

DL: ...May 14, 1978. I'm at the Mimslyn Hotel to interview Edward D. Freeland, former superintendent of Shenandoah National Park. I'll repeat the date, May 14, 1978 [background noise and laughter] at the Mimslyn Hotel. Well, Mr. Dixon what I really need is what you think is important and if you have something important during your period in charge here then I'd like to hear about that and then I'd have some questions later.

EF: All right. You realize of course that we came here right at the beginning of the war, and in fact we arrived on January the 1st, 1942.

DL: Just about three weeks after Pearl Harbor.

EF: Right. And we were here from that time on till October 1950. And during those war years, maintenance and protection was quite difficult because of our lack of personnel, people lots of people from our organization went into the various military services. And in addition to that we had to give up a portion of our warehouse because the Smithsonian, because of fear of bombing, came out and used the whole main floor of our warehouse at headquarters.

DL: Did you know what was really there?

EF: Yes, yes.

DL: I've heard so much about this but no one has ever whispered to me what actually was there. Was it paintings? Were there...

EF: Well there was the first automobile that was ever made, was there. The "Old Glory", the original "Old Glory" was there. I believe that's now, I'm not sure whether it's at the Smithsonian or the Library of Congress or it's displayed...I'm not sure about that. But we had to, we had to consolidate our warehouse and an elevator was put in, in order to take our stuff upstairs. And then they had a full time guard on the, in the warehouse and the humidity had to be controlled and we worked out a system whereby that could be done. And they stayed on there all through the war until it was open all over. And then they came back. They had numerous cases of various types, I think it was flower samples, flower specimens, and material that had been collected over a long period of years, and archeological remains, early man...[DL attempts to speak over]...I beg your pardon?

DL: Things that were totally irreplaceable. They were gone, they were gone forever.

EF: That's right. That's exactly it. Then we were helped out soon after the war started, we were helped out by a camp of conscientious objectors. Now...

DL: The CCC was all gone?

EF: Oh yeah. CCC was completely folded up.

DL: You still had one camp or two camps when you arrived or maybe more... two moved out in January didn't they?

EF: That's right.

DL: Almost immediately after.

EF: The boys had all gone. The foreman and the camp's superintendents, some of them had left but there was a small contingent of working foreman at the stations so

DL: DW's.

EF: Right. And it was these people who could not be separated without finding a place for them if at all possible because they were political appointees, you see, just as most of them were during that period.

DL: They were the people that helped recondition the house.