

Interviewee: Robert “Bob” Cornelius (BC)

Interviewer: Tom Martin (TM)

Subject: Working as a Park Ranger at Phantom Ranch in the Grand Canyon in the early 1970’s.

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TM: Today is September 28, 2018. This is Part 9 of an interview series with Robert “Bob” Cornelius. My name is Tom Martin. This is part of a Grand Canyon Oral History. And, Bob, thank you so much again for your willingness to chat with us about your time at Grand Canyon National Park in the 1960s-1970s. Yesterday you had told us some amazing things about the difficulties and the benefits of horses in the Inner Canyon. Is there anything else you’d like to kind of finish that up or expand that a little bit?

BC: Sure, well there’s lots of...and thank you for doing the interviews here. The horses, of course, were important in my time at the Canyon. And I think one of the things...one of the benefits of them that I might not have gone over earlier is, you know, you developed a relationship with your horses. They kind of knew what you were going to do, what you weren’t going to do, and you learned about their personalities and those types of things. But beyond that we didn’t have a lot of manpower or womanpower or person-power or whatever you want to call it in the Canyon in those days. We had one Ranger that was assigned to Indian Gardens, and had one Ranger, myself, that was at Phantom Ranch. This was in the ’69-’70 period, maybe ’71. And then we had a Relief Ranger. We talked about Vic Watahomigie was a Relief Ranger down there, actually maintenance man. They sent him to a little Law Enforcement School and he became a Ranger for a while. So there were only 3 of us, and that was after the first season...the first season there were 2 Seasonals at Phantom Ranch, plus Vic, and then one person up at Indian Gardens. So it sort of varies.

Once the...and I did talk about this waterline budget, you know, that was how I was paid in part. It was all...as always, you know, money was the big thing and then a little later on we had someone up at Cottonwood Camp, and so that increased our numbers, and about the last year and a half or so, we started to get some SCA, and you know, more volunteer-type. SCA’s aren’t exactly volunteers, but they fall in the same category. So we had help that way.

Overall there weren’t that many people, so the horse, you know, tended to supplement your ability to do things. You know, if you didn’t have 2 people to carry either end of the stretcher, you know, it helped to have a horse. If the person was, you know, semi-ambulatory you could put them on the horse and drag them someplace. I did a lot of that while I was at the Canyon, people that were, you know, dehydrated. You would go down, take the horse, and they were glad to see him, you know [chuckle]. Or...and a lot of times I’d carry their backpack and put them on the horse and drag them in, so it increased a single Ranger’s ability to help people that weren’t, you know, didn’t have to be put in a litter or something like that. And then I had a lot of little, crazy episodes with horses. Sometimes I think I told somebody sometime ...schools kind of always in session with a horse. You never know what they’re going to do sometimes. And I...this little horse, Chuck, that I rode a lot. He...I got to know his personality and I could tell when he was going to shy or going to misbehave. Whenever we would go up the trail and there’s a new rock...I guess, he had them all memorized. A big boulder, a big rock would come down, he

would turn around or he would fight me to go by it. And I know on one occasion, I had a pack mule named Helen. Because I didn't...I packed a mule...with mules in and out of the Canyon periodically. Most of the time I took my food and stuff out to Yaki Point. There was a little building there that we would put our food stuffs in and anything else we wanted to go down to the Canyon the packer would take it down, but a lot of time, too, I packed...I learned how to use the Diamond hitch and all that sort of stuff. So that was really sort of fun.

And then we had different pack mules that we'd use. This one case we had this mule Helen and I...she was a Jenny mule. A big female mule. And she was very fast, real long-legged, real tall mule. She would go do about anything. She was easy to ride, and like I mentioned in an earlier discussion, that I asked the Chief Ranger if I could ride the mule and he said, "No, it wasn't dignified," or it didn't look good. So we got up right below the switchbacks at the top of the South Kaibab Trail. There was a huge boulder in the trail and I had been fighting the horse all summer long to go by...around this boulder. It was a limited amount of trail to go around it. So I came up with the bright idea of turning the mule loose and letting the mule walk past the boulder, and then we would follow the mule, and I would just ride the horse up and grab the lead rope, and take the mule on up to the corral. Well, as soon as I let the mule go, she ran right around this boulder, the horse went and walked around the boulder, and the mule took off. And she really ran and so we had this race up the switchbacks there in the Chimney, and you know, we went up one switchback, up another, up another, and finally I noticed the lead rope was dangling down over one of the little rock walls, and I jumped off the horse and I grabbed that lead rope and was able to stop the mule. I think she probably would have just ridden...gone to the corral at Yaki Point, but then again she might've just gone to the corral over in the South Rim Village, you know [chuckle]. So that was kind of a funny story. Another thing that happened one time, another stupid thing I did. I decided to run the horse to the corral at Phantom. We started up near Phantom Ranch, and here, you know, it was kind of like winter time, and I went racing down the trail, and then I turned to go across the footbridge in front of the, what was the little Ranger Station at the time, and we headed right for the corral. Cause the only horse we had down there...the only animal we had down there was my horse, I left the gate open to the corral. And the horse ran, you know, full tilt into the corral, and I thought he's going to take me right under this little shed roof there where the horses would stand in under the shade. So I got one leg over the top of the saddle and I just leapt into the manure in the corral there, you know, and just this big cloud of dust and the horse...when I fell off, it scared the horse. And he went running around. Of course, he didn't run out the gate or anything, but running around the corral crazy like, so I never did that again.

TM: What a rodeo! [laughter]

BC: It was! It's pretty crazy. I took him up one time...another stupid one...I took him up to the Ranger Station and there was always tall grass around the Ranger Station, and I decided, well, he might like to eat some grass. He's always eating these old dry alfalfa pellets and stuff, so I took him up there and I put a long rope on him and I tied him to a...to one of the trees, and I went into the Ranger Station for a couple minutes for something, I came out and he had gotten wound...that rope wound around his legs and he finally...he basically tied himself up and he fell over in the grass there, but he was, of course, he was still eating, you know. [laughter] He liked that green grass so much. So just little things like that went on all the time. We...another packing experience was...yeah, another packing experience was, we had this one mule named Pat. Pat was huge. He was so big, we had an extra...had an extra foot-long strap added to his feedbag because his head was so big. He had this enormous head, and he was a big, like a gigantic barrel of a mule. I mean, it was...he was just huge. When you would put the saddlebags on him to carry your stuff out of the Canyon or into the Canyon, they kind of, you know, went far out and when you'd get on the South Kaibab Bridge, he could just barely clear with these bags because what

they would do is...the bags are called panniers. There just big canvas bags with a couple of loops on the top. You put the loop...over the sawbuck that's on top of the mule, and then inside of these they'd built little plywood boxes or frames, and they were probably two-foot by a foot maybe, and then the height of the pannier was probably two and a half feet or so. So these little boxes were there so there was a ridge...they were rigid and when we would go across the Kaibab suspension bridge, if Pat moved one way or the other a little bit, the boxes inside of these panniers would rub on the side of the bridge. And he'd stop, and so I was pulling him across the bridge, and I...every time I had a lot of trouble...so I asked one of the trail crewman, I said, "What could I do to help pull this mule, because he's so resistant?" Even going up the trail, he was very, very slow. And they said, "Well, take the rope and go through the D-Ring on the back of your saddle." There were these big brass rings that they are used to tie the saddle, like the britch in them, on the back of the saddle and stuff. He said, "Go through there and make a loop and then put a little dally or a loop around your saddle horn and then the horse will be pulling the mule rather than the..."

TM: You.

BC: You...because if you didn't, if the mule stopped or something and you had the rope around the saddle horn, then the rope, of course, would really, you know, dig into your thigh. I mean, it would get really uncomfortable. So here we go, I did like he said, here we go across the Kaibab Bridge, and of course, Pat scraped one of his boxes and he came to a dead halt and I heard this, "Bing!" and the ring had popped off of the saddle, and of course, the horse was just hanging there on the rope so I thought, "Well, that wasn't a very good idea," so I went back to the way that we had done it. You just had to be really careful with him. On another occasion...the bridge was always a problem. You know, you see the mules, the pictures of the mules and things going across it. It's a little dangerous, because the horses are a little apprehensive, or the mules maybe, you know, especially if they haven't gone over it a bunch of times, I think. One time I was...I think it was when they had this dead mule smell that I talked about in the last interview. You could smell it from the bridge, so I was...I decided to lead my horse Chuck across the bridge, and we got about halfway across, and here comes a military jet right down through the Inner Gorge, and this roar of the engine, and the horse...I...nearly ran me over. I'm lucky I really didn't get hurt, and [chuckle] so there were all kinds of issues. You know, I said horses are dangerous, and they really are. If you're not heads up or you do foolish things like I sometimes did with them, you know.

TM: Hey Bob, you mentioned something that made me think. At the top of the Kaibab Trailhead, up near Yaki Point there, there's a corral. And there's a residence there now, but I just wanted to make sure when you were there, that there was a building there that you could store stuff in. Was there a residence there that anybody was staying?

BC: Yes, uh-huh.

TM: Okay.

BC: There was two...I think there were two residences as I believe. One for Fred Harvey and one for the Park Service, I think. I believe. You know, that's been something I'm not quite sure of, because I didn't spend a lot of time going over there and finding out who was living there, you know. My activities were mostly the corral, and then also over right at the trail...almost at the trailhead, there was a hitch rail and that was parallel to the Canyon, and there was a small little wooden building there. It probably wasn't more than about 10x12 or 10x15. It wasn't very large, and that's where we would put our stuff. Our food stuffs and things like that. Sometimes they'd have quite a bit of...quite a few things, you know, to

haul down the Canyon. But I suspect most of the packing...most of the loading for the packer was probably done in the corral itself. Or adjacent to the corral itself there.

TM: And you also mentioned a Diamond Hitch. You said that was a good hitch to know and understand. Can you explain that a little bit?

BC: Well, you used the...you had a long rope that had a belly strap on it and you would go over the top of the load. You'd usually put canvas...a canvas cover over the...over your load, and then you would cinch that up, and then there were a couple of loops that came from the apex on the top there that would loop around the load on either side, and then you could cinch it down and tie it so it was secure. So it was just...added security for heavier or bulkier loads that wouldn't...or if you didn't have the pannier bags that we used to put on the sawbucks, you could still secure a load that way.

TM: I just wanted some clarification on those two things. So you were mentioning just the benefits of horses, but you had to be very careful with them. I was kind of wondering, just using horses for drag-outs, any sort of Fred Harvey activities.

BC: Yeah. Yeah, when I was there, there was a gentleman there by the name of Jay Goza. In fact, I think he moved to Loma, Colorado, which is over west of Grand Junction. Cause I ran into one of his...when I moved up here to Dinosaur, I happened to drive down to Grand Junction one time, and I was sitting in the mall on Main Street, and I ran into one of the Fred Harvey cowboys. And he happened to be one of Jay Goza's buddies and I started asking him about it and he said, "Well, he lives in Loma now." He had left the Canyon. But I think Jay was there for a long time – 15-20 years with Fred Harvey, and what we would do, and I think maybe Fred Harvey started wanting the Park Service maybe to use more helicopters in drag-outs, because it was a lot of effort on their part to bring people out of the Canyon. The first thing they had to do is they had to have a mule if it was on the South Kaibab. They had to have a mule that was available to go down that could be ridden [chuckle]. Out at Yaki Point. Most of the mules were kept over at the South Rim Village so drag-outs off the Bright Angel were probably easier to accomplish, but I would call him and if we had somebody...you know, we were aware of somebody on the trail that needed a drag-out, and this started with my first season, I remember several times calling Mr. Goza and asking for drag-outs when I was dispatching, and stuff like this. Word from 3-mile house, or Mile and a Half House, or Indian Gardens that somebody needed a lift out on a mule, and so they would send a mule, and of course, a guide, and second mule for the person to come out on. And we had a lot of them, of course, on the South Kaibab Trail, but it seemed that as time went on there were more and more reluctant to...or just unable to haul people out of the Canyon on a mule.

TM: I was just going to jump in here and say, what was your frequency? Are we talking once a week or once every two weeks? How often was this happening?

BC: It's just hard...that's hard to answer. It happened more in the summer than it did in the winter. I guess, you could say that. But as far as the actual numbers of requests.

TM: I mean, like one a day?

BC: You got a lot of... not one a day, no. You know, I, maybe I guess you could say there was one a week. You know, but that's a little bit hard to judge. A lot of times when you told people...you told them how much it was going to cost. You told them, you know, that you would call. And then you'd make the call and then you would be denied the request. And the people might not be in bad enough shape that they

wanted a...that they really felt they needed a helicopter. Of course, helicopters were much more expensive, too. But a lot of times we were told, there is just no mule available.

TM: Right. Do you remember what the price was?

BC: You know, I don't remember, I'm guessing around \$50 at the time. I think, the helicopter was a few hundred dollars. \$180 or something like that, per hour, and depending on how long. But \$80 dollars in 1970 was [chuckle] a lot more than fifty or a hundred or two hundred dollars is today. You know, you're probably talking \$500 today.

TM: Right.

BC: I don't know for a fact.

TM: So Harvey was becoming a little reluctant then to accommodate that.

BC: Right, right. I had one memorable incident where I had a guy. He was with the Sierra Club hiking group and they...he sprained his ankle really bad and he and his group, I think, they had come off of the Tonto Trail from, you know, Cremation Canyon or Shoshone Point, that area. Horseshoe Mesa...came over that way, and they ended up at the Tip-off. They used the phone there. They called and eventually got a hold of me at Phantom Ranch, and I talked to the individuals. I said, "Just go ahead and spend the night there at the Tip-off and I'll be up in the morning and we'll figure out a way to get you out of the Canyon." And so I got up real early and I hiked up to the Tip-off and found this party up there. I got there about 7 or 8 o'clock in the morning. And I made a call and tried to get a mule to come down and haul this guy out. And so there wasn't a mule available, so I said, "We could get a helicopter to come down and take you out." And they got...the guy got very angry about this. He didn't want to pay, you know, that much money to be drug out of the Canyon, and so he decided to walk out [chuckle]. End of story, I guess. I thought. So I had to go over to Indian Gardens, so I hiked across the Tonto Trail to Indian Gardens. I think I had to get my horse, I think the horse was over there. So anyway it was a 2-purpose trip. I don't remember why the horse was at Indian Gardens, but I remember that he was. So I didn't think anything about it. Here a few weeks later, we get this really nasty complaint letter from the Sierra Club about us not...oh, what was the terminology? We weren't being compassionate, basically, for this gentleman, because we couldn't get this mule for him, and it was made plain in our response that "Well, the Ranger tried to get a helicopter, could've got a helicopter, but the injured party didn't want to spend the money to get an evacuation by helicopter," and anyway...[cough] excuse me...and anyway, I remember, I further went on to say that I didn't get paid for the hour and a half or two hours that I had spent on the phone with him, the hike up to the Tip-off [chuckle], and that had been kind of free gratis, because I got paid for 8 hours a day regardless if I work 10 or 12 hours. So it kind of left a little bit of...sort of a sourness as far as Sierra Club in my mind after that. This was just a Sierra Club backpack, or I guess it was a backpack trip. It wasn't like the Directors and Officers of the Sierra Club were involved or anything. But it just didn't look good for the club, I didn't think. You know, the way that they responded.

TM: You know, it raises an interesting question though, about let's see, if you had somebody who fell and broke their arm or somehow was needing critical care, then you know, you would try everything you could to get them out.

BC: Oh, yes.

TM: Was there a charge then to those people? There's a fine line between somebody who's saying "Well, I can't, you know. What are my options?" You'd say, "Your options are to pay for this or to pay for that or to walk out," and the person says, "Okay, I'm going to choose of those options one or the other." And then there's a different realm where this is a medical emergency: I'm dehydrated or other things. How did you make that decision? Not looking at this point, the Sierra Club individual and that. But was there sort of a matrix that you used that was, okay, we're going to do this rescue, because we do rescues, and we're going to eat that cost as a part of our normal operations. Can you help me kind of clarify that?

BC: I...you know...we didn't have any real set guidelines, you know, ABCD type things. You just had to use good common sense, you know. If a person had a broken bone, let's say, you didn't ask whether they could pay or not, you just went ahead and got a helicopter for them. We had a lot of people come off the river that had to be evacuated that had been injured going through a big rapid or something. I had a couple of people that had snakebites. I remember, other emergencies when they were having, what was it? The shigella [chuckle] on the river. People would show up at Phantom Ranch, and they were deathly ill, you know, and we didn't have any way to, you know, hydrate them as far as intravenous or anything like that if they were severely dehydrated or something. We had water, we could help them drink. We had...you just had to look at each situation individually. I had some guys, for example, came down to the Ranger Station one night had ridden down on mules, and they wanted a helicopter out. I said, "Well, what's wrong with you?" "Well, we're real sore, you know. We have blisters, etc." and I said, "Well, you know, we just can't have a helicopter come down for every situation down here." You know, the noise the...and all. That's not what people are down here for to look at helicopters. So you would deny that. People would be upset. I think in the long run they probably understood. I had one...several actually, where people had basically mental breakdowns, down in the Canyon, and they...both off the river...I had a river guide one time just beg me to take...get a helicopter and get this woman off my trip, you know. She was just hysterical. And I had another woman and a man, they came down to Phantom, and they were upset because there wasn't television in the cabins down there, and it wasn't, you know, just a normal hotel room like they were, I guess, expecting. And they didn't want to hike out and they were causing all kinds of grief up at Phantom Ranch. And so I told the manager up there, I said "I'll just get a...if they pay for it, I'll just get a helicopter down here for them, and we'll get rid of the problem." So you know, it...you just had to use good common sense. That was all I guess. And I had some [chuckle]...I had two women come to the door at about 4:30 in the morning...5 in the morning. They pounded on the door of the Ranger Station, and I got up. I was...I had been up late all night, I think, with people getting stung by scorpions or something, you know. I went to the door, and the woman says, "We are French." She said, "We must go now or not at all." I said, "What are you talking about?" She says, "We need a helicopter. We have to catch a plane flight." And I said, "Well, how did you get down here?" And she said they had walked. So I said, "That's how you get out of here." Oh no, I take that back. She said, "We must go now or not at all." And then I said, "Well, I guess you're not going then." I said, "I'm the only Ranger awake in the whole park right now." I said, "The helicopter people...the helicopter operator is asleep. The Chief Ranger is asleep." [chuckle] I said, "You're going to have to walk out." And they did. They went ahead and walked out, you know. But you would have people think that, you know, the...that we were there for their convenience. Helicopters were there for their convenience, rather than for emergency evacuations.

TM: In the time you were there at Phantom, what sounds like three years or so, did you see an increase in helicopter traffic then in the summer time? Now there's a helicopter a day and it's bringing in supplies or taking out supplies, or working on water crew or bringing in, you know, just every day you can expect

a helicopter working the corridor in and out of Phantom, going up to Cottonwood, supplying Indian Gardens. There's a lot of activity.

BC: We tried to...we really tried to limit it. That was one of the reasons to deny a helicopter flight if the person wasn't, you know, still moving around, seemed like they were physically okay, they were just tired or something. You just...you didn't want to call a helicopter down for that. We had a lot of helicopter use, but I didn't see a huge increase. There...they started doing some supplying of Phantom Ranch, it seems like near the end of my tour, maybe a little bit more. But even that they were really reluctant to use a lot of helicopters. It's hard...it would be hard for the government to say, "Well, Mr. Tourist Helicopter, you know, you can't fly around and look at the Canyon, but we can fly down supplies and manpower and all this into these various areas and we're exempt from the requirements," you know. You can't fly, but we can. You just can't do that, so I think that probably was one reason they were trying to limit the use. And also the budget, you know. They're very expensive.

TM: You bet.

BC: I arrested a guy one time at Indian Garden...well, actually at 3-Mile House, just down from 3-Mile House. He was on drugs and he [chuckle]...he tried to give me some drugs to use with him. And I arrested him and I took him down to Indian Gardens, and my boss, we were on the radio, and Ed Carlson said, "We'll be down in a helicopter to get this guy in a little while." When I got to Indian Gardens, Ed said give me a call, so I called him. Ed says, "Well, the Chief Ranger says we don't have enough money in the budget for the helicopter. So you're going to have to walk the guy out." I said, "Okay." Because I was on foot. So I ended up hiking him up the Bright Angel Trail in handcuffs, you know [chuckle]. I got up about above the red wall there, and I ran into a Trail Crew and I commandeered one of their mules, and hauled this guy out on the mule and so sometimes the budget was not what it was.

TM: At that point was the Park Service just simply renting from the Tusayan Base helicopter services? Because eventually the Park would get their own ship with their own pilot and they would then rent a second ship during the year in the summer when it was busy. But at that time, back in the late 60s- early 70s was it simply a rental agreement with a local provider.

BC: I think they had a contract with somebody and I don't know who it was. They had several but we...I flew in several different types of helicopters, so it makes me think maybe they had...but they did have a contract helicopter because we had there for quite a while, we had the same pilot.

TM: Do you remember their names at all?

BC: I don't remember their names. I bought a car from one of them [chuckle]. I been still...I've been trying to find the guy for years since [laughter]. We flew in jet rangers a lot, and then they had these little Bells...the ones with the bubble, the two-person helicopters. We flew in those quite a bit. I recall one incident where we used a Bell, and there was a guy...we had a report of a guy down in the Canyon who had taken a...used sacred Datura and had gone kind of crazy. This was like in early April. It was pretty chilly down there, actually ice on the creek a little bit in the upper reaches there. And he had taken all his clothes off and was walking around in the creek. And someone found him or he wandered into Phantom Ranch, I don't know which, kind of all crazy like, so it was decided to go down and haul him out of there. And so I actually was on the South Rim, and I had a little house up there I was staying in, so I had to go over to the maintenance yard. I flew down with the pilot, and we found this guy down there, and I put him in a Stokes litter, a wire Stokes litter and put blankets over him and hooked him to

the skids of the helicopter, and I always remember he says, "Do I have to ride out here?" I said, "Yes, you do!" Like Jeff Foxworthy or something, and so this kid was actually the brother of Bob Yearout, who was the Concessions Specialist at the Park. It was very embarrassing for him, and we [chuckle]...when I got in the helicopter, I told the pilot, I probably shouldn't, but I said to the pilot, I said, "Well, give him a ride!" you know [chuckle]. We took off, and of course, helicopters had a limited amount of power, particularly if you have a load weight on it, so we had to circle to get altitude. You always had to do that at Phantom Ranch or Indian Gardens, you circled to gain altitude and so we were doing these circles, and I'm sure that when we got up to the maintenance yard there at the South Rim where the helipad was, this guy was really...he was happy to be back on firm ground again, you know [chuckle]. And his brother was there to meet him. Take him back...take him...ship him back east or wherever he came from. I flew a lot in the Canyon, and I got so I didn't like it. The first flight is always exciting, you go...all of a sudden you go from treetop level to...when you go over the Rim there's just nothing but air beneath you, you know, and then usually the helicopter kind of falls off the rim and you goes sailing down to the Canyon. And a couple of times...we came out of Indian Gardens one time and we caught a downdraft and it was frightening. I thought we were going to crash because the pilot...the helicopter went back down maybe 500 feet, and we had to start the climb all over again. It was pretty scary. But we used them also a lot for Search and Rescue. We would get a report of say a drowning in the river or a some other problem, you know, a lost hiker, and you would fly along the river corridor as far down as you...you know, you go past Horn Creek and Granite, and all those big rapids as far as you thought maybe a body might've floated or something, and I don't remember ever having much success with that though, you know. Once somebody goes in the river it's...you're pretty fortunate if you find them. Unless maybe if they had a lifejacket on when they hit the water, and then we also would search, you know, the trails and stuff, the Tonto, or even Bright Angel, or Kaibab. We're looking for someone who might have been lost or injured.

TM: Would you use fixed wings at all? Were they...did the Park have their own plane or again was that again contracted out.

BC: I don't know. It was probably contracted out. But they did have a...used fixed wing aircraft for fire flights in particular. I don't know if they used them to transport personnel from, you know, rim to rim or from one place to another, but I went on a fire flight one time with Dick McLaren. He was...at that time he was Fire and Rescue guy. And it was an interesting flight. He was...one of the things that I found interesting is he had a map of the park and he had it on a roll. It was rolled and as we would fly along he would turn that so he could see where we were on the topo map. It was just kind of an interesting little thing, but it was really a fun flight. We flew all over the Park. We left the Grand Canyon airport, and you know, flew out I think over toward Hermit's Rest, because there had been some lightening the night before, and then went over toward the North Rim, flew all over the North Rim and then looped back over Dessert View and then came back into the Grand Canyon airport. And the only fire we saw was when we came back into land in our...between the time we left and the time we got back – it was probably an hour and a half or so – this ponderosa pine tree had caught fire and was on fire right at the end of the runway. So it was crazy, so he called that one in. We could've called it in from the coffee shop probably if we had just waited long enough. The only the other time...let's see, I flew that one fire flight. The only other time I used fixed wing aircraft was up at Glen Canyon. Glen Canyon had their own plane and pilot and he...Warren something or other was his name. I went several times with him and a couple of times we flew from the Page County Airport right over Glen Canyon Dam and dropped right down into the Canyon, and that's a little scary. And then flew down looking for...we were looking for lost hikers on one, and I forget what the other one was. He had an interesting...of course, we're talking about Glen Canyon now. He had a really interesting thing happen one time. The Air Force would use

Rainbow Bridge as a...I guess as a target or something, and they would fly B-52 Bombers over Glen Canyon right down it at real low, 500-foot over the lake there, and they would go right over Rainbow Bridge. I would see them every once in a while. I mean, it's like unbelievable when they're that close to the ground, you know. And these gigantic planes go through. I guess one time, Warren, I wish I could think of his last name, he was flying one direction and a bomber was coming the other direction and I guess he decided, well I got to...they were on a collision course, so he started to gain altitude at the same time the bomber started to gain altitude, so then [chuckle] they kept getting closer and closer. So finally he had to just dive out of the way, you know. Take a...go into a steep dive to get out of the way of this bomber to keep from getting creamed [laughter].

TM: And of course, John Riffey had a plane. He had a small little Cessna...

BC: He did. Yes.

TM: Out there at Grand Canyon National Monument and was sort of flying.

BC: Yeah, I would hear him on the radio. When I was dispatching. I didn't...not when I was at Phantom, I don't recall much. But when we were dispatching he would go out...he'd kind of go out on fire flights, too, out in that area if there'd been a lightning strike the night before. And then I think he would fly down in the Canyon and like drop messages and stuff to boaters occasionally and things like that. I don't know how much searching went on out there, but there are routes, you know, that go off the...pretty rugged routes off the Rim there in that Toroweap area. Probably ended up looking for overdue hikers and stuff occasionally, too, I mean...

TM: I wanted to go back to something you had mentioned. You were paid for an 8-hour day. But it sounds in these interviews we've been doing that your day was sort of a 24-hour day, because you were on call when you were asleep.

BC: Yeah, that's right.

TM: You could be woken up by French women at four in the morning trying, you know, to get a ride out or you know any other thing, so it was more a 24-hour duty, you got paid for 8, but you might work 12 or 14 or more.

BC: Right. You were always on duty. I always remember when I moved from Grand Canyon to Dinosaur as a River Ranger up at Dinosaur, I had a real nice house, a 3-bedroom house, and I would work down at the Headquarter Office there near Dinosaur and then I'd go home at night and I would, you know, maybe sit in the living room, watch a little television. We had some television there, or you know, read a book or something, I always remember since I put in my 8 hours and now I'm sitting in the living room and thinking, "Gosh, this is such an easy job," you know [chuckle]. It's not...there's nobody knocking on the door. I was always waiting for somebody to knock on the door, you know, because, you know, you would get up in the morning, have your breakfast, usually, and then you'd go out and do mostly clean-up, because you know, one of the things hikers do at the Canyon...I never had to do this. This was probably one of the great pleasures of being a Ranger at the Canyon, I didn't have to get up in the middle of the night to start hiking out of the Canyon, you know, I had a horse, so I'd get on the horse and go out anytime during the day. So I would go up in the campground, and if you didn't get up there, oh, at least before like seven, everybody's gone. I mean other than the ones that are laying over, so you're ending up having to pick up all the litter that was left or whatever. And then you know, you do

whatever, clean the toilets and then maybe do some...maybe hike up to Phantom Ranch and see how things are going up there, or go on some other foot patrol or people would find you at the Ranger Station with whatever ills they had, you know, a lot of blisters. I repaired a bazillion blisters, and you know, whatever problem they might have, they'd come to the Ranger Station, and I usually held court out on the front porch of the Ranger Station, see. And then this didn't quit. This would go on all evening. Some evenings were a lot worse than others. People would get...scorpions were really a problem down there. People were always getting stung by scorpions. Particularly in the late summer when you start getting the monsoonal...you get sort of a drizzly night. It seemed like rain would bring these guys out. And then the other thing that happened is first thing in the morning, people would get stung by scorpions because they'd pull their pants on a lot of them would get stung right on the butt or they would get stung in the foot because they put their foot into a boot and the scorpions crawled in the boot at night. And so there was a lot of that and a lot of that went on...sometimes, I remember one night I think I had three or four cases where people came to the Ranger Station, and "Something bit me," they'd say. And I'd say, "Oh, no, you didn't get big, you got stung by a scorpion." They'd about have a heart attack. They thought they were going to die then. You would get them, you know...I had ice cube trays in the refrigerator, you know, so I'd give them those or use ice packs or just tell them to put their foot in the creek, you know... Try to deal with it that way. A lot of people had to spend an extra day or two down there, you know. You'd tell them you can't hike out with a foot that's all in that condition, so you just them stay an extra day or so until they felt better. And so this would go on. Sometimes in the middle of the night you'd get an emergency. Usually after about 11 o'clock at night, you know, things kind of quieted down. And you know, you'd go ahead and go to asleep. I never took my uniform off. When I was at Phantom Ranch. The couple...a couple of times that I did, something bad happened, you know, so I guess I got superstitious. But I would put my uniform on in the morning and I would take it off when I went to bed, because you never knew something was always going to happen. And you didn't want to go out there and try to convince somebody in your normal clothes that you were a Ranger. They just wouldn't believe you.

TM: At that time, were you the...you and Vic were there...trails...was there anyone doing evening interpretive talks at that time?

BC: No, there was no interpretation at all unless once in a while I would go up to Phantom Ranch in...I'd get an invite from them or I would make an arrangement and I would go up to Phantom Ranch during the dinner hour. Cause they...the only dinner hour they had was for the mule riders and those other people that were staying in the cabins there at...that might have hiked in or something. They had the one dinner hour and that was it. Of course, they'd have breakfast, too, obviously...

TM: So you would go talk with their guests, but there was no interp for the people that were hiking in, they were on their own.

BC: They were pretty much on their own. I did try a couple of times to do interpretive programs there at Phantom. I remember one of them I did...well, I'd give talks to like Boy Scout groups and that type of thing. I did that pretty commonly. But I tried to have an organized Nature Walk, I guess you would call it. It didn't go over very well, because I got the people...this happened a couple times I tried it. I'd have them come to the Ranger Station. They'd make their way down there and I'd say, "Okay, now we're going walk here or walk there." And they'd go, "Oh!" [Laughter] "We don't want to walk anywhere!" and so I gave up on that. But I had a list of like stations, you know, you could go to and look at different things. I was always interested in interpretation and then I...my supervisor provided me...kind of like a glass bulletin board that we put right out in front of the Ranger Station there on the other side of the

little trail, and I put interpretive messages and things on there. I had one that was real interesting. It was a National Geographic [This was a Life Magazine photo contest] had a contest, a photo contest, at one time and one of the famous pictures was this big 33-foot raft, pontoon raft, tipping over in Lava Falls. And you see all these shocked people and you see the...the thing I always liked about the picture is the pilot...it looks like he's getting ready to do a swan dive into the river. He knows they're going over, everybody else is hanging on for dear life instead of evacuating or jumping ship, and then in the background is a guy with a camera just with his mouth open looking at the whole scene not taking any pictures of this event. So I had this picture on this...the bulletin board and that was the most popular picture, because these River Runners would come in and look at that and just put the fear of God in them, you know, and they would say, "Where's this?" you know, or they'd want to, you know, end the trip right there [chuckle]. They were scared to death. There was some...some cursory interpretive stuff that I tried to do, but there was no formal interpretation that took place. We did...I know, one time they sent Bill Swift down to Phantom and during...it was during the Spring Break and it was craziness down there and I think they were, someone was probably...he was an Interpreter and they were trying to maybe look at Phantom from the standpoint of what they could do as far as interpretation down there. He ended up...we had a Search and Rescue. I...when he was down there, I got the flu and I was pretty much in bed all the time at the Ranger Station for a couple days, during this real heavy visitation, so Bill ended up, you know, doing my job as far as, you know, clean up and stuff like that. Then one afternoon he comes over and pounds on the door and it was late in the day and I got...I take that back, I got a phone call from Phantom Ranch and I got up out of bed and I went and answered the phone, and it was a guy who said his friend had gotten hit by a rock, a big rock, and he was laying...he was on the Bright Angel. Of course, I was kind of delirious from the flu, so I went over and got Bill. I told him I was going to go over look for this guy and then I'd give him a radio call. Well, I thought since they were talking about Bright Angel, they meant the Bright Angel Trail, so I hiked down to River House. I got down there and there was nobody there. What's going on here? So I went back and I...after calling from River House, I couldn't get the guy back on the phone at Phantom Ranch, and so I went back to the Ranger Station and we decided, well, we'll go up to Phantom Ranch, talk to the concession up there. Went up there and found out the kid was up way the other side of Clear Creek, the Clear Creek Trail junction. So now I've wasted like an hour and a half, you know, trying to locate the guy so we got all of our litter and everything, went up, and he had crossed the creek and gotten, you know, started to do some climbing up some slope or something and this big rock came down, smacked him, and I forget what his injuries were. But I went ahead...we went ahead and put him in a Stokes litter, then we all...I had commandeered some campers to help carry the guy, and so we hauled him down to where the helicopter could come in get him and send him out, and he was probably someone that never paid for his helicopter ride [chuckle]. My impression of the kid, you know. But I was really in bad shape. I mean, I just...I was so delirious. I would have been better off to have told Bill, you know, "You just go ahead and deal with the whole situation, you know, and I'll help you if I can." But I think I worked so hard, I think I burned the flu out of my system, because I was okay the next day [laughter]. In fact, I did that several times when I was sick. I hiked out of the Canyon, by the time I got to the Rim, I guess my body had worked so hard, the germs had given up, you know, and I felt okay.

TM: Wow. Okay well, I'm going to have cut this interview today a little short. Is there anything else you're thinking of right now, that you want to include in this Part 9 interview?

BC: Oh, no, I think we covered a little bit more about horses and helicopters and things. We did a pretty good job today.

TM: Horses and helicopters and fixed wings, yeah, okay. Well, let's end this interview here then. This is the conclusion of Part 9 interview with Bob Cornelius. Today is September 28, 2018 and my name is Tom Martin, so Bob please hold the line.