

INTERVIEW WITH WAYNE SANDERS  
BY DOROTHE NORTON OCTOBER 21, 2001

[Transcription note: this tape is seriously flawed technically. Much of conversation was not recorded]

MS. NORTON: Can you please tell me your birthplace and date?

MR. SANDERS: Fort Dodge, Iowa. December 10, 1918.

MS. NORTON: What were your parent's names?

MR. SANDERS: [tape skips information missing]

MS. NORTON: What were there jobs and education?

MR. SANDERS: Basically, it started out as farming in southeastern Minnesota. Then they moved to northwest Iowa. My Dad went into the garage business. He started a garage in [tape skips] and then moved to Spencer.

MS. NORTON: Where and how did you spend your early years?

MR. SANDERS: In Spencer. I did summer jobs in high school to earn a little money.

MS. NORTON: What hobbies, events or books influenced you to most?

MR. SANDERS: I spent time on hunting and fishing days.

MS. NORTON: So you did hunt and fish?

MR. SANDERS: Oh yeah. We had to hunt to put meat on the table part of the time.

MS. NORTON: What High School did you go to, and where was it?

MR. SANDERS: I went to Spencer High School in Spencer, Iowa.

MS. NORTON: When did you graduate?

MR. SANDERS: I graduated in 193... [Tape skips]

MS. NORTON: Where did you go to University?

MR. SANDERS: It was not a University. I went to a Junior College in 1937, and 1938. I worked on the road the next year, and went back to Junior College for the 1938-39 year. I had an Associates Degree.

MS. NORTON: What aspect of your formal education equipped you for the future? Who most influenced your education and career tract? Did you have any mentors, or courses that especially stuck with you?

MR. SANDERS: I took quite a bit of Biology and Chemistry courses. Most of my education was along the scientific lines.

MS. NORTON: Where there any adverse influences?

MR. SANDERS: No.

MS. NORTON: How about the military service? Where you ever in any branch of the military?

MR. SANDERS: That would probably be more influential than any of my other education. I was inducted into the Navy in December of 1941 a few days after Pearl Harbor. I served almost four years. I was in Radio School in Indianapolis in January of 1942, and Aviation Radio School in Norfolk, VA. After that I was in a [tape skips] ...BM squadron, which is a big twin-engine flying boat. VP, that's Patrol Squadron 201. I then went to ...River, Florida for training and in November of 1942 we transferred back to NAS, Norfolk and went into operations in anti-submarine patrol in the Atlantic Ocean, ...New Jersey and Florida.

MS. NORTON: Did you have any overseas duty?

MR. SANDERS: From there, we went out to Bermuda. In Bermuda, my crew, about half the Squadron were transferred back to Oceania Field in Virginia Beach, VA where we took thirty days training in some old Army B-24s, which the Navy called PB-4Y1s. After thirty days training we went by a southern route across the Atlantic to Scotland and ended up at Sanable Airfield in England. There we were placed with the 20<sup>th</sup> Coastal Command of the RAF, [Royal Air Force] on anti-sub patrol.

MS. NORTON: Did you receive any decoration while you were in the service, any special medals?

MR. SANDERS: Air medals. We went from England down, and spent about nine months in Morocco, French Morocco at Port Laotie [sic]. From there we came back to the States. We got new airplanes and went San Diego, to Honolulu, to Tanian, and from there to the little island of Marutea in the Dutch East Indies. Then we went back up to

Leyte in the Philippines. [Tape skips] ...in April and my whole crew got relieved and I got assigned to Corpus Christi, Texas to an Air/Sea rescue unit going back to the South China Sea.

MS. NORTON: Did your Military service relate in any way to your career with the Fish and Wildlife Service?

MR. SANDERS: Everywhere I went I was interested in the local countryside, conditions, animals and so forth. I went duck hunting in the salt marshes of Morocco several times.

MS. NORTON: Tell me about your wife, her birthplace and date, and her parent's names.

MS. SANDERS: ...Iowa. Maude and Ernie Wiese.

MS. NORTON: Where was their education?

MR. SANDERS: He was a farmer most of his life. He later moved to ...Iowa where he had a farm, and then Emmetsburg, Iowa where he was employed with....

MS. NORTON: Where, when and how did you and Jane meet?

MR. SANDERS: After I was ...the Navy...I was going to St. Olaf, Minnesota for flight training. ....when they dropped the bombs in Japan...I had enough points to get out and no place to go. My mother was sick at the time...I went to Wilt Chamberlain Field in Minneapolis one evening. At ten o'clock that night I was on the bus to Spencer Iowa. I went to work at 7 o'clock the next morning. During the War my Dad had developed a taxi business in Spencer. ...a training base at the Spencer Airport where they trained Fighter Pilots. There were four to five thousand trainees out there. We were the only taxi business around, and the base was about three miles from town. Anyway, Jane was working for Western Union at the time, and had to deliver all of the telegrams.... We met in the telegraph office.

[Tape skipping frequently]

MS. NORTON: Where and when did you marry?

MR. SANDERS: May 1st...

MS. NORTON: How many children did you have, and what are their names?

MR. SANDERS: There are four boys, Wayne, Jr., Timothy Kent, David James....

MS. NORTON: What are they all doing now?

MR. SANDERS: Wayne, Jr. is working for a...Corporation near Chicago. [Tape skips answer]

MS. NORTON: Why did you want to work for the [USFW] Service?

MR. SANDERS: I had been in Law Enforcement with the State of Iowa for six or seven years in Public Relations. I really didn't enjoy what I was doing, giving lectures to teachers and I wanted to get to where I thought... like conservation where I felt would do some good. I applied for the Game Management Agents job.

MS. NORTON: So, your first professional position was State, and then you came to Federal?

MR. SANDERS: Yes.

MS. NORTON: And what did you do?

MR. SANDERS: I worked for the State of Iowa as a Conservation Officer...counties for three years. Then I transferred to Woodbury and spent almost three years there. Then I went into the Des Moines office in the Public Relations section. After that I joined the Fish and Wildlife Service as Game Management Agent in St. Charles, Missouri.

MS. NORTON: What other duty stations did you have?

MR. SANDERS: I went from St. Charles to Sykeston, Missouri, from there to Anna, Illinois. From there to Jefferson City, Missouri as Agent in Charge of Missouri. I was there for about ten years I guess until about 1973. From there I went to SAC in Boston, district 13, the six New England states.

MS. NORTON: What were the pay and benefits like?

MR. SANDERS: To begin with, the pay wasn't all that great. In fact, I took a two thousand dollar drop in pay to join the Service. But I made it back in a couple of years time.

MS. NORTON: So you did have promotion opportunities from station to station?

MR. SANDERS: Yeah.

MS. NORTON: Did you socialize with the people that you worked with?

MR. SANDERS: Sure. [Tape skips]

MS. NORTON: What did you do for recreation in the field?

MR. SANDERS: In the field, there was no time for recreation in the field. Sometimes we'd catch a few days of hunting. Summers were taken up for seven years in Canada, from May to mid-August.

MS. NORTON: For banding?

MR. SANDERS: Yeah. That was almost considered recreation. You kind of had to.

MS. NORTON: How did your career affect your family?

MR. SANDERS: The fact that I was seldom there to do the things that my wife had to do. ...

MS. NORTON: Why did you leave the Service?

MR. SANDERS: I retired.

MS. NORTON: What training did you receive for your job?

MR. SANDERS: Very little for the first job. Except for what I had received from the State of Iowa which was several weeks training, plus several years-seven years of experience; both in Law Enforcement and in Public Relations. When I entered into Game Management Agent there was no training sessions at all.

MS. NORTON: What hours did you work?

MR. SANDERS: We worked whatever hours we determined needed to be worked.

MS. NORTON: What were your days...?

MR. SANDERS: Law Enforcement, law enforcement patrol, contacts with conservation groups, and ...informants. We had the upkeep of boats, motors and automobiles, and reports.

MS. NORTON: What tools and instruments did you use?

MR. SANDERS: Binoculars, ..... new Service inventions of innovations? We were always trying something new to increase enforcement of the baiting regulations. Agents

would come up with gimmicks like a pan with a screen over top, which you could put in the bottom of the pond. If they through some bait in there the screen would keep the ducks from eating it and you would have evidence. It worked part time.

MS. NORTON: ...with animals?

MR. SANDERS: Not so much with the federal Service except birds, which are animals...Ducks, Geese, Eagles. I and worked with many thousand of young ducks and geese in trapping and banding in Canada.

MS. NORTON: How did you feel toward the animals?

MR. SANDERS: I enjoyed especially the little ducklings. ...to determine the age and species.

MS. NORTON: Did this change?

MR. SANDERS: Not that I can think of.

MS. NORTON: What kind of support did you receive locally, regionally or federally?

MR. SANDERS: Your local support depending an awful lot on the Agent, and how much contact he had with the public. Some agents wanted to be a lone wolf, and others went all out for public relations; contacting all of the local conservation groups and made many friends and generated local support that way. Regionally and federally there was back up from the Service. Many times, or most of the time, if I asked for extra help, I could get it. If I was working on a major case and felt that I needed help, it usually was forthcoming. ...I think I have seen that change in the last forty years. The Fish and Wildlife Service presently doesn't have a very good name with the people that I have contacted, or who have contacted me. ...for many reasons; one of them being the Endangered Species Act, which they perceive as being used, in the Snail Darter instance to gain other ends besides preserving an endangered species. Otherwise, the Refuges around here seem to be respected and used.

MS. NORTON: What projects were you involved in?

MR. SANDERS: As I mentioned, trapping and banding in Alberta and Saskatchewan for six or seven summers. Other projects were pretty much in my own districts. There were issues; in New England things had changed considerably from the mid west. We had to deal with the commercial fishermen and lobstermen. We had to deal with depredation by Cormorants, and many other issues, which were really foreign to the mid west. But it was all interesting. We had many over bags in sea duck hunting, which is different operation altogether from regular duck hunters. ...to try to get local cooperation with the

various State departments to perceive them as being a problem. Many were quite sympathetic with the commercial fishermen, who were loosing fish to Cormorants. We worked with them to help them see that there were other means of protecting their fish.

MS. NORTON: Would you consider that your most pressing issue?

MR. SANDERS: No, probably not the most pressing. At the early stage, one of the most pressing issues was the ports...the most pressing issues seemed to be endangered species coming through undesignated ports, which at that time, Boston was not a designated port. We had traffic in hides and skins and trophy hunting from Africa coming into that area.

MS. NORTON: Has your opinion on that issue changed with time now?

MR. SANDERS: [answer unintelligible due to tape skipping]

MS. NORTON: Who were your supervisors, starting way back?

MR. SANDERS: Davis.

MS. NORTON: He was your first supervisor, then they split up the Divisions?

MR. SANDERS: Yeah. ...was out of Denver at the time. We had a District in Kansas City.

MS. NORTON: Right, Jack Downs?

MR. SANDERS: No. ...was in charge of Missouri, Kansas and Iowa for Law Enforcement and Predator and Rodent Control. I can't remember who the District Area Manager was in Kansas City at the time. There was a Mr. Griffith and then it was Larsen.

MS. NORTON: Who were the individuals who shaped your career?

MR. SANDERS: I guess Flick Davis was one of them. ...With the Missouri and Iowa Conservation Departments. ...Regional Office personnel in Minneapolis and the same in Boston.

MS. NORTON: How did changes in Administration affect your work?

MR. SANDERS: We didn't really notice too much in those days. Recently, I think it's horrible, the changes.

MS. NORTON: Who do you think were the individuals who shaped the Service?

MR. SANDERS: Directors had considerable influence at that time. Probably not as much in recent years, that I have noticed. We had some awful Directors. ....Gottschalk, and Greenwalt.

MS. NORTON: What was the high point of your career?

MR. SANDERS: ...District 13. There was three sacks in Region 5.

MS. NORTON: Did you have a low point in your career?

MR. SANDERS: Probably transferring from St. Louis to Sikeston as a "7".

MS. NORTON: What would you have done differently?

MR. SANDERS: Maybe, taken a little bit more time away from my job to be with my family.

MS. NORTON: What was your most dangerous or frightening experience?

MR. SANDERS: There were times in the State of Iowa when I had misgivings about getting back. ...Arresting a lady in Brookfield, Missouri who was picking geese and not keeping records and covering up for her clients on excess possession limits and so forth. I arrested the lady, and upon her arrest she says, 'I could get in more trouble running a god damned whore house than I can picking geese!'

MS. NORTON: What would you like to tell others about your career, or the Service.

MR. SANDERS: I would tell them that at the time I worked, it was a good place to work. ...And going from Game Management Agent to Special Agent was quite a change. We no longer had any of the biological duties, and went for more enforcement patrol to undercover operations. There was quite a few changes in operations.

MS. NORTON: Did you notice changes in personnel?

MR. SANDERS: Yes, we noticed changes in personnel at that time. From primarily State Agents who came with several years of enforcement experience; to College graduates with many varied degrees and no experience in enforcement or wildlife.

MS. NORTON: What are your thoughts on the future of the Service?

MR. SANDERS: ...get back to some of the basics.

MS. NORTON: Where do you see the Service heading in the next decade?

MR. SANDERS: ...which party gets in power.

MS. NORTON: Well thanks Wayne. Do you have any photographs or documents that you'd like to donate or share?

MR. SANDERS: I might be able to find something.

MS. NORTON: Well if you do, just send it up to me and I'll see that it gets to the Archives. We'll send you a copy of this tape when it's all done.

MR. SANDERS: I'm not sure it all recorded.

MS. NORTON: O.K., thanks Wayne.