

Transcription: Grand Canyon Historical Society

Interviewee: Pat Grediagin (PG)

Interviewer: Tom Martin (TM)

Subject: Pat recounts her experiences as an NPS ranger at Canyonlands, Lake Mead, Joshua Tree, and Grand Canyon in the 1980s

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TM: Today is Monday, November 23, 2020. This is Part 4 of a Grand Canyon Oral History interview with Pat Grediagin. My name is Tom Martin. Good evening Pat, how are you today?

PG: I'm fine. Great, thanks.

TM: Thank you. Pat, may we have your permission to record this oral history over the telephone?

PG: Yes, you do have my permission.

TM: Thank you. We wrapped up Part 3 learning about your training through the federal law enforcement training academy on becoming a commissioned officer, the summers of '84 on the river, still high water, and your high water experiences of '83 and '84. Can you pick that story up again?

PG: Yeah, sure. So the river ranger job, the permanent job that I got into in 1983, I worked on the river for the river season, which was basically March through October. The first two years of that were high water. As I mentioned before, we didn't do a lot of patrols through Cataract during high water and only did about a patrol a month even when it was lower water. And so most of my time was spent either doing trip checks at the launch with rafters or doing zodiac patrols up and down the Colorado or down the Green and up the Colorado and contacting all kinds of boaters – commercial and private – but also doing inspections on the commercial boaters. During the winters after those years, the river crew didn't have anything going on. The river shut down, people weren't on the river in any kind of numbers. I don't even know if there were...there probably were some random people, but the Park Service decided to send me out to the Maze during those winter months, probably November through February is what I think, because I could work in the contact station there. I knew the Maze and I could just help out there. They really kind of needed to figure out what to do with me in the winter, and so that's what they did with me. So I worked out in the Maze, just projects, and I can't even remember what, but mostly being in that information center/the contact center.

And then in 1985, I once again went back onto the river crew and did the same kind of work I had always been doing there. But that fall, I requested that I be able to work at Joshua Tree National Monument, I think it was at the time. It might have been a park. The reason being that I had gone to this law enforcement training center and gotten trained, but I really had no on the job experience using that training, and I felt like I was losing everything that I had learned or had never really sharpened it with working with it. I actually had done a ten-day detail, they call it a detail when you leave your assigned

park and go work somewhere else but you're still paid by your park, and I had gone to Lake Mead, I don't know when, maybe '84, something like that, probably '84, for ten days. I had a friend that lived there and was working there so I stayed with his family, so it didn't cost the park anything to let me go there other than they were paying my salary. I did road patrol with one of the employees there just to get some experience with how that all worked. Because my law enforcement was just restricted to river patrols, which really nothing much was going on there or the Maze in the winter and nothing was going on there.

TM: At Lake Mead road patrol, they have to deal with Las Vegas and a huge amount of tourist traffic.

PG: Yeah. I just did ride-alongs with one of the rangers who had worked there for a while. So he knew what he was doing, and I just rode along and kind of was with him and got to be part of it all and got to kind of see what a busy law enforcement situation or area was like and what doing road patrol there was like.

TM: What did you see on those ten days?

PG: Oh gosh. I don't really remember. I just remember driving around. It was hot. I don't have specific memories of things. I think there probably was maybe a DUI or campground disputes or maybe speeding on the roads, those kinds of violations. It wasn't really resource violations, it was people management issues.

TM: You might have seen all of those.

PG: I might have seen all, but I don't have any specific memories of that. So I still felt, though, that I was very under-experienced with the law enforcement. And I suspected that my future, since I was a permanent law enforcement person, that eventually I probably would want to move away from Canyonlands and the river jobs, and the direction I would go would be in some sort of law enforcement job somewhere. I really didn't have a lot of credibility as a river ranger in law enforcement, so I asked if I could go to Joshua Tree for about five or six months. They have a busy... They have an active winter season there and hire seasonals, and they had... I guess basically what they did, instead of hiring three seasonals they hired two seasonals and then they probably covered my salary for me to come work for them although it was just a short term thing. I hadn't officially left Canyonlands at all, so I still went back to Canyonlands in the spring after I did this detail to Joshua Tree.

TM: How did you... Sorry, I'm going to jump in here. How did you come up with this idea, and who did you ask to make it fly?

PG: You know, I'm not sure how I came up with the idea, exactly. The chief ranger there at the time was a man named Paul Henry and he had been the firearms instructor when I went to FLETC, the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center, in 1983. So even though people go in and out of that area, I think that he did remember me. I didn't have a special relationship with him, but I was a pretty good shot, and I think he just remembered that, perhaps. So I think I got a hold of him, and said, "Hey remember me? I'm the river ranger from Canyonlands." I'm not sure how I went about it, but I think I just kind of called him and said I'm looking for a chance to get some experience.

TM: So Paul was the chief ranger at Joshua Tree.

PG: Yes.

TM: And if he was an instructor at FLETC, I would think that anyone who came to him and said, "I would like to buff up my skills," as an instructor, he would be honored to be part of that.

PG: I think he saw what I was asking for in the bigger picture.

TM: Yeah.

PG: So he had been at FLETC in '83, and then he had gotten the chief ranger job at Joshua Tree, so he was strictly at Joshua Tree. But I told him I was trying to get some experience that I hadn't really gotten at my park. I think he saw that as a really valid request, and he had a position that he was going to fill anyway and he might as well use me as use anybody. I mean, I talked to my boss before I ever talked to Paul, and said, "If I can get this to work out, would you be okay with it?" I think he said, "Sure, whatever." Then I called Paul, and he said, "Oh yeah, we'll make it happen." So I went there, probably in October of 1985 and did road patrol. Well, the first little bit was training. The Park Service usually starts its seasons with training to where you have law enforcement refresher. We always had to have a 40-hour refresher every year. So I think I went through that there. I had gone through it in the spring in Canyonlands, so I might have gone through it again at Joshua Tree, I don't remember. But I do know they had a 40-hour rock rescue training course that was excellent, where they taught a lot of basic rescue skills. Not the climbing so much, but how to go get a person who was hanging off a rock in trouble off of there. A lot of rock climbers use Joshua Tree, especially in the fall and the spring, when it's not so hot. So they do have... I think they had a volunteer... They did have JOSAR, a volunteer Joshua Tree rescue group that would be around and help with rescue. So it was a pretty active rescue program, and I got to go through their training for that. So that was really fun, I really enjoyed that. It was great skills to gain. So the beginning would have been some training and orientation. And then, basically, I just got put into the shift where I had an 8-hour shift every day to do patrols in the park: drive in a patrol car through the campground, make sure everything looked fine there; drive up into the park, make sure nobody was driving drunk or anything like that; just making sure people were all doing what they should be doing.

So that helped me with getting used to the whole radio dispatch calling, you know, what do you say when you're stopping a car with dispatch, and how do you back people up, and just this whole road patrol that I had never had much experience in. Certainly I did the ride-alongs at Lake Mead, but now I was in the car and I was doing the job. It was real good experience for me to have that. I do remember two different incidents there. One was there was a family disturbance. Basically, it was a man and a woman arguing, and I can't remember if there was physical altercation going on or not, in the campground. Somebody else had called and said we've got a domestic situation going on here in the campground, we need a ranger to come in. And so I went there. I remember talking to them, and I remember requesting backup because it's just the thing you do if there's something that might get hinky, you want to have someone else there with you. Domestic violence or domestic situations are usually viewed as very emotional and potentially problems. So I got backup, but I was just kind of trying to resolve things. This other ranger who had worked there, he came in and he just kind of took over and said, "Okay, we're arresting you guys" and arrested them and we took him to jail. And, you know, I wasn't that assertive or aggressive. I still don't know really whether arresting them was warranted, but he was not timid about it, and I was a little timid about it. It was like, well, what am I going to do now? I was learning. I remember how he just went in and did it – arrested them, took them to jail, no big deal. And I'm like, okay, well that's how you do it. I still don't know whether they really should have been

arrested or not, it seemed like maybe a step too far, but he had worked there for a while and I was learning, and I just went along with it. So I remember that because it caused me to think things over.

TM: Well, let's just stop right there Pat because I got an interesting question. You're going to have a career in front of you in law enforcement, and today there's much discussion about, I think the lack of mental health resources in the law enforcement operations, where oftentimes a little softer touch can actually diffuse a situation.

PG: Right, I agree with you that there's more than one way to solve this. I always was a little bit like, I don't know if that was the best action that this other ranger took or not.

TM: Well, so my question is, you had a chance to see that, and you had a chance to question it. In your future career, did that help you – did you find your own way? I guess I should just wait, because eventually you'll get us there.

PG: Well, you know, for one thing, I never did a lot of actual law enforcement. Joshua Tree was one place, and as you'll hear in the future, there might have been another place, but I didn't have a lot of... I wasn't the person on the ground in the car very much in my whole career.

TM: Which is kind of dealing with concessions employees, bar fights, campground disturbances, speeding. Those are the... Domestic disputes are the big ticket law enforcement item issues. Poaching, of course, very deadly, issues that law enforcement deals with. So if you're not working in that realm, it's not quite so problematic. But I just kind of wonder, if there wasn't another way.

PG: Right, I would say, ultimately, in summary, my approach was always to go in soft to see what you could do before you started being the hard-ass. Part of that was because I agree with the notion that a lot of times you can resolve things just by other means than arresting people. So overall, that would be my approach. The problem is that you've got to be able to shift gears. If you just get stuck in that and things start going to where you really should separate people for their own good and take somebody away because there's a threat that they're going to be possibly threatening other people, I needed to be able to step up to that level and do it, and that probably was my weak spot. I really wasn't experienced in doing that, and that wasn't where I went to quickly. It never became an issue with me, as we'll talk through my career, but that was probably the point where I started thinking about, "Oh, that's one way to do it, is there another way to do it?"

TM: Okay. This is a dilemma that every commissioned officer faces.

PG: Yeah. Different officers work in different ways, and it's always hard to say you're wrong and I'm right, or that's wrong and this is right.

TM: That's right.

PG: You know, it's a call each time.

TM: Yeah, yeah. Cool, okay.

PG: So the other thing I remember was that there was a Marine Corps base just outside of Twentynine Palms. I lived in the town of Twentynine Palms. That's where the headquarters was. I would go to work there each morning, pick up a patrol car, and go up into the park. I had some night shifts, and on... Well, this wasn't a night shift though, maybe it was. I think it might have been the evening. There was a young

Marine on a motorcycle. I don't remember if he'd been drinking or not. It wasn't uncommon for them to be drinking and come up into the park and actually raise some hell, basically. But this guy was driving up into the park and there was a car coming down. I think he was towards the center line and the car – basically, they got in a wreck. But what happened was just the left side of this guy's...scraped across the left side of the car. The car was heading downhill and he was heading uphill. So there was this motorcycle. There was a wreck, it was a motorcyclist that was in bad condition. I was the patrol officer that responded there, and the ambulance came up and basically they were taken off. I don't remember the people in the car, but what I remember was that this guy's arm got sheared off in the wreck. So the ambulance packaged him up and was going to haul him off, and they asked me to go look for his arm off in the bushes because they couldn't find it. So I got my little flashlight out there, and I'm looking around for a loose arm, and I found it, and we... They wanted it so they could possibly reattach it or something like that. But that was kind of gory and I remember it. I'm like, "Wow!" This is the kind of stuff I'd never seen in Canyonlands and that I felt that if I wanted to go somewhere professionally I needed to be exposed to some of this stuff. So those two things stand out in my mind.

Oh, I also remember one time that there was a car that was weaving a little bit in front of me, and there was this kind of idea that if they crossed the center line... This was the guy in Lake Mead, he said if they cross that center line three times, that means that they could be driving under the influence and that's your probable cause to stop them and check them out. So I see this car, it's weaving a little bit and it weaves back, and on the third one, I'm like, "Oh my gosh, I think this might be a DUI. Oh my gosh, I think I better stop them, and then I've got to maybe arrest them? Who knows?" I probably called backup or something like that because it was a big deal to me. It was like the first time. So I pulled him over, I walk up to him, and I start talking to him, and it's like, "The reason I pulled you over is because I noticed that you were weaving around and I'm wondering if you've been drinking tonight." It turns out that they had just been driving and hadn't slept for like 24 hours. They had made a power run to get to Joshua Tree and were really tired and were just kind of, maybe somewhat falling asleep or just not sharp. So it wasn't a DUI as it turned out. I can't remember if I had them do any field sobriety tests or not, but somewhere along the line, I became pretty convinced that they hadn't been drinking, and that they were just tired, and their driving had looked like they were drinking because they were too tired to be driving. I don't remember what I did other than I didn't arrest them. Maybe I had them trade drivers or something like that.

TM: They'd have been wide awake when you pulled them over.

PG: Well, that's true. That might have woke them up. So I remember those three things, and I also remember being assigned to go out and watch... Haley's Comet went through, and there were people that came up from the populated areas surrounding Joshua Tree because of the clear, darker skies. We're watching Haley's Comet like at 2:00 in the morning and so... I am not a night person. I had to do these patrols that lasted till 2:00 or... Maybe the comet was at midnight or something, but I was up late and I was like, "I don't know if I can do this." But it was cool because I got to see the comet. I was out there with the people, and there was no problems. They just wanted to have someone on patrol late in case there was a problem. I got to see the comet, and there was a second comet that came through that year, which was really unusual. There was a follow-up comet after that that came like a month later that you could see as well, so that was really cool to be able to see both of those comets. And that's what I remember mostly about Joshua Tree.

TM: Joshua Tree would develop a reputation of kind of having a pretty rough winter climbing crowd.

PG: Yeah.

TM: And their Christmas-New Year's celebrations get a little out of hand in the campgrounds. Was that sort of just developing when you were there? Had it started up yet?

PG: I don't remember that the troublesome part was there with celebrations. The other thing was that the two other seasonal rangers that were working were both climbers and good with the whole rock rescue thing. They basically were responsible for taking care of the whole climbing stuff. So I didn't get... I think geographically I was on the east side of the park and they were up there where the climbers were hanging around. So I didn't end up doing much at all with the climbers, and I don't remember if I even got involved with any kind of rescues with them. I don't remember that I did. I might have got involved with some kind of a search for somebody that was missing, I can't remember right now. That's vaguely familiar to me, but I didn't end up doing much with the climbers.

TM: But it would be a lot of radio work, so you'd get comfortable with that.

PG: Right.

TM: You know, stops, interacting with the visitors as a law enforcement officer.

PG: Right, thinking through, "Okay, how do I protect myself and fix this problem? How do I protect anybody else that's around and address this problem and resolve it?" Those were just good experiences to work through.

TM: Do you remember who the superintendent was at the time?

PG: I don't. I have this idea of the person, but I can't come up with the name.

TM: Because Curt Sauer was going to take over that job pretty soon.

PG: I was there in '86, '85/'86, and it wasn't Curt, and maybe he took over...

TM: Just after that.

PG: You know, the guy that was the superintendent, right, I think he didn't last much longer after I left. And then I guess Curt went in there in the late eighties, huh?

TM: And he retired in ninety. No, sorry, in 2000. Is that right?

PG: Yeah, I don't know.

TM: I just did an oral history with him. I should know this. Dang it. Well, I'll look it up.

PG: Well, if you can remember everything you talked to people about, you're doing really well.

TM: Well, I can't. But I know he was in there. Yeah, OK.

PG: I don't remember that superintendent. It wasn't Curt. It was his predecessor then.

TM: Yeah, alright. And so Paul Henry was glad to have you and that worked out well.

PG: Right. It worked out well. I got the experience I wanted. He had a seasonal that he needed a position filled. And then at the end of what would have been the season there, and when the river season was starting back in Canyonlands, I think it was in April. It was either late March or April that I went back to Canyonlands. This was '86, and I started doing the river ranger work again. But sometime in 1986, I don't remember exactly when, it was probably late spring, sometime in the summer, I transferred to Grand Canyon. The way that worked out was that... I was a GS-5, and there was a bottleneck of GS-7 positions in the Park Service and it was hard to get that next step.

TM: Bottleneck meaning there were a lot of GS-7s? What was the restriction?

PG: I think there were not that many positions that were classified as GS-7, so maybe for every 20 GS-5 positions that there were out in the Park Service, there was maybe one GS-7. I don't know if that ratio is close, but it's just that there were a lot fewer of them. So most of the general rangers at that time were GS-5s, and then when you start being a -7 you might be a little bit of an extra good general ranger. And by the time you were a -9 you were supervising stuff. That was then. They changed the whole... There was a program called Ranger Careers in the nineties where they bumped us all up like a level. Anyway, the Park Service did not have many GS-7 jobs. I ended up wishing to get that, but I didn't, and what I ended up doing was... There was a fellow named Dave Stimson that was working at Phantom and for some reason... I don't know how I came across him, but I came across him maybe at some training session, I don't know what, and he and I started talking. We both were talking about, "Yeah I'm ready to do something different. I got a great job, best job in the Park Service, but I need to get a change. Get a little bit more experience so that I'm more marketable in the future for other jobs, like a GS-7 somewhere." Maybe we had been applying, I'm not sure, and not getting jobs. So between the two we cooked up this idea to see if we could do a job swap.

TM: How do you spell Dave's last name?

PG: I think it's S-T-I-M-S-O-N. M as in Mary.

TM: S-T-I-M-S-O-N, okay. So you guys cooked up this idea to job swap.

PG: Right. So I asked my boss in Canyonlands, Jim Bragg and said, "Hey, I'm thinking about...this guy wants to swap jobs with me, what do you think?" and he's like "Oh, yeah sounds okay." Apparently, Mark Law, who was supervising Phantom at the time said, "Sure, go for it." Later, I talked to Mark and he said, "We never thought that was really going to happen. We just thought, yeah, go ahead, it's going to get shot down by personnel or something like that." So I don't think either park really thought that this was going to happen, but Dave and I started dealing with personnel and started going through whatever paperwork steps and seeing if we could do a swap, and we got the swap done. Our superintendents signed off on it and he took my job in Canyonlands and I took his job at Phantom. Suddenly I had a new job. I was thrilled to be at Phantom because I always kind of preferred the backcountry, and I was along the river. I wasn't on the river crew, but I was seeing river stuff going by. It was new. I was always interested in new places and exploring types of...

TM: And this was in the summer of 1986?

PG: Well, it was 1986. I don't remember if it was in the summer or exactly when. It was after I had come back to Canyonlands from Joshua Tree. So it would have been sometime somewhere between May and November, I think, but I can't remember which month it was.

TM: It's hot in Phantom Ranch in the summer. You'd have remembered that.

PG: I do remember being hot down there, sometimes, but I can't remember if that was my first initial experience. I don't remember my first day there, I have no memory of that.

TM: What did you do with Chaz?

PG: Well, I got given this house, or I was assigned to a house that was out on Yaki Point next to where the concessioner had some mule barns out there.

TM: Yeah, right at the South Kaibab trailhead.

PG: Right.

TM: Wow.

PG: And right near it, there was a little house that did not have a good septic system, and so they did not want to put a family into it. It had two bedrooms. It was like an older small place. Mary Liz Gail, I think, was the housing officer at the time. I feel so sorry for these housing officers because they're always trying to stretch 90 houses to go for 100 people. They just never had enough. And so, she thought, okay, here's a permanent employee coming in that's going to need housing, and I'm going to give her this house that is good if people don't use it very much because of the septic system. She'll be down at Phantom most of the time, and that'll be her house on the rim. I was assigned to that house as my official residence, and I got a roommate. A woman that I knew from Canyonlands was working seasonal fee collection on the south rim. I said, "Liz, hey, do you want to get out of seasonal housing, and live at my house and take care of my dog for me when I'm down in Phantom?"

TM: Oh wow.

PG: She loved the idea of getting out of seasonal housing. Essentially she had a house to herself most of the time, which for a seasonal employee was really good because I think they were cramming three of them or more into little trailers and things like that. It just was not good housing there. So she moved into the house with me, which sort of defeated the whole purpose of assigning me that house when it was going to be empty.

TM: But you didn't know that and neither did Mary.

PG: So Liz was there and she took care of my dog for me. Ten days..let's see...no, we worked nine days. Nine days on. So I would hike down to Phantom on my first day of work. I'd leave my house, and my day would start at that moment I started walking down the trail. And then I would... There were cabins down there that were not assigned to any one person. They were for whoever was working down there. So I got basically assigned to a place called the Rock House, which was where I went to every time I went down. But it could be that someone else was living in there when I was not there, so that's why they gave me an official house up on the rim, was the Phantom house was just sort of a bunk house, in a way, but I was the only one in there.

TM: Like a duty station, I guess. I don't know.

PG: Yeah, a duty station. Right. That's probably the correct lingo. So I had the Rock House. Mark Law would stay in the river ranger house right next door when he came down, but he and I were opposite

shifts, I think. And then there was the Phantom ranger station house, I guess, which was kind of a three bedroom house type thing. There was a couple of seasonals that lived in there. Then there was the bunk house down at Phantom that the trail crew would stay in when they would come down and stay in the area.

TM: So Mark Law was the head Phantom ranger at the time? Is that right?

PG: Yes, I think he was up in the... Phantom subdistrict ranger, probably was his title. I think a guy named Butch, that wasn't Butch Farabee, it was Butch somebody else, was the district ranger, I think, in charge of perhaps what they would call the Corridor, which would have been Desert...

TM: Indian Gardens and Cottonwood and...

PG: Indian Gardens, yeah, right. So that was the Corridor. And then the backcountry rangers, I think that was all under a backcountry office. I forgot this other Butch's last name, but he was the district ranger. I think that Mark was the subdistrict ranger maybe for the Corridor. Maybe he was the subdistrict ranger of the whole Corridor. I bet he was. Which meant he might have been overseeing Indian Gardens, Cottonwood, and Phantom. So he wasn't down at Phantom much at all when I was there. If he went down, I think he went on an opposite shift. I was a permanent employee, so I was, I think, kind of the person that was the permanent employee that was usually around Phantom, and then there were seasonal rangers there. Then I think Mark might have kind of hovered over all of that Corridor. I think that's how it was. I don't remember exactly.

TM: Tell me some Mark Law stories. What do you remember of Mark?

PG: Oh, well. Oh boy. The whole crew down there, Dave Stimpson, Patty Thompson, the Phantom concessions employees, they had all been around for a while and when I got there it took me a while to settle in to that job and kind of pick up on the things to be doing. Mark Law gave me a long narrative about how he was disappointed in my performance. I had never had anybody do that before. But what I can recall is that in Canyonlands I was pretty much left to my own devices and I kind of invented my own projects because nobody was giving me very specific or direct assignments. So Mark operated on a different caliber, and he did say, okay, we want you to repaint the signs. I remember refinishing the signs down there; and we would do patrols early in the morning to see if people were illegally camping; and do patrols through the campground, talk to people to make sure they had their food stored safely; and we would catch excessive numbers of squirrels and relocate them. So there was very specific tasks that were going on at Phantom. I thought that I was doing them, but Mark thought that I wasn't doing them to the degree he wanted me to so he gave me a long narrative. I can remember just being kind of caught off guard because I thought, "Wow, I'm not used to having someone disappointed in my work." I remember writing a big, long email back to him saying, "Well, on point one, here's my counter blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. Point two, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah." And, you know, I don't remember anything really coming out of it other than that. I don't think it went any further and we were fine. We didn't have hostility or bad feelings between us or anything like that. I'm trying to sum up what my impression of Mark was. I got along with Mark fine, I think eventually, after we had a bit of a rough spell there. I went to his wedding. But he was a little particular about things, maybe is a way to say it. I really don't know that I can sum him up very well, but... I guess that's it.

TM: Okay. And then the Phantom Ranch crew. I'm wondering if Keith Green and Nancy Green might have been working there then?

PG: I don't recognize those names.

TM: Who do you recognize? Who do you remember was working at...

PG: I remember Patty Thompson. She was a super seasonal and she'd been around a while. By comparison, I paled in her wake. She was on things, was a super... Knew what was going on. She was an ace down there. I don't remember if there was another seasonal ranger. I think there might have been. Eventually, there was a fellow that came down. I can't recall his name. There was a woman who was a seasonal maintenance worker. There was a permanent fellow named Vern who ran the sewage treatment plant down there. I forgot Vern's last name. Then on his days off, there was a woman named Vickie Kellerman. She was his backup, or his relief when he had days off, and she would make sure the sewage treatment plant was running properly. So there was actually quite number of women that were working in that corridor. Yvette Ruan was working at Indian Gardens. In the backcountry office there were a couple of women. When I think of their names... Oh, Jane Hendrick was up there, Bev Perry eventually supervised that, and I forgot her first name, last name Sharrow.

TM: Bev? Oh wait, Dave Sharrow and his...

PG: Yes, and his wife. Yes, she was in the backcountry office. Anyway, women were becoming not uncommon in the ranger ranks down in the canyon at least. I don't think I remember any other names down at Phantom. You know, I got to know the concessions people in a limited fashion, but I can't remember any of their names. So I guess that's about it.

TM: Patty Thompson. Did she have red hair?

PG: No, she had blonde hair, and it was real long.

TM: Hmm, okay. What else do you remember about Patty?

PG: Well, you know, we had medical stuff going on down at Phantom. That was part of one of... Some of the stuff that we did more of was medical stuff than some of the other things because people would come down and have problems and hope that they could get a mule ride out because they had blisters. Lots of blisters and things like that. Patty was really good with the medical stuff as I recall. I don't remember... I don't remember much more. I mean, I have a very distinct image in my mind, but I don't know how to put into words anything more about my memory other than she was... I remember her laughing and just kind of being a great asset to Phantom crew. And then I think she kind of went away, and I don't know what happened to her. I think it was like, what happened to Patty Thompson? After a year or two she just wasn't around, and I think people didn't quite know what happened to her and I'm not sure... I don't know what happened to her. Oh, and there was a Marie Tuxhorn I forgot. She was up at Indian Gardens also doing maintenance there, I think.

TM: How do you spell her name?

PG: T-U-X-H-O-R-N. And she later became a BLM ranger.

TM: What's her first name?

PG: Marie.

TM: Thank you. Okay. She was doing maintenance at the Gardens.

PG: Yeah.

TM: Okay. There was a water pipeline guy named Jerry Chavez. Do you remember him?

PG: Nope. Don't remember him.

TM: Okay. Alright. I'm trying to remember who else would have been around.

PG: I was there '86, and I left in '88. I wasn't there a great long time.

TM: Okay. Richard Marks would have been the superintendent.

PG: That's right. Yeah. I don't even know who the chief ranger was off the top of my head. I'm sure I knew at the time, but it escapes me now. So at Phantom, the work, to a certain degree, was to interface with the people that were passing through there. There were people who were camping there, there were people who were staying at the concessions cabins that either hiked down and stayed there or rode mules down and stayed there. There were some rim-to-rims, but I don't think anything like what's going on these days.

TM: Right.

PG: And there were a fair number of people who were ill-equipped and ill-prepared and thought they were going to hike to the river for the day and then hike out that day. This is before Grand Canyon started their PSAR program, or their Preventative SAR, Preventative Search and Rescue. Now they've got great big signs like on the South Kaibab trailhead about trying to advise people that they need to be... They're trying to advise them about what the hike is like. That it's more than they might think it is and that they need to take water. That signage wasn't there before. It seems like we'd get people who would be able to kind of see the... I don't know where they saw the river from, or maybe they just imagined it down there, but they'd decide they'd hike to the river and back in a day and they would, a lot of times, practically never make it. Or maybe they didn't make it. They'd get to Phantom and they'd say, "Oh, there's no way I can go back." And I'd say, "I'm sorry, you have to. We don't have accommodations here for people. You can't just camp here. I don't have a helicopter to take you out. There's just not much choice, you've got to keep walking." I'd shoo them up to Indian Gardens, and they'd become Yvette's problem.

Occasionally, there would be someone who just absolutely could not walk. We did have some emergency food that campers would leave behind, and we had some sleeping bags, and we would let them sleep overnight in some of our gear if we felt like it was pretty legitimate. But then they'd have to hike out the next morning, or we'd say, "We can get you a mule for \$420, or whatever the price was. Those are your choices. No, there's not a helicopter to take you out of here." So a lot of it was just kind of shooing people on, or the trouble was shooing people on. 95% of the people down there were fine because they were backpacking down and had a campsite or had arrangements and had not made the mistake of thinking that they could hike to the river and back in one day. But the problems were the people that thought they could and then got down there and figured out that they couldn't, and then we had to figure out well now what?

There were some medicals. One time I remember thinking I was so brilliant with this resolution. There was a woman and her husband that hiked down into the Grand Canyon for their anniversary every year for the last 40 years, or something like that. So they were getting to be older, and I'm going to guess they were in their 70s, maybe 80s. They were hiking down and she got – and they had younger family members with them, either their children or grandchildren – but she got down towards the Tipoff and her legs started giving out and she could not hold herself up. She just would collapse. So we got the call that there was somebody needing assistance up there, and I'm like, "Okay." I grabbed a wheelbarrow and I trundled it across the bridge to the bottom of the trail there below Tipoff, and I started hiking up with the idea that I would just give her my shoulder to put her arm around and help her down, and then when I got there I'd put her in the wheelbarrow. Well, her family had gotten her down by that kind of means of supporting her and helping her walk down and she was pretty close to it. She was a small woman and I just had her sit in the wheelbarrow, and I wheeled her the rest of the way in. I like to call it my Phantom Ambulance. She stayed then at... She had reservations the Phantom...

TM: Oh, at the lodge.

PG: ...Lodge, yeah. So she stayed there a few days. I don't remember after that. I think she got her strength back and hiked out at the end, but that was one medical that I remember. There was another fellow that had pneumothorax down there, and the weather was really bad. We had a little bed in the Phantom Ranger Station and there was kind of a mini-clinic, kind of a small room that had been turned into a clinic. He was certain he had a pneumothorax because he had one before. He said, "I know what this is." So I took his vitals. I was the person that handled him, or treated him, or met with him. And I did the whole EMT kind of thing and assessed him, but we had medical control up on the rim. Do you remember Sherrie...?

TM: Collins?

PG: Collins, yeah. She was in charge of EMS in the canyon at the time so it was her call when we started evacuating people. So I relayed all my information up to her and said, "I've got this patient here that believes that he's having a pneumothorax. He's had it before. Here's his vitals, you know. Am I to get him helicoptered out of here?" She was kind of hesitant about it. She said, "Let's just give him a day and see how he feels." Because the Park Service was very conservative with use of the helicopter.

TM: Right. So, pneumothorax. I'm thinking of a collapsed lung.

PG: Yeah.

TM: And when that happens, people who've had it before, they know it, and they know that it's a medical emergency. It's hard for them to get it across to others that they're losing their respiratory function, their ability to breathe.

PG: Right.

TM: So I can appreciate Sherrie's like, oh yeah, yeah, we get these people all the time that say that's happening.

PG: Right.

TM: But it's hard for the person who's having it because they look okay. They're not grey or ashen and their vitals are...

PG: I believed him. I believed him, but I think I was not a proven entity to Sherrie yet, necessarily, and she didn't know whether I was overreacting, she didn't know whether this patient was overreacting.

TM: Yeah. Or lying, just hoping to get a flight out.

PG: Right. There was also weather complications that came up because I remember at some point she had... Well, in my memory she did not just jump on it. "Oh yeah, we'll get him out right away." She gave it a little time, and it might have been only a few hours, but there was a little bit of a like "Okay, let's wait and see" on her part. But meanwhile, there became terrible weather and the helicopter couldn't fly in. So as I remember, the poor guy had to spend the night down there before the helicopter could get down. The weather played a role and so this went longer than he was certainly comfortable with, and I was starting to be like "I don't know about this." He did get flow out eventually. He did have a pneumothorax, so it all got resolved fine. But I remember that was one of my bigger medical cases.

TM: What else do you remember about Sherrie?

PG: I felt that she was very professional and very on the ball and sharp and knew her business and was not someone that was going to be... I mean she knew what she was doing, and she didn't mind making hard calls. I had a great respect for her.

TM: Nice.

PG: Yeah. So we had medical stuff at Phantom. We had stuff that wasn't really seriously medical, it was inconvenient or slightly painful, but people needed to keep moving because we weren't getting them a helicopter for blisters. We did some evacuations, and actually, I wrenched my back one time because we were carrying a litter. I don't remember what the... I don't know if it was this guy that I just told you about or somebody else for some reason we were evacuating out, but I do remember a litter with four of us carrying it to the heliport. The trail was very narrow with kind of rocks lining it. I had to twist...my footing was not...I didn't have a path to walk on. I was kind of working around rocks and somehow in the course of that I ended up with an injured back. So I ended up on light duty for a couple weeks. I got reassigned up to the backcountry office, so I kept working, but I was... They swapped me out, basically. Somebody else came down to Phantom for a while so they could do foot patrols and all the stuff they should be doing, and I worked at the backcountry office so that I could go do some PT and be on light duty. Maybe it was four weeks, I can't remember how long I was there.

TM: Did you get evaluated at the clinic?

PG: I did.

TM: Do you remember who the doctor was who visited you?

PG: Well, I think there was... Was there a Nancy Elder or somebody either with a Nancy or an Elder? There was a female doctor, I believe, that would have been there in '86. She also removed some moles from my back.

TM: Cheryl Pagel, I remember her but she might have been gone by then. And Tom Myers and Jim Wurgler. Well, Tom hadn't started yet, but Jim might have been there.

PG: Yeah, I don't remember those names, and it was definitely a woman. And she was around for a little bit because I did have at least two encounters with her. So, what else about Phantom? I didn't do too much with the river people. They kind of came in and did their business and then just moved on.

TM: Right. They would do exchanges. People would hike in and hike out from river trips.

PG: Right.

TM: And probably river people would eventually, occasionally bring you someone who was hurt that they'd gotten down to Phantom.

PG: Yeah, maybe. Yeah, could've. I mean that would definitely have been something that's happened in the past. I don't remember specifically that, so either I didn't deal with it or else I just forgot it. Didn't have a lot of law enforcement down there, although there was one time where there was somebody down at... If you're going from Indian Gardens and hiking to Phantom, where you first hit the river, what's that place called?

TM: Pipe Creek.

PG: Pipe Creek, yeah. At Pipe Creek there was somebody that was illegally camping there, I think. Another ranger and I, and for some reason... Anyways, we went in and told them to move. I have a sense that we thought he might be dangerous somehow. I don't now have any idea where that notion came from. I don't remember that it turned into anything. We just told them he had to go, but there was some sense of I think two of us should go, maybe this guy has got... I don't know what the cause of the hesitancy with just walking up to him was, but we were on our guard when we went into his camp and talked to him. Oh, and there was something else where I had to... There was a few law enforcement things but just not much. I remember there was a guy that was pretty certain that the CIA had put a chip in his brain and he was being monitored from space all the time. So he was a little, you know, nuts. I guess he just hiked himself out. I can't remember what happened to him. He was harmless, but he was not. He was off his meds, is what he was. So really not a lot of serious law enforcement down there. I can remember another incident, but I don't even remember enough of it to describe what happened. I think we had illegal campers that we would come across that hadn't gotten reservations for the campground. We would just give them a citation and they'd have to pay it, and we told them that they need to move on. So I'd go down on my first day of work, I'd stay down there nine...or on my ninth day I would hike out. Nine hour days except for the last one was an eight hour day, something like that. And then I'd have five days off. I did not do very much backpacking in the Grand Canyon when I worked there because when I had my days off, I didn't want to turn around and go back in. I wanted to go get groceries, and go to a movie, and be on the rim for a while, and go skiing in the winter up there, whatever. Since I've retired, I've done a lot more backpacking in the Grand Canyon than I ever did when I worked there because now it's a treat to go there and backpack on my off time, which is always, but at the time, I just didn't want to turn around and go back in. I did a backpack off the North Rim one time, I remember, down into... Oh gosh, I can't remember all these... Where you could hike down to... Surprise Valley. Surprise Valley and...

TM: Oh yeah, Thunder River and Deer Creek.

PG: Yeah, Thunder River. I did that one. Most of my time when I was not working was either on the rim or out of there going to Flagstaff or going somewhere else.

TM: Did you go down to Sedona, or head off to Lake Powell at all, or Bryce?

PG: I know I went down to the desert. Probably, I don't know when, in the summer. I remember being in Yuma.

TM: Organ Pipe, maybe?

PG: And probably Organ Pipe, yeah. I don't know that I would have gone to Powell much, that didn't draw my attention. I'm sure I went through Sedona because I would have just been curious about it, but the biking wasn't there then. I just probably looked around at the beautiful scenery and then went somewhere else, I don't know.

TM: It's funny, you mentioned the few rim-to-rim people, and I thought, yeah, they all had kids that became rim-to-rimmers and now the place is overrun. It's like 30 years ago when, 35 years ago or so, another generation back.

PG: Right. That's true. Yeah.

TM: So it's kind of funny to ponder that. Back when there wasn't half as many people as there is now.

PG: Right. Yeah, that just started flooring me when I heard of all those rim-to-rims because it was a hard enough hike just to go in and out of Phantom. I was always just like, "You've got to be kidding me."

TM: And the rim-to-rim-to-rim people.

PG: I know. Even worse. Oh, another few things that I did was I did get on a couple river trips when I was assigned at Phantom. The park was really good about trying to cross train people a little bit and get them exposed to places other than just where they were working. So one time, I hiked down Nankoweap and joined the river crew. It was a trails trip in November to do rehab trails maybe at Nankoweap and somewhere else, where they would try and eliminate social trailing by putting cactus in the trails and other means of deterring people from wandering aimlessly through there.

TM: Hey Pat?

PG: Yeah?

TM: I'm wondering, we've been going on for about an hour here. I got a lot of questions for you about the Grand Canyon river trips versus Canyonlands river trips and who was on the trips and what do you remember about them and all that. Maybe it's a good time to...

PG: It's a great time to call it quits.

TM: ...wrap up Part 4, but you know where we'll be going for Part 5.

PG: Yes, that sounds great.

TM: Okay. Well, with that then, this will conclude Part 4 Oral History Interview with Pat Grediagin. Today is Monday, November 23, 2020. My name is Tom Martin, and Pat, thank you so much for this.

PG: Yes, you're always welcome.