you're gonna wind up this way, you'll be workin' if we

call you.” I’d say, “Very likely.” And they’d say hire some more people [?].” And they’d say, “Well, just keep it.” I’d be transferring—well, we moved from Centralia down to Mayes County, but I still worked the area. They said, “You might want to come up here and go huntin’ or somethin’. You’ve got the key.” Old Bob had a lot of country up there in several different places, and that one key would open every lock he had on his tack rooms and feed rooms and every gate.

0:59:39.8

(You didn’t have any desire to leave this area and go up the ladder in Wildlife Services, be a district manager?)

Well, I thought about it, and never did really make up my mind that I really wanted to climb that high. I enjoyed the freedom I had at the level I had when they set me up to principal district field assistant, and most of my state directors give me a lot of option, a lot of leeway to handle it on my own, and they generally didn’t—they kind of let it go, whatever I decided, and worked with me real well, and it all turned out reasonably well. I had a chance when James ___ was—you may know him.

(I know the name.)

He’s a good man. When Monty [?] was state director then, and when ___, Monty said, “I’m gonna ask you to do somethin’ that a lot of people wouldn’t want to do.” I said, “What’s that?” He said, when they hired a new man to come in, there would be a district supervisor that didn’t have field training. They’d generally put him in some place for six months and give him a little taste of it, just like they’d start a new man to work, and if they was makin’ a lot of progress, sometimes between that six months and before the year, when they had to make a decision, they’d keep him in a temporary status and then they’d turn the district over to him. So he wanted me to supervise James ___. I said, “Yeah, I’ll be as fair as him that I hoped he’d be with me.” So I supervised him 14 months before he was set up, and then he took the district over and worked—I can’t recall for sure, maybe six or eight months, and he got drafted. So then Monty asked me if I would fill in for him, supervise the district. I said, “Yeah, we’ll hold the position open for him until he comes back if that’s what he wants.” And that’s what he wanted. So I did. I filled in and supervised the district, and the moved Jim Watson into the counties that I was workin’, and before he come back, Tate Madison [?] come to work, and he took over the state director’s job. He asked me if I wanted to be promoted up. I said, “I considered it when he don’t want it any more.” He said, “He wants to come back here.” I said I knew that, I had written to him a few letters while he was overseas.

(Was he in Iraq?)

He went up to Vietnam. I told him that, and he said, “We don’t have to put him to work here. We could put him to work in another state. We’ve just got to give him his job back.” And I said, “Yeah, but he told me in his letters and he ___ by one day and I ___ get to see him when he got in on leave, I didn’t get to see him, I was gone, but he said he wanted to come back here to Oklahoma.” And I said, “I went through a little of that when I come back.” I told you about that earlier, they said they wasn’t hirin’, and I didn’t know what was gonna happen. I said that if he don’t want it, I’d consider it, but I’m not walkin’ under him. That ended that. He come back and supervised me and he’s been a level-headed supervisor, and I’ll tell you for sure, he’s called the shots as near fair as anyone could. So I appreciate him.

1:04:24.0

(Any trappers you worked with that you thought were really great, that you admired?)

I've learned some little somethin', it might not look like much to some people, but it's somethin', from everybody I worked with. I had a chance to work with a number of 'em. Some little technique or some way of doin' things that's helped me. I've admired everyone I worked with. They all had a quality of their own. That's somethin' that a lot of the beginning supervisors fail to recognize. A lot of these was like me, and still am, when a long time ago, when you didn't even have to have a high school education, they didn't care if you signed your name, if you could catch a coyote, if you was a trapper, that was good enough for 'em. They didn't pay you a per diem or any field travel or nothin'. You'd ride your own vehicle. Since I started, they'd paid me 6 cents a mile for 1,100 miles a month. You provide your own ammunition, your own rifles. If you use a dog, you didn't get anything, they wouldn't buy feed for it, and the old dog might have done you more good than you'd do on your own. But anyway, it's changed.

Any more, and rightfully so, they've got to have some education where they can—

(—use a computer.)

—converse with the people that don't respect or don't recognize that you might be dumb in book-learnin' but you've got qualities to be admired. If it hadn't been for some of those people that stuck it out in the hard times and bad times, they wouldn't be a Program now. Fish and Wildlife Service tried to get rid of us, like a stepchild, and if they hadn't transferred back into the Agriculture Department, they would have.

(I agree with that, yes.)

1:06:50.5

I got into a little problem over that. I kind of got to ____, too. I was kind of like my brother. [laughs] But anyway, they cut—you might know of that, and I may be talkin' out of school, I didn't tell this story—

Anyway, there's \$250 million [\$250,000?] they's cuttin' out of the nationwide program. I think that's the figure that I heard. And they had everybody—they was talkin' about how everybody was takin' a percentage cut, all of the departments. And always federal puts their budget a year ahead, and then you come to find out, when I was in the office runnin' through some stuff there, ____ what they was gonna do, Fish and Wildlife Service, instead of takin' the cut, they was cuttin' our department out of that much, but they was puttin' it with refuges [?]. So the following year, when everybody was supposed to take that cut, they was takin' it in one area, but they would get more money than they had before. I talked to a representative, I always had a pretty good lines to state representatives and senators on up to the federal level, and he said, Watson, he was here, and I talked—Wes Watkins, I talked to him, and he said, “No, everybody's takin' the same cut.” I said, “Well, maybe, maybe not. What if you had two men workin' for you and you cut that one man off on his salary and you was ____ his salary, but instead of losin' that out of your bank account, why, you was puttin' it over here on this other side, same, so you're just switchin' over to another basket?” He didn't think it. He talked to the director and said everybody was takin' their fair share of the cut. I said, “Well, if it's a fair share, I wouldn't be sayin' anything about it.

They've said that they was gonna cut it down, but '68, I think it was '68, looked like they were startin', they were gettin' rid of us." We got to have you-all. I said, "Well, you better do somethin' about it, then."

1:09:40.6

So he said, "I just don't see it that way. I don't think they misrepresented it." So I was in the office, and I got—there wasn't anybody keepin' an eye on me, so I just got a copy of all that that was—I whited out who it went to and who sent it, and I just run copies and sent the information, I put it all in one package and I sent it right to Washington. After he got it, it was ___ to him ___ black, and he called me about 6 o'clock in the morning, and he said, "Next time you've got somethin' like this, take it down there to that Macalester office and leave it with the secretary. That could have got you fired." I said, "Yeah, I realize that, but when I think somebody's stickin' a knife in my back, I want to turn around and face him a little bit, so I figured if they were gonna kick me out, I was gonna go out fightin'."

But back to the deal, Pete knew I was contactin' some of the farmers and ranchers about it. Another guy that was workin', another representative up there by the name of Allen West that was on some chemicals, depositing some chemicals in deep well deposits for storage, he was fightin' that which was close to his property. He was gonna meet with Representative ___, and he set a meeting for me and him to meet on this day we were cutting the funds. So it had been kicked around there. I come in one evenin', I got in about 20 minutes to five, and the phone rang just a little bit after I got there. It was Adam West, and he told me, he said, "I think those chemicals in those deep well deposits have slowed down." He said Bullard [?], one of his attorneys that was workin' with him, said they reinstated that \$250 million [\$250,000?] they were gonna cut out of your program. I said, "They did?" He said yeah. "So we can cancel our trip to talk to ___." He had already talked to ___. So it went—I thought ___ and Pete hardly ever did leave the office till 5:30 to maybe 6 o'clock. I called Pete and I told him, I said, "Pete, I heard we got the \$250,000 reinstated. Did you hear anything about it?" He said, "No, where'd you hear that?" I said, "You mean nobody said anything about it?" He said, "When did that happen?" I said, "Well, I guess probably about 2, maybe 2:30 Washington time, was what they told me." He said, "You're pullin' my leg." I said, "No, I'm not." So he questioned it, and so I said, "Let me know when you hear about it." Wasn't a week and a half before he heard anything about it through channels, and he called me and he said, "You was right about that, how'd you know it?" I wasn't gonna tell him who called me. I said, "I've got one of them red phones. When somethin' important happens, it rings and I answer it and they keep me updated on all this stuff. You got one of them? Evidently not, took you a week and a half before you found out. I found out about five hours after it happened." I never did tell him who called, I just BSed him.

1:13:25.9

But before that happened, of course, I had sent some letters and signed 'em, but I didn't get 'em approved. He told me, "You don't quit sendin' them letters, I'm gonna—" Of course, I ___, I didn't take time. He said, "I'm gonna ___ favors." And when they reinstated that money, he said, "How many more reams of paper you want?"

(You probably saved the program! It helps to make waves once in a while.)

I didn't want to makes waves, I just wanted people to know the facts, and then they can use their own judgment of what to do. I know when I was—I dealt with the ___ board, we met once a

month, formed our own county ambulance service and everything here in Mayes County, and they had the mayor in three of the towns and one of the commissioners and then we elected one to be over the operation and hired somebody to manage it in the county. It done real good, and still goin'. But you got to know what's goin' on and what's available and what direction you want to take it, and then you can decide what needs to be done, if you got the funds to do it with. Of course when I was mayor—

(You were mayor of ___?)

No, of Chouteau, the big town of Chouteau. Wasn't a big town, but I didn't want that position, really. Several of 'em asked me—one guy I knew wanted to make some changes and get on the planning zoning board and they meet once a year, once every three or four months, and I told 'em all right. So I was on it for about a year.

(Was this after you retired?)

No, that was when I was workin'. I got in touch with the office and asked 'em about it, told 'em what it consisted of. I told 'em it's a public service, there's no money involved. They said, well, it'd be all right. It went from there that they wanted me to go ahead and run for trustee. I told 'em, I said I didn't know. I finally said, "I'll file, but I'm not gonna campaign. Everybody knows me. If they want me to fill that position, all right." So anyway, to make a long story short, I won it by 73% of the vote.

(My God!)

And never did have an opponent run against me. So then the next round, it was a four-year term and when we went into the next round, I was elected vice-mayor, and the next round I went into and I was elected mayor. So I never did campaign. I never took a dollar for campaign funds, even the ones offered. I tried to be fair with everybody, and I never did have an opponent. I resigned when I retired to come down to start buildin' a house. I got the house built and some other things—

1:16:45.4 End file 2.

File 3-1

0:00:00.0

(Did you have any advice you'd offer to any of these young guys? Now there's young women coming into Wildlife Services. Do you have any advice for them?)

I'd advise 'em, get their background, their education. That gives 'em a leg up on what they want to do in life, no matter what. And to try to determine early in life what field they want to be in, if it's wildlife or some other field, somethin' that's enjoyable as well as make a livin' at, and to learn as much about whatever endeavor they decide to do to be dedicated to it and to actually try to prepare themselves to where they know enough about it that they can be successful.

(What was the most favorite thing you enjoyed about trapping?)

Like I said earlier, you had the opportunity to go to so many places and the freedom to enjoy not only another friendship with whoever owned the property, but you was renderin' a service to them. After all, it's a service program. You're servin' the public. If you don't enjoy servin' the public or bein' involved in somethin' like that, especially with somethin' else you'd like to do, you'd better find another occupation. And there's certain people that wouldn't like that work at all. I've seen it happen, and they won't apply themselves. If you're not willin' to reach down into your gut and drag out work when you don't want to work because you'd rather do somethin' else, you'd got to quit your job first. Really be prepared for it, and try to gain as much knowledge as you can about what you're doin' as you grow in your work. Do job training. I always appreciate that. But I don't know—I say try it a while and if it ain't your cup of tea, don't drag it out. Get goin' with somethin' before you get too old. Try somethin' new.

0:02:39.8

And respect the property owner. Many of 'em, when they get out there, they kind of go wild and they start shootin' at everything that moves. They don't like that, the landowners don't. They'll give you a lot of rope if you'll honor what they want you to do and try to protect their property and not drive all over back roads they don't want. There's a whole list of things that you should or shouldn't do. Then you'll be welcome the next time you come back. And if you deal honestly with everybody you deal with, straightforward, you can do it. They might not like what you're doin'. I've had people tell me that. "I don't care about what you're doin', but I like you as a person." So that speaks pretty well. Most people, if they don't like what you do, they'll never like you anyway. I've had different ones say that.

I don't know, it's hard for me to give advice. I need more advice that I've got the ability to put out.

(Some people have said that when they worked for Wildlife Services, it was almost like a family organization where their wives and kids were involved.)

It was.

(Did your wife—I know she answered the phone. Did she go out with you?)

Yeah, she went out with me some, but unfortunately, about the time where we got to the position where she'd go with me more, well, our youngest son had a divorce, so she took over the grandkids durin' the daytime, babysitting, so till he re-married and everything, she took a lot of time out. In the course of babysitting, she got involved in the day care operations, babysitting other people's kids, so that kind of prevented some of what she had in plans to do. But she did go with me some off and on. But then she'd get kind of antsy. Kind of like the conversation today, I'd be doin' down the road and see someone that I knew and stop and talk a little bit, or go down to talk to someone that I was gonna do some work for, they'd call me and we'd be out under the shade trees, leave her settin' in the pickup, we'd be out under the shade tree talkin', and she'd set out there and say, "You just left me and the kids settin' there sweltering in that sun?" I said, "I didn't stay very long." "Oh? I didn't think you was ever gonna shut up talkin'." But I was just gettin' acquainted. That's what I enjoy.

(You probably know everybody in this entire county?)

There's a lot of 'em I don't know. See, I moved from here, they transferred me from here—I grew up here. We're buryin' another person that I knew real well. That happens pretty often. Three coffins since I got back, good friends. But that happens when you start livin' a little longer than maybe you should. [laughs] But I left here in '56, I guess it was, February of '56, '57, somewhere like that. I lived up there in Chouteau and ____, and then I would work different counties from there. In fact, for a while I had equipment scattered so much, I'd leave home on Monday, and work goin' toward the west, swing back toward north and stay all night up with one of the Rangers up on the Kansas line, and get up the next morning and check the equipment I had on him, if I hadn't got it checked the evenin' before I got there, and then go through ____, ____, and Craig counties and stay all night again and come home and then I'd go south through Muskogee County on down south down here to take care of whatever I had down that way all day. Wagner County, back home. And then I'd start over again.

(You must have worn out a couple of trucks.)

0:07:27.2

I wore out quite a few of 'em.

(What do you like doing now? I know you like to hunt.)

Well, I deer hunt and I squirrel hunt, fish, quail hunt, and do a little feral hog huntin'.

(That's a big thing now, it's really becoming a big issue in Texas especially.)

I still like to hunt, and I like to fish. My oldest boy, he had been—he liked to fish, but he had probably been about as stupid about it as I am. My youngest boy, he likes to deer hunt, but fishin' is his thing. I guess they get that from, Mother liked fish, Daddy liked fish reasonably well, Granddaddy, he loved it. And I guess some of it's inherited. But Daddy liked to hunt, too. Some kids are different. My youngest boy, his oldest girl, she don't really go in for much of anything like that. The middle girl, she likes—like you was talkin' about, she likes fishin'. She likes that kind of life. The other ones, they don't care too much about it. It's just a difference in people's nature.

(Any other stories you want to talk about?)

I don't know. There's a lot of 'em I haven't told.

0:09:19.5 End file 3-1.

File 3-2

0:00:00.0

(Have you ever done any lion hunting or bear hunting?)

No.

(Trapping bear?)

No. I've done—just worked a little bit on black bear as far as checkin' an area for signs, but not actually trappin' them or anything. We hadn't really—when I was involved in it, we never did get into it where I had to trap any of 'em or anything.

(I guess in some states the cougar, the mountain lion population is really getting—)

They're kind of coming back in this state, too.

(We had a child attacked in a park in Boulder near where I live just recently. And bird work, have you don't any bird work?)

Lot of bird work.

(What kind?)

Round peanut fields, stuff like that, protect peanuts. And then small grain, like milo— work on that.

(Grackles?)

Grackles, blackbirds, cowbirds, and then actually on the bird roost work, stuff like that, on the birds and on egret.

(Egrets?)

Yup.

(Are there any fish farms around here?)

Quite a few in the northeast up there, catfish farms mostly. Cormorants, too, they had problems with that.

(They're everywhere.)

That's somethin' they need to start working on controlling, too. I don't think between the laws between the different countries and everything, it's kind of a problem to get it worked out.

0:01:50.1

(Are there any favorite stories you have that you like to tell people?)

Well, yeah, there's one that's kind of been a joke between me and Don Hawthorne. He first— he'd been working long enough that they'd sent him up to district supervisor, and he was doin' some research on stilbestrol [?] wildlife birth control. He had been puttin' out some big—the big ___ that had been impregnated on the ranches for a period of time, and they sent me out there in his area to do the trapping. He was supposed to start doin' some supervising on his men that was out there. I'd never met him, I worked with him before, but he—I asked him did he ever do any callin', and he said, "Yeah, a little bit, but I haven't had much luck with it." And so I told him, I said, "Well, let's get together. This looks like good callin' country. I'm gonna do some callin'

after I get up and check my trap line.” What they wanted me to do was to trap not only the predators, but all of the fur-bearers and everything I caught, if it was female, save the reproductive tract and put it in—preserve it, and take it to town. I don’t know where they saved it, they sent it to some research or somethin’ like that to tell if they’d ovulated or conceived or miscarried or what. I gave ‘em the skunks. [laughs] They said you _____. What they wanted to do was actually determine if it was doin’ the job that they wanted or if it had an adverse effect on the fur bearers that they didn’t really want to kill.

So we got to callin’. We had a lot of fun. We went over to a place where I had some traps set and checked another one, and this is gettin’ to my story, and we set down on a knoll up there to call and looked over and he said, “There’s somethin’ in that hole right there.” I looked, and it was an old cleanup where a badger had been and a coyote had cleaned it out, and the way the sun was shinin’ and everything, that was in April. But instead of bein’ down in the hole, it was just layin’ where he’d kind of—you know, where the sides of it’d be up like this _____ and he’d made a shade for him and just laid right there at the mouth of the hole. I said, “Well, that’s a possum. I’ll just see if it’s male or female, if female, I’ll make a collection here.” And when I started grabbin’ for it, it went down in the hole, way down in the hole.

0:04:52.6

He said, “Let’s go to the truck and get a shovel and dig it out.” I said, “No, don’t _____ badger. We’ve got to come back in the mornin’ and check them traps or be back through here. Let’s just set a trap here. It’s a lot easier than diggin’ the den out.” He said OK. My intention was, a three-year-old can trap a possum, but my intention is to set a trap, come back the next morning, and if it was male, if we had it, turn it loose, if it was female, we’d collect what we needed from it. So where that hole kind of went back, I just blind-set it, I thought, “That old possum will walk up there here,” and there was a little width there, and I thought, “Well, if I just stick a few weeds or somethin’ up here in front of it, that might keep somethin’ from goin’ down in the hole that would come in and get caught ‘fore the possum come out, and I’m sure instead of just goin’ through, with a little bit of deterrent there, it’d make him stomp around a little bit there and get caught.” I _____ figured that would catch him.

0:06:10.6

I went back the next morning, and where you see the traps, he’d check up, and where he stamped, I didn’t get my trap over in the direction. He went far enough over to stamp on the pan and trip it and of course with them #4’s, there was one of them that needed a little more weight to trip it, because you were gonna catch a coyote with it, and it just walked right through. What was funny about it, he asked me, he says, “What kind of set is that?” when I put all that stuff, and of course, him just startin’ and everything, I get he thought I had some real big _____ reason or magic touch to it. I told him, I said, “That’s a jailhouse set. I couldn’t think of anything else. I thought it would just pen him up in there long enough for him to step on the trap.” So when I retired, he sent me—some of the guys like him that I worked under, and Monty sent me one, and I can even—_____ control or something there on that deal, but he sent me a letter, and I’ve got it here somewhere, I was aimin’ to show you that.

There’s from Charlie Brown, Ed Hardin—you know Charlie Brown?

(He’s the eastern regional director now.)

Is he? I haven't talked to him in a long time. I really liked him, too. There's Don Hawthorne.

(I'm seeing him on Thursday.)

I'll let you read his letter here he sent me. You can ask him about it. He might want to add something to it. That'll get him started talkin'. Long as he don't talk too much.

("Magical notes on your ballpoint pen predator calling." [reading letter silently] This is a great deal.)

I always thought a lot of Don. He went on up the ladder, but he couldn't be any fairer with me than he always was. Seemed like he had a good head on his shoulders.

(Now he's talking about the famous jailhouse set for opossum.)

That's the one I was tellin' you about.

(___ effective ___ really that much ___. [laughs] A copy of the picture I took on that fateful day.)

That amused me. That just tells you that you don't know everything, back up and take another look. You might not be right every time.

(___ great ___ Bobby ___ George Graves. Great pictures. This is a great book.)

0:09:18.0

There's a patch. This patch here is what I designed.

(I like that. That's a lot nicer than the ones that they wear now, the blackbirds. There are some great photos in here. That was a wolf?)

Yeah. This was one I worked at Osage. They never did find out where it come from.

(Good Lord!)

Here's this one here. ___

(21 ___. [laughs] That's great.)

Did you see it?

(Yes. That's fun!)

That tickled me!

(That's great. That's wonderful.)

If I'm not mistaken, A.E. Grave was first supervisor to take over the state or district, agent, they called him. And then I worked under—the next one to come in, ____, let's see, Bill Nelson, Pete ____. This mornin' I could name every one of 'em, one right after the other. Anyway, they's only two—Don Hawthorne I didn't work under when he come back to supervise the state, and Stuber, I hadn't worked under him. But all the rest of 'em, I think there was six or seven of 'em, I started to name 'em off and I missed one of 'em there. Bob ____ is who I was tryin' to think of. It was Bill Nelson, Bob M____, ____ Dawson, Pete Madsen, and Pete Peterson, and George Grave. That's six of 'em that I worked under. I guess probably if I'm right, that would be seven, eight, nine directors is all they've had, and I've worked under every one of 'em up until I retired. I worked under George about six months.

(Is he in DC now? I know he's changed, moved again.)

I don't know where he moved, because I retired, and I'm not sure just where he is now or where he moved to.

(He's moved a couple of times.)

I know he moved from where he first went, and I couldn't even remember where he told me that was.

(I want to say Utah, but I'm not sure that's right.)

0:12:36.3

I had some—Charlie Roland and John Pickens was two field supervisors when I first started workin' that I worked under, and they knew their coyotes. I learned an awful lot from them.

(Monty Dodson, I'm gonna go talk to him tomorrow.)

I hadn't talked to him or seen him in I think since my retirement, and that's been 12 years.

(He's retired, too.)

Yeah, I knew he is retired. If you'll read the letter he put in here, if you've got time to fool with it, I've got a letter from him. It's funny. Old John ____, he's dead now, too. There's Kevin ____, he's an assistant. There's Bob ____, do you know him?

(Yeah.)

There's Ed Hartley, remember him? Charlie Brown.

([reading] "Dear Journal, if my memory is correct, the first time I met you was at the first Oklahoma hunters' conference at the number two youth camp in Lake ____ State Park, October 1956. One man, W.O. Nelson, Jr., assigned me the glorious task of delivering the safety talk, ____ waiting with great expectations. I remember you putting on a trap set when one of the man was squatting down in front of you as you were giving it proceeded to give you a bad time. I remember the other trappers saying later that if it had been you, you would have kicked dirt in the heckler's face. That was not ____'s style. I ____ hearing you lose your temper with anyone and

I would have to think hard trying to remember you ever bad-mouthing anyone, an employee who makes any supervisor's job easy. Whether you recognize it or not, you have a very special quality that is seldom found. I've always felt that if I had ever called you and asked you to meet me at 2 in the morning somewhere a hundred miles away, you would have been there with no questions asked about why or what for.

I haven't had the chance to ___ many of the many humorous things that have happened to you over the years. Most of them are things you have told me about yourself. That's another thing that made you so popular with everyone, the ability to relate embarrassing moments without hesitation." He goes on about retirement and keeping in touch. There's a great photograph here, is this you?)

Yeah, but I can't remember where that was at. I was either doin' some callin' or somethin'. I'm at an aerial control ___ in there where we was checkin' some stuff. I worked with old ___ coyote track count, you know, where you put the bait in the center of the circle. I done that for 10 years every year.

0:15:54.0

(Is that what a scent station is? They were doing population study.)

Population study, yeah. And then I worked on that soft-catch trap deal, when they done that one year, where they was testin' it against the regular traps that we generally use. I don't know if you're familiar with them, where they had the neoprene between the jaws. They called it soft-catch trap. I worked on that. And some of the other studies I done—not studies, I just took part in what they wanted me to do and they'd take the information I'd give 'em and put it with the other stuff. Studies that were done, that's what I was referring to, they—sometimes you never did know what part you was playin', you never did hear any more from it. You done your field part of it, it was good or bad.

(Did you ever meet any of the researchers? I know you knew Fred Knowlton, Mike Fall? He was in charge of the mammal program at the Research Center for a long time.)

I've heard of him, but I don't think I ever met him. I was tryin' to think of the one that come up when we was doin' that soft-catch deal.

(___ worked on it. Bob Philips.)

I believe that was his name. I just met him one day and he worked with me half a day.

(He's retired in Wyoming now.)

I believe that's who it was. I liked him.

(He's a nice man. I can't think of anything else to ask you. Is there anything else you want to talk about? This has been wonderful.)

[laughs] If somebody jogs my memory, I can think of lots of things to talk about. ___ This part right here, I just said that that was attached. I blocked out this part when I made copies, but it just

had the salary that they paid, I didn't think they was interested in that, wasn't none of their business anyway. And then down at the bottom, I left my name, but it had my Social Security at the bottom and I didn't want to leave that in there. And this is—but this—I told the service, it starts out here on the—see, right here's where I first started work at the Navy, and the year, and then it goes on down to my military service, U.S. Army.

(Your title was Predatory Animal Hunter.)

Yeah.

(Mammal Control Agent.)

Yeah. This stands for Principal District Field Assistant, PDFA.

(You've put a lot of years in. That's a great career.)

I went through—it's amazing, you know—'course all this was administrative decision, whatever, this part of it. It's amazing how many years you go through and they changed the name and you're doin' the same thing. [laughs]

(I've worked with Wildlife Services since 1983. We were Fish and Wildlife then. In '85 it changed to USDA. So I've been through about five name changes, I think.)

I guess all of us experienced that. See, when I transferred over and was payin' federal retirement, that's what I asked when I transferred, if I could transfer, and I transferred everything over, and then when we transferred to the Agriculture Department, you know how they was tryin' to adjust how many years you had or whatever, and they told me that there was some period of time there that they was gonna knock out, a little over a year, a year and a half, I think it was. And I told 'em, I said, "No, I was workin' under U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. It was an administrative decision, but I paid in retirement." And they still would knock it out. So fortunately, when I moved to Centralia, I contacted the Civil Service Commission and asked 'em if I could pay back retirement for all the years I had worked, and get military service credit, too. Like I said, I was drafted for 21 months and they extended me three months, so it made two years. So they set it and I paid it out. I had to pay at least \$20 a month more. I paid it and I kept all those receipts, and I made copies of the receipts and sent 'em, too, so they couldn't argue with that, 'cause they had already accepted it. So I got credit for the Navy time, of course, I worked in an ammunition depot, I got credit for that, because it was federal, and from the time I was almost 21 years old, 20, whatever the date says on there when I started it, all the way through, I worked for the government doin' somethin'. They tried to get me to go back to work for 'em when I moved down here and got my house built and everything. I was kiddin' with 'em. Even Don asked me to come back and work for him. He said, "We'll make a fine deal out of it. If you'll work ___ we'll ___." And I told him no. But anyway, ___, ___, he come by and wanted me to go to work.

0:22:19.5

He said, "You ever work ___ County?" And I said no. I said I quit and I wanted to build a house and get the place fenced and build some outbuildings, and I didn't know how long I was gonna last, so I was gonna get all that done. I said, "I've got that done now, just about done. It won't take long to finish it up. I don't think I want to start back to work. If I did, I'd probably get a

divorce, because Mama, she didn't like it too much when I scheduled so much time away." And so he said, "Well, would you just be willin'—" He asked me if I would be willin' to work in ___ and ___ County, and I told I'm no. He said, "What about just workin' ___ County?" And I said no, if I got started on that I'd be workin' full-time anyway. And he said, "Well, what about workin' half-time?" I said, "What do you mean, workin' half-time? When I worked, I just worked half-time and got paid for full-time. Why would I want to work for half-time and be paid for half-time workin' full-time?" [laughs] "Just kiddin'." He kind of give up on me.

[laughs] Sounds like you don't want to get back into it. It's addictive, probably. Once you start gettin' pulled into it—)

I know what I'd be doin' if I went back to work, it'd be just like it was before.

(I wanted to ask you about the feral hog thing. That's starting to become a real problem, a damage problem. In Texas especially, they're getting more and more. I know ___ said Oklahoma was getting more problems.)

I had quite a big of experience with hogs when I was young. We lived back out in the mountains, where I'm at now. This area here was the last place that closed open ranch, so they run the cattle and hogs out, everybody did. They had to fence where they had their crops to keep out the cows and stuff from gettin' in and eatin' it up. Everybody ___ they lived near where they could. Granddad Brown would bring some hogs down if we had a good acre crop or stuff like that, 35, 40 head, ___. I'd look after 'em out there, just keep feedin' enough to keep 'em tamed down where they was at, and when the acreage crop was gone, he'd take 'em in and sell 'em, take whatever you get for 'em, and whatever feed we put in 'em, then he'd split the profit with me. So that's where I—we had some hogs, also, Daddy did, that I was looking after at the same time. So I learned somethin' when I was just a big old kid about hogs.

0:25:06.7

They're way smarter ___. And they're harder to control than ___, because they get pretty sharp.

(We've got a new research station down in Kingsville, Texas, and they're looking at disease problems, too. The feral hog thing, they're real concerned with feral hogs getting close to domestic hogs. And with chronic wasting disease up in Colorado and Michigan, there's a lot of game farms. Do they have stuff like that around here, game farms?)

Well, not right here close. They have had some up towards the northeast corner. You're talkin' about the game farms where they charge so much to hunt? Yeah, they had some up in the northeast part, but I don't know any right here close. There may be some that I wouldn't be aware of. Oh, they are, too, I just happened to think. We sold three of them wild hogs, four of them wild hogs that we caught last fall, my brother-in-law did, to a game farm over here. They've got it finished where they turn 'em in there and they let 'em kill 'em. It's owned my Colgate. It's not a company, it's private individual, game farm, hunting reserve area. It's not the company.

(I don't think that's much of a hunting—)

'Course some of them they restrict it ___ or somethin' like that, it depends on the size.

(I can't think of anything else to say that I haven't asked you.)

I can think of a lot to say if you'd ask me. [laughs]

(Do you want to talk about problem coyotes that you've had, animals that you've had problems with? You told me about one. What's the weirdest, strangest thing you ever had to do? Strange situations?)

0:27:34.0

I think I've been strange all my life! [laughs]

([laughs])

I ___ official strange ___.

(Yeah, something we can talk about.)

I don't know.

(Have you ever gotten bitten by a coyote or attacked by any of the animals?)

Yeah, I got scratched by a bobcat I've tied up alive, several of 'em. I ___ one of the control officers up there, I showed it to him ___, and the guy you're talkin' about, Philips, I believe he is the one that was with me. The thing about that was that we was trappin' with those soft-catch traps, workin' that refuge down there, the Wagner waterfowl refuge area. We had signed up for the coyotes. Of course, if you catch a bobcat or somethin', ___ coyotes ___ didn't have it on the release of the trapper that signed it up, we didn't have bobcats on there, so if you didn't have it on there, you turned 'em loose. Anyway, I pulled up my first two traps where the road curved around and the road goin' this way wasn't very far apart, and I had a coyote trapped in a bobcat neck trap. They wanted a coyote to kill, I went ahead and shot ___ and took that back, wrote down the information I needed to for the research, went to the bobcat and wrote down the information I needed for the research, and I had a little rake I was usin' to rake beaver dams with, and I thought I could push down on one side of the trap with it, and then I had another kind of a stick I used for measurin' water with when we were checkin' for birds on the other side. I almost got it down far enough, and that stick slipped off and when it did, I went toward that old cat, and he hit me, I mean, right across there. I done that years ago ___, but he come across there and ___ right there to the bone across there in two or three different places. It stung a little bit, and I said, "That sucker hit me." I started tryin' to get him out again. I ___ like that before, somethin' more than just kind of like a broomstick to mash the springs down and get enough slack and jump back and away they'd go and I wouldn't worry about him jumpin' on me.

I started again and the stick slipped off and I look down. When you bend your hand where it went through here, you can see that knuckle through there where it just opened up. So I got this deal wrapped around it and I got my pistol and I shot him. If I had the proper deal to turn him out, I'd turn him out, but I ain't gonna take the chance of him hittin' me again.

Unorthodox catch and release station. I said, "Well, I released him." [laughs]

(Did you get stitches?)

No, I didn't. I wrapped it up and when I got home that night, I took a cord and cut it where it went in the palm of my hand and I wrapped these two fingers, where it'd be bandaged up to there, and then I could do like that and drive and use that hand. I'd take it off every night and re-doctor it. Mom said, "Go to the doctor, get that sewed up!" I said, "Well, if I just keep it like that where it won't bend, it'd just open up where it bends here, where it come across there, it's all right." Three days, four days, it was stickin' back together. I just wore that less than a week, and it healed right up, no stitches, no nothin'.

0:31:57.0

(Did you ever go out with horses?)

Oh, yes. We had horses out there all my life. I had a little buckskin horse I called Buck, that was his name. ___ name ___ Sumter. I had him, trained him, I goat-roped off of him. I was nine, I think, when we got him. I rode some of the other horses, but they was bigger horses. Dad got to trade part of an old Chevrolet car, some part of the body or somethin', for it. Anyway, I rode that little old horse many a mile. He was my buddy. He got to where—as a kid, I just dropped the reins on him ___ what they call ___. He might graze around there, but he never would run off. Other kids would come up and want to ride him. I'd have to catch him and get him on him, get back in there, ride him. That tickled me, because he wouldn't let 'em get close to him. He was an ornery little rascal. He could really run, for a short distance. He could just get away so fast, he could outrun most horses. I ___ a little ___ that wound up bein'—he taught school for a number of years and then he was a state representative for down here, Harold Thomas. I met him right after we come back, and I didn't recognize him. He looked familiar, but I couldn't place who he was. He said, "Don't you remember me?" I said, "I should." He said, "You had that little buckskin horse that could just run a hole in the wind for a little piece." And I kept tryin' to thing of someone up near Stringtown [?] or somewhere like that, and he lived in Tusca. When I'd be down there at Granddad's I got acquainted with him. That's where it happened. A little boy had what he called a half race horse. Harold's brother ___ had a brand-new Stetson, white felt hat, and Harold wore it that day. He bet that white hat against a team of jennies and an old stripped-down wagon that I could outrun that race horse so many yards. They stepped it off. I won that team. [laughs] The rest of the day we just drove them down them old ditches, washes, and stuff, and the little rascals ___ get down on their knees and pull 'em up by their mane with us kids on there, and at the end of the day, the Wilson boys we won 'em from, they said, "Oh, Dad's gonna kill us." They were worried about it. They just knew ___ win that Stetson hat. So about dark we said—I didn't really need the jennies, and I asked Harold, I said, "Them ___?" He said, "Ah, I don't need 'em, let's let the boys have 'em back." We had a good time with 'em all day long. So we gave 'em back. They said they would get in trouble.

0:35:45.8

(When you were working, did you use a truck? Did you use ATVs?)

I didn't until I guess about the last four years I worked or five, might have been a little longer than that, I used four-wheelers. But I didn't use it as much as—after I got started usin' it, I wouldn't get one of 'em when they first started buyin' 'em for the boys, because I said, "You can't trap beaver with one of 'em, you got to be able to get 'em out of the water, and I don't do

that much coyote control, and it don't work good around these bird rookeries, what would I need one for?" So I kept on puttin' 'em off and finally Pete said, "Well, take one out and try it." I never had used one, I just wasn't experienced with 'em. I took it out and tried it, and I found out that as long as you use some judgment with 'em—

(When you go up a hill—)

Yeah. And I've got one now that I use all the time. I ride it pretty well. When we're gathering cattle or something like that, I ready it. I don't use a horse any more.

(Did you ever use a horse when you were trapping?)

Yeah, several times.

(Did you have to go out a couple days at a time?)

Generally, where I used a horse, it'd be on a ranch where it was so wet, and where you had to set 'em, you just had to go on foot on some of it, so they'd have a horse and they'd say, ___ you don't have a horse on the trail, it'll have a saddle on it, you have to catch it and put a bridle on it and go check the equipment. And sometimes by the time you made the rounds, you might go two or three miles on horseback, it wouldn't be no big long deal, but it'd be better than goin' on foot. Some of the places, you might be goin' a little further than that, time you rode out the sections that you had and come back. Mostly it wouldn't be a long, all-day ride, you'd just come back and put him in the lot and they'd take care of him from there. They was awful good about if I needed a horse.

0:38:11.0

(A lot of times the ranchers were probably out working, so you get a phone call saying, "I've got problems," and you just show up and try and locate the rancher?)

Yeah, well, when he called, you'd try to tell him you'd call back or wait until you get in touch with him and let him know about what time you're gonna be there and make sure that he's available to meet with you. Of course, if you just happen to know where he's at and somethin' happens and you can get by a day early and you pull in there and he ain't there, well, that's your fault. Because you didn't let him know you was comin'. So no, you don't just pull up there, you make contact with him. If it's gonna be a while, you give him an estimate on how long it'll be. Some of 'em look like ___ you're strung out."

(Do you think the damage was increasing before you retired? I know you've been retired a while, but was the damage starting to increase, more incidents?)

I don't know if it has or not, I don't get any reports or anything. I think when they went to beaver control, it helped shoot a little more life into the program than what it had with just coyotes or somethin' like that, because we started gettin' a lot more participation on county land because they create a lot of problems for the county commissioners on roadways and stuff like that. So I think where they went—the only thing about it, when they introduced something outside into the area and don't get some funding or manpower to do it, well, it sure works hardship on the men that's already overloaded anyway. They've just got to go ahead and—when you start doin'

beaver work, we done a lot of night huntin' with beavers, too. It was a good way, kind of like aerial control, to knock the population down some, and then you're doin' bird work, you trap beaver in the daytime and hunt 'em at night. Bird work, you've got to be there every evening, if you're trying to move a roost area. You can get 'em 24 hours a day. It's kind of like Utica Square. I don't know if you've ever been to Tulsa, but it's a big center, it's takes in about an entire block, fancy classy people. They've got the money _____. And crows got to roosting there, and every morning they had to get their—a lot of _____ and stuff planted along there, and that makes a good place, vegetation, for birds to roost in. That's attractive to blackbirds as well as some of the crows. And the lady that was managing that called me and I went over there and visited with her and told her about the program.

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Finally, it evolved in that Tulsa County came in through the board of commissioners, but the Utica Square people put up enough for the salary and everything for I think it was two months or somethin' like that. We worked the bird problem, and then they started—we gave 'em some suggestions on alterations to make it less attractive for roosting. Some of them _____ and everything that helped reduce it and I don't think they totally solved it every year, but they followed those instructions and darn near got it down level. And I don't recall that crows ever come back in. That was the main problem. They was splattered bigger than the rest of 'em, I guess.

(What did you do to scare them away?)

We used those amplified distress calls, propane exploders, the aerial exploders, what we call bird dogs, the screamers and the ploppers and harassed them every night until it got dark and come back the next day. It took about seven or eight nights workin' it, but we got 'em out of there. Plus they put some lights in some of the trees that flashed on and off and things like that. When I first went there, that was one reason I was tryin' to get a uniform for the men to wear. We had some incidents working in town where we just dressed in regular street clothes, and some policeman that was off and didn't get the word said, "Someone's in the back goin' through there with a shotgun shootin' in the air." _____ some of the control methods, and here come policemen. They get pretty nervous. They're not as professional as you'd think. They get pretty scared when they think you've got a gun. They've got their hand on their pistol and you haven't got any identification outwardly, like a uniform, to say you're official, to kind of slow 'em down.

This gal, she was a black gal, she was what one of the _____ used to call a corn-fed gals, she was a football player-type gal.

(A farm girl.)

Yeah. I was talkin' to one of the other ones, and I told him we was gonna start bird control there at Utica Square. She pulled up there and just parked right there within earshot of what we was talkin' about. When I got through, she said, "What'd you say your name was?" I said, "Pitts." And she said, "Well, that's my name. I thought that's what you said." She said she was from the South. I said, "Well, that's where my folk come from, the South." I said, "What state?" She said, "North Carolina." I said, "I don't know if my folks ever got over there or not." I was just kiddin' her, I said, "You reckon your folks ever come down south to South Carolina or my folks—" I think Georgia was where mine was, I said, "—my folks come up north?" She said, "I don't

know.” I said, “Well, might have been.” I looked at her and she had gray eyes like I got instead of brown eyes, and I said, “It might have been. We might be cousins.” She said, “I don’t know.” Anyway, from then on when I was workin’ there, she’d come out and I’d holler at her and say, “Hi, Kuz!” and she’d wave back at me. I just happened to go up in there to visit with the lady that was over all that, two women that sat behind a desk like this, one over here and one over there, kind of in the corner. I was standin’ there talkin’ to her and I never thought nothin’ about it, and she come in. I don’t know if she was comin’ in on another shift or somethin’, but when I see her, I just blast her right out and said, “Hi, Kuz!” and she said, “Hi!” and one of ‘em settin’ over there, _____. Her face started gettin’ red, and I said, “What are you laughin’ about?” “Nothin’, nothin’.” The other one’s laughin’. “What are you laughin’ about?” “Nothin’.” I said, “What’s your face gettin’ red for?” “I don’t know.”

So anyway, I kidded back and forth a little bit and then I lied to ‘em. I said, “Your face gettin’ red over that little deal, what do you think my face looked like when I found out we was cousins!” [laughs] I never did say anything, I just left it like that. [laughs]

([laughs] I’m glad you enjoyed your work.)

I did. I worked hard. We worked some long hours. They couldn’t get anybody to take my area when I was talkin’ about retiring. They said no, too many people know about it up there, they’ll run you to death. It was about that way.

(Do you have any regrets at all?)

No. None at all.

0:47:16.7 End file 3-2. End.