

MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

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SUBJECTS DISCUSSED:

The President's Committee for the Quetico Superior Council; committee membership and problems it faced such as land acquisition, building of dams, airspace reservation, and destruction of wilderness by "civilization";
Sigurd Olson, conservationist;
Opposition of the Minnesota Conservation Commission to consolidation of The Superior National Forest prior to Governor Olson's term in office;
M&O Railroad and the Kabetogama Peninsula and the question of flowage rights and easement;
Conflict between the federal forest service and state forest service in establishing Quetico-Superior Forest;
Oberholtzer's Harvard University days, and his major in landscape architecture and discouragement by graduate studies;
Oberholtze'r's Harvard friendship with Conrad Aiken and their trip to England and Scotland (**transcript ends at this point**);
Setting up the President's committee on the Quetico-Superior and work with Sewell Tyng;
Opposition of the Arrowhead Association of northern Minnesota to the Quetico-Superior program;
Shipstead-Newton-Newton Bill;
Tax revenue paid to counties for land acquired for Quetico-Superior;
The International Joint Commission and its territorial jurisdiction over the United States-Canadian border;
Problem of ownership of flowage rights on property;
Quetico-Superior Council and the Isaac Walton League;
Airspace reservations over the Quetico-Superior.

NOTE TO USERS:

This transcript is a photocopy, made for preservation purposes, of a poor-quality Dennison copy. The location of the original typescript is unknown.

MISS K.: When was the President's Committee appointed?

MR. O.: The final report of the International Joint Commission dealing with the Backus proposals came out sometime in 1934, and that report listed those proposals as undesirable for that day and uneconomic and not required in the interests of the M & O paper company. It stated that it was conceivable there might some day be a situation there were inure water power would be called for, but meantime they hoped that nothing would interfere with the program of the Quetico-Superior Council for an international forest and wilderness area.

Now, of course, that was a very big gain lot us, and for ten years we have had constantly that problem to deal with, though the Shipstead-Nolan Act had been passed in July, 1930, at the very end of the congressional session. There was always the possibility that if the Joint Commission (having been instructed previously to answer the questions of the reference from the two governments concerning more power development that Mr. Backus had asked) had been favorable to Mr. Backus's proposal there might have been some question as to the proper applicability of the Shipstead-Nolan Act to the area. The Shipstead-Nolan Act had placed Congress on record as opposed to any further development, or any further change, of the natural water levels along the border between Minnesota and Ontario, without the consent of Congress, and if the Backus proposal had been approved, that would have required very elaborate changes. For instance, if Canada had objected, having agreed to the reference, then it was possible that some question might arise as to the legality of the Shipstead-Nolan Act. So the Commission's decision removed that danger and was naturally a great source of satisfaction to all those who had labored on the side of conservation through those years, along the border. It was then that Sewell Tyng made a suggestion.

Mr. Tyng was my good friend, a New York lawyer who had written us a brief in the name of his firm back in 1926, after the first hearing had been held on

the Backus project. The brief had been printed with the aid of generous friends who had supplied the money to buy the transcript, some \$600 which I had managed to have subscribed up there to buy the transcript before, Mr. Tyng could do his wont on it. Then he had done the legal preparation, having asked me to supply the physical details of the situation there on the border. But he also had had quite an intimate preparation for doing that, because he had been coming for a good many years, with his wife, and taking canoe trips that were planned for him in advance, and he was one of the best informed men outside of the area. Even in the area there were almost no people who had made these long trips on the canoe routes, especially on the Canadian side. This brief, when published, had made a great difference. It seemed to make a great difference in the attitude even of the Joint Commission, because it gave a very much more solid basis for the opposition than they had supposed there was, and we found from that time on that our scattered opposition was getting very much more consideration from the Joint Commission.

Well, that was the background for the next step. As Mr. Tyng had said in the beginning, we were like a lot of farmers with pitchforks against a man with a gatling gun and we must be organized. We had had this Quetico-Superior organization which I've already described, ever since late in 1928. His next suggestion was that we get concrete aid from the Roosevelt administration, which was known to be favorable to conservation and was encouraged by Secretary Ickes, who already knew the region, had been up at my own place, and had his son there with me two summers. He felt that we should see *whether* we couldn't perhaps get the President to appoint a special committee named for the project, Quetico-Superior, which without authorizing any funds would enable us to have the blessing of the President for the program and would enable us to make reports as to progress and recommendations in case of any deficiencies in the response of the various agencies that would have to execute the program. So this step was taken through Mr. Ickes. When he learned of this recommendation, he joined enthusiastically,

in a request to the President to set up some sort of a small committee with representation from the Government. The departments that were most interested were above all Agriculture, because the Forest Service was involved on a large scale because of the Superior National Forest, but also the Department of the Interior, under which the Indian Office was located. And of course Secretary Ickes was Secretary of the Interior, and he'd always been especially interested in Indians and the Indian reservations. There should be representatives of those two departments, since they both had interests in the area. Agriculture's interest was primarily in Superior National Forest, and the interest of the Department of the Interior was primarily in the Grand Portage Indian Reservation at the tip of the state. Both of those areas were covered by the Shipstead-Nolan Act of 1930, which had provided that north of a certain line, including these areas, there should be no further changes in lake levels without the consent of Congress, that there should be no further entry or occupancy of public lands, and that the shore lines should be protected against flooding and cutting and so on. With great promptness the President did set up by executive order in the spring of 1934 (I don't recall whether it was May or June, but about that time)-- the so-called President's Quetico-Superior Committee, naming five of us -- two officials from Agriculture and the Interior, and three others -- Mr. Kelly, Mr. Tyng, whose idea it had been, and myself. We then promptly organized and adopted a set of resolutions, which are the basis of our work. Those resolutions outlined the problem, the area, the history briefly and the reasons these principles had been agreed upon in our own program -how they had been first discussed with the Forest Service back in 1927 or 1928 and had had their full approval, and that this was the basis of our Quetico-Superior program and was to be the program to be followed so far as possible under the President's new authority.

It happened that I was chosen chairman of that committee and performed in

that capacity a good many years. I don't recall how many .it was. Then for a brief time Mr. Tyng acted, before his death, and in more recent years, since I have been less active in the whole endeavor, Mr. Kelly has been good enough to take on the extra burden of holding meetings and planning the program. And so that has been continued ever since. Every four years, the committee has been renewed by whatever President was in office at the time. It has had a continuous life through renewals by the various Presidents, all of whom so far have acquiesced in the same action. We have found the Committee to be very helpful to us. We have used the Committee whenever it seemed necessary to call to the attention of the President anything that was causing us a great deal of trouble -maybe right within the Administration, a misunderstanding or something of that sort. We have then sought the aid of the President, and so far have always had it.

MISS K.: Has either Fred Winston or Mr. Hubachek been a member of the committee?

MR. O.: No. It's only a five-man committee. Both of them would have more than qualified, of course, for membership, but in the first place, except for the case of Mr. Tyng, who died, there have been no vacancies. The second thing is that Mr. Hubachek's firm was represented through Mr. Kelly, and Mr. Kelly was a little freer, a little less burdened with duties than Mr. Hubachek. But Mr. Hubachek's voice was heard all the time, either in person Or through Mr. Kelly. Though Mr. Hubachek had been one of the most active of all our friends, his activity was translated into fact through Mr. Kelly.

Unfortunately, Mr. Winston, who would have been by all means a natural candidate, and as head of the committee too -- by that time was already afflicted with his present ailment. Although lie was not too much affected at the time, it appeared that he shouldn't take on new burdens. Moreover, he was in charge of our Quetico-Superior Council office in Minneapolis and was doing a service

there that couldn't be duplicated. He was doing it without pay entirely, because of his devotion to the program.

MISS K.: You really had three points of operation then --

MR. O.: Yes, we did.

MISS K.: Chicago and Minneapolis and Rainy Lake.

MR. O.: That's correct. And they were all very active. They all kept in very close touch with each other. No letter that was written from our office failed to reach all the other places of chief interest.

MISS K.: It's remarkable in a movement that a group of men should have remained so close together, even though you had minor differences in philosophy.

MR. O.: There was this bond and enthusiasm between us all. The representatives of the government varied a great deal in what they were able to give, but in general they were of the same nature. They were very dedicated to the program, and very constructive and very eager to translate into action by their departments whatever was suggested. One of the places where it was most noticeable was at Grand Portage, where we had some very wonderful men on the committee at various times. They included Will Zimmerman, who was the Assistant Indian Commissioner for many years under Collyer and who was in college when I was there. He sat right back of me, he said, in my history classes, though I never knew him at the time. He was my junior, so I always reminded him that he was quite a prodigy to get in there. Either he was quite a prodigy or I was very much of a mossback to get in there.

One of the problems was that the lands at Grand Portage, the Indian reservation had been dissipated. They were dissipated through the allotment system, which had been adopted quite a long time before and which provided that the Indians should have the right, if they liked, to divide their reservations among the members and thus enable the tribal members to hold their share exactly the same as the white men hold their property, in fee simple, so that they could

dispose of it, where previously a reservation could but be broken up because it was tribal, and they'd have to have tribal consent, you see. The allotment system had resulted at Grand Portage, and it has in other places in Minnesota, in the dispersal of the reservation. The only reason there was anything left at Grand Portage was that it was way up at the tier of the end of the state where it was hard for outside industries to find anything except timber. They would have liked the timber that was in there, and they did get a great deal of it. The lands were then tax-delinquent. These Indians were sitting on lands that were tax-delinquent and were formerly their reservation, but lead very little of it left. That was the situation when our program started. But with the aid of men like Mr. Zimmerman and Bob Marshall, who later established the Wilderness Society and who was one of the most wonderful foresters we've ever had and one of the most wonderful friends of Indians - -. With Mr. Ickes' encouragement and cooperation in Washington, these tax-delinquent lands were reacquired at very low prices. The portion lying to the east, called the Pigeon Point area, had never been in the reservation, and it, was completely wild without anybody living in there, and it was exactly the sort of thing that our program contemplated as part of its area and a fit place for our ideas, because it was very wild. While there'd been cutting in there earlier, a very delightful forest had grown up again. It was a sanctuary for wild life of all sorts, including not only very remarkable migration of birds, but: moose and bear. You could almost anytime go to the top

of Mount Josephine and look down from there into Teal Lake and see moose feeding, up to that time and long afterwards too.

Of course, the Pigeon River was named for the wild pigeons that had become extinct. The Indians used to tell of those wild pigeons, how they came to this river particularly for some reason. The tree branches would be so laden with birds that they'd break off. You could go right there and knock the birds off with sticks. I've heard Indians tell that. And of course that was an extremely historic area anyway. There was a trail that ran all the way up to Fort William, over which the Indians visited back and forth from Grand Portage to Fort William at both of which places there had been forts and departure points for the interior along the border. These trails were used in case of warfare if they were being attacked by Sioux. Their runners would then run from Grand Portage to Fort William with warnings. That has now become the location for the new highway -- this old trail, the Fort William trail. I mentioned that because those were some of the places where the representative of the Department of the Interior was able to be of very great assistance. Unless those lands were picked up and restored into the reservation immediately as tribal lands, something could happen, like what did later happen south of Ely in the time of the planes, when these cheap lands were purchased in order to take advantage of the wilderness policy. They were chiefly purchased during the last war at small sums. By permitting planes to fly in there, they were soon able to earn for the owners large sums of money and become industries of the region -- very difficult to dispose of.

So men like Will Zimmerman and Bob Marshall, who were very dedicated men, both to conservation and to the Indian, were able in due time to purchase these lands. (It was one of the first of the plans that were made in the sessions of this new Presidential Committee). They purchased lands until they had not only restored the original reservation, but had acquired for the Indians the whole Pigeon River Point, so that the Indians had a larger home than they had originally.

Now problems that were causing a good deal of trouble and required the cooperation of the Forest Service extended all through the area. They were quite different, but they required, for instance, consolidation of land, purchase of land, and many of these. During Roosevelt's administration there was a large sum available for the purchase of lands for the Forest Service anywhere in the country where it was desirable and needed, and these lands were still cheap. These moneys were available under that special appropriation. I don't recall the total sum of it, but it was a large amount. It was then that our Quetico-Superior group was having this struggle with the state, because the state officials in spite of the fact that the Shipstead-Nolan Act had already been long in force and that a similar act by the state was in force -- had definitely opposed any extension of the Superior National Forest, which would have completed the block lying within the Shipstead-Nolan area and within the watershed as proposed in the Quetico-Superior program. The Quetico-Superior program was, of course, the charter of our President's committee. It was the Magna Carta by which we were guided. The members of the committee felt it their duty as well as their pleasure to consolidate that area as rapidly as possible. But during several administrations in the state then here, state forest were then set up within that same area. The previous action had been planned for the federal government, and it caused a great deal of controversy. Some of our friends were troubled about this, because naturally no one wanted to limit state forestry. Any forestry we could get that would solve the problems of northern Minnesota was of the highest importance, and to see the state take an interest in setting up state forests in the northern part of the state

was something to be aided and applauded. But some of these state forests, unfortunately, were set up in the very area where there was money available for the federal government to purchase and begin application of modern forestry principles. There was no money available in the state for that purpose, and it would mean that these cut-over and tax-delinquent lands might lie there without management or anything else for an indefinite time, just when the federal government was in a position to recognize the importance of putting all lands of that sort to use and the importance of restoring them as soon as possible. There was then this controversy with the State Conservation Commission, which opposed further purchases by the federal government except in the old Superior National Forest that had been set aside in 1909, This was only about a third of the area that was contemplated for our side of the Quetico-Superior. That led to a long controversy which I do not think we have covered. Maybe it should be covered at some time. The result was, unfortunately, that though the Forest Service under Roosevelt's administration (and with Mr. Ickes' encouragement, because he was a member of the National Forest Reservation Commission as well as Secretary of the Interior) had finally made the necessary formal extensions of the purchase units that would have completed one solid forest from Rainy Lake through to the Indian reservation (and that would have meant that all those lands in time would have been managed under the principles of the Quetico-Superior program) the state opposed these purchases. The U. S. Forest Service is always loathe to go ahead against the formal opposition of a state, and particularly at that time when so many states were crying for those funds to be used for the purchase of lands all over the country, especially the Middle West. So before long all these funds, which could have purchased lands for a song and have gotten the whole area consolidated, were diverted to other states where they were more welcome. The result in the end was that after the war and after it had been demonstrated during the war the sums of money that could be made by purchases of these low-priced lands by interests that would be aided through flying, the values of these lands

went up very rapidly. These lands have continued to be a threat right straight along to the program, and particularly in the area just south of Ely where the older developments had taken place and where there was already a large development of canoeing and outfitting and all that sort of thing. That has led since my days of greatest activity to the requirements for large sums of money that had to be appropriated from Washington to buy at high prices lands that were already developed to an extent where they were earning, where their values followed the earnings, and where, if the government had ever wanted to resort to condemnation (which the Forest Service doesn't often use) the basis of value would be figured on the income. Thus maybe a place that had cost \$500 and earned \$15,000 in a year -- it would be a safe conclusion to think that probably it was worth \$200,000 and had an income of 7 1/2% on each hundred thousand.

MISS K.: Must be rather bitter approving these large sums of money now.

MR. O.: It is. I have found it a difficult thing to sit in the President's Committee and approve the payments, although the owners themselves thought they were way under paid, and they have been very bitter against our program. They tried every way they could, through the Supreme Court and all, to break up these. But so far the Supreme Court has always stood on the side of the conservationists.

Still the effort has never been given up. From the very beginning of the President's Committee up to the present time, we have been occupied largely by the effort through large appropriations to protect what we already had there, without going into these extensions that were considered a vital part of the program. This has almost led to the belief by some people that there are two programs -- one program which limited itself to what we already had and the other that took in the watershed as a whole. The latter is the Quetico-Superior program, which is, as I said, the Magna Carta of the President's Committee.

Now this shows briefly what the problems of the President's Committee have been. Those problems have involved many subjects, like roads. We couldn't have

helter-skelter road-building. Long before there was a Quetico-Superior program and before the Backus proposal arose, there were problems in the old Superior National Forest about unnecessary roads that were being built and that had been the subject of a lot of controversy between the Izaak Walton League and the Forest Service. That has continued to be one of our problems. But the Forest Service, more and more, were heeding the public desires and trying to meet them, that is to meet them and still fulfill their requirements for access roads for timber and that sort of thing. Up to the time of our program, when this question of water levels arose (an extremely serious one because that could have just wiped out all the beauty of the country by flooding) the principal public concern was about these roads.

These roads continued to be one of the main subjects of discussion, one of the main problems of the President's Committee right along. At nearly every meeting, it is one of the subjects on the agenda. There's been closer and closer cooperation between the Forest Service and this committee to make sure that these roads are limited both in their penetration into the area and in the type of road, even down to the point of deciding that some of the roads would be purely temporary, that they would be removed or closed off at the end of some special logging.

Then various problems have arisen occasionally over dams. There hasn't been any other attempt to build hydroelectric dams on the U. S. Side, since the report of the Joint Commission, and there couldn't be without bringing up the subject through Treaty action by United States and Canada, again before the International Joint Commission. But there were dams in there beforehand, and of course, the great dam on which the M & O Paper Company depends for its power is at International Falls. There's the problem of regulation, that is, how full you should have that and at what seasons and what precautions should be taken against floods and against such low water that the mill couldn't operate. That has led, with the encouragement of the President's Committee, to further action between the two

governments authorizing the Joint Commission to find better methods of regulating those levels through the engineers, and that is still a sort of moot question, but there has been great improvement. There have been some very serious floods, very great damage in the area. But more and more, the engineers on the two sides are trying to work out a regime which will lessen those risks.

That's been one of the problems. A third problem has been this one of ownership of lands. That's being solved through part of the area on our side by these large appropriations, but there remains the question of the extensions in the area where they were already approved by the Forest Service in purchase units, but where the Forest Service, first because of the state objection, hasn't for some years purchased lands, and recently because there haven't been funds available for those areas. Then there is also the question of zoning, which is part of the idea of almost everything that's done. Zoning is the foundation principle on which the entire program is based. We recognize how important zoning is in the cities nowadays if you are going to provide intelligent use of your area. It's clear to anybody who knows one of these large units like the watershed that all its resources are of the same nature. It is not an agricultural country. It is rock bound and forest grown, and has lakes and streams. Its resources and its pleasures all depend on those things. But zoning was the great principle. It was important that roads, resorts, and habitations of all sorts be kept on the outside zone, close to the lakes and streams that are already reached by railroads, roads, or some other natural means. It is important to keep roads from penetrating into the interior, and that vehicles like planes and snowmobiles should not be allowed to go right into the heart of the area and take away from the wilderness character. Those problems and new ones are arising all the time. The plane problem wasn't there at the time that the President's Committee was appointed. It didn't look like any problem at that time, but by the time the Second World War was over, it had become a very great problem. More recently there are problems like the floating

houseboats. Those are devices where you can have a furnished house on pontoons. They have no moorings except either the wild moorings or on property privately owned on these lakes on the perimeter of the area. They have become a great scourge, but profitable to the owners, and their numbers are increasing. That problem is being discussed in a great many of the President's meetings now, and no final solution has been found for it. If it's a sanitary proposal, why then they say, well, the other boats all have the same kind of facilities we have, and if a gasoline boat has sanitary conveniences, we should be able to use the same kind.

There are many of these boats, and they're permanent residences of the people in them, you see, and they come right up and land anywhere. They can tie up at your own property if you don't go out there and say: "Well, here you've got to get off." They stay right there, and they come again and again and again, to your own private property, right at your doorstep.

MISS K.: You know it's really frightening when you think of the wilderness in terms of the population explosion. The wilderness has the value because it is a wilderness, and yet people press in on all sides and have the will to destroy...

MR. O.: That's right, the will or else ignorance. That is becoming vastly more of a problem than anybody imagines. And it seems strange to someone like myself who has spent more than fifty years in the north and knew it for what it was at that time -- a glorious world possession, few things like it anywhere, not only in the beauty of the scene, but the abundantly exuberant wildlife of all sorts, including wild fowl and big game animals, like moose. And the life of the Indians, who led a happy, contented, healthful life there, wanted nothing else, were independent, and didn't destroy a thing. They lived on the game, but they never affected its abundance. Everything was handed over to the white man in superabundance - the timber, the game, the fish. Nothing had been destroyed permanently by the Indians -- not a thing.

If there's any shortage of game, it's an easy thing to say: Well, look at

those dirty, lazy Indians that destroyed all this. And I say that when I came here there were many times the number of Indians there are now, and they lived almost completely off these resources. They couldn't go and cut down pulpwood and get paid from the stores and buy canned goods. They had to live off the country.

Then when you answer that, they say: Well, the wolves, the wolves have destroyed the game. Well, you say, I never see a wolf anymore -- they've been poisoned, they've been shot from the air... Cars run over them on the ice, planes run over them on the ice, and they stand up on their one or two remaining legs and try to fight the plane, you know. I used to hear wolves always -- never went out on a trip that I didn't hear wolves, especially in the winter, and I frequently saw them. Now you can travel there for weeks and months and never hear a wolf. It's not the wolves. The wild game was able to hold its own. There was a fine natural balance. When the game can't hold its own is when you have some huge change in the habitat, like flooding, for instance. If you flood a large area in which there were millions of acres of wild rice, and almost all of these creatures fed on the wild rice -- the birds fed on the grain only, but all the other larger game animals fed on the succulent shoots which were extremely Nourishing apparently, and appetizing. They'd feed all summer. Moose and deer would stand up to their shoulders in water and feed, and porcupines and everything else went out and fed on this. The result was that like farm animals they had numerous progeny when they were well fed. In my first days, you would rarely see a cow moose with less than two calves, and sometimes three. But when you get the other situation, if they had any, it may be just one. It's the same with deer. It's very noticeable.

Well the deterioration of those things is a long subject. But when I look back over fifty years to what there was in that area and when I realize what these engines so destructive to the wilderness -- like the planes, outboard motors, all

the mechanical things -- have done in a comparatively short time in penetrating and dissipating the resources of that area ----- . And then you think ahead another fifty years, with the growing population, the growing wealth, and the growing ignorance of the fact that you can wipe out a whole continent and its resources ----- . It's hard for me to believe that in another fifty years you'll see few if any of our wild fowl and a lot of other things anywhere except in captivity.

MISS K.: We've been a prodigal nation. I think it came from this imbalance between resources and people. We had so many resources that we didn't take care until they were practically gone.

MR. O.: Well, that's it. It's a lack of recognition of what time means. They don't see beyond the immediate. Most of the people don't see that, and unless they've seen a considerable section of time with its usage they don't realize how rapidly you can destroy all these things. I think that's a very great wilderness problem today. We have these two things running in diametrically opposite directions -- the one rapidly going down, the other much more rapidly going up. You've got a resource that's dwindling and man that's just zooming up. You can fly right up now. The wild geese used to have at least the protection of going up into the barren lands and breed there and nest and rear their young, and then run down through the zone of great danger here. But now men fly right up where the geese are breeding. They meet them right there at the threshold when they're coming south, and that's going to have a tremendous effect. Well, those are some of the problems that come up before the President's Committee. There have been great gains and much encouragement by the larger recognition of these problems by the governments themselves. The President's Committee is authorized and encouraged to deal with outside agencies, like the Canadians in Ontario. Those are all possessions of the Province, not of the Dominion at all. The Dominion has authority over the boundary ones and over the Indian reservations, of which there are fourteen on that side. A large part of the reservations are unoccupied now (people died off). But there are still large Indian reservations on the Ontario

side. The President's Committee is authorized and expected to negotiate with the Canadian interests, but of course without any authority over them. It's their pleasure to do or not do what we're doing, and it's a difficult and delicate job even (certainly not guide them -- we would never attempt to guide them) -- to disagree with them on any point where their own experience has been more the experience we had two hundred years ago. They've got an undeveloped country with piles of wilderness, you see, and the wilderness seems to go slowly. Wilderness among the inhabitants often is considered as an enemy. You must overcome it. Yes, we thought so too. To think of the wilderness as a friend is a new concept, and it doesn't immediately sink into the minds of the local storekeepers or industrial concerns whose first consideration is the profit to be made. And there is profit now to be made even out of the sounds of the wilderness. Everything has a commercial value, and when it becomes known that some people like the wilderness because it's not noisy, then they'd better get hold of some of that kind of wilderness that's left and commercialize it at once -- invite people there because it's not noisy.

MISS K.: It's like paying for five minutes of silence on a jukebox.

MR. O.: Yes, that's right -- that's a very good comparison.

MISS K.: What did the committee do in regard of threat of airplanes?

MR. O.: Well, yes, that has been just one of the things that we had to deal with, and it was a very difficult one, and we had success. Now the committee couldn't ask any more of our government than that it should, if possible, limit or reduce flying into U. S. lands on our side of the border. We could hope that they might do the same on the Canadian side -- that's all. We could urge it upon them -- and negotiate with them, but the first thing of all was to get the U. S. government in Washington, if any way could be found to deal with the situation. The procedure was finally discovered through the Civil Aeronautics, the agency that was set up in 1926 under an act of Congress mainly for the encouragement of flying.

The men appointed to that group naturally felt it was their duty under the act to do everything possible to encourage aviation. So in dealing with a problem that had become a great menace to Superior National Forest, one could hardly expect that this agency which had been set up to encourage flying would take a very active part in helping the President's Committee get some restrictions.

The objection to the flying some people didn't see at all, especially if they didn't come up in the area, and particularly if they weren't dyed-in-the-wool wilderness friends. The s e people would think, well, what difference does it make, a little more noise, and it's a sign of progress anyway, and what difference if they did got in there? Isn't it a good thing that they should fly in? A lot of people haven't time to get in there any other way. They get there, and they could have a little sport, fish in a hurry, and get out, if they have enough money to pay for that sort of thing. Then why shouldn't all the classes be able to go into this area that the government is maintaining for wilderness? So, of course, when there was any thought of restricting planes and when there was a protest in publicity against the flights which had increased so greatly during the last World War, there was immediate tremendous opposition.

That was the time (right after the War) that I felt I should relax as much as possible from these activities which had taken my entire time and energy; and that was the time we asked Sig Olson to come in and help, because he was living right in the area where the planes were doing the most damage and where, mainly on account of the fishing there, they were having these short flights from Ply (merely twenty miles to the border) into the good fishing places. In a very short time during the war there had developed resorts that were very profitable but required very little investment. They were really exploiting the policy of the U.S. government -- and certainly the policy that we had in mind in establishing wilderness areas -- wilderness canoe area, you see. They were taking that thing which was intended to protect the quiet and the natural character of the area. This was the very thing they violated in coming in there by plane. So

Sig was called in, and he was of invaluable aid in calling attention to the damage that was being done there.

But meantime we hadn't found a way of restricting it. It was one thing to know what the damage was and another thing to know, if possible, how you were going to control it; and I think I've already told how the National Research Council had appointed a committee for two years to study the problem to see if there was already available some instrument in Washington by which you might curtail that flying. They had to say finally that they saw no correction for it, except a special act of Congress. A special act of Congress with huge opposition back of it would be a very difficult thing to get and maybe would mean a long fight, and the damage would go on and get worse and worse. I've already told how finally by going to Washington and going to the legal office of the agency where there was a friendly voice, we were able to learn that the act of 1926 specifically provided a remedy in words stating that the president shall have authority by executive order (this isn't the exact wording) for national safety (war and such things) and for other public purposes to restrict flying by executive order over certain areas.

It was with that discovery that we then went ahead, first to get the opinion of all the legal people, especially of the departments most concerned, like Agriculture, where the Forest Service was, but also of the Interior. We found that most of the officials in Washington who dealt with the problems related to the question were very eager that this should apply to all areas where similar problems existed, like parks, forests, and wildlife. But to get action that would cover all of those things would, of course, have meant a national outcry from wherever anybody was flying in and where they thought their interests were affected.

So it was agreed finally to seek presidential aid in getting this executive order, and it was under Mr. Truman's administration that we succeeded in getting

the support. We got the support not directly, but particularly through President Compton who was a very good friend of our project from the beginning. He was the President of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and was meeting Ike, later President Eisenhower. I have already mentioned that during the time when funds were available under President Roosevelt for consolidating lands out of a large sum that had been appropriated for that purpose all over the country, the state itself had shown opposition to further extensions of Superior National Forest. The state had set up under a special bill in the legislature a series of state forests. That ordinarily would have been considered a fine, constructive program, but it happened that some of the main ones of these forests were inside the area over which it had been expected that the Superior National Forest was going to hold sway under the Quetico-Superior program. Thenceforth the Conservation Commission openly took a stand against the Quetico-Superior program as conflicting with the state arrangements and trying to take lands away from the state.

Now it happened that the state didn't appropriate any money. It had no funds to consolidate the lands, and they simply took the vacant or tax-delinquent lands that were lying within the area that they named and dedicated those to state forestry, no matter how much land of that area might have been federal and in spite of the fact that those were areas in which definitely ever since 1927 there had been this Quetico-Superior program.

Well, that made a great deal of difficulty. We found it necessary to do a great deal of work before the Forest Service was willing to go ahead and begin to consolidate lands outside the old Superior National Forest. The Forest Service never likes to operate anywhere without state approval. It prefers not to go into areas like that. So one of our tasks was to try to persuade the Conservation Commission of five men, and the Commissioner himself, who was at that time Mr. Willard. But nothing we said convinced them. In fact they always

showed very open hostility to the whole program when we went before them. It was evident that they had a chip on their shoulders against our activity, except two members of the commission who were more agreeable about it.

I remember now the name of the man who was most hostile. His name was Foley, and he came from the southern part of the state. The last time I was mentioning this to you I couldn't remember his name. But he was very hostile, extremely so, to the whole idea, as if we were doing Minnesota a great damage. We had the general feeling that he was close to our opponents. We didn't have any proof though. But he spoke their language, and he spoke it in the most extreme kind of way, as if he considered us a bunch of cutthroats. So we had a number of hearings before the Commission and without gaining anything.

But meantime the funds were rapidly being depleted. I am referring to the large sum that had been appropriated for general forest acquisition and that would have been available to us at a time when those lands were for sale at a very low price.

By the time Governor Olson came in, or soon afterward, it was quite evident that we probably had lost our chance. The situation maybe went on for some time under Governor Olson, too. We had simply kept the same Commission and the Commission took the same point of view. We didn't know how Olson felt. It was at that time I was called upon to go before the Commission in Duluth. I think I've told you about it.

MISS K.: Yes, we have that.

MR. O.: This was the very hostile meeting. And that's when the change came. Up to that time we had had no success with the state at all, but at that time, during the intermission of the meeting, the editor of the paper, who seemed to keep note of all these things and report to the Governor, Abe Harris, came up to me and said: "It's not as bad as you think." And then soon after he requested me to write this article, and I sat up the second whole night, and I got the article in on time to appear beside Mr. Willard's in the magazine which was called The Conservationist. Mr. Willard's article was very hostile to ours, and ours was

presented in the best way I could. Then I was immediately laid up with a sore throat which the doctor said was due to getting too tired -- staying up two nights.

Anyway that was followed soon after by this boat coming up to my place and two of the commissioners who were friendly reporting that the Governor had sent them up and asking me to write a resolution that I thought would meet our needs for the state, which we did. That was introduced when the new member was appointed, and it was immediately adopted. Then we went forth with much more confidence.

But meantime a great deal of fuss had been worked up about our attitude. Even some of our supporters were confused by it and interpreted it as meaning that while we were for federal forestry, we weren't for state forestry, don't you see? They had been working to get the state to do what the federal government does, not in that particular area, but in general, you see. They tried to get more forestry. Well, we were just as much for more forestry as anybody else, but our program called for a federal area there, you see, and an extension of those federal pieces of forest preserves, and there was no other agency that appeared to do it, even the state. If they'd said, well, yes, we'd like to, they didn't have any funds, and you have to buy lands.

But that got some of the foresters at Yale and other places excited about our attitude, which was misinterpreted, because we surely hadn't any prejudice against any real forestry. But we wanted our forestry to amount to something. For years the state never did one single thing. It didn't appropriate money. These were lines on the paper, nothing else whatever. It was at that time, then, finally, that we got the approval of the Conservation Commission (with this new member on it), and the assurance from Governor Olson to Mr. Ickes that we would have the full support of the governor for our program. Of course that was a great delight to us and meant an awful lot. But meantime these main funds had

already been scattered off in other parts of the country. There was very little of them left that you could apply here. Then Governor Olson was taken ill and died, and his successor, Governor Benson, came in.

Our experience with him wasn't too favorable. We didn't have, though, a good showdown as to how he felt about this. But during the remainder of his administration we surely didn't get any active help. He seemed to be sort of preoccupied with other interests, while he was in the Capitol. So the time went on and we still didn't get any funds. There were no purchases in Kabetogama National Forest. Having been turned down once, they didn't like to go back, though it was under new auspices, you see, and I guess the Forest Service had many irons in the fire other places. They didn't want to take on any more here, as long as they'd missed it, you see. That's the way it stood for a good many years, until it suddenly became known that ----- . Oh no what had happened immediately was that the M & O bought all the Kabetogama Peninsula chat was available before -- all that wasn't already taken by the federal government. They bought all of it, and then they went ahead developing a plan for utilization, to take out logs for pulpwood, you see.

It was hard for us to put our finger on just what was the matter, but there was a good deal of criticism going around the state about the state's attitude in not joining with us, and then suddenly it became known ----- (It was early in that year before an election. This was under Stassen) that the company had offered to trade this land with the M & O in exchange for 37,000 acres of forest lands in the northern part of Itasca County, just south of Koochiching County. It was pointed out that this was a wonderful deal for the state, because the state would then get 101,000 acres of land... (This was said to be what they would receive from the company) and would only have to pay for 37,000 acres. It was more valuable timber, you see. This was good swamp spruce which the company wanted very much instead of just poplar. An acre of good spruce is

worth a number of acres of good balsam. Spruce is the top stuff for making paper. So the part that convinced us that there was something wrong was that the state officials went to so much trouble to publicize this and get it generally accepted. They sent some of their officials up to International Falls and talked. They had maps, and they pointed out what a tremendous advantage this was going to be for the state and how little it meant to them to give up this 37,000 acres that couldn't be enjoyed by people at all. It was swamp. You couldn't go in there; you couldn't get close in. So that went on without our having much effect on any public opinion. We didn't do much writing about it at the time because we felt there was something still -- we didn't know, and we never got at it. I think I've told some of this, how we entertained the editors of the Journal, & the present newspaper which by that time had gone under the control of people from Des Moines. Well, that's one of the things among others that we did to get a better understanding of the question. We hoped that we were going to have the help of the Tribune, you see. But we couldn't get it, and when they were all through, the editors thanked us and said: "Well, we think it's no use bringing up old scores here. It won't do any good. That's all done -- whatever it is. We don't know that there is anything to criticize, but it's been very enjoyable to meet with you gentlemen." But we couldn't get a peep out of them as to the merits of the proposed transfer of lands up there.

So then the time was approaching for a state election; and there's no subject that had been so sensitive, some years before, as this question of flooding lands. We had a state act against it. We had the federal act against it. And the legislature had been on record in both houses in a joint resolution in favor of passing the Shipstead-Nolan Act, you see. That was accepted, and the state Shipstead-Nolan had been approved. So when it was coming close to the election Mr. Winston, with the backing of a small group of conservation people in the state, (some American Legion and some others), asked for a special

with the Conservation Commissioner (that was Mr. Wilson at the time) to inquire fully as to any aspect of this proposed trade. They met in Mr. Wilson's office one evening, not too long before the election, possibly a month or two weeks before the election. Mr. Wilson very quietly outlined this trade, what advantages there'd be and all, and he told in glowing terms what the state would gain. Then Mr. Winston said, "Well, Mr. Wilson, are there any conditions Attached to this?" "Nothing of any importance," Mr. Wilson says. "Well, you mean there are some." "Well, let's see, yes, I think there are some small ones." "Well, could you tell me what they are?" "Well, let's see - there's one that provides that the company retains the mineral rights. But you know that's common." It is, too. You often can't buy the land, anyway without mineral reservation. I think that's a very bad practice. But it's almost impossible to get lands free of the reservation here in Minnesota where they're always hoping to have iron. Even the U. S. government takes them for the Forest service so as to get the surface producing again. So he couldn't criticize that. Well, Winston said, "But you said reservations. What else was there?" "Oh, let's see, there is some sort of a flowage right." "Oh, you mean the right to flood," Fred said. "I suppose that's what you mean," Wilson says. "I suppose that's what you think it is." Well, it's nothing else in legal terms. It's simply that you reserve the right to raise the water levels to a certain height, you see. That's a flowage easement. So Fred said, "Well, could you tell us to what height this would permit the company to hold the water?" "I don't know. I'll find out and let you know tomorrow," he says. "Well, don't you think it's rather strange that you've been stressing the fact that you acquire 101 miles, or whatever it is, of recreational shoreline which may be flooded at any moment if the company determines they want more power and they get permission for that." Well, he didn't have any adequate answer, but the next day he sent the figures to Fred, and Fred sent them up to me, and it proved to be that the company was reserving the right to flood these lands to a height

never known before and never proposed before.

So there we had something at last. Here was the most precious asset there was about those lands for the M & O Paper Company, the fact that you wouldn't have to pay flowage rights in order to raise the lake on it. That meant that all the other flowage rights in private hands around the lake together on Namakan and Rainsy didn't amount to as much as the flowage rights that the company held under that purchase. Up to that purchase they'd never had any appreciable amount of flowage lands, and it would have meant that if a big suit were started and enough people joined, the company might have been frightfully penalized to buy the necessary lands in order to operate. Most companies owned their flowage rights before they ever develop any power.

But that was the situation. Once we had learned that rumors spread rapidly around the state as to what had happened. But we weren't going into a big elaborate campaign to publicize it, because we didn't have enough good means of doing it at the time. We didn't have much funds, and the Minneapolis Journal or Tribune wouldn't publish these simple things. But we did everything we could to inform people in the various organizations, and one day very shortly before the election there was a short piece in the St. Paul paper on the front page which said: Company Withdraws Offer to Trade Lands on Kabetogama. Well, that was something. What had happened was that Charlie Horn, with whom we had had difficulties while he was treasurer of the national Izaak Walton League, had offered to have special pamphlets prepared airing these issues if he got all the facts. And he did. We accepted that. He paid all the expenses. He sent up to the island a very good man who'd been issuing the publicity for the symphony concerts, and he came and stayed with me three or four days and got all the facts. Then he went back and prepared a very cogent, well-done pamphlet on the merits of this problem. He used as one of the greatest arguments against that sort of a transfer that the lands involved in Itasca County were school lands and therefore not supposed to be alienated under the law, and

that here they were asking for these protected school lands in return for lands that they had been cutting over for a good many years. And with a reservation for flowing too. Well, that all got into the paper a few days or maybe a week before the election. There was a piece in the St. Paul Pioneer Press on the front page, very short, which said: M & O Paper Company Withdraws Offer for Transfer. So that was killed. But the company has continued to own that land up to this time, and it is the subject now of this proposal to make a national park there. That's the land that would be involved in a national park, plus whatever other private holdings there are (it isn't too much) on Kabetogama Peninsula. I would say that perhaps eighty-five percent of all the lands are in this project of the M & O, which it is now proposed, will be turned over to the federal government, but by purchase. The federal government would have to buy it, you see.

MISS K.: Yes, No land swap this time,

MR. O.: Well, they want a land swap too, but we don't know just what they may propose. They may propose some richer land that they have their eye on or they may propose something that if you didn't watch might mean they did reserve the water rights. That would be very terrible.

So that's the way it stands at the present time. There hasn't yet been a renewed effort to acquire those lands in the watershed that lie outside of the old forest, but we are hoping that it will happen before very long and that those lands will be turned over to some federal agency, either the Forest Service or the Park Service. The present plan is to turn it over to the Park Service, and Elmer Andersen, who was Governor for a little while I urged that they be, turned over for a national park.

MISS K.: What was Governor Stassen's attitude toward conservation?

MR. O.: Well, he said he was all for it, I think that it was under Stassen, (but I'm not sure) that the state law about the state forest I've spoken of was passed. But it was quite evident as that went on that it was done not to get

state forests but to block our program. Every move was then made to hold us up, and nothing was done to develop it. This was just a paper forest, you see.

There wasn't a thing being done up there in Kabetogama forest. The Governor openly boasted that he now had an instrument at least to break yip this program of ours. He did that -- that was Stassen.

MISS K.: Was his objection chiefly a state-federal sort of thing?

MR. O.: That's the thing he emphasized, state's rights, you see. He felt that the federal government was encroaching too much, that it had to be stopped. Well, of course, we felt that while it made a plausible argument the real reasons were much deeper. They were that the company had steadfastly opposed us all, you, see, and we felt that they had tried it and then they realized when we began to talk about flowage that it was a risky thing to try to put it through just before an election, and so all that was quieted down before the election came.

MISS K.: Did Governor Thye, who finished out Stassen's term, when Stassen went t into the war, and then had his own term, -- was his philosophy basically the same as Stassen's or were there differences?

MR. O.: Well, his announced policy was freer. His actual policy here in the state didn't show any sort of leniency toward our program. He just didn't seem to be much interested. It wasn't until afterward when we gave up trying to consolidate these outlying units, and had tried very hard and couldn't get funds, that the Governor joined in as loyally as he could in this effort to get appropriations to acquire lands within the old Superior National Forest. That's the one thing they've been doing all this time, and taking out these airplane resorts. They got one or two that are hanging on --they still haven't solved them. It will require a lot of money, at least a hundred thousand dollars on one of them.

MISS K.: Did Governor Youngdahl follow that same basic...

MR. O.: Well, nothing very much happened. We'd already bee blocked, and the

Forest Service wouldn't go ahead. We had this law on our books providing that the federal government couldn't go in and buy without the authority of the Governor. The Forest Service doesn't like to make an affront of that sort. It's bad psychology to go into an area and have it known that the state opposed them, and then be dealing with these other states, because anybody who had a grievance or has an objection is strengthened by the fact that the state of Minnesota previously stood as they do. So the Forest Service is very loathe to pursue purchases of that sort, where the state has indicated it doesn't want it. And they have really never overcome that yet, fully.

MISS K.: Did the change in political party make any difference, when Freeman won over C. Elmer Anderson?

MR. O.: We didn't try so hard then to get this. Times had changed and we had the war and everything, you know, and we couldn't ask for appropriations. But the main test was the Governor's attitude toward the whole of our program. There I think I told you that Olson had done all these various things, including publishing my version of it, and inviting me to write a resolution after he had changed the membership -- added one more member -- those things. And he wrote Ickes a very nice letter which we published in one of our President's Committee reports.

MISS K.: Did you ever talk to Governor Orville Freeman about the program?

MR. O.: No, I don't think I ever had a conversation with him. I generally waited with new men like that for some indication from them that it would be agreeable. There were exceptions. When Stassen went in, Peavey knew him very well and he thought we should go there right away. That was over this controversy about these outlying parts of the forest. We said we would like to get this resolution which would enable the Forest Service to go ahead and purchase. The Governor listened, and then he said: "How does my Conservation Commissioner stand on this?" That was Mr. Wilson. "Oh, he's against it." "He is?" "Well,

I can't overrule my Conservation Commissioner," he says. The elder Peavey, who was, of course, a top-notch Republican and a very strong supporter of Stassen, had felt that Stassen was going to be our big man. Then Peavey said, "Well, Ober, why shouldn't we consider this a little longer," or something of that sort. So we had to back out without anything. I was very much disappointed. He had not only failed to help us in any way, but it was the beginning of a stronger opposition. He made Mr. Wilson Conservation Commissioner.

When Mr. Wilson was called in, he said, "We're going to find what's at the bottom of this thing." Of course, that was anything but very nice. It impugned our motives, you see. Everything they published in the conservation paper was of the same general tone, which was very hostile, as if we were a bunch of thieves in spite of all our sponsorship, and everything else. That's the way it continued. Mr. Stassen never gave us any help or any encouragement at all. They were very abusive about Ickes, because Ickes was against the highway. They also attached a rider to the appropriations bill for the Interior that year a proviso that they should be granted any right of way they wanted across the Indian Reservation. Well, a rider of that sort makes it very difficult for the President. He wants those funds, and he can't veto just the rider. If he wants the bill, he's got to take it off, and that was Roosevelt's fix. He needed the money for the department, and so he had to accept the bill subject to that rider. Well, of course, that's often criticized among legislators and others. That's a bad law-making practice, you see. That's an easy way of getting through lots of bad things at the last minute, you see.

(Pause -- intermission)

MISS K.: Would you tell us about that wonderful trip that you and Conrad Aiken made together.

MR. O.: That'll be a fresh subject. It may be restful to have something different than Quetico-Superior.

One of my classmates at college whom I met early was no med Harold Tillinghast. His father, assistant librarian at Harvard, had prepared in Germany and elsewhere at universities there after Harvard for very much, higher things and then was found to have diabetes in the days when that was pretty bad, you know. So he was always more or less an invalid. He was very careful He was a frail looking man, not very large, with very scholarly tendencies that he'd never been able to develop on account of this condition. But he held this position as assistant librarian at Harvard, which was, just the same, a very responsible job, and he lived a very quiet life on Brattle Street in Cambridge, and had two children -- a daughter and a son. And it was his son whom I had met, and with whom I struck up quite a friendship.

My mother was there a great part of the time, living separately while I was in college, and they got to know her. We used to be invited back and forth for dinner Sundays and always enjoyed the family. A very quiet family. There I met one Sunday a cousin of Harold's named Conrad Aiken, whom I had never seen before, but who was a very handsome, attractive, shy youth of perhaps, at that time, fifteen years. It turned out that he was the son of Mrs. Tillinghast's brother, who had a very tragic end, and that Mr. Tillinghast had been appointed his guardian. He had had full management of this lad and had placed him in a new school. I probably should remember the name of that school -- perhaps you'd know it -- but it's very well known in the East now. It had high rank, and it was a very, very fine place. This boy always held high records in the school in scholarship -- that sort of attainment -- but not as an athlete. He wasn't an athlete at all. But he was tall, a great shock of light hair, very blue eyes, a pale face, very shy -- extremely shy. But not the kind of shyness that comes from fear. You realized right away that it was shyness, still of self-confidence -- that he knew he had ability, and he wasn't overawed by anything. But it was just a natural retreat into himself before the multitude. Well, from the moment I saw him I was very much attracted to him and we became very good

friends -- I'd seen him quite a number of times before my last year at Harvard, and then He entered Harvard himself as a freshman, and he began coming to me, and I saw more and more of him. It was nice to be able to give him a certain protection against the clash of the world around him. That is, when there were situations where he was perhaps not embarrassed, but he was ill at ease among some of these cruder people whom you're bound to know, you see, like me. I had a roommate who was a wonderful fellow, but he was rough and ready, you see, different entirely from Conrad. Conrad, by all odds, was the most sensitive man I have ever known in my life, and when I say sensitive, I don't mean that he took umbrage, but he was sensitive in his responses, as if he heard and saw and felt everything different than all ordinary being. He had that marvelous quality.

Meantime, I had heard about him and his history from his aunt and uncle, from Mrs. Tillinghast, who was his blood relation, you see, and Mr. Tillinghast who wasn't at all, but had been an excellent guardian. He had the money -- whatever money there was. It seems that the father had trained in medicine with the idea of doing research work, and he was evidently the same type of man that Conrad was, extremely shy and withdrawn. He fell in love after he had completed his medical course and married before he had been able to go ahead and do the distinguished research that he would like to have done and cared about. And, so, somehow -- I don't know how this happened -- he located at Savannah, Georgia, which is supposed to be a beautiful place, in the south, close to the Atlantic. There he had three children, Conrad being the oldest. It was painful, evidently to him, and it was more or less painful at times, I think, to Conrad, just to meet people. You could almost see a sort of -- well, I never saw his father -- but you could see in Conrad almost something that came across his eyes like a blind that he drew across, you see, to prevent damage or something from this maybe over buoyancy, or something. It wasn't that he didn't

like buoyancy, but it had to be a different kind than you get through the average student.

I had learned of this family story through these relatives. The boy was, from the beginning, extremely sensitive, and very fine looking. He was also a great reader -- a student -- oh, a great reader -- poetry -- reading poetry early -- very much taken by the sensitive side and the expression of all these things that ordinarily you don't get through any medium except poetry or possibly music. One morning when he waked up he heard two shots -- he was twelve years old. And this sensitive lad dashed into his parents' bedroom, and there on the bed were his mother and father dying. His father had shot his mother and shot himself, and there they were lying.

Well, the boy told me about this later, too, and he said to me. "Ober, from that day a great poet was destroyed." That's what he thought. But it didn't prevent his writing poetry. I think it's very restricted and it's remote from so many people's experience and understanding, but it may appear greater and greater as time goes on, for that reason, you see. But it doesn't have a large audience. He's never been able to make any money on it. Of course, that wouldn't prove it was great. But he won't even let anybody steer him in the direction of any kind of cheap success. He's perfectly satisfied with that. I should say before surmising up that we continued to see each other quite a little, and he was finally in his freshman year. On account of his contributions to the Advocate, one of our literary papers, he was nominated for membership on the board. I was on the board, too, and so I knew this was going to be a great trial to him. I'd gone through the initiation, and it was a trial even to me. Some of the boys on this board have become very distinguished. One of them was Van Wycke Brooks and one was Sheldon, the dramatist, who died a few years ago, a wonderful fellow. One was Max Perkins. I hadn't been elected for anything I'd done as far as writing was concerned, but I did almost anything. For instance if they wanted somebody to go out and see if they could/get some advertising,

I went over to Boston. I guess, as my Aunt Grace said, I had the gift of gab, because I spoke to one of these automobile salesmen, and I persuaded him to put an ad in. They'd never had an ad before. And they were so glad that they made me a business editor, you see. But at least it gave me a contact with these fellows, which I enjoyed very, very much. So I had gone through this initiation, which was rather trying. They don't do anything, they're not rough. They ask you questions, you see, and they say: "Well, imitate such and such, or what do you think are the three main values of life," or something like that. If you can be funny about it, they have a lot of fun, you see. Well, certainly their questions aided you a lot, and when I went in that way, oh, I was just quaking. But I came through it, for some reason, with flying colors. I don't know how. My gift of gab came in handy, and they seemed to be much amused by some of these replies. And so I was in a position to help out poor Conrad when it came to his initiation, because he was just speechless at the thought. So I would put in a word here, there, and anywhere to prompt him in a certain way, and he got through without making any great splash, or without fainting, and he was very grateful to me for that, because I continued to protect him, and he continued to produce these very sensitive things that they used in columns. He was forever after me to write, oh, he wanted me to write. Well I took six courses every year I was at college, and those that I didn't care about when I got in them, I just sloughed them off. I got through, but that's all, and then something I liked, I worked. But my main idea in going to college was to become more familiar with the things that there were so that I'd be better able to judge what I might like to do. That was my sole idea. It wasn't to get proficiency in some one thing.

MISS K.: You didn't have the idea of being a landscape architect?

MR. O.: Not then. It was only in my senior year I took a preliminary course under Olmsted, who was the great landscape architect, and there I happened to just hit it right. I did make out very, very well, and I got the top mark in

my landscape. The last thing was a paper and I chose a lake, a fresh-water pond it was called. It supplied the water to Cambridge, and it stood out all by itself in an area that was in a way barren, but it had certain trees, it had grasses and all. It was all wild, just as wild as could be. And I chose that as my subject for treatment. If I were asked as a landscape architect to recommend the finest possible treatment for that, you see ----- and my remedy there wasn't a wilderness remedy.

So then I tried to work out in my recommendation what they should do to provide the necessary protection and some of the necessary things for enjoyment and utilization, but maintaining and increasing the height of its wilderness charm, you see. That was the paper I had done, which brought me quite a lot of attention. Then these men who were at the head of landscape architecture strongly urged me to go into that as a profession. I gave it consideration, because it had so many things in it that appealed to me, you see -- outdoors, parks, and forests, planning their usage, -- this combination of the wild state, and its utmost utilization for beauty and inspiration and all that sort of thing. The two top men were in agreement that it was a very excellent contribution, gave me a fine mark, and invited me to go on in the course and to be an assistant in this course the next year. I was to be paid three hundred dollars. Well, three hundred dollars in those days seemed like some help. But I had just met Sam Morison, and Sam Morison had introduced me to his mother and taken me there to dinner. She invited me to become the tutor of her other son, and I told you why. So I was to go there and be paid a very, very good salary in those days, one dollar an hour (Nobody got one dollar an hour) and my meals while I was there. Oh, it was very helpful. And so I took that instead of the other. I came back the next year and I was over there every morning from nine till twelve and had lunch there and came back to Harvard, that only left me my afternoon and evening to carry out this schedule for landscape architecture, which was very heavy, and which included the first year, I'm sorry to say, almost

all architecture.

Architectural drawing was dreadful to me, that kind of formal drawing and using all those tools, you see. And all the other boys in that course were just perfect at it, and mine were smeared up and they were -- oh, it just broke my heart. I couldn't give it the time, either. I had never done any studying at night, but I had to do it to get through.

Then we had an art course, which was required, for free-hand drawing. I had told them before I had no talent in that direction and they said, you don't need talent -- anybody can learn to draw enough so that when you're dealing with a client you can draw quickly instead of using a lot of words. You can draw for them what you mean. Well, I think I could have acquired a certain facility but we went into this art course, at Fogg Art Museum -- a beautiful place, all the beautiful paintings they had there, and a very sensitive wonderful fellow as an instructor -- I don't remember his name now. But if I could have had a man like that for some time, he might have done an awful lot with me, because I did manage to draw, and enjoyed it. That was the thing, as long as I was enjoying it, you see. He'd give us a piece of Greek frieze first, and he'd analyze that, why that was so beautiful. There was a pattern in there that you never knew was in there, a repetition that when you analyzed it -- you didn't do that before, you didn't know why you had this sensation in looking at that frieze, you see. And when he pointed that all out, there was this marvelous kind of repetition, but a little different all the time. It was in there, you see. And you began to look at that very much differently than you did before. So that was a rich education, just in itself. I got a lot out of that course. Well, then we had to draw some of that. Then there was a head of a Greek statue with beautiful hair. You look at that and you find too that there was something of that same sort of thing -- a sort of rhythm -- rhythm in the painting that I never had seen before. There was a rhythm as there is in music, except it is a different kind of rhythm. It's a rhythm in your eye,

you see, but also probably in your brain. It affects it pretty much the same way. So we had to draw a head. Well, these fellows were good at that. They could just draw those beautifully, but I -- oh, I'd be so dissatisfied. I was so clumsy with free-hand drawing. The only thing about that was that I got so that I didn't dislike it. I liked that, you see. But the other drawing I didn't like at all.

This course had only been going a few years. It had been set up by the Olmsteds and by President Eliot's one son who had been a landscape architect and died early -- a gifted, gifted boy. It was done in the name of these two people, and the Olmsteds were at the head of it. Pray, who was the instructor, lived out on Brattle Street, and he was very, very good to me. He invited me out to his house all that winter, and he was the one who had invited me as his assistant. I hadn't done that because I had this better income from the Morisons you see. Besides, it got me exercise. I walked with this boy practically every day in the morning. I'd take him out on long, long walks and try to get his attention for certain things and educate him that way, then come back to the house and have lunch and go right out on the street car, as they called it in those days, out for my studies. But the rest of it was architecture, pure and simple. And we had a man who was the worst bore I have ever known in all my life, but he had a great reputation as an architect. Before you got through, with him -- you'd look at a building -- (I'd never quite looked at buildings like that before in Boston -- they were all cornices). He'd talk about cornices and their relation to the whole building until all I could see was cornices. Just nonsense, I thought. But it was the proportion of the cornice to the rest of it and the type of cornice, oh, I was so sick of it. Then I had to draw all of these mechanical drawings, and of course I didn't have much time. I had to draw at night. And I began having trouble with my eyes. It wasn't serious, but I had to put on magnifying glasses, and it was only until I got up here that I took them off again. It was only while I was drawing, you see.

Well, I got through the course finally with a good enough mark. I suppose I got about a "B" or something like that at the end of the year. They wanted me to go on, but I was disillusioned about it by that time. If they'd n had the kind of course that they have now I might have gone on, because they realized that they had put too much in it. One of the discouraging features of it to me was that in addition to the course I had, you had five years, I believe it was. And I was a graduate, a bachelor of arts, and I was to have all these extra years. Then I was supposed to go to Japan for a year and be an apprentice under a firm for some time before I could go out and practice. I'd have been an old man before I ever got anywhere.

I haven't any doubt that I'd have had some wonderful experience, and I'd have loved a lot of it later in planning all kinds of things -- big parks, national parks and all sorts of things. Some of the men have done that. And I would have been out of doors a good deal. That's one of the things I wanted--to be outside -- especially in contact with the wilderness. But. I never had any regrets in my life about anything I gave up. I have had a lot of fine opportunities, just as different as they could possibly be. I have been asked to do things that had absolutely no relationship, and I refused them.

MISS K.: I'll bet you've been asked to be a teacher more than once.

MR. O.: Yes, once. I was asked by President Morgan to go to Antioch at the time that he reorganized it, and put it on this fine basis it's on now, you know, where they coordinate the studies in groups. That's one thing which I thought was very valuable. The second thing is that they give them practical experience. If you're studying journalism, you study be many months, then you go and work for the New York Times or something for so many weeks. Then the standards are very, very high. I was up at the lake at the time and happy with it and didn't want to go out; and I felt that, well, I hadn't had enough grounding in some of these things. I was to choose my subject. One of the men they.' took was Van Loon. What a fellow he was! They had the ground sciences. They

grouped them under different names like that, and you never studied geology as a thing all by itself. You studied geology as part of a larger context. And when you were studying literature, it might include art. I think that's a much much more sensible and better way. Anyway I didn't go on to Chicago. He asked me to come on and see him. I'd been recommended by the men who had been asked to head up Antioch, who was our Unitarian Minister in Davenport. He'd known me ever since I was a boy. So when he couldn't go and Morgan was elected he made the suggestion that Morgan write me. Morgan's still alive -- I still have contact with him once in a while about these things. He's very fit. He became head of TVA later, you know. He did all kinds of wonderful things.

That's all kind of remote from the subject of Conrad Aiken. But during the year that I was doing that I was seeing Conrad Aiken. By the end of the year I'd made up my mind that I didn't want to go on in landscape architecture. Too long a time. I didn't see my way clear. The Morisons wanted me to go to Europe with them, to Paris, where Sam was going to go in the Sorbonne, and Mrs. Morison wanted me to go to the Sorbonne afternoons, but keep my same control over Bradford, the son, in the mornings. I was to have all expenses and a thousand dollars a year. In those days that was very good, you know. But I turned it down, much as I liked these people. Our relations had just been marvelous. Mrs. Morison was a delightful woman. Everything was just fine, except that I had this feeling -- well, I can't move this boy. I tried and tried and tried and tried, but there was no fundamental change. He learned to comb his hair, and He learned to sit down at the right time and stand up at the right time and many other things. And so I said no I liked my liberty, too. I knew I wasn't like Sam. I wasn't the scholarly type who liked to study in the same way he did, you see. I liked to see people more, so at the end of that year -- we'd had a panic, (the 1907 panic) the country was paralyzed and shipping was paralyzed everywhere, and transportation companies were offering tickets to remote places for just a fraction of what it was.

After college, when I got to Davenport, I found out that I could buy a ticket from Davenport to Liverpool (coach ticket to Quebec) a cabin in the third class, which was really steerage, from Quebec to Liverpool on the Empress of Ireland, a lovely boat, and the right to a ticket to London if I wanted, for \$42.50. So I got in touch with Conrad, and we decided to go over there. It had a high appeal for him. He was going to take his bike. I didn't have any, so I was going to rent one in Liverpool. I met him at Quebec, and we climbed onto the Plains of Abraham up there and looked down at our steamer waiting for us, and looked around all that day. We went aboard and found that we had the nicest cabin -- just as spick and span as it could be. We went out to supper that night, and the menu looked very excellent, except that the ice cream wouldn't melt. The tables were clean, and the patrons were mostly fiery nice, old town people who had come over to this country and flourished. During this period of recession they were going back for the first time to Sweden, Norway, Denmark -- there was every nationality. There were Jewish rabbis. And there was a very fine Swedish minister from Minneapolis. I don't remember his name, but he had a good Swedish name and he'd been very successful -- had a big congregation. He was the most polished one of them all. There were Germans, Russians -- every kind of people -- I had my fiddle along, which I thought could use in case we ran out of money. We had very little money, and I thought that I could play to get enough money to get along that way. So the people saw us get on with this fiddle, and these foreigners all were so curious to hear me play, and I kept postponing it. It was beautiful weather, just beautiful weather. We could be on deck, and we could see these people up above on the first and second-class bridges. They'd be looking down at us, and we'd be walking around in the sun, lounging around and reading. It was very comfortable indeed. But they were after me to play. So finally one day -- a lovely day and no wind -- the pressure was so great that I thought I better have it over. I came out (and Conrad

didn't know I'd agreed to do it). I came up and I put up a stand, because I didn't play anything from memory. I never had done that. I was never required to memorize because it would take that much time out of the period that I actually studied, you see. So I spread out my music and began playing, and I guess I played at least three-quarters of an hour or longer. I could see people up on the bridge. This was one of the curiosities. They were wondering what kind of an immigrant that was. All the steerage passengers were around there. Well, there weren't a great many, but there might have been a hundred or something like that. But it wasn't full.

When I finished, the Swedish minister walked up, and I'd had very nice contact with him. We had talked a number of times. He bowed, and he had a hat full of coins, and he presented that to me. "Why" I said, "I'm not going to take that. I wasn't playing for money." "Oh," he said, "you can't give these back. We don't know who gave these coins. People up there gave some, the rabbis gave some, and there's no way we can give these coins back." I was independent, you know, I wasn't going to take that. I hadn't been playing for money. So there was only one thing we could do, and my solution was that we find out what this was worth, because it was in many currencies, you see and I didn't know all these things. We gave them to the purser and let him determine how much was there. Well, I think there was something like \$16, in spite of the hard times. So there were two deck boys, as we called them. One was eighty--- poor old fellow. He got his food and very little else. One was a boy about fourteen -- that difference between the two. They took care of the decks, cleaned them, put the chairs away, all that kind of thing. They got their food, and I don't know what, if any, money extra. But anyway, the sum was added up and divided between these two extremes in age, and you never saw two people so grateful in all your life. You would have thought that I had bestowed a fortune on them. They couldn't do enough for me.

We only had about two days snore, and Conrad had been standing back a little

bit, listening to all of this, and he hadn't said anything. I don't know whether he said anything afterward, because he wasn't much of a fellow to say anything. If he did, he was very likely to talk about some entirely different subject. The only way I know that he remembered it was that when he got his final book, an autobiography called Ushant... I don't know whether you've ever seen it. Oh, it's the most difficult thing to read, and it's on the order of this stream of consciousness writing that he enjoyed so much, like Joyce, you see, and Ulysses and things of that sort. In that he brings in the most unrelated memories, odds and ends. He's talking about one subject, then here will be something that happened fifty years ago, or twenty years ago, or something like that. It's all right in together as if it's all continuous. And he has a special name for me in this book. I didn't know what it was. He didn't tell me anything about it. His cousin told me, "You're so and so." I forget what my name was, a little different than Oberholtzer. Of course, nobody called me Ober then, but he's got it down to about two syllables like that. And everybody else -- some he liked and some he didn't like. He didn't like his Aunt at all. He said she had absolutely no sense of proportion. Mrs. Tillinghast. I guess it was true, too. It was a great defect. Little things seemed to her just as important as the big things, you see, and to him -- now he had some ideas like that that were just wonderful, if people could guide their whole lives by that, you see. And things that he thought about like that -- psychological things. But anyway he has me in there, and apparently this is recalled a number of times in the course of his life when he's doing very different things, and still it comes in like a sort of a refrain. It's very funny. Well, I only read about a third of this book. I got Ushant and never read the rest of it. It was hard reading. The reviewer from the New York Times said he read it six times, and he said it was the most remarkable book (I think that's what he said) of human recollections he'd ever read. It's a very, very strange thing.

So we went across, and Conrad had his bicycle from home. I didn't have

any, so I negotiated to buy one. They didn't cost very much. It was an English bike -- what's called a Sturmey-Archer three-gear arrangement so that you could change the number of times the wheel went around, you see. If you were going up a hill, you'd go around oftener, but it wouldn't be so hard pushing. That was good for me, because I had been in the hospital quite a little bit with this little defect I had from rheumatic fever I didn't feel I could ride the way Conrad did, you see. As far as health was concerned, he was just immaculate -- never had anything wrong with him. I looked stronger, but I did have quite a bit of trouble with this other thing, so I was glad that I didn't have to pump my bicycle uphill. It was pretty hilly where we went. We decided that we'd hit first for the English Lake District, and we went up there. The first night going out of Liverpool we came to a little crossroads place and it was time to stop. I realized that I would have to make all the arrangements that when it came to arranging for the night Conrad was speechless. That's one thing he couldn't do at all. We had this small sum of money between us. We came to a crossroads place, and we asked: "Is there a place to stay, here?" Yes, you go up-to the Hesketh Arms? What? Hesketh Arms? So, I expected to see H-e-s-k-e-t-h, one word, and the next T - h -a-r-m-s, you see. It turned out that this was Hesketh Arms -- they called these little inns "Arms," you know. We asked there, and they were kind of astonished when we told what we wanted to pay. But they were very nice. "Oh, yes, yes, you came right in." I'd say, "Can we get bed, breakfast and supper for the two of us here for two and six?" Well, two and six in those days was 62 1/2C for bed, breakfast and supper. "Oh, yes, you come in." Nice looking place, and they had the stairway going upstairs. They had what they called -- they had a special name for them that I never heard before -- but they were hams hanging up that they'd made right there, and they were hanging over your head as you went upstairs all homemade.

Well, we got along beautifully, and the next morning we started out, and

we continued in each place the same regime where I'd have to go and ask "Have you got bed, breakfast and supper for two and six." At noon we would stop and buy what we saw advertised everywhere in Britain, and that was Hovis bread, which was a small loaf of very hard, beautifully baked bread. Well, I strung this out dreadfully, including so much on the side. But it's background for Conrad. So we went ahead and up and down these roads, and they were generally pretty good roads, though some of them were macadam roads. I guess they were all macadam but some of them were much smoother than others. Some were rough. And it was amazing how well the people treated us. I guess they thought, well, they look like young fellows out for a lark, and they are naturally kind. We never found anything but kindness everywhere we went in England. I think they're the most courteous country in the world. I don't think there's any country like it -- the most natural courtesy. They like people and they like to be friendly. You hear the other. Well, that may be true when you get among the upper class. I didn't run into it. I didn't see any of that kind of snobbery. The nearest that you got to it was when you got among the Cockneys in London. They were a kind of -- I don't know -- not to say that they weren't very pleasant, but somehow they were different from the rest of them. But out in the country you could never have people who would be friendlier or kinder or more helpful. Once in a while I asked for a place, and they'd say, no, we don't have those accommodations, but we'll send a boy out, or a girl, in the neighborhood here where I know there's a woman who'll be glad to take you in. And so there's where they got us in. You know they served us meals that they couldn't possibly serve for that price, but they liked to please us. Some of those women where we had to stay were elderly women. They'd see we were two young fellows, and they'd go to a lot of trouble.

Finally we got up into the lake district, which wasn't very far away, and that was, of course, just the most heavenly place. And that appealed to Conrad, especially because, of course, he knew all those poets of that time -- he

knew Shelley and Keats all by heart, you see. Then these very beautiful lakes -- just how they could have such beauty and not spoil it in any way, as we do, you see. The buildings didn't intrude -- nothing did. There was nothing wrong -- it was just so natural and beautiful and just like -- as if it had been set down there from heaven.

Well, we got to Windermere -- that's one of the larger places -- and they had a hotel called the Sun Hotel. That looked quite imposing. It seemed impossible to get put up there, but we went, and they had nobody there. The woman who was in charge was a motherly woman, and she had two sons of her own. We asked her the same price. Well, she said -- Oh, come in, come in. She gave us a beautiful room -- just beautiful. We were so taken with it we stayed there a week, and we walked in all directions around these beautiful lakes. And Conrad read, of course. All the time he was reading every moment he got when he wasn't on the bike. And when he was reading, he'd forget everything else. He didn't know anything that was going on in the world. Well, then she'd send her son up in the hills, and he'd shoot some grouse or something like that that they were allowed to shoot, and she'd serve us that for dinner, you know. Oh, we were living high and paying very little.

So then we left and went farther north, farther away from England and into Scotland, and all through the lake district of Scotland. We climbed the mountains. The highest mountain in England was there -- we climbed that up in the clouds. And we looked at these lovely lakes, and then got up in the Grampian Mountains. That's the highest place in England, and no people hardly live up in there, just little scattered settlements. We slept out two nights in the heather. It was cold. Luckily it didn't rain. And we could hear the Capercaillie in the morning, barking (that was these large game birds that were up there in the heather, you know). They knew we were down there and n there was the greatest clatter just at sunrise.

Then we went on to another place in the Grampians -- way up in the mountains,

and Conrad said: "Ober, I think we should go back now." My heart was set on going out to the islands on the west coast, the Isle of Sky particularly. And I thought he was going to go too. But he was going back to college. I didn't have to go back to college. I was unlimited that way, perfectly free, if I could exist meantime. So he wanted to go down first and go see Oxford. Well, that would have been a terrific ride, and he could ride much faster than I. It was hard for me to ride that fast. And I said, "Oh, no, Conrad, let's go on." "No," he said, "Ernest, I want to get back. I've got to take a steamer, you know. I've got to go back home. You're going to stay over here." He had been reading, reading, reading, and writing poetry too -- he wrote every day. Of course he had long spells of silence. He was always like that, but I didn't pay much attention to that -- when he didn't say anything and didn't answer. He got one of those for several days -- never answered me at all. I thought, well, even if he goes back, it'll be a good thing for him to go back alone-- a good experience. Why should I stop now -- why not keep on. It wouldn't be very much longer, and he is completely immersed now in what he's doing. Why not let him do it. So he told me he wanted to go back, and in the morning, I paid the bill. I bought sandwiches for him and myself, and I went out and tied the sandwiches on the handlebars, and said, "Well, Conrad, good bye." He got on his bike and never looked at me and rode away. Well, it was hard for me, but I heard when I came back and went down to the Sun Hotel that he rode that day from that point back to the Sun Hotel -- over one hundred miles in one day -- because he didn't want to have to make arrangements for himself. And the landlady said, "I felt so sorry for that friend of yours. He was in here and he shut himself in his room for two days. He was here three or four days before he left, and he never said anything." "Well," I said, "he was writing probably. That's the way he does." And that's all I'll tell you.