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Forest Service
Region Five History Project

Interview with:	**Lawrence and Carol Whitfield**
Interviewed by:	**Steve Fitch**
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Transcribed by:	**Christine Sinnott; August 31. 2004**
Corrected by:	**Whitfield**

[Begin .wav file I.]

STEVE FITCH: We're in the home of Lawrence and Carol Whitfield. My name is Steve Fitch and I will be conducting an interview this morning with Larry and Carol. Larry prefers to be called Whit. We're in Redding, California. It's August 28th of 2004.

Well, first of all, Whit, I'd like you to tell me about your roots and your family, where you were born and where you came from and those kinds of things.

LAWRENCE WHITFIELD: Okay. I was born in 1926 in Portland, Oregon. I lived there for a few years and my early recollections were after we moved to Vancouver, Washington. This would have been about the time the Depression started, around 1929. My father at that time was a salesman who sold equipment and supplies to undertakers. He had been an undertaker. About 1935 we moved to McMinnville, Oregon, a town of about 3000 in northwestern Oregon. My father was an undertaker there until he retired in the early 50's. I went to grammar school there starting in the third grade, and that's where I first met Carol. I left high school early during World War II to go in the service. It was a little different circumstance in those days. Going in the service was a fairly common practice. I served for two and a half years. Right after the war ended I was home on leave, and had occasion to meet Carol again and get reacquainted, that kind of started our relationship. I was discharged in July 1946. I started school at Linfield College in McMinnville the fall of 1946 as a pre-forestry major. I had worked one summer during high school on a fire crew and that got me interested in forestry. Until the war I didn't know that there was such a thing as forestry schools. A fellow I met on the ship coming back from overseas had gone to Oregon State College (now University), and coming back he said, "Well, if you're interested in that you should look into this."

While still in the service, I contacted the Forest Service and they gave me the same advice. If you wanted to work for them, you'd better get a college education. I attended one year at Linfield and then transferred to Oregon State College. Carol and I were married in 1947. She worked on campus in the Registrar's Office. I went to school under the G.I. Bill. I worked two summers during college for the State of Oregon in fire, one as a forest guard and the second year as a fire crew foreman at Dallas, Oregon.

After graduation we moved to Weaverville California. I got a job as GS4 fire control aide. I had, during school, gotten on the register as a GS4. At that time there were very few hires for foresters in the Forest Service. I worked one year there as a forest guard and then as a hotshot crew foreman, with various jobs that winter, wherever they were able to keep me employed. The next spring I was called back in the Marine Corps to Camp Pendleton in Southern California. I was there about a year. I wasn't sent to Korea, I had gone overseas in World War II.

In 1952, discharged from the service, I was assigned to Harrison Gulch, Platina, CA in the Trinity Natl. Forest. I'm not sure exactly what my job title was. I started out as a GS4, I guess as a fire control aide, but I worked quite a bit in timber, and I was promoted and classified as a forester. I worked there about a year, and in the spring of '53 I moved to Hayfork as a GS6 timber management assistant. Primarily I worked on the Wildwood timber sale. In the winter we pruned trees, and cruised timber. In those days everybody fought fires, so that was part of your job, and you were very conscious of your red card rating, the number of fires you fought and your job title.

I worked at Hayfork for a year and a half, then moved to Trinity Center. I was a timber assistant there and later my job title was changed to assistant ranger. We were there for two years. In the meantime our daughter was born in 1952 and a son born in 1954, both born in Weaverville. We moved from Trinity Center to Big Bar about March 1957. I worked there as a GS9 assistant ranger, primarily in timber. In January 1958 we moved to the Sierra where I was ranger on the Bass Lake district. I was there for three and a half years, then moved to Fresno where I was forest staff for fire, recreation, and lands. Later the fire job was split off and I was the staff officer for recreation and lands. I became the deputy supervisor when that job was created. In July 1964 I moved to the Sequoia as forest supervisor. In 1968 I transferred to the Washington office as assistant director of lands, responsible for purchases, exchanges and donations. In '70 or early '71 I became director of legislative affairs. During the period I worked as staff and deputy on the Sierra and one year as Sequoia supervisor I attended night law school in Fresno. I think that is the reason I later became the director of legislative affairs. I practiced law briefly while living in Porterville, but then became an inactive member of the California bar.

In the summer of 1972 we moved from Washington DC to Missoula, Montana, where I was deputy regional forester. Our son had just finished high school and he started at the

University of Montana that fall. Our daughter was attending Virginia Tech and she transferred to U of M as well. Both graduated there, our daughter in political science and our son in forestry.

In January 1977 I became regional forester in region 8. We were in Atlanta until I retired the end of December 1981. We moved to Redding CA and I worked as a consultant for the Southern Pacific Land Co, doing some legal work and working with them on their land exchange program with the Forest Service. I set up a sole practice of law in 1984, retiring again in 1999.

FITCH: Well, that's a good place for us to pause for a minute.

[End.wav File I. Begin.wav File II.]

FITCH: Okay, let's go back to those early years, and I want to ask Carol how you ended up with this fellow, Whit.

CAROL WHITFIELD: We met in the third grade at Columbus School in McMinnville, Oregon. We knew each other then for years and years, and began dating after high school

FITCH: Anything special about him that attracted you to him?

CAROL: I have learned that he is a very intelligent man, and of course that was my good luck. I did not realize early on that he was smarter than I was. It has been a wonderful life with him. I am very happy I married him.

FITCH: That's great. Well, Whit, you had a number of summer jobs, and I'm kind of interested in how those summer jobs evolved into directing you towards the Forest Service and not the state of Oregon, for instance.

LAWRENCE WHITFIELD: I had two summer jobs with the state. One was a typical forest guard job. I worked alone at a guard station built by the CCs. The second year I worked for them as a crew foreman out of Dallas, Oregon, which was their district headquarters. And in that process--and of course at that time jobs were hard to come by, and I would have taken a job anywhere I could get it--but I was acquainted with a lot of people that worked for the Forest Service. I think that one of the things that attracted me to the Forest Service is that it managed forest lands. The state was primarily interested in fire protection. So I was interested in seeing if I could use more of my education with the Forest Service than I might be able to do with the state. During college I got on the list as a GS4 fire control aide, and used that to get a permanent appointment. I started with the USFS in April 1950 in what was a seasonal job, as a fire control aide. I worked first for the forest engineer on a road survey at Wildwood. Then I went to work in Junction City, which was a fire guard station. Later that summer I was a fire hot shot crew foreman.

FITCH: Your first assignment was at Weaverville?

WHITFIELD: I worked a Weaverville for a short time, and then I worked for the forest engineer while I was waiting for fire funding, fire season. And my very first job was repairing the toilet facilities. We lived in a World War II trailer house. That trailer had a sink but it didn't have any other facilities. It was parked next to a CC shower and toilet building. This was a three-room job. The center room had benches and hooks for clothes, with a fifty-gallon barrel stove with coils in it to heat the shower water. The other room had toilets, and the third was the shower facility. We would start the fire to heat the water, and sit there on the benches, often reading, waiting to take a shower in this huge room with eight or ten shower heads in it. Of course, we used the toilet facilities.

FITCH: That was your first home in the Forest Service, Carol?

CAROL WHITFIELD: Yes.

FITCH: How did you like that?

CAROL WHITFIELD: I was not pleased, but you know, that's the way it was, so that's where we lived, and we looked forward to something better as soon as possible. That came in the form of the guard station in Junction City.

FITCH: Tell us about that.

CAROL WHITFIELD: That was interesting. Of course, in every FS place we have lived, I made curtains for every window in the house, so that was my first chore. The interesting thing about that location is that the water pipes came from a small stream across the Trinity river, under the bridge, then above ground to the station.

WHITFIELD: The guard station was built on mined-over country, so we were sitting on bedrock.

CAROL WHITFIELD: To shower in the summertime, there was no need to heat the water. In the winter, we had to use a butane sidearm heater. The problem there is that you must remember to turn it off or you could have boiling water. It was something new to me. I learned a lot.

WHITFIELD: That was an old CCC building. It had three rooms.

CAROL WHITFIELD: Yes, three rooms, one after the other. Kitchen, bedroom and living room.

FITCH: So your first two homes were basically barracks.

CAROL WHITFIELD: True. Our home at Harrison Gulch, (Platina) was also a barracks. The first house we lived in was in Hayfork. That was very exciting. Two bedrooms, a kitchen and living room, with a huge garden that Schlapfers had planted. We inherited the house and the garden.

FITCH: This is Ted Schlapfer?

CAROL WHITFIELD: Yes. The Schlapfers were transferred to the Klamath.

LAWRENCE WHITFIELD: Actually we did have another house, if you recall. We lived in what was called the office at Weaverville when I was a crew foreman, one room and a bathroom. The main room had a cooking stove and a large kitchen sink but no water. The sink came from the old CC mess hall, but was never plumbed.

FITCH: Carol, you were in some remote locations. What's the farthest that you had to drive for groceries?

CAROL WHITFIELD: Possibly Big Bar to Redding, although I usually stopped in Weaverville for groceries. I drove to Redding for dental appointments and special shopping Trinity Center to Redding was possibly the farthest I drove for regular supplies.

FITCH: You drove in from Platina also.

CAROL WHITFIELD: Yes, I did. Again, I usually bought groceries in Hayfork, driving to Redding for special shopping.

FITCH: How did you feel about handling those mountain roads with small children in those days going for groceries and so on?

CAROL WHITFIELD: It was my job. I liked to drive, so I managed quite well. I had a few worrisome times coming over the Trinity mountain road from Trinity Center. Sometimes it was quite muddy, and in places a lane and a half wide. Meeting another car could be quite scary. I was always happy to arrive at my destination.

FITCH: Were there any other interesting situations where you drove through the mountains to take care of the family?

CAROL WHITFIELD: When we lived in Platina, our route to Redding involved the "ditch grade", and the lumber trucks from the Wildwood Lumber Company would be coming out toward Redding as I would be returning to the station. The driver of the first truck would signal how many trucks were following so that you could meet safely. It was really a bit scary, because going back home at that particular stretch I was on the

outside of the curvy road, and it was a long way down. Always made the trip safely though.

FITCH: How did he signal?

CAROL WHITFIELD: As I recall he would just hold up three fingers, or something like that. Honking was another way to identify oncoming traffic. At a big curve, we'd honk, and the approaching vehicle would honk in response. It was an adventure.

FITCH: And where was your favorite place to live in California when you were stationed here?

CAROL WHITFIELD: Are you specifically talking Trinity Forest?

FITCH: Tell us what your favorite spot was on the Trinity Forest.

CAROL WHITFIELD: I believe it was Big Bar, because we lived in a real house and we had a lawn. It was very nice after the barracks. I also enjoyed living in Porterville. Those were wonderful years.

FITCH: Whit, in California, what was your favorite assignment?

WHITFIELD: I think without question it was being the supervisor of the Sequoia. It was a good job. I liked the ranger job. I thought for a long time that's where I would land and stay. The supervisor job was a little bit better in that you were still close to a community of people, the Forest Service, on the ground, and yet you had enough authority to get more things done. I have to say that without question I enjoyed this the most.

FITCH: How about people in those early years? Did you have a favorite boss, a favorite mentor, a person that comes to mind as somebody that affected your career more than any other in California?

WHITFIELD: Well, I think one of the best things about a career in the Forest Service is the people that you meet and know and worked for and with. Yes, there were several. One of them that I recall very vividly was a person named Jim McKnight. He was a fire control assistant (FCA) on the Upper Trinity District, which was Weaverville. That was also the site of the supervisor's office before the Trinity and Shasta forests were combined. Jim was a non-professional, and grew up in the Forest Service. His father was an early day ranger. In fact, for the first few years I was in the Forest Service, his father worked on the Klamath. I believe he was a law enforcement man. Anyway, Jim was pretty much self-taught, very reliant, quite a hunter, always had some hounds and was a great guy to work for. He and Cleone had a small acreage out of town, they had five children and early on lived in a building without running water. His wife was a great cook. They took us under their wing and made sure we got along okay in those days. In fact,

when we lived in Hayfork we got so affluent we thought we had to do something for them. We bought and gave them a young sow pig that they had for years, raising a number of litters. An interesting part of that scheme was, when I was in college we had a seminar. One of the things they preached to us was, if you go to work for a public agency, you're going to be working with a lot of non-professionals who have a lot of skill. Don't make a big thing our of being a college boy. The was very good advice. I learned a lot from men like Jim. They became life-long friends.

Our ranger was an awfully nice guy, Myron Nelson. A quiet man, hard worker, good work ethic, ran all kinds of section lines. There was a man named Harvey Farmer who was the automotive shop foreman there for years and years. He started in the CC days. Of course, I did not work for him or necessarily with him, but he became a really good friend. There are just more people than I can list now that were good friends, mentor, great workers, people we really enjoyed, both men and women. There were a great number of clerks and secretaries, such as Myrta Hedger, June Johnston, and Mary Maher who were extremely loyal and hard working. They kept me out of a lot of trouble.

FITCH: I want to ask Carol a similar question. I am sure you came in contact with lots of Forest Service families in the different places you lived. Are there any that particularly stood out in your mind as far as helping you, or helping you get through the early years, raising your kids and those kinds of thing, emergency situations and so on?

CAROL WHITFIELD: Again, I would mention the McKnights at the beginning, because Jim and Cleone McKnight were so much fun and so good to us. Our two children were born while we lived in Trinity County and they helped us a lot. But interestingly enough, we were newcomers, it was Whit's first job with the Forest Service, didn't know a soul, and the Pettigrews, the McKnights and others were very kind to us, very friendly. From that time on we were not strangers. With each move, we knew someone or there was a friend of a friend at the new location. That was true with every subsequent move. It made it fun. I think the people we met--you don't necessarily love everyone in the Forest Service--but there were always people you felt were kindred spirits, and they're friends and its forever.

FITCH: How do you think the Forest Service job, moving around and all those things that you did in your lives affected you family, your children.

CAROL WHITFIELD: I know it was difficult for them, for our two. But somehow they learned to cope. They learned to meet new people. They've since said they don't have any one place they regard as their hometown. But interestingly enough, our daughter Susan encouraged her husband to go into the Forest Service, and our son Jim works for the Forest Service. I would say that moving and the people we met, the jobs, were a wonderful opportunity and they had wonderful experiences. During Susan's last year in high school, when she had completed all requirements for graduation from Jeb Stuart High

School in Falls Church VA, she worked as a GS2(!) for the Bureau of Fisheries in the District. She seemed to be a go-fer, occasionally she would take documents from their office to the "hill" or to committee heads, etc. She commented, "I don't think there are many Porterville girls with such an interesting job" One of many great experiences.

FITCH: Let me ask you, Whit, were there any special people that impacted your career and your life outside of California, in the other part of your career on the East coast.

LAWRENCE WHITFIELD: Yes, there were several. I worked for John McGuire both when he was a deputy chief and I was in legislative affairs, and when he was chief I was a deputy regional forester, and regional forester. He as an outstanding man. He gave me hell one time at a meeting when I was a bit negative about some problems, later he called me into his office and in a very nice way, apologized. He said he didn't think he'd handled it very well.

Red Nelson was a real first-class person, I think. I worked for Russ McRory and I think he was great. Paul Statham, was a mentor of mine even after I retired from USFS. He lived in Redding and I enjoyed him a lot after I retired and moved to Redding. We would have lunch together on Mondays because he couldn't play golf on that day. [Laughs] One of the real joys of working for the outfit were the people you came in contact with, both inside and outside the service. These are just a few of names that pop into my head--very helpful, very competent people.

FITCH: Well, Whit, you did something a little unusual in the Forest Service. You went on to get a law degree while you were carrying a leadership job in the Forest Service. Tell us about some of the stresses and the difficulties of doing that, and also how it helped your career, or affected your career.

LAWRENCE WHITFIELD: I first got interested in law school when I was a ranger. There was a fellow named Sam Mobley who ran a bar and restaurant on a mining claim. He sold parts of mining claims to people to build cabins on. I crossed swords with Sam and that led me to look into a night law school in Fresno. It sounded great, but I didn't think I could manage that from the ranger station. Not long after I was transferred to Fresno, and so started school. It was a four year school, I attended for the three years we lived in Fresno, and the last year after moving to Porterville. Classes met twice a week, except during the summer, and there was a lot of homework. It took a lot time. I'm not too sure that I really paid enough attention to my kids during that time. Everyone had to be quiet while the old man was in the bedroom studying. But it was interesting, and I am sure it helped me in my career. I'm sure that is one of the reasons that I went to the Washington office, because of my legal background. Certainly it was the reason I got into legislative affairs. So it took a long time, and I worked a lot harder studying at that time than I ever had before in any school.

FITCH: What year did you get your degree in law?

WHITFIELD: Well, let's see. I passed the bar in 1967, and at this particular school, if you had graduated from college, that limited how many hours you had to have. Even so, I had to go back one term to get enough hours, so I think I got that degree in 1968.

FITCH: What position were you in at that time with the Forest Service?

WHITFIELD: I was the supervisor of the Sequoia.

FITCH: Sequoia Forest. Well, you've worked in opposite ends of the country. You've worked in Region Five in California, you've worked in Washington D.C. You've worked in Region Eight, out of Atlanta, and Region One up in the middle of the country. Can you tell us about any cultural differences in the Forest Service culture that you may have observed during these times in these different parts of country, and particularly how they might compare with Region Five?

LAWRENCE WHITFIELD: I think there's a certain culture associated with rural areas everywhere I worked. That may be changing now with the move to larger population centers. But it's a very interesting culture, one that makes the Forest Service really interesting. I believe a big part of the job is to get along with the people wherever you are. I remember when we were moving to Region Eight, I knew nothing about that culture. Some people thought we would find that people were different, for instance, being nice face to face but not necessarily otherwise. We never found that. People treated us royally and were great. But when you talk about culture, some of the rural culture, which I did not get as exposed to as would a ranger or supervisor, certainly was different. One such place comes to mind, the Rebird Purchase Unit on the Daniel Boone National Forest. It is near two small mountain communities, Manchester and Peabody, Kentucky the ranger headquarters. A book by Bob Collins, a long time supervisor in Kentucky, gave the history of that acquisition. The whole purpose was to get some land to deal with watershed issues in the headwaters of the Kentucky River. The Forest Service bought 60,000 from the Ford Motor Company. Ford had purchased the logged over land, not for coal, but for the high-quality hardwood timber on it, from which they made wood wheel spokes. This was the heart of Appalachia. It is tough country, and some of the people there live in tough circumstances. The schools feed breakfast and lunch, otherwise, many of the students would be malnourished. Schools are not very good, and some people lived in coal shacks, terrible. With the purchase the Forest Service became landlord to sixty or more houses, some in intolerable condition. The Forest Service could not be slum landlords. What are we going to do with these people? What will happen to them if they are run off? As is so often the case, some employee down in the lowest ranks said, "Here's what we're going to do. We will inventory all those houses and categorize them as to condition. As houses become vacant, people moving or dying, whatever, we will move people out of the worst ones which we will then tear down. I thought that was just outstanding. Many of those people worked for the Forest Service and the majority of them were really fine folks, hard working and dependable. Once, on a visit to

Manchester, we asked "Where do we eat breakfast?" The answer was "Well, there's two places in town and you don't dare go to one of them." This was in the late "70s. We had a fine ham and eggs breakfast for eighty-five cents. The sheriff's wife fed the prisoners. The sheriff was shot and killed. His wife was running to succeed him. Her campaign ad pointed out how well they had taken care of the community's sons, brothers, and husbands. It was a different world.

FITCH: Well, Whit, were there any other ways of doing business, say that were different as you moved around the country in your observations of the Forest Service, in particular, any ways that differed from what you saw going on in Region Five?

WHITFIELD: I think so. There is a good deal of sameness in the western regions. Some have different emphasis, with a little different timber stands and different fire situations. I think the East and South certainly had a different program going there because of the way national forest lands had been acquired. Those lands had been cut over and farmed, so we started with cut over land. It was a different way of doing business. Timber grew differently, the terrain was different. And so some of that enters into the organizational culture. But I do think there is a sameness about social and professional culture and fewer differences. In my early days with the Forest Service, transfers between regions were rare except at high levels. You just did not see ranger level or above move. You do now. We found in Region Eight quite a few people we had known or known of in Regions One and Five that were then in the South. And that had a good affect, It tends to bring the good from all regions. One thing, every region I was ever in thought they were the best region in the outfit. And every one of them had some aspects that probably warranted that. I do not think that was bad at all. I think it was good for the organization in that the spirit of competition was healthy.

There have been changes that are not quite so good for the Forest Service. There were areas that absolutely needed improvement, but there were problems with some of the things we got into with Civil Rights and programs for minorities and women. By the time I worked in the South there had been improvement to improve minority hiring. The South had worked hard to improve this. We recruited people. We encouraged predominantly black colleges to encourage people to go into forestry. We had many really good minority men and women working for us, which helped the program. But in the course of events, we had things like the Consent Decree in Region Five. In my mind, they did violence to the Civil Rights Act of '64 and its amendments. The authors pointed out that the act was not to discriminate against anyone. We continued to say that the best qualified person was picked for the job. Unfortunately we have not done that. It was forced on us in part by the courts and others. That had a tough impact on the agency. Some people were selected for jobs they were not capable of carrying out, in most cases simply because they did not have enough experience, so they were thrown into something that was almost a guarantee of failure. That has had its impact. I thing there is some evidence we are moving beyond that. But it has had a tremendous impact

on the culture. We disenfranchised a generation of white male Americans, and in the process lost some high-quality people. That is not to say that women and minorities do not offer top people. They do, and I have certainly seen the evidence of that. One example was an outstanding presentation by a district fire management officer, a woman, at the 2000 USFS reunion in Missoula. Montana. But in other cases we have not gone with the best people. There is some real work to do there.

FITCH: Well, were there any other changes in the management of the National Forests that occurred during your career that you would like to talk about before we leave that area?

WHITFIELD: Probably the most dramatic have been things like NEPA, the Endangered Species Act, and CEQ. Those and others have had tremendous impact. They have been difficult to sort through, and we are still sorting through. The courts are still sorting through. It has forced a lot of effort to be put towards needless studies and paperwork, and taken people away from on-the-ground work. I think it is questionable whether it has really been all that beneficial. Obviously, as science improves and people in their educational processes improve, we are going to do things differently. We will deal with issues scientifically and that is good. Science must be carefully defined and stated to help avoid litigation. It is difficult to deal with an urban society that may have far less experience and understanding of resource issues which sometimes leads to wrong conclusions. It is hard to get political attention directed to rural issues and rural people. We will see this for a long time to come, but I hope the Forest Service can regain credibility, and that we will make decisions based on solid science and management.

FITCH: Wise words, Whit. You've had a very interesting career, but it didn't all end when you left the Forest Service. Now, let's see if I remember correctly. You were a regional forester in Atlanta when you retired, is that correct?

WHITFIELD: Yes.

FITCH: And then you moved to Redding?

WHITFIELD: We moved to Redding, and the first thing I did was work as a consultant for Southern Pacific Land Co. They had a lot of intermingled railroad lands with the Forest Service and had a very active land exchange program, a very successful one, I might add, for both parties. I worked with them on that and with the Forest Service. I thought the Forest Service had some really outstanding people in those areas. Later on I moved into the practice of law,. I also worked for a timber association for a few years. My job for them was to be a conduit between industry and the Forest Service, primarily associated with timber sales. I had private clients and did get involved in contract disputes and other areas of law. I was involved in one case involving the Forest Service that wound up in Federal Claims Court. I thought it turned out remarkably well. We split it right down the middle.

I am somewhat active with the National Association of Forest Service Retirees, which is dedicated to insuring sound management of the national forests. We have had some success. It is difficult because we are all volunteers. There is only one paid person in the whole group, our secretary/treasurer. Unfortunately he is paid very little for his energy. There is some tremendous talent from all areas of the Forest Service. Phil Aune, now the vice president of the California Forestry Association, now doing some outstanding work. Ron Stuart and his people wrote up some really good material. We have had lots of favorable compliments from members of Congress and others. We are trying to do that right down the middle. We are trying to not be political about it. We are now involved in a lawsuit challenging fire management and the use of retardant. Pacific Legal Foundation will file a friend of the court brief on our behalf.

We are enjoying retirement. You know, I have never looked back and regretted what I did with my life. I certainly feel sorry for those that do.

FITCH: Well, I was going to ask you to look back at the ups and downs and the experiences that you had, to tell us whether or not you felt you were satisfied with your career in forestry. I think you've indicated that already. But go ahead if you have any concluding thoughts.

LAWRENCE WHITFIELD: I think that really sums it up. Sure, there were tough times. You know, that's life. The good experiences far outweigh the tough ones.

FITCH: Carol, did you have any final thoughts that you'd like to pass on to future generations?

CAROL WHITFIELD: I want to tell people how surprised I was to find how open and friendly the people in the Washington office were. We arrived in Washington office along with many others from other regions. Bernie Paine and his wife invited all/only newcomers to their (apparently) annual party. It was a wonderful way to get acquainted early, to become friends. It was a very welcoming thing. I have enjoyed, and still enjoy the friends we made in the Forest Service. They are with us forever. It was a great life. I would do it all over again.

FITCH: Well, good. That is a fitting conclusion to a very interesting interview. Thanks a lot.

[End of interview.]