

Interviewee: Robert “Bob” Cornelius (BC)

Interviewer: Tom Martin (TM)

Subject: Working as a Park Ranger at Grand Canyon in the 70’s and transitioning to River Ranger at Dinosaur in the mid-70’s

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TM: Good morning. Today is Wednesday, November 7, 2018. This is Part 10 of a Grand Canyon Oral History interview with Robert “Bob” Cornelius. My name is Tom Martin, and this interview is conducted over the phone. As such, Bob, good morning. How are you?

BC: I’m doing well, thank you.

TM: Good. May we have your permission to conduct this interview over the phone and record it?

BC: Yes, you may.

TM: Thank you very much. Last time, gosh it’s back in September, late September we were talking before we all ran away to do some other busy things, you had mentioned the hospital and you had been into the hospital after being, I believe, kicked by a mule for your knee and had some surgery there and had mentioned Dr. Silverstein. I’m really curious about your recollections of the hospital and the goings on there.

BC: Okay. Yeah, Dr. Marty Silverstein, he did a little bit of surgery on me. I had been kicked by a horse by the name of Duke. They took some x-rays, I think we talked about, and they saw some things on the x-rays that looked a little bit odd like maybe some metal shavings or something so he decided to open it up. It was a very small cut but extensive bruise at the time on my left knee. He really opened me up, I mean I still have this [chuckle] scar to this day to prove that I got kicked by a horse at one time. One of the things that happened is that near the end of the time... I was in the hospital for six days or something like that and I was getting tired of sitting there. The only thing they were doing at one point was just giving me some pills and antibiotics and stuff. I said, “Well, I can take those at home.” So I checked myself out of the hospital. The doctor didn’t want me to, but I did anyway. Went back and spent a couple more days at my residence there on the South Rim and then I was able to hike down into the canyon. I’d been really concerned that this was like a career-ending injury but I’ve never had any issues with it since then. So Dr. Silverstein apparently did a pretty good job. The hospital itself was kind of a focal point often in investigations.

TM: How so?

BC: Because people would be injured for... I remember a guy one time, for example, in the campground. I got this report that a man had been crushed by his car. I went out to the Mather campground and this

guy had tried to... Instead of backing into a campsite, he had went forward into the campsite. Apparently somehow the car... He left the car in neutral and the car started rolling forward and he tried to jump in and stop the car. The door hit a Ponderosa pine tree and pinned him against the frame of the car. Had it not been for a large rock the car ran into... You know how they put rocks around the parking areas...

TM: Yes.

BC: ...at some campsites. If there hadn't been a rock strategically placed he would've really, really gotten hurt. He got hurt pretty bad. I went out to the campsite and I saw all the evidence there but there was no victim. I talked around to a couple campers and they thought that someone had given him a ride to the hospital. Went up to the hospital and there was my victim so I was able to interview him with that.

Naturally, if people were injured someplace in the backcountry or something, they might come straight to the hospital before ever talking to us. Technically the Park Service is supposed to investigate all accidents and injuries that occur in the Park, but in reality you're not able to because people don't come to the ranger station before they go get medical help in many cases. The medical staff would call us if it was something really serious and we could go up and talk to the people.

I went up one time, I remember seeing this guy all bloody and beat up hobbling across the parking lot of the ranger station. It was a helicopter pilot who had been sling loading modular homes into Supai. He'd run out of fuel in mid-air and crashed. Fortunately he wasn't killed but they had brought him up to the hospital. I'm not quite sure who brought him there, but here he was going across the parking lot. After he was tended to, I was able to interview him in that way.

Sometimes we would have like, what would you call it? Psychiatric cases, I guess. Might be people on drugs or some other issue and they would end up in the hospital. On one case I remember we had to guard this one guy. He had taken some kind of hallucinogen and he was convinced that the mob was out to whack him. He would lay in bed and every once in a while he would jerk up and say, "What'd you say?" I was standing there. "What'd you say?" I'd say, "I didn't say anything." Finally I realized if I stood behind a curtain I could still guard the guy or keep him from running out of the room, that's what the problem was. He would go over to the window and talk to people outside the window. All sorts of really bizarre behavior. You got that sort of thing up there.

A couple times we actually had to go up where there people that were on drugs and stuff that were attacking the staff. I remember that happened one time and we... The guy attacked a couple of the nurses and ran out of the hospital and into the woods. We finally were able to capture him. I think it was the next day we captured him. I remember I went into the South Rim [chuckle] District Ranger Office and Lester Womack, one of the permanent rangers, had duct-taped this guy to a gurney because he was so out of control. They took him back up to the hospital and were able to give him medications that were able to calm him down and get him to sleep, I guess.

We were talking earlier about Barry Goldwater being in the hospital. He was, of course, a famous Arizona politician, ran for president and all that sort of thing. He had a heart attack while he was up on the South Rim. They put him in a room and then the rangers were up there keeping people away. I don't know if anybody ever knew that he had had this heart attack. I was working the entrance station. This was in 19...would've been 1969, the summer of '69, I think. He came out in an ambulance. I could see

him in the ambulance, waved at him and away he went to probably to the Grand Canyon airport. Then they probably flew him back down to Phoenix.

Who knows who else over the years was there. We would have... Late at night the hospital closed as I recall. If there was nobody actually in the facility itself, they might shut the door. A couple of times went up there where people showed up in distress. We went up and gave them first aid or tried to resuscitate them or whatever the incident might be. Like I say, it was like a hub for people that had problems. When you have an injury or something you go to the hospital.

TM: When you had your surgery, you were in 24 hours a day there overnight. There was a cafeteria there and they actually cooked food, would bring you food, is that right?

BC: Yes.

TM: Okay, and then there were...

BC: Yes, it was pretty much a full-service hospital at that time. It was small scale, but still they did everything.

TM: Okay. So if they had no one for overnight observation then they would close up...close the doors?

BC: I think they did. I think they did because I remember one time we went up there. There was a guy who had had a heart attack somewhere out by Topocoba Hilltop or somewhere like that way on the west end of the Park. The family had brought him to the hospital. He had actually been dead for hours, I'm sure. We tried to resuscitate him probably more for show than anything. But there was nobody in the hospital whatsoever. We were out in the parking lot with this guy. I'm not quite sure how we were notified. I guess they used a payphone probably.

TM: How would you get in touch with the doctor to let him know that he needed to come over or any of the other staff? Would you just go knock on the door?

BC: We had an emergency call numbers for the staff and stuff like that. Of course, we brought people to the hospital all the time. It seemed like, well, if they were in the El Tovar Hotel and they had a heart attack, it was always on the 2nd or 3rd floor. You'd have to climb up the stairs. We did that a number of times. My first summer I was on the South Rim a lot, so you got to see all sorts of stuff. A couple of times I went out to the Moqui Lodge out at Tusayan. I think it's probably closed now. It was one of the few lodgings outside the Park. I remember going out there on heart attacks and trying to resuscitate people, and of course, bringing them back to the hospital if we could. We had this Ford Torino station wagon and that was our ambulance. It wasn't a very good one, because it's a station wagon, got a very low ceiling.

TM: Right.

BC: The little gurneys we had, they were things that were sort of like a cot with wheels on one end. They could fold in half so you could set them up against the side of the station wagon or you could just leave it in the middle there. They weren't very well secured, so you couldn't drive at a hundred miles an hour because you would knock everybody all over the back of the so-called ambulance. It was really, when you think about it, fairly primitive compared to, I'm sure, what they're doing nowadays.

TM: Oh yeah.

BC: But we did do quite a few runs out to Tusayan. It was kind of... I don't know if... There was probably a written agreement with the county and stuff like that, I'm sure.

TM: Okay. And the hospital was a large concrete building, fairly new, is that right?

BC: Yeah, it was fairly new. It was on what we called the service road, or off the service road, that went from where the old Entrance Station used to be, which was about a mile from the rim. That was the way residents came and went from the Canyon development there at the South Rim. In fact, one of the interesting things is that I... This is kind of off the subject a little bit, but one year, oh, probably around '72/'73, they had one of these fogs in the canyon where the cloud layer is down below the peaks and pyramids in the canyon. You could stand on the South Rim and look out across this sea of fog but underneath that was just... Once you went through the cloud layer there was no fog down below. I remember getting calls all week long about, "What's it look like down there?" I'd said, "Looks like it's cloudy, a cloudy day." It was colder at Phantom than it was on the South Rim because the cloud layer was keeping the sun from shining at the bottom of the canyon but it was shining bright up on the South Rim. I remember the last day, it was starting to lift. I rode out of the Canyon for my days off and rode through that. It was really spectacular. One of the things I learned during this episode is that there were a lot of people that worked at the Canyon that actually never really went out and looked at the canyon on a routine basis. They were there for a job. You could drive from up Highway 64, turn on the Service Road that I was referring to, go to your Park residence and never see the canyon. Then you could go to your job at the Visitor Center or at the Babbitt's store or wherever it might be, and you'd never get close enough to the rim to see the Canyon.

TM: Right, right.

BC: There is this little group of people that are working there, but aren't, at least at that time, weren't necessarily that enthralled by the canyon. It was a job. That's what they were there for.

TM: Yeah. Going to go back to the hospital for a minute again then. The staff. There would've been then a couple of nurses and some front office sort of secretary people and then a doctor. Is that... maybe somebody running x-ray...

BC: They had Dr. Silverstein. They had his wife and I don't remember...she was kind of, as I recall, like the head nurse, assisted in surgery and that sort of thing. Then there were a couple of other nurses and they had these candy striper volunteers that did a lot of the routine things, changing the bedding, bringing food to you and things like that. I don't know how many of those there were. I know there were a couple anyway. That's about all I remember about the hospital. There had to have been a kitchen staff of some kind I suspect. I don't know how many beds they had there. I don't really recall. Probably their problem was keeping the beds filled and that's how they make money at the hospital. The everyday routine, taking splinters out of fingers and things like that just didn't keep them going over the years.

TM: Right. So when you checked yourself out, Dr. Silverstein is going, "No wait! We need that guy in here!"

BC: Yeah. I need that money. There was not a professional ambulance service up at the Canyon. The Park Service, with our Ford Torino station wagon, we were the ambulance service and it really was pretty inadequate. I know there wasn't anything at Tusayan. Any ambulance would have had to come all the way from Flagstaff...

TM: Or Williams. Yeah.

BC: ...or Williams and that's a long ways. It was, like I say, pretty primitive. It was a good thing to have a hospital there. I don't know at what point Dr. Silverstein left, but I think probably once he and his wife left the Canyon, then that left a huge void in the ability to take care of patients.

TM: Right, and eventually that overnight hospital was downsized to a clinic...

BC: Right.

TM: ...with emergency after-hour services, but it wasn't... Yeah, so it's an interesting...

BC: Yeah. You would've had, too, the Park Service itself, the quality of medical technicians and stuff on staff was increased. When I was at the Canyon, park rangers were generalists very much and not specialists. I remember going back there for training years later and it was all specialists. There were different types of jobs for these specialists. You had people that apparently were just back country Search and Rescue and you had fire people that did fire and had firetrucks and stuff. So a lot of specialties that didn't exist when I was there.

TM: Right.

BC: I think Lloyd Horner was probably the only specialist as Law Enforcement Specialist. [chuckle] Everybody else just did what you're assigned. They did have it setup where you had one person involved to take care of the campgrounds and fee collection and that sort of thing, but it was still pretty rudimentary.

TM: Okay. I think from the top, the model was here's a specialist, we're calling him a Superintendent, and here's a specialist called the Administrative Assistant, which would become the Deputy Superintendent. Here is a specialist which is the Chief of Law Enforcement and then things kind of broke down below there. People were assigned to certain areas, but those people did a lot of different things.

BC: Yeah, that's right.

TM: And then as the years went by, that type of...

BC: Cause you had a Supai Ranger, a North Rim Ranger, a Desert View Ranger, a South Rim District Ranger. These were all... But not so much specialty as far as the type of work that they were doing.

TM: Right. I mean the Supai Ranger and the North Rim Ranger, they could give an evening program talk and then go help with a heart attack and then go search for a stranded hiker and then go...

BC: Yeah, that's true.

TM: ... do some interpretation with visitors out on a viewpoint, and then help with some maintenance somewhere to fix a broken waterline or whatever. It seemed like it was a...is that right that you would basically...?

BC: Yeah, pretty much. I mean you did have a division of maintenance, obviously, a large division of maintenance. But in the canyon, we had to do a lot of maintenance as far as the day-to-day stuff. Mostly picking up trash and cleaning restrooms and making minor repairs and those types of things, yeah. But on a routine basis, rangers didn't do as much maintenance as they may have done in the dim, dark past.

TM: Right. Right. Okay. What other sort of general recollections or reflections do you have about that time before we maybe head off to Glen Canyon?

BC: Yeah, well, there were a couple things that I was thinking about. As I get on Facebook and stuff I look at these people bragging about doing rim-to-rim-to-rim-to-rim hikes and the runners and those types of things. There weren't any runners when I was there. If there were, they were just starting, that was becoming a popular thing. Well, this one individual I remember that...I was on the South Rim, and this was in about, oh I don't know, probably 1970, maybe '71, there was this van driving around... On my days off I saw this van. It says, "Bill Boyce The Kite Man" on the side of this in big, bold painted letters. This guy was from Australia and on top of the van he had these big long poles and things. He was one of these fellows that had like a paraglider I guess you would say.

TM: Or a hang glider.

BC: Yeah, sort of like a wing-type thing but I think it had metal parts to it. One morning really early I had gone up Phantom Ranch to get a water sample and I got a phone call from Lloyd Horner. This must have been like maybe 6:00/6:30 in the morning when I got this phone call. Lloyd asked me, he said "Did you see a guy with a kite fly down there this morning?" I said "No, I hadn't seen that." So I beat it on down to the Bright Angel campground and I started asking campers. This one fellow says very matter-of-factly, he says, "Oh yeah, this guy landed in this kite right over by the burner there." This was before we had gotten rid of the trash burner in the Bright Angel campground. He said there were a couple other guys and they all disassembled this kite and took off. We were able to get enough description of them that they caught the guys when they got to the rim and took them to court and all that sort of thing. I think that was probably the first time anybody tried to do one of these base-jumping. It was sort of like a base-jumping type of thing and but I think he had more of a wing-type kite than just a parachute like base jumpers.

TM: Yeah, so this would have been the early hang gliding days. The early '70s it was a big deal. So they would've then gone for a visit in front of Magistrate McKay. Is that how that would've worked out?

BC: Yeah. I'm sure that happened. I think he'd gone off of either Mather or Yaki Point. One of those places. Yaki Point was closed, so he probably went off of Mather Point early in the morning. In fact, there was a guy named Waldo Wilcox and... This is how they found out about it. He was an engineer and he was going down to do some work on the transcanyon waterline. He was in a helicopter. Takes off from the maintenance yard there at South Rim and as he's flying down, here's this guy in this kite racing him down to Phantom Ranch. So that was how we actually found out about the case, a Park Service maintenance employee reported it to us.

TM: Okay.

BC: I guess by the time Lloyd found out about it and he was able to track me down at Phantom Ranch, the guy had... It was very quick. Base-jumpers develop a way of...they must practice. Just like drunks practice roadside maneuvers [chuckle]. See if they can get the thing put away real quickly and make their escape.

TM: They must have known that it was illegal to do.

BC: Oh sure. Yeah. He might have gone in and asked somebody for all I know or been questioned by somebody, because this van was very obvious. Here's his name and everything on the side of the thing. It was pretty obvious that he was there to do some kind of flying. So that was kind of an interesting little aside.

TM: Was that Bill Boyce?

BC: What was that?

TM: His last name spelling: B-O-Y-C-E?

BC: Yeah, Bill Boyce as I recall. "The Kite Man" he was called. And he was from Australia.

TM: Okay.

BC: Let's see, I think we talked a little bit about... I can't remember if we talked about clean-up. Using helicopters to clean up of trash in the canyon.

TM: No.

BC: I'm trying to think...it must've been in '72, maybe '73. We had a report... Because there were very few of us in the canyon that were Inner Canyon rangers. We had the ranger at Indian Gardens and a relief man and we had a ranger at Phantom and we had a ranger at Cottonwood. So there were really only 4 of us. To cover the whole canyon was an impossibility because all the activity that occurs in what's called the Corridor Unit now just took up all your time.

TM: Yeah.

BC: You didn't have a lot of time to go on extended back country patrols unless you were to do it on your day off or something like that. We had a report of a guy at Hermit Camp that was like a long-term camper. So they wanted to... We talked about it a couple times, I think it was in August, we wanted to get over there and bust this guy and get him out of there but couldn't break away for a day or two. My boss wanted me to ride the horse across the Tonto Plateau at one point. I said, "That's a long ways and I don't know the condition of the trail..." whether the horse could easily do it and he's got to have water and stuff and feed and everything. That was kind of an impossibility. I guess it was in September we decided to fly over there. I guess we had some extra like year-end money or something. They flew me over to Hermit Camp. Apparently the guy had left just prior, maybe a day or two before I flew over there. But of course, he'd left his mess and it was unbelievable. There was trash everywhere. He'd actually camped on top of what appeared to be an Indian ruin and then he had just [chuckle]... There was just trash everywhere. What we did is we got these big bags or tarps I should say. We tied the tarps

up, put all the trash in the tarps and then it took two loads to get everything out of there. I mean, there was a lot of trash. It took hours.

TM: Wow.

BC: And I was the only one. It was hours for me to get everything collected and put up. We did have long-term camper issues in the canyon and it was hard to deal with. I'm sure the same thing is probably going on today. I know the upper part of Phantom Creek, I never caught... Well, I caught a couple of people up there, probably a half dozen camped up there without permits during my time there. I think there was probably more extensive camping in that area after I left. People would just wander through Phantom Ranch. I wondered where in the world are they coming from? It could've been rim-to-rim hikers or it could've been people that were going up to the South Rim for a few days or something to resupply and then go back to their long-term camp. But, you know, you could only monitor so much. I spent a lot of time going up Phantom Creek, especially the lower part of the creek, because there were several campsites there that people would camp in and make a big mess. But that was usually only for a night or two and not long-term. But I did find a couple of long-term camps up there.

TM: And of course, they would want to be someplace where there was water and where they could...

BC: Yes, near the creek.

TM: ...get in and get out. There's a lot of places in the Park, it's fairly large, where you could hang out but getting to is very, very difficult. You might not be found but getting in and out may take you a day or more.

BC: That's right, yeah. Usually a day or more especially if you don't want to be found out.

TM: Right.

BC: Let's see. I mentioned earlier about getting phone... Did we record that about getting phone calls at the bottom of the canyon?

TM: No, let's do that.

BC: The Inner Canyon Ranger Station was the name of the little ranger station that I stayed in out near the river there at Phantom Ranch. In the phone directory it was listed as Inner Canyon Ranger Station. It was the only facility that the Park Service had on the South Rim that said "Ranger Station" so people wanted to talk to a ranger. I would get these calls all hours of the night and during the day from people that had basically information requests. If you knew the answer to their question of course you'd answer it, but otherwise you would direct them to the Visitor Center or something like that. I remember getting a lot of calls about people wanting to hike the length of the Grand Canyon because they had recently read Colin Fletcher's book. They had decided that they would like to do that. They wanted to know how many days it would take and everything, not realizing this was a major undertaking having to cache water.

TM: Right.

BC: So I would always tell them, "Well, why don't you try to hike the Bright Angel Trail first or the South Kaibab and see what it's like in the canyon, 'cause it is a different type of hiking than you find other places." That was something you really couldn't address. The problem if they called the Inner Canyon Ranger Station is that it was really an emergency phone line. So if you talked to people for a long/extended periods of time then you're tying up the emergency phone. You didn't want to do that. That was just kind of a crazy thing that went on down there that you weren't really prepared for.

TM: And you couldn't, of course, leave it off the hook, because if somebody had an emergency then they couldn't get in touch with you.

BC: That's correct. If any of the phones were off the hook that defeated the whole purpose of the emergency system.

TM: Right. You talked about that where if a line was open it would shut the whole thing down.

BC: Yeah.

TM: Interesting.

BC: One interesting thing I've been reading, and people on Facebook on some of these groups, they talk about a thing called "The Box" up the Bright Angel Creek on the North Kaibab Trail. I don't know if that's a... I've tried to look that term up and I think it's a more modern origin 'cause we always called it just The Narrows, the Narrows of the Bright Angel. The people that are describing this... The reason it's an important feature is that during the summer it's more like an oven than a box. It really gets hot up there. You get the heat radiating from the ground and from both sides of the canyon walls and if you're in the direct sun it's even worse. But names were always interesting when they change a lot. I think I might have mentioned in an earlier conversation, one of the big confusions was always the Bright Angel Trail is on the south side and the Bright Angel Creek is on the north side and the North Kaibab and the South Kaibab Trail go along Bright Angel Creek. It's important to know what these names are when you're dealing with situations. Let's see. One thing, I was thinking of was my first encounter with Ted Hatch. I know you're interested in river running. I'm trying to think what all the circumstances were. It was in the mid-70s and he came to the South Rim and a whole bunch of people... My supervisor, Ed Carlson, he said, "Come on, Bob, we're going to go out to..." We went to one of the hotels out at Tusayan and we're going to have dinner. So I went out there with Ed and we met with a whole bunch of people. I don't remember if the Superintendent was there. I know Warren Hill was there.

He was the river manager. There was probably a group of maybe 10 people and Ted Hatch was there. Of course, he obviously had a huge interest in the Canyon because they wanted to maintain their... That was really their bread and butter – the Grand Canyon runs. They had Dinosaur, and all over the west they had the Salmon and the Middle Fork and all these different places. But the Grand Canyon was really their bread and butter and there were a lot of decisions that were... One decision could be made on user days that could really impact their business. I don't know exactly what all the conversation was or what the meeting was really about. It wasn't a formal meeting by any means, it was more a schmooze of Federal employees I suppose. But, we got out there and the kitchen had just closed so Ted, unbeknownst to most of us, he went back in the back into the kitchen and pretty soon the kitchen was up and running again [chuckle]. I think Ted probably went down there and gave the guy a \$50 bill or something and the chef decided to stay on [chuckle]. I had other dealings with him, and of course his brother Don, when I got to Dinosaur. But that was the first time I formally met Ted Hatch. I had seen him

down at Phantom Ranch, I just didn't know who he was. He came in on several river trips. He loved river running. I think he ran rivers until he passed away here. He was really a real character. A big personality. Almost hysterical [chuckle] to be around. He was a very funny guy. Don was a little more laid back. He was not quite as outgoing as his brother, but still a really nice guy.

One of the things I think we talked about in the last interview or something, was a deal about...and this is more Dinosaur... We had a problem at Lee's Ferry, not a problem at Lee's Ferry, we had a problem at Lodore, the Gates of Lodore, but the Lees Ferry ranger, Perry Thompson, had called up and said that the ranger at Lodore was not really checking lifejackets very well. That they were taking the lifejackets from the Grand Canyon that were sinkers or damaged or wouldn't pass inspection. They'd just take them up and use them at Dinosaur. Perry Thompson told the people at Dinosaur what was going on and they passed it on to Glade Ross, who was the ranger up there. Glade really went over the lifejackets. It made him mad. He went over them and he was pulling lifejackets out that weren't any good. So the Hatch brothers, and Ted in particular, he was a pilot, he had to fly up to Lodore and give them enough lifejackets to go on this one trip. Then what happened was that Don Hatch, because Don was the one that really managed the Dinosaur operation and Ted did the Grand Canyon, Don called me up, I remember, and he was furious about all these lifejackets. I said, "Well, you know, they've got to be a certain way." In our course of our conversation, I had taken lifejackets down to the pool at Rangely of different quality and got in the pool and found out that a sinker really would sink you, and so on and so forth.

Another thing occurred during the conversation and that was that Don says, "My boaters were at Rippling Brook." Rippling Brook is a little campsite on the lower end of Lodore Canyon. There's a little rapid that goes around the... Between the upper and lower campsite there's a rapid. These guys were in this little yellow raft and they came zipping down through there and they tipped over. They were able to get most of their gear. I think the Hatch guys helped them get their gear. So Don says, "Well, what are you going to do about that kind of thing?" I said, "Oh, well, we arrested those guys when they got to the boat ramp at Split Mountain because they didn't have a permit." There was silence on the other end of the phone. The way this had gone on, if you thought that things were not very modern at Grand Canyon, it was worse at Dinosaur. We didn't have any way to transport a prisoner at Dinosaur. We drove around in pick-up trucks and so when we caught these guys over at Split Mountain, we had to say, "Well, get in your car. Get all of your gear and everything in the trunk of your car and then follow us down to the Justice of the Peace." So they did. They followed us into Vernal, Utah, which was about 10 miles. The Justice of the Peace found them guilty of boating without a permit, which was against the law in the state of Utah. Then he said they had to go to jail. They didn't have the money to pay a bond so they had to go to jail. So we said to these guys, "Okay, well follow us over to the Uinta County Sheriff's Office." And they did. They got in their car and they followed us in the car and we took them in. I remember the jailer kept saying, "What were these guys arrested for?" We'd say, "Boating without a permit." [chuckle] Anyway, it impressed the Hatch brothers even though it was just kind of a crazy coincidence. Because the number of people that we arrested at Dinosaur was... I think there was probably only maybe a half dozen in the 3 years I was there. Since you couldn't transport people anywhere, you just had to write 'em tickets, but that's another story as far as Dinosaur goes.

TM: Well now I want to ask you all about Dinosaur because I am really interested in that as well. Before we head off to Dinosaur and Glen Canyon, cause you were at Glen Canyon as well, is that right?

BC: Yes, uh-huh.

TM: Okay. Are we ready to leave Grand Canyon? You may remember something later as we're talking about Dino or Glen Canyon that relates back to Grand Canyon so don't worry about that, but at one point we're going to be ready to leave Grand Canyon and this may be it.

BC: Yeah, I suppose.

TM: Okay.

BC: I guess, there's one other thing I might talk about and that's the dispatch.

TM: Okay.

BC: We probably hit on the dispatch a little bit. Dispatching is really critical in any park and there were times when... They finally got kind of a formal dispatch going, but there were kind of transition periods and then they hired people. The one thing that always bothered me is that they would hire someone, but that person would never be exposed to the canyon. I don't know what their training was. What my complaint is is that you might be someplace and the person really didn't know where you were. They weren't familiar with the area, they weren't familiar with even time/distance/other issues that might create problems. Then, of course, a lot of times you had such poor radio communications to begin with, that if a person didn't pick up bits and pieces and know that they're up Phantom Creek, he told me that an hour ago that's probably where the transmission was coming from. So you felt sort of uneasy about that with certain dispatchers. Not all of them by any means.

TM: Was there training for them? Were you able to sit down and...

BC: Well, you know, I don't remember ever personally being involved in any training with dispatchers. I'm sure they had training but, like I say, sometimes not going out and actually experiencing and seeing the resource puts you at a disadvantage. I had a report one time. We had this huge flash flood at Phantom. The way I found out about it is... [chuckle] The dispatcher called and I happened to be in the ranger station. I picked up the phone and the dispatcher says, "We got a report." She says, "There's a flash flood coming down from Indian Gardens that'll wipe out Phantom."

TM: Oh wow.

BC: I said, "What are you talking about?" [laughter] Obviously, the two areas, Indian Gardens and Phantom, are on opposite sides of the Canyon. That would be one heck of a wave to wipe out Phantom if it came from Indian Gardens. Stuff like that was a problem. I guess by the time I left Grand Canyon things were much more professional. I think they had a good training program and the dispatchers were all...seemed to be pretty competent individuals. There was kind of a transition there from going from the radio phone on the desk of the District Ranger Office to an actual dispatch center. It made a huge difference.

TM: Okay. And then you all had your own handheld radios.

BC: Yes. We had Motorola radios. Great big things. I mean, they were huge. Then we had base stations at some of the ranger stations. I know at Phantom we did. I can't remember, I think Indian Gardens just used the handsets there.

TM: You must have had antennas placed strategically placed on the rim to get into those places.

BC: Right. They had a repeater up there that they could boost the sound. There were places, like at Phantom Ranch, if you were on the River Trail, you just might as well shout because you're up against that south wall there, a narrow trail, there's no radio communications at all. Then if you went up Phantom Canyon or something or up the North Kaibab and different places, you had very little radio. What we would do is you'd call, "I'm going to take the horse and I'm going go up to Roaring Springs." You'd call in and call out [chuckle]. I always wondered if in-between if anything happened if anybody'd ever find you. You were it down there most of the time. Even Cottonwood Ranger Station, that was really pretty much a summer operation.

TM: Yeah, but at least dispatch...

BC: They tried to make it a year-round operation but the guy that was there, he and his wife left. A guy named Doug Vaniman and I can't remember his wife's name. He was there for a whole summer and then he got crossways with somebody and he left. They replaced him then with just summer seasonal people. Doug Vaniman, yeah and I can't remember her name. There were some other guys. Jerry Refhus, I think he was at Cottonwood. Then there was another guy named Kurt Sauer. He eventually ended up in Rocky Mountain National Park. He was there for years and years as a permanent ranger.

TM: Okay. Kurt was in Grand Canyon for many years or was in Rocky Mountain?

BC: No, he was at...I remember, he was at Cottonwood. He was one of the last people that I trained, or oriented I should say, to the Canyon. He was at Cottonwood. I think he was there probably when I transferred to Dinosaur. He was still working down there. There were some other guys. There was a Ted Little at Indian Gardens and then a guy by the name of Ray Rosales. He worked there part of the time. Then Stan Stockton, he was at Phantom probably in '73, I think. He was still there when I left.

TM: Did you know a guy named George Mancuso?

BC: No. I don't recognize that name.

TM: Alright. So how was it that eventually you left Grand Canyon?

BC: I had a lady by the name of E.C. Fields and she was watching the... Let me start over again. I went up to the dispatch office at the Visitor Center, that's where it was located, one night and I was talking to the dispatcher. I looked down the hallway and I saw the light of the superintendent's office was on. This was like 8:30/9:00 at night. I was wanting to leave the canyon/leave Phantom.

TM: Why? You wanted to leave Phantom, I mean, just because you'd been there enough? It was getting old? Why do people transition?

BC: Well, if you're down in the canyon [chuckle] long enough finally it starts to get to you. All the issues with people, it's like a treadmill. People bringing dogs down, people coming down with no water, all the emergency types of things, the heat, so on and so forth. It was just time. After 4 years, I was ready to do something else. So I was up in the Visitor Center and saw the superintendent's light on, so I went down. The Superintendent was a guy named Merle Stitt. So I went in and I talked to him and about things that were going on and wanting to advance in my career and all these other types of things that come to

mind. He said he would have my supervisor, Bob Yearout, call around and see if there's anything available. Well, I did actually get a call from Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument, they had a position down there. Then I had applied... This E.C. Fields, as vacancy announcements came through, she was looking at them for me at the South Rim. She gave me a call about one at Dinosaur. I think we've talked about this before. It was a split position at the quarry both in interpretation and ranger type stuff, so I applied for it. Well, I didn't get it. A guy named Tom Hansen got the job, but they kept my application and when a guy named Barry Ashworth, who was the river ranger at Dinosaur, when he left, the Superintendent called me up and we talked. Eventually they convinced me and I convinced them that [chuckle] it was a good match, I guess. Then that's when I moved to Dinosaur.

TM: What year was that?

BC: That was 19...let's see, May of '73, I believe, that I moved to Dinosaur. Okay. How old was Barry? Was he older than you or younger than you?

BC: You know, I don't know. I think probably he might have been in his 20s. I was probably 24 or something like that so he was probably of similar age. I've never met him, I don't know. He was the first river ranger. We were talking about specialists earlier. He was kind of the river ranger specialist. He dealt with all the river issues that Dinosaur... Issuing permits and checking on... Getting commercial operations, who was allowed to do commercial operations, assigning campsites, and purchasing equipment. All those things that go along with running the river operation there. I think he was there for about a year and a half, maybe two years. Kind of got things rolling. They went from really informal river running to a more formal, you got to have a permit, and not only do you have to have a permit, but we're going to limit the number of permits, that type of thing. He got all that kind of up and running. When I moved up there, he had left and Glade Ross was kind of doing the permit issuing and stuff. Glade kind of oriented me over a day or so on how to issue permits and all that kind of stuff.

TM: So at that time, Vernal was sort of the local regional town west of the quarry and headquarters was over in Colorado...

BC: Right.

TM: ...at Dinosaur, Colorado, and then Lodore was like way around over by Flaming Gorge Dam over by Browns Park.

BC: It was about an hour's drive.

TM: So this is another park that is fairly large and very spread out. The Yampa arm going off toward Colorado as well, actually in Colorado. So where did you stay? Where was your housing? How did that work out for you?

BC: We had the headquarters there at Dinosaur. There's the Harpers Point Road.

TM: Right.

BC: It goes up into the canyon about 25 miles, from Highway 40 up to Harpers Corner is 25 miles. About a quarter of a mile/half mile up that road on the left or the west there's a service road goes up. Up there is a residential area. There's some hogbacks there at Dinosaur. Between two sets of these hogbacks is

this residential area. Much like Grand Canyon and everywhere else in the Park Service at the time, there were kind of like a little Park Service ghetto. The Superintendent lived on the far end and then next to him was George Cooksy. The Superintendent was Dick Townsley and then George Cooksy, he was a foreman. Graham Lisle, he had the next house, he was the Chief of Maintenance. Then there was my house. Next to me was Steve Petersburg, he was a Resource Management Specialist. Next to him was Chuck Rutheford, he was the Administrative Officer. Next to him was Hal Greenly who was the District Ranger, the Yampa District Ranger they called him. Then across the little area there were a series of apartments for seasonal employees. There were about 4 to 5, probably 4 apartments, I'm thinking. That's where Joe Alston stayed [chuckle] when he was there. He was in one of those. So that's where we would live. The river operation was run out of the maintenance facility there behind headquarters at Dinosaur. We had another kind of an auxiliary, keep a couple of boats over at the quarry for runs through Split Mountain Gorge for emergencies and stuff like that. Most everything ran out of the Dinosaur maintenance area. We would do our shuttles from there. You'd get somebody to shuttle you to Deer Lodge Park to go on the Yampa or up to Lodore to go on the Green or down to Echo Park to do a one-day down through the canyon or even all the way around to Rainbow Park to launch, just to go through Split Mountain. It was fairly centrally located there at Dinosaur.

TM: What do you remember about your first Yampa trip? You're hiring on as a river ranger and...

BC: Right.

TM: ...you don't have a lot of river experience.

BC: I didn't have a lot of river experience, but I was a good learner [chuckle]. They put me with a maintenance man and his name was Ray Harrington. Ray was a former Utah highway patrolman, he was no longer with them. An older guy and he had worked for many, many years for Hatch River Expeditions there out of Vernal. He'd done the Grand and all of the rivers of the west. I mean, he had been all over the place. We had a 22-foot pontoon boat and it had it a 20...I think it was a 28-inch tube. They had a suspended plywood floor in the middle because they had cut the hypalon bottom out of this thing. So it was just a big tube, a big donut.

TM: A big oval, yeah.

BC: Yeah. Then we suspended this plywood. There were four sections in that boat. We suspended them with chains from the D-rings. Then we had an oar frame made out of like 2x6's. It had pipes that were pinned into the... You drilled a hole in the 2x6, you put the pipe and drilled a hole through the pipe and ran a bolt through there and that was your oarlock for thole pins.

TM: So you guys were running pins and clips.

BC: Yes. You'd just put a...well, what we would do, we'd get a piece of firehose and you would put the firehose on your oar and then the firehose would go right over the pin. So it was a real simple thing. Wasn't anything fancy about it all.

TM: How would you hook the firehose to the oar?

BC: You'd just a run a bolt through it, just bolt it right on to the oar.

TM: Huh. That wouldn't weaken the shaft right there?

BC: No, not enough to cause a problem. Or they would use...I take that back. I guess we used hose clamps. Hose clamps. Yeah, I take that back. And it worked really well.

TM: Okay. So I just want to make sure I got a good handle on this. The firehose is clamped to the oar, and the firehose is parallel to the oar. There'll be a little slack in the firehose that the pin then can go through the slack area between the oar and the firehose.

BC: Right. You'd take the firehose and you'd clamp it on one side and then make a little bit of a loop and then clamp it on the other side.

TM: Right and that's facing, that little loop would allow the pin to go through.

BC: That was your propulsion system.

TM: Got it. Were there two...

BC: And then we had some beautiful... What's that?

TM: Were there two rowing stations for that 22-foot long boat or just one?

BC: Just one. Just one person rowed the boat. Then you would do a quick-release tie and put oars on both sides of the... We actually hung them on the outside of the boat so if you did break an oar or lose an oar, you could grab another one real quick and put it on there with this quick-release. You had a loop on one end where you put the oar part, on the paddle part, and on the other end you'd have this quick-release knot up on whichever side of the frame you were sitting. So you could just grab it, pull the quick-release real quick, and then just slide the oar out and put it on right on the pin. It could be done pretty quickly actually. We had big old heavy plywood boxes we used for our cooking gear and all that sort of thing. We did have waterproof rubber bags from probably World War II and a lot of ammo boxes. That's how we stored everything. My first boat trip was, I think it was the first week I was there. Ray said, "Let's go over and we'll go through Split Mountain Gorge." So we take off and we head over to/tried to get into Rainbow Park and it starts to rain. I mean, it was just a torrential rain. They have this stuff out there called Gilsonite in the mud. It was just unbelievable. Well, when we got to the Rainbow Park boat ramp, it was just coming down so hard that Ray says, "Well, I don't think we want to go today." I was disappointed, but I said, "Okay." We tried to get out of there and we got stuck. The wheel wells of the pickup truck we were in were just packed with mud. It was unbelievable. When it finally quit raining, we dug all that mud out of there and were able to finally get the truck and boat unstuck. We got back to the quarry and eventually back over to Dinosaur. But that took all day. It was just did sort of a one gigantic self-rescue for the whole day. So that was my first river/non-river trip, I guess.

I'm trying to remember if I went down Lodore. I guess we went down the Yampa next and that really was an experience. I got to run a couple of the rapids, but when we got to Warm Springs, which is the really big rapid and the Yampa was in flood, then Ray Harrington, he showed me how to run it [chuckle] and we went through there. The first time I ever ran Warm Springs was the next, actually the next year, I guess. Well, I did run it with Ray one time, but the first time I did it all by myself was with this Tom Hansen. We got in a little 10-man raft. They had a spray shield on that raft. It was made out of pipe and then we had hypalon material tied to this shield. The shield was about, oh, maybe 2 foot high at the

most. When the bow of the boat would go into a wave, that spray shield that was tied on to all the D-rings would act as if it was a much bigger boat actually. It would divert a lot of the water from flooding into the boat. You'd still get some. Before the trip I went over to the quarry and there was a... The Chief of Interpretation was a guy by the name of Truesdale. I can't think of his first name. Anyway, Tom Hansen worked for him. I remember him asking me in the office, "Have you ever run Warm Springs?" I said, "Yeah, of course." Meaning, yeah I'd been through the rapid [chuckle] as a passenger! So anyway, we got to Warm Springs and it was scary. It's a scary rapid. Fortunately I did it right. We got down to the end. It kind of makes a left-hand turn at the end of the rapid, the canyon does. We stopped down below because that's where the campsite was. We wanted to clean that anyway. I remember how exhausted I was from all the stress and everything else. It was at that point that I told Tom, "Well, really I'd never rowed through there before." [chuckle] I gave him the option at the upper end of the rapid if he wanted to walk or wanted to go through the rapid and he said he wanted to ride along [chuckle].

TM: Fun.

BC: Scary thing. Later on I went down the Green. I'm skipping back now, with Ray Harrington, most of the trips we made were down the... We made a couple on the Yampa and then as the water level dropped we switched over to the Green and went down the Green River.

TM: Alright. On the Green arm, because of Flaming Gorge Dam upstream, as the Yampa would dry up, there was still enough water coming out of Flaming Gorge to run Lodore. Is that how that worked?

BC: Right. Uh-huh. Yes. Once in a while, Lodore would get really low for some reason. I think there was only one time that we ever went up there and decided that it looked like you had to walk about a half mile across the mud flats there to get over to the main channel and we decided not to go. Usually you had some kind of water prediction and you knew whether you were going to have enough water to go down through there.

TM: Right.

BC: Once in a while it was a real rock orchard going down through some... Like Hell's Half Mile or something. Disaster Falls would just be a pile of rocks.

TM: Were you in the 10-man or were you in the bigger 22 or both?

BC: I usually used the little 10-man when I would go on river trips and then I would give the... The 22-foot pontoon I would give to the seasonal rangers that ran the trip. What we would do is we'd put somebody on the Yampa and we'd put somebody on the Green and we'd run one or two trips fairly close together.

TM: Would you guys then meet up in Echo Park or would you both...

BC: No, no. Just do separate river trips so you could be on both rivers. We did that occasionally.

TM: Would you take out at Echo or would you go down through Whirlpool, all the way down through Split Mountain to the ramp down by the quarry or did you just have options and you okay, we're going to take out...

BC: You had options but generally the patrols were all the way through. You'd start at Lodore or you'd start at Deer Lodge and you'd go anywhere from 3- to 5-day trips through the canyon. Stop and clean up campsites and clean toilets in places where we had toilets and that type of thing. Actually the canyon, the river runners did a remarkable job of keeping things clean. They really did. Probably the biggest problem were like ashes and things like that, were a bit of an issue.

TM: Okay.

BC: They did a pretty darn good job. The problem at Dinosaur was you had two rivers coming together and all the campers and boaters from both those rivers would then converge on the lower Green. At the time the only real...well, we had two campgrounds. We had Jones Hole, which had about...I think they had 5 campsites, Below Jones Hole you had Rainbow Park where they put on for the day trips. In my last year at Dinosaur, one of the main things we were doing was trying to find other alternative camp areas on the lower Green where people would camp. The problem is everybody wanted to camp at Jones Hole, because of the creek there. You know how beautiful that creek is, especially after a long 2 or 3 days on the river everybody is dirty, they want to get kind of cleaned up and stuff like that.

TM: And the fishing's good there.

BC: Nothings more fun than to jump in the creek. That was a bit of an issue down there.

TM: Yeah, especially if you want to take out fairly early, then you want to camp closer but there's no camps closer or few, very few. So it's a very competitive...yeah.

BC: I think they've provided some campgrounds down at Island Park now. I don't know, it's been so long since I've dealt with any of that stuff. I have no idea what they're doing as far as their permits. That was one thing that I spent a lot of time doing is issuing permits. We started out and they had a lottery as I recall. I think Barry Ashworth did that. They had a lottery. After they did that, then you still had to do some kind of lottery-type thing with the boaters. There weren't any fees or anything like that. We changed the date of application to like the first of the year. That way it gave us enough time to do our lottery and start issuing permits and calling people and working with them. "Can you come this day and not that day? Can you camp in this campsite and not that?" People were always changing their... They'd call and want to change the number of people in their group, yhey'd want to change the number of campsites. This was before computers, so what I did is I made up the permits and then I would have a checklist. This person needs this, this person needs that, like brochures or those types of things. But when you would actually issue the permit, I'd have to have a copy for the permittee and then I'd have to have a copy for our records. My office was up front and the Xerox machine was in the back of the building. I would make a permit change or issue a permit and then I would run down the hall to make a copy of the permit. By the time I could get back to my office, the phone would be ringing again. I was on the phone in that job almost 8 hours a day. It was just crazy.

One of the first problems I had is that the Chief Ranger wanted me...he said, "Do you have a phone yet in your house?" I said, "No." He said, "Well, you need a phone in case people call and want to change their permits or need this or I need that." I said, "Well, that's fine. I don't mind having a phone." I said, "Is the government going to pay for it?" He said, "Well, no, we won't pay for it. It would be your phone." I said "Well, then I don't want to have a phone." He said, "What?" I said, "I'm not going to have a phone. I'm not going to have people bothering me on my weekends and after hours." I said, "I know what it's like during a 8 hours a day down in the office and I don't want that repeated up at my house." They

would not provide a phone for me so the whole time I was at Dinosaur I didn't have a phone at my house [chuckle]. When I wanted to call my parents or something, I'd have to go down to the payphone at the Visitor Center and use that [chuckle].

TM: Amazing. Okay.

BC: That was an interesting thing. Cecil Lewis was the Superintendent after Dick Townsley there at Dinosaur. One time I ran down that hallway and I almost bowled him over as he came out of his office. After that whenever he would come out into the hallway he would stop and look both ways to be sure I wasn't running down the hall. But it was really crazy especially during what you'd consider the permit season. There was just one phone call after another. I would get frustrated with all of it in late spring. I'd break my pencil and go on the river and let someone else deal with it [chuckle]. I worked during the week. I didn't work weekends because the Chief Ranger didn't want to deal with the permits during the work week. So on the weekends, if there were any changes to permits, people would drive into the Visitor Center and want to change their permit or something, the Green River District Ranger would take care of it for me.

TM: Right and they'd have to drive in from say Deer Lodge. If they had any sort of change in permits or change in the number of people on the trip or things like that, itinerary, a change in campsite location, then they would have to drive from the put-in over to your place and try to track somebody down to make that change?

BC: Well, no, they could call. They could always call. Now, of course, weekends were a problem. They could always call the visitor center at the Quarry or something and have them get a hold of us. They could do it that way.

TM: They'd have to call from...?

BC: You could always call somebody back or something.

TM: Yeah, where's the nearest phone, though? There wasn't a phone at the put-in.

BC: No, you'd have to go to Maybell or something like that or one of those little towns or wide places in the road. A lot of people were driving through. They'd be coming from Utah and they'd be driving through and they could just stop off.

TM: Got it. Okay.

BC: That's usually what we dealt with most of that.

TM: So they were driving through.

BC: There were a tremendous number of boats at Dinosaur, too. They had all these old World War II rafts. At one time I counted we had 23 boats...

TM: Wow!

BC: ...of different kinds. We had an Avon Redshank. We had this 10-man that we used a lot. Later on we bought 2...gosh I don't remember the brand on them... we bought from Western River Expeditions. We bought 2 boats brand new...or pretty much brand new boats. I think they'd been used a season or something. Then we had all these pontoon boats of different qualities. The 22-foot pontoon was the one we mainly used. Then we had a 10-man over at the Quarry. Then we had an aluminum river boat. I took it one time, put an engine on it, put a couple engines on it. We had some 25-horse engines that they used before it became all oars and paddles. I convinced the Chief Ranger one time that it would be advantageous if he let me take that power boat and go down to Echo Park and see how far I could run upriver. I ran all the way to the Warm Springs campground at Warm Springs rapid in some big water. It was so much fun [laughter]. I went through some holes and stuff and I'm lucky I didn't get killed. Then another time I took it and went all the way to Rippling Brook campground at the base there. Because there was no real whitewater there. I knew I could do it. I did it a couple of times, probably 3 times. I probably went up to Warm Springs maybe 3 times while I was there. I only went up to Rippling Brook I think one time. Dinosaur didn't have a whole lot of river accidents. If an accident occurred I think it was usually self-rescue and stuff like that like it is anywhere.

TM: Yeah. So few river accidents that you guys actually had to get involved with.

BC: Right. I know we went down on a few of them. There was a...

TM: Hey Bob?

BC: Yeah?

TM: You know what? We've been at this about an hour and a half now.

BC: Okay.

TM: And river accidents, I'm going to want to know a lot about those and I've got a whole bunch of other questions for you about Dinosaur so maybe this would be a good place to stop...

BC: Sure.

TM: ...this part and let's pick this up again our next discussion. What do you think?

BC: That sounds good.

TM: Okay, so in that case, this is going to conclude Part 10, of an oral history interview with Bob Cornelius. Today is November 7, 2018. My name is Tom Martin. Bob, please hold the line and thank you very much.

BC: You're welcome.