

**Transcription: Grand Canyon Historical Society**

**Interviewee:** Paul and Barbara Schnur (PS and BS)

**Interviewer:** Tom Martin (TM)

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TM: Today is the 4<sup>th</sup> of August, 2014 and we're here with Paul and Barbara Schnur. My name's Tom Martin and we're in our house in Flagstaff. And Paul and Barbara, I'd like you to introduce yourselves. Tell me the year you were born and please spell your names.

PS: OK, I'm Paul Leo Schnur, MD and I was born on February 15, 1936.

BS: I am Barbara Schnur and I was born on August 13, 1935.

TM: Thank you. Paul and Barbara, what I'd like to do today is focus on the June 30, 1956 airplane accident between TransWorld Airlines and United Airlines and Paul if you could tell me what you were doing at the park that summer and sort of set the stage for us.

PS: Ok, well let me go back and say that my family first moved to Grand Canyon in 1947. I'm pretty sure it was '46 or '47. And I was 11 or 12 years old at the time. I was born in '36 so I would have been 11 years old at the time. Went through grade school. When I got time to go to high school, there was not a high school at Grand Canyon so one would have to go to Williams or Flagstaff and live with somebody. But there was a boarding school in Utah where most of the kids from Grand Canyon and other national parks went. It's called Wasatch Academy. So I went to high school there, graduated from high school there. And then I went off to college. And of course all this time I'm living at Grand Canyon with my parents but going off to school. And so I started college in 1954 and I was at the University of Arizona in Tucson. But I would come home every summer and work for Fred Harvey. And so the summer of '56 was no different, I was in college but I would come home and I would work for the park, for Fred Harvey. And this summer... and I would work at different places. I would work at the Kolb... at the Lookout Studio one summer. One summer I even worked at the laundry, one summer I worked at the gas station pumping gas. But this summer I got a job as a bellhop at the Bright Angel Lodge which was a real plum job because you got tips. And my family had moved... Ok, keep going?

TM: Paul can you tell me a bit more about that job that summer as a bellhop getting tips. Getting tips doing what?

PS: Ok, let me just tell you this, that my family had moved away from Grand Canyon in 1954 because my father had left the Grand Canyon hospital and opened a practice in Sedona. So they were now living in Sedona but I still kept coming back from college and working at Grand Canyon. And I would bring

classmates, so I had a bunch of buddies that would come up and work at various places. This summer I got a plum job as a bellhop at the Bright Angel Lodge which was one of the best jobs that... summer jobs you could get at Grand Canyon. And I lived in one of the dormitories because my family had moved away. And the job, like any bellhop, entailed being at the lodge doing whatever they asked you to do in terms of taking ice to rooms. But mainly rooming patients, I mean not patients, I'm mixing metaphors now, rooming customers/clients. And they would make reservations at the Bright Angel Lodge. And of course the lodge was filled all summer long with reservations. There was never any open rooms. So people would drive up to the front of the lodge. And you're familiar with the lodge. There's a driveway in front of it. As you walked in the door, there's a long registration desk that not only registers people, but it also had a desk where they did, what where they took reservations for trips into the Grand Canyon - mule trips, bus rides, all the other things that Fred Harvey offered. And then if you remember looking at the lodge, and it's not a lot different today. If you looked at the desk and you looked straight ahead there's this gorgeous fireplace that Mary Colter designed. The last time I was up there it was all covered up because they were remodeling it. To the left a little bit as you go around the corner there is an opening in the wall, and it's the bell stand. And next to that, and they don't have it now, was a gorgeous copper water fountain/drinking fountain. And then if you go down the steps to the left there was the bathroom. But the bellhop stayed at this check station that's still there. You can see it, they opened the doors. There was a half door covered with copper. And we would hang out inside. We wore uniforms. We wore Fred Harvey uniforms. They were, if I recall they were, I guess the color you'd know today would be burnt orange that the University of Texas has. About that color. And you had epaulets and you had brass buttons. It was all very formal looking as a bellhop. And we hung out there. So... yes, we wore a cap, we wore a cap. We had as I recall, it looked like a bellhop cap, you know sort of round. And so as the customers would check in, the desk clerk would call us. We would go with the customers out to their car and direct them to which cabin they were staying in. Usually we would walk down there and they would follow us in their car. We would then have 'em park in front of the cabin and we would help them carry their bags in and then stand there with our hand out. It wasn't quite as common tipping in those days as it is today. So we had to work a little bit for the tips. But, you know the better you were, the happier you were, the more affable you were, the more you told them about the Grand Canyon, and then told them about things, the better off the tips were. It just so happened that one of my buddies who I'd grown up with worked every year at the Bright Angel and he actually put himself through college working as a bellhop there. He made enough money in the summer time to pay for his tuition, room and board at the University of Arizona.

TM: Who was that Paul?

PS: His name was Phil Leeks he's not alive now. His father was a baggage man for the railroad so he didn't have the money to put him through. But my father was a doctor so he could afford help me out with the tuition, this supplemented. But Phil actually put himself through college by working as the bellhop. He helped me get this job. So, those were our day to day activities. And we had different rotations, sometimes we'd come on at 6:00 in the morning and work until 3:00 or 4:00. Sometimes we'd come on at 10:00 and work until 10 or 11:00 at night. We probably had a bellhop there from six the morning until maybe 10:00 at night. There may have been somebody there all night. And I think, if I remember right, it was one of the permanent bellhops who worked year round who would do the night shift.

TM: Did you have tour buses coming in?

PS: Oh sure

TM: Then you'd have to deal with a lot of baggage all of a sudden.

PS: When the tour buses would come in, yes.

TM: Coming and going? Did you help them load back up again?

PS: We would but usually everybody would come out and help with that. We'd have multiple people. But during the day they'd be just one or two on at the desk.

TM: OK

PS: And then we'd take, we didn't do food service. Somebody else did food service. But we would take ice or other things that people wanted that were there. So that's what I was doing for the summer. It started as soon as college let out, probably beginning of June maybe even in April and worked till the end of August. And then there were other people that worked year round but they were small in number. So that was basically the job description for that summer. Now you want to talk about the day of June the 30<sup>th</sup> as I recall. Okay what was day like, any other day? Let me preface that by saying I wasn't a pilot at the time. I ultimately got my pilot's license and got to know the flying people there. But, I had gone up in one of the Hudgen's planes. I'd think it was the old Ford tri-motor for my first flight where we flew over the Grand Canyon as a sightseeing passenger. So I knew about the Hudgen's because the Hudgen's also had their home base in Tucson near the airport in Tucson. I didn't know them well at the time. But this day was like any other day. Things were going on as suspected. And we started hearing about this possible plane crash over the Grand Canyon. That there was information. We didn't have television. There was no television. We had radios but I think the only station we could pick up was Flagstaff and Williams. They were fairly local stations. There had been news about a crash over the Grand Canyon. I can't remember the exact time of day, but it was sometimes into the afternoon. And that it had been covered by Hudgens. And I sort of didn't know what to make that, you know, planes of that size. But then the most impressive thing to me was the media arrived. Media from everywhere.

TM: Was that that night or the next day?

PS: No, it was probably the next day. I don't remember that, because they had a long way to come. Some of them didn't come in for two or three or four days. They came in from New York, they came from Los Angeles, they came from places like Albuquerque, Tucson, Chicago. All these reporters from big name newspapers. There was television, not at the Grand Canyon. There were reporters there. There were photographers there. A lot of media photographers, some video photographers. And then later on people, media was arriving from London, and from Paris, and from international. And the most significant thing about it was it created a madhouse. Because number one, there was no place for them to stay. All of the rooms were taken by people, by tourists who had reservations. There wasn't anything open to stay. And number two, there wasn't any transportation available for them. They got there by train. They got there by flying into, the airport that was being used at that time was the Valle airport. And, at some point in time there was public flights, not chartered flights but scheduled flights into Valle. But I'm not sure there was that, I can't remember for sure.

TM: Would this be Valle as it is today or was the Red Butte airstrip going?

PS: Yes. The Red Butte airstrip was there but it was only being used, it was essentially a private airstrip. The Hudgens were there. I didn't remember that, but at the dedication I talked to the son, the Hudgens son. He was there and he told me that he was a little boy and he was living there in a house that the Hudgens were living in. I didn't know that until he told me that. But I do know that it was the airport that was being used for sightseeing but not for commercial.

TM: Thank you

PS: But the Valle, there was flights into the Valle [airport]. There were TWA flights into the Valle at some point in time. And I don't think at that time. It may have been earlier or later. I'm not sure about that. But charter flights could have come in there. People came by rail, mostly they came by train. Or they drove, you know. They might have flown into Phoenix. But earlier this was before jet aircraft. To fly across country. When I was a freshman in college in 1954, my roommate was from New Jersey and he invited me home for Christmas. We flew from Tucson to Newark, New Jersey in a TWA Constellation like one of the ones that crashed. And it took about 12 hours. We couldn't do it nonstop. We had to stop in Chicago to refuel because it was so slow. Any reporters who came by air would have had to travel a long time. And then if they flew into Phoenix and rented a car it was a long drive up there. And there were not many car rentals in those days. In fact I don't even remember car rentals. At that time to drive from Phoenix to Grand Canyon was 6 or 8 hour or even longer drive. So it was a long time to get up there. But they showed up, all these people showed up. And miraculously

TM: I'm just curious, did Fred Harvey, did anybody have an inkling that they were coming?

PS: Certainly not before the crash. And then I think it was a matter of them walking up to the desk and saying "I need a room."

TM: Got it

PS: And the desk clerk saying "I'm sorry sir we don't have any rooms, there are no rooms available." And they would say "Where can we find a place to stay?" And they'd say "There's no place to stay here." And the media are not shy so they started demanding places to stay. And I think Fred Harvey, I can't remember exactly what they did, but there was a lot of finagling and moving. I don't think they were cancelling reservations of tourists. They may have because people found places, the media found places to stay eventually. But they didn't have any transportation. And as we were just talking, the center of search and rescue, although I don't think it was called search and rescue then, was out of the Red Butte airport. Which is how many miles from Grand Canyon? 10 or 12? I mean it was a good drive. It's not something you could walk or drive

TM: That's right

PS: It's not something you could walk or ride a bike. These people didn't have any transportation. There were no rental cars there. There were no taxi's there. Fred Harvey had cars and busses but they were all being used for tourists. They didn't want to interrupt the tourists that were coming there. So these people needed to be able to get back and forth and they needed to be able to get around. At that time Basha's was... not Basha's, it was Babbitt's store was where you could buy stuff. And they needed to get to places where they could file their reports by telephone. So those of us that had cars, I was fortunate that I had an old 1950 Ford that I'd gone to college in. So I had this 1950 Ford. So I and other of the bellhops and other people around would rent our cars. I mean we didn't rent them to them, we drove

them. We acted as chauffeurs. They paid us. I can't remember whether we fixed prices or we just told them whatever they thought it was worth. When I wasn't working, I still had to work, but when I wasn't working I would run people back. I would hang around the Bright Angel Lodge or even go up to the El Tovar. They would say, you know, "I need to get out to the airport", "I need to get down to Babbitt's store". I and others would run them around in the car.

TM: How did that work Paul? How did you connect with the fact that these people were milling around looking for transport?

PS: Well, they would come around to the bellhop and say "I need to get out to the airport", "How can I get there?", "Where can I get a cab?", "Where can I rent a car?", "Where can I find transportation?" And I would say "Well I have a car, I could take you out there during my lunch hour. Or I could take you out there at a time." And then I'd start doing it. And they knew that I had a car so that they'd come to me and say "Can you run me out there tomorrow morning". Other people that had cars would do the same. So it was really word of mouth that we would connect with all these people. And then usually I would head out to the airport with one person and 3 or 4 more would come up in front of the Bright Angel Lodge and say "If you're going to the airport can I go with you?" And I remember the frustrating thing in taking them out to the airport was that I'd get in the middle of all the conversation because the search and rescue or the investigation as we know now, and this was kind of vague at the time, Hudgens really discovered this. He went out in the morning with a tourist group and saw some smoke and thought it was a fire and came back. And then when he heard that these planes were missing he went back out and found the wreckage. So soon on we knew where the wreckage was. And when we went out to the airport there was just a lot of discussion about how to get down there. Planes were flying over. I remember them searching to see if they could see any movement down there with the idea that there were any, anybody still alive. They flew over. No helicopters then. It was just fixed airplane, fixed wing airplane. There was a lot of discussion about trying to fly over and see if there was any movement down there. And as I recall after a day or two they decided that they saw no movement. So that there was no survivors that they knew of. But they still wanted to get people down there. And I remember, I don't remember the Swiss climbers that came. I've learned about them before. But I knew that they were trying to get people down and it was a remote area and it was not near any of the trails. I knew the trails because I had hiked the trails a lot. And I knew it wasn't near any of the maintained trails. And then I do remember all this discussion about getting a helicopter. There weren't any helicopters available in northern Arizona but they could get one out of Fort Huachuca. That was a military down there, that was the army and there was army aviation down there. They had to truck the helicopter up because I don't think it could fly up or at least they didn't want to fly it up so they trucked the helicopter up. I do remember the helicopter coming and I remember just one helicopter, I remember. A lot of discussion about who was going to go down in the helicopter, the preparation to go down in the helicopter. I've subsequently seen pictures of this helicopter. I don't remember it at the time. I just remember a helicopter, but I've seen pictures of it. It seemed like a fairly sophisticated helicopter. It had double props. It looked like the modern Huey, like an older version of the modern Huey. So that's a pretty substantial helicopter. But I remember 'cause I was out there with these reporters. And I remember they all wanted to get on this helicopter. Every one of them was demanding that they get on the helicopter. "I'm from the New York Times. I got to get on." "I'm from the London..." whatever the newspaper is in London. "I'm from the LA Times", "I'm from the Wall Street Journal", "I'm from ABC, NBC. I need to get on this plane." So finally I remember, after all this discussion and a lot of shouting and brow beating,

that they sat down and they said "OK". And I don't know who decided this. Obviously whoever was heading up the whole operations said "We'll take one reporter and we'll take one photographer and you guys decide who that's going to be." So there was a lot of scrambling there. "I'm the biggest newspaper", "I'm the most important newspaper", "I'm the biggest magazine". So finally after all this discussion they sat down and drew straws for one photographer and one reporter. And I don't remember who they were. I can't tell you who they were. So the first helicopter flight that went down took one reporter and one photographer down. And they went down and they landed. They were there for I'm not sure how long. But then when they came back they confirmed that there was no survivors, that everybody was dead. But then all of the reporters and photographers got together to share the information with the two who went down there. Then that went out to the media all over. They sent it all out by telephone, they got to telephone file their information.

TM: Did you know if they jammed the phone system out of the park? Because there must have been just a few lines going out of the park at the time.

PS: I don't remember that as a specific. But living at Grand Canyon was really primitive in those days. I would suspect that that could have been a problem. Certainly no cell phone then. So then as time went on and there were more helicopter flights that went down, I think they took more reporters and more photographers down. This went on for two weeks. Just exactly two weeks. Every day running people back and forth whenever I wasn't working lunch hour or on a break. Whenever I had a coffee break for 15 minutes I'd run somebody out and run somebody back. It was fairly lucrative for a young college student. Then suddenly the reporters were all gone. Two weeks, they just disappeared, overnight. Any idea why? What do you think happened two weeks after the crash?

TM: Help me Paul

PS: Ok, it was another bad crash. It was a ship collision off Nantucket. It was Andrea Doria and the Stockholm. They had a huge mid-ocean collision of these two ships with injuries and a lot of problems. So the reporters virtually were gone within a matter of 6 or 8 hours. They were/we were down to nothing by this time because by this time pretty much everything had been sorted out. They knew there were no survivors. They were starting to plan evacuations. I think evacuations were underway. So the big stories had been told. I'm sure some/a few reporters stayed but all the big-time reporters were gone. We were sort of back to normal in terms of that activity. But, the feeling of the people who lived there was pretty traumatic. The people who worked there, the people who worked in the restaurants, that's who/we were all... There were people who worked for the railroad, people who worked for Fred Harvey, or people who worked for park service. And that was virtually all the people who lived there. They were pretty traumatized. I'm trying to remember just how everybody felt. But I'm sure it was like New York after 911. That sort of we'd been violated by this accident. All these deaths have occurred in Grand Canyon, the peaceful, wonderful Grand Canyon. You know, we all have one objective at Grand Canyon and that's to give the tourists... I say one objective, the park service has another objective. They have to maintain the park at certain levels. But certainly Fred Harvey and the railroads and even the park service, their primary objective is to making it a worthwhile experience for the people who are coming there to visit. And certainly there were not as many people in those days as there are today that came and visited. But relatively speaking there were a lot of people came. They came by train. Lots of them came by train. But that was in the transition from everyone coming by train to everyone coming by car. We were sort of in the transition where the train would come in every morning and it would be full.

But there'd be lots and lots of cars that were coming and people that were staying there. We had to continue on taking care of these people and yet deal with this terrible thing that has happened and all that went on. And then as I recall, as the summer went on it sort of quietly became part of the scene and life went on after a number of weeks and most of the bodies had been evacuated. They were then thinking about clearing up the wreckage. That became more in the background discussion. Certainly I wasn't involved in that working for Fred Harvey at the Bright Angel Lodge. So that went on and the summer went on and by the end of summer, by the end of August beginning of September, I went back to college. It's been an indelible memory. Barbara can tell you that all the time we've been married, which is 51 years now, she's heard about this accident. It comes up in conversation. It wasn't, it didn't really take such a front place in our lives again until this time for it being made a National Historic Site came up and we were invited to come as being part of the Historical Society and volunteer and meet the people. So for the very first time, we met the families of these people. I had the experience at one of the dedications of meeting one of the sons of one of the passengers who told me that he came up as a child with his family and stayed at Bright Angel Lodge. I was very surprised at how he got a room at Bright Angel Lodge. I can't tell you this for sure, but the Harvey people must have done some maneuvering to try to take care of everybody.

TM: So that was the first time, that was this summer, that you were aware that there was actually family at the south rim in 1956.

PS: Yes, I had no idea that the families had come. Even though I was there and I was working at the Bright Angel Lodge, I did not/do not remember that families came, families of the passengers/families of the victims. It wasn't until this gentleman told me he had been there as a child that I realized that the families were there.

TM: Do you know if the park service or Fred Harvey or the railroad put any people up, reporters or family in their houses? I'm just trying to figure out where all these people went.

PS: My family wasn't living there at the time. We had a house on Navajo Dr. but somebody else was living in that house by the time this happened. I was living in the dormitory. I do not recall people staying in homes. I do know that these people all got put up. Another summer I worked at Kachina Lodge. This was the summer before this summer. I worked at Kachina Lodge. And if you remember Kachina Lodge at that time, it's had different names. Grand Canyon Inn it was called. But when I worked there it was called Kachina Lodge. It was the lodge, it was on the old mine/uranium mine.

TM: It was up on the hill

PS: Yes, it was on the west rime drive. I worked up there, in fact I managed it. I was in high school and I managed the lodge for the summer. My parent's friends had bought the lodge and they were looking for a manager.

TM: Oh my gosh

PS: So here I was, a senior in high school and they asked me to manage it. It's hard to believe I was managing the bar and I couldn't drink. But anyhow, so I faced all summer long this thing about people coming rolling in at 6, 7, 8:00 at night without a place to stay. We were completely full. So we put up tents in the back. We had probably 8 or 10 tents that were like old army tents with wooden sides in the tents and they had a bunk in them. We'd finally say "we don't have any rooms but we do have a tent. If

you want to stay in a tent then you can use the bathrooms in the lodge.” We’d usually fill those tents up. So there may have been something like that. There may have been tents put up somewhere or some sort of. I don’t remember that but I do remember they were all there and they had a place to stay eventually. But it was maybe 2 or 3 days of turmoil because there were no places for them to stay.

TM: Do you have any other observations of what was happening, what struck you as curious or interesting out at the airport when you’d take the reporters out there?

PS: There was a lot of activity going on out there. There were a lot of planes there. The Hudgen’s were there. I think they were involved but I don’t think they were running the operation. I think the military was there. They had military aircraft there. I later got to know that airport better because I became a pilot and I flew my small airplane. I never landed at that airport but I’d fly over that airport on the way to landing at the new Grand Canyon airport, or landing at Valle. But I do remember lots of aircraft there. I remember this episode of the helicopter: we need a helicopter, we can’t get down there without a helicopter. Can a helicopter get down there? Everybody was aware of all the drafts and the squirrely winds that occur down in Grand Canyon and the fact that an aircraft can get down and get caught in down drafts and not be able to overcome the downdrafts because they don’t have enough power. I think there were a lot of anxiety about that with the helicopters. But obviously, as we talked about this, the helicopter in retrospect that they had was a pretty beefy helicopter. That may be why they trailed it up because they needed a military helicopter with the most amount of power. I can’t remember, I can’t visualize the helicopter, but I remember seeing the helicopter there. I didn’t know about airplanes or helicopters. I’m much more interested now or at least when I started to fly. But I remember a helicopter. I don’t think I’d ever seen a helicopter before. That was the first time I’ve ever seen a helicopter.

TM: Do you know who the doctor was at the south rim at the time?

PS: You know you asked me that question once before and I should have found the answer but I don’t. When my dad left they had two or three doctors in succession that didn’t stay very long. Right at that time, obviously there wasn’t any need for medical attention except for some of the reporters or anybody that was there that might have been hurt or gotten sick or whatever. I’ll find that out and let you know.

TM: I just kind of wondered what the impact was to the hospital staff once they heard this disaster happened. What did they do to spool up for this and then to stand down when there were no survivors.

PS: It’s possible there was the doctor there. And it’s possible that it could have closed as a hospital by this time because I know after my dad had left they had a couple of doctors there that just didn’t work out, it wasn’t a good fit. There may have been a period of time in there when they had decided to just run clinics and not have a hospital. I can maybe find that out and get that information available.

TM: OK. How do you think the accident affected the people of the community?

PS: As I said before, I think the community was devastated. The community sort of focused on taking care of tourists and this was something totally different. I think that at first it was an accident of such proportions that it was hard for people to fathom. Two huge, for that day, aircraft colliding over the Grand Canyon and people and bodies falling into the Grand Canyon. Certainly there was the sadness for... I think we thought about their families who were in far distant places. As I say, I certainly wasn’t

aware that the families were there. But I'm sure other people were aware that they were there. I'm not sure exactly what all they did while they were there. Whether they were involved in identifying the bodies. Because ultimately the two grave sites, the two mass grave sites in Flagstaff and Grand Canyon, occurred and there must have been a lot of preparation for that which I was not involved in so I didn't have any appreciation of that. Certainly there was this sadness. There was this feeling that how could something like that happen over the Grand Canyon? I think there was anger that these planes collided. Why should they collide? Why did two commercial airlines have such an accident, when at that time we had modern aviation. Even though it wasn't jet. I think we all knew that airplanes flew 'cause we'd see them. We certainly knew about little airplanes because the old Ford tri-motor was a standby. That was almost a joke. It was a funny looking airplane. It was made by Ford. It was made out of corrugated aluminum. It was almost a comical airplane. But it was the ideal airplane for sightseeing over Grand Canyon because it'd cruise at 50 miles an hour and had big windows in it. So we were all aware of that aviation. I think the big aircraft... We just didn't think much about them. The people I think were pretty devastated by it. They were said sad, it was probably a little bit like New York City after 9/11. Although it wasn't local people that were killed. Whereas in New York City it was the New York City people who were killed. It was brothers and sisters of people who lived there. Here, they were all distant and unknown. So they didn't have a personal feeling. I think you could just think about people laying in the bottom of Grand Canyon all torn. Then there were stories of finding watches, and finding wallets, finding all the paraphernalia around that were attached to those people. Now, we're sort of used to huge aircraft accidents like that. Still, it's the safest means of travel. But when it happens it's always big news. There's always a lot of detail and the media loves to take an aircraft accident and look at every single detail in the aircraft accident. And show pictures of sadness and small details that evoke emotion as part of the media. I think we all had that then maybe for the first time. Those of us who were living then and were old enough, I was 20 years old, remember World War II. We remember all the people who were killed and all the devastation during World War II. This was small potatoes to that. This was 10 years after the end of World War II. We all listened to the radio and heard about all the troops that were killed. We saw pictures in Time magazine and Life magazine. We'd go to the movies and they'd have these movie reels that would show the devastation of the war. So we were used to that. But this was close to home and it was not a war, this was an accident. So I think it traumatized them. But it didn't last a huge, long time. It's certainly not like New York City where here we are 12 years, 13 years after that accident and it's still probably as real in people's memories in New York City as it was two years after. I think people gradually, when it got cleaned up, we got back to their normal routine because it wasn't loved ones, people who lived at Grand Canyon village. We got over it, we got back to taking care of tourists and seeing that they got a nice experience. They got the mule rides, and they got bus rides, and they got the chance to see the canyon.

TM: Yea, that makes sense. So this summer was the dedication of the National Historic Landmark. What are your thoughts on who you got to meet and how did this dedication impact you?

PS: Let's ask Barbara, she made one of the first contacts. Since Barbara and I are members of the Grand Canyon Historic Society, we got called to volunteer. So we volunteered to help at one of the first receptions on the 30th. And we found out that there was going to be the ceremony at both the Flagstaff and the Grand Canyon airports, I mean gravesites. Since we were living in Sedona we thought it would be better to hit the Flagstaff one 1<sup>st</sup> and then head on up to Grand Canyons. So, we drove up to the

Flagstaff one. I didn't know where it was. I'd never seen it. I had no idea it's basically on the NAU campus.

TM: The Citizens Cemetery

PS: I thought I was going to the back of a dormitory, and there's the cemetery. And there's the mass site. I'd never been there. I knew about it, I'd seen pictures of it. I knew it existed but I'd never been there. We got there and ask Barbara, she made the first contact.

BS: May I say that Paul and I were married. We met in 1961. I was not on the scene here in Arizona in 1956. We were married in 1963. We have been married 51 years.

PS: We were almost married to the day of the accident.

BS: On June 29 1963. So for all of these years I have heard many, many, many times Paul talking about the accident at the Grand Canyon. It really is, and was, very much a part of his memory and in his thoughts. On occasion we had attended some talks. One in particular in Prescott at the museum when these talks were given about the accident. Paul made it a point that he would attend because, with me of course, because this accident was very much a part of his memory. It affected him emotionally in a different way than the children of the passengers and crew. But nonetheless, it affected him. So when he told me that this site would become a national landmark and that we were invited to participate, he was very much interested in being a part of this event. As he said, we first went to the cemetery in Flagstaff on our way to the Grand Canyon on that day. First person that I met and said "good morning/hello" introduced myself, and she said "I'm so-and-so and my father was the pilot of TWA flight 2. So you can appreciate how I felt thinking of the strong, strong emotions of the day. So, that day plus the day that followed, was it July 8?"

PS: I think it was July 8

BS: Those two days

PS: That was the official dedication

BS: Yes, the official dedication certainly will remain with us forever. Especially to me because now I have experienced a little bit more of the actual happening. We heard, in those two days, of the experiences. Many of them were children who have this memory edged in their minds or memory. And will stay with them, of course, forever. That's all I wanted to say.

PS: Following up on that we did have a chance to make contacts with some of the families. At the Flagstaff cemetery they asked the families... Were you at the Flagstaff one?

TM: No, I was at the one here at the cemetery on the South Rim.

PS: OK. The Flagstaff one was very formal. The park service almost made it like a military one. I'd never seen park service rangers march and salute. I never thought of them and as para-military. They went through the commands and they carried the guns and they carried the flags just like military salutes would be. The superintendent wasn't there, an assistant superintendent there was conducting this. He asked all of the family members to come up and take a rose and put the rose on the grave. Then he asked if they wanted to say anything. This lady that Barbara befriended, the daughter, she went up. They all said a word or two, not a lot. Then a gentleman went up, he had gray hair with a gray beard.

He started talking about losing his father in that accident. With tears in his eyes and a shaking voice, he talked about how it affected his life not having a father, growing up without a father, and living a fatherless life. How it made his life less than what he would have wanted it to be. Really emotional. Barbara asked me if I wanted to say anything considering the fact that I was there. I thought that that was so insignificant compared to what they experienced that it was not a proper thing to do. Go up and say I was there and participated in the things but it was... compared to what they experienced. When we had the reception, you were at the reception up at Grand Canyon, there were several people who told their story. There was a lady who beautifully wrote the story but sadly told how it affected her life. There was another gentleman who got up and spoke extemporaneously about how it had destroyed his life. His mother was killed in an automobile accident and his brother committed suicide. That really brought things home. Then in the July one there was a fellow that had written a book called Going In or We're Going In.

TM: Yes, I think that's right

PS: He wrote a chapter, he read a chapter out of that. I was taken because I... The other thing it brought home was the connection these people had. Surprisingly enough a lot of them worked for TWA. They were part of TWA and they were flying on this aircraft from Los Angeles to Chicago because they had operations in both places. This fellow who wrote the book was a Chicagoan. I love Chicago, I spent a lot of time in Chicago when I was working on my professional association because they had a course in Chicago. I love the Chicago accent. Everybody that lives on our block in Scottsdale is from Chicago almost. He's a very typical Chicago fellow. He wrote this article, the book he wrote he read a chapter from. A very Chicago oriented, look at the event and the effects it had on him. It really brought back the profile and the effect that it had on all these people who were members of the family.

BS: And I might add the effect that it had on Paul.

PS: One surprising thing to me was that it would be made a national historic site.

BS: Landmark

PS: You usually think of it as something marking a historic thing that's maybe upbeat and creative and adds to society. This added to society but in a very negative way. At first I really was surprised that they would make it a national... And then I was surprised that there were 8 or 10 national historic sites in the Grand Canyon.

BS: Landmarks

PS: Landmarks, yeah. And then as I thought about the significance and the history of this, it's going to have a very different effect on people when they see this as opposed to some other sites. But I guess if you go up to the Little Big Horn where Custer was annihilated, is a fairly significant historic site because it's certainly talked about in history extensively. And I think this site will be too.

TM: It seems what we need to remember, yes it was a national tragedy but it spurred Congress on, finally, to start the Federal Aviation Administration. And, the skies today are as safe as they are, as you mentioned there's no safer way to travel, because of this tragic loss. So we honor these people and their families. The Gandy's, Captain Jack Gandy, his daughter, the TWA pilot. We honor these people and their sacrifice for future generations of the country and all fliers around the world. A huge

significance in that regard. I think that may be how the park came at it. They went “Wow, this is a really big deal.”

PS: Yea, it's certainly been a big deal and what it's done for aviation. One of the things that I was a little surprised and I anticipated was that with all these family people there that there might be an animosity between the families of the passengers and the families of the pilots. With the idea that in some way the pilots may have been responsible for this accident. I didn't sense that. I didn't see that anywhere. Maybe an undercurrent. But, I didn't see it anywhere. I didn't see it in talking to people, in listening to people talk, in seeing what they had written. I saw nothing about the families of the passengers feeling animosity toward the families of the pilots. I don't know what the FAA or whether the FAA determined was the cause of the accident. But it probably had to have been pilot error.

TM: the final report cited both, well there were a number of errors, but they cited both pilots in error. They cited, if I get this right, the United pilot was in error for being at the wrong altitude. Or the other way around, the TWA pilot was at the wrong altitude. The United pilot was in error because he approached the TWA plane from behind and did not avoid it. Meaning he saw it, he started to take evasive action but he was too late and hit the plane in front of him. If you rear end someone with your automobile, the person in the back is [cited in] failure to control your vehicle. So, basically it was it was a no win game. That was my take on it. It was a tragedy for everyone, the guy in front shouldn't have been in front. He was hit by the guy behind who shouldn't have hit the guy in front. And there it went.

PS: But if they're not in IFR, which they weren't, see and be seen, that's what the pilots...

BS: VFR flight rules, see and be seen

PS: Sometimes it's not easy. I can tell you personally that you're scanning the sky and it may be an airplane something will show up that you didn't see in your scan.

TM: Do you remember the weather for that day?

PS: I think it was beautiful. I can't remember whether there was... but in a reading it was a very clear, beautiful day. I've read the report of Hudgen's finding it and that's why. In what I've read, when he went out and flew and he was coming back, he saw this whiff of smoke. Thought to himself initially “Oh, there's been another lightning strike that's started a fire but it's such a remote area I don't need to worry about it.” But then he gets back and he hears on the radio that there are two planes missing. And this is from my reading, he thinks to himself “There aren't any clouds and the sky. It's a clear, beautiful day. There shouldn't be a lightning strike. I'd better go back out there and take another look.” Which is what prompted him to go back out and take a look and find the crash site.

TM: Barbara what else are you thinking about this? What else would you like to add?

BS: For Paul and me we have certainly thought a lot about the event of 1956. As I looked around at all the children and family members of the passengers and crews of the airplanes, I thought that I had a positive feeling about the day and the fact that this event all came together in the way that it did. I'm thinking the word that's used maybe too much, closure is a word that came to my mind. Thinking that the people present must have come away after all of these days that everyone was together with a feeling in their hearts that there was the positive, as you mentioned, that came out of it. With the FAA that came into being and that the skies are safer for all of us because of that particular happening. And

so I came away with some positive and good feelings, good in quotes, after having had an opportunity to be present with all of the ceremony. And so, that's what I would like to say.

PS: You know, in thinking about these people, Barbara talked about closure. Maybe there's a closure but it doesn't change the effect it had on their lives. That was my first real experience. Subsequently, being interested in aviation, I followed subsequent... You know at that it was the worst aviation accident in history. And then when I was living in Tucson practicing, the Tenerife accident occurred where two 747s were in Tenerife and one was taking off and the other one was taxiing.

TM: On the ground

PS: Yes, and the one taxied in front of the one that was taking off. The one taking off tried to clear it but didn't. And these two 747s collided on the ground with... I think that was, at that time, the largest fatality. And subsequently I had a chance as a physician to take care of one of the patients. Of course it happened a long way away. But one of the patients happen to live in Tucson. He had bad, bad burns from this accident. He was a survivor obviously. I think he had been treated in Brooke Army Hospital burn center, which is the largest burn center in the country. He had extensive burns. It was maybe five years after the accident. The insurance company had compensated him fairly well. He had gotten back to a fairly normal life. The insurance company said you needed to be checked out because we're not going to support you after five years. So, we want you to see a physician and see if there's anything more that needs to be done. So they sent him to see me as a plastic surgeon to see if there was any more work that needed to be done before the insurance company was going to write it off. There really wasn't. He had been well taken care of and been well reconstructed. He had had virtually everything that could've been done to reconstruct him to optimum. So I had a chance to meet him and get to know him. And then I had another experience. You may remember there was an accident of a plane leaving Detroit I think on its way to Phoenix. It crashed on takeoff out of Detroit. The personal experience there was that one of the vice presidents of the University of Arizona, his name was Swede Johnson. He was a friend of mine when I was an undergraduate. He had been head of the student union. I had stayed in touch with him and stayed friends. I was involved in the University of Arizona because I served a term as president of the National Alumni Association. Swede was a big Sigma Chi and his son was a big Sigma Chi. They had had their annual meeting in Detroit that summer. Swede and his son met there for the Sigma Chi convention. At the end of the sigma Chi convention Swede took his son to the airport and put him on this plane to fly back to Phoenix. Swede was taking another plane someplace else. The plane took off and his son was killed. Knowing Swede and commiserating with him about the loss of his son, a fraternity brother at a fraternity meeting was pretty traumatic. And then as a private pilot we've had two close friends who have been killed in small airplane accidents and you realize the profound affect that this has. When you take123/128...

TM: 128

PS: 128 people and you look at the profound effect that's gonna have on all those lives. The difference was being at Grand Canyon and they had come from Los Angeles on their way to Kansas City and Chicago. We didn't know or meet any of these people until the ceremonies this summer.

TM: Anything else about this event?

PS: Barb can you think of anything?

BS: No, I don't think so.

PS: I have to say that I thought the ceremony held on the 8<sup>th</sup> was a very, very moving ceremony with the park service and the superintendent there and people from the FAA and people from the park service. The importance that that was given. It must have been comforting to the families to see the importance. And the media sort of threw it in a little bit. We talked to the media. We saw coverage of it on the evening news and on the Phoenix media. But I don't know that it got any national media coverage. But it was an impressive ceremony I thought. Beautiful setting. I can't think of anything else.

TM: OK, thank you so much for your time remembering this and I sure appreciate it.

PS: OK

TM: Thank you