WILLIAM NOTHSTEIN

Interviewed by Dr. Louis Silveri

July 1, 1976

SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS RESEARCH CENTER University of North Carolina at Asheville

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William Nothstein, interviewed by Dr. Louis Silveri, July 1, 1976.

Dr, Louis Silveri: I like to get a little biographical information of the people I interview. It helps us to put in context. . . .

William Nothstein: Yes.

Silveri: Are you a native of Western North Carolina?

Nothstein: I'm a Pennsylvania Dutchman.

Silveri: Where were you born?

Nothstein: Lehighton, Pennsylvania, in the Lehigh Valley.

Silveri: When?

Nothstein: When. . . '02. . . so I'm not a boy.

Silveri: Is that coal mining country?

Nothstein: My home town, Lehighton, is just below the anthracite belt, and I had uncles, three uncles, who worked in the coal mines, but my home town was a railroad center. My father was a locomotive engineer.

Silveri: He spent a lot of time away from home, then.

Nothstein: Oh, yes; yes. I worked on the railroad off and on, too. It took me six years to get through college, but I didn't flunk out; I had to get out and labor. I labored in the slaughterhouse as a flunkey one year, for twenty-five cents an hour. Then I was a railroad section hand, and . . .

Silveri; . . . while you were going to college. . . all this time?

Nothstein: Well, after high school. . . and another thing, I fed a Rock crusher for fifteen cents an hour right after I got out of high school, trying to get some money. Then I went to school a year, and I

Nothstein: (Cont'd.) was busted, and I got out and I worked on the railroad, section gangs, for a year.

Silveri: Let me see if we can get it by year, now. You were born in 1902; you went to public school in your own town in which you were born, you finished high school there?

Nothstein: Oh, yes, ^twenty-one.

Silveri: Okay; nineteen twenty-one.

Nothstein: Yes; I was late starting public schools.

Silveri: Could you just tell me what impact that you can remember that the First World War had on your town and your family?

Nothstein: The First World War? Well, I wanted to get in that, but I missed it by twenty pounds and two years.

Silveri: Twenty pounds underweight?

Nothstein: Two of my uncles made it, and one of them is buried at Arlington Cemetery. So *I* missed that.

Silveri: You finished high school, then, in nineteen and twenty-one.

Nothstein: Right.

Silveri; What did you do next when you got out of high school?

Nothstein: Well, then I worked for the town, feeding a rock crusher for fifteen cents an hour, and finally I got a job as a flunkey in a slaughterhouse for twenty-five cents an hour, and *I* stayed at that until I got enough money to go to school.

Silveri: When and where did you go to school?

Nothstein: I went to Penn State the end of that year; then I was broke, and I came back and I went to work on the railroad. Gifford

Nothstein: (Cont'd.) Pinchot was the Governor of Pennsylvania. They had two schools of forestry in Pennsylvania, well, Gifford Pinchot says that they needed only one school of forestry and he discontinued the appropriation for Perm State and said they had the Pennsylvania State Forest School at Mount Alto and that was the approved school of forestry for the State of Pennsylvania. I had my credits transferred to Mount Alto.

In the meantime, at Penn State, they circumvented the Governor, and put in a course in farm forestry. I didn't want to go into farm forestry, but since then things have been reversed.

At any rate, I got out of Mount Alto> in forestry after three years, in 'twenty-seven. While I was a student, we went down to the Okefenokee Swamp. In lieu of a summer camp, we went down there in March, 1926, and we cruised and mapped two hundred and thirty thousand acres of land for the Superior Pine Products Company, which had an office at Fargo, Georgia. We moved camp seven different times. We lived out there with the snakes and the razorback hogs and everything else. The contract gave us enough money to buy two Ford trucks, which we rode. Then we had enough money left over when we finished the job in August to come to Western North Carolina. That's when I first saw Western North Carolina. We made the rounds: the paper mill . . . the band mills were still running. They still had logging railroads. I've got pictures of those operations in '26. So we had a month in Western North Carolina. Then we got back to school. We would ride. . .

Nothstein: (Cont'd.) one time we rode forty hours without stopping to rest, except for gasoline and servicing.

Silveri: This work down in Georgia, you did before you graduated from school?

Nothstein: Yes; that was my junior year summer. We had to go to school 46 weeks a year. We got a Bachelor's degree, but that Bachelor's that four-year Bachelor's degree today is the equivalent of a very strong Master's. We carried many subjects, and we even had German. Another requirement was, we had to have a thesis. That's no longer required for a Bachelor's degree, We were required to have two years in German, which stood me in very good stead later. Of course, I spoke the Pennsylvania German dialect, Pennsylvania Dutch, from boyhood. It's a dialect. Today, I can go into Finkelstein's; I have a friend here, Jewish man. Many years ago I came to Asheville and wanted to buy a landing net. I am a trout fisherman and I knew what I wanted, it was a collapsible frame; the Japs made them. I went into Finkelstein's down here and Herb Shiftan was there. I knew he could speak Yiddish, and Yiddish and Pennsylvania Dutch are almost the same, I didn't speak a word of English to him, I never told him who I was; I just told him what I wanted. 'Tali," he had it. We transacted the deal; I paid him, walked out and he stood there with his mouth and eyes open, wondering, "Who the hell is that?" Herb and I have been fast friends ever since.

Silveri: I should have asked you earlier if you had any relationship with the Mennonites or the Amish.

Nothstein: I did have ... my home section was not in the Mennonite or the Amish section, although there was a very small Mennonite church in my home town, and my mother, before she married my father, belonged to that Mennonite church. One thing that I have never forgotten, and one thing I guess that made me a crusader, is the fact that the Mennonites respect the earth. They think it is sinful to destroy any part of this earth. It just appalls me when I see these bulldozers climbing up and down the mountains skidding logs and letting the earth wash down into our streams. I've been crusading against that for years.

Another thing: I was born on the Lehigh River and the West branches of the Lehigh River drain through the anthracite belt, and the washings from the coal breakers were dumped into the river, and there wasn't a living thing in that river. When I came to Western North Carolina and saw these beautiful trout streams I thought I was in heaven. Now there were some trout streams coming in from the East side of the Lehigh River, and that's where I used to fish, trout fish, with my father.

So when I saw these forests here, and these mountains, and these streams, this was it for me, although I was banished several times.

Silveri: You saw it during the summer between your junior and senior year. You went home; you finished your senior year. . .

Nothstein: I went my senior year.

Silveri: You got a Bachelor of Science in Forestry?

Nothstein: Right. Silveri: What happened after that?

Nothstein: Then I hitch-hiked; I had my satchel in my hand and thirty dollars in my pocket and I hitch-hiked from Pennsylvania to Asheville. In those days they were building highways. They had two kinds: dusty and muddy. But I got to Asheville, all right.

Silveri: In 1927.

Nothstein: Yes. I went out here at Bent Creek, the experimental forest, and worked there. Later we camped up in Virginia, and worked in Eastern Carolina.

Silveri: When you came down here. . . Did you have a job before you came to Asheville?

Nothstein: Yes.

Silveri: You knew you were going to have a job.

Nothstein: I knew I had the job. It was a foot-in-the-door job. It was a sub-professional status job.

Silveri: For the Government?

Nothstein: Yes.

Silveri: For the State of North Carolina?

Nothstein: The Forest Experiment Station.

Silveri: The U.S. Government.

Nothstein: Yes.

Silveri: Did you get on a Civil Service roll?

Nothstein: It was temporary. It was a foot-in-the-door business. Then, in May of the next year, I went over in the Smoky Mountains with timber cruisers.

Silveri: Would you explain for people who don't know what you mean

Silveri: (Cont'd.) by "timber cruiser?"

Nothstein: You take samples. They have different ways of sampling. It's statistical. You check such-and-such a percentage of the trees in a given area and then blow it up to a hundred percent. In those days, we did it according to the strip method. They have simplified ways of doing it now, but we did it by strip method, and we had baselines run off. A chain, is sixty-six feet. We had a crew that laid off a baseline that had stakes. Those stakes were ten chains apart. A crew would be assigned to a stake. Actually, *I* did not do too much cruising. I did most of the computing and the mapping, and the chief of party and I would go out and run a check strip on each crew every month. I was not an every day cruiser.

Then two men, one with a staff compass, in front', and he pulled a two-chain tape with a trailer. You had to make slope corrections. The steeper it was the more you added. So you could tell by your grade how much to allow for slope. This compass man, he'd be in front, then the man in the back, the rear chainman, he'd call him to stop when he was; at the proper distance, two chains. Then the compass-man was a note-taker, and the rear chainman was a cruiser. He had *a* Biltmore stick, which is a stick which by mathematical calculations you can hold it up. Now you can take a yardstick and hold it up and it does not give you the true diameter of a tree.

Silveri That's quite a story.

Nothstein: The Biltmore stick was developed right out here on the Biltmore Forest by Dr. Schenck. It's a method of determining the diameter of a tree, and you can hold it vertically and

Nothstein: (Cont'd.) you can tell how many sixteen-foot logs there are in that tree. That man in front would tally and the man behind would call each tree thirty-three feet on each side of that tape. So he took a strip sixty-six feet wide and he called, by species, by diameter, and by number of logs. Then when we'd-get a watershed or a unit complete, we had run ten percent. Then, in theory, you run it up by ten and you get a hundred percent. Actually, there are other ways of doing it, but in essence that was the way it was done. There are many, many species of trees.

Silveri: Why did you do this? Who you doing this for?

Nothstein: It was being done for the North Carolina Park Commission, which was a commission appointed by the Governor. Tennessee had a Park Commission, and North Carolina had a Park Commission, and the State of North Carolina paid half the cost of the land acquired in North Carolina, and the State of Tennessee paid half the cost of the land acquired from the Tennessee side, and the Rockefellers, in effect, put up the difference.

Silveri: Now you're talking about the origins of the Great Smoky National Park, right?

Nothstein: Then, after it was acquired. See, the two states bought this land. They bought the land. They had to resort to arbitrary condemnation in some cases; they shut down industries. They had band mills, logging railroads, and a lot of things. . . homes, farms. But the states had to acquire the land and then transfer title to the Federal Government, and that's how the Great Smoky Mountains National Park came into being.

Silveri: You mentioned the Rockefellers, too.

Nothstein: The Rockefellers paid half of the cost of acquiring the land of the Smoky Mountains National Park, yes.

Silveri: We[1] re not talking about what used to be the Vanderbilt Estate?

Nothstein: Oh no, no. This was the Smoky Mountain National Park.

Silveri: Now, so you went in, along with others, to make a survey of the standing timber in that area that was purchased?

Nothstein: Yes. That was the job, and when I went on that job I already had assurance that the State of North Carolina, the North Carolina Forest Service, would give me a job the first opening they had. Verne Rhoades was the Executive Secretary of the Park Commission, and when I went to see him, I told him exactly what I had in mind.

He said, "All right, if you want to quit tomorrow I won't hold it against you. Go over there and stay as long as you like."

The State offered me a job then, late that summer or early that fall, so I very reluctantly left the Smokies, because I never felt better in my life. I went to work, I had a fancy title: in charge of visual education. They had a three-quarter ton International truck. They had a generator bolted down inside this panel truck. I had a movie projector and a trunk about that high, and old silent movies and a screen and film and mending kit, and all that sort of thing, and I went around and showed motion pictures, fire prevention movies, and also game protection pictures; wild life protection. These mountain

Nothstein: (Cont'd.) people had burned the forest religiously, for years. They had no game laws. Well, they had game laws, but they never respected them. Even to this day, many of them don't respect our game laws. So I went from one county to the other showing these movies. I went back as far as you could get. I had cable, I think, about fifteen hundred feet of cable. If I could get within fifteen hundred feet of one these rural backwoods schoolhouses I could show movies. I'd have to give them about a twenty-minute spiel before I could show the movies, because if you showed the movies first and then talked, you didn't have an audience.

I showed movies to people fifty years old who'd seen. . . that was the first movie they'd ever seen. I got back into the Smokies as far back as people lived; as far back as you could get; all over Western North Carolina, and go from one county to another.

Silveri: Let me ask you a couple of questions here: When you got your first job with the State, you were stationed in Asheville. Is that right?

Nothstein: The first job for the State. . .

Silveri: After you left your work in the Great Smokies and got this job you're talking about?

Nothstein: Well, actually, my headquarters were in Raleigh.

Silveri: Raleigh.

Nothstein: You see, it was a State-wide Job. Later, then in the Fair season I traveled the County Fair circuit and I put up exhibits

Nothstein: (Cont'd.) at the County Fairs. I had exhibits, and I'd stand at those exhibits and talk and try to stop forest fires. I was a preacher, I tell you. So I made the Fair Circuit; go from one County Fair to another; put up these exhibits and. . .

Silveri: When you were talking about showing the films to people, how long did you do that?

Nothstein: Well, I did that from August until, I guess, the latter part of September, or early October, when the County Fairs started in Eastern Carolina.

Silveri: What year?

Nothstein: That was in twenty-eight.

Silveri: Nineteen-twenty-eight. Okay, so you say you traveled extensively through the mountains showing that film, right? -Way back in the Smokies?

Nothstein: Oh, yes.

Silveri: That's just about all the counties?

Nothstein: I would concentrate pretty much in the back woods where the forest fires originate; where the game law violations were concentrated.

Silveri: So you must have met a lot of the mountain people.

Nothstein: Oh, sure.

Silveri: What's your opinion of them?

Nothstein: Well, I've lived with mountain people most of my life. . .

Silveri: Are they any different from any other people?

Nothstein: Yes; they're better; they're more trustworthy. They're

Nothstein: (Cont'd.) more dependable; more reliable. They've got more character. They are different. I'd trust a mountain man before I would a city man any day.

Silveri: Did you ever sleep in any of their houses or eat with them?

Nothstein: Many times … many times. And I've. . .well, there's one or two places I even had my own place at the table.

Silveri: Would you describe some of the food they served?

Nothstein: Well, it varied, according to season and according to. the financial status of people. I'd go in some places. . . and when I was showing these movies, I'd eat my evening meal at the house nearest the school house. . . cornbread and milk, sometimes, and fatback, fried potatoes, onions, leatherbritches beans. It varied considerably, and then sometimes fresh pork, if they'd killed a hog somewhere. But I did stop at one place, and an elderly widow lived alone, I stopped there for my evening meal. Of course, there wasn't a speck of paint inside or outside the house, but the floor was clean. No carpets, but if I'd dropped a piece of cornbread on the floor I wouldn't have hesitated to pick it up and eat it; it looked specklessly clean.

After we'd finished, and . . .I'd offer to pay. You insulted people if you offered to pay for your meal. Yes; you insulted them.

Silveri: You had come to that cabin; knocked on the door and told them what work you were doing and that you would like to have supper there?

Nothstein: Yes. Usually the County Warden was with me. They had a County Fire Warden, and he knew his way around, and usually he went along. So he ran interference for me. He arranged. . . he knew where the school-houses were, and one thing and another. At one place, this elderly widow, after we'd eaten, said: "I have a suit of clothes here I made for my husband. He never wore it. I raised the sheep; I sheared the wool. I carded the wool and I spun the yarn; I dyed the yarn and I wove the cloth and I made the suit." She said, "I'll let you have it for ten dollars." Well, like a fool, I said, "Well, if it'll fit me." I tried it on and it didn't quite fit. But that would be a collector's item today, and I could have afforded the ten dollars, but I figured, "Those things are everywhere, you know." I didn't have sense enough to recognize what I saw.

Silveri: Did you eat meals or sleep at houses where they had large families? Mountain people are supposed to have a lot of children. Did you find them?

Nothstein: Well, I didn't sleep at too many of them. Now, over the years I slept at several, but usually I was able to stay in town overnight. But I have stayed in some homes; they always gave me a good bed. I never had any problems. Another thing, there are some places you learn to steer clear of certain spots, too.

Silveri: Among the schools you went into, most of them were one-room schoolhouses?

Nothstein: Yes; and a few of them were different. I had one surprise, just under Mount Mitchell, up on the head of Cane River at Pensacola,

Nothstein: (Cont'd.) in Yancey County. Molt Hensley was the County Warden. They had a high school up there; a big white building. There was a one-track road going up through there. I went up there with Molt. We went up there and met the school principal. He said, "We're having a reading contest tonight. Would you rather give your program before or after we have our reading contest?"

I said, "Well, it's immaterial to me."

He said, "Well, if that's all right, we'll have our reading contest first, then."

I sat and waited, and after a while he got up. They had a stage, and here came the girls. I mean, this was in the backwoods, I thought, but those gals came out in evening dresses and they had their contest; pretty girls. Of course, I had hair in those days and I was single. After the reading contest was over the principal introduced me and I had to give my usual twenty-minute spiel. I was taught to have eye contact with my audience; not look up here when you talk, but stand back, throw back your shoulders and suck in your gut and look them in the eye. So, I was talking and I looked, there'd be a pretty girl laughing at me. Well, I looked another place and would keep on talking, and there'd be another pretty girl. They were scattered all over that house, and every time I'd see one of those pretty girls she was laughing at me. I figured, "What the hell, maybe my necktie is wrong." I felt, casually; my necktie was all right. I kept on talking. *My* hair was all right. I thought, "My Lord, is my fly open?" That was all right. *My* posture was

Nothstein: (Cont'd.) all right. I figured, "Well, I'm going to collar at least one of those girls before they get away from here tonight." Before I could make contact with a single one of them, they were all gone, and to this day I don't know what. . . I think it was a conspiracy. I think they were trying to get me riled, or something.

Silveri: How about your speech? Maybe your speech might have been quite different than what they were looking for.

Nothstein: Well, maybe being a Damyankee, I guess maybe that. But why all of them should be laughing at me, I couldn't understand. But anyhow, that's a minor item.

Silveri: What was the reaction of the mountain people after they saw that film and heard your talk?

Nothstein: Oh, they just. . . they thought it was wonderful. They'd come and see me and tell me what they thought about it. No, it was one of the finest things that was attempted. At any rate, to get away from that, that's just a minor part. Then, in January of 1929, Al Folweiler (another Pennsylvania Dutchman) who is now the retired State Forester of Texas, was leaving as District Forester at Lenoir, North Carolina, the State of North Carolina. I was a District Forester, so I went to Lenoir, North Carolina. I had eight counties, I think, from the Virginia line to the South Carolina line, and four protective associations.

Silveri: What are those?

Nothstein: That's blocks of private land under a cooperative agreement with the State whereby they pay so much an acre per year, which is matched, dollar per dollar, by the State. In other words, they had

Nothstein: (Cont'd.) intensified protection; a little better protection than was given county-wide.

Silveri: Fire protection?

Nothstein: Fire protection; I was a fire boy. We ate a lot of smoke in my day. So, I went to Lenoir, and Al Folweiler stayed with me one month to get me acquainted before he left. We built a lookout tower up on Dugar Mountain. This was in the latter part of January, and we had a glaze storm which coated steel girders while we were putting the tower up, but we finally got it done. We had a Model A Ford coupe, and we had to get up on the Blue Ridge. We had chains on, and we got up there on top of the Blue Ridge to a section, Aho, now on the Blue Ridge Parkway. It goes through Aho now, but it was a big meadow on top there, and just two wheel tracks going through there, and here was an awful mudhole.

We went down to the axles, and it was dark and freezing, bitter cold, and a couple of miles, at least, to the nearest farmer. It was obvious that if we left that vehicle it would freeze in that mudhole. So one of us had to stay there, spin the wheels to keep the water from freezing, and the other was going after a team to pull it out. Well, Al and I almost had a fist fight as to who was going to take a walk. Finally he won out; he walked. I had to sit, periodically start the motor and spin the wheels. Ultimately he came with a farmer; hitched his two-horse team to the Ford and pulled it out. We got into Lenoir lat that night.

Silveri: What did the farmer charge you for that? Nothstein: I don't remember. I stayed at Lenoir as District Forester

Nothstein: (Cont'd.) until the early fall of 'thirty-one. I went to Wilmington, North Carolina, as District Forester, and there I was handling two districts. I had a district office in the Customs House in Wilmington. I had a secretary and an assistant, a non-professional assistant, and I had an office and a secretary and a non-professional assistant in New Bern, North Carolina, and I was holding down two jobs. Money was scarce, and we had fires. They talk about big fires; we had fires. The Fall of '31 and the Spring of [f]32, I guess, were the most destructive forest fires. There haven't been any that destructive since, or as extensive.

Silveri: Why was that? Drought conditions?

Nothstein: Drought; wells that had never been known to go dry in the memory of the oldest citizens went dry. I had an automobile, a Ford automobile, out In the White marsh, near Whiteville, North Carolina. That normally is chest deep in water. You could drive an automobile through there. We had it. We had big fires. We had big fires. But this was in the Depression. Many counties had no fire protection.

In the meantime, while I was at Lenoir, I married. Married in 1930. I married a widow with four children; she had no money; I had very little, but I had the promise of a thousand dollar a year increase in salary. By gosh, instead of getting my thousand dollars a year increase in salary, my salary was gradually cut, and when I left them down in Wilmington, North Carolina, in May of 1933, I was making the munificent salary, holding down two jobs, of a hundred and twelve dollars and fifty cents a month. Also, they said they did not know whether they would have money to pay me for the remainder of the fiscal year at all. The bank folded and left me a month in debt because the household expense checks did not clear.

Nothstein: (Cont'd.) I had applied with the U.S. Forest Service. I got a telegram from the director of the experiment station here, Andy Frothingham, to offer me a job. I immediately accepted. About two or three days later, I get another telegram, from the Supervisor of the Nantahala National Forest, offering me four hundred dollars a year more money, which was a lot of money in the Depression. Well, I sent him a wire and I thanked him very, very much, and I told him what I had already done. I had already accepted this job at the experiment station for four hundred dollars a year less money, but I was going to be as good as my word. Here, in a few more days comes a telegram from Andy Frothingham releasing me from my previous acceptance.

Silver: Do you remember the name of the superintendent that you are speaking of. . .the national forests?

Nothstein: John B. Byrne; John Byrne.

Silveri: B-u-r-n?

Nothstein: B-y-r-n-e. He was a World War I Marine who was gassed; he was hospitalized repeatedly. He had a wife and three children, I believe. Here this CC program came in on him; pressure; overload. The poor fellow would be knocked out; he had tuberculosis. He came to Oteen Hospital to get to where he could come back, and we tried to do everything we could to shield him from everything we possibly could, but the dirtiest jobs, he insisted on doing himself. He was a man; he didn't wish the dirty jobs off on his underlings. We tried to shield him in any way we could. He died, here at Oteen, in the hospital. But he was a man, and there's a stone tower on Wayah Bald with a bronze plaque in honor of John Byrne.

Nothstein: (Cont'd.) I suggested the stone tower, and later suggested that it become a memorial to John Byrne, one of the cleanest men I've ever known.

Silveri: You came in 1933, back to Western North Carolina?

Nothstein: Right.

Silveri: You came to work for the U.S. Forest Service?

Nothstein: Right.

Silveri: In the Nantahala National Forest?

Nothstein: Right; which has now been combined with the Pisgah National Forest, the Uwharrie National Forest and the Croatan. There are four national forests in North Carolina and they've all been consolidated. But in those days the Nantahala was an entity unto itself.

Silveri: What was your job to be?

Nothstein: Well, they first asked me to be a project superintendent at a CC Camp. I went there with that understanding. When I got there, they said that they had another job for which they did not have a qualified man available. These project superintendents at CC Camps were mostly construction people, contractors, and they could handle that. But the job for which they did not have a qualified man available was somebody to head up the timber stand improvement program. That involved tree planting and going in and releasing desirable young trees from undesirables. They had ten CC Camps. You see, the Nantahala at that time was in three states, Georgia, South Carolina and North Carolina, and they had ten CC Camps. In addition to that, they had other N.Y. . . . What was it? NYRA ... the different projects, similar to WPA, but under a different name.

Silveri: The National Youth Administration?

Nothstein: No, no. This was something similar; took older people. But they had trouble with those jobs, too. So I agreed to it; and I would travel from one camp to another, and I'd train young foresters fresh out of college how to train these local men and CCC boys/ We'd get local woodsmen and the CC's, local CC boys, and train them now to do these jobs. So that's what I did. So we planted trees and we did this. . . we had hundreds of them out with axes, cutting out. . . just finding a decent tree here and cutting around it so it would grow, and we really built up a forest.

I think the CC program did more for the forests of Western North Carolina, for the Appalachians, than any other program they ever had. So, there were some mistakes, and one thing and another. We gradually got things ironed out, and just about the time one of these young foresters was trained to where he could do a good job, they'd have some opening for him. They needed him in Mississippi or Texas or some other place, you know. It was just a constant training job with these; I guess around a hundred young foresters went through their training there.

[END OF SIDE I, TAPE I] [SIDE II, TAPE I]

Nothstein: (Cont'd.) It was just a constant movement around from one of these camps to another. There were ten of them. So we made out all right. We had a timber survey; that's another thing. We had to make timber management plans. We had to figure out how much timber we had and where it was, what species and what the sizes were. In other words, we were making an inventory. I had crews working on that; some young

Nothstein: (Cont'd.) foresters working on that. On top of that, here they'd come. Well, they had more money. 'We've got so many more men that need work and they're going to have money. Now what else can we do? At one time I had the job of figuring out cutting all of the chestnut trees and cutting them up into acid wood with Government labor. I had to figure out how many axes and cross-cut saws, and everything else. Fortunately, that job never did come about. I'd fall heir to making estimates like that.

Things rocked along until November of '35. The District Ranger, they had to move a District Ranger in Andrews, North Carolina, I knew it was coming, but I couldn't say anything much because it might-look as though I was after his job. It was obvious he was going to have to be moved, and he was. So they offered me the job to go over there to Andrews, North Carolina. He was very unpopular; the people in every county contributed to hire a lawyer to go to Washington and have the man fired. Anyhow, it was a very unsavory situation because the Forest Service was not in very good repute at that time. He had down-graded them pretty much. They said, "Now, it's up to you."

I said, "All right, I'll go." I went, straightened out inequities wherever I could find them and did the best I could. We had fires. The first year I had ninety-nine forest fires. But I stayed with it. Sometimes I had to walk twice to throw a shadow. I'll tell you, I was loaded down. I'd get to three fires in a day, sometimes. You go around them, and getting to them you had to climb these mountains, and stuff. Of course, I was young and wiry then.

Silver!: Maybe this is the point for me to ask you what the methods were in fighting forest fires?

Nothstein: Well, it was hand labor, entirely; no equipment. We did not have any radios; we had no Jeeps; we had no roads. Well, there were some roads, but there were no roads back into the mountains,, so we had to walk. Some places we had to walk, the men were exhausted when they'd finally get to the scene of the fire; no means of communication from the fire, except by messenger. We had telephone lines to the lookout towers. I finally got some lookout towers built. Gosh, trying to get a message out, you just . . 0 maybe it'd take a day or something to get a message out. We made out, nevertheless^

In the CC program we had plenty of manpower.

Silveri: What would you do when there was a fire, cut down-trees, backfire?

Nothstein: No; no. The thing was, the main thing, basically, is to rob the fire of fuel. Our main tool. We had axes and saws, and stuff, but, the main tool was the Council fire rake, which is nothing more than four blades of a mowing machine. You've seen these mowing machines cut hay? Four of those blades put on an angle frame with an eye welded on, and an over-size hoe handle in it, and you could cut and rake at the same time with them. We'd rake, generally, not always; you had to change your tactics, depending on the situation, but generally the thing was to get to the head of the fire. [inaudible] try to get up here and then get your forces and divide and rake a line across that head. That's the hottest-spot; get that stopped, and sometimes you had to get a little distance ahead of that head to backfire, and then rake; one man behind the other.

Nothstein: (Cont'd.) One lick method. One lick. The first man lick, another man lick, and the last man makes the final lick. Finally you've got to drop somebody back to patrol and come on down.

Silveri: You*re talking about brush, now, cutting brush, right?

Nothstein: Well, it’s raking leaves, basically raking leaves. Dodge the brush as much as we could, so we wouldn't have to cut it.

Silveri: What about the trees?

Nothstein: You go around the trees. You dodge the trees. You didn't cut any trees, unless the dead trees caught fire. Then we'd have to cut them down so they wouldn't throw sparks.

Silveri: If you cleaned the forest floor of fuel then the trees. . .

Nothstein: You just get a fire line raked, yes, and hold it That's basically what it's about, but it took a lot of physical effort. We made out. In those days, we sold timber, marked timber, and the CC boys continued the timber stand improvement. They continued planting trees. We built telephone lines; we built foot trails; built truck trails, roads, graveled roads, the CC boys did. Had rock crushers; surfaced them with rock, crushed stone. We built bridges. They built houses for the game protectors. We developed some wild life management areas. We had these wild life protectors out there; built a house for the game protector; a barn, woodshed, and put in a water system for him. So many things were accomplished.

Silveri: Let me ask you some other questions, at this point. What year was the Nantahala National Forest established?

Nothstein: The Nantahala National Forest was established, I believe,

Nothstein: (Cont'd.) they had purchase units. They had two purchase units. I can't tell you exactly when the Nantahala National Forest, as such, was established, but I can tell you this: There wasn't any land, first off, before the Government could come in here and buy land, they had to have the consent of the State of North Carolina. The State of North Carolina had to pass an enabling act, and in 1901 the State of North Carolina passed an enabling act making it possible for the Federal Government to come in here and acquire land for a national forest. It was not until 1911, ten years later, that the Weeks law was passed. That made funds available for the purchase of lands. So they had purchase units. If I remember rightly, it was about '21, maybe, that the Nantahala, as such, was established. But the Nantahala was in three states. Now, what was once the Nantahala is in three different national forests, each state unto itself. They divided them by state lines.

But in 1911, in the fall of 1911, they started surveying and dickering for land.

Silveri: You mentioned those ten CCC camps. Were they built right in the forests?

Nothstein: Not necessarily; no. They were built at the edge of the forest, or they were built out. Some of them were on leased land, out near a community, near a road, where they could get in and out. They just… a number of them were on leased land, and some of them were actually out in the forest, Some were in the forest, some were. . . where there was a suitable site and where there was access to the site.

Silveri: Was it the army that administered them?

Nothstein: The army was responsible for feeding, clothing, disciplining, and for the health and welfare, and for education. Then the Forest Service was responsible for the work projects.

Silveri: The Forest Service you're speaking of, in which you were employed, was under the Department of Agriculture.

Nothstein: That's right.

Silveri: Was there discussion back then that it really belonged in the Department of the Interior?

Nothstein: Back in Gifford Pinchot's day there was a feud between the Department of the Interior and the Department of Agriculture, and for years people in the Forest Service looked askance at anybody in the Department of the Interior. But the Forest Service has been in the Department of Agriculture since Gifford Pinchot, and I wondered about why should one branch of the government be an enemy of another branch of the government. When I went to Andrews as the District Ranger I asked my predecessor: I said, Well, we're looking at the Smoky Mountains from some of our lookout towers, and they're looking at some of ours. In fact, they're looking at a lot of ours that we don't even have a way of looking at; we can't even see our land from the air." I said, "Do we have any. . . how about cooperation with them?"

"Oh, they won't cooperate worth a damn." You know, the first chance I got, I went over and saw some of those Smoky Mountain National Park people, and they welcomed me with open arms. I drew up the first cooperative agreement, and we've been palsy, walsy ever since.

Silveri: Also, while we[1] re here, I wanted to go back and ask you a couple of questions about when you were working in the Smokies, when you were making that survey when they established the national park. Do you remember the year in which they established the national park, the Smoky Mountains National Park? I can check later. . .

Nothstein: Yes; it's of record, you can get that. . . Franklin Delano Roosevelt dedicated it, and it was in the thir .. . I don't remember the year, but it's of record. It's easily available to anybody.

Silveri: You had nothing to do with moving the people out of that area?

Nothstein: No; I did not. Then, I did have something to do with moving people out of the area in the national forest. As we acquired land, you see, all this acquisition program was just continuing right on, so here, they'd acquire a tract in my ranger district, and they'd acquire a squatter with it. I was asked to encourage those squatters to move; and I did, but I never evicted anybody.

Then, when the Santeetlah. . .and I pushed the development of three wild life management areas. I had my knuckles rapped a time or two over it, but I kept on and they finally materialized. So the Santeetlah Wildlife Management area was an area in which we had acquired a number of people with the land. I had orders from one supervisor to go see those people once a month. We had to keep a diary every day, and that diary had to be sent in with our monthly time sheet before we'd get paid.

Silveri: Do you think those diaries are still in existence?

Nothstein: I know mine, for a few years, are, because I kept an exceptionally good diary, and mine finally wound up in the archives. My diaries were selected to go into the National Archives.

Silveri: In Washington?

Nothstein: Yes. I kept carbon copies of my diaries. There are several reasons a diary can help you, because in every bureaucracy there are ambitious people, unscrupulous people, who will do anything to further their own ends: trample on subordinates or associates or do any damn thing else they can do to get ahead.

That's one of the greatest disappointments to a young man going into a bureaucracy, if he's got a conscience at all. If he's clean-minded. But you run into them, and they're not concentrated up in those hallowed chambers in Washington, either.

In keeping a diary, you had something to present if you were accused of being in a certain place, and say, "Here's my diary, and my diary shows I was in such-and-such a place; or I did this, or I did that." For years, the cardinal sin for a ranger was to have a big fire. They had a grand high mogul up in Washington one time whose idea it was that to keep fires small was to fire every ranger who had a big one. And everybody was in a state of fear.

Then they'd have. . .a board of review, or something termed like that. After a big fire, they'd have to go through all this^ you know, if somebody up above thought that he might be accused, why he had to find a hole to crawl in and try to leave the man on the ground exposed, stark naked. So, keep a good diary, to protect yourself. I had to keep

Nothstein: (Cont'd.) this diary. I had to send it in every month, but I always kept a carbon copy. Then, there was one tract of land inside this Santeetlah Wildlife Management Area. These other people, I'd see once a month and I'd encourage them to move; see if I could help them find a place. Finally got them off and they were on speaking terms with me. Nobody ever shot at me; I never carried a gun. I had a 38-Special which I carried only once, except when I'd go out on patrol on deer hunts. I'd carry it if some guy wounded a deer that needed to be put out of its misery; I had a way of doing it. But only one other time did I carry a pistol on duty. I'll get around to that in just a minute.

There was one man who owned thirty acres in the Santeetlah Wildlife Management Area. He wouldn't sell. I had orders to go see him once a month until he decided to sell the land. I went up to see him; I had known him. I told him. I said, ''I'm going to be absolutely honest with you, I've got orders to come to see you once every month until you decide to sell this land to the Government."
He said, "You come as often as you like. You're always welcome. Come in and have supper."

I'd go up to see him. I'd wait until the last call of the day. He made his own whiskey. As far as I know, he never sold any. He'd pour out about that much in a water tumbler; I'd drink it. I blew bubbles in a lot of fruit jars, but his was potable. Most of it wasn't even potable, as you'd get around. I'd make believe; I'd blow bubbles in fruit jars lots of times. But this man's, I would drink. His son and daughter-in-law lived with him, and his little grandson. His daughter-in-law would say, "Supper's ready."

Nothstein: (Cont'd.) He says, "Well, you know where your place is."

I had my own place at the table. I went up there one day. . . this had been going on a long time. . . he says, "Well, next time you come bring them papers."

I said, "You're not mad at me."

"Nope. You see that boy," he says, "He's got to go to school this fall. No way to get him there from here."

So I took the option up and he signed the option.

Silveri: It was the law, though, that eventually he would have to get off that land. Right?

Nothstein: No; they never arbitrarily condemned land in the national forest. Not ever since I worked with them did they arbitrarily condemn. Now, in the park, they did, but there was no arbitrary condemnation; it was by persuasion.

Silveri: When they created the Cape Cod National Seashore they allowed the people who were living there to live there the rest of their lives, but their children could not inherit it.

Nothstein: We had one or two like that, too, that we gave lifetime residence, and in the park they had some like that. They had some like that in the park; lifetime residency.

Getting back to the only time I carried a pistol on official duty, was this neighbor of this same man, who lived down the road about three miles from him. An elderly man who lived with a half-wit son, and he had already sold his land to the government, but he retained a lifetime

<u>Nothstein:</u> (Cont'd.) residency. Well, it was in the summertime, and one Monday morning the game warden who lived a couple of miles below called me. He said, "Well, they robbed Brownlow Blevins yesterday. Yep. Yep. He said he was sitting on his porch." (He had a mountain cabin.) "He was sitting on his porch and two fellers jumped up on the porch and snapped a pistol in his face and it didn't go off, and then they took the shoe last? (that's an iron stand that's vertical, and there's a last that fits on top. They took that shoe last stand and knocked him in the head and knocked him unconscious).

And the old man, it was known, had seven hundred and fifty dollars in a money belt that he carried around with him. He wouldn't trust a bank. I told the game warden, I said, "Why didn't you let me know last night?" I said, "We'd have those guys today."

"Yeah?"

I said, "Where the hell would you have gone if you'd pulled a stunt like that?" I said, "Those guys went up to the Haoe Lookout tower, and you've got to climb over three thousand feet in four miles to get up there, on foot." I said, "They went up to the Haoe Lookout tower. There was a bad thunderstorm yesterday; that's where they're gone. Now you just keep your teeth in your mouth and I'll be over there as soon as I can get over. I'll meet you."

So I took my 38 Special and drove over there and got the game warden. We drove to the parking lot where we had to get out and we hit the trail. We had to go up that four miles and climb over three thousand feet. We got up to this lookout tower. It was actually a

<u>Nothstein:</u> (Cont'd.) temporary thing. It was a fourteen by sixteen toolhouse that had been moved a board at a time. The CC boys carried every piece of lumber, everything, on their backs up that mountain. You couldn't take a horse up, because one place was a stone step that high you had to crawl to get up over.

So we got up there to this fourteen by sixteen cabin, and then there was a 6" X 6" cupola like a church steeple on top, all glass, with a firefinder and telephone up there. Well, we got up to the door; the bottom panel was kicked out of the door. The padlock was still on the door.

I said, "All right, Ray, you pull your pistol and I'll pull mine. I'm gonna unlock this lock. Pull the door open and we'll both rush him, with our guns."

We did so. There were two cots in there; cook stove, everything, rations for a man to stay there. There was nobody there, but there was a ladder against the wall up to this lattice trapdoor. That game warden was fearless. Without asking any questions or anything, he just started up that ladder and poked his head through to see if they might be up there. But they were gone. Their wet socks were still hanging on the back of a chair, and the coffee grounds were still wet.

We tracked them and found out that they'd gone off the ridge and gone over to Tennessee. Well, they caught them about a week or so later, when they bought an automobile with the old man's money. At any rate, that's another little. . .

Silveri: What ever happened to the old man? Was he all right?

Nothstein: He recovered. Before we leave those lookout towers: when the Region wanted information about old-timers I did not suggest myself. I suggested two old-timers who pre-dated me; and two old-timers who deserve recognition and are still alive; and two old-timers who took the roughest, most nitty-gritty stuff there was and got the least out of it: lookouts. In the summers, off-season, they'd work as laborers on the road crew or something like that. One of them lives over here near Enka in the Candler area, Nieval Grant. The other one lives over in Macon County, Grady Waldroup. Those fellows, along with others, had to carry everything up to those lookout towers on their backs, and they had to carry enough up there to sustain themselves for weeks at a time. They had to carry the kerosene they burned in their lamps; they had to chop their wood to keep from freezing to death; they had to carry-their water a quarter of a mile. So those people deserve recognition; no Social Security. So does Lew Mielke. I want you to see Lew.

Some of those lookout towers I've had. Well, after CC boys went out (they had CC boys up there), but after the CC program went out. It got pretty rough. I wound up with a ranger district unto myself, and had lookouts who were paid $2.20 a day, and when there were dark clouds in the sky I had to take them off and had nothing else, no other source of money to pay them. If the telephone line went bad I had to go out and repair the telephone. If I'd find a blocked culvert I shoveled that out. I marked the timber; I scaled the logs. I was fire boss with local pickup crews when we had fires, and I was a detective when we investigated the

Nothstein: (Cont'd.) fires. Of ten fires, I collected costs or got a. conviction on seven cases, so I had a seventy percent law enforcement record for which I never got any recognition. *My* boss said, "Why didn't you get the other three?" In fact, in all the years I worked with the government I never got one letter of commendation. If you didn't hear anything, you knew things were good. If you heard something, you knew you were going to catch hell. That was the philosophy.

Silveri: Before, you mentioned about your recommending the creation of certain wildlife management areas. There was some opposition here. Does the creation of a wildlife management area mean that no timber cutting could go on in that area?

Nothstein: It did not; no. It was just a place. . . you see, the deer were extinct; had been fifty or seventy-five years. Here these areas were set up so we could bring in deer and get specialized protectors on those given areas to give those deer the protection they needed until they could multiply, and keep the dogs out. Dogs are the biggest problem in deer management. A dog is a sacred animal in these mountains today. You can slap a man's young'un, but don't ever kick his dog. You can get by with slapping a kid sometime, but you never get by kicking a dog. That's the way it is.

So we finally got things going. We got deer established in places where they hadn't been seen in seventy-five years; and other wild life, and then stocked the fish, and so forth, and provided a lot of fun for a lot of people.

Silveri: I wanted to ask you another question. You were dealing

Silveri: (Cont'd.) with a National Forest, and it was under the Department of Agriculture, and it meant that you would manage that forest. Now that did not exclude selling timber?

Nothstein; Oh, no; oh, no. We sold lots of timber. The thing was, there were certain ways of doing it; certain controls. You can't go in there and cut everything at one time, and then have feast and famine; it was supposed to be an orderly process.

One of the biggest jobs we had was to salvage the chestnut. The greatest tragedy to hit these mountains was the chestnut blight. I bought chestnuts at a dollar a bushel. The chestnut was the sustaining food for our wild life. Chestnut was the most sensible tree of any we've had because the chestnut would not bloom until danger of frost had passed. It would not bloom until June. The oaks and the hickories bloom early. If the weather is warm, and one thing and another, they bloom early, then you get a late killing frost and bang, you have no mast. We had mast failures; the squirrels leave the area. And turkeys, and other forms of wild life; deer. Deer eat a lot of acorns. But the chestnuts. . . one-third of the trees were chestnuts in these mountains. One out of three trees. Imagine! It grew on poor land, on good land, higher land, lower lands, sunny, shady, just about anywhere, you could find a chestnut tree. Then it bore these delicious nuts. Then, out it goes! I would have rather seen any three trees perish than the chestnuts. The greatest catastrophe that ever hit this country! And *I* was fortunate enough to get here before they were killed.

Silveri: That is a tragic situation, I know, the blight on the chestnut

Silveri: (Cont'd.) tree, and you described it very well, there, as far as how important it was. Talking about, again, the sale of timber. Back in those days, did they have the same kind of process that they have today: clear cutting and slash cutting?

Nothstein: We didn't do any clear cutting. In fact, I never deliberately clear cut an acre in my life. Thank God. I left the ranger district and I got out of the timber business before I was forced to go into clear cutting. I could launch into a long diatribe against clear cutting. In places; yes, certainly. Douglas fir and places like that. Get down into the Southern pineries, where they can go in there and machine re-plant and where they've got level land. There are many places where clear cutting is fine, but in these Appalachian Mountains; no.

Now, there*s one thing that has been greatly overlooked. That is the fact that the Weeks Law of 1911, making it possible to buy lands for these; national forests would have never been passed on a basis of forestry alone. The only way they could get that passed was to get allied with the watershed people. The thing that finally did help put it over was that they were protecting the headwaters of navigable streams j watershed protection. What appalled me was to see how they finally let the lumber industry run wild over these mountains and absolutely neglect the principles of good watershed protection. That's what put it over.

Now, here, you talk about wildlife, too. Wildlife has been one of my interests. . .along with many other things, botany, and so forth. I'm a half-baked naturalist, self-educated. But the fact remains, that in Daniel Boone's day the deer and the bison, (the buffalo) and the elk,

<u>Nothstein:</u> (Cont'd.) the game was down here; it wasn't up there on the steep side of some rocky mountain. If you read Lewis and Clark (I finished that just the other day for the third time) . . . their journals, big-horned sheep were not confined up to the highest clouds. Back in those days they were even down below. They've finally been forced up there, as a last means of survival.

Another thing, here, when they started buying land, in the Appalachians, we started at the tops of the mountains and came down, and it was made known that they were not going to buy good agricultural land. So, what did we get for our national forests, and what have we got? For years, when I was in timber management, *I* considered at least one-third of the Nantahala National Forest as being unfit for commercial timber production. Because you start up here and you come on down. To the average American a tree is a tree, but to you and I, when we see a human we don't say they're all Ph.D.'s do we? The percentage of stupid ones. . .

<u>Silveri:</u> You're not against that kind of select cutting of trees?

<u>Nothstein:</u> Select cutting. . „ maybe in patches, maybe clear cut certain patches, but, well, when they clear cut a whole watershed. . . I've seen some awful things happen here in these mountains. We've got rain. I mean, we have downpours, torrential rains. In one night, well, I've seen logging roads built, and they've never had a truck on them, and in one night the road washed away before they ever put a wheel on it. I can get into that at great length. Soil and water are our basic resources. If we do not protect them, we'd better get out of the business. And

Nothstein: (Cont'd.) timber is secondary. Timber has been the thing that brings in the money, and the forest products industries, through their organizations and their pressures, have exerted influence which has been detrimental to our forests.

Silveri: You're talking about, going back to the latter Nineteenth Century, 1880's, 1900. I've often heard that the big lumber companies, the Ritter Lumber Company. . .

Nothstein: Oh, yes. I knew those people; I knew them. Sold timber to them.

Silveri: Incidentally, did you ever know Horace Kephart?

Nothstein: I met Horace Kephart. Horace Kephart is responsible for me being in these Appalachians today.

Silveri: Really. Tell me that story.

Nothstein: When I was a boy I read his first edition of Our Southern Highlanders. I figured that if I ever had a chance, I was coming to this country. When I got a chance to come to this country when I finished school, I took it. While I was showing movies and one thing and another, I told you, in '28, Walt Jenkins was the county warden in Swain County. I told Walt about having heard of Horace Kephart, and that he lived at Bryson City. I said, "I'd like to meet the man."

He said, "He's right over here in the drugstore right now, come on."

And I met Horace Kephart. I had previously met some of his characters. Showing movies, you know, I told him. I said, "Things are just like you say they are." He appreciated it.

Silveri: What did he look like?

Nothstein: He had a mustache. He was a medium-sized man; not heavy. He dressed like the mountain people. He wouldn't stand out in a crowd of mountaineers. But he had a mind.

Silveri: Yes; that was quite a book he wrote.

Nothstein: He had a mind.

Silveri: You went out to Andrews. . . in what year? Remember?

Nothstein: November, ?35.

Silveri: November, f35; and how long did you stay there?

Nothstein: I stayed there until August of '43. .

[END OR TAPE I, SIDE II]

[TAPE II, SIDE I]

Nothstein: My people had been in all the wars this country had. Here came World War II . . . and I started poking around. . . well, I had a wife and a daughter. She was in grammar school. I thought, "Well, let's see what ..." So I made some inquiries, and I've got a ruptured right eardrum, and I was then, I think, thirty-eight years old, or something like that. I went around and made a few inquiries. I was told, "We're not that hard up for men, yet." So I let it be known that I wanted to get a little closer to the war effort, so here came the Timber Production War Project, which was an off-shoot of the War Production Board. I was made a project forester, with the Timber Production War Project and assigned down to Washington, North Carolina. I covered, I guess, about seventeen counties out of there. I was an expediter, and an investigator. You couldn't buy tires; you couldn't get gasoline; you couldn't buy trucks

Nothstein: (Cont'd.) and everything else, and everybody wanted something. The policy was that those who had AA-One priority orders, that is: one hundred percent military, got preference for whatever was available. They refer all these cases to me and I'd have to go out and do the legwork. They had to have AA-One priorities, I think, for about a month's production before they could qualify. I had to analyze all their invoices. So I did that. Then the Little Steel Formula froze wages. Some of the boys in the saw mill carriages decided to strike, and so forth.

I had some big mills. I had the most productive lumber section in the State of North Carolina. There was one band mill; they were going to shut down. They said to their help, they couldn't give them a raise in pay; they weren't allowed to, and they wouldn't stay. Well, I finally got the word around and invoked the Little Steel Formula for them.

I found another band mill that was not putting one stick of lumber into the war effort; swung them around to a hundred percent war production. Of course, I had to check around these mills (some of them were producers and some were not producers) and see where I could do some good and occasionally write off the hopeless ones. It took a little doing to get around to scout this thing out, and also sell yourself.

Then two outfits: I went into one and here they were laying for me. The OPA, you know, froze lumber prices. Here came a government boy, himself, in a government automobile, wearing a government uniform. Just what they wanted to give vent to their wrath* I listened them out; I got my card out, and I said, "All right. I told you who I was and what I'm supposed to do to help you. I listened to you and I will not bother

Nothstein: (Cont'd.) you any more unless I hear further from you. Good-bye." I treated two big shots like that. One of them was in the black market and wanted a fleet of White trucks to truck his lumber to Boston from Eastern North Carolina, despite the fact that his mill was right on a siding of the main line of the Atlantic Coastline Railroad. His son was flying "the Hump." You're old enough to remember flying "the Hump," or hearing about it. A fine looking young man; had his picture on his desk. Son flying "the Hump"; the old man in the black market one hundred percent. I told him the facts of life, too. Ultimately, the OPA got him. They got him for everything he had. They confiscated his mill; his equipment, and wound up with a thirty-eight thousand dollar judgment against him. But I didn't report him to the OPA.

Silveri: Were you doing that kind of work, then, throughout the war, from '43 to the end?

Nothstein: That, and I had other things, too. I worked with the veneer people, paper mills, and sawmills. Then they had to have gasoline and I had to check. I tried to go to these ration boards; tires and trucks, and then personnel. They'd say, "Here's a key man, the draft board is about to take him away from me. If I lose this man, I've got to shut down." Then I had the very nasty job of appearing before a draft board trying to get deferment for some of these key personnel. Sometimes the cases were exaggerated, and I was embarrassed a time or two, I also trained Italian and German prisoners of war to cut pulpwood safely. A man in the Piedmont section left, and I had an assistant that I'd well-trained in Washington, North Carolina. He knew his way around, so I moved up to the Piedmont, North Carolina section. I had a group

Nothstein: (Cont'd.) of counties I worked there. Then, V.J. Day, I was supposed to go to Charleston. In fact, I was supposed to go to Charleston, South Carolina as a silviculturist. You see, the Experiment Station was trying to re-claim me again. I was supposed to go to Charleston, South Carolina as a silviculturist. The Experiment Station covers the Southeast.

Silveri: Silviculture?

Nothstein: That's tree; tree culture, silviculture, and it was research. I had already moved my family down there, but they asked me to take a detail and travel the Carolinas and the Virginias where they checked up on compliance with the OPA, and needs and stocks of forest products. Then they had to prepare a report for the Department of Commerce every couple or four weeks, and I had to get out and get all this basic stuff. They had sample mills that were checked for production and stocks,. and problems. I covered the Carolinas and the Virginias on that job. They'd want me to continue on, and continue on. I said, "Hell's fire, there's my family down in Charleston, South Carolina, and I don't even get within miles of the place in my travels."

I had an old beat up Hudson; about a 1940 Hudson, and the rubber on it was rotten. One night, coming out of Virginia; left Wytheville, Virginia, coming to Asheville. Left there about five-thirty; I had five flats before I got into Asheville. The spare would last just long enough to get to a filling station to get a patch of some kind. Five flats! That same week I was down in Eastern North Carolina and I was driving in from up near Camp Lejeune; cut across in toward Burgaw, and I had trouble with the thing; I barely was able to limp in to Burgaw

Nothstein: (Cont'd.) on a Friday evening. I got it to a mechanic. He says, "You've got to have a new distributor cap."

I said, "Well, how about it?"

He said, "I'll see if I can get one."

I had to wait around Burgaw, North Carolina, a God-forsaken place, until sometime the latter part of Monday before a distributor cap finally came. So you see what kind of contraptions we had to put up with.

But then, that traveling; I took some insults there, too, but I didn't fail to hurl them back when they were needed. That stretched out, and out, and they said, "Two weeks more."

I said, "Hell fire, there's my family down in Charleston, South Carolina. I don't get within miles of the place."

They said, "All right, if we move your family up here, will you continue on a while longer on this detail?"

"All right." So I did. They moved them up here.

Silveri: To Asheville?

Nothstein: Yeah. We had to rent a furnished house. We moved our own furniture in on top of it. We had two pianos; we had two refrigerators; two of everything. But at any rate, this was my base of operations. I'd come in here and I'd spend several days in the office writing reports before I went out and traveled again. Of course, we didn't have many motels in those days, and they had a hell of a lot of crummy hotels. The damn thing finally stretched out into thirteen-week detail. I liked the people I worked with, but it was not my regular job. In the meantime, I

Nothstein: (Cont'd.) got a telephone call from the supervisor of the Nantahala National Forest, saying that Congress had passed a big pile of money for the acquisition of lands. They wanted me to come over there and buy land. Would I come?

I said, "What's in it?"

It was less than I was making.

I said, "No, I'm not coming over for less."

They said, "Well, you just wait a while; see what I can do."

Well, they got the grade changed, so I went over for what I was already making. I got some boys. Well, first off, I had to go down to the Croatan, to those Pocosins down there, and we wallowed around in December in those Pocosins in water up almost to our hips with ice, cruising.

Then I came back to Franklin, and I recruited a crew of timber cruisers. I had two boys who knew anything at all about timber, and the rest of them were G.I.'s who didn't know one tree from another.

Silveri: That was 1945 or '6?

Nothstein: That was ?46. . . '47, I guess, by the time I got back. Forty-six, I guess it was. *And* then I got these boys, and we made timber cruisers out of them, and we bought some land.

Silveri: In the State of North Carolina?

Nothstein: Yes, sir. And believe it or not, I got one twenty-eight thousand acre tract for five dollars an acre.

Silveri: Who did you buy that from?

Nothstein: That was bought from the Whiting Manufacturing Company,

<u>Nothstein:</u> (Cont’d.) which was an English concern. . . twenty-eight thousand acres for five dollars an acre. (I was forbidden to buy a single acre for myself.) It was rough country, but we made that, and then we kicked around and bought some more land. Then the money ran out on land and they decided to let me get into the timber business. So I became the timber management assistant on the Nantahala National Forest. I worked on that; wrote timber management plans; made stumpage appraisals; made timber sale contracts; supervised timber stand improvement and planting, and all that sort of stuff.

Then I asked for two more jobs. I wanted the wildlife job and I wanted the watershed job. I held three staff jobs: watershed, wildlife and timber. I worked at it. I was knifed by an associate or two, but, anyhow, I did the work. I did the nitty-gritty stuff. I don't want to go into all that; I'm fighting my blood pressure.

<u>Silveri:</u> Did that carry you through the 1940's and into the '50's?

<u>Nothstein:</u> Yes; then, let's see. . . that got me up. . . I worked like a dog on that job. One man today doesn't have nerve enough to come within range of my fist. But, anyhow, I told you there are snakes in the bureaucracy. Then in 19. . .the latter part of 1952, they abolished my job. I did all the nitty-gritty stuff, and this other guy who finally claimed credit for everything I did, he was the assistant to the Supervisor, of course. . . and then I had a choice. I went down to the Savannah River Project for the Atomic Energy Commission. There they had a job. That area was two hundred and two thousand acres. They just drew a ring around an area and said, "This is it, and everything else is getting the hell out of here; we're going to make the H-bomb here.” They condemned two towns;

Nothstein: (Cont'd.) took them. I don't know how many farms. They put up these plants, and one thing and another. They had thirty-nine thousand people working there at one time when I got there. But they had eighty thousand acres of fields. The Atomic Energy Commission had made an arrangement with the Forest Service to get trees planted on those fields; to manage the woodlands. I went down there as the assistant to the man who had already worked his way into the top notch.
So we had a choice between three species of pine to plant, and we had to determine the degree of plasticity. In other words, how little clay, or how much clay there was in the soil as to which we could plant. I spent days and weeks and months with a soil auger boring holes in the earth to determine the degree of plasticity of the soil. I was out there one day; the thermometer was a hundred and nine. They've got an oak down there; the leaves are on edge, so they can escape the
reflected heat from the sand. We had scientifically accurate thermo-
ground meters stationed around in that area, and ground/surface temperature often ran from a hundred and thirty-five to a hundred and fifty degrees above ground.

This day, it was a hundred and nine degrees above ground. I had a Jeep station wagon that had only nine hundred miles on it, and I was out reconnoitering, looking over these areas where I wanted to go, and where these fields were, and so forth; one of the most remote spots. Here were two woods roads, crossing at right angles. Well, I knew that's easy to orient on an aerial photograph. I had area photographs. I studied my photographs to see where I was wanting to go; what there was in each way. When I started to crank that damn thing up it wouldn't

Nothstein: (Cont'd.) go; it was hung on center. You remember the old . . . you don't remember the A-Model Ford. They'd hang on center. Well, that damn thing hung on center; it was the first damn Jeep I ever had do that to me. I helped wear out a lot of Jeeps. Well, we used to just rock Fords off; I tried to rock the damn thing off; it wouldn't go. I rocked until I just ached. Finally, it was obvious the only damn thing to do; I had no radio; the only damn thing to do was just take "shank's mare" and it was four miles to the nearest guard station. I sweated through my shoes. I was completely dehydrated when I got to that guard station. You'd see the birds hanging on the bushes with their tongues hanging out. Did you ever see that?

Silveri: No.

Nothstein: I tell you: it's hot. I was the only living thing moving. Four miles. But I got in there. I told them what my situation was. I said, "Now all it takes is some man, a mechanic in a pick-up, who can get underneath there and get that damn thing off-center; it's hung on center."

Well, he radioed in. I hung around and I ate salt tablets by the hand full; just gulped water and gulped water. After a while, here comes the biggest damned Oshkosh truck you ever saw, with two guys, two hundred and fifty pounds apiece, in the cab. I said, "Hell's fire, all we needed was one man in a pick-up."

"Get in."

We went. And when that two hundred and fifty pounder got on his back and got under that damn thing, you should have heard him.

Nothstein: (Cont'd.) But, in just a few minutes, he had it fixed. The thing cranked up and everything went off smoothly. Anyhow, all this stuff was mapped and planned ahead. In fact, I made plans for of work two years of before we started actually planting trees.

Silveri: Wouldn't the trees naturally grow there?

Nothstein: There weren't any seed trees, or anything. It would have taken decades and decades. I had a big mosaic map; the aerial photographs. As we'd plant something we'd color it in. In November, we started planting trees and let a contract. Hershel Webster, from Cornelia, Georgia, bid off the contract. Hershel had sixteen Ford tractors; brand new. He manufactured his own planting machines, sixteen of his planting machines. They had three men: one on the tractor and two on each planting machine. So there were sixteen, times three, are forty-eight, plus, he had some foremen. We got four young foresters detailed in to check on these operations. I was riding herd on the whole she-bang. In less than . . . in four months we planted ten million trees. They would come in from a nursery. Was it Alabama or Mississippi...or Louisiana or Mississippi? I believe it was Louisiana. . . the biggest tractor-trailer rigs. We had a shelter built. We had to water these trees. They came in bales. Ten million trees. Actually, there were more than that, because there were about a quarter of a million he didn't get paid for.
We would go behind with a spade and we'd dig up. If the roots were balled up, or they were planted too deep, or they were planted too shallow; they were not acceptable. He had to replant. So there was

<u>Nothstein:</u> (Cont'd.) about a quarter of a million he had to plant over. But Hershel Webster had a very tough time, and I admire that man greatly. He is a religious man; a clean, honest man, but I never heard him get mad one time, not once, and he had plenty of reason to, especially on Monday morning. Because his planters, and most of his tractor drivers, were blacks. Monday morning is a hard time to expect a full force to show up. He did a fine job. I'll always respect him.

<u>Silveri:</u> What kind of trees, variety of trees, did you plant?

<u>Nothstein:</u> Three different kinds of pine: longleaf pine, slash pine, and loblolly pine, depending on the soil.

<u>Silveri:</u> That plant is still in operation today, down there?

<u>Nothstein:</u> Yes. Oh, yes.

<u>Silveri:</u> Have you ever seen. . .

<u>Nothstein:</u> No; I haven't been back.

<u>Silveri:</u> When did you leave that job?

<u>Nothstein:</u> Then, in the meantime, my wife. . . Hell, she couldn't drive a car; she couldn't open a window; she couldn't do any marketing. It was terrible. Well, I knew this, because it had been going on for some time, and the climate down there is above freezing, and the dampness goes right through your clothes. I was out there one day and I had on the same clothes that I had worn a few years before within a mile of the top of Mount Mitchell when it was thirteen degrees below zero with a strong Northwest wind blowing. Down there at forty degrees, it went through my clothes. . .and her arthritis. . .the guy in charge there was a jittery kind of individual. He'd get the heebie jeebies and have to go

Nothstein: (Cont'd.) home and rest for a couple of days sometimes; let me carry on. I waited until the last week of planting season, and I let him know that I had to get my wife out of that country. I said, "This is March; they've got plenty of time, but I've got to get my wife away from here; this climate does not agree with her." The summers she could take. It would be so damn hot, we just put a bowl of ice cubes on a kitchen table and put the electric fan behind it and have it blow at us. A hundred and nine! She could take that; but the winters, no.

He waited. I said, "Now you're going down to the regional office next week. You won't have to put all this damn thing on paper, but those are the facts, and I'd appreciate it if you will tell those fellows. They have plenty of time to plan, now. I've just got to get my wife some place where this damn moisture freezes in the winter time."

He left me, I got back to the office that night to leave the keys to my Jeep, and there I saw a carbon copy of a God-damned officialese memorandum that he'd sent to the region, under personnel designation and all that sort of thing. Double-crossed me right then and there.

Well, the upshot of it was: they hung onto me until the latter part of August, then I was offered two jobs, both a demotion of what I had. I said, "I didn't ask for a demotion, in the meantime, I'll come down and talk."

They said, "Oh, you don't need to come."

[End -TAPE II, SIDE I] [TAPE II, SIDE II]

So I've got no use for that bunch of bureaucrats. I took a demotion. I went back to Lenoir as a district ranger. I was there almost a year. Then a man over in Franklin retired, and I was moved over to Franklin as a district ranger. They asked me would I go back.

Nothstein: (Cont'd) I went back to Franklin a third time. I always left town owing nobody. I paid house .rent for thirty-two years. I moved my wife seventeen times. So when I came here: no insurmountable mortgage. So we went back to Franklin and I stayed over there until about '62. I came back over here. I got into recreation planning and visitor information service. Then they talked me into taking over the watershed management job: "What's in it?"

"Same thing," but indicated there was a chance for a promotion out of it; which never materialized. But, in watershed management I could lament and criticize. When I was a district ranger I shut some of them down; just shut them down. But the average ranger is afraid to shut down a lumber operator for fear he'd go to a Congressman and get him moved. There are bureaucrats and bureaucrats, but I believe some bureaucrats need just a little more guts than they've got. They need the courage of their convictions, and they need to be backed up by their Congressmen. But it takes guts to go into public service.

So I pushed and I got in this, and I also developed into the naturalist part of the business: take people out and tell them what the trees and shrubs were, and so forth.

I retired at sixty-six, was it? . . . It's over there: they've got the date on that sign over there, when I retired.

Silveri: How many years, total years, did you work for the Federal Government?

Nothstein: Forty-one, less five.

Silveri: Thirty-four. [36]

Nothstein: Then I left, but before I left they offered me a job teaching over at Haywood Tech. . . forestry. I taught all the forestry subjects over there, and I really enjoyed that job. It's over twenty miles over near Clyde, North Carolina. I did that for two years; drive back and forth, and my wife wasn't able to drive, and one thing and another.
I couldn't go fishing or hunting, because it was a twelve months a year job.

Silveri: You like fishing arid hunting?

Nothstein: Yeah; there isn't anything to hunt or anything to catch, fishing, but it's getting out. When I retired from the Forest Service I retired with twenty-three hundred hours of accumulated sick leave. I could have claimed a backache and drawn my full salary for a whole year and added to my annuity by another year, plus the leave, the sick and the annual leave that I would have accumulated while I was on leave, but I gave them twenty-three hundred hours of sick leave.

Silveri: I wanted to ask you about: the Department of Agriculture had a Chief Forester, right? He was the one in charge of all of the national forests?

Nothstein: That's right.

Silveri: Do you remember any outstanding ones in that position?

Nothstein: Yes; McArdle. Silveri: McArdle?

Nothstein: McArdle; maybe because I knew McArdle a little better, but even so, I don't believe it's all prejudice, bias, or whatever you want to call it. But McArdle had a smooth operation, and McArdle, despite

<u>Nothstein:</u> (Cont'd.) the fact that he had a background in research, made an able administrator in the field. He was admired by everybody. McArdle had a simple way of presenting things. By way of illustration: When he was still in research here in Asheville, they were starting to find ways of defining the degree of fire danger weather. Some people say, "It's dry." Some fellows say, "It's dry as Hell." What did it mean? You had to have some common terms understandable and acceptable to everybody to determine the degree of fire danger, and as the fire danger increased, therefore we were justified in increasing fire forces, putting more people on duty; volunteers who were available when called upon to stand by, and they were paid by the hour to do so. As things increased, we tried to increase our preparedness.

In order to determine what all this fire danger business was, they came up with several criteria. You've got to blend wind velocity, and you've got to figure humidity and the amount of moisture in forest fuels. You coordinate all those factors, and how long it had been since the last rain, of a certain amount; the season of the year also comes into the picture. Then you have to measure rainfall. They had rain gauges; they measure rainfall in tenths and hundredths of inches; a stick.

They had a joint fire meeting over in the Smoky Park. They had all those fire people in there. McArdle was there, and I went over. I was ranger over at Andrews. Maybe I wasn't; maybe I was in Franklin at the time. At any rate, I got over; I went to those meetings in the Smoky Park over the years. McArdle got up and talked about this thing

Nothstein: (Cont'd.) and told the boys. Many of them were just fire wardens, you know, some, maybe, with a fifth or sixth grade education, but they were woodsmen, every one of them, qualified. Those were the guys that get out and fight the fires; do the work; the nitty-gritty stuff; the grass-roots stuff. McArdle. . . he made it so damn simple that an illiterate could understand him.

He got this rain gauge... nothing more than a piece of galvanized stove pipe. The most stupid man in the crowd knew what a stove pipe was, didn't he? That was McArdle. He could do it.

Silveri: I want to ask you about some people in Western North Carolina who have done a lot for forests.

Nothstein: That's a big question. That's a big order. A lot of them who have gotten their names in the papers, and some continue to keep their names in the paper. Some are image-projectors; self-seekers, and there are those who put service above self. I'd hesitate to go into all that. You can go into. . . they've got that history all written up. . . I don't want to judge anybody, or mis-judge anybody.

Silveri: Was Mr. George Stephens involved with any forest management?

Nothstein: George Stephens? I've known George Stephens. I succeeded George Stephens over in the Smoky Park. He left there. He was keeping ... he was tallying the number of trees and one thing and another over there. When he left, I took his place.

Silveri: This is the George Stephens of the Stephens Press, right?

Nothstein: Yeah; sure. I've known George a long time.

Silveri: What positions did he have in the Forest Service?

Nothstein: He didn't have any.

Silveri: Didn't have any?

Nothstein: No; no; he worked for the N.C. Park Commission for a short time; in the office over there. In camp, doing the same job I had when, I succeeded him.

Silveri: I also wanted to ask you about hunting. You said you did some hunting and fishing.

Nothstein: That can be a long story, too. As I told you, I crusaded for three wildlife management areas, and had my ears beaten down a time or two, but I persisted. Then, after I'd be banished to the flat woods at one place or another and I'd drift back, you know; back into that Nantahala country. Then, after the deer herds had multiplied to the point where they could permit regulated hunting, I thought, "Well, migosh, here I worked on this, maybe I can go out and hunt a deer." Lo and behold, we had a regional forester in Atlanta who forbade Forest Service employees to hunt in those areas; those management areas. I sounded off loud and clear. I said, "The workers deserve a share of the harvest." I just kept talking. I didn't give a damn. He was several steps above me, but I still didn't give a damn. Finally, sent somebody up from Atlanta and told me to shut up. But the next year he lifted the ban.

But, what happened: the wildlife in the national forest is managed by the State, and the State claims ownership of the wildlife, going back to the days when the Crown claimed ownership to the wildlife, and then from the Crown it was supposed to have descended to the States.

Nothstein: (Cont'd.) The Forest Service and the States have tried to work out cooperation, and each state has its own game laws. At one time they had Federal game preserves here, you know. Pisgah was at one time a Federal game preserve and they had Federal game wardens, but no more. So they entered a cooperative agreement, an arrangement with the state. The Forest Service is supposed to provide and manage the habitat, and the state is supposed to provide protection and law enforcement, and replenishing the fish and game populations. That's the division point they've arrived at. The fact remains that some of these game wardens finally were just about to take complete possession of the National Forest. People didn't even recognize the National Forest; they recognized the game warden. He was the great hero; he could tell them there-was a buck up that hollow, or something like that, and they didn't pay much attention to the Forest. As far as they were concerned, it was a state forest. In order to dispel those thoughts in the minds of those improperly informed, or ignorant, or indifferent, I took it upon myself to say that on every day that we have an organized deer hunt there's going to be somebody from the Forest Service there right next to that game warden when he sells the tickets to people to go in there and hunt. This is a dual thing; we're going to identify ourselves as partners in this venture. As a result of that, for nine years I did not hunt deer, after I had brought about the restoration, because I was usually every other day on duty. That meant being there before daylight. That was when they had the check in and check out business. They've done away with that

Nothstein: (Cont'd.) foolishness, now.

Silveri: How about bears? Were there any bears around? Bear hunting?

Nothstein: Yes; I haven't finished on the deer yet. And Thanksgiving Day; you can't ask a subordinate to work on a holiday, unless you have previous permission from your superior. Now, you've got to almost go to the President to get that permission. But there's no limit on how many hours the ranger works, on which days the ranger works, or anything. So for nine years, on Thanksgiving Day I was out watching the boys on the deer hunt; representing the Forest Service on the deer hunts.

Speaking of overtime; that's another cardinal sin to let anybody work and earn overtime without approval from way up there, but the ranger can work until he drops dead and nobody will say a damn word about it. I have worked many times twenty-four hours without relief, on these forest fires, climbing around over mountains and trying to. . , wear out one crew of men in twelve hours and have another crew of men and wear them out, and try to still maintain their morale, and one thing and another, even to the extent of telling a dirty story, if that's what it takes. . .and lie down with them. Several times I worked thirty-six hours without rest. When it comes to feeding men, I would never eat until every man was fed, and until we had that fire under control; had a ring around it and had the men back on duty, then, if there was anything left to eat, I would eat.

Getting back to bears. Incidentally, I'm not through with deer yet. So after I left the ranger district, I did get a chance to go

Nothstein: (Cont'd.) deer hunting. I went out and went back in the backwoods section over in Graham County; camped out for a week; enjoyed it immensely. Back packed in and back packed out. During that week I killed two bucks and missed one. Had my shirttail cut off. And that shot I tried was just almost impossible, but it was the only shot I could take. The deer that I killed had no marks on them. I don't gut-shoot deer.

Silveri: What's gut-shooting? Oh! Right in the stomach.

Nothstein: It's a dirty mess. If I can't kill them clean, I don't want them. The first one I got. . .just cut his backbone, right there. . . just. . .[inaudible]. . . instant death. Not that I'm such a sharp shot, because I had missed every other shot before that one. . .he'd paused long enough. . . you poke them long enough it addles them. That's a good term, mountain term, addle. Did you ever hear about anybody being ^addled?

Silveri: Yes.

Nothstein: Confused?

Silveri: Yes.

Nothstein: It addles him; he stops, and he poses, and you get it. The second one, I got right through the head. Quick. So I did get a chance to kill some deer. Deer that I was instrumental in re-stocking. I've caught a lot of trout; many trout, but they're not so easily caught any more, because they're scarce.

Bear? Two years ago I saw a bear. A buddy and I were trout fishing over . . . going trout fishing on Cataloochee Creek, and you go over in the. Smoky Park you can see them on the highway there, Garbage can raiders. And I've seen them out in the woods, just walking. I've seen

Nothstein: (Cont'd.) every kind of wild animal we've got here. I've even seen otter, which is the rarest animal; beaver, bobcats. I've seen bobcats in daytime: turkey, foxes, mink, skunk. There is little in the This panther story you read about in the paper. They say five rangers saw a panther on Cataloochee Creek. The first thing that entered my mind was: "What the Hell were five rangers doing together in the first place?" Can you answer that?

Silveri: How about wild turkey? Were there any wild turkey left?

Nothstein: A few; and there's another story, on wild turkey* Back when I was in Franklin, in the '30's, turkeys were almost extinct. We did have some remnant flocks, just some seed stock. I talked to the forest supervisor about this thing. I suggested to him that if it was agreeable to him, I would contact the county commissioners of all those counties and ask them to close the turkey season for a few years to give them a chance to build up some seed stock. He agreed, and all the county commissioners I contacted agreed also, and they asked the State to close the turkey season, and they preserved some wild turkeys. I've got a turkey feather; I've got two turkey wing feathers and a tail feather. I've never killed one, but I found them out in the woods. Do you know how to tell a wild turkey tail feather from a tame turkey tail. . . ? Well, a tame turkey has a light, an almost white, whitish-gray streak at the end of his tail, but a wild turkey is brown.

Silveri: How about a wild boar? Any of those around?

Nothstein: Yes; in Graham County. That's a scourge. We had wild boar, I've hunted wild boar. I never got a shot at one, but I've seen them

Nothstein: (Cont'd.) out in the woods working. I'd be out cruising timber; I'd see them, and I'd drive along the road and see them. Well, they root up every damn thing: grass, any grass, they'd just root it up. They're destructive. Then they go up and down the branches and they get-all the salamanders and the crawfish, anything they can get, and they rob the 'coons. Then they go out in the grouse nests, or turkey nests; they'11 clean that up. They're a scourge. I hoped for years that cholera would wipe them out completely. They just root everything up.

You'd go over on Slick Rock Creek; that's now wilderness. That's where I used to deer hunt. You can't get a decent drink of water. Every spring is a hog wallow. It's just. . . they're filthy. They don't belong here.

Silveri: I want to ask you about something else. I often hear a term: "virgin forest." Would you define what that is, for me, "virgin forest?"

Nothstein: Well, I'll tell you, I'm wired for sound, I won't tell it.

Silveri: How about Joyce Kilmer Memorial Forest?

Nothstein: Well, they never cut any timber in there.

Silveri: Okay; so the trees that have been growing in there ...

Nothstein: And it's just nature going on. . . you find a lot of dead trees; big trees. You find diseased trees. It's a reference point.

Silveri: Talking about the virgin forests being a reference point. . .

Nothstein: Oh, yes; to the past, and the Joyce Kilmer Memorial Forest is a complete watershed of thirty-eight hundred and fifty acres. When they wanted a suitable memorial for Joyce Kilmer, they went to the United States Forest Service, and they checked around and checked around and finally they decided that was a suitable site, so that was selected.

Nothstein: (Cont'd.) There were big doings there. Joyce Kilmer was a reporter on The New York Times, and that was my weapon to whip bureaucracy. I knew that. I was also the District Ranger when that Joyce Kilmer Memorial Forest was dedicated on July 30, 1936. When I got home, my wife said, "The New York Times has been trying to get you all day. They want you to call them. They want to know whether they can say whether the dedication went off as planned."

Joyce Kilmer was a reporter before he went to France in World War I and was killed.

So then, while I was working with the bureaucracy, I knew they planned this road. That watershed is just like this. [Illustrating with his hands] And here, these two high points, that's the Hayor; this is the Naked Ground, a gap, and this is the Stratton Bald. You drive through the Santeetlah Gap and it's just like looking right into the palms of my hands.

Now, what they were going to do, in effect, was build a road, a super-highway, a two-lane, modern highway, from the tip of one thumb to the tip of the other thumb, clear across the middle of that watershed.

An awful scar on the landscape and here comes the water, muddy water, and all that sort of stuff.

I was against it to begin with, but I couldn't express myself. When I left the bureaucracy and I was over at Haywood Tech, I said, "I've heard of academic freedom. Does that entitle me to read my thoughts into a public hearing record?"

Nothstein: (Cont'd.) "Certainly."

I did. I called The New York Times and they sent reporter Homer Bigart down to go with me and get the facts for the story that stopped the project. I used to take my students over to Joyce Kilmer Forest. But that's it. Certainly, the trees are decaying and falling in. But we need one reference point, don't we?

Silveri: How about the size of trees in that forest?

Nothstein: Oh, gosh, they have poplar trees in there eighty inches in diameter at breast height.

[END OF TAPE II]
[BEGINNING OF TAPE III]

Nothstein: They're dying; you can just see them falling in, but something else comes in and fills up that hole. Before World War II, after Hitler took over Austria, he sent thirty German foresters to the United States. As near as I could find out, their objective was how to manage forests on the extensive scale that we do, rather than the intensive scale that they do in Germany,

Here came a bus load, a charter bus load, of thirty German foresters with one American forester from the Washington office in charge. I guided them through the Joyce Kilmer Memorial Forest. They did not know the English names of our trees. I knew a little German, but I knew the Latin names. I knew the Latin names of our shrubs and some of our wild-flowers, and I knew the Latin names of all of our trees. They did too. Those Latin names are universally known, and Latin is the language of science; "Vas is das?" I'd tell them,

"Yah, yah, yah." The name immediately registered.

Nothstein: (Cont'd.) There have been people in there from all over the world.

Silveri: Speaking of the Germans and German forestry. What about Dr$_4$ Schenck? , Did you ever meet him? What did he have to say about what went on?

Nothstein: They wrote me up, here about a year ago, on Dr. Schenck. They've got a book on Schenck, but Schenck when I was a student, Schenck was in Germany, but he would come to America to deliver lectures. He came to my school, and he′d lecture us and take us on field trips for two weeks. Then he[1] d go out to Montana and do the same thing. Then he would gather students in the spring and take them on trips through the European forests for six weeks. But I couldn't afford that.

But I knew Schenck from the twenties. Then when I went to Aiken, South Carolina, in '52, one of Scheck's students was a man named Conger, who died within the past year at age ninety-some. He lived up in the Shenandoah Valley. Conger made his fortune creosoting timbers*

When I went to Aiken, I had to wait until I could find a house, and one thing and another, and there was one very nice boarding place there; one of the high class boarding houses. You don't find many of them any more; the best place in Aiken to stay. That's where I stayed. Here was Conger, and here came Schenck as Conger's guest, and Schenck in his eighties. Schenck stayed at that same place for two weeks; we ate in the same dining room, and we had very nice contact.

Nothstein: (Cont'd.) Conger had bought a big piece of woodland. There was a field included, and he had a slash pine plantation that was, oh gosh, I guess the trees were around ten feet high, or better. Then Conger had taken some of his finest creosote timbers and built a fancy entrance portal that had a fine memorial tribute to his old professor, Dr. Karl Alvin Schenck Dedicated in grateful appreciation of what Dr. Karl Alvin Schenck. had done for him. Dammit, about two weeks before Schenck arrived, a damn fire went through there and killed every tree. Well, everybody thought, what an awful disappointment. . . here this great surprise for his old professor. . . Schenck took it in good grace: "Ach, those things happen."

Silveri: What about the work he did at Biltmore, in the school of forestry there. Did they do significant research and training of foresters, and so on?

Nothstein: He's got a book. You can pick the book up; it's available even in paper copies. He tells everything in the book. I didn't know him when he was at Biltmore. It was years after that, that I knew him the first time. I did work with some of his former students, though. When I was a district forester for the State of North Carolina, two other district foresters in the State of North Carolina had been former students of Dr. Schenck.

Silveri: The recent Federal Circuit Court decision about cutting timber in the forest. Have you kept up with that?

Nothstein: Yes I have. I have. . . That Humphrey bill; they're putting some more clauses in it, but the way that Humphrey bill first came out.

Nothstein: (Cont'd.) The Randolph bill is too restrictive; the Humphrey bill was too lenient, originally. So they're working on that Humphrey bill, now. Of course, Hubert Humphrey doesn't know a damn thing about trees, but somebody had to push it. But the fact remains, that whether we like it or not. . . I don't give a damn whether you broadcast this statement. . . our public land foresters today need to be controlled by law. As I told you before, many of them are afraid of being fired or moved if they oppose the lumber industry. The lumber industry is our greatest enemy, and I don't trust them under oath. I've had a lot of dealings with lumbermen.

I have preached. . . for nine years I have preached erosion control and watershed management more than I did fire control^ and in those nine years of preaching I got only two converts. One died, and the other backslid. So the only damn way we can properly protect our natural resources is by law. I mean strict, specific laws, not some loose thing that leaves it up to the local administrator. Maybe that local administrator knows what's right, but he hasn't got guts enough to enforce doing what is right.

I can show you some awful things in Western North Carolina. Things are improving, but I think we've got to have the force of law, and things must be spelled out specifically to protect the bureaucrats. Because the bureaucrats are job-scared, and they are scared of that damn lumber industry block.

Silveri: Did the Champion Paper Company do any cutting in the national forest?

Nothstein: Not directly; indirectly, they do. They buy pulpwood. Different operators, different people buy pulpwood. Champion buys the wood. They get it; they get it. They finally buy the pulpwood, but they don't buy the stumpage. Now, they might subsidize some of those fellows; I don't know.

Silveri: Do you think Champion is the biggest consumer of timber in Western North Carolina?

Nothstein: I guess, if you talk forest products, yes, I guess they are. Now we've got several sawmills.

But, here's one thing in my quarrel with the way things have been going. The fact remains that the lumber industry owned these mountains c They devastated them. Then the Government comes back and raises a crop of timber on them, and then the lumber industry wants to dictate just how they want to cut that; how much they want to cut, where they want cut, and when they want to cut. I told some of them in our meeting here one time. We've got a Society of American Foresters Chapter here, >and.some of them are in the lumber business, I says, trYou come on my farm and want to harvest my crop, You had the farms. Why didn't you keep them?"

Now it's not up to the lumber industry to tell the Forest Service how the Hell they should cut the timber. That's what they're trying to do, is push this damn clear-cutting business. Clear-cutting is an eye-sore. Another thing, if you go into ecology, clear-cutting deteriorates the site. I mean, it really deteriorates *it.* They usually to talk about trying to build up humus, you know, I guess you've heard

Nothstein: (Cont'd.) that from time to time: prevent fire, and the leaf mold and stuff builds up humus and stuff. Well, a couple of years ago I was out with a friend of mine and he said, "Look, I didn't know they had a fire here."

I said, "Well, they did, but it was an awfully slow burning fire." Humus will oxidize in direct sunlight. It oxidizes. So they did have a fire, but an awfully slow burn.

That site-deterioration. I can show you a place over here where they clear-cut on a national forest, in the name of research, and they had a rain that just whoosh, it took the bottom out of a watershed and washed the sides off, the soil off, and washed the road away below, and on each side of it, no damage whatever. I can take you there and show it to you.

We get torrential rains. You get a torrential rain on a clear-cut and you're going to have one Hell of a lot of damage. It takes a thousand years to build an inch of soil. How are you going to correct damage like that?

All right. I'm through preaching. The hat's not being passed.

Silveri: I want to ask one more question. Would you encourage young people to get into the field of forestry today?

Nothstein: Not today. The field is overcrowded. There are too damn many of them. Every state wanted its own school of forestry. There's a Hell of an overproduction. The boys. . .you take. . . I taught over

Nothstein; (Cont'd.) here at Haywood Tech, which teaches a sub-professional. . .the boys who do what they're told. And the boys. . .well, two years. . . they[1] re pretty good boys in the woods by the time they get out, if they pass. But the fact remains that there are vacancies in sub-professional grades,

[END OF TAPE III, SIDE I]

[TAPE III, SIDE II]

Nothstein: (Cont'd.) The boys who are graduating from colleges with a full degree, some even with a Master's, in order to get their foot in the door, grab those sub-professional jobs. That shows how overcrowded it is. Every state wants its own school. They've got too damn many of them. That's where the doctors and lawyers are smart: they don't over-produce. Foresters over-produced.

Silveri: Well, Mr. William Nothstein, you've been very, Very generous with your time. I want to thank you, very, very much. . .

Nothstein: Well, I'm opinionated; I'm opinionated.

Silveri: Thank you, again.

[END OF TAPE]