# Oral History Cover Sheet

**Name:** James Bayman
**Date of Interview:** March 31, 2004
**Location of Interview:** Residence of Mr. Bayman, Columbia River Gorge Area
**Interviewer:** Ed LaMotte

**Approximate years worked for Fish and Wildlife Service:** Around 32 years

**Offices and Field Stations Worked:** Willard National Fish Hatchery, Little White, and Spring Creek

**Positions Held:** Fish Culturist

**Most Important Projects:** Got to work with the YACC and YCC programs

**Colleagues and Mentors:** Ed LaMotte, Don Karens, Ed Horn, Clyde Adams, Dr. John Halver, Duane Gahimer, Benny Crocks, Ernie Hessler, Neil Woodall and Ernie Shanks.

**Most Important Issues:** Higher education for fish culturists.

**Brief Summary of Interview:** Has had an interest in hatcheries since he was ten years old and talks about his experience with a hatchery as a child and moving to Salem, Oregon where he finished high school. He talks about getting a job offer and starting work for the FWS in July of 1956, working for the Western Fish Nutrition Lab for a year then going back to the hatchery. He also talks about leaving the Service and why, what he did in his time away from the Service, eventually coming back to the Service and tells a few stories about his time with the Service and while he was working at the Nutrition Lab. He mentions some high and low points in his career, changes that have occurred in the Service, things that he thought should be addressed within hatcheries and fish cultures and his feelings about his career.

**Ed:** My name is Ed LaMotte, I'm an interviewer in Region 1 and today is March 31, 2004 and I'm in the residence of James Bayman, who retired as a fish culturist in 1999. He's spent most of his career, all of his career in the Columbia River Gorge and three hatcheries. And Jim is here and I'd like to start out, Jim, by asking what kind of background did you have and what prompted you to become interested in working for the service?

**James:** Well, as a young man about ten years old, I had been a fisherman for four years by then; I started fishing when I was six and everything in me centered on fishing. So one time my family had a picnic up at Naches River at Ash Ball Park. To get there you had to go by a little trout hatchery at Naches, on the Naches River in Yakima, Washington. And I saw that hatchery and I didn't say anything but I, as a ten year old, I rode by bicycle 20 miles one way to go up to that hatchery to see what was going on; I saw those big blue trout in there and it was really interesting to me. And, of course, I took my fishing pole and I used to fish down on the other end of it but that was another story. But anyway, I got very interested; I'd go up and I'd spend the day with those guys and probably got in their way and they'd say "Here's that kid again out here, getting in the way." But they'd let me feed the fish a little bit and so I went up there during my summer days. I'd probably go out there maybe two or three times a week and it weathered my appetite for fishing and wanting to work at a fish hatchery, so in the meantime, my mother was divorced and moved to Salem, Oregon where I went and finished high school. Well, as a junior in high school I had continued to be a fisherman and wanted to work in a fish hatchery yet so I went up to the state of Oregon to the Fish and Wildlife Service in Portland and interviewed the Oregon State Fish Commissioner and used his information to write a thesis in my English class on fish hatcheries. After I graduated from high school in June of 1956, I put my application in with the Fish and Wildlife Service and a couple other jobs and so it was July (unclear) about July 25 or so I got a letter from Lew Garlick, who was at that time the acting manager of hatcheries, I don't know exact position he had, but anyway, they offered me a job at Willard, Washington as a GS 1, $2690 a year. And it was a dream come true for me at the time, but I'd put in other applications on the very same day that I got the application from them. I had job offers from Firestone Tire and Rubber Company and like (unclear) Block and Supply in Salem but I chose the fish hatchery cuz that was always the dream come true and so; graduating in the first week in June, I went to work for the Fish and Wildlife Service in July.

And moved with my wife that I had just married to Willard National Fish Hatchery, which was built in 1953 and this was 1956 so it was a fairly new hatchery. And was built as a Mitchell Act mitigation hatchery for overrun; they had no possible way of having a return of adult salmon because of impassible falls on the Little White Salmon River, so. At the time I thought it was the greatest thing and it was what I'd always dream to be able to do. As you can see, the pay wasn't much but the rent at that time was $12.25 every two weeks. And the hatchery road had still not been paved and the troughs and incubation was not finished and there were screens being made for the incubators to incubate the eggs in; there was a lot of just finish work that we did. And being an overrun hatchery we weren't always a busy hatchery with rearing fish but at that time we did go ahead and we were very busy cuz at that time there were no limits on how many eggs you could take and programs were what you got and we always seemed to have an overrun there so we always had fish at the hatchery and it was a forty pond hatchery with a reuse and an additional ten ponds, which the Western Fish Nutrition Lab used part of the time. But my first year there, I ended up going down to the Fish Nutrition Lab and worked in the wet lab for Dr. Halver. And stayed there for a year and he wanted me to stay but I wanted to go back to fish hatcheries where I really had always dreamed of working so I did and so I started actually working in fish hatcheries in 1957. And then during the time frame that, at that time we were still feeding the meat diets where it was the beef livers and pork livers and this type of thing and something that you have a larger crew on the place, on the hatchery, because they were, it was more labor intensive than it is these days. And we would have one or two or three people just feed fish for the day and you know preparing the fish diet and feeding it with air (unclear) and (unclear) and it entailed a lot of work. But anyway, that went on like that until about 19, oh 1960, '62 there came this marvelous thing called an organ moist pellet that we started feeding. And the company by the name of Bio-products (unclear, some background noise)… made to die initially and then Don (unsure of last name) who at that time was the station manager wasn't exactly sure that that diet was optimum for the cold temperatures that we experienced at Willard National Fish Hatchery at the time. So we proceeded to do some experiments with our own diets and did make some variations. I think there's four variations of it and we did get a diet that was better than theirs but it was also much more costlier so with the advent of dollars and cents involved it was back to the organ moist pellet. And so I stayed there at that hatchery from 1956 to '67 and at that time is when the Service decided you

couldn't work your way up through the ranks and become a hatchery manager. They went to the program where they got their managers as college graduates or from schools that were (unclear) on just hatchery. And so it, they said, "Well, you could go ahead and work your way on through and pass it," a test, which I did then. They still turned me down so I got angry with it and lost heart and interest in it and had an offer from Corps of Engineers as a Construction Inspector so I did go to work for them, which was an old man's job that was, and I was a 30 year old young man and I couldn't stand sitting on the seat cushions in a pick-up for eight hours and doing a little bit of pencil work. So I only lasted with them for about a year and for that reason and I couldn't stand the inactivity of the job. And so I had an offer in the meantime to go to work for Goodyear and, Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company, and so I accepted it as a Credit Manager Trainee and worked my way up through the ranks to become a store manager in Vancouver, Washington in 1971. So it took me '68 to '71 to become a store manager, in which I, I, I did but it took five moves in three years with my young family and so they wanted me to move again and I told them no, so I went to work at a, as managing a new car agency in St. Helens, Oregon. I lasted there about four years and it was labor intensive to being seven days a week and I can remember the days of a five day week job that the phones didn't ring and every call wasn't a problem from somebody, so I went ahead and went in one day and talked to Smith and he was, I asked him if there was any job openings and opportunities and he just answered back (unclear) was "When do you want to go to work?" And I said "Two weeks." And I thought I was just, you know, (unclear) true story but he said "Yes," he says, "You even have lower river preference if you want to come back." So he says, "Fill out the paperwork before you leave." So I filled out an application and within about three weeks I was back with the Service, and went back up to Little White and worked for Jack (Bolder?), who was the manager, and Jack Manning was the assistant manager. And I stayed there for ten years and it was a very interesting thing: I had some stints with the (unclear) YACC and the YCC programs and seemed like I was the fellow that got the opportunity to work with the kids but I welcomed that because I've always liked young people. And I worked there and then Ed LaMotte was moved into the Spring Creek Hatchery and I'm not exactly sure but I think '84, '85 in there somewhere. So he was looking for a replacement for Al (unclear of last name) who was an old legendary lead man at Spring Creek National Fish Hatchery. And I had worked with Al in earlier years and he came to work in '57 and I went to work in 1956; I'd

been there a year when he came. He went on, I was a young man at that time but anyway, I went to work for Ed at Spring Creek in 1986, in January of 1986 and worked there 'til I retired in December 31 of 1999. I've had some great high points in my career and I had some, of course, low points and everybody has that in whatever endeavor you have; it doesn't matter if it's fish hatcheries or being the President of the United States, you have ups and downs. But some of my lower points was the time when I had to quit and go to work for the Corps of Engineers because their lack of being able to advance me into management. And that was one of my low points. Some of the high points I had with Ed at Spring Creek. We, he took over a program (unclear) more or less on the rocks and had been severely, poorly managed and with his good management, and I had some ideas that I've always wanted to use, and he gave me the head to be able to do it. And so I did it and I think we made some real progress at the hatchery and it was really a great thing and it's proven now so that the great runs that they're having again right now, of course, mainly because of the good fish culture we have but also because the ocean conditions have changed so maybe all of the talk that's been going on about getting rid of some dams and things has just been something where we've some bad conditions for, wasn't conducive to good fish culture. Some of the big changes I've also seen is the addition of additional people that are not necessarily production people but people who are staff people that really don't have much to do with production of fish but find themselves in there with a job (unclear), taking a slice of the pie and I just feel like maybe we need to take a long look at what we're doing here and get back to some basics with fish culture and putting some money where you're going to get the most bang for the buck with this and realize that there's a lot conjecture with wild fish versus hatchery fish. Well, with a hundred years of fish culture, there's not a lot of true wild fish left; there's some, probably in some of the coastal streams there are, but as far as the Columbia River and some of these major rivers with, that have had hatcheries on them for over a hundred years, there aren't many pure stock, much pure stock left. And for as far as I can see, we need to have the biologist, they need to have it but most of the times, things that I see wrong is that we don't utilize what they do. I mean they've got a hundred years of experiments but they don't seem to be able to do anything with them or they don't get in and analyze them to the point where they're usable. And especially with the downstream migrants, which has been a problem, and I understand now that they're starting to do it at a, but, you know, not having to put into the dams to start with an initiative that now it's

a costly endeavor to be able to change it so when you get the little guys, juveniles, downstream safe. Some of the fellows that I worked with over the years when I started in 1956, Walt (unclear) was acting manager and then Abe (unsure of last name) came down from (unclear) was an old time hatchery manager, the one that managed the Hagerman Trout Hatchery in Idaho. And then we left we, Don Karens? came to be manager, who had been back at the Cortland New York School that all the managers did for a year prior to being reassigned. And he stayed there for a while and Don was there when I left and then after I left, I understood he transferred to be manager at the Carson Hatchery. And there's been a number of hatchery managers that, Ed Horn was one of the original managers at Willard and then worked for Benny Crocks and Clyde Adams, that's at Spring Creek, both of those, Benny was at Little White and I'd have, being an overrun hatchery we would supply labor for them to spawn the fish during the spawning periods. We used to grind up the old salmon flesh and feed it back to the young when we did the meat diets, and we just froze that and we were feeding back a lot of bad things to our fish but after we, after about a year or two of doing that, they figured that we should take it to Warrenton and have it made into salmon meal and pasteurize it which got away, did away with some of the bacteria problems and but, we used it for, as part of our diet. And the diets would vary quite a bit just due to the fact that you couldn't get certain ingredients; you would have to end up substituting. Sometimes we substituted things that weren't the right things for the fish but there really wasn't a choice in what we did with that. Some of the other things that was different for me when I came back to work in 1978, after being gone for about eleven years or so or about (unclear) about ten years, was the, at that time they called it FRO which I didn't even know what it was or what it meant or who it was or what it was for, but since then it has, it's changed its name, I guess, to FAO and I guess it has a place in hatchery systems now. But still, it's another place where some of money goes that it's non-producing and I feel like we need to, to really take a long look at what we're doing, how we're doing it and we can't be closing hatcheries now; we need to depend on them more and more. And the fish culture is getting better. I admit fish culture I was having, been real good but I think fish culture is getting better and I think the management system which they chose at the time, which was much to my chagrin with the managers coming out of college, I think, was a bit advantageous to the Fish and Wildlife Service and I think it was probably a plus thing to do. And I see Fish and Wildlife Service being a stronger organization now that most of the

states because of that. And it's a, it's one of the things that I, that you hate to admit, but I saw that and I see it and I know it's a fact now. But that's about all I have to say other than the fact that it was a lot of fun. I wished I had another 30 years of it but it was time to move on. It was a great, great time and the people you worked with and was, it was a lot of fun and I can tell you some chronicle stories and some things and the flooding that I've gone through at some of these hatcheries. We've, I've gone through two, two 100-year floods already so I don't know how old that makes me but anyway we've had some real trouble flood times. One year at Willard we had 48 inches of snow on the ground one day, the next day it was all gone; we had 13 inches of rain in 24 hours and it was 70 degrees at midnight. I went to work to fight the flood in a tee shirt and it was, and it was in December so it was, it was really a phenomenon. It washed the road out to the main highway down, going up the gorge and it was really quite, quite a flood. Then some of the comical things, of course, happen when you, when you're working and one of the guys I was working with one day we had this (unclear) cleaner and it had wooden handles on it and this other guy that was working with me on the other side, it took two guys to run it, well he was pushing down on it real hard to allow to let the water go by; he's pushing, he just did a head first right in it and went clear under but he got out so fast he had a dry spot on both sides of his pants. But it was middle of winter and cold but he didn't spend much time in there. And I think that, and then another time getting a yellow jacket nest out with a carbon (unclear), fire extinguisher down underneath the end of a tail race and there was no water in the ponds and I was going to spray it and guy was behind me and I didn't realize it but he picked up a long handled net and when I got right up close to there, that net flew right over the top of me and knocked that great big yellow jacket nest that was about a foot across and it flew down on the bottom and the yellow jackets come out and started busting on me and I thought, he was already up the road laughing and I, needless to say, got stung a couple of times but it was a, I made a fast exit too. But that, I think that about covers it for me. Thank you very much.

**Ed:** Jim earlier in your talk you were, mentioned the Western Fish Nutrition Lab under John Halver and you worked there for about a year or so. What, what did you do there?

**James:** Okay, I worked at the wet lab and a gentleman by the name of Duane Gahimer was the, was the leader of that and when John brought me down he wanted me to learn a little bit about the fish cultures so, there and I did. What I did was I mixed test diets and it was mostly an amino acid study. And he had done it on most of the cell (unclear) and I was continuing when I was there, he was working with Fall Chinook Salmon. And so I would mix up all the test diets; a control would have a complete amino acid in, the test would maybe have like a folic acid, would be minus folic acid. And then we would observe the differences in the behavior of the fish and the mortality and any of the physical characteristics that might arise out of the demise of one amino acid out of a complete. So it was very interesting; I did, of course, my share of maintenance in this type of thing and they also had an animal husbandry there too with rabbits; they did test diets on rabbits also. But, of course, that's a different ball game and what I was interested in with the fish and I did most of the maintenance at the, with the troughs and this type of thing. And… it was an interesting time frame for me but it just wasn't what I wanted to do and it, the people there were, were very interesting folks and there was probably about seven or eight biologists there who worked on this and (unclear of name) was there, who was a (unclear) pathologist. Ernie Hessler was there, who did the blood work and Neil Woodall was a researcher there. Ernie Shanks…can't think of any of the rest of them. But there was a, oh…Crosston was there, I forget what his first name was. But there were several of these fellows that came and went and they were all researchers in, in this diet nutrition and there was a counterpart for this, this facility in Portland, New York. And this was the west coast portion of it and Doctor Halver has since gone on to University of Washington as a professor up there in the fisheries program. That's about it. I can remember one thing, I'll just go on with this, they decided to do a study with Spring Chinook and they injected with some radioactive materials of some kind. Well, the fish turned a bright orange and their fish eyes, the eyes in the fish turned pink and they all turned belly up so. The, that program did not last and so here we were with some radioactive fish, dead fish so they took them down, this is something probably I don't know if I should say but anyway took them down and buried them in a, dug a big, deep pit and buried them down there and the next thing you know the bears had them dug up and so we had bears running around eating radioactive fish (laughing). But it was, it was just a one-time thing. The rest of the Spring Chinook that they had netted out of Bonneville Dam (unclear) fish ladder they released in the river, in the Little White Salmon

River, which is another great fish cultural marvel to do but it also created the Spring Chinook run that is there now. Okay.

**Ed:** Jim, is there any other projects or experiments that you were involved with on hatcheries that were really of an interest to you and that you might want to pass on to us?

**James:** I really didn't have, to be honest with you, Ed, I didn't have a lot of, of ability to be able to do that with managements systems and that existed in fish hatcheries. The fish culturist wasn't taken as somebody who's had some new ideas and maybe some things that would, that would work better than what was already in place. But when I got to Spring Creek, I had that ability to be able to do some of that and I got to be able to do some the ideas that I had in spawning. And as you know, we ended up doing a form of individual spawning, which is never, you know, in a very large scale…egg take that we had at Spring Creek. And so that, that was a really a good, positive thing that I liked of what we did and knew it was the right thing to do. The other thing was, like you said, was when the, when we were going from the meat diet to the, to the pellet, organ moist pellet, to be able to experiment with the different diets that we had; was interesting and was something that I always thought was a positive thing. Along with the getting the, we used an old banker method of feeding the fish. All it was, was just like (unclear) it was just fish with, as the fish would grow up everyday they'd be going and figure the fish food on a daily basis and go out and get the water temperature and you'd, you utilize that and that was clear back in 1956, '57 when we did that and that was very interesting to me to be able to do that. But other than that I don't…some of the things that are in the hatcheries today are, need, they need to have a better communications system so that other people know what other people are doing, in other words they need to share their ideas and some of their, and some of the things of how they operate and what they do; some of the, not just the hatchery managers but the fish culturists, too. We had one meeting and with that and it was a symposium workshop in Pendleton, Oregon and I had a part in getting that put together and it, it needs to happen more. I mean, I don't think they need to do it every year but they need to do it like every two or three years. And keep a (unclear) each another of the hatcheries are doing and if they've got some new ideas to go ahead and share them instead of everybody keeping these ideas for themselves or not realizing that it could help another place;

that they aren't, that they aren't doing a good job. So these things need to be addressed and maybe it will help the Service in the long run.

**Ed:** Jim, you spent, you spent your whole career with the Service in the Columbia River Gorge Area. Why don't you kind of tell us what is unique about the gorge and the fish that come back here (unclear) Columbia River…is it a special place to you?

**James:** Well, the Columbia Gorge is different in the fact you're almost in an enclosed area. I mean it's not like it's, it's shrouding you, but it is in a way you don't, it's a different place to live. It's a beautiful place to live and the river itself is very unique in that it drains the area that it does; people don't understand how much area this Columbia River does drain; it's a drainage system that encompasses clear into Canada and goes clear over into Montana and, and starts out and runs up into Canada and back down through and all of the feeder streams, there are some major streams like the, like the Snake River and, and it's just a…it's mind boggling to think of the area it drains and the size of it. The fish that are here are…are…the river houses all kinds of fish. It's amazing the amount of species that are here and for all of the species that there are for them to be able to co-exist; it's a great thing. I mean they have a (unclear) fish of all kinds, they have sturgeon, they have shad, they have eels, they have salmon, they have steelhead, all of these fish being (unclear) and they all come and go and use this for their continuation of their species. The hatcheries have been here for a long, long time. Most of the hatcheries, at least where I worked, have been here a hundred years and a hundred years of fish culture and some of the hatcheries (unclear). Before hatcheries, the Indians used to use the salmon for their, for part of their bartering and for their, over the winter they would use them for food, they would dry them, and over the years, like Lewis and Clark, and even utilized the salmon and bartered it for food with the Indians. And right now the, with the upcoming of Bolt decision, which granted the Indians half of the fish and that has created a real hardship on management and, but the river itself has sustained, continues to sustain and will continue if they make, if we make the right decisions it's all in our hands now; it's not, not in Mother Nature's hand so much any more, it's in man's hands and we need to be able to make some right decisions and think environmentally and not, not (unclear). But other than that, I continue to live here; I am on the east side of the gorge now but the gorge gets in your blood

and it becomes part of you. And you may go to other parts of the world, other parts of the United States but there's none more beautiful than right here. The weather diversifies from tremendous amounts of rain to where I live, we get maybe 25 inches of rain clear to like 100 inches of rain in the Cascade Locks Area where the mountains meet the Cascades, where the Cascade Mountains meet the clouds and rain is dropped right there.

**Ed:** Thanks Jim, one more last question Jim. What, what would you like to tell others, one final statement about your career?

**James:** Well, totally my career was a bit, the Fish and Wildlife Service only got a small portion of what I had to offer. I could have given them so much more if they would have given me the opportunity but they did not. And I feel badly about it in a way but in another way all I could do, what I could do and they chose to…only grant me certain amounts of, of power and (unclear) so and the last station I was did that and before that I was a young man with a lot more energy and had a lot of good thoughts and everything but never was able to initiate it with the system that goes on and how they manage so. They need to take a long look at how they do things and I, but I really feel like it, like it's getting better but it still requires some work. They need to understand that they have some people there that can, can help the Fish and Wildlife Service. And with me, I don't have any regrets with it; I mean, I knew where I stood with that a long time ago back in 1966. I understand, understood where I was at and how the Fish and Wildlife Service felt about its fish culturists and it still hasn't changed a whole lot; but maybe some time in the future it will. I've always thought that eventually fish culturists will come, go to college and they'll have a four-year degree like everybody else and maybe have a more equal voice in management of it. Even though everybody will have an equal education, some will just be in administration and some will be in actual working part of the bowels of the hatchery.

**Ed:** Well thank you Jim, thank you for telling us your story.