

Transcription: Grand Canyon Historical Society

Interviewee: Charles "Butch" Farabee (BF)

Interviewer: Tom Martin (TM)

Subject: Butch recounts growing up, moving to Tucson, college years, Scouting, and training for the National Park Service

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TM: Today is Saturday, April 20th, 2019. We're at the home of Charles Butch Farabee. My name is Tom Martin. Good afternoon, Butch. How are you today?

BF: Good, thanks Tom. This is going to be interesting.

TM: I hope so. Thank you so much for being part of a Grand Canyon oral history interview series. This is Part 1. We'll see how it goes. We might complete today, but if we don't, this'll be Part 1. We'll just see how it goes. Butch, what year were you born?

BF: I was born October 18, 1942. Valparaiso, Indiana.

TM: What were your folks doing out in Valparaiso?

BF: My dad was a general practitioner medical doctor and was one of the only doctors for a radius of maybe 12/15 miles from this little farming community of North Judson.

TM: How did your dad meet your mom?

BF: My dad met my mother while he was in residency at Watts Hospital, Durham, North Carolina.

TM: Was he from North Carolina?

BF: Yes, he was born in Lexington, North Carolina in 1907. My mother was born in 1911 in Lodi, Ohio. My dad graduated from University of South Carolina Medical School. I actually have to check that, it's either North Carolina or South Carolina. Then he did his residency and became a hospital doctor, whatever the right term is at Watts which is a pretty famous hospital for that part of North Carolina at least. It was famous because it seems that it was open to the general public, there's probably a term for that. It wasn't so much an integrated hospital but it was a hospital where the poor people could come to. Just recently my brother and I had been researching this which is one of the reasons it's sort of fresh in my mind, although it's embarrassing I can't remember either North Carolina or South Carolina. My mother graduated from Ohio State as a nurse which is the reason they met. She was an instructor at the nursing component of this Watts Hospital which had a teaching aspect to it.

TM: So let's go back to your father for a minute. Were his parents doctors or...

BF: Nope.

TM: It was a big deal for him to go to med school.

BF: That's right, he was the first of his brothers and sisters/siblings to go to college. His older brother actually ended up going to college, but was in the Navy first in World War II. So that got interrupted but then he went to college. Then of the six kids in that family, I think three for sure and maybe the fourth graduated from college, actually. My grandmother on his side, my dad's mom, ran a boarding house and probably did other stuff as well. My grandfather, part of the time anyway, was in the Merchant Marine and this was in Lexington, North Carolina.

TM: Alright. So it was a big deal for your dad to become a doctor?

BF: Well, I guess so. He, I think, wanted to do this. He went to... I've got this all written down in another room. He went to University of North Carolina in basically it would be a pre-med program for two years and got a certificate from them. Apparently there's some sort of reciprocity between them and I think it's University of South Carolina where he would then continue on and go to medical school for four years. So his college education essentially was six years, but it kept being interrupted by working for a semester, going to school for a semester, working for a semester. One of the stories he used to tell me, and sometimes I believe my dad sometimes I don't, but I think that he ended up helping transport mules and horses overseas on freighters. So he was a pretty good traveler. At the same time was earning enough money to go back to school for a semester or perhaps longer. I guess I sort of inherited my dad's wanderlust and sense of adventure I think, I hope.

TM: Then when he got his medical degree, he didn't go work in a big city. He went to a rural community.

BF: Well, no. Initially he worked in this Watts Hospital in Durham, North Carolina. My older brother... I have a brother and a sister. My brother was born in Durham at Watts Hospital, my brother was born in 1936. But in 1940, we think that my parents and my brother moved to Hobart, Indiana. I'm not sure why Indiana. That's a question I would like to resolve myself. But he ended up going into business with a doctor who I think was older and was getting out of business. Then about the next year he bought a practice in North Judson, Indiana, which is probably a 50 mile distance between Hobart and North Judson.

TM: Is this southern Indiana or central, northern?

BF: No, it's northern. Right up close to Michigan. North Judson is roughly 40 miles from Chicago. I was born in Valparaiso, Indiana, which is the nearest hospital to where my dad practiced. That hospital no longer exists.

TM: Did he ever say why he liked working rural?

BF: No, not really, but he liked people. He was just a good old fashioned family practitioner that would go out on house calls. Some of my favorite memories are going out with him as a six/seven/eight year old to a farm where he would end up... I would stay in the car of course, but he would go to these farms. A lot of his practice involved migrant workers because there was a pretty good potato, onion farms around there and pretty sizeable farms. They'd have these migrant workers which as I remember were probably mostly, if not all, Anglo. He would deliver the babies and sew up the people and take care of the accidents. One of the things I recall him talking about was sewing people up with hair from a horse tail. My brother always likes to brag. My brother spent more time in North Judson than I did and he considers that his home rather than Tucson. I consider Tucson my home. But my brother would brag about all the people he would meet when he'd go back to North Judson who would say, "I was delivered by old Doc Farabee," and "I was a sewn up by Doc Farabee," and whatever. My dad was just a good old farm doctor. I don't think he was brilliant, but he was certainly passionate about medicine. He loved medicine. Later in life when I was a teenager and going out on dates, I'd come home on a Friday night or a Saturday night and he'd be

sound asleep in the bed with a medical book on his chest and a cigarette burned down to his fingers. Why he never burned the house down, I don't know.

TM: So he went to college and became a doctor. Was going to college an expectation of you and your siblings?

BF: Well, I don't know. I don't know that my parents ever put any pressure on me. I guess I thought that I would just automatically go to school. My brother, who is six years older than I am, ended up getting a bachelor's in mining engineering here at the U of A and then getting a master's in math. My brother did not want to be a doctor. My dad sorta wanted him to be a doctor. When we lived in Bisbee for six months...and I'll come back to that in a minute.

TM: Okay. Yeah, cause I was gonna say, how did your brother end up in Tucson. That's a long way from Indiana. But let's back up a minute. In your grade school days, did you learn to swim? Did you learn how to paddle a canoe? Did you guys camp much?

BF: Nope. We didn't do anything outdoors. I remember going fishing once with my dad out at some little farm pond and catching sun perch or something like that. But no, we just didn't live in area nor did he have the interest as far as I could tell of camping or hiking or stuff.

TM: What about you?

BF: I got the interest in scouting in the Boy Scouts. Do you want me to finish up with Bisbee or...?

TM: We're going to get to Bisbee cause we're still way back in Indiana. Let's hold off on that.

BF: So I didn't do anything of any consequence. I was in the Cub Scouts maybe for a year or two in Indiana but really not much of any exploring to speak of. Well, actually that's not true. My parents didn't do that, but it was pretty easy for me to get on my bicycle and get out into the woods and ride down these back roads, which I guess would amount to what you're asking about, right?

TM: Yes.

BF: But never anything of any great outdoorsy stuff.

TM: No, but just out in the woods. I mean, it wasn't like you were staying at home reading and you didn't like to go outside.

BF: No. Like most kids, I guess of that era anyway, I played cowboys and Indians. I played war. My brother who was six years older than I am, he was already in high school when I was still in elementary school. He would push me or lead me in certain directions cause he was a real sports guy. He liked football and basketball. He was never any good at any of it but he was always the second string or junior varsity.

TM: You can't live and breathe in Indiana without playing basketball.

BF: That's right. He ended up being a referee for years and years and years cause he went back to Indiana to work. Became a teacher, essentially. So anyway, no, I didn't do much exploring in the out-of-doors other than maybe on a bicycle on a Saturday or something.

TM: Okay. In scouts, did you learn how to canoe or just learn how to swim?

BF: The scouting was here in Tucson.

TM: Okay. So then we have to leave Indiana and get here. So how did that happen?

BF: Mostly my mother's health. She was sort of a walking medical problem. She had polio for one, she had asthma and allergies. She was just in not great health all the way through. She was my dad's nurse on occasion both in Indiana and then in Tucson. And part of that, depending on which year we're talking about, she was a stay at home mom as well. So anyway, we came out here in my fourth grade, which would be like '52 or '53 without my dad. My dad stayed back in Indiana to retain his practice. I think it was an experiment to see how my mother would fare as far as health is concerned. We lived on a little guest ranch over on Grant, 4500 East Grant. There's a little guest ranch called the Double E, which stood for Ely Ensign, that was the man's name.

TM: Where did you end up going to school when you were in fourth grade?

BF: Fourth grade, my sister was in the third grade. We went to Davidson Elementary which was at Fort Lowell and Alvernon. They've moved the school since I've been retired, actually. They moved the school because apparently that corner was much more valuable to some medical practice. They tore the school down and rebuilt the school at the cost of this developer, which I don't understand how that happened. But anyway, it was a lot of desert. Most of the time we walked home from school. We often caught the school bus to school, it might be a mile and a half away.

TM: What were your thoughts about going from deciduous forest Indiana with lots of corn fields to the desert southwest?

BF: Well, I guess I never thought of it that way, Tom. I certainly enjoyed the switch. There weren't any mountains where I lived in North Judson. Mountains are really important to me and have been forever and ever and ever. I don't know that I ever really gave that much consideration. I was at the beck and call of my parents anyway so wherever we went was fine with me. So I spent my fourth grade here and then went back to Indiana for my fifth grade. Spent the year back there and my dad wrapped up the practice.

TM: Did your mother's health improve when she moved out here?

BF: Well, I assume so. I assume because we moved back here my sixth grade.

TM: No more snow shovels. No more ice storms.

BF: No. I don't know that that was a real major concern. I think it principally was her health. So we came back here in my sixth grade. My dad had to end up, I guess, selling his practice there and we moved to...let me think about this. When I was in sixth grade we ended up moving to 2725 East Manchester Drive here in Tucson. It's close to Broadway and Tucson Boulevard. It's a place called Broadmoor.

TM: So kind of near the El Con hotel?

BF: Yeah, it was to the west of El Con about a mile...less than a mile. I used to go to the El Con hotel and ride horses. As stupid as they were, as a 12 year old they'd let me get on a horse. I'd pay them whatever it was, a buck/a dollar or something and they'd tell me where to go. So, I'd go ride.

TM: Where would you go?

BF: Well, I'd ride off wherever there're houses now. Out towards Speedway and to the east from El Con. They had a whole stable there at the El Con hotel but no guides. They just weren't concerned about any kind of liability. But anyway...

TM: That sounds like a lot of fun.

BF: Well, it was. It was. So we lived at this place, 2725 East Manchester, when I went to the sixth grade. My dad still had to establish residency for I believe a year so he worked at Tucson Medical Center. He wasn't in private practice quite at this point. He was establishing his residency at TMC. Then at the end of my sixth grade, we went to Bisbee and he became the doctor for the Phelps Dodge Hospital. The hospital in those days in Bisbee was located right downtown. It was a company town and a company hospital.

TM: Let's back up a minute because I'm assuming that this is in '56 or '57.

BF: Well, I started high school in '56 my freshman year. So '54 and '55 would have been my seventh grade, I guess. '55 and '56 would have been my eighth grade.

TM: So he went to Bisbee roughly what year?

BF: We went to Bisbee would be my seventh grade but only for six months. That would have been probably '54.

TM: Let's back up a minute because you and I had talked sometime back about your recollections of a helicopter ride at Grand Canyon. Can you tell me that story? Was that the first time you had gone to the Grand Canyon?

BF: Yes.

TM: What year was that?

BF: I'll have to think about this for a second. It would've been the end of the fourth grade. My dad had gotten out here, probably flew I assume. We went back to Indiana, but we went by way of Jerome, Sedona, Oak Creek Canyon by car through the Grand Canyon, and then worked our way from there up into North Dakota. I can remember going to Deadwood.

TM: Route 66?

BF: I'm sure we went on part of it, but I don't think it was the whole 66. I don't remember much about 66. I do remember lots of oil wells in Oklahoma, it seems. But, you know, I'd been across the country several times during that period of time so some of the images I have get confused as to whether I'm coming or going from Tucson. But getting back to the helicopter, we got to the Grand Canyon and I think it was... Didn't you say '54?

TM: '50.

BF: So '50. Well this was later than '50. This would have been '53 or '54. And again, I've got these dates based on when I was going to school. But, we went to the Grand Canyon and we stayed in one of the little basically one-room lodges. What the heck is the name of the lodge now over by the Bright Angel Lodge.

TM: The Maswik Lodge?

BF: Well, these were little tiny places.

TM: They had little tent...

BF: No, these weren't. These were rock as I recall.

TM: Not the Bright Angel cabins?

BF: No, I don't think they were the Bright Angel cabins. There was another set of cabins, as I recall anyway, on the other side of the railroad tracks. Where is the big cafeteria and...

TM: Yeah, that's the Maswik.

BF: Maswik. So it was in that area.

TM: There was a little car camp in there.

BF: Yeah, it was like a court or something. We were there for a day or two. One of the things that we did in Tusayan was we were going to take a ride in a helicopter. It was a little three place, probably like a B1 or... Just a little canopy in the front. The pilot was in the middle and my dad was on one side and I was on the other side. The pilot started to power off and something malfunctioned. I suspect we didn't even get off of the... The skids were probably compressed a little bit. We probably didn't get up in the air, actually. But whatever reason, we couldn't take the trip. That would've been at the end of my fourth grade. So that would've been maybe '53. And again, I can settle the dates more firmly, but you kind of caught me off guard on this.

TM: If you could. I'll just make a note of it. I'll ask you later. I'll shoot you an email. Just because that helicopter showed up at the south rim in 1950 and was gone by the end of that year. I don't know what happened after that. You know, who was the next helicopter company to move in and try to make a go of it there? Well before Elling Halvorson ever showed up in the 60s.

BF: Well, this was in Tusayan, I'm pretty sure.

TM: That's where Ed Montgomery set up shop was in Tusayan in 1950. The Park Service wanted nothing to do with helicopters and his flying machine. Nothing. He was slowly showing them the benefit of rescue. They were agreeing to that but the whole tourism concept they did not want to promote at all. So he was out of the park someplace else so he set up shop right outside at Tusayan Motor Court out there.

BF: So he started out in the park?

TM: No, he started out right outside the park. He took over and rented, I think, from Thurston the little Tusayan gas station. His wife was flipping hamburgers in a little restaurant there. Yeah, and that was in 1950.

BF: Well, that sounds familiar. I mean, it was sort of a little mom and pop kind of operation as I recall. But again, you know, I was in the fourth grade. What the heck do I know?

TM: Okay.

BF: One of my favorite memories from that particular trip to the Grand Canyon... I don't remember the Canyon so much but I do remember, probably at the Hopi House, my parents let me buy a stiletto. I'm sure that they were fake now that I think about it, but it seemed to be rock multicolored handle. There was a wooden telephone pole outside this cabin that we stayed in and I really got interested in throwing that into that telephone pole. I don't know who I thought I was, so that was a good memory or an interesting memory that I have from the Canyon. But frankly, I actually don't remember the canyon itself very much that first trip. I know we spent at least one night there.

TM: Most children your age are interested in knives and squirrels and things like right up close. The big distance is hard to get.

BF: That's probably true. Essentially that's the case in my case.

TM: So then back to Indiana, and then back to Tucson, and then your dad is going to work at the hospital in Bisbee. Company mine, company town.

BF: Yes. And we lived in a company house. My brother and I found this house just last year, or relooked at it. Interesting for me, Linda and my brother and I... My brother wanted to go just see Bisbee. My brother is 81 or -2, sort of a farewell shot I think. He said, "Well, let's go see if we can find the house." I knew pretty much where it was. We went up there and there was a for sale sign in front of this house that looked like it was the right house. Across the street were these two women. They were younger than us but not that much younger, probably 65 or so. We pulled up and we were taking a photo of the house so the women walked around and said, "Can we help you?" We said, "We used to live here. My dad was a doctor here." As soon as I said that, they perked up. Apparently they had lived down the street in a smaller house. There were five kids. They lived in company housing. I guess in the middle 80s, Phelps Dodge sold these houses to private individuals. They ended up moving into the house after we left. Her parents had bought this house so they were a direct line to us. I don't remember the woman's name right at the moment, but she said, "That's interesting because we had a medical bed in the garage for years and years and years." She remembered the name Farabee. Then she said, "It's good that you stopped because in about 10 minutes we're going to go close. We have sold this house." Within minutes, they were going to go close and so it was somebody else. So had we been 15 minutes later we would not have talked to them and would not have learned any of that history.

TM: Nice.

BF: But anyway, so my dad, in order to help establish his residency in Arizona, worked for the Phelps Dodge Hospital but we had to go to Santa Fe so he could take his medical exams. Arizona and New Mexico had a reciprocity program where if you took exams in New Mexico it would count for Arizona. So I have a certificate out in the garage telling me when he passed his board and could legally practice medicine without any kind of oversight as an individual practicing medicine. He was obviously working for two different hospitals and probably others as well. So after six months, we moved back up. Once he passed those exams we came back up to Tucson. We had never sold that house on Manchester so we moved back into it. I remember my mother going back and forth on occasion.

TM: What were your thoughts of Bisbee at the time?

BF: Bisbee was, mining was still going on. Every afternoon, it seems to me, they would set off the explosions. They would drill and put the dynamite/the explosions into the wall. They had a viewpoint where people would drive out, such as my dad did, and we would watch them blow up a wall on the far side of the Lavender Pit. It's called the Lavender Pit now. There was no television yet in Bisbee. I went to Lowell Junior High School. There's three towns. There's Bisbee, Lowell, and Warren, and Lowell is in between. I think Bisbee has assimilated the little town of Lowell. In those days it was the Lowell Junior High School that I went to. One of the things we would do... My dad was a big train nut. He would love to go watch trains so we would drive down to Naco, which is south of Bisbee maybe half an hour or so, and we'd watch either the Sunset Limited or the Golden State come through on the Southern Pacific. That was a big deal. We would sit there and watch the train go through. A couple of times, I did this for my kids as well, we'd put a penny on the track and smash the penny. My dad would make a big deal out of it... I mean, he was trying to be very, not mysterious but dramatic but he says, "Now if there's a wreck, we don't know anything about it. We're going to get out of here real fast." In my case I thought, well, Jesus, a penny or a dime, maybe we could derail this train. I gotta be careful about that. And of course, I didn't know any better. So for years and years I had these flattened pennies and that was one of my treasures, of course. Then we would also go out and drive out between Douglas and Bisbee out into the Sulfur Springs Valley on some of these

older farm roads that were paved and count jackrabbits. We'd drive along at night and count the jackrabbits. That was our entertainment. Not necessarily every night, but...

TM: Do you remember what the maximum amount of jackrabbits was one night?

BF: No, I sure don't.

TM: 10 or 15?

BF: There were a lot. No, there were a lot of jackrabbits. But part of that's a function of how long you stay out there, too.

TM: [laugh] Right.

BF: And in our case, I don't remember. But, you know, we would take a drive in the family car to go count jackrabbits or go down and watch the train.

TM: Did you ever take that road all the way into Wilcox?

BF: Well, I have lots of times since but I don't necessarily remember it then at that point. No.

TM: Today, of course there's a lot of Sandhill cranes out there certain times of the year. Did you see any cranes at any time then?

BF: Not that I know of.

TM: Did you get out and hike into the hills any of that country at the time?

BF: Well, so I was in a Boy Scout troop there. I joined the Boy Scouts in Tucson when I was in sixth grade here. I think that was 1953 probably. I think if you actually put this on a chalkboard it would unscrew the dates a lot.

TM: Alright. You are, but that's a good thing. Because if the sixth grade was in '53, the fourth grade is in '51 and now we're very close to my date at the helicopter at Grand Canyon, which could have been 1950 possibly and that would fit then as a match.

BF: Well, I think '53. I mean, again, I have all of this stuff written down. I've got every one of my Boy Scout merit badge cards. I got all that stuff which I'm actually working on trying to sort and organize a little bit for my kids.

TM: Good.

BF: So you asked about the hiking when I was in troop here, Troop 79.

TM: Well, I'm thinking of Bisbee before you came back to Tucson.

BF: No, I was in the troop before I went to Bisbee. I was in the scouts before I went to Bisbee.

TM: Okay.

BF: My very first day in Bisbee, I took a Greyhound bus from Tucson down to Bisbee by myself. My dad was staying in the Copper Queen Hotel. He had made arrangements with the local scoutmaster, a guy by the name of Bob Hossler. It was Troop 6. He had made arrangements with the local Scout people for me to go to Camp Victorio in the Chiricahua Mountains. Now Camp Victorio doesn't exist anymore. It was done away with not that many years ago because of bear problems as well as water problems in the Chiricahua. Camp Victorio was a rustler park in the Chiricahuas. I spent two weeks there going to camp and then I came back and was real active with that Boy Scout troop. I was on

the seventh grade football team. I was the halfback until I broke my ankle jumping from rock to rock on the slag heap behind our house. I did a lot of climbing and exploring, both, as a Scout as well as just friends of other Scouts. We would go off on our own. Nothing organized from the Scouts standpoint, but from our standpoint we'd go out and play. After six months, as I say, he took the exams. Was licensed in the state of Arizona. We moved back to Manchester and he opened up a practice about a long block away. A private practice. Over the years, many, many of his patients were either policemen or poor. Many of them were Mexicans who couldn't necessarily pay with money, but could perhaps pay with not so much services, but food, chickens, horse steaks. I can remember having horse steaks. Would drive my mother nuts because not only was she his nurse, but she also was taking care of the books and things. So anyway, down in Bisbee I did exploring, but it was all through the Scouts principally. Then coming back here, I spent an inordinate amount of time hiking and camping and in the mountains around Tucson.

TM: Did you do that with the Scouts or did you do it with some friends?

BF: All of the above.

TM: And then how would you get to the mountains?

BF: Well, in Bisbee, you could just walk out your back door.

TM: But in Tucson you're at El Con, it's like flat land forever until you've got the Rincons, the Tucsons, the Santa Ritas, and...

BF: Well, we would hike over to Fort Lowell.

TM: Okay. So you'd just walk right from...

BF: Well, not all the time. I mean, principally my mother, but occasionally my dad, would... Once a month there'd be an organized hike or camping trip with the Scouts, with Troop 79. Mothers and parents would take us up and drop us off and then come back on Sunday and pick us back up. So we did a lot of that. I ended up falling in with some other friends and we all became Eagle Scouts eventually. I would go explore with them. Sometimes they would have somebody that would take us someplace. A couple of my friends were like a year or two older than myself, so they'd end up getting a car faster than I did.

TM: What did you do your Eagle Scout merit badge working on?

BF: Well, they didn't have that. There was no project in those days. But I ended up getting 41 merit badges and then I also got, which I'm pretty proud of actually, for a bunch of years there was a Eagle equivalent called the Silver Award in Explorer scouting and I got that. So I have both Eagle and the Silver Award. The Silver Award doesn't exist. I got my Eagle in '54 or '55 or '56. In that day, there was no such thing as an Eagle project. You just got the merit badges and you did all the other jazz. So I did a whole lot with Scouting. I mean, I could talk for hours on the Scouting aspect of it.

TM: No, it's just good to know that you're an Eagle Scout. That just shows commitment, dedication, that sort of stuff. That you guys went out and explored. I'm assuming you hiked the Santa Ritas, I'm assuming you hiked the Tucsons and the Catalinas and the Rincons.

BF: Yup. Yeah. Mostly the Catalinas and the Tucsons. Well, pretty much all around. Probably the Rincons lesser. The Rincons would have been more when I was in college. A little bit older and not affiliated with Scouting at this point. With just friends.

TM: Did you go to Tucson High School?

BF: I graduated from Tucson High School in 1960.

TM: What was Tucson High School like to go to as a high school?

BF: In 1956 when I was a freshman there, or two years before that, my brother graduated from Tucson High in '54. His graduating class was, I believe at the time, the largest graduating class in the country. Tucson High when I started in '56, I was on a split schedule so I went at six thirty in the morning, got off at twelve thirty or one o'clock, something like that. Then there was another shift that came on. So my freshman year and my sophomore year, so '56/'57, large class. My graduating class was 575 when I graduated. But Rincon High School, Catalina had not peeled off yet. The kids were going to school at Tucson High but they were still considered Rincon students or Catalina students. Once they peeled out of there, we went back to a single shift but it was really pretty crowded.

TM: And that would be reflective of the growth of the city.

BF: Yeah. I mean, the city just couldn't keep up with building schools, and in this case high schools. Pueblo came online I believe in '54. So it was already going but the kids that my brother went to school with were going to Pueblo the next year. My brother graduated in '54, so some of those kids would have been going to Pueblo his senior year. The kids that were juniors would have gone in the Pueblo. Catalina/Rincon wasn't online. There weren't that many high schools in that day.

TM: Right. But a graduating class of 575. That's a lot of kids.

BF: Yeah. That's what it was.

TM: Yeah. Yeah. Good teachers? Was it a good experience?

BF: Well, I really didn't have anything to compare it with. I mean, I was essentially lazy. I pretty much was interested in the out-of-doors. I graduated in the top third of my class, but it was only by luck. It wasn't anything I really made an effort to do. School was relatively easy for me. Some of the teachers I can remember that stick out of my mind. Several of them, particularly my speech teacher... I just drew a blank. Anyway, the speech coach/speech teacher. I took two years of speech my junior and senior years. I got into competition oration and debate in high school. We did pretty well. I did I think pretty fair in competition.

TM: Did you go up to Phoenix? Did you guys travel around the circuit or was it just in town?

BF: Mostly...well, almost all in town. One of our members ended up becoming number two in the nation. One of my classmates who also was the student body president at the time. His name was Manny Don/Manuel Don. He was Chinese and went off to become a PhD speech pathologist, I guess. That teacher was really important to me. I took biology and chemistry and physics and Spanish. I remember the teachers but not well enough that none of them really stuck out. I don't know if that's because I didn't pay attention or they just weren't that good, right? So I took the sciences.

TM: They must've been fairly easy for you. You know, top third...

BF: Well, I think so. Yeah. Physics I had to work at, but chemistry and biology was pretty easy I thought. But I did flunk algebra. I remember flunking algebra. But I graduated in the top third of my class so I went to the U of A because it's a good school and it was right here at home. I never even thought about going any place else. To this day, I don't know that that's important at the undergraduate level unless you perhaps want to go to Harvard and become a doctor or something maybe. But generally the U of A is a good school. And in those days it was a good school, too.

TM: What were you thinking about to degree in?

BF: I was in pre-med. So now my dad was going to get a son that was a doctor.

TM: Did he want that?

BF: Well, I think he was pleased about that. He never pushed me about any of that stuff.

TM: Did you want it?

BF: Well, not enough to be very successful, that was for sure. The truth is that I discovered girls when I was a freshman in college so my grades went to hell in a hand basket. I mean, they were terrible. I almost didn't graduate from the U of A. I'm not being facetious or exaggerating here. I was terrible. I got suspended. I saw the papers a couple of days ago. I got thrown out of the U of A academically. If it hadn't been for my long term girlfriend whose mother was the Dean of the School of Home Economics here, who realized that I wasn't a total idiot, that I was just lazy. She and my parents and I went in to see either the Dean of the School of Liberal Arts, which is where I was enrolled, or it might have been the Dean of MEM, whichever, and she went to bat for me. So I have a piece of paper that literally I saw within the last two weeks, a letter from the school that says, "You're suspended. Pick up your money." Then a week later I was reinstated. I went from essentially being on the bad Dean's List to being on the good Dean's List, which was only my saving grace. That's how I graduated from college, really. But if it hadn't been for her, I'm not sure what I would've done. I probably would have been in the Army.

TM: Tell me a little bit about that time. I mean, were you dancing? Were you partying? Were you in search and rescue? Were you hiking? What was happening?

BF: Well, I spent a lot of time out hiking and camping and caving. The Explorer Post that I belonged to, which was this Troop 79/Post 79, we specialized in spelunking and caving.

TM: So this is before you got into college?

BF: Yeah. So in 1957, maybe '56/'57 freshmen, I was already an Eagle at this point. We got into some real serious caving. I joined the National Speleological Society. I just got a 60 year pin the other day. I still belong to it. I don't actively cave. I can't bend my knees or anything, but I still support the concept and the organization. Then in 1960, I was one of the three founders of the local caving club, which still exists. It was a Southwestern Speleological Association, the SSA.

TM: Who did you form that with?

BF: The president was Kirby Smithe, who unfortunately when I talked to him a couple years ago was pretty much into dementia and couldn't remember much about that period of time. But there are some other people. Dwight Hoxie is one that comes to mind. And Kurt Holmes.

TM: And these guys, Kurt and Kirby and Dwight, were they Scouts as well?

BF: No, none of them were Scouts. They were graduate students or students at the U of A, and they were all a couple of years older than myself. Dwight, I was just in Mexico with him a couple years ago, he's a PhD geomorphologist but has some emphasis on the moon. Smart guys. Some of the other guys were, again, they were graduate students and they were in engineering or they were in geology. One guy, Pete Huntoon, who was a real Grand Canyon person, actually, was in this group. Pete, of course, has gone on to be a pretty well recognized as a PhD hydrologist with the Grand Canyon.

TM: So tell me early Huntoon stories.

BF: Well, I don't have too many Huntoon stories. The one that I remember was... Remember at this point I'm only maybe 17 years old. I can remember us going down to a cave on the south side of the Huachuca Mountains. The cave at the time, the things called Joerger Pit. At the time it was the deepest known cave in the state of Arizona. It has since been surpassed quite a bit, but at the time it was 400 some feet deep. We went to the bottom of it either on a cable ladder or rappelled in and came out on a cable ladder. These guys took explosives into this cave because they could feel air coming out. They'd been there before. This was my first time. They had taken dynamite in to open up this one opening cause you could feel a lot of air coming out and you knew that there was a lot of cave there and they wanted to access it. I know that Pete was part of that group. At this point, I'd never even seen a dynamite stick. What do I know? So, it was exciting and interesting and we didn't kill ourselves. Got in and got out okay.

I think I went with Pete one time to a cave in the Chiricahuas that is called Crystal Cave because it has some huge crystals in it. Pretty unique kinds of crystals, I believe. When you crawl in there, you just get ripped apart. It's really a bad cave to explore just because of the crystals because it's hard to navigate around. So I don't have any great Huntoon stories. If he walked in this door, I might remember who he is, I probably wouldn't really. But I was part of that caving group. To this day, I still am involved with people who started out in caving here in Tucson, not from a caving standpoint, but from this Menudo Society group that your dad would've been part of had he been alive, probably. So where have we gotten to? What're we talking about now?

TM: So this is your college days?

BF: Oh, yeah. Well, that's right. That's right. I'm going down the tubes here.

TM: Yeah. Yeah. You're going down the tubes in college. And thank heavens, your girlfriend's mom has good connections. She sees something in you.

BF: Yeah, barely. Actually she did. She liked me a lot. She really did. I went with this girl for six years. The first kiss, the first sex, the whole routine. That put me on a whole different trajectory.

TM: So I'm trying to put this...this is 1960 to 1964ish?

BF: Yeah. Well, I graduated in '65 cause my grades were so bad. I was on the five year plan at that point.

TM: So while this was happening in Tucson, in Berkeley, in California there was... Just thinking about the ferment of the country and where your generation at that time of their lives was at. Tucson didn't have that big of a sex, drugs and rock and roll kind of thing going on.

BF: No. Uh, uh.

TM: But it wasn't totally isolated from that as well. The Vietnam War and the peace marches happening.

BF: Yeah, but that was just starting to happen.

TM: Putting that in place.

BF: When I was in Yosemite as a ranger and Death Valley as a ranger, and then Tucson Police Department, we intersected with, for lack of a better term, the hippie era/the counterculture time. But when I graduated from the U of A in '65, Vietnam, nobody could spell Vietnam. I certainly didn't know where it was or anything about it. Racial tensions were starting to flare up a little bit. Free love hadn't really come around that much. But, I mostly was either lazy or was out hiking and camping

and exploring and never paid [laugh] attention to my grades. I don't know that I want to have this recorded or not, but...

TM: Well, remember you are in the drivers seat.

BF: ...when I graduated... I don't care, but I didn't tell my kids this until not too many years ago. In the College of Liberal Arts, we had like a winter and a spring graduation class.

TM: Yeah, yeah. So there would have been a December class graduating and then a April/May.

BF: Yeah. I was in one of those classes that graduated in May. I was supposed to graduate in 1964 if I'd been on the four year plan. I was in pre-med initially, only because I was going to be a doctor, but only because my dad was a doctor and I never even thought beyond the end of my nose. So I was taking all these pretty hard courses to start off with. At the same time I discovered sex and girls which really derailed me quite a bit. And then I got into skydiving quite a bit as well.

TM: Where were you doing that?

BF: Well, I'll come back to that in just a second. Let me finish up about my grade. I was telling you that out of I think like, and this is pretty close, like 1,210 students in the College of Liberal Arts graduating in May, cause different semesters, but graduating in May, out of 1,210 I was like 1,188.

TM: Well, somebody has to be the 1,188th.

BF: Well, that's right. You know, John McCain and I had to be way at the end of the totem pole. So there were 22 people that had worse grade average than I did. I did not know that I was going to graduate. I mean, I didn't believe until I saw the actual diploma that I was actually graduating because it was so iffy. It was so scary because I'd already been admitted to the National Park Service as a ranger on a permanent basis.

TM: We're going to have to back up because I want to figure out how that happened. My other question for you is, was this going to be a liberal arts degree then?

BF: Well, yeah. It was pre-med, but my bachelor's is actually in wildlife biology now because I had all the zoology courses, which I really enjoyed. But I really screwed around in organic and chemistry and, I think, beginning algebra. I just didn't either have an interest. I guess I didn't have the interest to really knuckle down and really work at it. If I couldn't just slide through without studying, I probably didn't pass that course.

TM: Okay. Let's also back up a bit. In the caving community, I'm also thinking about Southern Arizona Rescue Association.

BF: 1958.

TM: Is that when it started?

BF: Yup.

TM: Did you get in on that?

BF: No. Well, that's not true. In 1958, one of my classmates...[phone rings] there were three Boy Scouts, actually, there's six Boy Scouts that were going to hike to the top of Mount Baldy/Wrightson in November of '58 and they got caught by a totally unpredicted snow storm. In my backyard in Tucson on Manchester, I had four or five inches of snow. They ended up having several feet of snow at the end of the road in Madera Canyon, called White House Canyon. The six boys that started hiking to the top of Wrightson, three of them turned around, three of them kept going. The three

that came down lived. The three that kept on going probably never got to the top but ended up turning around at some point. At one of the intersections, Josephine Saddle, it's a four way intersection, they took a turn and started off to towards the south down Josephine Canyon instead of coming back on the trail to the end of the road where they had their campsite. One of those boys was Mike Early, who was a 16 year old classmate of mine at Tucson High School. I knew him in passing and to say hi, but I did not know him as a friend or anything. The other two boys, one was 12 and one had just turned 13 I believe that day. There's a pretty good book written about this if you ever want to read it. It's called Clouds Over Mount Wrightson, I believe, by Kathy Hufault. [title is Death Clouds Over MT Baldy: Tucson's Lost Tragedy] Several of the people who are real players in what would become the Southern Arizona Rescue Association (SARA), Don Morris, Eber Glendening, and Tom Harlan, all of whom were graduate students at the U of A. They were also very accomplished hikers, very accomplished outdoors people for their age for that period of time. They ended up working their way through the snow, up to their waist probably, to the top of the mountain cause there was at that time a cabin there at Baldy Saddle. The authorities thought perhaps that these kids had gotten in there and taken shelter.

They were able to get up there but the next weekend my friends who were Eagle Scouts, they belonged to another troop called Troop 8. Their scoutmaster was a guy by the name of Nelson. No last name. Legally he changed it to one name. His name was Nelson. He was an architect. He'd grown up in Montana and was teaching these kids, including me because I was paling around with my friends, how to climb and rappel and a little bit about pitons. I was also getting into the caving as well, so this all dovetailed together. But this group, this Troop 8, had been officially deputized by the Sheriff's Office as Pima County Junior Deputy Search and Rescue. Now, I don't know that they ever got any kind of a certificate that said that, but a big newspaper article referenced this. So this group of eight, I believe, maybe six to eight of us, and I was not part of that troop but these guys were my friends, and I went along. So we went out on this search. Now the three boys are missing. Were not found for roughly 18 to 20 days. But we spent a weekend going through the snow in our Levi's and our cotton sweatshirts and whatever. In today's climate, my parents would probably be taken to court because [laugh] of either child abuse or something to that effect. But, we were walking up in the snow and I'm sure that our pant legs were frozen but we were 16 year olds. You know, in this case, and I take great pride in being an Eagle Scout, but in this case we were outmatched. We should not have been there. I mean, we were just ill-equipped and ill-prepared. We were down there for two days and I think some of them went back down again, but I did not. Collectively, they brought in probably over a thousand soldiers from both Davis-Monthan and Fort Huachuca. So it was a huge search, probably the largest search in southern Arizona and one of the largest in Arizona in general. Eventually, the snow melted to some degree and some ranchers, who were always involved in this, stumbled across these kids. The ranchers were on horseback and they found these boys huddled. This is all pretty well elaborated on in this one book. I think it's called Death Clouds Over Mount Wrightson or Mount Baldy. But anyway, that was pretty much the beginning of SARA.

TM: Had you met Tom Harlan and Eber Glendening and Don Morris by then? Did you know of them?

BF: No. Well, I knew of them. I went caving with Glendening, and Harlan...

TM: What was he like? What was Eber like?

BF: Well, Eber was an engineer and ended up professionally working for either the county or the State of Arizona roads department. Quite a drinker.

TM: Even back then?

BF: Even back then. That's how the Roma Ramblers came about, which for its period was quite a famous southern Arizona hiking group. Roma was Roma wine. They would take a bottle of wine up

and have wine at the top and they'd leave the bottle with their names and things inside the bottle. But they're also very accomplished. Don Morrison and I got to be good friends later on. The man's now 82. I just talked to him about a month ago in Ventura and will be going to do an interview with him on his early days in SARA. Tom Harlan I maybe met once or twice. I really didn't know him.

TM: He was a math professor at the University of Arizona?

BF: No, Tom Harlan was a dendrochronologist at the tree ring lab. He made his entire career at the tree ring lab.

TM: I was thinking of John Bounds I think.

BF: No, Bounds was part of SARA but Bounds was a math professor. Dave Lovelock was with them, too. So that sort of answers your question about Harlan and Morris. Morris I met in Death Valley and spent several weeks with him when he was doing a archeology project in Death Valley. Actually for about six weeks I believe.

TM: How did the National Park Service get on your radar screen?

BF: Good question. So in 1959/'60, I am a lifeguard at the Elks pool downtown.

TM: All right. Hang on a second because so far water has not been a part of your journey. You're not out there canoeing cause you're living in the desert.

BF: Right.

TM: How did you get interested in water then?

BF: Well, I mean, I was a good swimmer. I was a state champion freestyler in high school.

TM: Was that because swimming was an option in PE and you thought, oh, that would be fun.

BF: No.

TM: How did you get to like water?

BF: Well, I don't know but I learned to swim at this guest ranch that I lived on.

TM: The Double E?

BF: The Double E Ranch. They had a pool and they made money... On a Saturday and a Sunday, this is when there weren't that many public pools around for one thing, so there are lots of locals that would come over there and go swimming and you got to know all these people and the kids. I learned how to swim there by teaching myself how to swim underwater first. Once I got the confidence of being able to travel underwater, I got on top of the water. In 1958 or so, I went with my dad down to Mazatlan. He went to a medical conference, in theory. I don't know for a fact that they weren't down there partying. Dr. Cortner, who was a early orthopedic surgeon, I forgot his first name... He just died recently. He was one of these young... He had money and he was a adventurer. He had one of the first scuba tanks in Tucson/southern Arizona. He had it down there in Mazatlan. He said, "Do you want to go out with me? Go diving?" Well, for sure I do. So I ended up putting on a tank, no instruction, course it was only about 10 feet of water. I guess I'm assuming that he sorta was looking over my shoulder, but I was down there puddling around and I all of a sudden I realized I'd had all these sea urchins around me and I couldn't stand up. There was no buoyancy compensator [TM laughs] so you're really trying to keep from killing yourself on the sea urchins. But I lived through it.

In 1959 or '60, let me think about this, 1960, one of my good friends who was an Eagle Scout and had actually introduced me to my first girlfriend, his dad was a teacher at Rincon High School during the school year. But he also worked in the summertime at a sporting goods store downtown Tucson. He bought us a scuba tank, a regulator, I'm assuming fins and mask, and maybe a weight belt, I don't really remember that too much. So he and I would trade off and we'd clean the bottom of the pool and we'd kill the tank. We would just drain the tank. One of us would be on top and sort of watching, but mostly cleaning the pool. Then his dad would fill the tank up for us and we'd go back down and kill the tank again. So I was teaching myself how to dive, absolutely no lessons or anything.

This will show you how stupid I am. There's locally a real famous cave called Onyx Cave in the Santa Ritas. Over time I probably was in Onyx 75 times. One time I took the scuba tank in there and I dove the water table at the very end of the cave. Zero training. Zero anything. I had a flashlight inside of a plastic bag and I had a rope. I guess I had the rope tied to me, I suppose. It was just a matter of going down as much as I could. I didn't go into any real side holes. I mean, I didn't get too far away from surfacing. But I mean for 1960 with the sport of scuba being so brand new and no training, no... It was like, I should not have been there either. In some ways I was a mother's worst nightmare. But anyway, so I taught myself how to dive to some degree at that point. I never went out into the ocean. Not yet.

But I got sidetracked. Instead of caving, I got sidetracked into skydiving. I had a good friend. Oh my god. I had a good friend, a classmate of mine, he worked at a little mom and pop aviation company out of Tucson International. He had access to a couple of parachutes. He ended up having these parachutes packed by the Air National Guard. Just sort of walk in and say, "Hey, here we are. Can you help us?" "Sure." There was a group of about five of us and I was like the youngest or the earliest, the latest one to come to the dance here. These guys had all made four and five jumps. One of them was a pilot. Actually, my friend was a pilot as well. So they put me out of the plane. I made two static line jumps and then maybe my first freefall, about 10 seconds worth, on my third jump. These guys had actually been doing it without any/no training, any static line. They just jumped out. So then I got into skydiving. This group, this Arizona Parachute Association, we were setting world records unintentionally, accidentally, because we're sort of a wildcat group. The club was perhaps 12 to 15 hardcore jumpers, probably a few others. One of these early guys, his name was Al Hoffman, who went on to become a United Airline pilot, in order to support his family, he had a young kid and a wife, he started this jump club out at Ryan Airfield. On a Sunday afternoon, many, many days of the year, he would land his plane on Sandario Road. People would come out and watch us jump. He would charge \$15 a jump for people who just wanted to say they parachuted once. We would provide a half an hour's worth of instruction to them and maybe stand on the tailgate of a pickup truck and jump off and roll and tell somebody about the hazards of parachuting. Not that we knew any more than they did practically, but on my sixth or seventh jump I was packing other people's parachutes in the dirt in the road. They all opened, there'd be this big puff of dust. When the parachute would open there was a big puff dirt. We were so rogue in some ways that probably the country's best parachutist/skydiver, whose name should be on the tip of my tongue but right at the moment, oh, Lyle Cameron was his name, came over from Los Angeles. He was so in fear of us killing one of ourselves and putting a bad name on the young sport of skydiving or parachuting that he traveled over and he spent...and we agreed to all this...but he spent probably a full six to eight hours teaching us what we should have known a long time ago because mostly he just didn't want to have his livelihood screwed up by a bunch of idiots in Tucson parachuting. We were doing night jumps from 16,000 feet. That's not true. 14,500 or 15,000 I guess, at night with 60 second delays and all landing in a certain area. There'd be a bonfire that'd be sort of our target. Of course we wouldn't land in the fire but that would be our target. And then we would proceed to party. I don't drink, never have drunk, and I don't drink at all but this was an opportunity that now we could go out on a Friday night parachute, have a date. My girlfriend would come out and meet us. Everybody sat

around and she wasn't any kind of a drinker either. We'd watch everybody else get drunk, really. I did that for three years.

TM: I can really understand the attraction of jumping out of a plane at 16,000 feet during the day cause I would love to see that view in that kind of freefall time. What was the attraction at night except just to have a party?

BF: Just to do it. Just to do it.

TM: Okay. So it's like dark. You can see stars. That's nice. You can kind of make out where the mountains are. I suppose you can see the lights of Tucson all around.

BF: Well, it was the thrill of the jump. It wasn't the beauty of the surroundings. In my case, our reserve was on the front of us, which is no longer the case anymore. We also had a little metal panel that had a stopwatch and a barometer in it. We knew we could precalculate if we got to a certain altitude, how long it would take us before we had to pull. So as soon as we go out the door we'd hit the stopwatch, but we'd also watch the altimeter. So it was just the thrill of the long fall and the fact that it was something to do, right? You could always jump at daytime, but you couldn't always jump at night.

TM: Right. What was your highest jump?

BF: 23,000.

TM: And you did it in the day or night?

BF: That was a night, I mean a day jump.

TM: Where?

BF: Out at Marana. Actually 22,500 I think is the right altitude. At 23,000, I believe this is true, you needed to have a bailout oxygen or a bailout...yeah, oxygen bottle.

TM: I was going to say, were you running supplemental oxygen.

BF: Well, we were in the plane. It was a C-47 so there are about 20 of us. Now they did this twice. I only did it once.

TM: I was gonna say, how did you end up in that plane? Cause that's not the sort of thing that somebody's got on their own out at Ryan Field.

BF: I think it had something to do with the CIA and Evergreen Aviation, which was a cover for the CIA during the Vietnam days. I don't know that we paid anything. We maybe did, I don't recall. I tend to think that somehow it had to do with...we got it free almost.

TM: Sounds like a fun jump. It would be quite the view up there.

BF: Well, it was cold of course. We had bottles of oxygen in the plane but once you went out of the plane, you didn't have anything. It was a 90 second freefall. But I do think that at another 500 feet, at 23,000, you were supposed to legally have a bottle that you bailed out with. That was just too sophisticated and something that we just didn't have access to. So we ended up jumping at 22,500. Not too many weeks later, they did a second jump like this but in the interim I had broken my ankle. Not parachuting, but crossing a sorority lawn, my girlfriend's sorority Kappa Alpha Theta on the U of A campus. Which is one of those do overs. If I could do it over again, I wouldn't have crossed the lawn like I did. I just was in a hurry. So that's the highest jump I made was 22,500.

TM: So the question is how did the Park Service show up in all this?

BF: That's right. That was your question about half an hour ago.

TM: But we're getting there.

BF: So in 1961, one of my good friends, Mike Hayhurst, who is still alive, he and I... Let me backtrack. His dad was a doctor here in Tucson as well. His dad had been born in Tucson and had a lot more family ties politically and was just old family. A congressman, who I don't remember whose name it was, and whether it was a state congressman or whether it was at the national level, but in those days, they could appoint. They had a certain number of appointments where they could take somebody and give them a job for the summer. It was called a political appointment. If you didn't cut the mustard the first time, you didn't go back the second time. I mean, it wasn't like it was a freebie every year. He was able to get the four of us jobs working on trail crews in the Sierra. So Mike and I spent the summer of '61, well, half of the summer of '61, '62, '63, '64, and then I went back in 1966, working on trail crew in the Sierra for the National Park Service for Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks. Over time, I probably have been on at least three fourths of all the trails in Sequoia and Kings Canyon. For several of those years, we would go back 90 days a summer. Had my own horse, six mules. I learned how to use explosives. All on-the-job training. No formal training at all. I could shoe a horse. I could pack a mule better than the packers practically and I got to be pretty good. I got to be a good packer cause we had six mules and we are moving camp every couple/three days. My friend Mike and I really took it on seriously. We just ended up learning a lot about working in that environment.

TM: Who mentored you at that time? Did you have any mentors?

BF: No. Well, the only real mentor would've been the trail boss, or the crew boss, who was a habitual liar. He loved me. Most of my crew member friends or trailmates, if you will I guess, hated him. I mean, the guy was terrible and he was an alcoholic. But Mike and I worked our tails off. One summer there were only two of us, a trail crewman, a packer and a boss. The packer and the boss some of the time were so drunk they'd stay in their tents and we'd cover for them. We're 19 or 20 years old and we didn't want to see anybody getting in trouble so we'd go out and we'd bust our butts on doing what had to be done. So I ended up learning to use explosives that way and, as I say, I became a pretty decent packer. For five summers, I worked for the National Park Service on the trail crew.

TM: Now your girlfriend's here in Tucson and you're [phone rings] out there in the Sierras. Did you just travel back and forth? How did that work?

BF: I was just gone for 90 days. [phone rings] I just would go over there and work beginning of the summer. We go back roughly on Memorial Day and come out on Labor Day. I think one time, actually the time when my dad died, I came home for two weeks during the summer but never stayed. I stayed over there and worked.

TM: So when did your father die?

BF: He died in 1964, July 5th, which was my parents' wedding anniversary as well. 29th wedding anniversary.

TM: Heart attack?

BF: Yeah, massive heart attack.

TM: Sorry.

BF: Probably dead before he hit the ground according to my sister. But, the four summers that I worked for the trail crew for the Park Service, I never once thought about the Park Service as a career. Now at this point, I know that I'm not going to be a doctor. Right?

TM: [laugh] Yeah. But you're into a lot of different stuff. You could have been a pilot, you could have been a jump instructor. You could have been a caver.

BF: I never thought about any of that stuff but I ended up getting this degree in wildlife biology. So in the back of my mind I think, well, maybe I could go work for like the California Fish and Game or, you know, one of my classmates was Arizona Fish and Game. My girlfriend, her name is Karen Hall... I have to tell you an interesting story that maybe doesn't need to be on tape here in a little bit.

TM: It's up to you. [laugh]

BF: Yeah. Well, it has to do with Karen English. Who you know, I'm sure.

TM: Well, I know of her.

BF: Okay. I'm not gonna mention that right now. So my girlfriend was Karen Hall, six years worth. We're in the sorority front room like on say a Saturday morning or something, just talking. She says, "What are you going to do when you graduate?" Now she's one year behind me. She's actually gotten a degree in three and a half years. One semester she was out sick with a bad ear kind of a deal.

TM: Smart woman.

BF: Well, I think I was smarter, but she was just more dedicated. Right? She just knew what she wanted to do, or at least she didn't want to be in school forever. So she and I sat in this front room and she said, "What are you going to do?" Then she says, "Why don't you think about the Park Service as a career? We just went over to Carlsbad." And of course I knew that she had gone there. She said, "Those guys in uniform look so good. Why don't you think about being a ranger?" I had never even thought about that. She knew when the entrance exam, used to be called the Federal Service Entrance Exam, FSEE, was being given maybe several weeks from now and you had to go down and sign up for it and whatever. So I went down and I took it and I passed it. In the process, I believe you had to identify a couple of agencies or a couple departments you were interested in being considered by. I put down Park Service and probably Forest Service and who knows what else I put down. So partway through what is now my senior year, which is my fifth year, I get a letter from the Grand Canyon from Albright Training Center, Frank Kowski was the head of the center, and it says, show up on July 5th. I forgot, that's the anniversary of my dad's death. So you show up on July 5th and basically you had to have your degree in hand. I mean, that was the caveat. You had to have graduated. So now I've got this opportunity to go get on permanently with the Park Service. I've got the letter. I just got to go to the training and successfully get through the first year.

Partway through that year, my girlfriend dumps me. I am now taking a course called advanced plant physiology because, at least in those days, you had to have certain number of units out of certain kinds of courses. You had a choice of x number of courses, four or five. So I took this advanced plant physiology. I'd never taken beginning plant physiology, but this advanced course would satisfy a requirement. My competition in this course were all these graduate students from places like Egypt who were over here and if they didn't graduate and do well, they'd have their hand cut off or something when they went home. In my case, I just wanted to use it to graduate, right? So I'm just starting this course along with others. But I was just starting into this, my final semester, in theory, and she dumps me after six years. She ends up running off and getting married. She ends up coming back and all this kinds of stuff, but for the time being, anyway, she goes off. She gets married while I'm at the training center. I'm taking this course, advanced plant physiology. We come to the final

exam. My going into the Park Service as a permanent ranger the summer of 1965 all hinges on this final exam. The professor, some doctor, turns out it's an oral exam. I've been a space cadet for the last several months cause she dumped me. I mean, I just really took that hard. It was my first love. I mean, I just got screwed over royally. Plus I was way over my head in this course. So the professor starts his exam. After the first question, he looks at me and he says, "You really don't know this do you?" I probably started crying. I probably told him, "I've got this great job opportunity. The love of my life just dumped me. World's coming to an end here." He looks at me and he says, "Something like that happened when I was your age." Now I suspect it happens to everybody at that age, but in this case, he said that. And he says, "I tell you what I'll do. I'm going to give you a D if you promise never to take one of my courses again." [TM laughs] I said, "Doc, you will never see me again." He gave me a D and it was sufficient for me to graduate in the bottom 1% of the class, but I still graduated. So I showed up on July 5th at the Albright Training Center at the Grand Canyon. Went through three month's worth of Introduction to Park Operations. They don't do this, they haven't done it for years and years and years. But you know, there are about 25 of us or so. Some of them were older rangers.

TM: So this was an intake program for the Park Service that was growing in leaps and bounds at the time.

BF: I guess. Yeah.

TM: Yeah. I'm trying to think about, a lot of the people in the park already were starting to get moved up and moved out into new parks. Hang on a second. We've been at this now about an hour and 37 minutes. Is this a good place to stop? Because my next question for you is to tell me more about this program. What sort of things did they teach you in that three months? But before we do that, I want to know is there anything else about your college days that you want to bring into this?

BF: Well, let me think about this. My dad was dead. My mom, who was a nurse, she ran the School of Nursing for St Mary's. She did that sort of intermittently while she was my dad's nurse as well. I don't know all the real detail on that but she was in fairly ill health and I go off to the training center. So college-wise nothing. The trauma was my poor performance as a student. I helped found two groups that were pretty visible in the skydiving community and the caving community. I spent a lot of time in Scouting itself. I became what they call the chief, The Order of the Arrow, which is an honorary group within the Boy Scouts. Got to the highest level in that as well. Scouting was probably my biggest formative thing while I was growing up. In high school and college, really not much more. I probably could drum up stuff, but nothing really jumps out at me right now.

TM: Okay. You know what let's do then, if you wouldn't mind, let's talk about those three months at Albright and wrap it up with that.

BF: Okay.

TM: So did you stay in those blocks of buildings?

BF: We stayed in dorms. I didn't know anybody there initially. There were two women and roughly 20 to 24 males. Some of us were brand new and several of them were older men who were coming back to be trained, if you will, to go through this school. Some of them had a fair amount of experience, probably a number of years of experience already. I've made some lifelong friends from that school.

TM: Like who? Who was there?

BF: Well, okay. So Dave and Doug Morris, Roger Giddings, Tom Griffiths, Steve Hickman, who lives in Tucson, who lives in Green Valley actually. There are others. I'd have to think about this for a

moment. Most of those guys were pretty successful in their careers. The three months that I was there, I had a roommate who... What was his name? Bill something. I forgot it now, actually. Even though this was a ranger school, if you will, he was probably a poor example, I think.

TM: I have a question about ranger. This is a ranger school, but the Park Service hadn't gone through the transition where there was a law enforcement ranger and there was an interpretive ranger.

BF: No.

TM: So the concept of rangers...

BF: Which I never bought into anyway.

TM: Okay. The concept of ranger at the time was...

BF: Everything.

TM: ...Everything.

BF: Right. That's the three months they did. You learned a little bit about everything. Everything from planning a new park, which in retrospect is not much help to you, down to the history. I actually taught... They brought a mule over from the Grand Canyon tour group.

TM: From Xantera, Fred Harvey would have been...

BF: Yeah. Fred Harvey.

TM: 1960 would have been Amfac...

BF: No.

TM: ...had the contract?

BF: No, this was Harvey.

TM: Was still Harvey then.

BF: They brought a mule over and I showed everybody how to pack a mule. At night we stuffed little rodents that we caught. We went out and did archeology. We did some digs out there at Grandview. And these were things that had already been identified. It wasn't like we were out there exploring new stuff. The FBI came up. Steve Pyne, who is a pretty famous author and is a PhD historian for ASU. Steve's dad, Joe Pyne, was an FBI agent and came up along with another guy and they spent parts of a week teaching us how to do come-alongs, some basic take downs, a little bit about search and seizure, a little bit about rules of evidence. Every one of those subjects is probably a week long when you go to a real school. But in that time, we had a couple of hours of this, couple of hours of that. We went out on the range. I'd never even had a pistol in my hand. I had a 22 rifle at this point. We went out on the range and tried to qualify. I don't know how well I did. I don't know that anybody cared. It was really more of a familiarization thing. So for those three months we did a lot of everything but not much of any of it. A couple of hours here, a couple of hours there kinds of exposure.

TM: And this is 1965?

BF: This is summer of '65. And we made two trips. The first trip was a five day trip. They loaded us all into Nava-Hopi buses. There were two busloads because a couple of the guys were married and some of the instructors and things. So they ended up having two busloads. We went to Glen Canyon,

which I'll come back to in a second. Then Zion. We stayed the night in the Driftwood Lodge in Springdale, Utah. We went to... What's the name of the little National Park Service area that's a fort?

TM: Pipe Springs?

BF: Yeah, Pipe Springs. We went to Pipe Springs, Lake Mead, [laugh] Las Vegas. We went to Las Vegas first, then Lake Mead. So here's a story that is pretty entertaining. This Frank Kowski who was one of the three men I have on a pedestal. Dr. Wurgler, my dad, and Frank Kowski, is the director of the training center.

TM: Albright Training Center.

BF: He had been the head of training for the Park Service at one point. He was an old ranger out of Yellowstone. Kowski was this cigar smoking, probably in his mid-fifties at that point, sort of a wheeler dealer, old school, World War II vet guy. This course had gone on for several years, so he'd already had some of the things pre-done. He walks into the class one day and he says, "How many of you people would like to go to a big extravaganza show in Las Vegas?" Those were the days when the Flamingo had these really pretty costly, extravagant kinds of shows with all the showgirls and things, right? So, I don't know, probably most of the guys said, yes. Raised their hand. But I didn't. So a couple days later he comes back in, he says, "Geez, I'm sorry everybody," he's talking to the class now, "I couldn't get tickets for a show." I think probably at lunchtime, and I'm sort of winging this right now, but at lunchtime I go in and I say, "Mr. Kowski," cause it was still Mr., "Mr. Kowski, would you mind if I tried?" I'm what 23 years old. I'm this young punk kid that barely graduated from college, right? But what he doesn't know is I had been dating the second dancer, the lead dancer at the Flamingo Hotel. Her stage name was Carrie Noven but her real name is Barbara Nowinski. She was a good girl friend of my sister at Tucson High School. Built, holy moly. So I call Barbara and I say, "See what you can do, X number of tickets." A couple of days later, she comes back, she says, "I've got you what you want." I don't remember what the show was or anything now. So I walked back in and say, "Mr. Kowski," I'm making up a number now, "I got 20 tickets for..." Who knows what the hell was the name of this thing. You could see his jaw drop. It's like, who's this 23 year old punk?

So anyway, we go on this trip, I think it's four nights trip and we go by way of Glen Canyon. Now, Glen Canyon at this point the dam has just been closed, '63 I believe. The water's starting to fill up, but there's nothing out there. I mean, you can't hardly even see the water. There's lots of open desert, really desert stuff. So I'm there and I'm saying to myself this isn't too bad. I didn't say it to myself, I said it out loud. I said, "This is okay." The very first day that I had started this school, this three month school, I was in the Bright Angel Lodge. I don't know if it's the first day, but the first week. I was standing there in the front room, the entryway where they got the chimney with all the rocks in it and I'm starting to hustle this 18 year old girl standing next to me who was looking at all the jewelry and things in the case. I'm putting on my best 23 year old fast talk hustle. As it turns out she and her parents are camping there for a couple of weeks. I fall in not lust so much, but I get really infatuated with this girl. So we go to Glen Canyon. I say, "Well, this isn't too bad." We go to Zion. I ended up meeting this girl there, who ended up following me down after I quit the Park Service, at the Driftwood Lodge. She was the hostess. So we go to Las Vegas and I have a date with my friend Barbara. My roommate on this whole trip and a guy, his name is Eric Burr. Good looking guy. He had been a lieutenant in the Marine Corp. Terribly intense. He would do isometric exercises under the table while everybody...at the school.

At this point, I have a '65 Chevelle 327 with I think its five speeds. Nice looking car. I don't know why the Chevrolet people here sold it to me cause all I had was a letter saying you're going to get hired. And I didn't have much of a down payment, I don't think. I was paying 98 bucks a month for three years or something like that. So we get to Las Vegas and everybody goes off to the shows. My roommate, Eric, I said, "Eric, would you like a date? I'll set you up with some lady." "Oh yeah, sure."

So [laugh] we go to watch them dance. They get off work and I guess we must've went with them. My friend Barbara, who was a classmate of my sisters, who I had been seeing a few times, nothing great but we were friends, and her girlfriend... The idea is that we're going to hop in bed. We're sitting in Barbara's apartment and my friend Eric starts talking about Aldo Leopold. My friend had a masters degree in forestry from Berkeley and his idol was Aldo Leopold. So he gets off on this thing about conservation and preservation in the parks and Aldo Leopold and science and stuff like that. All I'm interested in is getting laid. His date gets so turned off she tells him, "I want to go home." He can't understand what's going on yet. It's just all going over the top of his head. He's a very bright man and there are whole stories about him. All of a sudden my objective is just been screwed up. So nothing happens. Everybody else has a good time watching the Flamingo dancers or whatever it was. And so they come back to the Grand Canyon. That's the first long trip.

The second trip is we come down to southern Arizona and we go by way of Globe. We go to the Western Archeological Conservation Center, which now, of course, is in Tucson. But in those days, WACC was in Globe. We went by there to look at the preservation, the archeology, the museum collections that they had from different places and things. We go there, we come down to Tucson, we go to Saguaro...

TM: Hang on. I'm sorry. I got to go into this rabbit hole. The Western Area [sic] Conservation Center is a regional Park Service repository of all kinds of American heritage.

BF: Correct.

TM: Can you tell me about the building at the time? Do you remember anything that you saw there?

BF: Well, what I remember is that, first of all, it was like an old fashioned...probably an original adobe building that only housed mostly just pottery and that kind of stuff that would come out of say Chaco or out of Walnut Canyon or Tuzigoot or someplace like that. It really didn't have much of the artifacts that you might find later, like Faraway Ranch out of the Chiracahuas. I don't recall that at all. I don't recall. I'm sure that they had funerary objects, probably some mummies or bodies, you know, skeletons. We probably only spent a couple of hours there and it was pretty superficial. I don't remember exactly where it is, but I'm sure that it's known. People know where it is.

TM: Yeah. And today that same facility collection now has grown greatly in size and is curated here in Tucson.

BF: Right. Correct. It's pretty good sized here in Tucson.

TM: Thank you.

BF: So then they take a trip to Nogales which I can tell you about afterwards. Then we go back by way of...we go to Saguaro, Tumacacori, spend the night in Nogales. A lot of these guys had never been across the border so they go across the border. You didn't even need any kind of ID, you just went back and forth. Then we went back by way of Winslow, Holbrook, Petrified Forest area. I had gotten my induction notice to take my Army physical at this point, which I did. I got on the bus in Holbrook, I believe, to go spend the night in Flagstaff and then I would catch a Greyhound bus along with two other buses of mostly Hopi and Navajo boys and we went to Phoenix to go take our Army induction physicals. Now, at this point, 1965, as I say...

TM: I'm going to jump in here. So the group went back to Albright to continue to train but you're heading on a bus to Phoenix to get your physical.

BF: Correct. And it was getting close to the weekend, too. So I went down, stayed in the YMCA there in Phoenix, and the next day went over and took my Army physical. I was probably one of the

healthiest people in that whole group and I flunked because probably a corpsman, I suppose — although there was a captain/a medical doctor that signed off — he says, “You got a hernia.” I didn't have any hernia. I had just taken a entry physical for federal government. Pretty comprehensive. My friend, the guy that I worked on trail crew, his dad gave me the physical to get into the federal government. No mention of a hernia. Never before. Never after. Why ever this guy said, you got a hernia. Now in '65, nobody knew about Vietnam. I wasn't trying to get out of going any place. All I knew was I had this great career potential in front of me, and if you say I've got a hernia, then fine, I'll go with it. So I flunk. I'm one of the very few college graduates in this group of three buses, maybe 60 to 80 young men. I have a college degree. I'm as healthy if not healthier than anybody in that whole group and I'm one of the few guys they kick out because of health. Now a lot of these guys failed because of what they call moral turpitude. Along the way they'd stolen a car or something.

So I go back up to the training center now. In those days, at least in my class, this three month class Introduction to Park Operations. It was called the Roger Allen, I believe, course. Was named after... I'd have to look this up I suppose...was named after some regional director in the Park Service or somebody. I was just looking to see. I have my certificates up there, I believe. They would ask you, the instructors, this Frank Kowski and Howard Chapman and Tom Thomas, they asked us, “Where would you like to go?” I don't know that there were any guarantees, but there were people in the room who were interested in history and who had come from the east and they wanted to go back to the east. They had no interest in going to Yellowstone or Grand Canyon or any place like that. So everybody gave an idea. I thought, well, they're never going to send me to a place like Mount Rainier or Olympic. Because this girl that I had hustled, the 18 year old at the very beginning of my course, was a freshman at a religious school in Oregon. If I thought about it I could probably come up with the name of the school. But I was infatuated and I thought, well, why not? So I told myself they're never going to send me to a big real park in that area, but they might send me to a recreation area, meaning what's now Lake Roosevelt National Recreation Area. But in those days, it was Grand Coulee Dam or Coulee Dam National Recreation Area.

TM: This is on the Columbia.

BF: Yeah. It's in Oregon isn't it? Is that right? Grand Coulee Dam is on the Columbia River.

TM: Yeah, it's on the Columbia. I think that's right. I think it's in Oregon.

BF: Yeah, I believe that's right. But I knew... Well, they're never going to send me to Rainier or Olympic but there's this recreation area that's not too far from her. Maybe they'll send... So I put down recreation area. Well, somebody remembered hearing me say Glen Canyon isn't too bad. So I end up being sent to Glen Canyon to Wahweap and I end up becoming the first permanent ranger for Rainbow Bridge living on a little houseboat no bigger than this room. Not even close to the size of this room. I had a little trailer, a little Airstream trailer in what is now a pretty big campground. But in those days, they had just planted the stuff in the Wahweap campground. I spent much of my time living on this houseboat up at Rainbow Bridge.

TM: Okay. Stop right there.

BF: Okay.

TM: Cause now I want to know all about Wahweap and Rainbow Bridge. We have been at this now two hours and I think I had told you that's my pumpkin time. So we're going to wrap this up now. Is there anything else you want to add? Like burning, no, I gotta plug this in to finish this story off or are we at a good break point?

BF: So you're saying you want to start with Wahweap or Glen Canyon?

TM: Yeah. I'm saying I want to start with Wahweap. I might actually want to go back and ask you about Chapman, Howard Chapman, who I think becomes...

BF: Regional director.

TM: ...Regional director.

BF: Tom Thomas, Dave Karraker.

TM: Yeah.

BF: Karraker is buried at the Grand Canyon.

TM: Okay. I would like to know about those folks and maybe we can talk about them next time. What you remember about them.

BF: Yeah. Well, I've dedicated my ranger book to them. Old school rangers. Kowski, Chapman, Thomas, Karraker. I think there's somebody else I put in there as well. So is there anything else I want to say about the Grand Canyon?

TM: Well, about that training.

BF: The training, rather. One thing that does come to mind is going down to Phantom Ranch on our own. We went down on a weekend, not everybody, but a group, was a volunteer group, we went down and I knew, because I was a pretty serious hiker, that the day that we were going down was a full moon that night. I knew that I did not want to hike back up in August coming out the Bright Angel. We went down the Kaibab and came out the BA. I knew I didn't want to hike that in the daytime. Everybody else never paid attention to that. We went swimming in the pool at Phantom Ranch, and of course it was no longer there. Several of these other guys said, "That's probably a good idea. We ought to hike out tonight." So we hiked down, swim, wait around till the moon comes up and it cools off a little bit, and then we hike out the BA that night. Only two of us actually get out. A couple of these guys... Gill Lusk who lives here in Tucson/Green Valley, he ends up having both his knees go out on him so they end up spending it at Three Mile House. They sleep on the table the rest of the night. That was my first trip into the bottom of the Grand Canyon was on that.

During that same period of time, a couple of us drove over to Supai, to Hilltop. Hiked down and spent the night in Havasu Canyon. There used to be, and you probably know about it, there was sort of a back way to get to the Hilltop out of Tusayan.

TM: To come in Topacopa side, coming from the east side.

BF: Yeah. You would go all the way around to the Hilltop itself though. There's a ranch you drive through. There's sort of a circuitous way.

TM: Its south, but not as far south as going all the way to Williams.

BF: Correct. It's all sort of a dirt road. Its good dirt but you have to know which turn to take.

TM: Yeah.

BF: So that's the way we went in and came back. We went to Supai, spent that one night there. That was my first trip to Supai and I've been there several times since.

TM: So in that three months training... At the end of that three months, were you getting settled and wow, this is great. I like this.

BF: That's exactly right. We were exposed to a little bit of everything, but not that much of anything. But I was so impressed by the content and, of course, the concept. I would not be fooling anybody if I said that I was really on board philosophically with the Park Service and the environment, preservation, whatever. But that was my undoing, was that I was so geared up to conquer mountains and slay dragons. I mean, they sent me out after three months. I go to Glen Canyon, I have my own patrol boat which, of course, nobody ever told me how to run. [TM laughs] Little JT. There was another ranger that showed me. I lived up there and I didn't realize that I was doing exactly what I was supposed to do, which was be the eyes and ears of management. Keep an eye on things, interact with the people. I don't think I ever gave a citation. The one car wreck that I went to when I was like on a night patrol at Wahweap, I had to call the higher patrol because I didn't know what the heck to do. But, I was sorta disillusioned. I thought I needed to know... For some reason I'm not doing what I'm supposed to do. Even though I'm living up at Rainbow Bridge, I'm exploring all these side canyons, which are all underwater, like 300 feet of water, and I don't think I'm doing what I'm supposed to do.

So my mentor, this Frank Kowski, who couple of times I would go over and sleep on his couch at the south rim. I'd whine and sniffle about, one, the superintendent there at Glen Canyon who was a real...

TM: Okay, hang on a second. We're going to stop this now cause now there's like too many doors opening [laugh] in front of us. So this sounds like a good place to tie it up. You finished this program, but then at Wahweap, at Rainbow Bridge, things are looking a little different. So I think that's a good place to...

BF: Okay. What I'm going to tell you then later on is that that's the reason I left there and joined the Tucson Police Department.

TM: Okay. All right. So I want to explore that a little.

BF: He recommends... You know, the name of the game for park rangers is law enforcement. But I had a great time up at Rainbow Bridge.

TM: Yeah, and I want to know all about that, too. Okay. With that, we're going to conclude Part 1 oral history with Butch Farabee. My name is Tom Martin. Today is Saturday, April 20th, 2019. Butch, thank you so very, very much.

BF: My pleasure.