

Hudson River Valley Institute
Walkway Over the Hudson Oral Histories
Tom Lake

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Length: Approximately 33 minutes

Interviewer (Paul Contarino): Could you please state your full name for the camera?

Tom Lake: My name is Tom Lake.

Interviewer: Okay. How long have you've been a resident of the Hudson River Valley?

Lake: My entire life, I was born here, I was born in Cold Spring, New York down in Putnam County. I grew up in Beacon, New York. I got married to a woman from Newburgh, New York and we lived in New Windsor for a while and then we moved back to Wappingers Falls for the last twenty-five years or so. So my entire life has been in the Hudson Valley.

Interviewer: So as a lifelong resident of the Hudson River Valley, what aspects of the valley do you find the most interesting and why?

Lake: Well it goes deeper than simply having been a resident of a valley. As a teacher, I in the various aspects of my life I do a lot of teaching and the Hudson Valley is a wonderful for a teacher to teach. Beginning with the river itself, beginning with the tremendous amount of history that we have here in the Hudson Valley and for me as an archeologist it goes deeper than that. I've got 20,000 years worth of prehistory to work with as I'm teaching of various disciplines here in the Hudson Valley.

Interviewer: So what aspects of the prehistory do you focus on?

Lake: Well the nice thing about the Hudson Valley is that when you [clears throat] when you look at the span of time you're working with it's nice because there's an actual starting point that is unique in North America, you have to have been enveloped by an ice age and in fact we were 20,000 years ago. There was nearly two miles of ice over the land and very likely no one living here at that time and so you can begin at 20,000 years ago and work forward and talk about the receding glacier, glacial ice, the return of life to the Hudson Valley, eventually the types of support systems that would ensure humans would be interested in being here and eventually the arrival of native people somewhere around 11,000-12,000 years ago, a little fuzzy on that date exactly and then on through the evolution of humans in the Hudson Valley until 1609 when Henry Hudson arrived, although other Europeans had been in the general area earlier than that but that's pretty much recognizes the Hudson Valley's first contact with humans so that's the prehistoric piece which I find most intriguing.

Interviewer: So do you a lot about the, also the [cuts off] well instead of the pre-historical as the Europeans sometimes call it with Henry Hudson sailing up it?

Lake: Yeah, well once Europeans showed up and the interesting thing about that is that when Europeans showed up they brought with them a philosophy that was antithetical, exactly the opposite of what native people were fully developed and thriving at the time. In prehistory,

native people had this world view of recurring themes and so they saw life a big circle. They saw the months of the year and they saw natural cycles in everything. And when the Europeans showed up they saw this time's arrow of progress and was antithetical to what native people were talking about. And so there was definitely this culture clash of when the Europeans first showed up and it makes for a very good teaching opportunity, to talk about the people who were here and the historic period afterwards and of course immediately after Europeans showed up we begin to have one major conflict after another and many of them European conflicts that flowed over into North America and unfortunately the native people were caught right in the middle of that and eventually the American Revolution and we work our way forward to the War of 1812 and a lot of conflicts that effected us here in the northeast.

Interviewer: What aspects of the Hudson River itself do you like?

Lake: Well when I looked at the Hudson River, I teach natural history and I'm an estuary naturalist. So I go out and work and do research in the river and work with fish and bald eagles and all sorts of animals that live and use the estuary. And at the same time, I teach anthropology and archaeology and the interesting thing today among contemporary groups of people they'll look at those two and not see a connection between that and yet if we were living here in the Hudson Valley prior to Henry Hudson if you were not a naturalist, if you were not someone who understood the natural cycles of the Hudson River and the land you probably were not going to survive and that's a connection that we've really really lost in the historic times of the Hudson Valley. People are just not connected to the world that they live in. And so a better way to answer your question is what I find the most interesting is the life in the Hudson Valley. In studying the various cycles of migratory fish or even more that we talk about the water fowl and bird like bald eagles that are this wonderful connection between the river and the land in terms of them feeding on fish and yet using uplands as strategic places to nest and to rear there young. So there's this tremendous connection that's going on that not everyone recognizes as there.

Interviewer: So where do you, what kind of work do you do?

Lake: Well a couple of things [slight laugh] One I work for the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation and I'm an estuary naturalist there. In that job I do several things, one is I produce a weekly natural history journal called the *Hudson River Almanac* and we're in our fifteenth year now. And it is a compilation, a weekly compilation and an annual compilation actually of entries of observations, impressions; reactions to what's going on in the Hudson Valley in terms of natural history were talking now by anyone who really cares to be part of this. So we have hundreds of people send me emails and letters and postcards every single week with their ideas of what's going on and we put it all together and make a mosaic out of it and it tells a story of what's going on in the Hudson Valley. Also in that job I also teach, I teach, I do some research. Lately I've been working a lot on eels and bald eagles, so there is that research piece of it as well. I also teach anthropology at Dutchess Community College here in Poughkeepsie and as an offshoot of that work I'm a field archaeologist. So right now I'm working on a site in Orange County in Newburgh, a multi-component site which means multiple occupations of people over time that dates from, this site had people there from 8,000 years ago. Right up to, we have great evidence that there were people there 400 years ago so it must have been a special

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place for native people to have continued coming back for well over 7,000 years to the same spot. So you can see it's a mixture of jobs that I have and I think they are pretty much all related.

Interviewer: Could you please describe your experience, for the first time being on Poughkeepsie Bridge?

Lake: Yeah, I've only been on the bridge once and I used to do a lot of photography of the Hudson River in winter because one of the things that fascinated me was the movements of the ice. We talk often to people about the name of the Hudson River that the Mohican people gave it, the Algonquin speakers it was [Mahee Koni Tuk] and from which their name came and it's the idea that the river that's never still, the river that flows both ways, I'm sure you've heard of all those analogies or metaphors. And when you're on the bridge in winter, be it the Mid-Hudson Bridge or the railroad bridge and there's ice on the river, you can actually see that, you can see where sometimes the tide, the current in the middle of the river is heading one way and the current along the shore is heading the other way and when you have ice to show you that movement, it's just a wonderfully graphic way of being able to see exactly the mechanics of an estuary and how an estuary works from that with students you can begin to talk about depth of the water and velocity of the water and mass moving over space over time and those sorts of things. So the bridge itself, in this case the Poughkeepsie Railroad Bridge can actually be a teaching tool where you can use it as a vantage from which you can observe natural phenomenon that are otherwise something you'd be writing on a chalkboard.

Interviewer 2 (Colonel James Johnson): One of your vantage points has been from the river aboard vessels, any insights you gain from that?

Lake: Well with the vessels yeah, it's difficult to with a vessel because you're on the river moving with the water and you don't get the same perception of you know obviously there are other advantages and benefits of being in a boat on the river whether you're in the wind or smelling the flowers or seeing fish jump as we have seen sturgeon jumping out of the water and all those sort of things. But in particular, sometimes in fact it's not, there are not too many vantage points along the Hudson River that are close to the river other than a bridge where you can get sort of a top down look, sort of a plan view of the river in motion and I think that's a wonderful advantage of having the bridge. That isn't necessary to say that the bridge ought to be there but certainly for a teacher and educator it's kind of nice thing.

Interviewer 3 (Jason Schaff): I have a question for you as; I'm Jason Schaff by the way- [cut off by Johnson]

Interviewer 2: He also teaches at Dutchess.

Lake: Oh, okay.

Interviewer 3: I've wandered the halls of the HG Department.

Lake: Okay.

Interviewer 3: As a naturalist and someone who is involved in environmental issues as well, do you see the bridge presenting any environmental problems?

Lake: You know I've thought about that because somebody mentioned that to me the other day, do you think the bridge ought to be there? The bridge has been there for so long it's kind of part of the river right now. There are other examples of that when we talk about introduced fish species in the Hudson River people have often said, you know carp they're awful, they're not native but they've been here so far, they're naturalized and that's a term we use for something that has been here a long time, whose effect on the environment has become fairly benign and we're not talking in terms of zebra mussels it's still, the decision on them is still out. But something like carp as far as fish or the bridge, I see the bridge as sort of a naturalized citizen of the Hudson Valley right now. There may have been a time when, probably not, probably ever since that bridge has been there I don't think anyone has really thought of it that way. Now it's akin to an historic piece of the landscape. And so yeah, I think the bridge is fine, I think is fine there, I think it's part of the landscape now and it fits. Whether we would build something like that today given the environmental impact statements and those sorts of things perhaps not but I think it's fine. The system, one thing about natural systems is if you give them a long enough time they will adapt to almost anything. The Hudson River estuary in the last fifty almost sixty years now has adapted to power generating facilities, nuclear power more recently and there was a time where no one would have dreamed that as possible given the millions of fish these facilities killed. But the system through natural compensation has been able to compensate and so power plants, I hate to say this but power plants have sort of become naturalized citizens of the Hudson Valley as well.

Interviewer 3: Do envision perhaps any environmental issues with the reopening of it as a walkway?

Lake: As strictly as a walkway no, I mean if you got into maybe into the commercial uses of it which you know would maybe include trains or something like that, that's another issue I really don't have the ability to say too much about that but as far as a walkway as long as the insurance companies don't have a problem [laughs] with it, I don't see a problem with it at all, it's, I just don't, you know.

Interviewer: Do you think people will better appreciate the beauty of the Hudson River Valley once the bridge is opened?

Lake: It's possible, the thing about that bridge, where it's located, you have to take that into consideration too. From the bridge on clear day, you do get a good view of the Catskills, you know if you could take that railroad bridge and put it perhaps closer to the Hudson Highlands. There are other places where it might afford you a better view, a better look, a better appreciation. But I think with the proper and you know today whenever we have anything like that where Walkway Over The Hudson where it's open to the public and there are going to be [keyax] and you're going to have signs and maybe viewing scopes and those sorts of things so people can look down the river and probably see Storm King Mountain and look up river and see Crumb Elbow and on up into Esopus Meadows and places like that. So with a little help and a

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little guidance and a little education that would naturally come with such a venture, I think the bridge will definitely be a positive educational addition to what we already have in the Hudson.

Interviewer: So will it attract more tourism?

Lake: It could, everything's all in marketing. You know people just, people [cuts off] I was going to say people are funny today but they really aren't, they're just really picky. And what you have to do is make it seem important to them and make it seem interesting to them because there are so many competing interests out there today that you find people, you shake your head and you wonder why they're not visiting battlefields and things like that, you know they'd rather go to casinos, well you know it's what they perceive as being in their best interests or the most interesting, so it's really a marketing thing. And you know if you were able to do that, I think it would work, yeah.

Interviewer: So how did you get involve or meet Bill Sepe?

Lake: Bill Sepe, well Bill Sepe was the director I guess of Walkway Over The Hudson for several years. And for three years in a row we did shad bakes for American shad. For twenty-five years now, The Hudson River Foundation has been doing shad bakes on the Hudson River; these are a very traditional way of celebrating the return of American shad on the Hudson River. It dates back at least to colonial times and we're fairly certain, there's good evidence that native people were doing similar things before Europeans showed up. Native people were probably celebrating every day the sun rose; it was that kind of a world view and philosophy. But anyway, we've done these for twenty-five years at various points along the Hudson River and Poughkeepsie was one of those for about three years. And in the spring time, beginning in April or so maybe March, I would get a hold of Bill Sepe and we would discuss what the needs were, how many fish they needed, how many people they thought were going to come and we would show up on a designated Saturday and I think they were all on Saturdays and we would provide free of charge, to the public, as many people that showed up and sometimes we'd have a 1,000 people show up, pickled shad, which we would pickle ahead of time, smoked shad which I would smoke right there on site and baked shad which we would bake right there on site. And we would serve maybe a third of a fillet of each and so that people coming would get half of a fillet of a fish and to be honest it was our way of connecting people to the river. They would come for the fish and while they were there, we would talk to them about the life of the river and the natural cycles of the river and I wouldn't say it was a hook but it certainly was a way of getting them there and so they would perhaps be a willing audience to tell them a little bit about what's going on with the river. American shad by the way, are the largest of the herrings, they can be up to thirty inches long and weigh ten or twelve pounds and they've been coming back to the river, they're what we call an [natrumist] they live in the ocean but come back to the river and spawn. And so they've been doing this now perhaps longer than there have been people in the Hudson Valley, we think at least as long as the people have been here, 12,000 years, that these fish have been coming back and spawning. So they've got a legacy that goes way back in time and to native people who have lived here and when you are trying to figure out, determine the appreciation for these natural events occur, you sometimes have to go back to before the Europeans showed up to find that sense of appreciation. Every year an incredible amount, an incredible source of protein would show up in the Hudson River and herring and shad and striped

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bass and sturgeon these were a very predictable resource and if you are native people who have a very I wouldn't say, it's a non-sophisticated society but they really didn't have answers to everyday questions. So if they could depend on a tremendous amount of food every spring, that was just wonderful for them and they really really appreciated that. So I think they did a lot of celebrating every spring when all these fish would show up once again, it's like when their corn would harvest in the autumn they were very very pleased that once again another year they would have corn to get them through the winter and so they would have green corn ceremonies. I think they probably had shad festivals so to speak as well.

Interviewer: One other question, could you please provide any detail on the transformation of the Walkway organization?

Lake: You know I worked with Bill Sepe for a few days each spring, he would show up at the events. He'd be there, he was a whirling dervish and I mean that in a very positive way. He never was quiet, he never stopped moving, he was constantly here, there and everywhere making sure that every aspect of the shad bake was being taken care of. He was just busy, busy, busy, these shad bakes would go from noon to about 4 o'clock. So for four hours he never sat down. He was constantly going and it was his energy I think that made them go. After three years, for reasons of politics I believe, these shad bakes stopped but for the three years they were very successful and a lot of that can be given to Bill, a lot of the credit can be given to Bill for that.

Interviewer 2: Can you elaborate on the politics?

Lake: Yeah I'm camera; I can do that, yeah. Well I was told anyway, that there was change in the political landscape in Poughkeepsie and where as the administration that was I wouldn't say friendly, the administration that was they had no problem doing shad bakes. Suddenly they looked at the use of the park in a different way, especially for an event where no admission was being charged. And there were a lot of things that were suddenly being thrown their way, Bill's way, and the walkway's way and our way, that we just realized that you know, we could read the handwriting on the wall, they just don't want this to be here anymore. So we ended up not doing it anymore, as delicately as I can put it. [Slight laughter]

Interviewer 3: In terms of, you know the Quadrennial celebration, what are some way which you want to see the Hudson Valley and Poughkeepsie celebrate this big event?

Lake: That's an interesting question because I'm involved in the Hudson 400, the quadricentennial and I've got really, mixed feelings about it. And I do have to be a little bit careful because I do work for the state. Even though the state would look at me and say no please tell us what's on your mind [laughs] but the truth of the matter is, I know people who have been racking their brains to come up with this laundry list of all the wonderful things that have happened since Henry Hudson was here. And you know they're coming up with some and then I can make a list twice as long of things, you know I sometimes use the expression when the Dutch showed up the train went off the tracks you know not too long after a while, well a while after, but certainly since the Industrial Revolution, the Hudson River became a convenient sewer for commercial and domestic pollution, one alien species after another coming into the valley totally disrupting the ecology of the Hudson River Valley, the railroads, totally changing the face

of the river, the loss of tide marshes, the loss of wet lands and you know a lot of this was done, I have to be fair, a lot of this was done with complete ignorance of the way the system works, terms like ecology and estuarial systems and all those kinds of things that nobody knew about 150 years ago, even fifty years ago many people didn't know about them. When Rachel Carson came out with *Silent Spring* they laughed at her and told her to go away and leave them alone, I mean it totally wasn't accepted. But the Hudson 400 is a tough one because you know native people and I work all the time with native people in the Hudson Valley. In fact, students look at me all the time and want to know, you know where are the native people in the Hudson Valley? When I take students to the American Southwest, the native people are everywhere. And I tell them, you know that those who did not die of disease were displaced. They went away to fight in wars for either the British or for the colonists and when they came back and found out that their land had been taken from them, fraudulently in almost every case and so native people are not celebrating the Hudson 400 as much as commemorating it. It's a different word, it has different connotations and the state's got a hard road to go here because they are going to try to get native people involved in this and at the same time they have to understand it most native people do not celebrate Columbus Day either and so it's not easy to make this marriage happen. And there are so many things that have happened and that I just don't know how the state is going to make this sound like a joyous occasion. I haven't really seen, you know, too many lists that impressed me a whole lot. I'm sure we'll talk about some of the things that have happened but a lot of its perspective, we'll talk about the power grids, we'll talk about, you know, about Amtrak, we'll talk about the Fulton steamboat, I mean we can go on about you know Frederic Church and Thomas Cole and the Hudson River School of Painting and all those things. But a lot of things you are discussing have displaced natural systems, they've displaced cultures, the very fabric of what was going on here in the Hudson Valley dissolved within the first hundred years. So there's a two-sided coin for sure and so to answer your question without going on anymore, it's, I'm really conflicted about the Hudson 400, I really am, it's good it's a way off because I still have to reconcile this in mind a little bit. I know native people who I actually started talking about things like this and they start tearing up, I mean just, because their ancestors, I mean many of the family trees they all died of small pox or one thing or another and so it's a tough situation, to try to find some common ground on this. So we'll see what happens.

Interviewer 3: Do you think there will be any significant Native American representation at the celebrations?

Lake: Well one thing you have to remember and I tell all my students all the time, you know, just because their native people it doesn't mean that they're not people. They're just like everyone else, they're susceptible to all the forces of life we are and so there will be, you know native people who will either say it's what past is past, let's get on with the future, you know for various other reasons they may decide that it's in their best interest to participate. And so I think we probably will, for some it will be an opportunity to, I don't want to sound callous but it will be maybe an opportunity to advance their own position in life. Traditionalist people who see things a little differently, it's going to be a lot harder to get them, you know, to be a part of this I think, yeah. So it's a mixed bag.

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Interviewer 3: I'm kind of just going to fish for a little bit, I don't know if you know the answers to this, have you heard anything about the communities of Native Americans who actually did work in the construction of the bridge?

Lake: Yeah, those are high steel people and I think most of them were Mohawk and other Iroquois or [Odensani] people. I'm not aware of any Hudson River, what we call Hudson River Indians which are the Mohicans and Lenape, and a few other groups, [Unami] and Munsee and so on. As far as I know, they weren't involved, there may have been but I am just not aware of it but I know whenever we talk about construction whether it's skyscrapers in Manhattan or bridges, that it's usually and the reasons for this I'm not entirely sure but it's usually Iroquoian people who are not Hudson River people, so different-[cut off by Colonel Johnson].

Interviewer 2: Some sense of maybe after the fire in 1974, that some of the demolition might have been done?

Lake: Fire of where, and the demolition what? [Lake looks for clarification].

Interviewer 2: On the railroad bridge [cut off by Lake].

Lake: Oh, oh.

Interviewer 2: When the railroad bridge burned 1974.

Lake: Oh, okay.

Interviewer 2: There was some demolition work that had to be done because of the damage and that maybe, in fact somebody from the Marist campus believes that he observed Iroquois, Mohawks, someone-[cut off by Lake].

Lake: Yeah.

Interviewer 2: Actually scaling the piers to help take.

Lake: Could be.

Interviewer 2: Some of the debris-[cut off by Lake].

Lake: Probably.

Interviewer 2: From the fire.

Lake: This sound like Mohawk or there's other groups that possibly could have gone up, you know and the reason I say this and the reason why I'm fairly certain these were not river Indians is because they're really aren't river Indians. The majority of Mohicans for example are out in Wisconsin, there's some in Stockbridge, Massachusetts but not many, and but most Mohicans are on the reservations in Wisconsin and you know students will say why are they in Wisconsin?

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They were driven out, that's why they were in Wisconsin, that's where they had to go. There was no longer any place for them in the Hudson Valley because they were standing in the way of progress. So, yeah those were probably, they well could have been native people, sounds like they were and they were probably Mohawk I would guess or some affiliated group.

Interviewer 2: Tom thanks.

Lake: Oh Jim, you're welcome.

Interviewer 2: Good to see you sir.

Lake: You're welcome man.

Interviewer 2: I'm glad you came.

Interviewer 3: And you gave a great perspective that we hadn't had yet.

Lake: Yeah.

Interviewer 3: In terms of Native Americans.

Interviewer 2: But we knew that.

Lake: He knew this, you could have interviewed him! [Laughter in the background]

Interviewer 2: We knew the perspective that you were going to give.

[Schaaf laughs in the background]

Lake: [laughing] He would have sat here and given you all of this.

Interviewer 2: No, I don't know all the stuff you know.

Lake: Alright that's great; I've got to leave now? [Slight chuckle]

Interviewer 2: You did make something that clicked in my mind, maybe we need to send Fran Dunwell down too, let her us give some estuaries.

Lake: She's my boss by the way, so don't repeat anything to her of what I said about the state. [Laughs]

Interviewer 2: You cued me to the fact that maybe she might have interesting perspective on the bridge.

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Lake: Well she would be wonderful for the historic aspect and I except I know Fran well, she's my boss and I would tell you that she's probably going to give you a perspective that's a little guarded in terms of any questions you guys have.

Interviewer 2: We're on official business.

Lake: I mean I don't want to-[cut off by Johnson].

Interviewer 2: You've got to be careful.

Lake: Otherwise, I will be selling pencils at the mall you know. [slight laugh]

Interviewer 2: We'll get James to turn this off, did he get to see [cuts off] did Tom get to see the demo?

Interviewer 3: I don't believe he did see the demo.

Interviewer 2: We'd like to show you, I've got to run back, we're having a Teaching American History Institute.

Lake: Okay, okay.

Interviewer 2: But maybe James can show you, the demo of what we've put together so far with the interviews and how we see this working over time.

Lake: Okay.

Interviewer 2: A much longer DVD that would capture the real nuggets for example the question you asked [to Schaaf] which one was it, it was a great question you gave.

Interviewer 3: The environmental?

Interviewer 2: Just the right spin on one, there's one for sure that's going to be used your first question.

Interviewer 3: The one on the environmental impact of the bridge?

Interviewer 2: No it's even before that no I think that it will be useful too. [Background noise]

Lake: You know there's-[cut off]

Interviewer 2: Because you used the word that essentially said we naturalized.

Lake: Yeah, yeah.

Interviewer 2: I think the naturalization through-[talked over by Lake]

Lake: Yeah and that's what happens.

Interviewer 2: Is a great sound bite.

Lake: Yeah, yeah.

Interviewer 2: That I'm sure-[cut off by Lake]

Lake: It's become a habitat.

Interviewer 2: Will show up in the final-[cut off by Lake]

Lake: I was telling Paul during the-[cut off by Johnson]

Interviewer 2: Remember that when you're doing the transcription.

Lake: I was doing the interview with Paul and I mentioned it in the Hudson River Almanac, one of the gentleman who changes the navigational lights on the bridge sent me a letter in the mail and said, you know, I was down there changing, one had burnt out and he's down there and he looks at one of the footings on one of those huge pillions there and he says there was a collection of feet and he thought how odd that was and he checked into it a little bit and I think he sent me a picture of them. It turned out they were pigeon feet, just pigeon feet, a pile of pigeon feet, come to find out there's peregrine falcons that live there on that bridge. And you know they really don't build a nest, they use kind of little scrapes a little area where they lay eggs and eat [monitor] and they don't really build a nest. But anyways, there's peregrine falcons living on that nest and peregrine falcons, their favorite meal is to go and catch pigeon which is not easy but they are able to do it because pigeons are incredibly fast. What the pigeons would do is they would catch a falcon or catch a pigeon, fly down to the [station], sit there and eat the whole pigeon except for the feet. And so over time, the feet collection would keep piling up on that bridge so today if you were to take that bridge out of there you would have to do an environmental impact study oddly and kind of a reverse impact statement, what is the impact going to be and I'll tell you because it's home to peregrine falcons successfully nestling and fledging peregrine falcons, you probably couldn't get that bridge out of there right now.

Interviewer 2: Did you get this on tape before?

Lake: No.

Interviewer 2: It's a good thing we're talking.

Lake: It's true yeah, yeah.

Interviewer 2: You see that was another good sound bite.

Interviewer 3: Yes it is another good piece.

Lake: Yeah a collection of feet, pigeon feet-[all talking over each other]

Interviewer 2: So are any other species that you know are connected with the bridge?

Lake: Well, you know the other thing which, if a number of environmental impact statements were done on that bridge, they would have to take into consideration, how over time, that bridge has been there a long time, over time the very physical structure of that bridge has created a flow, an ebon flow to the tidal currents that is now perhaps something aquatic life is depending on. Where there are eddies around that bridge, where there's backwaters around the bridge, you suddenly take that bridge away, you may be eliminating habitat for some kind of an aquatic organism that has found a safety zone, a place where they feel comfortable, a confront zone in and around the structure of that bridge, and so that would be very difficult to measure. But I have no doubt that given the size of some of those footings in that bridge that there are what we call comfort zones of aquatic organisms in and around the bottom of that bridge that would be disturbed add that in with the peregrine falcons, you can make an argument that the lights on that bridge are used as navigational aids to migrating birds. I mean, I think that's pretty definite that birds will do that, birds will use various bridges and the lights on the bridges as ways to, because you get birds like Canada Geese who migrate at night, we think, you know that there's this romantic idea that they look up at the constellations and that's how they know where they're going. And there's a lot of good information to suggest they're looking at lights on bridges so there's one less bridge so, you know, there's a lot of things to think about.

Interviewer 2: What about the shad, the striped bass, there having, they've had to accommodate their runs.

Lake: Yeah I wouldn't use them as an example only because I don't see, just my reaction is, I don't see a connection between the bridge and them I don't, they just go by that bridge.

Interviewer 2: Go right by it?

Lake: Oh, absolutely falcons are there organisms, sedentary organisms perhaps in and around the footings of the bridge. There maybe shellfish beds you know, we have the fresh water mussel in the Hudson River Valley which is under tremendous stress from zebra mussels and you know someone would have to go down and make sure there aren't some fresh water mussel beds in the [lee] of one of those footings, if you took it away they're going to be gone. So you know there are all these kinds of things that you don't even think about until an ecologist looks at the river and comes up with this list of possible detriments that could come from removal of this bridge.

Interviewer 2: There's another sound bite.

Lake: It's one of these reasons why we don't willy nilly go and remove all the dams on the tributaries even though we've got a hundred or more tributaries that are dammed unnecessarily today because you just don't know because they've been there for so long, that you remove them, and you now change the whole ecology downstream. So you just can't, a lot of these

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manmade structures that we wish were not there, we have to be very careful about how we deal with them because we don't know whose depending on them right now because they have been naturalized, they have become part of the ecology of the system.

Interviewer 2: I'm glad we kept talking, thanks Tom, I really appreciate all of this.

[Lake proceeds to leave seat and shake hands 32:12]

Lake: You're very welcome sir.

Interviewer 2: Now we intend to continue our relationship just we want to make this relationship closer.

Lake: Sure.

Interviewer 2: We're trying to get Bowser involved in it.

Lake: Yep.

Interviewer 2: We'd love to have your expertise, we're trying to develop some kind of an environmental component to the Hudson Valley Institute, I need your advice

Lake: Sure.

Interviewer 2: Advice and expertise.

Lake: Sure, let me know.

Interviewer 2: I'm glad that Paul made this hook-up, get us talking again.

Lake: Yes, yes, it's been a while.

Interviewer 2: Instead of being out board the [Mystic].

Lake: I've managed to avoid that job. [Johnson laughs]

Interviewer 2: Because you and I were doing our duty for God and country and the American way.

Lake: Here's my card, why don't you email me.

Interviewer 2: Let's see if we can get James to close it off, would you show Tom the little promo.

[End of Interview 33:07]

Transcribed by Paul Contarino