

SCHMIDT, Andrew FS 1938-1973
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**U.S. Department of Agriculture
Forest Service
Region Five History Project**

Interview with: Andrew R. Schmidt
Interviewed by: Nordstrom ("Nord") Whited
Location: near Placerville, California
Date: December 18, 2003
Transcribed by: Mim Eisenberg/WordCraft; January 2004

Edited by: Linda Lux, USDA Forest Service; March 2004

NORD WHITED: This is recording number one of an oral history interview with Andrew R. Schmidt, S-c-h-m-i-d-t. Interviewer is Nord Whited, W-h-i-t-e-d, also a Forest Service retiree. The location is the home of Andrew Schmidt in El Dorado County, near Placerville. The date is December 18th, 2003, and the time is about one PM.

WHITED: All rightie, what is your full name?

ANDREW R. SCHMIDT: Andrew Raymond Schmidt.

WHITED: All right. I already did the spelling on the introduction, so they got that.

SCHMIDT: I go by the name of Andy.

WHITED: Yes, I know, yes, although, you know, Doug calls you Andrew when he talks about you.

SCHMIDT: Oh, is that right?

WHITED: Yes, it's interesting. Okay. And when and where were you born?

SCHMIDT: I was born at a ranch house in southern San Benito County, California.

WHITED: San Bernardino?

SCHMIDT: San Benito.

WHITED: Where is that?

SCHMIDT: You know where Monterey County is?

WHITED: Yes.

SCHMIDT: It's right adjacent to it.

WHITED: Oh, okay. Were you anywhere near King City?

SCHMIDT: Yes.

WHITED: Were you in King City?

SCHMIDT: No, I was born at the ranch, but I always call King City my hometown.

WHITED: Yes, okay. I like that area, don't you?

SCHMIDT: Yes.

WHITED: It's a great place for a guy to grow up. Did you give me the date?

SCHMIDT: April 9, 1915. That makes me eighty-eight years old.

WHITED: Yes, you've got five years on me. I was 1920.

SCHMIDT: Is that right?

WHITED: Yes. Okay, who were your parents?

SCHMIDT: My parents were Anna and Neils N. Schmidt.

WHITED: Were they living on the ranch when you were born?

SCHMIDT: Yes, that's right.

WHITED: Who's ranch was it?

SCHMIDT: It was the so-called Rudolph Ranch. I'm a descendent of the Rudolph family.

WHITED: They were living right on the ranch, then, when you were born.

SCHMIDT: Yes. My parents were, yes.

WHITED: How did they get there, in their lives?

SCHMIDT: Well, my father came from Australia.

WHITED: No kidding!

SCHMIDT: Yes.

WHITED: I'll be darned.

SCHMIDT: Near Melbourne. He was on a kind of a world tour with his cousin, and they were working their way around the world—

WHITED: What year was that? Do you remember?

SCHMIDT: Pardon?

WHITED: What year that was?

SCHMIDT: That was, well, close to 1900. It was 1899 or 1900, something like that.

WHITED: They were working their way?

SCHMIDT: Yes.

WHITED: Do you know what kind of a ship?

SCHMIDT: Yes, it was a regular passenger liner. He had two uncles in Watsonville, who had immigrated from Denmark.

WHITED: Good night!

SCHMIDT: By the way, my dad's a son of a Danish immigrant to Australia, and my Rudolph family also immigrated from Denmark.

WHITED: Okay. Now, whose side—where did she fit in, the Rudolphs?

SCHMIDT: That was my mother.

WHITED: That was her maiden name, then.

SCHMIDT: Yes.

WHITED: So what happened? He got into San Francisco?

SCHMIDT: Yes, and then he took a train down to Watsonville, and finally found his uncles there, and they put him to work, and then his friend, too. I guess it took him about two years, but the interesting part of it was he made a trip to King City to see some relatives, which were close by, and the Rudolphs were one of them. He and my mother hit it off, so they got married.

WHITED: Well, now, was she born in this country?

SCHMIDT: Yes, she's a native.

WHITED: Now, the Rudolphs already had the ranch?

SCHMIDT: Yes, they homesteaded part of it and bought some of the other land.

WHITED: So he probably met her in town. Oh, no, visiting the relatives.

SCHMIDT: No, he was right there at that ranch house.

WHITED: Yes, that's great. How far out of town was that? Do you know?

SCHMIDT: That's about fifteen miles out of King City.

WHITED: Which way? North, south, east?

SCHMIDT: King City is southwest from Bitterwater. That's the valley that they lived in.

WHITED: Okay. All rightie. Let's see. Was she born and raised there, your mother?

SCHMIDT: Yes.

WHITED: On the ranch.

SCHMIDT: On the ranch, yes.

WHITED: A real native, then, a Californian.

SCHMIDT: [Laughs.]

WHITED: All right. What was your father's full name?

SCHMIDT: Neils [Neilsen] Schmidt. The first name is spelled N-e-i-l-s, and Neilsen.

WHITED: You're Scandinavian.

SCHMIDT: They're good Danish names, yes.

WHITED: Yes. Well, I'm a little north. I'm Swede.

SCHMIDT: Oh, are you?

WHITED: Yes. My first name is Nordstrom.

SCHMIDT: Oh, I see.

WHITED: That was my mother's name.

What was his occupation?

SCHMIDT: He was a farmer.

WHITED: He was farming in Australia?

SCHMIDT: Yes, he was born on a farm there in Australia.

WHITED: So he fitted right in, went to work on the ranch.

SCHMIDT: Oh, yes.

WHITED: Did he have a hometown down there that you could name?

SCHMIDT: It's near Korumburra, southwest of Melbourne. Right now I can't think of the name. [It was Poowong East, a Danish community established by early Danish immigrants.]

WHITED: Well, if he was on a ranch, he probably was outside of town, anyway.

SCHMIDT: Yes, yes.

WHITED: Korumburra, though, yes.

SCHMIDT: Yes.

WHITED: What was your mother's full name?

SCHMIDT: Her name was Anna Rudolph.

WHITED: How old was she when they got married? Was she working?

SCHMIDT: She was about twenty-one, I think, twenty-two, something like that.

WHITED: But she was working mainly on the ranch.

SCHMIDT: Well, she was living there.

WHITED: Part of the ranch.

SCHMIDT: Yes. She was, of course, part of the family, and they all pitched in and did things on the ranch.

WHITED: Family work on the ranch, yes. You said they met because your father was looking in on distant relatives.

SCHMIDT: Yes.

WHITED: Okay. How about their education? Tell us about both of them.

SCHMIDT: Both of them went through grammar school, and there wasn't anything such as a high school in those days, so they completed their education at the end of grammar school.

WHITED: How about language? Did your dad speak good English, or what?

SCHMIDT: Oh, yes. He could speak a little Danish, but my mother was far enough removed from Denmark that she didn't have any Danish language.

WHITED: At all. I'll be darned. That's the way it was with my mother.

SCHMIDT: Oh?

WHITED: Yes. She could speak a little Swedish, but not much.

After they were married, where did they live?

SCHMIDT: My father's uncle turned over a farm there in Watsonville for them to work and live on.

WHITED: Great!

SCHMIDT: And they spent about their first almost ten years there before they moved down to Bitterwater to take over the Rudolph Ranch.

WHITED: Was he an uncle on the Schmidt side?

SCHMIDT: Mm-hm.

WHITED: Okay, so the Schmidt name was there in Watsonville already.

SCHMIDT: It had difference in spellings, you know (such as Smid)..

WHITED: Yes, right, yes, to American spelling. So then they were running, the two of them, in essence. What kind of a ranch was it?

SCHMIDT: It was, well, mainly grain and alfalfa and that kind of stuff.

WHITED: Big fields.

SCHMIDT: Yes. They weren't into the strawberries and all that other thing.

WHITED: Or artichokes.

SCHMIDT: Yes, artichokes. [Laughs.]

WHITED: All right. And did they work the ranch the whole time right up to the time you arrived?

SCHMIDT: My three older brothers and older sister were born in Watsonville, and in the interval, about 1910, they moved to King City, and that's when the latter three were born.

WHITED: How many brothers and sisters did you have?

SCHMIDT: I had four brothers—actually five, but one of them died at Watsonville at an early age of two, and two sisters, one born in Watsonville and one born in King City.

WHITED: And so at one time it was a pretty large family.

SCHMIDT: Yes.

WHITED: Seven kids.

SCHMIDT: That was about an average family in those days.

WHITED: But you were born in King City.

SCHMIDT: Well, near King City.

WHITED: Near King City, okay. So they were back at the ranch, then, the Rudolph Ranch.

SCHMIDT: Yes.

WHITED: Do you remember much about the early years? How long did you stay there?

SCHMIDT: Oh, yes. I spent my first twenty years out on the ranch there, going to school and high school.

WHITED: Boy, that's terrific.

SCHMIDT: Before I branched off going to junior college and all those things.

WHITED: But your first twenty years were right there.

SCHMIDT: Yes, I pitched a lot of hay and bucked a lot of grain sacks.

WHITED: That's great. What a great place to grow up.

SCHMIDT: Yes, it was outdoors.

WHITED: What kind of activities were you interested in when you were a youngster?

SCHMIDT: Oh, baseball and swimming. That's about it.

WHITED: Did you—

SCHMIDT: Played football at King City.

WHITED: Oh, did you? What position?

SCHMIDT: Defensive end.

WHITED: Same as me!!

SCHMIDT: [Laughs.] I'll be darned.

WHITED: Actually, we went both ways.

SCHMIDT: Yes, we did, too.

WHITED: So you were offensive and defensive.

SCHMIDT: Yes.

WHITED: I'll be darned. Catch many passes?

SCHMIDT: Oh, I caught two or three, I guess, in my career, but I never scored any touchdowns.

WHITED: Neither did I. But you enjoyed that. You had fun.

SCHMIDT: Oh, yes, I enjoyed it.

WHITED: How about hunting or fishing or something like that?

SCHMIDT: There wasn't much hunting available down on the ranch. There was if you went out in the boondocks, so to speak, but we'd hunt doves and quail and that kind of thing.

WHITED: But football—well, baseball, too.

SCHMIDT: Yes.

WHITED: And football and swimming. How much swimming did you do?

SCHMIDT: Oh, there was a community built-up swimming hole in the San Benito River about ten miles from the house, and we used to go over there on Sundays and sometimes after work.

WHITED: Was it in the river?

SCHMIDT: Yes.

WHITED: No kidding! I'll be darned.

SCHMIDT: It was a community affair.

WHITED: Yes, but I mean that's fresh water coming out through there.

SCHMIDT: Yes.

WHITED: Yes, that's great. Okay, so you went to King City High School.

SCHMIDT: Mm-hm.

WHITED: What did you think about it? How did you feel about your high schooling?

SCHMIDT: Oh, I was a studious guy.

WHITED: Good!

SCHMIDT: I enjoyed it. We rode a bus from Bitterwater to King City.

WHITED: How long a ride was that?

SCHMIDT: About fifteen miles by the way it went.

WHITED: Oh, not bad, yes. Were there any particular school activities that you were involved with?

SCHMIDT: No, we played around with a little tennis and—well, I had to give a talk when I graduated.

WHITED: Oh, you did!

SCHMIDT: Yes. I was the salutatorian.

WHITED: Very good! Yes. Okay. Well, they figured you could write and you could speak.

SCHMIDT: [Laughs.] I was scared to death.

WHITED: Yes, I was too when I did that. I didn't do that. I was vice president of the class.

How about social life?

SCHMIDT: We had community affairs, like card games and picnics and dances.

WHITED: Good. Did you like dancing?

SCHMIDT: Oh, yes. That was a popular sport, of course. When we were in high school, we used to have a monthly dance there, in an old schoolhouse, with a band and everything else.

WHITED: Where was that, down near the ranch?

SCHMIDT: It was down in what they called Tully Hall, which was the south end of the Bitterwater Valley.

WHITED: Now, here you are in high school. What did you do in summers?

SCHMIDT: We worked on the ranch, pitching hay and herding cattle, too.

WHITED: That sounds great! Terrific. Now, was there any summer where you went and did something else?

SCHMIDT: Not until I got away from the ranch.

WHITED: So your work was cut out for you, then, at the ranch.

SCHMIDT: Yes. Oh, yes.

WHITED: In the summers.

SCHMIDT: We were the laborers on the ranch.

WHITED: Yes, but it was a family. That's the great part.

Here you are, you're in high school, and you're working summers on the ranch. What did you think about what you wanted to do as an occupation?

SCHMIDT: All I had in mind was I wanted to go to college, so I took a preparatory course in high school so I'd qualify.

WHITED: What was the emphasis on your high school, science?

SCHMIDT: Science.

WHITED: Really?

SCHMIDT: Mm-hm.

WHITED: You mean biology?

SCHMIDT: Yes.

WHITED: How about chemistry?

SCHMIDT: No, they didn't teach chemistry.

WHITED: Physics?

SCHMIDT: But physics, yes.

WHITED: Oh, good. I had a science major, too.

SCHMIDT: Oh, is that right?

WHITED: Yes. Didn't leave you too much time for chorus or playing in the band.

SCHMIDT: No. [Laughs.]

WHITED: You didn't play in the band, did you?

SCHMIDT: No, I was not musical.

WHITED: But you didn't think of any particular profession.

SCHMIDT: Not at that time, although I did—when I had a chance, we used to go to Santa Cruz once in a while, and I loved to go over there and see the redwoods. That's probably one of the events that came along in the course of my career.

WHITED: Now, there was a ranger station in King City.

SCHMIDT: Yes.

WHITED: Did you ever have any—

SCHMIDT: I had nothing to do with it at the time.

WHITED: Didn't even know about them.

SCHMIDT: I knew it was there, but that's all.

WHITED: That would have been part of the Los Padres, wouldn't it?

SCHMIDT: Yes.

WHITED: Okay. So you didn't see any forest rangers or anything or get involved.

SCHMIDT: No, my first introduction of anything closely related to my career was I spent one fall working for the state Division of Forestry on a fire crew at the Pinnacles National Monument. From there, I—

WHITED: Now, where was that relative to your high school?

SCHMIDT: It was towards Hollister, the county seat.

WHITED: Yes, but I mean had you graduated from high school?

SCHMIDT: I had just, yes.

WHITED: So this was between high school and college.

SCHMIDT: College, yes.

WHITED: Did forestry come into thought at that time?

SCHMIDT: Oh, yes. I guess the first inklings of it came along about that time. I kind of enjoyed what the Park Service was doing there at the Pinnacles National Monument. About that time, the Three Cs [CCC, Civilian Conservation Corps] program came along, and they put a camp there at Pinnacles. I joined up as a local experienced man (LEM).

WHITED: Very good. So you were in the CCC.

SCHMIDT: Yes, for six months.

WHITED: What did you think of that?

SCHMIDT: It was all right. We were building trail, and I enjoyed that.

WHITED: Being outside.

SCHMIDT: Yes.

WHITED: Then you say you went to college. That fall?

SCHMIDT: There were a few intermediate steps in there.

WHITED: [Laughs.] Tell me about it.

SCHMIDT: [Laughs.] My next elder brother had gone to Visalia J.C. one year, so we both went over to Visalia J.C. (junior college) at Visalia, of course. We lived with a family in Tulare. It so happened that the family had a daughter going to Cal [University of California], and her boyfriend was Norm Dole, if you've heard of him. I'm sure you did.

WHITED: Yes.

SCHMIDT: At the time. And he came down on their Christmas vacation, and that was my first introduction to anybody in the Forest Service. He was going to forestry school at—

WHITED: Yes, at Cal.

SCHMIDT: Cal, yes.

WHITED: I'll be darned. So what came of that? How do you feel about that part?

SCHMIDT: I finished the year at Visalia J.C. As an English lesson or project, and I had to do a thesis on something, and I chose the Shelter Belt program because it kind of intrigued me.

WHITED: The forestry-related subjects were very interesting to you.

SCHMIDT: Yes, the combination of doing that thesis and meeting Norm Dole, who [was] in forestry, taking forestry then lit a spark, and I wanted to be a forester.

WHITED: Great! So what did you do?

SCHMIDT: Well, after completing that year at Visalia Junior College, I applied for entrance to the University of California, Berkeley.

WHITED: How soon did you hear or were you able to act on it?

SCHMIDT: It was sometime during that summer I was accepted at UC, and so I went. Nineteen thirty-five I started my forestry education at UC.

WHITED: Great. Now, if you were accepted—I mean, you had to apply and you were accepted. Were you in a forestry major right from the start?

SCHMIDT: Yes.

WHITED: At Cal.

SCHMIDT: Mm-hm.

WHITED: I'll be darned. I'm a UCLA person, myself.

SCHMIDT: Oh, is that right? [Laughter.]

WHITED: If that means anything.

SCHMIDT: Well, we were good rivals.

WHITED: Yes. What year was that?

SCHMIDT: Nineteen thirty-five I started at Cal.

WHITED: Cal, right, okay, 1935. All right, that's great. And up to that point, really until you ran into Dole and did your paper and everything, you really hadn't had any—

SCHMIDT: No, I hadn't settled on anything. All I wanted to do was go to college. I was kind of dumb at that time. I didn't know about anything.

WHITED: Yes, I know what you mean. I had no idea what I wanted to do. But it was kind of fortunate for you, those two things.

SCHMIDT: Well, yes, it was just happenstance.

WHITED: So you're in a forestry major right from the start.

SCHMIDT: Yes.

WHITED: Were you in a major at Visalia at all?

SCHMIDT: No, that was the freshman year of junior college.

WHITED: And we already talked about how you decided on that. What did you think about—you know, here you are, you're into Cal. What did you do for living quarters?

SCHMIDT: I joined one of those student cooperatives at Cal. I was living in Barrington Hall for the three years.

WHITED: Have you ever been back?

SCHMIDT: No, not really.

WHITED: The campus still looks back.

SCHMIDT: I've been on the campus but not to go to school.

WHITED: How long did you stay at Barrington?

SCHMIDT: For three years.

WHITED: The whole time.

SCHMIDT: Mm-hm.

WHITED: Now, they counted your year at Visalia?

SCHMIDT: Yes, I got credit for that.

WHITED: Great. Okay. What did you think about the curriculum and so forth in forestry?

SCHMIDT: There were a lot of interesting courses to take. I hadn't any idea of majoring in any phase of forestry, just general forestry.

WHITED: There wasn't any particular subject that took your fancy right off the bat.

SCHMIDT: Not really. Forest management, I guess, was the main thing I was targeting, I guess.

WHITED: Did you have to decide on certain subjects with an emphasis one way or the other, or was everybody taking the same thing?

SCHMIDT: Everybody was pretty much taking the same thing, although they had electives like range management and stuff like that, but—

WHITED: The upper division. My experience is that in lower division, freshman and sophomore—

SCHMIDT: Yes, basics.

WHITED: —it's a basic, but then when you got up to junior and senior, you kind of branched off.

SCHMIDT: You had a few choices, but you had a lot of requirements, too.

WHITED: [cross-talk; unintelligible] any particular direction? What ones were you interested in?

SCHMIDT: Oh, I guess the course I enjoyed most at the university was a course in forest influences, which was a forerunner of forest hydrology or watershed management.

WHITED: But when you—here, let me keep to my subjects here. What were your summers like? What did you do in the summer while you were at Cal?

SCHMIDT: The first summer, I went back home and worked on the ranch and odd jobs that anyone else had in the valley.

WHITED: Now, moving on from there, what about the other summers?

SCHMIDT: The second summer, I had a chance to join the three Cs and work with the experiment station up at McCloud, Mount Shasta.

WHITED: That's great. How'd you like that up there?

SCHMIDT: I enjoyed it.

WHITED: Yes? Now, you hadn't been up there.

SCHMIDT: No, not at all. That was my first time of living out in the woods, so to speak.

WHITED: How'd you feel about that?

SCHMIDT: I enjoyed it. Very interesting. That was the year I climbed Mount Shasta, too.

WHITED: Oh, okay! And then you'd come back later and be in timber management. [Laughs.]

SCHMIDT: Yes.

WHITED: So you liked the outdoors.

SCHMIDT: Oh, yes.

WHITED: Here, you could get paid and—that's just the way I felt.

SCHMIDT: Paid vacation.

WHITED: Sit around and do the trees and say, “Gee, we get paid for this.” [Laughs.] Okay. So then what happened the third summer?

SCHMIDT: The third summer was taken up by going to the forestry field camp.

WHITED: Where was that?

SCHMIDT: That was at Meadow Valley on the Plumas, out of—oh, what’s the name of the town?

WHITED: Well, let’s see, Plumas—

SCHMIDT: It’s the main town. [Laughs.]

WHITED: I’m stuck, too.

MRS. SCHMIDT: Quincy.

WHITED: Atta girl!

SCHMIDT: Quincy.

WHITED: Yes, that’s a nice town. What was the gist of that? What was the design of that school?

SCHMIDT: That was to give you field experience in surveying and timber cruising and mapping and tree identification, all that sort of thing.

WHITED: What was Cal’s connection with it?

SCHMIDT: They ran it. It was part of the university.

WHITED: Oh, okay, but the Forest Service was involved, too.

SCHMIDT: Well, it was on Forest Service land, or near Forest Service land, but no, it was run by the university.

WHITED: Where was it? I never ran into it. Where was it located relative to Quincy?

SCHMIDT: It was about ten miles out of Quincy, to the southeast, I think it was.

WHITED: Southeast. Yes, okay. Yes, all right, that would be end of the forest a little bit.

SCHMIDT: It was out towards Bucks Lake.

WHITED: Is that a regular part of the curriculum?

SCHMIDT: Yes.

WHITED: So everybody went.

SCHMIDT: Everybody was supposed to. Yes, everybody did.

WHITED: Boy, I bet you liked that!

SCHMIDT: Yes, we had a lot of fun there.

WHITED: Was there any compensation for the work you did?

SCHMIDT: No. No, we had to pay our board.

WHITED: Oh, really? What were the living conditions?

SCHMIDT: We lived in tents.

WHITED: Okay.

SCHMIDT: They had a cook house.

WHITED: How long did that run?

SCHMIDT: It was supposed to run all summer, but they shortened it because somebody got measles, and so we had to disband for about three weeks.

WHITED: Did you have any time off between that and starting up in the fall at Cal?

SCHMIDT: No, just a few days.

WHITED: Now, let's see, we're talking about—let's see, that would have been 1937, right?

SCHMIDT: Mm-hm.

WHITED: Thirty-seven, and what about the fourth summer?

SCHMIDT: The fourth summer? I graduated in 1938—

WHITED: In the spring.

SCHMIDT: Yes, and got a job with Forest Service with Oscar Evans in timber surveys.

WHITED: Great! How did you get that job?

SCHMIDT: I applied for it.

WHITED: Where did you apply?

SCHMIDT: Over at the San Francisco office, the RO [regional office].

WHITED: Where was that office at that time?

SCHMIDT: The Phelan Building, just off of Market.

WHITED: I don't know when they moved to Sansome [Street], do you?

SCHMIDT: Oh, sometime either during the war or shortly after the war.

WHITED: Oh, okay. So in '38 you worked for the Forest Service.

SCHMIDT: Yes.

WHITED: What did you mainly do?

SCHMIDT: I was in a camp of about ten students doing the same thing I was, and we spent some time in the Plumas, some time on the Shasta, some of the time on the Klamath, and some time on the Modoc that summer.

WHITED: Getting paid.

SCHMIDT: Oh, yes, we got paid.

WHITED: Do you remember the scale?

SCHMIDT: I think it was ninety-five dollars a month.

WHITED: Oh, not bad! And food?

SCHMIDT: Well, no, they deducted a dollar a day for food and quarters.

WHITED: No kidding!

SCHMIDT: Oh, yes, that's standard.

WHITED: It's not bad. Yes, that's a bargain.

SCHMIDT: It sure was.

WHITED: Now, how long did that run, did you say?

SCHMIDT: Well, it ran for the summer?

WHITED: I mean, do you remember how many weeks or months?

SCHMIDT: I started in June, and they called it quits for the season in December.

WHITED: Gee! That was a fairly long stretch.

SCHMIDT: Yes, it was.

WHITED: What brought that to a close?

SCHMIDT: Weather.

WHITED: But, I mean, you were still in the Forest Service.

SCHMIDT: Oh, yes.

WHITED: So this was the beginning of your career.

SCHMIDT: Well, it was actually, yes.

WHITED: There's no break after that.

SCHMIDT: Well, there was a break for—because these were part-time jobs, and so—

WHITED: Okay, that's part time, yes. Okay.

SCHMIDT: So lacking anything else to do, I went back to school for a semester at Cal and took the first part of a graduate—which I didn't intend to continue anyhow, but it's something to do.

WHITED: What was it? What was the course?

SCHMIDT: Forest management.

WHITED: That probably was helpful for you.

SCHMIDT: Yes.

WHITED: While you were in college, were there any special activities [that] you get involved in?

SCHMIDT: Oh, intramural sports. Barrington Hall had a baseball team and all other sports.

WHITED: What position did you play?

SCHMIDT: Oh [chuckles], softball I was usually an outfielder, and football I—

WHITED: You must have been a hitter.

SCHMIDT: What?

WHITED: Were you a hitter? I mean, a pretty good hitter?

SCHMIDT: No, I was just an average.

WHITED: [Chuckles]. Okay. And how about football?

SCHMIDT: I was just getting by. I did play football at Visalia J.C., but I was getting out of my league.

WHITED: Sometimes, at least for me—I didn't have that much spare time for college competition. You had to give a lot of time to it. Okay, any other activities you can think of?

SCHMIDT: No. We used to go over to Forestry Club meetings and all that sort of thing and field days. Every once in a while, we'd have a field day.

WHITED: Okay, so you did your final three years there, graduated in '38.

SCHMIDT: Mm-hm.

WHITED: With a bachelor's degree in forestry, right?

SCHMIDT: Yes, B.S.

WHITED: You said you did a little graduate—you took one course.

SCHMIDT: Yes. Well, a couple of courses—

WHITED: Did you consider going back to graduate school?

SCHMIDT: It would have depended on what had happened in the foreground, because I didn't have a full intent to go on to get a doctorate or anything like that.

WHITED: Mainly just to fill in.

SCHMIDT: Yes.

WHITED: But it was useful. Okay, now, what's looming there is World War II. Now, what effect did that have on you?

SCHMIDT: I spent the summer of '38, '39 with Oscar Evans's crews, and spent most of the time in '39 on the Plumas, but in 1940 I got a job scaling timber on the Shasta.

WHITED: Scaling?

SCHMIDT: Logs.

WHITED: How were they doing it then?

SCHMIDT: With a scale rule.

WHITED: You know, they got into different techniques later.

SCHMIDT: Oh, yes, how to deduct for defect and all that sort of thing.

WHITED: Yes, right. And so what about the government? Were they looking down your throat for World War II coming up?

SCHMIDT: Not yet. [Laughter.] I took the junior forester's exam both in '38 and '39, but at that time, it was kind of closed. They weren't doing much hiring, and so I spent the whole summer of 1940 scaling timber and doing odd jobs with Vance Brown up there in timber management on the Shasta. That was still a temporary job, and that spring I got a notice that I was accepted for my junior forester appointment, and that happened in April 1941, on the Trinity National Forest in Weaverville. That's before the combination of the two.

WHITED: Right. Okay. Now, were you on the job when you heard about that?

SCHMIDT: No, I was off work at the time. I was doing a little plumbing work for somebody there in Dunsmuir, but that came to an end, so I went on home for a month. At that time, I heard of my appointment.

WHITED: Vance Brown was the ranger?

SCHMIDT: No, he was the timber management officer on the Shasta at that time.

WHITED: Okay. I've got to check my notes on here. [Looks at documents.] Okay, he was the TM on the Shasta, right.

SCHMIDT: Vance Brown was, yes, but I was working in the—

WHITED: What were you doing in Dunsmuir?

SCHMIDT: That was when I was doing a little plumbing to keep my skin together.

WHITED: [Laughs.] Okay. Well, now, how long before World War II got in there?

SCHMIDT: I was doing management plan cruises, on the Trinity National Forest. During that summer, I married Barbara. We knew each other, and we were going together, but I couldn't afford a wife until I got my appointment. It was still going early December, and we were out getting a free Christmas tree off of national forest lands—

WHITED: [Laughs.]

SCHMIDT: —and we were out there in our car with the radio on, and that was the day of December seventh.

WHITED: And Barbara was with you.

SCHMIDT: Yes.

WHITED: Okay. You were out sneaking a Christmas tree.

SCHMIDT: Yes. [Laughter.]

WHITED: Okay. So then what happened?

SCHMIDT: We waited about a month to find out what was going on, and then the opportunity arose to join the Navy as a photo interpreter, so I joined the Navy in January of 1942, and—

WHITED: Where did you go to sign up?

SCHMIDT: San Francisco. And I was called to active duty in October of '42.

WHITED: Where was your duty station?

SCHMIDT: The first one was indoctrination school at University of Arizona in Tucson.

WHITED: Good night! Photo interpretation.

SCHMIDT: Yes.

WHITED: How'd you like it?

SCHMIDT: It was all right. It got kind of boring at times.

WHITED: So then what happened? Well, let's backtrack a little. How did you meet Barbara?

SCHMIDT: Oh, we knew each other almost our whole lifetimes.

WHITED: Oh, really!

SCHMIDT: She was born in a neighboring community of Hernandez, and we knew each other—

WHITED: [unintelligible] city.

SCHMIDT: Yes. We knew each other since high school. I was out of high school by the time she went into high school.

WHITED: Same with me and my Barbara.

SCHMIDT: Oh, is that right?

WHITED: Yes. Oh, gosh, she was almost four years behind me.

SCHMIDT: She was five and a half years younger than I am.

WHITED: And when did you meet again?

SCHMIDT: While I was going to college, we'd go home once in a while and go to community dances and that [sort of thing].

WHITED: So she was still down there.

SCHMIDT: Yes, she was working in the bank at that time.

WHITED: Okay. So when you were in areas like Dunsmuir and so forth, you were away.

SCHMIDT: Mm-hm.

WHITED: When did the thought of marriage occur, and when did you do it?

SCHMIDT: When I got established as a junior forester, I started considering what I was going to do. I tried to use my head.

WHITED: [Laughs.] The wrong move to begin with, yes.

SCHMIDT: I could afford to marry her, and she was interested, so I asked her to marry me.

WHITED: Oh, great. Now, what year was that?

SCHMIDT: Nineteen forty-one, July 2nd.

WHITED: That's when you got married?

SCHMIDT: Mm-hm.

WHITED: Gee, that was quick. I mean, once you decided, you guys decided pretty fast. And that was '41?

SCHMIDT: Yes.

WHITED: Okay.

SCHMIDT: We spent a couple of days, honeymooned at Tahoe.

WHITED: Really!!

SCHMIDT: Married in Reno and a couple of days at Tahoe, and that was it, then ran back to Weaverville.

WHITED: But you went together—

SCHMIDT: Oh, yes.

WHITED: —when you went back. Now, Barbara—what was her background? Was she on a ranch, too, or what?

SCHMIDT: She was born and raised on a ranch, but as soon as she got out of high school, she started working in a bank. She was doing her career at that time.

WHITED: So then you came along, and there was a little change in plan.

SCHMIDT: Yes. [Laughter.]

WHITED: Okay. Well, let's see now. We got through there [refers to his list of questions].

And then you went to Weaverville. You still weren't with the Forest Service, though, were you?

SCHMIDT: Yes, I'd been with the Forest Service the whole time except for the Navy, three years.

WHITED: Oh, okay. What was your assignment at Weaverville?

SCHMIDT: I was doing what they called timber management plan cruises, sampling out there near Hayfork country, for working circle planning and stuff.

WHITED: Now, that was at Trinity then, wasn't it?

SCHMIDT: Yes.

WHITED: But you were attached to the Weaverville district.

SCHMIDT: I was working out of the supervisor's office.

WHITED: Oh, really?

SCHMIDT: Mm-hm.

WHITED: Was it there in Weaverville?

SCHMIDT: Mm-hm.

WHITED: Oh, okay. See, because the first time I saw it, it was Shasta-Trinity.

SCHMIDT: No, Weaverville.

WHITED: Weaverville was a ranger district.

SCHMIDT: They had a ranger district there and the supervisor's office.

WHITED: And the supervisor's office, yes, okay. Was that your first permanent full-time assignment?

SCHMIDT: Yes.

WHITED: And when did that actually start?

SCHMIDT: In April 1941.

WHITED: April 1941. Okay, so now you're launched on a career.

SCHMIDT: Yes, I thought I was.

WHITED: [Laughs.] Yes, you were kind of counting on it. Let's see, how old were you then?

SCHMIDT: Forty-one would make me twenty-six.

WHITED: Twenty-six, okay. All right, you're getting there. What was your grade?

SCHMIDT: I was a P-1.

WHITED: Is that in the new system?

SCHMIDT: Yes. Well, it was the old system.

WHITED: Oh, okay, because I was GS-7.

SCHMIDT: Excuse me. It was the P-rating deal, and I was a P-1.

WHITED: All right, yes, so that's the old system.

SCHMIDT: Yes.

WHITED: Yes. All right. So here you are, on the Trinity. What was your first assignment?

SCHMIDT: That timber planning cruising, sampling.

WHITED: You later did a lot of planning over on the Shasta, timber planning.

SCHMIDT: Well, I didn't do any planning. The work—

WHITED: Yes, work planning system.

SCHMIDT: I wasn't involved at that time.

WHITED: But you did that over on the Shasta.

SCHMIDT: After I got back to Shasta, I did that.

WHITED: So Weaverville, then, was mainly as you described it.

SCHMIDT: Yes.

WHITED: What were the living conditions there?

SCHMIDT: Barbara and I lived in an apartment first, then rented a house, and I went out to the field during the week. We worked five and a half days, and I bunked at the ranger station at Hayfork while I was out in the field.

WHITED: Right. But Barbara was in an apartment in—

SCHMIDT: She stayed in Weaverville, yes.

WHITED: What did she think of it all?

SCHMIDT: Well, luckily, she got acquainted with the supervisor's wife, and they kind of teamed up, so she was kind of looked after.

WHITED: Good.

SCHMIDT: Andy Brenneis was the supervisor then.

WHITED: Now, who was your boss, your immediate boss?

SCHMIDT: I guess you'd have to say it was Andy Brenneis.

WHITED: Oh, really! You were the timber management officer.

SCHMIDT: No, I wasn't. I was just a JF [junior forester]. [Laughs.] They didn't have much of a staff at that time. Harry Camp probably came closest to being the resource officer there, under Andy Brenneis. Andy Brenneis told me where to go and what to do.

WHITED: Staffs were smaller.

SCHMIDT: Yes.

WHITED: Okay. And you were out in the field, what?—four days a week?

SCHMIDT: Five and a half days a week.

WHITED: Couldn't get home.

SCHMIDT: Yes, we came home Saturday afternoon and went to work Monday morning again.

WHITED: Very good, okay. But in between, you would be out—

SCHMIDT: Out cruising, tramping the woods.

WHITED: You were in an apartment there. Was it a very good one?

SCHMIDT: No, we got out of it just as soon as we could.

WHITED: [Laughs.]

SCHMIDT: We spent I guess six weeks, maybe, in it.

WHITED: What about the Forest Service living quarters? Anything available, or what?

SCHMIDT: The supervisor had quarters, and I guess the ranger had quarters. I can't remember now for sure. That's the only ones that had quarters.

WHITED: Was it like a compound, though?

SCHMIDT: Well, sort of. They had warehouses and stuff like that.

WHITED: Yes, yes. I was thinking of up at the old Lake Valley. You know, it was pretty extensive.

SCHMIDT: Yes. Well, that was a big ranger station

WHITED: Yes.

SCHMIDT: [Laughs.]

WHITED: It was a beautiful one, though. I loved it. I never got to live there, but...

Now, who were some of the people you worked with that made a particular impression on you?

SCHMIDT: Starting when?

WHITED: When you showed up as a JF.

SCHMIDT: Of course, the supervisor.

WHITED: What was he like?

SCHMIDT: He was a nice guy, and kind and helpful.

WHITED: Very good. Were there any characters or individuals?

SCHMIDT: The closest one would be Rupe Asplund, who was a ranger. I don't know whether you ever met him or not.

WHITED: No, I never did.

SCHMIDT: He wasn't a character, so to speak, but he was different, if you know what I mean.

WHITED: Okay.

SCHMIDT: Yes, the staffs are so much bigger now. If you got everybody together that was attached to the supervisor's office, how many would you say there were?

SCHMIDT: Well, there was forest engineer, and he had an assistant, and Harry Camp, and then the administrator's officer and a couple of clerks.

WHITED: For a grand total of what, what you say?

SCHMIDT: Five or six, I guess.

WHITED: Gee! And that's the supervisor's office.

SCHMIDT: Yes.

WHITED: Yes. Remember that. [Laughter.] Okay. How about the ranger station? Was it about the same?

SCHMIDT: No, it just had a ranger and a fire control assistant.

WHITED: And that's it.

SCHMIDT: That was it.

WHITED: I'll be darned. That's something. I don't know, that was probably fairly pleasant, wasn't it?

SCHMIDT: Yes.

WHITED: Yes. Okay. Any oddball situations that developed while you were on that assignment?

SCHMIDT: No, other than I also had a chance to go fight fire a few times.

WHITED: What was the general fire policy?

SCHMIDT: They always had a spring fire camp for training all the hires for the summer, and I was called upon to give a course in First Aid, which I had taken during the winter, while I was waiting to go to the Navy.

WHITED: What was your daily schedule like?

SCHMIDT: On the forest?

WHITED: Yes.

SCHMIDT: Well, I'd get up early Monday morning and drive out to the Hayfork area and picked up an assistant, just a man to run a compass, and we'd head out to the woods to run survey lines.

WHITED: How did you do that? I mean, running the lines. Describe the process.

SCHMIDT: Compass and chain.

WHITED: Describe it in detail.

SCHMIDT: I was very similar to the cruising that we did with Oscar Evans. Ran a cruise line along the section line, which we tallied all the trees, chain width. At that time, they were getting into log grading, so I learned how to do a little log grading, so I cruised the timber and log graded it as I went. Later on, we worked up the cruise sheets.

WHITED: How many people were doing that?

SCHMIDT: Just the two of us.

WHITED: Did you ever have to use horses to get anyplace?

SCHMIDT: Not at that time.

WHITED: Okay. All rightie.

SCHMIDT: Time out.

WHITED: Okay! We're just about through, anyway.

SCHMIDT: Okay. Well, I'll be right back.

SCHMIDT: Okay.

[End CD 2. Begin CD 3.]

WHITED: All right. Were any things about this job that you particularly liked?

SCHMIDT: No, it was interesting, but I wouldn't want to do that forever. [Laughter.]

WHITED: Okay, you mean the cruising, itself?

SCHMIDT: Yes.

WHITED: Yes, all right. But you didn't mind being outside.

SCHMIDT: Oh, no, that was enjoyable.

WHITED: What did Barbara think about it?

SCHMIDT: She was kind of lonesome, I guess.

WHITED: I'll bet. What did she think about the Forest Service?

SCHMIDT: She got acquainted real quick, and she loved it

WHITED: Oh, really? Good. Okay, my Barbara did, too. She just thought it was wonderful.

Liked the people.

SCHMIDT: Yes, that's the whole thing.

WHITED: Did Barbara take up any particular activities while you were in Weaverville?

SCHMIDT: She worked for the bank there locally.

WHITED: Oh, did??

SCHMIDT: Yes, part-time.

WHITED: Okay, great. So you remained in this assignment until the Navy came along.

SCHMIDT: Yes.

WHITED: That essentially brought it to an end.

SCHMIDT: Yes, a hiatus of three years.

WHITED: Tell us a little bit about your Navy experience.

SCHMIDT: It's interesting. It was the first time I'd ever been down to Tucson, and enjoyed the climate and everything else, but there was a gang of, oh, about thirty going through that indoctrination. Well, there was a whole gang of people going through the indoctrination, but thirty of us were—

WHITED: Photo interpretation.

SCHMIDT: There were thirty of us in photo interpretation at that time, going through indoctrination.

WHITED: What kind of rating did you have?

SCHMIDT: I was an ensign.

WHITED: Oh, it that right??

SCHMIDT: Yes.

WHITED: You got a commission out of it.

SCHMIDT: Oh, yes.

WHITED: Very good. That's that Forest Service education.

SCHMIDT: Yes, it was.

WHITED: [Laughs.]

SCHMIDT: It really was.

WHITED: Yes, sure, darn right. Well, you were a professional.

SCHMIDT: Yes.

WHITED: Okay. So what happened after that?

SCHMIDT: From there, we went on to further training in photo interpretation. That was mainly where we were trained, at Anacostia, DC. That was where—about three months or something like that.

WHITED: Then what?

SCHMIDT: Well, then we got out of training in Anacostia and got our assignment to the Pacific, so we reported to San Francisco. We didn't know at the time where we were going. We just reported out to the commandant. We got aboard an LST, one of those rough-riding LSTs that went ashore with a tank on them? It took us eleven days to get from San Francisco to Pearl Harbor.

WHITED: Good night! I didn't know they did that.

SCHMIDT: Oh, yes.

WHITED: Well, I'll be darned. So what happened to you then?

SCHMIDT: After waiting for further assignment, we stayed down near Waikiki Beach, so we went swimming on Waikiki Beach and enjoyed the scenery in the Hawaiian Islands for, oh, I guess about another month, waiting for assignment and transportation, and then we headed to New Caledonia.

WHITED: I've been there. [Laughs.]

SCHMIDT: Headquarters of the COMSOPAC, Admiral [William F.] Halsey [Jr.], with various stops along the line. And then we got assigned to the headquarters unit there at COMSOPAC in Nouméa [New Caledonia], but the rest of my gang went on up to Guadalcanal.

WHITED: What year was that, now?

SCHMIDT: Nineteen forty-two. Wait a minute. It would be '43. In '42 I went into the Navy. Yes, that would be '43.

WHITED: You were still in Nouméa.

SCHMIDT: I was kind of picked off that gang and assigned to the main intelligence unit there. I got to see Admiral Halsey once in a while.

WHITED: How'd you like the duty?

SCHMIDT: It was interesting. As part of my assignment, I reviewed the dispatches that came through every day. I had to kind of keep track of some of them. But I was just a little man on the totem pole.

WHITED: Me too, yes. So what happened after that?

SCHMIDT: After sixteen months on that tour of duty, we got a rest and rotation, two weeks at Australia. During that time, I was able to inveigle a ride from Sydney to Melbourne, out to the old homestead.

WHITED: No kidding!

SCHMIDT: Yes.

WHITED: Wonderful!

SCHMIDT: I spent two nights there, and then I had to hurry back.

WHITED: Were there any Schmidts there?

SCHMIDT: Oh, yes.

WHITED: No kidding!

SCHMIDT: Several uncles and aunts were there.

WHITED: I'll be darned.

SCHMIDT: I met my father's family.

WHITED: Terrific!

SCHMIDT: Except his mother—my grandmother and grandfather were dead by that time.

WHITED: What did they think about you? [Laughs.]

SCHMIDT: They never told me? [Laughter.]

WHITED: Well, you were in America. We and the Australians fit together.

SCHMIDT: Yes. Oh, yes, they were glad to see me, of course, and I was glad to see them.

WHITED: That's great. That's wonderful you had that opportunity. Okay, and so after—where were you, Sydney, did you say?

SCHMIDT: Well, that was the rotation location. I was able to get railroad transportation down to Melbourne.

WHITED: That's quite a train ride

SCHMIDT: Yes.

WHITED: [Laughs.]

SCHMIDT: Yes, two different gauges of railroad, so I had to get off of one train and get on the other.

WHITED: Yes, I've heard of that. Okay, so then where did you finish up?

SCHMIDT: We came back for further training in the United States, and we got back—that would be '44. We went back to Anacostia for further assignment and further training, and then I was assigned to the intelligence unit out at Guam, under Admiral Halsey—not Halsey, Admiral [Chester] Nimitz. That was nine months of tour duty there.

WHITED: How'd you like Guam?

SCHMIDT: Oh, it was interesting, but it was kind of [bore], too. I didn't like bomb damage assessment work, but I got a chance to see the island. I was there when the atom bomb was dropped, Nagasaki and Hiroshima.

WHITED: How long before you could get back to the States?

SCHMIDT: How long did it take?

WHITED: Yes.

SCHMIDT: Well, we left down there late August, I guess, aboard ship, and went to Honolulu and stayed there for about three weeks or so, and then got a flight into San Francisco, and I was—

WHITED: And what did they call it?

SCHMIDT: Mustered out.

WHITED: Yes, right.

SCHMIDT: That was in October.

WHITED: October of?

SCHMIDT: Of '44.

WHITED: No, '45.

SCHMIDT: Forty-five, yes.

WHITED: October of '45. Okay, and what was your rank by then?

SCHMIDT: Lieutenant.

WHITED: JG [junior grade] or full lieutenant?

SCHMIDT: Full lieutenant.

WHITED: Wow!! Okay. You beat me.

SCHMIDT: [Laughs.]

WHITED: I came out a JG.

SCHMIDT: Oh?

WHITED: Yes. But I started out as an apprentice seaman.

SCHMIDT: Oh, well, you had a late start.

WHITED: Yes. [Laughs.] Okay. Well, what do you say we call it a day for now?

SCHMIDT: That's fine. Anything you want to do.

WHITED: We'll be back for more later on, but that's a good place to make a break.

[End of interview.]

SCHMIDT, Andrew FS 1938-1973
01-21-04
03__Corrected

**U.S. Department of Agriculture
Forest Service
Region Five History Project**

Interview with: Andrew R. Schmidt
Interviewed by: Nordstrom ("Nord") Whited
Location: near Placerville, California
Date: January 21, 2004
Transcribed by: Mim Eisenberg/WordCraft; January 2004

Corrected by: Linda Lux, USDA Forest Service; March 2004

NORD WHITED: This is recording number two of an oral history interview with Andrew R. Schmidt. Interviewer is Nord Whited, as before, also a Forest Service retiree. The location is the home of Andrew Schmidt in El Dorado County, near Placerville. The date is January 21st, 2004, and the time is about 1 PM.

WHITED: I think we're in business. Okay. Now, if you'll just review a little bit—you went to the Lassen National Forest first, after coming off—you were separated in San Francisco.

SCHMIDT: I was reassigned back to the Trinity National Forest and then I got transferred to the Susan River District on the Lassen National Forest, in Susanville.

WHITED: How soon did that happen? You came out of the Navy, and you were reassigned to the Trinity.

SCHMIDT: Yes.

WHITED: How soon did you go to the Lassen?

SCHMIDT: In June of that year, 1945.

WHITED: Well, that would be '46.

SCHMIDT: Forty-six, yes.

WHITED: So you were a few months on the Trinity, then.

SCHMIDT: Yes, under Wes Hotelling, ranger on the Lower Trinity District

WHITED: Was there any particular reason why you were shifted to the Lassen?

SCHMIDT: No, I don't really know.

WHITED: It was just a career move.

SCHMIDT: It was a grade level up.

WHITED: Oh, okay. Well, then, that's part of the policy at that point. If you wanted to go up, you had to move.

SCHMIDT: Yes.

WHITED: Okay. So what was your new job like?

SCHMIDT: I was assistant ranger. I was, of course, under his direction. I handled special use permits and made that map of his grazing allotments.

WHITED: That's the one where you were using your photo interp [interpretation]?

SCHMIDT: That's right.

WHITED: Yes, okay, great.

SCHMIDT: He seemed to be pleased with that. In 1947, December '47, I was transferred to—I was to be district ranger of the Salmon River District on the Klamath National Forest.

WHITED: Had Barbara [his wife] joined you by then?

SCHMIDT: Oh, yes.

WHITED: She started out with you right away on the Trinity, didn't she?

SCHMIDT: Yes.

WHITED: Came out from the ranch.

SCHMIDT: Yes.

WHITED: Okay. Now, what did you think about being assigned ranger?

SCHMIDT: Oh, I'd been looking forward to it, of course, because that's the next step up. So when we reported in Yreka in December, early December of '47, I told you that Forest Supervisor George James had a knack of being concerned about his employees, and so he went all out to see that we got situated at Sawyers Bar.

WHITED: How were your living quarters?

SCHMIDT: It was a ranger house there at the station.

WHITED: On the station.

SCHMIDT: Yes.

WHITED: Can you describe it?

SCHMIDT: It was a three-bedroom house, well constructed. Had a fireplace and all that.

WHITED: How about furnishings?

SCHMIDT: Well, bare bones. [Laughter.]

WHITED: But there was furnishings in there?

SCHMIDT: There were some there, yes, and we had some of our own.

WHITED: How about things like china and cookware and all of that?

SCHMIDT: No, that was ours.

WHITED: What did Barbara think of it all?

SCHMIDT: She was happy, but she was concerned about the fact that in the wintertime you were kind of snowed in. Our young daughter was only six months old at the time we went over there.

WHITED: Was she the first?

SCHMIDT: The second.

WHITED: So you had two children at this point.

SCHMIDT: A the time, yes.

WHITED: Who were they? Tom?

SCHMIDT: No, that was Larry and Diana.

WHITED: Larry and Diana, okay. And how old was Larry?

SCHMIDT: Larry was about four.

WHITED: So they weren't in school yet.

SCHMIDT: That's the reason I got assigned there. I was supposed to go to the district there at—oh, down below Etna.

WHITED: I know the one you mean.

SCHMIDT: I can't think of the name of it.

WHITED: We'll write it in later.

SCHMIDT: Chuck Arment was going to be the ranger there at Sawyers Bar, but he didn't want to take it because he had a daughter that was school age, and there was no school, so they switched us. That was fortunate for me.

WHITED: Yes, yes. Well, you became ranger, which was great.

SCHMIDT: Well, he was ranger there at—oh, what's the name of that little town there just south of Etna? Callahan. And that was on the Shasta National Forest

WHITED: How about hospitals and things?

SCHMIDT: The hospital was in Yreka, and doctors.

WHITED: Was there an episode where appendicitis was important?

SCHMIDT: Yes, there was. [Laughs.]

WHITED: When was that?

SCHMIDT: That happened in 1948. Al Crebbin, who was a staff officer in charge of range and recreation and so on and the headquarters in Yreka—we were on a pack trip up to Caribou Lake on the Salmon side of the Trinity Alps out of Big Flat, and I had a so-called bellyache.

WHITED: Who did? He did?

SCHMIDT: I did.

WHITED: Oh, you did, okay.

SCHMIDT: Yes, and so that ended the pack trip, and I returned to Sawyers Bar and took my horse down and put her in the trailer at Cecilville, but I had to ride down from Big Flat to Cecilville to get there, and then I transported her and myself back to Sawyers Bar. By that time, I was feeling all right. Some time later, maybe a month or two later, I had another attack at home, in Sawyers Bar. Ike Gibson, who was the dispatcher there, had also been a medic in the Army, and he knew it was [an] appendicitis attack, so they took me over the hill. It was about dead winter, but we made it over the hill to Yreka, over the Salmon Mountains]. I had a good doctor, and—

WHITED: That was in Yreka?

SCHMIDT: Everything went fine. I had the best of care, and I recovered rather quickly.

WHITED: Good thing.

SCHMIDT: [Laughs.] It was a good thing for me, yes. [Laughs.]

WHITED: Yes, I'll say! So then you were a ranger there for how long?

SCHMIDT: Two years.

WHITED: In Sawyers Bar.

SCHMIDT: Yes.

WHITED: Which is very remote.

SCHMIDT: Yes.

WHITED: [Laughs.]

SCHMIDT: Any time we wanted to go out in the wintertime, we had to go by way of Happy Camp.

WHITED: Wow! Yes.

SCHMIDT: So that was kind of an all-day excursion.

WHITED: Oh, yes, I did have a question. What's the situation on uniforms? Like, from the time you started in the Forest Service. Were there changes?

SCHMIDT: Not that I recall. The bronze badge was there, and the forest greens. They were furnished at that time.

WHITED: By the Forest Service.

SCHMIDT: Yes, or we were allowed allowance.

WHITED: Some money. Yes, right. Did you have to have a dress coat?

SCHMIDT: Well, no, in the field you wore work clothes.

WHITED: Yes, but later on, they had a dress coat.

SCHMIDT: Yes.

WHITED: Single-breasted, kind of brown.

SCHMIDT: I think I had my uniform by that time, coat and tie.

WHITED: Green tie.

SCHMIDT: Yes.

WHITED: How about the tie tack? Did you have that?

SCHMIDT: Well, they had one, but I didn't have one. [Laughter.] I had another one.

WHITED: Okay. How about a hat?

SCHMIDT: Yes, the hat was an old felt hat.

WHITED: Yes, kind of a rancher's hat.

SCHMIDT: Packer's hat.

WHITED: Not a Smoky hat.

SCHMIDT: No, it wasn't a Smoky hat.

WHITED: Right. Okay. Before the war, now, was there much uniform then, do you remember?

SCHMIDT: I got my first uniform when I was at Weaverville, and so I just picked it up and moved it with me.

WHITED: So the uniform thing was in from the beginning, more or less.

SCHMIDT: Pretty close.

WHITED: Because I've seen pictures of guys. They hang their badge on whatever they happen to be wearing.

Any particular jobs came up there? I guess they weren't shooting at rangers yet, were they?

SCHMIDT: No. But I had a good instruction from Al Cribben, who was a staff in resources at Yreka, on being a ranger. He gave me advice to be a good listener, and I passed that on in later years to young foresters.

WHITED: What kind of a staff did you have there?

SCHMIDT: I had a fire control assistant and a general administrative assistant there.

WHITED: So there were three of you.

SCHMIDT: In the office, and then we had the fireguards and lookouts.

WHITED: Right. Did you have secretarial help?

SCHMIDT: That was the GAA.

WHITED: Oh, okay, so that was a combination situation.

SCHMIDT: Yes.

WHITED: Did they live on the—

SCHMIDT: Yes, they lived on the compound.

WHITED: So there were houses there.

SCHMIDT: Yes.

WHITED: Do you remember where the design of those places came from?

SCHMIDT: No.

WHITED: Was it a standard?

SCHMIDT: Probably during the CC[C] days, when they were building offices and houses.

WHITED: Yes, that was pretty good when they built those, yes. What kind of vehicles did you have?

SCHMIDT: I had a pickup.

WHITED: Was that the only one, or how many did you have?

SCHMIDT: Everybody had a pickup, just about. The guard stations had their pickups, too.

WHITED: Were there any particular activities or events during your Sawyers Bar stay that sticks in your mind, other than the appendicitis?

SCHMIDT: [Chuckles.] Well, just a curious incident: I was up at English Peak in the Marble Mountain Wilderness, and my horse had thrown a shoe, but luckily my packer was there, and he put the new shoe on. In the meantime, I went for a walk to look at some range matters, and then when I walked into a meadow, there was a skunk cabbage clump there, and—incidentally [chuckles], a little brown bear was on the other side of it. When he rose up from where he was, I

don't know who was more startled, whether he was or I was. [Laughter.] Luckily, he trotted off. I tried to take a picture of him, but I couldn't do it.

WHITED: All rightie. Well, anything else?

SCHMIDT: Yes, the other important thing was that I got to be associated with the first woman lookout in the Forest Service, Hallie Daggett. She was living across from the ranger station on a mining claim there, and she and Barbara were good friends. But what happened was one evening she was out on her claim, and then she fell and broke her hip, and she was calling for help. Luckily, I was working out in front of the house, in the garden, and I think I was about the only one who could have heard her holler for help. And so we got everybody organized, and she was taken out to Yreka for medical attention.

WHITED: Was she employed by the Forest Service?

SCHMIDT: She was retired by that time. She was the first lady lookout. She started in 1917.

WHITED: Now, she lived there at Sawyers Bar?

SCHMIDT: Yes, on that mining claim. But she was a daughter of the lieutenant governor of California. I don't remember his first name, but his name was Daggett. [Transcriber's note: His first name was John.] She was brought up as a society lady in San Francisco, but he had a mining claim, a mine (the Black Bear) on the Salmon River district, and in her earlier days, why, she spent practically all her summers up there, hiking trails and—

WHITED: Really loved it, yes.

SCHMIDT: —and getting acquainted with the wilderness, so to speak. She was an able kind of a woman. She could use a gun. She was a sharpshooter. She was independent and took care of herself.

WHITED: When she was on lookout, about how long did she do that? I mean, in a year.

SCHMIDT: I don't know what year she retired now, but it was probably in the thirties. She was a very capable lookout.

WHITED: Yes. Good. All right. Now, you continued there for a couple of years. Was there anything else you wanted to bring up on that?

SCHMIDT: No, other than I did a lot of horseback riding where the wilderness and range allotments were, and luckily we had good fire seasons, so I wasn't saddled with a lot of bad fires to contend with.

WHITED: How did you and the horses get along?

SCHMIDT: Oh, pretty good. I had a good horse to ride, gentle and capable, of course. One time, we came off of English Peak in the dark, and I let her take her head, so she got me home.

WHITED: Now, you had a number of horses there?

SCHMIDT: We had a pack string.

WHITED: About how many?

SCHMIDT: We had about five or six mules and a lead horse that the packer rode. Each district had its own stock.

WHITED: You used them for patrol. What were some of the other—

SCHMIDT: Well, for fire control.

WHITED: Pack trains.

SCHMIDT: Yes.

WHITED: Pardon?

SCHMIDT: For—

WHITED: For patrol.

SCHMIDT: And for servicing lookouts and trail crews.

WHITED: Now, did the packer go with you?

SCHMIDT: At that particular time, yes.

WHITED: Okay. Was he a regular Forest Service employee?

SCHMIDT: He was a summertime, part-time employee.

WHITED: But somebody who knew horses.

SCHMIDT: Oh, yes.

WHITED: And took care of them, a wrangler.

SCHMIDT: Yes.

WHITED: Yes. Good. Okay. Anything else now about Sawyers Bar?

SCHMIDT: No, I think that's about it.

WHITED: Now, what brought that to the end?

SCHMIDT: I was given an RO [regional office] detail, studying the manual on range.

WHITED: Oh, is that right?

SCHMIDT: Yes. While I was down there in San Francisco, I was given the word that I was going to be transferred to the Shasta as a staff officer in range, recreation and wildlife.

WHITED: Good. Did Barbara go with you?

SCHMIDT: Not at that time. I was on detail to San Francisco, and when I got home, I was immediately transferred to the Shasta. I had to report and find a house to live in, and luckily they had a barracks that we lived in for two or three months, so we moved, oh, about March to Mount Shasta. In the meantime, Diana got bronchitis and had to be taken out to Yreka. The only thing that Barbara didn't like about the assignment was the fact it was too far away for doctors for the kids, and illnesses.

WHITED: You mean the new assignment?

SCHMIDT: No, when we were there at Sawyers Bar.

WHITED: Yes, that's a long way away from—

SCHMIDT: That's about as far back as you get.

WHITED: Yes, that's right. Okay, so you moved to the Shasta. Was this was the supervisor's office?

SCHMIDT: Supervisor's office.

WHITED: In Shasta.

SCHMIDT: Yes. I was a staff officer in charge of recreation, range and wildlife.

WHITED: How'd you like that?

SCHMIDT: It was good. Bob Jones was the supervisor, but he gave me a free hand on about everything.

WHITED: Yes, I've got his name here, Bob Jones. He was your supervisor on the Shasta.

SCHMIDT: Yes.

WHITED: Did you have any contact with Doug Leisz while you were there?

SCHMIDT: Yes, he was a JF [junior forester] that reported to Vance Brown in timber. His first assignment was out there at the nursery at McCloud.

WHITED: I've seen pictures of him, yes.

SCHMIDT: Yes. Incidentally, we all were highly impressed by him. One of the fellows, Andy Anderson, who was later killed in a fire down in San Diego country, made the remark that "we'll all be working for him someday."

WHITED: [Laughs.]

SCHMIDT: And it was the truth.

WHITED: Did he really say that?

SCHMIDT: Yes.

WHITED: That's great. Okay, well, this was really your first shot at recreation. What did you think about that?

SCHMIDT: We had to kind of oversee the recreation program on Shasta Lake, which was interesting, of course. Outside of that, there wasn't much recreation, other than to see that the campgrounds were taken care of, but that was the rangers' job.

WHITED: That was what, 1950, we're talking about?

SCHMIDT: Yes, that was 1950, in February 1950.

WHITED: Was camping pretty much free at that point, for the public?

SCHMIDT: Yes.

WHITED: No charges.

SCHMIDT: No charges, just a permit.

WHITED: Yes, that's right. Fire permit.

SCHMIDT: Fire permit.

WHITED: What were your other duties? Besides recreation, you mentioned—

SCHMIDT: Range, and I had a lot of good help and training by Walt Wetzel, who was assistant in the RO and taught me a lot of range techniques, about judging proper use. I also had previously been trained by Al Cribben on how to pack mules, so I was a little bit familiar with horseback riding by that time.

WHITED: Were you involved with the work planning system?

SCHMIDT: It was going on at the time, and I was asked to devise a system to get some order out of it, I guess you'd say, but the one I devised was just too complicated, so they scrapped it.

WHITED: Oh, no!

SCHMIDT: Just my request from the rangers, where the administrative assistant did a lot of the funds.

WHITED: Was there a district office in that supervisor's office?

SCHMIDT: No, that was down at Dunsmuir at that time. Irwin Bosworth was the ranger when I got there. I had known him. He was also the dispatcher on the Lassen when I was there in Susanville. He was a graduate of California, too.

WHITED: I knew that, but I didn't know he had been a dispatcher.

SCHMIDT: Yes, that was during the war years.

WHITED: Now, how long did that assignment last? You went into that in 1950.

SCHMIDT: It lasted until June of 1954.

WHITED: Fifty-four? That's a pretty long stretch. What was the housing for you and Barbara and the children?

SCHMIDT: Outside of the barracks—that was a stopgap until we could find housing—housing was on our own. But the supervisor had a house.

WHITED: Did you get any allowance for housing?

SCHMIDT: No.

WHITED: The military does, you know.

SCHMIDT: Yes. There was no extra at any time, that I know of, in the Forest Service.

WHITED: You lived in town, then.

SCHMIDT: Yes, in Mount Shasta.

WHITED: How'd Barbara like that?

SCHMIDT: Liked it fine, except it was kind of cold, but we enjoyed it.

WHITED: How about the youngsters, now? Were they going to school?

SCHMIDT: Tom was born in Mount Shasta, and that finished the family.

WHITED: But Larry was ready for school by the time you got there.

SCHMIDT: He was going to school. He went to first grade in Sawyers Bar, and then—

WHITED: There was a good school at Sawyers Bar, then.

SCHMIDT: Pardon?

WHITED: There was a good school at Sawyers Bar?

SCHMIDT: Well, George James and I got it started. It was mostly George James' contacts with the school superintendent at Yreka that got it going, but I did a lot of legwork out in Sawyers Bar and Klamath and Salmon River. I recruited a teacher.

WHITED: No kidding! How did you do that?

SCHMIDT: Tried to find anybody that had experience. Finally I found somebody that had a little experience, but no credentials, so to speak. She started the school as a teacher.

WHITED: How did you find her?

SCHMIDT: By word of mouth.

WHITED: She was around in the area.

SCHMIDT: Yes.

WHITED: That's very good. You guys had the initiative to start that school.

SCHMIDT: George James was the one that really got the thing going.

WHITED: Now, that's an elementary school.

SCHMIDT: Yes, grammar school.

WHITED: What did you do for a building?

SCHMIDT: There was a schoolhouse there. It had been discontinued for a few years before I got there, and that was the only reason why Arment turned it down, because he had to have some

school for his daughter, but I didn't have any school kids at that time. But the need kind of grew up on us. He was five and six, so he had to go to school. There was other kids there that were farmed out to relatives in other places until we got the school back.

WHITED: Great. Okay. So you left your mark there, then.

SCHMIDT: Well, yes, in a sense.

WHITED: Getting that school. Okay, so now you're up at Shasta. Now, you and Doug used to go hunting a bit?

SCHMIDT: Yes, we used to go pheasant hunting and duck hunting, and so did a couple of others in the office. We'd get up at two o'clock in the morning and drive to Klamath Lake or Tule Lake and be there at dawn for shooting time.

WHITED: What was the end of that assignment? Where did you go from there?

SCHMIDT: After Shasta, I moved to the Eldorado National Forest.

WHITED: In '54.

SCHMIDT: In '54, in June '54.

WHITED: And that was at the supervisor's office?

SCHMIDT: Yes. I was timber management officer.

WHITED: Who was supervisor then?

SCHMIDT: That was Guerdon Ellis.

WHITED: Oh, yes. And what grade—

SCHMIDT: By that time, I had gotten to a GS-11.

WHITED: Okay! That was moving along, yes. How about housing there? Just get it on your own?

SCHMIDT: You're on your own.

WHITED: Where about were you located? The supervisor's office was downtown, wasn't it?

SCHMIDT: It was up—oh, I don't remember the street.

WHITED: Something View Hill, yes.

SCHMIDT: The Soil Conservation Service was in it, too.

WHITED: Right. Yes, it was up on a kind of—

SCHMIDT: Kind of a hill, yes.

WHITED: Right. All right. So did you folks live right in town, or where?

SCHMIDT: We lived out on Holly Way, which was a side street off of a road to Georgetown.

WHITED: So you were a little out of town, then.

SCHMIDT: I guess we were inside the limits.

WHITED: You were timber management officer. Did you have anything to do with recreation at all, or just strictly timber?

SCHMIDT: Just strictly timber and lands, some lands. Nothing much going on other than...

WHITED: What sticks in your mind about the operation there in El Dorado?

SCHMIDT: [Chuckles.] Well, a couple of things. I was instrumental in getting rights-of-way straightened out so that we could have a timber program, and with the help of the RO, John Edwards, in lands down there, the Forest Service condemned the right-of-way on Icehouse Road, for improvement. Jim Usher was the engineer at the time, and he, of course, was ramrodding the deal, location.

WHITED: Who had the mill up at Camino at that point?

SCHMIDT: That was the Michigan-California Lumber Company. That was the lands we had to condemn to get a right-of-way across it to improve it enough to haul timber over Icehouse.

WHITED: Did you have anything to do with the cable?

SCHMIDT: No, that was all gone by the time.

WHITED: Oh, was it?

SCHMIDT: Yes.

WHITED: I'll be darned.

SCHMIDT: That was, oh, maybe two or three years before my time down there. The sawmill used to be across the river, and they brought their lumber back over to Camino for finishing and sale. That had been discontinued.

WHITED: Pino Grande was over there.

SCHMIDT: Yes, Pino Grande, right.

WHITED: Did you have much to do with Lake Valley?

SCHMIDT: Yes, I made ranger inspections and also we were trying to get some land exchanges going, but Vaughn Hofeldt was the ranger there when I was there, and he was doing his job real well.

WHITED: Were you doing much logging, any timber sales in the valley?

SCHMIDT: There was a sawmill up there that was owned by Harvey West.

WHITED: Where was that located?

SCHMIDT: It was just west of town, there in a little valley there.

WHITED: Yes, I know where it is, sure. There's a road that goes down there.

SCHMIDT: Yes.

WHITED: And the old pond is still there.

SCHMIDT: Yes, yes, it's still there.

WHITED: Okay. Was that the last mill in the valley?

SCHMIDT: I think that was the one and only and last one, I guess, in recent years.

WHITED: Did you have much to do with Harvey West?

SCHMIDT: No, I didn't have. When I was here, of course, I had contact with all the lumber companies, and I was getting the rights-of-way for most of them for our timber program and also timber sales, preparation and sales program.

WHITED: What was the general policy as far as the manual was concerned on timber management?

SCHMIDT: Well, they had a manual, of course, and I really don't remember now much about what the manual was. I was familiar with it, I know, but I don't remember anything particular about it.

WHITED: The thing that struck me was the sustained yield approach.

SCHMIDT: That was going on in—

WHITED: As far as I can tell, it's been going on forever.

SCHMIDT: The sustained yield units were ongoing at the time, trying to get them established, but none on the El Dorado.

WHITED: Do you remember, was the allowable cut in operation?

SCHMIDT: We had an allowable cut of ninety million. We never reached that much because we were locked up with right-of-way problems.

WHITED: You mean getting stuff out of your sales?

SCHMIDT: Yes.

WHITED: They went up to 135 million at one point, but, as I understand, 160 million is what the growth rate was.

SCHMIDT: I think that's about right, although I don't know if at that time we had an established growth rate. There must have been something, but I know our allowable cut was ninety.

WHITED: How about the Fallen Leaf Lake campground? Were you involved with that?

SCHMIDT: No, that was handled by the ranger, and that was before my time, too.

WHITED: I had a note here about it.

SCHMIDT: It was John Buck. I replaced John Buck here. They were going on a—see, about that time, the land exchange with Baldwin and—

WHITED: Oh, yes, Lucky Baldwin, yes.

SCHMIDT: Yes. And Pope was going on, and I got here just about the time that was wound up. The plans for the campground and some of the other recreation aspects of the new land was well under way.

WHITED: Were you timber management the entire time there on the Eldorado?

SCHMIDT: Yes. Oh, I got a grade promotion while I was here, but...

WHITED: What was the grade promotion?

SCHMIDT: From -11 to -12.

WHITED: Good. I'll bet you were glad to see that.

SCHMIDT: Sure was. [Laughs.]

WHITED: All right.

SCHMIDT: There's one other thing that might be of interest. During that time, the experiment station came out with a program, a system of unit area control, which was taking what was on the ground and applying management treatment to that unit. I think that was a forerunner of the ecosystem management. Unfortunately, the system didn't have any guidelines for application, so

I was instrumental in getting a systematic classification of the stands so that you could apply silvicultural treatments, like thinning or clear-cutting or thinning or selective cutting.

WHITED: Okay. Was there anything more? How long were you on the El Dorado?

SCHMIDT: Four years.

WHITED: Okay, so from '50 to '54? What was the new assignment?

SCHMIDT: What was the next assignment?

WHITED: Mm-hm.

SCHMIDT: Was a promotion to Region Four as branch chief in charge of sales administration and sale preparation.

WHITED: Okay. Now, where was that, in Ogden [Utah]?

SCHMIDT: In Ogden, yes, and that came with a grade promotion, too, to GS-13.

WHITED: Good! That would be '59, then, to Region Four.

SCHMIDT: February—let me see here. [Pause as he refers to document.] Yes, February of '59.

WHITED: Oh, '59. Oh, you went to Eldorado in '54.

SCHMIDT: Yes.

WHITED: So you were almost five years on the Eldorado.

SCHMIDT: Well, four plus, four and a half.

WHITED: Okay. How'd you like that move?

SCHMIDT: It was rather interesting. I reported to the job there in Ogden, and I was assistant to Joel Frykman, who was the chief of timber there. It was pretty much of a learning assignment.

WHITED: You were mostly involved with sales?

SCHMIDT: Sales and administration.

WHITED: Before we leave the Eldorado, was there anything more you wanted to touch on there?

SCHMIDT: Well, one incident was we had a sale go sour. The Dufrene sale over there near Bear River country. What happened, the TMA [timber management assistant] on the district had made a gross error in applying the sampling of his marking to the whole sale area, which included a lot of non-timbered area, and so it was advertised with too much timber volume, and that didn't pan out. So it was appealed by the Wetzel-Oviatt Lumber Company, who was the successful bidder, and it was quickly kicked out of my hands to the chief's office. And so we sat idly by, so to speak, but in the meantime, we did everything we could to make little amends to the sales volume.

WHITED: Where was that located on the forest?

SCHMIDT: That was just off of Highway 88, and just north of the Bear River Reservoir.

WHITED: You're going to be in the sun here in a minute.

SCHMIDT: That's all right.

WHITED: All right. Anything else on the Eldorado before we move...

SCHMIDT: No, I think that pretty well covers everything.

WHITED: And in '59 you were in R4 [Region Four].

SCHMIDT: Yes, and that was a learning assignment. I was—

WHITED: Mostly sales.

SCHMIDT: Sales and administration.

WHITED: How about housing there? Were you right in town?

SCHMIDT: On your own.

WHITED: Okay.

SCHMIDT: We built a house.

WHITED: Oh, you did! Okay.

SCHMIDT: Unluckily, it was on a fill. We had trouble.

WHITED: What do you mean?

SCHMIDT: Well, it settled.

WHITED: Oh, did it?

SCHMIDT: Yes.

WHITED: Badly?

SCHMIDT: Well, pretty badly. The contractor came in and put underpinning on it and leveled it back.

WHITED: Now, everybody's in school by that time, weren't they?

SCHMIDT: Yes. Larry was in high school.

WHITED: No problems for them?

SCHMIDT: No, they did pretty well in their moving around, getting reacquainted with new schools and so forth.

WHITED: Let's see, '59. You're just about to come up on 1960 and the Multiple Use Act.

SCHMIDT: Right.

WHITED: Did that have any effect?

SCHMIDT: Not on my job. It was going on already, multiple use.

WHITED: I thought it was, yes.

SCHMIDT: But the act, of course, came later, when we were practicing multiple use before, and they just legalized it, so to speak.

WHITED: Exactly, right. Did you feel it created any problems for you?

SCHMIDT: No, not my job.

WHITED: But I mean you were mostly in timber sales, and it didn't adversely affect that in any way.

SCHMIDT: No. We were assigned as an assistant to a staff officer, to make forest inspections, so we got a chance to be involved in those, as a learning experience.

WHITED: How about the general city living? Did your family take to that all right?

SCHMIDT: Oh, yes, fine. We joined a swimming club up there, where we had our house.

WHITED: It's beautiful country

SCHMIDT: Actually, Utah was the second choice of coming back to California to retire.

WHITED: How much snow did you get there in the winter?

SCHMIDT: Not too much, maybe six or eight inches or something like that. Just icy roads, mostly.

WHITED: You didn't have to do a lot of shoveling.

SCHMIDT: No, no drifts five feet like it was up in Mount Shasta. [Laughter.]

WHITED: Yes, that's right. Well, any particular events there, in the R4 office?

SCHMIDT: Floyd Iverson, of course, was the regional forester. He was a kindly gentleman, so to speak.

WHITED: Was he a timber person, or did he—

SCHMIDT: No, he came out of Region Five. He was supervisor, but he was also known a lot with range management, and I think that's why they sent him to Utah to get that straightened out.

Excuse me. I'll roll that curtain.

WHITED: Can I do it for you?

SCHMIDT: I think have to do it.

WHITED: Here, let me get you unhooked.

SCHMIDT: Oh, yes.

WHITED: Do you want to take a break?

SCHMIDT: [from across the room] No, I don't need one. Just do this little chore here. [Closes vertical blinds.]

WHITED: Okay.

SCHMIDT: That'll last for a little while.

WHITED: Yes, should do. All rightie. I'll wait until you get back.

[Addresses listeners to tape or readers of transcript]: In case you're wondering, we're adjusting the sunlight. [Both chuckle.] [He reconnects Mr. Schmidt's microphone.] There you go.

SCHMIDT: As a step to the next job, I was slated for the forest supervisor job at—what forest was that?

WHITED: We can write it in later. [It was the Bridger National Forest in Kemmerer, Wyoming]

SCHMIDT: I should have made a note of it, but I didn't.

WHITED: Let's see. [Refers to document.] Yes, I got you here to go to Milwaukee.

SCHMIDT: Yes?

WHITED: What followed the R4 job?

SCHMIDT: That was the promotion, GS-14, as a branch chief in the Washington office on lands, land exchange and purchases.

WHITED: Did the supervisor's thing come up before that?

SCHMIDT: Yes. The Washington office had put a stop to it because they wanted me back there.

WHITED: Oh, okay. You would rather have had the—

SCHMIDT: I didn't know at the time.

WHITED: Yes, I guess you wouldn't. Now, what year was that?

SCHMIDT: In 1961.

WHITED: In DC, lands.

SCHMIDT: Yes. I was there in Region Four for a couple of years.

WHITED: Okay. How did you happen to get the lands thing in DC?

SCHMIDT: That's a mystery. I hadn't had but a smattering acquaintance with lands work on my other jobs, but I think—going back to Region Four, we used to attend national timber management meetings, and I met Axel Lindh who was the chief in Region One, so I knew who he was, and I guess he knew who I was. In the meantime, he had become the chief of the division of lands and adjustments in the Washington office. Also George James by that time had become the deputy] assistant in National Forest Protection and Development and—I've forgotten the name of the departments. I could look them up, but...

WHITED: That's all right.

SCHMIDT: Red Nelson was the chief of that, and George James was his assistant, being trained and slotted for regional forester of [region] nine. So he probably had some little finger in getting me back to the Washington office.

WHITED: What year was it that you went there to the Washington office?

SCHMIDT: In '61, June '61. Axel then was the chief of the division. Ed Cliff was the chief at that time. He was easy to get acquainted with. What I liked about him was no matter where he

saw you, he could call you by your first name. When you come in from the field, he'd say, "Hi, Andy" or whatever.

WHITED: Yes, I met him. He's quite a nice guy.

SCHMIDT: Yes.

WHITED: Impressive, though.

SCHMIDT: Yes, he's a big guy.

WHITED: Yes, I'll say. Yes, he came out to the dedication out at the Stream Profile Chamber

SCHMIDT: Oh, he did?

WHITED: Yes, cut the ribbon.

SCHMIDT: Oh. He was instrumental in another dedication.

WHITED: Which one?

SCHMIDT: The Sylvania tract in Region Nine.

WHITED: Oh, no kidding.

SCHMIDT: Yes. That's just by itself.

WHITED: What was that about?

SCHMIDT: Well, after two years in the chief's office, as a branch chief, George James got me transferred to Region Nine as assistant regional forester in the new department of lands, minerals and soils, watershed. So they established that division. Why, I guess I was a candidate as far as he was concerned, so I reported there in June of '63, I guess it was.

WHITED: You went to Milwaukee, then?

SCHMIDT: Yes.

WHITED: In '63.

SCHMIDT: Yes.

WHITED: Okay. How'd you like that assignment? Boy, it sounds like they gave you a lot of different things to deal with.

SCHMIDT: That was a real interesting assignment. My first job when I got there was to get the Sylvania tract, which was about 6,000 acres of primeval north woods up in Upper Michigan, on the Ottawa National Forest. What got us started, of course, was John Wernham, the supervisor of the Ottawa, in which the tract lay, was acquainted with Ted McGowen, who was the executor of the Fisher Body estate, and through his acquaintance, they decided that maybe we could have the government buy the tract for recreation. At that time, it would have taken a special appropriation from Congress to do it, but while that was going on, the Land and Water Act was passed, giving us lots of money to buy land.

WHITED: Yes, right. Now, was that related in any way to Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness, Minnesota?

SCHMIDT: No, separate.

WHITED: But you were involved with Boundary Waters, too.

SCHMIDT: Yes, I had something to do, but not very much. Do you want to stick to Sylvania, or should we...My staff had to do some land appraisals up there to see if we could reach agreement on price. Incidentally, there was a lot of help and public support for the acquisition of Sylvania.

WHITED: How many acres did you say that was?

SCHMIDT: Over 6,000 acres, with forest and lots of lakes, on really prime land. It took us about a year before we got, actually, in total, but—

WHITED: Now, Fisher Body had that?

SCHMIDT: That was in an estate, yes. They had owned it for years and years as a private hunting ground and so on, fishing ground.

WHITED: Private hunting ground.

SCHMIDT: [Laughs.] But there was a lot of public support for public acquisition of it, and the University of Michigan put out a colorful brochure on it, recommending that the tract become public lands. Ken Davis, who used to be in the experiment station at Berkeley, was a prof at University of Michigan, and he ramrodded that brochure out, and that was a real helpful thing.

WHITED: But when you were working to acquire it, what was your advance word on what you were going to do with it?

SCHMIDT: None, other than it was prime recreation land.

WHITED: Were you thinking of wilderness or anything like that?

SCHMIDT: Not at that time.

WHITED: Primarily the motivation was recreation, mostly.

SCHMIDT: Yes.

WHITED: And how long did it take you to—

SCHMIDT: It took us about a year, a year and a half to finally get the deed signed. We had a lot of sessions with Ted McGowen. The other owners were the Christiansen brothers, and I negotiated with them, and finally they decided that if we would threaten condemnation, they would consent, so we got that arranged. And so at the deed signing ceremony up on the Ottawa, the county supervisor in which the Sylvania tract lay was against it, but he was overwhelmed by the other supervisors, and he got mad at the time. In the meantime, as soon as the deeds were in order, the deeds were quickly taken down to the courthouse to be recorded. As soon as he found out, he demanded, "Un-record them." He demanded they be un-recorded.

WHITED: Oh, no.

SCHMIDT: Of course, they couldn't be.

WHITED: That's right.

SCHMIDT: It took a long time afterwards to mollify him, but John Wernham got him kind of straightened out.

WHITED: Now, which forest was that on?

SCHMIDT: The Ottawa. Now, about a year later, after acquisition, they had pretty well come to the conclusion that we ought to keep it as kind of a little wilderness, small wilderness, and—

WHITED: Now, who was that that was involved with that decision?

SCHMIDT: George James and the chief's office, of course. But the dedication of the Sylvania tract was done in the fall of—well, I've forgotten what year it was, but anyway, the secretary of agriculture, Orville Freeman, was there to dedicate it, and Ed Cliff, the chief, and Lady Bird Johnson, and several other bigwigs. But I was in the background. The ceremony was handled by the administration, even the president's office had its hand in protocol and all that sort of thing.

WHITED: Now, the tract is still there.

SCHMIDT: Yes.

WHITED: Does it have any special designation?

SCHMIDT: I don't know what they call it now, but it's the Sylvania Recreation Area.

WHITED: It's got that name.

SCHMIDT: Yes.

WHITED: Primary recreation.

SCHMIDT: Yes.

WHITED: Okay, that's great. Well, now, tell me about the Boundary Waters.

SCHMIDT: One more thing. Orville Freeman was always proud of the Forest Service, and he had a good time at the ceremony. He was in his element. He was a fine man.

WHITED: Yes, yes. I think a lot of people, as far back as I can remember, but especially him, had a strong feeling about the Forest Service.

SCHMIDT: Yes, he was proud of it.

WHITED: Yes. Good operation. Okay, now, was there anything else about—

SCHMIDT: Now do you want to go to the Boundary Waters today?

WHITED: Well, just mention it, yes.

SCHMIDT: At that time, we were trying to acquire all the private land in the Boundary Waters, and there was a fellow—I can't think of his name now, but he owned quite a few tracts up there in the Boundary Waters. He had gotten permission from the Treasury Department to donate partial interest over time, like this year he'd give us a ninth of it or a quarter of it or whatever, until we got full title.

WHITED: Was there any particular reason for that?

SCHMIDT: No, he was all in accord with getting all that private land out of Boundary Waters, and so— [he donated the tracts for tax purposes]

WHITED: What was the designation you were working toward?

SCHMIDT: It was already the Boundary Waters Canoe Area.

WHITED: Yes, but I mean was it a wilderness?

SCHMIDT: It was the only Boundary Waters canoe area in the United States.

WHITED: You had to go by all of the wilderness regulations.

SCHMIDT: Yes, it was passed by Congress.

WHITED: Anything else on that, now, before we...

SCHMIDT: Yes, there was one other thing. During my time there in Milwaukee, McCormack, who was head of the McCormack-Deering, donated—

WHITED: Yes, big name, yes.

SCHMIDT: —was interested in the experiment station work.

WHITED: Forest products, you mean?

SCHMIDT: Well, experiments on lands there. And he had almost an identical tract, about 6,000 acres, of cut-over lands up there, just north of the Sylvania. So I got involved in getting a deed straightened out (including an appraisal of the tract for tax purposes).

WHITED: That was McCormack. Was it a comparable piece of land?

SCHMIDT: Yes, except it was cut-over. It had lakes and second-growth.

WHITED: Come back to the Boundary Waters Canoe Area.

SCHMIDT: Yes.

WHITED: I've never been there, but it sounds terrific.

SCHMIDT: It's a real experience.

WHITED: Did you get in there much, yourself?

SCHMIDT: I had a canoe trip with the staff one time.

WHITED: To see the whole thing.

SCHMIDT: Yes. That was the only wilderness area that allowed logging.

WHITED: Oh, is that right?

SCHMIDT: Yes. That was an exception, I guess, in the act that they could cut timber in a certain section of it.

WHITED: But overseen by the Forest Service.

SCHMIDT: Oh, yes, mm-hm.

WHITED: Did you ever have anything to do with the forest products land over there?

SCHMIDT: No, no.

WHITED: It always sounded to me like a very interesting place.

SCHMIDT: Unfortunately, I never did go over there to go through it.

WHITED: I guess it's still operating.

SCHMIDT: Oh, yes.

WHITED: Boundary Waters is still going.

SCHMIDT: Yes. Sylvania is still going. I don't know what has happened to the McCormack tract. They wanted to have the experiment station do some experimental work on it, and they may have taken it over as an experimental forest.

WHITED: Well, could be.

SCHMIDT: It's logical.

WHITED: Yes. Okay. Anything else on R4?

SCHMIDT: That's R9.

WHITED: R9 I mean, yes, right.

SCHMIDT: Yes, I was blessed with a good staff, so I had experts in watershed and experts in minerals, and those, of course, are my weak ones.

WHITED: [Laughs.] It sounds like you had everything but the kitchen sink to do there.

SCHMIDT: Yes, they even had multiple use at the time. It wasn't much of a program going on in Region Nine, and I was never able to get it off its ground.

WHITED: How'd you like Milwaukee?

SCHMIDT: It was interesting. We lived in a little town called Thiensville [pronounces it Thanesville], north of Milwaukee. We commuted into—

WHITED: How long a commute was it, about?

SCHMIDT: Oh, about a half-hour drive.

WHITED: Heavy traffic?

SCHMIDT: Oh, yes. [Laughs.]

WHITED: Yes, that would be—let's see, you were there in '67, right?

SCHMIDT: No, I was there from '63 to 1970. I was there seven years.

WHITED: Right. Okay. Anything more about R9?

SCHMIDT: Yes, we had a big program of land acquisition while I was there, two to three million a year in land and water funds.

WHITED: How much?

SCHMIDT: Two and three million dollars. And we were instrumental in getting the Eleven Point River [Missouri] designated as a wild river.

WHITED: Did they ever do anything about Peshtigo [Wisconsin], that big fire [of 1871]?

SCHMIDT: No, by that time most of the evidence of that was long gone by re-growth.

WHITED: The impression I had was that it had a lot to do with the formation of the Forest Service.

SCHMIDT: I think it did, yes.

WHITED: It was such a disaster.

SCHMIDT: That's about the biggest fire and the most disastrous fire—

WHITED: It killed a lot of people. Tremendous.

All rightie, anything else for Milwaukee?

SCHMIDT: Oh, we were busy getting pieces of excess federal properties and getting them transferred to the Forest Service, several instances of that, lighthouses and whatnot.

WHITED: Oh, good! Yes, that's right, on the lakes.

SCHMIDT: Yes.

WHITED: Very good. How long did that run? You were there to '70.

SCHMIDT: Mm-hm.

WHITED: What happened then?

SCHMIDT: In 1970—well, I had just gotten my promotion to a GS-15 while I was there, at the end of '69, and about February of 1970, George James got a telephone call from Region Five, wanting to know if I'd be interested in heading up the planning team at Lake Tahoe [California and Nevada]. Yes, I was interested because I was planning to retire in the next three years, and the assignment would last about that long, so I got a free ride of transportation for household goods and everything to out West. But I gave up a -15 and took a -14.

WHITED: Oh, okay. I didn't know that.

SCHMIDT: Yes, I voluntarily—

WHITED: Same pay, though?

SCHMIDT: Same pay. So I reported in June of 1970 to the lake. In the meantime, I'd had a couple of trips out to attend the opening of the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency in March of 1970. I came out to attend that.

WHITED: Yes, we opened the Stream Profile Chamber in '69.

SCHMIDT: Oh, they did?

WHITED: Yes, the chief came out and cut the ribbon for us. Then I went down here to the supervisor's office. That's when this whole thing of—you know, the Lake Valley District was no more, and the LTBM, Lake Tahoe Basin Management unit—

SCHMIDT: Yes. Well, there was still a ranger district while I was there.

WHITED: Oh, is that right?

SCHMIDT: Yes.

WHITED: I always thought it was considered a forest.

SCHMIDT: Well, it is, but that happened in 1973, and I retired almost immediately thereafter.

WHITED: All right, so it was still considered a district while you were there. It was still the Lake Valley District.

SCHMIDT: Yes, but then Tahoe had a district, and so did the Toyabe.

WHITED: That's right, three of them. Now, George James was instrumental in your being offered that position?

SCHMIDT: I wouldn't know. Of course, Irwin Bosworth was supervisor here, and some of my buddies when I was still here in Region Five—Hank Branagh.

WHITED: Yes, that's right. Quite a group.

SCHMIDT: Eddie Maw on the Toiyabe while I was here in the Eldorado. They apparently decided they wanted me, and I don't know why.

WHITED: You had a world of experience.

SCHMIDT: Well, I don't know just what struck them.

WHITED: I think the Milwaukee experience might have been important.

SCHMIDT: It may have been, and it may have been suggested by somebody in the chief's office or something like that.

WHITED: Yes. Well, in California. That's your home state, yes. Okay. Well, you liked the idea.

SCHMIDT: Yes. Barbara, especially.

WHITED: I'll bet.

SCHMIDT: [Laughs.] We considered that the last move.

WHITED: You could do a little planning.

SCHMIDT: Yes.

WHITED: That's great. Okay. Well, do you want to take a break?

SCHMIDT: Yes, let's take a break.

[End CD 5b. Begin CD 6.]

WHITED: We're in business. We're recording again, I hope. And here you are, at Lake Tahoe.

SCHMIDT: Mm-hm.

WHITED: What'd you guys do for living quarters?

SCHMIDT: We bought a house.

WHITED: Whereabouts?

SCHMIDT: Arizona Avenue there, just off of—oh, that Venice type—

WHITED: Oh, yes, okay.

SCHMIDT: I can't think of the name. I'm having a bad time today.

WHITED: Yes, I am, too. I know the very place you mean, right down there, where they have boat access and a whole bunch of stuff. [Tahoe Keys]

SCHMIDT: Yes.

WHITED: Okay, well, that was fairly close in, then.

SCHMIDT: Yes.

WHITED: When you arrived, what was the mandate?

SCHMIDT: The mandate of the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency was to make a land-use plan there in the eighteen months, by act of Congress. The planning team was supposed to help, as much as it could, the agency get started with planning and whatnot, in any way we could.

WHITED: What was their primary objective?

SCHMIDT: To get control of the land development up there.

WHITED: In other words—

SCHMIDT: To save the lake.

WHITED: More or less.

SCHMIDT: Yes.

WHITED: Do you remember what the logic was of essentially cutting loose from the Eldorado National Forest, becoming a separate unit?

SCHMIDT: Towards the end of things, after the team was disbanded and it became a unit, the thought was that it needed a unit for management, single unit, not subject to three different forests with different policies and whatnot.

WHITED: How many forests abutted on the lake?

SCHMIDT: Three.

WHITED: Which ones?

SCHMIDT: The Eldorado and Tahoe and the Toiyabe in Region Four.

WHITED: What kind of form did the plan finally take?

SCHMIDT: Going back, when I first found out I was going to get the assignment as a team leader, I had made up my mind that I wanted to base land-use planning on physical formations and land capabilities and stuff like that, so the three assistants—well, actually two at the time—

were Harry Siebert, our engineer, and Bob Rice, the district ranger. I needed a man that had knowledge of landforms, geomorphic landforms. He was the one that really put the underpinning on the land-use plan of the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency. Bob Bailey was his name. He was a geomorphologist.

WHITED: Where did he come from?

SCHMIDT: Region Four.

WHITED: He was a Forest Service person.

SCHMIDT: And he had done some land classification work in Region Four, on landslides and whatnot.

WHITED: Did your photo interp come into play at all in this?

SCHMIDT: Oh, it came in in a lot of ways.

WHITED: I mean, it was useful to you when you were reading—

SCHMIDT: Oh, yes. All my experience kind of related to the next step.

WHITED: How long did this process go?

SCHMIDT: Going back in history—I don't know how much detail you want out of this—the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency was formed in 1970, but unfortunately they didn't give it any staff or any money, so it fell to the Forest Service to do most of the land planning. We didn't make the plan, but we furnished the basics for it.

WHITED: How many people were on that TRPA [which he pronounces TER-puh]?

SCHMIDT: If I remember correctly, it was ten.

WHITED: You were one of them?

SCHMIDT: No. No, no, I was never a member. Each county had a representative. There were five of them, three from Nevada and two from California. [Note: City of South Lake Tahoe had

a representative. The resource chiefs of the two states were members, so that's two more. And then they had a state representative, too, each state, so it was about ten or eleven. I think maybe eleven, with the presidential appointee.

WHITED: What was their standing, the agency?

SCHMIDT: They were legalized by an act of Congress.

WHITED: Were they salaried?

SCHMIDT: They were paid, I guess, but I never knew how much.

WHITED: From their own outfits.

SCHMIDT: Yes, but the staff, of course, was paid.

WHITED: What was your standing? Now, you weren't the district ranger.

SCHMIDT: No.

WHITED: What was your position?

SCHMIDT: I was a team leader. I was the assistant to the presidential appointee.

WHITED: Who was?

SCHMIDT: Who was—oh—[pause].

WHITED: But he was appointed directly by the president.

SCHMIDT: That's right.

WHITED: We can put him in later. It's no problem.

SCHMIDT: I'm having trouble remembering things.

WHITED: You and me both. Okay, so you were the team leader—

SCHMIDT: It was Jack Deinema.

WHITED: Yes, okay, right, yes. He was Regional Forester.

SCHMIDT: I was his representative out there, and I was also the coordinator between the three forest supervisors.

WHITED: Two states, too.

SCHMIDT: And the two states, two regions.

WHITED: Now, a lot of this, you put into a publication, didn't you?

SCHMIDT: I wrote the history of the Forest Service's involvement.

WHITED: Do you mind if I just read the title into this?

SCHMIDT: Sure, go ahead.

WHITED: This is a publication entitled *The Role of the United States Forest Service and Other Federal Agencies in the Lake Tahoe Region*. It's a publication dated June 1979 [Interviewee note: This should be 1981 (1979 was time of the original draft but I updated to 1981 ?)], and over all I guess is about how many pages?

SCHMIDT: About a little over a hundred pages.

WHITED: It pretty much spells out the whole process.

SCHMIDT: Yes, and the whole history of the thing.

WHITED: Yes. So we'll just make a note of that, that this is available. Now, where are copies of this available?

SCHMIDT: I understand from Doug that the region is going to actually publish the thing. When I did it, the intent was to publish it and to put maps and pictures and everything else into it. I don't know what their plans are now, but it got caught in the edict of President [Ronald] Reagan that prohibited federal agencies from putting out a lot of pamphlets and stuff.

WHITED: The Paperwork Reduction Act or whatever they called it?

SCHMIDT: Yes.

WHITED: But if you wanted to get copies of this, could people still go to the regional office?

SCHMIDT: I don't know just where it stands, frankly. It has been in a standstill situation since 1980.

WHITED: It really spells out the whole process that you went through over the period—what was it?—three years?

SCHMIDT: Yes.

WHITED: Yes. Okay. Well, the regional office must have a copy, right?

SCHMIDT: I'm sure they have, but I don't know if they know where it is.

WHITED: But you have a copy.

SCHMIDT: I've got a copy.

WHITED: I'm holding a copy here in my hand, yes. Where did this come from, this copy?

SCHMIDT: The study was set to type. They had gotten that far.

WHITED: Who did it, the regional office?

SCHMIDT: The regional office. And so I got a hold of a copy of that, editing and so on.

WHITED: Okay. And so if they're strapped for a copy, you have a copy.

SCHMIDT: Yes. I understand and I know where it stands now, but I understand the printing plates were sent to the Basin [Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit] and I understand that the Basin has them, but whether they—

WHITED: Someplace.

SCHMIDT: Yes, but whether they know that or not, I don't know. It's probably buried someplace. Or thrown away. [Laughter.]

WHITED: It was quite a process. I should think it would be important to have the record someplace where people could get their hands on it and follow the process because it was

apparently very good. If you really need the detail on this, it's the place where people could go, but could you kind of summarize essentially the process?

SCHMIDT: Yes. It boiled down to the fact that after about six months on the job, we decided that we were going to be the ones that had to do the work, so—

WHITED: You mean the team.

SCHMIDT: Yes. So we devised a bunch of committees. They were volunteer committees, people that wanted to serve and get their hand in on the thing. People from the state and federal agencies were serving on those. That was to get everybody involved, and they did a good job. They didn't come up with anything specific that helped the agency get established, but it was enough to get interest going along. While we were doing our work, Bob Bailey was drafting a schematic map of land capability.

WHITED: Within the boundary.

SCHMIDT: Within the boundaries of the lake.

WHITED: What did you set as the boundary?

SCHMIDT: The watershed.

WHITED: The crest, more or less.

SCHMIDT: Yes.

WHITED: What is the relationship of the bi-state compact? Is that a separate entity?

SCHMIDT: There was a bi-state compact between the states, but it had to be ratified by Congress.

WHITED: Did you have a hand in that?

SCHMIDT: No, that was all done before my time.

WHITED: But your group, the planning team, is plowing ahead on the plan.

SCHMIDT: Yes, right.

WHITED: Is the plan a thing we can get our hands on?

SCHMIDT: I don't have a copy of their latest plan, but they had trouble getting a plan adopted.

Going back just a little bit, land classification was a new idea in land-use planning. That was kind of based on some work done by Ian McHarg in Minnesota.

WHITED: The planner, yes.

SCHMIDT: Yes. That helped eliminate a lot of land from any thought of development because it was just too steep and rugged and would cause erosion, but on top of that, there was some land that could be developed, but they had to put some limits on those, too. So we came up with a classification or a system of impervious surface limitations. Between the two of them, land classification and impervious surfaces, the land plans of the agency got a handle on slowing down development and stopping a lot of it.

WHITED: But the plan that you folks finally finished or came up with was a thing you could hold in your hand.

SCHMIDT: That was after my time. See, we were instructed to give assistance to the regional agency, and we devoted most of our time to that, but we were also doing some groundwork on a Forest Service plan for the basin.

WHITED: That's right, you have the two sides to deal with, yes.

SCHMIDT: Yes. Going back in the history of things, the original land-use plan by the executive officer of the regional agency, J. K. Smith—all he had was the land classification map and a little bit of writing.

WHITED: Now, this was TRPA?

SCHMIDT: TRPA, yes. And at that meeting for the adoption of the plan, all hell broke loose, of course.

WHITED: Where was that meeting?

SCHMIDT: At South Lake Tahoe, next to Harvey's up there.

WHITED: One of the estates?

SCHMIDT: No, no.

WHITED: Oh, next to Harrah's. Yes, okay.

SCHMIDT: Really the next one up from the street from Harvey's. I can't think of the name of it.

WHITED: No, I can't, either.

SCHMIDT: I think it's had its name changed several times.

WHITED: Yes. They're all changed up there now, yes. Whose approval were they trying to get?

SCHMIDT: The governing body of the agency. They turned thumbs down on the whole thing.

WHITED: No kidding.

SCHMIDT: Yes. Except—I've forgotten—well, one of the agency members said we have to have something. He said, "We designate that map on that wall as our plan" to meet the requirements of the act, but then they had to go back down and get the thing...They fired the executive officer of the regional planning agency, and a planner by the name of Dick Heikka from Placer County took over, and he recognized the value of land classification and impervious surface systems, so he incorporated those into his plan, and he fluffed out all the guts of a land-use plan, where development could be and what kind of development and that kind of stuff.

WHITED: Was your team involved with that?

SCHMIDT: No, we let agency do that, although Heikka had a session with us to show us what he planned, and we thought it was okay, not that we had power of approval.

WHITED: Well, he knew you had been working on the whole thing.

SCHMIDT: He needed support, I presume.

WHITED: So your team was primarily interested in the forest planning, as it were.

SCHMIDT: That was the ultimate job.

WHITED: But Heikka would be very interested in that, I should think.

SCHMIDT: Well, I think so.

WHITED: Yes, it would be pertinent.

SCHMIDT: He was all for the government to acquire all the land they could, get it off development.

WHITED: When did you consider your part of the work accomplished?

SCHMIDT: Pretty much after Heikka took over, but we were still there to lend a hand, but we started our system of the land-use planning, and we prepared a plan, Forest Service plan for the basin, and we had hearings on it at the Lake, at Reno, and Sacramento-Oakland and Los Angeles.

WHITED: Boy.

SCHMIDT: It was so-called listening sessions. By the time we got all through that rigmarole, the land-use plan for the Forest Service had pretty good acceptance by people that had reviewed it: the environmentalists and the other people.

WHITED: A lot of that would be in this publication.

SCHMIDT: It's all in there.

WHITED: The Forest Service role, *The Role of the United States Forest Service and other Federal Agencies in the Lake Tahoe Region*... Yes, that would have most of that in here.

SCHMIDT: Yes.

WHITED: In the detail. So you felt pretty good when you got all done.

SCHMIDT: Yes. But before they approved our plan up there, the Forest Service decided to change gears on how to make plans, region plans and forest plans and area plans and all this sort of thing, so that became a bastard plan.

WHITED: A what?

SCHMIDT: A bastard plan.

WHITED: Oh, okay.

SCHMIDT: It was neither a forest plan nor a unit plan.

WHITED: You say it became a unit after you left?

SCHMIDT: While I was there. I was the first administrator.

WHITED: LTMBU [Lake Tahoe Management Basin Unit], yes.

SCHMIDT: In March, but I retired in July.

WHITED: March, April, May, June, July, right.

SCHMIDT: Of 1973.

WHITED: Well, okay, but you must have seen things going pretty well.

SCHMIDT: Oh, yes. I didn't want to be involved in running the unit as a ranger district, so to speak.

WHITED: What happened there? I was down here when we made the recommendation that it be a separate unit. Bosworth was involved with that, and I think it was basically his idea.

SCHMIDT: They had people from the Washington office and the regional office come up and make a study of the unit and decide what the best way to organize it.

WHITED: Weren't you impressed with the way the Forest Service took this job on?

SCHMIDT: Well, yes, but they were the only agency that really had the expertise to do it.

WHITED: Yes. But, I mean, the thing that impressed me was that we were able to have a vision about all kinds of land management, and this was a very specific problem.

SCHMIDT: Yes, that was to get the handle on control—to save the lake.

WHITED: But, I mean, that they would say, “This is a special management problem.” Of course, we’ve been doing that with wilderness, too, for a long time.

SCHMIDT: We do a lot of planning in various forms.

WHITED: I think a lot of people don’t realize, like, what’s in there.

SCHMIDT: Like planning a timber sale and so on. Planning is kind of built into the Forest Service.

WHITED: Yes. But the Forest Service has a broader view of the forest as a whole, I think, than most people understand.

SCHMIDT: Oh, yes. Well, no other agency has land management responsibility of this kind except the National Park Service.

WHITED: Yes. Even their mandate is narrower than what the Forest Service does. Okay. Well, you felt pretty good about it, though.

SCHMIDT: That was my most interesting assignment.

WHITED: Of all?

SCHMIDT: Of all.

WHITED: The whole career.

SCHMIDT: I liked all of them, but I particularly liked the assignment at the lake because it gave me freedom of thought and action, so to speak. I had no manual to go by or anything else.

WHITED: Yes, that’s right.

SCHMIDT: So I had a lot of my own thoughts involved in it.

WHITED: I think you were the right person at the right time, because of your background in land planning.

SCHMIDT: It helped.

WHITED: It was pretty broad, compared with most people.

SCHMIDT: Yes, I had several assignments.

WHITED: Yes. That's terrific. Now, is there anything else you wanted to mention from that?

SCHMIDT: No. Let's see. [Refers to documents.] I could write a book on it, so...

WHITED: [Laughs.]

SCHMIDT: It's enough for this purpose, I think.

WHITED: Was there anything that you particularly wanted to point out to anybody who may be reading our transcript?

SCHMIDT: No, I think to make use of any assignment is a learning and doing program.

WHITED: Okay. Well, how do you feel we are as far as what we've been trying to do here?

Do you think we're finished?

SCHMIDT: Yes, you're finished with me, I guess. [Laughter.]

WHITED: Well, I'm finished, period, yes.

SCHMIDT: [Laughs.]

WHITED: But, you know, since I had worked up there and you came along while I was still here on the forest, I thought, *Well, I ought to be the one to do this*, with you. And I must say, it's really terrific. Did you have anything? They listed five items here that they were kind of interested in getting some reaction on. Do you feel that there are any particular positions on fire

management, for instance, that you would like to make a point of, comparing the old to the new or whatever?

SCHMIDT: I'm not acquainted with the new. I did a lot of plan chief's work on the Shasta, but I got out of contact with fire when I left the region.

WHITED: Various ideas have come along, but I think the basic approach is still there.

SCHMIDT: I sure don't like this business of letting a forest burn.

WHITED: No, the let-burn, no. That's what I mean, yes.

SCHMIDT: The fact that we have a fire season and it's usually a bad one, bad conditions for fire, and unless you've got level-headed people, which we don't seem to have much of any more, they take the word from somebody that you should let the fires burn, not thinking in terms of what damage it'll do if it gets away. Like, some of these [lake?] fires. They let it go for too long, and then they got in the big campaign fires, doing a lot of damage.

WHITED: How about the Forest Service and our contact with the public? The public's perception of the Forest Service.

SCHMIDT: The perception of the Forest Service has been damaged by the environmental groups, like Sierra Club and the wildlife organization and Wilderness Society. They did a butcher job on the Forest Service by their campaigns, some of them half-lies and lies and distortions and whatnot.

WHITED: Do you have any thoughts about why they do that?

SCHMIDT: They were taken over by what I call extreme environmentalists, who got so embedded in the idea of "let nature do the job," and so fire was part of nature, and they didn't like any human activity in the forest other than recreation, wilderness and whatnot.

WHITED: Yes, it's really [cross-talk; unintelligible].

SCHMIDT: They were against timber harvesting, which was the reason the Forest Service was created in the first place, and they got the public so brainwashed that they were successful in their campaign of legal work on...

WHITED: Litigation.

SCHMIDT: Litigation, yes.

WHITED: Have you got any thoughts about what the Forest Service could do to straighten that out?

SCHMIDT: I think the tide is changing a little bit. There are more people coming to realize that nature is destructive as a way of doing business and that it needs help from mankind to manage the forests, putting out fires, of course, and growing timber and creating recreational opportunities and that kind of stuff. The lock-up of the environmentalists—I think it's fading.

WHITED: Well, I hope.

SCHMIDT: I hope so. I have my fingers crossed, of course.

WHITED: Yes, I always—it's not my tape, but I always was very impressed with the whole sustainable yield and that healthy forest approach.

SCHMIDT: Yes.

WHITED: I just think it was all there, and I hate to see it disappearing.

SCHMIDT: Going back a little bit in time, I was disappointed when the Forest Service took on clear-cutting as a standard practice. I thought it was an error, but I was in no position to do anything about it by that time, and the public didn't like it. Without the public support of clear-cutting, we lost a lot more than just timber management. We lost a lot of good will.

WHITED: It's less visible, yes.

SCHMIDT: We have to regain it.

WHITED: Yes. Well, we need a strong VIS [Visitor Information Service]. [Laughs.]

SCHMIDT: That's right. This idea of just because they sue us, we fall over backwards to accommodate them, I think ought to be put a stop to. I think we ought to fight these cases in court.

WHITED: Exactly, yes. Yes, I was always badly impressed with some of the legal eagles wanting to back off a fight.

SCHMIDT: Yes, they didn't want to fight.

WHITED: It's easier to accommodate.

SCHMIDT: They thought they'd be losing anyhow, so they just gave up, so to speak.

WHITED: Okay. Well, what do you see for the future?

SCHMIDT: I don't like to get into politics, because I'm not a Republican.

WHITED: [Laughs.]

SCHMIDT: But I think in some ways, President—my mind is blank.

WHITED: [George W.] Bush.

SCHMIDT: Bush is on the right track with this business of thinning stands to protect the environment.

WHITED: Well, I hope so.

SCHMIDT: Well, it's a step.

WHITED: It's right there in front of us, especially down in L.A.

SCHMIDT: Yes. And I think the public is beginning to see the light of what happened down there in L.A. country and in some of the other...The locals, of course, understand better about salvage and timber management and that kind of stuff. Need to be more vociferous, I guess.

WHITED: I hope so. It's hard to get people interested. I mean, they're interested, but I mean...

SCHMIDT: I think they need leadership.

WHITED: Yes. A little television would help, too, do it right. Okay, anything else you want to throw into the pot, Andy, before we wrap up?

SCHMIDT: No. You can always come back and fill in if you want to.

WHITED: Okay. No, it's been immensely interesting for me.

SCHMIDT: If you're interested in reading this thing—

WHITED: I'd like to, yes.

SCHMIDT: It'll take you several days. [Laughs.]

WHITED: Yes, I'd really like to see it because I never was able to follow the whole operation, and I'd like to see what—

SCHMIDT: I'll let you have it for a couple of weeks or so.

WHITED: I'll guard it with my life.

SCHMIDT: That's it. [Laughter.]

WHITED: Since it may be the only copy.

SCHMIDT: Oh, by the way, in doing this, I made interviews of Ivan Sack, the supervisor of the Toyabe in Reno, and Ray Knisley up at the lake, and J. Alan Bray, who was the chairman of TRPA.

WHITED: Yes, I remember him. Yes, he came out to our stream profile dedication. That was a lot of fun, that whole thing.

SCHMIDT: Yes.

WHITED: They still got it up there, you know. It's still in good shape.

SCHMIDT: Oh, yes, I've been through it several times. I haven't been there in recent years, but I used to go up quite often.

WHITED: Kids love it. It's a good [unintelligible]. And the trail down there is nice.

SCHMIDT: Yes. They've been doing a good job.

WHITED: Oh, yes. No, I always feel if the leadership gets in there that the Forest Service people are ready to do the job.

SCHMIDT: What we have to do is get public understanding. The Society of American Foresters, have a program to educate the schoolteachers—

WHITED: Absolutely.

SCHMIDT: And I think it's through that channel, when the educators understand what the problem is, they'll teach it to their kids and others.

WHITED: As a matter of fact, each forest really needs to contact their [sic its] local schools and offer regular assistance, bring it into the classroom.

SCHMIDT: I know of a couple of instances where the teacher had reversed his or her position on timber cutting and so on and so forth after attending these sessions with the Society of American Foresters. That's an ongoing program that can be utilized.

WHITED: I got some copies of the National Association of Forest Service Retirees from Doug. It was a special issue, all about the southern forests: San Bernardino and the Angeles. This was before the big fires, and it rang the alarm bell. It said, "Look, we got problems down here." Not just fire.

SCHMIDT: I don't know whether you're a member of the National Association of Forest Service Retirees.

WHITED: Yes. I don't know if I'm national. I'm with the—you know, the ex—

SCHMIDT: This a group of retirees. Doug is head of it. They have put out publications that have been well received by the congressmen and on out the line.

WHITED: See, it's really a complex subject. The average citizen does not really grasp the nuances of forest management.

SCHMIDT: The National Association of Forest Service Retirees put out a publication on getting the knowledge straightened out as to how you have to manage a forest for fire protection and—

WHITED: Absolutely.

SCHMIDT: They pointed out the danger of that happening down there in L.A.

WHITED: Oh, absolutely.

SCHMIDT: They predicted it, in a sense.

WHITED: Any good gardener will tell you: You got to thin.

SCHMIDT: Yes.

WHITED: Well, all right.

SCHMIDT: Thank you.

WHITED: Thank you very much.

SCHMIDT: I guess I better unhook myself.

WHITED: Yes. This was an important thing to get you on tape here, and I do appreciate your taking the time, and we'll see what kind of reaction we get from the RO. [Laughter.]

SCHMIDT: I wish I wasn't so darned tongue-tied today.

WHITED: You're not. When you were trying to remember details, like we were trying to, it's nothing. Okay. I'm going to click off now. That's the end of it.

[End of interview.]