

**ORAL HISTORY**  
**of**  
**Marion Cruikshank**  
**Permits Application Examiner**  
**Minneapolis Regional Office (III)**

Interviewed by  
**Dorothe Norton**  
On September 15, 2004

Oral History Program  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
National Conservation Training Center  
Shepherdstown, West Virginia

Oral History – Marion Cruikshank  
Permits Application Examiner, Minneapolis RO  
Interviewer: Dorothe Norton  
Interview Date 09/15/04

DN: Today is Wednesday, September 15, 2004. This interview will be between Dorothe Norton and Marion Cruikshank. Thank you.

DN: Okay, Marion. Good to see you.

MC: Thank you.

DN: I haven't seen you now since Marlys's funeral.

MC: That's right.

DN: But it's good to see you again. Yep. So, I want to know your birth place and date.

MC: I was born Rice County, Minnesota December 3, 1943.

DN: Okay. And what were your parent's names?

MC: My father's name is Bernard Carl Wegner and my mother's name is Irene Ida Bisbee.

DN: Okay. And what were their ed... what was their education and their jobs?

MC: Oh boy. I think my mother only completed high school, and I don't know if my... I really don't know if my dad went to school or not. But, he was a carpenter and then eventually he had his own business.

DN: Well, that's good.

MC: Construction business. And he was in partnership with another fella.

DN: Oh, that's very good. And so, where did you spend all your early years?

MC: Far as I can remember, in Faribault. I went to a parochial school up till 8<sup>th</sup> grade and then I went to Faribault Junior High, and then I graduated Faribault Senior High in '61.

DN: Oh, okay. So did you have any hobbies or books that you did a lot of reading or any special events that you looked forward to when you were a kid?

MC: Boy. I need some time to think about that. Not really. I... I can't really. I enjoy gardening.

DN: Well, that's good.

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MC: I mean, I... I picked potato bugs for my dad.

DN: So, you lived on a farm?

MC: No. We lived in town, but my parents live still in the same house and they have... they still have a pretty good sized garden.

DN: Oh, that's good.

MC: And my dad...

DN: Are they the ones that also grow the gladiolas?

MC: Yeah, but he doesn't do that anymore.

DN: Oh, okay.

MC: He...

DN: I remember when you would bring those to the office.

MC: Yeah.

DN: How beautiful. Beautiful.

MC: That was... that's a lot of work. Cause you gotta dig them out and then you gotta powder them and then you gotta keep them in a cool place, and so.

DN: And then replant them the next year.

MC: Yep. Yep.

DN: Okay. So, did you ever have any jobs till you graduated from high school?

MC: Yeah. I worked in a bakery.

DN: Oh, wow. How fun.

MC: Behind the counter, and then I learned how to wrap bread and wrap rolls, and then waited on customers. I did that... I did that the summer before... right after I graduated until I started beauty school.

DN: Okay.

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MC: And then I went to Mankato and went to beauty school for nine months and then I worked in a beauty shop in Faribault for I think it must have been close to two years, until Dave and I got married.

DN: Okay. Did you ever hunt or fish when you were a kid?

MC: Yeah. I used to go fishing with my dad. We used to go to the... I'm trying to think of the name of the dam. The Old Mill Dam? Is that what I was called? We used to go bullhead fishing.

DN: Oh, my gosh. Bullheads, huh?

MC: Yeah. Doesn't that sound like fun?

DN: Did you eat them too. Take them home to eat?

MC: Oh sure.

DN: Did you really?

MC: Yep. Mom... bullheads are pretty good. I haven't ate one for a long time, but we ate 'em when we were little.

DN: Oh, okay. So then you... after you graduated you went to beauty school and...

MC: Uh-hum.

DN: Okay. You never were in the military.

MC: Nope.

DN: Okay. So the next question is, when, where and how did you meet your husband?

MC: Well, Dave and I are high school sweethearts. I met Dave in my senior year of high school.

DN: Okay.

MC: And, we went together for four years before we were married.

DN: Wow, that's good. And so, when did you get married then?

MC: June 6, 1964.

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DN: Okay. Very good. You've been... you've had a long...

MC: Been married for 40 years.

DN: Yeah.

MC: Just... just this past June.

DN: Yes. Okay. And so, you have two girls.

MC: Two girls.

DN: And what are they doing now? I mean, are they working and, if so, what kind of jobs are they in and...

MC: Okay. Julie, our oldest, is currently a stay-at-home mom, and Joanie works for Best Buy.

DN: Oh, okay.

MC: As a... I'm not exactly sure what her title is, but she's... works with the printing.

DN: Okay.

MC: So.

DN: That's where Mary's youngest boy works, for Best Buy.

MC: Really! At the main office?

DN: Oh, all over.

MC: All over.

DN: They have him... He's been at the main office sometimes. They had him in some training classes and things.

MC: Okay. She goes to the main office for meetings and then she works out of the Eden Prairie office.

DN: Is the main office the one right on 494?

MC: On Penn. Yep.

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DN: Yeah, well Mark was out there a couple different times.

MC: If you ever have time, you should go there some time for a tour. It... it looks like a college campus. I'm not kidding.

DN: Wow.

MC: They have their own cafeteria. They have their own physical fitness room. It's just... it's mammoth, just mammoth. They have training rooms. I couldn't believe how big it was when I went.

DN: Good. Okay.

MC: Very nice, though. Very nice.

DN: Okay. Well, now we'll go to your career.

MC: Okay.

DN: Was there any reason why you wanted to work for the Service, or... for the Fish and Wildlife Service?

MC: I don't think so. I think I... I was just looking for a part-time job to begin with.

DN: Okay.

MC: And...

DN: So, was that your first professional position then after being at beauty school?

MC: Yeah. Yep.

DN: And so, what did...

MC: Well, I shouldn't say that. I did have one other job. I... I worked for a dermatologist for, oh boy, I'm gonna guess close to two years.

DN: Okay.

MC: Part-time.

DN: But then you came to the Federal...

MC: Then I came to Fish and Wildlife.

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DN: And so you started in about 1979? And what was your title and grade? Clerk Typist GS3? 4?

MC: Dorothy, I'm gonna have to go dig out my papers.

DN: No, that's okay.

MC: I think it was... I think it was a GS4. I think.

DN: I think it probably was too.

MC: Yeah.

DN: I should remember, because...

MC: Yeah. You hired me.

DN: Yes, I know. Okay. And so, you stayed all the time in the Minneapolis Regional Office. Twin Cities Regional Office III.

MC: Yep.

DN: Okay. And so, did you have opportunities for promotions?

MC: Uh-hum.

DN: Okay. And you retired April...

MC: 2<sup>nd</sup>.

DN: 2<sup>nd</sup>.

MC: 2004.

DN: And what was your grade and title then?

MC: I was GS7, step 8 I think. It was either 8 or 9.

DN: What was your title?

MC: Oh, Application Examiner.

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DN: Okay, it still was that then. I know how often sometimes they change titles around.

MC: Right.

DN: So, what did you think the pay and the benefits were like when you started?

MC: I thought it was good, really. I mean, I think at... at that point in time, you know, I was making... I mean, I was happy with the salary I was making.

DN: Okay. That's good. And so did you socialize with some of the people that you worked with?

MC: Oh, certainly.

DN: And did you ever do anything for recreation in the field? We weren't really a field office, but...

MC: No. I don't think I did.

DN: Okay. Did your career affect your family in any way?

MC: I don't think so. If it did, it probably was, you know, more positive than negative.

DN: Well, that's good.

MC: You know, because I only worked part-time, so I did have two days to, you know, catch up on things or...

DN: And so... and so then you didn't leave the Service until you were eligible for retirement.

MC: Right.

DN: That's good. Okay. So, did you ever receive any training for the jobs that you had?

MC: I'm sure I did, but I don't remember what it was.

DN: You learned a lot of it from the people that you were working with.

MC: Right.

DN: That were above you.



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MC: Right. My sup... Well, my supervisor and I don't even know what Carol Darling's position was at that time, but I know when I...

DN: Yeah. She was about the same as yours.

MC: But, when I started she was the one that.

DN: Yes.

MC: You know.

DN: So, then she'd a been kinda like what Marlys worked at.

MC: Right. Right. Told me the ropes.

DN: Because in those days, permits were very, very voluminous, but it was just pretty much the same thing over and over. We didn't get... you know, after a while we started getting more important types of permits and different ones just kind of narrowed down some of broader (undecipherable), so. And so you just worked the regional office hours when you worked. You didn't work any pre-dawn or...

MC: No.

DN: Evening.

MC: No.

DN: So can you tell me what you did all day long? What was the science of the day for you?

MC: Oh, boy. Push papers. When I first started, I probably... I know I sent out applications. I did a lot of filing. I did a lot of things that were backlogged. Catching up on rearranging files. I remember when we got the Lectriever and I had to... I was out in the hall taking files from the hall and putting them in the Lectriever alphabetically and... First it was numerical and then we went to alphabetical.

DN: Yes.

MC: But, that's really all I can remember. You know, I know... whatever Carol gave me to do I did.

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DN: And so then as you had been there a few more years and you got more responsibilities, then did you... were you just assigned one kind of a permit? Or did you help with all, or?

MC: Boy. I know...

DN: I was trying to think... when I left, what... I know you were then doing specials.

MC: I think I did... I got involved with depredation and... I was trying to think if that was the only kind that I did. 'Cause Marlys was doing taxidermy and waterfowl and Carol did rehab and scientific collecting I think.

DN: Okay.

MC: And then Phyllis did the import/export.

DN: Okay. Phyllis Weiss.

MC: Yeah.

DN: Okay. And then Jim, when he was there what did he do?

MC: He did... Well that... Let's see, then I think Marlys... I think Jim did waterfowl and taxidermy and he did some other kind too, didn't he?

DN: I think so, but it doesn't (undecipherable).

MC: MBIE maybe. And then I think Marlys did, she did rehab and... Oh, I forgot about salvage.

DN: Yes. Yeah.

MC: Well, and then did... Oh, okay.

DN: So many. So many types. It just kept growing and growing.

MC: Yeah. Yeah. And I think... I think Marlys probably did salvage and scientific collecting. And then I think I learned how to do the conditions for the permits and, you know, I would help out if... Like a lot times when Marlys would get backlogged I would enter all the data into the computer and actually print the permit for her to give for signature.

DN: What was kind of a comical thing was one day when I there, shortly after.... Right... right... right after Marlys' funeral I believe I did go into regional office

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- for some business, and I stopped to talk to Judy. I didn't know that was her name, and Deanna?
- MC: Deanna.
- DN: Yeah. And, they said, "Oh, Dorothy, Dorothy! Can't you come and help us for awhile"? She said, "You could just open the envelopes". I said, "Okay. You tell Steve that I'll come if he wants me to, but just tell him to call me". And they said, "Well there's so much mail all the time". And I said, "Yes. I'm well aware of that".
- MC: Yeah.
- DN: Yeah.
- MC: Yep. We did have a lot of mail.
- DN: Yeah. Okay. So, did you... you never worked with any animals or anything then.
- MC: No. No.
- DN: Yeah, okay. Let's see, this is a lot of... How do you think the Service was perceived by people outside the agency? Like permittees. Did you ever have any problems with anybody wanting a permit and couldn't get it, or?
- MC: Probably the only one that I remember that Marlys dealt with was people that wanted a crow for a pet, or a raven. And I do remember... I don't... I... If I can remember, I think there was one person that did have a pet crow and... or maybe it was a raven, and then when Dave Purington was there he gave a gentleman in Missouri, I think it was a crow, for awhile. But, you know, I... I know sometimes the rehabbers that have the special purpose possession permits, you know, they're gung-ho to have...
- DN: Yes.
- MC: The rehab birds on the special purpose possession permit and, you know, Marlys was more in control of that. Deciding...
- DN: Yes. Okay. So, were there ever any special projects that you were involved in? I mean, just...
- MC: Probably the only thing I could think of, maybe, would be like a special mailing. Like when certain parts of the regulations would change we would have to send that out to every permittee.

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DN: Oh my gosh. And how many did we have in Region 3, about 10,000?

MC: Yeah. I'd say... there was a lot.

DN: I believe Region 3 probably had more than the other Regions.

MC: I think we do.

DN: Okay. So, you were never involved in any major issues. Or were you?

MC: I don't think I was.

DN: I don't think so.

MC: No.

DN: Okay. So, did you ever feel that there was an impediment to your job or your career?

MC: No.

DN: That's good. And so, your supervisors were...

MC: Well, most of the time it was you and Carol Darling and Marlys Bulander and Steve Wilds.

DN: Oh, Steve. That's right, because when he went to refuges...

MC: Yeah. Yeah.

DN: Did you notice a big difference when you moved from law enforcement into refuges? Was everything about the same as far as the work conditions and the expectations and that type of a thing?

MC: I think that stayed, for the most part, the same.

DN: That's good.

MC: You know, the only thing that I remember was that Steve questioned, you know, certain ways that... certain rules that we had, like say for the rehabbers or for scientific collecting people. He was, maybe, a little more particular about certain species of birds.

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DN: How about Bureau of Indian Affairs? Ev... did you ever have problems with the Indians that needed feathers and that type of thing?

MC: No. I didn't...

DN: I know you didn't work with those, but...

MC: I didn't work a lot with the In... the Native American permits. The only time that I can remember was a lot times... and I don't know if it was... if that actually happened in law enforcement, but when someone would graduate or if they knew a Native American was gonna pass away, we would try to expedite getting feathers for them. And that's, you know, that's changed I think, a lot since...

DN: Yeah.

MC: ... when we first started.

DN: Oh yeah. I'm sure permits have changed a lot...

MC: Yeah. I think...

DN: ...even since I left.

MC: Yeah, I think the... the way that they handle the... the Native American permits now are more efficient as far as where they're placed in line as far as becoming eligible to get feathers.

DN: Oh, okay.

MC: You know, I think whereas before it was...

DN: Okay.

MC: Well, you know how the mail (undecipherable) was.

DN: Yes.

MC: You know.

DN: Yeah.

MC: I mean, sometimes it would take days before you would actually pick up that paper and, you know, do something with it.

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DN: Right. Yeah. So, do you remember who was president when you started, or?

MC: Oh, man.

DN: Or who was Secretary of Interior or Director of Fish and Wildlife or Regional Director?

MC: Ohhh... senior moment. Well, I remember Harvey Nelson and I remember Jim Gritman and I remember...

DN: Bill?

MC: Huh?

DN: Bill Hartwig?

MC: Yeah, but... One other one. Oh, he wore glasses. Oh, what was his name?

DN: He wore... Travis Roberts? No.

MC: Nope. Nope. It was... I think Sharon worked for him. I know he was up front for awhile. Oh! I can picture him. I can't think of his name.

DN: That's a senior moment.

MC: Yeah.

DN: Okay. So, did you ever feel that the changes in the Administrations, like Republicans versus Democrats, affected the work that we did, or were expected to do?

MC: Nah.

DN: I don't think it affected our division that...

MC: No.

DN: In that part of it anyway.

MC: No. No.

DN: Yeah. Okay. So what do you think was the high point in your career? What did you feel was the high point? You must've had one.

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MC: Boy.

DN: Were you in a rut?

MC: The high point.

DN: Did you ever get a special award for anything?

MC: Yeah. I got a couple of those. In fact, I got one when I retired that about blew me.

DN: Well, that's good. Well...

MC: Because I was really surprised. It was... well, it wasn't... I think it was a special achievement award. I think it was.

DN: For what you had done. For doing all the permit work.

MC: Right. And that was when... that was during the time when Marlys was sick.

DN: Yes.

MC: And, you know, I mean we... I mean we all really tried to pitch in, but I tried to stay on top of things.

DN: Yes, and you had been with Marlys for so long, and you probably knew a lot about her work too, whereas the others didn't, so that was...

MC: Yeah.

DN: That's good that you got an award for that. 'Cause that is... it's vital. You know, you can't... People who get sick, they can't help it. And I know that they kinda... I know Marlys was the type that would be concerned about her job too.

MC: Oh.

DN: Even though as sick as she was, because that's just the type of person she was.

MC: Yeah.

DN: Very honest and very...

MC: Very dedicated.

DN: Yes.

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MC: Very dedicated.

DN: Yeah. It's too bad that she...

MC: Oh, yeah.

DN: Left us so early.

MC: Yep.

DN: What do you consider the low point in your career?

MC: Oh, geez.

DN: I remember one thing. See if you remember it.

MC: It has to be Jim.

DN: Huh?

MC: It has to be Jim?

DN: No.

MC: Low point. Oh, when I went to refuges and stayed for...

DN: Two weeks.

MC: I don't even think it was two weeks.

DN: No, I don't think it was. (Undecipherable) we both remember the same thing.

MC: That was a dumb move on my part. Really, it was.

DN: Yeah. Because I remember you came back to me and asked me if you could come back to law enforcement.

MC: Yep. Yep.

DN: And I was glad we could get you back.

MC: Yeah.



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DN: But it was an oppor... that was an opportunity for an advancement too, which we weren't able to give you, probably, right at that time.

MC: Right.

DN: Yeah.

MC: Yeah. That... that was it.

DN: And so, was Jim Nelson a low point too?

MC: Yeah. 'Cause I think, you know, I think I was treated unfairly, but...

DN: Yes.

MC: You know, that's... that's in the past.

DN: Yes.

MC: You know.

DN: He's working now at the VA hospital.

MC: He still is.

DN: Uh-hum. And Margo Ulrich saw him there 'cause she took her dad one day. Her dad has cancer now and so she took her dad there, and as she was walking down the hall she heard somebody say "Hey, yoo hoo"! And she thought it was... he was talking to her dad so she both... they both turned around and looked and he says, "How are you Margo?" And she said, "Oh my god, Jim!" 'Cause he's all white-haired now.

MC: Really. Now, wasn't her dad the one that was gonna write a book?

DN: No. Her father-in-law.

MC: Oh, her father-in-law. Okay. Did he ever do that?

DN: No. Well, they worked on it, but I don't know if they'll ever finish it or not. And Margo is... I told her to contact personnel because once the kids are in school all day... but of course she'd want to have summers off. But, I said, "You know, there just might be something you might be able to help with".

MC: Yeah.

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DN: So she probably will. I interviewed her, too, a couple weeks ago.

MC: Oh, okay.

DN: So. Yeah.

MC: Good.

DN: Okay. Did you ever have a dangerous or frightening experience? Like with Jim?

MC: Well, I guess not frightening.

DN: But, just stay away (undecipherable)?

MC: Yeah. I stayed away.

DN: Okay. Now, what was the most humorous experience you had?

MC: Oh geez. I suppose you know of one, huh?

DN: No, I can't think of....

MC: Humorous.

DN: I mean, you know, we tried to keep things kind of on a light... not get too serious and to have fun, but not... to still get our work done.

MC: Well, I know I did. I know I've done some silly things, you know.

DN: There ya go.

MC: Humorous. I know I mailed some things out that something was forgot in it.

DN: Oh. I don't remember that.

MC: Well, maybe it wasn't when I was working for you, but... Like when we do our annual reports?

DN: Oh yes.

MC: I mean, there was so many steps and, you know... this annual report got this piece of paper and this annual report didn't get it. You know, salvage got this one and

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some of them, you know, it says if you wish to renew your permit, well the piece of paper wasn't in some of them, so...

DN: Oh.

MC: But I don't know if that's humorous.

DN: Well, I bet when you realized that it was... everybody kind of giggled and laughed.

MC: Well, and then some of them I caught before they actually went out, so I was able to put them in new envelopes.

DN: Okay. Okay, so what do you tell other people about your career? Like your neighbors, or people that you haven't seen for awhile and they all say, "Oh, you're retired? Where did you work?" You know, I've had people do that to me, and...

MC: I guess most people that I talk to and tell them what my job is; they think that it sounds very interesting. You know. I mean, I en... I enjoyed it. I mean, I learned a lot about the environment. I learned a lot about birds, and just, you know, people... how dedicated permittees are, you know, taking care of them and, you know, protecting...

DN: Great.

MC: Protecting birds.

DN: Yeah. It's amazing, I know when I went there I didn't know a duck from a goose, I just knew they were birds.

MC: Well.

DN: And it was just interesting to learn what I did learn. And especially from the agent point of view too, because back then we didn't have the positions that we have now when I started and so I would be involved in a lot of things. Well, for eight months, at one time Mary and I was the only in there. I was the admin officer, the secretary, and the file... and permit clerk, and that...

MC: I can't imagine.

DN: Oh. Well, I worked from 4 to 8 on permits every night and... before we had the computers. So I'd try to type as fast as I could and if I got 10 an hour then I'd try to make the next hour make 12, to see what I could do. Eight months. Eight

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months. And we didn't have as many, as variety, you know, more complicated type permits then.

MC: Yeah. Started out...

DN: But, it is amazing what we learned and the thing I enjoy the most, now, about these interviews, too, is interviewing people that I've never met before in different divisions. I've had some research people that I've interviewed, and that's just very interesting. EPA, Federal Aid... all these things. Because we were kinda like the leper colony, although the agents worked close with refuges and they did work with a lot of others too, but it was just very, very interesting.

MC: Well, you can kinda see the whole picture.

DN: Yes. Yes.

MC: You know.

DN: And I, honest to god, sometimes feel I could write a book.

MC: Well, you should.

DN: Yeah. Well, my family wants me to write a book now about our family so, we'll just see.

MC: Ohhh.

DN: Okay. Did you ever observe any changes in the service as far as personnel or the environment?

MC: Not that I can remember.

DN: Okay. So, where do you see the Service heading in the next decade? Are you still interested in reading things about Fish and Wildlife? I mean, I'm sure you'll get mail, the reports to read.

MC: Yeah. Well, one thing that would interest me is, when I left there was some talk about centralizing permits and, you know, I don't know where that's going, if that will be brought up at the next permit meeting, but you know, they were talking about putting all the permits in one location or putting certain kinds of permits... spreading them out across the...

DN: Oh, I see.

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MC: ...states, and I'd be interested in seeing, you know, how that finalizes, if it does.

DN: I bet that would be interesting.

MC: Yeah. Yeah.

DN: And maybe then you could even do some consulting work, you know.

MC: Oh no, Dorothy. I'm retired.

DN: Okay. Well, that's about the end of the interview. And I'm glad that you did such a good job, and I want to thank you for your time.

MC: Well, thank you.

DN: Okay. You're welcome.

MC: Well, that wasn't too...

(End of side 1, Side 2 blank)