

Transcription: Grand Canyon Historical Society

Interviewee: Gail Nielsen (GN)

Interviewer: Tom Martin (TM)

Subject: Gail's parents ran the Hite ferry from the late 1940s to mid-50s. Gail recounts living there and working at the White Canyon uranium reduction plant in 1952

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Transcriber: Melissa Moriarty

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TM: Today is Thursday, March 26th, 2020. This is a Grand Canyon oral history interview with Gail Nielsen. My name is Tom Martin and this is a telephone interview. Good afternoon, Gail, how are you?

GN: Just fine, thank you, Tom.

TM: It's good to hear your voice. Would you mind if we record this interview over the telephone?

GN: No, this is fine Tom. Just go ahead and record.

TM: Thank you. Gail, what year were you born?

GN: I was born 17 August, 1927.

TM: Where were you born?

GN: Provo, Utah.

TM: What were your folks doing in Provo?

GN: At the time, my mother and father were living in Heber City. During the births of myself and my siblings, they came to Provo to a home for those giving birth.

TM: Oh, okay. What was your mom's name?

GN: Beth.

TM: Thank you. And your father?

GN: My father's name was Maurice Warner Evans. There was a divorce and she later after twelve years about, 19- oh, let's see, it was in 1943 when she married Ruben Wester Nielsen.

TM: Sorry, what was Ruben's middle name?

GN: Wester.

TM: How did Ruben meet Beth?

GN: Well, he met her in Centerfield, Utah. At the time we were living on the farm of my grandparents.

TM: Is that where you grew up then was Centerfield?

GN: Primarily, yes.

TM: And that was on a farm. Were you helping with the raising of the livestock and such?

GN: Yes. And during crop times, yes.

TM: Where did you end up going to school?

GN: Well, I went to different schools: Centerfield Public Schools, Gunnison Valley High School, Manti High School, and North Sevier High School for graduation. During that year of 1952, I graduated from Brigham Young University and majored in mathematics and chemistry, but primarily in geology.

TM: So let's see, '27, '37, '47, so you would've been 18 then when you went into BYU? Is that about right?

GN: No, I was in the Service from '46 through early 1948.

TM: Can you tell me about your time in the Service?

GN: I spent about, oh I would say about four months in the Merchant Marines and 13 months in the Army. I'm a veteran of World War II during the occupation.

TM: So, did you actually go to Europe then?

GN: I spent that 13 months in Japan.

TM: And this would've been after the atomic bomb, is that right?

GN: Yes, that was, of course, way after. '46, '47, after '45 for the bomb, the bombs.

TM: Let's see, so you came back from service from Japan in '48. Would you have then gone to BYU after that, do you think?

GN: Yes, I went the fall of '48 to BYU through '52.

TM: Had you been into southern Utah by that time?

GN: I was at Provo at BYU during those years. I did the thing at southern Utah, Hite primarily because I got a job while I was visiting Hite with my folks who were living there at that time.

TM: When did your folks move to Hite?

GN: Again, this is a guess now only, during the middle 40s [They moved to Hite in 1949 GN].

TM: At that time in the middle 40s Arth Chaffin was running the ranch there, wasn't he?

GN: It was property owned by Arth Chaffin.

TM: What do you remember your first recollections of meeting Arth?

GN: Just meeting him during the time I was working at the Hite uranium reduction plant. He was quite a greedy sort of person.

TM: Tell me more.

GN: I really can't go much beyond that except my step-father worked for him because he was an excellent mechanic and could take care of the equipment.

TM: Can you tell me everything you remember about how the Hite ferry worked?

GN: Well, I can only make some guesstimates on it. Primarily, it was a wooden structured ferry, but heavily wood product made. Probably made out of, I don't know, probably 8 x 8's. I don't know. But they were brought in. I'm sure this Arth Chaffin brought in enough for it would float and carry small trucks, passenger cars, and passengers. A Model A Ford was attached to it. One rear wheel was attached in a circular loop around the drum of the car that pulled it along the cable which was extended across the river.

TM: I was confused because I was thinking that the Model A ran a little paddle wheel.

GN: No, like I mentioned this cable run around the drum of the Ford's rear wheel. Of course, with the speed, you know, you can accelerate but it was a fairly slow journey across the river in that low gear. It was low gear.

TM: Absolutely. So, it would be sort of a first gear kind of thing. Would you actually like sort of push the clutch and put it in gear, and then let the clutch out slow and start taking off?

GN: Yes.

TM: Okay. And I'm assuming there would've been some cables going up to pulleys and a main cable that would sort of hold the whole ferry there.

GN: I'm with you on that one but I'm not really sure about the support other than that cable. But the Model A Ford was on the south side of the ferry. I don't remember any cables so I can only assume that all of the force was controlled by the force of that cable around that drum of the car.

TM: I was just going by photographs that showed this kind of main cable and then...

GN: But there might've been another support cable. I don't know.

TM: I'm not sure either. But, anyway, did you get a chance to operate that ferry when you were there?

GN: No. No.

TM: Your dad was doing that?

GN: Yeah, he operated the ferry as well as early years when Arth would operate the ferry.

TM: Gail, when you came out there to Hite, were you expecting to get a job at the uranium reduction plant?

GN: Perhaps. But it was a marvelous summer to be able to work there a full summer.

TM: And this was 1952?

GN: I'm not just sure what year it was. '51, '52, or '50, 1950 or 1949. I think that's ii '50, '51, '52.

TM: What do you remember about that?

GN: But probably not '52. Well, are you talking about the plant or the ferry?

TM: The plant. The people. Where did you stay? What did you do on your days off if you had any? Just everything. [laughs]

GN: Well, basically, during those times on the working days I was at the plant working. I don't remember days off. But I can relate a little bit about those first years when I was working at the plant if that's what you want.

TM: Oh, sure.

GN: This reduction of uranium and copper was very similar to what goes on at Bingham Canyon.

TM: Where the big smelter is?

GN: Yes. But there's no heating process it was all acid reduction or base-type formulas in the process.

TM: Had you studied some of that in school?

GN: Well, a little but not extensively. Actually working as you learn it.

TM: Yeah, okay.

GN: My work was on the container that reduced copper. And, of course, they'd drop iron material, pieces of iron similar to like tin can type material, into this solution which was a sulfuric acid solution that dissolved uranium and copper into solution. I don't know the percentage, but it took most of the copper and uranium into solution.

TM: So, would they precipitate out or were you trucking out the reduced ore as a liquid?

GN: Dropping that iron into that container precipitated the copper and it would float over onto another container but it had a canvas top. It was sort of like a baking pan, circular baking pan. The solution would go right through the canvas because it was neutralized. Well, the copper would be out but then it'd still be a sulfuric acid solution. Then that copper would precipitate out again on top of that canvas and then they'd literally just scoop the copper and remove it into containers that would be shipped out and sold.

TM: For further refining?

GN: Yes. But that process, again, is similar what goes on at Bingham west of Salt Lake there.

TM: There's also a uranium mill at Blanding.

GN: I'm not sure of anything at Blanding. I know there was one at Moab.

TM: Yes, there certainly was one at Moab for a while.

GN: I don't know of anything except maybe mining at Blanding. But the river don't go to Blanding.

TM: No, but there's a uranium mill, it's been there a long time. But that's okay, not to worry. I'm assuming you guys had a crusher there, is that right? Did you crush that ore down?

GN: I think there was a secondary crusher that ground it into sand texture.

TM: Yeah, all right.

GN: The primary crusher was... It came in that form, but I wasn't at all acquainted with any of the crushing. You know, that sulfuric acid solution carrying the iron oxide and uranium oxide flows into another big container again. Then a basic-type material was used to neutralize that acid. When that occurred, out comes iron.

TM: So, the iron was kind of going right back in again. It would come out and go back in?

GM: Well, it's iron oxide in solution.

TM: All right. I was just thinking about a couple steps before where you'd put the iron in the acid reduction and then you precipitate it out.

GM: It only precipitates out after I use this basic material to bring out the iron oxide. Then it went into some kind of containers that would squeeze out this basic solution with the uranium oxides. I've kind of forgotten how. Apparently there was another solution change made it more basic, where the other was just a neutral material. Then it put that uranium into uranium oxide and precipitated out. Then those particles would go into a frame-like structure that was rectangular but square rectangular, but they were sort of a press-type thing, and it would squeeze out the juice, and of course, it would just run into the river. That whole plant was electrified by an energized electric. Was a big engine that generated the power for the plant.

TM: Like a big diesel generator?

GN: No, it was a gasoline-powered motor with a generator.

TM: How many people worked there?

GN: I really don't know. I don't think it exceeded eight or ten.

TM: So, pretty small.

GN: Yeah, it was. They didn't need too many people. It was just a matter of opening valves to let it go from one big container into another one.

TM: But it sounds like it was kind of dangerous work because of the acid and the basic liquids, those are kind of dangerous.

GN: Well, there's no way I would be jumping in these vats, that's for sure.

TM: [Laughs] Yeah, no kidding. Do you remember anything about anybody that you worked with?

GN: No. I remembered names way back then, but I really don't remember any.

TM: Were you staying with your mom and dad then?

GN: I was staying with my mother and dad on the west side of the river.

TM: So, you'd have to cross the river to go work then?

GN: I literally had to go across on a ferry.

TM: So, you took the ferry across to go to work?

GN: Yes.

TM: Wow, you actually commuted to work every day across the ferry.

GN: Well, yes. There was a short time there where the river was really low. I just literally swam the river.

TM: Was the water warm?

GN: Well, 75° to 80°.

TM: That's nice.

GN: When it's that low it run warmer.

TM: Could you just wade across or did you actually have to swim?

GN: There was a lot of wading, yes, but the main current you'd have to swim across. As I swam across in that location where my folks stayed, I'd be swimming across and downstream somewhat.

TM: That sounds wonderful. So, you'd have a little bath on the way home.

GN: [Laughs] Yes.

TM: What do you remember about your house there, your mom and dad's house?

GN: Well, back in those days the expense of construction was quite expensive. For my father and my mother, they couldn't afford to build a house at that time. All the time that they lived there, they lived in tent houses, two or three tent houses.

TM: Like a large tent that had a hole in the side of it for a wood stove opening for a stove pipe?

GN: Yes. But there was only one that had any heating.

TM: Did they have crops?

GN: I'm finishing out this uranium process. Once that liquid, which was somewhat basic, they squeezed the liquid out and, again, it flowed in the river, and then they'd open up those frames and extract the uranium oxide out and put it in 30-gallon barrels. Those 30-gallon barrels would be shipped probably over to Moab or Blanding or wherever for further reduction. U_2O_3 was carnotite. Then $3O_5$ or something was the plutonium form. I don't know about the chemistry of it. You can look that one up.

TM: Yeah, exactly. So, it sounds like it was quite the concentrator reduction, as you say, to take a lot of material and really refine it down.

GN: Again, I wouldn't be able to let you know about any of that. I didn't get any further than knowing that that iron oxide was the precipitate that went into those frames and they extracted it out and put it in those barrels.

TM: All the rest of the liquid and the waste, the rock waste, did that just then go into the river or were there tailings there? Was there a tailings pond there?

GN: Tailings would stay in the original big bin or the big original one that had the sulfuric acid in it. Then they'd have to remove that by forklift or some kind of a way of taking it and dumping it on the refuse

pile. But it only stayed in that one container. Then again, like I mentioned, the copper and the uranium are in solution. The process, you could probably look it up of how they do that in the Bingham location.

TM: Yeah. Gail, where was the mine that was feeding you guys the ore?

GN: The primary mine was up at the Happy Jack Mine up White Canyon. It was some miles where they'd truck it to the primary crushers. And then, again, they'd truck it down and run it through the secondary crushers. But all I remember is the sand. So, where the crushers were, I couldn't tell you.

TM: All right. They might've been up at the mine even.

GN: I don't think so.

TM: Well, they could've been onsite, but they sure would've made a lot of noise.

GN: Yeah, yeah, that'd be a pretty noisy, dusty process. I don't think I'd want to breathe that, that carnotite-rich blend.

TM: Yup, that's right. That's pretty tough on your lungs that stuff. What do you remember about the farm that Ruben and Beth were running?

GN: Well, they bought six acres of that west of Chaffin. Then they farmed a portion of it. It was primarily a garden and fruit trees.

TM: What kind of fruit trees?

GN: Well, apple trees mainly.

TM: Watermelons?

GN: Yeah, they produced a lot of melons. Excellent place to grow. Like a Garden of Eden on melons. They grew a lot of... Oh, what is that fruit with a little seedy-looking... Pomegranates, that's what that is.

TM: Oh, really?

GN: Yeah. They grew nice, big pomegranates.

TM: Nice. They're kind of labor intensive but they sure are sweet.

GN: Yeah.

TM: Were they growing grapes?

GN: Yeah, they grew grapes. They could even grow some of the European-type grape.

TM: Wow. Were they trucking this out to Moab and other places to sell?

GN: I think it all was hauled into Hite and they processed it. But I can only just assume. There might've been some of that Happy Jack going back to Moab, but I think they just literally hauled from the closest to those kind of plants.

TM: Oh, so you think that the food your mom and dad were growing actually went up to the mines?

GN: I thought you were still talking about...

TM: No, I'm sorry. I apologize.

GN: They mostly gave away the types of fruit to people that were coming down the river on those boating trips and shared. They didn't sell much.

TM: All right. So, basically, their bread and butter then was the ferry?

GN: The bread and butter was the ferry.

TM: Do you remember how much it cost to get across there?

GN: I've completely forgotten. But I'll bet there was a lot of five-dollar bills spent.

TM: Well, good. [laughs] Did you get a chance to meet any of those river-running people?

GN: Yes. Primarily just one and I forgot what his name was, but he was kind of a nature kind of a kid.

TM: That wouldn't have been Harry Aleson, was it?

GN: Maybe, I don't know.

TM: Did he have a goatee?

GN: I wouldn't be a bit surprised.

TM: [Laughs] Do you remember the Porter's, the Porter family, were they there?

GN: Yes.

TM: What do you remember about them?

GN: Not much. I did meet him and he was kind of out of it. She was the one that kind of ruled the roost. I kind of forgot her name. There was a daughter that lived there, too. But that was a very short time. It just happened that I was there that particular summer when they were there. The housing was very, very poor where they were.

TM: Yeah, it sounds like the housing was kind of poor for everybody.

GN: Yeah. Of course, that Chaffen, he built quite a cabin-type structure.

TM: Did he?

GN: Yeah. I don't ever remember him renting out more than just him and this wife of his.

TM: Was there a store there?

GN: There was never a store that I remember at the Hite location. There was one in White Canyon.

TM: Who ran the store at White Canyon?

GN: I really don't know.

TM: What do you remember about the store there?

GN: I didn't really go to it. When I went over there, I was over there just to go to work and then back over across the river.

TM: Okay, just work and back. All right.

GN: There was sort of a tent structure in White Canyon where the mill was, but I never stayed at that location. I visited but never stayed there. Many of those workers they did sleep overnight at that tent location.

TM: So the workers stayed on the White Canyon side.

GN: The White Canyon side.

TM: At what point did you realize there was going to be a dam built downstream?

GN: Well, basically, during the college years and later on, everything was just written in the newspaper so I didn't get too much information. Myself, I was just sorry to see the river go with that big lake form in there. I can see the necessity of it, being able to release water according to what was needed in California, and Mexico, Nevada.

TM: Do you think your parents shared that sentiment?

GN: I do.

TM: Did they ever talk about it?

GN: No, not much. Leslie has her opinion on it. You'd have to ask her. [laughs]

TM: Well, she does, and Leslie being your daughter. We both agree on that, but asking you is more important because you were there. [laughs]

GN: Yes. That's one thing about Leslie, she visited there, too. [laughs]

TM: Well, she's definitely got some great stories, too.

GN: My other sister, Wanda, did work for a short time at the mine at that location in Hite. But I really didn't delve into much on her labors there.

TM: She was your sister?

GN: Yes.

TM: Okay, and she worked for your mom and dad?

GN: No, worked for the mill. Her and a lot of my mother's relatives visited Hite and they enjoyed the fruit and the trip and the sites.

TM: I bet.

GN: As far as the geology is concerned, it was primarily just that Triassic and the Navajo Sandstone. What's in there was the Wingate in Jurassic time. Moenkopi and Chinle which was the most interesting slope-forming formation. It's all that petrified wood.

TM: Yes. Was there some of that around White Canyon?

GN: Yeah, there was a lot of small pieces of petrified wood. Leslie, she's still got a chunk of it. You never would be able to lift it. [TM laughs] You'd be lucky to be able to lift it with a crowbar. She'll tell you all about that one.

TM: She was just sending me pictures of a place called Moki Fort.

GN: Well, that's true. This Moki Fort was obviously a lookout point for those pre-Indian times. And during the late times, 'course, it pretty well dilapidated that structure.

TM: It did. I saw that. She sent me that picture. It was heartbreaking.

GN: You might've saw some of Leslie's pictures of it.

TM: Yes.

GN: But the irony is that it was located approximately 80 feet above the river level. So that indicates up and down. I would say that river at that location was about that deep.

TM: And it's been dropping since so I'm kinda wondering. Did you ever get around and see any other Indian ruins like that?

GN: No.

TM: Did you ever do any flying in that country?

GN: No. Leslie did a little bit but not much. She met a flyer that worked up northeast in that area. I think it was government related.

TM: After you worked at the mill, where did you go from there?

GN: Well, during the summers I went on other different jobs. It was just that one summer that I spent down there.

TM: Did you ever get a chance to boat down the river below Hite?

GN: No, but I did boat five miles down from the bridge location with some driftwood with my father. We just tied it together with ropes and drifted down the river to Hite and utilized the driftwood for fuel.

TM: Oh, that's nice. So, this was from the ferry? Did you build a little boat there at the ferry and then go on downstream?

GN: I never went downstream.

TM: So, where was the bridge?

GN: The bridge location now is about five miles upriver from the White Canyon-Hite location.

TM: Oh, you're talking about the bridge that they built when they built the dam.

GN: Yes.

TM: So, this would've been before the dam backed the water up in there that you guys floated down?

GN: No, no. This is just that one summer that I was working at that reducing plant. We literally just walked up and I just floated down.

TM: Oh, that's fun.

GN: Just carried some rope...

TM: So, that would've been up near the Dirty Devil, the mouth of the Dirty Devil, Escalante coming in?

GN: That's correct, yes. That's where that bridge location is.

TM: Nice. That's pretty country.

GN: Yeah, interesting geology. There's one formation at the base of the river there called the Cutler Formation.

TM: That's where the uranium was in, is that right?

GN: No. The uranium was up in the Jurassic formation. The uranium formation was in a different formation. I'm wrangling my mind to remember the name of it.

TM: Yeah, I can't remember it either. Do you have a sense of how many people might've crossed that ferry that were river people or people just tourists or people just traveling? Was it once a day or a couple times a day?

GN: Well, I could only just be guessing but it was fairly regular. You know that route there from on that Highway 24, I forgot the number of the highway, but anyhow, they were frequently going across the river. I really wasn't too much aware of much of it going on but I'm sure there was a lot. People sightseeing primarily.

TM: Leslie mentioned there was a little journal or a register where you'd write in who was crossing. Do you remember that?

GN: I guess my folks had kind of a little bit of a register but she would be more knowledgeable than I on that one. They did have that telephone line across the river from that Chaffin location over to a telephone line close to the ferry.

TM: How did that work?

GN: Well, it was just a telephone line. I don't know about the electrical process but Leslie still got one of those telephones.

TM: Nice. So, it must've had a little crank on the side and you would put it in your ear and crank it and it would ring a bell somewhere.

GN: Yeah, I could have it ring a bell on the west side. At such time, they run that line down so my folks could hear it.

TM: So that way they would know there was business, because otherwise they might be out working in the fields and they wouldn't know somebody had come along.

GN: Yeah. Working in the orchard and garden. There was no per se farm other than a little bit of veggies. Mostly it was fruits, melons.

TM: Must've been good eatin' when it was in season.

GN: Yeah. Leslie, she's got one picture she should show you when we visited one summer when she was just a toddler, two-and-a-half years old about.

TM: She showed me that picture. It's the cutest picture. It's three of your children there.

GN: It's classic.

TM: They're holding fruit that's almost bigger than they are and they look very happy. [laughs]

GN: Yep. But we did go down that way visiting. That was during the early 50s.

TM: Or the early 60s, I guess.

GN: 50s.

TM: What else do you remember about that time?

GN: Well, I'm still wracking my brain here. An old 93-year-old punk.

TM: Oh, you're doing fine.

GN: [Laughs] I do remember walking down on that east side one time and found a dugout. I only assume it might've been some prospector trying to mine for gold. I remember it was dug out and boarded up somewhat, the dugout. Made shelves. I remember a bottle of peaches [laughs] that I tasted that still tasted pretty good.

TM: Wow. Nice.

GN: Hard telling how many years it had been. Any gold was very limited. I can only just assume that even in the height the jack mining was very poor grade gold if there was any. I don't think of any silver.

TM: Yeah, it was hard. You'd have to move a lotta dirt to make a very small living.

GN: Yep.

TM: That's neat though that you found a little dugout there, a little prospector's place.

GN: But that was interesting.

TM: So, it sounds like there might've been a dozen or so people living there?

GN: On the west side it was just the Chaffin's, my folks, and probably that one year where the Porters were there.

TM: Then about that many again on the east side over at the mill.

GN: Yeah. I really don't know how many people lived in White Canyon. But it was nominal. The only ones were just those people who worked at the mill.

TM: What did you do then with your career? Where did you go from there?

GN: My major, that I mentioned, was in geology with the other science degrees. I never used anything other than years later I spent about a year working for Dugway Proving Grounds. Then I was able to leave there and go to Boeing Aircraft in Seattle. I lived up there more than 40 years, where I met my wife. I don't know if I mentioned, she was from Idaho, Rexburg area, living there with her family. She had 10 children and I had the five.

TM: So, you moved a long ways away for working in...was that Seattle for Boeing?

GN: Yes. I worked during the Bomarc Project. It was a missile project but it was really never used. Other projects were much more accomplished than the Bomarc Project.

TM: Gail, is there anything else you can recollect about those days at the Hite ferry that might be good to talk about?

GN: There's one other. For a short time on a small hill just to the west of the Chaffin location, up on top of the hill there was a government house built. It was for a young engineer, I think, and his wife that lived up there for a short time. They were assigned to measure depth of the river.

TM: Oh, this was the USGS people?

GN: Yes. There was a cable assembled that went across the river east-west. Then there was sort of a chair affair that was attached to the cable and, of course, it would zing across and pull yourself back type of a thing. The amount of...in the water as well as the depth of the river.

TM: Did you get a chance to ride across that thing?

GN: No. No, I wasn't that interested.

TM: There's a sad story around that couple.

GN: I see.

TM: Because didn't he drown?

GN: I don't know.

TM: Okay. I think that was '56 or '57. Yeah, that was later on. But thank you because in the photographs every now and then I'd see this house up on the hill and I'd always assume, well, that must be where Chaffin lived, but it's not.

GN: No, he always lived there next to the river in his cabin.

TM: Was that a wooden cabin?

GN: Yes. It was a wooden structure with a roof on it.

TM: What were the mosquitos like?

GN: None. No, that flowing river you wouldn't have mosquitos.

TM: That's good to know.

GN: We had horseflies and flies.

TM: Ah, the horseflies that were kind of slow that would land and bite ya?

GN: Yes.

TM: You could get 'em but it hurt.

GN: Yeah. [TM laughs] That's about all I can think of unless you can up with any...

TM: No, I'm tickled to death. Thank you so very much for your recollections of 70 years ago, the Hite ferry times. I really appreciate it.

GN: My mother, she was quite a collector of those chunks of petrified wood and primary quartz-type material. They had a lapidary process where they would run the fine-grinding material, polish the rocks in there. I still have quite a collection of her polished rocks.

TM: Oh, nice. Okay.

GN: If you're ever up in the Utah country I'd be glad to give you some of them.

TM: [Laughs] That'd be fun. Well, I bet Leslie's got her eyes on those.

GN: I don't know about that one, but I'll try to remember to make sure she gets some of them. I have given her some already.

TM: Did your mom and dad—did they play musical instruments?

GN: My mother was fairly good on the piano. My step-father, he never had instrumental. He didn't sing. He liked to dance.

TM: Well, the photos I've seen of your folks there, they looked very happy. They look very content.

GN: Yeah, they were a very happy couple. Very well-loved and contented. Are you a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints?

TM: I'm sorry to say sir, I am not.

GN: Has any missionary ever stopped by, anyone at all, to give you a copy of the Book of Mormon?

TM: Oh, yes sir.

GN: Have you read it?

TM: Enough, but I better back away cautiously.

GN: Well, that's okay. One thing about a person's own religious convictions is it's a very personal thing. A person throughout their whole life tends to their own achievements, their own salvation. It isn't a onetime thing.

TM: You know who I was thinking about, which I'm gonna mention but you might not have met him, was a fella named Bill Wells. He was a Mormon bishop. He had a plane and he was known as the Flying Bishop.

GN: Yes, I've heard about him. He'd fly in to White Canyon area, there was that little airport there, yes.

TM: Right. I wish I could've done an oral history interview with him. I bet he had quite some stories.

GN: I imagine.

TM: Yeah. Flying in that country.

GN: My folks knew him.

TM: I bet they did. I bet they knew him well.

GN: But I didn't meet him.

TM: I'll ask Leslie to see if she's got photos of Bishop Wells because I bet he was there. He actually ended up doing a river trip. He got down in the canyon and he married some people down there. But that's another story.

GN: Yes.

TM: Well, Gail Nielsen, thank you so very, very much for a wonderful hour recollecting Hite, Utah, and the wonderful days there. This will conclude our Grand Canyon oral history interview. Today is Thursday, March 26th, 2020. My name is Tom Martin. Gail, thank you so very, very much.

GN: Thank you too, Tom.