

Transcription: Grand Canyon Historical Society

Interviewee: Barbara “Gay” Tidball Cameron (GC) and Kenneth Lincoln “Buzz” Cameron (BC)

Interviewer: Tom Martin (TM)

Subject: Gay recounts her childhood, Lees Ferry and Phantom Ranch in the 1950s, Part 2

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TM: Today is Friday, December 8th, 2017. This is Part 2 of a Grand Canyon Oral History, with Barbara Gay Tidball Cameron and her husband Kenneth Lincoln Cameron. Kenneth’s nickname is “Buzz,” and Barbara goes by “Gay”. My name is Tom Martin. This is a phone interview and both Gay and Buzz are on the phone. Gay and Buzz, may I have your permission to record this conversation on the telephone?

GC: Yes, you may.

BC: Certainly.

TM: Thank you very much. It was such a wonderful interview last time. I went back and looked at my notes, and realized Gay, I didn’t ask you about the uniforms that you and your sister wore in the Hopi marching band. Could you tell me a little bit more about that?

GC: I can. Basically all the men, and of course my twin and I, we all had white pants on and then we all had various colors of velvet tops. My twin and I did not have velvet tops like the men had, and I presume had been wearing for quite some time. But my mother found a seamstress and she made us... I wore black velvet and my twin wore red velvet. They had long sleeves and a collar and they were belted at the waist. I think we ended up getting some kind of a silver belt, I don’t know if from the trading post or just where that came from. The Hopi men wore all of their wonderful jewelry that they had made or acquired during their lifetime. We had no headgear. I don’t remember for sure what kind of shoes we wore. I presume either white shoes or black shoes. We were all decked out, looking like two Hopi Indians. [Laughter]

TM: Did you practice marching in formation?

GC: It was just a straight marching formation going down the street.

TM: Sort of three or four people across and three or four rows of people? I mean, how many people were in the band, do you remember?

GC: I don’t remember for sure. There were probably about six rows of us and then we were probably four or five across.

TM: Wow, wonderful. So, not only did you have to play as you walked, but you had to make sure that you stayed in your line and didn't run into the person in front of you.

GC: Oh definitely, yeah. The one advantage Jo and I had is we came from marching bands, from prior band situations we were in, so we were pretty good marchers, as well as players. We knew what we were doing.

TM: Fun.

GC: We knew what we were doing. [laughter]

TM: Did you get to walk with each other?

GC: No, no. The clarinets were in one section, the saxophones were in another.

TM: Oh, fun. Anything else about that Hopi marching band that comes to mind that you wanted to recall that you didn't mention the other day?

GC: The one thing I do remember—my mother and dad were in the audience on the side streets and they had several people comment "Oh look, there's two white girls. They're not Indians and they're girls!" And everybody else was a man, an Indian man. [laughter]

TM: Wow, that's wonderful.

GC: They had several comments on that side. [laughter]

TM: Very fun. Well let's head back to the end of the last interview where you had come up to see Grand Canyon for the first time. It was the winter of 1952-'53. You were out of school, and you're going down to the bottom of the Grand Canyon to see your dad who you haven't seen all fall, as he's working for the United States Geological Survey at Phantom Ranch. Can you pick that story up again and go from there?

GC: Okay. It was the Christmas break of our junior year in high school. When Christmas break came, my mother drove us up from Mesa where we were living. My dad was already stationed at the bottom of the Grand Canyon. So we drove up from Mesa, spent the night at the Bright Angel Lodge. That's where Jo and I had our movie date, so called. Then the next morning, we got up and met on I think the Bright Angel Trail, the head of the Bright Angel Trail. The dude men were there with their mules and they assigned us each a mule. I can't remember my mule's name, but anyway, we all got on our mules. We knew nothing about riding the mule anywhere, let alone down to the bottom of Grand Canyon. It was quite an adventure. The scary part as you know with all mule rides going down, is when the mule stops and grazes over the edge to grab a blade of grass you think you're going to fall right off and go right on down.

TM: Oh my gosh.

GC: Yeah, we were kind of scared at times. I can't remember for sure how long that trip went, but quite a few hours. We did stop at Indian Gardens and had a break, and maybe lunch, I can't remember for sure. But it was quite a wonderful experience. The scary part when we got down to the bottom, we had to go through the tunnel that led out on to the suspension bridge to cross the Colorado River. Some mules took to that pretty good, some of them didn't like it and kind of balked and a cloud of dust came out, and we had to kind of scurry around getting them straightened out. We didn't do much, the

wranglers did that, but anyway, it was quite an adventure. We were so sore when we got off that mule we couldn't walk. [laughter]

TM: Wow, yup.

GC: But anyway, we got down to Phantom Ranch and my dad was there to meet us. We thought we were right at Phantom Ranch when we got on the other side of the tunnel and across the bridge, but that's where my dad lived in the U.S. Geological Survey houses were right there about a quarter of a mile off the bridge, but Phantom Ranch was another mile up the trail. We were very disappointed that we had to go another mile before we could get off. [laughter]

TM: Oh, they wouldn't they let you get off at your dad's house?

GC: No, no, we had to keep going. Anyway, we made it and I think we had two weeks of Christmas vacation down there with him.

TM: What do you remember about that Christmas, your first Christmas there at Phantom Ranch?

GC: Yeah, it was awesome. We got acquainted with Slim and Dottie Patrick very much, that were running the Phantom Ranch. Heard all kinds of stories from them. We'd go up there probably every afternoon and had dinner several nights with them. We'd go up and also play cards with them at night. Of course we did a lot of exploring, hiking on our own. It was just an awesome experience. One of the fun things every day was watching the mule trains come in and watching the clouds of dust come out from the tunnel where the mules had to go through to get on the suspension bridge to come across. We just had a wonderful time. We met a lot of good tourists there. We just did a lot of visiting and got acquainted with our dad. He showed us his process of making his mud pies and the cable car that he had to go across the river on. Of course, my mother thought she was in heaven. She loved that kind of life. It was fascinating.

TM: Do you remember any of the stories that Slim and Dottie told?

GC: Ooh. Not right off the top, Tom. They had stories all over the place, but I don't think I paid that much attention to them.

TM: What kind of cards did you play? Do you remember?

GC: Canista.

GC: I can't remember, I'm sure we had other games and I can't remember them right off the top.

TM: Okay.

GC: We did a lot of reading. We took books. My dad had books down there, so we did a lot of reading. Generally just goofed off every day and had fun. [laughter]

TM: Fun. Was the swimming pool in place, then?

GC: The swimming pool was there, but of course it was way too cold to go in.

TM: Too cold. Yup.

GC: Yeah. We did that later in the summer but not in December.

TM: What else do you remember about that winter? You're reading, you're watching the dudes try to get off the mules when the train comes in, hanging out, playing cards, it just sounds like a wonderful Christmas.

GC: It was, it was very nice. I'm not positive it was that same Christmas that we hiked up to Roaring Springs, which is on your way up to the North Rim. We met the people that were running the power plant up there.

TM: Oh. What do you remember about that hike?

GC: Oh, the first part of the hike from Phantom Ranch was pretty level, I remember. Boy, you're taxing my memory now, Tom. Then it got pretty steep going up to Roaring Springs. We did hike that, and I think we just stayed for a short while, introduced ourselves to them. I can't remember their names for sure, but anyway, then we turned around and hiked back. It was a beautiful day, if I remember correctly. Sun was out, it was warm. But anyway, we got acquainted with those people. Then later on, when we were down for the summer, we of course went back up and visited with them, spent the night, and then hiked on up to the North Rim. But that was another visit.

TM: I'll ask you about that in a bit. Was Ken Patrick there at Phantom that winter of '52-'53?

GC: I don't recall that he was. He might've been, but I don't believe he was there when we were there.

TM: He might've been based out of the rim doing the mule rides at that time.

GC: Right, he might've been.

TM: Okay.

GC: Yeah, I believe he did work with the mules, too.

TM: And then, back up the trail to go back to school.

GC: I guess we could've ridden out or hiked out. We all elected rather than get back on the mule back, we would prefer to hike, so we hiked.

TM: Wow.

GC: Yeah. We got up early in the morning. I'm sure my mother and my twin and I, I think daddy stayed down in the bottom. We started out and carried what clothes we had, or whatever, not any more than we had to, and water of course, and hiked up the Kaibab Trail.

TM: Excellent, excellent. Then, in theory, your car was there, the car you had driven up with from Mesa, and then you just drove back down to Phoenix?

GC: Right, right, uh-huh.

TM: Do you have any remembrances and recollections of what you were thinking the first time you saw Grand Canyon right there at Bright Angel?

GC: Oh, we were just awe-struck. We had never seen or heard of anything that big or that beautiful. We were just all in awe. We just couldn't believe that we were gonna hike down that canyon and stay there for a while. Just were awe-struck, we appreciated the beauty of it so much. It was fantastic.

TM: That winter there at Phantom, do you remember any ice forming along the banks of the river at all?

GC: Not that winter, but I do know another time there was ice. But I don't remember any that particular winter, but that doesn't mean there wasn't any.

TM: Okay, so then, you hike out, and now it's the spring of 1953, and you're going to finish off your...

GC: Junior year.

TM: Senior year, is that right?

GC: No, that would've been our junior year.

TM: Junior year, thank you.

GC: Yeah, from Mesa.

TM: What do you remember about that?

GC: Finishing high school, you mean?

TM: Your junior year 1953, back in Mesa?

GC: Okay, okay. There again, we were brand new students and had to get acquainted with everybody. There again we got very involved with the band and we got involved in some of the plays in Mesa. There was an opera that was being put on and we were chosen to dance in that. I can't remember the name of it now.

BC: The Mikato

GC: Yes. It was The Mikato. There again, Jo took classes that related to her nursing degree, and I took all business classes. Shorthand and typing and bookkeeping and that kind of thing.

TM: Did you get a chance to visit with your dad anytime during that spring of 1953?

GC: I don't recall, I don't think so. I know we were in touch with him by phone because he had to come out once a month with his monthly report, and he would call. I don't believe he came back down to Mesa while we were there.

TM: Okay. So was his call then once a month?

GC: Yes, yes. He had to hike out the canyon. I guess he could've ridden a mule, but he chose to hike with his monthly reports.

TM: Did he write letters back and forth to your mom?

GC: Oh, yes, yes. Uh-huh. And all the mail was delivered by mule train of course.

TM: Do you still have those letters?

GC: I don't believe I do and I don't believe my mother had any either. She may, but I don't remember seeing any.

TM: Okay, just curious.

GC: I know that they communicated all the time.

TM: Hmm, nice. So, when school's out in the late spring of '53, then what happens?

GC: Then, we decided we'd go back down. We knew we wanted to go back down to be with our dad. Of course, my mother wanted to get back down to her husband. This is a funny story coming up, Tom. When we got up to the... We had a duplex here in Mesa. My mother and dad sold that right at the end of our junior year of school. They sold that and they bought a trailer, a big long trailer. They had that moved up to the South Rim of the Grand Canyon. I believe that was in place when we finished our junior year of high school, but we never stayed in it. Well actually, we did. The trailer, we lived in it the last month of our junior year of high school. Then that was transported up to the South Rim of the Grand Canyon. That's where my mother lived after that, while she was teaching school there. We had our choice of either riding the mule to go back down for the summer or to hike, and we chose to hike. My mother was very excited that we're gonna hike. All of our life, Jo and I had parakeets. The little budgie birds?

TM: Yeah.

GC: So anyway, long story short, my mother said "One of you take the bird cage with the two birds in it, and the other one of you has to take a watermelon." [laughter]

TM: Wow!

GC: I don't know what she carried, but Jo and I had to take turns carrying the watermelon and the bird cage. [laughter]

TM: My gosh. How did the parakeets do?

GC: Well, they did better than... Our hands got so tired from hanging on to the handle. [laughter] We had the cage covered with a white towel, so to speak. One bird was blue and one was green. By the time we got done with the bottom, they were both brown.

TM: Oh my gosh. [laughter]

GC: But, we carried that bird cage and watermelon 7 miles straight down. [laughter] We were idiots I think, but that's what we did.

TM: Well, did the watermelon make it?

GC: The watermelon made it, you bet.

TM: Was it tasty? Was it worth it?

GC: I can't remember, [laughter] I doubt it. And I don't know what my mother carried. I'm sure she had something in her arms, too.

TM: I'm sure she had a whole bundle of stuff.

GC: Yeah, right.

TM: Phantom Ranch in the summertime is kind of like being in Mesa in the summertime. It's hot down there.

GC: Yes, it is. Very hot.

TM: How did you handle the heat?

GC: We lived a lot of that summer, in the afternoons anyways, in the Phantom Ranch swimming pool. That was fed by the Bright Angel Creek, which was very, very cold, but we got in. We lived in that swimming pool most of the summer. [laughter]

TM: Nice.

GC: Yeah. When the mule train got in every afternoon, that's where most of the dudes off the mules came, too. So we had fun splashing around with everybody visiting.

TM: Fun, fun. What do you remember then, about Slim and Dottie Patrick, their son Ken, and at this time, I think Shirley Patrick would've been there as well.

GC: Yes, she was. I can't remember how long she was down there, but I know we got very well acquainted with her. She and I had a lot of fun. I think I might've been a little closer to her than Jo was because Shirley and I had a lot in common with our education. Shirley loved shorthand and that kind of thing. It ended up when we separated after that summer, we wrote letters in shorthand to each other for quite a while. I don't remember if Ken was around then or not, but I know Shirley was. She worked there. We did help clean the cabins in the morning for Dottie and Slim just because we needed something to do, and then help serve some of the meals for the dudes dudes... That wasn't a daily occurrence, but just whenever it worked out.

TM: Okay, nice. Well, that must've been helpful, because seems like the staff there was always short and always working.

GC: Right, right. It's a non-ending job for Slim and Dottie, I'm sure.

TM: What else do you remember about Slim and Dottie from that summer of 1953?

GC: They were just very, very pleasant people, never knew a stranger. Dottie was a wonderful cook. I didn't pay a whole lot of attention to what all their duties were, but they were always busy. They were very helpful to us. Made us feel right at home, right there at Phantom. We had many meals there. I don't know if they charged for them or not, probably not. My folks were very happy with them. They spent a lot of time up there in the evenings with them visiting. I know there was a little card playing. I don't know how much.

TM: Nice.

BC: Did Dottie do the cooking to serve to the dudes?

GC: Yes, Dottie did the cooking. I think Slim definitely helped her, but I think Dottie was in charge of all the cooking. She was a wonderful cook.

TM: At that time, was there a buck, a large deer, that was tame that would hang out there at Phantom Ranch?

GC: Not that I'm aware of.

TM: Okay. That might've actually been in the 40s, now that I think about it. It was there in '42, it was there in '47. I think I'm just trying to place that animal there. One of the things that Shirley had talked about was the linen coming in, the linen going out. Do you remember how that operation worked at all?

GC: What was that, Tom?

TM: The linens?

GC: The linen?

TM: Yeah.

GC: Oh. Okay, I don't know if the beds were changed every day, I doubt it, but I do know everything was hauled in and hauled out on the mules, if I remember correctly.

TM: So, no laundromat. How did you guys do your washing?

GC: I think on a scrub board. There was no washing machines or anything.

TM: What else do you remember about day to day life there at the USGS house?

GC: My dad had to measure the... If there was any rain, he had a rain gauge, and we would... Course it didn't rain all that much, but when it did, we got to read that. Every day we would get the flag down off the flagpole and put it back up. And watch him make his mud pies. We just kept busy everyday with weeding and visiting, and just in general having fun. We never got bored.

TM: Do you remember seeing any river runners go by?

GC: I do. I don't think they came real close to where we were. They might've been not too far from us and they'd stop, but I don't remember them ever coming up to the house or anything where we were. I know we saw some going by, but you know, we'd just go out and wave at them.

TM: Mhmm, okay. I know that at least one river trip stopped and spent a day or two there. I think at least a couple trips did that, getting resupplied for food and fuel. If they were running motorboats there was at least one motorboat trip down there.

GC: Okay.

TM: Got to go back and crosscheck, so I figured I'd just ask you about that. What did you do with your trash, do you remember?

GC: Oh, I think we burned a good part of it. And the cans, canned goods, I don't really recall.

BC: Probably haul them out.

GC: Yeah, I really don't recall. I don't know if we had a big hole where we buried them or not, but I think most of what we could burn, we would burn.

TM: You know, Shirley remembered there was a wagon that they would put their trash on. Then every now and then, Slim would put a mule on that wagon, and take it down and chuck it in the river.

GC: Oh really? I don't recall that, oh.

BC: That was a real good National Park Service program. [laughing]

TM: Well, you know, when you stop and think about it, the river back then would flood in the springtime and wash all that stuff on downstream. And there wasn't a lot of plastic and Styrofoam, the kind of stuff there is today.

GC: That's true.

TM: So, you're right, absolutely Buzz you're right, but either you're going to pack it out, or then what you're gonna do it. And burning trash was very commonly accepted practice at that time. You have a 50-gallon drum with some airholes knocked in the bottom of it, you'd dump that stuff in there, and light it up and that was that.

GC: Right.

TM: So yeah, I was kind of curious how that worked. Where did you get your drinking water from?

GC: There was a spring, I believe. I'm not sure, Tom.

BC: Might have been out of Bright Angel Creek.

GC: Might've been out of Bright Angel.

TM: I would think possibly yes.

GC: Yeah.

TM: Did you guys have a bathtub, or shower? How did you clean up?

GC: Yeah, the little house that my dad lived in, it had a kitchen area and a little bedroom area and then... But it did have a bathroom with flushing potty and a bathroom sink in it. It was plumbed modern.

TM: Okay. Did it have a bathtub or a shower?

GC: I think a shower.

TM: Okay. I wonder about the hot water heater. I wonder how that worked.

GC: Boy, good question. I know we had hot water but I don't remember how...

BC: Probably oil. Probably an oil heater.

TM: Yeah, absolutely could've been. Okay. What else do you remember about that summer?

GC: Oh, other than it went by way too fast. I do remember there was two boys that worked up at Roaring Springs, which is on your way up to the North Rim. They came down to Phantom Ranch one time. Of course Jo and I were there and we got acquainted with them, so they kept coming back. [laughter] Any chance they could, they'd hike down the trail to Phantom or whatever and come see us.

TM: Oh, that's fun.

GC: Yeah, just kid stuff, you know.

TM: Hmm. Very fun. You mentioned that your mom and dad bought a trailer and had that set up there at the South Rim. When did your mom get a job working at the school there at Grand Canyon?

GC: She would've started the fall of '53, '53.

TM: At that time, the school at Grand Canyon wasn't a K through 12, is that right?

BC: 1 through 8 probably.

GC: Yeah, probably 1 through 8. There was no high school.

TM: Right, and you guys then had to go someplace else for high school. How did that work out?

GC: Right. I'm not sure how my mother found her, but we had to board and room with a lady by the name of Mildred Sheehan in Flagstaff. She had a big house and she took in roomers or boarders. So we spent that winter of that school year, our senior school year, living with her. We would commute every weekend again. Sam Turner had a car and another fellow—can't remember his name—had a car. Most of the time, we would come back and forth with Sam and his other friends.

BC: Sam was in college then?

GC: Yeah, yeah. Sam, I believe, might've been a freshman at what is now NAU.

TM: Can you spell Mildred's last name, please?

GC: Yes, it's capital S-H-E-E-H-A-N. She had a beauty shop in Flagstaff.

TM: Do you remember the name of the shop?

GC: I think it was just Mildred's Beauty Shop.

TM: Okay, what do you remember about Mildred?

GC: Mildred was a nice gal. She was divorced from an Ed Sheehan, her husband, who worked at the post office. She had two daughters. Edwina, was the older one, and Dena Mae was the younger daughter. They were probably 2 to 3 years younger than Jo and I. And, like I say, she ran her beauty shop out of her home. Then she had a big two-story house and had bedrooms that she rented out to other people.

TM: Do you remember where the house was?

GC: No, we didn't do house work.

TM: I'm sorry, do you remember where her house was in Flagstaff?

GC: Where it was? It's no longer there, they've torn it down. I don't remember the street. North...

BC: It was north of Highway 66. I'm thinking it was on Sitgreaves and...

GC: I don't remember.

TM: Was it a pretty easy walk to get over to the high school then?

GC: Yes, yeah. The high school was north of that.

TM: So, it would've been sort of near the downtown, on the northwest side of the downtown area?

GC: You got it, yeah.

TM: Great, great, okay. What was high school like? This is your senior year.

GC: Right, our senior year. Of course we had spent our freshman year there, so we knew a few of the students there. Mr. Killip, who was the principal of the high school at that time. We just got reacquainted with our close friends and we got back into the band.

TM: So, back into band, back with your friends in the band.

GC: Uh-huh, and then back with regular classes. I say Jo continued her studies to become a nurse, and I went back into the business end of it. Bookkeeping, shorthand, typing, that kind of thing.

TM: Okay. Then on weekends, you mentioned you would catch a ride back up to the park with Sam Turner?

GC: Right.

TM: Would you try to then hike down the trail to spend a night with your dad or would he come out. Or would he stay down at Phantom and you guys would just spend maybe a Friday night/Saturday night with your mom, how did that work?

GC: That's basically what we did, except for maybe Thanksgiving. My dad, I think, hiked out that one Thanksgiving. For most time, we just arrived Friday night after school, arrived with Sam, and we would visit her. I don't remember what we did during the day, we were all always busy. Then Sunday night, Sam would come by and pick us up and drive us back to Flagstaff to go to school. We would communicate with my dad. I don't believe we had phones, I don't think so. But my mother always had us doing something.

TM: No phone, no email, no texting, what!

GC: Yup, terrible! [laughter]

TM: What were the roads like? Describe for me the ride from the trailer there at the South Rim, over to Mrs. Sheehan's house in Flagstaff. What was that like?

GC: Most of the time we took the road from Grand Canyon down to Williams, then Highway 66. It was a paved road. It was a good road, but it was narrow. I don't know if they've improved it a lot from then. I've been up there in a long time. We would usually leave the Canyon around 5:00, I believe and get to Flagstaff maybe around 6:30 or so.

TM: Okay, so hour and a half, hour and 45 minutes, not bad.

GC: Something like that. And Sam picked up a couple other people. One was a lady named Betty Bartlett, I remember. She was going to college also.

TM: What do you remember about Betty?

GC: Other than she was a very intelligent lady. I can't remember what she was getting her degree in. I don't remember too much more about her. Very friendly.

TM: By this time, Shirley Patrick had transferred up to the South Rim. I think she was working in the administration building possibly, I'm not quite sure. Did you keep up your friendship with her, then?

GC: Not then, no. I didn't realize she had done that, Tom. Is that what happened?

TM: Yeah, she was only down at Phantom for the spring of '53. Then in the summer she went back up to the rim after a 6 month nonstop stint down there at Phantom.

GC: Oh, okay.

TM: So Sam would take Betty and you and Jo, and then another friend of his, is that right?

GC: It seemed like there was another person, but I can't remember who it was, to be honest with you.

TM: Okay, so that was a full car. Do you remember the traffic on Route 66? Was it a busy road?

GC: It was busy. Not like it is today, I'm sure. But there was a constant flow of cars coming and going, if I remember correctly. The road from the Grand Canyon down to 66 was not too busy.

TM: Right. How was your mom doing at the school? Was she enjoying that?

GC: Oh, she loved it, she loved it. I'm not sure, I think she was teaching 5th grade there. She was teaching, I believe, Preston Shellback. She had him, and—oh I can't remember some of the old timer's children there, but she loved to teach.

TM: Did you meet other people at the community there? Just, you know, you were only there on weekends.

GC: Right, yeah. Probably not too much, Tom. I don't remember. I know we got acquainted with some of the other people in the trailer park, but I don't remember their names or anything like that. I know we got a little bit acquainted with Sam's parents, a little bit. My mother, of course, knew a lot of the people through teaching.

TM: Yeah, yeah, you bet. She would have definitely pretty quickly known how the community worked and who was who.

GC: Right, she did.

TM: Then, the Christmas break of 1953-1954, did you go back down to Phantom?

GC: Yes, we did.

TM: What do you remember about that?

GC: [laughter] I think we hiked down that time. No more mule rides. Just spent another wonderful 2 weeks down there. I don't remember anything in particular out of the ordinary, other than we just did some more hiking. Probably hiked back up to Roaring Springs to visit those people. Just spend a wonderful Christmas. It was quite quiet during the day, but we kept busy with whatever we were doing—reading or playing games or visiting or talking to the dudes coming in on the mule train. It was just kind of more of what we did that first summer.

TM: How do you think your parents were handling this remote situation? They've got jobs, and the kids are in school, except that the school is not where your mom's job is, and your dad's job is not where your mom's job is, nor is it by the school. You were all... You and Jo had each other, clearly, but I would assume that as your dad, he was kind of... He'd sort of see you every 2 weeks out of 6 months and go "Oh, wow you're growing up and how you're doing?"

GC: Yeah.

TM: Did he ever talk about those years at all?

GC: He really didn't say too much. I think he enjoyed his job so much, he loved that. I think he was very lonely for my mom. I'm sure of that. I think he decided he didn't want to live that life forever, but I think he knew it wasn't gonna be forever. But he loved what he was doing so much and loved the outdoor work. And of course, he had Slim and Dottie to talk to all the time, and anybody else he could talk to. He surely enjoyed his job, I know that. I think my mom decided they didn't wanna have to live apart like that forever. So they finished out that year. It was in the spring of '54, my dad got transferred to Lees Ferry.

TM: Okay. Do you roughly know what month?

GC: That would've probably been May. That's the year Jo and I graduated from Flagstaff High.

TM: What do you remember about your graduation ceremony at Flagstaff High?

GC: There was 101 in our class, I remember that, and Jo and I were selected to play a clarinet-saxophone duet for the ceremony.

TM: Wow, what did you play?

GC: I don't remember the song. [laughter]

TM: Okay, was it fun?

GC: My mother and my older sister from California came in for our graduation ceremony. I don't think my dad could've been there. He was up getting settled at Lees Ferry.

TM: Wow, so Dawn came over.

GC: Dawn came from California. I think she was living in California at that time.

TM: Oh, fun.

GC: Yeah. Jo and I were still living with Mildred Sheehan when we graduated. I don't remember how soon after, probably real soon, we transferred up and we all moved to Lees Ferry.

TM: So, you had been to Lees Ferry once already when your dad and mom got a job working for Lorenzo Hubbell at the Marble Canyon Trading Post back in, I guess it would've been '51. Would've been...

GC: Right, '51.

TM: ...2 years earlier, so you were kind of familiar with the place.

GC: Yeah.

TM: Were you looking to go to college then at that time, or what were you thinking? What did you want to do?

GC: We knew what we wanted to do when we were seniors. Jo wanted to go into nursing training and I wanted to go into business college. There was a fellow...I don't know how it all happened, but he came over from Albuquerque. He was from a business college by the name of Draughon's Business College in Albuquerque. My mother wanted us to be together if we could. Somehow or other, I ended up going to business school in Albuquerque by the name of Draughon's Business College, and Jo went into nurses training at, oh, St. Vincent's, I believe. I can't remember for sure if that was the name of the nursing school right there in Albuquerque.

So we spent the summer out at Lees Ferry, and then that fall when school started our parents drove us over to Albuquerque. She got into the nursing college right where the school was, and of course, had her board and room right there. It was a Catholic school and the sisters there let me have a room, like in one of the dorms that they had. So I stayed there and walked to downtown Albuquerque to business college every day.

TM: Wow, and so Jo stayed at the Catholic school as well?

GC: Right, right. Stayed there and did her nurses training, uh-huh.

TM: Okay, wow. Let's go back now to Lees Ferry in the summer of 1954.

GC: Okay.

TM: What do you remember of that?

GC: Oh, I remember how terribly hot it was. We had no air conditioning, of course, but...

TM: And no swimming pool.

GC: No swimming pool, no, but we soon found a great big tamarisk tree right on the edge of the Colorado River, and every afternoon we'd take our books and a blanket or something and go sit under the tamarisk right on the edge of the Colorado river and read or do whatever.

TM: Gay, I wanna ask you specifically about that tree because there was a big willow tree there. You mentioned tamarisk, it sure could've been a tamarisk but there was also some big willow—I mean, the trunk was 4 or 5 feet in diameter.

GC: Wow, wow. Was it right there at the boat landing, where the boats...

TM: That's right, and it would've only been 20 feet high or so. It wasn't like this big towering thing, but it was big and bushy.

GC: Okay, that may have been it, Tom. Maybe I thought it was a tamarisk but it could've very well been that big willow tree.

TM: Well I don't know. There were a number of more like Gooding's willows, with these big thick trunks and 20 or 30 feet high. Wonderful shade trees.

GC: Oh yeah, it was. Whatever it was, Tom, and I may be wrong when I said tamarisk. It could've been willow.

TM: I don't know. You mentioned river runners or boaters would come by. Can you talk to me about that?

GC: Okay, yeah. That was the one spot where the river runners would come in and set up their boats and everything getting ready to run the river. Or, they would come off the river, too, there. It was a landing spot both going and coming. Every time a river runner group would come by or take off, we'd all go down, including my mother, and my dad if he could, if he could get away, go down and talk to them and hear about their adventures. We got very well acquainted with Georgie White and Harry Aleson. Oh I can't remember, there were several boat parties. I can't remember all their names now.

TM: Well, let's take it from the top, cause I'm gonna wanna know everything you remember about these people. [laughing] What do you remember about Georgie?

GC: She was a character.

TM: How?

GC: She was a character. She was very thin. She looked like she had Indian skin. She was just brown leather all over. She was a tough bird. Her husband was named Whitey, and if I remember correctly, he was with her on a few of the earlier trips. It seemed like he was a little bit older, or quite a bit older than she was. She knew what she was doing. She was quite a river rat as we called her. She did all the work that I could tell, you know, putting it all together. And she had some other fellows helping her, if I remember correctly. Getting the boats ready for launching, or packing up and getting out, whatever, but she was quite a character. My mother really liked her, and my dad did too. [chuckling]

TM: And then Harry, Harry Aleson. What do you remember about Harry?

GC: He, too, was a character. He loved the river. He was also very tan from running the river. He was quite an adventurer, quite a character. He had a lot of boat stories to tell. I don't remember him quite as much being the actor as Georgie White was. My mother really did like him, too. My mother liked everybody. [laughter]

TM: Do you remember a gentleman named Frank Wright?

GC: No, I don't.

TM: He would've been just getting ready to... Well, he would've been down there once a year or so, maybe a little more often doing the San Juan down through Glen Canyon runs. One day in 1954, a bridge pontoon with a motor stopped for the weekend, and that would've been Chuck Bolte and Earl Eaton.

GC: Boy, I don't remember those names at all.

TM: Okay. These would've been one trip wonders. They would've pulled in and pulled out and you'd of never seen them again in your life. So, I certainly understand. Otis Marston might've shown up with a bunch of motor boats and gone downstream.

GC: Okay, I remember the name. Was it Marston brothers or something?

BC: Dock Marston.

GC: Dock Marston?

TM: That's right. Would've been Dock Marston and his son Garth. Garth would've been a little older than you, but a very handsome young man. I'm trying to remember... A lot of older people, sort of your father's age, would've been with the Marston people there.

GC: Oh.

TM: And then of course, lots of rubber boats, canoes, fold-boats. All kinds of watercraft. There were a lot of people in Glen Canyon that would come to down Lees Ferry and take out.

GC: They would come down the Glen...?

TM: I'm sorry, looking at the Rainbow Bridge register for the 1950's, there were a lot. In 1954, there were hundreds of river runners that were exploring Glen Canyon, upstream of you guys.

GC: Oh really, oh.

TM: And they would've been taking out there at Lees Ferry, so there would've been a lot of people coming and going, well, you know, coming down the river and then loading up and leaving. They wouldn't necessarily say much, I think, to you guys except "Hi, how are you?"

GC: Yeah, probably.

BC: Isn't that where Art Greene used to take his airboat and go up to Rainbow Bridge, did you take off from there?

GC: I don't remember that.

TM: Yes, you're right, Buzz, but the years that Art had that boat going, and it was a Navajo named boat Tseh Na-ni-ah-go or something like that, I forget. It was in the late 40s/early 50s. It was a hard boat to run. It cost a lot to keep that motor going and it was a loud, loud machine. It only worked for a short amount of time, and it's possible that by the time Gay and Dean and everybody showed up there at Lees Ferry, he had transferred that into a typical motorboat to run up to Rainbow Bridge. I'm not exactly sure of that.

GC: I do not remember that boat at all.

TM: It would've been docked and parked out at Cliff Dweller's if it was still there. It was parked out by the road for quite a while.

GC: Wow. I don't remember it Tom, but that could've very well been sitting there.

TM: Okay. So Georgie and Harry. Otis Marston came and went. Who else in the river scene? I know that... Sorry?

GC: Were the Sanderson's?

BC: The Sanderson's.

GC: Sanderson's or Sander brothers.

TM: Rod Sanderson would've been there, but Jerry and the kids hadn't started going yet. They would have been hanging with Marston. Larry, Larry Sanderson, that would have been a little like a year or two later that he would have started going on the trips with Marston. Also, Bill Beer and Daggett did their swim trip that summer of '54 [1955]. But, they were trying to hide from you [laughter] till they were downstream. They slipped in the water and took off.

GC: Ah, okay. I don't remember those names at all.

TM: There's a story in the superintendent's report, and I don't remember the year, of a group of river runners coming out of Glen Canyon that kind of, I wouldn't say attacked, but they sort of held the Lees Ferry gage person like they almost wanted to rob him or bust him up or something, like got into a fistfight.

GC: Really?

TM: I think that might have been just the year before your father showed up there.

GC: Oh, I don't remember even hearing that.

TM: Okay, okay. What else do you remember about the river, river runners?

GC: Not a whole lot more, Tom. We were fascinated to get to talk to them. Sometimes, the way the house was situated, unless we just looked just right, they could be down on that landing or whatever and we wouldn't have even seen them. But any time some river runners came or went or whatever, we usually went down and talked to them. Find out what they were doing and where they were going.

TM: Did you ever get a chance to get on a little motorboat and go up into Glen Canyon?

GC: No, I did not. My mother did.

TM: How so?

GC: Yeah, my mother took a river trip with Georgie White. Wasn't it, Buzz?

BC: I have no idea.

GC: Yeah. I think she got acquainted with Georgie real well and Georgie took her. That was before Glen Canyon was in place, of course. She went on a river trip up to Rainbow Bridge with Georgie White and her crew.

TM: Wow.

GC: Yeah, she was gone 3 or 4 or 5 days I believe.

TM: Sure, maybe a week.

GC: Yeah, maybe a week, could've been.

TM: That summer?

GC: Yeah. I believe it was that summer.

TM: Okay, that is very good to know. I might be able to cross-check that. I've got a series of photographs from a Georgie White Glen Canyon trip in 1954. It would be wonderful. I'll try to cross-check to see if Nancy happened to be on that trip. [The river trip was actually with Harry Aleson]

GC: Okay.

TM: I'll do that by looking at the Rainbow Bridge register to see if she signed that on that trip in '54.

GC: That would be very interesting to know.

TM: What did your mom say about that trip when she came back?

GC: Oh, she was just fascinated. She loved every minute of it. She just talked and talked about what a wonderful time, what an adventure. She did mention...I think they had to hike I want to say a mile and a half up to Rainbow Bridge.

TM: 6 miles.

GC: Maybe it was even more than that, it was quite a little hike from the river on up to Rainbow Bridge. But she loved every minute of it and loved the people she was with. I can't remember how many were in her boat party, but quite a few.

TM: Did she have a camera?

GC: If she did, I don't remember seeing pictures.

TM: Okay. Nice. So hiked up to Rainbow Bridge, had a wonderful time. Well, she's going to get sun tanned just like everybody else out there, those river runners. [laughter]

GC: One thing my mother did, wherever she went she left a penny. She was always leaving pennies. I know she left a lot of them at Rainbow Bridge. Wherever she hiked, she'd pitch a penny in a crevice or something like that. So, who knows how many pennies are laying around.

TM: Fun, very fun. What else do you remember about that summer? Did you work it all over at Marble Canyon, or did you just stay there, just kind of like vacation time/summer vacation at Lees Ferry?

GC: It was summer time. We did not work we just did regular chores around the house and all that. Just regular vacation time until it was time to head for Albuquerque and go to school, which I presume was the end of August.

TM: Were you looking forward to that?

GC: Yes, very much so. Yeah, very much so. Jo was very anxious to get into nurses training and I was anxious to get into business college.

TM: Fun. Before we leave Lees Ferry in that summer of 1954, did you guys have a telephone or a radio?

GC: My dad had a radio that he would radio Albuquerque every morning with his water reports to Albuquerque on the flow of the Colorado River.

TM: Okay, so Albuquerque would have been the central headquarters for the USGS at that time.

GC: Right, right, uh-huh. He had to report in at 8:00 every morning.

BC: Did he report to Albuquerque or did he report to Flagstaff?

GC: He was part of the Albuquerque.

BC: Albuquerque, okay.

TM: There is a mention of the superintendent at Grand Canyon somehow getting patched through to talk to some river runners at Lees Ferry. So it would have made sense that somehow he would've patched through to Albuquerque and Albuquerque would have radioed over to your father.

GC: That could be. I'm pretty sure it was Albuquerque he talked to every morning.

TM: Okay. Do you remember any river runners actually coming up and using the radio to talk to Grand Canyon Park people at all?

GC: No, I don't. That doesn't mean it didn't happen though. [chuckling]

TM: Sure, sure. It's a 15-minute event that would have happened 70 years ago or so. [laughter]

GC: And who could remember that?

TM: Exactly, exactly. Anything else you remember about that summer of '54 at Lees Ferry?

GC: Not a whole lot. I was gonna say it was later on, another Christmas, where my dad and Dawn came for Christmas from California that we hiked up the trail up behind the Lees Ferry houses, up to the top. I can't remember it was the old Mormon trail.

TM: Yeah, the Spencer Trail. Hey, you know what, before we go there, let's go back to that summer of '54, I'm kind of still stuck there.

GC: Okay.

TM: Where did you go for food? Did you, on occasion, go into Flagstaff for shopping? How did that work?

GC: My dad there again, had to go in to Flagstaff once a month and deliver his monthly reports to the Flagstaff office of the USGS, which was in downtown Flagstaff. They would spend the night and get up the next day, but then they would get all of their groceries for the whole month.

BC: Groceries, gasoline.

GC: Yeah, groceries.

BC: Fuel oil for the heaters. Propane.

GC: Yeah, it was quite a long trip for them once a month, but they would load up on all the monthly supplies they needed.

TM: Okay, and then drive back. What do you remember about that drive from Flagstaff to Lees Ferry at the time?

GC: It was just a little highway 89A road at that time.

BC: It wasn't 89A, it was 89.

GC: 89.

TM: Yeah, would've been 89.

GC: 89, uh-huh. Course we passed several Indian trading posts along the way. Buck Rogers had one not too far out of Cameron, just before you dropped down into the Cameron Trading Post. Then we'd cross the Little Colorado River where the suspension bridge is.

TM: Were you on the old black bridge, or about when do you remember they built that concrete bridge next to the black bridge? I can't...

GC: Earlier, earlier, Tom, we were on the old black bridge.

TM: Okay, in '51?

GC: Yeah, in '51.

TM: There was a lot of construction going on to replace those suspension bridges.

BC: That concrete bridge wasn't built until they started building Glen Canyon Dam, so that would have been in the late 50s.

TM: Okay, okay. There was a wooden suspension bridge at Mexican Hat and in 1953 or '54, they built a concrete bridge that is still in existence today next to the suspension bridge. It was the heavier truck traffic that was driving these needs to make better bridges.

GC: Oh, interesting.

TM: Okay, so dad is going to stay at Lees Ferry there. What's your mom gonna do?

GC: Well, she's stayed out there several years with him, you know, and every day it seems like somebody was dropping in on them. They had a lot of company from Montana where we came from, and she just kept busy doing her thing, reading. She wrote a lot of letters and they'd drive up to Marble Canyon, maybe not every day but every other day, to deliver work mail and she had to pick up the mail. She had a good time. She did a lot of scrapbooking and everything, but I can't remember what year. They moved there in '54. What year did she go...? They didn't have a whole lot of money on his salary, so she decided she'd better go back into teaching. Her first job was at Page.

BC: No, first job was at Tuba city.

GC: Was it Tuba City? Okay. She got a teaching job at Tuba City.

BC: I'm thinking that was after we were married. That would've been sometime after June of '58.

TM: Okay. I'm listening here and I'm thinking in 1958, would she have driven every day from Lees Ferry to Tuba City, or did she move to Tuba?

GC: No, she moved to Tuba and there again, she commuted on the weekends.

BC: She went with your dad.

GC: Yeah, oh yeah, I guess my dad drove over and got her. I don't know if she liked to drive or didn't wanna drive or they only had one car.

BC: They only had one car.

TM: Yeah, they only had one car, that would make sense, sure, sure.

GC: Yeah, so my dad would drive over every Friday and pick her up, and then take her back on Sunday. He probably spent Sunday night and then came back to Lees Ferry on Monday morning.

TM: That would make sense. Again, it's just like owning dairy cows. You have to stay with them every day, and that work for the USGS on the river was every day.

GC: Right.

TM: There was no day off, so you had to kind of work around...

GC: Right, that's true.

TM: Work around that. So we're following you and your story and so at this point it's time to head off to Albuquerque in the early fall of 1954. What do you remember about that?

GC: It was very exciting, it was a big city. I didn't know much about big cities. And neither did my friend, but we made do. I know I had to either walk down to my business college, and it was quite a little walk, well I learned to take the transit bus. That was kind of scary the first few times, cause I didn't know anything about bus rides or anything, but I soon found out. I went to school all day long and then came home and did my studies. I don't know now where I even ate my meals. It might've been with the nurses at the school.

BC: Where did you live?

GC: I lived across from the hospital. Jo was closer to the hospital in the nurses' dorms, so to speak, but there's some buildings where they held classes for the nurses. It was 2 stories and the top part was where they had some extra bedrooms and that kind of thing. The Mother Superior was up there and the housekeeper for the school was up there. They let me have a room and that's where I lived.

BC: Did you work for most periods?

GC: Yeah. Then while I was going to Business College, the Mother Superior wanted to know if I could come in and help her in her office. So when I'd get out of school, I would go in and work for her 2 or 3 or 4 hours a day in the afternoon.

TM: Oh wow, okay. Doing clerical typing sort of things and office management?

GC: Yeah, office work, uh-huh.

TM: Your college, the Draughon's Business College, was that a 2-year degree or a 4-year degree do you remember?

GC: Actually, it was whatever you could do as fast as you could do it. Mine was supposed to be about a year and a half, and I got it done in 10 months. [Chuckling]

TM: Wow.

GC: As soon as I got through with that, then I went back to Flagstaff.

TM: What about Jo? What kind of program was she in there, do you remember?

GC: Yeah, she was in a 3-year, I believe it was a 3-year nursing program to get her RN. So we parted ways there, when I came back to Flagstaff and she had to stay. But she completed her 3 years of nurses training and got her RN degree.

TM: So, as twins you and Jo, it seems like throughout this great adventure of your mom and dad heading off into the warmer, if you will, west out of Montana, you two girls were really just there for each other it seems like until here in Albuquerque where you're gonna boogie back to Flagstaff and she's going to stay in Albuquerque all by herself for another couple years.

GC: A year.

TM: Was that easy for you guys, do you remember that at all?

GC: I think it was pretty easy because she was busy concentrating on her degree and her studies and she had a lot of nursing friends. So I don't think it was too hard on us to get separated like that. And then I went on back to Flagstaff and lived with Mildred Sheehan again. I had a lot of friends there and got a job so I was very happy doing what I was doing, and I think Jo was very content being in nursing school and doing what she was doing.

TM: This would have been nice because at least your mom and dad when they came to Flagstaff to shop once a month could visit with you.

GC: Right, and we did. Yeah, I got to see them at least once a month.

TM: Great.

GC: Then often times on weekends I would take the Greyhound bus and go out to Marble Canyon and they would pick me up and I'd spend the weekend with them, too.

TM: Tell me about the bus. When did it leave Flagstaff?

GC: Oh, isn't that terrible cause I don't remember. Because I was working, I probably got it early Saturday morning and came back late Sunday night.

BC: Early Monday?

GC: Yeah, early Monday morning, yeah. It'd come through Marble Canyon something like 4:00/2:30 in the morning. My folks would drive me up from Lees Ferry up to Marble Canyon and we'd sit in the car cause it was pitch-black and wait for the bus. Most of the times there was no problem. One time we waited and waited, and the bus never came back. That was on my way back to Flagstaff. A semi-truck came by and stopped. When the guy got out to check the tires or whatever he was doing, my mother asked him "I've got a daughter here that needs to get back to Flagstaff, can she ride with you?" [laughter] He said "Sure," so right here I am in a semi-truck with this strange man. [laughter] But he was very nice and he took me right in to Flagstaff. I can't remember where he let me out at, but I made it to work on time Monday morning.

TM: I was just looking at a journal from 1942 of some people who were going to Marble Canyon. They got on the Southwest Chief in Los Angeles. They arrived in Flagstaff at about midnight. The bus left Flagstaff about 2:00 in the morning and made it to Marble Canyon about 5:00 on that way north. I didn't

know the returning schedule, so the buses must have passed each other. How would that work? Somewhere near Cameron, probably. Cause if you'd got on that bus in the dark and it was heading south, the other bus would have been coming north.

GC: Coming north, yeah.

TM: Anyway, just trying to work out that schedule. So, at least now you were able to visit with your family, some.

GC: Right.

TM: Once a month basis. Who did you start working with there? This would have been in the spring of 1955, is that right?

GC: Right, right. Yeah, my first job in Flagstaff was with a finance company called Pacific Finance. I worked there probably 9 months or so.

BC: That would've been in...

GC: In '56?

BC: Yeah, but you didn't come to town until '57 maybe.

GC: Did I? I can't remember. Maybe I was there a little bit longer, I can't remember. Anyway, one of my girlfriends by the name of Shirley York, she and I were good buddies. I was in a club there named the Venture Club, which is a junior part of the Soroptimist Club. But anyway, I was acquainted with a lot of gals my age. She was working for this law firm in Flagstaff who was part ownership with Buzz's mom and the title company. She said "You need to come to work for the title company." They had an opening.

TM: Okay hang on a second—hang on, let's back up a little bit. So, Shirley worked for which legal firm? Do you remember?

GC: Yeah, it was called Wilson, Compton and Wilson. A law firm.

TM: Had they been in Flagstaff a while?

GC: Yes, a long time.

TM: Okay, Wilson, Compton and Wilson.

GC: Wilson, Compton and Wilson.

TM: Alright. Was there a Mr. Wilson or a Mr. Compton?

BC: Mr. Wilson. Charles C. Wilson Sr. was the older, and Charles B. Wilson Jr. was the...

GC: Younger.

BC: Yeah, the younger, and Orrin Compton was in between the two.

TM: Orrin Compton, okay.

TM: And Charles' middle initial?

BC: B, like boy.

TM: B, thank you, so there was a Charles B...

BC: He went by CB.

TM: The senior did?

BC: Yeah, the senior was called CB. And the younger went by Chas, Charles. [chuckling]

TM: Okay, the younger. What kind of law did they do, do you remember?

BC: Land, real estate law, probate. They did not do criminal.

TM: Okay, all right. So Shirley is working for Wilson, Compton, Wilson. She's a good friend of yours and she suggested that you put in an application for which company?

GC: For Northern Arizona Title.

TM: Okay, and this is in the spring of '55?

BC: Probably more like '56.

TM: I get off my track again, here. Hang on a second. Back to Albuquerque in '54, you finished that in 10 months. That would have been the spring of '55. So this would have been in the fall of '55 or the spring of '56.

BC: It was fall of '55 she came back to Flag, and then she went to work for Pacific Finance.

TM: Okay.

BC: She worked there....

TM: Got it, 9 months.

BC: I don't know. This was still before we got...

TM: Right. You're coming along, but you're not in the story just yet here. [laughter]

BC: Not there yet.

TM: Okay, so this is going to be then in 1956, it sounds like. There's a couple things I think about in Flagstaff in the 1950s and one was the Flagstaff rodeo or the Flagstaff Pow Wow.

BC: Yeah, the 4th of July celebration.

TM: Yeah, yeah. I want to know about that, but also about your father working at Lees Ferry through '55 and through '56. Did he tell any stories about his time there that you remember?

GC: I don't really recall other than the day-to-day events he had. There was always somebody interesting coming down to Lees Ferry that he would visit with, but I don't remember any particular happenings.

TM: Did he keep a journal?

GC: No, I don't believe he did.

TM: Okay. And I wonder did he write letters to your mom that would have recounted the events of the week, or what had happened?

GC: I don't believe they did.

TM: Cause they were seeing each other by then once a week if she was still teaching at Tuba.

GC: Right.

TM: Okay, all right. What do you remember about the Flagstaff 4th of July days?

GC: They were fascinating watching the parades. Buzz, do you remember more?

BC: Well yeah, I grew up at the corner of West Santa Fe Avenue and Toltec Avenue, which was the streets that went from the downtown area to the city park and the rodeo grounds.

TM: Okay.

BC: During the 4th of July, we were inundated by most of them Navajo Indians. Some of them on the old horse and wagon, some of them even with the steel tires. Most of them had converted to rubber tires by then, but they still got to town on the wagon. They'd go by our house and they would camp up in the park area north of Toltec Street. The rodeo grounds were about maybe half a mile from where I lived, maybe three-quarters of a mile, north of Santa Fe Avenue. So there was a constant stream of Indians and tourists that would go up. Also over the Fourth of July there was always a carnival and it was out adjacent to the rodeo grounds. So that was really a hubbub of activity during that period of time.

TM: You know what, Buzz, what let's do is it sounds like you guys are just about ready to meet because Gay has gotten the job now working for Northern Arizona Title Company, which is a company that your mom owns or co-owns. So Gay, why don't you finish this up until you meet Buzz, and that'll end today's Part 2 and then we can start Part 3 and start on Buzz. That may take an interview or two to get him back up to meeting you, and then we'll roll forward from there.

GC: That's good.

TM: So, you've got a job working for Northern Arizona Title, and that would have been where you met Buzz's mom.

GC: Right, right.

TM: Tell me about that.

GC: Okay. Like I say, I went to work for Buzz's mom. I got interviewed and did a little bit of everything in the very beginning at the title company. I knew nothing about what a title company did, what it meant, what it was all about, but I ended up in the bookkeeping end of it with Buzz's mom. She was in charge of all the books, basically running the place. She was a wonderful, wonderful lady, we got along beautifully. Little did I know, she's gonna be my mother-in-law. [laughter]

TM: What was her name?

GC: Her name is Catherine Cameron, but she went by Babe.

BC: She was the youngest of her siblings.

TM: Okay, we're gonna get into that, but I am curious to know why she ended up with the nickname of Babe.

BC: Because, she was the baby of the family. That was rather common in those days that the youngest member of the family, a lot of time they were called "Babe."

TM: Okay, alright. That makes sense. So Babe would...

BC: As a matter, it was interesting, because on my father's side, he also had a brother named Babe.

TM: Who was the youngest of the family.

BC: Yes.

TM: Okay. Gay without Buzz listening, what were your first impressions of Catherine, of Babe?

GC: Oh, she was a beautiful lady, wonderful personality. I just loved her from the minute I saw her. She was easy to talk to, very down-to-earth, very fun lady. She loved life, she loved to laugh. She was very intelligent.

TM: Did she ever say what she saw in you as one of many people interviewing for the job, that you stuck out, that she said "I'm gonna hire Gay."

GC: Not that I'm aware of. I don't know why I got the job. I never really did talk to her about it. [laughter] I don't know if there was a lot of people or not.

TM: When did you first meet Buzz?

GC: Well actually, I knew him through high school. He was a year behind me, I was a year ahead of him in high school. When I lived with Mildred Sheehan, she had a real nice car but she was too busy to drive anywhere. So I went and got my driver's license living with her, so I could take her daughter's to their events and that kind of thing. At that time, Buzz was working in the service station. I was always down at the service station and he would fill up the car for me. [chuckling]

TM: Did you know that he was Babe's son?

GC: No, I did not know his mother at all at that time. I just knew who Buzz was. Like I say, I knew who he was and that was about it, little did I know. [laughter]

TM: When did you put two and two together and realize that Buzz was Babe's son?

GC: When I went to work for his mom, for Babe. Then it wasn't too long after that, he must have come back to the title company and was working in the darkroom, and I thought "Oh, I remember him from filling up the car."

TM: Oh, fun.

GC: Yeah.

TM: Okay, where are we at timewise here? We have been chatting, gosh, another hour and a half has just blasted on by. [laughter]

GC: It has, Tom, yeah.

TM: This sounds like a great place to wrap this interview up, and then Part 3 is going to be on Buzz. Does that fit? Is there anything else you want to add to this as we are here in 1956 and you've gotten a job working for Babe and you've connected Babe to Buzz? Anything else there in 1956 you're thinking about before we wrap this up?

GC: I honestly can't think of anything else, Tom.

TM: Okay. In that case, Buzz does this sound like a good idea?

BC: That's fine. You know, we've still got some Lees Ferry stories probably to tell, because after we were married, we would go out there probably once a month and we were able to get... We were married in '58, and at one point we were able to drive up to the Glen Canyon Dam site and things like that. So we're not really done with Ferry-land quite yet.

TM: Oh no, not at all, but in the timeline of events, it sounds like we've got things fairly well covered. I will definitely want to know from you, Buzz, your first experiences with Lees Ferry and Marble Canyon, growing up in Flagstaff, your adventures in northern Arizona. We will definitely want to get back to Lees Ferry in the timeline, certainly later on in the 1950s. That makes a lot of sense.

BC: Okay.

TM: Great. Okay, well, with that, today is Friday, December 8th, 2017. This is the end of the Part 2 interview with Gay and Buzz Cameron. My name is Tom Martin, thank you so very much.