INTERVIEW WITH THOMAS DUNCAN
BY MARK MADISON APRIL 21, 2001

MR. MADISON: Tom, like we said, we're just going to ask you some informal questions to find about your career in the Service, and have a conversation.

MR. DUNCAN: You wanted to know when I was born?

MR. MADISON: Yes.

MR. DUNCAN: June 5, 1928 in Washington, D.C. in Sibley Hospital. My father was a Treasury Agent. We lived in D.C. until 1939 when he was transferred to Oklahoma. When I was a kid I used to go to the Smithsonian. My Dad's office was right across the street from the Smithsonian, and right across the street from the FBI building and the Internal Revenue Service [building]. I would go to the Smithsonian and spend Saturday mornings there. That's where my interest in wildlife started. I also played in the woods in Glover Park in D.C. I found out a few years ago that I was playing in the Civil War entrenchments down there in the woods. I would bring home salamanders and everything under the sun, out of the woods. Of course, my mother would scream every time, but nonetheless that was my youth. In Oklahoma I was taught the art of hunting by a friend of mine, a kid in the neighborhood. We went duck hunting. I had a .410 shotgun. I will never forget it. It was called a Black Prince. His father let me use it. The first thing that happened was a flock of Wood Ducks came in and landed in decoys. There were about thirty birds. I was all excited, thinking that we were going to shoot them. But he said, "We don't shoot Wood Ducks! They are protected, and very scarce. We very seldom see them." And right after that, a Black Duck came in and landed. He said, "We don't shoot Black Ducks. They are *very, very* rare here." Pretty soon, some Bufflehead's came in, so my first duck was a Bufflehead. That started my interesting waterfowl. At that point, I decided that somehow, I wanted to be a Waterfowl Biologist. After military service in the Marines for three years, between World War II and the Korean War, I went to school at Oklahoma State University. I got my degree in Wildlife Conservation. I came very close to doing to Delta Research Station when they didn't have any money. Al Hokebaum [sic?] said, (I have a bunch of letter from Al who is my hero). He told me, "I'll give you food, and a place to sleep, but I can't give you any transportation home". I thought, "How in the world am I going to get from Canada to Oklahoma, or from Oklahoma to Canada?" I didn't have a dime. I had to barrow the money from my Dad to go to Seattle. I got a job offer in Alaska. When I was in college, I worked for thirty days at Salt Plains National Wildlife Refuge under John Vandinacker. Vandinacker came up on June 30th and Congress hadn't appropriated any money that year. They delayed the appropriations, which you know they do occasionally. So he says, "I have to lay you guys off." There were three or four of us who were 'temporaries' so we had to be laid off. That was the end of that session, but I loved it out there. I decided, after doing fence post for miles and

miles, of the government way in sand, that I had really learned something, because that is an art. That was between my freshman and sophomore year.

MR. MADISON: What year are we talking about roughly?

MR. DUNCAN: That would have been 1950, 1951. Then I went to Yellowstone Park with Ollie Cope's Rocky Mountain Fishery investigation. Incidentally, Walter P. Taylor was the co-op leader at Oklahoma A and M at that that. That is now Oklahoma State. Stebler came in after that. Dr. Stebler came to me one day, and he said, "Hey Tom, you're interested in the Fish and Wildlife Service aren't you?" I told him "Yeah." He asked me how I would like to apply for a summer temporary job. This was through the Albuquerque Regional Office. That's how I got the job with the Rocky Mountain investigation. I had to go out to Yellowstone. I hitchhiked out there, which was an experience. I came in the east entrance. I went in and checked in and thought that I had died and gone to heaven when I went into Yellowstone. I worked up there all summer down at the south end of Yellowstone lake working on cutthroat tagging and retrieving tags off of Pelican Island. I was digging through the dung, and picking up our fish tags. Here again was a great experience. I met Fent Carbine who was a Regional Fisheries Director out of Ann Arbor, Michigan. He had come up there for some reason or other. He was the kind of guy that talks to you about things like what year you're going to do in your career and what year you are in at school. I told him that I was going to go into waterfowl. He said that there was no way that I would ever survive in waterfowl, "ducks are on the way out." He said, "I'm a fisheries man, what you want to do is to stay in fisheries!" I found out the next year when I went to North American when I was a senior in 1953. I went to North American and I met Al Hokebaum. I thought that I would work on a master's degree. But he couldn't fund me with any money. And I didn't have any. Fred Baumgartner was my advisor. He was a Quail Biologist more that anything else. Fred told me that I should just look for a job. He said that he couldn't help me any more. The guy who I worked for in Yellowstone was Harvey Moore. Harvey had transferred to Seattle. I had written to him and told him that I was looking for a job. He told me that they needed a couple of people, early, to go up to Alaska. I said, "I don't know anything about Salmon." He said, "You took Ichthyology didn't you?" I said, "Yeah, I know where they are classified, that's about it. And I know that they come in a can!" So I went to Alaska. I went to Seattle and they put me on an airplane. Harvey said that I was the only person that he had ever seen picked up at the Seattle airport that was standing in the rain looking up with his face in the rain. I told him that we hadn't seen any for sixth months in Oklahoma. I went from Seattle up to King Salmon, Alaska. I was all prepared for cold weather. I had a big, old, heavy parka. And when I got off of the plane it was something like 70 degrees. I was melting like a block of ice that had had salt poured on it. When we were coming in on the plane, I noticed a big flock of swans on the Naknek River. I remarked to somebody, when we got off of the plane that that was a *big* flock of swans up there. I was told, "Yeah, they come in here all of the time." Curiosity killed the cat. I was walking up the river and I heard them trumpet. And they weren't

whistlers they were trumpeters. I came back, and I said, "Hey, I thought they said that there weren't any trumpeters outside of Montana!" The guy said, "No, you don't see them outside of Montana." I told him, "Well, there are trumpeters out there!" He then told me "Those are whistling swans, they are always around here." I told him, "No they're not! They are trumpeters!" Being so young and naïve, I thought that here was [a topic] for the first paper that I could write. The next year somebody published a paper, "New Flock of Trumpeter Swans Found on Bristol Bay". I thought to myself, 'Well, I know who found them, but it's too late now!' I came back to Seattle and I worked over on Cook Inlet, Alaska in the Anchorage area; The Kenai Peninsula, Lake Tustamena, Kenai River, the Upper Russian River, Cooper's Landing, you know all of these places. There was another lake that was on the way to Kenai. Dave Spencer put us up for the night many times when we would go to Kenai. But I traveled all over. I went out to the other side of Mount Redoubt and Grecian Lake. I worked in the canneries out there, taking Salmon samples. I went out in Bristol Bay. I was trying to think of the fellow that took me out on a gill netter, so I really learned how to gill net Salmon because we were tagging them in Bristol Bay for a management project. His first name was Burt, but I can't remember his last name.

MR. MADISON: What was it like to be up in Alaska in the 1950's as a Fisheries Biologist?

MR. DUNCAN: Well, the road to Kenai was a cord road. It was all dirt. The only paving was from Anchorage, down to the junction where you went to Seward. That's were it was paved. But when you turn off to go to Kenai, it was dirt. This is one of the things I always remember about Kenai; we used to fly in there once in a while, later on. And you'd fly right over Main Street. I mean, with the wheels [landing gear] down you could take the roof right off of the building, because the airstrip is right there! It was an experience! As a Biologist, I really enjoyed it. It was outdoors, all of the time. We lived on a lake, and they put us in a tent and had to survive. There were several times…
In fact a fellow who is still in Seattle, Kenny Liston, he and I worked together most of the time during my first year up there. Most every summer Ken and I worked together. He is about 5'2", and I am 6'3", so he'd always make me look for the Brown Bears when we were going through the tall grass. And I had to whistle or something to scare them off. We did these Salmon surveys on all of the spawning streams. We collected a lot of data off of [word unintelligible] fish. I came back to Seattle, and after about my third year they decided to put me in a different position. I took over what we called the 'technical staff', editing and doing the graphic work for the Biologist's papers, and photography. I did a lot of photography. I became the lab photographer. That's why I was asking you why you didn't have a photographer. I looked back in the Archives upstairs and I found a lot of stuff that I had taken pictures of. There were SSRs, fisheries, and sonic tagging. I was pretty proud of the fact that I had a cover on *Electronics Magazine.* From Seattle I went into the tenth Departmental Management Training Program. This was another great experience. It was a good training experience because you were interacting with people

from every other agency in [the Department of] Interior. I found out why we have such a short administrative manual. This is because we're kicked around from one place to the other so often that that they don't have time to build one. The National Park Service has one that goes from this wall to that wall two or three times. They've got information on how to drive a nail in the wall. They can tell you. Ours was real short. It was never more than three volumes. I even had to write some administrative manual stuff. But I had experiences, even up in the Secretary's office, which was really good experience.

MR. MADISON: Who was the Secretary [of the Interior] during this period?

MR. DUNCAN: Seton. Seton was Secretary. And then, about a year later, Russ Sollen who was the Executive Secretary; and this was the longest title for the smallest grade, I took his job. Russ Sollen was the Executive Secretary for the Stalick-Kennedy Advisory Committee to the Secretary of the Interior. Now isn't that a title? And it was only a GS-9! I stayed in that job for about two years. That's when it was used to be the Bureau of Sport Fisheries and the Bureau of Commercial Fisheries, and the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service had an Assistant Secretary who was the one that came in… Arnie Swamlaw was the Commissioner of Fisheries. I always remember going in to Arnie's office to talk to him about things with this Committee. I remember his desk was clean as a pin, and he would be reading *Sports Afield* or *Outdoor Life* or something. I found out that this was a political appointee. I don't know if we ought to record this part! Then I was there at the transition when John F. Kennedy came in. The first thing they did was to introduce all of the employees to the new Secretary of the Interior. That was Stuart Udall. Man, what a guy, he was super! We'd go up to the Secretary's suite. I don't know if they still do this. It was really a top dog thing. One day I was coming out of Don McKerndon's office and I was coming down the hall, well first I have to tell you something else. When I was first assigned this job, Elmer Higgins was the Editor in Chief of all publications in both Bureaus for the Fish and Wildlife Service. They didn't really have a place to put me in the organization chart. So they put me under him. He said, "I don't know why they put you in here Tom. But they don't have another place for you anyway". He said that he had to edit all of my reports. I said, "O.K." He was one of the finest men that I ever worked for. When he assigned me my desk, Elmer told me, "This is hallowed ground. This is Rachel Carson's old desk that you are sitting at". She had just left a few months before. I was really impressed by that. So after two years in that job, Paul Thompson came over from Sport Fisheries. And I think Ed Carlson was involved in this. I saw him the other day and I remember thinking that I knew him. But I think it was Paul and Ed Carlson. They asked me if I would come to Arkansas. He said that they couldn't get anybody to take the Reservoir Investigations job in Fayetteville, Arkansas. I said, "Fayetteville! I practically grew up in that place!" My Dad went to school there. He was from right across the border in Oklahoma. He said, "You're just the guy I need, Tom!" About three weeks later, he came over and asked me again. He caught me at a time when I was angry about having to do all of these reports. I went to Fayetteville. I transferred down there, and transferred agencies. I went down to Fayetteville and set up

the South Central Reservoir Investigations. We worked on a Beaver reservoir, which was under construction. We had a lot of contracts with the University of Arkansas. We did a lot of cooperative work with the Arkansas Fish and Game Commission. We started off on a very ambitious program. Then Bob Jenkins came from the Sports Fishing Institute and headed up the whole national program. It was unfortunate, because to be quite truthful about it, Bob and I conflicted. He was always telling my people what to do and he didn't go through me to do it. It was frustrating because I had been in the Management Training thing, and I said "chain of command, chain of command!" Since he didn't follow it, I didn't either. There were several other stations set up. And they closed all that down in 1983. I transferred down to Arkadelphia when they set up the new one. That was the Multi-outlet Reservoir Study. The SGA guy told me that we were the first federal agency that had ever contracted with a private University for an office. There had always been Land Grant schools. And this was a Baptist University, but they had a water Chemist was renowned
Nationally, especially today. His name is Joe Knix. He got us over in their offices, and they fixed us up with a real nice place to work.

MR. MADISON: We are doing three oral histories at once! You know, it's a great weekend! We want to try and catch everything.

MR. DUNCAN: Well, like I said, if you want someday I'll just make a tape of all of these stories and send it to you.

MR. MADISON: That's great too. We will transcribe it and add it to the archives.

MR. DUNCAN: I was thinking about doing this for my kids because some of the stories of things that happened to me when I was up in Alaska are pretty hair raising. I can name all of the pilots; the ones that I liked to fly with, and the ones that scared the daylights out of me.

MR. MADISON: Well tell us some stories about the pilots. Who were the good one, and who were the scary ones?

MR. DUNCAN: Well, there's one of them that is still around. His name is Tom Wardley. Tom was a young buck at the time. He was the one that was always the hot rodder. That's what we thought of him. Tom Wardley, after he left the Fish and Wildlife Service, began an inspector for FAA. I felt that he knew all of the tricks. There was no doubt in my mind. He flew an "old Silver". It was a Drummond Goose that we flew out of Anchorage. They refurbished it and they flew it down on Oshkosh, Wisconsin. He flew it down from Anchorage.

MR. MADISON: Was that for the Air Show there?

MR. DUNCAN: Yes. Wardley took me in on Lake Tustamena. There were Ken Liscomb and I, and Carl Elling who was our supervisor out of Seattle. Carl is still alive. It is eighty-something years old. He still goes fishing. We came in to Lake Tustamena which is thirty miles long and about five miles wide. There was about a thirty or thirty-five miles per hour knot wind blowing. The waves were about this high at the point were we needed to go in and land and go in shore. Wardley says, "Well, we'll just land crosswind". And I thought, "*Golly!*" I was in the Marine Air [Division] when I was in the Service. I said, *Crosswind? In this wind?"* He said that yes, they were going to put it down on top of a wave. We were drifting this way with the wind, and the waves were going that way too. So he did, he laid that big Goose down on the top of a crest of a wave. But you know what? That wave went right out from underneath it and right down in the water we went. I just saw water fly everywhere. And I thought we were going under. I couldn't see anything but bubbles! I wanted to grab a lifejacket. I am telling you, it scared the life out of me. But we got into shore. I looked at the tips of the blades on the propellers, and they were pitted all the way up to the center of the hub. I am not kidding. They were pitted like I have never seen. I had seen pitted propellers when I was in the Marine Air Corps when these guys would come down and hit the deck too hard. They would pick up water and pit the propeller. He got in, and unloaded us. And when he took off it didn't take him long to get off of the water because he went into that wind and he was up in the air before you could blink your eyes. That poor airplane took a beating! That was the last time that I wanted to fly with Wardley, but I flew with him several other times. Warren Nicestrom came to pick us up on a lake called Blue Lake on the west side of Cook Inlet, across from Kenai. It's a little round bowl surrounded on three sides by pretty high hills. But there was an opening on the south side that you could out of. But there was a row of Cottonwood trees down there, about one hundred or so yards off of the lake. To get off of the lake with a Grummond Goose, you had to go around in circles and whip up the water real good for a few minutes. You had to go around at least three licks. Well, Warren came in and he had a habit. We'd always fix him something to eat because he hadn't eaten all day. He always picked us up in the last part of the day. We were sitting there frying some Spam, which is good for up there. We had some Spam, and we were cooking. Warren pulled the plane up, the tail was sitting in the water. We sat around and ate that, and cleaned the frying pan, put the gear away, and stowed all of the gear in the plane. We were getting ready to leave, and took off. We were trying to take off. We were going around skimming the water and he says, "You know? This plane feels heavy for some reason or other!" I was sitting up there, and Tom Costello was with us. Tom says, "Yeah, there's something wrong here!" Well, when we started to take off, he just gunned those engines. He hit them both, just full throttle. That plane was just *screaming* across that lake. And I could just see the land coming up, just like this. All of sudden, he dropped those flaps down, and that plane just lifted up, just as we got to the shoreline. I said, *"Holy Cow!"* And I just buried my head! Well the next thing I know, the plane is going over like this, and I see trees out of the window. Just right there, and the pontoon took off the top of a tree! The plane finally went, [makes a sighing sound], and he said, "Man, that was close!" He said, "I didn't know

which tree to go between!" Costello said, "You did a good job Warren!" But I will never forget it. We were climbing up out of there, and he said, "There's something wrong, I've to trim it. There must be water in it or something." A Goose has a couple of windows up on the edge of the cockpit where you can see out. As we were climbing up he said, "We've got water streaming out of here like a jet!" When we got back to Anchorage, or on the way back to Anchorage, and I'll tell you, I told somebody that I have a guardian angel because I knew that she was with me this trip. As we were flying back, he pulled up to five thousand feet. That's about as far as you can go in Anchorage because of airspace and Air Force regulations and stuff. We were coming out of the sun at that particular time. Tom Costello was an ex-Navy fighter pilot in jets. Tom took the wheel up there, and he pushing it forward real quick while Warren was flying. Warren said, "What are you doing?" All of a sudden a jet went right over the top of us. I mean, you could see the guys face in it. [The jet] He pushed it just enough, it didn't quite hit the tail. But he came close. We shuttered when he went by. We had a "mid-air" going for us. And Warren said, "How did you see him?" And he answered, "Well, I fly jets, I look way out there." He saved our skin. But we were still dumping water all the way back to Anchorage. We got back to Anchorage, and I kissed the ground I think, when I got back off of that trip. I was dead beat, but that was a real hairy flight. Of course, I knew about, and sent you the stuff of the 1953 crash. We had already lost one biologist out of the lab. I thought we were going to loose a couple more that day. I really did, I was really concerned. Another time I flew with Nicestrom, I thought it was a funny story. We were at Kenai, and the cloud cover was so low that we couldn't get up in the clouds. They fly by the seat of their pants, these bush pilots do. Warren says, "Well, I'm not going to miss dinner at home tonight guys. We're going back." He took that Goose and lifted up off of the water and we flew about this high [demonstrating] up off of the water all of the way up Cook Inlet, from Kenai to Anchorage. He radioed the tower and said that he was coming in on the runway. They said, "All clear, but I can't find you on the radar." And Warren said, "That's cause I am down on the water." He came up just as we got to the big bluff there at the end of the runway. He dropped the wheels and we land on the strip there. The fog was just right above us as we came up. We almost went into it. That was a funny flight. It was sort of different, but we got home fine. I was with Warren Nicestrom one other time when they told us to go up in the mountains and look at some creek to see of there were any Salmon spawning in there. We got in the mountains, and the air was spilling over the mountain at a real high velocity. It was just bouncing that airplane around like this. I looked out of the window. I was sitting up in the co-pilot's seat. There was oil streaming out of the engine. I told Warren, and he said, "Let's get out of here." We peeled around, and got out of there and into smooth air, and he said that he wanted to see what was going on. He said, "Watch this gauge here Tom, and if it goes down, let me know. You take the wheel. All you've got to do it watch this gauge here. Just stay level." So, I had had a little flying lessons when I was in High School so I knew basically what to do. But I didn't know whether to just keep it steady. But he got out and looked, and there was oil all the way down the side. He couldn't see out of the windows on that side of the aircraft. He said, "I don't know how much oil we've lost.

But this is bad." He called in to the tower and told them where we were, and where we were heading and what our bearings were. He gave them all of this information. We kept flying in to Anchorage, and he told "Keep an eye on that [gauge]." He was getting worried about it. But when we got in, Warren was one of these pilots who always checked everything on his aircraft before he took off. And always serviced his own airplane to make sure it had plenty of oil. He looked in that engine after he took that cowling off and he started cussing. They had a mechanic that put the oil in the plane that day, and checked it. He didn't put the cap back on completely. The oil cap had come off when we hit all of that rough air. A quart or two of oil had come out, but it looked like ten gallons! I know that if you've ever been up there, and done any flying at all you've had some experiences like that. Because it's just …

MR. MADISON: Did you ever fly with a fellow by the name of Bob Burkholder?

MR. DUNCAN: No. I flew with Theron Smith. I flew with Theron several times. He was a real professional pilot. He wasn't your ordinary bush pilot. He was the head of the whole program up there. Theron was an outstanding pilot. I liked flying with him. He wasn't one of these guys that took chances!

MR. MADISON: Burkholder was just the opposite.

MR. DUNCAN: Working in Alaska was a wonderful experience. I got to see [a lot]. I bet it 's spoiled now compared to what it was then. I have thousands of pictures of pictures that I took up there. I took fifteen or twenty or thirty rolls of film up there every year, all thirty-six exposures on the roll. I have gleaned those down to about a few hundred now.

MR. MADISON: Should we run through the rest of your career in the Service?

MR. DUNCAN: I told you all about transferring down to Arkadelphia and the Multi-Outlet Reservoir Studies. And then in 1983 they closed down the whole national Reservoir Research Program. I was going to be fifty-five in June of 1983, and they retired me on April 15, 1983. I was very angry about that. I asked them for a transfer to a Regional Office and they said that there were no jobs in Regional offices. They told me that I could go to Washington, D.C. Vernon Brown told me that. And he hated to tell me that. I could tell by his tone of voice. But he said, "That's the only thing that we have Tom." I said, "OK". He said, "You have to sign here." I told him, "I don't want to sign." I didn't voluntarily retire. I gave him a bad time. Charlie Hasty was working with him. And Charles was one of the best men that I ever worked with. He got me out of more trouble. I would have been some deep trouble if I hadn't done what he said. Charles Hasty was a great Personnel person. He really was. That was the end of my career with the Fish and Wildlife Service. I had thirty years in, in March of that year I think. I got my Thirty Year pin. I was real disappointed that the Fish and Wildlife

Service didn't have the Buffalo on the Thirty Year pin. They had started to buy those sixty-cent GSA things that weren't worth the powder to blow them to kingdom come. But basically, that's the end of my career. There are some things that I learned and did. We had a submarine at one time. It was at the South Central Reservoir Investigation. Somebody had talked us into it. They said that they thought it would be a great research tool. It was great for public relations, but it was sorry for research work. We transferred it to somebody in Texas. We figured that they would probably use it for a fishing reef or something. It was a two-man submarine. I had some wonderful people on my staff. Al Houser who passed away several years ago. He was an Apache Indian. He flew B-24s in World War II. Al's widow still lives in Springdale, Arkansas. And I thought that if they do this thing with the bricks, I am going to do some bricks for these people that I worked with.

MR. MADISON: Tell us about how you became interested in Bob Hines. I know that you have been researching that.

MR. DUNCAN: I started in 1954; I think it was, when the King Salmon Conservation Stamp came out. Here I am, just a young guy in a lab. I was the low man on the totem pole. They needed a chauffer to take Bob to the Postal ceremonies, the hotel and airport, and to see that he got fed. I was the PR guy, so Clint said, "Tom, take care of him. Do whatever he wants." I said, "OK!" Boy that was great. It was great to have a day that I didn't have to sit in the lab. I could drive all over Seattle. I took him to the Postal ceremony. I went there with him and listened to them laud his work. Bob is sort of humble guy. We went to the Post Office. He said that he had to mail some stuff. I went to the Post Office with him, and I bought a whole sheet of those stamps. I told him, "Bob, I sort of collect stamps. I have done this my whole life, would you sign these as the artist?" He said, "Sure!" So on the first day of issue, he signed that sheet of stamps for me. That is the only sheet he ever signed, he told me. I asked him years later about it, and he told me that I had the only one that he had signed. I still have them. One of the perforated edges is gone, but I cherish that. That's how I met Bob Hines. When I was transferred back to D.C. for the Management Training Program I used to see him quite a bit in the Cafeteria. We would go down and have a cup of coffee when I had a break, and when I wasn't doing something else. I would see him in the morning at breakfast. We would try to go in early in the morning to try and avoid the traffic, because I lived in Springfield, Virginia. I would try to beat all of that traffic. We would sit down and have breakfast together and talk about Alaska. He loved Alaska. When I left D.C. we communicated back and forth and sent Christmas cards. I have ten or fifteen of those Christmas cards. I also have some letters from him, about his kids, and my kids, and just personal things. So we became just friends that way, because we worked together. I used to go up there to the lab in the penthouse and talk to him. I grew up D.C. as a kid. I remember seeing Peregrine Falcons over there at the Post Office building. He told me that he saw some Peregrines over there, and we talked about that. We talked about living in D.C. and all of the wildlife, and the Chain Bridge and how he used to catch Herring down

on the river at Great Falls and the Glen Echo area and all of that. That's how our relationship [was]. It was just a good friend type thing. He always encouraged me. I told him that I sort of did some sketching and stuff, and he told me that I should enter into the Duck Stamp contest. He said, "I run it, so you don't have to worry about it!" I told him, "No". I was afraid that someone would yell 'prejudice!' So I never did. But he set up that Duck Stamp program. I set up the judging for that. And I admired him because there was a stack of that stuff and he would go through it. And the first he did was to always count the primary feathers on the wing. And if found more than ten he would kick it out. He would could the primary feathers on every duck that was in the picture. If the primaries were there, he would count the secondary feathers that were showing. If there were too many he would [get rid of it]. He showed me one that had fourteen primary feathers in it. He laughed about that, he thought that that was hilarious.

MR. MADISON: He could have saved a lot of heartbreak if people had known that!

MR. DUNCAN: He looked for accuracy! I don't know if I wrote this in my paper or not; but when we walked out on the north side of the Interior Building and were going across the little park there, a Sparrow flew across. He said, "Hey Tom, there's a [name of particular kind left out]! I asked him "How did you recognize that?" He says, "Well, I saw that little eye stripe above, it's white. And then there's a tiny little bit of yellow here. And he went on and on. I said, "How did you see that? That bird was flying thirty miles an hour?" He told me that this was just one of those things that he had learned to do when he was younger. He was incredible! He could tell you a bird just as quick at that, [Snaps fingers] on the wing when they are flying full speed. He did that all the time. It was not uncommon. You know, his wife was an employee of the Washington Zoo, the National Zoo. She had something to do with an Elephant out there at one point, but I don't remember what the story was. That was his second wife. He had a daughter named Nancy by his first wife, and his second wife's name was Nancy. His son was John. When I was in Seattle, Bob's son applied for a job at the Privloff [sic]. Bob didn't know this, [that he had applied] but he got the job. Bob said, "Golly, if the Service ever finds out, they'll kill me!" He called me in Seattle and told me that he was going to be there overnight. They were going to put him [his son] on the ship the Brown Bear to go up to Alaska, to Privloffs. He asked me to look after him. I told him "Sure!" He came out to my house, and stayed with my wife and I. He was so excited about the whole thing. He was an Entomology person. He loved bugs. He was a bug hunter if I ever saw one. So all night long, he was out in the back yard looking for bugs. John got up the next day and he was dead tired, but he was so excited about the whole thing. When he came back, he called me and said, "Mr. Duncan, I'm down here at boat dock, and I've got a few things. Could you help me get them to the railway express office to ship them?" I asked him if they were all crated. He said, "Yes, they are all crated." And so help me God, he had Caribou antlers, Seal skulls, I don't know where he got them. But he had all of this stuff that he had collected up there in the Privloffs. I don't know where he found all of this stuff. But he had four of five cases of this stuff that he sent railway express back home!

I told Bob, "Boy, he's got a world of stuff that he is sending home!" It was sort of funny. I had to laugh about that.

MR. MADISON: Well Tom, thank you very much. This is a great oral history. We really appreciate it. This is an oral history by Thomas Duncan. Other participants were Debbie Corbett, Ken Larsen, and Jerry French. It was a NCTC, Shepherdstown, West Virginia, April 21, 2001.