

Interviewees: Larry Sanderson (LS), Jean Sanderson (JS), Lisa Riedel (Lisa), Kate Carmedy (Kate)
Interviewer: Tom Martin (TM)
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TM: Today is 2nd of May, its 2016. This is Page, Arizona, an interview with Larry Sanderson and Jean Sanderson and Lisa Riedel from Glen Canyon and Kate Carmedy, Larry's oldest daughter. Great, my name is Tom Martin. So, Larry what I was hoping we could do today is I'm interested to know where you grew up, how was it that you came to this country, and what you remember about your first river trips through Grand Canyon, your job working on the dam for Glen Canyon, did you go through Glen Canyon before the dam. This may take some time.

LS: Okay.

TM: What year were you born?

Larry: I born in '29.

TM: Where?

LS: In Salmon, Idaho. That was when...my folks happened to be up there with relatives. So I was born there and came back when I was 3 months old, to Arizona. My dad had a job for the Indian Service to put in irrigation systems for the Gila River Indians, south of Chandler. My oldest sister was born in Prescott. My brother was born, older brother, in Phoenix. The rest of, Jerry and Karen, well Bill and Dick, Karen and Judy, were all born while we were living on the Gila River Indian Reservation, south of Chandler.

TM: Did you grow up then...

LS: I grew up on the Gila River Reservation with the Indians. We went to school at Sacaton. Then during World War II, when they moved Japanese from the coast, they had a camp set up, which was Rivers it was called, on the reservation. We lived with the Japanese at the camp for couple years. I went to grade school, graduated from...on the reservation.

TM: What do you remember about that internment camp?

LS: In '47, '48 and I think in '49... No, it was before then. Probably the last of '41 and '42 and then '46, we were living in Phoenix and my dad was sent to Arabia to work for King Ibn Saud to teach them how to irrigate. Then in '46, we've moved to Skull Valley near Prescott.

TM: I've got a question for you, let's back up just a little bit. Sometimes there are certain things I wanna hear about. But I just chucked all that out the door, because the internment camp on the Gila River in '41, '42 may be '43 or '44 you would have been 15 or 16 maybe 17 at the time.

Larry: I was fourteen, well 15 and 16.

TM: What do you remember about that Larry? What do you remember about the camp and the people that were there?

LS: We went to school with the Japanese. The first year they was quite a bit of a trouble as far as us, the Americans/the white and the Japanese, till they sent the Japanese that wanted to go back to Japan in exchange with Americans that were in Japan. They changed/swapped Americans. Four Japanese to one American is what the ratio was. That was during the war that they made the swap. And after that first year when the Japanese that wanted to go back to Japan left the camp, then the camp was, you might say, all Americans because most of them were all Japanese-American US citizens. After the first year, it was just like anything else, anybody else. Went to school with them, just together. I didn't know any difference.

TM: And your mom and dad were teaching at the school? What was their role there?

LS: My dad was teaching and putting in irrigation systems. The Japanese raised their own crops, cattle, pigs, and things like...and chickens. They had their own. Actually they raised their own food. The other camps, like in Idaho, they did the same thing. The Japanese that were there in Idaho, most of them or a good part of them stayed there. But because we were on the Pima Indian Reservation, they couldn't stay there at the farms that they raised.

TM: Had they lost their houses? I mean, it seems like those people were sort of gathered up and...

LS: In the coast, they went back to their own homes that they had before the war. But a number of them, I know, had the option to stay. The camps where they raised their own food, they got that property. So they were still there.

TM: But they couldn't do that at Sacaton 'cause it was on the reservation?

LS: Because it was on the reservation.

TM: Wow. So where did you graduate from high school then?

LS: In Prescott. After we moved from the camp, my dad went to Arabia. We took our cattle that we had to Phoenix and then my mother bought a small ranch at Skull Valley which was near Prescott. And that's when went to high school in Prescott. I had one year in Phoenix and then on my senior year I didn't graduate I joined the Navy in '47. I was in the Navy from '47 to '51.

TM: What did you do in the Navy?

LS: I was a gunner's mate.

TM: What kind of craft?

LS: First, I went aboard the Iowa, which was the battleship. We decommissioned it in San Francisco.

TM: What year?

LS: I guess '48, the last of '48. Then I went aboard a destroyer. Jerry, my brother, had joined the Navy and he was aboard the Helena, a heavy cruiser. So I requested to get aboard the Helena with Jerry. We first went to the Philippines and then the Korean War broke out. We supported the Helena during Korean War, which was a heavy cruiser.

TM: What do you recall of that time?

LS: During the Korean War?

TM: Well, so I'm thinking, here's a young man who grew up in Sacaton and is suddenly on a heavy cruiser in the Philippines seeing that there's a real big world out there.

LS: Before we actually went to the Philippines, we went up to Japan and was going from Japanese seaports that we could go to. We went to the two towns that we had the atomic bomb on and saw those towns completely destroyed, just ruins, from Nagasaki and Hiroshima. It was interesting to see it. The Japanese kids would come out when we were being in the town and they was just happy to see us. And this was just couple of years after it was bombed. But the Japanese were, you might say, welcomed the Americans back.

TM: Tell me what you saw? Can you remember?

LS: Of the Japanese?

TM: Of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

LS: Complete, just the ruins of the town. But it was outside of the town, other towns that we went to. It was the Japanese and the kids 'cause we gave them candy and stuff. You'd get a whole bunch of kids around us when we were going to their town. It showed the towns that were bombed and especially the two towns that were the atomic bomb on. The Japanese adults we didn't have too much communication with 'cause they would speak in Japanese and we were Americans, but the kids would just come out. We enjoyed the Japanese people, you might say. I don't know if they hated us, the Japanese, but they didn't appear to. We didn't have any problems. I enjoyed seeing Japan. We probably went to at least 10 different seaports. Even though we would anchor out, we would go ashore and have liberty and be able to see things of the Japanese towns. Of course being a sailor we probably wasn't interested in anything but the Japanese girls.

TM: Haha. Sure.

LS: It was good to see Japan, which was just a couple of years after the war.

TM: Yeah.

LS: We went back to the Philippines and spent a year, you might say, in the Philippine area. Then the Korean War broke out and we went right up there and started the Korean War. During the time that MacArthur was there, we could, being out at sea just off a coast looking through the gun sights at the

coast, we even had a tank and armored car run down on the beach and shoot at us or try and shoot at the heavy cruiser.

TM: Haha.

LS: It's like a person swatting a fly. They couldn't even hardly reach us.

TM: How big were the guns on the cruiser?

LS: They was, well, 16 inch on the Helena, the battleship, and I think 12 inch on the heavy cruiser.

TM: Okay, so the Helena was a battleship?

LS: Right. The Helena was a heavy cruiser, the Iowa was the battleship.

TM: But the Iowa was then decommissioned, is that right?

LS: Right, it was decommissioned at that time.

TM: So in the Korean conflict then...

LS: The Helena was already... It was the heavy cruiser and so it was one of the bigger ships that was in the Korean War.

TM: Okay, and you all are launching then from...

LS: Ship to shore.

TM: Shells off into Korea?

LS: Yeah. We did have a spotter plane sometimes that would tell us where to shoot at. I was on the 5-inch guns. We had six, maybe it was eight, 6/7...I think there was 8 5-inch turrets guns on it. And so half of the ship would be going up the coast. You'd be able to fire from one side of the ship and then when you'd turn around and come back along the coast, the other side would fire the 5-inch.

TM: Did you have any hearing protection at the time?

LS: No.

All: (laughing)

LS: And 5-inch has a loud barking noise, extremely hard. I think I lost a good part of my hearing from those 5-inch guns. I think if we had any protection we might have stuck some cotton in our ears, but I don't recall really. During the evacuation at Inchon the Chinese had come in to the war. They had a large amount of the American people, soldiers were trapped on the beach. We had to evacuate them off, get them aboard ship. While we were going in to the shore with the smaller boats to bring the soldiers back, we were firing the 5-inch over 'em, at the Koreans and most of them were the Chinese. We...36 hours without sleep. When we finished up after we brought them aboard, not only the Helena but other ships,

took them south and beached them again. So the evacuation was only in about a 20-mile stretch. I know I went to sleep right under the 5-inch gun and they started shooting again. They didn't have general quarters that time but they had port and starboard crews and I was laying under the gun. When they shot, I didn't even wake up after being awake for 36 hours on the firing line.

TM: So, I'm assuming the decks were covered with all the people that you were pulling off the beach.

LS: We pulled them off, took them down and launch and put them back on the shore to where they was trapped at Inchon. We took them down where they could continue the fighting.

TM: The craft that you used, the small craft back and forth from the Helena, was that supplied off another ship or was that your craft?

LS: They were from other ships.

TM: Okay, so you guys are trying to provide cover.

LS: We provided fire power for the people to evacuate the...

TM: To get off the beach?

LS: Off of the beach. We could see through the gunsights as we was... They led each gun mount fire as they saw into the hillside right near it. The evacuation, we could see people that we were shooting at because we were only less than half a mile off of the shore.

TM: Did you had overhead planes as well trying to tell you where to fire?

LS: During the Inchon, they just told us to fire into the hillside and the trees. We could see people on the beach and we were firing over them because they were the Americans that were...

TM: Coming out/retreating out.

LS: ...coming out. It was probably 20 hours at least getting the people off of the beach.

TM: And that went on right through the night?

LS: Through the night and the day. We were just continually firing. When we got the people off and took them down, we had to go out to sea farther where ships had ammunition for us. We highlined the ammunition aboard. After we got all of the ammunition aboard, the 5-inch guns we had burnt the paint right off the barrels of that. You fire that much steady, firing those 5-inch guns they... The Chinese were using Russian planes, but they didn't come down at us. We didn't have to fire at any aircraft, it was mostly all shore batteries that were buried in hillsides in tunnels. They would come out and shoot at us just before dark and just at daylight and then they'd pull the guns back in the hills in the tunnels. It seemed like we couldn't destroy the firepower that they had. They would only shoot at us probably for 10/15 minutes to the very most.

TM: Yeah, it seems like the longer they would fire at you, the better you could zone in on where they were.

LS: We were allowed... They told us each gun could shoot at the hillside there where they was firing at us. We didn't have... The Helena was hit one time.

TM: By what? By the land-based...?

LS: By shore batteries.

TM: Got it..thank you.

LS: From the Korean shore batteries.

TM: They clearly weren't very good shots.

LS: No, I was running, you might say coming out of the hatch going to the 5-inch gun and had a shell that hit right at the side of the ship and threw water on me. That was as close as I got to it. It was during the time when MacArthur was in, we could... Then the Chinese came in and McArthur wanted to put an atomic bomb on the Chinese when they crossed the river. Truman pulled MacArthur and then the war was the complete opposite. We could see the Chinese coming down and we couldn't fire at them. We could shoot at the roads to slow them down, to stop them in front of them. They started the peace talks. When they started that the war... Well, the Korean War never had an ending. It's still North Korea and South Korea and the 38th parallel they established. Most wars have an ending but the Koreans don't. North Korea even today is... You would see South Korean lights of the cities and North Korea: blank. It's two different countries now being both Koreans, but it's entirely different. One prospered, the other is strictly a military control and the people really don't have anything to do.

TM: So, again from the outside, as you tell this story, I get a sense that this would have been an amazing education for you.

LS: Yes. Even though we wasn't ashore, we were involved in keeping the peace, you might say. When the Chinese came in, we were clear up to the Russian border and North Korea. The war should have ended right then, but that's when Truman pulled MacArthur out and the military leaders was the opposite. Instead of fighting they was wanting the peace.

JS: There were bad storm. I don't know whether it was going home or going over there.

LS: A storm?

JS: At sea. A hurricane, what are they called?

LS: They're typhoons. I was coming back to the states to get discharged during the last of the Korean War and was transferred from the Helena to a tanker that was refueling us. Then the tanker went alongside a refrigeration ship and was refueling it. We highlined onto that refrigeration ship which was a World War II ship that they carried supplies in. Real slow, it had one huge diesel engine and I think 96 rpm that it would turn. 11 knots was its maximum speed.

TM: Was Jerry with you as well when you were heading back?

LS: Jerry stayed aboard the Helena. He came into the Navy after I did, so he still had almost a year to go.

TM: Why did you decide to discharge out?

LS: Well, I'd had finished my 3 years that I signed up for and Truman gave us an extra year and so my 4 years was up. So I transferred to go into Japan, on the east coast of Japan, but to get there we had got into a typhoon. We were 3 days in it.

TM: At 11 knots and 96 rpm.

LS: We couldn't get out of it. We were in it and we were... It was 180 knots winds, one of the largest typhoons. The ship was just in. You couldn't go out but you could look through portholes and see. The waves were probably... We were like 40 feet above the water and the waves were another 60 feet or so above you. Huge waves.

TM: Wow.

LS: When we did get out of it, we were able to go in to Japanese port and then train to the Tokyo area and then by a carrier to get back to the states.

TM: What year was that?

LS: '51.

TM: During this time, from '48 to '51, your dad was in Saudi Arabia?

LS: No, he went in '44 or... I think in '44 or '45. He hadn't got back when I got out of the Navy. Maybe it was in '49 or '50, I guess, that he was in Saudi Arabia. When I got out of the Navy, went back to Skull Valley and got married. My dad had already come back and was working with the Geological Survey putting in...they was the waterways, like there at Lees Ferry, to check the water.

TM: The stage is gages.

LS: The gaging stations. Then in '47, the first of '47, he was with the Bureau of Reclamation on the Marble Canyon, or Glen Canyon first, dams site investigation work. Then in '48, they checked the dams site at Redwall Cavern dams site. Then they went down to the Marble Canyon dams site. I got out of the Navy and that was my first job is working on the Marble Canyon dams site.

TM: Was that in '51 or '52?

LS: That was in '51 and '52. I was working drilling the tunnel work investigation. I was running the boat from the highline up to and taking the crews to the drilling platforms taking core samples out of the riverbed. Then I was drilling the tunnels on both sides of the river that are still there.

TM: On your days off where was home? Were you all based out of Flagstaff for that?

LS: I was at Skull Valley. We would work 10 days and off 4. You'd have one day driving to work. Part of the crew or people were from Phoenix, so they'd come up to Skull Valley and pick us up and we would

go on to the damsite. Usually we would get there at night. The cableway going down from the upper rim to the lower rim was 3/4 of a mile long. If you had new people, they made sure that they came there at night...

TM: Haha.

LS: ...to go down before anybody lit the lights down at the lower inner gorge.

TM: So they wouldn't see.

LS: So, they wouldn't see what they were going till after they were down there. They'd look up in the morning and see where they... We only had one person that I know of that wanted to get out that first day.

TM: Do you remember a camp on the west side of the river up on the same top of the Redwall? Was there a camp on the west side and a tramway to the top there as well?

Larry: Yes.

TM: What do you remember about that?

LS: We lived in the inner gorge on the...

TM: East side?

Larry: ...west side.

TM: Were there two lines coming in from each rim?

LS: No, only from the south rim side that we came down. We had, at the bottom of the inner gorge we had a cableway going across the gorge to the east side. We had a cableway going down to the river from the inner gorge, but we lived up in the inner gorge. We did have a little quarters at the top that the operator lived. He lived up there.

TM: On the east side. So it would be on basically the Cameron side.

LS: Yes.

TM: Yeah, so this is the weirdest thing 'cause I have driven out to Buck Farm to the head of the rim up there on Buck Farm. There is what looks like pretty hefty bolts into the Kaibab limestone on the top there right across from the eastern side rim tramway development. On the top of the Redwall on the west side there's some aluminum piping, there's some material still there. So I was wondering, do you remember any of that development on the west side at all?

LS: No. I got a contract to remove debris from our main way down. I had to go down high-scaling and remove debris that was thrown off or that wasn't used. What I didn't haul out, I buried.

TM: What year was that, '52ish?

LS: No this was in the...that I had got a contract...it was in the late '70s. Or was it...

JS: It must have been in the early '70s because you didn't do that, I don't think, after we were married.

LS: When I took Mike over?

JS: I wasn't...

LS: You wasn't? So, that was in the '70s then.

TM: Well, let's talk about the Marble Canyon damsite.

LS: Okay.

TM: It seemed like in '49, '50, '51-ish, it was being looked at.

LS: Right.

TM: But then again in '61-'62 ish.

LS: They did quite a bit more work.

TM: Okay. And I didn't know whether the development from the west side was from that 1960's time.

LS: It was in the later work.

TM: Okay. And then your contract was to clean the whole thing up...

LS: Yeah.

TM: ...after the Central Arizona Project basically turned off that development then.

LS: I didn't go over on the other side. Just on...

TM: That's why that stuff's still there! Haha, okay.

LS: I just had the contract to take care of what we had left.

TM: Fun. Okay, okay. So 1952, what do you remember about drilling down there and your interface with the river runners that you were going by?

LS: Before I went to work there in the last of '51, that's when they spotted a boat coming down in the early part of the evening before daylight. They had already gone up to the inner gorge and saw this boat go by and it was... They went down, got it, and tied it up down below. Then they spent all night with lights shining on the river to see if any river party came by. Then next morning it was Hatch, I believe it was Hatch's group. They were the boat of... They were looking for...the person that drowned.

TM: So let's think about this. In 1951 Dick and Isabell Griffith came by with Johnny Schlump and the whole works was going on. They got a ride up and they got some good eats. These were scrawny kids that were in their early 20s. They were hungry. Now you may have started working just after they went by.

LS: Yes. So I didn't see them.

TM: Also, David Quigley had drowned but that was... His body was discovered down at President Harding. Bert Loper had drowned in '49.

LS: That was Bert Loper was the one, his boat that they found and tied up.

TM: Okay, so you would have seen his...

LS: And my dad was on that. He got the boat, caught it, and tied it up downstream from the damsite.

TM: Okay, what do you remember about the camp at what today is called Bert's Canyon right near where Bert's boat was tied up. There's tables there. Did you guys go down there and camp there at all?

LS: No.

TM: Okay. Do you know why that camp was set up there?

LS: It was set up to where they could climb out and put the cableway in from one rim to the other side on the inner gorge. Because they had to go up there on each side and they tied rope on to cactus.

TM: Haha.

LS: Threw it over and let the cactus bounce on the way down. Then with the boat, tie both ropes together and then pull cables over. Well they had to go up there and drill and put in anchors for the cableway. So a headtower that they had put up. That camp was set up so that they could do that work on the opposite side of the inner gorge.

TM: Okay, that A-frame tower is still there and those anchors are still there on the west side.

LS: Yeah.

TM: Yeah, fun. I did wonder, though, why was that camp set up? Was it for drinking water/for freshwater down there because there's a little spring down there in that Bert's Canyon. I don't know.

LS: In November of '47 is when I went to work. Or '51.

TM: '51. Did you guys boat up and down the river much then or was it mostly for work with the barges and...

LS: It was mostly in the damsite area that I boated. When they were doing the Redwall damsite, which they didn't do too much of, they took a Higgins boat down with Norm Nevill's party when he went down, down to there. And that was probably one of the first power boats to run...

TM: That section. That's exactly right.

LS: ...that section from Lees Ferry down.

TM: That's right.

LS: That was in '47, I believe, that they took the Higgins down.

TM: I'd have to look it up, I can't remember. So, while you were working for the Reclamation there, did you run the core drilling or were you just doing the drift mining to get the core drillers in there?

LS: I was just involved in putting in the tunnels. They was doing the core samples from the barge on the river in four different areas across. And the core drilling, they drilled in the sides up on the beach area. I wasn't involved in the core drilling there.

TM: So then what happened, this is 1952. They kind of stopped that whole exploration for a bit.

LS: We finished the first preliminary and then they came back. I wasn't involved in the second work.

TM: Yeah, that was the state of Arizona that did that. It wasn't Reclamation.

LS: Right.

TM: So in '52 then, you were basically working for Reclamation but the project was done, the preliminary work was done. Where did they sent you next?

LS: I went to Kingman and worked on putting in roads along the powerline from Kingman, the power from Boulder Dam.

TM: Okay.

LS: I was putting in sort of maintenance roads along the power line for maintenance of the power line.

TM: Driving a bulldozer?

LS: I was drilling and blasting the road work.

TM: Oh, okay.

LS: Then I went to school on my GI Bill.

TM: In what?

LS: First I had welding machinist work and drafting in preparation for the junior college for mechanical engineering. Just before I finished up there, I went to California as a machinist. My dad called me and told me they needed a boat pilot at Glen Canyon.

TM: This would be in '56?

LS: In '57. I went to... No '56.

JS: Yeah, early '56.

LS: Yeah, that summer '56. I went there with Bill, my brother. I got the boat job and I said, "What other job you got?" He says, "We need a high-scaler." "What does a high-scaler do?" I had to fill out a 57. I says, "If I take the high-scaling job could Bill have the boat pilot job?" He says, "If he can qualify for that." Well, he had as much experience on running the river and running boats as I did. So he said, "Yes," and he says, "We got a high-scaler from Boulder who's on a 30-day detail." "Well, I'll just have him teach me how to high-scale. When do you want us to go to work?" We hadn't quit our jobs yet in California.

TM: Hahaha.

LS: He said, "Bill can go back and quit for you. I want you in the morning or in the... This was Saturday afternoon. Monday morning he wanted me to go out to the damsite to go to work.

TM: How much did they say they were gonna pay you for that?

LS: \$1.68 an hour.

TM: Which was pretty good money back then.

LS: Well, it was about what I was making as a machinist in California.

TM: Well what was Bill gonna make pushing the boat?

LS: \$1.30 something.

TM: There you go, an extra 30 cents an hour.

JS: Hahaha.

LS: Yeah. So the high-scaling was about 30 cents an hour more. So I went out and the fellow from Boulder handed me this extra bolt. We made up short ropes on it. We threw over a second rope over the side and he started tying on. I was watching him and I was tying my ropes on to the main rope and he says, "Have you high-scaled before?" 'Cause I was doing copying him. I said, "Oh that was a long time ago..."

All: (Laughing)

LS: "...when I was at Marble Canyon." He says, "Go up the rope and tie on and slide down to me." I went up and tied on like he did and nothing to do. I was twisting and all of a sudden it started sliding down. So I slid down to him, we both went over the edge. I made the one trip down. He went in to Kanab with the survey crew and told them, "You got a high-scaler, I'm going back to Boulder." So, one trip over with the high-scaler and I was the high-scaler.

TM: How did you get back up?

LS: We had built a little road at the Ropes. We put those in.

Lisa: You put in the ropes?

LS: What?

Lisa: You put in the ropes, the Ropes Trail?

LS: Ropes.

Lisa: Oh.

LS: We built that. We put the ropes in to get out. Then we did put a road down Wahweap and we were able to drive jeeps down to the river. Bill had had the boat down at the bottom and when they take us either to the ropes or up to Wahweap and we'd just make one trip over the rim to the river.

TM: So you would scale out then on your way down and then exit by boat to the road up at Wahweap on one way or on the other side of the river there was a road they pushed all the way down to the river, is that right?

Lisa: No. There's a rope trail.

LS: On the same side, the ropes that we put down on that then made that...

Lisa: That's where people go fishing now? The Ropes Trail, is what you are talking about?

LS: Yes.

Lisa: So, it's on the west side of the river by the dam. Right by the dam people go in there and go down still and go fishing.

LS: Just below the bend.

Lisa: Yes.

LS: That was our first way out is we had to go down over the side doing this survey. We were rodmen, you might say, on the canyon wall with the paint. One instrument would line us up and we were mapping, you might say, the canyon wall. To design the bridge and to design the dam we had to map the wall/the canyon walls. That was what I was involved in, high-scaling.

TM: Did you had a radio, were you in radio communication?

LS: No.

TM: How did you know where to stop and paint?

LS: It was calm. They're only 800 to 1000 feet away from you but you could talk back and forth because there wasn't any noise. So they'd come over when they were ready and they would line us up and we would go in a straight line. So we were mapping. Every 10 feet we would be going over and one transit would line us up and they had two other transits that was shooting angles to the exits. We would put numbers and some of them are still, I think, visible.

TM: Would you bring your lunch with you and just eat right there on the cliff face?

LS: Generally we would try and get... We wouldn't eat until we got through. When you first start making the trip it might take us 4-5 hours on the wall. And then go out and that was the day's work.

TM: So this was 1956, did you see any river runners go by at all?

LS: No. We had to put a road in at Crossing of the Fathers.

TM: Kane Creek?

LS: At Kane Creek we put a road in and a sign telling river runners they had to get out there, because from Kane Creek on to Lees Ferry was shut down, nobody could boat.

TM: So, was there a short amount of time when construction was happening before they closed it at Kane Creek and the boaters were still going?

LS: There might have been. The first year they might have been able to boat through because there wasn't any construction yet. We had to do the surveying and then when they started to put in the tunnels, they had to shut it down at Kane Creek.

TM: Right, okay.

LS: Of course they didn't have any barrier or anything but they put a sign up and the boaters knew that they had to get out there. That was the first road, you might say, we put in to Kane Creek.

TM: Did you ever see Art Greene in his big airboat?

LS: Airboat? Yes.

TM: What did that sound like?

LS: My dad was involved when Art Greene first started that airboat on the investigation of Marble Canyon damsite. Then Art used to run from there on to Rainbow Bridge in it. That airboat was real noisy but it would go over the sandbars and the water that was shallow. He was able to go where... We would go from Kane Creek to Rainbow Bridge in our boats to see Rainbow Bridge. You might make it in one day if you are lucky. One day to hike up to Rainbow Bridge and come back. We'd make a river camp and so it was 3 days to get to Rainbow Bridge and back to Kane Creek. If we went from Lees Ferry before we put in the road to Kane Creek, it was 5 days to get to Rainbow Bridge and back to Lees Ferry.

TM: What kind of boats were you driving?

LS: They were these boats that are on our river boats. They were 19 foot.

TM: The Smith Craft?

LS: The Smith Crafts.

TM: Okay. They look like they tootle along pretty fast.

LS: Yeah, but this is on Lake Mead.

TM: Aah.

LS: On the river, if you didn't run during the flood stage it was take you... 'Cause the river would be less than 3,000 cubic feet per second (CFS), maybe 2,000. You'd be fighting sandbars. It was just slower going.

TM: Did you start at Hite at any time during this period? Did you run that section from Hite down to Rainbow Bridge and then on down to Kane Creek?

LS: No. The only work that Bill ran was photographing with the Bureau. We didn't run any tours down.

TM: No, just on your own did you go up to look at that at all?

LS: Not to Hite area. When they first started filling Lake Powell, I was... When we wasn't high-scaling, I was operating the government boat then. We went up, my first trip, and some of the dwellings at Hite were floating. You had to fight driftwood and stuff because at first everything that was up there... The water were rising so trips from Kane Creek wasn't used anymore. We'd get in at Wahweap, the water backed up.

TM: So, let's just jump back a little bit 'cause there is a section here I'm kind of interested in. That 1956 to 1960, you're working for Reclamation, you're doing high-scaling work there, the dam is starting to come underway, how was it that you met Marston in that time?

LS: My dad met him to take the first boat down. Doc Marston was running for Norm Nevills on a trip and my dad went with that Norm Nevills party and Doc Marston. That's when Marston got with my dad to take the first boat down through the Colorado.

TM: Didn't your dad and Marston run Badger together on one of those Norm trips? Your dad came down with the trip and ended up...

LS: With the Higgins boat.

TM: Well no, it was before that, I think. It was on one of Norm's commercial trips and your dad went down and actually jumped on the boat with Doc and they ran Badger and Norm was signaling 'em where to go.

LS: That was...

TM: In '48?

LS: ...when dad was taking the Higgins boat with the party.

TM: Oh, okay. Down to Marble Canyon or down to Redwall Cavern to the damsite?

LS: To the damsite to get it started. Norm didn't want motorboats going so he told my dad that I'll signal to ya how to... He signaled to him to get him in the worst spot on the rocks.

TM: Norm had a habit of doing that. It wasn't just your dad, don't take it personal.

JS: Hahaha.

LS: But anyway, after Badger my dad said, "I'll read the river." But he still went with the party down to just below Vasey's Paradise.

TM: So, when did you meet Doc?

LS: In '46. I had already been to work at the damsite as a high-scaler when my dad had taken his trip with Marston.

TM: Which was '51. Well, I mean all the way through where they...

LS: He went all the way through, but I was in the Navy and going to school.

TM: Had you met Doc by then?

LS: No, not till forty...

TM: Or '56?

LS: '56.

TM: Okay. What do you remember about that meeting?

LS: Well, we were getting the boats at Lees Ferry ready. My dad took the trip with the three boats.

TM: That's the Cactus and the Boo-Too and the Rattlesnake?

LS: The Rattlesnake. They took that and then the next year in...

TM: '57?

LS: '57, I took my first trip down with Doc Marston.

TM: What do you remember of that trip?

LS: Oh, definitely. My first trip through the Canyon and through the rapids.

TM: Were you driving a boat?

LS: I was driving the boat.

TM: Which one?

LS: The first trip, I was...probably the Boo-Too.

TM: Okay, and this was a Smith Craft twin...?

LS: 35-horse Evinrudes with their 19-foot Smith Crafts.

TM: Did you ever meet Seth Smith?

LS: In Phoenix, yes.

TM: What do you remember about him?

LS: He was just a... He was a boat dealer and I didn't really have much to do... We went down to have him do a little work on the boats after the '56 trip.

TM: You didn't put any holes in 'em did you?

LS: I didn't.

All: (laughing)

LS: No, I didn't hit any rocks but we did hit rocks. You'd get the boat, pull it up, and put temporary patches.

TM: What were you using as a temporary goo? What kind of stuff were you using?

LS: We used just roofing material and canvas and then drill and put aluminum patch with...

TM: Pop rivets or a...

LS: We would use screws at first. Then when the end of the trip, we would take that off and weld it up.

TM: Ah, okay, and Seth would do that down in Phoenix? He would fix them up?

LS: The first year he did but then after that, well, I was involved in getting the boats ready after the first trip that I was on.

TM: So did you learn how then to weld aluminum?

LS: I had already been to school on my GI Bill and so I had one year of welding.

TM: Larry, who do you remember also was on that trip in '57? Marston would've been there.

LS: His son.

TM: Garth?

LS: Garth. I'd have to look up the names. One of them had went down with an inner tube.

TM: Oh, Bill Beer?

LS: Yeah, he was on that trip.

TM: Okay, right.

LS: I think both of them were on that trip that went down with the inner tube.

TM: In '54? Yeah, they swam it, right, right. So what do you remember about these people? Do you remember... Course it's your first time through the Canyon, you're driving a boat.

Larry: Yeah.

TM: Was it fun, were they really hard to get along with? I mean, what do you remember about it?

LS: Oh, it was just new experience for me. Even though they had been down before, everybody got along with one another. If they didn't, my dad would make sure they did.

TM: Did you guys scout rapids? Did you look over what runs you were gonna take and talk about that?

LS: We stopped at Badger first. After Badger I don't think we stopped. We didn't stop at Soap or any of the rapids after Badger till we got down clear past at Lava Creek which was past the...

TM: Unkar down there.

LS: We did stop at Unkar and walked down and looked at Unkar.

TM: And then Hance of course.

LS: Hance was always... We camped above Hance. Hance was our big one. With these boats you didn't have any real problem running Hance. You start on the right side, cut across and then turn and go down on the left side. You made sure you didn't go in the holes in the middle, but we were able to run Hance without any real problem.

TM: So these boats, were they self-bailing? Meaning when you took water in by your feet, did they have scuppers that would...

LS: We had holes in the side of the boat.

TM: Scuppers.

LS: We had a floor in the cockpit area above the water level. So water would come in and just run out. The front and the back were hatched over. The back had a big hatch, the front had a smaller hatch on it to carry... But most of the supplies were carried in the back hatch.

TM: Would they leak a little bit? It'd be normal to have a little leakage, you'd have to kind of bail that out maybe.

LS: We had on the back probably a 2-inch opening pipe with a flapper on it and a foot pedal to where we could open it up to pump water out of the bilge. So if you did hit something and get a bad leak, you were putting out water, you'd just open the flapper on it and water could go out a 2-inch hole. We only had one or two times that we had to really use that to get to shore. Mostly you'd get to shore, pull the boats, unload them and pull them up on the beach and turn them up and patch them on the side.

TM: Did you have enough gasoline to get all the way through the Canyon or did you have to re-gas?

LS: We would gasoline at Phantom Ranch. They would bring 100 gallons down to us. Then at Whitmore, Chet Bundy would bring it down on horseback. Then during the time that the jet boats were making the upriver run, he put in plastic tube.

TM: Chet did that?

LS: Chet did. At first he started to siphon gas out of a 55 gallon barrel up there in his pickup. When he finally got it started surfing, it built up pressure. He could hear it and he yanked it out of the barrel and then he... "What am I gonna do?" It just started sucking too much pressure out and we couldn't catch it down below, we's catching it in 5 gallon cans. So he started siphoning out of the barrel into a funnel, he had the funnel in it so it would suck air and only the amount coming out of the short siphoning tube...

TM: Would go into the funnel and then...

LS: ...into the line going down. At first he would siphon in 5 gallons and we'd catch it down below to find out if there was a leak, if we would get almost 5 gallons at the bottom. If we caught 5 gallons, we would wave a flag.

TM: I was gonna say how did you talk to him?

LS: Communication with flag.

TM: Like, go ahead.

LS: Yeah. He would siphon in and we had 5 gallon cans setting there and we'd fill our 5 gallon cans again.

TM: So what happened when you went from can to can? I imagine that gasoline was coming out at a pretty good clip.

LS: It had air with it, so it wasn't that bad.

TM: Wasn't that bad, okay.

LS: Because he would siphon into this funnel that he had stuck in the tube. So when he'd siphon in, air and gas would go down. So we didn't have any problem after that first shot we put. The first shot of gas, before he went to the funnel, just knocked the 5 gallon can out. We went to flagging him down. He was right at the rim to where he could see us.

Lisa: What was that distance, what would be the distance? Like a hose was coming all the way from top?

LS: 1200 feet, I think, of hose. Then the jet boat... He put it in mainly for the jet boats. We took down extra gas with us for the jet boats and left 'em at Lava Creek at the mine.

TM: In the shade of the tunnel there?

LS: In the tunnel there at the river we left the gas for the jet boats.

TM: Were these the square cans with the little lid on the top or were they...

LS: Yeah, because they fit good on the boat. They were just the square cans with...

TM: There's a little screw top?

LS: ...screw top.

TM: When they were empty did you just deep-six them?

LS: I don't know. They must have. They wasn't any use after that for them and they were empty for anybody else, so what good would they... So they probably just threw them down. They went on down to Lake Mead.

TM: So you came back in '58 and ran again with Marston?

LS: '58 and then in '59 we made the movie of Ten Who Dared.

TM: So let's back up a minute. Before we get to '59, what do you remember about the 1958 trip? This is your second trip. Are you driving the Boo again?

LS: I was driving then, yes, the Boo. My dad was driving the Cactus.

TM: So Bill Beer wouldn't have been on that trip in '58. Was Garth on the trip in '58?

LS: To Phantom Ranch. He hiked out at Phantom Ranch.

TM: What do you remember about Garth?

LS: He was just big, like a river runner. I mean...

TM: You guys were about the same age?

LS: We were about the same age. I might have been a year or so younger than Garth. And so we got along real good.

TM: Did you guys sing at all?

LS: I don't sing.

All: (laughing)

TM: Did they sing?

LS: I imagine they did. I don't know of them carrying a guitar or anything down because of the river, you know. You don't have that much room in a boat to carry any extra things. Even though it would be on the river in short periods of the day, you would spend, like at noon, maybe 3 hours or so because you'd only be running the river 2-3 hours to the most in the morning and then in the evening.

TM: And you guys were going pretty fast downstream?

LS: In '57, we had 128,000 CFS going down. Trees and logs and debris. We would have to, at each rapid, sit there going upstream holding till we would be enough clearing of debris to where we could turn around and wouldn't catch up to it before we got through the rapid.

TM: So Larry, you just reminded me of something. I had heard a story of a scout at Lava Falls on that '57 trip and one of the boats decided to run the rapid without anybody on it. Do you remember that story?

LS: Run the boat? They went...?

TM: It wasn't tied up real well and you all were up at the scout and the boat decided to make a run on its own.

LS: Not of ours. But we do know that Beer was... He'd told everybody that he'd gone through with just his life jacket and hanging on to a tube. "No you didn't. Well, get in this boat and we'll go out there and you swim down with just your life jacket and one other life jacket", and he did.

TM: In '57?

LS: In '57 when he had the...

TM: On 126,000 CFS? Did he run Lava? What did he swim?

LS: He did swim on the left side of the big hole, but he almost went in the big hole.

TM: Well, you know, it almost doesn't count.

LS: But he missed the big hole.

TM: That's great.

LS: But he was showing us that "I did it before, I'll do it now."

TM: That's great, wow. There's a story about...I don't know if it was the Boo-Too...was one of the boats...Doc had his camera out on the boat, the hatches were open. The boat started off doing a pretty good run and then it flipped and they caught it down by Whitmore. Do you remember that at all?

LS: They was running the river, running the rapid. Joe Desloge who was on the trip with my dad and Doc Marston. He told my dad, "I want to run the boat." My dad told him, "Well I'll be sitting right behind you." 'Cause we had a seat set up right behind the pilot and he sat/the second person could ride behind him and a couple on the side. Joe says, "I'll go like you tell me." My dad kept telling him, "Go to the left." "Oh, you are taking this too serious Rod." Right through the middle, the big hole. The boat flipped and they didn't catch up to the boat till on down 'cause they had to run back, get in their boat, and...

TM: And go get it.

LS: ...go get 'em. Then pull them in and drain the water out and crank the motors over with the spark plugs out and take the carburetor apart 'cause it had water in it and put them back and fire 'em up and kept going.

TM: So, was there talk, after the dam then was constructed and the big flows then were stopped behind the dam, was there any talk about how the river had changed? Because you guys saw it at 120,000, I mean that's like big water.

LS: In '57 and in...

TM: '58 was big, too.

LS: ...'58 was two big years. '58, it came up and went down. They had a cold snap and the snow melt-off stopped and the river dropped fairly fast. So our high water was up and back on the trip. We was tied up one night to mesquite tree and in the morning the boats were floating instead of at the beach. We had to dive down to untie the boats from over 6 feet.

TM: From the tree, haha.

LS: The mesquite tree was 6 foot under water where we had it tied to.

TM: Wow. So I'm just trying to put this together. The high water of '57 and '58... Some of the river runners that were on the water at that time seemed to like running...50,000-60,000 seemed to be the ideal level.

LS: 60.. yeah.

TM: Why?

LS: That was about all that would come down the river.

TM: Why was the 50,000-60,000 CFS...why was that the golden flow? What made it better than 30,000 or better than 90,000? Why was that 60,000 flow so...?

LS: That was more of a average runoff. The San Juan had already had its runoff and the Colorado and the Green River runoff. So in the first of June or so you would be getting the runoff from the Green River and the Colorado together. They would trying and gage the boulder that's there ahead of at Lees Ferry. If water was going over it, Doc says we can go. If it showing, we've got to wait for the runoff to come.

TM: Wow. So you guys were waiting for high water.

LS: You could. We wanted to get it over 40,000.

TM: Why?

LS: That was Doc's goal.

TM: Was he worried about rocks?

LS: Rocks.

TM: Okay, and you're running propeller boats with hard hulls. That makes sense.

LS: Yes. So at over 30,000 you could run it without getting into rocky shore. 'Cause when Marston took the first power boat down through, they had to...my dad was on it with Marston and they had to use mesquite wood to make a rib in the boat. Cut a mesquite tree and made a rib to patch the boat that was his inboard.

TM: So in '51, was your dad and Jimmy Jorden, both in these two open...

LS: 16-foot.

TM: ...16-footers. Did your dad talk about how irritated he was when that boat crapped out way down there in the west end of the Canyon?

LS: He didn't talked too much about it except for you know they only had a 20-horsepower motor.

TM: They were kind of small.

LS: A single. So it was a small boat. On one of our trips with this, we had a 16-footer that my dad's...one of his younger brothers was on it with his son. They went through Lava, through the big hole, with the 16-foot we called the Kamikaze. Joe was thrown out. He went in the transom and the motor caught him and he was pinned to the back of the boat through the rapid. One of the films that Jerry had, I don't know if it showed the Kamikaze, but it was just thrown...the whole boat in the air coming out of the big hole.

TM: Wow.

LS: You know that hole, you could put a big house in it. Especially in '57 and '58. '58 it was a little lower when we got to it. But '57, in Havasu they went in and you couldn't get out. The water had come up and we couldn't get the boats out of the upper part.

TM: So what did you do?

LS: Waited there 3 days...

All: (laughing)

LS: ...till we could turn the boat a little bit on its side and the water went down to where we could get...

TM: Get it out.

LS: ...these boats down. But I spent 3 days in Havasu waiting for the water to go down.

TM: That was '58?

LS: '57.

TM: '57, okay. Wow. Okay, it's ten till one now. We've been at this almost 2 hours. I have a whole bunch of more questions for you. We haven't even gotten to 1959. We haven't talked about the dam and all the questions that Lisa has. So, you're here tomorrow?

LS: Yeah.

JS: In meetings.

TM: Well.

Lisa: But, he does have his whole family here as well, you got things planned?

KC: We kind of do, but we can work around part of it.

TM: I guess my question is, it'd be fun to keep going on this but, you know, we got to get something to eat and we gotta go to bathroom and things like that. We could visit again later today or tomorrow morning. How would you like to manage this?

LS: Today would be better.

JS: We're coming here to dinner tonight.

LS: Tonight?

KC: You're more than welcome to come. The whole family will be here, too.

TM: Well, what if we break for lunch and revisit this at 2 o'clock? What do you think?

LS: 2 o'clock would be fine.

TM: Does that sound good? Because I would like to ask you about '59. I would like to ask you a little bit more about what you remember about building the dam. Then about starting Sanderson, the river company, afterwards. What Jerry did with that. So, I have some more questions.

LS: Okay.

Lisa: And last year he went with a bunch of Sandersons and some of my family. I believe it was his 80th trip. Is that correct? 60th?

JS: It's was his 60th trip and he was 86.

Lisa: Okay, I'm sorry, got the numbers mixed up.

TM: Nice.

LS: Yeah, from my first trip to, I hope it wasn't my last one but it was in last summer, the longest period that anybody had been river running.

TM: Would you really hate me if I told you there's somebody else that's a little more than you? Would you be okay if I told you that?

LS: Who? Yeah I'd like to know.

TM: Dick Griffith. So the kids in 1951 that went were Johnny Schlump, Dick Griffith and his wife Isabelle, they started in Green River, Wyoming. They were heading to Lake Mead. They actually got a ride with you guys up to have dinner. Your hospitality was well known in '51. They had a great meal. These were young hungry kids and Dick Griffith just ran the river this year. He's been doing it every year for a long time. Since the 90s. He lives in Alaska and he's... So, you need to know there's one other person in front of you... just one.

LS: I didn't know that he had. My kids let me run every river rapid this last summer.

TM: That's great.

Lisa: They didn't have a choice did they?

LS: At 86 years.

TM: Good for you. So Dick's down there, he's rowing a boat.

LS: How old was he?

TM: I think he's 88. I'll have to look, I'd have to figure out the math. I'll figure it out, I'll let you know.

LS: When he made his last trip?

TM: He lives in Anchorage.

Lisa: Katie's from Alaska.

TM: Yeah, he lives in Anchorage. Dick Griffith, he's also known, excuse me, as Black-Ass Griffith.

Kate: Oh, I'll be looking him up.

TM: Yes, absolutely, just because of frostbite.

Lisa: Where do you come from, Homer?

Kate: South of Anchorage in Kenai, Nikiski, but I lived in Anchorage when I first moved there.

TM: Nice. Kaylene Johnson, a book just came out called Fire and the Ice about that 1951 river trip and then they went down and run the Copper Canyon. But I digress... So there's one other gentlemen, both of you need to meet each other and chat. That'll be fun. So what if we break for lunch and come back at 2:00?

LS: Okay, I was hoping that this last trip wouldn't be my last one.

JS: Oh, I am sure it won't be.

LS: The worst part about it is I have macular degeneration and this eyesight is gone.

TM: Do you know that Doc had the same problem?

LS: Did he?

TM: Yeah, and at the last trips that he did, he would think he was sitting down but he'd be sitting on a pot of soup. He'd think that it was a chair 'cause he couldn't see well enough.

LS: I was hiking up where I shouldn't have been and fell 20-some feet down on the streambed boulders at Fern Glen. Busted my rib, knocked my sternum out and had hit the side of my head, busted my ankle, and...

Lisa: He still went on.

LS: ...I went on down. The kids wanted to chopper me out and I, "No, no, I just got a sprained ankle and my rib is just a bruise..."

TM: So hopefully the kids learned a good lesson which was to stay a little closer to dad and don't let him fall. You gotta get these kids in line now.

LS: I took them up two times to show 'em where I fell from.

TM: Oh, oh. There's no reason why you can't run a river again. Next year is coming along.

LS: If you get a permit.

TM: Yeah, that is the problem. That is the little problem.

LS: That's the big problem.

TM: Well, let's just do some outreach and see if we can make it happen. See if we can find somebody that has a permit that would want to get you all in there.

JS: Hahaha.

TM: Why not, 'cause there's history here we are talking about.

LS: I'd go along with that.

TM: All right then.

KC: Do you have any idea how they used to get across the Canyon before the dam and the bridge?

TM: No, but this is what we wanna...

KC: I can't tell you how many spankings I got for running out there at 4½/5 years old and we'd get that bridge just to swing and have adults drop down to their knees.

TM: Hahaha.