

**Transcription:** Grand Canyon Historical Society

**Interviewee:** Pat Grediagin (PG)

**Interviewer:** Tom Martin (TM)

**Subject:** Pat recounts her childhood, college, and early jobs at Canyonlands National Park in the late 1970s

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TM: Today is Tuesday, November 17, 2020. This is a Grand Canyon Oral History interview with Pat Grediagin. My name is Tom Martin. Afternoon Pat, how are you today?

PG: I'm doing well, thanks.

TM: Great, good to hear it. Pat, may we have your permission to record this oral history over the telephone?

PG: Yes, you may.

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

PG: 1955.

TM: And where were you born?

PG: In northern California.

TM: OK, there's a lot of northern California. Is there a town?

PG: I know, yeah. In Eureka. Sometimes I get a little worried about how much personal info might get out into the who-knows-where, but I'm sure that's out there already.

TM: OK. How did your dad meet your mom?

PG: They met while skiing in college. They both went to college in Eureka. There was a small ski area in the Coast Range just to the east and there was a college lodge. My dad and his buddies had built a ski lodge and so they crossed paths there.

TM: 1955, no, no. Did they meet before?

PG: Right.

TM: OK, when did they meet?

PG: I think '52 maybe, something like that. I think got married in '53.

TM: Wow, they were early into skiing.

PG: Yeah, right. My mom had skied when she was young on the east coast where she lived. I don't know, I think my dad just, with his buddies, decided they were going to figure out how to ski. They actually built a little rope tow with a Jeep motor that would run. There would be a pulley and they strung a big rope around and had this little rope tow that they set up on their own. It was this do-it-yourself thing for a little ski area. Yeah, so that's how they met. Then that became a place in the winter we would go skiing up at this ski lodge, stay with some of his friends and ski during my first ten years or so. Then we moved to Oregon. We continued skiing, but it wasn't there anymore.

TM: Your mom and dad were in college, what were they studying?

PG: My mom became a teacher, so I guess she studied education, and my dad had a major in wildlife management, something like that. But he didn't use that, he ended up deciding he didn't want to sit in a box somewhere and count peoples' ducks when they came out of the refuge or something like that. So he ended up in California being a timber cruiser. He always liked to be outside, so he was a timber cruiser. Then when we moved to Oregon when I was nine, he became self-employed and just built houses from beginning to end that we would live in for a while, and then he'd start another house and we'd rent the first house. We'd move in to the half-finished second house and he'd continue working on that. Then he'd start another one the next year. So it was that kind of occupation.

TM: Oh, that's kind of neat. So he was basically – he'd built a house, you guys would stay in it until he got the next house going and built, then he'd move you there and sell –

PG: Right. When it was half-constructed, we'd move into the next house, which worked out well when you've got a bunch of young girls who liked to pound nails in the walls to hang up their jackets and stuff, so that was...

TM: Oh that's fun.

PG: Yeah, it was. It actually was great, and he was home. He worked at home, so if we wanted to come home for lunch or something, we could come home, and Dad was there working on the house somewhere. So yeah, it worked out well.

TM: Nice. Did you have brothers and sisters?

PG: I have two sisters, and I am the oldest of the three of us. No brothers.

TM: Alright. So, then you were in school there in Northern California and then up in Oregon. Did you all do the station wagon summer vacation thing? Did you camp out as kids?

PG: Yeah, we did. We camped a fair amount. We did this epic, in my mind, trip as a fifteen-year-old one summer. Because my mom had summers off, we took the station wagon and a little tent trailer, and the dog, and the three girls, and the mom and dad, in a little Ford Falcon station wagon and we drove around the US. Took two-and-a-half months to do that. I can remember going into the desert. We hiked into Havasu when I was fifteen and camped down there. So we did a backpacking trip there.

TM: Wow, so this would have been 1970?

PG: Yeah, yup, 1970. I think I became really... I loved deserts right from the beginning. I was charmed by/enchanted by the notion of desert. Well, I was living in western Oregon and it was long, grey winters and I just decided that sunny, drier climates were really appealing to me. That's where I did end up spending most of my working career and I'm still very fond of deserts. So, I think it started with that trip.

TM: What do you remember about hiking into Havasu in 1970?

PG: Well, I'll tell you what I remember, my sisters and I were loving the idea of going swimming and getting... You know, when you're a young teenage girl, you like to sunbath and swim and explore, so we liked that. But my dad, even though he had spent much of his childhood and young adulthood and then married life with these camping trips on his own when he was younger or with us, he never got in the habit of carrying water. You didn't need it so much in Oregon or northern California. So we hiked into Havasu, and mostly I remember the hike out which it was June. It was really hot. He wisely thought, OK, we should at least wait until dark and hike out in the evening because it was stinking hot. But we didn't carry much water with us. Just something he wasn't used to or didn't think through. I can remember getting to the top, and we had this five-gallon jug of water in our tent trailer which was like 98 degrees hot and we just slugged that stuff down. It was the most awful stuff, but we were really quite thirsty. I do remember that quite well, as well as the fact that there was a rattlesnake in the trail. One of my sisters and I kind of went ahead of the other sister, mom and dad. I don't think we had a flashlight, and there was a snake crossing... Oh, well a rattlesnake rattled in the trail ahead of us, so we stopped and we're like, "oh my gosh, what are we going to do?" We finally figured out to toss... Because there was a little bit of moonlight and there were shadows so you could kind of see some stuff, so we tossed pebbles in the direction of the sound, and then it made the snake move and we could see it when it moved. So then we knew where it was, so then we went around it and continued on our way. But that was memorable as well.

TM: Yeah, gosh. So did you go swimming and go down to the falls and camp in the campground?

PG: Yep. Below Havasu Falls, as I remember, there was a campground.

TM: It was operated by the National Park Service at that time.

PG: Was it?

TM: Yeah, it was before the 1975 Enlargement Act.

PG: Wow. Well, I didn't know. At that time I didn't pay any attention to who operated it, but that's really interesting.

TM: Did you see a ranger down there? Did you see anyone? Did you talk to any of the...

PG: I can't remember. You know, I don't remember.

TM: And this was part of a two-and-a-half month tour around the country. Did you like go down the western coast and then into the deserts and off to the east coast and back up across the northern part of the country?

PG: Right, right. We went south and then east and went through Florida. My mom's grandmother was in Florida. She was in a nursing home. We only visited very briefly there, and then we went up the east coast and we went to Washington DC and saw *Fiddler on the Roof*. No, that was in New York City we saw *Fiddler on the Roof*. And then up into the Maine and New Hampshire area where my mom had grown up. Then across the northern tiers back to Oregon. Yeah, it was great. And I can remember being very curious, like I was an explorer, and I kept a journal. I'd say, "OK, the landscape is changing from trees to more grasslands here. Oh, there's cactus now!" I was just into what I was seeing.

TM: OK. Was that your first time out of Oregon and California?

PG: I don't think it was the first time out of Oregon. I had an uncle and relatives in the state of Washington. I know we went to Yellowstone when I was...I think before that. I think it was before that big trip. We mostly stayed in Oregon for our outdoor activities and our weekends and our trips. But we

did have relatives in Washington and in California still, so we would sometimes do family trips to visit relatives. I guess the Yellowstone trip was the main one that wasn't in Oregon and also not a family-oriented trip.

TM: OK. Did you all camp out, then, in Oregon in the summers?

PG: Yeah, right.

TM: Did you learn to swim?

PG: I did. I dog-paddled, basically, when I was young. With family, we'd be camping or swimming at a lake or something and I knew how to dog paddle. I don't know if I knew how to really swim more than that then. But then when I was in junior high, our PE classes had swimming as part of the curriculum, so we actually had swimming lessons as a class. That's probably where I learned to be a little more proficient with it.

TM: OK. Did you like sports? Did you get into sports at all?

PG: Yes. I was always basically pretty athletic, as were both of my sisters and my parents. I participated in track when I was in junior high, and then... When I was in junior high there were some good opportunities for girls. I think I was on a little basketball team when I was in eighth grade, or something like that. And we moved to a different town. Those years were in Philomath, Oregon, and then we moved to Albany in my high school years, and they didn't have as good of programs for women's sports. I was never a tennis player. I can't remember what I did there. Maybe I played soccer for a little bit. I just sort of dabbled in some of those kinds things. Never did a whole lot of formalized sports. But our family, we skied and we hiked. That would have been more of the regular things that I did throughout my life.

TM: So thinking about going back to that trip when you were 15, from Havasu you most likely would have then gone to the south rim of Grand Canyon?

PG: Well, I'm trying to remember if we actually went to the south rim. I'm not sure we did, and I don't know why we wouldn't have. I can remember that we camped at Boulder Beach in Nevada, and I was... Yeah, it was a beautiful evening and the moon was full and there was palm trees, and I thought, "Oh my god, this is heaven." Then I know we camped somewhere south of Flagstaff out...is it Lake Mary kind of to the south? I think we were out there somewhere in a Forest Service campground. And then I remember being in Lyman Lake, which is over on the east part of the state, I think. Maybe south of or north of Snowflake or whatever, somewhere in that area. So I'm not sure if we would have had time... I don't remember the South Rim, so I'm not sure we went there.

TM: OK. Did you like high school? Were you interested in school?

PG: Yes.

TM: What did you enjoy about it?

PG: Really, learning, I guess. I was a good student. I just sort of lapped up information and schooling. And I had some girlfriends and a high school boyfriend. But I'm not sure that it was the social thing so much as a just an opportunity to study and learn, I guess. I'm not sure, but it seems to me that's more dominant in my mind than seeing friends.

TM: OK. Were you thinking about going to college? Was that something that was sort of expected or encouraged in your family?

PG: It was encouraged. I don't even know if I would say... Yeah, I guess it was encouraged. It was not heavily... It wasn't like "you will go, you must do this." It was "you make good decisions, and we expect you're gonna make good decisions in your life, and college is probably something that's gonna work right out for you." I don't remember that I ever thought that I wouldn't go to college, but it did feel like it was my choice. It wasn't that my parents dictated it to me.

TM: What were you interested in at that time? College sort of focuses people, in a way, on some things. It doesn't have to, but it can.

PG: Yeah. Well, I was really unfocused my first year, other than the... It was like... Well, I grew up near Oregon State. Philomath is near Corvallis, Oregon State, but I wanted to go live on my own. I wanted to get away from home just because of the adventure of it. So I went to a college in southern Oregon. At the time it was Southern Oregon College, and now I think it's Southern Oregon University, in Ashland because they had a ski area there, and it wasn't living at home. So I went there and just did some general kinds of studies. Well, actually, I was in this experimental program that was called Living Learning, where they gave you credit for learning through living things versus sitting in a classroom being lectured to. There was maybe a hundred of us that were in a dorm. We could write some of our own classes and say I want to study this and this is how I'm gonna do it. We had some advisors that would approve it or not. But there also were other things that the advisors thought of and had classes or offered. One of the things that came up was that they would give us credit if we went and lived in another country. I was like, "Cool!" My mom's parents had spent some time overseas, and I also thought that sounded great. So when I learned that they would give me credit to go and live in Israel on a kibbutz for six months...and I'm not Jewish, but it just was a chance to go live somewhere else for six months. And it was gonna cost the same thing as if I went to school in Ashland because my lodging was paid for there. I didn't have to pay for lodging because we would work four hours a day, and then we'd have schooling four hours a day in this program that was really an intake program for people who were immigrating to Israel. But Southern Oregon gave me credit to go there for six months. So I got language credit and cultural credits and sociology credits. Just kind of things that would cover an experience like that.

TM: And did you go?

PG: I did go.

TM: Tell me all about it. How old were you? You would have been 18/19?

PG: I graduated from high school when I was 17, and I went the fall my sophomore year, so I was 17. I think I was 18. I went in October and there was a couple of...I think there was three others from this program that were in the same kibbutz I was on, so I kind of knew a couple people. But there was a lot of young people from all...international young people that were there. Some people were immigrating into Israel, but some people were just volunteering to live on a kibbutz. They were from Germany, or Switzerland, a guy that was an immigrant was from Russia, so it was very international cast there of characters, that probably fifty percent American or Canadian, I think.

One of the most interesting things was we got there in October of 1973 and I remember people saying to me before I left, "Oh, aren't you afraid because of the conflicts between the Israelis and the Syrians and Jordan." I said, "Oh no, not really." Well, three weeks later the Yom Kippur War broke out when I was there. What I can remember happening was that the men from the kibbutz left because they had to go and fight in the war. We had blackouts, so we had stuff on the windows so we wouldn't have lights. The kibbutz I was on was maybe 60 or 80 miles south of the Golan Heights. We would have air raid sirens that we were supposed to go into the bomb shelter if there was a plane that came our way. But

one of the tasks, I had a lot of different jobs while I was there, but one of them was to hoe cauliflower. We'd be out in the field and we'd hear the air raid siren go off, and the guy that was overseeing us, he's like, "nah, just ignore that." I think once we might have gone in an air raid shelter, but not that. There were several times that we didn't go. I'm pretty sure that one time I was just gazing off toward the north, towards where the Golan Heights were in the distance, and I saw this bright flash of light. What I interpreted at the time that I saw, was of a plane being hit and going down. So I felt like I was kind of in a country that was at war because of a lot of different things, but at the same time my daily life wasn't very altered. So that was interesting. Then that resolved within a week or two and life kind of went back to normal, although one of our teachers, her son died in the war. That was really unfortunate. But mostly we would work four hours and then have class for four hours. And there was a great cast of young people there that would get into mild trouble together, having parties and things like that. We took a couple field trips to Jerusalem and different places. On some of our days off, I remember going to Jerusalem on the local bus and spending a night there and wandering around. That was pretty much the experience. And then I came back in the spring and went back to Ashland and then finished up school, I think spring term there, I guess. Then I ended up needing to move back to Corvallis because I no longer had enough money to live in Ashland. I lived in my mom's apartment, my parents had separated at that time, and I lived with her in Corvallis and went to school at Oregon State for another two-and-a-half years because they didn't accept all... So I ended up studying recreation at Oregon State and got a degree in recreation, but it took me an additional half a year. So it was four-and-a-half years because not all the credits that I had from Ashland were transferable or counted toward my major, so I had to stay another extra two terms, I guess, to get everything wrapped up.

TM: Is that recreation planning?

PG: Well, they called it recreation management. They called it resource/recreation management, and there were several options, but the option that I was in was how to be a park ranger, basically. It was interpretation.

TM: Oh really? OK.

PG: And it really was how to be a park ranger. I hadn't focused on that my first years in college, but I had an incident before I got to Oregon State where I was backpacking with...I think it was my dad and my sisters and maybe I was somewhere in my 16/17/18, I don't know how old I was, but in my mid to later teens. We were in the Cascade Mountains in Oregon and this young woman came up to us, backpacking along with a uniform on, and she asked to see our permit. It was a Forest Service, they called them Wilderness Guards, I think, at the time. They just checked to make sure you had the permit. And then she walked off. I said, "Wow, she gets paid to do that. That's what I want to do!" Well, that idea got planted in me, and after I hung out in Ashland for a few years, and didn't really have a focus, I thought, okay, I guess I need to focus on something. I guess I'll go to Oregon State and get a degree in how to be a park ranger.

TM: And your dad, you mentioned that your dad had gotten a degree in wildlife management.

PG: Right.

TM: So you would have had some familiarity through it with your family.

PG: Yes. So wildlife is harder to see than trees. What I remember mostly learning from my dad was he taught me a lot of different trees because he had worked as a forester. So we would be driving from Corvallis across the mountains to Bend, Oregon, which is where I now live, but that's where we would base to go skiing in winter, or we'd go up into the mountains in the summer. You get bored when you're

a kid and so I'd start saying, "Well, what's that tree dad? Well, what's that tree?" And after a while, it got reversed because I started learning the trees, and he would say "Well, what's that tree?" And I'd say, "Oak." Yeah, so I remember being interested in learning about what trees were, or different plants, through him. I don't think I learned too much about wildlife through him.

TM: But certainly, that concept of resource management/recreation management sort of seemed to fit there.

PG: It was a good fit with me. I don't know that I particularly cared as much about... No, actually I loved learning. So, my courses were a lot of introductory courses to a lot of things, like introduction to oceanography, botany, wildlife, because they were preparing people to go out and have a fundamental understanding of how the natural world works so you could get a job as a park ranger and give interpretive naturalist programs in Oregon and wherever you ended up. It wasn't really geared for Oregon so they wanted to just give you a smattering of "this is the basic stuff." I loved learning all that basic stuff about different natural subjects.

TM: Mm hmm. Ecotypes, ecoregions. Flora, fauna.

PG: Yeah. But what I think was most attractive to me was the idea of just being out. Well, so when I got a job in Canyonlands... I graduated from college, I got a job in... No, I'm better back up. I graduated in March, 1977 and I didn't have a job. So I was like, oh now what am I going to do.

TM: Well, hang on a second. Before you graduate, how did you work it out financially? Did you get summer jobs? Did you get jobs throughout the year when you were working through college? Scholarships?

PG: Yeah. My parents helped me. They said they'd help with the first couple years. It didn't cost as much to go to college then. And I had had a summer job at a hamburger stand my last year of college [High School PG] and saved up a thousand dollars. I felt really rich. So between my money and my parents money, and then I did work in Ashland at the ski area actually, at the restaurant at the ski area. So I had some jobs. And then in the summer I worked at a resort in the Cascades. Then when I went to Oregon State, I did get a small scholarship, what they called work-study, where you worked on campus for different places. So I worked during college as well as the summers, between – yeah, during summers.

TM: OK. Alright. So you were working out the finances as well. It's like, OK, we need to kind of save and work and...

PG: Right. So I never had to have student loans, which was great. But I graduated poor. You know, everybody probably... College people graduate poor or in debt and at least I was on the only poor end of it and not in debt. So that was good.

TM: Right. You graduated and was ready for a job and had a little bit of money saved up. Did you have a car by then?

PG: Well, I guess I did. I don't remember. I must have had a car my senior year. Yeah, I don't remember. I know I had a car because I drove to Utah, but I can't remember quite when I had one. I guess I might have had one the last year or year-and-a-half of college. Because before that, I had lived close enough that I could walk to campus. I did have a car by the end, a Volkswagen Bug. So I graduated. Do you have any other questions before I launch into that phase?

TM: No, I think we're ready to go. Just trying to paint a picture of what you were interested in. You know, what kind of outdoor skills you had. So this is nice. And this is in the spring of 1977, you're graduating with a degree in recreation management.

PG: Right. Environmental interpretation was my option or focus, but I had no job. But I had seen these flyers for something called Student Conservation Association, and the job would be to be a Student Conservation Aid, which was SCA, commonly called an SCA. This flyer said that Canyonlands National Park in southeast Utah was looking for some SCAs to work there starting in March. So I saw that and knew I was going to be graduating in March, and so I said, "Aha! I'm going to apply because I love the desert. I love the idea of going to a desert, working in a park and I don't have a job anyway." This was a volunteer stint for three months where I would not go broke, but I wouldn't make money. They covered my expenses. They covered travel expenses to Canyonlands and back home. They gave me a stipend for food. The park provided housing. They gave me a uniform. So essentially they covered expenses.

TM: Like a per diem kind of thing.

PG: Yes, like a per diem thing for food and stuff. If I wanted to go skiing on a weekend, that was on my dollar. So I applied to that and got offered a job as a backcountry ranger in the Maze District of Canyonlands.

TM: Wow!

PG: That's what I said. Wow! You mean I get to get... Well, I didn't get paid for hiking around in the desert, but I got to go do it. So I thought that sounds great and I accepted. And I drove... Actually I think I ended up finishing my finals early. I didn't go to any kind of graduation, which didn't matter to me. I drove to Utah and I started my job as an SCA in the Maze. We started with a week of training, so I got to know some of the other...for the whole park, so I met people who were working in other districts as well. A lot of them were like in the Needles or based out of Moab. But I got to know a few people, which was nice, so that when I had days off I could go into Moab and sleep over at somebody's house that was also my peer, basically – a seasonal person or an SCA. Then we'd decide to go for a hike together. It became a pool of people that I did a lot of recreational stuff with over time.

TM: OK. Just thinking about the lay of the land here. Canyonlands encompasses the Green River and the Colorado River. They meet at a place called the Confluence, and then head down into Cataract Canyon. On the east side of the river is the Needles District, is that right? And on the west side, sort of the Green and the Colorado side, is the Maze. Is that...?

PG: Correct. There's a big Y that's in the middle of Canyonlands National Park, it's the Green and the Colorado coming together and then go south, mostly south. On the east side of all of the rivers is Needles, between the two rivers is the Island in the Sky District, and on the west side of the Green River and then the Colorado where they join together is the Maze District. It's the most remote district and the most undeveloped district. I was stationed at a place called Hans Flat, which is up on top of the Orange Cliffs, kind of west of the Maze proper.

TM: Is that spelled H-A-N-S?

PG: H-A-N-S. Right. Flat. I think... There's a little strip of Glen Canyon National Recreation Area that runs up the west side there.

TM: That's right.



PG: I think they manage what they call the Orange Cliffs, which is that higher chunk of land that Hans Flat was on. I'm not sure whether it still extended clear up to Hans Flat or not. I think we were just an isolated little island of Park Service administrative area surrounded by BLM, but we could have been surrounded by Glen Canyon up there. So you would drive south along the Orange Cliffs, go down the Flint Trail and drop down a thousand feet or something like that, and then kind of drive in a north-east direction on a plateau level there. I don't think its equivalent to the White Rim around... I don't think it's the same as the White Rim level and the Island in the Sky that people now bicycle a lot.

TM: Right, it's a little higher isn't it?

PG: Yeah, I'm trying to remember, but roughly speaking, it's kind of a halfway plateau between those high Orange Cliffs and down in the Maze, and certainly down into the river. There were road systems that went through there out to the Maze Overlook where you could hike down into the Maze proper. Or you could take another fork and drive out to Standing Rocks, kind of go further east to some needles-like spires of rock that were isolated there and you could end up at the Dollhouse, which was above Spanish Bottom.

TM: Right. And then beyond that is the Fins. There is some amazing, amazing country out there.

PG: Yeah, exactly, right. The Fins are on the southern part of the park there.

TM: Yeah, yeah.

PG: So my job... There was also the isolated Horseshoe Canyon component.

TM: OK, hold that thought for a minute: my job. So you went through a week's worth of training. Did they say, now go buy so groceries, because you're going to be out for a month or two?

PG: Right. Well, it was a three-hour drive to Moab. I think we worked ten days on and four days off.

TM: So three hour drive to Moab. That would be from Moab, you have to drive to Green River, Utah, cross the river, and then head south toward Hanksville or something? How did that...

PG: Yep, exactly. We went toward Hanksville, and then maybe 15 miles north of Hanksville, on whatever road that is, you would turn east and go by the big flat tops, and basically drive east to Hans Flat. The total drive time from Moab to Hans Flat was roughly three hours.

TM: And what was your day on/day off schedule?

PG: I worked ten days on and then four days off. So we bought ten days' worth of groceries when we were in town.

TM: So you'd go to City Market there.

PG: Yes. I think it's moved three times that I can remember. So it was three locations ago from what it is now. Yeah, City Market was the place to get groceries and go out there. Then I would go on patrols, I would be assigned to patrol in an area. The Park Service tried to have someone patrolling at Horseshoe Canyon daily because they have some really world-class pictograph panels there and they didn't want them to be vandalized. They thought it was just good to have a presence in the canyon. So they might send me there for just or day, but they might send me there for three or four days. It just kind of depended upon what was going on with the schedule.

TM: Did you have your own backpack? Would they send you out with a truck or a backpack and just say well here's...load it up?

PG: We had trucks. Yeah, we had trucks, so mostly I would go to a place with a truck. Actually, at that time you could drive down into Horseshoe Canyon. I would drive down in and just set up my camp out of the truck there, and just be there, pretty much. I would hike up to the pictographs, and then I would hike back, and if I saw people I would talk to them. I didn't see a lot of people there. It wasn't like it's a place that's real crowded. It was visited, but it wasn't heavily visited.

TM: Yeah, this is like Moab in 1977-'78. I'm like, you lucky woman!

PG: Right, exactly. So that was one place I would go. I might be assigned to go into the Maze. Then I would drive a vehicle down to the Maze Overlook and hike into the Maze, then hike around there for three days, maybe, or four days, whatever was in the schedule. So that would be a backpack trip. Or I might be sent to the Standing Rocks, the Land of the Standing Rocks, which you could drive out, and we would just basically car camp there at the Dollhouse or other places and do day hikes into different areas like the Fins or Water Canyon or different locations from there.

TM: Did you hike down to Spanish Bottom?

PG: Yes. Which is instrumental in my story of how I became a river ranger later. I'll get to that, but yes, we would hike down to Spanish Bottom and just do... I probably spent the night down there. Yeah, so especially if the river crew was coming along, I would be hiking down to Spanish Bottom sometimes to rendezvous with the river crew. There was the three districts that were the land districts, and then there was a fourth district in the park, or a sub-district at the time, I think, that was the river. There were river rangers that lived in Moab and did patrols. Once I started knowing people a bit, if I had heard the river rangers were doing a patrol through Cataract, and I was going to be down in the Dollhouse area... I don't think I did it a lot, but at least a couple times I think, I hiked down and camped with them. I had a great meal on the river and socialized. One of those times, it must have been June or something, it was hot, and that Dollhouse Trail down to Spanish Bottom is east facing, and in the morning they just toss all their stuff in the boats and go splashing down the river, and I heave my forty-five pound pack on and walk up the Dollhouse Trail with the sun hitting full blast on that face. I remember thinking, "Why am I a backpacking ranger when this river thing looks like it's so much fun." I can remember thinking, "I don't think I really like backpacking that much anymore. I think I don't want to do this anymore." I just remember that. I couldn't tell you if that was...

TM: Another SCA bites the dust going, "Hey. Why..."

PG: Actually, I'm way ahead of the story now because what happened was when I was an SCA, I later came back for two seasons as a seasonal there. So it was in one of my seasons as a seasonal when that episode happened. But the first three months, I was an SCA with the kind of tasks that I described. Really, I did the same work as the seasonal work. When I later came back as a seasonal, it was the same stuff. Then after I was an SCA there for three months, I had this summer trip that I had heard of in Oregon. At Oregon State some of the professors said, "We're going to try to put together this trip to go visit national parks in South America. Who wants to sign up?" I went, "I do!" So I talked my parents into covering the cost of this trip as a graduation present. So I had signed up for this trip that left from Miami. We met somewhere in Miami and we first went to Everglades, and we went to Biscayne Bay, and then from there, I think we spent... I don't remember how long the trip was, maybe a month, I can't remember now, but we went to Panama. I used to know this all, now I'm forgetting. I know we went to Panama, Venezuela, Brazil, Paraguay. That might have been it – and Costa Rica, I think. And then we returned to Miami. I ended up, after I was in the Maze, driving my Volkswagen Bug to Miami and meeting this group there and doing this trip to South America to look at parks. It was kind of interesting

to me from the park perspective, but it also was just travel. I loved the idea of traveling and seeing the world, so I had multiple motives – or, I guess, really, two motives.

Then I flew back into Florida and drove back to the west. That kind of took the bulk of the summer. I'm sure I had a few weeks on each end, but what I had done was signed up to be an SCA again in the fall in Canyonlands. Because I still didn't have a job that paid any money, and I didn't have anything scheduled for the fall, I said, "Great, maybe I'll be an SCA again." So they hired me on as an SCA, and this time I was in the Needles. So Fall of '77, I was an SCA in the Needles District, which had... Oh, one of the things I forgot when I was in the Maze, was that I did spend time in what they call the contact station there. They had a little trailer where people would stop and get permits to go into the Maze and we would tell them stuff about where water was and what the road was like. So that was another one of my tasks there. In the Needles, it was kind of similar, that I would be in the contact station, which was a little trailer, or we would be out on some kind of a patrol which might be a driving around, or a Jeep patrol, or a backpacking patrol. But it seems like I backpacked less there. It seems like I was more in a vehicle or in the contact station.

Although, what happened was that I was an SCA there for two months, and then during my third month a maintenance worker had quit or somehow there was a vacancy in maintenance, and they decided they needed this laborer. So they did an emergency hire and hired me on as a maintenance laborer. So I was officially paid at that point and no longer doing ranger kinds of things. I was doing things like painting the outhouse, and I don't even remember, maybe helping other maintenance guys with whatever jobs in the Needles District they needed to be tending to. They'd need someone to hold the other end of the 2x4 or something like that. It was easy and fairly lightweight stuff, but I was thrilled to have a paying job.

TM: Yeah. Can you tell me a little bit more about the concept of the SCAs? Because I'm thinking about seasonal 180 day job that doesn't go beyond 180 days, except in this case, the park doesn't have to pay anything except food and lodging, a place to stay, so it's really financially beneficial to the park.

PG: It is.

TM: You're right. They give you an area to do a rove in, they probably gave you a radio to stay in touch, so you really are a seasonal that doesn't cost anybody anything.

PG: Right. It's actually supposed to be where you are giving people some experience in what it's like to work in the park and to have ability to gain some skills while doing that. So it's not just about the park benefits. The SCA is also supposed to benefit by gaining some skills from their real world adventure working in a park. It's funded by something called the Student Conservation Association, who does look for grants; I don't know about grants, actually, I suspect grants, but donations. They get funding from somewhere, I don't know where. Donations, grants, funding. Then the SCA program will be in touch with parks, and say, "Do you have positions that you'd like to fill?" And they coordinate how much money do we have? How many positions can we cover? with different parks. They will agree to fund six three-month positions in a park, or twelve, maybe three each season or something like that. So the park kind of knows that going year after year, and just incorporates that volunteer pool into the whole work staff.

TM: And I would assume that the seasonals and the permanents get a chance to look at the SCA people and say, "Oh, we would like that person to work for us. Oh, we would not like that person to work for us."

PG: Exactly, yes.

TM: So they get a little exposure.

PG: It's like a foot in the door. It was a foot in the door for me so that after I was an SCA in the Needles, then I applied the next season, in the winter whenever the applications were being accepted, to be a seasonal in Canyonlands. I was offered a seasonal job in the Maze District. At that time, I don't think there was a 180-day limitation. There might have been some limitations, but it was a long season. I think it was seven months my first year. It might have even been verging on eight months. So I was offered that seasonal job in the Maze District, and I'm 100% positive it's because I had been an SCA there. They knew who I was, they knew that I could do the job, and I knew what the job was. So at that point it was a good fit. So it paid off.

TM: Now that we've got that landscape mapped out, you mentioned that your second SCA stint, a couple months out, there was this emergency hire came up for maintenance. How long did that last?

PG: It was just 30 days.

TM: Oh, OK. So you got a month's of pay.

PG: Right, right, yeah.

TM: And so then, did you say, I want to apply for a seasonal term then?

PG: Yeah, so that would have taken me into, I think it was September/October, it might have been about the middle of November, maybe November 10, that this whole SCA and then 30-day emergency hire thing ended. I can remember doing a backpacking trip in Grand Gulch at the end of that, and it was freezing cold. And then I basically didn't have a job for the winter. I had applied for a job for the next summer, for the year of '78, as a seasonal in Canyonlands, but I ended up going back to Oregon and waitressing in Corvallis, Oregon during the winter and living at my dad's house because, you know, I didn't have a job.

TM: Yeah, OK. And so was that... I would assume that that might have been kind of depressing. Because it's grey skies and you got a job waitressing, that's nice, but the desert's out there and you don't have a seasonal job yet.

PG: It wasn't terribly depressing. I don't remember being terribly depressed. Like, I didn't have a lot of options. It was nice to have a job, it was nice to have a cheap place to live, like no rent because I was at my dad's house. And I think that I must have been optimistic that I would get a job in Canyonlands, and so not be stuck there forever. And then I got to be at home for the holidays. I don't remember being depressed about it. I think it was like it was what it was.

TM: OK. Alright. It was working out.

PG: I got a job offer, and I was all excited, and went back to Moab.

TM: So then you would have filled out some sort of paperwork for that. Did you fill out applications for any other parks for any other seasonal jobs?

PG: I don't remember. I don't remember. I probably did just because that would have been the smart thing to do is cover your bases in case something went awry in Canyonlands. But I honestly can't remember.

TM: OK, and then when did that job start in 1978?

PG: Like I said, it was a long season, so I'm thinking that I might have... It was probably sometime in March. Maybe the first week of March? Yeah, and I think it went into most of October or through most of October. So I think it was March through October, roughly speaking.

TM: OK. You know Pat, we've been talking for almost an hour, not quite. I'm wondering if this might be a good place to stop this interview. We'll pick it up again when you leave Corvallis and head to Canyonlands for your first seasonal job in 1978.

PG: Sure, that sounds great.

TM: Do you have anything else you want to add to this section that we haven't covered that we should?

PG: I don't think so. I don't have anything else to add. If I think of anything overnight or whenever, we can fill it out tomorrow morning, but I think that's really pretty thorough.

TM: Good. OK, well, I always ask. "No, I wanted to tell you about this happened that was way back in there when I was in high school or whatever." You know, so we can catch that. Well, with that, this will conclude Part 1 Oral History with Pat Grediagin. Today is Tuesday, November 17, 2020. My name is Tom Martin, and Pat, thank you so very much.

PG: You're very welcome.