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Interviewer: Tom Martin (TM)

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TM: Today is Tuesday, May 21, 2019. This is a Grand Canyon oral history part 10 interview with Keturah Pennington. My name is Tom Martin. Good afternoon, Keturah, how are you today?

KP: Wonderful, thank you, and you?

TM: Very good. Well, thank you so much again for taking us on this incredible journey through such an incredible place. Glen Canyon, as it was before the Glen Canyon Dam. And we left off at Grotto Canyon at Mile 57.8.

KP: Do we want to go back to Grotto or are we heading down then to Dungeon?

TM: We are at Grotto. We haven't done Grotto, so—

KP: Okay, Grotto Canyon.

TM: We finished off... Where are we upstream from there? We finished off Catfish, that's right.

KP: Yeah, we finished Catfish and we drifted down to Grotto. And apparently this picture is from Grotto looking back towards Catfish Canyon.

TM: So this is an incredible photograph. The caption reads, "Mile 57.9 Looking upstream from near the mouth of Grotto Canyon. Catfish Canyon landing is at [the] right side of [the] picture." So looking upstream, there appears to be a long sandbar on what would be river right. And that's the mouth of Catfish Canyon where that shear kind of brown wall is. Is that right?

KP: I think Catfish and Grotto are both left-bank canyons, aren't they? Let me go down to the map and check that...

TM: Oh, they very well might be. I'm lost. I don't know.

KP: Well, I don't remember this well as Phil did. Yeah, they're both left-bank canyons. So let me get back to Grotto. And I have a feeling that the river... You can see a bunch of greenery starting at the left edge of the map and running out almost to the center. And then there's a break in it, and a bunch of greenery

much lower, indicating it's probably much farther away, running from there off towards the right. And I believe that the river goes up and off to the right and around the sandbar that's sticking out. It looks like it's right below the greenery but I'll bet there's river between that sandbar and the greenery. And the entrance to Catfish Canyon is off the picture to the right.

TM: Okay, that would make perfect sense.

KP: And the river, then, at the lower, smaller part of the greenery, is running between us and the greenery, but upstream is to the left and it goes around the end of the greenery and back to the right again, just over that low ridge.

TM: Well, I was thinking that the Hermitage would be at the base of those cliffs.

KP: The striped ones.

TM: Yeah, way off in the distance there, is that right?

KP: Right.

TM: Okay. And so these are coming in from our right in this view.

KP: Yeah, they're left-bank canyons. That, I think to river runners, is unambiguous.

TM: That's right.

KP: "Left-bank" means on the river's left side as you face downstream.

TM: Right, correct. Yeah. And this picture's just gorgeous. It's blue sky, white fluffy clouds, cliffs in the far, far distance... It looks thousands of feet overhead... and near cliffs that are a good 300 feet high...

KP: Yeah, I think the far, far distance is probably the Kaiparowits Plateau, isn't it?

TM: I would assume so. I have to go back to the map.

KP: That's what I'm bumblng for right now.

TM: Scurry back and forth and look... So if we're looking upstream from Catfish, Navajo Point would be up there, from Grotto and Catfish, on the Kaiparowits, yeah. Oh my gosh, how pretty is that?

KP: Oh well, I lost myself.

TM: Lost in Glen Canyon again.

KP: Grotto. Okay, yeah, there. I'm back to Grotto now. Yeah, I'm pretty sure that the white cliffs in the far distance is the Kaiparowits Plateau. And you see how high that cliff is, but that only gets down to the top of the cliffs above the river here. So there's another thousand feet of cliff below the white cliffs up there. Big country.

TM: Really is, and really puts it in wonderful perspective there, from down at the river, right at the water's edge looking up, past the near cliffs and then these far distant towering cliffs way out in the distance. Very pretty. Now there's a link here to a page called "April, 1963."

KP: Yeah, that will be flooding.

TM: And again, it was March that the reservoir started impounding behind the dam in a serious way. And "[t]he reservoir has just started to fill" is April 1963 photograph. So, in this picture, there is a tandem foldboat. Looks like its towing a little rubber raft.

KP: Yeah, and I don't know why that raft is empty, but it is.

TM: Unless somebody's swimming and they jumped out for a reason.

KP: Oh, yeah. Let me see if I can enlarge that any. That could be Pat swimming. The tandem foldboat is two foreign students that none of us ever knew very well. We didn't know them before the trip, we didn't know them after the trip, so our only acquaintance with them was then. They spoke English... oh, no. I think the person in that raft... I think you're right, they're towing it alright. I think the person in the raft is lying down sleeping, or possibly photographing clouds up above, if they're not sleeping. But anyway, these two foreign students spoke, understood English very well, I mean, they were studying in English. We had no trouble communicating with them, but they paddled somewhat ahead of most of us, into a canyon that was in the process of being flooded. And there was a sort of an island that had been caused by the floodwaters. There was water all the way around the island, and some Navajo sheep had gotten trapped there. Boy scouts had camped on that island, and they were pursuing the sheep vigorously. And the boy scouts were yelling, "Get that sheep! Get that sheep!" And these two boys heard that, but they heard it in Italian or whatever language they spoke, translated into English as "Get that ship!" And they thought the boy scouts were about to pursue them.

TM: Oh my gosh.

KP: We met them paddling out at a really fast pace. And when they told us their story, it didn't take us long to figure out what was really going down, eventually when we saw the sheep running around. But, yeah. That's just one little interesting story about things that went on down there. A lot of things got trapped on what became islands and couldn't get off to some place where they could get out and away. And of course, sheep don't swim really well.

TM: No, no. Not with that much—with thick woolen coat.

KP: So I don't even remember those boys' names. Let's see... if I can figure out... Boy, I don't know who's in that other kayak either. I know whose kayak it was...

TM: So in April of '63, is this the trip we all hiked down the Hole in the Rock?

KP: Did we—well, I'm sure we did in April. I'm try—yeah. Yeah, it was. We hiked down Hole in the Rock at least three different times. I recognize that kayak. I made two kayaks during this whole thing and sold

one of them. And the person who owns that kayak—or owned it at that time anyway—isn't there, so somebody borrowed that kayak from him, and I am trying to enlarge this enough to see who that might be, and I don't recognize... This was a really big trip, the biggest. 20-some people, 26 maybe—different people. And boy, I can't make much out there... Oh, that seems to be a beard. I didn't know we had any bearded people on our... Okay, no I'm sorry, I can't identify those folks for you.

TM: Okay, no worries. But clearly the reservoir has come up, maybe 30 feet? Maybe 40? In a pretty small amount of time.

KP: Oh, yeah. This is April '63, and when did you say the gates were shut?

TM: March—something I have to look up to check.

KP: Of '63?

TM: Yeah, yep.

KP: Yeah, yeah. It's really come up a bit, that's quite true.

TM: And I remember, somewhere I read, people were really surprised at how fast the reservoir backed up into Glen Canyon. You know, it doesn't have a real steep gradient.

KP: Well, if you think, though, of a hollow-stemmed wine glass, the bottoms of the canyons were really narrow. And if you pour a quarter cup of liquid into a hollow-stemmed wine glass, it really rises up that hollow stem fast.

TM: Right. That's right, that's right.

KP: And then when you pour another quarter cup in, it spreads out and it takes several quarter cups to rise another half inch in the glass.

TM: That's right.

KP: So that's exactly what was happening. We were losing our canyons really fast, which was why we were pushing our trips so hard.

TM: Okay, that makes perfect sense. So I'm gonna go back to the Grotto Canyon page.

KP: "Return to Grotto." Okay.

TM: And the second picture down says, "Grotto Canyon is short but quite spectacular." What are we looking at here?

KP: Fairly near the entrance, just—it was broad. We're in an alcove, you can see most of the alcove on the left margin and on the very top right corner. Big slopes, but greenery. Broad at the bottom with greenery. And it wasn't very far back to that jumpup. And that's it. It was beautiful, but not very long.

TM: The third photograph is, "It ends with a spectacular jumpup." And this really is some amazing sandstone here in what must be some sort of waterfall type thing. And somebody looks like they're scrambled up a little bit, maybe to a pool up above...

KP: Yeah. I went up that far, and to drop the rope and get everybody up, we'd have climbed up through the water, and I'm looking over the lip into a somewhat larger pool there. It's quite deep, and just beyond and to the left and upstream is a jumpup that we weren't gonna get over, so I don't think anybody else even bothered to come up through the waterfall there.

TM: Okay, that would make sense. It just looks very, very pretty.

KP: Let's see. Some of those people I can identify. The red shorts is the person who I talked to today that has pictures that she's willing to share.

TM: Is Pat Armstrong?

KP: Yeah, she's Pat Armstrong now. If she's labeled here, if Phil has labeled her in any pictures, it'll be Pat, then. To her right is Sam Greene. I think the one to his right is Helen McGinnis' brother, I think his name was David, but I don't really remember. And I don't know the one at the far right.

TM: Well, it looks like a short walk and everybody walked up there.

KP: Yeah. And it was pretty all the way around. You can see how high the water table that created springs and enough water for the maidenhair fern and Mimulus and whatnot to grow. It was just a very verdant canyon. Lovely.

TM: And then the last picture is "looking downstream from the mouth of Grotto Canyon to Dungeon Canyon."

KP: Yeah. Dungeon Canyon is the first sunlit vee in the left-bank wall. It's above the sunlight sandbar.

TM: And that sandbar is on river right, is that correct?

KP: Yes.

TM: Okay. What a gorgeous-looking camp down there for a sandbar, gee whiz.

KP: Oh, all of our camps were gorgeous-looking. Well, not the one from the alcoves were different, but they were wonderful. There wasn't a single bad camp anywhere on the Glen Canyon river, where is now down there in that same area. You know, their flat, hard rock, not soft sand that you could dig a little hole in. There's no firewood around now. There was all you needed. Most of the campsites were a number somewhere between one and five in my nomenclature, how many steps it takes from where I put the fires to where I can get enough firewood to... It was just easy-going, wonderful, welcoming, providing... anything you wanted, it was there. If you wanted shade, you had it. If you wanted a sun tan, you got it. If you wanted to listen or watch the birds and were patient enough and nobody bugged the birds, they were there. Everything.

TM: Gosh, nice.

KP: Yes, wonderful. So...

TM: Well, we'll go down to Dungeon.

KP: Right.

TM: At 56.2 mile. Incredible picture starts this off with a sunset shot—sunrise, actually. It says, "Probably a sunrise, looking downstream near Rock Creek." And it would make sense. If it's looking downstream, it's looking west, and the cliff is all lit up. There's low, gray clouds and the sun is coming through. It's really stunning.

KP: The caption means that Phil wasn't real sure when he took it, but he looked at the map and saw where the sun would be to light that cliff, and it has to be sunrise.

TM: It makes perfect sense. It makes perfect sense. The next photograph is from Dungeon from the air. And this is stunning, because it shows the river... The plain is probably 2,000 feet above the ground, maybe three. And it shows the river... Let's see... Dungeon is on the right side of the river, if I get this—sorry.

KP: No, Dungeon's on the left bank.

TM: South side.

KP: Yeah, I guess. I never remember which—

TM: Hang on a second, I'm gonna go to the map. I'm gonna go to the lower map.

KP: It's definitely on the left bank. All the spectacular lower canyons—

TM: Dungeon, yeah. From the south to the north. But on this section of river that it's taking, the river's actually turning to the north, or actually to the northwest, alright. Looking at Phil's map here, so... So there's this incredible picture from the plane, looking down. So if that's northwest, we're looking south. What a tight little canyon, slickrock all around it. But it looks like you can go up it quite a ways.

KP: Yeah, yeah.

TM: Maybe a mile or so, I mean...

KP: And it's narrow. Right from the start, it's narrow. Always.

TM: So there's a photograph "[f]rom the mouth of Dungeon looking out." And I see boats are on the right and there's somebody standing there, arms outstretched, holding some gear on the left on a big, flat bar. And it looks like, at high water, the river backs up in here and drops all this sediment to make—

KP: Yeah, I'm sure that's the case.

TM: —to make a wonderful bench there.

KP: But we all, you know, got into the canyon before we tied up our boats, really.

TM: Oh, but hang on, 'cause the next picture now, it says, "Most of this canyon is wider at the bottom than at the top. In June, when the water is high, many parties use rafts to ferry passengers past this long swim near the mouth." Okay, wow. That's really gorgeous. The sunlight is coming in in spots, in places, and lights up the river that's... This reminds me of a Venetian canal, somehow.

KP: Well, you come at it on the sandbar there, where the figure is holding gear. That's me holding the rope in my right hand and probably somebody's—oh, I do remember. It's somebody's wet pants. They took them off and they realized how much water-wading it was gonna be, and I volunteered to carry them back to their partner. But the sand that I'm standing on is probably underwater in this next picture. The top picture is September of '62. And the bottom picture is June of '62.

TM: Alright. Okay, so in June, the water would've been up and it would flood right on in there. This is really fascinating.

KP: I don't know if we can—no, we can't. Never mind.

TM: Really fascinating to get a sense of the river flooding up into these side canyons during high water and then receding out of them when it dropped back down again. Really fascinating. I just think about little ecological niches and what may have been growing there, et cetera.

KP: And then the river came up. Gonna click on "Next two years" now?

TM: No, but okay. Here we go. I was like "No! I don't want to see." Oh my god. Okay, so the—three, four. Oh my god. Four photographs have popped up here.

KP: Oh, I'm messing around.

TM: June '62. "Most of this canyon is wider at the bottom than at the top." Okay, and then the next photograph is April '63. "The end room in Dungeon Canyon, the location of the cover photograph on Eliot Porter's 'The Place No One Knew.' It's flooded in April, 1963." So this is a jumpup, here, and it looks like you can boat right to the base of the jumpup fall, is that right?

KP: I think it's not a jump up. I think the river turns left. That's my kayak there and we kayaked a fair distance in, because, you know, this was narrow at the bottom and the water fills it up fast, and we kayaked a long way in... and Phil is very good at recognizing photos, skylines, and everything. And he recognized this as the place that Eliot Porter had taken and put on the cover of his book, so he, you know... Get your kayak in there, go a little ahead, move to the left, until he got the picture he wanted, and...

TM: And September of '62. So this is a flat, sandy wash bottom slot canyon that's maybe 20 or 30 feet wide. It just towers up overhead for hundreds of feet.

KP: Wider at the bottom than it is at the top.

TM: Really gorgeous.

KP: And not very wide at the bottom.

TM: Right. And then is that a picture of you in the kayak there?

KP: Yeah. He's ahead of me in this one and turned around and got that picture. And then comes June of '63...

TM: And by June of '63, "Nothing is left of Dungeon Canyon." This is absolutely amazing. The water has gone up high enough. It's clearly come up 100, 150 feet? Maybe 200 feet?

KP: Yeah, I don't have any idea how high.

TM: And Dungeon Canyon is entirely—

KP: Oh, more than that even. I don't know, but there are records that would tell that.

TM: That's right, that's right. Wow. That's just amazing. And then the bottom picture is back to the aerial view from the plane.

KP: To show that big wall that was then flooded and we were up on the flat. Okay, "Return to Dungeon"?

TM: Yes, "Return to Dungeon." And there's a photo. Then the last photo on this page is of five people. And the caption reads, "We occasionally met other parties. Here's one which used yellow rafts to get across the swim. They asked me to take a picture of them with their camera, so I asked them to reciprocate. Here's the picture they took with my camera while I stood with their group. Can anyone tell us who they were?" Yeah, no kidding. Gosh, they're wearing—is that you standing there in the blue pants?

KP: No, I'm not on this trip. Phil was the one on our far right, in the dark swim trunks.

TM: Got it. He's a strong man.

KP: Yes, he was very strong. And we put that strength to good use many times.

TM: He looks like he's a very athletic guy. He's got a lot of muscle definition and... and the other people on the trip, there's—on that other trip—there's two guys in red... life jackets?

KP: Life preservers, yeah.

TM: Bare-chested guy and a...

KP: He didn't get any names. I guess that "Can anyone tell us who they were?" ... he's asking other people who were on that trip. I wasn't on that trip. And he was asking other people if they remembered or wrote it down anywhere.

TM: Yeah, yeah. "Dungeon Canyon is one of the most popular and one of the most photographed in Glen." Okay. Well, alright.

KP: It is very spectacular and it was worth people's time to go into it. But there are others that were equally good and, in my opinion, possibly better.

TM: Really? Oh my. Okay. Well, let—

KP: Well, some people like one thing and some like another.

TM: Yeah, you know, that's right. Let's continue. It says "Continue in Dungeon Canyon." So I'm gonna continue... Oh, boy. The next picture is people are in knee-deep mud. "In September, that swim at the entrance has a lot less water and a lot more mud." Okay, well that makes perfect sense.

KP: The back person is Helen McGinnis, who I hope to get you in touch with about slides. And she's the one who was prone and swimming through mud in Forgotten Canyon.

TM: That's right, I remember that picture.

KP: And this one, she came prepared with her life preserver to keep her face out of the mud, in case it got that bad again.

TM: For her. And so did the other person in there that's slogging along. He's wearing their jacket as a life preserver as well.

KP: Yeah, I think that's Steve Kafirana, but I can't say for absolute positive on that one.

TM: And the next picture down shows two men walking away from the canyon, there. Walking over sand. Looks like beach sand. And they're in a narrow, narrow little slot canyon. That's gorgeous.

KP: As I remember it, it may have been mud, but I don't remember... The floor was easy. It was fairly level, not rocky.

TM: Right, and at one point the mud would transition to sand, and so maybe they've just cleared that. But the light coming in from above, the Dungeon Canyon name really makes sense. Just because of the light, it's dark down there and the light comes in from up above. Next picture has three picture in life jackets, one is looking up.

KP: Yeah, on the left is Helen. On the right is Steve. So I'm pretty sure the one I said was Steve earlier is Steve. And probably the middle one is Helen's brother.

TM: Okay. "Dungeon provided excellent camera shots and was a favorite of photographers." Yeah, I can see why. Golly. "The [classic] camera shot in Dungeon." Yeah, okay. Sandy bottom and light coming in,

raining in from above with dark, dark walls. Gee. “[The] next two years”... Alright, so we saw this. We were here, right? So did you guys camp at Dungeon at all?

KP: No. There were much better campsites. Oh, and we hit in the middle of the day. We wouldn’t have camped that early anyway.

TM: Right, okay. And what a great time to be in there midday, with light streaming in like that.

KP: Yeah.

TM: Okay, so “Go down to mile 55 - Rock Creek.”

KP: Oh, this is the December trip. The first December trip.

TM: So what—tell me about the first December trip.

KP: That’s when we saw an alcove where Phil and I had camped started to rain and snow and we saw a lot of little waterfalls sprout up. And then other pictures with snow up on the mountains—very pretty, frosted with white. And then the river began to freeze. And I suspect... is the alcove that we camped in and watched the snowstorm... and the river was frozen. You can see, what... 10, 12 feet out, it froze along the shore. And Phil is breaking the ice so that we can get the kayak, which you can see on the lower right corner of the picture, back to the open water out there.

TM: Okay. And here in ’62, actually all of these trips, was the takeout at Cane Creek, or are you gonna pass that and be able to go down to the dam? I’m jumping ahead, so I know you’ll explain that, but—

KP: We could never go past Crossing of the Fathers because the rafts... that was the last place the road hit the river. The rafts didn’t go upstream, so we always—

TM: —stopped there.

KP: Except for the Labyrinth Canyon trip.

TM: Okay, so how—

KP: Oh, no. Some of the later trips, when just Phil and me, we didn’t need to take out there. We had the kayaks, and kayaks could go upstream.

TM: Right. Oh, so you could go down and then turn around and paddle back up.

KP: Right.

TM: Wow, okay. Great. So Phil’s got a ways to go to get to open water there, how’s he gonna manage that?

KP: Well, he only had to get enough cracked up to get the kayaks in, and then we could get in the—the ice is very, very thin right there. It only had one night to freeze. Sort of like you find on the road puddles, it’s frozen over, and it goes *tinkle tinkle* when you step on it. It’s not very thick.

TM: What's he using there to break the ice?

KP: A piece of driftwood. I mean, a board—

TM: A piece of plywood, yeah. A sort of board, alright.

KP: Yeah, it's not plywood, I would be surprised. But it was a thick board and we were lucky to find it, otherwise we would have to use probably our boots or something. Anyway, it was no big problem, it's just interesting that the river had started to freeze along the edge and had frozen very thinly out partway. So we knew that we might be heading for trouble.

TM: Why, yes. Yeah, good thing. This is gonna be freezing in on us, but you got to go anyways, so...

KP: Yeah. There was no sitting around. But back to summer in the next picture.

TM: Yeah, it's a couple people in shorts. They're certainly not worried about ice right there. Green vegetation. And fascinating—

KP: That's Pat Armstrong at the top and me at the bottom in the plaid shirt. And there you can see how in some places, they stashed brush along the right side and then flattish rocks, I don't say "flat" rocks, but "flatt-ish" rocks. And we found it easier to go down the slickrock, but we weren't sheep, so...

TM: Alright. And that goes right up to the skyline up there.

KP: Well, yeah. The skyline isn't very far away, and that's just a false summit... leveled off for a little and then kept climbing. Phil has another picture, though. He was very good at remembering where these landmarks were. And the water at that time is up higher than what Pat is now, not quite up... You can still see those two sticks sticking up at the top of the skyline there, but it was...

TM: How far are you from the river surface there? Are you quite a ways, are you a couple hundred feet up, or is this the—

KP: Oh, I don't think it was a couple hundred feet, but it may have been 60 or so. I don't know what... Pat and I are probably, what... 12 feet, 15 feet below what the water level was at his second picture. So if we could figure out what we can—let's see—what we... In April, that would have been—this picture was taken in September of '62. And whatever week we were there in April, the water was—as I say—higher than Pat is now.

TM: Okay, alright. And that makes sense, yeah. It had come up a good 30 feet or so.

KP: Oh, at least, yeah.

TM: By April of '63, yeah. Okay. And then the next picture...

KP: That's where the sheep trail sort of ended.

TM: Okay, so it went up to the slickrock on top of the cliff—of the riverside cliffs. And in theory, you could work your way around the far, higher-up cliffs to get out to open land, I bet.

KP: Yeah. Well, you can see there's actually a fairish amount of vegetation—I wouldn't say "grass," but sheep will eat it anyway—tucked among the rocks here and I don't know how much farther up they took their sheep. We didn't spend a lot of time looking because we were eager to get going.

TM: Right. And the caption here says, "Looking downstream from the top of the sheep trail. This is the top of the four-mile fetch, the longest straight stretch of canyon in Glen. When the wind blew strongly in its direction, hand powered rafts were at its mercy and kayaks had difficulty making headway in a head wind. That's Gunsight Butte in the far background." Okay. Yeah, that would be terrifying... Wind out of the southwest—you'd be stopped. Gosh, do you remember that? Do you remember the wind really whipping through there?

KP: I don't think the wind ever whipped when we were there, because all of our party were always in rafts and we didn't have to sit out any time waiting for the wind to quit for the rafts to move. I suspect it didn't really happen very often, but it was spectacular.

TM: Oh, yeah. Gosh. And then the last photo on this page says, "A wall in one of the small side canyons along the left bank [in] the four-mile fetch. (... canyon might be Katie Lee's 'Little Dungeon.' We found disagreements in the names of these canyons as we researched them.)" Oh, that makes sense. That's really pretty. Little slot canyon.

KP: Yeah, we had a little trouble sometimes distinguishing which name she put to which canyon, but... I suppose if we got her pictures and ours, we might be able to figure it out. Nobody, as far as I know, ever has.

TM: So this sheep trail is, oh, maybe 150 to 200 feet above the river, it looks like.

KP: I would imagine, yeah.

TM: At the top there, okay. Was there a cairn or some sort of pile of stones to mark that fact that the trail headed off the cliff edge there?

KP: Oh, you thinking about that funny-looking cairn that we saw in another picture?

TM: Well, I just kind of wondered, you know, I'm going back up to the picture of the two of you working your way down the cliff by the trail.

KP: I have a feeling that the Navajo, by the time they had spent so many days working on that trail, could've walked to it in the dark.

TM: They knew where it was, sure.

KP: Yeah, and we're the only ones who cared. So I don't remember any cairn, but, you know, it could have fallen over, blown over, or never been there.

TM: Right. Well, let's go to Little Dungeon.

KP: And back to winter.

TM: Oh, oh brr. "Little Dungeon Canyon" at "Mile 52.3." The first photograph is taken from the nose of a kayak, looking—it looks like the four-mile fetch... yep, sure enough. "Looking downstream along the four-mile fetch, just above Little Dungeon Canyon." This is December of 1962, and the icebergs are winning. Open water, but it looks like the icebergs are gonna take care of that soon.

KP: Yeah. They're not very firm icebergs, now, though. You can possibly tell the kayak is crashing through them.

TM: Okay, so you were able to push through, but this would be on it's way to freezing solid.

KP: Yeah, and we kept thinking about that. Looking at the map... Where is there land along at the base of cliff, and where is there not? Some of our party—not our party—some of the hiking clubbers got stuck where it did freeze bank-to-bank... So, as I say, we kind of worried about it, but...

TM: Yeah, yeah, it's really... I would imagine it would be cause for concern. So that's Gunsight Butte there, way down in the distance?

KP: Yeah.

TM: Okay. I'm gonna run away to the map for a minute. Lower Canyon Map. And I'm gonna look for... "Crossing of the Fathers"... look for "Gunsight Butte," I don't see that. "Grotto"... Okay, I see the long fetch, there. And Little Dungeon is about three-quarters of the way down the fetch, this big long straightaway. I'm trying to see what... okay.

KP: So sit down and to the right. I'm not on the map, so... Okay, "Lower Map." Oh, "Gunsight Butte" isn't on the map, "Gunsight Canyon" is.

TM: Right. So it's down there somewhere, that's—yeah. So "Looking upstream along the four-mile fetch, just below Little Dungeon..." That river left is a long series of cliffs, couple hundred feet high. It comes right down to the water. Really gorgeous, pretty open sky. And then Little Dungeon Canyon, there's a photograph of a woman in her red shorts wearing a hat. Is that Carla? It says "Carla Selby"?

KP: Yeah.

TM: Okay. "The mouth of Little Dungeon." Really pretty light in that picture, especially up above, the upper part of the photograph. The cliffs up there are sort of all golden, they're so like... just on fire on the inside.

KP: When the sun hit them, they were really glowing, yes. And it kept going up from there.

TM: So I'm gonna read this caption here. It says, "Little Dungeon doesn't have overhanging walls as Dungeon has. (We had difficulty identifying the canyons here along the left bank of the 'four-mile fetch'—mile 51 – 55—with Katie Lee's list. This is the next to last canyon before West Canyon Creek. It

may be the one Katie Lee called 'Dove.' We called the last one 'Dove.' Katie might have called that one, 'Happy Canyon'.") So there's a photograph here. Is that Carla in the red shorts there?

KP: Yeah.

TM: Okay, and then who's behind her?

KP: Sam Greene.

TM: Okay, and then it looks like that's the end, but does it keep going there?

KP: I think they're coming back. I think they're going downstream at the moment.

TM: Yes, and so you think that's about as far as they could make going up...

KP: Oh, no. No, I'm sure it wasn't. Phil... I am thinking shall I say this, and I'm gonna say it anyway, because Sam's no longer with us, and I don't know where Carla is. Carla was the most dainty person I have ever known. And Phil felt no one would believe that she was in mud up to her knees unless he had pictures of her. But as you can see in the picture previous, she's muddied pretty far up.

TM: She's there, yup. Yep.

KP: And in this one, you can tell that her knee is muddy already.

TM: Yeah, she's in it. She's in the thick of it. There's no escape.

KP: Somehow she managed to have a white shirt. I think she's the only one of us who ever wore white... No, we might have worn shirts that started out white, but I don't think there's any pictures of any of us in white shirts except for Carla.

TM: Well, she gets the award for the whitest white shirt, at river mile 50. That's great. And then below that is, looking up from the top of the jumpup climb and Little Dungeon.

KP: Yeah. We came to several jumpups and sometimes we do a three-man shoulder stand to get the rope up there.

TM: Alright. To get up the next level?

KP: Yeah. We were very determined. These canyons were great. The farther downstream you got, the greater the canyons got and the harder we worked to get up them. The upstream canyons we might quit fairly soon.

TM: Well, yeah. They were wide and open. I remember those photographs. You know, you were just like "Well, we just figured we get out here, so we turned around and went back." These are like, "Woah, these are really tight little slot canyons that are worthy of exploring."

KP: They were very much worth exploring. Okay, so "down to Dove"?

TM: “[D]own to Dove.” Uh oh, ice again. 51.5. Now there’s—

KP: Yeah, Phil sorted his pictures by mile, and the winter trip one showed the mile of wall that he wanted to see, why, that’s the one he took.

TM: And so is that... Are those the... On the left, it looks like it’s the tandem foldboat?

KP: No, that’s a different one. That’s Margaret Young and Jim Richards.

TM: Okay. And is that you on the right?

KP: And that’s me on the right.

TM: And this would be toward the end of the fetch, is that right?

KP: Yeah. We’re coming down towards Dove Canyon. Just in the shadows... it’s hard to pick it out... not worth it.

TM: It looks pretty cold. There’s ice... sort of trying to kayak your way through these icebergs. Wow, and then the—

KP: When they got bigger and firmer, we sometimes rammed ourselves up on them. Even the rafts could ram themselves onto them and ride them down. And the change in perspective once you were floating with the ice was really very striking. Most interesting.

TM: So the next picture down after the ice, the boating on the ice photo, is the “landing at Dove Canyon is about a mile upstream of West Canyon Creek. That’s Gregory Butte looming over West Canyon Creek.” On the left—on the right, is the river in ice, and on the left in shade, looks like it’s a giant sandbar, is that right there?

KP: Yeah.

TM: Okay. That’d be a good place for a camp if you wanted, but...

KP: Yeah, I suppose it would have been.

TM: Might be a little wet.

KP: We did better. We did the Anasazi Alcove, but... I don’t really know where most people camped on the winter trip, but anyway, yeah.

TM: Hopefully in a warm alcove, with a fire. Yeah, gee. So... this December 1962 photograph, it shows an individual standing in the sun right next to the river. Behind them are two people in shadow. And is that above Dove Canyon or is that West Canyon Creek down there?

KP: I think we’re at Dove Canyon here, and sometimes, I can make these pictures expand, but I’ll be blessed if I can... And I don’t know people’s winter... Let’s see, this must be Phil’s kayak in the

foreground, and he probably just stepped out of it and took the picture. And I'm pretty sure that my kayak is down a little farther.

TM: Okay, so that might you standing there?

KP: Yeah. And that's my paddle...

TM: Oh, also maybe that's Margaret and Jim down there, behind you, past you.

KP: I don't know, but I think I just really, really goofed. And I don't know how to get myself back, except to go clear back to the bloody beginning. This is gonna take me a while.

TM: No worries, I'll look at pictures in the meantime.

KP: Okay. This is really... Alright, computer. If you want to live past tonight, you better...

TM: Wow. I'm just looking at the photographs here in Dove Canyon, just going "Oh, my heavens."

KP: Okay. Well, I'm back to Dove Canyon, now. Now, let me get to where you are.

TM: Okay. I'm looking at the three people that are wading in water up to their armpits, as they try to work their way along and into Dove Canyon... "starts with a long swim."

KP: This is one of a very few pictures that Phil didn't take. That's Phil closest to us. And me in plaid shirt in the middle. And I don't think I can say with certainty who the next two are... So, no. Phil and me are the only two... Helen McGinnis took the picture.

TM: Okay. What's really fascinating here is this water line that is 10 feet, 15 feet over your heads.

KP: Right. That was from when the dam—diversion tunnels—accidentally got plugged up and the water rose for a few days. Few weeks, I think. And you can see how much it rose and how much mud—those mud cracks are an inch thick or more. It had already deposited an inch of mud.

TM: Wow. Just there and then gone back down again. Oh my gosh.

KP: Right, and that, of course, is a matter of record somewhere, too. So you can see how much damage was done in just a few days.

TM: Right. How high the water is shot right up and then went back down again. And then the next picture is December '62. "Above the swim, Dove Canyon is easy walking." So in December of '62, I would not want to have swam that. Was the water low enough for you guys to walk in there?

KP: Let's see, in December of '62... It—yeah... Well, no. That's not quite true. The water was high and we boated in past all that mud and got a lot farther back before we had to get out and walk.

TM: Okay, and then there's a sidebar that says, "The next two years."

KP: Yeah. That means Phil had pictures from...

TM: Oh, so there you are, working your kayak in there in June of '63.

KP: Yeah.

TM: Quite a ways up higher. And then...

KP: And then in '64?

TM: June of '64. "Dove Canyon is completely inundated." Wow. So I'm gonna "Return to Dove Canyon." And then these last two pictures. I'm gonna read the captions. So December of '62. "This is one of the finest of the long narrow canyons. As we walk up further and further, the light intensity gets less and less. The camera must be on a tripod for most of the pictures and a rather long exposure—perhaps as much as three minutes—is needed. This results in blue pictures, and we came to know these canyons as 'the blue canyons.'" Absolutely stunning. Just tight slot canyons...

KP: Yeah, but look at the texture on the wall and the twisting of them. Imagine how floodwaters rushing through there must have banged first on this wall, and then on the other.

TM: Terrifying to think about and flood.

KP: Yeah, right.

TM: And then the last picture is one of the blue pictures, and it's like a black-and-white, only it would be called a "blue-and-white." And the captions reads—

KP: Yeah. Phil sometimes added a little bit of red to them to give them a purple color.

TM: Yeah, it's really just gorgeous.

KP: Oh, he explains that here, yeah.

TM: I'll read it out. "The predominance of blue is the result of 'reciprocity failure' in the emulsions of the film (Kodachrome): as the light gets very dim the responses of the three emulsions in the film no longer follow a simple linear relationship of image density to exposure time. The red and green sensitive layers are most affected by reciprocity failure—twice the exposure time does not result in half the density of the transparency. The film is relatively 'blind' to the red and green ranges of the spectrum. The blue-sensitive layer retains much of the reciprocity relationship, so its response is still pretty good. The blue image remains while the red and green images are largely gone," hence the blue canyons. Wow. And this, now, has boulders on the bottom of the canyon floor...

KP: Yeah, and very often, the boulders are as wide as the canyon floor. About three there near the center, vertically... are an example of that.

TM: It's just as stunning or more so as Antelope Canyon, it's just a classic sandstone slot canyon. Really gorgeous.

KP: I'm sorry. Where are you now?

TM: I'm still there. I'm looking at the blue picture there. And then I guess "Continue in Dove Canyon," so absolutely. Let's do that. Oh my gosh. So now there's more blue... "Ansel Adams felt that these blue pictures were 'too chemical' in appearance and strongly suggested that I find a cure for the problem. The originals are truly monochromatic—high saturation blue to white. To compensate a little, I've used Photoshop to add a little bit of 'second dimension' to the color: mostly red. This makes the image closer to the actual appearance. When we hiked these 'blue' canyons we often needed a flashlight to see. And what little illumination we had was usually from an intensely blue sky overhead." That's just absolutely gorgeous.

KP: This was one of our favorite canyons.

TM: And it looks like it just went on and on.

KP: Yeah, it did.

TM: Really, really nice. And again, it's maybe 20 feet wide. But sinuous, very curvy back and forth.

KP: Yeah, I suppose that purple-y one might have been 20 feet wide. Almost all of it you could touch both walls with your hands at the same time.

TM: Okay. Really, really fascinating. Would've been really neat to watch Phil kind of play with these in Photoshop just to wrack his brain to get the colors right.

KP: Yeah, as Ansel Adams pointed out, those weren't really the colors. They were—it was just like being in a dark room. There wasn't much color, really. We didn't think of the walls as blue when we were standing in them. We felt—we thought of them as shaded. Dark.

TM: Well it's just interesting. It's amazing that you got any photographs out of there at all.

KP: Phil was very good.

TM: Very good. No kidding. And then the last photograph caption of the narrower says, "The jumpup in Dove Canyon that stopped most parties had a hole in the ceiling directly overhead. On our last visit there, we did a three-man stand to get Keturah up through the hole. (She then lowered her nylon rope with the loops and the rest of us got up.) We didn't push it much further: too difficult. (And no pictures.)" What do you remember about that?

KP: We were very determined to get up, and Phil is strong enough that he could be the bottom man on a three-man shoulder stand.

TM: Wow. Who was in the middle?

KP: Oh, on this one... I don't know. Maybe Steve Kafirana? I really don't know who was in the middle of this one.

TM: So Phil would stand there. The next person would climb up on him and stand up on his shoulders, and then you would climb up Phil and up the person above him to get up on their shoulders?

KP: Right, but Phil and I had done two-man shoulder stands, so often that it was really fairly easy. He would stand and brace himself, usually with back or bottom, against the wall... and cross his hands and extend them to me, and I would put one foot on a knee and he would uncross his hands as he—as I pushed up, he raised me up. And there I was, standing on his knee with his hands above his head and my next foot at his shoulder. And then all I had to do was turn around, or if it was just two of us, why, we—I'd climb up from there. So, you know, he was very good at the shoulder stand, so it wasn't real hard. It sounds impressive, but it wasn't.

TM: It sounds impressive, so—well, you think it's easy, I'm like "you had a human ladder!" Wow.

KP: The impressive part was that Phil was strong enough to hold two or three of us for long enough to get up. He was very strong. Okay, so we're where?

TM: So the next picture down is—it looks like you in the kayak on the far right. "On the river just below Dove Canyon. West Canyon Creek ahead entering the Colorado from behind a long thin wall."

KP: Can you see the wall?

TM: It looks like it—so I can see a cliff with—

KP: Just to the left to that very white streak coming in the right.

TM: The sand, behind your head.

KP: Yeah, sand in the sun.

TM: Right. And then it looks like there's a small wall down there. It's growing in size to the left.

KP: Right. And the creek—West Canyon Creek—is behind that wall, from where we're looking. So we're gonna land over there on the shaded part of that sandy strip and walk in.

TM: Not until we turn and take a look back up the four-mile fetch. "The lower end of the four-mile fetch. Dove Canyon is the first canyon on the right; just over the kayak." Okay, that's where we just were. And now, this is probably from down near the mouth of West Canyon, looking back up. Okay. That's gorgeous. And that little butte up there on the right. The little button. So in the kayak, you're coming—yeah, that's right, this is... This must be an upstream view, is that right? "The lower end of the four-mile fetch."

KP: Yeah, we're looking upstream.

TM: Right, so you're coming toward...

KP: Dove Canyon is a left-bank canyon.

TM: That's right, and so you're coming toward the camera in your kayak, is that right?

KP: My picture's unless...

TM: You're center-right. There's a kayak there.

KP: Yeah, I think I'm just sort of—

TM: Drifting along?

KP: Drifting along, but yeah... The canyon is over there near me, anyway. I can't—oh yeah, I can pick it up. No, I can't for sure...

TM: Let's go down to West Canyon.

KP: Okay, "West Canyon Creek." Ah, yes.

TM: Okay, so here's—once again, Gregory Butte—I'll read this, 'cause a big butte there in the skyline with the river and a bunch of boats. And I recognize the thin wall that you told me about, that's the entrance to West, so "Gregory Butte from the river in front of Dove Canyon. West Canyon Creek is behind that long, thin wall. Where it joins the Colorado, was a very large panel of petroglyphs. While the dam construction proceeded, the tunnels carrying the water around the construction site jammed with driftwood causing the water to back up and form 'the bathtub ring' we see in this, and many other, pictures. It also destroyed the petroglyph panel." Wow.

KP: Yeah. And of course, the petroglyph panel and the pictographs will never come back. But we might get the rest of it back.

TM: December of '62. Trying to work through an ice flow down to the mouth of West Canyon.

KP: Yeah. The wall behind which the canyon enters the river is reaching off to the right of the picture. We have to go farther right than the picture goes to get around the end of that wall. But you can see snow on the sand dunes up above.

TM: Yes, that looks very cold.

KP: When the sun came out, it wasn't all that cold, but at night it was, yeah. We were all glad we had good, warm sleeping bags... that there was plenty of firewood around.

TM: I bet. And then the next picture is a picture of the canyon walls overhead reflected in the water below. And this picture—

KP: That's one of Phil's arty pictures.

TM: It's definitely artsy, fartsy. Boy, it's really gorgeous. It's titled, "This picture, the second picture in our Glen Canyon slide show, was taken in West Canyon Creek. We have many stories to tell about West Canyon Creek... relatively few pictures—and they are run-of-the-mill Glen Canyon Spectacular. Pictures will be added, and perhaps some of the stories." So tell me a West Canyon story.

KP: Yeah, so I was gonna say I can't think what story he's talking about. Oh, I can think of one and it wasn't a winter trip story. We were camping on that sandbar and I don't know why, but there were no

rocks on that sandbar—anywhere. And everybody, every night, would get themselves at least two and sometimes three rocks and build a little fire under it and set their pot on top to cook. And here we are on a sandbar with no rocks. And you couldn't dig a pit in the sand, because it kept caving in on you. People really scouted around and some of the rocks they used were pretty little. But even so, there were so few of them that there was this row of little fires. There was one rock and a little fire, and another rock on the other side of that fire with a pot sitting on it. But if the second rock was possibly big enough, there was fire on the other side of it and a rock on the other side of the fire and two pots were sitting on the rock between the fires. And there was a line of four or five little fires so that you got five potholders with only six rocks. And so that was one—if we'd gone up the canyon, why, we would've probably found more rocks and so forth, but that was one of the stories. I can't remember what other ones he's thinking of. Now, if I think of them between now and we talk again, I'll tell you.

TM: If you were camped in the mouth of the canyon, it'd be all just sand and mud. It would be no rocks. Gosh.

KP: Well that happened once, anyway. Occasionally, the canyon wasn't quite as giving and generous as it might have been.

TM: Did you walk—would it go a long ways up there? Could you walk...?

KP: Yeah. We could and pretty much did, because we knew it was gonna go, and if we didn't do it, why, we weren't going to do it ever. It wasn't like the up ones that we could come back next year and they'd still be up there.

TM: I'm gonna jump to the map for a minute. West Canyon comes in from the south. That's a very big canyon. Okay. And then Last Chance Creek is just downstream of that. Well, maybe this is a good place to call it for part 10.

KP: Oh, you saw the great blue heron tracks?

TM: I did. And let's talk about that. This is still on this page for West Canyon. This is a weird picture, because it almost looks like it's the... it's the negatives of positive prints, if that makes any sense.

KP: No, it's in mud. Soft mud.

TM: Right. But the footprints look like they're bumping up instead of depressed down, in my mind's eye.

KP: Yeah, that's just the lighting.

TM: Isn't that something?

KP: I wasn't on this trip either, but this is the first time that almost any of the party had seen great blue heron tracks, and they were amazed, impressed. You can see that somebody had come in and stood with their feet together there looking at those tracks, wondering what they were, and when other people came in from the other side and looked and so forth... But finally, somebody got them identified.

But they were—some of them beginning to wonder what they were likely to encounter in there. And I think there were some pretty wild guesses. They knew it was a bird, but emu?

TM: Teratorn? Yeah, big bird. Gosh.

KP: Well, that's where I grew up. We had the Rangoon legend. In many creeks of the Midwest, there are almost-round boulders of various sizes. And the story to the naïve was that those were petrified Rangoon eggs. And Rangoon was a prehistoric bird that was huge, and so forth. And I imagine some stories of that nature went around here too...

TM: So, yeah. These would be Rangoon chick tracks.

KP: On hiking club trips, there were two real jokesters in the bunch. Phil was one of them and the other one never came on any of these Glen Canyon trips, but... I can imagine there were stories about those great big tracks before they got identified. Okay, down to the last picture.

TM: Down to the last one, which is just heartbreaking. It's this incredible picture looking upstream or downstream, and there's river, and there's near cliffs, and in the far, far distance are big giant cliffs too. And it says "Just below West Canyon Creek, perhaps", at "Mile 49.9."

KP: Yeah. Obviously, we had pulled into a little slot. Possibly Phil and I were exploring, and once we got in, he turned around and saw a nice picture and he was very alert to picture possibilities.

TM: Thank heavens, thank heavens.

KP: Did I tell you about his film purchasing?

TM: No.

KP: Never mind.

TM: Oh, wait. No, I think you did. That he was buying in bulk and cutting the stuff and loading his own reels.

KP: Well, yeah. He always did that 'cause it was cheaper. But his first trip, I believe he said he took six rolls of film. And he figured for a week, a roll a day was probably gonna be good. The next trip, he took 32 rolls. And other people tried to buy some, and then he wouldn't sell for any price. I mean, they upped the price... No, he came back with 32 rolls and wished he'd had more.

TM: I bet. Yeah, this is the sort of place if you had a lot of film, you could shoot a lot of film.

KP: Okay, so until next time, then?

TM: Until next time. And I'll wrap this up, but hold the line for a minute. Today is Tuesday, May 21. This concludes part 10 oral history interview with Keturah Pennington. My name is Tom Martin. Keturah, thank you so very, very much.