

Transcription: Grand Canyon Historical Society

Interviewee: Keturah Pennington (KP)

Interviewer: Tom Martin (TM)

Subject: Keturah narrates early 1960s Glen Canyon river trips side-canyon by side-canyon using photos her husband Phil took. This interview travels from mile 88.4 to Music Temple at mile 75.9

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TM: Today is May 2, 2019. It's Thursday. This is a Grand Canyon Oral History interview with Keturah Pennington. My name is Tom Martin. Good afternoon, Keturah. How are you today?

KP: Very good, thank you. I hope you are, too.

TM: Yes, fine. Thank you. Will you give us permission to record this Part 7 interview over the telephone?

KP: Most certainly, yes.

TM: Thank you very much. To continue our journey down through Glen Canyon, at 88.4 Mile is a place called Hole in the Rock. Can you tell us about the place and why it's called that?

KP: I'm sure there are others with better history knowledge than I have, but that's where the Mormons crossed the Colorado River. They built a road down one side of the river, floated their wagons across, and built a road up the other side. They were determined to go West.

TM: Okay, and they were with wagons and oxen, is that right?

KP: That's my understanding, yes.

TM: So, let's jump in with the website here and the website we are following is www.explorepx.com. On the lower right of that main webpage is a link to Glen Canyon. There's maps in there and lots of photographs for lots of different places. There's two different breakouts here for Hole in the Rock. The first one's right there at the river. Keturah, there's a nice picture here of a kayaker in the water. Is that you?

KP: Yes. I'm almost certain it must be the September '62 trip and we're getting down to Hole in the Rock. In September of '62 we started up at Hite and floated down here. On other trips, when we didn't want to spend the time getting all the way from Hite down to Hole in the Rock on the river, we drove out the Hole in the Rock Road and parked there, did our shuttle of course, but then hauled our boats down the old route down to the river. The old route has disintegrated a bit since the time that the Mormons came across. Looking at it, I would never have dreamed of trying to take wagons down that slot. But they did it and they succeeded, so you gotta give them a lot of credit for ingenuity and skill and persistence and plain old hard work.

TM: The second photograph on this page, I think, shows a view looking into what is the right bank access to the Hole in the Rock crossing. It looks very steep and very fast and goes down into what looks like a vegetated jungle. There's just this...

KP: I suspect it looked that same way to the Mormons, but it was the best they could find. They had scouts out going up and down the river. And, you know, if you wanted to get down and across the river and that was the best you could find and you said "let's go for it, boys," you really got to admire their tenacity and whatever else.

TM: Indeed. How does the route work? I can see there's a notch at the top. But the lower half looks like it goes... Does it run right down through what looks like a small gulley full of trees?

KP: Yeah. Somewhere there is a picture of where they entered it. I'm scrolling down and I don't see it there.

TM: I wonder if it's on the next page, "The Mormon route down from the plateau" page.

KP: Maybe I was wrong when I said we should click on the one nearest the river. Yeah, let's go to "The Mormon route down" because that starts up at the top where we came in.

TM: Great. So now we've moved to the page titled "Hole in the Rock. The Mormon settler's route east, across Colorado River and Plateau, Mile 84.4." The first picture is a photograph looking upstream, yes? Says "Looking upstream part way down the Hole in the Rock route."

KP: Now go down to the next picture and that's starting down the Hole in the Rock.

TM: This is a classic photo. There's four or so people here, heading down this very narrow slot. It looks like its only six or seven feet wide.

KP: And they somehow got their wagons through there.

TM: Okay. The caption for this picture is "June 1961. Twelve people starting down the Mormon Hole in the Rock route, their introduction to the sublime, the spectacular, the irreplaceable Glen Canyon." The fine print says "There was a thirteenth in the party but he had to leave us back at the end of our trip down the Narrows of Zion to take his bar exams in Colorado. He passed the exams, soon got elected to the state legislature, and later became governor." Who was that?

KP: Dick Lamm.

TM: Oh my gosh! Governor Lamm, of course. How about that! So this is 1961 for this photograph at top of Hole in the Rock. I'm looking at a person in red shorts; it looks like they're carrying some gear. Did these people go down and camp out down there or were they just on a day trip?

KP: That was just a day trip. That was the one that got all of this started. They went out and camped at Hole in the Rock and did this hike down to the river. Then they went over and got into the Escalante from... The cars were parked at the top of Hole in the Rock and it's not very far over to the Escalante from there. If you look at the girl in the red shorts and imagine her stretching out her arms, you can imagine that she could touch both sides of that slot at the same time. That's how narrow it was, and I really don't know how they ever got the wagons through there.

TM: It certainly looks like she could do that and it makes me think that the wagons must have been just that wide.

KP: Knowing how the Mormons engineered this, I can imagine that they chipped both walls until they were just an inch wider than the widest wagon and did it that way, but I don't know that for sure. But they were very determined and didn't give up. They weren't gonna let anything stop them.

TM: The next photograph is of an airplane with its engine running. This is a tricycle-gear plane. Navajo Mountain is in the background and the caption reads "Hole in the Rock airstrip. Two of our twelve are missing having gotten lost coming out of the Escalante the day before. One of Page Aviation's planes was patrolling the area with a pilot and a park ranger. I accompanied them on a search flight. The aerial photos taken in 1961 were taken from that flight. Here we have just landed after our search."

KP: I believe I mentioned somewhere in our discussion that a plane came over and the vehicles from the hiking club party were parked on the edge of the runway, the airstrip, yeah, runway. He buzzed them and said, "get the hell off the runway." They waved him down and got help to go search for the lost hikers.

TM: Nice, and the caption here says "The following year we started chartering the same plane and often had the same pilot."

KP: They got so they knew us fairly well. They're the ones who would fly the car shuttle drivers up to Hite.

TM: The next picture down shows... It says "Keturah maneuvering her kayak down the Hole in the Rock route used by the early Mormons to cross Colorado."

KP: Oh, do you not have the one that says "Looking across the Escalante River Canyon as we walked back to the cars"?

TM: I do have that one.

KP: Okay. In that picture are the two that got lost. They had been down in the Escalante River and Phil had left his map at the gauging station and they picked it up for him and were bringing it back up. Although it's not really very obvious, if you look on the left side there's two white dots about a fifth of the way in from the left and a little bit up from the bottom, those are the two hikers. The sun is getting low, but it's still hitting their heads and shoulders. Those are the ones that are veering off farther than they should and are about to get lost."

TM: Wow, so somebody actually got a picture of them as they headed out. Oh my gosh.

KP: So they spent the night out.

TM: It looks like great country to go get lost in.

KP: Yes. And since they had the only map, it tells you something about their map reading abilities and so forth. They were in an area that was up towards the plateau between two slot canyons. They somehow convinced themselves that they had crossed one or the other of those slot canyons. So instead of coming up the only way they could, up to the top of the plateau, they were meandering around trying to find a way to get back across the canyon. But anyway, it got the whole group interested in the place and

started I guess it was nine trips for the hiking club to explore the whole thing. It was wonderful, so we need to thank them.

TM: Whoever they are, thank you for getting lost. For starting this great adventure.

KP: Okay, the picture down below that is taken in the winter—December. That was the route that is left that the Mormons came down. Somehow they had that filled in with enough cobbles and so forth. I don't know where they got the logs, but they managed to get logs to put into the rock walls to help build themselves a road. They brought their wagons and all their livestock and everything down where I'm trying to get the kayak down.

TM: It's just a huge amount of work.

KP: I really can't imagine that.

TM: So what is it like getting a kayak down here? Did you put any holes in the boat?

KP: No, no. The boat is reasonably light. I can carry it by myself quite easily. I just sort of slid it, bumping from rock to rock.

TM: How many up and downs would you have to do to get all your gear finally down to the river?

KP: One down with the boat and back up. Then I think only one more with a backpack to get my gear. This trip we were only going for a week, so we didn't have a lot of food. But even so, I still brought cans because I had gotten so off of... After two weeks of only dehydrated stuff, when I was going on the river I took cans.

TM: You look pretty bundled up there. It looks you have a scarf, maybe a muffler, some very heavy duty-looking thick clothing.

KP: This was December. It was cold. This is when the river froze before we got off of it. So yes, I was well-bundled up.

TM: I'll read the caption here. It says "Keturah maneuvering her kayak down the Hole in the Rock route used by the early Mormons to cross the Colorado. They ended up establishing the town of Bluff, Utah. Because most of the most spectacular canyons of Glen Canyon were between Hole in the Rock and Crossing of the Fathers, we sometimes chose to put in at Hole in the Rock."

KP: Yeah, that saved us several days of paddling on stuff that wouldn't be flooded quite so soon and wasn't nearly as interesting. So we'd start at Hole in the Rock and hit the good stuff right away.

TM: Would you leave Berkeley late in the day after classes and sort of drive through the night to get out here? How did that work?

KP: It depended on the drivers. Every driver got to choose his leaving time and everything else. But especially on this winter trip, yes. We left as quickly as we could get the cars loaded after the last person got out of class. I think a lot of them would stop and camp. On the winter trip that I was on though, some of the cars, anyway, just drove right straight through and we got there very late at night. Some of them decided to go down and camp at the edge of the river because it was very cold and windy at the top. I decided I didn't want to go down and then the next morning start by hiking up again to get my kayak and gear, so I camped up at the top. I suspect that may have been a mistake. Anyway, it was cold

that night and windy, which is why I'm bundled up like this. In fact, Phil and I had made ourselves wetsuits. We went to a commercial wetsuit maker and he cut them out for us and we had to do the gluing and this and that. I think I wore my wetsuit that night to keep warm. And I didn't, it was cold.

TM: Wow, brr!

KP: And the coverall was to protect the wetsuit. We were afraid that we would scrape it on the rocks and so forth and make holes in our wetsuits, so we bought workmen's coveralls and wore them over our wetsuits.

TM: That's a good idea.

KP: So anyway, there I am going down first thing in the morning with my kayak. Down below that, there's a picture of the wonderful camp we had in April down there. Everybody went down and camped down on the river. I think we all got there before it got dark because coming down in the dark would have been a bit of a problem. You can see the sandy area, the flattish sandy area, down there is just filled with everybody's stuff.

TM: It's covered with boats. There's two people here: a person in green and a person in a white shirt with what looks like a white sailor's cap, so that might be you there on the right.

KP: That was me and my kayak.

TM: Who's to your left?

KP: That could be one of the ones in a raft and I don't know who that is. I can't see enough to tell. The other two kayaks are Phil's and Sam Greene's. Let's see, the canoe down there at the right margin, that would be Jim and Margaret.

TM: They must have carried the canoe down as well.

KP: Yep. But there were two of them, so they could carry the canoe down okay. They're also very skillful and very capable. So I'm sure that that didn't faze them any either particularly. I imagine there are people camped in the tamarisks both upstream and downstream from where this picture was taken. I think we all went down and camped there first.

TM: This looks fairly close to the river, maybe 20 feet above or so?

KP: Yes, I suppose. It was the first flat spot that we could get above the river because... I don't think it's even 20 feet. It's very close to the river.

TM: The caption for that picture says "April 1963. Bottom of the settlers' Hole in the Rock route. Preparing the boats for the trip from here to Crossing of the Fathers."

KP: Phil says there's frost on everything, but this is the December before the picture up above when it was so cold. You can see that some of them did come down and set up tents and camp down there that night.

TM: Yeah, it looks cold. That's from December 1962. "Same place as above, but now there's frost on everything in the morning." That looks like a Klepper kayak to the right of that tent. Unless it's just the same kayak, just in the odd light looks kind of blue.

KP: It might have been. We did have a collapsible kayak.

TM: Yeah, it looks like a collapsible kayak, that's right.

KP: Our trips had whatever boats you wanted to get. We had quite a variety of craft.

TM: Nice. So now I'm gonna click on the link that says "Go to the settlers' road on the left bank."

KP: Yeah, that's where I had us start and I was wrong, I shouldn't have. After the Mormons got across, why, they built themselves a way up from the river and part of the road is still there.

TM: That's a ton of work! So this is a photograph. It's the third one on this page. The first one being Keturah in her kayak. The second photograph being a shot from river left across the river looking north, I suppose, to the Hole in the Rock route coming down to the river from the north side. And the third photograph shows a major amount of work, stone work/rock work, to build a ramp up through not a shear cliff but a fairly steep cliff face.

KP: Yeah. They had carried rocks to fill the route on the other side there, too. They did a lot of rock-moving.

TM: Wow, that's a huge amount of work.

KP: It is. Well, they camped up there for a very long time. Up on the other side, on the right bank side at Crossing of the Fathers, apparently they spent the summer there. They had a big rock a little bit back from the river they called "Dance Hall Rock" and apparently they had dances there in the evening.

TM: Okay. This is a great picture looking down the roadcut. The caption is "Looking down the road toward the river and toward Hole in the Rock." Did you all walk this route up a ways from the river on the left side?

KP: Well, Phil obviously did but I was interested in getting around and seeing the canyons. I went a little and looked and said, "Oh yeah, it's a lot of work. I'm off." I wanted to get into the narrow canyons.

TM: Okay. I'm like, "What's up there?"

KP: Well yeah, but I know what is up there, graded roads and the way out towards Bluff.

TM: Right, and there's an airstrip on the top on the north side.

KP: There is now.

TM: Then the last picture... One, two, three, four, five. There are five pictures on this page. The caption reads "Looking downstream from near the left-bank landing opposite Hole in the Rock." It must be a morning picture.

KP: Very likely the morning of the winter trip. Phil got down quickly and got across.

TM: Crossed and got this great shot of sunrise on the far distant cliffs and the river heading that way. The river is in shade, very pretty. So the next page to go to is... Oh I'm sorry, before we leave here, is there a story about camping here that you want to talk about?

KP: Oh, I just wanted to mention the great difference between our winter camp, some of whom camped down on the river and me and two or three others who were too lazy to go down and back up and camped up on top and how cold and windy and blustery it was. And then how beautiful it was in April, down with the greenery and everything. Just the contrast between our camps there.

TM: Wow, okay. So you're here for the December trip, is that during a semester break?

KP: It was a Christmas holiday.

TM: Christmas holiday, alright.

KP: Yeah, Phil and I spent Christmas night in a really wonderful little alcove Phil took pictures of.

TM: Alright so now we're gonna click on the page that says "Go down to Llewellyn Gulch."

KP: Yeah, and you know, I don't really remember a lot about Llewellyn. It was spectacular, but it wasn't outstanding. It was almost ho-hum run-of-the-mill, but as you can see from how high the walls are, it was a spectacular ho-hum.

TM: Yes, just a spectacular ho-hum. [laughs] It's gorgeous. This is "Llewellyn Gulch at Mile 81.9." It looks like it may have had running water in the bottom of the gulch here?

KP: Yeah, it does, doesn't it? A lot of them did.

TM: But that might be right next to the river that first...

KP: Well yeah, that's it. A lot of them did down low. When you get a quarter mile in, why, it might have risen enough that it was above whatever the water table was at that moment. You could usually tell where the water table was by where the line of maidenhair ferns and mimulus surround the edge was.

TM: The third picture in this series is an aerial photograph and the caption is "Llewellyn Gulch from the air looking toward the Colorado River."

KP: Yeah, that was obviously taken when Phil was out flying around looking for the lost hikers. But you can see the canyon is quite broad and there's water quite far up it at that time and that was in June.

TM: Llewellyn Gulch comes in from the north, so am I safe to assume that this aerial photograph is looking south? It would kind of make sense.

KP: Well, I'm gonna go back to the map and see. Llewellyn. Yeah, I get which direction on the river they are. It was a right-bank canyon and since the Colorado is out there, why, it must be looking south, yes.

TM: Okay. What's really amazing about this aerial photograph of Llewellyn Canyon is the fracture patterns in the rock that makes up the landscape.

KP: Yeah. There are a lot of areas down there with parallel fracture patterns. I mean, not just here around the Colorado River, but over at Dollhouse and that area, too.

TM: Up in Canyonlands further up the Colorado River, okay. This is really, really a stunning picture of Llewellyn. It looks like you might be able to get out Llewellyn. Do you remember how far up you guys went Llewellyn or was it just "alright, it's another side canyon at this point"?

KP: It was a spectacular ho-hum. We didn't spend a lot of time on it, no. We liked the narrow ones.

TM: Well, it's very beautiful. Okay, so now we're gonna go down to the San Juan River and I'm gonna click there. This is a picture of the confluence of the San Juan River and its river mile 78. There's only one picture here but off to the side there's a link that says "The next two years."

KP: Right. Before we leave this picture, if you look at the skyline above that lighter-colored layer over there, you can see a ridge sticking up higher than some and a little sort of thumb pointing off to the left.

TM: Yeah, like a little beak almost or a little mushroom kind of flattop mushroom rock with a sharp lip on its left.

KP: Right. And the lip is undercut, so it seems to be pointing left. So fix that in your mind and look at the next picture. That same thing will be in the next picture, also. We're gonna click on "The next two years." I'm pretty sure that's right. I think this is the place where he got three years of... Okay, in the next picture down, that little thumb that's pointing left...how to describe it. The ridge we were looking at is just above a vertical shadow. There's a big shadow like a mutilated butterfly and then to the left of it there's a vertical strip that's not very long. That ridge is up there and the thumb is pointing off to the left. Okay. The next one, that thumb is almost down to the water. Well, let's see, the river will be making a turn there and there's a big shadow that reaches all the way down to the water. Okay. That shadow is being cast by that ridge and the little bump on the left side of that ridge is the thumb that's pointing off in the other two pictures. So you can see how high up the water has come.

TM: This is just an absolutely amazing series of three photographs. The first photograph is labeled "September 1962. The confluence of the San Juan River and the Colorado River." There's sandy beaches, not a lot of vegetation, though some certainly upstream along the river, and there's a skyline. The next picture is taken from a little higher than the first picture, right at the water's level, and that's June of 1963. I'm trying to think that...

KP: In the top picture, you can see that lighter-colored layer in the cliff above the sandy beach and everything.

TM: Yes. And in the middle picture that white band is almost gone but it gives you the visual appreciation that the water has risen 60/70 feet...

KP: At least.

TM: ...in the scope of a few months because 1963 the dam bypass tubes were closed and the water's clearly racing right back up into Glen Canyon. Then the third picture from a year later, "June 1964. The former confluence of the San Juan River and the Colorado River. Note the Park Service floating sign where the San Juan arm of the reservoir joins the Colorado arm." I see that over there. But at this point now, the water has come up, oh dear, 150/200 feet?

KP: Yeah, I don't know how high that is.

TM: Clearly, as the reservoir continues to fill and has more surface area to fill it, it will decrease its speed of fill...

KP: True.

TM: ...so that's happening. But this is an amazing series of photographs. One of the things I noticed is that the early river runners hiked up to a high bluff and looked down on the confluence and there's pictures of there. The third photograph in this series shows the bluff they were probably standing on in the foreground. It's around sandstone knoll, but it would've had a really nice view of the confluence. But gosh, this is just a...

KP: Well, and which view do you think is most interesting and prettiest? The one where the water is way up high and broad catching the wind and knocking you about or the other one, yeah?

TM: Yeah, well this is... I'm stunned. But what I would really be interested in doing is going back to this place today where the June 1964 photograph was taken. Another reservoir got higher than that that would actually flood out this camera station. And then where is it today and where is the level today? It might be closer to June '64. We could figure that out on the...

KP: Yeah. With a topographic map you can figure things like that out, yes.

TM: I doubt it's gotten that low. I don't know if the reservoir's gone to such a low level yet, but...

KP: I haven't even been following that. I don't know, but there's hope.

TM: Really just an amazing series of photographs. These three showing the San Juan coming up, up, up.

KP: Well, wait till we get to I believe its Catfish Canyon. That is really miserable. Phil has, I think, four years of those.

TM: Before we leave the San Juan arm here, did you guys go up the San Juan any distance at all?

KP: No. Well, the rafts couldn't go up, and the kayaks and the rafts would stay together, of course.

TM: Okay. So the picture in June of 1963. Do you remember where you started on that trip?

KP: Oh come on, June of '63. We must have started at Hole in the Rock. By then, we were getting panicky. It was disappearing and we weren't gonna waste any days paddling over stuff that we might be able to see the following trip, whenever it was gonna be.

TM: Fair enough. So the June of '63 trip would've been a rush to see what was going to be buried.

KP: Yeah.

TM: Got it. Okay, the next—sorry?

KP: Cottonwood, then?

TM: Yes, go down to Cottonwood Gulch. So "Cottonwood Gulch, also called Reflection Canyon, at Mile 77.0." The first picture is stunning photograph. It looks like it's looking west, roughly, with the Colorado River snaking its way through these tall cliffs with these entrenched side canyons working their ways down to the river. And high bluffs off to the north. The caption reads "June 1961. Cottonwood Gulch (Reflection Canyon) is just over the wall in the foreground. The San Juan River joins the Colorado in the lower left corner of the picture. Hidden Passage is in the center of the picture about a mile downstream from Cottonwood Gulch. Music Temple is across the Colorado from Hidden Passage and a little downstream. Its canyon is just behind that tall wall, the tallest in the Glen, on the left bank. The

entrance to Mystery Canyon is a couple of miles downstream from Music Temple and on the left near the edge of the picture.”

KP: Well, Phil was up in the air with the search party and he saw all this and he can hardly wait to get back there on foot or boat, preferably boat. So I guess we kind of do owe those two who got lost a debt a gratitude.

TM: No kidding! This is a stunning picture. I’m gonna just orient myself here again. I can see the Colorado River in the bottom of the picture off to the lower left, and then it comes back around toward the center. There’s a side canyon coming in from the right and that’s... “San Juan is in the lower left corner, Hidden Passage is in the center of the picture.” So Cottonwood Gulch, is that the first side canyon coming in here on the right?

KP: Yeah, it more or less parallels the bottom edge of the photograph.

TM: Yes, thank you.

KP: And Hidden Passage then, is that shadowy notch that’s heading off, first towards straight up and then off to a couple of branches to the right.

TM: Okay, it’s sort of the big carved-out, open area?

KP: Yeah, that’s Hidden Passage.

TM: There was a well-visited camp... Well, maybe it will come up, never mind. Okay, so the next picture is “Lower Cottonwood Gulch. A deep canyon, but not particularly narrow.” Looks it’s got cottonwood trees in there.

KP: Yeah. It certainly did.

TM: The next picture is from a plane, you can see the window of the plane in the corner of the picture. The caption is “June 1961. These graceful entrenched meanders are not deep by Glen Canyon standards but they are photogenic. The cover of Eleanor Inskip's *Glen Canyon Before Lake Powell* has a photo of Reflection Canyon very similar to this one. The July/August, '06 issue of *Audubon Magazine* shows this canyon as re-exposed by the lowering of Lake Powell by drought. This canyon is quite deep by ordinary standards. See the person in the picture below for scale.” Did you all hike up this far enough to get into this twisting, archy area?

KP: Yeah.

TM: In this picture just below, is that in that same area?

KP: First, let’s stop in this twisty, arching area. Pointing off towards the right edge of the picture, you can see a U-turn in the canyon. Okay, the next picture down is from the other side of that U-turn in the canyon.

TM: Got it. That’s very nice.

KP: And a little inset below that is a somewhat blown-up bit of somebody standing there waving his hands. Near the right edge, just above the shadow at the bottom, you see that tiny little person there waving his hands to give you an idea of how big that little ridge is.

TM: That's wonderful, I had no idea.

KP: If you look at the picture above, you know, it's just a little ridge. There's stuff above it that's higher. But when you get down there it's jolly big!

TM: It's huge, it's gorgeous! And it looks like there was water in there.

KP: Yeah. Let's see, that would... I wasn't there in June of '62, but yes, we'd been in there and there was water. I mean, I have been in there when there was water.

TM: Okay. Wow, that's just gorgeous. Right, June of 1962. "The ridge dominating this picture is the small ridge in the lower right of the aerial photo above. The photographer is under the dark overhang in the far right center of the canyon and shooting so as to take in both upstream (left) and downstream (right). At the far right in the downstream direction note the man waving his arms. It's Sam Greene, physicist at Sonoma State, California." Oh my gosh, how about that. Nice. That's very gorgeous. The next one down's another aerial photograph of the same Reflection Canyon. The caption says "From further upstream. The lower end of Cottonwood Gulch is now flooded by Lake Powell," this is in June of 1964, "as is the San Juan River in the upper center-left of the picture. The high wall on the right was the highest wall in Glen Canyon. It overlooked the confluence of the Colorado and San Juan Rivers." Did you guys get a picture of that wall before the water started backing up in there?

KP: I don't know. I'm trying to remember... Have you seen the slideshow, the movie preferably, that Sierra Club made of Phil's slides?

TM: No.

KP: They've got a lot of before and after pictures in them, and I can't right at the moment recall if there's any of that or not. I don't think this website has all that many before and after's but the movie sure did.

TM: Okay. So the bottom picture is a deep-looking pool. There's a person on the left and there's a person in the center. The caption says "One of the short swimming sections in the lower part of Cottonwood Gulch."

KP: Yeah, and they were surprisingly cold because the sun never got down there to warm them up.

TM: Well that is a stunning canyon.

KP: Yeah. I don't know who either of those are. I would suspect that the one on the right is Julie Brand, but I'm not sure. So we better not label it.

TM: Alright, well the next page here is "Hidden Passage."

KP: Yeah, one of the aerials showed Cottonwood more or less parallelling the bottom of the picture and then sort of a dugout area above it. That was the entrance to Hidden Passage and this is the entrance closer.

TM: Okay, and that makes sense. Looking on the Hidden Passage page, 76.1, the caption is "Mile 76.5. Hidden Passage from Horseshoe Alcove." I'm assuming this is looking more or less west toward Hidden Passage based on that aerial photograph.

KP: We're on the right bank of the Colorado River and the Hidden Passage canyon is also on the right bank. It twists and turns so much I never know when it's looking west or north or whatever.

TM: Right. Let's hold that right there at that first picture. The photographs from other river trips that I've seen looking to Hidden Passage appear to be taken from a camp just upstream of Hidden Passage. Do you remember camping there at all?

KP: No, we never camped there. We always hit Hidden Passage in the middle but I think Georgie White camped there.

TM: Okay. The second picture is "Hidden Passage from near the Basketmaker Cave boat landing." It looks like it is a hidden passage. It looks like there's no way in there, it's just a wall.

KP: Then you go behind that wall, go past it and it really opens up.

TM: This is kind of a stupid question but with your kayaks and your rafts and your canoes, was this where you pulled over to walk into Hidden Canyon or would you go downstream a little more?

KP: Oh no, we pulled off right at the greenery. Let's see, I think if you go down one more picture you'll see the sandbar where I think the commercial boaters camped and you'll see Basketmaker Cave. The one says "Hidden Passage in center left. Basketmaker Cave in lowermost right."

TM: Okay, I see that, yep.

KP: Okay, so Basketmaker Cave was over there in the dark shadow and there was camping on the sandbar there and I think that's where the commercial trips went. I don't know if they could walk across to Hidden Passage or not, but they may well have been able to from the looks of this picture anyway. We didn't. We knew where it was and pulled in and started right there.

TM: So, I'm a little confused here with this.

KP: Oh, Phil notes that. "Trails leading to the canyon at the bottom center and left." So yeah, the commercial trips did walk in.

TM: Bottom center and left. Alright, so "Hidden Passage in center left." Okay, got that. "Basketmaker Cave in lowermost right. Music Temple Bar. Note the trails leading to the canyon at bottom center and left." I don't see where those are. "Bottom center and left." Alright, so Music Temple Bar, is that on river left across the river from Hidden Passage?

KP: I'll have to get to the map. Oh dumdy dum, how come I can't find the map?

TM: "Middle Map," I'm gonna click on that. Let's see. Cottonwood Gulch, Hidden Passage... Oh right, very good. So Music Temple is on the left, Hidden Passage is on the right. So what the aerial picture is showing is a campsite on the left above Music Temple and people are walking down there from this campsite and maybe leave the trails there, that would make sense. But there's a really nice campsite on the right, it looks like, just down below the Basketmaker Cave. Did you go up into that cave?

KP: Basketmaker Cave? Yeah.

TM: What did you find there?

KP: I don't think we found any particular structures left. But somebody must have found baskets in there at sometime.

TM: Yeah. It looks like it's a fairly giant cave.

KP: Yeah. I'm sure that the natives camped there and probably farmed maybe on the other side of the river on some of the flat areas. We know they farmed down there because we did find corn cobs.

TM: It sure makes sense. Alright the next photograph down is labeled "Hidden Passage is one of the most popular canyons in Glen. It's visited by virtually all of the float trips."

KP: Yeah, it was one of the popular stops because it was easy. And I guess from what you say, there was good camping there. We just never happened to hit it at the right time of day.

TM: And it looks like it's got wonderful pools of water.

KP: Yeah, if you're doing pictures, that's Ed Leeper in the water and I'm pretty sure that Cy Benton on the far bank. I don't know who is the higher man.

TM: It says David Rhodes.

KP: Oh, oh ok. That's right. I had forgotten he was on that trip. Yeah, Ed Leeper was a piton maker to work his way through college and for a time afterwards. Yeah, I hadn't seen those names down there.

TM: Then the next picture down is just of stunning towering walls, undulating with desert varnish striping down their sides.

KP: Beautiful things, yes.

TM: Just gorgeous.

KP: Better than an art gallery.

TM: Yeah. The caption is "High walls dominate the lower sections of Hidden Passage." And of course I want to continue up Hidden Passage, so I'm gonna click the link that says "Continue up Hidden Passage." The first picture is of a pourover. "Waterfalls, short swims, and big chock stones were common in lower Hidden Passage." Alright, I would need some help to get over here. How did you get above that fall there?

KP: Well, if you swim through the very, very cold pool you can scramble behind a big chock stone that has fallen down there and chimney your way up a little higher. Once you get up there, why, there's fairly easy walking for a long ways.

TM: Which looks wonderful. There's a small stream there and it looks like there's very little sand and rock. It's almost as if the stream has scoured out all the sand, so you're walking on the sandstone that makes the walls of the canyon.

KP: That could be. That happened in many places, yeah.

TM: The caption reads "We can climb behind that pinnacle to get to a crawl ledge that takes us to views of the river." Oh my gosh.

KP: Yeah, this was Georgie White's feature for that place. The thing that she directed her people to and they spent a lot of time doing.

TM: Okay, I see the crawl ledge. "Georgie White's crawlway." That's a bunch from one of her raft trips. Oh, I see. There's somebody out there crawling along this ledge which is right over Portage Rock.

KP: It's not very wide and the ceiling is fairly low, so part of the time you really are down lower than hands and knees just pulling yourself along.

TM: I'm assuming that this went to a protected area that was like a dead end, but a nice area to get out of the rain and weather?

KP: No, it went out to a nice view. Let me go back... I can't believe that he doesn't have that in there, so let's keep going we may get out to the view. It went out to where you were out very near the end of the ridge that was hiding Hidden Passage.

TM: You know what I'm gonna go back to lower Hidden Passage and I'm gonna go to the third picture down which shows the aerial of Hidden Passage.

KP: Yeah. It got out to where you were almost out to that little ridge that hides Hidden Passage.

TM: That kind of knife edge ridge right at the mouth?

KP: You didn't get out onto that ridge, no. If you went into Hidden Passage there and around the first curve, it went around there. I sort of recall that you could see Basketmaker Cave from the end of that crawl space. And, you know, it was just a nice view. It was fairly safe. I'm sure Georgie would have sorted out any of her people that she thought wouldn't make it. Phil hated things like that and even he did it, so he can tell that it was pretty safe. In fact, that is Phil. I took that picture.

TM: That's Phil crawling there on his hands and knees?

KP: Right.

TM: He's just got this drop right off his right shoulder and there's a cliff kind of pushing him off to his right, coming at him from his left, and he's crawling along this tiny little passageway.

KP: Yep, well, almost all of Georgie's people did it. I suspect all of our party did, too, but I never checked.

TM: So the next click here is to "Go down across to Music Temple." You know what, hang on, before we leave Hidden Passage I'm gonna go back to lower Hidden Passage and look at this one more time. Keturah, would you mind to go back to the lower Hidden Passage page.

KP: Got it, yeah.

TM: The first photo, looking into Hidden Passage from Horseshoe Alcove. The little crawlway came out to a view where I could look out onto the river, I'm assuming up this way back toward Horseshoe Alcove. Was that on creek right or creek left of Hidden Passage?

KP: Creek right.

TM: Creek right, okay. So that put me kind of over there. Well, maybe we'll get to see some more photos of that. That looks really neat. Okay, so now we're gonna go to "Go down across to Music Temple."

KP: Okay, across to Music Temple.

TM: It's funny because the mouth to Music Temple doesn't look a whole lot different from the mouth of Hidden Passage. You don't really see much. It's a little break in the sandstone and that's all you get.

KP: Yeah, that's true. But somebody a while back discovered what a neat canyon it is.

TM: Well, Powell got in there in 1872, so yeah. That's pretty neat. The caption for the first photograph reads "Music Temple landing was right across from Hidden Passage. In the spring, when the river was swift, the rafters had to take their rafts far upstream at the Hidden Passage landing and then row as hard as they could or they would miss Music temple. Kayaks had no problems." How about that. I had no idea.

KP: Well, they're fairly close together and if the river's moving along, why, you have to row like mad, I suppose. I don't know, I wasn't in the rafts.

TM: I'm trying to... "An aerial view of what lies downstream from Music Temple." I'm gonna back up for a minute here, if you don't mind. I'm gonna go back past Hidden Passage, up to Cottonwood Gulch. Okay, the first picture on the Cottonwood Gulch page... This is, I think, what Phil's trying to help me understand. Cottonwood Gulch is on river right, for the Colorado. Next up is Hidden Passage, also on river right. And immediately across the river, on river left, is gonna be Music Temple. So if I want to check these canyons out, yep, I have to be very quick on my feet to get across the river.

KP: You do when the river's moving fast.

TM: Right. When it's not, not a big deal. Alright, so here we are on the Music Temple page again. The second picture, the caption reads "Musicians gave frequent concerts here right up to the end." Did you guys have anybody with musical instruments there or any good singers?

KP: Nobody did. Well, that's not quite true. Phil had his either the recorder or tonette and maybe both with him. He did play in there but it was no big deal. It was nice. Georgie White would bring people in at night for a concert. She had a route that would get people up into a little alcove above the main alcove at river level and they would play up there, yeah. We learned all this from... We spent quite a while talking to her while her people were up a canyon one time when Phil and I were out by ourselves.

TM: What do you remember of that conversation? What did she say? What was she like?

KP: Oh, she is an extraordinarily interesting person. I could probably talk for half an hour about her. So shall we come back to her and the stories about her after we finish Glen Canyon?

TM: Well we could. We could start off the next interview or we could take the rest of this one. I would definitely like to hear your recollections of that.

KP: Oh, let's see. That would have been one of the trips when none of us were particularly happy because it was just Phil and I. She said she was on her last trip. Well now, wait. Maybe my head is confusing itself, because her party had hit a very bad storm. Oh, right. I'm getting my head in gear now. We were probably in the catamaran and we had hit a very bad storm, too. Maybe I better think about this a little. Alright, on to the stories about Georgie White. She was very tired that day, because they had had a very bad storm the night before. She said she had spent most of the night holding her boats because her tie-downs were jerking around and she wasn't sure that her boats weren't gonna float away. She had sent her people up some canyon and I don't know which one it was. Okay, that's the part. I was trying to put this in Music Temple and it didn't happen at Music Temple. But we got to talking about the things, and she told us that she had discovered a fairly easy route into a small alcove above the main river-level alcove some years before. She regularly got anyone who had musical ability, either singing or playing or whatever, to go up there and she would bring her group in and they would sit

around the edge. I don't think they had campfires because she wouldn't mar the floor with ashes but they were probably all sitting around. And on a signal the people up in the little alcove would start with music. She said it was absolutely wonderful. After she did it the first time, she made it a point to get there so they would be camping there at a night time so they could all see the canyon during the day and then go back in at night for whatever she told them to do. She had had an absolutely fabulous career. During the Second World War, she was one of the women pilots who ferried planes to Africa. Planes that were manufactured here in the United States and had to get over to where they were needed in Africa, and she had signed up for that. Apparently, she enjoyed it very much. She said they'd catch a flight back and take off again real soon. But when she came back, she looked around for something equally adventurous and ended up getting married and having a daughter. I can't recall what she had to say about what happened to her husband. I don't think that they split. I believe that he died of something, and I can't remember what. But for the daughter's middle years, she was raising the girl alone. The two of them were out bicycling and a driver came speeding around. Even though she and her daughter were at the edge of the road, the driver hit the daughter and took off like a bat out of hell. She did get his license number, but apparently, since her daughter had been killed, why, she didn't even pursue it. But someone else came along and helped her get the daughter into the hospital, but Georgie said she knew as soon as she saw the girl that she was gone. I don't think I would have been anywhere near that forgiving. Let me see... Eventually she came in to a rubber raft, a military raft, quite by accident and started doing river trips for her friends and then realized that she could make her living that way. She fell in love with it. I don't know how many trips she made, but it was several every year. She was responsible, though, for all these people, so she never had time to really explore the canyons herself. While they went up the canyon, why, she was fixing lunch. She had her favorite stops. Music Temple was certainly one of them and Hole in the Rock, because of the history.

TM: Did she talk about exploring Glen Canyon with Harry Aleson at all?

KP: If she did, I don't remember, because I don't know Harry Aleson. I don't think I've heard about him. Tell me about him.

TM: Well, he was wandering in this area. He was wandering in Grand Canyon and Glen Canyon and met Georgie there in LA and they both started exploring Glen Canyon together and they... Trying to remember the year, 1949, '50, or '51. Somewhere in that time, she and Harry took a boat down through Cataract Canyon, a little rubber boat, and on through Glen Canyon to Lees Ferry. In that same time period, Harry was into motorboats and the two of them motored up into Glen Canyon from Lees Ferry. So she kind of cut her teeth in there with Harry in the...

KP: He may have been her boat support when she swam all of Glen Canyon. Her gear was going in a boat, but she swam the whole thing. I don't recall his name. I'm very bad with names, even of people I'm trying to remember.

TM: No worries. I know that Georgie swam some of the lower parts of Grand Canyon with Harry and that was in the, oh gosh, '47/'48 time.

KP: Okay. So that was right after the Second World War.

TM: Yes, right after the Second World War. That's right, right after her daughter died. Yeah. Did Georgie talk about what the flooding of Glen Canyon meant to her? Do you remember that at all?

KP: Yeah, I do. She and Phil commiserated with each other. But yeah. She, I expect, was mourning that as much as she had mourned her daughter because it was a big part of her life for a large number of years. You knew about her daughter then, right?

TM: Oh yes, yeah.

KP: Do you know more than I do?

TM: Well, only because I've recently researched it. We'll talk about that...

KP: I'm always interested in learning.

TM: Well, let's finish off the Music Temple journey here and we'll call it good for the day and then I'll yik-yak a little bit about that. There's some inscriptions here. 1871. "That's 'C Powell,' John Wesley's brother" is the caption here. And then, of course, Freddy Dellenbaugh has his name carved in there. And Bishop. The caption...

KP: I suppose they didn't see anything really wrong with it in those days.

TM: Yeah, it was graffiti when they made it just like it's graffiti when we make it today. But if it lasts the test of time, its historical significance is amazing.

KP: Yeah, the early pioneers, I guess, places like Devil's Tower and so forth, people carved their names in just simply to say "We made it this far. Hope we can make it farther." But now if you do it, why, it's not looked upon favorably.

TM: "Dominguez en Escalante paso parta aqui" or whatever the inscription reads. People leave these inscriptions and today, of course, we look back at them and go "oh my gosh, look at that." Really nice photograph here of Bishop and Dellenbaugh inscriptions. It says here "Fortunately, most of the pre-Lake Powell visitors respected the history and refrained from adding their names." Was there a register there? Do you remember a Music Temple register where you signed your name?

KP: No, I don't. Did Georgie have one?

TM: There was one there. The Rainbow Bridge register was salvaged, but I think the Music Temple register as well has been archived, but I'm not exactly sure on that.

KP: Well, there are registers on the top of a lot of climbs and they get refreshed. When all the space is taken, somebody puts in some new paper and a sharpened pencil. So I just figured it was for climbing up the bridge that that register was there. I never even thought about putting one in Music Temple.

TM: So I wanted to ask you, Music Temple, you couldn't go far. It wasn't like miles and miles of slot canyon 'cause you'd get cliffed out pretty quickly. What was it about that place? How would you describe it for me? How did it move you?

KP: Well, Music Temple, I think, was visited because of the acoustics. You know, the echoes that you got in there and so forth. Music Temple was not one of our big stops. We all went in it once, but I don't think any of us went in it twice because, as you say, it was short and there was a lot more interesting stuff elsewhere.

TM: You mention Phil had a...was it a recorder? What kind of musical instrument did he have?

KP: He had both the tonette and the recorder and I don't know which or both, if he them there. The tonette kind of became his icon symbol for the Glen Canyon. He played it several times in both the slideshow and the movie.

TM: Wow, okay. Did he play either of those in Music Temple?

KP: I don't remember that he ever did, because it would have... Once we discovered how neat it was... He may have but he'd of had to go back to his boat to get it, because he certainly didn't carry it with him while we were hiking most of the time. Come to think about it, knowing that we were going into Music Temple and knowing what to expect, yeah, I suppose he did take it in there. He played it at night at our campsites and things like that, so I wouldn't particularly remember him playing it in any one place. Once he had a kayak, he'd sit in his kayak and float and play his tonette. It was nice! It was like the Italian guy floating down at night and singing Italian folk songs.

TM: On the gondola in Venice.

KP: Phil was a very good player.

TM: Nice, oh very nice. That's helpful. Okay, the last photograph on the Music Temple page is an aerial photo looking possibly southwest, the river is in the right half of the picture. The caption reads "An aerial photo of what lies downstream from Music Temple Canyon which is the canyon in the extreme lower right of photo. The next canyon..."

KP: Yeah, the edge of the plane, one of the struts or something, cuts across it.

TM: Yeah, it says "The next canyon, a left-bank canyon, is Mystery Canyon. It extends across most of the central part of the picture. On the right bank a little below Mystery is Twilight Canyon. It parallels that high wall on the right bank, the Eye of the Needle wall, staying quite close to the river. Across from Twilight is Oak Creek. Wishbone Canyon set of canyons includes the wide meadow that dominates that part of the picture." Okay, I can see that.

KP: I imagine the Native Americans farmed that wide part of the meadow, but I don't know.

TM: Amazing photograph. A slickrock country, again. Not a lot of trees out there. Some grasses but mostly just sandstone slickrock country.

KP: Yeah, and it was just sandstone. There wasn't a lot of even sand up there. It was just rock.

TM: I've got one more question for you on Music Temple. There's a fairly large drainage that makes Music Temple, and again, in this last photograph here from the air, you can see some of that upper Music Temple canyon. Did you get up there at all or because of the cliff, the little jump-up, the pourover right there in Music Temple...

KP: After Music Temple, the lower part flooded, we boated into it and several of the others because, you know, we could boat over those lower jump-ups. It might even have been Music Temple that had the little bird up it, but I don't really remember. But yeah, once we got over the lower jump-ups, we found a lot of nice canyons a lot of times.

TM: Yeah, I was just wondering whether you... It sounds like you did get in there so that would be really neat to see those photographs of what the upper part of the canyon looked like.

KP: They all eventually come out on top. Some of them sooner than others. Some of them stay slot canyons until you're essentially on top, which is most interesting. A lot of fun. I think our best one, though, that we enjoyed getting into was probably Labyrinth once we got over the lower jump-ups.

TM: Well, we have been at it not quite an hour and a half here. Maybe this is a good place to call it good for today and next time we will go to Mystery Canyon. Is there anything else you'd like to say about Music Temple before we wrap this up?

KP: No. I'm sorry that Music Temple was so appealing to so many people that they would forgo some of the others like Twilight and Catfish and whatnot in order to spend time. Music Temple was wonderful. It was worth spending a lot of time in and I'm sure that people with musical ability had a terrific time there. But if they had taken half of the time that they spent in Music Temple and spent it in ones like Mystery and Twilight and Forgotten, and so forth, they would've had at least as good a time and seen a lot more. So in a way, I'm sorry that Music Temple became so popular. Other than that, it was terrific. I mean, it was a great canyon. They all were.

TM: Yeah, well said.

KP: Every single one, even the run-of-the-mill ones that wasn't a great canyon.

TM: Well Keturah Pennington, thank you so very much for spending another part of your day guiding us through Glen Canyon.

KP: I certainly enjoy looking at the pictures again and I will enjoy hearing more from you about Georgie White and some of the other things.

TM: Thank you, again. Today is the 2nd of May, 2019. This concludes a Part 7 oral history interview with Keturah Pennington. My name is Tom Martin. Keturah, thank you so very much.

KP: You're very welcome.