

ORAL HISTORY
Of
Wetland Manager (Retired)
Fergus Falls, Minnesota

Interviewed by
Dorothe Norton
On April 19, 2005

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

Oral History – Grady Mann
FWS Position: Wetland Manager, Fergus Falls, MN
Interviewed by: Dorothe Norton
Interview Date: April 19, 2005

DN: Well Grady, you have a very nice place here, and I am happy that I was able to get up here and you would have time to do this interview this morning.

GM: Plenty of time, plenty of time to do the interview.

DN: When you are retired you have a lot of time. OK. So we are going to start out. I want to know where and when you were born.

GM: Let's see. I was born September 8, 1919, in Clarksburg, West Virginia.

DN: West Virginia?

GM: Yep.

DN: Wow, was that anywhere near where our training center is?

GM: It is down there--

DN: Pretty far south?

GM: --, as they call it, West "By God" Virginia.

DN: OK. So what were your parents' names?

GM: Ah. Parents' names. My dad's was John L. and my mother's name was Jessie. Jessie Pearl... And she was a McDonald.

DN: OK.

GM: So we really-- go back quite a ways. Quite a few McDonalds on both sides of the family.

DN: Well good, OK. And did your parents have education? And what were their jobs?

GM: Oh, my dad—of course, we were in the middle of the depression—he had been in the banking business all the while, and during the depression days, the bank closed. OK, he was out of a job. So he was appointed by the banking commission in West Virginia to—a bank to bring in all their-receiverships,. All his job was to get all the debts back up so they could pay off all the depositors, which he did over a seven-year period.

DN: Oh, very good.

GM: So, in the process, we lived in an almost semi-rural town, about 1500 people, near the Ohio River. Yeah, it was a very good experience. High school days.

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GM: Good times.

DN: And your mom just raised the kids,?

GM: Yep.

DN: OK. So you spent all your early years, then, in the West Virginia part of –the country.

GM: I finished the high school days right there in Middlebourne, West Virginia.

DN: OK.

GM: Then, the major aim of the parents of course that three kids were going to go to college. So, I shipped out to West Virginia University.

DN: Which is in ...?

GM: That's Morgantown.

DN: Yes.

GM: And completed four years of training in agriculture, animal husbandry, and that sort of thing. And then went directly into the army for about 4-1/2 years.

DN: OK.

GM: So, that took care of the first part.

DN: Well, while you were a kid did you ever have any jobs before you graduated from high school, like a paper route, or work in a store, or anything like that?

GM: Oh yeah, we had a variety. We worked in greenhouses, and we worked did a little farm work, and on agronomy farms. We had variety.,

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DN: OK.

GM: Plus my dad kept me busy. There were two boys in the family, and he had about three rental properties, and ---we were the maintenance crews.

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GM: That took care of the summer months.

DN: Did you have any hobbies or anything?

GM: Oh, I did---at that time, I did a lot of fishing and

: --played lots of tennis, and , played baseball and basketball in high school.

DN: --That's good.

GM: --Of course, the long-term major hobby has been canoeing.

DN: Alright.

GM: Particularly since I came to Minnesota, and we have been doing that actively with long-term friends. In fact, I've canoed with them 50 years. So we've kept that old beat-up canoe out there in the backyard pretty busy.

DN: You graduated from--what high school was it?

GM: The Tyler County High School.

DN: In what year did you graduate?

GM: 1937.

DN: OK. And then what college did you go to?

GM: West Virginia University.

DN: Oh, that's right! Morgantown.

GM: I graduated there in 1941.

DM: OK. And your degree was in?

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GM: The degree was a B.S. in Agriculture.

DN: So then you went in the army, where did you have your basic training?

GM: bBasic training—Fort Knox, Kentucky. Maneuvers in Louisiana and then we went to Ireland and England and the North African campaign, then into Italy, and on to the Anzio beaches.

DN: And so did you ever get any medals or decoration?

GM: Oh no. I was no hero. We did our job, but we had, particularly at Anzio, we had lots of activity there, which made it kind of interesting and not boring. Kind of touchy at times.

DN: So what was your job in the army?

GM: I was kind of a company motor officer, so we had a group of mechanics, and I was no mechanic myself, but at the same time, I knew who in that crew were mechanics, and they knew what they were doing.

DN: Oh, that's good.

GM: We had a good crew and our job was to keep the vehicles coming in at the end of the day. But we had come up to the mess truck pretty late at night sometimes, and our meals consisted of one cup of coffee and a big slice of spam! That was about it!

DN: You know, my husband likes Spam.

GM: Oh he does?

DN: Yeah, well, and you know, sometimes I just get a can and slice it up and fry it with some fried potatoes and beans. He just thought that was a good supper. [Laughter] The kids liked it too, so I guess it wasn't too bad.

GM: Better than C-rationing anyway...

DN: So you just got a B.S., you didn't go on for a masters or anything, and then when you got out of the service, did you go back to school at all?

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GM: This is the interesting part. I came to Minnesota, and I thought I'd look around a little bit and cut some of the rough edges off of my army life, and so I decided to go to graduate school at the University of Minnesota.

DN: OK.

GM: And I, met my wife at the University of Minnesota, from Duluth. And, since then we have been married 57 years.

DN: That's wonderful.

GM: So I made a good choice, .Yes, a very good choice.

DN: Did you get a master's degree then?

GM: I completed a master's degree in Wildlife Management.

DN: OK.

GM: And I've often commented, it looks like I shifted from Agriculture to Wildlife Management.

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GM: I used to kid my Wildlife Management coworkers. I'd say, "Well, that agricultural degree has been a real plus for me, because we were working with farmers, and you know what? I could tell the difference between a Holstein and a Hereford.

GM: Ah, if you can back up there is one other little wrinkle.—

DN: --Oh sure, that's fine.

GM: I actually came to Minnesota because I was serving as a best man at a wedding. One of our fellow officers was marrying a Minneapolis girl.

GM: --so, in the process, I thought, well, maybe I better check in over here in Minnesota and see what they have going for graduate work.

DH: Sure.

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GM: And the interesting thing, to me, was the University of Minnesota professor was brand new – well, he had just come from the field. So this was almost his first job teaching at the University level. And he said, “Well, why don’t you go down to the University of Wisconsin and talk to this fellow Aldo Leopold down there, be.. So I cranked up and went down to talk to this fellow Aldo Leopold. At that time, I wouldn’t have known Aldo Leopold from one of our mechanics working on flat tire. . I spent a full afternoon talking with Aldo Leopold, as we walked around the campus with his dog, and all the time he was kind of checking me out, academically, I’m sure, to see whether I could cut the mustard under his academic regime at Wisconsin. At the same time, I was weighing my chances at being able to reach that academic standard. So we were kind of jockeying a little bit there, but it was a pleasant experience. But the big thing---I wouldn’t have known Aldo Leopold from, well, most anybody down the street.

GM: So I came back to Minnesota then, and decided to do the work at the University of Minnesota, which was, the right thing to do.

DN: Well, good.

GM: It worked out that way. In fact, it seems that in everything I’ve done, there has been a factor of faith as far as I can see, that said, “Hey, its better this way.” And it’s worked out, worked out fine.

DN: Good.

GM: It’s a lot like Yogi Berra says, “When you come to a fork in the road, you take it.”. In this case, I took a fork in the road, but the fork in the road always seemed to have worked out just fine.

DN: That’s good, that’s good Grady. So you and Lois, then, you met her when she was a student too?

GM: Yep. We both finished in ’48, so it worked out just fine

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DN: And how many children do you have?

GM: tTwo children, two girls.

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DN: And what are they doing now?

GM: The oldest is an occupational therapist, in a hospital in Spokane, Washington.

DM: OK.

GM: The youngest is an administrator in a large engineering firm in Seattle

DN: OK, so we are going now to your career.

GM: OK.

DN: So, did you ever have any reason you really wanted to work for Fish and Wildlife Service?

GM: Well, I started working with the Minnesota Conservation Department.

DN: Now DNR

GM: And, had three summers of seasonal work. I had a temporary assignment in southwestern Minnesota with the department. I really wanted to keep in waterfowl work and I wanted to be able to work on an area where I could see what they did in management all four seasons of the

GM: So, as it worked out, I ended up on an assignment to the Lower Souris National Wildlife Refuge in Upham, North Dakota, now known as the J. Clark Salyer Refuge. Anyway, they changed the name, but at that time it was Lower Souris.

GM: I worked there two years.

DN: OK. And then did you hear about an opening in the Fish and Wildlife, or how did you happen to come to Fish and Wildlife?

GM: It was by choice.

DN: OK.

GM: I applied and accepted and started employment at the end of the two years at Lower Souris. I shifted down to the Waterfowl Production Study at Waubay, South Dakota for two summers, 1951-52, probably.

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DN: OK.

GM: It was good duty.

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GM: And then I moved into the regional office, because, at that time, this study was under river basin studies.

DN: Alright. They don't call it that anymore.

GM: No.

DN: So, did you think that the pay and benefits were OK when you started with Fish and Wildlife?

GM: I never thought of it.

DN: Never thought of it. Because you were just interested in the type of the position you were getting.

DN: OK, so you had promotion opportunities then, too, as you went along, but you weren't even concerned about that?

GM: I wasn't too concerned about that either.

DN: So you came into the regional office--

GM: --That's what happened.

DN: --in '53?

GM: There were about three years in the regional office while we were working on the national wetland inventory.

DN: OK.

GM: So **Warren Nord** --this was the key --the National Wetland Inventory

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GM: So **Warren Nord** and I, as a two-man team, covered intensively all of Minnesota, all of Wisconsin, Michigan, and then I worked in Iowa. So, we covered four states on a broad basis.

DN: OK

GM: OK, that took care of that, then, from that, the prairie pothole region was delineated, based that inventory. So, then they set up the at Fergus Falls to explore the possibilities of saving marshlands in the prairie pothole region.

DN: OK.

GM: And that's where I wanted to go, and did, and stayed until the youngest daughter was out of high school.

DN: When was that established there in Fergus Falls? What year, approximately?

GM: 1954

GM: It's all right in this report.

DN: Right,

GM: It's kind of a history of the Fergus Falls office--

DN: And you don't have to dwell on that on this tape because it's all right here. But you may say whatever you'd

GM: OK, all of the material here will be in that paper that Ethel Peterson sent you..

DN: Yes, OK.

GM: And **Ethel Peterson** is one of those prized, prized people
She could read my writing.

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GM: So she typed it up and put it in order. OK. We set up the office here, and then equivalent offices were set up in in Benson, Minnesota, Devil's Lake, Nort Dakota and Aberdeen, South Dakota—later there were several others.

GM: But, this is a current—reasonably current map from Fergus Falls to show you how the distribution of the initial effort started to spread.

DN: OK.

GM: Green spots were the key areas--

DN: Wow

DN: It was plenty to keep you busy?

GM: It was quite a crew there between the realtors and the engineers and the biologists,.

DN: So you spent the rest of your career then at Fergus Falls?

GM: Let me think.

GM: Not quite.

GM: They shipped me off to the regional office--

GM: They started reshuffling. OK. Shaking things down. A new broom, sweeps clean. So I, really, I didn't have much alternative except to go in and work under **Burt Rounds** as an **assistant regional wetlands supervisor**—something like that.

DN: When I think of Burt **Rounds** I think of a hat and the cowboy boots.

GM: Yep. The hat.

DN: OK.

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GM: So, anyway... I lasted. Yeah, that's right. I lasted. Having been in the field all the time, working with the local people, I knew how they thought, knew what was going on in the land. I said, "Hey, I can't cut this." So, at that time, the early retirement option came along and I said I think I better go.

DN: Is that when you retired? When did you retire?

GM: 1972.

DN: 1972.

GM: So I was in the regional office only about, It might have been a month. [chuckle]. It might have been less than that.

DN: OK, so you started with us in 1948 or '49 at **Waubay**?

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DN: Oh, '51 at Waubay.

GM: I started with the Fish and Wildlife Service in Lower Souris in 1948.

DN: And what grade did you start on there?

GM: Oh, as low as you can go.

DN: Seven? Five? Probably a five.

GM: I think it was lower than that.

DN: With your college education? Well, all the way back then maybe it was. Five?

GM: Well, give it some benefit of the doubt.

DN: OK, well that's alright. And, uh, you retired as... What was your title?

GM: I retired from that position in Minneapolis office, so I would have been an assistant regional supervisor of wetlands or something like that.

DN: What grade? 12? 13?

GM: Let's see... I think I retired as a 13.

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DN: So, when you were working at the office up in Fergus Falls, let's say, because you were there the longest. Did you socialize then too, some, with the people you worked with?

GM: I'm a freelancer. No.

DN: OK.

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GM: Social affairs with people in the office, that wasn't my cup of tea.

DN: OK, that's fine.

DN: So, how did your career affect your family? Or did it?

GM: You better check with Lois.

GM: I think it really worked out alright. I mean she put up with a lot, you know?

DN: Well, you still had to travel a lot when you were out working on these wetlands.

GM: On the wetlands we were out three weeks at a time.

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LOIS: I learned to become independent.

LOIS: Essentially, I was raising our daughters and Grady would come home on weekends, or sometimes once a month, depending upon what he was doing. But, that was OK. I became active in the children's' youth activities and church, and then very active in League of Women Voters.

DN: OK.

LOIS: One of the things that Grady has been doing, is writing up his own story about all this for his daughters. They said, "We're glad you're doing this because we didn't know what you were doing when we were young."

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DN: That's wonderful.

GM: I've been working on that for five years.

LOIS: He's been doing this for the girls. Just describing all the different people

that he has met and worked with and some of the kinds of things that he did. But, I think we have to divide the Fergus Falls time into two periods. The period when he was running the office by himself, that was about the first seven years that we were there. Essentially, our house was the communication center or clearinghouse..

GM: In other words, that was the dining room table..

LOIS: And so I was really in the center of all those. --and they were there for dinner and if they were in the area and Grady wasn't in, they would come by and visit with me.

It was an interesting time.

DN: I think that it is kind of a family-oriented type of an agency anyways.

LOIS: Once he had an office staffed all the telephone work was there--

DN: Yes.

LOIS: So it's was a change there.

DN: So his career did not have a negative effect then on the family.

LOIS: No.

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GM: You asked if we socialized.

DN: Yes.

GM: Lois had her life, kind of, with her friends-good friends—and I had all the social life I needed when I was doing all the contact work with county boards and the scouting programs and all that. But within the office, uh huh, that was hands off.--

DN: Well, that's OK.

GM: Because, well, I guess, serving as an officer I know that you usually maintain a little more respect if you just kept a tight line there, I guess that I maintained that. So, as a social life, I was not with the office folks outside of office hours .

LOIS: But we would certainly, you know, get acquainted with the families, and if they needed any help or if they had any problems, we were to help. It wasn't that we were completely separate from them.. .

DN: Did you have an interest in your husband's work.

LOIS: Oh yes.

DN: Because some people, you know, you talk to different married people and,, they say well, "Did you know your husband did this?" "No, I don't know what he is doing as long as he gets a paycheck that's OK." You know, [Laughter] and they just aren't that interested in what their

--husbands are doing. They know they are working hard. But that's kind of good—

LOIS: I helped him with researching materials.

GM: Oh yes, she saved a lot of stuff that I would have missed, but she reads a lot, so I took up these key quotations and this and that and the other, and we had a presentation that looked halfway sensible.

DN: Well, that's good.

GM: One little incident, we all can recall. In Fergus Falls, at that time, our dining room table was kind of the headquarters , before we had the big staff. OK. So our youngest daughter, who will be here this weekend, oh, what was she, three?

LOIS: About three or four.

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GM: OK, here's Mac McBroom, river basin studies in Washington and one of his Bureau of the Budget men, and they were thinking about the funding, that would work for the wetland program, and they had all this money coming in from --

--Oil in the Gulf Coast area. They were talking about all this money and how to spend it, and how to use it. So this 3-year-old pops up—this is around the dining room table with all this high brass, as somebody called them, she said, “Well, I know what I’d do with all the money

GM: --I’d put it in the bank.

GM: This is a three-year-old.

DN: Oh boy, that’s pretty good.

LOIS: It stopped the conversation.

GM: I’d put it in the bank! Well that’s a sideline, but, but there was— humor in most of these situations. I can skip the bad parts, but I pick up the humor on some oddball remark and make hay out of it.

DN: So, what projects were you involved in, just the wetlands acquisition?

GM: I worked with the local scouting program on the troop programs, and many canoe. I worked at the district level and was on the Red River Council.

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GM: I received the Silver Beaver Award, for whatever it’s worth.

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DN: OK, so the major issues in your job, though, were the wetlands.

GM: Oh yes, the major one, professionally, was strictly preservation of prairie marshlands. Period. That was it.

DN: What would you consider the most pressing of the issues?

GM: The continuing drainage of the prairie marshlands that we were battling tooth and nail. The drainage was being subsidized by one arm of the government, and here we were

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working on the other side to preserve marshlands for the future, which is really coming into play now, when I looked at a series of articles in the St. Paul paper, and they've got big demonstrations to save the wetlands, after the horse has been out of the barn, so to speak.

DN: I know that it's always—I get enjoyment out of reading what some countries, or some parts of the cities are trying to do, and the ones who are against it, because it would do something for the environment as far as wetlands and all kinds of things. And I can't believe how these developers want to build on anything and everywhere, they don't care if they have to drain it, or dig it up, or whatever, you know?

GM: It doesn't make any difference. For the most part, it didn't make any difference, except when you read that Fergus Falls report, you will run across one quote in there by a Fergus Falls engineer, who says that those development projects will not only be influenced by the engineering skills, but the basic philosophy of the engineer, when he builds.

DN: So, how do you think the local people reacted? Did they know about it? Was it ever put in the papers, articles in the paper as to what was going to happen?

GM: It was a major—that was my major job.

GM: I worked with 19 county boards, up and down the state of Minnesota, and with constant publicity, by radio, television, conservation volunteer articles, any number of articles.

One of the breaks that we had was that the country schools were still open.

--and they were always looking for a speaker, particularly one with slides. They would have their meetings and invite me, Everybody came, the grandmas, the little kids, mom and dad, and they all heard the story. The other break was, it was the beginning of television out there, and they were looking for local people to come in for the programs, because they weren't really tied into the big national programs yet, and so I was used as backup, and I was on Alexandria TV and at Fargo-Moorhead a lot.

GM: And then I'd pull in all the—call the state cooperatives, the fellows that we work with within the state, you know, and so we would give them a full-blown program. But, the big thing was dealing with the public 98 percent of the time.

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DN: Well, how do you feel that people perceived this sort of a step

GM: Pretty well.

DN: Uh huh..

DN: OK. It sounds like Fish and Wildlife and community relations were pretty good then.

GM: Overall, I think they were, because--

GM: We weren't fighting them, you know? A key point was, in our presentations, that I found out quite early. No need to, again, no need to present the dismal side of it. Here is the ditch running down and the dirt is running off here, and you've lost these marshes. We started working on the beauty angle of it-- worked the other way around. And in that Fergus Falls report, you will find a Swedish television crew that came all the way from Sweden to photograph the beauty of the marshlands and that sort of thing we had in Otter Tail County to carry back to Sweden--

DN: Wow.

GM: --with them. So I picked that up right away. I said, "Hey." I used that for my presentation. I said "Hey. " Again, talking to the county people, I said, "You gotta take a look around here and see what's going on. Here's this Swedish crew comes all the way across the Atlantic Ocean and photographs these potholes you have in your backyard, and here you want to drain them out? Think about the kids... We varied the pitches to keep the need in mind, some solid principles of conservation, long term. Period. Like the boy said, you Keep it on the principles and keep the people out of it. You don't keep them out of it, but you don't make an issue between people, you keep it on the principles of why you are there working. So, that's what we tried to do. And, overall, I think it was accepted quite well.

DN: Good. So did you ever feel there was a major impediment to your job?

GM: Impediment?.

GM: Well, there is always the bureaucracy, but there's always that.

I think I'll leave that one blank--

DN: That's fine.

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GM: Overall, I guess that's the way it had to be.

GM: --But in the midst of it, I know this. There were some key people in there that were bullheaded enough and they were willing to put their head on the block when the need arose, so that they could get the job done instead of floating along with something that somebody higher up said to do that didn't make sense. So, you could go right down the list and line up quite a few of them.

DN: Sure. Well, some of the people that you got to know in all this work that you were doing that did not work for the service—did you ever feel that some of them would have been good to be working for the service, too?

GM: Would like to have been?

DN: Yes, or did you ever feel that, "Gosh, they'd be good if they were working for us?" Or were they always just the farmers that owned the land....

GM: Yes, in our work, you had to work around the fact that the lands were in private ownership.

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GM: OK. —and they always claimed that they were still paying taxes on that chunk of marshland out there, which they were not. Because, in the first place, the land, at that time, was blocked out into five categories, and when you got down to marshland, that's wasteland, so the tax base, if there was any at all, was the next to nothing. I mean, usually nothing. So they had that claim, and there were some fallacies in their line of argument. And anytime there was a weakness, you kind of helped to encourage— offsetting it somehow or other.

DN: Well, how did you feel that the changes in the administrations affected our work? Did you feel there were any? In Washington?

GM: Changing administrations?

DN: Yes

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GM: Oh, yes. Very definitely. Particularly after Kennedy-Udall. That's when we really had the expansion. Udall. When Udall was Secretary of Interior, from there on—there were pressures that we could feel at the field level quite quickly. .

DN: OK, so let's go on to... What was the high point of your career with Fish and Wildlife ?

GM: . With the Fish and Wildlife Service or later?

DN: No, with the Fish and Wildlife. Well, either/or, but preferably with the Fish and Wildlife, if you had a high point. Then you can tell me about the other high point too.

DN: OK. Within the service.

GM: OK, within the service. They had finally gotten around to where they had gotten \$105 million to start the program going, to acquire marshland, or take perpetual easements of marshland. OK, that was a good deal. So, we had to do this sensibly. In western Minnesota, we were working on about 12,000 square miles. OK. Here you've got the money, you've got a team of negotiators, and you've got an engineering crew. Out of that 12,000 square miles, what do you work on first? OK, we had aerial photos, which were not up to date. By that time, a big chunk of them had been drained out .. We had the aerial survey, where currently, we ran every township line in that 12,000 square miles and established a priority for acquisition of those marshes, based on three or four categories. So, this is transferred to the county plat books, the and the clerks in the office spent an awful lot of time duplicating those plat books, because the negotiators then could pick up a plat sheet with those priorities, already mapped out there,.... The priorities you put on there would probably be only a week or so old, because we had just gone over it and lined it out. So, they could take the plat book, even in the dead of winter, they could have two or three feet of snow and know whether they should go ahead and negotiate on that marsh or not. So, anyway, that's written up in detail. That was kind of a highlight in the progress of things, but so essential. Otherwise, it would have been just a hodgepodge of--of nothing. But this way, they were working on a fully established priority, biological-based, waterfowl protection based priority before they spent the \$105 million running around the countryside and not knowing what they were doing. Based on all the experience that had been gained and the highlight of my own effort then was when Saskatchewan called and wanted my assistance in setting up their wetland program in Saskatchewan and they gave me freewheeling to work on—I think I figured out about 600 square miles..

DN: OK.

Oral History – Grady Mann
FWS Position: Wetland Manager, Fergus Falls, MN
Interviewed by: Dorothe Norton
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GM: OK, here we go. Saskatchewan. They wanted assistance on setting up a preliminary evaluation of how they should proceed in their waterfowl protection zones of Saskatchewan. Anyway, they gave me freewheeling for about oh, seven or eight months, to go up there and work on it alone, which I really liked, because I had all my records in the trunk of my car, and then I had access to charter air flights to bring it off. It was a pretty big piece of country to come up with something like that, but things worked out. It was a wet season to start with and the season progressed like it should, so I worked on that for about nine months. That was probably the highlight of my career. This was after the Fish and Wildlife Service.

DN: OK. Well, was there every a low point in your career?. Not necessarily the program, but for you personally. Did you--

GM: Well, yes, personally was. There was a low point. OK. We had the office at Fergus falls.

DN: Yes.

GM: OK. We had the responsibility to make sure the program was carried out sensibly, but we had four branches working under us. We had River Basins. We had realty. We had engineers and a biological staff.. We had the responsibility but, in effect, we weren't given the authority to see that the program was carried out with the local people. That's when I said, "Hey, something's gotta give here." So, I was prepared to resign. So I sent this real short memorandum in to **Bob Burwell** and I said, "Hey, effective as of April the 1st, such-and-such a year, I am forced to resign from the supervisor position at Fergus Falls." Bam. Then Lois over here says well, you sent that in now. I think you better go skiing. So every day, I took the 90 miles up to Park Rapids and ski all day long. Oh, it was getting pretty nice. Then back down to Fergus Falls that night. **She would take a look around and say, "I think you better go again"**. OK. So I go up there and ski all day long. Then I'd come back down at night and, anyway, I skied for nine days. By that time, I had gotten things figured out. But, it was a low spot because my head was on the block. They could have accepted the retirement--

DN: Resignation. Not retirement.

GM: Well, retirement. Yeah. It was resignation. So it was in black and white. I was ready to go. We either—the point being—if we had the responsibility, we had to have the authority. That was the key. OK. What was happening was the realtors had a problem. They would go to Bob Jorgenson down at the Regional Office to solve a local landowner problem

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GM: --or the engineers had a problem and they would turn to their counter part in the regional office.. And the final call was made down in Minneapolis, 200 miles away from where the problem existed. So that was the key point. But, in the process, Bob Burwell took a look at it. He knew he had to call the shots down there in Minneapolis, otherwise, something else was going to happen. So, he straightened it out. And from that point on, it worked slick.

DN: Oh good, it was resolved then, too.

GM: It resolved.

GM: I didn't get fired.

DN: Well, they knew they had a good mind there, and they didn't want to let you go.

LO.

DN: --they recognized the talent, I think, and especially somebody like Bob Burwell. I think he was a very intense man in some ways, but yet he was always very honest. So, at least it was resolved, so you didn't have to wish you had done something differently to resolve it. It was resolved in a very positive way.

GM: Well, it was pretty direct.

GM: It gets down to the green envelope, so whatever, blue envelope--

DN: I never used to like to get them because I always thought it would be something bad. Usually it wasn't so...

GM: So that was the low point that I had to step through.

DN: OK. Well, did you have a humorous experience? Any one particular one that you remember?

GM: Oh yeah, any number of them.

DN: Oh, I'm sure.