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Interviewee: Mary Hoover (MH)

Interviewer: Tom Martin (TM)

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TM: Today is the second of September 2014. This is Williams, Arizona, at the home of Mary Hoover, and my name's Tom Martin and as I came in, Mary told me this incredible story about a skunk and the El Tovar.

MH: At one time we had an overrun of skunks. And because the trash wasn't covered in the back by the kitchen, they had a platform where they put the trash cans, and they would get in there. But then people would leave the door between that area and the hotel, open. And they would climb the steps. And one morning I went up to check a room, and as I came up the steps, as I got even with the floor, I could see this tray sitting there with a skunk eating the food that was left over on the tray. The dining room was supposed to always come and pick up the trays, but they didn't always do it. And so this little skunk was just enjoying a good meal, of left overs.

And another time, we had trouble with a heater and maintenance came and fixed the problem, but they didn't, there was a very small space around the pipe that went down under the building, to bring the heat up, and there was a little, a little skunk got into a room. And a little boy, about three o'clock in the morning, woke his dad up and said, "Dad. There's something in bed with me!" His father turned on the light and it was a skunk. So that was another instance.

And another instance, we had was of course, they're being in the back of the building: every time you came around the corner coming into the back door, you had to look around the corner before you walked over there, because you might meet one head-on! And everybody had to come through there, pretty much, because they got their uniforms down there and the rooms' office was down there, and everything. So that was quite a bad incident. But I don't know how they did it, but they evidentially got it all cleaned, cleared up. Because the Park Service would not let you kill animals that were, what should I say? They were inhabitants of the land before we were. You couldn't kill mice; you couldn't kill snakes; you couldn't kill skunks; you couldn't kill squirrels; no matter what kind of a mess they gave you - you had to clean up after it and forget it. But anyhow

TM: What year was this? That you ran into the skunk on the tray, on the third floor?

MH: That had to be when I was at the El Tovar and I was there from '78 to '80, '78 to about '85. So it was in that time; but I don't remember the exact year. But we had an overrun of them that year.

TM: Did anyone you know get sprayed?

MH: No. Not really. But it's a miracle! That was one of my stories at the El Tovar. It was quite a place to be a housekeeper. You had three floors; you had; there was some rooms down on the ground floor, on the south end of the building. There was from two to fifteen, I think it was. I don't know, but there were not; every room was not numbered because some of them were suites, but there was only one suite on that floor. No - I don't think there was even one. No. There wasn't any on that floor. The next floor was the main floor and that's where the office was and where you checked in and where the curio shop and everything was. And when you came in there, you had - they had a honeymoon suite at one time. I think it's, part of it is an emergency bathroom for people who are disabled. And they put the ladies' bathroom, restroom, downstairs as well as the men's. So that was changed while I was there. They did a lot of changes while I was there. They put the; took all the logs off of the outside of the building and replaced them. They had to get the logs from a certain place in Oregon and they had to be treated before they brought them. And so some of the building didn't have the outside skin on it for a while.

And they changed the windows so the windows were more consistent in size. At one time we had to make a lot of the curtains because the windows were odd sizes and you couldn't buy curtains for them; you had to have them made or get special ordered ones. And they redid, while I was there, they redid the walls; some of the walls. We had one room that only had one outlet in the bedroom. And I told them that we need at least one more by the bed, because the only one we had was behind the armoire that held the TV. And it was hard to get to. And I would have to take and put a, an extension cord all the way around the edge of the room, over to the middle of the bed, there were two beds in the room, so that they could have their light on there - at the bed.

And people would take the, the extension cords. They were quite long. And they, you know, they weren't cheap. I mean, by the time you bought maybe three or four in a year, you spent a little bit of money. So anyway, that was one of my pet peeves.

And then while I was there, they also updated things and they put shampoo and hand lotion and different amenities in the room. And they put new stationary; they had a folder, but it was very plain and they put a fancier one in; and they put an ink pen in the desk. And we had an argument about it because I said I couldn't do it on the budget they gave me to work with for the amenities and stuff. And they said, "Well, you'll have to show us that you need the extra money." And I don't think they thought this old lady knew how to do it, but I did. I found out how many rooms we had the year before; how much supplies we used the year before; I took the amount that that costs plus what the new supplies cost and that got my budget changed.

But I really don't think they thought I could do that. I even got the utilities and everything, in on it. And our utilities were - when I first went to Grand Canyon, we were self-sustained: we had our own water plant, we had our own heating because we had a steam heat from the power house

that went up along the rim to the El Tovar, and then the girls' dorm, and then the Brown Building, and the Indian Dorm and all that was heated with steam heat. And there is a tunnel that goes from the El Tovar - no one knows where it is anymore, but there is a tunnel; and it went where the pipes went from one building to the other and you could go down, in the tunnel, and come to the Bright Angel. But I think they've just never told anybody, when somebody new came in anymore, because they don't want them to use it. And I don't think they could find it anymore, anyway, because it was quite hidden. But I do know that it did exist.

And we had our lights were generated at the power plant. And Mr. Elmer Nelson, "Pop" Nelson, was in charge of the utilities and things for the Santa Fe Railroad -that's who really supplied it, but Fred Harvey's paid for it, but they did supply the heating and stuff.

TM: Mary - how much noise did that power house make when it was chugging away?

MH: None. The walls are hugely thick. And the only time you heard it was when they blow the, blew the whistles at six o'clock in the morning; at twelve noon; and six or whatever it was, in the evening. And everybody kept their time because they had a way to find out the time without having to go and ask somebody, "What time is it?" Because you knew.

TM: And would that run 24 hours a day?

MH: If it was necessary, yeah. We didn't have the steam going, of course, excepting in the winter time. And it was nice that the steam was there because I worked at the laundry and I walked from the, what's now Colter Hall down to the laundry. And there was a, the steam pipes went under and down to the power plant, so we had a clear walk even when it snowed. And we had a little Indian, I told you about this - about Sammy Pipmaheenay. He was so short and he would clear the path a little bit more so he'd shovel it up and you'd - you wouldn't see him, but you'd see the snow going up over the top. That was always a joy to see Sammy. But that was one of the things that we had.

And when I worked at the El Tovar, when I went there, the first day, Mary Tomichi was a housekeeper and I was replacing her, and she was out on a ledge washing a window. And I said, "Mary! Get down from there! You're going to fall." It was on the second floor and all I could think of was, down, way down below, she'd probably break her neck falling down there. She came back in and I told them that I wasn't going to have any of my help out, hanging out a window up there, washing windows - because it was too dangerous and they could just hire somebody to do it. And they did. I don't know how long they kept it up. I know one time, we had it all done and this was when they were remodeling, they put fire sprinkler system on top of the roof at the El Tovar - and we got all the windows washed one day and the next day they turned them on to see if they were working all right. And all of our windows got splashed and of course the pipes were not, had not been in use, and so they were kind of dirty. And all of our windows got messed up.

Of course, I fought with the maintenance department all the time. They thought I was an old witch. Because I would demand that they do things when they needed to be done and they didn't like that all of the time. The bosses were very good to me; it was the ones who did the work and

they did only little things. Like, we had - they came in and they stained all the doors at the El Tovar, except the one at the very top of the steps: I think its number 80; anyhow, they left it and didn't do it, but they left the stain there. So one day I thought, "I can do that." So I stained the door. And about two or three weeks later they came back and they said, "We came back to finish staining the doors." I said, "You don't have to; I've already done it." "Oh you couldn't have done that." I said, "Yes I did." I said, "I called and I told the secretary to tell you to come up and finish your job and you never came so I did it." So anyway, we oftentimes fought.

TM: Was Alan Naille the head of the shop at that time?

MH: Alan Naille?

TM: Does that name ring a bell?

MH: He was a general manager, but he came in, he started out - I think he was a desk clerk when he first came, but I'm not really sure. But he and Carol would come by - they lived in Rouzer Hall and they would come by and knock on my door in the evening, just to say 'hi'. And I still say hi to them every once in a while. I don't see them very often. And the last time I saw Alan, I couldn't get it through my head who he was. But when I see Carol, I always know. And I saw Alan up at the Pioneers Picnic in July, and that was the first time I'd seen him since some funeral I'd gone to, I think it was. But, anyway, I don't see him very often. But I always just really cherish my friendship with them. And Carol used to be our, she used to take a group through the El Tovar and show them some of the suites and things. And I always thought that was a good thing for the hotel. Because a lot of people saw just not common rooms, they saw the suites. And when I was, when they were remodeling, they remodeled for seven years - while I was at the El Tovar. They brought in new furniture and one day this boy was holding the bottom of the armoire and they were taking it up the steps and somehow or other, on the landing he got out from behind it or out from under it, and it fell down the rest of the steps. But he didn't get hurt. And we were thankful for that.

TM: These things are big! They weigh hundreds of pounds.

MH: Yeah, they are. They're quite big. And of course, they had them in every room because they put the TVs in them. In all the rooms, at that time, had TVs.

At one time, they had restrooms on each floor and the one that was, I think it was 81 that was the restroom on that floor, and that was the third floor, we always had trouble with the plumbing in that area and I always blamed it because they didn't really redo that when they made it into rooms, they didn't do it right. But I don't know if they still have problems or not.

One of my things with the maintenance was that when Bill Bohannon was the manager, he was the GEO, we had a VIP coming in. And so of course the room had to be really inspected well and make sure everything is right and all this. Well, the girl came and told me, "Mary, the stool is leaking in that room." She said, "It's cracked." And so I called maintenance and told them. And we had one room that was out of service for some other reason and so instead of going down and getting a new one, they took the one out of there and changed it. And I went in to inspect the

room and I always inspect it behind the door and behind the stools. And when I tried to open the door all of the way, I couldn't get it all the way open. And they had put an elongated stool in the room. And Bill came to inspect the room because it was somebody that was really important and they wanted a suite and there was none available, and this was the closest to it because it had a little sitting area. And so they gave them that room and it was on the third floor and you could walk down the hall and look out the window on the step landing, and see the Canyon from there; see the flag flying above the Canyon, which I loved to see.

Anyway, Bill came in and he said, "What's the matter Mary?" And I said, "Well. Go in the bathroom." He said, "Looks all right to me." And I said, "Try opening the door all of the way." He said, "Oh my gosh!" He went and picked up the telephone and boy, they were right there, fixing it. And they brought a new one up. So that was taken care of.

But it seemed like I was always fighting, not with the ones who were in charge of the maintenance - they were always very good to me - when I really got a hold of them I could get things done. But when it just went through usual channel, or if I sent a list of things down, you never knew whether it was going to be done. And one day I called down to tell them that they hadn't done something and the secretary said, "What's the matter, Mary?" And I said, "Well, this is what's the matter." And she said, "Oh." And there was somebody standing there and they said, "Oh. Is that the old witch from the El Tovar?" And I said, "Hold the phone out...Yes this old witch is calling again and if you'd do your job, this old witch wouldn't be calling every other day."

But I did go through and I did a different section every day. I did inspect a section of the hotel every day. We had, I think, six - five or six sections and we had an inspector for each one. And then I did one section. Anyway, we had - no - we didn't have that many sections. We had three. Anyway, one inspector did so many rooms. And that was always a neat thing because I could find anything that was wrong - if the girls didn't tell me when they were inspecting the rooms, or sometimes it was boys inspecting, which was fine because we had - we didn't call them 'maids' we called them 'room attendants'. Because we had, sometimes, more boys than we had girls. Which was fine.

TM: What did the inspecting require?

MH: Well, you had - the bathroom was the thing that you really had to inspect. You were supposed to check the beds, so sometimes you pulled a bedspread back and made sure the sheets were on right and stuff like that. And you checked the window sills for the dusting. You checked - that was the thing that got left the most often, was the window sills. They didn't, for some reason they didn't like dusting window sills. And of course, we had we didn't have to move the beds very often because they were on sort of a platform, and so you didn't have to clean under the bed very often, but you did have to do that every so often - when you did a - you were supposed to do a 'super clean' every day and a 'super clean' meant that you moved all of the furniture out and you went behind it and you washed the windows and you super-did the bathrooms and all that. But when you went in the bathroom, you checked the walls, behind the shower - up in the shower - and you checked the faucets to make sure they were all gleaming and that they worked, and you checked the medicine cabinet because a lot of people left things in the

cabinet, and sometimes the kids didn't open them up and look. And you had to check behind the stools and you had to make sure the shelves were clean. You had to look under the beds because people did - get things, drop things and they went under the beds.

TM: What would you do with the stuff you found, that people had left?

MH: We had to make out a slip: put the room down, the date, and what it was and who found it and turn it in. We turned it in at the desk. I was, I'm pretty sure that they got most of that stuff. Sometimes we'd keep it for two or three days, and call Fire and Safety and they would come and pick it up. You found all kind of things. You found jewelry, one time we had a frantic woman call up and she said, "I put my jewelry under the pillow and we didn't sleep in that bed. But it's in room such-and-such. And I need to know if it's still there; 'cause I'm just frantic about it." And so I went and the people were asleep in the room, so I couldn't go in and they didn't leave, and they didn't leave, and finally they left and the desk said, "They checked out." So I knocked at the door and went in and it was still there! Because they hadn't used that bed, either.

So that was a good thing. I found a ring one time underneath of a heater and it was a beautiful, very expensive ring. If nobody claimed or wrote or called about things, they would save it for a year or so. And then they would have a - they would sell it. Auction it off or sell it, I don't know what they did, exactly, 'cause I never went. But they did have a man in the Park Service who took care of Lost and Found. At first the Fire and Safety, Fred Harvey's, took care of it. And then they turned it over to the Park Service. This man came from someplace down in San Antonio Texas, I believe, and his wife worked for me and she was a maid. And she couldn't speak English and I couldn't speak Spanish. But we got along and when she had a problem, she'd call her daughter and her daughter would translate - she was a little girl in school - but she would translate for her. But anyway, we got along okay.

But they - I don't know if they - I think they got transferred someplace else. He was working for the Park Service and so I'm not sure where they went. But - she was a good worker. And if I did have some kids around, sometimes, that sometimes could speak Spanish, but not very often. We had a lot of college kids in the summer time and of course we had some Indian folks that came in and worked - we had at one time, we had a lot of Indian people working at the Canyon and when I first went to work at the laundry, and Buford went out on the Reservation, and hired a bunch of Navajo and Hopi people, because we had had Spanish descent people and they really didn't like the Canyon, I don't think, very well. It was different to them. And, they, just finally, all of them left. Most of them left. We had chefs that were of Mexican decent and they were very good chefs. We had one Italian chef, at the El Tovar. And then we had, we had Tracy Smith, that had worked at Hutchison for a short time, and I knew him when he came in, but he couldn't remember - he didn't recognize me because when I was working there I was, at that time, I was working - wearing my own clothes in the evening most of the time because we were working Troop Trains and we didn't have wear our uniform. So he didn't recognize me when I first, when he first came in there, at the El Tovar. And one day I had on this pinafore that I wore when I was at Hutchison, and he said, "Oh. I know who you are!" And I thought that was so funny. That that's the only way he recognized me was because I was always in a pinafore with a little white blouse. My mother made them for me when I first started so I wouldn't ruin my other dresses. And anyway, the El Tovar was a big challenge and we got it up to a four while I was there; it

was a two when I went there; and it could never be a five rating because it has no swimming pool and it has no elevator. And they had talked about putting an elevator in where the staircase came up the employees staircase came upstairs, but it never happened.

TM: Mary, how many times do you think, in your life, you've gone up and down those stairs?

MH: Well, every day. If I was working on the first floor it was fine because I just had the first floor and one or two rooms up on the second floor to check. But if I worked upstairs, sometimes I went up them about 5 or 6 times, all the way to the top, and other times, why - well, you know you have to go up and down the hallways and you have to make sure that everybody's checked out, and that's one of the things that the housekeepers and the inspectors do - they make sure the rooms are empty when they are supposed to be.

However, sometimes, people don't turn their key in; and we had one little man that used to come every year, and he was always in the same room. He had a game leg and he couldn't get around very well; and they always put him in this one room. And he would - he was so nice - he would pack all his things and he'd say, "I'm checking out." And he'd leave his bags there. And then he'd come back in and he'd use the bathroom and maybe he'd lay down and take a little snooze on the bed. You had to clean the whole room again! But he thought he was being real nice to us because he told us he was checking out. But he came every year that I was there. And we weren't very thankful for that.

And I had a lovely lady that came from some island; her husband had been in the counselor's service for the federal government and they had retired to this island off the African coast and I can't remember what the name of it was, but she was a very nice lady. She was German born; she met her husband in New York; and somehow or other, I have in my head that she worked in a library in New York, while he was in the - he was in the counselor's service. I don't know why they were in New York, maybe they were just stationed there for a while, for some reason. But anyway, she was a very, she was a very nice lady and when they got the theater out at Tusayan, when they opened, she said, "Oh I'd sure like to see that." And I said, "Well, I'm going and I have a car and you're welcome to go with me." So they gave us tickets and I told them I needed one for her, and they gave her one because she came every year and stayed for a month. And we had a chaise lounge for her so she could sit out on her little balcony on her chaise lounge. And you know, I cannot, for the life of me, remember her name. And I should never had thrown my old telephone books away, because I had everybody's name in them. But anyway, she came every year. And she could remember being, growing up in Germany and how awful it was. And she was Jewish decent, but she was German Jewish. And she had a sister who had lost an arm and I never asked her what happened to her arm. I thought if she wanted to tell me, she'd tell me; but if she didn't - and when she left, she said, "You know, people are always so curious and they always ask my sister and she'd get so upset about it." And she said, "I thank you for not asking her." And I thought that was nice of her. But, we did things together, I would take her - if there something going on that I thought she might like, I invite her and a couple of times, we went to dinner together and just little things. She was such a pleasant person. And it was really nice to have people like that.

We had lots of dignitaries. I can't remember who they all were, we had - when I worked at The Bright Angel, in the dining room down there, we had a Lord and Lady come and they wanted crumpets. And this kid was so dumb, she didn't know what a crumpet was - she went and asked the chef and he said, "We don't have anything like that. I can give them a breakfast roll or suggest cinnamon toast to them, or something." Well, they decided on cinnamon toast, but they had to sit out; they wanted to sit on the patio and watch the people. So they had their tea and cinnamon toast out on the patio. I never had an experience like that ever before. That was really different to me. Anyway....

TM: Mary, one question I had for you was, your recollections of Burt Lauzon...

MH: Oh. Papa Burt. He was a dear, dear gentleman. He was Dolly and Hubert and Tiny's father. And his first wife had died when I think she was already dead when I went, well, I know she was because he was married to Rosa and Rosa White was a school teacher at Anita. She taught school in a boxcar at Anita. And one of her...

TM: Where's Anita?

MH: It's outside of - it was a railhead before the rail went all the way into the Canyon

TM: Thank you

MH: And they had mines out there and they hauled animals out there like cattle and sheep; some people raised sheep up in that area and some people raised cattle, more cattle than sheep. There were ranches up there. And she taught school there and she taught Harry Matsen who I met down here in Williams and he went to school there and he told me about that school. But Hubert never went to college, he was - there was three rangers at one time who had never been through college, and he was one of them. But he was so intelligent and he knew so many things and he knew how to do so many things. And the Indians loved him. He was invited to things that no other white man had ever seen. The Supai's thought he was the greatest person in the world. He opened his house to them and when they would be coming back and forth from Tobacopa Trailhead - they would stop and spend the night in his kitchen. They would sit around the table, put their head down on the table and sleep. And they always had coffee going, early in the morning, and when Hubert's wife came up, she was a bride, she came up from the south and she had never been around Indians, and they didn't have electricity out at that house and so they used kerosene lamps. So she thought she would be a good daughter-in-law and go fix the coffee early in the morning and she walked down the steps with the kerosene lamp, she almost dropped it because all these heads came up.

But Hubert had a little car and he'd drive into town and he'd bring Rosa and they had their little things they did. She'd go to the store and he'd go down and see his friends and they just would visit around because he was already retired, I think at that - maybe he was still working when I first went there and then he retired. I can't remember exactly when he did retire. But I knew the kids. And Dolly was a dear friend of mine for many years. Her name was Muriel. And Hubert was Hubert, of course. And Tiny was... he had another name, Lauren, Lauren. Tiny moved to Wickenburg and raised his family there. Hubert stayed at Grand Canyon, he worked for the Park

Service for many years, and Dolly married Virgil Gibson who was the Fred Harvey photographer. And they lived at the Canyon and they raised their kids there. And actually, I should remember when Hubert died, because I took care of the kids that day. And I didn't know how to start their stove. And I had to have their daughter, their little girl, did the stove for me because I didn't know how to light it. I'd never seen a stove like that before. Anyhow, that was the day that Hubert died, so I - or was buried, so I didn't go to the funeral. I stayed and took care of the kids for Dolly. 'Cause she, she just didn't want them to be alone.

TM: And so he was called 'Bert' for short?

MH: Yeah.

TM: Did he talk about his river running with the Kolb's at all?

MH: He never did to me. We always just talked about local things like, "What's going to go on this weekend?" or "Have you heard about any dances?" or whatever. And Rosa went blind. I think she had possibly what is it when you can only see out of the side of your eyes?

TM: Cataracts?

MH: No...Buford had it...Macular Degeneration. Because she would walk in, all the way in that house, it was quite a walk, several miles - and she'd walk in and go see Virgil and Dolly. She didn't like - I don't think she ever really got along very well with Dolly because whenever something was done for her, she always thanked Virgil. So she thought he did it. And anyhow, sometimes they would write letters and stuff for her, but Dolly usually did it. But she always thanked Virgil. Maybe she was one of the ladies that liked boys better than girls, I don't know. She always got along with the two boys. But she would punish Dolly for anything. And I always thought that was kind of sad 'cause Dolly was such a good person. And she was, she was just a nice person. She always talked to you and I didn't know very many people outside of the ones I worked with, but I got acquainted with her and I didn't belong to anything that she belonged to, but we were always friends.

And Virgil was always a good friend to me, too. I liked to go down to the Lookout Studio. He took care of that and he was the photographer there. They did have a photographer for Fred Harvey as well as Mr. Kolb's studio. Of course he didn't have any way to take pictures of mules going down the trail, but he took pictures of a lot of dignitaries and people that came into the Canyon. At the El Tovar we had... sometimes we had talks; they had teas up on the mezzanine; they used to have the window between the mezzanine and the dining room was open and then they didn't have any place to put the cooling system for the dining room so they put it in there, and that closed off that - but they had a piano up there. People would come and sometimes we had Ferde Grofé would come to the Canyon, and sometimes he'd sit up there and play the piano.

TM: What was he like?

MH: He was a rotund, little man. Very jolly. Loved to go to the Legion Hut. Loved to have homemade food and we'd have potlucks when he'd come. And Jack Verkamp would lower his

piano out of his apartment and they'd bring it out on the back of the truck and take it in the Legion Hut and they'd dance all night, and he'd play the piano. And he always ended up with the music that he wrote about the Canyon, and that was always nice. And I remember one time they had this really, really big party; and Jack had put the piano back on the truck and they were going in and they were out in front of Tusayan - not Tusayan, Moqui, the Legion Hut was out by Tusayan, where Frank Rotter got one of his hotels - buildings - anyhow, he got up on the back of the piano and they danced in front of Moqui. I was too tired: I had fixed meals and fixed coffee and done all of the side work for the dinners that we had and I was too tired; I went on home. But I guess they were out there from three to about four and finally some Ranger came out and said, "I think it's time for you to go home. Get a night's sleep." So everybody went home.

TM: Time to go home and wake up! 'Cause it's four in the morning.

MH: Yeah. Usually got up about 5:30 up there, because all of the jobs started early, as a rule. You had to be to work by 8:00 or sometimes 7:00 or whatever. And so you had to be up early. But, anyway we did have, we did have fun! And we had a lady named Henrietta Vogelsang, her husband was at the fire watch tower out at Grand View, and they lived out there. And she would play the piano and then they hired a trio that was called the Asidro... his name was Asidro D'Valley and they - he and his wife, Evelyn, played and then they had a young man that played the drums for them. And they would play there, but sometimes when they'd get off there, they'd come out the Legion Hut and play. And everybody got acquainted with them because they were very into the community, even though they slept late and everything, they got around in the evening and they were always in everything in the evening.

And I don't, I can't think of anybody that was famous excepting Ferde Grofé that played the piano. Mrs. Vogelsang, when she'd play, her husband would sit down in the dining room there and wait for her. And pretty soon he'd say, "Henrietta? It's time to go home." And so she'd close the piano up and come down and they'd go home. But they were really nice people. I don't know where they went when they retired from there, but I hope they had a happy life in their older years. Because - they weren't young when they left, but, anyway. They were really a good couple.

And, let's see - what else can I tell you about the El Tovar? The El Tovar is my favorite subject because I loved to work there. I loved that old building, and I was broken hearted when they told me they were going to put me in a different unit. I thought, "I can't do this. I just can't leave." And I got really upset and I went and told my boss, "I guess I just ought to leave." And she said, "Oh, don't do that. We'll give you a job that'll keep you busy for a while." And they sent me to Yavapai Lodge. Well, they had

TM: Why?

MH: To clean it up.

TM: No, no, no. Why did they - they could have found somebody else to clean up Yavapai - why did they move you out of the El Tovar? Clearly you're very good at that.

MH: Well, we had a room manager that didn't like me and we didn't get along - we didn't see eye-to-eye.

TM::Okay.

MH: And sometimes, he would tell me to do something and I think that's not the way it's supposed to be done, and so we didn't see eye-to-eye. I liked most of the managers; I got along with them well; and everything - but that one - I just didn't like him. Anyhow, he said he was going to get rid of me; and he did. Anyhow, I went out to - he was still in charge of the rooms and he was still my boss, but he very seldom ever came by to see me and asked me if I needed anything or anything, and you know Al White - don't you - from Flagstaff?

TM: Yes

MH: He became my boss. And Al and I got along famously. He didn't know anything about cleaning a room and so I taught - he told me I taught him more than anybody else up there. But we had a - and he always said, "Don't leave before I do!" And he did leave before I did. He went to Moqui and then he went out of the company and went to Flagstaff. And then he got hurt and his world kind of fell apart. But he got up and he wiped himself off and he kept going.

TM: He did.

MH: And I admire him.

TM: Yes.

MH: He used to have parties for us and I didn't quite approve of his parties, so I went only one time. But they'd go on all night and the kids would come to work and they couldn't do their work; I'd get so upset with him about that, but other than that, we got along great. And I was really sorry that he didn't get to get his job that he wanted to apply for. I think he could have; he was very capable; and he would come down and he would talk to me about, you know, how we should do this and he told - when I went out there to Yavapai he told me that, "You know. That place really needs to be cleaned up." And I went out there and I did clean it up. I cleaned the yard - personally -I cleaned the yards up. I raked them. And the boy who'd been there as the housekeeper, they had just painted the outsides of the buildings and he said, "I washed all the windows." Well, they had spray painted the buildings and he didn't wash the outsides of the windows - if he did he just washed them with soap and water and didn't get any of the paint off; and I went through 90 rooms and I personally cleaned the outside of every one of those windows.

TM: Did you have to scrape them with a razor blade?

MH: I got some commercial Windex and I sprayed it. And guess what? That really takes the paint off. And I got them all cleaned. Oh, they were just so shiny! And I was so proud of them and they had a new rooms department person and she came out and she said, "I understand that you really did a great job on the windows. Can I see one?" And I said, "Well, the room right next door is vacant." And she went in there and she said, "There's no window in there!" I said, "Oh

yes there is. Go touch it." She said, "I've never seen these windows so clean!" But I had to call the maintenance department; and of course they were mad at me; because I couldn't help but drip some of it down and it got on the window sills; and they had to repaint the window sills outside. And they were mad at me, but they did it.

Anyway, they got new, new mattresses for the, for Yavapai when I was there. And who ever bought them didn't know how to buy mattresses; and I think it was probably Al - but it could have been somebody who was doing the buying at that time, because we did have people that ordered things - and they, they started, the threads were like a sack - like a whip stitch, backstitch - and when you'd pull one end of it, if a little piece came up and you pulled on it, it would come unsewed. And so, one winter I was - they closed the Yavapai and I was out there and Al said, "What" he came out and he said, "What are you doing?" I said, "I'm putting the mattresses back together." And I had gotten some string and I was sewing; I had got a curved needle, and I was sewing them back together. And he said, "Well, we're going to have to see about this." The next year, they got all new ones. But they lasted through that year anyway.

TM: Mary, did you know the Bakers? Tersh and Steve and Ronnie? Does that name ring a bell at all? Ruth Stevens-Baker's Children?

MH: No. I don't even remember what they - that they were there. There were some Bakers there, but they were a man and wife. And he was a bell man and she was a, she worked at the Hopi House. But, Wilma Baker, her name was. I can't remember what his name was.

TM: She had worked for Emery at the studio....

MH: You know, after Virgil left, I hardly ever went down to the studio unless there was some reason: like somebody came to visit me or something. Or it snowed real - I have a lot of pictures of the studio in the snow. Because it intrigued me. Here was this little, little building and it was all covered up with snow and you could see the railing down here - and that always intrigued me. So I'd go down and take a picture of it, with my - what was it? A one-sixteen? Or something - some little, tiny camera that I had. I took lots of pictures with that.

TM: What do you remember about the Kolb's?

MH: Well, I knew them. I was invited to their 50th wedding anniversary: I had that napkin I gave you, and Mrs. Kolb was a very tall, stately woman. And of course, Emery was a small man. And he said, he met her - he got off of a train and here was this beautiful woman; and he stopped. "I'm going to marry her." He didn't even know who she was! And he eventually did! And like I said, she was very stately but she was big built. She had, she was a big boned woman; she wasn't fat - she had big bones. And over the years, she got sick at one time and she lost a lot of weight and I did a lot of alternations for her. She said, "It's nonsense to buy new clothes when you like the ones that you have." And so she just had me take them in. And I took about four inches out of some of her suits - that's how much weight she had lost. She became kind of frail. And Myra, my friend Myra, asked her one time if she had been to China, 'cause she had so many things that looked Oriental - and she said, "My dear. I haven't been to all the United States yet." She said, "Why would I go to China when we have such beautiful things here in this country?" So - that

was her idea. She was a very gracious, but she was kind of a domineering person. When her daughter got married she ordered her furniture for her for their house. She married a Ranger and they were put in a Park Service house. She ordered furniture for it. And her mother came and she didn't like it so she sent it all back and got what she thought she should have. But she was domineering with her daughter. And I remember her grandson, Sonny, she thought he was the star of the world. She was always praising him -but she should have praised her daughter a little bit more - because Edith had a lot of good qualities. She had some bad ones, but she had a lot of good ones.

TM: Like what - what do you remember about her?

MH: Well, she just - she drank too much for one thing. That was her problem. But, she was, she could be very kind. And if you asked for something, why she'd always try to help you with it and do things for you that way. And I used to have conversations with Sonny 'cause he'd sit there by the Lookout Studio and he'd sit there on the wall, and when I was going down to work sometimes, I had a few minutes before I went into work, so I'd go out and look at the Canyon and talk to Sonny and we'd just have nice conversations. He's - I think he's a couple of years older than I was - and he went away to college and then I didn't see very much of him. But, anyway, he married a girl that worked for me and Edith did have a little of her mother in her: one day we were at some gathering of some kind - I don't even remember what it was - but her daughter -in-law was there. And she said, "Do you know Sonny's wife?" And I said, "Oh, yes. I know her." And she said, "Well, where did you meet her?" I said, "She worked one summer at the laundry for us." And she said, "She worked at the laundry?" And I said, "Yes she did. And you know something? She was a darn good worker and she didn't have to back up to take her paycheck." And she was a good worker. I think her name was, her maiden name was Miller maybe? I can't remember it right now - I didn't think I'd ever forget it, but I can't think of it at this moment. But anyway, Emery Kolb was a kind of lonesome man in lots of ways. He had a fabulous memory. He could read a magazine and you could tell him, "What's on page 32?" And he' could recite the whole thing. He had a - what kind of memory you call that?

TM: Photographic?

MH: Photographic memory. And he would do that - to impress people. He would do it at the Rotary Club sometimes. Carl and he both belonged to the Rotary, way back when I used to work at the El Tovar. I worked in the dining room there, first when I was a Harvey Girl, and that was still in the '40s, but anyway, I went to the laundry in '47, and so I was working there in '46, some of '46, a little bit of '46 and then '47, because I went back to Kansas for part of that '46. I went back to Newton and I worked there for a short time. But - anyway - when I came back, I didn't get along with the lady that was in charge of the Bright Angel dining room, so Mr. Kennedy he stuck by me - he sent me up to see Mr. Rouzer and I went up to see Mr. Rouzer and he put me in the dining room. And my girlfriends were there - they came out to work for a summer. They went to school at NAU - at Flagstaff - both of them - anyway, they came out and worked. They had worked, one of them came out with me originally, and the other one had been out here the year before. And then when they came back out, Peggy worked one year at the El Tovar and Rosalie came back the next year and worked at the El Tovar. And I had both of them as roommates when they were there. But..

TM: Would the Rotary meet in the El Tovar?

MH: Yes. And the side-porch there. And they - Mr. Rouzer and Mr. Witteborg had friends that went fishing down on the Colorado all of the time, and they'd bring up fish and on Friday, they would have the fish fried.

TM: What kind of fish were they bringing up? Do you remember?

MH: I have no idea. I'm not into fish; I don't even eat fish.

TM: This would have been in the late '40s?

MH: Yeah - it was in the '40s.

TM: So it was before Glen Canyon Dam. So it could have been - were they big fish or were they little fish? Were they like a foot long or were they a couple three feet long?

MH: When I saw them, they were on a plate.

TM: (Laughing)

MH: Anyhow, Mr. Rouzer liked to have a beer with his fish on Friday. And so did Mr. Witteborg. And they'd tell me, "Mary, go get out beer." Well, I'd go and tell the bartender. Well, one day I was serving them and Mr. Rouzer said, "How is it that you never bring our beer to us?" And I said, "I can't." And he said, "Why can't you?" I said, "I'm not old enough." They wouldn't let you serve beer until you - so anyway. It was funny, I thought.

TM: So - Emery was a member of the Rotary then?

MH: Yeah. And his, I think his son-in-law was the President of the Rotary at one time. But anyhow, John Cunningham was a Rotarian. Jack Verkamp; Buford; all of the managers were pretty much - and some of the Rangers were members of the Rotary. And they had, they still have things going on. They have a Rotary Dance every year at the El Tovar.

TM: Now, was that Rotary Dance happening in the Forties?

MH: I can't remember when it started. I don't think they had it when I first worked there. I just don't remember when it started. But the Rotary Club goes back quite a ways at Grand Canyon. It's like the Masonic Lodge and the American Legion and, at one time, they had a VFW up there, but it didn't go over very big because you had to have been overseas to join the VFW and there were a lot of Veterans that didn't go overseas. And they both -the Legion and the VFW were sanctioned about the same time and they were given special rules and we had a big argument once with somebody because they said that the American Legion wasn't being run right because they didn't give a specific amount of what they took in to the things that they were organized for. But, they said there was no definite amount as long as they gave enough to show that they were,

like, taking care of Veterans things and they take care of things for kids, they give donations to the children's home and they've helped kids at the Canyon. There's a little girl up there, that's buried there, and she was born with some affliction and she died real little, and her folks didn't have any money - and they helped bury her. And they've helped bury a number of people up there that were

TM: Do you remember who that was?

MH: The little girl's name was Lee - her last name was Lee - and her grave has a little fence around it.

TM: And it was the Legion that helped make that happen? And did they buy the headstone there?

MH: The family eventually bought the stone. That was Henry Lee's girl. I can't remember her name, but she's on the list of people buried at the Canyon. It was Henry and Cora's girl. Bobby Martinez is half-brother to Henry Lee. There were two Lee boys: Henry and Joe. Joe Lee lives down in, a lot of Joe Lee's kids are still around. I think there's a couple of them still working up at the Canyon. But they've married and I don't know their last names anymore. But anyway, there was a...

TM: What did Henry do? What did Henry Lee do?

MH: He worked for the Park Service. I don't know - it was maintenance or something. I have no idea what he did in the Park Service, but Cora never worked, that I know of. When she had this little child, she took care of it and then, as far as I know, she never worked, out of the house. But they did have other family, I'm sure. Joe had a big family.

TM: So going back to Emery - he was clearly, like you say, had a photographic memory. But a lonely man - why was he lonely? Why did you say that?

MH: Well, he knew lots of people; he knew famous people; but he would, he always seemed lonely to me. And - like at night, after she died, he called Buford up. Buford used to do, he would massage his back for him. He used to fix my back for me... Anyway, he would call Buford at 2 or three o'clock in the morning and say, "Buford. My back is just killing me; could you come over?"

TM: Two or three in the morning?

MH: Yeah. And Buford would get up and go over. And they'd talk the rest of the night. I don't know what they talked about. Emery was in service and he was a Veteran of the First World War. And I think he was in like Commissary or - he ordered things, they don't call it that in the Service, they call it something else - I can't remember what they call it - but he did that. And he didn't; I don't think he ever went overseas or anything -but he did serve in the Service. And he was a member of the Legion. And he was a life member of... He would go over and they'd talk the rest of the night, sometimes and he just, just liked Buford. I don't know. They were good friends. And Myra liked to go down there.

And Emery was in the parking lot at the Bright Angel one day, and he wanted a ride out to the store, and I was on my lunch hour and I was just going in to eat, in fact. And so I skipped lunch that day. And he didn't know who I was. And we'd had a little snow and he said, "This is nothing. We have had snow that was up to here." He said, "This is no snow at all." And he went on and on, like I didn't know it and I knew - I lived there when we had a lot of snow. That wasn't too long before he passed away; but anyway - he was quite feeble and he didn't drive anymore. He had an old touring car and he had a little garage that he had there on the shelf up above his house. And the one mechanic down here said he kept him in business. Because he was forever backing into - he backed into me one time and I was driving Buford and Myra's car and he backed into me. And he didn't get out and look at my car - the car I was driving - to see if it was okay. He got out and looked at his car. I would have got out and looked at the other one because I'd be afraid I'd really banged up somebody's car. But he got out and he looked at his own. And he said, "Oh, it's all right." He was the one that backed into me! I didn't back into him. But Buford's car was okay. Anyhow, he had a big car and this was a; it was for that kind of car, it was kind of a big one, but it wasn't that big. But anyway, it was funny. But he always blamed somebody else when he had an accident. And this man said, "He doesn't know how many times in a year he had it. Sometimes 12 times. Once a month." But other times, it wasn't that much. But he wasn't a very good driver. He did get around in it, though. I can see him driving down the street, yet. Here's this little man. Here's the steering wheel and here's his eyes.

TM: He could hardly see 'em over the steering wheel.

MH: I got to being that way, too, before I quit driving. But he didn't - they told him he had to quit driving. So he finally did. But, people would take him out. He could call Fred Harvey's and they'd take him out. They had a taxi and stuff. He didn't always do that. He'd just stand out - and that day, it was so funny, 'cause he kept telling me like I had never been there before, anything. And he said, "You're a very nice lady." And I said, "Well, I'll wait for you." "No, I'll find somebody to take me back." He said. And so I went back and went to work.

TM: So he was getting forgetful at the end.

MH: Yeah he was. I always blessed him because I always thought of my own father and, but my father had a sharp memory right up until the end - but, he was so sick. Anyway.

TM: What do you remember about the Verkamps? Now there's a lot of them - and shall we take it from Jack at the top or how do you want to sort through them?

MH: Well Peggy was the oldest one. And of course, I got acquainted with her through church because she and I taught Sunday school. She was in charge of the Sunday school and Mary Jane Daisy was the other one that taught, and I taught. And then Mary Jane and Dean left, I don't know, they were - he was transferred, he was a Ranger, and he was transferred. They only had one daughter. Mary Jane had - they told her she wouldn't live to be twenty-one. She had some illness of some kind or some disability. I don't know what it was; I never asked her. They told her she wouldn't see her daughter reach 21; but she did. She saw her graduate from college. But her daughter died right after she got out of college and Mary Jane lived for some time after that.

But when she was young, they told her that she would never make it. And she did. And Dean was, he was a character.

We had a woman named Jo that worked for us. And sometimes she took care of the counter, and she also did some sewing and she did different things in the laundry. She was very adept at doing anything you asked her to do. And anyway, Dean would bring his shirts down and he said, "I wish you'd put a shirt on this button." Well, he was always losing buttons and so one time, Jo sewed buttons - she sewed a great big button right here where his belt would be because he always - I think his belt rubbed it and broke the thread on it - because his button was always off at the waistline. And he swore that we took them off. So Jo got a great, big button and she folded the shirt so it didn't show. And he got up in the morning; he always had his shirts folded - and he got up in the morning, and he started to put the shirt on; and he thought I did it. And after I came down here in the '70s, when we had the cleaners down here - he came in one day and he said, "I never did forgive you for putting that button on." And I said, "Really Dean. I didn't do it. It was Jo." "Oh, you're kidding me. She wouldn't have done that to me." I said, "Oh yes she would." She did it to somebody else only she put it - she had - he had a fly front here on and the buttons were underneath - and she put great, all different color and all different sizes of buttons and under the flap of the pockets. And she must have put 20 buttons on that shirt. And his name was Harry, and he came in and he said, "Are you mad at me?" I said, "What are you saying, 'am I mad at you'? I'm not mad at you." He said, "Well, you put all those buttons on my shirt." I said, "I didn't do it." He said, "Oh. I know who it was. It was Jo." And it was. So we got a big laugh out of that. But we did do laundry things sometimes at the laundry.

One time Jo sewed - this guy was always coming in and saying his jeans weren't creased. He always had them starched; have you ever tried to iron a starched pair of jeans? It's almost impossible. Jeans are made with one leg on the cut on the straight of the material and the other one is cut on a bias. Did you know that? The original jeans because they were saving material. And in order to save the material, they did that. Well, she couldn't get the biased one to lay flat so she went back to the sewing machine and sewed it down the crease, it down the seam - for the outside seam and the inside seam - and she pulled, and pulled, and pulled until she got it to lay flat. And she starched it as heavy as she could. Then she put it on a hot press and it was so stiff it could - it stood up like a board. It was so stiff. And this guy came in and he said, "Well, you finally got my jeans stiff." And she said, "Oh yes. I got them stiff." And she didn't tell him that she'd sewed them. And he got up and tried to put them on and he couldn't get them on. So he came back and, oh -he was mad. He was mad! He was a packer for the Park Service. He worked for Fred Harvey, first.

TM: What was his name?

MH: Guy May - he worked for Fred Harvey's as a manager at the cafeteria - cafeteria.

TM: I'm sorry - what was his name again?

MH: Guy May. Raymond.

TM: Guy May. Raymond. May.

MH: They have a son named Raymond, too. Anyhow, he was a manager down at the motor lodge at one time.

Talking about skunks, one day he left the door to the cafeteria open and that was when they had the old cafeteria before this Maswik thing came along; and these people came in and it was a tour and when they all got in, nobody closed the door. And pretty soon, here came the old mama skunk and all the little skunks. And they started walking through the room. And everybody was, "Oh! Oh!" And they were moving away. And Guy goes back in the kitchen and he said, "Give me some lunchmeat - give me a piece of string." And they gave it to him and he tied it on the end and he went and he pulled it in front of this mama skunk and they went right back out the door and followed him and he walked them over into the woods.

TM: That was clever thinking.

MH: Yeah. It was fast thinking, too. You know, not very many people would - I wouldn't have thought of that. I didn't think of that when the skunk was upstairs in the hotel. But anyway, that was funny. But we lived in - we were there with the wildlife; and people didn't understand that. We had, when I was down at Maswik, yeah, I worked there a couple of times and we had this young man from New York and he came in late. He had paid for his room and everything and they told him how to get to his room and they told him there was a step - steps at the end of the - both ends of the building - well, he came to the first steps he came to and he started up the steps and there was a skunk and so he went back down and he went to the other end and found his room. And the next morning we were checking rooms and he said, "What kind of an animal has black?" I said, "Black. Did it have a white streak?" He said, "Yeah." I said, "That was a skunk." He said, "I've never seen a skunk before!" He lived in New York City. He'd never seen a skunk. I thought that was so funny. Everybody's seen a skunk, someplace, in their lifetime. Anyhow, to me they have. Of course, to me, I've kind of lived out in the country when I was young and everything. And we had them there, too, but anyway. I thought that was funny.

TM: Anything else about the Verkamps you want to remember?

MH: The Verkamps - let's get back to the Verkamps. I met Peggy through the church and of course, Jack went to church, too. And Mary liked to read and I took care of the library for 22 years. And she would send the kids down. She didn't get one book: she'd get a dozen books at a time. She read constantly. I think that's the only thing that she did that she really enjoyed doing. Anyway -

TM: This was Jack's wife?

MH: Jack's wife - his first wife. She would tell her kids, she'd send them with pillow case or a big bag and tell them to get a dozen books. And she was reading like - "Just take them off the shelf in the A's." And she'd go to the next section and the next section and the next section until she'd read all the A's and then she'd go to the B's. And anyhow, I think some of them she read several times, but we got new books, too. Whenever we got a new one, I'd try to stick a new one

in for her. But the kids would come down and get them. I don't know that Trish ever did, but Steve and Mike did; and sometimes the girls used to come in the library.

But anyway, Peggy was very into the school - she knew that. She was the one that got the schools going despite the fact that there was a Park, there was no other parks that had schools. We got one at Grand Canyon and at first it was only to the, it was always to the sixth grade. I have a picture of the Greening boys and they went to the school that was down behind the garage; now it's the library and the engineer department or something. Anyhow, Peggy taught school. She didn't always teach at Grand Canyon, though. But she went through college and she taught school and she became a teacher. And then the war came along and Jack's father was gone and Jack was trying to run -and then Jack went into Service for a while. But he didn't, I don't know how he got discharged, but he was discharged from the service. But he did serve for a while. And Peggy started working with him because they didn't have any clerks; so she quit teaching; but she was always interested in education. And she did lots of things and I don't know if you've read her thesis from college -

TM: I've not read that.

MH: It's very interesting. It was very technical, actually. But when she went into something, she really did it.

TM: What was it on?

MH: It was on - you know - I really don't remember too much about it, excepting I remember reading it and thinking, "Gee. She put lots in this." I think it was the geology of the Canyon, something. It wasn't about the Village or anything. It was about the Canyon, itself. And grandfather built - grandfather Verkamp - built that building and he had unique ideas: there was a pump on the front porch, and he fixed it so that the water came off the roof, and those pillars that were on the front porch, they actually had pipes that went down into a cistern - so he could keep the water. And so they had water when nobody else - when people were hollering that they didn't have enough water, and stuff. He always had some water there.

TM: And that explains that upstairs porch roof - big roof area - comes down into the middle there

MH: He designed that and built it all himself. So he was a very clever man. He started out as a rancher. And he wasn't really into that, I guess.

TM: Had he passed away by the time you arrived in '46?

MH: Yeah - he was gone. Jack was in charge of the store. And the first day we were there we went up to Verkamps and two of the first people we met were Donald Woholma and David Kilvama. They worked for Jack. And we were new in town so they came out and talked to us. David still lives over in Flagstaff. Donald's passed away - he went back to the reservation: he and Edith and they are both gone now, but they worked for Jack and Peggy back then. But both of them went into service, too, because they belonged to the Legion. And I used to keep the Legion's membership. So I know - knew - most of the ones that were in the Legion. But I worked

for the Legion for about 50 years. Not because I was a hired person to work for them; but because Buford was always an officer of some kind in the Legion and he didn't like to do bookwork. And since I did bookwork all of the time, I got to do it. Sometimes

TM: He volunteered you?

MH: Yeah - he volunteered - I was volunteered - the Belgard family volunteered me for many things. But anyway, we were good friends. We came from the same area; and I knew his, I knew her cousin when I was in the third grade.

TM: This was Myra?

MH: Myra. She went to the same school in Kansas City I went to - but I didn't meet them until I came to Grand Canyon. And then when I was back

TM: That's a small world!

MH: Yeah it is. And then when I went back to Hutchison - to Newton that time, and worked - his aunt had been working there at night and they needed somebody to replace her until they found somebody there to replace her. And so they asked along the line and they sent me back and I was there about 3 or 4 months. It was in the wintertime and the Canyon wasn't that busy and they were laying off or cutting way back and you weren't making enough money to live on so, I said, "Well, I'll go back there and then I can go back and see my folks once in a while." 'Cause Hutchison or Newton wasn't that far from Kansas City and you could go right out the door and catch a train.

TM: What were Buford and Myra like?

MH: Well, they were my friends from the time I met them. I was working at the counter at the Broad Angel and Myra has a sister named Dorothy and I have a sister named Dorothy. Myra's sister named Dorothy looks like me, or did look like me. She never gained and I did - I got kind of heavy there for a while, but anyway, she's always been a thin woman. Myra walked in; she kept looking and looking; pretty soon she came over and she said, "Where are you from?" I said, "Kansas." She said, "Oh my gosh. What is your name?" I said, "Mary Hoover." And she says, "No. I don't know anybody by that name, but you look just like my sister." She thought I thought, she said, "I thought maybe you might be a cousin or something." And so we got to talking and I was working there and I was working at the El Tovar and I was to the point that when somebody got seated at my count - my tables, I was to the point I really didn't want to wait on people anymore; and I thought, "It's time to quit this job." You can't be - you have to grit your teeth to be pleasant, it's time to quit. So I went and talked to Mr. Rouzer and told him that I guess I'd better leave because I just can't wait on people anymore. And he said, "Well, don't get in a hurry." He said, "We'll look around and see if we can't find something for you." So the next day he called me up and said, "I've talked to Buford and he needs somebody at the laundry to be the cashier. Can you cashier?" "Oh," I said, "I guess I can." And so they hired me to do that. And that's how come I went to work at the laundry. And I didn't know anything about a laundry. I was used to a scrub board or an old washing machine with a ringer on it and they set me down there

and, of course, I had to learn the cash register and I got so I could do anything in the laundry excepting I couldn't unload the wash machines because they were too heavy. But I could do any of the rest of it. I could run any of the presses, and run the dry cleaning and do the whole bit.

TM: What attracted you to Buford and Myra?

MH: Well, we had a lot in common. We were from the same area. They knew some of the people I knew; they were from Newton, I was from Hutchison; and Myra's mother grew up in Kansas City and so Fern and I got to be good friends when she'd come out. Myra's dad was the...

TM: Fern was Myra's sister?

MH: Mother.

TM: Mother. Thank you.

MH: Her dad was the night switchman at the Santa Fe and when I was there for that little time in Newton, he'd always come in and have a cup of coffee and Buford's uncle was in charge of the switchman and he worked at night, too. His name was Irving Belgard. And he would come in once in a while - his wife I replaced; they both worked at night. And anyway, they - we just got to be good friends. And then they had Karen and the first time they wanted to go to a party and they didn't have anybody to take care of her, they asked me if I'd do it and I was - I was a babysitter from then on! And I loved it. I missed my family - I missed all of those kids we had back home. We'd always had a houseful of kids because my sister had lots and my brother lived two doors down, my other brother lived close by and there was always kids around.

TM: What were they like - Buford and Myra - were they fun - were they joke people - what were they like? How would you describe them?

MH: Sometimes they were very serious; and sometimes they weren't. Myra was very into the community - she liked to be social; and I didn't like to be social but she dragged me every place she went. She worked with me on the library and she worked with me on the auxiliary stuff and I don't know - we did a lot of things together. And we'd go shopping together.

TM: Into Flagstaff?

MH: Into Flagstaff.

TM: Was that a big deal?

MH: Oh that was a big deal. I didn't drive; I didn't learn to drive until I was 26 years old. I never owned a car until then and I lived at Hutchison. I was 2 blocks from school; I lived where I worked after my folks left; and when they were there I was about 4 blocks from their house; so you know, I didn't need a car. And my sister learned to drive when she was 12 - but then she was, she was a Tom Boy. And I never was; I always had my nose stuck in a book; although my

sister liked to read, if you sent an old paper in - wrapped something in an old newspaper, she'd take it all apart and read it before she'd throw it away!

TM: So Myra would drive you into Flag?

MH: Into Flag and we went to concerts down there and we'd go in sometimes to the show because we only had one show a week at Grand Canyon, for years. And that was at the Community Building.

TM: Were the roads paved then - and how did the route go?

MH: 180 wasn't paved.

TM: 180 wasn't paved.

MH: And they had cattle on 180. If you came home at night, you had to be very careful. Because sometimes they'd be lying on the road; and sometimes they didn't want to move and you'd have to find a way to get around them. Anyhow, we'd go down there and...

TM: And the road was probably dusty and it would dust up the car?

MH: Yeah it was. Yeah. And then you'd have to wash the car. I never washed the car, though, they always took care of it. Anyway, I took care of Karen when she was little and one time we were in the store in Babbitt's store and somebody had been kidnapped - some child had been kidnapped - I can't remember who it was, but anyway, people were being so careful of their children. And Myra was looking at dresses and you could never get Myra away and Karen wanted ice cream; so I was going to take her to get some ice cream and so we were walking across the store and I hadn't said anything to her for a while and I had her by the hand and we were walking through the store and she kept pulling back and wanting to look at this and wanting to look at that; and I just kept walking and holding her hand. And pretty soon she said, "You're not my mother!" She just screamed it, and everybody in the store turned around and looked at me and I thought, "Oh, God. They think I'm kidnapping this kid." And I kept saying, "Karen, you know who I am." "Well, you're bossing me." I said, "Yes because I want to go get this done. We're going to get an ice cream cone, and then we are going to come back and get your mom." So we went out of the store and went down and got an ice cream cone. But she was quite a kid.

She got sick and I taught her at home for about 3 months. And Mr. - there it goes again - he was the school principal - Carl Guthrie - when she went back to school, I had taught her so well that she was ahead of the class. And so he came and he said, "Mary, I'd like to hire you for a substitute teacher." And I said, "Oh, Carl. I can't do that." And he said, "Why not?" He said, "You did so well with Karen." I said, "I haven't been to college. I couldn't teach if I had to." And he said, "Well she sure learned a lot while she was in your class." She had tests right after she went back to school; and she was out of school, I think about 3 months - it was quite a while - and anyway - I had her. And then Becky came along. And I'm Catholic and they were Methodist or Baptist. Buford was Baptist and she was Methodist, or Evangelical - anyway - they asked me if I would be Becky's godmother and I went and asked the priest and he said, "Well you shouldn't

really do that because they are not the same religion - but go ahead and do it. You're good friends. You'll look after her." And I've always looked after her - I still do. She calls me every other night. She worries about me. But I worry more about her than I think - she needs to worry more than I do. I get along fine. But anyway, she was always my little girl. And she's still my little girl.

Anyway, I'm closer to those two girls than I am to my own family because I was out here all these years - and when did I see my family? For two weeks once a year and then there were years - there was one year I went home: I got there, I took my vacation the first two weeks of December and I got there and I spent my vacation and I came back out here and my brother died. And I went home and stayed home two or three weeks at that time, 'cause I had to help with the family. And then I came back out here and then my mother got sick and I took, I went back for three weeks because she wouldn't go to the hospital. And she was very sick. And dad, my father wrote me two letters in my lifetime: and both times it was because my mother was sick. And he said, "Mom won't go to the hospital because there's nobody to stay with me," and, "Could you come home?" So I went home and I stayed there until she got well enough to take care of herself and everything.

And then my mother broke both arms once. And when she did that, I told them I'd come - it would have been kind of hard for me to go right then because Buford was doing something for the Legion and he was in and out and he would have had to cancel everything. My two sister-in-law's said, "Don't worry about it, Mary. We'll see - take care of mom." And with dad helping her and everything, my father was already retired when she did that. She fell into the house. She had quite a time because you can't do anything when both of your hands are in casts and your fingers are back like this. You can't even move your fingers and that's what they did to her so she wouldn't use her fingers. She... that was in 1961, because my brother came down from Alaska and she was so upset because she couldn't fix meals for him. And she hadn't seen him in thirty years; and she was really upset because she couldn't do things for him; and he was just happy to be there. Anyway, they got through it.

TM: Coming back to Buford and Myra - what other stories do you remember about them?

MH: Well, they both were, like I say, very social. They were always into going places and doing things.

TM: Buford ran the laundry?

MH: He ran the laundry.

TM: What did Myra do?

MH: Myra sometimes worked at the laundry. If we needed somebody extra or if we didn't have a cashier because from being the office girl, I got to be the floor - I went out and supervised the floor. And sometimes I did the dry cleaning and all that stuff. And so she'd come down and wait on the customers. And sometimes she worked days and weeks at a time and other times when we didn't need her, she didn't come down to work. Which was okay. She knew how to work in a

laundry because she worked in the Newton laundry before. Beaufort worked in the Newton laundry before.

TM: How did they meet?

MH: They went to school together. He was a grade ahead of her. Yes, he was a grade ahead of her.

TM: In High School?

MH: In - ah - I think they went to grade school together, too. But, anyway, he lived with his grandparents in Newton because his parents had a business and they couldn't always manage the business and take care of him and his - and then he had a brother, too. And his brother was sickly. But anyway, grandma and grandpa took him in and when he was sixteen he went to work for Fred Harvey's. And he put the linen on the trains, the Super Chief and the Chief when they'd go through. They did the linen, for the dining room and they did have -you could sleep on those trains. They had cars where you could sleep. And they did the linen at Newton and they also did all of the uniforms for the people like the waiters and such. And he would do that while he was going to high school.

TM: So he got exposed to the laundry business early on.

MH: And he worked there at the laundry for the 4 years that he was in high school and then they got married in 1940 or 41. They were married 67 1/2 years to the day, when Myra died. A long time. They didn't always get along. They had, like every married family, when they'd start arguing I'd say, "I'm going home. Good-bye." But when Karen would get mad at her mother, she'd say, "I'm going to go live with Mary. She treats me nice." Sometimes I'd spank her little butt, but of course she'd get ornery. She wouldn't mind what I told her to do. But anyhow, she always took it - she still calls me, too. In fact, she called me last night. But anyway, we were always friends. And we enjoyed doing a lot of the same things.

And when Beaufort didn't go places with Myra, why she'd call me up and say, "You want to do this? Well, you can do that sewing tomorrow. You don't need to do that tonight. You can do that tomorrow." And I made her girls things and I've got - I made dolls one time. I must have made, I think there's about 8 or 10 in the picture I have, but I must have made about a dozen that year. I made them for my nieces and I made them for Karen and Becky - oh, I just made a lot of dolls. And I still got doll patterns, galore. But I don't make them anymore. But I made them, I made a crocheted dress for Karen when she was about 5, I guess, or 6. And it was so funny - I picked out this pattern and I got some yellow material or yellow thread, and it was kind of shiny. I think it had some, maybe some nylon in it. And I crocheted this dress. Well, it was a little bit large on her; here came this nice package from grandma Belgard - she had made the same dress yellow and she made pink. Hers fit her perfectly, so she wore that. But her grandmother made her all kind of clothes. She knit and she crocheted. She had a whole suit that her grandmother made: it had a vest, it had jacket, it had a little skirt. And she knit the whole thing - and she made her a little hat that went with it. It was so cute, and Becky has the knit dress that I made and all of her girls have worn it when they were baptized. It was way too big and she got a, her, her

grandmother Becky bought Christening dresses and they put them over that dress and then later on in the day they took the Christening dress off and put it away and put the other one away. And I did see them wear it a couple of times later on, when they were growing a little bit. But I think a mouse got - they had stuff stored out in the garage and they didn't realize they had mice there until it ate the electric wire to the, now here I go again, the chest where they kept their meat -

TM: Oh. The freezer.

MH: Freezer. Now isn't that crazy, I can't remember little words like that.

TM: So, I get a sense that the community there, certainly in the '40s even through the '60s, '70s, maybe even the '80s,

MH: It was very close when I first went there because there wasn't very many - they only had the El Tovar, the Bright Angel, and the Motor Lodge - they called it the Motor Lodge at that time. And then they changed it to the Auto Camp.

TM: This was to become Maswik down the road...

MH: And they had the Brown Building, which was right next - I have someplace in all those pictures I have of it, a picture of the Brown Building when it sat up there and there was a - the Indian dorm was right across from Colter Hall. It was a big brown building, too; and they had storage under it. It was - it set up off of the ground and in front of it they had a spice and flower garden and they had a man named Albert -his last name was Alberts - his wife's name was Helen. I can't remember what his name was - he was a German man - and he took care of the garden; and he took care of the lawn out in front of the hotel; and the greenhouse. Right there as you go past the girls' dorm, at the very first part of it, there used to be a driveway that went up in there and there was a greenhouse that set there. And they had flowers on the table. He grew them. And sometimes they - he couldn't get the flowers to grow very well, he'd go out in the park and find some cactus and make cactus things. And he made little, rock faces for them and he planted them in them. He didn't kill them; he kept them growing, but they would put those on the table. And I thought, "Gee what an awful thing to put on the table." Guests would go over and...

TM: Touch them and get spines in their hands

MH: But anyway - Tony Albert was his name. And they were, they were kind of a different couple. She had her station; and boy if you were the one who had it when she was off for her days off - she would get so mad if it wasn't arranged just the way she had it when she left. And the first time I did it - boy - did I get told off because I didn't know that - and finally, Milly Smitkey came over and said, "MH: You didn't do it right. You have to look at it before you start serving the next morning so you can put everything back so it's just like it was." But Milly was, she was a dear. But she's got a great story - anyway, to get back to the Verkamps - boy did I digress!

TM: Let's you know what? Let's finish up with Milly's story and maybe we'll call it a day.

MH: Okay. Rudemillow was from Germany. She came over to the United States; she had a sister that lived in Santa Fe; she'd come over earlier; her - their father was the veterinarian for Kaiser Wilhelm. And Millie and her sister, I can't remember her sister's name, but she lived in Santa Fe and Millie thought she would go there and live with them and find a job. Well, she went there and her sister didn't really want her there and she made it very obvious that she didn't want her there. And so she saw this ad for Fred Harvey and she applied for it. And she came out to Grand Canyon and at that time some of the help, it was a time when, I don't know exactly why, but some of the help was staying in the El Tovar and this man named John Smitkey was running the transportation desk at the El Tovar. And Johnny came down the steps and she thought, "Oh, look at that little shrimp." She was like Mrs. Kolb - she was a tall, big boned woman. She had a heart that was so generous and so good and she would, if we would do something wrong, she never made a scene or anything. She'd come and she'd say, "You know you should do it this way." And she spoke with an accent. She had a very strong accent till the day she died. Anyhow, she had a blind date one night. And here came Johnny. And she says, "You mean I have to go with that little shrimp?" She told us that at, one time when we were having a party. And Johnny was there. And he just laughed. And he said, "Well, she married the little shrimp, and we've been pretty happy."

TM: Is that right?

MH: They had one daughter. And she lives in California, yet. Johnny finally retired and they went some - I can't remember where they went. But Johnny died and she went out and lived with her daughter until she died. But she would send clothes home and her father was in an area where they didn't have enough food after the German war was over and she would send all kind of canned foods and stuff over to him. And clothing - she'd buy clothing for them. And he would give it away and he starved to death. He would, rather than eat it himself, he would give it to people around him because they didn't have any food. But she was, she was just a kind, generous person.

TM: Like her father.

MH: Yeah. Exactly. And I loved to hear her talk. Because she had that accent and you know, a lot of my family was German. And my, some of my uncles reverted to German in older life. And it always reminded me of them. When she'd talk I'd always listen because she was so, like I say, she was so kind. And she spoke 6 languages. And whenever they'd have dignitaries come from other countries, she could speak French to them; she could speak Italian to them; she could speak German to them; you know she just had a lot of..

TM: So she would translate?

MH: Uh-huh. And they'd always give her the dignitaries and she'd have that section that's over by the fireplace when you go in, it's on the right hand side - that was Millie's section. And she always - she was always there. She did - she was a very good waitress. That's all she ever did, was wait tables. She was very tall and straight - not like me, bent over with old age. But she worked until she was up - getting up in years to be a waitress.

TM: Good for her.

MH: She kept at it. She and Johnny - he'd come in and he'd take her arm and they'd walk out. I always thought that was nice.

TM: A tall woman and a short man.

MH: Yeah.

TM: Nice. I've got to get back to Flagstaff today so we'll call it good here.

MH: OK.