

**Transcription:** Grand Canyon Historical Society

**Interviewee:** Robert/Bob Packard (BP)

**Interviewer:** Tom Martin (TM)

**Subject:** Hiking the length of the Grand Canyon

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TM: Today is October 24th, 2015. We are in the home of Robert Packard, P-A-C-K-A-R-D. Robert, of course, is known as Bob. Bob, could you tell me what year you were born?

BP: 1936.

TM: Where?

BP: I was born in Portland, Maine.

TM: What were your parents doing in Portland when you were born?

BP: Oh, dear. I'm not 100% sure. I think my father was selling Electrolux vacuum cleaners and my mother was just being a housewife.

TM: Do you have any brothers and sisters?

BP: I do. I have two of each.

TM: Okay. Older? Younger? Where are you?

BP: I'm the oldest.

TM: You're the oldest? Okay, cool. What did your father do, was he a travelling salesman?

BP: Well, at that particular point when I was born. But basically growing up as a little boy, he was a social worker. Worked in Augusta, Maine and did several kinds of social work for the state. My mother was a housekeeper, but she was also tax collector, treasurer and town clerk of the town that I grew up in. The town office was our kitchen. That's how informal it was. So people would come into our kitchen and do business with my mother who was town clerk, treasurer and tax collector for several years.

TM: How many people were in the population of Augusta, Maine?

BP: Oh, that's not where I grew up. That's where my father worked. My father had to travel 20 miles each way to get to Augusta. We lived in a little town called Jefferson. A very rural town that surrounded a lake, Damariscotta Lake. I grew up on a lake. Farming country. We had a family farm. It was not commercial. We basically raised our own food. I grew up milking cows, haying, digging potatoes. We

essentially raised almost all of our own food. Beef, chicken, pig. You know, slopping pigs, feeding chickens and killing them in the fall with my brothers and sisters and parents.

TM: Were you out-of-doors a lot then?

BP: Well, if you're milking cows and if you're tossing manure around you're outdoors a lot. If you're haying. You know, grow up on farm, a family farm, not to make money, but to feed ourselves.

TM: Did you learn how to swim then? Did you go swimming? Did you go hiking?

BP: No hiking. The family basically worked. Very little time. My father had a full-time job with the state as a social worker. I can remember those years where he would milk the cows in the morning and I would milk them at night after I came home from school and so forth. So no, there's not much memory of the family going on outings to go hiking. Essentially none of that.

TM: What about family vacations?

BP: You can't have a vacation when you have cows. They have to be milked twice a day. That's kind of it, we were stuck at home. But, on the other hand, I would not want to have been brought up any other way. My whole thrust in my life has been to get away from that, of course, but I wouldn't want to have grown up any other way. 'Cause I know what agriculture is like. I know what raising animals is like. And I know what feeding yourself is like off the land and so forth.

TM: In high school, what were your interests?

BP: Well, I was on track and cross country teams. I did that through high school, through college and even up until I was 47 I ran competitively and have quite a reputation actually. I have held 10 U.S. age records for long distance running.

TM: Just thinking about your high school, were you the star runner of your class?

BP: I was the top cross country runner in my high school.

TM: Wow. Were you thinking about mathematics at that time?

BP: Well, yeah. I mean, I was good in physics, chemistry, the sciences, and mathematics. Then when I went to Bowdoin College, I was a dual major in both chemistry and mathematics up until my senior year. Then my senior year, I decided to drop the chemistry and finish the math major.

TM: Why did you choose Bowdoin? Or did it choose you? How did that work out?

BP: Well, my father went to Bowdoin. I suppose that that would be the major thing that caused me to be introduced to Bowdoin and so forth. Bowdoin's actually been in the news recently. This guy, Pickering, who's being mentioned in the news in connection with Obama's administration and being an ambassador. He's a Bowdoin graduate.

TM: That would be Thomas Pickering?

BP: I guess so, yeah.

TM: Okay. Before we leave growing up on the farm, you mentioned it was a wonderful place to grow up and yet you were wanting to leave.

BP: It's not so much wanting to leave. My parents wanted all of us kids to have life better than they had it. So part of that is getting a good education. And, you know, society has changed from agrarian to more urban as time is going on and I was just part of that natural thrust. It's not that I wanted to leave. It's just that that was the thing to do.

TM: Mm-hmm. Okay. Where is Bowdoin College?

BP: It's in Brunswick, Maine.

TM: Okay, just trying to put this in perspective. When was the first time you actually left Maine?

BP: Well, gee. You mean for good?

TM: No, because it seems like because of the farm, you're basically wedded to that to provide food. Vacations, I'm assuming you didn't take any because of the farm. So when did you get away from Maine for the first time and start exploring some of the rest of the country?

BP: Well, gee. I guess that... Let's see. I went to Bowdoin and then I went to Lehigh University after Bowdoin to get a master's degree. I started hiking on the Appalachian Trail, at least the parts of it that went through Pennsylvania.

TM: What drew you to the Appalachian Trail?

BP: Okay, my first actual hike, my first actual mountain, was at the age of 22, the same month that I graduated from Bowdoin College. A classmate of mine approached me and said, "How would you like to climb Mount Katahdin, the highest point in the state of Maine?" I said yes. I never had an experience like that. So I did that and had a lot of fun and kind of... I suppose that was the beginning of me getting hooked on hiking. Right there. But that's still in the state of Maine. Then I liked that so much that when I went down to Pennsylvania to get my master's degree, I climbed some of the mountains in Pennsylvania and started hiking on the Appalachian Trail a little bit.

TM: And that was college, Lehigh College?

BP: No, Lehigh University. It's in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania.

TM: Okay, thank you. And you got a master's there? 2 years/3-year degree?

BP: It took me 3 years.

TM: Okay. In mathematics?

BP: In mathematics, yeah.

TM: Then did you go on for a PhD?

BP: I did. But before that, I was an instructor in mathematics at the University of Maine. I was there for 3 years.

TM: University of Maine is in which town?

BP: It's in Orono, Maine.

TM: Okay. How many years did you teach there?

BP: Let's see. I said 3, but I guess it was 4. 4 years I think I was there.

TM: Do you know the time periods roughly, the years?

BP: Let's see. Graduated from high school in 1954, graduated from Bowdoin College in 1958, got master's degree from Lehigh in '61, taught at the University of Maine from '61 to '64. '64 to '68, I got my PhD from Dartmouth College, which is in Hanover, New Hampshire. Then directly after that, I came to Flagstaff to teach at Northern Arizona University.

TM: So just to clarify here again, you got your master's at Lehigh and then went to Dartmouth?

BP: Well, no. I taught at the University of Maine.

TM: Yes, taught and then went to Dartmouth to get your PhD. Were you getting into hiking at that time? Did that keep going, did it start building or was it just an occasional hike?

BP: I suppose just an occasional hike. But while I was at Dartmouth I had an opportunity to go hiking in the Green Mountains and do Mount Washington and New Hampshire and things of that nature. Of course, I was spending most of my time studying.

TM: Right. Right. I'm just curious. What was your dissertation on, your PhD?

BP: Oh my god. Endpoint properties of Green's functions for second degree linear differential operators. Something like that.

TM: Thank you. We'll leave that right there. [laughter] Okay, so you got your PhD. What attracted you to... Was Northern Arizona University still a state school? Was it still Arizona State or had it become... Was it Arizona State College or State school? This would have been 1968-'69?

BP: I was hired in 1968. So let's see. Arizona State. It wasn't Arizona State Teachers College. It was...I forget. I don't think it was Northern Arizona University quite at that point. Or was it? I don't know. I'd have to look it up. I mean, you'd have to look that up.

TM: What attracted you to this small rural college way across the country?

BP: Well, lots of things. Let me see. During the time that I was teaching at the University of Maine, I got married. And this is a big deal. It was the best single thing that I've ever have done really. So, I'm at the University of Maine and my wife and I have first child. Then I go to Dartmouth College after that. We're together there and we realize, "Well, I'm getting a PhD in Mathematics." So sitting around the kitchen table, where do we want to go? At that time, it wasn't too long after Sputnik. So there was all kind of money all around the country, especially in the math and sciences, to compete with the Russians. So probably I could've gotten a teaching job in mathematics probably in any state in the union at that point,

which is quite the opposite if that is the case now. So well, where would we like to go? Well, we both felt provincial. My wife is from New York City. Well, that doesn't sound provincial.

TM: Pause here for a minute. What was your wife's name?

BP: Her name was Roberta. Robert and Roberta.

TM: How did you meet her?

BP: For many years, 7 summers, I worked at a fishing camp on Damariscotta Lake in my hometown in Jefferson, Maine. I could talk for hours about that, but let's not.

TM: This was while you were in college for 7 years or in high school? How did that fit in?

BP: Well, I'm gonna have to do some calculating.

TM: If you don't know, you don't know. But for 7 years you were there, just kind of wondered.

BP: I think probably from the age of 20-27.

TM: So you finished up your college undergrad there. Then were through Lehigh and then into teaching?

BP: Mmm hmm.

TM: Okay. I'm just trying to place that-- so 7 years there. Out-of-doors again. I'm just trying to think about you at a...

BP: Fishing camp.

TM: At a fishing camp.

BP: Yeah. I'm building up to trying to answer one of your questions there.

TM: Which was about how you met Roberta?

BP: Yeah. She's from, as I say, from New York.

TM: From the city?

BP: Well, she was born in Manhattan, but she lived in Westchester County which is just north of the city. That doesn't sound exactly provincial, but it's northeast. She had never been anywhere other than the northeast really. And, of course, I'm a maniac from Maine. That is really country, really provincial in lots of ways. We decided, well, it would be nice to live in another part of the country for 3 years, let's say. And, as I said, back then you could get a job almost anywhere. I applied to five schools and got 5 job offers, so kind of the proof of it.

TM: I'm going to back up a minute 'cause I was curious about how you met Roberta. Are you getting there?

BP: Kind of getting there, yes. She had been hired to be the head waitress at this fishing camp. I had been working there 5 years prior to that. So I met her, we had a summer romance that didn't end. Then the very next June, that was the 6<sup>th</sup> year I worked there, the next June, we got married. We worked there again for my 7<sup>th</sup> year there.

TM: What was the name of the fishing camp?

BP: Let's see now. Sunset Lodge.

TM: That's great.

BP: It had a central dining and social area. On each side of it, it had 13 cabins. These cabins had to be taken care of, supplied with ice. They all had Franklin stoves. My buddy and I, we did all of that stuff plus we were down at the dock all the time bailing boats, repairing boats, repairing outboard motors, selling bait to the customers. People would come from New York City, Hartford, Boston and come up and spend 2, 3, 4, 5, even 6, 7 weeks at the camp and go fishing every day. Then when they left, they would give us tips. So half of the money that I earned was through tips and half of it was the salary that my boss paid me for doing the work. I say we worked 12 hours a day, 7 days a week. Probably never been in better shape in my life than then. Do all kinds of things like diving for lost anchors, like repairing wharfs, diving underwater to roll boulders around to make launching places and stuff and like that. And yeah, that's where I met my wife. Did that answer your question?

TM: Okay, that's great, just trying to put this together. So your first child's name is?

BP: Erik. He was born while I was still teaching at the University of Maine. He was born in Bangor, Maine.

TM: It sounds like you and Roberta were thinking, "Well, we can go anywhere. Let's go west to a rural area," because you both liked rural, the rural life.

BP: Getting back to that question. So we're sitting there. We'd like to live in another part of the country. I could probably get a job anywhere. And so, we ruled out the South because that was the time when there was all kinds of racial problems in the South and we didn't want to be messed up in that. Ruled out the Midwest. Flowing waves of grain might be nice, but I wanted mountains and stuff like that. We actually ruled out the Pacific West because we had that usual sensation that people have that Washington just rains all the time and California has too many people and all this kind of stuff. Both of which are probably false. Now I know that the state of Washington has lots of warm sunny days and there's parts of California where you can get lost and not see another individual, especially in the mountains. But we were prejudiced against the Pacific West. So I applied to schools up and down the Rocky Mountain corridor. Idaho, Utah, Colorado, Arizona, places like that. Every place I applied, I got a job offer.

Okay, so now, why did I hit on Flagstaff? Well, lots of things. I was still getting my PhD from Dartmouth. I went to the library and got the magazine, that Arizona magazine: Arizona Highways. There happened to be an article about Flagstaff in there. I read, "Aha! Snow! Aha! Pine trees! Well, I'm gonna be at home because I grew up in the pine tree state." Then I'm real close to canyon country, which I'd never experienced before, and not too far from Phoenix. Real honest to goodness desert and cactus and stuff which I've never experienced before. I said, "Well now, how can I have a better situation than this?" I'm gonna be in an environment which I'm familiar with, snow and pine trees, yet, close to these exotic places that I'd never experienced before and which I was determined to experience. There's another

element in here. During this period, I got to know a guy who was trying to get his master's degree in statistics from the University of Maine, but he had come from Northern Arizona University. He knew Harvey and had been hiking with Harvey Butchart. So I knew Harvey Butchart, or about him, before I even came to Flagstaff.

TM: What was this individual's name? Do you remember?

BP: Reider Peterson.

TM: Okay. Reider was working on his masters and he had studied under Harvey or he had hiked with Harvey.

BP: He had hiked with Harvey and he had got his bachelor's degree in mathematics from NAU. How he chooses the University of Maine, I don't know. Except, the University of Maine had a pretty good statistician there. For some reason or other, maybe a member of the math department at NAU knew this guy, knew this statistician, and maybe those... I don't know, but anyway, Reider showed up with his wife. He and his wife and me and my wife, we did some things together. We got talking about the Grand Canyon and Harvey and stuff. That coupled with the fact that NAU offered me more money than any of the others, so I came to Flagstaff. When I moved to Flagstaff, I drove a U-Haul truck across the country with my furniture and our car hauled behind it. And at the time, I had never been west of Rochester, New York. In other words... I got my PhD from Dartmouth College, but we actually lived in Vermont across the Connecticut River. And so, here I am. I get this U-Haul and go across the country. It was all just completely new and wild experience for me.

TM: Where were you living in Vermont across...?

BP: While I was getting my PhD, my wife and I lived in an apartment complex, similar to this one by the way, in Wilder, Vermont, which is not too far north of White River Junction, Vermont. The only kind of thing that Wilder has is there's a dam across the Connecticut River in Wilder. I don't know whether it was hydroelectric or for flood control or what it was, but there's a big dam there across the river and it's called the Wilder Dam.

TM: Thank you. So let's come back to your impressions in a U-Haul with the belongings and the car out the back.

BP: Well, of course that's a trip I'll never forget. If you haven't been west of Rochester, New York and you're driving west and you see all this new stuff, it's just like being on another planet. That's all I can say 'cause I fall in love. Remember now, my wife and I figured by the time we came out, we had two children. Erik was born in Portland, Maine while I was teaching at the University of Maine, but Keith was born in Lebanon, New Hampshire while I was getting my PhD. The boys were only 1 and 3 when we came out here. They stayed with my wife and they stayed with her parents in Westchester County while I was driving west. Then they flew out. Of course, I can remember meeting them at the airport in Phoenix. It's like being in an oven down there. New experience.

TM: And then you quickly headed to the mountains?

BP: Yeah well, I brought them up here where I had rented a house. Within two or three months, we'd bought a house on Havasupai Street. Only one house between my house and Harvey Butchart's house, by the way.

TM: So basically next door to Harvey.

BP: Next door to Harvey with one house in between.

TM: Was Harvey instrumental in you buying that house or saying this is a nice neighborhood, come move where I am?

BP: No, I had no idea.

TM: Really?

BP: No. When I came here, I had rented a house over in east Flagstaff and we stayed there for a couple of months over the summer. We just started looking for a house and it just happened to be... It was just an accident that it was right next to where Harvey was.

TM: What was the number of the house you moved into?

BP: 612 Havasupai Street. Now Harvey didn't live on Havasupai Street. He lived on a street that came in perpendicular to it. Navajo? I can't remember the name of it.

TM: So tell me about your first meeting with Harvey if you remember that.

BP: I can't remember the exact first meeting, but I knew in advance that Harvey was actually a well-known hiker of the Grand Canyon. He was in his early 60's and I was in my early 30's. He kind of took me under his wing 'cause I guess I told him that one of the reasons I came here was because I was interested in canyon country. So he felt that he was the appropriate member of the math department to take me under his wing. He took me on my first, probably almost 30, hikes in the Grand Canyon with Harvey. The very first hike was the very first loop we were talking about earlier. Salt Water Wash to Tanner. Or Tanner to Salt Water Wash. I would have to look up which way we went. But that was my first hike in the Grand Canyon. It was over a hundred degrees. I can remember taking all of our clothes off and sinking ourselves down into a pool of water to cool off and stuff like that. The hike lasted after dark and I can remember hearing a rattlesnake as we're coming out. I'd have to look up my notes to get all the exact particulars, but I can remember. So Harvey introduced me to the Grand Canyon. As I say, he probably took me on my first 30 hikes in the Grand Canyon. Or nearly so, I might've done a couple solo ones in between, but...

TM: And those were day hikes?

BP: Mm-hmm.

TM: Okay. When did you start doing overnight hikes?

BP: I'd have to...

TM: In that period, roughly in '68-'69 or did it take you a while to get into that?

BP: It took me a while to get into multi-day hiking. I'd have to look it up. 'Course, I ended up doing extremely long hikes with Jim Ohlman and his friend there. I can remember doing a...



TM: Ken Walters?

BP: No, Ken Walters wasn't on that hike. It was Jim Ohlman and his buddy. We were probably out there 8 days. I can remember close to 5,000 vertical feet of elevation gain on that trip. We did 4, 5, 6 interior buttes. We attempted Snoopy/Angels Gate. Well, we couldn't make it. Ohlman, since then, has gotten up there, but I haven't returned to that. Vishnu. I can't give you the year of this, by the way. Then another really long trip. Oh, in 1974 I think it was or about then, was when I met Ken Walters. Ken Walters is the guy with whom I have done more hiking with than any other individual on Earth. We have done over 100 hikes in the Grand Canyon together. We have done over 100 climbs of mountains in the West together. I don't think there's other... There's several other people that I've done lots and lots of climbs with. In fact, there's others I've done over 100 summits with but, if you add all the hikes in the Grand Canyon and all the mountain climbing with Ken, I think he is the champion. I don't think I've done more hikes with anybody else other than Ken Walters. And of course, I have to give him credit. He's probably the reason I'm as well-known as I am because he would be the leader on these technical climbs that I otherwise wouldn't be able to do. He knows that I give him credit for that.

You know these guys. I haven't hiked with Ken in recent years at all. We barely even communicate anymore. It's not because of hatred. It's because my life has become different. He's more into Grand Canyon and my Grand Canyon days are essentially over at this point. I expect to go back and do a couple of little things here and there. I'm into high-pointing and peak-bagging at this point in my life, still. So we've kind of separated as far as our interests are concerned so contact isn't there. Ohlman, I guess he still lives up in Kayenta. I don't know. Does he?

TM: I believe so.

BP: But I haven't had any contact with him in recent years either. Those are the two guys that I know best in connection with the Grand Canyon.

TM: Okay, so Harvey took you under his wing. The first hike you did was Tanner to Salt Water Wash and that's in Marble Canyon. Is that right?

BP: Mm-hmm.

TM: Okay. Anything else you remember about that? It was hot. You cooled off in a puddle of water. Rattlesnake there. Anything else you remember about that first hike?

BP: Well, I remember looking for and finding an inscription scratched on the rocks down near the Colorado River. I think it was a railroad guy who was doing surveying for the possibility of a railroad through the Grand Canyon or something. Which never came to fruition, thank goodness. We found this inscription. I remember that. And of course, this was my first experience of any kind in the Grand Canyon. Going down a canyon, paralleling the river and coming out a different canyon. And of course it was all... I can remember writing letters to my parents after I experienced this. I might as well have been on the moon. It was such a wild experience.

TM: And there was no trail?

BP: Oh, no. Of course not.

TM: Was that the first time you had ever hiked off-trail?

BP: Oh, no, I don't think so. I had done enough stuff in New England. Well, you know, my very, very first hike in Flagstaff was Humphrey's Peak. My very first hike. Believe it or not, 1968 there was no trail up there so it was all bushwacking. So, no. That was not the first time I was off trail. I say my first trip off-trail in Arizona was Humphrey's Peak. But I'm pretty sure that I did some off-trail stuff in New England before I moved west.

TM: Okay, so it was new to you for the landscape, river, canyons.

BP: Yes, that kind of stuff.

TM: But not the fact that there was no trail to follow?

BP: That's right.

TM: Okay. That would be the Frank Brown cenotaph from 1889 that you all saw.

BP: Probably.

TM: Okay, that would make sense. So what was it like being mentored by Harvey?

BP: I knew the fame that the guy had. At that point when I met him, he had already written his guidebooks. When I first met him, there were just a series of 3 guidebooks. As you well know, since then, somebody's got permission from Harvey before he died that they could combine them all into one. Of course, I have copies of all of them upstairs. You asked me a while back what it was like my first time I ever saw the Grand Canyon. I saw the Grand Canyon, you know, taking the wife and the kids up to the Grand Canyon from the South Rim. That's the first time I ever saw it. The impression that I remember from that is it didn't look real. Standing there on the South Rim, and of course, I could see the rocks and I could see the river down below. The North Rim, it looked like it was a great big mural. It looked like it wasn't real and yet I knew it was real. And of course, it was kind of a mystical experience which highlighted over and over again on the many years/hundreds of hikes in the Grand Canyon since then. 'Bout 6,000 miles I figure total.

TM: And that was 1968, that first visit?

BP: My first visit. Mm-hmm. Oh, another interesting first climb, early climb. I climbed up Sunset Crater. Not too many years after that they closed Sunset Crater to the public. I haven't been up since then. Although I offered to go up. What's his name...Bob Martin. You don't know Bob Martin? Bob Martin died a few years ago. Bob Martin and Harvey Butchart, the two men that I worshipped most as far as their hiking experiences were concerned. We know about Harvey's/you know about Harvey's fame, but Bob Martin is just as famous in his circle. Here's a guy that lived in Tucson in the winters and in Sierra Vista, Colorado in the summers. That man climbed all the 14er's, all the 13er's, all the 12er's, and all the 11er's in Colorado. Some 2,000 peaks right there. At the end of his life, he was working on the 10er's.No relation to you or your brother?

TM: No. How did you meet him? You were talking about Sunset Crater and that got you...

BP: Oh yeah, right. The reason I thought of him is because Harvey Butchart had climbed every summit in Arizona over 8,000 feet that was not on an Indian reservation except one, and that was Sunset Crater. I don't know about putting it on here, maybe you have to be careful. Since that was the only one he was

missing, I said, "Bob, come up some moonlight night and I'll take you up the backside of that and we won't get caught." He never took me up on that because he was kind of a stickler on not stealing stuff like that. So that's why I remember Sunset Crater as one of my early hikes and that made me think of Bob Martin who is missing only that one in a list of Arizona summits.

TM: Got it. Got it. What other stories do you remember about hiking? Just those early hikes, those first 30 or so hikes with Harvey, basically day hiking in the Canyon?

BP: Well, I remember being impressed by his knowledge and his physical ability. Remember, he was 30 years older than I was. I soon discovered if I sat down for a rest... We would sit down and 5 minutes would be the maximum rest. "Okay time to get going." Not too hard to imagine, I had all I could do to keep up with the guy. If I was to read my notes and look at my maps, my memories would come back probably for most of these hikes. Do I remember a specific one? Not right at the moment, because that first one is a big one.

TM: At what point did you feel confident enough to start hiking on your own?

BP: Not too long after that. Remember, this is 1968-'69 when I met Harvey. Then mid 1970's, Ken Walters came to town. He was a geology major, a geology graduate student at NAU. As was Jim Ohlman. You know, the three of us kind of did a lot of stuff together. I was doing an awful lot of stuff with Ken. One of the ten day hikes we did was going around the Thumb/The Great Thumb. We climbed Akaba and Sinyala on that trip. I can't give you the dates right now, but it was early on. Late 70's or early 80's. Somewhere along in there.

TM: 10 days. Nice.

BP: The hike that probably is the most memorable of all the hikes I've done, and this was with Ken Walters, was meant to be a 9-day hike which turned into an 11-day hike. This is the frostbite trip. I suppose you've heard about that.

TM: Mm-hmm but, remind me.

BP: Its 1981 and Ken is an instructor in photography over in NAU. And of course, I'm in the Math Department. All of a sudden... What's happening is the campus is all torn up with trenches in it. There's a contractor coming in to repair the gas lines. The gas lines that carry, I don't know, that carry heat to the buildings from a common source or something, I don't know what it was. The contractor went to the administration of NAU and said, "You better get the students off of this campus. This campus is a dangerous place. We're afraid of an explosion." This is the week before Thanksgiving week. So the administration says, "There's not gonna be any school the whole week of Thanksgiving." When I heard that, I said, "Well, that's 9 days." There's the weekend, then the 5 days of Thanksgiving week and then another weekend. So I rushed over to Ken's office and said, "Ken this is what we've been waiting for, a 9-day period. We can do this big hike." We had 9 days to clip off 10, 12, 13 interior summits.

TM: In what area of the Canyon?

BP: This is going over Saddle Mountain and doing Nankoweap. I wish I had my notes. I can't remember the names.

TM: In the Nankoweap area.

BP: The Nankoweap area, yeah. We went in there and we were clipping them off like mad. We probably did, I don't remember the exact number, 10 or 12 interior buttes on that one trip. Then about the 7th day, there was a cold front came through. We could tell that because our canteens froze that night. Well okay, so it was cold. But then as we were approaching the North Rim, which of course is closed at that time of year/Thanksgiving, snowstorm. We were in trouble. Again, I wish I had my notes to give you the exact thread of where we were. I remember walking by Siegfried Pyre I think on that trip, but anyway we're working to get up to the North Rim. Our original plan was to go along the North Rim and go back down to where my truck was parked at the trail head for Saddle Mountain.

TM: That would be Houserock Valley, Saddle Mountain trail head, top of the Nankoweap trail?

BP: Right.

TM: But you gotta go up and over a saddle to go back down to get to the vehicle there.

BP: That's right. That's right. Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah. So we had this big loop. And the thing is, we never gave up on doing that loop. Harvey asked us, "When the storm hit, why didn't you go down instead of up?" And, well, all kinds of explanations. When the storm hit, we couldn't see down so we just kept on going. Anyway, so we're part way out to the North Rim. I wish I could remember the name. Atoka Point, could be. I'd wanna look it up. I think it was Atoka Point. Boy that storm hit. We had no tent. We had a tarp that we spread out under a big, I think it was a fir tree. Might have been a pine tree. It just snowed so much during the night that the snow would make the canvas sink down, it would touch us. We'd have to keep hitting it, you know, to get the snow off. That night, I got frostbit. I can remember telling Ken in the night that there's something wrong with my feet. We tried to crawl into a common sleeping bag, but they weren't big enough. There was really no way that we could warm each other's feet up. The next day, we made it to the rim. We tried to attract planes, but it didn't work. We just kept going and it came to be Sunday. By Monday morning, we were missed 'cause I was supposed to be teaching classes. I don't know where Jim Ohlman was. When it became pretty obvious that we were missing, Jim was putting together a search party for us. We were never lost, of course, we were just in bad straights.

After the storm, we spent the first night right on the rim. Again, no tent. Again, super cold. Then the next day, we went along and got down to where my truck was, after dark. I can still see the silhouette of my truck as we approached it. You know, kind of an emotional feeling to get there. I had no four-wheel drive back then either. The interesting thing was we got back to my camper, similar to the one that's out there right now in the parking lot, and I turned the lights on. There was a plane circling overhead, they had found my camper. The minute that I turned the light on, the plane took off. When we got back to Flagstaff, we were told that that's when everybody, our friends, knew that we were safe. Then got in the camper, it didn't have any four-wheel drive so I had to put the chains on 'cause, you know, 2 feet of snow. As we're starting to drive out, a pick-up truck approached us. This was the guy who ran the buffalo ranch out there checking to make sure we were alright. Well, 'we were alright', but we were getting low on gasoline. We had figured out coming out during the daylight hours and getting gas at Marble Canyon or something on the way out. But, of course, this was like midnight, so we actually went in to the buffalo ranch and got gas. He gave us some. I'm driving out through 2 feet of snow, out to the Jacob Lake road, the road from Marble Canyon. I will never, ever forget this - rabbits. The place was filthy with rabbits even though there was 2 feet of snow. They would run in the ruts. We did not make the first ruts through the 2 feet of snow. I have a feeling that it was the manager of the buffalo ranch that had made those ruts. The thing is, the rabbits would be in the ruts and the ruts would be lit up by the headlights and it would be dark on the side and they wouldn't jump out.

TM: 'Cause they couldn't see.

BP: They couldn't see, unfortunately. I didn't dare slow up, I was afraid of getting stuck. Killed a few of 'em. Some of them would get tired enough and smart enough to jump off the side, but I'll never forget killing/running over rabbits on the way out. By the time I got out to the highway, my feet were beginning to hurt like hell because the heater was on in the camper and thawing my feet out. So Ken drove to Flagstaff. I told Ken, "Drive me straight to the hospital." Well no, I said, "I'm going straight to the hospital. I'm not even going home." So I let him off at his home. I drove to the hospital and parked right in the parking lot. It was 2:00 a.m. I went in and told the intern in there that something is wrong with my feet. He said, "Okay, take your boots off." He took one look at my feet and said, "You're gonna be in the hospital for a while." I was in the hospital for 5 weeks.

TM: Wow. Did you lose any digits?

BP: I didn't lose any digits, but I have permanent damage done to 4 of my toes. My two little toes and my two big toes. It's my left big toe which maintained the biggest damage.

TM: And that was loss of sensation?

BP: Well, great big scabs on all 4 of those toes, but especially that one. I was given a continuous I.V. during the whole stay in the hospital. The doctor, wish I could remember his name now, he was the local expert on frostbite. By the way, he was kind of gleeful, "Oh, interesting case." He'd take pictures of my feet and he'd come to see me every day. Then he says, "We're gonna have to wait until that scab falls off." It was kind of depressing, really. When the scab fell off, there was no skin under it. You could see open flesh. By this time, he let me out of the hospital. He said, "I think you can go home." By the way, today people come home even quicker. No staying four weeks like I did. He says, "I think we've got the infection taken care of." It's not the frostbite that's bad, it's the infection that can occur afterwards which is dangerous. He figured that he had had it licked. So I went home and 2 or 3 months later... I'd go and see him frequently, the doctor. Dr. Hildebrand, John Hildebrand. What happened over the course of several months is there was live tissue at the bottom of my big toe and it grew sideways. I never knew that skin could grow sideways before. It grew sideways up around the sides. It grew and it sutured itself on the top. He never even had to... For a while, he thought he was going to have to take a piece of my thigh skin and graft it down there. Never had to do that. I have no toenail on that toe to this day. Then the 2 little toes and the other big toe have toenails that don't grow. They're like globs of glue. They're not flat and nice. It's just like someone taking a glob of glue, they just stay there doing nothing. The left-hand one grows a little bit, but it's just like something is oozing out of a toothpaste tube or something, you know, but very, very slowly. About once year, I take a saw and saw it off a little bit.

Another thing I mention, to show how desperate we were when we were out there camping those 2 nights/3 nights, whatever it was. Just 2 nights I guess. In the mornings, our shoes would be so frozen that we couldn't put our feet into 'em. We've have to take water and heat it and then put it in a canteen and then run the canteen down into the shoe to soften it up enough so that you could even put your feet into them.

TM: Were there ramifications from the University about you being away and then 5 weeks?

BP: Well, no. Of course they were worried about me and concerned about me, but I wasn't disciplined in any way.

TM: Were there any ramifications from the Park Service?

BP: Well, we didn't have a permit but there was no ramifications and no search party was put out for us because we were discovered back at the camper at about the same time that they were getting ready to put something out.

TM: You self-rescued yourself?

BP: We self-rescued, yes. Ken, by the way, didn't have any frostbite except frostnips on the ends of this fingers. But, you know, that healed really quickly.

TM: Lucky. Yeah, yeah. That's a memorable hike.

BP: Yeah, and probably *the* most memorable. And, of course, it made headlines. It was in the newspaper and I got interviewed by the sheriff. What's his name? Anyway, the Coconino County sheriff. Something in the newspaper about if we hadn't been so experienced and in such great physical shape, we might not have made it. That's undoubtedly true. The last day, we were out of water, out of food, and out of fuel. One more night would've been really, really, really bad.

TM: Bob, let's talk a little bit about through-hiking or hiking the length of the Grand Canyon since there's two people right now, Rich Rudow and Chris Attwood, that are right now as we are conducting this interview, working on a continual hike the length of Grand Canyon. You completed a line through the Grand Canyon. When was the first time? You may not know, have it down in your notes, but roughly do you remember when you suddenly realized, "Hey, I can connect these lines up and I have a line from Lees Ferry all the way to the Grand Wash Cliffs, 280 river miles"?

BP: Yeah, that's a good question. I can't pinpoint exactly when it was. Let's put it this way, when I did that Salt Water Wash to Tanner Wash with Harvey, it didn't even cross my mind that this would eventually happen. But as the years went by and I did more and more and more loops and then Ken and I together saw, "You know, we're developing lots of lines on the map." Then we started making a conservative effort. I finished the south side first, river left. By that time, I knew I was gonna aim to do the river right as well. One of the most emotional moments for me as a hiker was... I can't remember whether it was in Surprise or Separation, but it was the Surprise-Separation loop. I'd have to look up on my notes which way we went. We went downstream. So maybe. You know. Which comes first? Separation then Surprise?

TM: That's right. Its Separation then Surprise.

BP: When we got over to Surprise, I'm with Jim Ohlman, he's the only one with me. By the way, I think Jaseknacias was on that trip. But there were several people on this trip. Jim Ohlman was the only one with me when the dramatic moment happened. I knew it was going to happen. Here I am I think at Surprise. I actually recognized the spot when Ken Walters and I had come down to that same exact spot coming upstream. So that is the exact point where I had then completed lines through the Grand Canyon on both sides of the river. I nearly cried when that happened. Course, it was still a hell of a lot of work to get out Surprise to the rim and our vehicles, but that was the moment. There's only one other comparable moment to that in my hiking career. I'm the first person to have finished the county high points of all the 11 western states. It was climbing Mount Stimson up in Glacier National Park up in Montana. And again, I'm with only one guy. It was a dramatic moment to be on that summit because I

knew that nobody else had done this. By the way, since then, one other person has done it and has promptly committed suicide. Do you know Adam Helman?

TM: Adam Helman, H-E-L-M-A-N. I never met him, but my brother has talked to me quite a bit about him.

BP: Yes, right. Well, Andy and Adam and I have done a lot together in Mexico and all over the place. But that's another story. His suicide's a major event.

TM: Thinking about the through-hiking, did you meet George Steck?

BP: I have only met him once or twice, and it was not hiking. It was at some affair up in the Grand Canyon Village so I never knew him very well.

TM: And Robert Benson?

BP: Of course, I never met him, no. But 'course I know plenty of him. By the way, did you know that Benson predicted his own death? When you called up the other day, remember we talked about my dear friend McCairen lives up in Point Roberts, Washington now. But I met her in Flagstaff. She did a solo raft trip down the Grand Canyon and met Benson while he was doing his through-hike on river right. I knew that because knowing Patricia and talking to her and reading her book, Grand Canyon Solitude, I know that she had met Benson at one of her campsites. Actually she had helped him find his cache there. If I looked at my notes, I could find out exactly where this was. It was in the western part of the Grand Canyon. So I decided that I knew that his notes were up in the Grand Canyon Village, up in the historical... Is it the historical building or...?

TM: The Musuem Collection?

BP: Something like that. I knew he had copious notes of all of his trips. Not only Grand Canyon but the Green River and all that crap. So I was determined to go up there and see if he mentioned Patricia. So I went up there. You go in and they make you wear these white gloves. Have you ever been in there? For some strange reason, they don't let you take notes. I couldn't understand it. By talking to Patricia, I knew what date to look for, so I thumbed through Benson's notes until I came to this date and by golly, he mentioned her.

TM: Nice.

BP: Yeah, he is hiking along and he's looking for his cache and he meets this woman who is on a solo raft trip down the Grand Canyon. So he actually mentioned it. But then I started reading the stuff that you might call a preface of his notes. There's a sentence in there that will really open your eyes when you read it, "I will be dead before the age of 30." Of course we all know he made it true and we know how he made it true. Why he made it true, or why he predicted it, or why he knew it in advance I think is still somewhat of a mystery.

TM: Well, let's talk about it. Do you think he was... He knew the troubles he was in.

BP: Well, really?

TM: Well, he knew he didn't have authorization to stay in the country. He knew he was estranged from his family. Was he premeditating his suicide at that time when he wrote that?

BP: Well, one thinks so. I mean, I knew he was an illegal German alien. Right? Was he going to be forced out of the country?

TM: Well, he was worried that he would be caught, if you will, by immigration services and sent back to Germany because he had no authorization to be in the United States.

BP: Yeah, but he hadn't been caught.

TM: Well, exactly. I'm with you Bob, but yeah. Yeah.

BP: I thought that maybe he was afraid of being forced back to Germany where he might've been in some serious trouble there of some kind.

TM: Well, I'm not sure and I'm speaking out of turn here. It seems as though he was estranged from his family and he was in love with the Southwest.

BP: He wanted to stay here and life wouldn't be worth living without it.

TM: That's right. That's my impression. Yeah.

BP: Well, it's a similar story with Adam as might you know.

TM: Helman.

BP: We're never gonna know exactly what triggered it. It appears that to him life wouldn't be worth living if he lost the ability to climb Mount McKinley. As time went on and his physical problems became such that it became pretty obvious he probably would never be successful with that or any other big giant peak, apparently that was enough to set him off. Probably together with an episode of pain, probably, from his back pain. We're never gonna know, but boy, did he do it dramatically.

TM: Do you remember David and Rebecca Kiel? K-I-E-L.

BP: No.

TM: Okay. They're through-hikers as well. They started from the source and hiked to the sea. They got a lot of help on their journey, 1983-1984, from George Steck and Robert Benson.

BP: You were talking about Steck, whether I'd ever met him. I think I shook his hand, that's about all. Maybe two or three, "Hi, how are you" kind of stuff. That reminded me of Benson and then... What was your question?

TM: If you knew the Kiel's who did a through-hike in 1983-'84 from the continental divide to the Sea of Cortez.

BP: Oh my god.

TM: It took them a year and a half to that. I just wondered if you...



BP: How did they handle the lake part?

TM: With a canoe. They hiked to Lake Mead and then they canoed on the high water of 1984 to the Sea of Cortez. They knew they didn't want to walk through the lettuce fields of Yuma. They figured it would be a lot more fun to do that in a canoe. So they made the transition then to a canoe.

BP: They didn't do it all on foot then?

TM: No. From the source, from the continental divide, they walked all the way to Lake Mead. At the Grand Wash Cliffs they transitioned to canoe and completed their through-hike.

BP: This brings up number three, which is Holycross. A while back, I'm over at the NAU library looking at maps, and Holycross is there with a couple other people and looking at maps. I'm overhearing them. I think I came up and I said something, "Maybe I could be of some help." They were obviously interested in the Grand Canyon. When they met me and knew that I knew a little bit about the Grand Canyon, we planned a visit right in this room here. He came over with his wife. I don't know if they were married at the time. She's the one that, of course, died in the Grand Canyon in an attempt to finish the river left. I didn't know this at the time. So he was in here and the person who was either his wife or going to be his wife and three or four other people, including a Havasupai Indian. I forget his name, but I do have his name because I think he might be useful to me at some time. But anyway, I just pulled all my Grand Canyon maps down and we study 'em. I told them how I did this section and this section. They took notes and all this and that and other stuff. Course, they left. Later on, I hear that she dies in an attempt to finish river left on the western part of the Grand Canyon. Of course, very, very sad. It took me quite a while before I realized that woman had been right in my own living room. Within the past year, I got an email from Holycross. What's his first name?

TM: Andrew.

BP: Andrew. Said, "I'm visiting Glenn Rink just a few houses from here. How would you like to have a visit?" Of course, I said yes. He came over and he sat there on the sofa and I sat here. We reminisced about the time that we met at the NAU library and their time here. Talking about his wife and how he did go and finish the south side carrying a lock of her hair, apparently, to kind of symbolically let her finish that project. Was it after that that he did the north side? Do you know?

TM: I'll have to look. Andrew is the only person to complete both sides. One in segments and the other in a through-walk.

BP: As I mentioned to you on the phone the other day, it is kind of interesting. There's 3 of us. One of us did both sides in pieces. That's me. Then Benson did both sides in continuous hikes. Then Holycross did the river right as a continuous hike but river left in piecemeal. It was kind of curious.

TM: So tell me a little bit about that moment when you connected your line on the north side, knew you had finished both, walking the length of the Grand Canyon on the south side of the Colorado River and north side of the Colorado River there in Surprise Canyon.

BP: I think it was Surprise.

TM: What touched you there? What touches you about the Grand Canyon?

BP: Oh, well those are really two different questions. What touched me at the moment was look, anybody who has a massive project and has been a part of their lives for years and it finally ends, there's an emotional feeling to it about all the sacrifices you've made and all the hard work you've gone through to make this happen. Similar to finishing the county high points of the west, too, is also similar. It's a kind of a psychological emotional feeling. But then immersed in your question was my feeling of the Grand Canyon in particular. The point I'm making is I had similar feelings when I completed the Grand Canyon through-hikes and completed the county high points of the west. You see, similar feelings of success and satisfaction. Of being successful and completing a huge, huge project. But then there's the emotional feeling about the Grand Canyon itself in its own right. Not me, but it. Yeah, I still go up to look over the Grand Canyon and tears come into my eyes because it's been such a big part of my life. There's something magical about standing on the rim and realize that you've been down there and you've experienced all those experiences on all those side canyons and so forth. What can I say? It's kind of a dual magic. The dual magic of being successful in a big project and then being in an amazing place, which the Grand Canyon is.

TM: So could I say that you were inspired by the Grand Canyon or that it touched you?

BP: Oh yeah.

TM: Do you think it touched Harvey that way?

BP: Oh yeah, I think it had to. I know he had big, a lot of pride in what he did. I think he was also attracted by it as well. It's kind of a romance. [laughter] This brings up another point. Harvey never got divorced, but I did. I can remember one time my wife saying that the Grand Canyon was my mistress. I suppose Roma, this is Harvey's wife, probably felt the same way but never brought it to the divorce stage. But again, even with my wife and I, I think it was just one element.

TM: When did you get divorced?

BP: We separated in 1978. I moved into this apartment in 1978 and one year later we got divorced. Her idea was we wanted to have a separation for one year and see if our feelings changed. I guess she thought that maybe I would romance her more or something, kind of woo her. But I didn't change character. And of course, at the end of a year, she noticed that I hadn't changed character so it was, "Okay. The trial separation is over. We're now gonna get a divorce." Of course there was not much I could do about it.

TM: I don't wanna get too personal here but do you think the Grand Canyon did play a part in that?

BP: It wouldn't necessarily have to have been the Grand Canyon. It would have been my desire to be outdoors doing hiking and experiencing the outdoors, when maybe I should have been spending a little more time with her. You know, that kind of thing.

TM: Sure, sure.

BP: You'd have to talk to her, really, 'cause she's the one that filed for divorce. I told you earlier, marrying her was the best single thing I've ever done in my life because I had been having some problems up until then, my life was unbalanced. When I married her my life became balanced. It has stayed balanced since then even after divorce. She knows this too, by the way. I told her that she straightened me out. Suddenly, life became worth living. Even after divorce. She also knows this, and I

tell everybody this: The second best thing I ever did in my life was getting divorced from her because it's allowed me to have experiences that I otherwise would never have been able to have. I'm not going to go into those.

TM: Sure. Sure, but I would assume that some of those experiences include that day at Surprise Canyon and that day up in Wyoming standing on top of a high point having completed all the county high points.

BP: I would have to look at the exact dates of all of those things. Probably both of those occurred after 1979. Both of those did occur after '79. Well those would be two of them. To elaborate a little bit, not being tied down, not having a wife, I could come and go as I please. I can plan my activities irrespective of having to worry about anybody else. So that's one of it. The other things is I've had affairs with other women that I couldn't have had if I'd been still hooked up.

TM: Are your sons still alive?

BP: Oh, yeah.

TM: And what do they do?

BP: Erik is a math professor at Mesa State University in Grand Junction. He is a peak-bagger with quite a bit of obsession. I've done around 800 or 900 summits in Colorado but he's done 1300 or 1400. And he's much younger than I am, of course. He's into it heavy-duty. Not Grand Canyon stuff but mountain climbing.

TM: Nice.

BP: Mm-hmm. He was married, actually been married twice. Is divorced from his first wife and is trying to get a divorce from his second wife which was a woman he met online from Moscow, Russia. My other son is a pharmacist. A hospital pharmacist, not a store pharmacist, but a hospital pharmacist in Las Cruces, New Mexico. He was married, has two children and has a live-in lady friend at the moment. He has been a pharmacist in Las Vegas, New Mexico, Anchorage, Alaska and Las Cruces, New Mexico.

TM: So both children today are still today living the rural lifestyle?

BP: Las Cruces is not exactly rural. I bet it's got 100,000. It's a pretty big city actually. Not too far from El Paso, as you must know. North and a little bit west. Erik is the one who kind of takes after me. Keith takes more after his mother who is a lifelong nurse. Now retired of course. She's in her 70's.

TM: We've been at this now an hour-thirty roughly. Before we end, I'd like to wrap this up thinking: someone finds this recording 50 years from now, is interested in hiking Grand Canyon, what would you like them to hear?

BP: Ooh. Yikes. They already are pretty disposed to hiking in the Grand Canyon, huh? Okay. I would say don't jump into it too... You need to be a little bit prepared. That reminds me of something. A guy from New Jersey several years ago was writing me. He was gonna go down the whole Grand Canyon. He had never been there. It took me a long time to convince that guy he shouldn't do this. When you go into the Grand Canyon, you got to go in piecemeal. You got to learn it piece by piece. You can't go in and think you're gonna do the whole Grand Canyon all in one big hike when you've never even seen it. I finally convinced the guy not to try it. I thought that was good advice. Anybody who's done these major things

in the Grand Canyon has worked up to the point where they could do it. You need to know where there's water. You need to know when you can walk along the river and when you can't. You don't know those sort of things just automatically. You learn 'em by talking to other people and by doing hikes over and over again yourself. I guess that would be the first thing I'd mention is don't expect to learn everything about the Grand Canyon all at once. Number one, you're never gonna learn everything about the Grand Canyon. Number two, you need to know things in order... Whatever you're doing is built upon what you've already done. So, do some little things first and then do bigger things afterwards. Oh, and be prepared to be in fantastic scenic settings and see amazing things. Do it slow enough so you can absorb these things.

TM: That reminds me of one more question. There's a difference, there's only 24 people, of which you are on this list, people who have hiked the length of Grand Canyon. Half of them have done it as a continuous walk and the other half have done it in segments. The chunky people. What are your thoughts on smelling the roses versus walking through?

BP: Well, I'm sure they both have their satisfactions. But you know, life was such I couldn't have done a through-hike that wouldn't I had been free. I was a professor at NAU. You kind of need 2 months if you're gonna do a through-hike. So it never appeared in that form for me. Harvey set the stage for me when he took me on that very first loop hike. Then all those hikes with Ken Walters would be on weekends or maybe a week at a stretch. Even that's not enough to do a through-hike. Then you finally get to the stage where, "Oh, we can finish this up." The other thing is, if you do it piecemeal, you actually see more of the Grand Canyon. You actually get to walk, not just cross, all these side canyons. You get to actually walk up and down them as well. You see things in them that...yeah.

TM: That's right. Anything else you'd like to bring into this?

BP: Well, one of the things that maybe I've implied but haven't mentioned yet is I'm no longer into the Grand Canyon. My projects, of which I have many, are related to peak-bagging and high-pointing.

TM: Congratulations on completing the western states.

BP: Oh, I've done more than that.

TM: Oh, sure you have.

BP: I've completed 29 states as far as the county high points is concerned. I believe, 'course you'd never know these in absolutes, but I believe that I am the world leader in number of summits (over 6,000); the number of 2K-peaks, that means peaks with 2,000 feet of prominence, with about 1,100 of those; and I believe I'm the world leader in the number 1K-peaks, these are the peaks with 1,000 feet of prominence. I'm just, just this last year past the 2,000 mark on those. As far as the big, giant peaks in the world, no. There are plenty people who have done the 7 summits for example and the number of ultras. Those are peaks with 5,000 feet of prominence. I think I'm 4th in that list, though.

TM: Are you gonna complete any more states for county high points?

BP: No. No, I'm not. They're uninteresting. [laughter] I mean, I've already completed Nebraska and Kansas and the Dakota's and Oklahoma. Those are boring enough. You can have Indiana and Ohio. Oh, by the way, there are 4 states that have never been completed and probably never will. Florida's one of them and Louisiana's another one and Texas is another one. Those states have areas in them that

number one, it's hard to determine where the high points are. Even if you know where they are, it's just a terror to get to them. Imagine swamps. Imagine Louisiana for example. Okay, so the high point may be on the side of this levee down here some place, but you can't get here or something. People aren't gonna do those. There's one state where I'm the closest to finishing, its Missouri. I've done 110 of its 115 county high points. The 5 that are left are just not attractive at all. A couple of people have done them, by the way. Collectively, these 5 counties have roughly 250 places you have to visit. They have contours all the same elevation. The champion county in the whole United States is Schuyler County in Missouri. I think it has 127 places calling to us, all the same height. You don't know which ones the highest, so essentially, you have to go and do them all. A couple of people have done them. But I don't wanna go out there and walk around this flat land with little bumps everywhere. I don't want to do that. Not interested.

TM: Don't blame you.

BP: Now, Texas has another problem. It has private property issues up the kazoo. If you want to be killed, shot to death by an irate rancher, then just try and finish the county high points of Texas. Okay, did that answer your question?

TM: Yeah, I think that's good. Thank you very much. I really appreciate your time. I've had a lot of fun with this. I hope you have, too.

BP: Yeah, it's been fun to reminisce. Okay, well thank you.

TM: Thank you.