

Transcription: Grand Canyon Historical Society

Interviewee: Jennifer Burns (JB)

Interviewer: Tom Martin (TM)

Subject: Jennifer recounts working at Phantom Ranch for Fred Harvey in the mid 1970's and then working at Chiricahua National Monument

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Part 1

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TM: Jennifer Burns, thank you so very much for being a part of the Grand Canyon oral history program. Today is January 16th, 2019. This oral history recording between you and me, Tom Martin, is happening at your house. Thank you so very much for letting us do this.

JB: You're welcome.

TM: Where should we start? What year were you born?

JB: 1955.

TM: Where were you born?

JB: I was born in Salem, Massachusetts.

TM: What were your folks doing back there?

JB: Well, they're dead. [laugh]

TM: I know, but what were they doing then?

JB: My folks actually met on Humphrey's Peak. My dad was in the Air Force and he was stationed outside of Phoenix. My mom was working for a radio station in Phoenix. So they met there. My sister was born in Phoenix and then they moved back to my dad's kind of ancestral home in Salem, Massachusetts.

TM: So they were kind of outdoorsy people. Hiking up the San Francisco Peaks?

JB: They were skiing. They would drive like every weekend from Phoenix up that old... I have a USGS map that doesn't even have Interstate 17 on it. I'm sure you've seen that. Anyway, they would go through Jerome and blah, blah, blah, Wickenburg.

TM: Yeah. Yeah. It was a long drive.

JB: As kids, there was three of us living in Salem, Massachusetts, we would come to Arizona pretty much every year for a vacation because they loved Arizona and they love friends here. So that's how I got to really like Arizona.

TM: So you had older brother or older sister or...

JB: Older sister. Younger brother.

TM: Would you guys do the typical American summer in the station wagon drive out from Massachusetts?

JB: No. We would fly because my dad was a TWA pilot for his career after he got out of the Air Force. Although it was even before the Air Force was formed, it seemed like. So yeah, he was a pilot so we could fly all over the place and that's what we did.

TM: Would you then rent a car or how would that...

JB: Yeah. We'd rent a car and we'd go out to one of those dude ranches or we'd drive up to the Grand Canyon and go hiking into the canyon.

TM: When was your first time at the Grand Canyon?

JB: That's a good question. God, it I probably like 13/12 maybe. I remember hiking down with my friend Lizzie Allen, also from Salem, Massachusetts, who we brought along. I think we spent one night down there as a family. I don't even remember if we stayed at Phantom or what, but yeah, that had to be the first time.

TM: So 1967/'68ish?

JB: Yeah, if you do the math.

TM: So your folks really liked Arizona. Would you come out in the summertime or come out in the fall, winter?

JB: Spring, spring.

TM: During spring break at school?

JB: Yeah.

TM: So as you were going back and forth between Massachusetts and Arizona, what were you thinking in your mind about where you kind of wanted to go?

JB: Oh, I wasn't thinking about that at that time at all.

TM: After high school was it assumed that you and your older sister and younger brother would go to college? Your parents were like...

JB: Yes, it was assumed. Yes, they were absolutely dead set on that. Yeah. I was into art. I was very much an artist and went to art school pretty much. I went to Skidmore, went to Rhode Island School of Design [RISD], went to a program in Copenhagen through Pratt Institute in New York for a semester, too. This is all back east. When I was a junior, I think, at RISD, my friend Connie and I did a little vacation and we went to the Grand Canyon cause I loved it. We also went to the Boyce Thompson Southwest Arboretum. Have you ever...yeah.

TM: In Phoenix?

JB: Yep, yep. Well, Superior out there. We went there because I had also done a little winter program through Macalester College, just a month with a bunch of scientists. I was an art major, you know, was like a fish out of water. But anyway, found out about Boyce Thompson so we went there. Then we went and we hiked into the Grand Canyon, Connie and I. We didn't get a permit.

TM: So this is 1975ish/'76ish to hike into the Grand Canyon. Of course, the first time you were in there was in the mid-60s. You know, Wes Hildreth and Jack Fulton were doing their walk way back then. That was the days of Colin Fletcher and...

JB: Yeah.

TM: So that was kind of early journeying in there.

JB: No, not really. I mean, we had backpacks and we just... We knew we had to get a permit but we didn't bother so we hiked down in. I don't know if we went the Kaibab or the Bright Angel, but we went down. We actually slept in the campground, which was [laugh] really stupid because then we got caught...

TM: You didn't have a permit. Yeah.

JB: ...by Phil Hecker who was the ranger.

TM: What do you remember about Phil?

JB: That he was a really nice guy. Really nice ranger but he gave me a ticket. Also that night when we spent the night there... I don't know if we spent two nights. I can't see that we didn't because I was stung by a scorpion on the neck in the middle of the night. So when he gave us the ticket, like probably the next day we went to his office and he said, "Oh yeah, yeah, that was a scorpion." But we also hiked all the way to Ribbon Falls that day and back. I remember tingly, you know how it is. [laughter] But also I woke up in the night and I'm like aah and slapped that thing on my neck. I just had the most intense pain. I thought I am going to die and then I just fell asleep. [laughter] I woke up and there was no pain, but there was the numbing sensation stuff.

TM: In your fingertips.

JB: Fingertips.

TM: Both hands?

JB: Tongue, lips.

TM: Oh my gosh.

JB: Yeah. So we got the tickets. Eventually after we went to Ribbon Falls, we must have spent... There's no way we hiked all the way out again that day. Phil must have let us stay. So we came out and I was required to go in front of the judge on the south rim. So I went front of the judge. [laugh]

TM: Do you remember the judge's name?

JB: No. No, I don't.

TM: Older gentleman?

JB: I would say that. Yes.

TM: Red nose?

JB: I don't remember that. But anyway, I was fined. Then during that visit, I applied for a job with Fred Harvey. So we went back to RISD after a nice vacation and I got a letter from Fred Harvey, I think it was Fred Harvey at the time, but anyway, saying we are pleased to announce...

TM: I'm just gonna back up a bit to the judge for not getting a permit, what was your fine?

JB: \$25 bucks, something like that. It wasn't much. It was a hassle. Well, it would have been way more of a hassle if I had to go into Flagstaff to a judge. I don't even think they even have a judge on the south rim anymore.

TM: No. Okay, so you went to the judge, paid the \$25 for the ticket, but that didn't phase you at all cause you got the application for the job there with Fred.

JB: Right. Right. Yeah. I wish I could remember that lady's name who I applied with. She's very nice. So then back, I don't know, it was maybe a month later or something. So that was in the spring. The letter said, we're pleased to offer you a job as a utility with Fred Harvey at Phantom Ranch. Cause I think I said I will only work at Phantom Ranch. I'm pretty sure that's what I put on my...

TM: And again, this would be '76ish?

JB: Yeah, I would say -ish.

TM: '75/'76?

JB: Yeah, I think so. So that was the end of RISD. I just left and went to Phantom Ranch and took a job as a maid.

TM: How close were you to graduating?

JB: Like a year.

TM: Did you just like, "that's nice. Let's go do this new adventure." What were you thinking?

JB: Oh yeah. Oh yeah. I'm going west. I'm going to the Grand Canyon. Oh yeah. Nothing could compete with that, really. Even RISD, it took me two tries to get in. [laugh] My parents were like, "Yeah, okay. Whatever." They were very supportive. Yes, very nice folks.

TM: That's awesome.

JB: So then, I think the summer was coming on. Basically I stayed a year working at Phantom Ranch and lived in one of the little cabins back there.

TM: Who were you working with down there? Do you remember?

JB: Terry Mishe was the manager there. I don't know if you ever knew Terry. She's passed away now.

TM: What do you remember about her?

JB: That she was a go-getter. A real hardnosed manager but super friendly. I thought she was excellent with the clientele and everything. So, yeah, that's what I remember about her. It was good. It was good working there.

TM: Tell me about your schedule, on/off schedule.

JB: I think it was like 10 days on/4 days off kind of a thing. Hike out.

TM: Where would you go? Did you have any housing when you hiked out?

JB: I would go to the train station, which was at that point... George Marsik and Barry...I can't remember his last name, they had an outfitter guide, like a touring company, that was run out of the train station at that point.

TM: Was this Grand Canyon Trail Guides?

JB: It sounds like it.

TM: Gaylord Staveley's concession?

JB: I think so, yeah. So yeah, a friend and I would just go. There was a huge clawfoot bathtub there. Just crash there or stay with friends on the rim, or go down to Flagstaff.

TM: Do you remember the other people that you worked with at Phantom?

JB: Well, Keith Green, of course. First day.

TM: Tell me about Keith.

JB: Met Keith the first day. We went around and made beds. What do you want to know about Keith?

TM: I know nothing about Keith.

JB: Have you met him?

TM: So what can you tell me about Keith? What do you remember?

JB: That he was a very nice guy and that his eyesight was not that bad at the time. So he got around pretty good.

TM: Was he wearing glasses then?

JB: He was definitely wearing glasses and he also had his magnifier that attaches to the side of his glasses so he could read. I don't remember how long he'd been there but he'd been there at least a year probably.

TM: And he was working for Harvey, too, at the time?

JB: Yup. Same job, more or less. Dan Tobin was the assistant manager,

TM: Not Dan, but...

JB: I don't think I worked there when Dan was there. I think Dan came a little later. Terry Soler. Yeah. Terry Soler, who later married Dan, worked there at the time. Who else. Oh, Cindy Kane. Great artist. Last I knew she lived on a boat in Manhattan and was doing... In fact, if you Google her, you're going to see some incredible artwork. So she was already doing art when she was working as a maid down there.

TM: What do you remember about her?

JB: Tall, blonde, gorgeous. Best friend. She was my best friend there.

TM: Did you talk art with her at the time?

JB: Ah, yeah. Sure. I didn't do much art but I did do some art. I remember now, cause I remember some photographs of myself actually sketching up Phantom Creek.

TM: Did you do hiking at the time? You got four days off cause you're still based out of Phantom and could just hike.

JB: All over. Yep.

TM: Zoroaster?

JB: No, I'm not a climber. Was never a climber. I would go over to like Clear Creek. I remember going over to Clear Creek just by myself one time and then hiking down the drainage and a big storm came in. It was like Thanksgiving and I freaked out cause I thought it was going to flash flood. Up Phantom and over. You know that great hike you go up Phantom and you go over the top and you come down into Bright Angel campground.

TM: Piano Alley?

JB: Yeah. Our go-to place was up Phantom Creek basically.

TM: Do you remember who the Phantom Ranch ranger was at the time?

JB: Well, Dave...actually no. Dave Marcello was later. I later became the Cottonwood ranger as a student conservation aid, as a volunteer ranger more or less. Well, actually, Dave wasn't the ranger then either. When I was a resource management specialist for Grand Canyon, Dave Marcello was the ranger down at Phantom. So who was the ranger? I don't remember.

TM: There was a gentleman named Bob Cornelius, but he probably left about '72/'73.

JB: I'm thinking he wasn't.

TM: So, Keith's there, Terry, Dave, and Cindy. And Terry Mishe is kinda managing everybody. The river runners are coming and going during that time in '75. They've all become concessionaires. The river management plan is going to happen in the late 70s. But they didn't interface that much with you all. You were busy up at the ranch. I'm just assuming here. Is that right?

JB: Yeah.

TM: And, of course, after the summer there was nobody there. I mean, all winter long.

JB: Just to backtrack a tiny bit, when I was down there with my parents that one time, we did go to Phantom cause I remember the swimming pool was just being filled in.

TM: '67ish, okay, for you being 12 or 13.

JB: Yeah. They were just throwing all kinds of stuff in there and then burying it.

TM: Like what?

JB: I remember silverware going in there. Furniture.

TM: There's a good archeological dig there someday.

JB: Yes, there is. [laughter] Yeah.

TM: Did that strike you as being odd?

JB: No. I had no frame of reference whatsoever. But the bunk house was not there. Actually, when I worked down there the bunk house had not been built yet so we all stayed in cabins. There were tent tops. Where the dorms are now, there were all canvas sided tent tops. So while I worked down there, there was a huge project to reconstruct those into the dorms, hard sided dorms, and also to build the employee housing that is now the first thing that you see when you...

TM: So this would be the summer '76ish? '76/'77 roughly. I'm just trying to timestamp that this construction was going on. Helicopter flights in and out to carry all the gear?

JB: Lots of helicopter flights. Yup.

TM: Bringing in lumber and...

JB: Construction workers. Got to ride on some of those flights.

TM: Did you?

JB: Uh-huh.

TM: Did you get a ride out or get a ride in?

JB: I saw a sky crane come in one time, or maybe multiple times. Ooh, that was impressive.

TM: Wow. What was it carrying? Something heavy.

JB: You know, I think it was working on the sewage treatment plant bringing something in.

TM: Which had to have been built around that time I suppose?

JB: Yeah. Yeah. Anyway, where were we? We were trying to move forward.

TM: Well, we were just talking about the construction that you saw when you were there.

JB: No, you were asking me about rangers, what rangers...

TM: Oh, we were talking about the river and, of course, who the rangers were.

JB: Mostly we were aware more of the dudes who were coming down on the mules. That and hikers. People who were actually coming to the lemonade window and were getting sandwiches or the people who were coming and having meals at the ranch itself.

TM: By 1976, the incredible crush of people at the Phantom Ranch campground that was happening in the late 60s had totally been quieted down by the implementation of this permit system.

JB: Right.

TM: So when you started working for Phantom, all that in theory was more or less...

JB: Do you remember that?

TM: Only what I have learned talking to others who worked there at the time and the stories they told me.

JB: Yeah. No, that was completely over. Yeah, everything was very controlled.

TM: Okay. Kind of controlled and orderly, I guess, if you will, in quotes. Do you have any other interesting recollections of that first year? You worked there for a full year it sounds like, through winter, spring, summer, fall. Any other recollections of that time?

JB: John...this guy named Grizzly. Do you know who I'm talking about?

TM: John Martiney.

JB: John Martiney, yeah. He was my boyfriend at the time. I don't think he was working at Phantom. I don't think he was working when I was there. I remember seeing him on the rim.

TM: He was a driver for Super Trash up at Tusayan for a while.

JB: Right. With Bob Sutton.

TM: Yeah, with Bob Sutton. Would that have been that timeframe?

JB: Mmm, hmm.

TM: What was Grizz like as a guy to hang out with?

JB: He was really nice. Really nice guy. In retrospect, I think... He grew up on the Island of Aruba and I think he was always on Aruba time. So he was just really mellow and laid back. Just super nice guy.

TM: So while you were working for Fred Harvey, you must've been aware that there was a national park service there. Couldn't kind of avoid them. Clearly this is Grand Canyon National Park. What were your thoughts about the Park Service at the time?

JB: Not much. Didn't think much about the Park Service. To me it was like going to the University of Phantom because I had been a very serious student, albeit an art student. [laughs] But anyway, I was a really serious student. Didn't party much. But when I went and worked at Phantom it was like totally different situation/scene. There was just a lot of hilarity and a lot of fun. Lot of fun.

TM: Collegial comradery of the team there.

JB: Yeah, of the team there.

TM: Nice.

JB: As I said, there was more interaction with the mule train guides than with the rangers. I just remember rangers coming through and I'm sorry I can't remember who exactly. I remember Wayne Ranney, he was a ranger at the time. He's the one I do remember. He would come up and, of course, say hello and everything. I know there were other ones and I can't remember who they were. I didn't go to the ranger station. I don't remember going there much or really seeing it or spending much time there as I did when I was working at Cottonwood. Another person was Roy Starkey.

TM: Tell me about Roy please.

JB: He, of course, was working for USGS doing his stuff, and then he was the maintenance guy for Phantom.

TM: Oh, he was.

JB: Yeah. He was totally the maintenance guy for Phantom Ranch. He was busy all the time and he lived in that back cabin kind of behind me. I was in the little cabin that was right behind the lodge and then he was in one even a little bit further back that you would encounter. If you were coming down from the north rim it would be the first cabin that you... I don't even think you could see it cause it was vegetated and stuff. He had a great, great, beautiful spot there. He was just a super, super great guy.

TM: Did you get a chance to ride with him out on the cable car out across the river?

JB: I did go out on it once and it must have been with him. I can't imagine who else it was.

TM: At the marks on the cable he would drop his little torpedo down there and fill the little bottle with fluid and bring it back up and put the bottle in the little cradle.

JB: I don't remember that.

TM: What else do you remember about him?

JB: That he always wore jeans and a little work shirt and he had very white hair. He wasn't reclusive. He was just, that was his life was down there, basically. He was one of the real constants of Phantom Ranch. He was well respected for his talents in maintenance.

TM: I can't believe that he was able to actually do his sediment drying, weighing, measuring job, and take care of the maintenance requirements of Phantom Ranch. That would have been quite a lot of work for one guy to take a handle on.

JB: I don't remember him ever getting stressed out or being a grumpy guy or anything like that. He was just kinda quiet, but always there and always pleasant. Just upstream of the cable car is what's called Roy's beach. So we would always go up to Roy's beach. Not with Roy, but Cindy and I would go hang out up there between shifts because you'd have basically two shifts during the day. Very early and then after the dudes came in you'd have like a dinner shift or something. So you'd have time in between to go run around and go up Phantom Creek.

TM: So were you cooking? Was the rotation through...

JB: Everything.

TM: You kind of did everything.

JB: Mhm.

TM: You cleaned the beds.

JB: Sometimes.

TM: You'd clean the bathrooms. You'd help cook the food. You'd help wash the dishes. Do the laundry. Just cycle through all those different chores.

JB: Yup. Sometimes be the assistant manager. At some point I remember being the manager, just acting manager, briefly. But yeah, you do everything.

TM: Any other Roy stories before we move on? That beach up there upstream of the gauge, was that called Roy's beach then?

JB: Yeah. Oh yeah. Yeah, that was Roy's beach.

TM: Was it bigger then than it is now?

JB: Oh yeah, it was definitely bigger. In fact, the last trip I was looking, I was like where is Roy's beach? [laugh] I couldn't really even see it there was Roy's beach there.

TM: Isn't that interesting?

JB: I'm not sure. It's been chewed away.

TM: Did you get wrapped into any rescues of overheated hikers or tourists that were sick or any things like that that were happening at the time?

JB: The only one I remember... The answer is generally no. We would just stay out of the way, basically. I can't remember if this was when I was a Cottonwood ranger or working there for Phantom, but I remember this guy coming in who... I'm trying to think. This boat came down, it was a commercial trip. No, I think it was a private trip. They were all freaked out because they had some

injuries in Hance, but they had had to hurry down through Hance, actually is maybe why some people were injured by ammo cans flying around and stuff, broken ankle maybe, because they had lost a guy at the Little Colorado. They'd seen the guy float downstream and then they immediately got on the water and started searching and came right... I think they had to spend the night, though, and then they came into Phantom. Maybe I was the ranger at Cottonwood because somebody told me to stay down by the river and watch. Well, here comes this trip. It's a motor trip and this guy is on the trip, had been picked up. So what had happened was they were all at the Little Colorado. This guy had eaten some Datura. Was an all guys trip, was a private trip. This guy had eaten some Datura. He had tripped out. He had decided to go across the river. So he had thrown himself in the river maybe three times trying to get across the river or something is what he was telling me. Then he got swept away. He got out of the river shortly but was tripping like his brains out or something. So he got separated from his trip. They couldn't find him so they decided they needed to head downstream. They didn't see him for some reason. So he was stranded in his little shorts overnight and then begged a commercial trip to take him, [laugh] because according to him they didn't really want to pick him up, down to Phantom. That was basically sort of the happy ending.

TM: So was his group still at Phantom? He was able to reconnect with them?

JB: Yes. I think this group was still at Phantom and I think that they flew him out. I don't think they allowed him to continue. Cause then they were also flying the injured out. Interesting, you know, this commercial trip pulls up and they shove this guy off. [laugh] They went, this is the guy. [laughs] Did you have a nice trip? Actually, he said it was the most incredible experience of his life [laugh] being on the Datura and spending the night by himself on the river.

TM: And not drowning.

JB: Yeah, not drowning. It had to be summer cause otherwise he would have froze.

TM: Yeah. And, of course, there were other trips down there that. He ran into a commercial motor trip and if it wasn't summer they wouldn't have been there.

JB: Yeah.

TM: Alright. So that makes sense.

JB: I think that probably wasn't while I was an employee at Phantom cause I would've been hanging out at Roy's beach and wouldn't have participated in any of that.

TM: How did you transition from Fred Harvey then to the Park Service?

JB: After a year at Phantom, I decided it was time to go back to school. I got into the Resource Management Program at the University of Arizona in Tucson. I started going to school there and I applied...

TM: So I'm just thinking, now you were a year out from graduating in an art degree. [JB laughs] How did you shift to resource management?

JB: I think I was pretty confused. I think I wanted to be a veterinarian all of a sudden so I went to school in science and I think that was when... Well, no, it wasn't. Anyway, I went to school in science or biology, and then pretty quick I got into resource management which the school's really good for. I've always been interested in wildlife thanks to my mother mainly who was a birder. So that's the other great love. So there's art and then there's science, biology, whatever. So I slid into that. During that time I saw a posting for a co-op position, I'm not going to get the dates, with the Park Service. I ended up getting a position with Chiricahua National Monument out there by Wilcox.

TM: Can you tell me a little bit more about what a co-op position is? That's new to me.

JB: It's called something different now for the Park Service and the US Forest Service. It's an entry level position. It's one of those ways that they can hire students and then the student will have an opportunity to be hired in a permanent fulltime position noncompetitively once they fulfill all their obligations.

TM: Once you graduate, then.

JB: It's a really rare, really great opportunity. It's kind of like people in the Peace Corps. You know, when you go into the Peace Corps and then you get out, you have like a year's noncompetitive status with the government where people can hire you in the government. You can be hired without even a position being posted. So same thing with the co-op. They're very rare. They weren't so rare then. They're much rarer now that government is being squeezed. So anyway, I was really lucky to get it because I was the only one with any Park Service experience. I'm thinking I had that SCA position before I applied for this job cause I was the only one with over a 2.0 GPA and had a little bit of rangers experience under my belt with the Cottonwood campground ranger as an SCA. So right after Phantom, I think I spent like a season being the Cottonwood campground ranger as a student conservation aid. That's what SCA is. It's a really great program but it's not a government program. It's kind of like a nonprofit, Student Conservation Association like AZCC, Arizona Conservation Corps, or American Conservation Experience. All these groups try to take a youth and get them experienced in protected area management.

TM: So if you were thinking, okay, I'm going to go back to school. I'm going to go to the U of A and I'm kind of thinking about being a vet. I have all these credits from art, so they're going to come in. But I'm going to have my summers off. It's going to take a number of years, I guess is what I'm thinking to get a degree. So I'm going to take my summers, I'm going to run back to Grand Canyon. And that would make sense that that first summer, maybe, you were at Phantom?

JB: I think I was just thinking I really liked the Grand Canyon but I wanted to... Maybe I talked to somebody who was in SCA or something so I was intrigued by it. I also knew I didn't want to stay at Phantom anymore. I was ready to go back and do something else. Go back to school.

TM: So then before you got sent to the Chiricahua, you spent a season, would be a summer then I'm assuming, at Indian Gardens.

JB: Cottonwood. At Cottonwood.

TM: At Cottonwood. Okay. Sorry. So Cottonwood, of course, is between the north rim and Phantom Ranch about halfway seven miles this way and seven miles that way more or less. Upstream of you a little ways toward the north rim would've been Roaring Springs and Bruce Aiken and Mary and all the kids?

JB: Yeah.

TM: What do you remember about...

JB: Well, we had a lot of interaction. We had a lot of fun. It was great knowing them. I did a lot of hiking with both Bruce and Mary. I remember spending time with the kids. That was before they reconstructed their house so it was really beautiful. Really beautiful there.

TM: 1978ish?

JB: Maybe. Sorry.

TM: Just trying to keep the timeline sort of close here.

JB: When I was the ranger there, it was great. It was so great. I do remember a few incidences. One time I was down at Ribbon Falls and I encountered this guy who had spent the night at Ribbon Falls. And of course that's not allowed. So I wrote him a warning. I could only write warnings. I wasn't a cop so I wrote him a warning. He basically made it into a little paper airplane plane and just flew it off the dome there or whatever. He said, "I'm a poet and I should be able to go anywhere, be anywhere and do anything for my own inspirations." [laugh] I said, "Okay. That's great. Interesting." I had a case of a kid who was stung by a scorpion and had a bad reaction so he was flown out. That wasn't that uncommon to have people that have to be flown out.

TM: Did you have a radio?

JB: Oh yeah. I was just like a ranger except I couldn't write tickets.

TM: And no weapon.

JB: And no weapon. Thankfully no weapon. There's always beavers who lived there up and down the Bright Angel and Colorado, of course. There were resident beavers there at Cottonwood and they were chewing away some of the trees in the campground. The head rangers got really concerned about this, or resource management did or something. They asked me to trap the beavers. I ended up trapping two beavers [laugh] which, believe it or not, was really easy to trap these beavers.

TM: Who would you do with them? They're big, their big teeth.

JB: I had clam shell live traps that you set. Basically you get some, it's beaver castoreum. It's the scent of the beaver that they get from dead beavers. But anyway, you make a little break in their dam right there in the campground area and set the big trap there. They go to check it out and boom they're caught but they don't drown. I trapped two of them and I had them in a place where I kept the garbage, which was like a big sunken culvert kind of a thing. I had to put them in gunnysacks, this is so ridiculous, because we were going to fly them all the way down the river someplace and let them go. Relocate them at great expense. So I had to put them in gunnysacks, which I did, which was funny. Beavers are not very aggressive. I just remember picking them up by their tails, which probably wasn't the best thing to do, and putting them in these gunnysacks and then putting them over there at the helispot, two gunnysacks. Going back in, having a cup of coffee, waiting for the helicopter. The choppers on the way so I go out and I'm like, oh my god, where are the gunnysacks? These beavers in the gunnysacks, they must've heard the water so they humped their way down to the water's edge. I just remember at least one of them was about to tumble in the sack into the creek and probably drown. So I gathered them up and here comes the helicopter. We put them in the helicopter. I got in the helicopter, which is awesome. I did a lot of flying. I did much more flying later. Then we flew all the way down Bright Angel and get on the river. We go all the way down... We went down to someplace like Forster and landed and let these poor beavers go. I remember as we're taking off seeing these beavers, they're basically heading away from the river. Then I saw them turn around and at least one of them got in the river and it was swimming and inexorably being sucked down into some rapid that was there, which I'm sure didn't matter to them. But, you know, beavers are very territorial. Pretty sure they wouldn't really make it. Later we ended up putting wire around the trees and protecting the trees. I think that's pretty much the way they manage beavers today because it's ridiculous, you'd be trapping until the cows come home.

TM: Yeah. Yeah. Beavers are a fascinating survivor.

JB: They're great.

TM: They survived the dam. They survived the Park Service [JB laughs] and all kinds of other people after getting rid of them. The Spanish and all the frontiersmen, James Ohio Pattie, and all these other people.

JB: Yeah. They're so soft. I was so honored to be able to touch one alive. That fur was just amazing. All they do is they just hiss like sss. This little tiny soft hiss at me when I was picking them up and putting them in the... I remember finding some marijuana growing along the stream there. [TM laughs] That was another thing. I don't know if somebody planted it or whatever. Not a big marijuana grow, like later we've certainly got on the National Forest. I remember eavesdropping. I was in my room or something at the ranger station, on some people who believed that the Grand Canyon was created in six or eight days. Whatever that belief... That's kind of a fundamentalist Christian kind of... They were talking about that and I was just like, wow, interesting. Never heard that before. But it was great, it was a really great job.

TM: So backpackers would stumble in and spend the night and crawl away in the morning, or they would... Were you pretty busy? Was the campground pretty full then?

JB: No, kind of on and off. Not really. It was very mellow.

TM: So again, 10 days on/4 off kind of thing, but maybe with some sort of housing on the rim?

JB: I don't remember any housing on the rim. Nope.

TM: Then weekends in Flagstaff. Were you're still hanging with Grizz at the time?

JB: No, I don't think so.

TM: Were you still friends with the Phantom people? So when you were hiking in and out you would just stop in and say...

JB: Oh yeah. Definitely.

TM: ...hi to Terry and Keith and...

JB: And Roy.

TM: ...Roy. Who would have been your boss? Do you remember any of the other law enforcement people that you would have reported to at all?

JB: Stan?

TM: Stockton?

JB: Yes. Thank you. I remember Stan...

TM: What do you remember about Stan.

JB: ...but I don't think Stan was my boss. You'd think I'd remember who my boss was. I just remember Stan was also a very nice guy. Doing a lot with the stock. He was in charge of the mules for the Park Service. Packing stuff in and out for the rangers.

TM: Stan had a mentality where if he found a hiker without a permit he wouldn't give them a ticket. He'd say, when you're done with your hike, go to the back country office and get a permit and go home. He was friendly. He had a way of telling people about this and that. Did that wear off on you as a Park Service employee dealing with other Park Service people? He wasn't the kind of fellow you

ran into at Indian Gardens that said, "I'm going to give you a ticket. You need to go see the judge on the rim."

JB: [laugh] No, I don't remember any training that I got, come to think of it. I don't remember anything. I just sort of did the best I could.

TM: Do you have any other Stan Stockton stories?

JB: Nope.

TM: So that was summer. Then it was back to school again.

JB: Yeah. Then it was back to school in Tucson. Then I applied for that co-op position and then I got the job working resource management at... Actually I was working interpretation.

TM: Well, hang on a second. Let's back up a bit. So the concept of going to the U of A for vet school means you need a lot of science and all that other stuff, but eventually you're going to morph that into resource management.

JB: Pretty quickly. [laughs] Pretty quickly I was like, oh no I'm not going to be a veterinarian I'm going to be a wildlife biologist.

TM: Okay. Then you mentioned the Chiricahua's. Was that another summer position again? You mentioned the student...

JB: Student conservation...?

TM: The co-op.

JB: I was in the co-op, the Park Service Cooperative Education program. Yeah, so working summers and working vacations like over Christmas or whatever. Working any chance. Anytime I could give them, that's when I would work.

TM: So was it about that time after the summer in Cottonwood, then the Chiricahua's came along?

JB: Yeah.

TM: The Chiricahua's is this Sky Island and this hot desert either side of it with wonderful granite and big pine trees at the top.

JB: Yeah.

TM: And out in the middle of the southern Arizona desert next to the Mexican border.

JB: South of Wilcox, yeah.

TM: Yeah, south of Wilcox. What do you remember about that?

JB: Well, I worked for a guy named Paul Fugate who later after I left there disappeared and was never found. He was the chief interpretive ranger and he was an amazing guy. He was really, really good at his job. He had long hair, he was a hippie, and he had been fired pretty much for his hair. He had challenged the Park Service and he had gotten reinstated with all of his back pay and blah, blah, blah, blah. That was well before when I got there. So when he disappeared there was some thought that somebody/the Park Service was taking revenge or something. But actually, the theory is that he ran into some drug deal something and was taken away, thrown down one of those little chasms there and never to be found. But anyway, that happened probably the year after I graduated. I

wasn't working there. I was about to go to South America and work with some people who ran the Urubamba River in Peru and do some river guide training down there. I was leaving my Volkswagen, actually, at Paul's house when a friend of his called and told me that he had disappeared. That was really, really bizarre. I just got contacted like within the last year, they had reopened his case, contacted by the Park Service police. Of course there's nothing new that I could tell them and I don't know what new they had found out that triggered that reopening. It's an open case.

TM: So what were your duties at Chiricahua? What did you do?

JB: I lived in the...I think it was called the Sugarloaf lookout. It wasn't an active fire lookout, but you would hike like a half a mile up to the top of Sugarloaf Mountain. It was this beautiful little on-the-ground lookout tower. It wasn't a tower, it's just a little lookout house and I had that as my quarters. I was so lucky. I would come down every day. I was an interpretive ranger so I'd do interpretive programs in the campground and I was also doing resource management. It's kind of a bit of everything as a co-op student. It's a super good job. So I was helping Paul, helping the rangers. I did, for example, a peregrine falcon survey of Cochise...of that area.

TM: How many falcons did you see there?

JB: Oh, I don't remember.

TM: Were there just a few or were there a lot?

JB: I don't remember. Trying to think of what other duties. I do remember one time I was driving my little Volkswagen down the hill going to work and this fawn darted out, paralleled me for a split second, dove under my tire and I ran over it. So I ran back. It was alive. Picked it up and it had a broken back or something. Anyway, I'm there looking at it and I look up. Full uniform, I look up and here comes a tour bus up the road. I'm like, oh no, this is bad optics. But it was empty. It was just the driver. Anyway, I put the fawn in my trunk, took it down to the ranger station and the chief ranger took it out and shot it. That was really bad.

TM: Hmm. That's tough. That's very hard.

JB: It was beautiful there. When the monsoons would be happening there's a lot of waterfalls. It was a beautiful kind of oak woodland. Not a lot of visitors, very quiet place.

TM: When I think of monsoon season in a lookout, I think of the lookout ranger perched on a chair with insulators trying to avoid the lightning strikes on the building.

JB: Yeah. I just remember a lot of incredible sunsets up there, you know, just wow.

TM: So today the concept of the wall and illegal aliens is big on everybody's radar screen. Back then in the late 1970s still there were people crossing. The border was fairly porous. There were border patrol people around. Did you ever see any of that?

JB: No. Chiricahua National Monument surrounded, by Chiricahua's National Forest, it's not the first thing that you would come to over the border. So that's a bit insulated by the forest itself.

TM: Its further north. It's further up. If I was just trying to go north of Chicago, I would get on the road, I wouldn't go up on the mountains.

JB: So no, I didn't have any of that.

TM: Now this is a wilderness area. Wilderness Act passed in 1964 and so this is the late 1970s. And Chiricahua National Monument, I think, does have wilderness designation.

JB: Oh yeah?

TM: Did that factor into your manager consciousness at all at the time?

JB: No, no.

TM: Alright. [laugh] Do you know who the monument...

JB: Manager was?

TM: Would have been the manager or whether they were even called the superintendent at the time? I'm not sure.

JB: I think they were. No, I don't remember who that was, but I remember driving them home one time from a public meeting. I thought I was driving a stick shift, but I wasn't. I was driving an automatic and I slammed on... I went to put the clutch in [laugh] in front of his house to drop him off or something in a government vehicle and I just like slammed on the brakes. Anyway, I do remember that. I remember he was a nice guy. I don't think I had much interaction really with that guy.

TM: So for groceries it would be run down to Bisbee or up to Wilcox.

JB: Wilcox, yeah.

TM: So the northern end of the Chiricahua's is a mountain range called the Dos Cabezas.

JB: Yeah.

TM: And there is a long term family up there called the Klumps. Did that...

JB: Nope.

TM: Cause if you knew Klump stories, I wanted to hear those. And, of course, the Wilcox Playa was there.

JB: Oh yeah.

TM: A big dry lake. Did you get out on the playa at all?

JB: No, but I got my pilot's license there from this guy named Marvin Motes who lived in Wilcox. He flew an ag truck, as they call them. He was an agricultural sprayer. He had crashed numerous times. [laughs] He was a character and a great pilot. We ran out of gas one time actually in the air. I'm just like, hey, it's yours. [laughter] You were the one who didn't want to fill the tank up before we left.

TM: Where did you land?

JB: We just landed right back at the airport. We were doing just a little thing.

TM: Just sit it down and that was that? And the little propellers going pop, pop, pop and no power coming out of it.

JB: Yeah. So anyway, I got to fly around over the playa quite a bit.

TM: What got you into wanting to get a pilot license?

JB: Cause my dad was a pilot. He had taught me how to fly on the East Coast. So I just needed to finish up and get the license.

TM: How much time did you put in with Marvin?

JB: I don't know. Probably 40 hours, maybe. 30 hours. Good amount of time.

TM: And then did you solo?

JB: Oh yeah, yeah. I did my first cross country solo where I flew up over...I feel like it was Mount Graham. I flew up and over... It was the windiest day of... It was ridiculous. I never should have been flying. Flew to Safford and I was the only plane that had landed so far that day. I literally came down like this because I was into the wind, you know, and it was [laugh] pointed straight down.

TM: [laugh] Just sort of straight down with a little bit of forward motion, but not much.

JB: When I went up that high, I thought I was gonna [laughs] pass out. I remember saying to myself, do not pass out. [TM laughs] If ever you are not going to pass out, this would be the time.

TM: So you would have been at 10,000/11,000 feet, something like that to clear...

JB: It was just ridiculous.

TM: ...Mount Graham. Is it 9,000 something isn't it?

JB: Yeah. [sound effect] Going over it's like I should turn around.

TM: Were you like heading to Safford or something?

JB: Yeah.

TM: Out and back?

JB: Yeah. Just over to Safford. That was it. That was my cross country. So I did it. Check.

TM: Wow. In a little Cessna something?

JB: A little Cessna something, yeah. Probably a little two seater that he had.

TM: Tail dragger?

JB: No, no. I never flew a tail dragger.

TM: That's fun. What else were you doing down there in the Chiricahuas? Flying, you'd go to Wilcox for food.

JB: That's all. Just working, hiking around. There was no wine tasting. There were no vineyards or anything at that time. There was nothing.

TM: No Sandhill cranes.

JB: You know, I never went over to see the Sandhill cranes but I'm sure they were there. Don't you think?

TM: I'm not sure at the time.

JB: And Portal. Portal was the Southwest Research Station. That was a big deal. Still is.

TM: Did you go down there?

JB: Never went over. I might have gone over there once when I was working there.

TM: Did you go down to Cienega, that area down there near Sierra Vista down that side at all?

JB: No. Really didn't. Didn't really even go to Bisbee till much later. Just back and forth U of A to the job. Wilcox.

TM: So at this point it seems like you're getting close to graduating.

JB: Yeah.

TM: You're in this program that is tying you in with the Park Service. Were you pretty happy with how things were going that way?

JB: Yeah. When you're getting close to graduation, you start looking for a permanent position. You're kind of marketing yourself to different parks to see if anybody has a position, if they're interested. At that point I was qualified to be a resource management specialist. I ended up getting just a seasonal job, actually, at Lassen Volcanic National Park as a resource management specialist. While I was there, I was offered a position when Larry May—Larry May was the chief of resources at Grand Canyon—offered me a position as a resource management specialist at Grand Canyon permanent full time.

TM: Okay. Let's back up a bit because I realized I forgot something, which is boats.

JB: Boats. Yeah.

TM: When did you start getting interested in boats and boating?

JB: I went to Outward Bound. When I graduated from high school, that summer I went to Outward Bound. It was the first summer that they had Outward Bound on the Rio Grande and it was a disaster for Outward Bound. [laugh]

TM: This is the Rio Grande in Big Bend?

JB: Yes.

TM: In the desert, the tight canyon, twisting, lots of rock.

JB: Outward Bound in Big Bend. So there was everything. There's camping, there's climbing at the mouth of Santa Elena Canyon, and there's boating. There's rafting. It was paddle rafting that we did. So I learned how to... I was fascinated. I'd always been a canoer. My parents were canoers and stuff.

TM: So back up a bit because, from Massachusetts...

JB: And my father was a sailor. we lived on the coast so we were always sailing and stuff.

TM: Alright. Could you swim well? Did you like swimming?

JB: Oh yeah. I was a water baby.

TM: Okay. So then you came into it with a little more than the average bear because you were comfortable around water. And if you were canoeing, you knew actually how to read water if you weren't in lake and you were on a river.

JB: Right. We spent a lot of time on lakes and a lot of times sailing, but we also spent time canoeing down local rivers, especially the Ipswich River which was kind of our go-to there in Salem. Ipswich being nearby.

TM: So then in Outward Bound, it's a paddle boat. There's one person in the back with a little paddle as a rudder to steer the thing and the person in the back is shouting orders to the poor, poor people in the front who are either doing forward, backwards...

JB: Actually it was the Outward [laugh] Bound instructors who are pretty much in a canoe with a chicken tied to the gunnels or something.

TM: For dinner?

JB: Well, I think for dinner, but I don't remember them ever actually killing the chicken. So it meant us Outward Bounders were two and two on either side of this paddle raft.

TM: With nobody steering on the back?

JB: No, no. No.

TM: So you're having to talk to your mates right on the other side of the boat there. Forward, back, right, left.

JB: Yeah. I think we just ran Santa Elena Canyon. And so, you know, after that...

TM: So when I think of the Rio Grande, I think of Santa Elena Canyon. This is this tight limestone canyon with these boulders. And if the water is low, you have to turn the boat...

JB: Oh, it was crazy.

TM: ...up sideways...

JB: But fantastic.

TM: ...to get between the boulders. It's gorgeous. Sunrise/sunset is really pretty down there. But really, Santa Elena Canyon?

JB: I know. I know. Like the first day of this Outward Bound trip, maybe two people passed out from the heat. [TM laughs] Heat stroke, basically, cause these Outward Bound instructors had never had a class. And this was the summer at freaking Big Bend, right? So they were really figuring it out. I think maybe they changed up. You know, I met an Outward Bound instructor who was part of that initial Big Bend push and we were laughing hilariously about it. This was like in the last couple of years I met somebody and we were talking about this and how they were... I don't think they do Big Bend anymore. For me, it was great. I loved it. I loved that I learned, also, how to camp in the desert. Bare bones camping. Throw down an ensolite and just sleep. No tent, no nothing.

TM: Well, when it's 110 it's pretty easy. You don't need a tent and all that other junk.

JB: I totally agree.

TM: Then did you get into kayaking at one point or...?

JB: When I was going to school at U of A, I bought this piece of crap military life raft. You've probably seen these. It was like a 15 footer, but it had those double tubes and they're thin as paper. [laugh] I think I carved off that upper tube and then I turned the boat into a barge. Cause I liked the Rio Grande, some friends and I and Wayne was on this trip and Grizzly and Terry Soler and Dan Tobin. I'm trying to think who else. I think it was six of us. We went for two weeks on the Rio Grande. We did the entire thing from Colorado Canyon. From Lajitas, basically, all the way through Boquillas Canyon to the end in two weeks in the winter. [laugh]

TM: With the ice now.

JB: Oh, ice. You're like breaking through the ice and buckets... It was cold and it was windy and it's crazy. So that taught me a lot. I really liked rafting.

TM: So not so much kayaking, but more...

JB: Not so much kayaking. I think I got into kayaking when I met Glen Rink and did some kayaking with him.

TM: Which would have been in the 80s then?

JB: I think I met Parsons first and he came up to visit me. I was living on Apache Street working for resource management. In the 80s, right. '80 to '85.

TM: So this would have been '80 to '85.

JB: I met LB, Little Buddy, and then I learned how to kayak.

TM: Maybe this is a good place to wrap up Part 1. What do you think?

JB: Yeah. Yeah.

TM: Is there anything else before we do the final wrap up of Part 1 that you want to put into this section that we haven't talked about?

JB: No, no.

TM: Okay. Today is January 16th, 2019. This is the end of Part 1 Grand Canyon oral history interview with Jennifer Burns. And Jennifer, thank you so very much.

JB: You're welcome, Tom.