

Transcription: Grand Canyon Historical Society Oral History

Interviewee(s): Rick Tidrick (RT), David Ganci (DG), and Jerry Robertson (JR)

Interviewer: Tom Martin (TM)

Subject: Recounting early climbing and their first ascent of Zoroaster Temple in 1958

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TM: Today is June 12th, 2015. We're at the home of Tom Martin sitting at the kitchen table with Rick Tidrick, David Ganci and Jerry Robertson. Rick, let's start with you, could you please spell your name for me, please?

RT: Yeah, Rick, that's my nickname. My first name is actually Rodman, L. middle initial, Tidrick.

DG: My official name is Joseph David Ganci, Jr. but I've never put Jr. down. I go by Dave, my middle name. My first name is Joseph.

TM: What year were you born?

DG: 1937.

TM: Okay, so Dave Ganci born in '37. Rick?

RT: 1937.

TM: Rick was also born in '37. And also here with us is...

JR: 1937. Jerry Robertson, middle initial D as in dog.

TM: Excellent. Thank you all so much for being here tonight. My name is Tom Martin. These guys are all amazing climbers in Grand Canyon. So I'm gonna try to build this together. Rick, when did you first come to see Grand Canyon?

RT: To see the Canyon itself?

TM: Tell me about the first time you saw Grand Canyon.

RT: Well, I lived in Flagstaff when I was 1 to 4 years of age, so I've lived here so I saw the Grand Canyon then. Back in the late '30s, I moved to Phoenix, lived there for many years. So I've been around the Grand Canyon a lot cause I grew up in Arizona for the most part.

TM: And Dave?

DG: I saw the Grand Canyon for the first time, I forget the exact year it was. I was out of high school and I was taking a Phoenix College course, I believe it was in geology. We went up to the Grand Canyon and hiked down it and back up. I collapsed about the Coconino Sandstone. None of us were really prepared for the hike.

TM: This was roughly 1957-ish?

DG: Yeah, about then. My memory on this fades. That was my first introduction to it. I saw it in pictures and things before that, but my first real going over the rim and walking down in it.

TM: And Jerry, you?

JR: My mom was born and raised in Williams and her dad worked for the railroad. With him in the mail car on the railroad when I was 6 years old, I went to the Grand Canyon the first time.

TM: Wow.

JR: Didn't hike in the Canyon, of course, at that age but that's when I first saw the Grand Canyon.

TM: So that would have been 1943?

JR: Yep.

TM: What do you remember about that train ride?

JR: Very little (laughter) other than I was along with my grandpa in the car and we puffer-bellied our way up there in a steam driven engine, yeah. Of course back then they didn't have diesels running, at least not that I was aware.

TM: And then so I'll go back to Rick, born in Flagstaff. Would you continually go back to the Grand Canyon? You went down to Phoenix, would your parents come back up to the Canyon?

RT: First of all, I wasn't born in Flagstaff. I moved here when I was 6 months old, left when I was 4 or 5 to Phoenix.

TM: What did your parents do?

RT: My dad was a barber and my mother owned Lazy PK Ranch here in Flagstaff. And then they bought a larger ranch, which is on the way to the Snowbowl. There are two stone pillars stand today with about 200 acres, and they were raising Palominos and Arabians. The Arabian horse they raised, Mustafa, is a very famous horse. Became the top Arabian in the country in the mid-40s and is documented in *Arizona Highways* and many other places. Never lost a show. Stud fees in those days was like \$500, it was the top stud in the United States. Is buried on the McCormack Ranch in Scottsdale. They bought him and had him for the last few years.

TM: Okay. So how did you start climbing in the Canyon?

RT: Well, I started out at a junior college in Menlo Park, California. Got involved with the Stanford University Alpine Club, became leader my freshman year in the University Alpine Club at Stanford.

TM: So you were hiking in the Sierras then. Granite? No?

RT: No, I was in Yosemite Valley climbing, among many other places. But getting to the Grand Canyon, a friend of mine...

TM: Well, hang on, let's not leave the Yosemite Valley just yet.

RT: Okay.

TM: There's a big wall in that valley. I mean, like big, straight El Capitan type walls. Is that the kind of stuff you were doing?

RT: Yeah. Yeah, that's where I got into technical climbing, yes.

TM: Okay. Thank you.

RT: That was 1955.

TM: Okay. Gold line, pitons, what were you...?

RT: All the santos in those days was not at all like it is today. (laughs)

TM: What kind of material did you have then? This was in the mid/late 50s in Yosemite Valley.

RT: Yeah, basic army angles and various assortment of pitons and a hammer and ropes and clutter shoes or boots. Clutter shoes was a type of shoe for that day. And our bodies. So anyhow...

TM: Then let's take that to Grand Canyon. So you came to Grand Canyon with a lot of climbing skill.

RT: I did, yes.

TM: When was that, when did you first look at Grand Canyon as a place to climb?

RT: Well, I developed some climbing skills in the Valley and other locations in California. Then I went also on an expedition to Cordillera Blanca in Peru in 1957. '58 is when we made, Dave and I and Jerry had been involved as well, the first ascent of Zoroaster's Temple. But at that time, a friend of mine, John Harlin, who Jerry knows very well, he and I climbed for about a year and a half together before I left California and moved back to Arizona to school. We had talked about Zoroaster's Temple. We talked about a lot of different projects but we never initiated anything in that movement. But I was very aware of it cause I grew up here in the state.

TM: So I'm just gonna double check, John Harlin, the mathematics professor in Tucson at the University of Arizona?

RT: No. No, he is the fellow who fell on the Eiger doing a direct descent back in 1966.

TM: Okay, thank you.

RT: So that's another famous American mountaineer.

TM: All right. So by '58 you guys are, how did...

RT: I was gonna share another thing...

TM: Yes, please.

RT: ...where the three of us were involved. If you remember the plane crash over the Grand Canyon, two planes came together in 1955.

TM: 1956.

RT: The three of us came up to offer our services.

DG: I never, I didn't get with you on that.

RT: You were not? Just Jerry and I then? Okay.

JR: And my brothers both.

RT: And your brothers both? Okay. But wasn't accepted because they brought in Swiss Mountaineering and Rocky Mountain group.

JR: But we watched them take bodies out of that helicopter as they brought them in body bags.

TM: And that was over at the airport, at the Red Mountain Airport?

JR: Yeah. Yes.

TM: Okay. Did you guys take that okay, all right, they've got some other people with this?

RT: We just thought it was an outside chance. We knew that they had experts coming in. We had a bit of climbing experience and knew a little bit and thought we could help.

TM: Okay. All right. Then Dave, how did you get into climbing and how did you... I guess, yeah, let's start there.

DG: Well, I guess the very first thing that peaked my unknown desire for climbing and mountaineering was reading a book *Kingdom of Adventure: Everest*. I forget the author. Something just clicked inside me and said I want to do that. I tried to find out if anybody else was doing that in the Phoenix area. I found out there was a group called The Kachinas and had a guy named Pedrick, I think that was his name, Jerry may remember more than me on this one. Ken Pedrick or somebody Pedrick.

JR: Ben.

DG: Ben Pedrick? They were climbers so I tried to get ahold, I think I got ahold of him and he referred me to you, Jerry Robertson. So I called Jerry out of the blue and then Jerry took me climbing one day I remember. On Camelback Mountain, I think it was.

JR: Papago Park.

DG: Was it Papago Park? Papago Park for the first time in work boots and shorts and straw hats, that kind of thing. We kind of bonded on that and started climbing from there together and eventually going... Well, I don't know how far you want to carry it, but we eventually ended up... Well, Jerry knew Rick so we ended up going to Yosemite Valley together and doing some climbing. Those were the early days in the 50s.

JR: Don't forget the Monk now, the Praying Monk.

DG: The Praying Monk. That's a little traditional, I guess you would call it, climb. The Arizona Mountaineering Club always had beginning climbers climb a little pinnacle in Camelback Mountain.

JR: Camelback Mountain area.

TM: This would have been '55, '56-ish?

DG: When was it, Jerry?

RT: That was in June of '56.

DG: '56?

RT: Well, we'd made the second ascent of it.

DG: Of what?

RT: Of the Monk. Who was with me?

JR: The three of us, I think was...

DG: The three of us climbed the Monk, yeah, I guess, which is a little pinnacle with... Like I say, it's kind of a graduation climb as I remember from the Arizona Mountaineering Club, which was formed... When was that formed? I don't...

JR: No idea.

DG: Doug Black.

JR: He was rescue primarily.

DG: Rescue. And he made some hardware, Doug Black, I think.

JR: Yeah, I think you're right.

DG: Well, we're scattering things here but I'm trying to bring times together on it. And then, you know, Rick and I and Jerry got together and went to Yosemite Valley in the lean years of 50 cents a day living and when the real icons of rock climbing were there. Yvon Chouinard, Royal Robbins, T.M. Herbert, Chuck Pratt. God, who else? Let's see. I remember Wayne Merry.

RT: Mark Powell, Wayne Merry.

DG: Mark Powell.

JR: That's about it.

DG: No, the other guy, Warren Harding, he was one of the main... There were others, too, a lot of others, but those were kind of...

DG: When that whole genre started...it started before that. One of the men, I'm just remembering some things that I, you know, pulling up from somewhere back...

RT: Oh, Allen Steck was an early one.

DG: Allen Steck.

RT: I knew him pretty well cause he ran the mountaineering store in...

DG: Boy, those are names I remember. And I remember...

RT: ...not in Oakland but in Berkeley.

DG: Oh, John Salathé who was an icon from Europe. I think he was a Swiss guy. The Salathé Wall on El Capitan was named after in his honor. That was kind of...I call it the Golden Age.

RT: It was the Golden Age of rock climbing.

DG: We were part of that, or I feel in kind of a small way when, in those good days at Camp 4. I forget, I think it was Rick that brought up the Grand Canyon thing and Zoroaster Temple. I remember Jerry and I... Did we go together to recon it?

JR: Umm hmm.

DG: We did. Who was the other guy with us? Remember there was another guy with us. I'll think of his name. I know it'll come. We went up to find a route to the... Oh, I'm sorry.

TM: No, no, I'm just, I kind of want to come back around to Jerry for a minute.

DG: Okay. Good.

TM: Let's get Jerry up to this speed, too, cause I want to know how you all three guys met. I think I'm kind of figuring that out. How did you get into life behind a rope?

JR: Rick and I were best buddies in senior year of high school, maybe before that. Then Rick went off up to Menlo JC and the Stanford Alpine Club and he brought it back to Phoenix and to me. Prior to him going there, one of our adventures was to climb Four Peaks, which we did while we were still in high school. And then that first winter that you were home for Christmas we climbed San Francisco Peak, so winter ascent and froze our butts off.

RT: To be there on the top on January 1st, which was...

TM: Wow.

JR: Which we did, yeah. It was an interesting adventure.

TM: Was Four Peaks a rope climb?

JR: No. Not at all. A backpack in, camping at the foot of the northern peak. We managed to start a little forest fire there inadvertently (laughter), one of the guys did.

DG: That Thompson Peak and the north one? Yeah, Thompson.

JR: Just that north peak, I don't know the name of it.

TM: And Jerry, you grew up in Williams.

JR: No.

TM: No, your mother did.

JR: I'm a native of Phoenix.

TM: Of Phoenix?

JR: As was my dad.

TM: Okay.

JR: My mom was born in Williams so I'm a native.

TM: What did your father do?

JR: Printing and lithographing.

TM: Okay. In the Valley there?

JR: In the Valley in Phoenix. Phoenix Arizona Engraving and Lithographing Company was my dad's business. He inherited basically from his dad who started the business.

TM: So then Rick shows up with a new skill, climbing?

JR: Right.

TM: And said "Let's go climb."

JR: He got me started. Yep.

TM: And how did you meet Dave?

JR: I actually knew Dave from Boy Scout days. We both went to the National Jamboree in Valley Forge, Pennsylvania in 1950. Dave was one of the other Boy Scouts there that attended. So we knew each other from then. All three of us are North Phoenix High School graduates of 1955. (laughs)

TM: Same class?

JR: Same class but we didn't interface with Dave then. It wasn't till college when...

DG: When I called you and we started climbing.

JR: Right. Right.

TM: Like a year later, or two years later? '57?

RT: Had to be within the end of the year.

JR: Yeah.

RT: Our high school graduation.

TM: So then I've got a question back for Rick. When I think of Grand Canyon rock and I think of Yosemite rock, there's a difference.

RT: Yeah, apples and oranges.

TM: Thank you. What did you think about that at the time? Did you even think about it or it was just like, hey, I want to climb here, let's go?

RT: Well, for me I was very comfortable on granite. They have a story about being uncomfortable on granite (laughter).

DG: Very uncomfortable. We laugh about that.

TM: Well, wait, let's stop right there. What's that story? (laughter)

JR: Well, our first experience, Dave and mine, is...

DG: This is on New Year's Eve and New Year's Day.

TM: What year?

JR: '56 it had to be. 55's when we graduated our first year in college.

RT: Yeah. Cause we did Humphreys the first year, so we must have done that the second year.

JR: '56-'57.

RT: Yeah.

TM: '56, '57?

JR: Anyway, Dave and I joined Rick Christmas time. Rick was home to Phoenix for Christmas and we thought let's go to Yosemite on his way back to San Francisco to go back to college. So Dave and I joined him in Yosemite. The first climb we did was the Lower Cathedral Rock. It was Dave and I's first experience at an exposed situation where we're on the edge and we're looking down there and it's a long ways down there...

DG: On very slick, polished rock. This was the overhang bypass on Lower Cathedral Rock is what it was, official climb. And I was in mountaineering boots, I might have interrupted Jerry, but anyway, and it was very freaky. I froze in the middle of the pitch and I couldn't move because of fear.

JR: We were totally unfamiliar with friction.

RT: High angle friction.

JR: Right.

TM: Were you roped in? Were you roped up?

DG: We were roped, yeah.

TM: Okay.

JR: Rick was our famous leader.

DG: He was our leader.

TM: And Rick, you were comfortable, you were cruising?

JR: He was a bonafide leader from the Stanford Alpine Club at that point. He was taking along us student neophytes. (laughs)

DG: I don't know if that scared you, Jerry, like it scared me.

JR: Oh, yeah. Absolutely.

RT: Oh yeah, I have the photographic evidence (laughter). Stuck on the traverse.

DG: Yes.

RT: Friction traverse, with drop off of 800 feet probably or a thousand foot.

JR: Well, it took us so long to get up across these two areas. There was an open-book chimney which was about a 45 degree angle up and you took special technique to be able to climb up that chimney. You couldn't just stand on the faces cause no purchase. But at any rate, with that and this traverse, we were so long on that darn thing that we had to bivouac on Lower Cathedral Rock. And if my memory serves our project took us 27 hours (laughter) before we got off of there.

DG: Yeah, it was a two hour, two and a half hour climb. (laughter)

JR: Well, let me tell you...

DG: We hold the record for the longest climb, probably.

JR: John Harlin and I went back there several years later and John said we did it in 45 minutes. (laughter)

RT: And we sat on the ledge. Little ledges our three butts could sit on, that's was all the larger the ledge was, in our t-shirts at 16/17° in the valley that night. Froze our butts off. We were stuck on that ledge for...

DG: I was tied to a tree, I remember, for fearing I would fall off.

RT: ... close to 16 hours.

JR: Didn't we have a little fire there?

DG: I'm trying to remember. We might have. Did we? I'm trying to remember. I don't know how we survived without one.

RT: I think in our imagination we had a fire.

JR: Maybe.

DG: Well, maybe. I remember being tied into the tree afraid that I was gonna fall off the thing. So I tied myself into a tree.

RT: So we had one pitch to complete, which we did the next morning.

DG: (laughs) I think at that time, Rick may not bring it up, but he was thinking about who have I got here with me (laughs).

RT: We checked back into the ranger station the next morning and they didn't seem concerned. (laughter) So that was the interesting part. Course in the middle of winter nobody else was in Yosemite Valley climbing either.

DG: I remember sleeping 13 hours that next day when we got down.

JR: Day? We crawled in our sleeping bags when we got down and we slept, and slept, and slept daytime, as I recall anyway.

RT: But that was the introduction to granite. (laughter)

TM: After that climb were you like, okay, we get it, or was it like I don't want to have anything to do with this again?

DG: No.

JR: Oh, no. Not that at all.

DG: We did Higher Cathedral Spire, is that right?

RT: Yeah. We did.

DG: We tried Lower Cathedral Spire and didn't make it, I remember that. I remember rappelling off...

JR: Higher.

DG: ...the Lower Cathedral Rock and coming to the end of the rope and having to swing in to a ledge, didn't reach all the way.

RT: Lower Cathedral Rock. Was that on our trip? Not on our trip.

DG: Yeah, I think so.

RT: I don't think so.

JR: I don't remember that.

DG: No?

JR: You're manufacturing, Dave.

DG: No. Maybe I did it with somebody else, but I remember we tried that and couldn't make it.

RT: We only did Lower Cathedral once.

DG: Higher Cathedral.

RT: And then Higher Spire, yeah. But Higher Spire had its...

JR: Had its challenge. Oh, yeah. That very first pitch on there, another ooh, it's way down there exposure thing and we had trouble getting over that very first little place. Eventually got to the top of it later in the day. I was to be the last one down on the belay, I mean the rappel, and the damn rope hung up. I had to go back onto the top and unhang it. And I had been going so slowly up that thing, you know, very, very cautious and troubled, but when that rope hung up I went back up to the top (laughs) of that mountain so quick you wouldn't believe it. I couldn't believe it. (laughter)

DG: I remember that now. Isn't it funny? I had forgotten all about that. He's jogging something back here. I remember that.

RT: I had a little prior history on Higher Cathedral Spire cause the year before up the route doing it for the first time and got off route. Had one piton in, it prevented a hundred and sixty foot fall, cause I did take a fall. My only leader fall ever. Caught an ankle on the way down so I ended up wearing a brace for the next year on the ankle while it healed and so forth. I climbed the Monk with the brace on cause it was only two months later cause I was on crutches, cause it was the year before. So it was nice returning to Higher Cathedral Spire, completing that.

DG: You were talking about, if I may, we were talking about Yosemite granite and the sandstone. I remember after climbing in the Valley and then getting on that sandstone it was like night and day. I mean, sandstone, you could actually stick on it, you know. I think that's what encouraged me and maybe you, too, to do some of the stuff on Zoroaster because we'd been to Yosemite.

RT: Well, it seemed like not a big deal at the time. But I have a question. Did we do Royal Arches together?

DG: I did Royal Arches, I remember, twice.

RT: Okay.

JR: I was on Royal Arches with you but I don't remember doing it twice.

DG: I did it with somebody else, I remember.

RT: Oh, okay. Just curious.

DG: The old log, whatever they called it, I remember.

RT: Yeah, the log was still there, the tree.

JR: And a lot of ashes from debris that... They would light fires at the top of Royal Arches every evening and throw these...

RT: No, that was Glacier Point.

JR: Glacier, you're right, you're right.

RT: Not Royal Arches.

DG: Glacier, umm hmm.

JR: Oh, well.

DG: They did that at Yosemite Falls, too, didn't they at one time?

RT: No.

DG: They threw fireworks.

RT: That was always back in the 40s and 50s off of Glacier Point, 4,000 feet.

DG: Impressive.

RT: Cause I was there as a kid, saw it more than once, yeah.

TM: So you were working on Granite. Did you guys start climbing then in the Valley [Phoenix], start working the Valley rock?

JR: Well, course we were climbing around the Phoenix area, Camelback, and that's rotten granite, and Squaw Peak. I don't know what kind of rock it is but totally different.

DG: Yeah, metamorphosed crud.

JT: Yeah, with a lot of cracks and ledges and stuff, not a friction kind of deal like we were confronted with in Yosemite.

RT: Yeah, we were doing different pinnacles. We ended up doing Baboquivari in southern Colorado, established the first climbing route on it.

JR: Arizona.

TM: That's in Arizona.

RT: Arizona. Sorry. We also... There was a needle above Tucson we went up, ended up doing a second ascent. We did Pinnacle Peak, you and I, and...

DG: Pinnacle Peak, yeah.

RT: ...you are lucky to be here today.

DG: Yeah, that's one I almost ate it on.

RT: The rappel anchor came out and he landed on a little ledge about ten feet down and managed to...

JR: Hang on.

RT: ...stay on the ledge.

DG: Yes. Number two.

RT: We made a second ascent of that, too, Pinnacle Peak. That was a granulated...

DG: Do you remember, were you with us when we went out to do Tom's Thumb? Remember?

JR: Oh, yeah. It wasn't Tom's Thumb. That was the Dork.

DG: Oh, the Dork. We called it the Dork.

JR: Now they call it Tom's Thumb. (laughter)

TM: Where is this?

DG: McDowell Mountain.

JR: McDowell Mountain from the north end, toward the north end of it.

TM: Okay.

DG: And we found a group of Boy Scouts had climbed it. Remember?

JR: I don't remember that.

TM: So Baboquivari, you were climbing in the Catalinas it sounds like.

DG: How did the Baboquivari thing come about anyway? We just, you know, last...

RT: What I remember, cause I'd been to Baboquivari, went up the usual route that had been there for a hundred years and so forth, I think. I think one day I decided, well, let's put up a new route and take the weakest view, what that might be. It was like a 5.6 in terms of technical difficulty, but it was fun. We had six people on that route.

DG: Yeah, that was a neat climb.

RT: And Jerry got left off the credits, right?

JR: Yeah.

RT: And some woman got put on it, don't remember who that was. We didn't have a woman with us.

DG: Yeah.

JR: I can't remember her name right now.

TM: Is that Joanna McComb?

JR: Yes. McComb, Joanna.

TM: Okay. Did you guys present at the Granitica they just had for Baboquivari?

RT: They did.

JR: We did. He didn't make it down.

TM: Okay. All right. So you guys were starting to climb, you're really working the granites.

RT: More in the granite. We were in Pinnacles National Monument climbing, which is a very...I don't know what. It's a conglomerate of some kind, just a lot of little pieces of granite compressed together. All fingertip stuff. And then a lot of practice climbing areas all around the Bay Area we went to.

TM: Oh. While you guys are climbing in the Valley. So you're all still working on your climbing skills and you haven't really geared into Grand Canyon yet, is that a correct picture?

RT: Well, back up. In the summer of 1956, John Harlin and I, with another couple, went for three weeks to Canada to do some climbing. Invited Jerry to join us in part of that, so he came up and joined us. We did Snowpatch.

JR: Yeah, and you did Snowpatch. First thing was Mount Sir Donald.

RT: Mount Sir Donald we did and we did several other mountains. We did three in one day, I remember, 19 hour...

JR: Victoria was one and...

RT: Victoria.

JR: ...one above Lake Louise. While you guys did Snowpatch, I did Pigeon Spire and lost my billfold in the process. So here I was way up in Canada with no identification, no money, no billfold. (laughter)

DG: Those are the stories we have. (laughs)

TM: How did you sort that one out?

JR: Those two guys (laughter). Actually John and Rick cause Dave wasn't...

RT: For me the climbing was really on holidays and vacation times being in college, same with Jerry. He [Dave] may have done more in the Phoenix area probably. I don't remember.

DG: No, not a whole lot. No, my climbing was basically with you guys. I didn't really know anybody else in Phoenix that I...

RT: Dave and I decided... I dropped out of school. Well, back up a minute.

DG: I remember Long's Peak, too.

RT: Oh, that's right. Tried to do a winter ascent of Alexander's Chimney. Got in a blizzard, had to dig a trench just to pee cause the wind was howling and so cold. In fact I got frostbite on my feet. They were swollen up. Took...

DG: And then me and Don Morris... We didn't go, these were the two experienced guys. Don Morris and I, we were gonna try and do the regular route on it, Don and I? I can't remember. I remember being in that cold tent and skis, we had skis.

RT: Oh, yeah, cross, yeah, skins.

JR: Well, the skis were military type skis and we had taken ropes and wrapped them around the skis so that we could climb up on the snow.

RT: We didn't have skins on that? We had skins on Humphreys.

JR: Did we?

RT: Yeah.

JR: Well, one time I remember we had ropes tied around the skis.

RT: Cause it was my first time on skis, let alone having skins. Because I remember coming down was crash and bang, boom, with all the packs and all of our equipment and stuff. Going up was okay but coming down... (laughter)

JR: On San Francisco Peaks is the only place I've ever gotten frostbitten. Not our trip, but later with John Harlin.

RT: Oh, really?

JR: Yeah, he was training in Phoenix. He was a fighter pilot and he was training on the F-100 at Luke Air Force Base. We did a lot of stuff together while he was here. One of the things we did was Humphreys. We didn't go all the way to the top, we went to Agassiz. But at any rate, when we got up on Agassiz from the Snowbowl Lodge, on that side the wind was blowing pretty good on our backs going up. So we went over to the other side and fooled around and got some pictures of John with his ice axe doing stuff. We turned around and faced the wind coming back down toward the lodge and the wind was blasting and my gloves weren't on and whatever, and I got frostbitten on the nose and cheeks and fingertips.

TM: Wow.

JR: First and only time.

TM: So, I'm sorry, it's not John Harlin but its Tom Harlan in Tucson actually that I was thinking about.

JR: Okay.

TM: Okay. Sorry about that.

JR: John's totally different.

RT: But to get you to how we got to Zoroaster's let me try to introduce that.

TM: Please.

RT: In '57 I went off to Peru, an expedition for two and a half months. Came back. Had transferred to the University of Arizona in February of '57 when I went off to Peru. We all continued climbing. I was in summer school in '58 and Dave and I decided we'd go on another adventure. I wanted to return to Peru. I said "Well, let's hitchhike through Mexico, Central and South America and get back to Peru," cause I wanted to get back to climbing. Dave did, too. So I dropped out of school. In doing that we said "Well, we've got some time." And I said something about let's do Zoroaster's because Jerry and Dave, the year before, went down the South Rim, Phantom Ranch and hiked up to get to the base of Zoroaster because they'd obviously had conversations about it earlier.

DG: We're looking for a route to the base of it.

RT: Yeah. So they kind of set up the agenda for us to look at climbing Zoroaster's.

TM: And just to be clear, that was 1956 you were basically doing the scouting?

DG: Wasn't it?

RT: That would have been '57.

DG: It would be '57 because we climbed it in '58, September of '58.

RT: Yeah, '58.

JR: The guy that went with us was Dick Ernst.

DG: Dick Ernst, that's right. Good you got the name.

JR: He never really got into it. He was just sort of a kid that happened to be there and wanted to go with us.

TM: The spelling of his last name?

DG: E-r-n-s-t, I think. Ernst.

RT: E-r-n-e-s-t.

DG: Ernst or Ernest?

RT: I think so.

TM: Thank you.

DG: But that's the only contact I remember we had with him, was it, or did...

JR: I think we did some climbing on Pinnacle Peak with him different times.

RT: So before we started to hitchhike to Mexico we thought, well, let's see if we can't first ascent of Zoroaster's. The three of us wanted to do that but it was unfortunate. You might want to embellish that story. Dave and I wanted to go and Jerry wanted to go but Jerry had a problem that prevented him from going.

JR: Well, I had to get registered for my last year of college if I wanted to continue my college to get my commission in the Air force ROTC program. So I was unable to go because I had to be in Tempe to register. So they took it and went and did it. Ouch. But what do you do? I went off to be a military pilot and an airline pilot, and through a career and all that because of that avenue that I took. (laughs)

TM: What do you think looking back on that? Did you wish you'd gone with those guys?

JR: Well, considering the overall outlook and how everything turned out, I mean, it was nice that they went ahead and did it and I wasn't there, but I thought I'd take the route that I took.

DG: But Jerry and I did the third ascent, you know, to do that, so it was kind of like, you know...

TM: You weren't left out too far.

JR & DG: No.

RT: I came back a year later and brought five other people from Colorado College, which I'd transferred to from the University of Arizona, and we did the first winter ascent in February. On both of our ascents, the first and the second, we'd bivouac for various reasons. Some funny things on the first ascent. We got part way up the climb on a nice shelf, big shelf, and I woke up the next morning and he was gone.

DG: Take nice out of that description. (laughter)

RT: What did I say?

DG: Nice shelf.

RT: It was a nice shelf. It was beautiful.

DG: I'm just kidding.

RT: I mean, it was a flat table top shelf. We didn't bother to tie in cause it was plenty of room, but he was gone when I woke up the next morning.

TM: (laughs) Oh, no.

RT: He fell into the crack between the shelf and the face going up, which was our first 110 foot overhanging rappel. He was gone. He was sound asleep in this crack.

DG: I woke up, I think I took a sleeping pill. I'm trying to remember...

RT: We were tired because we were dehydrated. I lost 15 pounds in 6 days.

DG: We were wasted.

RT: It was extreme heat. We took a...

DG: September.

RT: ...big five-gallon can to collect water cause it had been raining up to the day we got on. It started raining again the day we got off six days later. We couldn't collect water so we were eating and sucking grub filled little potholes for water. We only took two gallons with us...no two quarts, I think a quart each.

DG: We left...remember we dropped some off. We were looking for a route on the Temple because we hadn't really discovered one on our recon Jerry and I did. They found that back on the southwest corner and dropped some water and some gear. Remember, they went back...

RT: Yeah. We went to that one and immediately that looked like a potential route.

DG: And went back to our base camp a little bit lower.

RT: Then we decided the next day to take the whole day to circumnavigate the whole perimeter, all the way around, to see if there was a better route to get started.

DG: We were waiting for the rainfall. It was a five-gallon jerrycan that we took to the top.

RT: And a big tarp to collect water.

DG: And it never rained, so it was decision time. Do we bail off this thing or go for it, and we did. I remember the very first pitch of the climb, very bottom of it, there was a tree down there with a pink rattlesnake in it. Do you remember that?

RT: A Grand Canyon rattlesnake. It was there when we started and it was there when we finished. Didn't move.

DG: Well, the story on the ledge was I remember having some horrific nightmares, and I woke up. I took something, aspirin or something. I remembered we could only take a few swallows of water. I woke up and I was delirious. I didn't know where I was, I remember that. Somehow I got off that ledge down into the crack and I don't remember exactly how, but I didn't know where I was. So then I went back to sleep, thank God, or I'd still be there probably. That's number three in the list. (laughs) So Rick woke me up the next morning. From that spot we went out around, remember the little traverse into the chimney that goes up to the ledge that you led the last difficult pitch on.

RT: Well, we had two significant leads before that that were almost full rope lengths, 120 foot. Two diagonal leads on very high angle, probably 75 degrees, no handholds, all friction/toe friction. They were very delicate and no protection.

JR: They had little pockets on it, though.

DG: That was in the first part of the climb.

RT: I don't know where... But total exposure and no protection.

JR: Well, there was a little cactus.

DG: This little cactus in the middle of the thing. (laughing)

JR: Do you remember that?

DG: Did we have those 120...

RT: Have you done Zoroaster?

TM: I have not climbed Zoroaster. No, no, no.

DG: We had those 120 foot nylon ropes. And, of course, you know, no stinking harnesses in those days you just tied the rope around our waist. So that reduced the rope length to climb with quite a bit. What did we figure, about 80 feet, actually. I remember we could do like 80 foot leads.

RT: Well, we had 120 foot rope.

DG: Yeah, but we tied into it.

RT: Well, we would have had at least 100 foot.

DG: Maybe a 100 feet.

RT: Yeah, maybe 100, 110 probably.

DG: Anyway, I remember the leads were... First of all, the protection we had at that time, other than some Army angles and then I remember I had some Stubai's, some things from Europe.

RT: And we had some bolts. We had a...

DG: Some bolts and some malleable things that... In those days they'd not put pitons in, they left them in. I remember if you did that, you know, you could run out pretty easily. So I remember the leads were short. But I think a lot of the times we took leads without putting protection in because they were short.

RT: We put in bolts for belay protection but not for climbing.

DG: Matter of fact, I remember, did you think... At that time I thought that bolting was not climbing. I thought it was artificial climbing. I thought it was...

JR: Well, for a belay it's not...

DG: Belay. I'm talking about the actual climbing.

JR: Sure.

RT: Well, it's like on El Cap, Hardin put in 300 bolts.

DG: Yeah.

JR: But they were hanging on them.

RT: Well, yeah. That was for climbing. We wouldn't use anything.

DG: Yeah. And those were such early days that I remember thinking that's not climbing, for whatever that was worth. So if you couldn't do it without that, that wasn't fair. No, not fair, but you weren't really climbing. That's the way I thought in those days, anyway.

JR: Different.

TM: So after Zoroaster, then what happened? Cause you were looking about going down to Peru.

RT: I'd already been to Peru.

TM: No, for a second time.

RT: For a second time, yeah. But one other thing on Zoroasters, when we did summit the thing we built a six foot cairn so the rangers could see with their telescope that it had actually been ascended to prove that we were there.

TM: Six foot? It took you a while to build that.

RT: No. There are plenty of rocks on top.

DG: Coming down I remember we were in such a dehydrated ozone coming back, I remember staggering along to get to the break in the Redwall and being fuzzy focused, one of the first stages of dehydration. We were wasted. I don't know if you remember that or not. I don't know how we got down to the Redwall.

RT: We were grateful to get back to Phantom Ranch and get water.

DG: I have a picture. It rained. When we got down to the base of the Redwall it rained, and I have a picture of the first water pocket we hit. You have a copy of that don't you? Black and white...

RT: Yeah.

DG: ...picture of Rick sticking his face down. Looked like a skeleton sticking his face down into the water.

RT: That's probably in here.

DG: Is that in there? I remember did we have fruit cocktail? Bought some fruit cocktail at the ranch?

JR: We had a chicken dinner, actually.

DG: Where was the fruit cocktail?

RT: Yeah, here's the one he's talking about.

TM: And you're face down in a pocket of water.

DG: That's Zoroaster there.

TM: Yeah, yeah.

DG: Yeah, he's face down...

RT: Here's another one.

DG: Oh, yeah, that's on the way in.

RT: Zoroaster.

DG: Do you have the one of me, of the back of me going across the little traverse?

RT: I do on a 3D slide.

DG: I think I might have a copy.

RT: Not here.

TM: Rick, is this from the proceedings?

RT: No. This is Dave's article in *Summit Magazine* documenting the first ascent.

TM: *Summit Magazine*, do you know the year, volume? Is that written down there?

RT: I have lost that magazine and it's not here.

DG: I have a copy of it at home.

TM: Okay. Just curious. All right.

RT: But it would be the next year, probably springtime, 1959. 1959...

DG: I've got it.

RT: ...timetable it was produced *in Summit Magazine*.

TM: Okay.

DG: Jerry and I, and what was his name, what was the other guy?

TM: You mean Pomeroy?

DG: Pomeroy, Gene Pomeroy.

TM: Gene Pomeroy, yeah.

JR: On our third ascent we had another individual. His name, Gene Pomeroy. He was not a climber. He was a weight lifter, he was a very husky guy. But the endeavor to get as far as he got up there was pretty good for him because he really was not a hiker even. But anyway, Gene was our backup guy.

RT: On your third ascent?

JR: Yeah.

RT: Did he make the climb?

JR: No.

DG: Now, where did he stop?

JR: He had no intention of...

TM: So then you came back, Rick, to do the second ascent, is that right?

RT: Yes. I brought five other people with me.

TM: In the winter?

RT: In the winter, in February. We brought, also, a few people who were hiking in the Canyon. They all came down to Phantom Ranch with us and we went on and climbed up to Zoroasters. That was pretty interesting. I do have an article on that, it was written by one of the people who was on that ascent.

TM: Oh, wonderful.

DG: How did you get all those people up there?

RT: Well, that's fairly interesting. I had another person who I felt was reasonably qualified because he climbed in the Garden of the Gods, which is sandstone, so he was familiar with that, although this was real hard Coconino sandstone which is beautiful to climb on, Garden of Gods is more rotten. But he

bailed out on those two leads to lead it so we ended up having a rope of six. That's another reason why we ended up bivouacking. All five of them had a slip on that climb. And particularly on the north side of it, it was all ice. You know the traverse? I remember one of them fell out of the chimney. He yanked his belayer off the ledge where we had a, you know, bolt for a tie in from first ascent. It was a comedy of errors. Then to make the last pitch, which was ice, my belayer was standing on a very small ledge and I had to get up on his shoulders standing up with, you know, looking down at the big drop. He commented here... I found the article via last year or whenever it was. It was in *The Trail and Timberline*, Colorado Mountain publication, the record of the ascent. He said that's the most, something ridiculous or incredible lead that he had seen but I got high enough to get in a bolt but I had to do 6 class.

RT: Yeah, thank Dave for that. But we did get up there. But anyhow, we did make the climb and we also bivouacked and we did build a fire.

DG: Where did you bivouac?

RT: On the summit.

DG: On the summit?

RT: Yeah. On the summit, or just right under the summit.

DG: Yeah, below the Kaibab.

RT: Yeah. Did a lot of shivering that night, the six of us.

TM: I bet. Did you bring any gear to bivouac?

RT: Yeah. We were, well, no. Yeah, we had gear enough. We didn't freeze to death. It was just really uncomfortable, that was all. Then the first rappel off of Zoroasters, a beautiful 110 foot overhanging free rappel, a real ass burner because in those days...

JR: No sling. No firm method.

RT: Shoulders and butts.

JR: Padding.

RT: Yeah.

DG: I still have the scar back here of...

RT: Did you get a scar on that?

DG: No, no. Rappelling off the Monk in shorts.

JR: In shorts, ooh.

DG: Shorts and work boots. It slipped off my pants. In the middle of a rappel you gotta keep going, right?

RT: That was an overhang. There was another one about 10 foot over.

DG: Yeah, I remember just inching it down and screaming.

RT: Introduction to climbing.

JR: You know, when we did the third ascent I don't think we were aware of the fact that Rick had been up there.

RT: No you weren't. You were was shocked.

DG: I wasn't.

JR: When we first discovered there was a footprint in the dried mud in the route to the base, we thought somebody's been here since we were.

DG: Well, you know, somebody had been up there even before. I don't know if you, whether you and I and Dick Ernst discovered a piton in one of the layers on the way up..

JR: Really?

DG: ...to the base. It was in the Redwall. There was a piton in the Redwall. I'm trying to think, I think somebody earlier...

JR: I remember a piton on Sinyala.

DG: No, there was one in the Redwall. I think some earlier people had been up on that plateau where Zoroaster and Brahma and Diva, that's where the three are, on the top of the...what the layer is there. I think some of those early climbers had been up there maybe, because I remember finding it. I wish I still had it. I thought what the heck. But maybe that's as far as they got, I don't know.

RT: And the interesting thing to me was that, what's the other climb we did and we were so dehydrated, right next to Zoroasters on the same plateau that wasn't climbed till 10 years later.

DG: Brahma?

RT: No, it's...

TM: Is that Angel's Gate?

RT: It's much larger thing, but not a technical climb.

DG: Well, Brahma is between Zoroaster and the rim. There's Zoroaster, Brahma and then Diva.

RT: Not Brahma.

DG: Not Brahma? Buddha Temple, that's on the other side of the creek.

TM: On the other side of Phantom.

RT: We've lost our minds. What can I say?

JR: We need a map. Sorry.

TM: So with that success then, now you're getting ready to go flying. So at what point did you say goodbye to Grand Canyon, I've gotta go flying or did you keep coming back to keep climbing?

JR: Well, when I started flying I was with Bonanza Airlines and we had route from Las Vegas to Grand Canyon Airport. That's when I discovered Mount Sinyala with my flying over Havasupai and looking down, oh, that's pretty interesting. So then we started investigating Sinyala. Dave and I and his wife and my wife and your brother, we made our first attempt on it. That was springtime? Anyway, we carried a whole...

RT: What year was this?

JR: We were a big expedition. I had one kid in a backpack Mary was carrying and she was pregnant with my second kid and we went down and camped at Supai campground.

TM: Is that how you were gonna try to get up Carbonate or somehow get up onto the Esplanade?

JR: Right. Well, we...

TM: Had you scoped it out from the plane?

JR: Yes, only from the air.

DG: We went up Carbonate Canyon part way and then...

JR: Decided this isn't gonna work.

DG: Well, I remember the rattlesnakes.

JR: Well, there were snakes but there was no obvious route to get up there.

DG: That stopped us the first time, never ever got up onto the plateau. Then we went back again a second time in the...

JR: Winter.

DG: ...wintertime because there was water. There was snow melt in the water pockets up there on the plateau so we didn't have to carry as much.

JR: And it was beautiful.

DG: Oh, gorgeous.

JR: Plenty of water, temperature's good. We got most of the way up the climb and, oops.

DG: It was snow on the north side of the damn thing. I remember getting up there in clutter shoes and starting to slip.

JR: We weren't ready for that.

DG: we were just, you know, that far from the top and we had to bail. I got scared and bailed out.

JR: So we trucked back out of there...

DG: So we trucked back out (laughs) and went back again.

JR: ...and went back again.

RT: In what year are we talking about?

JR: Well, let's see, '68 is when I hired with the airline so it must have been '68 or 9.

RT: Oh, so it was many years after Zoro.

DG: Oh, yeah.

RT: Oh, wow.

DG: It was a long time.

TM: Mount Sinyala in 1958 was UCLA climbers and then it says Ganci. Would you have been there in '58?

DG: No, that was later.

DG: Ganci and Robertson.

TM: Let me see if I can find that.

JR: Dave wrote up a nice article that was in *Arizona Days and Ways*, so that'd tell us. All I have to do is go dig it out of my box that I'm storing it in.

RT: Wow, in '68.

JR: 1/29/68's my date of hire with the airline.

RT: 10 years later.

DG: Remember that one, huh.

JR: Yeah, seniority. The lifeblood of an airline pilot.

DG: How many years were you actually an airline pilot then for? '68? Well, gosh.

JR: Well, I left with them in '94.

DG: Wow, that's a long time.

JR: Retired in '97 actually.

DG: Wow, that's a long time. But you had some off-time in between there didn't you, between airlines?

JR: Yeah, two different times I had furlough time. That's when I went to work for...

DG: For Camp Trails.

JR: ...for Camp Trails and you were working for High Adventure Headquarters.

DG: Right. Right. But you still worked, didn't you still work when you were also flying the airlines?

JR: Yes, I did. Yeah, I was working part time and full time, being furloughed, and back to full time.

TM: So what I've got is the first ascent of the north face Monday, April 11th, 1960, 5:30 p.m., Don Meyers, Mike Sherrick, Jim Wilkerson, Bill Amburn, UCLA Mountaineers.

DG: Mike Sherrick I remember. A couple of those names somehow I associate with Yosemite.

TM: Second ascent by Dave Ganci and Jerry Robertson, May 3rd, 1969. "North face route up this wasp nest, has only mud route we've ever climbed. Found carabiner and sling from 1960 ascent, a U.S. Army caribiner at that. Beautiful climbing weather with a high of 80 and low of 40s. Tremendous view. A panorama of the Grand Canyon that evokes the feeling of timelessness and desolation."

JR: I assume that was what was written in the log at the top. A man of many joyful words. (laughs)

TM: So that would have been May 3rd, 1969

DG: At the same time piss off.

TM: So you started working for Bonanza in '68.

JR: I began in 1/29/68 and it was '69 when I discovered that, hey, that's...looking down there.

TM: And it took you one trip down to scout it out.

JR: Just to try to find the route to the base of it.

TM: How did you eventually find the route to the base? I'm sorry, I ran away. Run that story past me again.

DG: Second time we went down we got up on the plateau...

TM: How did you get on the plateau?

JR: Right there at the Supai Village was the way to get up on it.

DG: Yeah, there was a trail up there that the Supai's used because they had horses up there.

TM: Huh. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

JR: And once we got up there then we just do this zig-zag thing.

TM: Umm hmm, just walked around on the Supai?

JR: As you know, you've been there.

DG: I've got a good picture, more than one good picture of it. A hellacious looking thing to climb at that time from most angles, but the north side happened to have a break in it.

TM: Had you seen that from the air? Did you realize that there was a route on the east and then wrap off around the north side, or you just said, okay, well...

JR: We'll go there and check it out and climb it.

TM: Wow. Okay. So you started just walking around it?

JR: It seems like we never went around it much.

DG: We went around some of it. We didn't go around the whole thing, we just found that route we went around. But, you know, from my vantage point in those days, the climb was one thing, but the whole thing was the adventure. You know, you don't just drive up to the base of the wall and climb. It's getting there and the whole aspect of that to me was, you know... Zoroaster was unique thing in itself.

JR: Well, that's what prevented a lot of the climbs from being done earlier on because people wanted to be able to drive their car to the base of it and climb, and those things you didn't.

DG: It's a whole hump, especially for water and things, to get to them. I don't know, now the climbers, I don't know if it's conditioning or gear or what, they seem so much faster.

JR: Well, like when John Harlin III went in there from the South Rim, up, and all the way back to South Rim in 24 hours.

RT: Yeah, that was the *Outside* magazine article.

DG: You wonder about that and think, well, could we have done that then with the same gear and training. People, you know, train for this. It's a big thing now. It's a sport. People train for it. We never trained for anything. We had limited gear, I guess you could say. Then a lot of it, I think, was in our

heads, in your head that it's never been done before therefore it's gonna be difficult. I don't know, but... I look at some of the things they do today and I went, wow, are they on speed or are they... Are they just that far advanced in their conditioning or what?

JR: Mindset is so different. You know, like the north face of the Eiger, the famous killer mountain, it's been done in, the last I heard, 2 hours and 47 minutes.

DG: Just free climbing, right? The whole thing with a...

JR: Free climbing, yeah, solo. I mean, he's just running up that thing.

RT: In the same nose, the original route, it took 42 days on El Cap., just over two hours, free. No direct aide.

TM: So some of this is these people are going on your shoulders, meaning they've got the route descriptions, they've got very good gear, they don't have to think about let's go figure out the route, first time, okay, second time.

RT: They don't have the logistical problems.

TM: They don't have the logistical problems, that's all done. And they have maybe better gear so they can come in on that highway and...

JR: That's the evolution of...

DG: Yeah, and they know it's been done a hundred times before.

RT: But the 50s was really the Golden Age for climbing.

TM: Did you keep climbing in Grand Canyon then after, because it sounds like there was a big gap for you guys. Is that right?

RT: I ended up going to Lincoln Park Zoo in Chicago, well, after I graduated from college, and getting in the zoo business.

DG: I went back at different times to do things.

TM: In the 50s or into the 60s?

DG: No. No, later on. Different times and with different people. Angel's Gate. Actually climbed Zoroaster Temple two more times, one by the standard route and one by the Southeast Face.

JR: You know, in that record right there there's no mention of John N. Reno being involved in any of the climbs there.

DG: The Southwest Face, yeah, he and I...

JR: I know, but it's not in that book there.

DG: Really? Hmm.

RT: Oh, his new ascent/new route was not in this book at all. Was it?

JR: No, it wasn't but, I mean, any of the climbs...and you guys... What's the name of those pinnacles off to the east? Snoopy?

DG: Oh, Angel's Gate.

JR: Yeah. He was involved a lot but I never see anything about him there.

DG: And then went back to climb, well, I actually went back to climb Zoroaster with Steve Williams and Dan Bingham. That's when I was at High Adventure. That was another bivouac thing, winter bivouac thing. And then, let's see. Well, actually I made a first ascent of the east face of Brahma Temple, a solo ascent, it was a 4th class climb. George Bain came up the other way and we did Mencius and Confucius Temple. These were just kind of spaced out. I was never really quote "a serious climber", whatever. Now climbing is "serious", you know. It can be very "serious".

TM: Well, I think of Yosemite Valley and I think of people out there. Its Camp Four, isn't it?

RT: Yeah.

TM: Yeah, so there is a location and we climb here for weeks at a time. And the people come up from San Francisco every weekend to climb.

JR: Oh, yeah.

TM: It seems like that really wasn't happening in Grand Canyon in the 50s and 60s.

RT & JR: Not at all.

JR: I don't know that has ever gotten to that level of interest.

TM: It has individually. I think of the Tomasi brothers and people in the 90s, George.

DG: Well, look at George Bain.

TM: George. Yeah, the Gortex brothers that were out here on weekends. Harvey, of course, I think was the first sort of weekend, I'm there every weekend, but he was basically all alone. I mean, yeah, it's different with hiking partners.

RT: Colin McCullah wrote the book on backpacking.

DG: Colin, Colin Fletcher.

TM: Fletcher. Well, he was in, he was out and he was gone. I mean, it wasn't he was...

RT: Well, I thought he spent more time here.

TM: No. No. He came back, he did some more hiking. He went from Supai out to Diamond. He did some more but just that concept that we might have today of, I'm going out to the end of Camel and I'm going climbing. Where the Tucson people would climb in the 70s, when I kind of got into it, it was "All right, I'm going out to Windy Point." I mean, it's every weekend sort of deal. I get a sense that in Grand Canyon in the 50s into the 60s the UCLA Climbing Club would show up and do a climb and be gone.

DG: And go.

RT: Yeah, cause we started the technical climbing, as far as I know, in the Canyon. And it was a 10-year drought before there was any more technical climbing, at least 10 years.

DG: Umm hmm, yeah.

TM: Well, I'd say Merrill Clubb was out there with a giant hemp rope. There's some amazing pictures of him in the 50s.

RT: Oh, I don't know who that is.

TM: He's got his pith helmet out there with this amazing smile and is hanging off this rope going down some Coconino chute on his way to climb Vishnu Temple.

DG: Those are the crazy people. (laughs)

TM: Yeah. And he was Harvey's...

RT: I don't know about that.

TM: ...he was Harvey's mentor. I can look up his first ascent of Vishnu Temple. And then I think he went up Woton's...

DG: Was that 1937, the year we were born, wasn't it?

TM: It might have been '47.

DG: Oh, was it '47? Wonder what motivated him. (laughs) Yeah, some of those old...

JR: Because it's there.

DG: Clubb, and who else was there? Clubb and Butchart and a couple other guys that... Who's the first Isis Temple? Who did Isis Temple fairly early?

TM: I have never climbed Isis. I don't see that here at my computer, but I've got it here cause I know Ohlman's put that together.

DG: Two attempts to climb it.

TM: I know it's there, just going past it right now. But, yeah, there were just odd people out there that weren't connecting that didn't even know it. You'd get to the top of Sinyala and you'd say "Who are these UCLA people?" because people weren't quite connecting yet.

DG: Yeah, that's right. Yeah, there wasn't a connection that I know of, that I can think of. I think there is now.

RT: Well, that's what I don't know. I've heard that a lot of the Inner Gorge walls, people have been climbing on those, but I have no knowledge of the evolution of technical climbing in the Canyon in terms of recent years.

DG: Well, there's more, I don't know how many routes there are on Zoroaster now but probably...

JR: But you know, the climbing...

RT: There are more?

DG: Oh, yeah, there's different routes. Aren't there, Tom, a number of routes on Zoroaster Temple now, or around it, isn't it? It's kind of like...

TM: I don't know. I don't know.

DG: I think so, yeah. George Bain did a new route on it, I know.

JR: But even today I don't think the level of climbing in the Canyon is anything at all like it is in Yosemite.

RT: No. No. It's still hard to get to and you have...

JR: It's hard to get to.

RT: ...and logistics.

JR: Exactly right.

DG: You gotta carry water.

RT: Not so much fun in those logistics.

DG: Yeah, you gotta carry that damn water.

RT: Cause we were actually in the Golden Age of adventure climbing, I think.

DG: Yeah, that's a good description. The adventure was getting there sometimes.

RT: We didn't train for it, we had good skills, and we did great things...

DG: And we were young.

RT: ...for that time. Yeah, we were 20.

DG: We were young. (laughs) Young and dumb.

TM: I'm still trying to track down Isis.

DG: I made two attempts to get to Isis.

JR: You tried to kill her, Dave.

DG: Who? (laughter)

TM: 1945, Merrill climbed Vishnu, northwest slope...

DG: What year?

TM: 1945 on July 13th. Here is his route description. I thought that he had been up there before that. I thought he had scoped that out with his son. There's a photograph on the Clubbs'... It's a long story. They lost all their photographs when they were moving. There was a fire in their moving van and burned a bunch of stuff but they had a small 'best of family photos' album on a seat and they grabbed that and got it out. They had a photo Merrill took of his son on top of Vishnu. I thought that was...well, there it is. July 13, 1945. So there were people out there doing stuff.

DG: When did Butchart start?

RT: Is Vishnu a technical climb? I don't know, I've never been there.

TM: It's a 5th class at the top.

DG: You've climbed Vishnu, haven't you?

TM: Yeah, yeah, yeah. You gotta poke around. You gotta figure it out. It's just like Sinyala. Well, we gotta get up here. You gotta work at it. So these guys were out there working it.

DG: 1945. Wow.

TM: So, yeah. That's why the photo of him with this giant hemp rope and you're looking like, really? It was like anchor chain.

RT: My perspective on it is things really started in the 50s because Vida Rock went down, the Totem Pole went down, and Zoroaster went down. Those are three iconic pieces.

TM: Ship Rock was in there somewhere.

RT: That was earlier. In the 40s.

TM: Earlier, okay. Okay.

RT: Yeah, Ship Rock was earlier. Then the whole cast moved to Utah and all the sandstone pinnacles there in the 60s.

TM: By then the Sierras were done. The last of the Sierra peaks had been done so the climbers were moving inland then into the deserts.

RT: Yeah.

DG: You saw the book "Desert Towers" by...

TM: Yes.

DG: That's a great, great book. You have a copy of that?

TM: You showed me. I think you brought it and showed it to me.

DG: Did I bring that with me?

TM: Yeah, yeah.

DG: God, what a great book that is. The history of that is unbelievable.

RT: Layton Kor and...

DG: Yeah.

RT: I did some first ascents with Layton Kor.

TM: Did you. What was he like to climb with?

RT: He was like a giant spider, long arms, long torso. I remember things that I took him on that probably made first ascents, and he had such a long reach it was easy to get over that. We did an ice climb, we did a winter ascent of the second buttress of Halletts in the winter. It's actually recorded. There's a whole book on Kor's early climbs and people talked about them and so forth. A good friend of mine was the editor who put that book together. I'm spacing out his name.

JR: That's not the book that I've got, is it? *Beyond Vertical* or something?

RT: Yeah, that's it. It is *Beyond Vertical*. It was the fifth ascent of that but it was the first winter ascent. Neither one of us might have been here. Cam Burns, I don't know if you know that name.

JR: Ken Burns? Sure you know Ken Burns.

TM: Oh, Ken Burns? Yeah.

RT: No, Cam.

JR: I thought you were saying Ken. Okay.

RT: No. Cam Burns. He's doing Layton's biography. He's written a lot of stuff about mountaineering. I just happen to be on his Facebook thing so I get updates on what's going on. He interviewed me several years ago about Layton and this particular climb and other climbs we did, and I had shared with him. It was a 1200 foot face and it was like a day and a half, the first ascent. We did it in five hours in the middle of winter, colder than hell. But, about a thousand foot up there's an overhang and Layton fell off the overhang. Had a great belay, but the anchor bolt I was in, was the original anchor bolt, it had pulled out but I never told Layton that. I told Cam, I said "Well, that come out, we'd be a mess down at the bottom, a thousand foot down." Well, I wouldn't have nine children and Layton wouldn't have done all these wonderful things in his career in climbing. (laughter) So... That was good conversation. Yeah, I just think it was a great time for me. And, again, for me it was all during the college days and vacations and stuff so I never continued. I got involved with Outward Bound in my late 30s, was a chief instructor and course director for them, Colorado Outward Bound at the Marble Camp so had a lot of fun.

TM: And then eventually you got into some river running?

RT: Yeah, I did. I probably organized about 40 rafting trips with Hatch. I'd design my own trip. All my ones in the Grand Canyon, did a dozen of them, they were all 10-day trips. Most of them got out at Lava so we stayed a lot in the Inner Gorge. We did a lot of the side canyons and so forth. You've been on the Canyon. The last one we did, Thunder River where it comes out of the wall, we went in in August and climbed in and went caving. Have you ever done that one in there?

TM: Yeah.

RT: We got stopped at the waterfall, the little 12 foot. And we did Hermit in life jackets that year. But it was a fun time. We had a lot of great trips. And we the Green and Yampa and the Middle Fork of the Salmon, Cataract.

TM: Were you doing that with Colorado Mountain College?

RT: No, no. I ran private trips. I just used Hatch as my outfitter.

TM: Okay. So you would charter the trip?

RT: Charter. Umm hmm. I did that and I did a lot of whitewater canoe trips. Lower Canyon, Rio Grande, covered canoes and stuff. We did several trips in the Paria Canyon, Buckskin Gulch and those things. That was primarily cause my kids were growing up. They were young, they were 8, 10, 12, we were doing fouteeners and that stuff. So in the 70s did a lot of rafting on the Arkansas. Yeah, I remember going down the Arkansas in high water one time. Got sucked off the back of the boat my first three trips cause my paddlers didn't get me out of the hole. (laughter) That's one of the great rivers actually to raft in high waters. I spent from '69 to '78 a lot in the out-of-doors. Probably spent three years on the river I think I calculated one time.

DG: Before I forget, a book I had mentioned to Jerry and Rick, maybe you've heard of it, by Craig Childs, one of his latest was *Apocalyptic Planet*. Did you read that?

TM: Yes. I've heard of it, yes.

DG: I just got done. Fantastic book. One of the chapters is about them running a river in the Himalayas. The first ascent of this God-awful river and that description is just...

TM: God-awful.

DG: God, yes. Makes me want to hold my breath, you know, when I read it. He's really a good writer for stuff. So you might enjoy that.

TM: So from Zoroaster to Sinyala, were there any other summits in between then? And then after Sinyala?

JR: For me, finished airline career and here I am.

TM: Okay, okay.

JR: Actually Sinyala I think was the last...

RT: I stopped climbing. The last time I climbed was 1962, I was guiding for the Iowa Mountaineers. They wanted me to go on further trips going back to Peru and stuff like that but I was involved in the zoo business, a zoo professional administrator, and had moved back to Colorado and knew Marlin Perkins at the Lincoln Park Zoo in Chicago several years. Then came to Denver Zoo as assistant director then became director and got politically really out of balance. My political intelligence was not intelligent enough.

TM: This was at the Denver Zoo?

RT: Yeah, umm hmm. So I left the zoo business and went into other things. Also eventually got into Outward Bound.

TM: When did you leave Denver?

RT: The Zoo?

TM: Yeah.

RT: 1966.

TM: Okay. Chuck Warren has been very instrumental in the zoo but I think he's much, much newer.

RT: Clayton Freiheit was the one who came in after me about five years later. He's the one that really developed the zoo to present. He was a good friend in the zoo business. Cause at the time I left the zoo business I was scheduled to be I guess the chairman of the Education Committee for Zoos and Aquariums in North America. But I never returned to the zoo business after that cause I had to go elsewhere in the country and I didn't want to move, we'd just bought a house and a lot of other factors. I was involved in a radio/television corporation, a bunch of other stuff, so life changed.

TM: David, you were with these guys for Sinyala, after Zoroaster, which you then did another ascent of.

DG: Well, two more ascents. One of the standard route when I was working at High Adventure headquarters, which is a retail store that Camp Trails owned. And then later, it was 1978 when John Annerino and George Bain and I climbed the southwest face of Zoroaster. Then intermittently I climbed Buddha Temple and then, it was actually '72 that I climbed Angel's Gate with Chuck Graff. Then George Bain and I went out and climbed Mencius and Confucius Temple on the far west end at the end of... What's the end of that road that goes out past Tiyo Point?

TM: Vishnu Temple? Sorry, Shiva Temple, out there. Tiyo Point?

DG: Well, I climbed Shiva Temple, too. That was later, that was not that long ago. I was up in age at that time. But we went out to... What's the end of that road out there? You know what I'm talking about?

TM: Point Sublime.

DG: Point Sublime, Point Sublime. Off of Point Sublime there's Mencius and Confucius Temples George Bain and John Annerino and I went up. George and I climbed and John went and did something else at the time. I had a friend who was the, she still is I think unless she's retired, Wendy Hodgson, the herbarium and curator at the Desert Botanical Garden in Phoenix. She's an old bud of mine, a really great, great lady. She spent half her life out in the field collecting plant life for the botanical garden. She was interested in the Grand Canyon in that a botany had been done along the river, obviously, because of the easy access on the river and along the rim, but not of the inner canyon. So I said "Well, let's go in the inner canyon, I know some places." I had this crazy idea that maybe on top of one of these temples, flat temples, something had evolved differently because, you know, over five million years...and we would find a first plant and I could name it after me. (laughter) The agave igancii or whatever it would be. (laughs) Well, she thought that might be a possibility. So Wen and I went into the inner canyon a number of times between the rim and the river and one time I took her on top of Diva Temple, which is the closest temple to the North Rim. There's Diva Temple, there's Brahma Temple, then there's Zoroaster Temple. Diva's accessed from the North Rim. It's a long beat to get out there, relatively easy climb to the top. Got to the top of this mesa out there, I thought maybe we'll find something different (laughs). We didn't but anyway she collected. She got permits from the Park Service to do this and I got to go with her and I got paid to do it. She made quite an extensive collection of stuff in the inner canyon. I think later she discovered a couple unique plants that maybe one's named after her but I never got my name on one. That was really interesting and she was a tough, tough lady. We'd carry our packs in plus a plant press, you know, which she would put her plants in. Stack them in a cardboard plant press and come out. She was tough, tougher than I was. That was, gosh, when was that? Some of that was in the 80s, in the 80s I think it was.

TM: So you would certainly fit, but on a pretty punctuated, lots of time in between not climbing, would fit one of the early people that actually came back again and again and again. I mean, Harvey was doing trails. Harvey wasn't a real summit climber or at least he didn't like ropes. I mean, if he could get up there without a rope he didn't want to use a rope.

DG: Right.

TM: So then I'm thinking about Ohlman and who were some of the other...

DG: Gary Ohlman, Gary Ohlman.

TM: Jim Ohlman.

DG: Jim Ohlman.

TM: Yeah.

DG: I remember he used to approach me a couple of times and wanted me to take him up Zoroaster Temple, one temple he had never climbed. I remember talking to him.

TM: There's only a couple he hasn't.

DG: Really? I guess he's done... Well, same with like George Bain, right?

TM: Right, right.

DG: For 100 I think he's got.

JR: I'm assuming this Jim Ohlman isn't the James Ramsey Ullman but may be a relative of his.

DG: This is Ohlman. Spelled different.

TM: Ohlman, O-h-l-m-a-n.

JR: Oh, okay.

TM: He works for Peabody Coal out of Kayenta and worked for Grand Canyon Trail Guides or North Rim Trail Guides when that operation was going, doing guided hiking out of the North Rim.

RT: So you're saying there's a couple of men that have made it their mission to climb all the temples in the Canyon?

TM: Yes. Yeah.

RT: Has anybody succeeded yet?

TM: That's a very good question.

RT: There are around 150 aren't there?

TM: Yeah, something like that.

DG: 150 named ones?

TM: If you want to look in the definition boundary of Grand Canyon National Park there's a list there. If you want to include rim to rim, Lee's Ferry to Grand Wash Cliffs, that's a different list of named summits. But there's a list there and a number of people are closing in. I think Ohlman...

DG: George is one of them.

TM: George, Ohlman, yeah.

DG: Who else?

TM: The Tomasi's were after it very aggressively for a while but they've kind of given up now a little bit. There are some very obscure places out there that are difficult to get to as you guys found out early on. Just getting there is hard, figuring out how to do it is hard, and then you finally get there and you have to back away again. So it's, yeah. Excellent.

DG: Isis Temple is another one I think. You haven't been up Isis or you have been? No?

TM: No, I've been denied on Isis, so. I don't know if I'll get back there again or not. I might but...

DG: I don't know if I can make it either now but I tried twice and couldn't make it.

RT: You couldn't get to it?

DG: Well, the first time... Well, actually, my ex-wife and her son and I were looking for a route to it at one time. Got stranded back over in... What's the name of the canyon?

TM: Phantom Creek?

DG: Phantom Creek, Phantom Creek. We went up and over, got stranded back there. Was a snowstorm came in in March and stranded us there for four days. I was just looking for a way to get to a break in the Redwall that leads to it.

TM: There is, in the back of Phantom Creek. Yes.

DG: Yeah. Then later...how many years ago is this now...Steve Williams and myself, crazy James Dean, and another guy were going in to try and do it from the South Rim, which is a long, long way to get back in there. We got to the base of the Redwall and we just kind of ran out of food and ran out of motivation. I think we're just getting too old and tired. Just beat us out.

TM: And Rink and Bain went up through the Redwall, off that Utah Flats route and made that work.

DG: Yeah. Yeah, we got spanked on that one, I think, and the storm and all. Oh, yeah, and then Cheops Temple. Another one I climbed. George Bain and I took Wendy up. Took Wendy almost to the top of Cheops Temple. But, again, those were spaced out. Yeah, it was never serious climbing. Climbing now is business. God, it's...

TM: It is and it isn't. I mean, there's still people that are still doing it for fun like you guys were, so that's still happening.

DG: But it just seems like I can't get interested in things like the climbing magazines anymore because it's all about the 5.11.3 thing. It's just such a competitive thing. It seems like its work now. Maybe I'm just an old fart talking about the young people. (laughs)

JR: Well, it's a profession for some of those guys.

DG: Yeah.

TM: There's people that all they do is inside climbing walls.

DG: Yeah.

TM: They don't go outside. And a lot of people will look at Grand Canyon and just say "The rock's no good, I will not climb there." Okay.

DG: (laughs) Been there about five million years.

RT: Remember this guide to the Grand Canyon? I don't know if you ever saw this. This was the centerfold in there. I thought you'd be interested.

DG: Got our names on that one. First ascent...

RT: This centerfold. This guide has been recognized for the Grand Canyon. Got some award for it.

TM: James Kaiser, K-a-i-s-e-r. Winner of the National Travel Guide Award.

RT: Yeah. I just brought it along because I didn't know whether you'd seen it.

DG: You got a copy of that?

RT: I don't have a copy.

DG: Will you make a copy and send it to me?

TM: I got a copy machine here.

DG: Yeah. Great.

TM: Yeah, I'd like to make a copy of that as well.

DG: Yeah, I'd like a copy of that.

RT: You want copies of like the second ascent written?

TM: Yes, please. Yes, please.

RT: Do you want one of the *Outside* of the magazine, or you can make copies of all of these. This is all about Zoroaster's. These are my notes on the first ascent.

TM: Yeah, that'd be great.

DG: Is that what you sent me?

RT: Yeah.

DG: You sent me your notes on it.

RT: Yeah, you're welcome to make...

TM: Okay.

RT: This is the register.

JR: I never wrote anything about it beyond him writing it up. I want to mention that between Zoro and Sinyala there wasn't a total void for me. I had the opportunity in 1960 to go to Europe and spend a month climbing in the Alps.

TM: Wow. What was that like?

JR: Great adventure. I was there with John Harlin. We had intended to go there and be the first Americans to climb the north face of the Eiger but it was a very bad weather year. Rationally we weren't really ready for that. But he did manage to do it two years later, be the first American, North Face.

DG: Was he the first American ever to climb that?

JR: Yeah.

TM: Well done.

RT: And also Dave, you went back. You went to McKinley and...

DG: Well, when Rick and I took off...

RT: You went back to Peru to climb.

DG: ...to go to South America. I got down, climbed in the Andes in South America. And Isis snow stop, really neat. And then later years, well, we had the climb/drink beer summer with Charlie Rigdon and Kes Teeter. We climbed Mount Hood, Shasta, Rainier. Then went back to climb Mount McKinley again. Got blown off McKinley at 19,000 feet after 10 days of...

JR: When you say again, were you there a previous time?

DG: McKinley?

JR: Yeah. Were you there more than once?

DG: No. What I meant is we climbed again together. Went to McKinley and... (laughs) We went in June, which was early, and there was a late winter. When we started off we were just following the wands of a German expedition that had gone ahead of us. That's the only way (laughs) we found our way is following their wands because of this white out. I remember 10 days of just ice and snow, you know it's

like where's the fun in this one? Am I getting too old for this shit or what? We had three Optimus 111B stoves. Do you remember those? Nice stoves. All three of them failed at 19,000 feet. We spent the next two days and a night in an ice cave, I remember, because of the storm, trying to make one of them work. I remember we put an ice saw out at the entrance to the ice cave and we could tell how fast the wind was blowing by how far the ice saw would go over like that. That was our gauge of when to go out and pee, you know, when the ice would go like this. (laughs) We finally got the 111B working, one of them, and we were going to then continue on to climb McKinley. We got up on, what was it, I forget which ridge it was, and we were off... There were five of us, matter of fact, I forget the other two guys. We looked at each other and said "Let's go to Hawaii." (laughter) And we did. (laughs) It was like this is not fun, we're getting out of here.

TM: I think we're gonna wrap this up now. I'm just interested in what would you like to say to climbers 30, 40, 50 years from now?

DG: That's a long time, Tom.

TM: I'll start with you, Dave.

DG: That's a long time. 40, 50 years from now?

TM: Yeah.

DG: God, where will it be? Where will it be in 40, 50...

JR: It'll be a matter of new routes on top of old routes that are crisscrossing each other. I don't know. It seems like...

DG: Okay. All right. I'll say throw away all the technical gear and start over again for the adventure of it. This may sound sacrilegious, throw away the chalk, throw away the friends. Boy, this is an old fart talking now. Throw away the sticky shoes, throw away all the intricate hardware to belay and climb with. Just start basic and see what that's like. (laugh) Yeah, it's just an old timer talking but that's what I would do. I mean, how far...by then they'll be like spiders, right, they'll be like spider man. It's like they'll have shoes that will stick to the rock and their fingers, their gloves, like a football players, will have stuff on it that will just stick to the rock. I'm being facetious I know but, hey, that's what I see. Where's the adventure? I couldn't see adventure that much in what some of them are doing now. I mean, it's like it's all how fast we can do it and they're like spider people. That's just jealousy, I guess, talking, old age talking maybe. Go back to the adventure of it, forget about how hard it is. Either you can do it or you can't and have fun. (laughs)

RT: Yikes. For me, I'm just grateful that I grew up in the Golden Age of mountaineering and rock climbing and got to meet some really neat people. Like I was looking here, did a first ascent with Nick Clinch who's very famous in the mountaineering circles in Peru that we had here a peak. I got to do a consult job for Hilary. In the early 60s we failed to climb Makalu and we had to go tape some things. The neat people I got to climb with like Layton Kor, Harvey Carter, and Nick Clinch and these two old farts here, Jerry Robertson and Dave Ganci. Great gratitude for that. It's just something, it's come and gone and never to be repeated in that way, and cherish that forever. I think for me, the neat thing for me is Zoroaster's Temple. If we were the first people to be on top of that, which I think we were, that's over

millions of years and nobody can top that. And it's an icon. Millions of people see it although they don't know anything about the history of it, but I know. I know the adventure. So I'm lucky. I'm blessed.

JR: It's hard to add anything to what you guys have said. I was just thinking about ice climbing as a adventure cause it's non-repeatable, for the most part, routes. We may not have any ice left in 50 years. (laughs) I don't know.

RT: Good point.

DG: Wouldn't do routes.

JR: Yeah. Right. But there's so much extreme stuff that people do on the ice it just blows you away. They'll just keep doing it more and more extreme, I guess. Have you guys done any ice climbing? Rick has.

DG: No, I've never done it.

JR: Well, I've had some experiences on the snow.

DG: Some, a little bit, yeah.

RT: Well, the technology was pretty low grade in the 50s for ice climbing. I mean, it's advanced like everything else in rock climbing, as well as mountaineering has advanced tremendously.

DG: I think as the mental state of the people that do it now are so far advanced, I think, over like what they do now I can't relate to. That's why I'm being an old fart talking about the old days, you know. I can't relate to some of the stuff they do today.

RT: A lot of people are gymnasts.

DG: Yeah, exactly.

RT: And they train. I never trained. The only thing I ever trained for was when Layton and I did the winter ascent of the second buttress of Halletts. I felt I needed to really get in shape cause I knew it was gonna be cold. We didn't have any idea of what we were in for and it was on the North Slope, no sunshine, and it was a winter ascent. But...

DG: You know, one of the big things that's really changed that I remember... I remember in the early days in Yosemite when we were there, were there any girl climbers, any women climbers at all? And now look at them.

JR: I don't remember a one.

DG: I don't remember one climber.

RT: I only climbed with one woman climber who was really good, and that was with the Iowa Mountaineers. Don't recall her name. And also Delores, my first wife, and Jerry was part of the wedding. They were pretty good.

JR: And his wife. Two of them. I'm holding it against him for not letting me be his best man.

DG: I would, too. (laughter) But, yeah, look at how far women have come in it, you know.

RT: Oh, it's fantastic.

JR: Oh, yeah.

RT: That's what's exciting. In fact, my daughter, Ashley, when I saw her in Morrison one day, 11 years of age, doing a 5.10 overhang. Impressive. (laughter)

TM: Yeah. And trying to track down early women climbers in Grand Canyon, they were there, they came in late after you guys. As in river running or... They were there but the numbers were small and slowly... But even now they're very small.

RT: Georgie White. Rafting.

TM: Well, the rafting, the people coming in, the women... Okay, Elzada Clover, Lois Jotter. Clover got that trip through Grand Canyon, but they were few and far between. And it's the same with climbing. In thinking about the first woman to summit Zoroaster, who was that, when was that?

DG: You know, that's a whole research project, just women climbers. Wow. Anybody even thought about that?

TM: Yeah. Right. Well, you see them in the registers. Wanda Meyers, who is Wanda Meyers? She was climbing with Hans Bodenhamer when they did Horus and Osiris and Ra and Set, boom, boom, boom, boom. Who was she, where did she go?

DG: Where did she go?

TM: So these people are out there. It's a matter of researching and finding them out. It's like Merrill Clubb. Who was Merrill Clubb, who are these people? You have to go look. They're out there, you just don't know. It's hard to connect the dots there.

DG: Have you any interest in or is the Park Service interested in going back even further to the early Americans that lived down there? Has there been anything really done on that? I've read sketches of that. Well, Harvey did, right, because he found these crazy routes off the rim down to the river.

TM: The 36-mile route, the Bridge at Sighs route, is a really good example of basically what looks to be... There are some logs that are stuck in cracks and yucca fiber ropes are really strong.

DG: Who knows, huh? Yeah, any evidence would be gone.

TM: Yeah. All we can do is we can document what our written tradition can tell us but there's a Native American archeological site every mile all the way through Grand Canyon from start to end.

RT & DG & JR: Yeah.

TM: So those people were everywhere.

DG: That's what I thought.

TM: There's a bridge, Bridge of Sighs, no, not Bridge of Sighs, but Anasazi Bridge at 43-mile on the river that's this little log structure that's placed across a crack way up this cliff face. You go past that bridge and around the corner it goes off the 5-scale pretty damn fast. I'm like, yeah, really? We just don't know.

DG: Yeah, that history's probably buried somewhere in the bottom of the Colorado River.

JR: Before recorded.

TM: Before recorded.

DG: Being a river runner, what are your thoughts of the early Americans using the river as a transportation corridor? Do you think...?

TM: Before the dam, the river was warm in September after the monsoons kind of petered out, and low. So a thousand cubic feet a second, swimmable. Why wouldn't we? Why wouldn't you? There was sand everywhere. It wasn't as vegetated along the shoreline as it is now so walking the thing would have been easier. The water's warm.

DG: Why not? Yeah.

TM: Why not?

DG: Up and down, right, the river?

TM: I don't know about up but I would certainly go for down cause it's easy. I just have to float along.

DG: Yeah, just float along on something. Yeah.

TM: But again, you'd be stupid to say it didn't happen because we don't know. But let's at least want to catch what we...

RT: Could have been done.

TM: Absolutely could have been done. Yeah, yeah. I just want to kind of catch what we've got. Thank you guys so very, very much for the time to come over tonight.

JR: Thank you for taking the time.

TM: I appreciate it. Before I turn this thing off I do want to mention that there's discussion of doing a Granitica, I think you guys went down to the Baboquivari one for Grand Canyon, and that might happen next year. So if it does would definitely like to bring you guys in to that and talk about first ascents. And you all are first ascents, Zoroaster. That'd be fun.

RT: Be fun.

DG: Yeah, it would be fun. I've got emails from Steve Grossman talking about this fall in November.

TM: Oh, is he thinking this fall?

DG: That's the last thing I've heard from him. He doesn't have a set date but...

TM: I need to send him an email again cause I started outreaching him and then everything just stopped and I haven't heard back from him.

DG: Well, he must have your email because... Did he contact you, Steve Grossman? He needs to get Rick's email then.

TM: Right. Is he thinking about doing that in November then?

DG: I think that's what he said, don't quote me for sure.

RT: I've got his email cause there was communication.

TM: Okay. Well, I need to make a note then.

DG: He wanted, well, he obviously... I got an email that he had sent George Bain and George sent back to him about it. He's wanting images, digital images, to choose what to use at the Granitica. I think George probably has thousands of them.

TM: Oh, he does. Yeah.

DG: From hundreds ascents. Then he's making, whatever... I don't know what he's gonna with it.

TM: So that's already happening. Let's just spool that up and make sure that happens. I think that'll be a lot of fun to do that. All right. Well, I'm gonna turn this off. Thank you guys very, very much.

DG: Okay.