

University of Illinois Student Life and Culture Archives

UI Centennial Project

Interviewee: Victor E. Shelford

Interviewer: Maynard Brichford

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Maynard Brichford: This is a tape recorded interview with Professor Victor Shelford made on- Victor E. Shelford- made on March 24, 1965, by Maynard Bridgeford, University Archivist at Professor Shelford's home at 506 West Iowa Street in Urbana. I wonder, in your papers, we don't have some biographical information. You were born in New York State?

Victor Shelford: Yes.

MB: A farm family, or?

VS: A farm. On a farm.

MB: Uh-huh. You taught school? Did you?

VS: I taught at school for two years.

MB: Two years. You went to West Virginia, didn't you?

VS: Yes.

MB: Would the family move or...

VS: No.

MB: Why did you go down to West Virginia to school?

VS: An uncle of mine.

MB: Uncle down there.

VS: He wanted me to come stay with him. My mother, grandmother.

MB: Oh.

VS: He invited me one year, stayed there one year. They're very nice.

MB: And you met a professor down there, didn't you? Or you got interested in zoology and ecology somewhat down there at the University of West Virginia?

VS: Yes. [Inaudible] zoologist and a biologist.

MB: Oh, he was. He was a zoologist and a biologist.

VS: Yes.

MB: Was he at the university?

VS: Yes.

MB: What was his name?

VS: William E. Rumsey.

MB: Rumsey. Then you went to Chicago. After West Virginia, you went to University of Chicago?

VS: Yes.

MB: For graduate work?

VS: No, for undergraduate work.

MB: Oh, undergraduate. You finished your undergraduate.

VS: Yes. Over two years at West Virginia. That didn't quite make two years. The president got fired.

MB: President got fired. I'm sure you had no connection with that, did you?

VS: [Inaudible]

MB: Oh, Rumsey? Did Rumsey? The president. What was his name? The president of the university.

VS: Raymond. I can't think of his first name.

MB: His last name was Raymond. And he went to Chicago and took you with him. Well, that explains that.

VS: He was at Harper to give me a scholarship.

MB: He gave, oh, he got a scholarship from Harper?

VS: From Harper for me.

MB: For you. Well, that was fine. You stayed at Chicago for about six years, right through the doctorate, weren't you?

VS: Yeah.

MB: Stayed right there. Who were the teachers that you had in Chicago or the faculty there that you particularly remember?

VS: Frank R. Lilly and C.B. Jabb Mort. Important.

MB: Important men.

VS: [Inaudible]

MB: Was Coles on the faculty when you came?

VS: Yes. Coles. First class man.

MB: Did Chicago have one of the outstanding zoology departments, I suppose, by this time. They'd build it up.

VS: Yes. [Ted?] Bloom was there. [Ted?] Bloom, of course, was older. Let me prove my thesis.

MB: How did you become interested in ecology? Had you read publications about it, or was it just sort of a gradual—

VS: No, the gradual.

MB: I noticed in the history of ecology, somebody mentioned as in Brame and Semper and Coles and Forbes, people who had—

VS: Well, most of the-- Coles and Brame. [Inaudible]

MB: Brame was a German.

VS: Yeah. He wrote the descriptions, such as I wanted to do. Very, very weak course.

MB: Communities, animal community descriptions or the whole.

VS: Yeah. These little boys didn't come in.

MB: Let's see, the Ecological Society of America was organized in 1914, was it? Or no, earlier?

VS: Yes, the 13 and 14, 12.

MB: Were you on the organization of that?

VS: Yes, was on the organizing committee, the vice chairman may have made them follow the who's guest or whatever made him chairman, you know. No sense is that kind of training you choose. Not because he's where, but because he's what.

MB: Well, you were first president, weren't you, of the Society?

VS: Yes.

MB: The British had already organized one, hadn't they, a little year or two before?

VS: I think so.

MB: What was the reason for its organization at this time? Was it just sort of developing?

VS: Well, they're coming along.

MB: The people at Chicago, were they, what other universities had people at the organizing of the society? Eastern universities represented at this? Mostly Midwestern?

VS: Mostly Midwestern. Ohio representative.

MB: Was Illinois representative?

VS: I, yes, but myself and Kohl's and...

MB: It's Fayetteville.

VS: And someone else had a little hope.

MB: Did anyone come up, was anyone from Urbana? Or were you in Urbana at that time?

VS: Yes, I was in Urbana. No, I wasn't in Urbana yet. I didn't go to go down here at 14.

MB: Mm-hmm.

VS: And I've got to say Society of Order for that. One of that's in this book on me.

MB: Oh, in *The Ecology of North America*. Well, we can get it in the book, *The Ecology of North America*.

VS: Here's some of the men. Right here.

MB: Stephen A. Forbes and Charles M. Child.

VS: Mm-hmm. [Inaudible] Published 1913.

MB: Published 1913? That's about the time the...

VS: My announcement was to the world. What we do with North America. Anyway, at that time, the seminar. The history of that is right here.

MB: Announced the seminar group in 1914. Oh well, 1914 the idea was announced which finally culminated in this book

VS: Yes.

MB: The animal communities in temperate America. That's temperate America, your first book, was it not?

VS: Yes.

MB: And that was about 1913 or...

VS: 1913.

MB: Forbes?

VS: Who was responsible for my going to Illinois.

MB: Oh, Forbes was responsible for you coming down here. Had he read the book? Could you say something about how why he brought you down?

VS: So then they would be warding me if they didn't take me in zoology.

MB: Oh.

VS: Take me in entomology.

MB: Oh. He said that they didn't take you in zoology, he'd take you in entomology.

VS: H.B. Ward.

MB: H.B. Ward.

VS: He coordinated departments, you know. The important aspects of the field.

MB: Of zoology?

VS: Yes. He wouldn't stand for that, so he..

MB: So he had to take you. Uh-huh. Well, I know H.B. Ward is a man of strong opinions, and maybe this is a case of Forbes getting in there with it. But you did sort of stay on with Forbes, didn't you, as a biologist for the Natural History Survey through 1929?

VS: Yes.

MB: Is that a part time?

VS: Yes, part time.

MB: I wonder if you, we know quite a bit about Forbes. I wonder if you could give me your personal view of Stephen A. Forbes. He's an important man in the university and what do you think of him as a scientist or teacher?

VS: He's a scientist.

MB: That's why he's first in the aesthetication of the book. He is a man who was relatively self-taught, wasn't he? He didn't go abroad for his training.

VS: No. He took a PhD under David Jordan, I believe, at Indiana.

MB: He was a friend of Jordan, I guess. He was a fine man to work for, wasn't he?

VS: Yes. I don't know how old he was.

MB: H.B. Ward then had to take it. He was quite a competent man, wasn't he, in the field of parasitology?

VS: Yes, he found it very well.

MB: Well, I don't-- one respect is that the case.

VS: Oh, 50 cents by wine and he's down there today. Kind of a man he was. Are you taking this all down?

MB: Well, I don't, let's not go into it then. We've, Professor Hottis reacted rather strongly on Ward. I don't think we need to take it down.

VS: No. Better not.

MB: Edmund J. James was president then.

VS: Yes.

MB: Did you meet him?

VS: Yes.

MB: What was your reaction to him?

VS: I was very fine.

MB: He was sort of sympathetic with a scholar, wasn't he? Or someone doing scholarship?

VS: Yes. Yes. He founded some scholarly vision of the university [muffled] we went there.

MB: What about Charles Zeleny? We recently found some of his-- he was in zoology too, wasn't he?

VS: He was an enigma. Never could understand him. He was a nice fellow.

MB: He was a geneticist, wasn't he, primarily in genetics?

VS: Yes.

MB: He was quite wrapped up in research work, too, wasn't he?

VS: Yes.

MB: And, of course, there's David Kinley, whom you—

VS: David Kinley. Oh, yeah. Old scoundrel. Well, he was all right with me. He lost his general organs. Things had to be so-so. And he'd-- I don't know. I wrote what I once he didn't like, and he gave it again and said he'd take it up to the faculty, and I don't know, he wouldn't spare anything. I didn't pay much sense to him.

MB: He got excited over some things. I know in the '20s, we just looked at some papers about doing away with the ROTC, a committee in the 1920s wanted to do something to

make it voluntary. And that really offended him. He was quite active on that score. And I think around World War I, they had a group who were somewhat unhappy with certain things, and he was quite concerned, I think. Arthur Cole case.

VS: Well, who's our senator now?

MB: Oh, let's see. Which one? Well, we've got Dirksen. Oh, Douglas. Paul Douglas, you mean.

VS: Douglas.

MB: Committee with the old Kinley. As Kendrick Babcock, did you have much to do with him as a dean in LAS?

VS: Yes, he was very sympathetic and so on. He was the next fired by the, well, they say the old...

MB: You mean before he came here?

VS: Yes, before he came here, he got fired from-

MB: He was in Arizona and then he was in Washington D.C. the federal government.

VS: In the government and education department.

MB: Education.

VS: And he offended uh Chancellor Day of [Syracuse?] and they went down there and got a job.

MB: Well, I hadn't heard of that. That's sort of an object lesson to someone starting out in educational administration. Don't offend anybody. You make it your job. Let's see, Daniels

followed Babcock, didn't they, for a couple years as Dean, Arthur Daniels, and then McClure.

VS: Ward didn't do much.

MB: There weren't any scientists really in LAS, were there as deans. They were historian, philosopher. No, no. Of course, I don't imagine H.B. Ward was a candidate for dean at any time.

VS: He was a candidate for, they fired him, they didn't torture him. They fired him one time.

MB: Oh, when was this, roughly?

VS: About the middle of his career.

MB: Twenties?

VS: He told him that if he didn't do so and so, they'd fire him, and he was able to [fight them?].

MB: Yeah. Well, I think he would have, too.

VS: The Babcock, somebody else.

MB: Smooth it over?

VS: No, Roger Adams.

MB: Oh.

VS: Friendly enough to it?

MB: No.

VS: Let's take the issue. Let's fight him. He said they'd fire him soon.

MB: This was under Kinley, I imagine. Roger Adams was quite a important man, wasn't he, throughout this period in chemistry. He apparently could get things done over there.

VS: Oh, yes. He did things in so many years old.

MB: What about William Trevis? He was over in botany, wasn't he? He was a little older, wasn't he, than some of them.

VS: Yes.

MB: And Vestal?

VS: Vestal?

MB: He died recently, didn't he? He was interested in ecology, wasn't he? What was Vestal's interest in ecology?

VS: I don't have any idea to get it loose, as I could tell.

MB: What kind of ideas?

VS: Any kind. Then you've got to change the order of affairs. You better hit the taping everywhere. I'll be taxed with that.

MB: Okay. C.A. Adams. Is that C.A. or C.C.? Which Adams is that?

VS: C.A. was here. He didn't do very much. And C.C. was a successful ecologist.

MB: And the other names that-- let's see, the College of Agriculture faculty. You said something to me one time about the College of Agriculture faculty. Were they interested in ecology or not particularly?

VS: No. They did what the dean told them to.

MB: The dean was animal husbandry and—

VS: I don't remember that animal. I don't figure for them.

MB: MB: You did?

VS: Yes. Two of them backed me up and the dean was on the fire for it. They agree with me.

MB: They had a well-disciplined system.

VS: Yes. Oh, yes.

MB: Coles, I presume you had contacts with Coles after you came down here. And let's see, Child, maybe. Child, I notice, is also in the dedication. What particularly did Child, what respect did he influence you with?

VS: Well, he was, he just said that.

MB: In the dedication?

VS: [Inaudible]

MB: That's what he told you. The experimental work, but keep in mind the other investigations are the same field.

VS: He believed in the experiments the best way.

MB: How about F.E. Clements? He was pretty important, wasn't he?

VS: Yes.

MB: He wrote books, too?

VS: Yes, he and I wrote one together. He wrote, I don't know why. He asked for his wife and his baby.

MB: I wonder if you could describe the type and extent of the fieldwork you did, the problems and the rewards involved. You did quite a bit of fieldwork, didn't you? I suppose the Puget Sound Biological Station work from 1914 to 1930 was field work too, wasn't it summers. Could you talk about that a little bit, maybe?

VS: I was the one that had entered the marine field. I wanted to tell me about it. I saw right over my eyes. I didn't follow it up.

MB: It wasn't your primary?

VS: No.

MB: Your fieldwork was largely what type then? Was it traveling around the country? Or was it local, Champaign-Urbana area?

VS: Well, it was- I travel from- All the states, the United States, and all the provinces of Canada, three-fourths of the states of Mexico.

MB: All largely for *The Ecology of North America*, that is, in compiling the- *The Naturalist Guide*, that was what, 1927? That was quite a work, wasn't it? Was that right in the stream of your other books, wasn't it? *The Naturalist Guide*? Was it more popular or?

VS: No, it was told to what was in country and how to get there.

MB: I think, I agree, I think that to a large extent, the National Geographic and some of the periodical literature. I just—

VS: You can see how it organized.

MB: Natural areas and regions. That's a very- You were the editor, weren't you, of this?

VS: [Inaudible] various.

MB: Various people wrote various sections of the like a general plan. Well, this is a pretty broad question. Maybe it's not specific enough. But when and why did you become concerned about the preservation of natural areas?

VS: Oh, I thought they were afraid of that. And one of them was [muffled].

MB: You had a scientific interest. Did you ever run into any politicians?

VS: Yeah.

MB: Who particularly?

VS: I don't know.

MB: Pinchot was an early man.

VS: Yes, he was a forest.

MB: Various secretaries of the interior, I suppose, would be concerned.

VS: Yeah. Yeah, one secretary of interior that everybody was against. He wanted to destroy all the animals and I believe that

MB: When was this? Was it in the '30s or in the '20s?

VS: Probably in the '30s.

MB: You were responsible for this Grasslands Research Foundation, weren't you?

VS: And another model didn't develop.

MB: Didn't develop, as you... What was the essential point of difference between you and the Ecological Society's executive committee in 1945? You had a discussion with them, didn't you, at that time?

VS: I think I got [inaudible] to organize a sort of retreat, you know. That's some station that people went to. My [inaudible], the stationary. And yeah, everybody, [go to?] work.

MB: This is what, the grass, for the grassland or for the...

VS: For the disrupting the ecology of society.

MB: Oh, yeah.

VS: It disrupted them.

MB: That disrupted them. They didn't like that.

VS: They had to decide that they were going to do something or nothing.

MB: Was it their opinion that a scientist should not get involved in attempts to preserve areas, that he should just make the study and let that—

VS: No. They do something, but they wouldn't get mixed in politics, right?

MB: Didn't you say that some of the reason they wouldn't get mixed in politics was they were working for the federal government already?

VS: Yes.

MB: Thank you. I suppose there are economic and employment factors which influence the ecologist. In other words, the ecologist in his own ecology, he has to get along with his. How has ecology developed, in your opinion? Your work in animal ecology was among the earliest in this country. How has it developed, do you think?

VS: It grew.

MB: Now we have human ecology here in the university. This is a logical extension.

VS: Yes. I'm about worn out.

MB: Well, we can stop at the... This is a continuation of the preceding tape recording made at Professor Shelford's house on April 1, 1965. First of all, I thought we would maybe talk a little bit about your book that we haven't mentioned before, and we don't have a copy in your papers, and that is *Laboratory and Field Ecology*, 1929. What about the significance of that book? This is a little different than the other books, wasn't it?

VS: Yes, it was very different, very different.

MB: More in the methodology or?

VS: Methodology and attempt to show that some scientific methods could be used to determine what plants and animals did under the nature.

MB: Dealt with things, I believe, like light and temperature, climatic conditions, food and so forth. This is based on research done over the years, I presume.

VS: Yes.

MB: 1920s?

VS: Yes, over several years, quite a number of years before that. I was working for Forbes in the laboratory.

MB: Some of this research was done when you were a consultant in the Forbes. That was up until, what, 1922 or '29?

VS: I was in... I don't know when I quit Forbes. Because it was done... The secretary, the librarian, salary was given to me and some kind of error.

MB: Involved arrangement.

VS: Involved arrangement. I didn't even know it. That's just the one check.

MB: Well, he was apparently able then to secure his research despite any financial problems. I noticed the dedication there. Would you explain that dedication of this book to Henry B. Ward, Arthur Daniels, and James M. White?

VS: I always conceived of Daniels chasing Ward with a mallet. You see, hit him on the head, and then White was a referee. If anything went wrong, he sided with Ward, with Daniels always.

MB: White would side with Daniels then.

VS: Yes.

MB: And between Daniels and Ward, were you generally successful in getting...

VS: Yes. In Daniels and Ward, I got everything I wanted.

MB: Was Daniels always the aggressor? It's hard to, wasn't Ward occasionally in the position of chasing Daniels?

VS: Oh, rarely, no. Never chased you very far.

MB: Ward was in the hiker's club, wasn't he? Didn't he have a hiker's club?

VS: Yes.

MB: Were you, weren't in, were you in?

VS: No, I wouldn't have anything to do with it. I wouldn't have seen them.

MB: Your academic associations were enough then. I think in the introduction, well let's see, this book, did that go through a couple of editions?

VS: Two.

MB: Two editions. It was published in Baltimore or someplace, Wilkins or somebody.

VS: It was Wilkins, Baltimore.

MB: Did they have a remainder that they disposed of?

VS: Yes, they had a remainder when they got the Charlotte [health?] room, and that was some years after. They wanted to get rid of it, so they sold the 120 copies to me for a hundred dollars. It was cheap enough. And I proceeded to sell them for ten dollars a piece.

MB: This was the students and other researchers in the...

VS: People who wanted them. It had quite a following.

MB: Was this one of the first manuals of practice for ecologists?

VS: Yes. First manual of practice.

MB: Some of the people mentioned here in your introduction, I believe, helped you at various stages, didn't they? And of the, we've already talked about Forbes and Ward and Daniels. Carl Esterling, he was a...

VS: He was a reader.

MB: Editor?

VS: I got the manuscript in the printer's hands. They said that it ought to be retyped. There'd be a lot, lot, lot of errors if it started to type, and then there'd be a lot more upset. So I said, "You can really get the proof corrections." And so they did. They bought the proof corrections. It was \$400.

MB: \$400. The Esterling made the corrections?

VS: Yes. He helped me.

MB: Help you make the corrections on the proof copy.

VS: Yes.

MB: Let's see, Warder C. Ali of Chicago. He was one of your associates, wasn't he, early days.

VS: My first doctorate.

MB: Oh, he was a doctor, took his doctorate from you.

VS: Yes. The first doctorate.

MB: And he taught at Chicago or stayed there?

VS: Yes, he taught in various places for a while. And he got settled down back in Chicago again.

MB: Did he get his doctorate at Chicago or down here at Illinois?

VS: At Chicago.

MB: At Chicago before you came here.

VS: Yeah.

MB: Samuel Eddy, I see, at Illinois, E-D-D-Y. Samuel Eddy, he was a student here.

VS: He took his doctor's degree with me. I see that he went to Minnesota.

MB: Minnesota University.

VS: Yes. He's ever since.

MB: I see Charles F. Hoddis there. He was quite a lecturer, wasn't he?

VS: Yes. He lectured the [inaudible].

MB: What is that , it's German?

VS: Preacher's talk.

MB: Preacher's talk or voice.

VS: Preacher's voice, yes.

MB: You didn't have that voice, at least not to the extent that he had it.

VS: No.

MB: He's still got a good voice at hand. Let's see, after Hoddis, some of the other names. Chauncey Juday was at Wisconsin.

VS: Nothing to do with him. That is in this book.

MB: Kudo was at Illinois, wasn't he? He is here yet, isn't he? Art Kudo.

VS: Yes. He did some little thing, mentioned everybody there.

MB: Jacob Kuntz there. Didn't Kuntz help you on the photoelectric cell for...

VS: Yes. Was the first to use the cell underwater. According to the Englishman, that's...

MB: You got that recognition then?

VS: Yes. In the coach made the cell.

MB: Was this for use at the Puget Sound Research, your summer project out there?

VS: Yes. That's why I used it. I did a lot of work for that.

MB: The first one, the measured light underwater and that's probably, that affects the environment. Was it an environment of fish or marine life?

VS: Marine life.

MB: Marine life.

VS: Plant and animal.

MB: Plant and animal. This is what Forbes did in his study of the lake as a microcosm, only he didn't have the technique or the tools that probably you had after you had the...

VS: He is credited with having borrowed that from Mebius, a German who wrote the oyster bed as a community. Which is probably true, probably just against the idea there. He didn't deny it.

MB: I think the significant thing is the fact that he and others in his time brought over a lot of these advanced scientific concepts to this country and disseminated them. In other words, he published and brought this to the attention of new scholars coming along, like yourself. Some of the other names I guess I've mentioned in the other ones or other talks are people like A.H. Wright. He was the one who was at Cornell, wasn't he?

VS: Yes.

MB: Didn't you say that you knew him early?

VS: I knew him early as 19. Let me see. Well, he was there. He was at Cornell in about 1915 and I just first knew him there and he's still there, still doing good work.

MB: Tansley was an Englishman. A.G. Tansley was an Englishman, wasn't he?

VS: Yes.

MB: Ecologist.

VS: Yes.

MB: And Barrington Moore, did you say that he was not a professional scientist?

VS: No. He was interested in promoting ecology and really didn't know how to do it. He left his wife. He couldn't just live with it any longer. She was very wealthy. And he went to Washington. Opened up an office there as sort of a motor of ecology, but not very much success.

MB: It was a period, I suppose, a great amount of promotion of conservation and schemes of this sort.

VS: Yes.

MB: Forrest Shree, was he one of your students?

VS: Oh, no. He was a Hopkins man.

MB: Johns Hopkins. He was out west, Arizona, wasn't it? Or eventually?

VS: Yes.

MB: Or Oklahoma or something?

VS: He was in the desert laboratory.

MB: Desert laboratory.

VS: Tucson. Desert laboratory in Tucson.

MB: You visited him, I suppose, on your research trip.

VS: Yeah, it was then. He and I were working together a great deal in general.

MB: A.O. Weezy, or Weesy, is he?

VS: [Wees?]

MB: He was one of, Wees was one of your students, wasn't he?

VS: Yeah, he took a degree with me and went to Oklahoma and made the success of it.

MB: Then the last one I had, S. Charles Kendy, who wrote *Animal Ecology*. He sort of took over the work that you had done here, didn't he, Kendy?

VS: Yes.

MB: Was he a student of yours or was he?

VS: He had a degree with me.

MB: How many people got their degrees, their doctorates from you roughly? Do you have a general idea? A dozen or fifteen?

VS: I don't know. A dozen or fifteen, yes. That'll be safe.

MB: Maybe now we might talk a little bit about the, I believe you had a story on the publication of *The Ecology of North America*. The one was published in 1963. How that publication came about. This was some years after you'd retired. You retired in 1956, was it, or no, '48, wasn't it? '46?

VS: '49.

MB: '49. And this was published in 1963. How was that published, *The Ecology of North America*?

VS: Well, I... The press took it and looked at it and said they could spare a thousand dollars on their budget in a year. If I get someone to match it, they'd deal with it. So I've been working with the, the retired people. And I found the editor of the University Press.

MB: Don Jackson.

VS: No.

MB: Oh, Muntian, Muntian.

VS: No, the University, University Journal. The University Journal. It was, I can't think of its name.

MB: *Natural History*, the...

VS: No, the University has a journal. Don't you take it? You want to get it?

MB: We may. We probably do get it, but I can't remember his name either. But first, you'd approach the press, and that was where Mr. Jackson was. And they would offer a thousand.

VS: Yes.

MB: And then you had to cast about for another source of support.

VS: Yes. And I just discovered to my dismay that... [Marl Rathabout?], professor's salaries, was the head of that, was the head of the University Foundation.

MB: The head of the University Foundation, was the Alumni Association, too?

VS: No. I don't know what they call that, Gerald. He [was a guest?] of the Alumni Association. I discovered that it was the same man.

MB: Oh. Well, were you successful?

VS: Yes. I told him what I thought of him one time on the street. I said, "Damn you. I got a whole column in the [store of America?] and you didn't get any, you got so much. On the student salaries." I said, "Damn you." Do you remember that? He gave me... I think this appealed to him.

MB: Yeah. Well, maybe it's better to be clean spoken like this than to...apropos of this I would say confrontation with this man from the foundation. Seems though I recall in your papers and in your previous remarks a whole bunch of references to fracas and rows and controversies. Have you enjoyed these?

VS: Yes. I enjoyed them all.

MB: Well, I think that it makes for a much more interesting life than a, much more interesting and active. The universe, did you get help in putting that book together from people? Did they, people read various sections and help you in?

VS: Various people read it. Geographer, there on the corner, I can't think of his name. Read the whole chapter, read the whole book. One geographer and then Kenny, of course, was editor, and he described all of this.

MB: I can get it down here.

VS: Yes, Charles Candy, with the assistance of Dr. Gene Graber, Ruth Buckner, and Francis E. Thompson edited the manuscript. There were several editors.

MB: It's quite a job, I suppose, reading something as comprehensive and fact-filled as some of these.

VS: They stuck in with that. They stuck in with that because he was the only one to do who knew.

MB: Knew what the old picture, huh?

VS: Old picture, yes.

MB: That book was based probably quite largely on your field trips, wasn't it? All over, I believe you said, what, most of the provinces in Mexico or Canada and the states of Mexico and the United States. You took these generally during the summer, were they, the long trips?

VS: Yes. Some with classes, but usually I went alone. Sometimes I had one assistant. I mean two assistants.

MB: Take with you. Collecting data, I suppose, measurements.

VS: Yes.

MB: And then you took classes, I suppose, in the university you took to various places.

VS: Yes, oh yes.

MB: You mentioned, was it, was it Realfoot?

VS: Yes.

MB: Tennessee and...

VS: Went there so many times every year for many years as I learned a great deal about it.

MB: Was that a particularly good area to study?

VS: Yes.

MB: Ant, plant and animal communities?

VS: Yes.

MB: Not much intrusion of civilization, I suppose.

VS: Well, I was going there during the intrusion of the civilizations.

MB: What about the dunes area? You did your first work, didn't you, on the Tiger Beetle, up in the dunes area? Was that pretty wild at the time?

VS: No, it was not wild.

MB: Well, I mean, it wasn't settled, was it?

VS: [Inaudible] where I lived in, anyway. There's a border near the edge. It was a mile, any house, found anything. One fisherman had a house there.

MB: You staked out a plot in your area that you studied. One given area of the dunes was...

VS: Yes. I did that, but not very much. And they have equipment to make plots, establish them. Didn't want them.

MB: Oh. You went to Fox Lake, did you too?

VS: Yes.

MB: Northern Illinois. The studying of natural areas is, I guess, one part of your work that is in nature. Then you attempt to control experiments, I suppose, here. Did you get any funds after the publication of your 1929 book, which enabled you to study, conduct studies here at the university? This is after laboratory and field ecology. Were you able to set up anything in the vivarium where you could study a laboratory?

VS: Well, that's based on the laboratory there. Based on the laboratory in the vivarium.

MB: Was this, the laboratory in field ecology, was this based on work that you had done at the vivarium?

VS: Yes. I really had borrowed something from other people.

MB: But this probably helped you get additional support for your research in the vibarium in your laboratory.

VS: Oh, yes. That's what I get these two fellows. Bidding on who give a ass.

MB: Oh, the Daniels and Ward discussion. The one of the things that your name is connected with, I guess, is the Natural or the Committee on Natural Areas and Uncultivated Lands, that is the Trelease and the Brownfield Woods. Could you tell a little bit about the acquisition of the Brownfield Woods?

VS: No.

MB: That President Willard?

VS: The university always, always, according to the surveyor, always makes a deal or a plan for the survey and they survey afterward. And he had estimated as 60-some acres and it was a long, long, long reach. So there was two, three acres that we did in terms of what we bought. I had to straighten that out when Swinbridge Johnson helped me and we got a new deed and the land. So you got them in all circles, you know, but there was a couple of acres. The north end didn't belong to us. It belonged to the university. That was according to their method. That's what the survey said. Went by guess until they got caught.

MB: And you had to conduct the negotiations to get the land and the heirs and all. That's quite a problem. But President, you got the money. The money for the purchase of these woods came from...

VS: Willard.

MB: Willard. Now how much was that?

VS: \$10,000.

MB: \$10,000.

VS: You got an appropriation for \$10,000.

MB: What caused him to ask for this? Did you, had you sent a report to him or...

VS: Oh I asked him again and again.

MB: Verbally or in writing or in both?

VS: He didn't get the time verbally very much.

MB: Mostly in writing.

VS: Oh yes. He said he couldn't do it and I said, "Run back to him."

MB: Yeah.

VS: Must be done and he finally appropriated it.

MB: We probably got that story, and we've got Willard's papers and probably that's in his files, these copies of these requests from you. Was there a prairie area out there that they got too?

VS: No. I bought to the research board. Later, I got 20 acres into the Brownfield Road, to the Eastwoods.

MB: And that was prairie.

VS: That was prairie. Cleared land, but we sowed it and it took, you get the seed of all kinds of grasses from the some, there's a fellow of the partner I go through, was experimenting with him. He gave us the seed, we sowed it, it took. Prairie grasses.

MB: Did you know this fellow Aldo Leopold at Wisconsin?

VS: No.

MB: He was quite interested in this and one of his books, that is *Natural Areas*, he mentioned that in Illinois they had a tendency to make the state safe for soybeans and are always cultivating right up to the fences and not leaving any weeds or any of the natural flora, I guess, if they could help it. Was this what you found to be the case?

VS: Yes. That's what they did.

MB: Emphasis on how much crop you can get in the area.

VS: Well, not so much they do that anyway, but they're cleaning hedgerows.

MB: Clean hedgerows. Then in World War II, you taught at the university, you said?

VS: Yes.

MB: Women students, largely.

VS: Yes. That's the best assistant I ever had.

MB: She went into ecology, did she?

VS: What?

MB: Did she go into ecology professionally or?

VS: No, she... I think she took a master's degree, but she didn't care for a doctor's degree.

MB: What about the sales of this book on The Ecology of North America, the one that just came out. Has that been selling well? Is it?

VS: Yes, they gave me for the first eight months, ending January 1st, 1956, is it?

MB: '65, January 1st, '65.

VS: '65, yeah. They gave me 1,300 some dollars. I'll give you the amount.

MB: Well, that's interesting that it must indicates a real good sale. I think there are a lot of books...

VS: The skill, the salesman, as a person, and he was the manager and manager.

MB: It's an attractive book, too, well put together.

VS: He seemed to have in mind building it up or something. Jackson and the-- who's the director of the press?

MB: Munchen.

VS: Munchen?

MB: Yeah.

VS: And he ought to be mentioned.

MB: You taught here during World War I. That is when they had the Student Army Training Corps and they had a military aeronautics school here. Did you teach any of those people? Or boys in uniform at that time.

VS: Yes.

MB: And then the students' enrollment rose under Kinley. They got lots of buildings at the university at that time. New building, a library.

VS: Oh, yes. You might add that they didn't get anything under Roosevelt because the administration here said that he couldn't possibly be elected a second time. And they kept on and on that way with that idea and didn't get anything.

MB: Was this the trustees largely? The Board of Trustees that had this idea?

VS: It was David Kennedy and that kind of bunch.

MB: Did he have any influence here after he went out of office in 1930?

VS: No.

MB: I mean, he went out of office before the Roosevelt got in, but he was still around, wasn't he?

VS: Yeah, he was. Who was president when the First World War?

MB: The First World War? James.

VS: James. The Second World War.