

Transcription: Grand Canyon Historical Society Oral History

Interviewee(s): Richard Hanson (RH)

Interviewer: Tom Martin (TM)

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TM: Today is Tuesday, October 13, 2020. This is Part 3 of a Grand Canyon Oral History Interview with Richard Hanson. My name is Tom Martin and, good morning, Richard. How are you today?

RH: Good morning. Doing good.

TM: Good. May we have your permission to record this oral history over the telephone?

RH: Yes.

TM: Thank you. We'd wrapped up the last interview in 1970, '71, '72 time period where you're going between the Bay area and Mexico with a wonderful woman named Catherine, and I looked up the Stoneman Meadows Riots in Yosemite that happened on the 4th of July over a series of a couple days in 1970. Do you remember that? Were you there and do you remember what happened?

RH: Yeah, I do remember that. Initially I thought it was a year or so later. Well, what I remember about it is that whole year was, I think People's Park was in '69 and I was very active there. And Stoneman, I probably returned to the Yosemite/San Francisco area, my normal pattern would have been getting back to the States around April, April or May, and I told you about the Snow Creek Cabin, right? With the Curry Company?

TM: Yeah.

RH: And so I'd make that as kind of my base, and I remember being down in the Valley, oh, shoot, probably for four or five days preceding the riots. And to me, it was just another example

of law and order. It seemed like the Meadow was clean, it seemed like people were taking care of it, and it seemed just like people wanted to have some fun, that they weren't really doing any harm to the Valley. And then I remember they put a, I think it was like a day or two before the horses rode in, they put a curfew on people going into the Meadow, had to be out at a, kind of an unrealistic time of day. And I don't think anybody there, just like at People's Park, nobody there was looking to start a fight, you know, the same similarities as People's Park is, man, this is just a bunch of hippies out here wanting to, you know, to put a garden in, an abandoned friggin' lot. And, you know, the authorities, the cops, the, Ronald Reagan was governor, Nixon was president, and they weren't having any of that. And so just like People's Park they just had to show their power and their, and they had to do it with force, and I guess, I've never read the history of it but I think the Park, there wasn't just Park rangers. They had brought in U.S. Marshals, they had brought in county sheriffs, they had brought in, just like they do today for Black Lives Matter, they just bring a whole bunch of people in a charge, you know. And so I remember, I don't remember the exact time but I remember seeing the horses and remember maybe, I don't know how, three, four, five hundred people in the Meadow. You would know better than I. And I kind of realized what exactly was gonna happen and when they started coming in I kind of backed out. I wasn't ready for a fight in a place that had given me so much comfort. And if I had been in Berkeley or Santa Barbara or Oakland and they were rolling in on horses, well, you know, I would have, I would have been on the front lines, but I remember when it first started and I could see the panic I kind of slipped into some trees and I started the hike back up to Snow Creek Cabin. And so the details of the two, three, four hours of violence and all the arrests and all of that I don't have. What I do have is, like I say, the feeling that, man, this is, this is fucked, you know, this place, man, I love this place and it's turning into something just like you would find in Berkeley. And then I stayed up at the cabin for two or three days, didn't go back into the Valley, and I hiked up to Tiago Road and I think they had closed the whole park down cause it was, there was absolutely no traffic, there was nothing going on. So, you know, I was relying on hitchhiking and I was gonna head back, I was gonna head back to the city for a few days, and there was no traffic, there was no nothing so I dropped back into the cabin, stayed there for a couple or three days and pretty much the same thing when I walked out to the Valley. I think they were still shut down and I got hassled a little bit and I just said "No, shoot, man, no, I was in the back country for the last week," you know, and

TM: Umm hmm. This is true. That's what you were doing.

RH: Yeah, that's what I was doing. So it was just another, it was just another, I don't know how to say it, it was, it was, well, it was a wakening for me. Like I say, it was happening in a place that I loved and that had brought me calmness and peace and so it really disappointed me. But, guy, I could have sworn it was '71 or '72 but it makes sense now as far as my timeline, when I went to Idaho and all of that.

TM: Okay. So the superintendent at the time was a man named Leslie Arnberger, and his son Rob Arnberger would become superintendent at Grand Canyon National Park a couple of decades later. Did you ever meet Leslie Arnberger?

RH: No, I never did. The guy that was there when I first moved to Grand Canyon was Bruce Shaw, and he had been assistant superintendent. I think Arnberger had moved, I think he had been the superintendent. Bruce was the assistant, but Bruce was acting as superintendent when I was there. Now, was Dick Marks the chief ranger at Yosemite at that time?

TM: Yes.

RH: Okay, he was the chief ranger. That's what I thought.

TM: Did you ever have any words with Dick Marks later when he was superintendent at Grand Canyon about the event or did that topic never come up between you two?

RH: Really never came up where we talked about it but I think we each knew that the other was there and on opposing sides and he, yeah, he was a piece of work. He reminded me of my father.

TM: Oh, okay. Well, when we get you to Grand Canyon and Superintendent Marks is there I'll ask you for Superintendent Marks stories.

RH: Okay. (laughs) I got one or two.

TM: So it sounds like you were lucky to be able to size up that situation and then retreat back to your sanctuary.

RH: Yeah, I was. You know, I just, like I say, I just could not imagine myself fighting and rioting in a place like that, you know, from going to, you know, beating on a congo drum and having a little smoke and being real mellow to all of a sudden a cavalry charge just didn't feel right.

TM: Yeah. So moving forward then, '71, '72, you mentioned Idaho. Did that kind of get you out of your cycle of going to Mexico in the winter and in the Bay area in the summer up in Yosemite country?

RH: Yeah, and I'd have to, have to get the dates exact, right. What really moved me out of my cycle of Yosemite, and it was probably '72 or '73, was another incident that happened in the Valley. It was, and if I could google, man, I'd, well, I can google but I don't know how to put the key words in there cause I'd like to get the timeframe within a year, but so '70, yeah, more than likely I pulled out again around mid-October, November and went to the city and then headed down to, I'd expanded from Mexico into Central America and South America, and then I, you know, something about the tropics down there they really reminded me of Nam, and you look at a map, you know, you kind of draw a straight line and from where I was at you'd be down like in Nicaragua and such from Viet Nam to Nicaragua. And I would have come back probably in April. You know, I'd have the call of the mountains hit me in the springtime. I'd stop in San Diego and see my brother for a little bit and then just head back and get back into the same old

routine, which was music, demonstration, and Yosemite. And I was getting better. I mean, I was, every, every year I was getting better and I was getting more comfortable with myself. I was getting more comfortable around people. I was still going down to the corral every time I was in the Valley, still going down to the corral and feeding sugar cubes to mules.

TM: Had your relationship with Sweet Pea grown in any way or was it, or any of the other packers there?

RH: No. Yeah. No, a lot of times there'd be nobody there. I'd just go, just go and a few of them knew me, they knew they were gonna get sugar, when they saw me four or five of them would walk over. But I think, and here's how I left Yosemite, and I think it's 1973, '72 or '73, cause I'm at the cabin with Catherine and one other person and it's probably October, and one evening, first time in the three or four years I'd been kind of hanging out up there, one evening we hear a voice and it sounds like they're calling for help. So we go out and we hear this male voice, he's not far away, so we find him. He was only probably two hundred yards from the cabin, and he's a day hiker and he was basically lost. That's the first time anybody that we hadn't taken down there had showed up. So immediately I was kind of going, oh, fuck, you know. So we take him inside and feed him and do all of this and he seems real nervous and the next morning I said "I'm gonna take you down to a trail and I'm gonna point you the way to the Valley," and through talking and stuff found out that he was an employee at Curry Village and he was just out for a day hike and he was supposed to be to work and he was gonna be in all kinds of frickin' trouble and I said "Well, you know, I'll take you down to a trail but I'm gonna put a," I put a t-shirt over his head cause I didn't want him to be able to find his way back. And it was about a half a mile to Snow Creek Trail. I take him down there and I pointed downhill and I said "About five and a half miles you'll be back in the Valley." Next day, you know, just went about our business. The next morning at probably 5:30, 6:00 in the morning, just daylight, we hear helicopters. And going "What the fuck," and there was this point about, oh, a quarter mile from the cabin that just opened up, just beautiful granite with the most spectacular view of Half Dome in the Valley, and we're still asleep and stuff and hear these, hear these helicopters and about five minutes, ten minutes after hearing the helicopters we hear voices, and I come walking down the stairs and the door flies open and there's a guy in Eddie Bauer, just dressed to the hilt, and he's got a gun pointed at me. And I raised my hands and I said "John Muir, not Jerry Rubin," and he said "Get down here," and then five or six other guys were in the door, and they, they told by this guy that was lost, he'd went into the Park offices and said he was damn sure Patty Hearst and the Weather people were camped out up at this cabin.

TM: Oh, this was the time of

RH: The Weathermen, the Weather people. And there was a Park Service guy there, and there was five FBI guys there and two Park Service and, and they knew within two minutes that, you know, they had the wrong information. So we made coffee and the Park Service guy came over, you know, and said "Well, how long you been here," and I don't know his name or anything. I said "Well, off and on for three years or so, three and a half years," and he just kind of shook his head. Then I showed him all the improvements we'd done on the cabin, you know,

how we packed in all these shakes and we dug out this spring here and he just says "Well, you know, you can't stay here." And, you know, kind of brought, it was a bad moment for me but it was just the start of another yellow brick road. And they said "You don't have to go right now but, you know, maybe we could sign you up as a volunteer or something and you could stay there and," hey, I'm just gonna yell at my wife, she's getting, a friend just came up to take her to physical therapy.

TM: You know, I just wanted to step in and say it's just really awesome, you know, thinking about the Stoneman Meadows actions and then just a few years later to discover, you know, a cabin in the middle of the Park and not to sort of, you know, handcuff all you people and say "Don't ever show back up again," for the Agency to say "Hey, you know, you want to be a volunteer, do you want to, you know, keep your connection to this place," I was just like wow. That's great. I can appreciate it would have been work but the, the offer, the olive branch offer.

RH: Yeah, I agree. I thought at the time it didn't, you know, register to me as a real nice gesture but, no, I agree. I thought back on that and, you know, I agree. So I think I spent four or five days more there and then headed out to, I'm sure this was in the fall, and headed back out to San Francisco and made my, I think that year basically was the first time I ever came to the Big Islands. Instead of going to Central America, Catherine and I said "Well, let's go to Hawaii," and so we came over here. It was one of our last trips together. We came over here and spent like five or six months and, you know, grew a patch and went back to the Mainland. And when we got back from here that's the spring that I went to Idaho. You know, I'm thinking that's 1973 or it would have been '74, '73, '74, I'm sorry, man.

TM: Yeah. No, that's cool, that's good enough.

RH: And I just, I just don't have the memory anymore, and now I gotta call, now I gotta call my dog real quick.

TM: Okay.

RH: So, yeah, I had, I had picked up a hitchhiker, a guy by the name of Kent Stokes, where you from and all that stuff you do, and he was the first one that ever told me about Idaho, a place called McCall, Idaho. It's just spectacular.

TM: Hey, Richard, excuse me for a minute for jumping in, before we move to Idaho, did you ever go back to that cabin? Did you ever check in with the Park Service? Did they, did they incorporate that place? What did they do with it, do you know?

RH: You know, I talked to some people that had been there and I think at one time they made it a, what it was made for, for Curry they opened it up, they had a volunteer there and it was for people that were doing multiday cross country skiing and such. And that's what I think is that they, they stopped and, you know, I'm not sure but

TM: I might look that up a little bit. It'd be interesting to know, to see if they incorporated it or let it go back to ground again. Interesting.

RH: Yeah, I think maybe in these days it probably, I'm not sure. No, I never did go back there. I just, I never really did want to go back. This is an exception here.

TM: No, no worries. I just kind of wanted to tie that up and see, see how that headed out. So in the spring of '74 maybe, roughly, you ended up driving up to McCall, Idaho?

RH: I ended up hitchhiking to McCall, Idaho.

TM: Hitchhiking? Okay.

RH: Yeah. And, yeah, what a place. What an incredible place.

TM: What was it like? I've never been there.

RH: It was a real small town on a, on Payette Lake, and it was just absolutely spectacular, especially in the mid to early '70s. A small town, maybe 2,000 people, surrounded on all sides by what would become after the Wilderness Act was passed the Frank Church Wilderness of No Return, I mean, just, it was, it was unbelievable and

TM: This was Salmon River country.

RH: Umm hmm. Yep, it's, it would be just kind of south of Riggins. It was just beautiful. And the first year there, you know, I was doing odd jobs a little bit and doing same thing I did in Yosemite, you know, selling a little weed and just, you know, just trying to get by, and lived down on the river in a teepee with, there was about six or seven of us. I was the first Californian in there for, that anybody remembered. Yeah, some of the other guys were, you know, from Boise and came up and we met a guy that, Burt Walker, mortician, had a nice piece of ground right on the Payette River just about a mile from town. He was just super. He said "Yeah, you guys can set up a little camp down there, do whatever you want" and, you know, yada, yada, so that was home in Idaho for the first couple of years. But that first year I did, I did my basic thing again is get out of there in November, October, November, and go down south. That was still a comfort zone. I would, when I was going through the Bay area, call my mother, see if I could pop in there for a visit and she'd tell me "Yeah, your dad'll be working swing shift so 4:00 would be a good time." I'd go have lunch and hugs and then I'd get out of there before the old man got off work and then go over and stay in the city and then head down to, head down south.

TM: Central America area?

RH: Yeah. Yeah. Another thing you could research is, the date, I know it was Christmas Eve, I'm not sure what year, the big earthquake in Managua, cause I was there for that and I was about seven or eight miles out of town on, I think it was called Lake Nicaragua, the epicenter

was. And I spent Christmas, Christmas Eve there and scored a little weed and was traveling with some guys that picked me up hitchhiking from Canada and we drove out of town because somebody told me, you know, "Don't get caught with this around here." Somoza was the dictator at the time and so anyway, Cliff Notes have nothing to do with the Grand Canyon. We could find, find the year of that. And I came back into town the next morning, Managua, and there was just, and we felt the quake. It was at nighttime, late at night, and there was just all these refugees and there was just people pouring around and going "What the fuck?" And, yeah, Managua was just rubble, and I still had all my medical skills so I ended up staying there for probably three to four weeks volunteering, you know, just couldn't stand it any, couldn't handle any more. You know, it's another story cause it's a story of Somoza and dictators and nothing getting to the people and all this aid coming in and you'd have to buy it on the black market and nothing coming to any of the shelters, any of the relief agencies, any of that kind of shit. It was just absolutely incredible. You know, it was the first time I ever heard the word Sandinista and when I left there I headed down to Costa Rica and then Panama and so anyway, yeah, whatever year that was and I was, looked up, that might have been the first winter after I'd gone to Idaho. I'm not sure. I'm sorry about being so vague on dates and times.

TM: I couldn't do any better, Richard, if you ask me about what went down in the 1970's I'd look at you with a big blank state and go "Yeah?"

RH: (laughs) Yeah, I know.

TM: But that's good. You got Managua earthquake and Christmas Eve. We can, we'll get that timestamp. That'll be easy, yeah.

RH: So then, you know, I didn't even stop in Yosemite my next trip up to the mainland. I went straight back to Idaho and I was just kind of drifting and I got a, one friend from Viet Nam that, you know, we'd talk every couple or three weeks when, on the phone, and he says "Why don't you come up to Central City, Colorado." He says "My brothers and I have a business here." He says "We can get you a job." I said "Well, fuck, you know, yeah, sounds good to spend a few months back there." So I go to, again hitchhiking, to Central City, Blackhawk, Colorado, which is kind of in between Boulder and Denver. And these three brothers and a sister and her husband had started this packing business. They had horses and mules. They had, yeah, and they had a little gun store. They had, I bet they had 30, 35 head. I don't know how deep I can go into this but anyway I'll give you the Cliff Notes.

TM: Yeah, please.

RH: It was a front for a pretty good sized pot business. They would take the mules and this, this was what I got trained to do, this is where I learned how to friggin' pack a mule and ride a horse is we would have these Cessnas, sometimes two or three, fly over the mountains where there is no roads and such, and that whole area was just old mines, old mines, and they would kick loose hundreds of pounds of marijuana, and then our job was to pack them up, take them to a mine shaft and sit guard on them until somebody from Boston brought their U-haul trailer or a

big U-Haul truck and then we would pack them up again, meet them at a back road where however many miles that was, load their trucks, take the mules back into Central City, run a few friggin' tourist deals until the next load, which could have been anywhere from two weeks to a month away where we would go through the whole shebang again. And I lived with them in their house. Michael and I were tight. He was also a medic and it was, it was a very unique, wonderfully loving family. They were out of Orlando, Florida to begin with and had moved to Colorado four or five years earlier and had started this business, and I was paid. I started at a hundred dollars a day and by the time I left which, again, I left because of a little trouble, I was making three hundred dollars a day, and that was big money.

TM: It was way big money.

RH: It was big money. And so that's how I learned to pack a mule, and that's how I learned to tie a knot, and that's how

TM: Nice. Did you ever, without going into too much detail, did you ever like, you know, have a load like swing around to the, like swing off the back of the mule around to its tummy and, you know, have to sort that out as the mule's kind of hopping around? I mean,

RH: Oh, yeah, yeah.

TM: I would assume you would have learned by some trial and error experience with some difficulties involved how not to get your foot stepped on and bit and, you know, how to take care of the animals.

RH: Yep. Yeah. No, everything you said was, you know, exactly right. You know, you tie a load on and then you want to tie it on right the first time, and I learned how to throw a diamond hitch, I learned how to throw a barrel hitch, I learned how to manny the stuff up. I, yeah, I knew how to pack awkward loads and it was, it was a wonderful on-the-job training that would last me for the next 30 years. I was saying early on, you know, about the yellow brick road and just followed the path, you know, and I don't regret, I know it's against the law, but I don't regret any of it cause I just followed what was laid there. I made a phone call, the guys said he's got a job for me in Central City, you know. So great. And that job turned into a career with the National Park Service. And as I say, I look at the seven or eight years after I left Yosemite to the time I got to Grand Canyon, it just amazes me to this day, you know, still amazes me.

TM: Yeah, yeah. I mean, just like how fortuitous, rough terrain, large animals, packing OJT right there.

RH: Right there. That was it. From feeding them sugar cubes for a few years, talking to them. I always, always talked to mules. They love to be talked to. They pick their ears up and they move them around, they look you in the eye, you know. But, yeah, from feeding them sugar cubes to packing 200 pounds of weed a mule. Jerry Garcia said "What a long strange trip it's been."

TM: (laughs) Yeah. And so you were able to, so you were able to kind of leave the job without, you know, burning any bridges with those folks and

RH: Yeah, yeah. I was. The Cliff Notes, or the deal was that there was a little trouble. I think probably about third or fourth month that I was there, and I was able to zip out, and I had, I had, I don't know, probably five or six grand, more money that I'd fucking had ever. And I went back to Idaho and that's when I bought my first animals, my own animals. I bought three, two mules, er, two horses and a mule. And the high country around McCall area was, it was still snowy, so this is springtime, still kind of snow on the ground, and had a friend trailer my animals down to the Salmon River. And I'd been in jail a couple times and I wasn't real sure how all that shit in Colorado was playing out so he dropped me at a place called Wind River. It's about, it was about 25 miles from Riggins up a, at that time the Salmon River Road to, you know, gravelly, dirt track, and I went across that pack bridge, Wind River Pack Bridge, and I set up a little camp cause I had been in jail before and I told myself, you know, if you can't do the time you shouldn't do the crime, but I had broken the law and I, you know, could have, so I just didn't want to be anywhere anybody could find me. I had these old, my own animals, man, you know, I dropped off there with a bunch of beans and a bunch of pot and some feed, some cob, and spent a couple, three days right on a nice little sandbar on the Salmon River.

TM: Nice. And this is upstream from the end of the road? That trail goes all the way up to Salmon City, doesn't it? I mean, for a long ways.

RH: The road itself takes off right at Riggins and dead ends at a place called Vinegar Creek, and that's where now the rafters and stuff take out either at French Creek or, or Cherry Creek, I mean, or Vinegar Creek.

TM: It's a huge, huge country out there, the Frank Church.

RH: Oh, un-fuckin'-believable, bruh. Unbelievable. It's absolutely beautiful.

TM: That's a good place to hide out.

RH: Yeah. So I was planning just a long pack trip and I was getting used to my animals and they were getting used to me, and the first little trip I took after two or three days of camping down on the river was up the Wind River, and three and a half miles up the Wind River I find this abandoned cabin, exactly like fuckin' Snow Creek. I mean, the cabin wasn't but here I am again, man, I see this fuckin' abandoned cabin. I went back down, I got my camp, I moved up, camped in this meadow, had Meadow Creek on the back and Wind River running by us and this old hand-hewn log cabin. I mean, just absolute beautiful. So I camped up there for a few days waiting for snow to melt and all this other shit and didn't see anybody. Then I took a trip, it melted and still some snow on the trail, but I took a trip, saddled up and went three days to a place called the Shepp Ranch. It was along the river. You had to either fly in to it or that one you could jet boat, or you would, you know, stop there if you were on a river trip going downriver.

And I met some people there. Guy by the name of Cort Conley, who wrote some of the best books on the Salmon River. And he says "Well, where are you coming from?" I said, "Well, I found this little friggin' cabin, you know, just three and a half miles from the Pack Bridge." And he says "Oh, the McMeekin Place." I said "I don't know. McMeekin? I saw a grave down there on the river says Neil McMeekin," and he says "Yeah, it's the old McMeekin Ranch. It's probably the only private holdings in this neck of the woods or in that area," and shit. So I went back and I spent a couple days at the Shepp Ranch. They were just gearing up and I actually did a little work and got paid a little bit, and then they asked me if I wanted to help run their mules that they wintered in Grangeville. He says "We come in through the McMeekin and we run them down here. We like to have two or three people." They probably had 30, 35 head. And I said "Sure," and they said "Well, it's gonna be in about two weeks and we'll just see you there at your camp." So during that timeframe I went from, a friend from McCall I think came and picked me up and I went from, drove up to Grangeville, which was the county seat, and I found the owner and stuff of that property.

TM: Of the McMeekin place?

RH: Of the McMeekin Ranch, yeah. It was owned by a doctor in Portland by the name of Jack Bell. So I made contact with him and I told him, I said "I just been camping in your place there and would you be willing to let me stay there in exchange for some work? I got a little bit of experience doing work on remote cabins." And we reached a deal, and he was a super guy, and the only time I met him he came out after about, I was there about six months or something he came out and I packed him up there. But anyway so that place turned into home. It was absolutely unbelievable place, and I did a lot of work there, and I'd worked for the river guys now and again. I, so Catherine and I, we had split up not the year before but when I went to Central City she went back to San Francisco and then she came back up for a few days and I turned into a meat eater and we just, well, she says "I'm gonna go this direction, I'm gonna make jewelry and move to Maui." And I said "Well, I'm gonna go up to this, ride my mules." So I'll finish this off here cause that's gonna get me pretty close to the friggin' Grand Canyon and, again, I apologize.

TM: Why? No need to.

RH: So I'd been there for probably a year, year and a half and just hadn't left to head down south or anything. I had kids now, you know, I had animals, I had mules.

TM: Yeah, you had a responsibility.

RH: Responsibilities, and I was living like an old trapper or something, you know. One of the best books I ever read was called "Give your Heart to the Hawks," and it was about the old mountain men, Jim Bridger and friggin', you know, all the guys and it was just like, wow. And I was to a point living that life, you know. I mean, I was killing things to eat, butchering them out and fishing. Never did any trapping. I just thought that was inhumane. I was fixing up the cabin. I had all, you know, I had all kind of shit to do. And friends from McCall would come down now

and again and, you know, we would, it was just a wonderful place. And I heard about a party that was gonna happen in a place called Burgdorf Hot Springs and road miles from McCall it was probably 30 miles from where I was staying. By trail it was about probably 20 miles, 22 miles.

TM: Couple day ride.

RH: Yeah, it was a good ride. It took me two days. So I rode up there and it was a party where, again, just changed my life into the fact that I met this lady and we hit it off, and she had a two-year old daughter. And so we, you know, I stayed up at Burgdorf for a few days and Lisa, the, and her daughter Heather, were staying in a little place in McCall. I went down there for a day or two. I just absolutely fell in love with the two-year old. You know, I mean, her mother was a trip but here's this two-and-a half year old, and my mules had been up at Burgdorf in a big pasture around there and I knew the owner He gave me a ride up there. I saddled up and we said how about next week you guys come down to Salmon River and I'll grab you at the Wind River," and they said that would be great. And the rest is just kind history as we say. Heather, who's my daughter, we've lasted 47 years. The mother and I lasted maybe three. And it definitely just changed my whole way of thinking and we were up there together for two years. I would put Heather in a pannier and then I'd counterbalance the other side and ride her up the trail.

TM: That's some serious packing there. You wouldn't mess up with that kind of load.

RH: Nope. And it was a rugged trail, a couple of fjords and this but, you know, I had spent by that time I had spent between Central City and my own animals, you know, riding rough, you know, I'd spent hundreds of miles in the saddle already and so they, basically they moved in with me and it lasted until we both started thinking, oh, she's gonna have to go to school and such, and we decided we'd head back to McCall. I still had the lease on the place, the McMeekin. So we moved back to McCall. The first season back there I got a job for the city of McCall, village of McCall, just doing odds and ends labor stuff, and then I saw an announcement for the Forest Service that they wanted, they were looking for a trail crew and animal packers. And that was, that was my in. I got a seasonal job packing out of the McCall District of the Payette National Forest and the first year was just like packing fire lookouts, picking up smoke jumpers' gear after they'd jumped a fire, you know, busy, always busy, remote, you know, long trails, and I was good at it and just absolutely in love with it.

TM: Nice. And this is 1977-ish, '78-ish?

RH: Yeah. Probably that's right, '76, '77. I could ask Heather when we met but, yeah, yeah. That's the timeframe. And the second year with them, with the Forest Service

TM: Hey, Richard?

RH: Yeah.

TM: We've been going at it now about an hour and maybe it's a good time, cause I would like to spend a little more time with your packing experience working for the McCall district folks on the Payette there, and I don't want to rush through that, if you're okay with that.

RH: No, that's fine.

TM: All right.

RH: That'd be fine.

TM: Well, we wrap up this Part 3 Grand Canyon Oral History Interview with Richard Hanson. Today is Tuesday, October 13th, 2020. My name is Tom Martin and, Richard, thank you so very much.

RH: Yeah, thank you. Yeah, an hour's plenty, bro.