

CHARLES STODDARD INTERVIEW (BY GLENN STODDARD) 12/14/86

INVOLVEMENT IN CONSERVATION
CHILDHOOD TO RFF--1955

This is Glenn Stoddard recording Charles H. Stoddard's account of his background and experiences in conservation. Today is December 14, 1986.

GS: Dad, tell me about your early interest in conservation, how your interest as a child influenced your choice of a career.

CHS: I was raised in a big city--in Milwaukee--without much opportunity for outdoor experiences. Fortunately my father was a physician with a great interest in the rural scene as well as well as being a fisherman and outdoorsman, and he knew birds and trees, farming, etc.

GS: How did he develop an interest in conservation?

CHS: That's another story in itself which I'll try to sketch for you in a few words. His father was a physician in LaCrosse, Wisconsin where he grew up. He recalled seeing huge flocks of the passenger pigeon (which is now extinct) come up the Mississippi Valley in their migration in the spring and down the Valley in their migration in the fall in clouds of millions of birds.

GS: That would have been when?

CHS: In the late 1870's and early 1880's. Then suddenly it all came to an end. Many kinds of birds became very scarce and wild pigeons extinct. Add to that the traumatic experience of seeing the large sawmills close down because the forests became exhausted. They had been sawing white pine logs that were floated down the Mississippi from the St. Croix and the Black River. The logging was followed by fires, and smoke permeated the whole region, especially the valley of the Mississippi. Then the game became exhausted. Deer and small game became very scarce in the hills in the Couleé country back of LaCrosse. And finally, the farms, which were composed of loessal (windblown) soil from the glacial eras, became exhausted from poor farming methods which

caused erosion. All this had an impact on my father and many others of his generation who saw the urgency for adopting conservation methods.

GS: How did this concern influence his later activities in conservation?

CHS: It was sparked at the national level by Teddy Roosevelt's setting aside forest reserves, wildlife refuges and scenic areas and his calling the Governors' Conference on Conservation held in Washington in 1908. All of these things were done during the early 1900's. At that period my father had a case of tuberculosis, and he went out to a friend's ranch near Big Piney, Wyoming and lived there for over a year, fishing and shooting game for feeding the cowboys and others on the ranch, and also tending to their accidents and other things that a doctor could be helpful in.

GS: So he was already a doctor?

CHS: Yes. And the cowpunchers and the ranch foremen and the owners would gather around the campfire at night and swap stories, of course. Then Teddy Roosevelt's setting aside the forest reserves became a very highly heated subject for discussion. They felt that his conservation movement was robbing the people of their just rights to public lands they had always had access to, and it was destructive to the private enterprise system.

GS: How did your father feel about Roosevelt and those actions?

CHS: He was all for them.

GS: Was he a supporter of Roosevelt? What kind of politics did he practice?

CHS: He was a progressive Republican, and that's what Teddy Roosevelt was. So was Robert LaFollette in Wisconsin. LaFollette and Roosevelt were good conservationists.

GS: Well, then he came back to Milwaukee?

CHS: Yes, he had finished medical school and had studied in Europe--in Vienna and in Germany just prior to 1900. And then after he got well from T.B. at

the ranch--following the prescription of those days of cool mountain air and outdoor life and activity (to discourage the tubercle bacilli)--he came back to Milwaukee and practiced medicine all his life.

GS: And then he instilled you and your brother Jack in conservation by teaching you the names of trees, birds and farm crops, etc.

CHS: Yes.

GS: What else did he do in conservation?

CHS: His major activity in conservation was joining the group of doctors and businessmen and lawyers, etc., who hunted and fished up on the Brule River. That same group were all aware of what was happening to our resources, and they formed a chapter of the Izaak Walton League back in 1923, I think it was. The League was formed in Chicago in 1922, and immediately after it was formed, the Milwaukee chapter was put together and held monthly meetings during the winter. My father would take me down to them to see films and hear speakers on conservation. I got the bug there and never forgot it. The Milwaukee Izaak Walton League chapter decided it was going to take on a conservation demonstration project out in the country, and so they acquired the Moon Lake property, a farm in the upper end of the Kettle Moraine. Some of the men who had started the chapter, many of whom were Boy Scouts, joined together in reforesting some of the land up there.

GS: Did not that later on become the key tract of the Kettle Moraine State Forest?

CHS: Yes. The acreage was acquired a few years before the depression. When the Great Depression hit us in the early 1930's the Milwaukee chapter couldn't continue the payments so they approached the state; and the State Conservation Commission decided to acquire the tract to be the key tract in the Kettle Moraine State Forest.

GS: I see. And after you were introduced to conservation by your Dad, you were a Boy Scout, is that right? And then you continued your interest by studying forestry at the University?

CHS: One had to be twelve years old to be a Boy Scout then. As soon as I became twelve I joined the Scouts--that was in 1924--and I acquired second class and first class Scout and five merit badges toward the Eagle; but I never made the Eagle because my father decided my enthusiasm for the Scouts outran my interest in my studies in school.

GS: Oh, oh!

CHS: He had different priorities than you and I did. I got the conservation, forestry, camping and a couple of other merit badges I don't remember--swimming or something.

GS: Well, then you went on to college.

CHS: Wait a minute. My father wanted me to go to Harvard. I wanted to go to Michigan because Ann Arbor had a forestry and conservation school, but he ended up sending me in my freshman year to Wisconsin which lacked this training.

GS: Sort of a compromise?

CHS: I never regretted that. I enjoyed the studies in Madison my freshman year but it still wasn't forestry. In the meantime I persuaded my younger brother to take up medicine, and that satisfied my father who thought that he ought to have at least one of his two boys following his profession.

GS: Was forestry the only conservation field at that time, or were there other things you could have done in conservation?

CHS: Well, that's about all there was. There were fire protection and forest management careers, etc., but there weren't many jobs in fish, wildlife, soil and water and park conservation. The school in Ann Arbor was a

top school in forestry and conservation so there was a chance to get a broader education than in many of the other timber culture schools.

GS: So you transferred there after a year at Wisconsin?

CHS: I had several jobs in the summer of 1931: early on working at a pea cannery, and when that closed I went over to Trout Lake, the forestry headquarters of the Conservation Department in the north. And luckily my truck and I were hired by the superintendent of the forest.

GS: What did they have you doing?

CHS: Brushing out fire lines, hauling food and equipment to a fire lane brushing crew out in the woods a few miles away.

GS: Did you travel around northern Wisconsin that summer at all?

CHS: Yes, I went from Duluth to Ashland and over to Ironwood and down to Trout Lake.

GS: What was the landscape like then?

CHS: It was a sea of stumps as a result of logging and forest fires. You could see for miles. And then all that changed with the forestry protection and reforestation programs of the New Deal.

GS: You've had the "Property" for many years. When did you discover that? Was it that year?

CHS: On the same trip.

GS: The same trip? 1931?

CHS: I had gone up through Hayward and over to Chittamo (a crossroads community in northern Washburn County, Wisconsin).

GS: This was in a Model T?

CHS: A Model T pickup, yes.

GS: You told me you paid \$12 for it.

CHS: That's right.

GS: I wish we could buy cars for \$12 today.

CHS: If you could buy a Model T for \$1200, you'd be lucky--they are a collector's item.

GS: I think you're right. Well, what about the "Property?"

CHS: I was told about it by a friend of mine in Madison who was a freshman also, Fred Zimmerman. Fred said, "You've gotta see the old Wolf place if you're going over to Duluth."

GS: The old Wolf place? That was what they called it?

CHS: Yes.

GS: What was it like?

CHS: I drove up to the "gate," just a barbed wire gate, and I parked my car and started walking down the road, and I said, "This is it--the answer to a forester's dream."

GS: (Laughs) Why was it the answer to a forester's dream?

CHS: Because here standing in contrast to its surroundings was all this big timber with miles of cutover on all sides of the road.

GS: So it was pretty big timber, even then.

CHS: Well, it was better than anything else around there then.

GS: Was there a house there?

CHS: No, it was burned--there had been a fire in the spring, in April of 1931, that burned the house down. It was a ground fire, it wasn't a crown fire, so it didn't hurt the big trees like it did the brush and the young trees.

GS: What about the ponds and the dams? Were they like they are now?

CHS: The dams were blown up, they say, by bootleggers.

GS: This was during prohibition?

CHS: They say there was a still on the place. I never did know exactly where it was.

GS: They liked that spring water.

CHS: That's what the locals told me.

GS: Well, after you finished your work that summer--

CHS: Then I went to Ann Arbor to school.

GS: You started forestry school in your sophomore year.

CHS: Yes.

GS: Well, what happened that year? That would have been the fall of '31?

CHS: That was the fall of '31 and the spring of '32.

GS: Then you went to summer camp, forestry camp.

CHS: Yes.

GS: How many people were in your class?

CHS: Oh, there were about eighteen.

GS: That was the entire forestry class at Michigan?

CHS: The class of '34, yes.

GS: Where was the U of M summer camp and what did they have you do?

CHS: It was in Munising, Michigan and it was an old Cleveland Cliffs Iron Company logging camp converted into a forestry camp; and they had us learning how to map, measuring logs, measuring forest volume of stands of timber, and setting up a forest fire protection system.

GS: Did they teach you anything about wildlife, watersheds, etc.?

CHS: No, but we learned quite a bit about the politics of conservation. It was the summer of 1932 and the Great Depression was in full force. Hoover was President. There was one professor, Shirley Allen, who said that Shirley was a man's name until Shirley Temple came along. He took the side of Norman Thomas, the Socialist candidate for President, and the rest of the faculty were Republicans. Nobody was there to defend Franklin D. Roosevelt who was

the Democratic candidate with a strong forest conservation program. The arguments between the Socialist professor and the Republicans were hot and heavy, so we learned a lot. But as you know, Roosevelt didn't advertise what his conservation platform was then except in very general terms. He did talk about a Civilian Conservation Corps, for which the Republicans roundly attacked him.

GS: They did? Well, what happened once he got elected--in conservation?

CHS: There was a real explosion of his conservation proposals. But the principal thing was FDR's proposal for a Civilian Conservation Corps. He called a press conference to explain his ideas three weeks after Inauguration.

GS: A news conference?

CHS: Yes. And they asked him, "What about this program?" They were trying to find something wrong with it. And FDR, like an old schoolmaster with kindergartners, explained exactly what the program was, how it would work, what they would do and what the public benefits were.

GS: He knew the whole thing?

CHS: From forestry practiced on his Hyde Park estate. They tried to embarrass him but instead they went away like a bunch of spanked kids. In June of 1933, as soon as I got out of school I got a telegram from the Milwaukee office of the Forest Service. They had a job for me in the Forest Service at a CCC camp in northern Wisconsin. So when I was hired in Milwaukee the hiring officer told me to get a train ticket to Park Falls. The next morning I landed up in Park Falls. That was in 1933.

GS: Oh, that was the summer of '33. Between your junior and senior year.

CHS: The summer before that (1932) I had been at the forestry camp in Munising, Michigan; and luckily my timing was just right because I had learned much of what I needed to know for the CCC camp, and more.

GS: Sure. Well, what happened that summer when you worked for the CCC?

CHS: The first thing they did was to take us all out to Riley Creek Camp (we were a bunch of foresters) where we were assigned every day to go out and clear a new camp site including dynamiting the stumps out and bulldozing the land and leveling it off so that a trainload of 200 CCC enrollees could come out there. The CCC boys were all oriented into camp life by the Army at Fort Sheridan where they learned how to pitch their tents, how to use their mess kits to serve their food, etc.

GS: How big were these camps?

CHS: They were probably about five acres. They used tents at first, of course, and World War I equipment and World War I materiel.

GS: So that was quite a job, clearing the sites?

CHS: Especially when you had to do it every day for two weeks.

GS: Once you were on the job then with the camp, what kind of projects did you work on?

CHS: Fighting forest fires was the highest priority. We spent half our time doing that.

GS: How did these fires start?

CHS: Frequently by settlers who were trying to clear land for agriculture-- and it would get away from them.

GS: I see. Did you then plant trees in the areas where the fires had been?

CHS: Yes. During the summer we started planting trees. We also did some stand improvement work--we had to mark trees for thinning. And all that wood was saved up and used for firewood to keep the barracks warm. By that time the barracks were built.

GS: So they went from tents to barracks? How long were the camps in usage?

CHS: Until 1941, the beginning of World War II.

GS: What do you think about the kind of work that was done? Was it worthwhile or was it make work?

CHS: Anyone can make his own judgment on it. The most convincing thing is for a person to go up to northern Wisconsin. He'll see two things that stand out. One is the plantations of trees--they're now reaching saw log stage. Second is the regrowth of the hardwoods protected from forest fires by natural reproductive means.

GS: So you think overall the investment was worthwhile. Because we've got something to show for it.

CHS: Gosh, yes, that timber is worth a lot of money now. It's on public lands so it belongs to the people who paid for it.

GS: After the CCC camp experience that summer, you went back to school to finish your senior year and get your degree. Then what happened?

CHS: Well, I went through the year at school. One thing I forgot to mention. In the spring of 1931 when I was a freshman in college there was a controversy on about the logging and clearcutting of the state-owned (Wisconsin) hardwood stands along the Flambeau River. And I engaged in a newspaper battle over it with Roy L. Pinn who was attempting to justify it. I never knew who Roy L. Pinn was. I guess he wasn't a member of the State Land Commission in charge of these lands.

GS: He wasn't?

CHS: No. But when school was out I figured I'd won the battle with him.

GS: What happened eventually on that issue?

CHS: During all the rest of the '30's it was bought up and finally set aside as the State Forest.

GS: The Flambeau River State Forest?

CHS: Yes. Then in 1977 it all blew down in the tornado.

GS: Nature can be cruel.

CHS: It doesn't show much conservation sense. So my next controversy was when I was in the CCC camp. I wrote a letter to the Milwaukee Journal saying that the State Department of Conservation forest fire program was lacking in follow-up. I said we went out and stopped fires, and turned it over to the patrol of the State Department of Conservation. They weren't ready to take the responsibility so the fires got away from them; and the next day we would have to come back and do it all over again.

GS: What happened? What was the effect of the controversy you created?

CHS: A kind of tempest in a teapot. But the State Forester read the letter in the paper and raised hell with the Forest Service Regional Forester. The Regional Forester decided that I was writing letters beyond my authority so the bureaucrats decided to reprimand me.

GS: You were a kind of a thorn in the bureaucracies' side--in your younger years, anyway.

CHS: That's right. When I got out of school in 1934, I took a job as instructor in the Munising Forestry Camp. Then I went to work with the NRA.

GS: Not the National Rifle Association?

CHS: No, the National Recovery Act passed in 1933 to speed up economic recovery. Then I took a job with the American Pulp and Paper Association for a few weeks in New York. Then I went to Oshkosh and worked with the Northern Hemlock and Hardwood Association.

GS: This was part of the NRA?

CHS: Yes, Article X of the NRA Lumber Code required a certain number of trees be left per acre and delegated to the trade associations enforcement of the law. And so through the fall of 1934 and the winter I had a busy time inspecting logging operations. And to do it I travelled the logging railroads.

There were still a number of logging railroads and logging camps in the north country then. So I had an interesting winter riding the rails, staying out in logging camps, eating logging camp food, etc.

GS: That must have really been interesting. That was in 1934 and 1935?

CHS: Yes.

GS: What happened with the NRA at that time?

CHS: The "sick chicken" case--a Supreme Court decision--put an end to it. Some brothers, the Schechter brothers, New York meat and chicken handlers, were found to be handling contaminated chickens. The NRA moved in and ordered them to clean up their unsanitary slaughter house. The Schechters resisted and challenged the NRA in the Supreme Court; the Supreme Court said the Congress had no authority to delegate federal functions for private trade associations. And they were right, although a lot of New Dealers at the time, including myself, thought that this was a retreat into conservatism.

GS: But you think that was a good decision now?

CHS: Yes, but I lost my job.

GS: Why do you think it was a good decision?

CHS: For the reason that the Supreme Court gave. The federal government can't go delegating its authority to a bunch of private trade associations and have any federal government authority left.

GS: So it should have been done by a legally authorized agency?

CHS: Before that, when I was with the Northern Hemlock and Hardwood Ass'n. in the NRA Bob Marshall came in to Oshkosh to see O.T. Swan, who was my boss and head of the trade association.

GS: What was Bob Marshall doing at this time?

CHS: He was the chief of the Indian forest service in Washington. He was coming through Oshkosh on his way to Menominee. He was invited to lunch by

Mr. Swan. Swan invited me to lunch too, asking if I wanted to meet an interesting New Dealer. He was a pretty broadminded guy, Swan was. He wasn't a New Dealer or a liberal but he wasn't afraid of new ideas. So anyway, Bob Marshall offered me a job with the Bureau of Indian Affairs. He said he had a sustained yield operation. We adjourned after lunch, and I took him back to the railroad station. He said, "I need you young foresters. You're not afraid of new ideas." I said I'd just started this job with Mr. Swan. I'd only had it a couple of months. He said, "You stick with it, but if you do need a job, let me know." I treasured that memory because, as you know, Marshall formed The Wilderness Society.

GS: He died at an early age, though, didn't he?

CHS: In 1939. If I remember, he was 39 in 1939 when he died.

GS: After the Supreme Court decision, what did you do? You were out of a job.

CHS: There were a lot of forestry jobs available then, federal jobs.

GS: For someone with training, you mean?

CHS: Yes. I went over to St. Paul and got a job at the U.S. Forest Service Experiment Station which was doing a forest survey, inventorying all the forests in the Lake States and finding out how much was growing and being cut, how much timber was standing. To do that you needed to know the number of board feet of production by the sawmills and other wood-using industries in the region. Because I had had the contacts with the industries, the Experiment Station put me to work interviewing all these people who were running these industries. So I went back to see my old contacts.

GS: How long did you do that?

CHS: Summer of '35, fall of '35, winter of '36. Then I was offered a job as forester with the Otsego Forest Products Association in Cooperstown, New York. Because I was interested in co-ops and that was a co-op, I went down there.

And it was a very interesting experience. I went down there right after Roosevelt was re-elected for the first time.

GS: This was in '36?

CHS: In the fall of '36. I studied the setup they had there. The co-op was being advised by the U.S.F.S to build and equip a \$100,000 mill with government money. This advice came from a forest economist in Washington. An available alternative was to lease or rent an electrically driven mill owned by the Clark family in Cooperstown, a small town on the Susquehanna River. I was outranked. I had hiked up there, and there was too much "iffy" stuff--if the farmers would bring in logs in the quantity needed, if the mill could run so many days per month, if it could produce so much output--all that kind of wishful thinking. There were many assumptions.

GS: What finally happened with it?

CHS: Just exactly what I thought. They built the mill and they had to shut the mill down, and they had the mill crew go out and do the logging. So they could run only two or three days a week.

GS: So did you leave after that? Or before that?

CHS: Yes, I left in the fall of 1936. I had an opportunity for a fellowship and I moved back to Ann Arbor and to school to take my Master's degree in forest economics and policy.

GS: Were you married then?

CHS: Yes. Charley was born in 1937.

GS: He was? So then you went back to Michigan. In what year?

CHS: In the fall of '37. I was in Cooperstown for one year--a valuable experience. But I forgot to tell you one thing about my last year as an undergraduate. Dean Dana of the School of Forestry and Conservation had a way of encouraging intellectual stimulation in the policy areas of forestry.

He would break up his class into teams of two or three people each and assign a subject. We had to do the research on the subject, then be ready to debate with the other team before the whole class on our side of the topic.

GS: So he taught you how to debate the policy issues.

CHS: Right. Should we have federal regulation of private timber products? Should there be an expansion of the National Forests? And so forth.

GS: Do you think that was one of the things that got you interested in policy?

CHS: Yes, it did. It got me very interested. That and the letters that I wrote to the papers. All these things stimulated my interest. And I began to learn that there are limits to what one can do in conservation as an individual in terms of direct action.

GS: There are limits to what you can do?

CHS: Yes, you can plant trees, you can build dams, you can do a lot of conservation measures, build roads, get fire-fighting equipment, all of that; and yet there are distinct economic and policy limits to what the total job requires. And that requires organization--for fire-fighting, for timber sales and for whatever the activity is, and the adoption of policies to carry out these things.

GS: You can do a lot better if you get a well designed policy and use it? Well, when you went back to school at Michigan to do graduate work, is that why you got into forest economics?

CHS: Yes, there were jobs open so I took courses in business cycles, public finance, organization of business and more economics.

Anyway, I got my Master's. For my thesis I did a study of a lumber company which was typical of the large sawmills still left in the Lake States that had timber supplies of northern hardwoods available to them. And I showed that they could do selective cutting and shelterwood cutting to make their timber

last longer by growing as they cut.

GS: Sustained yield?

CHS: There wasn't enough timber for sustained yield but it was partial cutting the first time around; and while you're cutting the first time around growth is taking place on the timber that you have left; and when you go around the second time you take the merchantable stand of timber that's left, leaving a young understory of hardwoods.

GS: I see.

CHS: Then you have only small merchantable trees left, but you leave a growing forest.*

GS: But not a sustained yield operation.

CHS: No, not in terms of volume.

GS: After you got your Master's, where did you go in your career?

CHS: There were no jobs in forest management nor in forest economics. I did find a job in the watershed surveys just getting underway. There had been a lot of floods in 1936 and Congress had passed a flood control bill. So I applied and got a job on a field crew in New York state. I studied the Buffalo Creek watershed and then moved down into Pennsylvania and to the Codorus Creek in York, Pennsylvania and the Youghiogheny in the Pittsburgh area. I was transferred to Milwaukee in the fall of 1939. I asked for that move because my father was not well.

GS: You were working with the Forest Service, though. Is that right?

CHS: Yes, I represented the Forest Service on a joint watershed survey which included soil conservationists, agricultural economists, foresters, engineers. So I learned much more than I thought I'd learn on the watershed survey.

*See bulletin, "The Two-Cut system of Selective Logging in the Lake States," C.L. Fack Fdn., 1939.

GS: What was the point of the survey?

CHS: To find out how much reduction in flood flow would take place if conservation measures were applied to the whole watershed. If you put in forestry measures, if you put in strip cropping, diversion terraces, stream bank stabilization and other practices. The flood flow would be less, according to theory.

GS: I see.

CHS: The trouble was, there weren't any data to show what the flood flow would be with different conservation practices and rainfall measurements.

GS: So you didn't have a data base?

CHS: No. We were told to come up with results. We knew we had to "invent" sources.

GS: Boy! But you learned a lot about these different disciplines.

CHS: Yes, and the limits to which you can expect from conservation measures.

GS: After your watershed survey, you got transferred to Milwaukee because your father wasn't well? What did you do in Milwaukee then? What happened?

CHS: There I was in charge of all of the watershed survey foresters over the whole Midwest region. I had to go out to see if they were supplied with all the information that we had available.

GS: What year was that?

CHS: 1939. In 1940 I was offered a job with the Bureau of Agricultural Economics as a regional forest economist. I took that job.

GS: That was in Milwaukee too? What kinds of things were you working on for the Bureau of Agricultural Economics?

CHS: Principally, I started a study of forestry in relation to farm economy.

GS: Did you find out anything about whether wood lots were being managed well? Or were they being high-graded?

CHS: There was evidence that many were being high-graded. They were over-grazed.

GS: Cut for firewood, I suppose.

CHS: And fence posts, and farm use. One of the things that's kind of interesting is some of the people that I met when I was on the job. Leonard Salter came to inspect our watershed study crew in New York State.

GS: Leonard Salter was a professor?

CHS: No, he was an economist for the Department of Agriculture. He later became a professor. He made a brilliant analysis of the shortcomings of our data base. I was in Milwaukee with the BAE when I got a new job. They loaned me to the National Resources Planning Board (NRPB). Paul Middleton was the regional director. He was in Minneapolis doing a study of the post-war needs and opportunities in the Upper Great Lakes Region. So I did it. I wrote it all up, and just when I got it all finished, "Cotton Ed" Smith, who was the Farm Bureau spokesman in the South and chairman of the Agriculture Committee, managed to get the NRPB abolished.

GS: That was what year?

CHS: In 1941. He said, "We don't need any post-war planning."

GS: The war was already going on?

CHS: The war was going on and we were on the brink of getting into it.

GS: Where were you living when you worked on that study?

CHS: In Milwaukee.

GS: But you were working for the NRPB?

CHS: Well, they had transferred me to the BAE, to pay my salary.

GS: After that happened, what did you do?

CHS: I got into the war--into the Navy. In the Navy I had very little forestry activity until I got over to the British Solomon Islands. While I was

over there I was on a Navy base in charge of communications.

GS: What year was that?

CHS: In '43 I was over there, and '44.

GS: You had some training before you got there, didn't you?

CHS: Yes, I went to Harvard. That's when I got into the Ivy League where we were in the School of Government.

GS: So your Dad finally got his way in your going to Harvard.

CHS: Yes, though he didn't live to see me go.

GS: You got some more policy background?

CHS: Yes. Then when I got back from overseas, I went to Princeton for military government training.

GS: What kind of forestry experience did you get in the British Solomon Islands?

CHS: There was a Marine major of my acquaintance who was ready for shore leave. He wanted to go to New Zealand. He had it all worked out but didn't have any replacement to take charge of the logging and sawmill operations. So I volunteered.

GS: So you ran a sawmill in the Solomon Islands?

CHS: We had a 'cat' for skidding logs, a truck, and we had some chainsaws. They were the first chain saws I ever saw.

GS: This was in '43?

CHS: In '44.

GS: What was the lumber used for?

CHS: We needed it for bracing ship cargoes--we called it dunnage--bracing the load so that in a storm the load didn't shift, particularly ammunition. We also built walks in the muddy jungle, wooden tent floors. An officers' club, of course.

GS: That must have had high priority.

CHS: It did. And we used it for tent platforms and making beds and sea chests (of which I have one that I put together).

GS: What kind of wood did you saw?

CHS: We didn't know what we were sawing because there were no identification books based on botanical expeditions. So we called it teak, mahogany, ebony, balsa, etc. The trees would look close to these species. So I sent samples back to the Arnold Arboretum at Harvard where my close friend, Al Johnson, was located. They identified all the trees except one--*Mastixiodendron Stoddardii*--which they named after me.

GS: So they named a tree after you?

CHS: Because it was a new species.

GS: Pretty good. What kind of wood did this have?

CHS: It was a light reddish mahogany. Mahogany has strips in it--parallel strips--from cells coming off at a tangent separated by bands of flat cells.

GS: Was this a big tree?

CHS: Oh, yes. It looks like a redwood tree, the trunk does. It's a broad-leaf tree, though.

(See attached article on "Forests of the British Solomon Islands"--Journal of Forestry, 1947.

GS: Then when World War II ended, what happened?

CHS: I was awarded another fellowship by the C.L. Pack Forestry Foundation.

GS: To do what this time?

CHS: I had an assigned topic. A proposal was advanced to develop a forestry program to provide rural employment. The Foundation wanted somebody who had studied forest farming and rural unemployment. That's what I would do the study on. I was on that for three years.

GS: What kinds of things did you look at in that study?

CHS: How much land would it take to support a hypothetical family of father and son from logging and forestry operations. It just came out that it would take too much working capital, investment in equipment and managerial skill for many people in forest regions to be able to be self-sufficient forest farmers --(See bulletin attached--Forest Farming and Rural Employment).

GS: What years did you work on that study?

CHS: 1946-1949.

GS: What happened after that, in 1949?

CHS: I had the fellowship and I did some consulting work at the same time. There was no conflict with what I was doing.

GS: Where were you located then?

CHS: In my home in Wolf Springs Forest near Minong, Wisconsin. In 1949 I was looking over a couple of jobs in Washington. One was in the Forest Service and one was in the Interior Department with the Bureau of Land Management. Then I had a friend named Jim Marshall who was the main economist in the Secretary of Agriculture's office. The Secretary of Agriculture was Charles Brannan.

GS: That was under the Truman Administration?

CHS: That's right. I had noticed something in the subsidized soil conservation program that wasn't working at all, and nobody was calling it to the attention of the Secretary. The thing that wasn't working was that the government was paying money out for applying soil and water and forest conservation practices and wildlife management without technical guidance. People were signed up for it but there was a very sloppy follow-up in terms of inspection to see whether performance was taking place. So I got hold of Jim Marshall and told him, "I think the Secretary ought to be assertive to see

that the regulations are amended to provide for technical inspection of these practices, certification that they've accomplished what they were intended to accomplish. So Jim said, "You'd better tell the Secretary about that." So he called the Secretary, and I went in to his office with Jim, and I described the problem and then said, "The Forest Service and the SCS will probably like this--they're going to get some more money if they inspect the performance of practices on the agricultural lands and on the private forest lands."

GS: You made suggestions based on your own experience in Minong with that program?

CHS: After I had signed up for timber stand improvement and tree planting, no one ever came around to see if or how well or poorly I did it. They said I might send them a bill for the materials. A receipt for materials didn't mean I'd done the work.

GS: Did you ever write the Secretary, Secretary Brannan?

CHS: No.

GS: Did you then go to work for the Department of Agriculture or Interior?

CHS: No, I didn't want to get buried in the bureaucracy, particularly in the early 1950's with the Republicans likely to win the election. I went to work for the Izaak Walton League in Chicago for the winter of 1950. Then I came back to Minneapolis to work for the Office of Price Stabilization (OPS).

GS: That was the winter of '50-'51?

CHS: I went to work in 1951 for the OPS because the Korean War had started and Harry Truman set up an Office of Price Stabilization. My experience with Charles Brannan was my first experience in having an impact on national policy in conservation.

GS: On the ACP?

CHS: Yes. Performance checks.

GS: They followed up by requiring that you have a plan approved prior to payments.

CHS: Also a plan that is approved and performed according to proposed Forest Service specifications.

GS: After that experience, you went to the OPS Minneapolis Regional Office. What did you do there?

CHS: I did a lot of things. I was in charge of forest products prices and determinations. The Washington office, however, took the authority to decide what was going to be done in price changes and what wasn't going to be done. The result was that they would issue price tables on the various commodities without consulting the regional people who were affected. So just as a Christmas (1951) present to the loggers and tree farmers in the Northern Lakes States, Washington issued a table of OPS maximum prices that were rolled back considerably below the level they had reached since the Korean War started two months earlier. The subsequent howl by the loggers came to the attention of none other than U.S. Senator Hubert Humphrey, the new senator from Minnesota. Humphrey's office asked if anybody around the Regional Office could inform him about forest products pricing. None of the other economists around there knew anything about it but I had data from all the log and pulpwood price schedules going back ten years from the price bulletins put out by the University of Wisconsin. Senator Humphrey wanted me to come down there and explain what the hell was happening so I went down to Washington. I analyzed the trends and showed him that prices had not risen after World War II because they had been suppressed by the paper mills at World War II levels. They had not been allowed to rise in line with other wholesale and forest products prices. And pulpwood prices hadn't risen as fast as other prices.

GS: You mean they lagged behind all other prices?

CHS: Yes. And to roll them back to World War II levels was distinctly unfair. They rolled them back to the 1946 level.

GS: So you showed that, in effect, pulpwood prices never had risen with the post-war inflation and should not be cut back any more.

CHS: The Korean price inflation gave pulpwood prices a chance to make up for lost time. The free market had taken over instead of an administered price market--a monopoly of the buyer, or a monopsony. Then I started investigating who was running the OPS forest products section in Washington and found it was a man named Brown who was with the Brown Paper Co. in New Hampshire. Another insider was an economist who was on loan from the American Pulp and Paper Association; and the third one was a lawyer from the National Container Corporation in Tomahawk, Wisconsin.

GS: What did you find?

CHS: I found that they, in the name of price control, via inflation control, rolled back prices to the 1946 level, thus preventing them from catching up with the competitive post-war price trends. So the question was, "How could we get them to retract, to roll back so that all of the prices could get adjusted?"

GS: What came of that?

CHS: Just about what you'd expect. They knew how to bureaucratize the slowdown. They tossed it back and forth, there were legal questions they had to settle, all kinds of things. I went back and reported to Humphrey after I finished my investigation. I said, "The only thing I can see is to go to Mike DeSalle" (the head of the whole price stabilization program with Truman, a former mayor of Toledo and governor of Ohio). "You'll have to get him to take action." So Humphrey tried to get hold of him but didn't have any luck. By that time Eisenhower was just being elected. He abolished the OPS.

GS: Did Humphrey do a study on this, or have you do a study?

CHS: I did a study with his backing years later. Anyway, Eisenhower was elected, price control was abolished and the loggers weren't given any relief. It was in 1953 when I was in Washington that Resources for the Future got its start. Humphrey was on the Senate Small Business Committee and I got him to talk to Senators Morse, Proxmire and Sparkman, all influential senators, to authorize a study about the collusion in the pulp and paper industries in regard to pulpwood prices.

GS: Before we get to that, let's go back to what happened after you left the OPS. You mentioned that you went to Minnesota to work in the Legislature.

CHS: I was in Minnesota when I was working for the OPS in their regional office.

GS: But then you shifted over and worked for the Legislature.

CHS: Yes, they had a Legislative Interim Committee for forestry.

GS: What year was that?

CHS: 1953 and '54. Right after Eisenhower got in. It was dominated by Republicans--there were only a couple of Democrats on the committee. Minnesota was a conservative, rural legislative state. The committee members were kind of like the Association people. They had hearings; and I made a study of the forestry program in the state, out of which we developed a whole series of recommendations. By this time Orville Freeman became the governor of Minnesota.

GS: He was a progressive Democrat?

CHS: A Farmer-Laborite. He was a World War II hero of the Marines. His jaw was shot up. He was elected in 1954 to take office in 1955.

GS: This Interim Committee was operating all that time?

CHS: Yes. Before that. It was started in 1953. It issued the report in the fall of '55.

GS: What kinds of things did you recommend in the report?

CHS: A whole series. They were broken down into administrative, legislative, fiscal--and there were some others. And the whole idea was to make these recommendations as direct and simple as possible.

GS: When you worked on this report did you just take hearing testimony, or how did you get your ideas for this report?

CHS: I would talk it over with a legislator, then write up a statement for him. Then I'd include this idea in the report to the committee. Practically everything that went into it I had to tackle and nail down. Not that they were all my ideas--I combed them from all over the place. I asked the Dept. of Conservation field guys to tell me what needed to be done. That's why they liked it.

GS: Was there anything in there like important policy changes where you created new public lands or expanded forests, or changing policy in cutting or anything like that, or was it mostly administrative?

CHS: Ed Lawson was the Director of Forestry and George Selke the Director of Conservation. They welcomed the fact that I kept the screwballs at bay who would rip open the Boundary Waters Canoe Area to commercialization. After I went to Washington in 1955, I asked Selke to keep track of the recommendations, whether they were carried out or whether they weren't; and if not, what the reason was. He reported to me quite regularly. Substantial progress had been made in adopting the changes.

GS: After the Minnesota experience, you went with Resources for the Future?

CHS: Yes, I went down to Washington in December 1955 to become a staff member in land economics and policy. The Ford Foundation was underwriting this new program dealing with natural resources. It was a follow-up on the President's Material Policy Commission set up by Harry Truman. Resources for

the Future was just getting organized and they were building staff. And Marion Clawson (you remember my earlier contact with him) offered me a job at \$10,000 a year.

GS: In 1955, that was? How did that compare to what salaries are today?

CHS: I would guess that would have to be \$25,000.

GS: Then that was a pretty good job in those days?

CHS: Yes, that's how they started everybody, even with Ph.D.'s. And I only went up to \$12,500 in five years. I jumped from that to \$17,000 when I went to Interior.

GS: When you were with RFF, what projects did you work on?

CHS: The first one was a study of forest credit. It had long been claimed that because the forest was a fixed asset, liquid assets would be created from forests only by long-term credit which would relieve some of the pressures of liquidation. We had an advisory committee, a big advisory committee -- John D. Black, Murray Benedict, S.T. Dana, and various bankers. We went about it in the conventional way with hearings and luncheon meetings and so on. Finally we interviewed some land owners and asked how they felt about credit availability for forestry. To make a long story short, we found out that there was little demand for credit because most owners weren't holding the land for timber production. Instead they were holding the land for speculation, for real estate development or some other reason.

GS: Or recreation?

CHS: Yes. So there wasn't any substantial demand for credit at all because there are few operating forest enterprises or businesses.

GS: So the basic assumption was wrong.

CHS: Yes.

GS: Did you write that up then?

CHS: Sure, it's in a publication.*

GS: Was it pretty well accepted after that?

CHS: Little was heard of the need for forest credit; the demand was simply not there. The Pack Foundation study--Forest Farming and Rural Employment--met the same fate. There wasn't any prospect for either of these proposals.

GS: What was your next project at RFF? You were there for five years; you said.

CHS: Then I worked on a book called Land for the Future. Clawson was bound and determined to get some hard cover books out. Land for the Future was a manuscript seeking a publisher but did not contain any startling information. Then I worked on a study of small private forests. I wrote a number of journal articles on forestry and soil conservation. I was pleased with one on capital requirements to meet future timber production goals.

GS: You were sort of a forestry, rural land policy and economics expert?

CHS: That's right.

GS: What other kinds of people were there on the staff of RFF?

CHS: Mineral economists, urban planners, energy economists, farm land economists, water policy specialists, geographers, etc.

GS: So RFF was a sort of a think tank for resources?

CHS: It was called the "Democratic Department of Interior in exile."

GS: Who called it that?

CHS: People on the staff and around Washington.

*See FOREST CREDIT IN THE UNITED STATES--Resources for the Future, Washington, D.C., 1957.

CS: What other kinds of professional activities did you undertake during the late 1950's?

CHS: At the suggestion of Ronald Press, a New York textbook publisher, I wrote Essentials of Forestry Practice which has been printed in four editions since then. This I did at night. I also organized and prepared the lessons for the National School of Forestry and Conservation, built the camp on Wolf Springs Forest for the School, and I was active politically with the Democratic party in Wisconsin. Each of these took up a lot of spare time. My son Mac was born in February of 1958 and Jeffrey in 1960 (November).

↑
(Glenn)