

*Marjory Stoneman Douglas talks about gaining Inspiration at Wellesley College*

Interviewer: I'm going to ask you a question that might be, that's okay because...

Marjory Stoneman Douglas: They're not taking, I see.

Interviewer: ...that might be difficult for you to answer, but I'd like you to try and tell me, how did your interest in the natural environment develop? Is it something you had right from the earliest, earliest days? Do you remember or is it something that...

MSD: Oh, I think so. Am I talking now?

Interviewer: Yes.

MSD: I think I was always interested. You see, I was brought up in Massachusetts in a very different country, in a very different climate, very different weather and all that. But all New England people are interested in weather, and we're all mostly interested in backgrounds because the weather is always so changeable. It's one of our most important sources of conversation in New England. So I think I had a very natural interest in that. I was very much interested in geography; I had a marvelous course in geography in my college, which was Wellesley outside of Boston. We had a marvelous professor of geology and geography in those days. The first woman to graduate from Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Mrs. Fisher, and she was one of the country's great oil geologists. One of the only women then who was a geologist and she was a very important oil geologist. Well she did a course in geography that was terrific. It led me to ecology and geography and a certain amount of geology, not too complicated, but a certain amount, and archeology and anthropology and all that. A more or less introductory course, but I think it was one of the more important courses that I've ever had, and I've been using it, you might say, ever since. Because that (garbled) I can remember being interested in geography in grade school when you had a great big geography book, and you can hide behind it to read something else. (laughs) So I liked geography books from the very first atlases. I've loved maps and all that; it seemed to be a natural thing. And then with this course in geography with the backgrounds in it and so on, as I say, it was an introductory course only, but

at least it gave you the background and some of the vocabulary. So when I came to Florida, here was a new and completely unique country, and I was very excited by it from the beginning. I think it was all a natural development.