

INTERVIEW WITH PATRICK J. MANION  
BY DOROTHE NORTON, OCTOBER 8, 2003

MS. NORTON: Today is Wednesday, October 8, 2003. This interview will be between Pat Manion and Dorothe Norton. Gee Pat, it's been a long time since we've seen each other, but it's good to see you again! The interview takes from 45 minutes to an hour and a half; whatever you think, when you are being interviewed you can say. If there is something you don't want to talk about, or you don't remember, that's okay too. I'd like to know your birth place and date.

MR. MANION: Omaha, Nebraska, February 28, 1932.

MS. NORTON: What were your parent's names?

MR. MANION: Do you mean maiden names too?

MS. NORTON: Not really.

MR. MANION: My mother was Cecelia and my Dad was James Leonard Manion.

MS. NORTON: What was their education, and jobs?

MR. MANION: My Dad was college education in Portland, Oregon. His job was that he owned a construction company. This was when they still paved the roads with mules pulling the equipment. Then he was a Postmaster for a large number of years.

MS. NORTON: So where did you spend your early years?

MR. MANION: Keystone, South Dakota. Then I went to Portland, Oregon for school for a year. Then I spent three years in Cannon City, Colorado. That's where they had the big prison break. It's right between Pueblo and Denver.

MS. NORTON: How did you spend your early years? Did you have any special games you liked to play with the other kids, or hobbies, or special books?

MR. MANION: I liked fishing and hunting. That's what we used to do all of the time.

MS. NORTON: Did your Dad teach you how to fish and hunt?

MR. MANION: Yes, when I was six years old he taught me how to fish. That's what we did a lot. There is a lot of hunting and fishing on the Upper Peninsula. Of course with the kids I was involved....I was a good swimmer in my day and they were involved in swimming and the usual stuff. I played baseball and basketball.

MS. NORTON: Where did you go to high school? When did you graduate?

MR. MANION: In Cannon City, Colorado at the Abbey School. I graduated in 1950.

MS. NORTON: Did you have any jobs before you graduated, like a paper route?

MR. MANION: Certainly. I was paperboy, and I worked in the mines in the Black Hills.

MS. NORTON: I bet that was fun.

MR. MANION: It was! It built me up pretty good.

MS. NORTON: So after high school, did you go to college?

MR. MANION: Yeah, I went to college at Creighton University in Omaha Nebraska. I graduated from there.

MS. NORTON: I lived in Omaha, Nebraska for about three years.

MR. MANION: That's where two of my children live now, in Omaha.

MS. NORTON: What degree did you get?

MR. MANION: I got a BA at Creighton University. Then I got a MS from Northern Michigan University in Marquette, Michigan.

MS. NORTON: What years did you get those?

MR. MANION: It was over a number of years. I don't even remember when I graduated.

MS. NORTON: What aspect of your formal education equipped you for the future?

MR. MANION: I had my Biology degree in Fisheries. So that's why I went after a job in Fisheries. First I went to South Dakota to go into Hatcheries when I got out of the Army. I spent two years in the Army. They heard about Marquette, Michigan hired people in a new job, which was Sea Lamprey control. So I thought Marquette was where Marquette University was, but it wasn't. It's on the Upper Peninsula. But I went up there and worked for a while.

MS. NORTON: Who do you think influenced your education and your career track? Was it your parents?

MR. MANION: My parents did. They were determined that you had to go to college because we were in a very small, rough drinking town and they sent me to school. That's where I evolved from there.

MS. NORTON: Did you have any mentors or courses that especially stuck with you while you were going to school? Could it have been a fisheries course?

MR. MANION: No, I got in to fisheries after I was out of school, so I had many mentors after I got a job.

MS. NORTON: You said you were in the Army. How many years did you serve?

MR. MANION: I was in the Army for two years. I was an ROTC graduate, so I was a Battalion Supply Officer. I left as a First Lieutenant.

MS. NORTON: Where was your first duty station?

MR. MANION: Fort Reilly, Kansas. That's where I stayed the whole time. I missed Korea by about a half of a year, thank goodness.

MS. NORTON: Did you get any decorations while you were in?

MR. MANION: No.

MS. NORTON: So your military service didn't relate in any way to your employment with the FWS?

MR. MANION: No.

MS. NORTON: How, when and where did you meet your wife?

MR. MANION: I met my wife at Creighton University. She was from Rapid City, South Dakota. I saw her at Creighton. And I saw her on the train. We used to take the train in. She was on the train going back to Rapid City and I struck up a conversation with her. We were engaged for a year or two and then we got married.

MS. NORTON: When and where did you get married?

MR. MANION: In Rapid City, South Dakota in 1955.

MS. NORTON: Do you have any children?

MR. MANION: I have six children.

MS. NORTON: Six children!

MR. MANION: We put them all through; they are all college educated.

MS. NORTON: Can you tell me their names and what they are doing now? If you can!

MR. MANION: Carol is the oldest. She is a Special Education teach in Midland, Michigan. Mary is some kind of an insurance adjustment specialist in Omaha, Nebraska. My son James is Physical Manager for Monson Trucking Company in Duluth. Jeannie is a Nurse Anesthetist down in Rochester. Cheryl is in charge of homes for people who can't do too well. I don't know how she does it. It's nerve-racking. My youngest son is now some kind of adjuster with Wells Fargo in Omaha, Nebraska. He was a systems analyst making big, big money and he was laid off. It took him a year and a half to find a new job. Of course, he couldn't get back in to computers but he will eventually, probably. His name is William.

MS. NORTON: No Patrick Jr.'s and no Ann's?

MR. MANION: Well, we got William Patrick in there.

MS. NORTON: Well, that's all the personal information. Now we'll go to your career. Why did you want to work for the FWS?

MR. MANION: Fishing and hunting has always been my dream, so I wanted to get a job in fisheries. I really had to find a job quick when I got out of the Army.

MS. NORTON: So what was your first professional position? Was it with the FWS?

MR. MANION: Yes that was the only job I ever had. It was just as a Fishery Biology in Marquette, Michigan with Sea Lamprey control.

MS. NORTON: When did you start?

MR. MANION: I started in 1957. Then I became a Fishery Research Biologist in about 1968.

MS. NORTON: So your first duty station was Marquette, MI, where did you go from there?

MR. MANION: I went in to the Regional office in 1976. So I worked for twenty years in Marquette.

MS. NORTON: Isn't that something! That's great! How did you feel about the pay and benefits when you started?

MR. MANION: Well, we just lived on what we made. We lived on \$3760.00 as a GS-5. That was \$3760.00 a year!

MS. NORTON: Did you have promotion opportunities?

MR. MANION: Oh yes. I went up the ladder, taking a couple of years in each grade.

MS. NORTON: Did you socialize with the people that you worked with up in Michigan and in the Regional office?

MR. MANION: Not in the Regional office but it was a big family. Actually socialized more with the people from Ann Arbor, MI because James Moffett is the one who started Sea Lamprey control out at the Ann Arbor office. We were directly involved with him more than we were with the Regional office.

MS. NORTON: Did you have recreational things that you did too when you were in the field, like at Marquette: bowling or golfing, or ball?

MR. NORTON: Oh yeah. Everybody played ball. We played cards, and we hunted and fished in season. It was a big kind of a family.

MS. NORTON: When I saw Bob, he had been playing golf that day. He is a very nice man.

MR. MANION: Yeah!

MS. NORTON: How did your career affect your family, if it did affect it?

MR. MANION: The career was very nice in Marquette, MI. Of course the move to the Regional Office affected us. Al McLean was my mentor at the Regional office. I was a GS-11 when I left Marquette. He gave me a double promotion to leave and take over his job. It had to be because the taxes were so high here that we never gained a lot. It was a shock to learn about the taxes in this state when I first moved.

MS. NORTON: So you left the Service when you became eligible for retirement?

MR. MANION: I left in thirty-two years in 1987.

MS. NORTON: What was your title and grade then?

MR. MANION: I was Great Lakes Coordinator, but the title was still Fisheries Management Biologist. I was a GS-13. They went off on to merit pay before then so I was actually higher than that, pay wise. It was okay.

MS. NORTON: What sort of training did you receive for all of your different jobs?

MR. MANION: I had my college education at fisheries. We decided that there were some other things we had to find out, like how long the Sea Lamprey lives. It was 1960 when they found a chemical that killed the Lamprey. But they had no idea how long Lampreys live in the stream as what we called ammocoetes [larvae] before they transform; which allows them to grow big. They get teeth. But we had no idea how long they lived in the stream. So it was a project that nobody else would take and I took it. I put seven hundred and some Lampreys up a stream and blocked them. Then I watched them for five years until the first Lamprey came down. Al McLean and I built a trap that covered the whole river. This was a glacial river. The only thing that was up there were Brook Trout. It had a set of three falls that the Lamprey couldn't get past. Therefore it was a real virgin stream. It never had anything on it but Brook Trout, which are natural. In the fifth year, we started getting transformers. Then we decided our whole chemical treatment system. All of the chemical treatments were determined on a five-year cycle. It was a gamble, but we won it.

MS. NORTON: What hours did you work when you were out in the field like that?

MR. MANION: The usual; twelve to sixteen-hour days!

MS. NORTON: That's a little different from when you were in the Regional office! Did you have any special tools or instruments that you had to use?

MR. MANION: No, they were pretty basic. We had some really fine nets because we took out quite a few of their nests and counted their larvae, which was in the many, many thousands. Every year I would sample with a shocker. We would determine how much they grew every year. Then we'd make a growth chart after they first transformed.

MS. NORTON: Did you work with any animals besides the Sea Lampreys?

MR. MANION: No, I was with Lampreys for twenty years.

MS. NORTON: So it was them and the trout?

MR. MANION: No I hunted and fished, but the Sea Lamprey was my life.

MS. NORTON: What kind of support did you feel like you received locally, federally, or regionally for the work you were doing?

MR. MANION: Again, Ann Arbor was the one that supported the project. Nobody thought it would make it. I was the only who decided that I would do it, and give it a try. We got big support from Ann Arbor. When we needed money, they gave it to us to build the traps. The Regional office was really not in existence to us.

MS. NORTON: Oh really, that's too bad.

MR. MANION: Not until Al McLean came in.

MS. NORTON: How do you think the Service was perceived by people outside of the agency? What were the agency/community relations? Were there things in the paper about what you were doing?

MR. MANION: We had a millionaire named Martin. He had this big long sluiceway on his property, which was twenty thousand acres. There was no access. McLean decided to send me up there to see if I could build a trap on his sluiceway. I went up there and his dog came at me. It was a Pekingese. It came running at me and I slowed the car down. It kept running at me. I stopped the car but he kept running and he hit the car. It killed him. He belonged to the owner. The man who took care of everything came down and said that he had seen the whole thing. I introduced myself. Then the owner came down and he said, "You know what that dog cost?" I told him I had no idea. He said, "A thousand dollars! And you know something? He was the dumbest dog in the litter and I never did like him. Now what are you here for?" So we went down to the sluiceway and he said he didn't think he wanted anything built on it. It was his private fishing spot. I asked him what he was fishing for. He said, "Rainbow, and I can't catch any." I asked him to use his pole. I put a spawn bag on it and threw it out there. It wasn't two minutes later that an eight-pound rainbow had grabbed it. I handed the pole to him. He said he couldn't believe it! I told him that this was the bait he should use. I showed it to him in a little jar. He said that I could put anything I wanted to on that sluiceway if he could have that jar. So I gave it to him and we became fast friends. He's died since then.

MS. NORTON: So he approved what you wanted to do?

MR. MANION: He approved it and gave me the keys to the whole estate. He trusted me implicitly and I never violated it. I could go down there and we built. He was a friend from then on. But he was very much...he saw the Lamprey scars on the rainbow and therefore he knew what I was talking about.

MS. NORTON: What was his name?

MR. MANION: His last name was Martin.

MS. NORTON: I was thinking of the millionaire from up around Ann Arbor who used to come to Horicon marsh and set up this tent with his linens, and stuff.

MR. MANION: No, this guy lived there. He had a huge estate.

MS. NORTON: Fellow I knew lived in Michigan, but he would come to Horicon during the goose season. But that wasn't his name. So the projects that you were involved in were always with the Sea Lamprey control?

MR. MANION: Yes.

MS. NORTON: Did you have any major issues with that?

MR. MANION: No, I loved my job!

MS. NORTON: Who were your supervisors?

MR. MANION: The top supervisor was Bernie Smith. My immediate supervisor was Al McLean. Bob Broom and that bunch were in a different office. They were in Chemical and we were in Research, Harry Purvis and I. We went on some chemical treatments of course, when they needed people. But other than that, finding out how long that Sea Lamprey stayed in that river....we ended the project after thirteen years. Sea Lamprey were still metamorphosing and coming down. So they are very protective. That's why they've been around for two hundred and fifty million years. They don't all go out at once. They put out a few at a time.

MS. NORTON: I can remember seeing them in those in the big tubes on people's desks; Ugh!

MR. MANION: Oh, they were beauts!

MS. NORTON: So after Al, who was your next supervisor?

MR. MANION: When I came in to the Regional office I worked with Jack Hemphill. When I came in to the office I came in as Assistant Regional Director of Fisheries. Al Baumgartner became my boss.

MS. NORTON: Did you feel that there was ever any major impediment to your job?



MR. MANION: The impediments were when they started putting people in the Regional office who were not fishery oriented because they came from Washington, D.C. and they thought that a manager there could manage anything because they felt it was just strictly management, which wasn't true. You couldn't talk to them because they didn't understand what you were talking about; especially Sea Lamprey control. Harvey Nelson was quite supportive. Everything that he ever reported on Sea Lamprey I wrote. I wrote all of his speeches and everything. I wrote everything on Fisheries.

MS. NORTON: You're a smart kid then!

MR. MANION: He liked my writing. Harvey was very particular. He would change some of it. But he liked the way I laid stuff out. I had published quite a few papers, so I could write.

MS. NORTON: Do you remember who was President of the United States, or Secretary of the Interior, or Director of FWS while you were working?

MR. MANION: Not really. Who did we have... Greenwalt? They kept changing them.

MS. NORTON: Who do you think some of the individuals were who helped to shape the Service into what it is today?

MR. MANION: In different divisions I could see the people who shaped the way we were going to go. Al McLean certainly shaped Sea Lamprey control. Bernie Smith was a Commissioner along with Al McLean on the Great Lakes Fishery Commission. He certainly helped. Harvey shaped the way we were going for many years as the Regional Officer. Jim Engles shaped how the endangered species were treated. I could see people in the different divisions. There was Bob Hodges shaped part of it too.

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

MR. MANION: We have a very prestigious award, which is given out for the best publication. It's out of the Ann Arbor and Lacrosse lab. When I wrote the first paper on the life history of the Sea Lamprey I received that award. Then in 1978, they found a sterilent. The Hammond Bay lab found it. But they had no idea what to do with it. We went up back in to the Big Garlic which was still a virgin stream and we sterilized these Lamprey by hand and we put them up there. Then we pulled all of the nests that we could find. There were over a million larvae. We found out that 99.9% of them died. They would reach a certain stage and then they died. So in 1978, I again received the Jim Moffett award. You don't receive too many of those. In 1980 they put another chemical sterilent out and we had to get data on that. So we went to the Big Garlic again planted the Lamprey and repeated the process. In 1980 I received the award for the third time! That was pretty unprecedented.

MS. NORTON: You bet! That's great! What was the low point of your career? Or didn't you have one?

MR. MANION: I think it was when I realized about a year before I retired that the FWS was sending people from Washington in management position in to our fisheries. They were unqualified. I saw this in other divisions too. They were sending unqualified people down there that were taking up our money. They were high ranking, always. And they were taking up our money. I started arguing about it. Of course Kopowski and I started disagreeing on stuff, so I decided that I would get out. I could see the deterioration of my position as Great Lakes Coordinator as it was taken over by people who didn't understand what we were doing. I talked to Shultz after that. I had brought him up to take my position. Then they kept adding stuff to my position; like the budgets and stuff like that. I decided that after thirty-two years I didn't have to take that. I thought I'd get out because I could just see a deterioration with Washington taking over our office.

MS. NORTON: Was there ever a dangerous or frightening experience that you were in?

MR. MANION: Just the usual stuff; being out in boats with a storm coming up across some of the lakes. We'd be carrying propane around and we worked constantly with electrical weirs. I ran electrical weirs for a number of years. You had to be very careful because they were deadly. I never worked much with the chemicals.

MS. NORTON: Can you think of the most humorous experience?

MR. MANION: I often think that something like Albert Powers, who has turned into a good writer, should perhaps write some of this stuff down. There were numerous instances but they probably weren't printable. They were just ridiculous.

MS. NORTON: What would you like to tell others about your career or the FWS? Someone you had never met.

MR. MANION: Well, you know I followed the FWS. I never, when I left FWS, I left. I left Sea Lamprey control. I didn't go to reunions. I had a lot of friends. And I went to the Regional office very seldom. I went to several retirements, like the one for Diane. Did you go to that? I was just absolutely amazed that she had three Regional Directors there. She thanked them. Then she mentioned my name and thanked me. I thought that was well worth going to because she and I went way back. I took her up on the Big Garlic and everything with a four wheel drives. She was very proficient; excellent. I still say that if you stick, as in any job, you have to stick without being ornery about it, with your principals of what you believe is right. You can make your statement to the higher authority. You can push it pretty hard to show what you really mean. Of course when the Regional Director makes his decision, of course you have to go along with it. But I

don't believe you should really go over somebody's head, although I felt like it many times with Dan Baumgartner; to go over his head directly to Harvey. I did go over several heads when we ran in to the Indian problems. I can't remember the guy in the Solicitor's office, but we got in to trouble with closing down some hatcheries. I researched it and I went to the Solicitor and told him that we were wrong. He did his own research and found out that I was right. He said that Jack West told Hemphill that this was the way it was going to go. Hemphill was backing him. I told him that we had better go and talk to Jack because I didn't want Jack to get in to trouble. Jack was a good friend.

MS. NORTON: Was that Elmer Nitchski?

MR. MARION: Yeah that's probably it. We went up there and laid the case out and Jack just looks at me and the Solicitor and asks if all of this was true. The Solicitor said, "Pat is right. We are in trouble if we do it." Jack reversed it and West didn't like that too good. I could see some really serious problems coming in. I worked with the Indians quite a bit. They are something else.

MS. NORTON: Some of them are very decent people. But some are still kind of belligerent about the fact that they didn't feel like they had been treated right all of these years.

MR. MARION: They sure got what they wanted, and a little more. That was the only time I really went over somebody's head. And that was because I really liked Jack Hemphill. He was a rough bugger. In fact, the first time I ever met him; Al McLean says to me, "I want you to go up and ask Jack if he wants to go to lunch?" We went out a lot. And those guys drink a lot. Good heavens! I'm not a drinker. I went up to him and said, "McLean told me to ask if you have gone out for lunch yet?" He said, "What?" I repeated myself, and then he said, "In the southwestern part of the state we say, 'gaaeat'?" [slang or shortening of the words Did you eat?]

MS. NORTON: I saw Jack down in Florida at this last reunion that we had. His wife died. He has remarried to this little short lady. He's just so precious with her. And he's still heavy.

MR. MARION: I can't believe he is still around.

MS. NORTON: He was sitting in front of me at this presentation they were making and on the back of his hat it said, "Hemphill". I wondered where he got that hat. I didn't think it was him. But when he turned around, it was him!

MR. MARION: I was very sorry he left. He was a good mentor of mine.

MS. NORTON: What were some of the changes that you observed in the environment of the Service, and how it's changed. Where do you think the FWS is going in the future?

MR. MANION: Well, you know I've observed the FWS down in Florida too. I don't know what to say. Everything I say is based on the past, but I think it has deteriorated. Certain people still get the promotions and I don't think they treat the real workers like they should. But I see that the pay scale has gone up considerably. But over all, FWS is the Service and it is the one thing that keeps this whole nation from falling apart; in relation to fisheries, refuges and law enforcement. And that's a fact. If they were gone, this nation would be in serious trouble! There would be nobody to stop them.

MS. NORTON: Do you have any photographs or documents that you would like to donate to the Archives with your interview?

MR. MANION: They'd probably be just personal photos of me receiving awards or something like that.

MS. NORTON: Is there anybody else that you think should be interviewed? I only have 1800 names on this list, but if you can think of anyone.

MR. MANION: Do you know Harry Purvis? He can't hear worth a toot.

MS. NORTON: Where is he?

MR. MANION: He's down in Florida, in Fort Myers. He and I worked together for many years. He stayed in Marquette. When he found out that the Sea Lamprey lived for five years in the stream; and this was a cold-water brook trout stream; he started doing research on other streams. He was planting animals and marking with a dye and putting them in other rivers. He found out that some; a few minor ones would metamorphose at three years. I mean in a huge, warm stream that had lots of growth and lots of food. They eat what we called diatoms; that muck on the bottom. That's what they'd eat.

MS. NORTON: He's not on my list. So if you have an address for him, I will add it.

MR. MANION: I will.

MS. NORTON: Well that's it Pat. Thank you very much.

MR. MANION: I enjoyed it.

