A: All right. So we’re recording now. Okay, this is interview with Cleveland Pinnix, April 28, 2003. And Cleve, first a few background questions for you. First, where and when were you born?

C: Well let’s see. I’m in [Traphill], Mehmed. I was born in 1944 in Asheville, North Carolina. So I’m a hillbilly.

A: Okay. And where did you go to school at?

C: Um, let’s see. I went to a prep school down there called the Asheville School. And then took a Batchelor’s Degree in North Carolina State University.

A: And how do you spell the name of the prep school?

C: Oh it was the Asheville School. It’s A S H E V I L L E.

A: Okay. I see. (C: Yah) And what did you do when you came out of college?

C: I became a National Park Ranger.

A: Okay, straight out of college.

C: Yes, that’s right. Yup.
A: And what, what did you do? Where were you located?

C: Well I was fortunate enough to work a couple of summers, my last summer between terms in college, and then right after I graduated on the Blue Ridge Parkway down in western North Carolina, not far from Great Smokey Mountains National Park. (A: Okay) Then was hired as a permanent ranger. My young bride and I went to Grand Canyon National Park, went through the Ranger Academy. And then my first assignment was out here in the State of Washington at Mount Rainier National Park. (A: Oh okay) We spent about four years at Mount Rainier, took a promotion to a District Ranger position back at Mammoth Cave National Park in western Kentucky. And then moved on from there, after another couple, two and a half years or so, to, would you believe we lived on Liberty Island.

A: Oh did you really?

C: Yah.

A: Tell us a little bit about that.

C: Well you know, actually it probably was something that gave me at least a bit of an insight in dealing with the Lowell legislation, because of course, the great story at the Statue of Liberty is American immigration.

A: Right.

C: So we lived right on Liberty Island, had two small kids at the time. It was a lot of fun. When the last tour boat went home for the day we pretty much had the island to ourselves. We’d take the kids and stroll the sea wall. If I felt like some exercise I’d take the key along and unlock the door and climb up to the torch of the statue, and stand up there and watch the sun go down.

A: Wow.

C: [It was a great place.] It was a lot of fun. Yah.

A: Yah, it sounds like a great spot.

C: Isn’t that something. Yah, it’s a strange place to think about living if you’re an old National Park Ranger, but we enjoyed it for a while.

A: Yah.

C: And then the Park Service tapped me for a, it was the Department of the Interior Program then called Departmental Manager Developing Program. So they shipped us then to Washington DC for a year That was supposed to make me a little less stupid about the bigger picture than I
was. And during that time I took a work assignment up on Capitol Hill, and I worked for a Congressman named Roy Taylor and was chairman of the House Subcommittee on National Parks. And at the end of the internship he wound up offering me a job up there. So that’s how I came to leave the National Park Service. We spent the next, boy, over seven years working for the House Interior Committee, the Committee of the Congress.

A: Okay. And where was Congressman Taylor from?

C: He was from western North Carolina.

A: Oh okay.

C: Yah, in fact that was one way it made it easy to arrange an internship for me, because at least I’d grown up in his district.

A: Oh okay. Did your family know him or anything before that?

C: No, no, nothing like that, but the National Park Service legislative affairs people, as they look for ways to take people that were in this Manager Development Program, and think about how they would place him, they felt, hey, it’d be sort of a natural fit for me since I knew something about his district after growing there. And I thought it made it easier to work for his staff for a while, and then because of my background with The National Park Service, he decided that it was right. I just happened to be at the right place, at the right time. And then they had a professional staff person that, that served that subcommittee was an attorney. A guy name Lee [MacAlvine] took a new position with full committee. So the professional spot on the National Park Subcommittee came open, and Taylor said, “Oh I’ve got this guy who’s with Smokey the Bear,” and he thought my work was okay. So they hired me. Yah, it was fun.

A: I see. Now you didn’t have any training as a lawyer then, did you?

C: Not at all, no. I always thought of myself as the anecdote to all the [unclear]. You know, you had to have a few of us to keep the [unclear] straight. Yah.

A: Very good. (C: Yah) Well what kind of things were you working on when you first joined the committee?

C: Well the subcommittee’s jurisdiction was essentially pretty much any legislation that had to do with the National Park System. So new areas that would be proposed for addition to the National Park System, changes in existing areas that [might be an] existing national park, if they wanted to extend a boundary, or change something like that, Congress had to deal with it. But the committee’s jurisdiction, the subcommittee, also dealt with things like wilderness designations in the national parks, and national recreation areas, wild and scenic river systems, national trail systems, so sort of all the range of federal recreation areas. So it was a fascinating
subject matter, because I got to work on fights on protecting rivers from dam builders, and long distance trails like Appalachian National Scenic Trail, things like that.

A: What year did you join the subcommittee?

C: Let’s see, I came on staff there in it would have been spring of 1974, yah.

A: Okay.

C: Yah, yah, probably about April of ’74.

A: Okay. And when you were working for the NPS, what were some of your responsibilities there?

C: Well I, you know it generally had been field ranger assignments. So it was sort of the usual thing that people did was progressing from learning a lot of the field activities, doing everything from law enforcement to search and rescue work, to natural history interpretation. That was, I was back in the old days when they didn’t specialize rangers so much. (A: Sure) They did it all.

A: Sure. And then when you went to Washington what did you do there for the NPS?

C: Well I was, I was kind of on a management track. The move to Statue of Liberty put me in the entry-level management position. I acted as an assistant to the superintendent that ran the Statue of Liberty area. And when the Park Service tapped me for this departmental manager program, it was essentially suppose to be a year of really trying to develop people that were going to be managers for the National Park System. If I had stayed in the National Park System the next logical they’d have done with me is probably assign me as the superintendent to a small to medium national park, and let me keep going as manager.

A: Yah, I see. Now when was the first time you heard about Lowell if you recall?

C: Well it would have been probably early on when I was working for the Congressional Committee. So in 1974, and I think at that time, you probably got the dates and you can help me with this Mehmed, but I think Paul Cronin would still have been representing the Lowell area at that time in Congress.

A: That’s correct.

C: Yah, and I think the committee at that time, Cronin and other people in the Massachusetts delegation had been trying to get some interest in the Lowell project. And Congress passed the study bill at that time. So that was the, that was the enactment of the bill that set up the study commission to eventually put together a more detailed plan for what a national park unit would look like there.
A: Yah. Now what do you remember about that, that specific legislation getting passed?

C: I don’t have a lot of real specific things for you, but I think in a general sense one of the things that I came to learn as I worked for the committee is that if there were interests by members of Congress and perhaps adding something to the National Park System, and it appeared to have some merit, but maybe it wasn’t one of those things that was, where everything was worked out, one of the ways that Congress dealt with that was to pass study legislation. (A: Okay) Study legislation essentially gave direction to the Interior Department. The National Park Service would say, “We think this is a serious enough issue that we want it looked at in an organized way.” So the study legislation through Congress would give direction usually with at least some detail to the administration, and to the agency to put together a planning effort, put an organized report together to come back to Congress to essentially give Congress something to work with that would be organized and thought through.

A: And so would the study legislation, that wouldn’t be regarded as putting it on the shelf.

C: Oh no, I think it was (--) Well it, you know, different people would probably give you different takes on the way the study legislation worked. My sense of it was that it actually was a fairly useful sort of first step if you had a significant proposal, to find a way to get it put into shape. Some other people would say, well it could also be seen as sort of hero bill, something that a member of Congress can take back to their constituents and say, “See, I got this done.” But it didn’t actually commit the federal government to anything beyond the study. (A: Right) That’s a little bit of a cynical view. I guess I looked at it as something that can actually be very helpful, though the proponents and people that might have a lot of questions and reservations about the project.

A: Okay. So what do you recall about Paul Cronin?

C: Um, that he was an enthusiastic booster I guess you would say, um, for the Lowell area. That he was very interested in Congress taking some steps to assist with, with historic preservation and with redevelopment in the city. And he, and that he pushed for this study bill as a way to see that happen. Now by the time I came on, since I came on sort of midway through that session of Congress, (A: Umhm) you need to look at the way that sort of the ball game works in Congress. It’s really sort of the two-year time clock from once the Congress convenes after elections, and then running through the next even number year. And while I don’t have, but my records here Mehmed, I don’t, I can’t go back and say, “When did the first study bill get introduced, but my recollection is that was probably introduced well before I came on the staff. (A: Yes) That we were already dealing with it by then.

A: Yes. And did you work with anybody on Cronin’s staff?

C: You know we would have had contacts with [unclear] from his office, um, I’ve got to tell you it’s been too many years. So I can’t pop up any names.
A: Let me put a couple of names to you (C: Sure) and see if they ring a bell. Steve Karelekas?

C: Yah I think so. Yah, was he on his key staff?

A: Yes.

C: Yah, okay, right.

A: And then the other person which I think worked a little bit more closely on the Park legislation, was a woman named Sally Rich.

C: Oh yah, right. Yes, that name does ring a bell. Yah, okay.

A: But no, nothing strikes you for a story about them?

C: No, I really can’t give you any great stories about them, except that I think Sally Rich was the person, was she on Cronin’s personal staff?

A: I’m pretty sure, yah.

C: Yah, I think so. And we did, let’s see, I think it must have been that year we did a field trip to the Boston area, (A: Okay) because the committee was also working on Boston National Historical Park Legislation. And I think Sally went with us on that trip. (A: Okay) And here again is where my memory is not clear. I think we may have gone out to Lowell at the same time we were up there. (A: Oh okay) So that may have been where those of us on the committee staff, and probably some of the member of Congress may have gotten a first look. Have you got anything in your record there that indicates (--) 

A: Well I have you guys coming up to Lowell, but that’s in ’77.

C: Yah, okay.

A: So you might have come up earlier with a smaller group.

C: Yah, that’s what I’m thinking, is that we may have just (-) I know that we went up and we did field hearings and spent a fair amount of time in Boston. And I think we may have just, you know, several of us may have just gotten in a car and gone out to Lowell so we could get a first look at some of the area. And I think Sally may have been a part of that.

A: Okay.

C: Have you been able to contact her?

A: No, I just discovered her name when I started making these calls to do these oral histories.
C: Yah. Okay, right. Yah.

A: Steve Karaleakas, who I knew, said, “Well the person you really want to talk to is this woman.” And he’s going to try and find her for me.

C: Oh okay, yah. Well I bet that’s right, because I think Sally, I’m pretty sure she was on that subcommittee trip to Boston. One of the things, I mean I was new on the Congressional staff and that was probably one of the first times that I got to travel with the subcommittee. And there was a lot of staff work involved on that one, with setting up the logistics. We had a pretty intense schedule around the Boston area. (A: Interesting) Can I put you on hold a second? I’m getting an incoming call and I want to check it real quick.

A: Sure. Here we go, we’re recording again.

C: Okay. All right. (A: And you can continue) I’m just going to ignore any incoming calls from now on so I don’t disrupt the system here. Let’s see, 1974 stuff, I’ll bet you if you’re able to contact Sally Rich she may remember some of that.

A: Yah.

C: As I recall we spent a fair amount of time in Boston. We had several members of Congress with us. I think some of us must have gone out just for a day and run out to Lowell to see some of those (A: Okay) places, yah.

A: Now who, who was the Congressman that went up to Lowell? I mean I’m sorry, to Boston with you? Do you remember?

C: Into Boston. Wow! Well Roy Taylor, who was the subcommittee chairman. (A: Yup) I think a guy name Keith Sebelius (A: Sure) S E B E L I U S, (A: Yup) Yah okay. He was a member from Kansas. You know I’m pretty sure there was an interesting little guy named Tony Won Pat, two words, W O N, and then capital P A T.

A: Right, from Guam.

C: Yup, he was the delegate from Guam.

A: Tell us about him a little bit?

C: Oh just you know, a very interesting guy. He was sort of I guess, and I remember another person on staff that sort of helped fill me in, said that Mr. Won Pat was sort of a George Washington of Guam.

A: Oh really!
C: Yah, because he had, I guess after the Second World War and he had been sort of an American protectorate, and I guess Mr. Won Pat was apparently a key person in sort of arranging for Guam to have sort of a separate independent territorial status. A tiny little guy you know. Boy I bet he wasn’t more than about 5’2”, and pretty elderly, but real interested in things, very active. Although we always used to feel sorry for him, because anytime the House took a recess, and of course everybody got, all the members of Congress then flee backed home to do constituent work and get ready for he next election. And for Won Pat, he had to fly in from D.C to Guam, which is some you know, horrible thing where you were jetlagged to the point of near death. But I remember, I know he came up on that Boston trip. Yah. (A: Now) It may (A: Go ahead), well it may have been there are others too, and I just, it’s been too many years. A guy named Joe Skubitz from Kansas, S K U B I T Z, would have been the ranking Republican member (A: Okay) on the subcommittee at that time

A: Now Sebelius being a Democrat?

C: No, Sebelius was an R.

A: He was.

C: Yah, he was also from Kansas, and he was a real active member on the subcommittee. He sort of um, I think Skubitz must have retired at the end of that Congress, the end of the 93rd. And then Sebelius became, Sebelius was the ranking Republican member when the final legislation for establishing the National Historical Park was passed.

A: Okay. (C: Yah) Now 1974 of course is an interesting election year nationally. And how did that, did that impact you, the change over to Democrats, or?

C: It really didn’t, because on the, in the House of Representatives, the Democrats were in charge and while I was, as committee staff you weren’t affected by those things a great deal. You were affected more by like who was chair in the committee and the subcommittee. (A: Okay) So Sebelius (--)

A: And so did that change from somebody (--)

C: Yah, Taylor was reelected in the ’74 election. So he stayed as subcommittee chair for the next two years.

A: I see, okay. What else about ’74? Anything interesting happened out of that Watergate error, and all of that stuff?

C: Oh gosh! Actually incredible stuff, but probably not much on the point of Lowell. One of the things that was sort of fun for me is that one of the members of our National Park subcommittee was a guy from Ohio, John Seiberling. And Congressman Seiberling was also on
the House Judiciary Committee. (A: Umhm) So he was dealing with impeachment proceedings. And I remember occasionally you’d go in to see those members if you were working on a report or something that [needed] the legislation. So I remember going into John’s office more than once where we’d be coming in to see him about some piece of National Park Legislation and he’d be sort of in his private office where he wasn’t interrupted too much, with huge stacks of transcripts from all of the inquiries on the impeachment process. Like you know, the tape transcripts and stuff like that. He was a, he was a very, very dedicated good guy. He was an attorney and really took the responsibility seriously. And he was really doing his homework on Watergate at that time. So yah, it was sort of fascinating to be working on the hill at the time when the president resigned and all that change took place. Yah.

A: All right. What was the next step in the legislation? Obviously in ’75 Paul Tsongas comes around.

C: Right. Yah. You know my sense, I remember pretty clearly I guess when the subcommittee was first organizing, when Tsongas was elected. And generally what the subcommittees would do, the members of Congress when they get their assignments and then they, each member of the full committee would have usually two, sometimes three subcommittees they would serve on. So early in the session the subcommittees would kind of have organizing meetings to kind of start identifying members priorities, and maybe continuing issues stuff that hadn’t gotten resolved in the last Congress. And sort of start thinking through what their agenda was going to be. And I think it must have been in something like one of those first organizing meetings that Paul was, he was just being real direct saying that the reason that he got on the Interior Committee and worked an assignment on the National Park subcommittee was to get a National Historical Park in Lowell. You know, so he was, he was real upfront about that.

A: Yah. Would it have been hard for a freshman Democrat to get on to those committees, or?

C: Um, it’s probably not, not unusual I guess to the way I think about it Mehmed. I think from freshmen coming in, the committees that were considered pretty much impossible for a freshmen, were things like the appropriation committees, because that’s where you basically, you’d get the purse strings. So a lot of power. So Interior was considered probably one of the sort of mid-rank committees. And you know, it ah, one of the things that might be a little unusual for somebody like Tsongas, is that if you look at the membership of committees like that, you’d probably see that most of the members of Congress on that committee would come from the west, or they would come from districts that had lots of public lands. (A: Oh) Like Roy Taylor for example, Western North Carolina, there’s a lot of public land in his district. (A: Okay) A lot, a very large amount of national forest land, a major national park in Great Smokey Mountains, things like the Suitland Parkway. So he had sort of a good local district interest in being on that committee. And the committee was generally at that time pretty much dominated by western members. Moe Udall from Arizona. (A: Sure) people like that. So it probably would have been, while not super difficult, it probably would have been seen as little unusual. Here’s an urban guy from Massachusetts, and he’d gotten himself on this committee where he’s dealing with you know, water policy laws and irrigation districts in the west. Boring. You
know, so yah, not super difficult, but maybe as sort of interesting signal that he would spend his chips in committee assignments to get on a committee that in many ways you’d say, “What the hell does that have to do with his district?”

A: Very good. Very good.

C: Yah.

A: Staff members that you worked with from Paul’s side?

C: Yah. Boy once again you’re going to have to give me some names.

A: Okay, yah. That’s fine. Fred Faust?

C: Yah. Yes. Thank you. You bet. Yah, okay. Yah that, you know it was interesting because as a committee staff my work would be supporting the committee’s work doing, writing a lot of reports, working on drafting legislation, supporting members work that way, but you would also deal with the individual personal staffs, the members, when they, when they had something that they were really interested in. A lot of times, let’s say a member of Congress, and if they’re on that committee and they’re going to be voting on you know, let’s say a wilderness designation, for [Capulin] Volcano National Park out in California, and they’re from back east, they’re going to come to the committee meetings, they’re going to you know, listen to testimony and hearings, read their committee reports, engage in debate, have caucus meetings, but their personal staff isn’t going to be involved. (A: Okay) Why should they be, right? But if you have something like a member who’s got a particular piece of legislation that they’re really interested in, Tsongas with Lowell being a great example, then they would have their personal staff that would be very much engaged by that. So yah, somebody like Fred would have, you know, he would have been, would probably be talking with him fairly frequently, any progress, what was going on. Would look for assistance from somebody like, like Fred. If we were planning say field hearings for a field trip up to the area. So the personal staffs got you know, pretty much engaged with the committees at that point.

A: Okay. Let me just throw a couple of other names out there and see if you pick up any stories or anything remarkable. Dennis Cannon, or Kanin.

C: Kanin, yah. You know, I don’t.

A: Okay, Steve Joncas? It doesn’t ring a bell?

C: Yah.

A: Okay. Now at some point the legislation was set up and it was for a Lowell Cultural, Urban Cultural Park. (C: Yah) And then the name was change to the Historical Park. Do you remember any sense of why that happened?
C: Yah, some, and that’s where maybe this can be a Lowell interest for you. If you sort of pull back and look at kind of the larger context of some things that were going on in Congress at that time, there was really a very active debate among members of the subcommittee, and the people that were interested in the subject matter. People from the National Park Service, the administration, and some of the interested organized groups like the National Parks and Conservation Association, about what was appropriate to put in the National Park System. (A: Umhm) And this was at a time, oh in the early 70s there were things such as Golden Gate National Recreation Area, and San Francisco Gateway National Recreation Area, and New York City in an area. John Seiberling, the guy that was also on the Judiciary Committee, Seiberling was championing the Cuyahoga River National Recreation Area, which was the river valley that sort of ran between Akron and Cleveland in northern Ohio. So there was a lot of debate and discussion, and a lot of real hot disagreement about what was appropriate to add to the National Park System. And there were sort of, I think there were sort of two threads to that. One would be people that came in it from a policy perspective, that said, “Hey, you know, if something is going to have that arrowhead on the sign, and it’s going to be considered a part of the National Park System, it ought to truly be nationally significant. We’re not in the business of trying to duplicate what’s in local and state park systems. (A: Right) So we ought to handle only those things that we would say truly merit that kind of national recognition. The other thing was [unclear] pressure, and that’s where, in the administration where whether Republican or Democrat, would tend to get into it and say, “Wait a minute, we can’t be all things to all people. We’re limited in funds and we ought to be, we really ought to pick and choose and be very cautious about what we add to the national systems. So some of those early things (--) I think when Paul got in I think he, I bet you if you look in the records you’ll find he introduced a number of different bills, and I think he may have tried more than one way of saying, “How would you characterize this thing?” Though there be (--) You know, that the idea of what you would call this and sort of how it fit into the national system, was the subject of a fair amount of debate and discussion. And that’s the kind of thing that the subcommittee members would tend to sort of thrash out too. They would be working on that.

A: So was there quite a bit of opposition to Lowell becoming a National Park?

C: There was a fair amount of resistance, yah. I think that’s fair to say. I think you know, some people in the administration (--) You know you think about the kind of communications that Congress gets from any administration. And you have the agency people, the National Park Service people, but a lot of their formal and official communications with the Congress have to sort of go up through the chain of approval. Up through the Department of Interior, which is, would be political officials put in by any president, and in some cases if their going to comment on legislation that has budget impact, it even goes beyond the Department of Interior. It has to go through the office of wow, what, OMB at that time? [Unclear] the budget. I think it may be [re-titled] now. Anyhow, there are sort of a couple of interesting layers that would go on with something like that. And then we would be say a committee stance level, and people like Fred, people on membership Congress staff, we would have pretty frequent contact with people that were working for a National Park Service and their legislative division in the National Park
Service. And those would be people that they might be working with, National Park Planners, planning staff in the regions, in the field. They’d be pretty close to sort of I guess you’d say, the sort of the National Park Service’s professional views of the merits of different legislation. And then there was usually a pretty healthy energy in that era, with staff people like me and others, and those folks about what looks good and bad about this, and pretty healthy discussions about what was worthwhile, or what was a problem, what were ways to approach something today. You got a lot more [construed] when you needed to get sort of an official position from the administration. At that point this whole approval thing would kick in and you’d wind up maybe trying to get a letter that would come over the say, the assistant secretary interior secretary, that would put forth the administration’s position on something like this. So I think Lowell was probably one of those where we had National Park Service, the sort of people working for the agency, who were pretty engaged with the historic preservation aspects of it, and the story to be told. But they also recognized that it certainly wasn’t you know, it didn’t look much like Yellowstone, [if it wasn’t the] real traditional unit of the National Park System. So what did make sense? I think probably one of the things that, that’s where you probably look back to that study legislation that was passed by Congress, and you say from my perspective, that probably really kind of helped the debate a great deal, because it gave the Park Service people something they could work with, with working on that study commission report. And so it gave everybody a way to say, “Let’s think about how we define this?” You know, what, what looks like it could be appropriate for the federal government to assume responsibility for and pay for it, and what should be local. And you know, the way the final legislation came out where it had sort of the commission stuff in it. (A: Right) That study process I think really helped kind of find a way to define those things so that people had something to try and work with.

A: Was there any bumps in the road along the way towards this legislation getting passed?

C: Yah, I think, let’s see. I guess if I try to thing about sort of sequence, I think probably just like when Paul Tsongas first came on. Let’s see, at that point the study legislation would have been signed into law. Am I remembering this right? (A: Yup) Yah, it was probably passed late in ’74. (A: Yah) So, and then probably signed by the president sometime in January ’75, something like that. (A: Okay) So at least for a time I think probably the people on the committee would have been saying, “Hey, we just dealt with this, right? You know, we passed the study legislation, let’s find out what that’s going to tell us.” (A: Umhm) And so I think probably (--) ‘My recollection of Tsongas is he was always the guy, he really wanted to get at it, and get stuff done, and sort of not waste a lot of time. (A: Umhm) And I don’t have any great, I wish I had some great stories for you, but I don’t. But my sense is he probably was fairly frustrated during that early time on the subcommittee, because it was kind of, okay, you know, we’ve dealt with this study bill, let’s wait until we get the results back before we start pushing on too much else. But beyond that there was still substantial debate and resistance about and then this whole sort of larger picture of what should go into the National Park System, and what should Congress people spend that kind of money on to deal with. So generally, here’s sort of an interesting thing. You know you think about at that time when he was first in Congress, the Republicans were still in charge of the White House, the administration. (A: Right) The Democrats were in charge of both Houses of Congress. (A: Umhm) The Democratic leadership
on the subcommittee was probably, well not probably, certainly was sort of more receptive to kind of expanding the role of the National Park System, and looking at these less traditional areas than the administration was. But a lot of this didn't breach real cleanly along partisan lines. (A: Okay) In many ways, for example, a guy like Roy Taylor who was subcommittee chair, and people like Skubitz and Sebelius, they talked to each other a lot. And they gave us direction as committee staff that we needed to look for ways to try to resolve differences where we could, and to find ways to make something acceptable. So sort of the, I guess you’d say the style of operation for that subcommittee was that it tended to be pretty non-partisan. People didn’t sort of line up on a whole lot of party line votes. It tended to be more a matter of saying, well making it a subcommittee work session. That members talking to each other and getting some sense of where somebody had an issue or a problem, and then giving staff some direction. Let’s go see if you can work on how you might modify language. So that the way that some of this stuff got worked was maybe less along party lines that people might think today. (A: Okay) Does that make sense?

A: Yah.

C: Yah. Okay.

A: Um, where, who would you describe of the personalities being most vocal in their opposition if you recall?

C: Boy. Probably there and then, now let’s see. By the time the 94th Congress (--) I got to see if I’m keeping this straight. 94th Congress, that could have been 1975, 1976. (A: Umhm) And I think by then Keith Sebelius would have [unclear] member. So Sebelius would have been probably kind of a lead person, I would say not in opposing anything along these lines, but in voicing reservation.

A: Okay.

C: And god Mehmed, I don’t have a good clear specific sort of person, or [unclear] that says, “What do we get from the administration?” But my sense was we got a lot of generally negative stuff from the administration. (A: Okay) And here’s where maybe the party stuff does make some difference. Sebelius and his staff would probably have been maybe listening to those folks somewhat more closely just because it was kind of a Republican to Republican thing. (A: Yah) Yah.

A: Yah, okay. Good. (C: Yah) As the legislation went forward, did you have, whatever I want to say, national constituencies come out on behalf of this Urban Cultural Park, this Lowell Park?

C: I, you know, I think the answer is yah. And I think probably the group that maybe this is even worth you trying to talk to somebody there, is probably with National Parks and Conservation Association. (A: Okay) You know, if you look at all of the, [kind of] national groups, wilderness society, things like that, they didn’t focus too much on issues like this. (A:
Okay) But National Parks and Conservation Association, that was, that’s kind of their niche. (A: Sure) So those folks would have been actively interested in this sort of thing. They were, they were interested in sort of this whole larger national debate about you know, what, and how wide should the definition of the appropriate National Park Systems unit be? They would have been engaged with that.

A: Yah. How about any unions like Teamsters Union, or anybody like that?

C: Well you know they, I don’t recall anything in particular with Lowell.

A: Okay. (C: Yah) All right. Let me ask you about a couple of local people, if you can recall any stories about them. (C: Yah) Pat Mogan?

C: Boy I remember, I remember Pat as being a great advocate. Um, I think he must have come to D.C. and testified (A: Okay) at some of the hearings that we had. Oh and nothing, but no good stories.

A: Okay. And how about (--) 

C: You know, one of my, [I mean the kind of stuff you], it’s funny. The one story I remember from that era is when we did that trip up in Boston, and we had the subcommittee up on some little historic monument, a hilltop in Boston, where he had some of these revolutionary war sites. And some guy streaked the subcommittee.

A: [Laughs]

C: [Now that’s the kind of stuff that sticks to the staff, right?]

A: That’s a good one. You guys made several field trips to Lowell. (C: Yah) And what do you recall from those trips. Anything exciting?

C: Boy one thing that really struck me, well I guess several things. I remember we had a wonderful opportunity over in, I think it was the Tsongas’ house, we had a dinner and visited over in a wonderful neighborhood of these great Victorian [unclear]. I guess it was the houses that the mill owners owned. (A: Umhm) Have I got that right?

A: I think so.

C: Yah, and there was a (--) I remember one evening I think when the subcommittee was up there that we went over to one of these houses, and I think it was Tsongas that said, that owned it. And Paul was talking about how they paid you know, something like $70,000 for this place. Of course I guess it was a wreck when they got it, but it’s this wonderful Victorian era house with you know, a grand staircase and beautiful woodwork. And it was really fascinating just to see that and say, oh think about that contrast where the mill owners were over here in these, what
must have been in their heyday in the 19th century, just these absolutely spectacular mansions sort of over, across the river I think from all the industrial area was. (A: Yah) Yah. That’s one reason I got to come out and see you guys sometime [unclear].

A: Yah, and see if you can find that house. I think I know which one you’re talking about.

C: Yah. Do you know about this? That was, Tsongas had a house up there?

A: I think up in Belvidere was the neighborhood. (C: Yah, right) Was it going up a hill?

C: Yah it was. I remember it was up on a hill, yup.

A: Yup, that house is still there. (C: Okay) And his widow still lives in that house.

C: Is that right. Yah. Yah. Well I think they hosted the subcommittee over there. It was just beautiful.

A: Now was anybody from the community at those parties, or was it just congressional people and staff people?

C: Oh I think yah, they would have, typically what they would have done would have been invited people who were you know, community leaders, stuff like that. Boy it’s too long ago for me to bring names up and stuff. I remember we got, one of, typically I think what would happen was some of those kinds of field trips too, is that you’d get member of congress who were more or less willing to sort of get out and you know, get around. And then you’d get staff people like me, and have I mentioned the name of Clay Peters to you? (A: No) I should have, when we had that first phone call Mehmed. Clay was the, basically the Republican staff member of the subcommittee. (A: Okay) So his, just like my boss would have been Roy Taylor, the subcommittee chair, his boss would have been Keith Sebelius, the ranking Republican.

A: Okay, okay. So each, each party kind of had their own guy?

C: Yes. If you looked at sort of the committee organization, each party had a certain number of professional staff slots on the committee, and Clay would have been sort of the minority consultant, is what they called him, but Clay would have been on these trips. And typically what Clay and I would do, and maybe somebody like Fred, or Sally Rich, when she was working with this, people like that, a lot of times the staff people would basically go up there and say to the people that were hosting us, “Hey, you know, show us as much as you can in the time that we’ve got.” (A: Hm) So we would (--) Like in Lowell I remember, and unfortunately I just can’t tell you the name of who, who sort of dragged us around, but we had some of the people that had been working on it, and they were great, because I remember they took us to some of the head works there where the old dam was on the river, and some of the, and sort of took us through a lot of the areas where the machinery was, and the [unclear] and stuff into the canals. You know we chucked through a lot of the old, the old buildings and things like that. So the memories I
have of that is that we really got as much as we could. We really got around in the area trying, and they tried to help us by at least giving us a chance to get into our head some of what the buildings [unclear]. So if you talked about what, like the Boott Mill and stuff like that.

A: Right.

C: You had a clue of what it looked like, what’s there.

A: Yah.

C: So we, we really, we stayed pretty busy with that. And the members would do a fair amount of that. A guy like Taylor who would, he was practically in his 60s then, but Roy was, he was very, he was very interested in the subject matter, very interested in learning about that. He, so he enjoyed that sort of thing. So Taylor and Sebelius would probably have been pretty, pretty well in to at least do a fair amount of that. And then you typically have Paul Tsongas and his staff, they would be there too, obviously advocating, but also trying to just help people learn what the place had.

A: Yah. Did you meet any body, any business leaders like say, the head of the Locks and Canals, or anybody like that.

C: You know my guess is yah, but my guess is probably in a setting where you know, they would have like a reception, or maybe the deal like in Tsongas’ home, and just a lot of people in a big setting. Yah, I think that’s [unclear]

A: Yah. So nothing, (C: Yah, sorry. Yah) nothing more, smaller than that?

C: Right. Yah.

A: Okay. Do you remember where you were when the initial legislation was finally passed?

C: Hm.

A: Do you remember hearing it from somebody, or?

C: Well I was still working for the committee at the time. So you know, some of (--) I guess by then let’s see, when we got the final legislation passed, that would have been (--)

A: The legislation was passed in ’78.

C: ‘78 yah. So by then, see a lot of things have changed in the sense of leadership. Phil Burton had taken over as subcommittee chair.

A: He was a Democrat?
C: Yah, right. Yah the D’s were still in charge. So Taylor retired (A: Okay) at the end of ’96. [So he didn’t stand] for re-election in ’96, he retired.

A: In ’76?

C: Right. Yah, and maybe, how much more of this can you stand?

A: Oh, well actually we’re almost wrapping it up from my end, but (C: Okay) go ahead. Tell, tell.

C: Well maybe one thing that sort of, might sort of be of some interest here, Roy Taylor like I said, was kind of a consensus politician, moderate Democrat, worked very much with his republican counterpart. That was sort of a style of doing business. He retired. Phil Burton was an urban, extremely liberal member of Congress whose district was downtown San Francisco. (A: Oh) And Burton was an enormous political machine. He was really something. He was going to be Speaker of the House. His steppingstone was he was going to be Majority Leader. And at the end of 1996, 1976, he lost that race for Majority Leader to [unclear] of Texas by one vote. (A: Ah) So here’s a guy that through all of his time in Congress had been rising through the leadership ranks, was a real sort of national powerhouse politician, and all of a sudden by one vote his career track went right off, was derailed. So he was kind of looking for something to do, and he was a very senior member of the House Interior Committee. And he was urged by his home constituents, particularly the Sierra Club, to take on the National Park subcommittee. Taylor had retired, had just was you know, was headed out. The subcommittee was going to get a new chairman. Phil needed something to do and his constituents pressed him to take this on. So he took over the subcommittee and was, chaired it for the next four years. And it was probably the wildest ride for the National Park legislation that will ever happen. And that is sort of significant to Lowell, because Bill [unclear] would be generally much more expansive than a lot of members, about did it make sense to put the federal government into somewhat less traditional areas and urban settings. Bill was from San Francisco. He was very proud of the fact that he was the author of the Golden Gate National Recreation Area legislation. And he was determined that he was, and I guess in Bill’s words he was going to drag the National Park System kicking and screaming into the 20th century. So all of a sudden you had a guy there who was very much interested in, let’s get these things done. Don’t screw around with it. And he had the political organizing skills to really make it happen. He also was very confrontational, and it meant that in a lot of ways, sort of a style of doing business changed somewhat as he pressed harder and was maybe less patient with taking more time on stuff, and trying to work out all of the details. When did Tsongas, when did Paul move over from the House to the Senate?

A: He got elected in ’78 to the Senate.

C: Yah, okay, right. So he would have, okay, so he would have been on the subcommittee when Phil took over.
A: Yah, and did, and did they get along?

C: Yah, you bet.

A: As kind of, kind of activists young, younger democrats.

C: Absolutely. Exactly, right. Exactly. Yah, yah. And so you know, if you look at when a lot of work got done on that legislation, that would have been during that first two-year period when Burton was subcommittee chair. And that probably, it certainly changed sort of the leadership dynamics of getting some (--)

Side A ends
Side B begins.

A: Burton would have been a very strong ally for Tsongas.

C: Yah I think. Yes, absolutely.

A: Yah. How about Tip O’Neil?

C: Boy, ah, one of the things I guess, and this is one, maybe some of the stuff that the staff never gets to see like the members of Congress, is when somebody is as powerful as Speaker of the House was in that era, it’s almost like they refrain from getting into very much specific stuff, because it’s kind of like they’re the ultimate 800 pound gorilla. And I guess my sense is that Tip O’Neil probably would have sent signals that he was interested in this, and would have you know, been sure that for example to get, you know, you get the bill schedule for Florida [unclear] for instance. If the Speaker of the House let’s the chair of the rules committee know that yah, he’d like to see something move, now that will help it get in. Here’s all of these (--). If you look at how a bill gets to be a law, there’s all of these interesting place where you’d go to die. And so something like, say rules committee wants to authorize a committee, interior committee reports the bill out, then maybe having some [unclear] expression of interest from the Speaker of the House really helps, but the rest of us really never seen it. (A: Right) Now the other sort of interesting piece is that Burton and O’Neil were sworn enemies. Well they never would have said that, but anybody that ever followed what was going on back there.

A: Oh really?

C: Oh yah. I think probably O’Neil, O’Neil probably helped tip votes to Jim Wright on a final round for the Majority Leader. (A: Oh!) And [unclear] found out about it. So they, there were a lot of reasons, there were a lot of things where O’Neil and Burton were not buddies. So, but this legislation of course was to benefit a fellow Massachusetts member. (A: Right) And may I, you know, the other, and it, boy for a lot of reasons it’s too bad Paul Tsongas isn’t with us today, but it sure would be fun to know how Tsongas had to sort of navigate some of that stuff so as not
to maybe turn the Lowell bill into something that (--) If Burton perceived that O’Neil wanted the Lowell bill, it could have worked against it.

A: Yah. When we’re all done I’ll tell you a story that someone else told me, which is kind of fun. So.

C: Yah. Oh good. All right.

A: But any final thoughts about your time working on the Lowell legislation, or the politics of that time, or Paul Tsongas, or (--)?

C: One thing about Tsongas. Here is a story I got about, about the late Paul Tsongas. I remember, it must have been hell, I don’t know, sometime I guess in 1977, no, yeah, ’77, ’78, anyway when Tsongas decided to run for the Senate. (A: Umhm) And what was the incumbent?

A: Ed Brooke.

C: Yah! Ed Brooke. I mean here’s Brooke, this you know, sort of moderate to liberal Republican, very well respected.

A: African American.

C: Right! African American, you know, a guy that everybody liked. And Tsongas announces to run. And I remember talking to Paul, and he was in a hallway somewhere, but I can still see it, because I was so pissed off that here we had this guy who was this really bright young member of Congress to, I mean he was a good head on the subcommittee. One of the things about Paul Tsongas is he told us when he joined the subcommittee that he came on there to get the Lowell National Historical Park done, but he turned out to be a terrific member of that subcommittee. He was interested in the subject matter. He learned. He did homework. He was the kind of member of Congress that a staffer like me loved to have on the subcommittee. He worked on stuff. He was interested in it. He was accessible. He was a great guy. And then he went and announced he was going to run against Ed Brooke. And we all knew that was suicide, you know. And I remember sort of chewing him out a little bit. What the hell business did I have doing that, but I remember talking to Paul about it and saying, “You know, why the hell are you doing this? You know you’ve got this great opportunity here, you’re really doing good stuff for the country whether you’re serving on even our little subcommittee you know, and you’re going to go and run against the guy and be out of Congress. What kind of dumb thing [are you doing], you know. Which tells you that boy, I’m no political [unclear], because I didn’t know it. But I remember having that conversation with Tsongas, because we hated to lose him. And dammit if he didn’t win in spite of it all.
A: And talking about him as you know, a good person to work with, could you, could you do the flip side and describe somebody you know, who was on the committee that, I mean what was (--) Did you have Congressmen that didn’t really almost care, or?

C: Oh sure, absolutely sure. You had people that you know, they would, they would serve on the subcommittee maybe because they had a narrow interest. I mean in a way, think about somebody like Tsongas. His time on that subcommittee could have gone one of two ways. He could have been interested in the thing that he wanted, and he could have not put any time or effort into anything else, and simply use the fact to the seat on the subcommittee to push for that one thing. And maybe work to, you know, maybe let his views on other stuff be influenced by just you know, what does this take to make, [ingratiate] me with somebody that gets me a vote for my bill? And you saw some members do it that way. And then you had a guy like Tsongas who took seriously sort of whatever was put in front of him and went to work on it.

A: Yah. Let me talk to you quickly about another Tsongas initiative, which he did I believe when he was in the Senate, which was the Alaska Lands Bill?

C: Yah.

A: Did you have any involvement on that? You were still, you were still on the committee, right?

C: Yah, I was still working. I was still on the committee staff. Remember John Seiberling? The committee actually set up a separate subcommittee on Alaska land, (A: Oh) and had John chair that, (A: Okay) because it was such an enormous piece of work. And then Phil Burton, my subcommittee chair, was sort of the, he was kind of the behind the scenes guy, really helping Seiberling line up the votes and help him with the politics of it. (A: Oh) So that may be (--) Actually the Alaska Lands thing is probably a real good example of a guy like Tsongas who was willing to be an important player in a national issue. (A: Yah) Interested in the subject matter when you know, it was a hell of a long way from his constituents. (A: Sure) Yah. (A: Sure) You bet.

A: Any interesting stories about the passage of that bill?

C: Oh a lot, but I don’t know if you want, how much you want to get into that. I mean maybe the significant thing and some of what I got to see, was Burton and Seiberling, when Reagan won the 1980 election, the way that the game had been played is that the House had passed a much stronger Alaska Lands Protection Act. The Senate had then taken that and had amended the House bill, and was, it was, while it was still a good piece of work, they had more compromise built into it, because they had to deal with the Alaska Senators who were able to exert a lot more control than a member of the House from Alaska. So Tsongas and the other people that were working the Alaska Lands deal in the Senate, they had a lot tougher job in many ways, and what they were able to pass had more compromises in it. So what happened is the House passed the bill first. The Senate then amended the bill and sent it back to the House.
The House kind of sat on it for a while and waited to see what was going to happen in the 1980 elections. And then when Reagan won, and then when the Republicans also took over majority control in the Senate in 1980, then at that point Burton and Seiberling are, have worked out their tactics on this and they basically say, “Okay, we’re going to simply accept the Senate amendment because we know that we can’t get anything better.” It could get worse from here on out.

A: Yah. But that legislation was passed before Carter left, right?

C: Well, but it was actually passed in a lame-duck session I think, the last, you know, after (--) The way it worked was after the November elections when Carter was beaten, then Congress came back in the lame-duck session, I think that’s when the House would have agreed to the Senate version, so, but then sent down to be signed. (A: Okay) And that’s also when they did a lot of the national monument stuff by proclamation. Anyhow, that was sort of the end game tactics that those guys were involved in.

A: Yah. Any other interesting political stories from your time on the hill?

C: Well I guess the only other thing, you know, one of the things I did after your first call Mehmed, I went down to the basement and I dug up a couple of my old boxes. I pulled up the committee report that we did, (A: Yah) that you probably got. It’s the report to the 95th Congress, when legislation to establish the National Historical Park was [passed].

A: Now is that a, is that, what is that report look like? Is that a (--) 

C: Oh yah, let me get (--) Well it’s a (--) 

A: Is it a brown book?

C: You might have one that’s compiled into a brown book. What I’ve got is the original report that sort of, it’s about a 5x8 format. Let me give you a number reference of it. These guys are (-) 

A: Yah.

C: It’s report number 95-1023.

A: Okay, and that’s, that’s the House right?

C: Yah, yah. This is, it’s actually, and it’s dated March 30, 1978. And this is, this is the report after the HR 11, 662, after the bill was reported by our committee. And we put the report together and that’s what went forward. (A: Okay) So that was, as Congress was working on the bill that finally established the National Historical Park And one thing that’s interesting in it is if, if you get a copy of that, that the way that, here’s the way that sort of the party stuff worked.
The Democrats were in charge of the committee, right? (A: Yah) So the Democrats write the report. That’s part of what I did for a living, is I would, would write the report and get the boss to approve of it. And then the Republican member might add descending views. And that’s where Clay would come in working maybe with the Republican members. Well this is (--) And a lot of time you’d just see a report filed by the committee. And that’s, there’s no descending views, or anything in it. Well this report on Lowell is a report together with separate views. Now the way the report’s title, is their separate views, not descending views. Okay, so a lot of times, remember this is what the members of Congress are going to have in their hand when they’re going to floor debate in the House. Okay. So here’s this, here’s this report out of the authorizing committee that says, “We recommend that you pass this bill.” And then many times you would have descending views where some of the committee members that didn’t agree with the bill would write descending views. And so if you then got into floor debate, people that were speaking in favor of, or opposed to the bill, they would, a lot of times they’d be using the stuff in the report as sort of the base that says they’ve understood more about it, or to make a point and decide how to vote. Well I think it’s interesting in looking at Lowell, that what’s in this report is not descending views, but separate views, and the separate view is signed by Keith Sebelius, the guy from Kansas who was the ranking Republican member. And if you read his separate views at the end, it’s, I guess I would say it’s pretty conciliatory, because what he says in there is that talking about what’s the degree of federal responsibility, how far should it reach, how to [unclear] with the legislation in terms with the boundaries being real large for the National Historical Park. And basically what he says is, I got, that the way I’d paraphrase it is, his views say that I got listened to. And with the committee agreeing on the amendment that tightened the boundaries for the National Historical Park, and better define what the federal government responsibility and spending requirements would be. He finds it acceptable. Or he says it makes it more acceptable to me. And that’s a pretty interesting case of a Republican guy not wanting this sort of lead opposition to something, also acknowledging it. And here’s where, here’s this, at this time remember you’ve got Phil Burton, the subcommittee chair. 

A: Right. Right.

C: But Burton, Burton actually worked well with Sebelius, even though they were different parties and had probably very different worldviews about a lot of things. So he sort of courted Sebelius on this, and made sure that as we worked on the legislation that we did pay careful attention and we helped Sebelius accept something even though he probably wouldn’t say that he was ever an enthusiastic supporter, he was sort of willing to see it go through, and the separate views sort of send that signal. And that’s, my guess is that the stuff that we worked on, I bet you there were very few times we saw something where it came out this sort of separate, but not descending views. That was very unusual.

A: And what do you attribute that to?

C: I think it goes back to sort of the honest debate that was going on at that time about you know, is this an appropriate view of the National Park System? Should the system encompass these things? Some of the way that the legislature, or the Congress dealt with that at that time
was say, “Well let’s see if we can define it in ways that keep it acceptable to people that might have some real reservations about this.” (A: Yah) And Lowell is not alone about that, but Lowell is a pretty interesting example, because it was such a, it was so intermixed with the need for urban redevelopment and revitalizing the city, as well as a genuine historic fabric that still can tell a significant story in American history.

A: Do you think the economic angle was important to the Park’s legislation being passed?

C: I think it was important in the sense that, and here’s where you know, some of the folks that worked for Tsongas and Cronin, and people from that prospective would probably give you a better take than I would. But my sense all along was that um, Cronin, Tsongas, staff people, the proponents, all were very interested in the National Park Service being an important part of helping revitalize that community. And you know, and that it wasn’t anything they were [unclear] about. I mean I think they were clear all along that they saw having a role for the National Park Service there being something that could help their community as well as preserving some things that were legitimate [unclear] American history.

A: All right. Well any final thoughts?

C: I’m glad you called me. I really am, because it’s been a lot of fun just getting to think, “Oh yah, I was young then! And we did a lot of fun stuff!” It was fun working on this. But I’m also glad, because I’m glad it went into the law. I think Lowell is a worthwhile component of the National Park System and I think it’s got a really interesting American story to tell that wasn’t very much represented in the system in anyway at that time.

A: Right.

C: And I think that, I think the National System of Parks is better off and richer for telling those diverse stories, and not just being about you know, where George Washington slept, or where somebody found a Civil War cannonball.

A: There you go.

C: And Lowell is a great example of enriching the system. So I’m glad you’re doing it man.

A: That’s good.

C: And you do a damn good job out there too.

A: You do all the talking. So. All right I’m going to shut the tape off. Thanks very much.

C: Hey, I really enjoyed it and I’m hoping that sometime in the next year or two you may have a knock on your office door, and it will be an old bald guy saying, “Hey remember me?”
A: That would be great. That would be great. Make sure, make sure to call me.

C: Thanks Mehmed.

A: Okay, now hold on.

C: Okay.

Interview ends.