ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW WITH
DR. AND MRS. WILSON M. COMPTON

by

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Forest History Society

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Oral History Interview

Dr. and Mrs. Wilson Compton

with

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(October 29, 1965)

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MAUNDER: This is Elwood Maunder speaking from the home of Dr. and Mrs. Wilson Compton on College Avenue in Wooster, Ohio. This is October 29, 1965. I think we'll maybe just start off here talking today about your experience in first going to Washington, D.C. in 1916, when you went with the Federal Trade Commission. You had done your Ph.D. as I recall at Princeton in 1915, and had studied there under Frank Fetter, E.W. Kemmerer, and M.W. Adriance.

MRS. COMPTON: There's an interesting story about that. Bill, tell how you happened to choose the subject. Up to that time all graduate students usually had some ethereal subject, but very little practical kinds of subjects.

COMPTON: Dr. Fetter was the head of the Department of economics at Princeton and always wanted his graduate students to pick on something practical, a tangible field or problem in economics, not at that point to try to influence the opinion of the reading public, but to stick to some description of a problem. For that purpose he said "I think that if you would make a study of the influences that affect and perhaps determine the price of wheat in the country that that'd be a useful undertaking." I said, "Yes, I think I could do that all right, though that is not a subject which intrigues me particularly. But let me make a concrete suggestion. I've been interested since I was a small boy in forests, and I think if we decided that I would make a study of some aspects of the forest industries, which is notoriously having difficult problems"--which was true when I started --" I would be interested if it's acceptable to you and Dr. Kemmerer. " Dr. Fetter slammed his hand down on the table and said, "By Job, I think that's a good idea! Come to think of it, there isn't any identifiable literature about forest industry, and it should be very interesting. I think it's possible that a young fellow like you could really make a dent in that situation." "Well," I said, "I'm glad of that." I took up the hunt then in a few months. My first adventure away from Princeton for that purpose was to go to Washington. I stayed at a rooming place up on Connecticut Avenue. Pearson let me bunk in his apartment, and I spent about three weeks, I believe. With the help of the Secretary of Commerce I took up some of the loose ends left by the Bureau of Corporations, which was a front runner for the Federal Trade Commission when it was organized, and I spent several weeks poring over their manuscripts provided by some of the staff jointly between the Bureau of Corporations and the Department of Commerce.

MAUNDER: That was quite a copious document.

COMPTON: There was five volumes, and they were just about to go to work on the publication of the fifth volume. And that gave me my start.

MRS. COMPTON: After Bill finished his thesis, we had a friend, a graduate student who had gone to Princeton for years, and he came back and told us that Fetter and Kemmerer handed out Bill's thesis to him and said, "Now this is what we consider a perfect one. See if you can pick out as good a subject and do as good a job." Of course I was very proud.

MAUNDER: Did you gather a great deal of your data from the raw facts and the information that was to be found in the work report of the Bureau of Corporations?

COMPTON: Yes, I did.

MAUNDER: Did you get more out of the National Archives and other places?

COMPTON: Only to {Author Query} I was down in the Congressional Library frequently scoping out the various sources available there. They had an enormous file of library entries--enormous! They had oh, a thousand or two thousand documents that were classified as forest industry in some particular. I think I'd say offhand that I got better than half of the grist somewhere in my thesis out of this examination of the Bureau of Corporations and the Forest Service reports.

MAUNDER: Were all of these reports in published form, or did you have to go to unpublished sources?

COMPTON: Well much of the Bureau of Corporations information had never appeared in any publication. I don't recall if it ever did reach publication. But I was a kind of a burr under the saddle to some of the staff of experts in the Bureau of Corporations, who I think rather resented my being exposed to an opportunity to look at an unfinished manuscript. I got to read it, and they weren't resentful of me so far as I know, but they blamed the head of the Bureau of Corporations.

MAUNDER: Who gave you the entree to this material?

COMPTON: Joe Davies, who was then the head of the Commission. He was also a politician, and he was preparing to seek nomination out of Wisconsin, which was his home state. It had never been done before, and he gave me an opportunity without even consulting his staff. I was aided and abetted by a fellow who was Professor of Transportation at Princeton, Royal Meeker, dead long years ago. He was a friend of Joe Davies' and he was interested in getting Davies to let me look at this stuff. There's always a sort of vandalism that goes on. The boss, in this case Davies, overlooks or jumps over the fellows that worked on these reports for years and settles the question of showing their product to an outsider before it was in a good position to be examined by either an insider or an outsider. But that quieted down. Royal Meeker got a chuckle out of it. I soon discovered that friend Joe Davies really didn't know anything about the condition of five documents.

MAUNDER: They were all, I suppose, in separate document form then, weren't they?

COMPTON: Yes they were. There was, as I recall, one sort of a summary pamphlet that was in print. The five documents probably would take shelf space of about six inches. It was a pretty good document even at that time I saw it.

There was no limitation put on me. In my thesis I did give recognition to the Bureau of Corporations and the Federal Trade Commission. It wasn't because Davies attached any conditions.

MAUNDER: Were you aware at this time of the fact that there were some similar studies being made within the U.S. Forest Service by various people at the regional level? Dave Mason, for example, was working on one on the Inland Empire lumber industry in this period. And Bill Greeley another.

COMPTON: I was, yes.

MAUNDER: Were you in touch with these people at the time or did you get to know them only later on?

COMPTON: Oh, I knew them at the time.

MAUNDER: How did you come to know them?

COMPTON: Austin Cary. I lived at the Cosmos Club during that period.

MAUNDER: How did you happen to be living at the Cosmos Club?

COMPTON: I needed some place to lay down my weary bones.

MAUNDER: And were you there as the guest of one of the members?

COMPTON: NO, oh no. I was given a guest card and just paid my own room rent, that's all.

MAUNDER: But somebody had given you entree. You were not a member of the Cosmos Club quite that early.

COMPTON: No, I didn't become a member until 1919, I think.

MAUNDER: And it was while you were a guest in the Cosmos Club that you came to meet and to know some of these prominent foresters?

COMPTON: Yeah. I first met Greeley and David. There were two other fellows that were in this. Austin Cary had a line of thought all his own, and he was glad to see a young fellow with my training take an interest in the affirmative side of the forest industries. Said the way to solve the forest problem is not to fight over technicalities, just to make a good business out of the forests and then we'll deal with perpetuating the industry. He gave me a fine lecture one time. I remember he took off his shoes when we were sitting there. "Obviously," he said, "my corns hurt." He was, I'd say, so very generous. There was nobody like him. I remember he was out at our apartment several times. Helen finally said, "Well take off your shoes."

MAUNDER: You knew him, then, quite intimately as friends through the years.

COMPTON: Yes.

MAUNDER: Do you feel that knowing him then as a student had any profound impact on you at the time.

COMPTON: Yes, I think so. About that time people who were partially informed, very partially, mostly uninformed, were talking about the timber famine. I remember asking Austin Cary, "Do you think they're right?" He said, "No. There isn't going to be any timber famine. The people who argue that just don't know how fast these pines trees grow." He never before or after my first acquaintance with him would take on the load of leadership in the regulation gang, so-called. From them you'd never get any answer to the forestry problem without federal government control. He and Eloise Gerry said to me, "It just isn't so."

MAUNDER: Even Graves took that position at that time, did he not?

COMPTON: Well, yes, I think so. We got set up in the National Forestry Committee, one from each regional association and the chairman who was George S. Long of the Weyerhaueser Timber Company. We invited Henry S. Graves and a couple of others of his group to meet with the committee in Chicago. They accepted the invitation. That was the only business before the conference. George Long was pretty skillful in prying and leading conversation, but Henry Graves just couldn't jump any creek, no matter how narrow that was. He just kind of clammed up. I never could understand that because he was the Forester of the United States.

MAUNDER: This conference was when he was still Chief of the Forest Service?

COMPTON: Yea. That's the reason we had him. I'm not sure whether Greeley was there, but there were a number of others. I suspect that Greeley must have been there. We dropped the idea of making any working agreement with the Forest Service because it was evident that Colonel Greeley was not enthusiastic about the suggestion of any initiative by the industry itself. Some people called it timidity on Greeley's part. I don't know what it was. We tried to break some ice by just holding this conference and giving the representatives of both government and the industry opportunities to put out their ideas, but that was premature, I think. At least so far as the Forest Service was concerned.

MAUNDER: How many industry leaders were really ready to do something substantial at that point of time about the management of their lands?

COMPTON: Very very few. There was a fellow with the National Lumber Manufacturers Association in the New York office, I think only a couple of years. This fellow was given by us an opportunity to canvass the industry, find out the state of affairs of interest in doing some program. He did a substantial job, not as well as I think some others could have done, but at any rate he took the job, ran the study, and finished it. His only finding was that there were only three important timber companies, one in the West, one in the North, and one in the South, who were genuinely, deliberately, and intelligently trying to make their forest industry self-perpetuating. Bob Goodman, for one.

MAUNDER: Would you tell us a little bit about Bob Goodman, because here's a man we constantly run into, but about whom there is not nearly enough information. Can you describe him to us and tell us something about what impact he was having on the industry and on forestry at this time?

COMPTON: I'm not sure just how to. He was pretty well saturated with interest in forestry when I entered the National

Lumber Manufacturers Association. Bob's brother Charlie Goodman was very impatient about theories. He was a kind of hard-fisted, all for himself. He didn't care much about principles and so on, but the Goodman brothers couldn't carry the load, and Bob wanted to have some experiments. He made an effort in Marinette, and at the same time he had acquired the property up at Goodman, Wisconsin. A pact existed between the two brothers, but evidently broke and dissolved credit, and the conclusion was reached to give Bob Goodman the upper Wisconsin mill where the forestry studies were being made, and let Charlie Goodman do what he liked with his mill in Marinette. So they each had a play pen, so to speak.

MAUNDER: The Urania Lumber Company of the Hartners in Urania, Louisiana was the one in the South.

COMPTON: The Port Blakely Mill Company.

MAUNDER: It was the Eddy family.

COMPTON: Didn't they give a tract, he and his company or associates--

MAUNDER: To the University of Washington. They've also turned over all of their old records to the University of Washington, and there's a young economist there who started to write now a history of the Eddy's in Washington. Of course they're a family that went the transcontinental route, you know, from Maine to Michigan--

COMPTON: They shipped some of their housing. All the way from Maine.

MAUNDER: They did!

COMPTON: Yeah, there were I think it was three shiploads. Carried some of their Maine personnel.

MRS. COMPTON: Did they go around by boat?

COMPTON: Yeah.

MRS. COMPTON: The houses and all. Houses and crew.

MAUNDER: You mean they shipped the logging camps.

COMPTON: No, the mill.

MAUNDER: No, that doesn't sound very economical.

COMPTON: I don't think it was. I was up in Port Angelus. The architecture of the homes there in the town look like Maine, enough of them to give the town the atmosphere of New England.

MAUNDER: Now at this time that you were doing your research in Washington, you were also meeting for the first time Bill Greeley and Dave Mason. Do you recall your first meetings with these men?

COMPTON: Yes.

MRS. COMPTON: Now to me, my feeling was that Greeley preceded Mason. Mason was not important in the picture in the very earliest stages.

COMPTON: Yes, I went to Washington in 1916. There was a three-way agreement between the Forest Service, the Federal Trade Commission, and the Department of Commerce. Greeley was to make a study of general overall implications for the forest industries as a whole. Mr. Berry, who was at that time a member of the Commission, was inclined to unload what he was supposed to do on this young fellow, myself. It was interesting, but I don't think it was a very wise appointment. And the Department of Commerce--

MRS. COMPTON: Who did their job?

COMPTON: Oh, that was Axel Oxholm. I was asked by Mr. Berry to represent him at a series of conferences. I would represent the Federal Trade Commission, and I would meet with the representative of the Forest Service, who was always Greeley, and the other fellow--Oxholm had not been chosen at that point. The agreement was a result of an offer by the National Lumber Manufacturers' Association to provide a fund of I think $50,000 to enable the Department of Commerce to send a group of experts to visit a group of foreign countries--to travel in Europe and see about the opportunities of sale of American forest products to continental Europe. George Rubley, a lawyer, a member of the firm of Covington, Burns and Rubley, told me he talked with Frank Dixon, F. H. Dixon, who was at that time the chairman of the Department of Economics at Dartmouth College where I was teaching. And Rubley asked Dr. Dixon whether he could help in tracing and locating a competent fellow to run the lumber investigations. He told Rubley, "Now we have a young fellow that's getting dry on his Ph.D. here, and he's pretty smart. You might talk to him."

MRS. COMPTON: Did he know that you had written your thesis on the lumber industry?

COMPTON: Yeah, I think I told him so. So, he offered me the job. What the details were behind the scene I don't know.

MRS. COMPTON: That was another valuable contact. Rubley was the biggest law firm in Washington. They were very prominent, and of course he felt sort of responsible for Bill when he came. And members of their firms became our best friends. So he was only one year at Dartmouth, and then he wired me that he'd just had this offer to go to Washington to the Federal Trade Commission and I wired back "Yes." Bill said that was the first time he'd ever been able to get me to say yes to anything. And I only meant that he should take the job in Washington, but he assumed immediately and appeared in Bowling Green the next weekend. Assumed that it meant that I was willing to marry him and go to Washington. I was, and I did. One of the results was that he showed me his management general overall report on the lumber industry. That was, I think, that must have been about '16 or '17.

COMPTON: I really think it impressed me at that point because the Forest Service wouldn't do it, at least I didn't think they would.

MRS. COMPTON: You mean have let you see it?

COMPTON: Yeah. But Greeley did. Then he said that he got some useful ideas, which I've no doubt he did. I certainly got a good deal out of Greeley and his reports, but again, there weren't many Greeleys around. There weren't very many at that time and haven't been any since, as far as I can see.

MAUNDER: How do you appraise David T. Mason and the role he's played?

COMPTON: Pretty good. He has the advantage of having learned at a sufficiently early age to make his diary mean an entry every day rather than trying six months after it happened to figure out what it was that should have been put down in his diary.

MRS. COMPTON: I never felt he was nearly as able as Greeley, as an original thinker.

COMPTON: No, I don't think any of them equaled Greeley.

MRS. COMPTON: I think Mason grew and developed through the years, and he certainly made advantage of every good opportunity.

MAUNDER: He was a rather great prodder to get things done, was he not? With many things that developed later on.

COMPTON: I think so.

MAUNDER: How would you appraise the role he had in later events of the thirties when the Lumber Code was being formulated? You were very close to him at that time, too.

COMPTON: Yeah, I think he did a good job. I didn't have as close touch as I would liked to have had with Mason during much of that period because I was named by General Johnson the chairman of the Code Authority Organization Board, which was an activity set up to provide Code authorities a place to make their reports, while the main job of the NRA was to get more industries signed up. This was just kind of a makeshift proposition for a few months. Actually it was continued till the Supreme Court knocked the pinnings out from under the whole thing in 1935.

MAUNDER: Who do you feel was the architect of the Lumber Code of Article X? Who did the writing of it?

COMPTON: I did.

MAUNDER: You did? Every word of it?

COMPTON: Mm-huh. Including the official phrase with which it had been submitted to and accepted by the NRA, namely "This is an industry undertaking; it will be so administered..." The words, then Article C.

MAUNDER: Do you have anything more that you want to say about Article X and the Lumber Code?

COMPTON: Some place I have a copy of the Forest Conservation Code including in the upper right hand corner a notation which appeared in a few documents, but only one connected with the Lumber Code that I know of: "O.K. FDR" This was the first copy of the Code off the printing press and he gave it to me.

MAUNDER: Well that would be very valuable to have as a document.

COMPTON: Henry Wallace was the fellow who actually handed it to the president. He was doing that, I think, primarily to help me.

MAUNDER: Why was Roosevelt particularly interested in the conservation aspects of the Code? What was his motivation there? Do you know?

COMPTON: I don't. Of course he had several thousand trees of his own at his Poughkeepsie family home. He made mention of that frequently.

MAUNDER: How well do you feel you knew FDR?

COMPTON: Very superficially. He just knew who I was, and that's it. Of course I wouldn't expect anything from FDR. He wouldn't be very enthusiastic about me for political reasons. I never voted for him. I voted for one Democrat and that was Woodrow Wilson. I never got to the point of voting for another.

MAUNDER: How well did you know Henry Wallace?

COMPTON: Very well. Very well indeed.

MAUNDER: And how do you appraise Henry Wallace? I heard some rather high praise of him from your daughter when I was out at the AFA meeting.

COMPTON: He frankly admits, or asserts rather than admits, that he was taken for a ride by some people that had very plausible stories.

MAUNDER: Well he's a big enough man to do that. Has he admitted this to you personally?

COMPTON: Yes.

MRS. COMPTON: You had a very strong friend in Henry Wallace. Bill had entree to anything. The older Wallaces had been very good friends of ours. We were very young in Washington, they sort of adopted us. And when they had gone back to Iowa, Henry and Ida were coming as Secretary of Agriculture, they wrote us and asked me if I would find a place for them to live, furnish it and get it ready for them and I did. It was in a big apartment in Boardman Annex. I always thought it was the greatest compliment that eight years later they were still in the same place I had picked out for them, and so naturally they came and asked our advice about many things. Mrs. Wallace, Sr. was a Pi Phi, one of the outstanding ones in the country, and I was president of the Washington Alumni Club. And I think that was probably our first acquaintance. And then Mr. Wallace, Sr. became very much interested in Bill's work and saw its value. Of course they were from old Presbyterian stock and knew Wooster.

COMPTON: And my father. My father and Henry's grandfather were good friends.

MAUNDER: When you came to Washington, then as a young married couple in 1916, your Presbyterian background and family background stood you in some good stead.

MRS. COMPTON: Of course. We immediately becoming very active in the Presbyterian church which afterwards became the National Presbyterian Church. The Robert Lansings and the Dulleses, the Fosters, all those families belong to that church, and we became very well acquainted with them, naturally, primarily because we were willing to work in the church, we weren't thinking about planting ourselves socially. And I've always told our children that was the best way to get a good, firm background in a new community when you move into it. Become a part of it.

MAUNDER: Do you feel that way too, Dr. Compton?

COMPTON: Yes.

MRS. COMPTON: Mr. Pinchot kept you out of the Cosmos Club probably for a couple of years. Although even at that you were the second youngest member ever taken in. As you know in Washington, when we went there, there were three clubs. If you were rich, you'd probably join the Metropolitan Club. If you had brains, you might get invited to join the Cosmos Club. If you had neither, you might still make the University Club.

COMPTON: That's not a good story.

MRS. COMPTON: Bill, it's more or less true. You never got around to joining the University Club, because you became a member of first the Cosmos and then the Metropolitan. And you only did the Metropolitan Club because you were in the State Department and it seemed to be wise.

COMPTON: I couldn't have a sandwich, a plate in my office across the street. The Metropolitan Club was the most convenient arrangement I ever had.

MAUNDER: Can you tell us any more about the work you did with the Federal Trade Commission in those two years, 1916 to 1918?

COMPTON: Well, I completed a report--

MRS. COMPTON: Where is that report? Was it ever published?

COMPTON: I don't think so.

MRS. COMPTON: But it must be in their files?

COMPTON: Yes, I left a final tabulation. L. L. Bracken, who was the secretary of the commission, and carefully put it up in a prominent place on the shelves on unfinished or unpublished reports.

MRS. COMPTON: He was keen about you. You knew all the lumbermen in that study, didn't you?

COMPTON: Yes. I met quite a number of lumbermen--John Kirby, John Cole, Mr. Bloggett--the time that they had the first conference of the three agencies that I mentioned a while ago. Kirby was the new president of the NLMA. He was one of the representatives that picked out these foreign trade agents.

MRS. COMPTON: And of course at the time Kirby came in he had the job of finding a new secretary for the NLMA. So of course he must have been sizing you up all the time, unconsciously or otherwise.

COMPTON: I don't think he had any such objective in mind in 1916.

MAUNDER: How did you make your investigation in these years '16-'18, when you were in the Federal Trade Commission? Did you go systematically from region to region on a national tour?

COMPTON: I did some of that, but most of it was by correspondence on citations or meetings here and there.

MRS. COMPTON: Did the lumber industry like your report? Did they feel you were fair, because of course in a way you were from enemy territory when you were on the Federal Trade Commission.

COMPTON: No, I don't think so. The Federal Trade Commission had not discovered its functions of a disciplinary nature.

MRS. COMPTON: Of course the reason Bill wanted to go with the Federal Trade Commission, it was the first evidence of a government agency which was going to try to be helpful to industries that were having problems.

COMPTON: The Chairman of the Trade Commission at that point was Edward N. Hurley of Chicago, dead for years. He thought of the Commission in terms of helping industry, not hindering it. Incidentally, the most profane man I ever knew.

MRS. COMPTON: Who were some of the other members on the Federal Trade Commission at that time?

COMPTON: David Wayne?

MRS. COMPTON: Where did he come from?

COMPTON: He came with the Bureau of Corporations. The Federal Trade Commission simply absorbed the Bureau of Corporations.

MRS. COMPTON: I remember he was friendly to you and very helpful. Was Davies on the Commission?

COMPTON: Yes.

MAUNDER: Did you encounter any amusing or interesting experiences while traveling about the country to get the information that you sought?

COMPTON: No, I can't think of any. I was a very sober earnest, intelligent fellow. I wasn't out for pleasure, and I didn't look for it, and I apparently didn't run into it very much.

MAUNDER: Do you remember the circumstances surrounding the invitation extended to you to come and head up the NLMA?

COMPTON: Yes. I was invited by Bob Goodman to some meeting of the National in the summer of 1916. I think that's right.

MRS. COMPTON: Could it have been '17?

COMPTON: Yes, could have been '17. Well, Charles Jakes was then the president of the Southern Pine Association, which was a very potent organization at that point.

MRS. COMPTON: It was as strong and as rich as the National was poor.

MAUNDER: Would you say that it was the dominant lumber association of its time?

COMPTON: Yes, I think I would, among the regional associations. The one personality among the lumbermen, I suppose, who was most responsible for me being in the National for the next 25, 26 years was Charlie Keith. He had two big mills in Texas. He was a close friend of John H. Kirby, and they got their heads together at some point--1918--and I think Charlie Keith sold John Henry Kirby a bill of goods. "Try to get young Compton. You'll not regret it." I can remember being in Charlie Keith's office some time in 1920. They showed me some of their operating accounts, which they kept by month, and they had a string of five months on one of their ledger sheets where the profits after taxes were more than a million dollars each month. He kind of badgered me about it, he was a remarkable statistician. He was an economist of some sort and very sure of himself, and he had satisfied his own convictions about the future of the lumber business in the South, that there would be no timber after they had exhausted their timber by 1942.

MAUNDER: Can you give us any kind of picture of John Henry Kirby as you knew him?

COMPTON: All I can give you is a picture painted by a barber in the Kirby Building in Houston. John Henry would go in there every day to get a shave or a haircut. He was a great big fellow. I happened to be in the same barber shop, and this fellow remarked, "When that man comes in here, we know there's sun shining in East Texas." I met Kirby in 1916, but you might say only momentarily. He was a fine-looking gentleman, and I was attracted to him. He was not the president of the National at that time. He wasn't president of anything except the Kirby Lumber Company.

MAUNDER: Well, Dr. Compton, we were talking about John Henry Kirby when we ran out of tape here, and you had been telling us how he had lost his fortune or a good deal of it by, as a result of his deep friendship for people who got into financial straits and he would bail them out. Very often he got caught short himself in doing this.

MRS. COMPTON: That's certainly true. And of course he tried to help Charlie Keith later on.

COMPTON: I remember a revealing conversation of one of John Henry Kirby's traits. He really didn't know me. He had never met me personally except at {AUTHOR QUERY} two or three years earlier with the Forest Service and the Department of Commerce. At an executive committee meeting of the National somewhere in the South the conclusion was reached to try to offer me the position of secretary manager of NLMA, which he chose to do by inviting me to meet him in New York at the Waldorf-Astoria. In the meantime I knew from my long-time friend, old Bolin Arthur Johnson, the editor of the Lumber World Review. I was for some strange reason one of his specialties during the period of his last decade or two. And here was the president of the National and the new manager just barely met, so Kirby's instructions to me when I asked him for instructions was this: "You know I'm not too familiar with you. I like you, but I don't know where your plans lie, particularly. I would like to have you send me a carbon copy of all your letters. Just send them to me down in Houston." I saw him about two weeks later, some time, some place in Chicago. He said, "By the way, about that copy of the letters. Stop." I've seen enough of your stuff to conclude you know what you're talking about, and you do it in a pretty graceful way." So no more letters from that time on, as long as he lived. If there was some question involving discipline about something I had said or done, he said, "Well, that's all right. If Compton say it's so, it's all right with me. You don't run into associates like that very often.

MAUNDER: No. Who among the other directors of NLMA did you feel most closely related to over the years?

COMPTON: John Blodgett. Frank Wis~~e~~ner. Mark Fleischel. R.A. Long, while he was still living.

MAUNDER: I wonder if you are to go back in memory and talk about any of these men as you knew them in those early days. Do you remember anything in particular about R. A. Long, for example?

COMPTON: He was, I judged, doing a fine very job. Mr. Long himself, he'd been president of the National Lumber Manufacturers' Association. He was very vigorous in support of it. And was, of course, a very remarkable one. He lived to plant himself fairly in the Pacific Coast after he was at the point where his mills in the South were about ready to blow the whistle and call it a day. He had in mind the building of what was, in effect, a company town. I was there in Longview in 1921, I think it was, when they had the ground-breaking and T.R.A. Long gave the sickle to me for the second swipe at the weeds. The place is now occupied by the Long-Bell Lumber Company.

MAUNDER: I noticed, though, in reading through your papers this morning, that the Association was ten or eleven thousand dollars in the red in 1918 when you were called to be the new secretary-manager.

MAUNDER: Can you tell me a little bit about the general condition of things in the Association when you took over?

COMPTON: More or less stalling for time, waiting to see what the new organization would be. No hostility, just wait. I think it's fair to say that the directors of the National, including its president, just didn't know how much in the black or in the red the National was. This was a fresh finding that took place after I went to Chicago for September of '45.

MAUNDER: Who had been your predecessor immediately before you in this work?

COMPTON: There was a fellow, Lockey by name. His position was acting secretary for six months or eight months in 1918.

MRS. COMPTON: The two men were Kellogg and Rhoades. Rhoades went to Southern Pine and became really a great trade association builder and executive. Kellogg was a forester, a very good friend of ours all through the years, but a very gentle mind. Under him the National really deteriorated. Lack of interest. There were various reasons, but that's the reason in that ten years they had a deficit of ten thousand dollars. It was a question whether the National could survive. Bill's study the few years he was down in Washington on the Federal Trade Commission had convinced him that there was a future, so that they generally just needed reorganization and strengthening and a program.

COMPTON: As far as I know under him the chips fell just where they lay. On that deficit, it didn't handicap the National particularly; it didn't handicap it at all, as far as I know. But they had to rely on borrowing. If they wanted to borrow some money, they had to get Edward Hines to endorse it to get the credit. The National itself didn't ever have any credit.

MRS. COMPTON: Was he the treasurer?

COMPTON: Edward Hines? No, but he had his own business right across the street. He was most conveniently available.

MAUNDER: Well there came to be a period of stagnation in the trade association during World War I, as in that period when Kellogg was in the Association, and there seemed to be some quite strong dissension within the ranks of the lumberman who were members of the Association at that time.

COMPTON: The National was rather constituted in two parts. One of them had to do with other activities beside technical. The other bunch, which had its own head, had to do with all the scientific and technical work of the National. Neither was the boss. Ed Lynn in trade extension was just holding the fort. He didn't do anything except see that the bills were paid.

MRS. COMPTON: Well, it's fortunate for them that they got Kirby as president. Downman resigned, for his health?

COMPTON: Well, I hear he resigned only because of this issue they spread among the lumber manufacturers. Downman, he was a very strong minded gentleman, and he favored trying to force the government to devote a program to help the association to help the lumber industry, to improve on its association activity. His efforts fell afoul and there were frictions between people on high level and people on low level.

COMPTON: Downman's leadership of the National was not acceptable to the majority of the lumbermen, so they kind of took over. Edward Hines. He was the best salesman the lumber industry ever had. He got crisscrossed with R.H. Downman. Downman finally after four years went into the War Industries Board. He tried to get it to help the industry to get along with the government during wartime. Did very well. He had the respect of the war agencies, but in getting respect of the war agencies he seems to have lost the cooperation of the lumber companies, so he just disappeared from the scene. That's where Bob Goodman came in. Goodman had been elected as vice president of the National Board. He was not a particularly forceful gentleman. He had made it very cooperative, as far as I could see. The next in the National was to try to thrash out all these difficulties in the Board of Directors open meeting the early part of 1918, I think.

MAUNDER: In other words, they realized that their own dissension was one of the things that stood in the way.

COMPTON: That's right. Exactly.

MAUNDER: And they made some effort to meet to have a meeting of the minds?

COMPTON: Yes.

MRS. COMPTON: Now did Kirby call that meeting?

COMPTON: No. I think Edward Hines initiated it.

MRS. COMPTON: Had Kirby been elected yet?

COMPTON: No, not at that point. He was elected at that national meeting about May 1918. But this sort of hostility broke out somewhere along the line again.

MAUNDER: What was the basis of the hostility? Was it a matter of personalities, or was it a matter of regional rivalries?

COMPTON: Personalities, I would say, primarily. There'd always been regional rivalries.

MRS. COMPTON: But that'd been more or less wholesome.

COMPTON: Sometimes there was a lot and then they blew cold, they let them cool. Downman was very sensitive about all the things. He was put the National in the hole, as far as his public relations were concerned. And since he couldn't have his way in the Board of Directors, he quit. Kirby was chosen as president in the spring. They had a midsummer meeting out in either Washington or Oregon, I'm not sure which, where they concluded to hired a successor to Kellogg. Kellogg in the meantime had left and gone to the Newsprint Service Bureau. He was most recently newspaper.

MAUNDER: Kellogg's principle contribution seems to have been in the area of developing the use of statistics and compiling data for exchange members. Is that right?

COMPTON: That's about what it amounts to. Well, I always felt that Kellogg was a very competent gentleman. He was impulsive--

MRS. COMPTON: Oh, he was tactless, Bill. I think that was his worst problem. He was stubborn.

COMPTON: R.S. Kellogg did not succeed in getting the confidence of the bulk of the National directors.

MAUNDER: When you came into the thing I imagine you encountered different groups that had more or less coalesced around different leaders like Keith, and Hines, and so on. What were these elements of this dissension?

COMPTON: Kirby and I could hardly understand it. I never have felt I'd ever understood exactly what was back of R.H. Downman's hostility to persons on the Board. He certainly wasn't hostile to me. I only met him twice. He was interested in the National but he thought it was on the wrong track. Maybe they were, I don't know.

MAUNDER: Yes, but around what personalities were they centered?

COMPTON: Edward Hines, Charlie Keith, R.H. Downman. I wouldn't put R.B. Goodman in that.

MRS. COMPTON: Well he was just beginning to become important.

COMPTON: Yes, I think that's probably so.

MAUNDER: Where did the Weyerhaeusers fit into all of this?

COMPTON: F.E. Weyerhaeuser was on the Board. Never took any position, particularly. He always supported me and my recommendations.

MRS. COMPTON: But I don't think any real Weyerhaeuser leadership had been demonstrated yet. Do you?

COMPTON: No. They were a pretty forlorn bunch, the Weyerhaeuser top, even including F.E. I always though of him as being very disheartened by the destruction of the timber price structure. He thought timber was losing its value, and said so to his intimates, didn't say so publicly. F.E. told me that they might have even gone out of the lumber industry into something more in the depression. He said that somebody'd offered the Weyerhaeuser stockholders a pretty fancy price for the Weyerhaeuser Timber Company stock. But nothing happened in that. I think before anything reasonably could have been expected to happen, the depression descended upon all industries and closed almost every avenue to a new deal.

MRS. COMPTON: How much had the price of timber fallen?

COMPTON: That I don't know.

MRS. COMPTON: I was wondering what his peak was during World War I.

COMPTON: There wasn't very much difference, as far as I know, in those transactions.

MAUNDER: Do you ever remember him beginning to sound more optimistic about it?

COMPTON: Yes. It took place during the NRA. He was hostile, never swallowed the Lumber Code. He thought it was the wrong way to handle the industry problems and I think he was really more right than wrong. I saw quite a bit of F.E. Weyerhaeuser, most of the times in the office, his office, and with others present. I would say that he cooperated in my program, and he was very fine and specific, and "Sure," he says, "if you're able to put this program through, Weyerhaeuser Company will support you." That was the character of his reply about anything new. It included even the Bailey Amendment. Now I said to him and to Gus Clapp, who was the senior attorney sometime in there--well, he was a contact or you might say a representative. The first Board of Directors after Frederick Weyerhaeuser died, they relied partly on George S. Long as the pivotal spokesman for the Weyerhaeuser Company.

MRS. COMPTON: He and Clapp. He was responsible for building the town. Wasn't he one of the men that wanted you to head the National?

COMPTON: No. I don't know that he was opposed to it, but I don't think he participated.

MAUNDER: How much did you have to do with George S. Long in your career? Did you have many frequent contacts with him?

COMPTON: Quite a number, I'd say. Most that he talked to me about --in the earlier years--was forestry. He was chairman of the Forestry Committee and thought hat there ought to be some way to get better relations forestry-wise with the U.S. Forest Service. There was kind of a concealed hostility between the Forest Service and the lumber manufacturers which he didn't think was very sound. I didn't either. We talked about various steps which could be taken that would relieve that overhanging tension.

MAUNDER: When did you remember these discussions with George S. Long beginning?

COMPTON: With the chairmanship of the Forestry Committee, which must have been 1921. No. I think that first real visit that I had with George S. Long was when the Weyerhaeuser party from Tacoma, headed by Long, went to the Clearwater River as a part of an effort to locate a site for the Clearwater Timber Company, which up to that time had nothing but timber on its hands. I think that was 1929 or maybe 1930.

COMPTON: Well, he wanted me to have a chance to see what the Weyerhaeuser Timber Company was at work on. I saw. Very very much impressed by what I saw. That was the only purpose he had in mind as far as I could see. He was a man of great wisdom, in my retrospective view of the affair as it appeared. Long held himself pretty close restraint on these issues. He didn't want the lumber industry to become an outright opponent of what the Forest Service wanted to do, and he did succeed, I believe.

MAUNDER: You feel that he was one of the real statesmen of the industry.

COMPTON: Yes, I do. Yes, I do. Sometimes he was a blank wall, but I didn't consider that as hostility.

MAUNDER: How do you mean that, "a blank wall"? Uncommunicative?

COMPTON: Uncommunicative. Weyerhaeuser has never had any successor as far as I can see to George S. Long. I mean a successor in respect to his influence on his associates in the lumber industry.

MAUNDER: You know Fritz Jewett, of course, very well.

COMPTON: Yes.

MAUNDER: Can you tell me a little bit about Fritz Jewett and your appraisal of him as a man and what you feel he did most effectively?

COMPTON: Well, Fritz, in his relation to the lumber industry, was somewhat of a mystery to me. He thought more in terms of his being in a position to discharge what he called his "family responsibility" in the Weyerhaeuser group. I think he did that very well. He was also a strong factor in encouraging Weyerhaeuser spokesmen, such as George S. Long, to take a big bite in forestry problems, try to get those settled, the issues which were rampant in the '20's, I mean issues between people on the one hand like Pinchot, Earle Clapp, some others who agitated for government control, very expensive.

MRS. COMPTON: Well, he was plunged into it as a very young man. They felt that he was a dreamer a little, just out of college.

COMPTON: I know that Fritz Jewett was greatly interested in the National Forestry Program. He was the largest single, individual stockholder because he was the heir of the Jewett family and he--most of the years that I knew Fritz--was awfully busy about his attorneys and professional associates in order to be sure that he was doing as much as could be done to safeguard the encroachment on his estate by Internal Revenue Service. He didn't want to finance the Treasury. There was nothing novel about that except he talked with a low-pitched voice but you could hear across the continent. If you assume that stockholders speak with authority to the owners of the stock, and I guess they do, he was a potent influence. But as Helen says, he didn't like to go into the details of the business.

MAUNDER: Do you feel that this tax business became almost an obsession with the man?

COMPTON: Pretty much.

MAUNDER: Do you think it influenced the whole latter course of his life and the role that he came to play, or did he throw this off as time went on?

COMPTON: No, I don't think he threw it off, and I certainly don't know why he was in the National. He was conscious of the fact that he had a special responsibility because he'd been made the chairman of his Forestry Committee and was kept there for many years. And at the two Forest Conservation Conferences during that period Fritz was right in the thick of all that.

MAUNDER: How much of an original contribution did he make to the discussion?

COMPTON: Very little.

MAUNDER: What was his role, then?

COMPTON: I never was quite sure.

MRS. COMPTON: It was so evident that you had one of the leading men in the Weyerhaeuser group as chairman of the Forestry Committee, and that had a value.

COMPTON: Yes, Fritz's chairmanship was quite important. But if things threatened to get loose, Fritz was not very skillful at handling dissenters.

MRS. COMPTON: Well you had to handle that and do a bit of that.

COMPTON: Yes. Of course.

MRS. COMPTON: You did that for many other chairmen.

MAUNDER: What kind of difficulties were you alluding to here?

COMPTON: Well, how far should the lumber industry go in concessions to the support of government control of the industry? Fritz Jewett was just sitting down on that. He was trying to resist even the start of an encroachment by the Forest Service on the independence of the lumber companies, and he may not have been very persuasive to a lot of the lumber people, but he was very right.

MAUNDER: What were some of the concessions that were being pressed upon him by some of his associates and contemporaries?

COMPTON: Mostly legislation that I knew of. A succession of bills having to do with forest policy.

MAUNDER: Well, for example, how did he feel about things like Clark-McNary and McNary-McSweeney?

COMPTON: He was for the Clarke-McNary in '24 and McNary-McSweeeney in '28.

MAUNDER: Was he enthusiastic about this legislation or did he have some doubts about it, as you recall?

COMPTON: I'm not enough of a mind reader to answer the last question. I do know that Fritz Jewett both as an individual and as chairman of the Forestry Committee approved of the McSweeney-McNary bill. There was nothing in the McSweeney-McNary bill except help to timber companies. It was not a vehicle for raising the issue of government control, and that was a constructive feature. Clarke-McNary was the other one. Those two bills he was quite in favor of. I think Fritz Jewett gave all he'd got to help the industry to know that to improve its own action by itself, could improve the forestry policy of the whole country, and I think it had that effect.

MRS. COMPTON: He was one of the first ones to show any civic or outside responsibility in the participation. He as very active in the cathedral and the Episcopal Church. They called him "bishop." He began to take an interest in forestry from the very beginning.

COMPTON: I know that some of his associates made little comments on the border of being brutal indicating that well, what the heck does Fritz Jewett know about this? That wasn't too important because he must have been accustomed to having people belittle his efforts and his ideas.

MRS. COMPTON: But he stuck right at them.

COMPTON: That's where his obstinacy showed up to advantage. He didn't change his mind unless he knew a good reason why he should. And if somebody called him a name, even if it was mockery like "bishop," he didn't pay any attention to it, though I suspect that he disliked that as much as anybody would.

MAUNDER: Wasn't he very keenly interested in the whole subject of forest taxation too?

COMPTON: Not the capital gains tax. He didn't take part in that. Now on tax in general I think he was interested in any deal with a federal agency and interested in getting appropriations to enable the federal agencies to carry out the forestry program defined by Congress. He was kind of lukewarm about jumping in and helping them get their appropriations, though I don't think it did any harm because he never opposed it and there were others who were advocating it.

MAUNDER: Dr. Compton, rather early on in your experience with the National Lumber Manufacturers' Association I think you saw a need for adopting a better system of lumber standards. Hoover called the First General Lumber Conference in Washington in May, 1922.

MRS. COMPTON: And that was at your suggestion to him, wasn't it?

COMPTON: Yes.

MAUNDER: And the second conference came in July of the same year. And it was at this conference that the Central Committee of Lumber Standards, which later became the American Lumber Standards Committee, was established.

COMPTON: That's right.

MAUNDER: Do you recall how you saw this problem in the early days of your being head of the Association?

COMPTON: In most of the regional associations and individual companies their sales and manufacturing policies were simply aggravating the condition that had survived for many years, namely using some deviation from the national products standards to make it possible for some group to get marketing advantage, and that was all. Some of the old arguments were described years ago as "The Battle of a Thirty-Second of an Inch." Had a little fun being poked in the Central Committee on Lumber Standards, which was an industry activity. The Central Committee was supposed to be independent of any of the individual associations, and it did include consumers as well as distributors, wholesale and retail, and manufacturers.

MAUNDER: How independent was it in fact?

COMPTON: I think it was--to start with it was accepted by the lumber companies in good faith, but--

MAUNDER: They never did really get out of it?

COMPTON: No. Within a few years began encroachments on it, and now the threat's very great.

MAUNDER: Well, with the passage of the Clarke-McNary Act in 1924, you began to mark some real programs in the field of industrial forestry, according to what you've written. How do you see this legislation of the 1920's?

COMPTON: Oh, it was very constructive. I think particularly in a negative sense--it put to sleep three different opposed federal acts or recommendations made to the Congress that would have resulted in national government control of the lumber industry. The Clarke-McNary Law in '24 met head on the greatest unfinished business affecting timber --

namely the problem of fire prevention, insect and disease control -- by a combination of public and private effort. The fact that it has worked out as well as it has worked is a pretty good indication, I think that it was a sound basis on which to establish the next steps. And then the actual next step legislatively was McNary-McSweeney. The McSweeney-McNary bill did not originate with the National, it originated with the special committee set up by the Society of American Foresters. That was a loud and thumping promotion of research as one of the great needs of the forest industries. Somebody prepared a draft of the bill that would incorporate the essence of the report of the Society of American Foresters and took it to Congress. The logical place to send it when you wanted to get action was in the Agricultural Committee of the House, the chairman of which was Howken {Howden? Houghten? Howland) Do you remember that name? He was from Nebraska, wasn't it? Kind of an elderly gentleman at that time. And one of the members of his committee was John McSweeney. I was given an opportunity to help John McSweeney when he became a member of Congress to get placed on the important committees. There were a lot of trashy committees just to give the fellows that don't qualify for any higher position in the hierarchy of the House of Representatives.

MAUNDER: You were able to influence his placement on one of the better committees.

COMPTON: On the Agricultural Committee. There was never any issue of great consequence over this with the Society of American Foresters. People were a little suspicious that the thing might be put in a blind alley. They wanted to have it introduced by Howland himself, the chairman, and it's possible that he would have agreed to do it. My position was that was the wrong way to get the bill approved, because Howland's name was on so many other bills he wasn't going to have any time to fool around with a forestry research bill which politically had no great sex appeal, and so I urged that we try to get some fellow on the committee who believed in the bill and would be interested in keeping after it. I got McSweeney to do it.

MAUNDER: Because of your having influenced his appointment to this Agriculture Committee, is that right?

COMPTON: Yes. His grandfather, John McSweeney--

MRS. COMPTON: Was the greatest trial lawyer Ohio ever had.

COMPTON: His father was also a good lawyer. He was not a block off the old chip, but he was a good lawyer. John McSweeney is a lawyer, though he never had any practice.

MRS. COMPTON: He was one of the principals in high school for years here before he ran for Congress.

MAUNDER: McSweeney took a great pride then in his later years in having had a part in passing that bill.

COMPTON: He reminiscently refers to the McSweeney-McNary Bill. He said, "Bill, I don't suppose you know how much satisfaction I gained having sponsored a bill that's had so important a bearing on the future of our forests, paved the way for a real conservation effort in this country."

MAUNDER: Who wrote the legislation itself?

COMPTON: Well, the Society of American Foresters, primarily. The Forest Service couldn't do it because it involved spending additional public money, and to the extent which it involved financial outlay by the Federal government it was supposed to go through the screening of the Bureau of the Budget. As you know this had been the policy for years and years, and usually the Bureau of the Budget doesn't want to see the federal funds appropriated. Well, some fanciful idea. And this, as far as the McSweeney-McNary Bill was concerned, was, and I'm sure it sometimes still is, to improve and extend our fire protection, disease protection, tree disease. John McSweeney was published a half dozen times in recent years referring to himself as the initiator of the McSweeney-McNary act.

MAUNDER: Well, when you wanted legislation introduced, what was the course you usually took to get it under way?

COMPTON: Well, figure out the best I could the members of Congress who were on the committee that would be concerned, talk to them about it.

MAUNDER: One whom you felt might be most friendly to the idea.

COMPTON: Yeah. I'd be in a position to give some time to it.

MAUNDER: Well then did you work out with him the contents of the bill itself or did you present him with a raw draft, a drawn draft?

COMPTON: I think it was the latter. There were some features of it that were modified. I guess I was the fellow who wrote those--I don't remember what they were. I was not a member then of the Society of American Foresters, but I had offered to them that I would undertake to get this bill offered in Congress. Those features weren't of great importance. I thought they would be likely to stir up some hornets' nest either in the industry or in the Forest Service and edited the bill to that extent. They were things which, if developed hostility to the legislation, might be decisive in cutting it off and send the thing back to some committee where it would be buried. They know how to get a bill buried for about thirty years.

MAUNDER: So you had to be a tactician in avoiding that.

COMPTON: The same thing on 117-K, this capital gains tax thing on timber. It was passed in '43. This is how Josiah Bailey, the senator of North Carolina, happened to introduce that bill, which for years was known and still is to some extent, as the Bailey Amendment. It was hashed over in the comprehensive reviews of revenue legislation. They always tampered with that. So we got Bailey, he's been dead for years. He saw in this capital gains tax treatment a measure that would greatly help the forest industries in his state and that had a lot of political connections with people in the forest industries. Con Spencer, who had been president of the North Carolina Forestry Association for some years, very delightful gentleman, was a friend of Bailey, and so Con Spencer and I went down to talk to Josiah Bailey. I didn't know him or hadn't known him.

MAUNDER: He wasn't a very well known member of the Congress, was he?

COMPTON: He was a little bit like John McSweeney. John McSweeney first didn't look too good in political prestige.

MRS. COMPTON: I think it was just as good to get the ones who weren't because they didn't already have enemies.

MAUNDER: Now, when did you first start to work on the capital gains tax? This had taken some years to achieve, hadn't it?

COMPTON: The earlier effort was incorporated in the approach made in 1943 when the Bailey Amendment was introduced. As far as I can recall now, there were some specific steps might be mentioned. One of them was a meeting in Chicago at the Blackstone Hotel of our NLMA Forestry Committee in which every regional association was allowed a representative. As far as I can recall that was entirely initiated in my office.

MAUNDER: When would this have been?

COMPTON: '42, I think. That was a meeting of the committee for the consideration of a capital gains tax push. We didn't have the language of the final legislation. That came later. It was not made until Senator Bailey had introduced the bill and secured the opportunity for a hearing on the bill.

MRS. COMPTON: And you spoke to them in the hearing.

COMPTON: My recollection is not too clear about the initial steps. I think there were two of them. One of them was meeting this committee in Chicago, 1942. That's where Laird Bell walked out. Laird Bell was not a member of the committee, but was very much interested in settling the matter, and so he showed up for the meeting. Of course he was welcome. I think in that meeting there was no member of the Weyerhaeuser office. I'm not sure about that.

MRS. COMPTON: That may have been he reason why Laird Bell came.

COMPTON: No, I don't think so. I think he came because he was interested. And I was trying to stir up interest amongst the regional associations.

MAUNDER: Well had this approach to the tax problem been under discussion for some time before?

COMPTON: It had to some extent, yes.

MAUNDER: Where had it all come from, this concept of taxation?

COMPTON: A bill was introduced in the House giving certain types of improvements to the coal companies that were tending to become a problem rather than an answer. And I don't know what reaction others might have, but it shook me as possible that we could attach an amendment such as turned out in 117-K latching onto this coal text.

MRS. COMPTON: Some of your men who were mutually interested in coal and lumber like Ritter and those people, had they been interested?

COMPTON: Oh yes. They were.

MAUNDER: And did they see the application of this thing to the forest products industries and suggest it?

COMPTON: Some of them did suggest it and some of them didn't.

MRS. COMPTON: Who were some of them that did? Did Ritter?

COMPTON: No, Ritter didn't attend any meetings. Too hard of hearing.

MAUNDER: Who did? Somebody had to have the idea before the tax committee meeting was called.

COMPTON: As far as I know, I was the only one that had the idea at that point. Then the fly in the ointment, you might say, was the interest of timber companies like the Weyerhaueser Company in preserving the tax free provision that authorizes tax free dividends to be paid and to be received out of surplus, really a depreciation of value of timber since 1913. I'm quite sure it was the reason Laird Bell attended this meeting because he had felt for years and years prior to that that these nontaxable dividends out of the 1913 surplus were a particular thing that the Weyerhaeuser Company and others similarly situated were interested in and didn't want to see tampered with. That's why he took no part in it. Laird Bell took no part in this discussion, which he should not have done. He was not a member of the committee, but he was listening with all four ears, apparently, and come near to noontime when the committee recessed he evidently had a luncheon engagement. I was acting as chairman of the meeting and Laird said, "Would you mind stepping back here for a minute? I got to go to lunch." Which I did, and he said to me, "I just wanted to tell you how I think this will take up if you go ahead and do this thing that you're advocating. The industry will lose its 1913 free tax, free dividend distribution, and you'll never get anywhere with this capital gains tax idea." He wasn't belligerent about it; he was very matter of fact. I thanked him for having come and expressing himself as frankly as he had. "I'd appreciate it if you would just give your views just as you have to me to all the committee." He didn't want to do that. I didn't argue that point with him. I just thanked him for his time and I said, "I'm sorry you feel that way." The next step I'm very sure was a matter of a few weeks thereafter when Hoyle and the Senate Finance Committee reviewed this revenue bill that gave considerable attention to coal mining--one I mentioned a few minutes ago. There's certainly no specific authority, but I went to ask for an opportunity to testify before the committee on possible amendment to this revenue act. Vandenburger and Taft were members of that committee. Both of them I knew very well and I told them--Vandenburg--what they were trying to do. They helped me a great deal. All I attempted to do was to get it in the record of the committee hearings, and then wait until next year and then do something about it. Which is just what happened. Late that year we had our national association meeting in Chicago, mostly in the Blackstone, and Fred and

Phil Weyerhaeuser were present at that meeting. They came to me during part of the meeting, said they'd appreciate it if I would have a talk with both of them while this meeting was going on, and I said, "Sure." So far as I can recall, their questions were about like this. "Do you really think that there's a possibility of getting a federal bureau consideration of an amendment act like this one you're' talking about?" My answer to that was, "I of course don't know what'll happen. This I do know. If no change is made in the law, you'll be safe, but you'll be missing an opportunity which is very important for the forest industries. You're talking about permanent production. If it could be secured, this kind of legislation would be beneficial to everybody and detrimental to nobody. In my opinion no such measure would be secured unless interested persons or companies in the industry were to initiate the effort together. Further, I think I know enough about the ways and wiles of timber company consideration of a matter like this that unless the Weyerhaeuser Companies are willing to be known as supporting the effort, the whole thing will run out and it will be stopped. There are just too many other timber companies in a matter of this kind that wait and see what the Weyerhaeuser Company does before they commit themselves, and the result of all that will be we'll get nowhere with this supposed change in the revenue law." I suppose we went to lunch. They asked me to have a further talk with them while the meeting was on, which I did. I added in this three-way conference in Phil's room that as long as the Weyerhaueser Company was identified as hostile to this effort, well, that would stop it entirely. Well, two or three days later, just at the time of the end of the National Meeting, Phil--Fred was not there at that time; he had gone--said to me, "We now understand very much the impact of this movement on the timber company, and if you decide to go ahead with it, let us know. We'll support it." That was when the Bailey Amendment was really written, in these two conferences with Fred and Phil Weyerhaeuser.

MAUNDER: Is it true that major policies and actions of the associations are dependent to the same extent on the interest of the Weyerhauesers?

COMPTON: Not as much as it was at that time twenty-some years ago.

MAUNDER: But at that time it was critical?

COMPTON: Yes. I think it would have been a waste of breath for the National to have initiated an effort to amend the Internal Revenue Act along the capital gains tax route, and I think that same situation would hold today.

MAUNDER: The Weyerhaeuser reversal would indicate that the legal counsel of the companies had been brought around to another position in a relatively short period of time. What do you suppose made that change?

COMPTON: I have surmises. I can't say that they are facts, because I'm not a mind reader. I have the impression that the second generation or third generations had really taken some pretty important views of policies including policies of the government that could substantially affect the interest of the stock holders of the timber companies, and that Phil and F.K. wanted to take a more active position in favor of what they favored, opposed to what they opposed, but not keep their views under a barrel, under a bushel. And I think they did some quick calculations of dollars and saw where capital gains tax treatment for them and for many others would be a very great factor. Of course at that time the excess profit was in effect, so they--the tax advantage at that point was even more extensive than it was a year or two years later when the NRA was let down and abandoned.

MAUNDER: Well, in seeking this kind of tax release you found that you didn't have from your lumber company constituents all the support that you might expect in this effort.

COMPTON: Well not exactly. Very shortsighted, some of the things they did or failed to do.

MRS. COMPTON: Do you think that's partly because they had regional associations?

COMPTON: Oh, I don't think so particularly. I don't think that was much of a factor.

MRS. COMPTON: But didn't you always try to have your committees cover all of the regional associations pretty well?

COMPTON: I tried to get the regional associations to appoint someone to serve on every committee. It worked out fairly well. Of course on every committee there's some who will want to be there to squawk or to cheer, depending upon the way the wind blows, but they don't want to do much of anything.

MRS. COMPTON: But the bigger the men you could get appointed, the more you got done.

MAUNDER: Did you find that this concept or practice of always giving regional representation on every committee stood in the way of progress?

COMPTON: Yes.

MRS. COMPTON: What'd you do then? How'd you get around it?

COMPTON: I'd try to work on the recalcitrants. I don't know any formulas for this.

MRS. COMPTON: Well I can remember when we went west to visit somebody, it was a new member of the committee. Of course we did a good bit of that. You just spend an awful lot of time traveling--

COMPTON: Yes, I did. My busiest year with the National Lumber Manufacturer's Association, I think, was in 1926 and 27, which was immediately following the period in which a Lumbermen's Committee proceeding from other lumbermen and from lumbermen generally gave us five millions dollars trade extension. A million dollars a year for five years. This committee was appointed in 1925, I think. Charlie Keith headed it, and he had the idea, apparently, that if there was just a proposal made to interested lumbermen they would be quick enough to see how much they would benefit.

MAUNDER: Trade extension being primarily what? Seeking markets abroad?

COMPTON: No. Markets here. That went through even though it had to be constituted in 1927.

MRS. COMPTON: Why did it sort of peter out?

COMPTON: Well, Charlie Keith threw in the sponge. He didn't have spontaneous response from hundreds of timber and lumber companies.

MAUNDER: How much did he gather in before he quit?

COMPTON: Oh, $45,000.

MRS. COMPTON: Towards five million. And Bill took it over and registered it to make it just our organization.

COMPTON: Of Course Charlie Keith was a little sensitive about it, and I never talked to him frankly about it because I thought he was so sensitive. He just accepted the fact that another effort was being made to sell the program of a million dollars a year for five years.

COMPTON: We had a new chairman, Harry Hughes, in the cypress from Ganaret, Louisiana. He was a staunch supporter of the program, in fact felt it was very important for his company as well as for the doors or maybe hundreds of others.

COMPTON: But he had no idea how to talk with people and get them to adopt or favor or discourage proposals.

MRS. COMPTON: Who were some of their best men, I mean of your Board members at raising money?

COMPTON: George Dulaney was one of them. One of the best ones. Mr. Kirby finally turned out to be pretty useful in that connection.

MRS. COMPTON: Of course men like Blodgett could write to men like Blodgett.

MAUNDER: Was this the formula you used for raising the five million?

COMPTON: This little pamphlet, this little blue-covered booklet was written, I heard later, by Landon Bell who was Vice President-General Counsel to W.N. Ritter Company and tells about the raising of the money.

MAUNDER: The Better Value?

COMPTON: Yes, that's the one. It has the name of some lumbermen, that sponsored it--it may be on the first or second or third page. It's still a struggle in the timber companies, the lumber companies. The ones you expect to support a program of that kind fail to do so. Often some others that you thought would be lukewarm are--

MRS. COMPTON: Did Neill come in on that?

COMPTON: J. Neill? Yes, he did.

MRS. COMPTON: What about people like Bloedel-Donovan and--

COMPTON: No. Donovan was dead.

MRS. COMPTON: Oh, was he? I thought we visited him about that time.

COMPTON: No. We visited him in the '20s.

MAUNDER: What is there in your estimation about the character of the industry which makes it this way inclined? It is also this way inclined, is it not, in the realm of research and development? As compared with some industries they spend rather small amounts of money, don't they--

COMPTON: Yeah. They do. It's unfortunate that they do that, because they're contented with market situations where the lumber mills made lumber the way the mill wanted to make lumber and then try to sell it in markets that they didn't control and didn't succeed very well in persuading them to use lumber and timber products, but there was enough of a return that the industry gained out of this five million or so for five years, which really only lasted four years, not quite that, because it was overwhelmed by the depression. There were four hundred companies I believe, at maximum, that supported it. Fifty of them carried it through the depression.

MAUNDER: And this required an annual ante up from them to pay the cost of promoting the expansion of the trade. Is that right?

COMPTON: Yes.

MAUNDER: How was this done mainly?

COMPTON: By personal approach.

MAUNDER: How did you spend monies that were raised for trade expansion?

COMPTON: Oh. Well, we had engineers and technical people as well as publicists. We had centers in half a dozen different parts of the United States. For a time we had an office in Minneapolis with a very capable young fellow, Eddie Fisher; he died I think shortly thereafter. And then we had one in New Orleans where Walter Scheld was handling largely building code matters in the South.

MRS. COMPTON: But they tackled all the problems from mill machinery to building codes.

COMPTON: Right. And then we had another office in Chicago headed by Frederick Lawrence Keith.

MRS. COMPTON: Larry Keith.

COMPTON: He was first class, and a big tall gaunt fellow by the name of Horner out in San Francisco. We had enough income to get along if we'd stop certain things. The funds of the Trade Extension Campaign, whether we didn't make very good use of it. One use that was made of it was furnishing some initial capital to the Timber Engineering Company.

MRS. COMPTON: To make a permanent promotional operation.

COMPTON: Yes, within a limited scope.

MAUNDER: You've been affiliated or associated with the American Forestry Association for a long time.

COMPTON: Yeah. I think the American Forestry Association has done quite well in recent years. Of course it was really the personality of Ovid Butler that kept the AFA together for some years during the depression. He was more of a forester than he was a publicist and a very good one. There never was at that period complete frankness between the National and the American Forestry Association. I think that was inevitable, though. That does not imply criticism of any person, because there were these deep seated feelings in the industry and among its constituents, whether they were lumber manufacturers or wholesalers, even retailers, or wholesaling industries, and some of the foresters were officially kind of skeptical of all the actions taken by the industry. It didn't mean hostility, particularly. To some it did. Chapman for example. He thought I was a -- it was some kind of language that I never use. At any rate it wasn't intended to be very complimentary about some of my speeches and reports of the industry, and that didn't fan up very much harmony. But we found a basis of working quite advantageously, I think, when they decided to employ Fred Hornaday, who was himself not a particularly good administrator, but a fine fellow. Fred Hornaday is not a forester, but he understands foresters and he doesn't spend a dollar until he knows he has some idea what he's spending it for. And if it results in a black figure at the end of the year he's pleased. So are his directors. He knows his work, and American Forestry Association has prospered greatly under his administration, and I think they had a whole industry as beneficiary of that.

MRS. COMPTON: Well I think having a good magazine news and trade districts list has helped.

COMPTON: Yes.

MRS. COMPTON: And Collingwood was with them for a while, wasn't he? As forester?

COMPTON: Yes, Collingwood left the National and was taken on as forester for the American Forestry Association. This is the first year in many years that I've missed their annual meeting.

MAUNDER: What role do you think that AFA played in bringing the forest-related community to a recognition of its problems and a united front in dealing with them?

COMPTON: Well, that's pretty speculative. I don't think American Forestry Association had much to do with that. Personally, I think that a great gain was made by the industry along those lines, when it adopted during the National Recovery administration period this Forest Conservation Code Article X. Of course the bottom fell out of it after 1935, but the impetus had never been completely lost. You had a nucleus there that over a period of years, and not too many years, has brought a great deal of understanding and support between the two organizations. And that I think has persisted even to now.

MAUNDER: To what extent has AFA been temporarily dominated by one group or another?

COMPTON: Do you mean the industry on the one hand or the professional foresters on the other?

MAUNDER: Right, or the ultra-conservationists.

COMPTON: The Pinchotites? Well, the period that I've been connected with AFA, and I got into that oh, fifteen years ago, not quite, they never did make peace you might say with the left wing forestry, or whatever Pinchot is. In his later years, when he'd completely retired, no longer governor of Pennsylvania, he mellowed an awful lot. He discontinued his habitual public denunciation of the timber baron. He took that out of his vocabulary before he died. He had picked on me quite a bit in the beginning, right after the war.

MRS. COMPTON: Did he have some reason?

COMPTON: Oh I think I **was** probably an upstart in a way. That's what he called me. "Who is this fellow, this fellow that knows about forests and isn't even a forester." That was a characteristic of Pinchot. People classified as foresters if they agreed with him and if not, they were upstarts.

MRS. COMPTON: And of course you did contradict publicly his statement that lumber was going to run out.

COMPTON: Yes, oh yes. According to Pinchot's published assertion we've run out of timber right now; we've been out of it for nearly ten years. Well, I didn't, of course, like to be picked on as he picked on me, but I respected him for it, still do. I thought his attitude was negative. He didn't want to bother about any facts unless they were something that originated in his office. He was an awfully self-centered person, I think, but he was also going like a crackerbolt. My first acquaintance with him was in his own home on 16th Street. I remember being there in 1919. He had one of these donut and cider meetings.

MAUNDER: Baked apple and cider?

MRS. COMPTON: Donuts.

COMPTON: He was pretty sharp then. He was always polite but sarcastic to me. One time I sent him a copy of one of my speeches. I think it was one of my reports to an annual meeting of the Directors of the NLMA. It was a subject which concerned Pinchot and all the senior foresters. I remember that. And, well, I sent him a copy of the pamphlet when it was received from the printer. I got a very prompt acknowledgement from him. Pinchot said, "I have received a copy of a pamphlet which you sent me and I will read it if I have the time." I saw the dirty dig there. "If I have the time." But he spotted me in his later years, quite affable, and he didn't, at age eighty or 75 to 80, have very much influence, I think. On the whole I think Pinchot did the lumber industry a lot of good. Scared the lights out of them.

MAUNDER: And they needed scaring?

COMPTON: Sure did.

COMPTON: For some reason, after I left the National, the American Forest Products Industries quit the office there on 18th Street, set itself up with an organization, very capable too, devoted entirely or exclusively to the objective of better public relations on the part of the participating lumber and timber industries, and I think it's had an excellent effect, utterly attributable to two things. An increasing number of principals in the forest industries are now giving time to that sort of a program, to APFI. Second, and maybe more important than the first, is Charles Gillett's handling as the manager of the AFPI. He's a politician. He's an affable fellow. He was the State forester of Arkansas for several years before he came to the National, but he's built up a fiction that AFPI was initiated with stardom in 1945, which was the year I went to the Pullman. Actually the AFPI was founded in 1933.

MAUNDER: 1941, wasn't it?

COMPTON: No. TECO and AFPI were started at the same time, 1933. While we were under the depression. I never think so, talking with Charlie Gillett, and some of his own directors don't know that. But we employed Charlie Gillett, and he was a very fine workman, in my opinion.

MAUNDER: Well they're getting ready to celebrate a 25th anniversary next year and they're dating from '41.

MRS. COMPTON: But that was the reorganization of it, wasn't it?

COMPTON: Yes. The AFPI really ran the Trade Extension Campaign till the income was so small we had to abandon the nationwide organization.

MRS. COMPTON: In other words that was one of the things you started.

COMPTON: Yes.

MRS. COMPTON: From the five million dollar fund.

COMPTON: That's right.

MRS. COMPTON: Well, then how could they take over in '41?

COMPTON: By contract with me, the trustees of the AFPI, to loan or assign all the stock and the name. The contract which is still in effect with the National Lumber Manufacturers' Association. The AFPI charter is owned by the National Lumber Manufacturers' Association. The stock was transferred to a corporation called American Forest Products Industries, to be operated by a Board of Directors in which both paper and plywood and lumber were all to take part.

MAUNDER: Tell us a little bit more about the origins. of the AFPI.

COMPTON: I became the vice president.

MRS. COMPTON: Well, then, who became president?

COMPTON: Charlie French, he was a professional. Did a good job of it.

MAUNDER: Well, this time there was some recognition of the fact that there was a public relations problem for the industry as a whole, not just lumber.

COMPTON: That's right.

MAUNDER: And this was an endeavor, I suppose, to try to bring the pulp and paper people into the act, was it not?

COMPTON: That, too. As far as publicity was concerned, it was trying to establish a vehicle that would be supported by and speak for forest industries generally.

MAUNDER: To what extent did the movement towards diversification in the industry tend to stimulate the development of AFPI as an idea?

COMPTON: Well, I though that it would be a useful vehicle for helping a lot of the little groups of forest industries that don't fit into the Southern Pine, West Coast, U.S. Plywood, put up a place for them to go to work cooperatively. I think at first AFPI was a vehicle for setting up an organization for-- about 20 hardwood companies, and they paid the bill. AFPI was to keep a watchful eye on that development. There were, I think seven different groups early in 1940 and the 1940s which were under the tent of APFI, but it fell far short of its meeting the opportunities of large scale cooperation by the pulp and paper industries. I remember Allenby, being an officer of the AFPI, and, as I was, a founder of the charter for AFPI, did the original soundings. But it was not the way to build up an equal partnership in an organization between lumber on one hand and pulp and paper on the other. John Hinman of International Paper was opposed to their joining the AFPI as it originally constituted on the ground that they'd be riding in second place in a vehicle that was run by lumber--National Lumber Manufacturers' Association. He blurted it out. I think what he said was correct. What we were trying to do was to set up a vehicle where the participants, meaning the ones that put up the money, would have the means of running the show.. AFPI was trying to run quite a number of accounts, and I think under the circumstances did pretty well. But the pulp and paper people raised the question as to whether they couldn't do a better job on their own. That was about the time that Charlie French left. I think the reason there was so little pulp and paper representation in AFPI in its early years was just that International Paper wouldn't participate, and it was comparable to the lumber industry, where everyone followed Weyerhaeuser.

MRS. COMPTON: Now International Paper wouldn't take that stand today, would they?

COMPTON: No.

MAUNDER: To what extent did the AFPI development in the early '40s come about as the result of a new flash of fear in the industry that regulation was about to descend on their heads again?

COMPTON: I don't take much stock in that. I think there had been all the time that I was connected with the National, fears of that kind and proposals that we do something of the fighting variety. I'd just argue, "You don't build an organization by fighting somebody else."

MAUNDER: Who finally brought IP to seeing the value of cooperation?

COMPTON: St. Paul and Tacoma Lumber Company, Cordie Wagner and Spike Grigg. Cordier Wagner was one of the solicitors, you might say, of more complete cooperation of both the big industries.

MAUNDER: Didn't F.K. have a lot to do with selling the AFPI idea?

COMPTON: Well, in a sense I think so. He believed in it, and he's a man of great influence with other people that are not his immediate business associates, and I think in that sense F.K. did a lot of good helping improve the climate, before it became frozen. All these events we've mentioned certainly lifted my conception of the industrial statesmanship of F.K. and Philip. They were a great, great team, in my opinion. I shouldn't call them a team because I guess they worked separately, but together they {AUTHOR QUERY} better.

MAUNDER: I think they worked very much closer together than most people ever realized.

COMPTON: They still have that characteristic, I guess. They don't want to be on top of the group and be shouting at other people. They won't do it.

MAUNDER: What do you recall about the fire fighting problem and the men who were most influential in dealing with the problem?

COMPTON: I think I'd put Greeley as having been the most influential personality in forest fire fighting. Fellows like Lowell Besley, the forester there in Louisiana, well his whole job was to root out the incendiaries.

MAUNDER: You had a lot of contacts with Col. Greeley, over the years.

COMPTON: Yea.

MAUNDER: Can you tell us any stories about your relations with him?

COMPTON: Greeley had a good sense of humor obviously, but he was a serious person.

MRS. COMPTON: He was always so full of the things he was going to do, he had to do.

COMPTON: I can remember one thing that was an entirely personal matter between me and Greeley. I suppose the most important single meeting was held by the National during the 25 years I was head was in 1933, when the NRA codes were being formulated. Lumber and timber products were the second to submit their recommended code. I had made a speech which was, I've been told, the best one I delivered to the National, in presenting the Code or the problem of the Code Authority, making certain recommendations. The Code that had been recommended gave the AFPI the authority to amend the Lumber Code. That was a more comprehensive coverage than in the NLMA. John Tenant, who had been selected as chairman of the Code Authority to be, was against having the AFPI have anything to do with it. The ink was just getting dry on AFPI. A separate corporation was set up called the Lumber and Timber Products Code Authority. That was, however, done some couple weeks later. John Tenant, chose to read into that mention of AFPI an effort to corral all of the provinces of the industry under one tent. I guess, he was trying to pick on me, because I happened to be top officer of the AFPI at this point. The Timber Committee, with very broad representation, had a meeting with Tenant for a couple of days. Then tenant came into the general meeting of the NLMA. He said that it was important to get the full understanding of the recommended Code, in the minds of the leading lumbermen, and he would like to have Col. Greeley come to the platform and submit the proposed Code. Tenant was an obstinate fellow, but he was very smart, and he wasn't very fond of Col. Greeley. It took some courage, but Greeley said, "You should not ask me to submit a document 99 percent of which is the work of Wilson Compton." He blurted it right out to an audience of about 800, which is the biggest audience we'd had. He was a kind of a clear-thinking, clean-acting kind of fellow, not that I think it was important for me to submit it, but it did show that Greeley looked upon the Code as a real achievement, and he didn't want John Tenant or anybody to ask him to go through the form of submitting the document, where practically the whole work had been done by somebody else.

MRS. COMPTON: But why did Tenant ask Greeley to do it?

COMPTON: He was trying to take a nick out of me. At least that's what Greeley thought and so did I.

MRS. COMPTON: Well why did Tenant have it in for you?

COMPTON: Well, as I said that in the proposed print document which was submitted as a working paper, included our recommendation that if the Code once adopted required any amendment the application should be made by AFPI. There was no Lumber Industry Code Authority at that point, and I'm quite sure that Tenant thought I was trying to feather my own nest.

MAUNDER: What part had Dave Mason had in all this?

COMPTON: Not much. He was connected with the Western Pine Association at that point. Dave was brought in as the Code Authority Director in about August or September of that year, succeeding Arthur Bruce. Bruce was picked on first, but he had gotten his tail in the crack somehow or other with Averill Harriman, who was an associate of Gen. Johnson {AUTHOR QUERY} governor. And Harriman had a conference with John Tenant and in effect said, "It would be better for your industry and all your organization if you let Arthur Bruce go." The reason being, oh, there was some allegation that Bruce had done something double-crossing, not quite on the level.

MRS. COMPTON: Well, wasn't Bruce just a little hard to get along with?

COMPTON: Yes, he was. Very smart.

MRS. COMPTON: Very able man.

COMPTON: So far as I know, the effect of Harriman's coming in to see John Tenant made up his mind then and there to turn thumbs down on Arthur Bruce. It was kind of a tense time.

MAUNDER: According to my notes you participated in discussions about the Lumber Code between April 29 and May 19 in 1933. Then in May 24 and 25 the Lumber Industry Code Conference met in Chicago, which included NLMA's Executive Committee and others to discuss the National Recovery Administration and lumber's role in it. You approved a tentative code. Then on June 3 you submitted the proposed outline of the Code of Fair Competition and the proposed plan for the Forest Products Industries Control Organization to NLMA's annual meeting. Then on June 30, 1933, the Emergency National Committee formed in Chicago to draft the Code. Your draft was rejected at that meeting and a previous one adopted. Then on July 4 you were made counselor to the Emergency National Committee. This position entailed frequent visits to government officials in behalf of the Lumber Code Authority to explain the industry's viewpoint. On July 10 the Emergency National Committee completed the Code and filed it with NRA. This committee included you, Laird Bell, and David T. Mason as the drafters of Article C. Now, of course, the thing we're eager to know is to what extent each one of you played a role in all this and I gather from what you've said up to now that it was mainly the thing that you yourself drafted.

COMPTON: Yes. Laird Bell had become the representative of the public to cooperate with our Code Authority. That was simply the system of administering the Codes.

MRS. COMPTON: He wasn't writing the Code?

COMPTON: No, no. Laird Bell's function started at the time the Code was adopted.

MRS. COMPTON: And that's true too of Dave Mason, wasn't it?

COMPTON: Yes. That was true of everybody. I think that's correct that I submitted a proposal code after consultation with some of our directors (I didn't see them all; I can't travel that fast)-- I don't think it's correct that they rejected the code, which was merely a working paper down into the national meeting. That was the only code that I ever heard of. I think this Emergency Committee presided over by John Tenant went right to the very end of this document, which is a very ponderous one, and approved it, with the very minor exception that the responsibility and authority of amendments attached to a then non-existent agency which later became the Lumber and Timber Products Code Authority, Inc. And that was a proper move. But I put myself on the sidelines a day or two before that; there's nothing novel about having a report from me as Secretary-Manager. That was a thing done every year.

MAUNDER: You don't have any documents of that period that you could go back to and show me--

COMPTON: I'm not sure of that. I think I did.

MAUNDER: You have no correspondence of any consequence in that period that would show what you were saying in your exchange between various principals who were working with you in this, and if it did exist, where would it exist? In the files of the National?

COMPTON: I think so. I would not expect that to be available anywhere except in the national office. Maybe after the Code expired at the end of 1935 it was decided to leave the Code Authority correspondence and documents with the National Lumber Manufacturers' Association, just for safe keeping. I think that's where they still are unless in the meantime they've had some change of policy which I don't know anything about.

MAUNDER: In Mr. Mason's diaries for June, 1933, he writes about his activities in connection with the Lumber Code, and on June the 29th, he has this entry, or this is paraphrased from his entry. "National Lumber Manufacturers' Association annual meeting in Chicago. Burkes and Mason started a meeting of code representatives from the various regions to talk over the situation. This started the first scrap with NLMA officers which lasted until late in the evening, when I secured an adjournment." Then the following day, June 30: "Emergency National Committee formed. Western Pine Association getting two representatives. Mason spent the day working on the Code with Greeley and Carl Bahr." July 1: "At an NLMA meeting Mason was elected director." July 2-10: "Chicago and Washington. Emergency National Committee at work, drafting Code which was finished on July 10. Greeley, Compton, Laird Bell and I drafted Article X of the Code dealing with conservation."

MRS. COMPTON: Probably you people suggested that they put Mason on the Emergency National Committee.

COMPTON: I think Dave is correct. He was appointed by the Emergency Committee. It was an action initiated by the Emergency Committee.

MAUNDER: There seemed to be some kind of a scrap between representatives of the regional associations and the officers of the National.

COMPTON: I don't know what that refers to. I don't think that's correct. If Dave considered that it was a scrap, well, maybe that's his interpretation. I think the only issue of importance was precipitated by the members of this so-called Emergency Committee questioning who was to initiate amendments. TECO was started by a small board that represented AFPI. I think that was the first job they did of consequence. The working paper that was submitted to the National meeting in July was the only code that was ever seriously considered by the NRA. The only one really that was responsive to the request by Harriman, who was deputy director under Gen. Johnson, that they wanted a combined code and not a lot of little codes.

MAUNDER: But did it cover the pulp and paper people too?

COMPTON: No, no. Just the lumber industry and some other allied industries. All the groups I invited to representation had to submit the codes and suggestions.

MAUNDER: Well, the code writing was done as a result of a great many meetings and a great many discussions and ideas were flying back and forth all the time, were they not?

COMPTON: Yes.

MAUNDER: And then committees were named to draft preliminary statements, and you had an Emergency Committee assigned to that job, did you not? Weren't you and Mason and Greeley chiefly responsible for drafting the thing, then according to the assignment of your various meetings? I get that impression here, that out of the meeting in Chicago in May of 1933 there emerged an Emergency Committee of which you, Greeley, and Mason were all members. And maybe Burkes was too.

COMPTON: I wouldn't say that was exactly his statement. I don't recall such a committee, but there were all kinds of temporary committees set up, and some of them fell into place. The NRA had been set in June and July 1933 and they had not determined whether they should use trade associations as impetus for codes, and some industries did one thing and some did another. I remember that this draft working paper circulated to committee members shortly before the meetings in Chicago so that the outcome would be one code or at least one code agency represented the timber products industry. I didn't succeed in constricting it to that extent because there were so many timber products. There were lots of little industries that think that they're just as big as the biggest in their own estimation. I think it was a bit of wisdom, largely Laird Bell's, who by that time had been drawn in by Gen. Johnson and told that he was to be the National Recovery Administration contact to supervise the operation of the code for the lumber and timber products industries. As far as this entry in your documents attributable to Dave Mason, whatever good, bad, or indifferent there was about his suggestions for Western Pine, they went down the drain during the early period, if for no other reason than that NRA wanted to have a single code and not 20 codes. I think there was a potential of 20 codes--shoe last manufacturers, I remember; stick picker manufacturers--they wanted to have a separate code. A practical way was worked out in which they could have their interests taken care of in the scope of the Lumber and Timber Products Code. I learned then Picker stick was a phrase of the textile industry. It's just a small business, I guess a pretty lucrative business, tail after the dog of the textile manufacturing in the South.

MAUNDER: See, here he says, "Emergency National Committee at work drafting Code, which was finished July 10. Greeley, Compton, Laird Bell, and I drafted Article X of the Code dealing with conservation." That's a direct quote from his diary.

COMPTON: I think that's true. I submitted the Code, I mean as an individual appearing before the NRA hearing on the Lumber Code.

MRS. COMPTON: But it was probably the result of the work of these four.

COMPTON: It was the work of a number of people, and I suspect David Mason is one.

MAUNDER: And Laird Bell was another?

COMPTON: No, Laird Bell was not.

MAUNDER: He's listed here. And Greeley.

COMPTON: No. Laird Bell wouldn't put himself in the position of being prosecutor, judge, and jury at the same time.

MRS. COMPTON: No, not when he had been appointed to take Bruce's place, you see. I suppose he could have maybe been in on something.

MAUNDER: I can see no reason in the world for Mason writing Laird Bell's name down here on July 10, 1933 if he wasn't indeed a party to the writing of it.

COMPTON: Well, he probably was consulted. I talked to Laird Bell many times then.

MRS. COMPTON: But would he have been in on the actual writing of it?

COMPTON: I don't think so.

MRS. COMPTON: Well, three days later on July 13, he says, "I had lunch with Greeley, Graves, Compton, Pinchot, Stuart, Clapp, Ahern, Butler, Collingwood, Granger, Reed, Ringland, and Ward Shepard to discuss Article X and the U.S. Forest Service proposed substitute," which, he says, was a "vicious one." "The proposed amendment of the Forest Service would have given government considerable control of the industry."

COMPTON: That's right, I think.

MAUNDER: So, you were drafting one set of things or amendments, and the Forest Service had some others in mind.

MRS. COMPTON: Would that have been Clapp heading that?

COMPTON: That would, yes.

MAUNDER: Between July 14 and 18 in 1933 Mason writes in his diary: "More meetings and discussions on Article X that resulted in agreement between industry and conservation group." In other words there were evidently some exchanges and compromise taking place here at that time.

COMPTON: Representatives of all kinds of big and little people had organizations and were trying to get their places in the sun; there were many of them tugging and pulling, tugging and pulling. I would just suppose that the Forest Conservation Code, was the result of--well, Dave says he took the initiative, which he may have done; I have no reason to question that.

MRS. COMPTON: You might have even asked him to.

COMPTON: I don't recall that either. But I know what I did do was to urge that the Conservation Code be determined quickly. It was not submitted in the time the Lumber Code was submitted, but it had been prepared by the promises made when the declaration was made in the NRA hearing on the Lumber Code that it would be coming shortly as soon as a few finishing touches could be put on it. The only provision in the parent code, that is the Lumber and Timber Products Code, was the mention at a certain point in Paragraph X of a Forest Conservation Code, and it was known from that point on as Article X.

MAUNDER: Well, according to this, President Roosevelt signed the Code on August 19 after he had asked for and gotten some changes in Article X.

COMPTON: Yes, he had. The president had asked for changes--

MAUNDER: You don't recall what those changes were?

COMPTON: I don't know.

MAUNDER: It would be tremendously useful if we had in the file somewhere a draft or two marked up with the suggested changes or revisions that were made to suit the president.

COMPTON: I never heard of any changes being made after consultation with the president. I--

MRS. COMPTON: Do you suppose Henry Wallace would have any of these papers or anything?

COMPTON: I wouldn't think so.

MAUNDER: I suppose over the years you've had a long exchange of correspondence with Henry Wallace.

COMPTON: We have.

MAUNDER: You have no idea how important letters of that kind are historically.

MRS. COMPTON: I'm not even sure that we have any of those letters. Whether we kept them through the years. Oh, of course we have a few. Katharine has always run quite a correspondence with him. She has quite a number.

MAUNDER: I'd like to just get a brief entry in this tape this morning, Dr. Compton, along the lines of our conversation right before breakfast, when I asked you about George Romney of Michigan and the prospects of his leadership in the Republican Party, and you told me of how you had played a part in getting him started back in Washington years ago. Would you repeat that for the tape?

COMPTON: It was just an interesting opportunity to give a nudge upward to a fine young fellow who, proceeded to have a place in the industrial sun as representative in Washington of the aluminum industries. The automobile manufacturers at the same time were seeking someone to succeed their top representative in Washington. I recall having a talk with their top representative there, a very able gentleman, at just the time this young fellow George Romney had been around there a couple of years. He seemed like the most eligible young fellow on that horizon. I said, "Take a look at him," which they did, and the result was George Romney in the year 1965 is a different man from George Romney thirty years ago when he came into Washington for a job after he had concluded his missionary work for the Mormon Church. Well, what I did was very unimportant, but I like to think of it as contributing somewhat to the development of George Romney as a public figure who's been an inspiration to thousands of people. I hope I live long enough to vote for George Romney. I think it's fair to say that George Romney comes about as close to epitomizing the best traits of trade association activity as combined with political interest and ability.

MAUNDER: What was the state of the trade association movement when you came into the field?

COMPTON: Well, it didn't amount to too much. A few outstanding organizations.

MAUNDER: What were these?

COMPTON: The automobile manufacturers had an association, I think called the Automobile Manufacturers' Association. Steel, oil, big industries had some form of trade or industrial association, one of the early actions that I was a member to was the founding of what is now known as the American Trade Association Executives. It was sort of a superorganization by the various association heads got together in this national, professional society is really what it is.

MAUNDER: Was this started before you came into the field or afterward?

COMPTON: It was during the First World War. There was a certain growing consciousness of industry interest in organization. I think they called it the Association of Secretaries Conference during the First World War, but that ended at nothing very shortly after the war. But the beginning of what is now known and respected as the American Society of Association Executives was the outgrowth of a meeting in {AUTHOR QUERY} Massachusetts in 1919, and there's been an American Trade Association Executives ever since that time. The ATAE and now the ASAE have done a lot of good to the participating individuals and also made a good contribution to national political and economic endeavors.

MAUNDER: How strong were the lumber trade associations in 1918, when you came into an active role with them?

COMPTON: They didn't amount to very much.

MAUNDER: But they had existed for some time, hadn't they?

COMPTON: Yes.

MAUNDER: Why were they less effective than certain other trade association groups?

COMPTON: I think it's a composite of reasons. There wasn't much interest generally speaking in setting up the organizations. But individual manufacturers, I think in lumber as in most industries, they have a pretty definite consciousness of common interest with competitors in the same industry, and during both wars, there were strong personalities that kept working for stronger trade associations activity in the leading industries, and there are several thousand trade associations now. Most of them that amount to much are members of the ASAE.

MAUNDER: Is it your feeling that the wars drove people in industry into greater association with each other, then?

COMPTON: That's right.

MAUNDER: Well now you came right in on the heels of a World War. Did you find that there was a fine head of new enthusiasm in the industry for developing a larger program?

COMPTON: It had to be developed. There was a good deal of interest amongst the sawmill operators and timber owners, in developing a really substantial association cooperation. I think they were the leading people, like the Weyerhaeusers, Blodgett, Rares, White, interested in a fresh program, a strong national association, and they did contribute a very great deal to developing a sense of national interest which was pretty beneficial to the National Lumber Manufacturers' Association, but even more so and more importantly a benefit to the industries themselves.

MAUNDER: Do you see any substantial changes in the character of the trade association over the last 40 or 50 years?

COMPTON: I think trade associations have contributed a great deal to the development of the second industrial revolution, which has been under way for the last thirty years, I suppose. In many industries the trade association cooperation has been a persuasive factor in pointing the way to greater efficiency and to recognition of public responsibility of its industries and corporations, not merely their trade associations. Today the Washington Trade Association Executives possesses about 2000 members as compared with 25 thirty years ago. You might fairly call it a "boom movement".

MAUNDER: Do you think there's some problem of there becoming too many separate trade associations?

COMPTON: Yes, I do. Some industries would benefit greatly, I think, if they didn't divide their work into so many small parts.

MAUNDER: Do you think this is a particular problem in the wood-using industries?

COMPTON: No, I don't think it is. The organizations in the wood-using industries pretty well follow the pattern of organizations which developed after the first World War.

There occasionally have been new organizations, but I can't think of any in the last several years in the wood-using industries, though changes in names, functions and management have all been working in the lumber industry just as much as in any other.

MAUNDER: Well there has been some trend toward consolidation, has there not?

COMPTON: Yes. I suspect that there'll be found that consolidation or cooperation between groups within the lumber industry will turn out to have been quite beneficial to all of it.

MAUNDER: What do you see as the future of the trade associations, especially in the wood-using areas?

COMPTON: Well, I've been out of trade association work for now considerably more than 15 years, and I'm baffled by some things that are happening, just like everybody is who's thoughtful and makes any sort of examination of present trends. I think the association movement has stirred up new little splinter groups that are not strengthening the associations, and I rather think it's gone too far. There's an awful lot of overhead expended on duplicate work in associations, and I think this movement in the National Lumber Manufacturers' Association to try combination of associations having like interests might be a way of developing further the potential that's inherent in trade association cooperation. I think there are some indications that some of the best minds in the lumber industry are thinking in that direction, and I think they're right.

MAUNDER: What splinter groups do you have in mind?

COMPTON: Oh, people that are interested in some section of utilization. There's been very little splintering in the wood-using industries. In some new organizations there is, but that's because of new products or new problems.

MAUNDER: What do you consider to be the major accomplishments that you marked as a trade association executive during your time with the National?

COMPTON: I would say the development of a sense of interest in forest conservation was probably the most important one, and perhaps the second most important would be improvements in the economy of our wood-using industries. The third was probably better understanding of the impact of taxation on the economy of the lumber industry. In all these respects the lumber industry is fundamentally better off than it was 25 years ago.

MAUNDER: Where would be the first breakthroughs made with people in industry on the forestry matter?

COMPTON: Article X, Forest Conservation Code.

MAUNDER: You don't think that there was any really great stride made with the industry on this matter before that?

COMPTON: I don't think there was any. There were people like myself--I made a lot of speeches, always by invitation of interested industries, trying to develop greater interest in a better program of conservation.

MAUNDER: What part do you feel the trade press has played in this development?

COMPTON: Well, it was an important factor in the early days of my connection in the National. I don't think it's much of a factor now.

MAUNDER: Why?

COMPTON: I've often asked that question. My impression is that the trade press enterprises have not been particularly profitable. They have brought out some personalities who contributed a great deal to the development of the associations, lumber and forest industry associations, but they are mostly gone now. The American Lumberman, whatever it amounted to 35 years ago, was a residue of the personality of James Defebaugh, evidently a remarkable personality. There's never been any successor to Bolling Arthur Johnson. In recent years Stanley Horn down in Nashville has been the outstanding personality and a remarkable gentleman.

MAUNDER: What you seem to be implying is that the trade press has an influence on its industry only so long as it has been guided and edited by strong men of the type of Defebaugh, Johnson, perhaps--

MRS. COMPTON: Horn.

COMPTON: Yeah.

MRS. COMPTON: How about Ben Long?

COMPTON: Ben Long was a one man show practically. Never had great following. Ben Long was not comparable to James Defebaugh or Bolling Arthur Johnson. Now he did a lot of good. He had a sort of a following in Florida.

MAUNDER: These men were all students of their industries, weren't they?

COMPTON: Yes, they were.

MAUNDER: And were absolutely untiring in their efforts to cover the news of industry itself and of its association meetings and so on.

COMPTON: Yep. Yes, the trade press did a lot of good to the lumber industry, but I'm not sure they held so important a stature in the lumber-related industries' economy.

MAUNDER: How did you handle your press relations with these people when you were head of the National?

MRS. COMPTON: He certainly had their support right straight through.

COMPTON: I think I made more use of the interest in the trade journals than my predecessors seem to have had.

MRS. COMPTON: You met with them right away and explained all your opinions and hoped they would influence opinion in the industry.

COMPTON: One way or another I apparently succeeded in staying out of the fights that involved some of the trade journals. That was quite fortunate, I think.

MAUNDER: Fights between the trade journals, you mean.

COMPTON: They'd try to develop some idea, and they'd get on each others' nerves. Nothing very classical about that kind of competition.

MAUNDER: But you always took pains to stay out of that sort of thing?

COMPTON: Yes. I would say that the trade journals generally supported the programs of the National. I think most of them went out of their way to do just that. It must have been good business for them, or else they wouldn't have done it so consistently and over so long a period.

MAUNDER: How did you cultivate their support and their interest? Would you make regular visits to their offices?

COMPTON: Not very regular, I'd say, but continuing, whenever I had a chance. The editors in those days were essentially analysts, thinkers, men of great breadth and interest. They were not limited in their thinking, in their hopes and plans; they were not limited to the boundaries of the economy, which was at kind of a low level during much of this period. The publishers of the journals now in my judgment are not comparable. That type of talent for service has been built up now by a group of--not philosophers, but spokesmen and public relations geniuses, and there've been a good many of them in the lumber industry.

MAUNDER: In other words the best of the editorial and journalistic crop is now moving into the offices of public relations of the industry itself?

COMPTON: That's right.

MAUNDER: What were the circumstances that brought about your shifting from the National Lumber Manufacturers'

Association into another totally new area of your professional career going to Washington State?

COMPTON: There's a very simple answer to that. I had contributed about as much as I felt I'd be able to the formation and determination of policies and programs in the National Lumber Manufacturers' Association. I think the invitation from Washington State University was an opportunity to be more serviceable to the country and to its objectives, which I always had in mind. But of course in those things there's preliminary consultation between responsible trustees with regents of our Washington State. Furthermore, there were some aspects of the National, pretty petty picayunish agitations. For example in these papers you had yesterday, Dave Mason says that document was rejected. I say it was not rejected. We're sparring for position there, and there was quite a bit of that in the regional associations, picayunish boring into--"Well, why don't you do this?" or "Why don't you do it this way?" and so on. I wasn't mad at anyone; I was astonished at the stupidity of some of the people that criticized my power. After Congress had passed this 117-K, this capital gains tax on timber depreciation in value, I thought I'd like to have that as the capping of my career with the National.

MAUNDER: You and I have both been reading this Romney article entitled "Some Economic Applications of U.S. Revolutionary Principles" which appears in the October, 1965 of Freedom and Union magazine. I think Romney here demonstrates by the story about Henry Ford the very sharp divergence between two economic systems. One a narrow capitalism, and the other an American system of "consumerism", as he calls it; and it's to this latter which Henry Ford made such contributions and helped to bring into full flavor. Do you associate yourself with either one or another of these two economic systems as you look back over your career? Did you feel in tune with one more than another?

COMPTON: Yes, I did.

MAUNDER: From the very beginning was this true?

COMPTON: Yes.

MAUNDER: How did your feelings along this line match those of the people in the lumber industry with whom you so soon became associated? Were they of the same mind as you in this regard or of a different persuasion?

COMPTON: They were indifferent. They were skeptical about this. This was a kind of idea. "What makes you think it'll work"?

MAUNDER: Do you feel that there has been a steady change for good in the thinking of the people of the industry with which you were associated for many years in regard to this matter of the revision of their thought concerning the role of the businessman in society? Have they moved as rapidly as businessmen in other segments of the economy?

COMPTON: I don't think they have moved as rapidly. Some of them haven't moved at all.

MAUNDER: Why do you suspect this is? Why do they resist changes more than businessmen, let's say, in the oil industry?

COMPTON: Well, sir, I wish I knew the answer to that. I'm puzzled, too. There are still some companies, pretty sizable ones, too, and good manufacturers and as far as I know good salesmen, but what they want is to find somebody that will buy their products and pay for them at a figure that is at least reasonably profitable. They're not interested in finding out what the consumers want and see how close they can come to making it. I don't think that's been taboo in the last five or ten years quite as much as it was a decade before that. And there are more people that one way or another have convinced themselves that there are going to be changes pretty fundamental in our society, and they'd better try to understand it before it explodes on us.

MAUNDER: Do you think this has been something for which most of the trade promotion program of the industry has been really out of step with the times?

COMPTON: I don't know the answer conclusively.

MAUNDER: In 1924 the Forest Service called a National Conference on Wood Utilization which resulted in the establishment of the National Committee on Wood Utilization. This lasted until 1934, and you have several places indicated your feeling that its contribution was one of very high value.

COMPTON: It is true the Forest Service had been continuously for several years in some activity of studying the possibilities of influencing the lumber industry and the forest industries generally. One of the fellows that was of the opinion that the industry should move faster in modernizing and to that extent, I'd say, was a little premature...

MAUNDER: The Western Pine Association opened a research laboratory having to do with wood utilization back in the '20s. Do you remember anything about that?

COMPTON: Yes, yes I do. They had quite an interesting show. Their laboratory was small but had some pretty good men on the staff. I don't know what had happened to it up to date. I know when I was trying to find out how I could work to the best advantage with the Timber Engineering Company I learned quite a good deal about the Western Pine research and development effort. I think it was pretty well handled. Of course, the trouble with many of those so-called research and development projects is that the wealthy beneficiaries of that kind of an activity get out their tin cup right away and hold it under the tap, saying "Well, I put ten thousand dollars into this activity last year and now I want to get twenty thousand dollars out of it this year." Of course that's an exaggerated statement, but there was more of that going on at that time than was good for the industry. Most of the hard resistance ended up under the protective wing of Carl Rishell, who was on the National staff, now retired.

MAUNDER: Was this the same Rishell who was advisor to the Smithsonian in getting up their exhibit, their new museum of lumbering and logging, do you suppose? And he was associated with you and the National for a long time.

COMPTON: Yes he was. He had a job in Maryland during the Depression, but for years he had wanted to get on the staff of the National Lumber Manufacturers' Association. He came to see me, frankly hunting for a job. Not that he didn't have a job. He had a job but it didn't interest him. And I told Carl that of course we would keep him in mind and on file but at the moment we didn't have any openings for men of his talent. His answer to that was, "Well, sorry that there's nothing available now. But how would you know that I'd be coming back again?" He came back again and again till I gave him that job in the National Lumber Manufacturers' Association. He went with the Timber Engineering Company after I left and did great work there in charge of the laboratory that we had built up over in Maryland. When that TECO laboratory was built I had the impression that enough of the lumber manufacturers and especially their regional associations would get benefits out of this forest-industries-owned laboratory--that it would be an element of strength. But apparently it didn't sit very well with the regional associations for reasons which I didn't understand at the time and don't understand now.