INTERVIEW WITH GAYLORD BOBER
BY DOROTHY NORTON, NOVEMBER 13, 2002
MORRIS, MINNESOTA
ALSO PRESENT; MARILYN BOBER

MS. NORTON: Good morning Gaylord, it's nice to meet you. We'll do this interview, which will then go in to the Training Center and will be transcribed and put into the Archives. The first think I want to know is your birthplace and date.

MR. BOBER: I was born on May 26, 1942 in Jackson, Michigan.

MS. NORTON: What are your parents' names?

MR. BOBER: My father is Floyd Bober. My mother is Gladys.

MS. NORTON: What was their education and jobs?

MR. BOBER: My dad was an electrician. I think he worked for about forty-five years as an electrician. My mother was a Registered Nurse.

MS. NORTON: That's good! Where did you spend your early years?

MR. BOBER: All in Jackson, Michigan.

MS. NORTON: How did you spend your early years? What did you do?

MR. BOBER: The same things most people do. I went to school. When I was a kid I did a lot of hunting and fishing. I worked in a neighbor's apple orchard.

MS. NORTON: What high school did you got to? What year did you graduate?

MR. BOBER: Napoleon High School. It's a little town south and east of Jackson. I graduated in 1960.

MS. NORTON: Did you go to college then?

MR. BOBER: I went to junior college in Jackson then. After that I went to Michigan State University.

MS. NORTON: What degree did you get?

MR. BOBER: I got a double major. I got a degree in Conservation Education and Wildlife Management. I finished in about 1965.

MS. NORTON: Did you go on for a Master's or a Ph. D., or anything?

MR. BOBER: I was thinking about it, but I got drafted into the Army. It was right during the middle of Vietnam at that time.

MS. NORTON: So, you were in the Army?

MR. BOBER: Oh, definitely!

MS. NORTON: How many years?

MR. BOBER: I can tell you exactly; two years, ten months and seven days!

MS. NORTON: What were your duty stations?

MR. BOBER: I went to basic training and advanced individual training at Fort Dix, New Jersey. I went to the Infantry OCS at Fort Benning, Georgia. I was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant in the Chemical Corps. Then I went to Fort McClellan, Alabama for training as a Chemical Officer. I was sent to Fort Carson, Colorado. I spent about a year and ten months there. Most of that time I was actually the Fish and Wildlife Manager of Fort Carson. I kind of lucked out. I was teaching at the Chemical School at Fort Carson and the officer they had as the Fish and Wildlife Manager got shipped to Vietnam. Talk about the luck of the draw! They just started going through officer's records looking for somebody that was qualified to be the Fish and Wildlife Manager. I am lucky that my name started with "B". They got to the B's and found me.
It was just like working for FWS, being in the military.

MS. NORTON: You didn't have any overseas duty?

MR. BOBER: Nope.

MS. NORTON: Did your military service relate in any way to your employment with FWS? I guess it kind of did, huh?

MR. BOBER: Right, I spent a year and a half as the Fish and Wildlife Manager at Fort Carson.

MS. NORTON: When you were in school, did you have any mentors or courses that especially stuck with you?

MR. BOBER: There was a fellow at junior college that taught Ornithology. His name was Robert Whiting. He was a fantastic field biologist. I just enjoyed him. I think all of

the students that had him did. I spent a lot of time in the field with him; watching and observing the birds.

MS. NORTON: That's good. Can you tell me how, when and where you met your wife?

MR. BOBER: I met her on a blind date at Michigan State University. It must have been 1962 or 1963 when we met. We got married on April 4, 1964 at the Catholic Student Center, just off of campus at Michigan State.

MS. NORTON: Do you have any children?

MR. BOBER: We have two sons.

MR. NORTON: What are their names? What are they doing now?

MR. BOBER: Michael is working in Minneapolis now. He lives in Lanoka. [?] He's the youngest. The oldest son is Curke. He is presently driving a truck for a living. Previous to that he worked for a private company that ran prisons. He was in charge of maintenance. He was at three of them. He was at Appleton, which is just south of here. Then he was in Burlington, Colorado and another place in southern Georgia. He married a girl with three children. They ended up coming back here, and he's kind of between jobs right now.

MS. NORTON: Why did you want to work for the FWS when you first got out of college?

MR. BOBER: I wanted to work with wildlife. You either worked for one of the states, or you worked for the federal government. I preferred the federal government because they mainly worked with waterfowl. That was my main interest. I had a good friend from college who was presently, when I got out of the military…. Well, let me back up. Before I went in to the military, we went a visited a friend of mine who was working at Seney National Wildlife Refuge. His name was Jerry Updike. When I got out of the military, we went and visited Jerry on the way back from Colorado. Jerry was in North Dakota. I had sent all of my applications in to the various regional offices and Jerry suggested that I stop in Minneapolis on the way through. I did and I had an interview with Forrest Carpenter and Goodman Larson. I spent about half of a day there in the regional office. Then, I went back to Michigan and went to work. About three weeks later, Forrest Carpenter's assistant called up and asked me if I'd like to work for FWS. I said, "Sure!" Next thing I knew, Jack Frye from Shiawassee called me. I went up and interviewed with him. The regional office had already made up its mind that that's where I was going to be.

MS. NORTON: So, that was your first position with FWS?

MR. BOBER: Right, at Shiawassee National Wildlife Refuge.

MS. NORTON: Where did you go from there?

MR. BOBER: Well, from there, I went back to the military. They called me up from Fort Carson and asked if I'd come back and be the Fish and Wildlife Manager of Fort Carson as a civilian. The FWS was going through very bad economical times at that time. In fact, they were mothballing from refuges. I was at Shiawassee and they had eliminated the manager's position at Atawaphenwa Refuge [?] That refuge was actually being managed from Shiawassee. It was almost impossible to get transferred. So we had adopted our oldest son at that time, and we wanted to adopt another child. Colorado had children. Michigan did not, at that time. So everything worked out good to go back to Colorado.

MS. NORTON: When you finished that you can back to the FWS?

MR. BOBER: Right. I went to the Benson Wetlands Management District, which became the Morris WMD.

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

MR. BOBER: When I started at Shiawassee as a GS-5 the benefits weren't bad, but the pay was very, very low. Shiawassee is in the Saginaw/Flint area of Michigan. At that time you could have made substantially much more money than I was making, as a college graduate. You could have made more money sweeping the floors for General Motors. In fact, those people who worked for GM lived much better than we did as federal employees. They had full health benefits. If you went in to a drug store to get a prescription at that time, the first thing they'd ask you was if you worked for General Motors! If you did, you'd give them your little card and you had all of your bills paid in total.

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

MR. BOBER: At Shiawassee I spent a lot of time with Jack Frye and his wife. They had some really nice kids. I spent a lot of time with some of the state officers that I worked with; primarily, the state conservation officers. We also spent a lot of time with one of the clerks. She came on to the Refuge after a time. Her name was Janice Turner.

MS. NORTON: Did you have promotion opportunities when you first started?

MR. BOBER: It used to be that you had to move if you wanted to get promoted. They'd start you out at GS-5 and you could get maybe up to a GS-7 where you were, then you'd have to move. That's what happened to me. I moved to the Department of Defense and got a GS-9. Then I came back into the FWS as a GS-9 at Benson.

MS. NORTON: What did you do for recreation when you were out at the different refuges?

MR. BOBER: At Shiawassee we worked so much, we….

MS. NORTON: That was your recreation!

MR. BOBER: Yeah! I never hunted when I was at Shiawassee. I fished a little bit. During the hunting season at Shiawassee, they had all of these managed hunting programs. Goose hunting would start about first of October and go until close to the fifteenth of November. It was seven days a week. We'd sign goose hunters in, usually well before daylight. We had a drawing for which blind they'd have in the morning. So you had the goose hunters in, and you had to check them out too. The whole staff just about, was involved in that project. That's would take care of the first day of the fall. Then, half of the refuge was opened to gun, deer hunting. There were only three of us who had law enforcement authority. We pretty much kept track of the deer hunters for fifteen days. Then you got to December the 1st. At that time Shiawassee had a managed archery hunt, where the entire refuge was open because the deer herd was very large and they were trying to keep the population down. We had two weeks of deer hunting. So the fall season at Shiawassee were….

MS. NORTON: So that really was your recreation!

MR. BOBER: You managed hunters. That's basically what you did for two months.

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

MR. BOBER: I think we lived in nice spots. We didn't get rich, but we made enough money to support the family. My oldest boy especially likes the out of doors. He likes to hunt and fish. He still does. He loves western Minnesota, and doesn't want to leave it, even though the job opportunities out here aren't very great, here in the hinterland, so to speak.

MS. NORTON: So you left the FWS when you retired? When was that?

MR. BOBER: Right. I retired two years ago. [1999-2000]

MS. NORTON: What was your grade and title when you retired?

MR. BOBER: I was a GS-12. I was principle Assistant Manager at the Morris Wetland Management District.

MS. NORTON: What kind of training did you received for your jobs?

MR. BOBER: Compared to now, some of it was very funny; ridiculous almost. I remember the day that I started for Jack Frye. That would have been in about 1972 or someplace back in there. Jack gave me a badge and a gun and said, "By the way, you have law enforcement. Put the gun in the desk drawer, and I'll tell you when you can take it out." I started working for Jack Frye in February of 1970. [Mr. Bober has been looking through papers.] During the first fall that I worked for Jack, he sent me out with a lot of state conservation officers. I kind of got some on the job law enforcement training. That's king of the way they did it back in those days. Later, when I came to the Morris WMD, in 1977, they finally gave me some official law enforcement training. They sent us to FLETC, the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center for three weeks. They ran everybody who was doing law enforcement through down there and we all got three weeks of it. Also that spring, they had what they called a Refuge Manager's Academy. They were mainly trying to train GS-5s and 7s. But there was a big bunch of GS-9s who had never been to a Refuge Academy and so they had one class for GS-9s that I attended. That was in Beckley, West Virginia at the Bureau of Mines training facility.

MS. NORTON: What hours did you work? On the refuge it was probably twenty-four hours a day.

MR. BOBER: When I was Shiawassee, there was a lot of hunting in the fall at that time. And like I say, during a couple of those years there was a big banding program where we were banding a lot of geese. So we put in some long days. It was enjoyable work though. One year, there was a biologist named Jerry Cummings who was sent up from the Mark Twain Refuge. There was a big study of the Tennessee Valley Authority goose flock. We were supposed to band eight thousand birds, and we came close to it. For the flock of birds, the population wasn't going, or increasing as fast as they were hoping it would. We were banding a lot of birds because they were trying to figure out where the mortality was taking place. As we began to band the birds, so many of them were re-traps; meaning that they had already been banded, but nobody had ever been able to get the data all together and look at it. I remember Jerry went to the bird-banding laboratory in Maryland and he got the computer tapes. Nobody on the east coast had time to run the tapes to look at the data so the FWS paid Perdue University to process the tapes. They found out that the birds were being heavily over-shot at that time, in southern Illinois.

MS. NORTON: I remember some of that from working in law enforcement! What tools or instruments did you use in your jobs?

MR. BOBER: In the early days we didn't have a lot of the tools that we ended up with later in my career. It was a pair of binoculars and a pair of hip boots, a paper and pencil. Later in my career, computers came in. I remember that early in my work, they had put neck collars on some swans and geese. Later they even used radio collars on geese and swans. Obviously, later in my career, computers became a very big thing. I can remember when I first started at the Benson WMD everybody had a phone on their desk, but the office only had two phone lines. We did not have a fax. We had a copy machine. The clerk would try and do all of the copying one day a week because the machine stunk so badly, and it was a two-step process. You had to use special pink paper. You had to run a negative first, before you could run a positive. By the time I retired we had a Xerox machine and I think we were making something like 2,000 copies a month. We had a fax machine with it's own designated line. The office had over eight phone lines coming in to it.

MS. NORTON: How did you feel about the animals and waterfowl that you worked with?

MR. BOBER: I enjoyed them. I spent career observing them and trying to learn about the waterfowl; the ducks and other birds. I am still continuing to do that now that I am retired. If you look around my yard, I have several birdhouses and feeders. I still have nesting structures up for nesting waterfowl. I've got eight wood duck boxes up across the front of my yard. I have nesting cylinders for mallards that is east of the house here. Along the driveway there's a big marsh. I have a floater up there that produces two mallard nests and usually a goose nest every year.

MS. NORTON: So it's a pretty positive attitude you have towards the birds!

MR. BOBER: Right! I enjoyed working with them.

MS. NORTON: What support did you receive locally, regionally, or federally when you were in these jobs?

MR. BOBER: The regional office, when I started used to keep a pretty close eye on you. They were very familiar with what you were doing on your station, especially at Shiawassee. When I first came to the Benson WMD they also kept a close eye on us. It wasn't a "close eye" so much as they were very aware of what you were doing. It seemed that as time went on, the regional office got more and more involved in paper work and reports and let loose of the field more and more. The field operated much more independently as I got closer to retirement. The oversight was much less.

MS. NORTON: How do you think the FWS was perceived by people outside of our agency?

MR. BOBER: When I worked for the refuge in Michigan, we were looked on very positively because everyone was interested in all of the waterfowl that used the refuge and the deer hunt attracted a great many people. The boundary was established and everybody knew exactly where the refuge was. There wasn't much going on to generate much adverse public reaction. When I came to the Benson WMD, the wetland program was controversial and the regional office did not always understand the controversy that took place out here. It was a program that was growing. We were continuously buying acreage, which was controversial in the local community. Some of the neighboring farmers felt that they were in competition with the government when we bought a piece of property. The other thing that took place is that when the government originally started the wetlands program they thought they were going to buy these acres out here with the wetlands on them, throw some signs up around them and walk away. They didn't think they were going to have to do anything with them. Well, the upland had been farmed so it needed to be seeded. We were in the middle of an intensively farmed area. If you had any weeds on the federal property, it was very controversial because they didn't want weed seeds blowing over on to the private property. The neighbors quite often wanted to drain their property. Since the government was buying wetlands, which means you usually, had to lower the property and that was where the ditches needed to go through in order to facilitate draining the neighbors. There was a lot of controversy with the County Commissioners and the neighbors, there still is, up to this day.

MS. NORTON: What projects were you involved in?

MR. BOBER: At Shiawassee we rebuilt a lot of the dikes on the refuge. One of the very first people that I met from the regional office was an engineer named John Ramsour who is a friend of mine to this day. I think that the first week I was on the job, the Manager took the week off. He actually went to the regional office for part of the week. I was there and John called up and said, "I'm coming out for a pre-construction conference." I said, "Okay". The next think I did was to call Mr. Greenwalt. I asked him, "What's a pre-construction conference?" He said, "Don't worry about it, let Ramsour handle it." They rebuilt most of the dikes on the refuge were rebuilt at that time. Most of them were on the Shiawassee River. They prevented the refuge from flooding. At Morris, I enjoyed working with engineers, so they had me be the local coordinator. The Benson district became the Morris district and we built a new office when they moved. It was just under a million dollars for when they rebuilt the new office here in Morris. After we had been in the new office for about three years, they built a new shop facility. That budget was just over a million dollars. I spent a lot of time working with the regional office engineering staff and contractors on those. There's been many, many projects in the field that I have been involved with at the Morris WMD, building over three hundred miles of boundary fence because we had a lot of problems with the neighbors when we first got here. The old saying that "good

fences make good neighbors" is true, but it's a very expensive way to deal with your neighbors also.

MS. NORTON: What were the major issues that you had to deal with?

MR. BOBER: I spent most of my career at Morris, so when you ask about my career, I think of Morris. One of the big issues, when I got to Morris was that when I first got there, a lot of the boundaries were not posted. Nobody knew where the boundaries were actually located. The first five to six years we spent over half of the time trying to straighten out boundary problems; getting the neighbors to back off of the federal property and get a good line established so that the neighbors knew the difference between the federal property and their property. Basically what it was was that the neighbors were farming the federal property because it didn't cost them anything.

MS. NORTON: You were able to resolve those issues?

MR. BOBER: Right. There was a program called the Bicentennial Land Heritage Program that gave refuges a lot of money. That's what we used a lot of that money for, to buy good equipment and to build a lot of fences and to seed a lot of acres.

MS. NORTON: Do you feel that that was the most pressing issue?

MR. BOBER: That was an issue for managing the property that the government owned. But there was another issue that took place, and continues today. This is the continual drainage and elimination of private wetlands. I don't know exactly how you can address that, but the government had messed around long enough and probably ninety percent of the private wetlands in Minnesota have been drained. No matter what the law says, they are continuing to drain, even today. Eventually, most of the private wetlands in the state of Minnesota will be eliminated. The wildlife that depends on those wetlands will cease to exist.

MS. NORTON: Were there any impediments to your jobs, or career?

MR. BOBER: No, not really. I enjoyed Morris. I could have left Morris. The federal government, especially at the time I came up, was not real good for you if your spouse worked. If you transferred to get a raise, that meant your wife had to quit her job and leave with you. When we got here to Morris, I enjoyed the area. My two sons were in school and they enjoyed that school. My wife was working for the university. I did not put in for a great many jobs. I was very, very choosy and therefore I didn't get picked. Part of the reason was that I was so happy here, so I just stayed here.

MS. NORTON: You mentioned Jack Frye as your supervisor. Who were your other supervisors?

MR. BOBER: Well, when I was at Shiawassee I worked for Bob Timmerman. When I worked for DOD, my boss was Durwood Davis who was a fantastic fellow to work for. He was a fantastic range manager. That was part of the reason I went back to DOD was to work for Durwood. When I started working at Morris, which at the time was still Benson WMD, I was hired by Dick Tolsman. He was a very super smart individual. He was very fun to work for, but I didn't work for him for very long. He transferred into the area office and I became the acting manager of the Benson office for a couple of months. Then, Al Radtke came in in 1977 and I spent the bulk of my career working for Al Radtke. At the end I spent a year working for Steve Delahenty just for a year and a half.

MS. NORTON: Were they any particular individuals that you think helped to shape your career?

MR. BOBER: Working for Al Radtke, our personalities were a little bit different, but they fit together. I just enjoyed working for Al. He'd give me certain responsibilities and just let me do my job. He was a super fellow to work for. There was a whole crew of us who were together for a while; Bernie Angus who worked as a soil scientist. Basically, I worked with Al and Bernie for twenty years. We just got along good. We had two clerks during that time. One was a Maxine Tealander. She quit the FWS after we relocated the office. Then Karen Stutner worked in the office. There was Bernie, Al, Karen and myself who were there the longest. Then we had a supporting staff of people that turned over a little bit. Steve Delahenty who is the manager there now was there in the past. There are so many people I can't even think of all of the names.

MS. NORTON: Do you remember what Presidents, Secretaries of the Interior, or Directors of FWS that you served under?

MR. BOBER: Some of them. Some of them were famous because they were so controversial. There was Hickle, who was in there for all a while. There was James Watt from Denver. The Director that I think everybody respected the most, was maybe the least controversial and probably ran the outfit the best was Lynn Greenwalt. He was at the Minneapolis office when I got hired.

MS. NORTON: Do you remember we had an engineer named Bill Greenwalt?

MR. BOBER: Yes, I knew him too! But Lynn Greenwalt was the best.

MS. NORTON: Yes, and he is still very active in things. He comes to all of the law enforcement meetings that we have. He's very good. How do you think that the changes in administration affected our work?

MR. BOBER: Sometimes, it was just very slight. A bigger affect was probably the various laws that Congress passed, such as the Bicentennial Land Heritage Program. That probably had the largest impact on the refuge system because the large amount of money came in. That occurred back during the Ford/Carter times. In fact, it was a campaign promise that both of them made. They poured money into the refuge system. If you look at the Morris WMD, even today, they are finally replacing some of the equipment today [that was purchase then], the farm tractors and bulldozers. I think they still have two of the farm tractors that were bought during the BLHP. I mentioned earlier that we built three hundred miles of fence. All of those fences were paid for by the BLHP. There were thousands of acres planted in native grasses that were paid for BLHP.

MS. NORTON: In your opinion, who were the individuals who helped to shape the FWS?

MR. BOBER: Well, Lynn Greenwalt and other people who were more quite about the affects that they had. There was a Dr. Greene who worked at the Upper Minnesota River Refuge at Winona. He taught some of the early Refuge Academies. He was a fantastic field biologist. He'd go around to the various stations and check out the biological thrust of the program and help you get going in the right direction. There was a Dr. Elder in the regional office who was very knowledgeable about pollution from farm chemicals. He made sure that the chemicals that the refuge system was using were safe and sound. There were Refuge Supervisors such as Forrest Carpenter when I started. He was in there for a long time, and he was very knowledgeable and he ran a very good ship. He always knew what was going on out in the field. I am slower now with some of these names.

MS. NORTON: Those are senior moments!

MR. BOBER: Yes! Ellis Klett…that was the name I have been trying to think of for the last couple of minutes!

MS. NORTON: Oh yes, he was the Assistant Director for Refuges in Region 3 for a while.

MR. BOBER: Right. He actually ran Refuges, and when the Benson office switched to the Morris office one of the things Ellis Klett did was to rearrange our counties out here. We lost four counties from the Benson District and we picked up four counties on the west side of the district from Big Stone Refuge. At that time, they established the Litchfield WMD. That all took effect because Ellis Klett did not want any wetland counties supervised by a refuge. The Big Stone Refuge became strictly a refuge and they no longer supervised any counties with wetlands in them. After Klett, Harold Benson came. He was a very fine gentleman to work for. He has a strong Realty

background and he realized a lot of the problems that the districts were having in dealing with the local County Commissioners. He was very good to work for. Then John Eadie came in. He was much more dogmatic in his way of doing business than Harold Benson was. But he was also a very knowledgeable individual. He really knew what was going on throughout the whole region, I think. He did an outstanding job. It seemed like he'd visit each station at least two or three times a year. You always saw Mr. Eadie at lots of meetings.

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

MR. BOBER: Maybe it was just staying at Morris so long and seeing everything that took place on the prairie here. Some of it is very depressing. Like I say, the landscape had changed. I came in 1977 and it's now 2002. I've been here that long and to see the changing in how the private people treat the landscape. It's just unbelievable. The changes in the farming methods. The feeling between the present day farmer for the land and maybe say his grandparents; when they seemed to have more of a feel for the land and an appreciation for it. Now, the land is almost a commodity, of a factory. They use it to produce corn and soybeans. I don't think they appreciate much else.

MS. NORTON: Would you consider that to be the low point in your career?

MR. BOBER: Maybe. It's something that you couldn't do anything about.

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

MR. BOBER: Back when I worked at Shiawassee Refuge, I mentioned earlier the goose hunters we had. I remember one fall; we had signed the goose hunters out on a nice, beautiful day. I think it was in October. The clerk asked me if I could run her around to all of the blinds that are out there. We had had to tell all of the hunters how to tell their blinds in the dark. Janice says, "I just can't remember where all of those blinds are. And it helps me if I can visualize where the blinds are." We hopped in a truck and we were just going around. I think there were forty-five blinds. I was driving her from gate to gate. Most of the hunters would park at the various gates or signs and the signs directed them into the fields, and they could find the blinds in the dark. Obviously, now and then, some of them got lost. We had just about completed the whole trip and we were on Turner Road. We drove in and checked the blinds so Janice could see where they were. We were actually on the way back out on the road out of the refuge and I looked up on the road in front of us. This was in the afternoon. The refuge was only open to goose hunting in the morning. It was not open to any other hunting at all. In the road out in front of us was a fellow walking out, carrying a double-barreled shotgun. I sped the truck up to catch up to him, and when we got up close to him, he ran into the woods on the right side of the road. I knew he was going to try and get off of the refuge, so we went up to where the boundary was. The boundary, to prevent

trespassers, had been cleared through the woods. You could actually drive up the trail. We just sat there and pretty soon he popped out on the trail. I hollered at him and he walked over to the truck. I was starting to ask him if he knew he was in a closed area and he pulled down on me with the shotgun. He pointed the double-barreled shotgun at me and told me to "get the hell out of there!" So I got in the truck and drove out. I remember when we got up the road a little bit, Janice said, "You didn't even get excited, that must happen all of the time!" I say, "No, that's the first time!" We just up the road and kept an eye on him and we kind of figured out where he went. I got on the radio in the meantime and called for assistance. The first thing we did was that the Manager came and got Janice out of the truck and took her back to the office. Pretty soon the Sheriff's office and the Conservation Officer pulled up. They went in to the house where the fellow had gone into. They found the shotgun. He had disappeared. He had actually gone back through the woods and swam across the river to get into Saginaw County. It ended up that the shotgun was stolen out of the back of a station wagon when the people were goose hunting off of the refuge. He had busted the window out of the station wagon. The station wagon belonged to a State Policeman. So obviously, the shotgun had been reported stolen. This black gentleman had threatened me because he thought that I knew that the gun was stolen. I had no idea it was.

MS. NORTON: I bet that was a nerve-racking experience!

MR. BOBER: It was different.

MS. NORTON: Did you ever have a most humorous experience?

MR. BOBER: Just one that I got joked on a lot about. Back in the early 1970's there was a mercury scare and I was with Dr. Elder, Jack Frye and Bill Fuchs and a couple of other people. We were collecting a great number of shorebirds and Great Blue Herons and waterfowl from the Lake St. Claire area. They had had some many critters show up with mercury in their systems. They were doing a systematic collection to try and figure out where it was, which animals were being affected and if they could, where they were picking up the mercury. Naturally, it was very early in my career, and I think everybody else was a GS-11 or 12. I was a lowly GS-5. Dr. Elder shot a bunch of shorebirds across a ditch. They talked me into stripping down and playing bird dog for them.

MS. NORTON: What would you like to tell other people about your career in the FWS? People who don't work for the FWS.

MR. BOBER: It was a fantastic outfit to work for. I enjoyed it. I felt like we accomplished a lot. It could be 'flustrating' at times. Especially earlier in my career, it was much more family oriented than it is now. It was like working for a family. With the hustle and bustle and with computers and everything; I think the FWS has lot that

to an extent. Some of the younger people don't know what it is when I am talking about it. I can remember Forrest Carpenter moving an employee from North Dakota to the Upper Mississippi River because his son had Leukemia and his son ended up dying. But the Service moved him and the whole family in order to get him closer to a medical facility. I am not sure that that would happen today. I think the Service would try to do it, but I don't think they'd just flat out do it, like they used to do.

MS. NORTON: We are getting close to the end here. Did you notice any changes in the FWS as far as personnel and environment?

MR. BOBER: Everything seemed to be speeded up there at the end. When I started, the rules and regs were so much different. We worked a lot of hours that we never got paid for. We didn't expect to get paid for them. At the end, everyone expected to get paid for fifteen minutes if they worked overtime. As I said, it was much more of a family type group. Everyone just seemed to care for each other and take care of each other more when I started than towards the end. Maybe the FWS just caught up with the rest of the world. You can't believe how small and intimate it was thirty years ago, compared to now. I don't know if there's a way to really describe that.

MS. NORTON: Where to you think the FWS is headed in the next decades?

MR. BOBER: I am not really sure. It's a bigger organization. Sometimes I think maybe it would function better if it was split up, like some people would like to see it. Maybe it would work better if the refuges were yanked out of the rest of the Service. Maybe it could get both halves and get back to being smaller and doing a better job. I think it's almost being pulled in too many directions as one time. The world is a much more complex; faster moving organism than it used to be back in the early 1970's when I started. There are more farm chemicals. There are more people. There is more development. Everything is just moving faster and going in so many different directions now.

MS. NORTON: Do you have any photographs or documents or anything that you would want to donate to go into the archives along with your interview? If you don't, that's okay too.

MR. BOBER: No, the things I have; the Service has access to already. I have a couple of early narrative reports from Shiawassee Refuge. I am sure that Shiawassee has got copies. The regional office had copies.

MS. NORTON: Probably the Washington office too.

MR. BOBER: Right, and I don't know if they can actually find those if you asked them to, but they all existed at one time. I left some very interesting information behind

at Shiawassee when I left, that I had spent a lot of time running down. They were talking about having a Visitor's Center there. It was about the early timbering that took place in the state of Michigan and where the Shiawassee Refuge is, there were pens built in the river. They'd float logs loose, down the rivers and the logs would be collected where the Shiawassee Refuge is now, and sorted just like you'd sort cattle out. I can't remember the number, but the number of log mills along the Saginaw River from the town of Saginaw, all the way down to Bay City was just fantastic. All of those logs went through the Shiawassee Refuge and were sorted. When I was at Shiawassee in the early 1970's you could still see some of the big vertical logs that had been sunk into the bottom of the river to make these pens where they would collect the logs. They would collect the logs and rope them together. The logs came down from the forest and they were branded on the end, just like you'd brand a cow. The brands belonged to the various log mills. They'd sort the logs out and deliver them to the mills. That was actually big business and that was part of the early history of the Shiawassee Refuge.

MS. NORTON: Who else do you think we should be interviewing? Is there anybody special that you think we should be sure to interview?

MR. BOBER: I am assuming somebody talked to Forrest Carpenter and Ellis Klett.

MS. NORTON: Well, Forrest Carpenter has passed away.

MR. BOBER: Oh, that's right excuse me.

MS. NORTON: Someone did suggest that we should interview Mrs. Carpenter because she was just so close to him and knows all about his career. I am going to check with Mark Madison at the Training Center to see if he would like to do that. I don't know where Ellis Klett is, but I'll find him.

MR. BOBER: I am sure somebody talked to John Eadie because he is so active.

MS. NORTON: Well, we're going to try and do the best job we can Gaylord. I want to thank you for your time. You did a very good interview.

MR. BOBER: You should try for John Ellis too.

MS. NORTON: Oh yes, he's been deer hunting so he's going to be back, and I'm going to try and get him next week. Thank you very much!