

**Transcription:** Grand Canyon Historical Society

**Interviewee:** Barbara Gay Tidball Cameron and Kenneth “Buzz” Cameron

**Interviewer:** Tom Martin

**Subject:** Gay and Buzz recount life growing up in Flagstaff and other Arizona places in the mid-1900s (Part 3)

**Date of Interview:** December 15, 2017

**Method of Interview:** By telephone

**Transcriber:** Amya N. Moore

**Date of Transcription:** December 15, 2017

**Transcription Reviewers:** Sue Priest, Tom Martin

**Keys:** Flagstaff, AZ, Harold Cameron, Ilene Harbison, Grand Canyon, Flagstaff High School, Northern Arizona Title Company, Cameron, AZ, Cameron family tree, Ralph Cameron, Flagstaff Dairy, trains, Haydee Lane gas station, Lees Ferry, Dean and Edna Tidball, US Geological Survey, Edward Short, Glen Canyon Dam construction, Art Greene, Wahweap Marina, Rainbow Bridge, Boulder City, NV, Boulder Dam, downwinders claim

Tom: Today is Friday, December 15, 2017, this a Part 3 Grand Canyon Oral History interview with a couple Barbara Gay Tidball Cameron, Barbara goes by Gay, and Kenneth Lincoln Cameron, and Kenneth goes by Buzz. We’re gonna pick this story up with Buzz. May I have your permission Gay and Buzz to record this interview on the telephone?

Gay: Yes, you may.

Buzz: Certainly, you may.

Tom: Thank you very much. Buzz, what year were you born?

Buzz: 1937.

Tom: Where were you born?

Buzz: Born in Flagstaff, that’s Flagstaff, Arizona.

Tom: What were your parents doing in Arizona at the time?

Buzz: My dad was born in Flagstaff and spent the majority of his life there. My mother was born in Globe and went through school there and then went to Tempe Normal School which is now ASU. I don’t know how they ever got together. I think she was teaching after she graduated from school and discovered she hated teaching. I don’t remember if this was in Flagstaff, or I think it might have been in Globe, or maybe even Holbrook, I’m not familiar enough with the facts to really tell you. But I know they did get together and met, and finally were married in 1923. I think they were married in Flagstaff.

Tom: What was the name of your father?

Buzz: My dad’s name was Harold Lincoln Cameron.

Tom: And your mom’s name?

Buzz: Was Kathyne Ilene Harbison.

Tom: Thank you. What was your dad doing in Flagstaff?

Buzz: He did a little bit of everything. He went through school. I think he only went to the 8<sup>th</sup> grade and then went out and went to work. He was working, I think, when he got married for Union Oil Company. I think he was delivering heating oil and probably gasoline. That's about all I know about the early days.

Tom: Did you have any brothers and sisters?

Buzz: I do. I had one brother. He was born in 1925, he died in 2005. His name was Burton Wilbur Cameron.

Tom: What do you remember about growing up in Flagstaff?

Buzz: I got some real fond memories of growing up in Flagstaff. My earliest memories were probably about the time...well during the Second World War. Everything was rationed and things were just a little bit tough. Flagstaff at that time was a very small community. I think there were less than 5,000 people in the town. There were no traffic lights or anything like that. There were two blinker lights that I remember. One at the corner of Santa Fe Avenue and Beaver Street. The other one at Santa Fe Avenue and San Francisco Street.

Tom: They just had little blinking lights?

Buzz: Yeah, those four little lights that hung in the middle of the road. Like I say, it was a very small town. As I grew up, our friends and I would be playing out in the middle of the street, not paying too much attention to the traffic. When I was very small, we lived at the corner of Cherry Avenue and Leroux Street, the southwest corner. That was the original Cameron house. I don't think they built it but they acquired it long before I was ever around. From there we moved. My folks bought a place at 822 West Santa Fe which was at the corner of Toltec and Santa Fe Avenue. Right east of the road that goes up to Lowell Observatory. While living there, I remember, that's where I met my first very best friend. His name was Bill Thomas and he lived one block south of me.

Tom: What year would have that been?

Buzz: Probably '43/'44, something like that. 1943/1944.

Tom: Do you remember the lumberyard being south of the tracks? Did you get over there at all?

Buzz: I remember there were two sawmills. One of them was on the west end of town and the other was on the southeast end of town. I don't remember ever actually getting to the sawmills, but I remember when one of them burned down. I can't remember when it was. It was quite a sight to see cause you sure could see a lot of flames.

Tom: I bet. And that was when you a small boy?

Buzz: By that time I was probably not quite a teenager but getting awful close.

Tom: When was the first time you remember seeing the Grand Canyon?

Buzz: I think I was probably a teenager before I ever got up to look at the Grand Canyon. My first recollection is we went up there on a day trip. I had a horrible pain in my side and I don't remember too much about the Canyon but I know we came right back home and I ended up in the hospital with a appendectomy. So that was my first recollection of Grand Canyon. After that I went up there several times. I never did camp there nor did I hike in the Canyon until I was in college when I was on a geology field trip and we traveled camping. Hiked down the Kaibab Trail to the river and across the bridge. I

remember seeing Gay's dad's old geological survey properties. I was so excited, oh boy we're here at Phantom Ranch and I can relax a little bit. Then heard the sad story that we still had another mile to go.

Tom: What year was that? Do you remember?

Buzz: That would have been probably 1957.

Tom: Do you remember who your professor was?

Buzz: Agnes Allen was the geology professor.

Tom: How was that for you? You had to hike all the way down there with all your gear and turn around and hike all the way back and look at the geology. How'd that all work out?

Buzz: We hiked down one day and then the next day we were going to ride mules out. The hike from Phantom Ranch over to the Bright Angle Trail, it's about a 2 or 3 mile hike along the river, and then we caught the mule train there and rode out on mules. An interesting sidelight there. Gay's mother's name was Edna and the mule I caught to ride out on was also named Edna. She was pretty obstinate and I kind of wondered if maybe she wasn't named after my mother-in-law. [laughs]

Tom: Oh my gosh! At one point I'll certainly want to get your recollections of Edna after you meet up with Gay. What else do you remember about growing up in Flagstaff? Where did you go to high school?

Buzz: I went to Flagstaff High School. That was the only high school in town then. I remember seeing Gay and Jo Tidball because they were so very active musically. I think they were in choir and also in the band and things like that. But I didn't pay that much attention, after all she was a year older than me. I didn't want her to think I'd have anything to do with her.

Tom: Did you play a musical instrument?

Buzz: No, I did not. And I was not particularly inclined in sports. About all I did in high school, besides growing, is I had a photography hobby. I was one of the photographers for the high school yearbook the "Kinlani".

Tom: Nice. And this was black-and-white photography?

Buzz: Yes, indeed.

Tom: Did you work with anybody at the newspaper at all on that or was it just there in school?

Buzz: No, it was just in school. I worked at the newspaper to the extent that I used to go down and sell papers on the street, the Arizona Daily Sun. I'd go pick up ten papers and go sell them, and go give them their share of the money and I kept my share. But I don't think I was ever a real good salesman either. [laughs]

Tom: That's a hard one with a small town there. Must have been an interesting deal. So, '37, '47, '57, then going to college. Did you go to the Arizona State School then here in Flagstaff?

Buzz: Yes, I did. I started in the fall of 1955 and I graduated in the spring of '59.

Tom: What did you graduate in?

Buzz: I had a degree in business administration.

Tom: Did you want to stay in Flagstaff? Were you thinking about that or were you thinking about leaving? What were your plans?

Buzz: By that time I had gone to work for Northern Arizona Title Company, which is the company my mother was a principal in. That's where I got into photography. I worked first in their photo lab. Every day they'd go to the courthouse, which was right across the street from where the office was, and we would take off the recordings that had been recorded in the recorder's office that day. By "taking off" I mean we did kind of a notebook listing the document, the grantor or the seller, and the grantee/the buyer, or the mortgagor or mortgagee for a mortgage, and the lien of the property. But my job at that time was to take the microfilm, they photographed all the records, and take the microfilm over to the office. In the darkroom I would develop it and then have it available for people to use if they needed to examine the title.

Tom: So you were basically making a hard copy there...

Buzz: When an order would be received, somebody would actually go to the records that we kept there in the office, we called them "tract books". They would do a search of all of the documents that had been posted there, hand posting, and then I would get a list of those documents and I would photocopy them.

Tom: I want to back up a little bit. You're a Cameron and there's a town here in Northern Arizona named Cameron where the Highway 89 crosses the Little Colorado River. And there's a Ralph Cameron who was a territorial representative to Congress and had a lot of business up at the Grand Canyon. Are you related to Ralph?

Buzz: Ralph was my great uncle. Actually, he was a half-uncle I guess you could say. He was born in 1863, or something like that. His father was... [pause] My great grandfather was named Henry Cameron and he lived in Maine. He had three children that I know of. One was Niles Jones Cameron, the other was Ralph Henry Cameron, and then from a different a wife they had Burton Atwood Cameron, Sr., which was my grandfather. They all initially lived in Maine. The father was a fishing boat captain out of Southport Maine from what I understand. He passed away at some point there, I think from tuberculosis. Before that, though, he met Annie Ann Cameron and my grandfather was born. Ralph initially immigrated to Arizona back in...I don't remember the exact date. Ralph Henry moved out to Arizona, I think, in 1883. And his brother Niles followed him in 1886. In 1887 his widow, Annie, and my grandfather, Burton Atwood, moved to Flagstaff. I think they settled in Flag at the house that I had talked about previously. But Ralph and Niles were very active at the Grand Canyon. They had mining interests and Niles was active in working on and supervising the building at the Bright Angel Trail.

Tom: So, you can trace your ancestry in Flagstaff back to basically almost the time that the town became a town?

Buzz: Pretty much, yeah. I don't remember when Flagstaff was incorporated but they were definitely pioneers in that time, yes.

Tom: You bet. Wow, that's pretty neat. Does the family have any stories of Ralph that they like to talk about when they all get together that you could share?

Buzz: Well, Ralph was a consummate promoter. He was always working on a deal somewhere. I guess that's probably why he became such a prolific politician. I don't remember anything really that made him stand out to me, necessarily, at least not in those early days. I know he was a territorial representative when Arizona became a state. As a matter of fact there's pictures. Well, I've seen one in

the Arizona Republic, but the picture that I remember also is in the Sharlot Hall Museum. It's a picture of President Taft enabling a thing to make Arizona a state and Ralph is standing to his right along with a full load of other folks. Unfortunately, I don't have a picture.

Tom: Well they do there, so that's really neat. What else do you remember about Flagstaff growing up?

Buzz: Well, as I say, it was a very small town. As I grew and got to the point where I was old enough, or not necessarily even old enough, I was driving the car. We always knew where the policeman was because he drove an old International truck with a little red light on top of it. You could see that anywhere in town. So I'd always get away from him. I didn't have a driver's license at that time. We used to play out in the street. We'd play hide-and-go-seek and kick-the-can. This was after dark, but you know, people just didn't get out that much in those days. We'd have a high old time. Mothers and fathers would start hollering at us about 9 o'clock, "come on you guys come in and go to bed." That's about it. We had a good time. I remember the occasion when the war was over and we celebrated the victory over Japan and the big parties that went on that day. That was probably sometime in August of '45. I don't remember the hullabaloo about dropping the atom bomb on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, but I remember in retrospect about it. It was high old time. My dad gave me back my flashlight cause he'd been saving the batteries for them. I got to take the flashlight back because they figured now that the war was over before long the rationing would end.

Tom: I'm trying to think about other things about Flagstaff that you might have remembered as a small boy. Was there a Flagstaff dairy?

Buzz: There was, yeah. I don't exactly remember where it was, but they delivered milk in glass bottles. They delivered pretty early in the morning. My mom and dad knew that they had to get up pretty darn early and get the milk because in the wintertime it would freeze and the cream would raise up out of that milk bottle. So, they'd try and go out and get the milk real early in the morning before it froze.

Tom: What do you remember of the train? How busy was the train coming through town?

Buzz: I remember the trains. You got used to the noise pretty early cause in those days they were the steam engines. As they came in from the west they would be backlapping. In other words, they'd be letting the engine slow them down because you came off the side of Mars Hill there. For those going to the west, oh, they made a tremendous amount of noise because they were chugging and blowing black smoke. You could really hear them. I was probably maybe a half mile from the railroad track but boy you could sure hear all that!

Tom: I bet. It must have been, like you say, a loud bunch of noise all the time that you got used to.

Buzz: Yeah, you got used to it. Eventually you didn't even hear it. When the diesels took over, I don't even remember when that was but probably late 40s or early 50s, you never even heard them anymore.

Tom: What else do you remember about that time?

Buzz: Well, nothing really meaningful. We went to school. Some of the winters were pretty horrible. I can remember one in particular. I was still in grade school and we had a tremendous snowstorm. I think this might have been probably '47 or '48, something like that, but we had so much snow that the drifts were actually up past our windows where we lived there on west Santa Fe. Had to get up and shovel the snow off the roof to keep the roof from caving in. We had a porch on the back side of the house, it had a flat roof and he had to get up there and shovel that for sure. He also had to shovel all the snow off the peaked roof as well. It covered up the windows and everything. You couldn't hardly see out of the

windows. We had a little puppy dog, just a pup, a young dog, he played on the roof. He could climb up on the roof.

Tom: I'm trying to think about west Santa Fe because that road then does climb up to the observatory. On the north side of west Santa Fe still standing today is a two-story Moenkopi sandstone house, a gorgeous Victorian house. It's a bed and breakfast today. A little further along on the southside, there was a triangular arrangement of streets. The streets to the south came in at an angle. There was a small wooden house on the west side of the triangle called the Goldwater House. It was the Goldwater campaign headquarters, I think, in 1964 and they painted Goldwater up on the roof. Do you remember that?

Buzz: No, I think I remember the house. Was it two-story house? Is that correct?

Tom: No, I think it's a one story. It went back to the late 1800s, but it just got added on and added on as a number of the buildings did there. I'm trying to figure out... The building you grew up with there on Toltec at 822 West Santa Fe, is that still standing?

Buzz: Yes it is. In 2004, I have a picture that I took. We went by it and it was under renovation at the time, but the house is still there. When we lived there it had wood shingles on the outside of it. Now it has kind of almost like shiplap. It's a very attractive place now. The northeast corner of Toltec and Santa Fe, Toltec I think might be called Thorpe now. I don't know that for sure. That's the road that also went up to Mars Hill or Lowell Observatory if you continued west on Santa Fe. Then Toltec went north and then kind of veered off to the northwest. I remember City Park was up there. That's where the Indian pow wow was always held and there was always a carnival there around the 4<sup>th</sup> of July. But it also went up and kind of veered off to the east to a housing... I don't know what you call it now, it was called Brannen Homes but it built by the government. I think it was probably a low-cost housing for maybe people returning from the war, or maybe people that were working out at the Navajo Ordinance Depot.

Tom: Right, it's called Clark Homes today.

Buzz: Yeah, Clark Homes. That's right, yeah, you're right.

Tom: That's still there. Then your house would have been on the corner of Toltec and Santa Fe on the northeast corner?

Buzz: Northeast corner, that's correct.

Tom: Anything else you want to recall or add before we have you start working at a gas station?

Buzz: Before that my grandfather had owned that property. I don't know when they got it. My folks bought him out, I can't remember exactly when, but they build a garage and an apartment complex behind the house right on the alley with the garage doors coming out on Toltec. It's still there, at least the last time I was in Flagstaff. But my folks built that and there were two apartments upstairs and there was a small single room down below that mom and dad made up as a TV room for them. After Gay and I were married we lived in one of those apartments.

Tom: Oh, fun! Very nice. I know exactly where that is. I just walked right past there the other day.

Buzz: To the north of that across the alley, was the property that was owned by Pete and Ann Michelbach. I just saw a recent obituary for their oldest son, Albert. They called him Mickey. His dog's name, I think, was also Albert and his mother's name was Ann.

Tom: I should ask you as well, what else do you remember about Flagstaff High? Was the Flagstaff High School east of Toltec but north of Santa Fe?

Buzz: Yes it was. It was north. Actually, there was a street that dead ended at the high school. I don't remember the name of it. Do you know where the Federated Church is, the community church? It used to be right across the street from Emerson School, but I think that school was torn down and I think it might be a library or something there now.

Tom: Yes, okay Federated Church, your exactly right, you're down by the library and city hall.

Buzz: What's that street? Is it that Sitgreaves? Well anyway, at the north end it dead ended at the Flagstaff High School campus.

Tom: And it still does. Well actually, it keeps going but it runs along the east side of the campus and then goes up by Mrs. Brown's Burger Bar which is now a different owner. But yes.

Buzz: Well at that time, the high school actually faced Sitgreaves, I think it was Sitgreaves, anyway that road and that was all that was there. Later they built a gymnasium to the west of that. Even later, after we graduated and went on with our life, they built another wing out to the east side of it that went over to the street that you're talking about that went on further north.

Tom: Right, I just realized I'm mistaken there. You're exactly right. That north-south road that goes between the library and the Federated Church does dead-end at the high school.

Buzz: Right. That building has subsequently been destroyed, it's not there anymore. That original high school building.

Tom: What do you remember about that old building?

Buzz: A big old two story thing. The front steps were about 10 or 15 feet. Actually, I think it must have been a three story building. It was because it was kind of a lower level and you'd walk up to the middle level. That was main floor. The principal's office was as you walk in the front door was to the right. Then you went on further and I think there was a big hallway that went both west and east and there were classrooms on either side. Actually, there was an auditorium that was right behind on the north side of that hallway. The classrooms were on the south side of that. Then there was a wing that went off to the north on the east side and that was the junior high school. I think it was probably 5 or 6 classrooms on that. Then the stairwell and you went upstairs and duplicated it. I don't think there were any classrooms on the west side. But like I said, I think that was torn down. I don't think it's even there anymore.

Tom: That's right, that's all been updated, renovated. Another question I forgot I wanted to ask you. Your house on Toltec and Santa Fe, was that wood heat or was that gas heat? Do you remember?

Buzz: Originally, it was oil heat. The original oil stove that sat in the living room/dining room. Then at some point, I can't remember exactly when, they took that oil heater out and they put a floor furnace in that was also oil heated, burned fuel oil. Later on, when Southern Union Gas came in with their gas line they converted it to a gas furnace, but it was a floor furnace.

Tom: Great, I was thinking about what did you all do to stay warm in the winter.

Buzz: Yeah, well it had a nice fireplace, too, but that was mostly for ambiance. It did put out a lot a heat, but it also sucked a lot of heat up the chimney, too.

Tom: You had seen Gay and her twin sister Jo there in high school, but, again, she was a year older than you. How did you did get a job working at the gas station?

Buzz: I had worked there previously. I was just a very young, probably maybe 13 or 14 years old. The service station was owned by a guy by the name of Haydee Lane. He's an old cowboy. His wife was a high school teacher. Her name was Ruth. My older brother eventually married Jerry's daughter. His daughters name was Lois Lane. I went work for Haydee, I think I was still in junior high at the time. Eventually when I got into high school, I quit them and went to work for my mom at the title company developing film and making photocopies. I remember Jerry coming in and getting gas and everything, I think I must have been probably a senior in high school.

Tom: Where was Haydee's gas station?

Buzz: It was on the corner of Santa Fe and the road that goes north to the Grand Canyon.

Tom: Humphreys?

Buzz: Humphreys, yes. It was on the northeast corner. Now that's a motel. Haydee built part of the motel. The service station was just on the corner and the motel wrapped around the narrow space behind it. It was a full-service station.

Tom: How busy was that? I'm just trying to think about Route 66 was the way to travel by car through northern Arizona and it would have gone right past that gas station and then tucked under the railroad track and headed off to points further west out to Parks and off to Williams. How busy were you there at the station?

Buzz: Surprisingly, we were very busy. We had a lot of locals, but then we also had a lot of tourists. Of course, I only worked after school and on the weekends there at the time. I think he usually had at least two people other than him working there and the gas pumps were usually pretty full.

Tom: Did you often give directions to tourists about where to go? Was that fairly common?

Buzz: Very much so. A lot of times we had people come in for information on wind and water. They wanted to check their water and ask for information and air their tires. They used to always ask how far is it to Albuquerque, or how far is it to Gallup, or how far is it to Williams? We could tell them right off the top of our head how far it was.

Tom: So, Gay had noticed you and you knew who she was. What were your thoughts when you saw her working in the title shop?

Buzz: Well, I was kind of impressed with her. She seemed like a very nice gal. I think she came to work there probably either late '56 or early '57. At that time I was going to college. When I started going to college, I quit the service station business and went back to work for my mom in the photo lab. I worked there evenings and stuff like that and sometimes even at night. At that time we were really, really busy and there was just a lot of film to be developed and a lot of documents to be created. At that time, I was back in the darkroom which was quite a ways away from where she worked. She was up in the accounting department. So we really didn't get together romantically or anything like that until the time that her sister got married. They asked me to take the photos of their wedding. I did that and went to the church and photographed them coming out of the church and everything. Then they had a reception at the house up near the high school. I took at all kinds of photos there. Then Jo and her husband Don pulled out and left to go on their honeymoon. I asked Jo [Gay] if she'd liked to go out and have a cup of coffee. She agreed so that's where it all started.



Tom: Very fun. Had you ever photographed a wedding before?

Buzz: No.

Tom: Where you a little nervous?

Buzz: No, I was probably cocky. [laughs] I had a lot of film that I shot. Burned a lot of it up that night.

Tom: [laughs] That helps if you can take a lot of pictures. Did you get some good shots?

Buzz: Yeah, we did. Got a lot of real good ones. I had just purchased a new Photobright, which was relatively new in those days, but you didn't have to use flashbulbs. You could just bang away real fast and the battery pack weighed about 10 pounds up hanging around my shoulder. It recharged the bulb pretty quickly.

Tom: That would have been a state of the art thing.

Buzz: Yeah, it really was. They were lead batteries so you had to be careful that you didn't tip them over or something like that. Kind of like a car battery and they were about as heavy, too.

Tom: I'm going to ask Gay now, Gay what were you thinking when you went for coffee?

Gay: I just thought, gee I'll go anywhere after the wedding. We didn't want to go home and just cool. So anyway, he wanted to know if I wanted to go and have coffee. I said sure. I was all dressed up. I was the maid of honor for Jo. All dressed up and no place to go until he said, "Let's go for a cup of coffee" and I said, "Oh great." [laughs]

Tom: Where did you go?

Gay: There was a place, I believe it was close to where the Dairy Queen was or is out on your way to Williams. I can't think of the name of it. It was a popular place were kids went. I can't remember the name of it.

Tom: So that was south of the tracks?

Gay: Yes. South of the tracks across from the NAU campus. That's where most of the kids all went for special occasions or whatever. We had a cup of coffee and just talked about what a beautiful wedding it was and all that. I don't think we were out too late. Then I believe he took me home and that was it.

Tom: And this was in the summer of 1956 or the fall of 1956?

Buzz: This would have been in August of 1957.

Tom: And then, when did you two get married?

Buzz: June 21<sup>st</sup>, 1958.

Tom: Buzz, when was the first time you meet Gay's father, Dean?

Buzz: Probably at the wedding. At Jo, her twin sisters, wedding.

Tom: Okay, that would make sense because Dean and Edna would have been there.

Buzz: I had met her mother before that. She's the one that talked me into taking the photos.

Tom: When was the first time you went up to Lees Ferry then?

Buzz: After Gay and I starting going together, probably the fall of '57 sometime. Gay invited me up so we went to Lees Ferry. Of course we weren't married then. Dean and Enda lived in just a little two room house with an appended kitchen and bathroom on it. There was only the bedroom and also a couch in the living room, so the only place for me to sleep there. But they had a guest house that had been built years ago down right next to the laboratory where Dean used to do his mud pies and things like that. I slept there that time, until we were married, and Gay slept with her folks. She'd sleep on the couch and they'd sleep in their bed.

Tom: What do you remember about Lees Ferry at that time?

Buzz: It was very interesting country. It was so remote. I tell you, the road getting down there at that time you took your life in your hands in a lot of cases. A lot of times you'd be going down a wash and you'd have to kind of dodge boulders. It was a trouble. Then when you got down there the place was very, very remote. There was no electricity except the coal plant. The water was a well. That wasn't drinking water, you got your drinking water from a spring which was on up the river a little ways. It was interesting country but it was very remote and awesome. I remember one time we went up there, I don't remember if this was before or after we were married, probably after, and it was high water. In other words, it was May through July. It was hotter than blue blazes and that river it seemed to me was about a half mile across. That was before Glen Canyon dam of course.

Tom: '57 was a big, big water year. '58 not quite so much. You mentioned the drinking water came from a spring further up the river. Was that then water piped down to the house? Is that how that worked?

Buzz: No, Dean had to get in his International truck and load a 55 gallon barrel and drive up and fill it. I don't know how...I guess he had a hose or something. Then he'd fill up and drive it back and horse it off the truck. Was it on a sawhorse or something? I don't remember that aspect of it, but then Edna could go out and get the drinking water from it. It was outside the house.

Tom: It wasn't plumbed into the house, you had to go out and take it straight out of the barrel?

Buzz: Right. It was pretty remote and pretty old fashioned, so to speak.

Tom: And the generator, was that run just on an as-needed basis then?

Buzz: Right, yeah. He had to fire it up every morning before 8 o'clock because he got on his two-way radio to Flagstaff and Albuquerque but then he'd shut it off. He had a way to shut it off from the house. He didn't have to go up and shut it off. He could shut it off from the house. But to start it, it didn't have a starter motor or anything like that, he had to actually go up and crank it. The generator room/house was probably 50 yards on up the side of the mountain. You didn't really hear it when you were inside, but you could hear it when you're outside. It made a lot of noise.

Tom: He would have been having to dry the mud out of the water as part of his operations to test the sediment load in the river. Did he use a generator for that or was there some sort of solar way to do that?

Buzz: No, they used propane. He had a little bake-oven kind of a thing down in the lab and he had a propane bottle there that he could connect to it. So that's the way he did his mud pies. They also had a propane refrigerator in the house, an old Servel refrigerator, and a propane gas cooking range.

Tom: That would make sense.

Buzz: They must of had propane heat in there, too. Yeah, they had a propane...probably a wall furnace or something like that in there to heat the house in the wintertime.

Tom: Did you hike around there at all? There's a trail that goes out back behind the buildings there up the cliff up to the top. You can actually look off to the north off into Glen Canyon from there. Did you hike around there at all?

Buzz: Oh yeah, we used to go hiking. I never went to the top. I'd go up far enough to where you could see off to the south and the southwest but I never went to the top. That was a little more work than I wanted to go through. I know Gay did. Gay and I guess her older sister and Dean went up there one year. This was probably before I was involved. You know, you had to kinda ford the Paria River. We'd go over there and hike up to Lonely Dell Ranch and hike around the country. Hike upriver a little bit, the Colorado a little bit. That was pretty rough hiking there. We'd always go down to the boat landing which is where all of the boats that were heading for Grand Canyon would probably put-in. And anybody that was coming downriver from the Green River and all that, that's where they always stopped and either got out or reprovisioned.

Tom: What do you remember about that?

Buzz: Not much really. I do remember after we were married getting to look at a one of those jet boats that came up the river. I think there were two of the them that made it up the river. But there was just one of there on a trailer. That was the first time I'd ever seen a jet boat and I was very interested in it.

Tom: Did you get any pictures of that?

Buzz: I probably did, but I don't know where they could be now.

Tom: You were taking photographs of Jo's wedding and doing a lot of photography work for the title company. Did you shoot your own photographs at the time?

Buzz: Yeah, pretty much.

Tom: Because a lot of people wouldn't necessarily have had a camera, but you were certainly into photography. I'm just wondering, did you take your camera wherever you went and take lots of photos?

Buzz: I took an awful lot of pictures, I know that but I'll be darned if I know what happened to them. Some of them would be slides, but they're now 60 years old and I don't know how good they would be.

Tom: You will be surprised. You will be very pleasantly surprised and I want to encourage you go try to find those! [laughs]

Buzz: But there were an awful lot of black and white stuff I took, too. We have a paste-board box down in our closet that has a tremendous amount of stuff like that in it. That may be where some of that is.

Tom: I'd love to see that sometime, that'd be a lot of fun. I'm going to kind of run forward to June of 1958. Where did you guys get married?

Buzz: We got married in Flagstaff at the Federated Community Church. The same church that Gay's twin was married in a year earlier.

Tom: Where did you go for your honeymoon?

Buzz: We went to California, went to Los Angeles area. We went through Las Vegas and then down to L.A. I had two uncles that lived there and some real good friends of my folks. We visited with them, we didn't stay with them, but we visited with them. We were gone about a week I think.

Tom: What where you driving?

Buzz: I had a brand new 1956 Chevrolet Model 210 with a V8 engine and a standard transmission. And oh boy did I love that!

Tom: Nice. That must have been a fast car.

Buzz: It was.

Tom: Not sure where you would be able to drive it fast. [laughs]

Buzz: That brings up another story. Before Gay and I got together, I was running around with a couple of guys and I saw a highway patrolman taking off like a shot going down highway 89 heading for Oak Creek. I thought, "I'm gonna go see where that guy's going". He had his lights on and he was really motating. Well, I got real close and he wasn't real happy about that. As a matter of fact, he didn't cite me but he gave me a real strong talking to about not doing things like that again. Anyway, we became real good friends as matter of fact. Later on after that, I used to ride with him a lot. Even after Gay and I were married I'd ride with him occasionally.

Tom: Do you remember his name?

Buzz: His name was Edward Short. He lived up in Clark Homes. He had a real pretty wife and a real cute daughter. He had another daughter there, they had another child. Subsequently after that he moved. At one time he lived in Kingman and at one time he lived in Cottonwood. I've lost touch with him now.

Tom: So you guys honeymooned for a week and then did you come back and both staying working for the title company?

Buzz: Yes, we did. Our first house was a little bitty two room house out behind the Catholic church, the downtown Catholic church, been there a 100 years. Right behind that there's an alley then there's a big white...used to be white house. Then behind that is a little two room house and that's where we lived for probably 1½/2 years.

Tom: That would have been almost 1961.

Buzz: No. I graduated from college in '59. We were living there then so it was probably early 1960 when we left there. That's when we moved into one of my folk's apartments up behind where my folks lived.

Tom: Gay, how long did Dean keep staying at Lees Ferry?

Gay: He went to Lees Ferry from the bottom of the Grand Canyon in '54 and then he moved to Flagstaff in 1961 from Lees Ferry.

Tom: Did he retire then?

Gay: No, he worked there in the office in Flagstaff from '61. Then in 1963 he moved to Boulder City. He was still with the USGS there. They lived Boulder City, Nevada until 1966 and then moved to Blythe. He retired November the 24<sup>th</sup> of 1967.

Tom: Wow. Did they stay in Blythe?

Buzz: Actually, they didn't live in Blythe. They didn't want to live in California so they bought a 40 foot trailer and lived in Ehrenberg which is right across the river.

Tom: They loved it hot!

Gay: They did! [laughs]

Tom: Did they then retire to Ehrenberg and stay there then?

Buzz: No. They moved back to Bullhead City, which is another hotbox. When they were living in Boulder City, they bought a double-wide mobile home and they put it on a lot down on Lake Mead. There was a big RV park down there. In the meantime they'd bought a lot in Bullhead City and they had that mobile home moved down to Bullhead City. So, when they retired from Blythe they moved up to that trailer.

Tom: Did you guys get a chance to go up and look at the construction of the Glen Canyon Dam?

Gay and Buzz: Yes, we did.

Tom: What can you tell me about that?

Buzz: Well, the first time that I was ever up there, we were out at a Lees Ferry and we asked we if could drive up to the dam site. So we did and it was pretty primitive there, too. The road was complete because they were hauling all the equipment and all the supplies and everything up there. So the road was good. But we had drive back and cross Marble Canyon bridge and then drive down to Bitter Springs where we could turn and go up the mountain up to Echo Cliffs. Anyway, we climbed up there and through the big V there and up to Page. Page was pretty small at that time. We got to go right down to where they were working. I think they had the coffer dams in and they were beginning to excavate the bedrock down at the bottom. They were still blasting rocks away from the side probably for the key race for the dam site. They had a foot bridge that they had installed that went clear across that chasm and believe me it was a long ways.

Tom: Did you walk that thing?

Buzz: I walked out on it but we didn't go too far. [laughs] It didn't have any bottom in it. It was just strong fencing wire and you could look right down and see nothing but space. [laughs] It had tall sides to it. Boy, you kinda had to hang on to that because all you had to do was walk on it and the bridge would move a little bit. We walked out probably a 100 yards and that was it and we came back. Survived that and was glad to get off of it. But it was really interesting. [pause] I think at that time we got to see Art Green. First time I've ever met him.

Tom: I've got a question for you before we head off to Art. When you were out on that foot bridge, I'm assuming that was 1958 or '59-ish?

Buzz: Probably '59-ish, yeah.

Tom: What were your recollections of Art?

Buzz: Well, I thought we might have meet him then, but we couldn't have because at that time his holdings were on the other side of the river. Then the bridge over the Colorado had not been completed yet, they were working on it. [pause] At that time, I think we must have gone up to Kanab and come in that way. No, probably when the bridge was completed and went back and crossed the river there at Page and went up. And Art had a...it ultimately ended up being the first RV park for Lake Powell. It was up on the bluff overlooking Wahweap Bay. He had some rock sandstone cottages that he built. That's where I first met Art Greene. He had a bunch of kids. I don't remember too much about them, but Art was a memorable guy to meet, I'll tell you.

Tom: How so?

Buzz: He was a big man and he was very articulate and was very sure of himself. He was an interesting guy to talk to. He had a lot of knowledge about the Indian reservation and the river. Just a very interesting man.

Tom: I'm trying to think of what else can I ask you about Art. Have you recalled any stories he told?

Buzz: He and his family ultimately were able to get through the concession for the Wahweap Marina and then he had the RV park. The guy made a lot of money there.

Tom: He'd been quite a number of years out there at Cliff Dwellers Lodge. Running the lodge there and then running tours up into Glen Canyon from Lees Ferry. Did you guys ever get a motorboat and go up into Glen Canyon?

Buzz: Yes, after the construction and they were beginning to fill the lake.

Tom: Afterwards, but not before?

Buzz: No. I think Gay's mom was fortunate and then got to do that.

Tom: Yes, Gay had mentioned that last time that she had gone on a Georgie White river trip there through Glen Canyon. I looked at the Rainbow Bridge register, I did not see her name there but it doesn't mean I didn't miss it.

Buzz: I think you'd have seen it if it'd been there. Maybe that was even before there ever was one.

Tom: Oh, that register goes way back into the 20s. There are a couple pages missing here and there so she could have been on one of those missing pages. I want to ask you, with some tact here, but don't hold back, what were your thoughts about the Glen Canyon Dam and its construction?

Buzz: Frankly I was all for it. After Gay and I left Flagstaff in 1965 and moved to Kingman we bought a boat and spent a lot of wonderful times down on Lake Mojave. I was so delighted with the fact that Glen Canyon was under construction we took our boat, and this would have been probably 1966 or '67, and drove up and put the boat in the water at Wahweap Marina and spent the better part of a week out on Lake Powell. It wasn't anything like it is now, but you got to go into some of these labyrinth canyons and you got to see things that are now 100 feet underwater. It was really a fantastic experience. We'd go all the way up to Rainbow Bridge and were able to hike. At that time it was probably  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a mile we had to hike up before we could see the bridge. But it was well worth. We were just overwhelmed with it.

Tom: Gay, do you think your father shared the view that the Glen Canyon Dam was a good idea?

Gay: I think he did. My mother might not have as much because she had taken a river trip with I believe Harry Aleson and maybe Georgia White before it was ever started and she saw all these beautiful places that were now being buried or covered up. But I think my dad was for it. I'm not sure about my mother so much.

Tom: Because you guys knew that place, or certainly your mom did. But your dad certainly knew the river as a river that would drop in the winter and come up in the spring floods. He would have seen the fish and the driftwood and the sand. He would have known the river in its natural state before the dam. I'm just kinda curious what he would have thought about that. Some people liked it and some people didn't, and that was that.

Gay: I don't think he was really against it, but I know my mother was not real happy with it.

Tom: Why did you guys move out to Kingman?

Gay: Why did we move to Kingman? Buzz got a transfer with the title company there. You want to tell him?

Buzz: I moved over there in 1965 as assistant manager of the Mojave operations for Transamerica Title. Got a nice increase and we found a nice home. Our kids were very, very small and they got to grow up for 11 years in the Kingman area. It was a great place to raise a family.

Tom: Definitely a little warmer than Flagstaff, too.

Buzz: Oh, yeah. Warmer. That's high desert, that's about 3500 feet there. It's kind of like Page so it really wasn't desperately hot in the summertime.

Tom: It would have been easy to visit Gay's parents when they were at Boulder City. Did you travel back to Flagstaff to visit your parents?

Buzz: Well, my folks had left Flagstaff in 1963. They bought a parcel of land down in the Verde Valley. Dad retired on a medical retirement from the Navajo Army Depot in '61 or '62. Mom and her partners sold the company, Northern Arizona Title, to Phoenix Title and Trust Company which was owned by Transamerica Corporation at the time. She retired that was in 1963. So no, we didn't go back to Flag real often.

Tom: What do you guys remember about Boulder City at that time?

Buzz: It's probably the same now as it was then. [TM laughs] The town that'll never grow. The Bureau of Reclamation wouldn't let it. It was a nice little town, though. Didn't really set the world on fire.

Tom: It's a no gambling and very much a Mayberry town right there in Nevada.

Gay: My Dad did take us down through the powerplant there in Boulder Dam. We got to go down and see what all the makings were of how the dam operated and everything.

Tom: That must have been fun.

Gay: Yeah, that was.

Buzz: Very interesting.

Tom: Buzz, did you have your camera for that?

Buzz: No, I didn't take it then. I don't think they wanted anybody taking pictures down there.

Tom: That might have been neat if you'd have done that, but I can understand. So, Kingman for 11 years and how many children did you raise there?

Buzz: We have two children. Our son is Clay. He was born July 6, 1963 and our daughter Cheryl was born July 12, 1964.

Tom: Where did you go from Kingman?

Buzz: From Kingman we transferred to a new title operation in Salt Lake City, Utah. We opened up a title company up there started from scratch. It was quite an experience. In retrospect, I wouldn't do it again. But we survived. We were there for 3 years and then they moved us back to Arizona and we spent a year down in the Yuma operation. Then they transferred me to the main office in Phoenix here. I worked as a title plat manager for years and then as the administrative assistant for the manager of the

Maricopa County operations and eventually got into information technology. Computers were just now coming up. We just about to lose our minds but we started the computer system for the company.

Tom: So that's why you were so easy to send me the pdf oral history deed of gift. I was like, wow, this is great because most people your position are not quite so savvy with computers.

Buzz: Well, I'm not anymore either. Every day they're growing more sophisticated and I'm growing dumber.

Tom: Well they do keep changing, there is that. There's no doubt about that.

Buzz: Understatement of the year!

Tom: From growing up in Flagstaff and then moving to Kingman and Salt Lake, I kind of wanted to go back for a bit and ask you what you recalled about maybe your first trips to Phoenix from Flagstaff or Albuquerque. I'm just trying to think of when you guys took your honeymoon out to Los Angeles that would have been a huge city coming from such a small mountain town. Did you have any thoughts about Salt Lake as a city or Phoenix or Los Angeles?

Buzz: Well, as I was growing up I had problems with my eyes, my eyes were crossed. So I was familiar with Phoenix because about every six weeks we'd have to go down and I'd have an eye examination. Usually had to spend the night and everything. So, I was familiar with Phoenix. Phoenix was nothing like it is now, anyway, at that time. This was probably back in the late 40s or early 50s. Eventually I went to Phoenix and had surgery on my eyes and I was able to put my glasses away for the next 30 years. We were familiar with the big city. After Gay and I were married, she had eye trouble, too, and so we used to go to Phoenix occasionally, probably every six months or so, and she'd get her contacts renewed.

Tom: So you guys weren't unfamiliar with that.

Buzz: No not really. And as far as going to Salt Lake, that's just another big city. We kinda had to learn our way around, driving like crazy and getting on the freeways and stuff because we weren't used to that. You figure things out pretty quickly.

Tom: Gay, your mom and dad retired then to Bullhead City. When did they pass away?

Gay: My dad passed away February 6, 1983. My mother passed away February 5 of 1994.

Buzz: But they didn't all this time live in Bullhead City. After the summer or two down there they decided we got to get out of here at least for the summer. So they did. They had a little bitty travel trailer, I think it was something like 16' or 18', and they would climb in it to probably the 1<sup>st</sup> of May or middle of May and disappear and go up where it was cooler either into Utah or to Montana or anywhere up in the higher country where it was a little cooler. They finally ran across a place in Utah just north of Kanab, a little town called Orderville. A nice little Mormon town. Once again, Gay's mom never met a stranger, and played piano. So they fell in love with that place and found a lot they could buy. Darned if they didn't buy it and put a manufactured home on it. This was probably sometime in the 70s they ended up up there. Dean contracted lung cancer. He suffered from it for probably a year and a half or so before he ever told anybody about it. Then finally it got to the point where he had to have some help. So we went up on his 80<sup>th</sup> birthday and spent a long weekend and realized that he was quite ill. Then we tried to get him to come down and stay with us, he wouldn't do it. He wouldn't go to the doctor, wouldn't do anything. Eventually in January, I think, of the next year, that would have been '83, we drove to up Cameron, that was about halfway between Orderville and Mesa, and met them. Dean would still go out, Edna wouldn't drive. We met them and I drove Dean and Gay took her mom and we came back down



here to Mesa and got him to see a doctor. It was probably two to three weeks later he was in the hospital and passed away.

Tom: Did he smoke?

Buzz: Yes, all his life. Interesting thing about that. Are you familiar with the downwinders claim?

Tom: Yes sir. That's Department of Energy, people that were living in the southwestern United States during the nuclear bomb testing.

Buzz: Yeah, well, he was down here all that time. He was either in Grand Canyon or Less Ferry or Flagstaff so we were able to successfully prosecute a downwinders claim on his life. Were successful and got the \$50,000 which was split among his 3 children.

Tom: Yeah, well certainly he and Edna and the girls, as well, were there during that time.

Buzz: Well, I don't think that's where he got lung cancer. I think he got lung cancer from smoking cause he smoked like a chimney.

Tom: Was he a 2- or 3-packer a day?

Buzz: At least 2 probably.

Tom: What a life. Just quite the amazing journey there. And it's interesting because in the 1970s moving to Orderville. Kanab and that whole area now are quite popular with retirees that aren't Mormon moving into that area. Dean and Edna were certainly pioneers in that respect.

Buzz: That's right.

Tom: We have been at this now about an hour and a half, maybe a little over. It seems like this is a good place to wrap things up. What are you thinking? What questions have I not asked that I should have?

Buzz: Oh boy, at this point I don't know.

Gay: You did a remarkable job Tom.

Tom: Well you're very kind. Maybe we'll end this now at the end of Part 3, let it sit a bit and if we want to come back and do a Part 4, absolutely we can do that but let's just see what other questions we can come up with between now and a future discussion.

Gay: Okay.

Buzz: That sounds fine.

Tom: If this is going to be last one we do, Gay I'm going to ask you a question and then I'm going to ask Buzz the same question. The question is: 30 or 40 years from now, someone's going to listen to this interview. What do you want them to know about the world, your life, and your thoughts for the future?

Gay: I think this would be wonderful information that we've had these last three conferences for our children, our grandchildren, and our great grandchildren to read about. I don't believe any of them would have ever suspected that Jo and I would have had the childhood or the growing up years at the Grand Canyon that we did have without your interview Tom. So I'm really excited to get this all spelled out on paper or on record, or however. I just hope that our future generations have enough interest in history that they'll want to read it and know about it. I suspect there will be somebody along the way

that's going to be very interested in it. I really appreciate you taking your time and energy to get this all recorded and get it all in the history books.

Tom: Well thank you for taking the time to recount your journey. That's really wonderful. Buzz, you?

Buzz: Well, I feel very, very fortunate to have lived in the time that I did live. I found a wonderful gal and we're going to be celebrating our 60<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary in June. I'm delighted that you have done this and given us the opportunity to express ourselves. I don't know what to expect for our kids in the future. I'm very frightened of the way things are going now but I'm hoping that at some point reason will prevail and we can continue life in a meaningful manner.

Tom: Thank you, that's very nice and I want to congratulate you both on your 60<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary. That's wonderful.

Gay: Thank you.

Tom: That's really neat. Once again, I'd just really like to thank you both for your willingness to participate in this Grand Canyon Oral History. This is going to complete Part 3 of an interview with Barbara/Gay Tidball Cameron and Kenneth Lincoln Cameron. Today is Friday, December 15, 2017. My name is Tom Martin. If you guys could stay on the line, I'm going to turn this machine off. Thank you both very much.

Gay: Thank you.