

Transcription: Grand Canyon Historical Society Oral History

Interviewee: Richard Hanson (RH)

Interviewer: Tom Martin (TM)

Subject: Richard recounts his time as trail foreman at Grand Canyon National Park starting in 1980

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TM: Today is Tuesday, October 20th, 2020. This is Part 5 of a Grand Canyon Oral History interview with Richard Hanson. My name is Tom Martin. Good morning, Richard, how are you today?

RH: I'm doing well, thank you.

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

RH: Yes.

TM: Thank you. Last time we left off you had sold your horses and said your goodbyes to your friends in McCall, Idaho and in the spring of 1980 headed to Grand Canyon National Park to take the trail foreman job.

RH: Yup.

TM: Where do you want to start? What was the trip down there like and then who did you meet when you showed up?

RH: Well, the trip down there was, you know, Idaho to Grand Canyon. You go through the Great Basin, the High Desert, Nevada, Elko. It was a beautiful trip. I showed up and my direct supervisor, by the name of Adrian Hatfield, who was really quite a guy, got me hooked up with housing and such, and then I started work.

TM: What do you remember about Adrian?

RH: Adrian was a good old boy. He was from back in West Virginia, the South area. Had worked for the Park Service for a long time. I think he had been at Grand Canyon about three years when he selected me for the trails job. He had been in Glacier before that. A really, really a nice guy. Mostly a hands off kind of guy once he trusted you and knew you. So, yeah, I mean, what I basically remember of the first five or six months is that I was over my head. In McCall, I think I told you, man, I was feeling pretty much at peace and healing. I had a couple people working for me on the trail crew and I was just packing. I got there and it turned out that there was a lot more to the job that I didn't have really any experience in.

TM: Like what?

RH: Well, on the Payette I didn't have any input into budget items. I didn't track the budget. I didn't have to balance the budget. I basically showed up and I saddled up and I rode off, and I came back five/six/seven days later. This was much different than that. Like I say the first six months was like, "Am I gonna do this, am I gonna be able to do this?" I had a...well, this is gonna be transcribed...I had a crew. Here we are at one of the crown jewels and I think I had a five-person crew, and they were all elderly. A couple of them couldn't even go down into the canyon anymore. One of my new employees was in jail when I got there and I wouldn't meet him for about two months. I was new to the desert. It was a big job. I had to just learn by trial and error. I had no idea, and I did do it by trial and error. I made a lot of mistakes. I didn't get out in the field near as much as I had. I would hike trails on my day off just to get familiar with them. And 99.9% of our work, although there's, you know, shoot, 390 miles of trail or more than that in the Grand Canyon, 99.9 is that we never made it. It was the Bright Angel, it was Panorama Point, it was Phantom Ranch, it was South Kaibab and then North Kaibab, you know, about 40-some-odd miles worth of trails that were... And even at that time the Babbitt mules were running. I'd be interested to find what the visitation was in Grand Canyon in 1980, but I bet it was...it had to have been over a million.

TM: Oh, maybe a couple million. Maybe even..., yeah.

RH: Yeah. 1980, yeah, I'm not sure. All I know is that it was a hell of a lot more than the Payette National Forest where you could disappear and not see anybody.

TM: Yeah. So now suddenly you're dealing with not only budgets but you've got people on the trail you're trying to work.

RH: Yeah.

TM: You're dealing with packing and people on the trail. That's gotta be way different, cause these are busy trails with lots of people hiking here and there.

RH: Yeah, yeah, exactly. You know, we had to supply Phantom Ranch, the ranger station, and do all that stuff with our pack string. I did have a packer that had been there a few years, a guy by the name of Dave Smith, that knew his job and liked to work me a little bit. But all in all, he was decent and he got what he was supposed to do done. And I had a guy by the name of Fred Carter, Jr. that couldn't go in the canyon. I mean, he was old and he was big. Then Pete Howard was the guy who I didn't know, that was in jail. Another guy by the name of Sam Clevenger, and that was it. So I started augmenting, or whatever you call it. I brought on some YCCs, and then I had...

TM: That's the Youth Conservation Corps?

RH: Yeah.

TM: So they're people that sign up to help do trail work, is that right?

RH: Yeah, trail, any kind of stuff, just kind of get their foot in the door. I screened them pretty well. Actually three or four of them that I'd hired went on to careers in the Park Service. A couple of them really making some giant strides, good strides there.

TM: Cool. But that's gotta be difficult. I mean, you'd applied to be just trail crew and now you're the foreman, which means you have to do the hiring and you've got a crew that it sounds like really doesn't work. I mean, you can barely, it sounds like with two people who can pack, one guy's in jail, two people who don't go over the edge, you've gotta have a hard time just getting Phantom Ranch supplied.

RH: Yep. That's what I say. It was a difficult... Adrian was really good. I think it was six or eight months where I just had to tell him, I said, "You know, this isn't working, man. We need to reassign Fred and Sam." I said, "They're just really holding us up." The problem there is if we reassign them, then their position and the money goes with them. But we both decided that something had to be done. So I worked pretty much with the YCC crew. And then I started working on increasing the budget, writing memorandums, and condition assessments, and all the stuff that... I mean, we could barely even keep the friggin' piss spots f***** cleaned up, you know, where every mule f***** stopped in the same place on the Bright Angel and it just reeks for half a mile.

TM: Yeah, the Fred Harvey crew would take their dudes down and stop at, I don't know, cinch up and, you know, some of the other places at the same place, and the mules had that figured out so they would take a piss there.

RH: Yeah. If one of them had to piss on the trail then every one of them had to piss, you know.

TM: And tons of mule traffic every day, which is hard on the trails.

RH: Yeah. Very hard, very hard. And they had developed... Well, there wasn't much of a relationship with Resource Management, which surprised me. But the archeologist, a lady by the name of Jan Balsom, helped me out a lot as far as...

TM: How so? What do you remember about Jan?

RH: I remember that she taught me a lot about the history, the first people history in the Canyon. She taught me about sensitivity of where we get materials and why that's so important. Then together we developed a couple of strategic spots where we could have our dirt pits, going into the side of the friggin' mountain anywhere you're at and loading up tons of dirt. I remember doing a couple river trips with her. I think that's what saved me there was I think I would have been there...I got there in April...nine or ten months when I went down the river for the first time. The chief of Resource Management was a guy by the name of Larry May. Really a fine guy, Viet Nam veteran. Him and I and Marv Jensen were hiking in to Phantom and we were gonna catch the boats at Phantom the next day. I remember talking to Larry. One of his arms, it's kind of like John McCain, one of his arms, he didn't lose it but it was all messed up. You can just kind of look in a guy's eye and see where he's been, you know. We just started talking a little bit about Viet Nam. He asked me what I had done and who I was attached to. I said, "Well, I was a medic." He just stood up, and he walked over, and he gave me a great big hug, and he said, "I love medics." So I got along great with him and, you know, he was up there in the food chain. He really helped the few years there with helping to get a budget together, get a crew together. We decided on that trip where we stopped at like Deer Creek, all the heavy duty, you know, all the spots.

TM: Yeah. Tapeats Creek, Deer Creek, Elves Chasm, Stone...

RH: Matcat.

TM: Matcat, yep, Stone-Galloway.

RH: The trails and the resource, the multiple trails and just the... It was like a free for all a lot of those places. You know, multiple trails going the same place, switch-back cutting. It's a pretty fragile environment. We decided to try to get some trails trips where we would just take trail guides. River Unit would supply the boats and the boatmen and Resource would kick in. So we started that the next spring and that just added a whole new element to my love of the Canyon and my... Basically after the first trip I couldn't wait to go down again and my attitude just about, yeah, I can do this. 'Cause another time, you know, was another one of those deals where you spend a couple weeks in the wilderness and you just come out reborn. 'Cause I was. The first six/seven months, man, it was like f***. Then I got a taste of the river, a taste of what the Grand Canyon really is. It's just not the South Rim. Went from there. Ended up having just a... I did good there. The Park Service at that time, if you say, "What was the Park Service like in the early 80s" you'd just have to say White male, especially in any type of management roles. I made it a point to... By the time I left I had Hopi, Apache, Supai, Navajo, all working, all working for me. I'd been told by, well, even Adrian and the chief of maintenance, Ed Klampe, you can't put Hopis and Navajo on the same crew. I'm going, well, sure you can. So I did good there. I had a very diverse crew, very talented. I learned a lot from... Hopis are incredible rock builders, wall builders. They just, you know, genetically I guess it's just like right there. Navajos were incredible with the stock. It was really cool. I'm kind of an outgoing/ingoining guy. I don't talk much. This is as long as I've talked in years. But, you know, then started meeting some people that I would know and have contact with the rest of my life. So, yeah, it was good. We did a major overhaul of the rim trails. Then I think it was 1981 where one of the biggest floods ever in the Canyon came through and wiped out about four miles of the BA trail. You familiar with the corkscrew below Indian Gardens on the Bright Angel?

TM: Yes. Yeah.

RH: Basically had to... Even the BA... It came over the top. Bright Angel Creek went off. The river got real high. That little stream through Indian Gardens was just... Basically they had to rebuild Indian Gardens also. And here I was probably a year in. We decided to treat it like a fire, and Dick Marks had just gotten into the picture, too. He was a friggin'... He was a hands-on-everything kind of guy. I mean, every aspect of... He didn't put any faith into any of his management team. I was working with him on this flood and it got to be fairly insane. But we decided to kind of treat it like an incident, like a major fire. This would have been in the fall because trail crews around the country... I said, "I got all this money, you're giving me all this money but I got nobody that really knows what the f*** they're doing. I got a bunch of YCCs." "Well, we'll hire people." Well, easier said than done. That's when I did bring on a lot of the Native Americans. I got with Adrian, I said, "Well, let's see if there's a bunch of seasonal at different parks that are getting ready to be laid off and see if we can't bring established crews over." So we had crews come over from Glacier, Yosemite, Rocky Mountain. Where was the other? We brought about 20 people in.

TM: Cool. So this was something that Curt mentioned was he would work seasonal in the summer at Rocky and then he'd get laid off there and then he'd go work seasonal at Grand Canyon.

RH: Uh huh.

TM: So what you were doing was putting out the call to the seasonal trail crews from other parks saying, "When you get to the end of your time there, if you want to come over here and work the winter as a seasonal at Grand Canyon we want you."

RH: Yeah, that was basically it.

TM: What a great idea.

RH: And what happened was they came as crews that had already been working together. It took us... Well, we got Panorama Point opened in a month or something. I mean, basically, the trails were shut down to all mule traffic, so Fred Harvey didn't like that and was putting pressure on Dick, Dick was putting pressure on me, and yada yada. But it took us, I want to say, five or six months. The first year I was there, also, there was no blasters in the park so they sent me to blasting school. I was the only one that could handle dynamite and anfo and gels and all of that, so I had to do all the blasting, had to handle the magazine. It was just another added thing cause we did do a lot of blasting on the flood job. We got her done, I made some good friends, and it turned out nice. We built a wet wall down right along the river where the BA hits the trail. That was totally gone. Yeah, that little creek right down there had just been humming.

TM: There's a little place called the River House, a little emergency phone there, right up a little ways up the mouth of Pipe Creek. Was this the flood that put flood debris up in the River House?

RH: Yeah. Yeah, I think so.

TM: So it would have just basically hammered that trail from, as you mentioned, the base of the Devil's Corkscrew all the way down Pipe Creek?

RH: Umm hmm.

TM: Okay.

RH: I'm trying to get that creek name out of the recesses of my mind. So, yeah, yeah, that was the major part of it. And that's... I don't know, from Devil's Corkscrew to the river is, what, three miles?

TM: Yeah. I was gonna say it's a easy couple of miles.

RH: Yeah. So, basically that was all destroyed.

TM: And I'm assuming that given an event like that it typically would have just been everything water everywhere and it would have just, you know, water would have been racing across the Corkscrew and kind of going from switchback to switchback and, as you mentioned, up into Indian Gardens, kind of bombing out that place. So, well, besides all the regular trail crew work you're doing and after this first river trip, you've got a bunch of river work to do as well.

RH: Yep, yep. I think after we got the flood work all done and... The regional director at the time was a guy by the name of Howard Chapman, and him and Dick Marks just hated each other. Howard and I, he wanted to hike in, see the damage. So I was, just me and him... And like I say I'm still just an Idaho cowboy and I'm hiking this trail with the regional director of the Western Region and I didn't hold anything back. I think this is what originally got Dick kind of on my case. I told him everything. I told them about my crew, what I had to work with, the budget, and what I thought it was gonna take to get this thing fixed. What the Canyon, even without the flood, what the Canyon would need going forward.

TM: Just a baseline operation.

RH: Baseline operation. So we went to Phantom, spent the night at Phantom, talked some more. He was getting on a helicopter the next day. I'd given him a number of something like \$300,000, maybe a little more than that, you know. He was getting in the helicopter, he looked at me, said, "Don't worry, you'll get your money." Dick had told me when I was saying, "Hey, man, we're gonna need..." He says, "You'll just do it best you can, how you can do it," you know, yada, yada, yada, yada. "We're not going to the Regional Office to ask for supplemental money," yada, yada. I guess when Howard flew out I was still down at Phantom. The next day Dick flew in. I guess Howard had told him what was gonna happen and Dick was all over me, just all over me. It was who do you think you are kind of talk, you know, you have no respect for authority. I listened for a while and I told him, "Yeah, Dick, I don't really respect authority. I respect what I respect." I think I learned that in the military that even authority can be wrong at times. We, you know, we went on and on. Bottom line was the next year we saw a big increase in the budget and we got close to \$300,000 to finish the Pipe Creek trail rebuild. It was good. Then I was... I think after that was done... I did a lot of river trips while I was there. Some of them of them were commercial with OARS, George Wendt. I would take leave. The others were all trail trips with Crumbo, a guy by the name of Sam West, Turk, Kimmie, Marylou Mauer, Cindy Burns, John Thomas, who become a Caruthers disciple, worked for Steve for a long time when he turned into a developer. Turned in, again, into just one of those wonderful, wonderful time of your life. It was just amazing to me.

TM: Tell me some about that. What were some of the cool things you saw and did?

RH: I met a lot of good people. I was still... At that time I was still fresh and I was still I think... Probably in 1980, I was born in '48, '81 I was in my mid-30s maybe. I still had the leaning against the corral down there in Yosemite feeding sugar cubes to mules in my mind, and here I was in charge of the government pack string and saddling up mules whenever I wanted, going into the Inner Canyon. We instituted a...for a while, I think it lasted for about two or three months...but an Aloha Friday where we would wear aloha shirts and big sombreros...

TM: (laughs) Oh, cool.

RH: ...down into the Bright Angel. Coming out of there by Kolb Studios and all those places, the tourists would be just friggin' lined up to take pictures. These guys in f***** Hawaiian shirts and big sombreros, man, you know. Dick happened to be at the trailhead one Friday and that was the end of Aloha Fridays. Just a lot of things, man. I mean, what I did good there...I think I helped put the Inner Canyon trail system and usage on the map. We were probably... On one of our trips we spent, it might have been the first time in a long time that we spent like almost two weeks at Nankoweap. Jan and another, Helen I think, were on that trip.

TM: Helen Fairley?

RH: Umm hmm. We built rock walls at South Canyon. We really did a nice job. We picked one out of about twenty trails that were headed up to the granaries at Nankoweap and said, "Okay, let's do this one. Let's harden this one and let's get rid of the rest of them." That was a real fine job.

TM: Probably up at Saddle Canyon as well maybe?

RH: Saddle, Deer Park, cleaned a lot of the river camps, helped eradicate all the tamarisks. So, yeah, it was wonderful. I did four trips with a guy by the name of Paul Winter, alto sax player who had made some pretty good albums, including Icarus. He came down to the Canyon. I met him on the South Rim. I think he was there for a Night Sky seminar/conference or whatever. This would have been probably '81/'82. He was talking about really wanting to go into the canyon, make this album and stuff. So next day we hiked in Bright Angel about two or three miles, he took out his sax, and it was like a temple. We were sitting where we could look down and see the Colorado. He goes, "I really want to friggin' do that. I'd like to bring my consort out here and do that." I hooked him up with my next door neighbor, a guy by the name of Sam West. Between the three of us, Sam doing most of the leg work... He had worked for OARS for a lot of years before he started with the Park Service. He talked to George and I guess we got a deal on like five boats. It took three trips. We had an organ... We had some fabulous musicians down there. The organ took one boat; the sound man; a guy by the name of Mickey Houlihan, he and I became great friends had a naturalist by the name of Peter Warshall; had an organ player; we had drummers; we had vocalists. We would float, find a canyon, set up, they would play, we'd get back on the river. I did four trips that way with them and they were all just wonderful.

TM: How would they do the recording? Was that battery powered recording stuff or would they have a generator running far, far away and a long extension cord?

RH: Yeah. Set up. There'd be a lot of cuts for helicopters cause even then there was...probably more than there is now cause they put some restrictions on them. Those were fun and those were... Then the little movie was great. That was recorded by David Vassar who did the Stoneman Meadows. All these things just connect. Money by John Litton, who turned into a good friend. Yeah, I was rolling along. Had a nice house. Heather, my daughter, was up basically living with me, her mother was I think at that time in Tucson, and she did one of the trips with me. Only kid on the trip, she aced it. She had her... Let's see, she was born...so 1982, yeah...

TM: She would have been going to school there at the South Rim?

RH: Yeah, she did go to school at the South Rim. We were putting a life together. I had upgraded my housing and I was living in the first superintendent's house, which was right down by the old boathouse. Nice little two bedroom house. We became great friends with Bruce and Mary because their kids...their oldest was the same age as my daughter.

TM: That's Bruce and Mary Aiken?

RH: Yeah.

TM: Cool. So their kids were Heather's age?

RH: Yeah. Their oldest daughter was exactly Heather's age. Some great times. If I was going into Roaring Springs and had to work that stretch down to Cottonwood or down to Phantom, Heather would come in with me, and Mary and Bruce were down there. Bruce was doing the pump house and Mary was being Mary. It was just wonderful, just wonderful. I left I think mid-'84 to take that job in Olympic. When I started at the Grand Canyon, you know, I'm thinking can I do this, do I want to be here, da da da da da. By the time I left it was the exact opposite, do I really want to go, what's it gonna..., you know, I love it here, I'm full here. But my brother was living in Seattle. He had just had a kid and he was running a sporting goods store. My father had died five or six years before. My mother said, "Well, I think I'm

gonna move up there, too, now I got a grandkid,” and all of this. When Olympic called and said I’d been selected I had second thoughts, but then I felt, well, wouldn’t it be great to get the band back together again. Spend time with my mother and my brother, be in the same, you know, hour and a half away instead of planes, trains and automobiles. So I took it.

TM: But that would have meant you actually applied for that job?

RH: I did.

TM: Okay. And that would have meant that you were willing to move on out of Grand Canyon.

RH: Yep. Yep. You can apply for something and think you might not have any chance in the world to get it, and I think that was my... And I say, when I applied for it the main thought process was, okay, maybe we can get the band back together. I’d been to Olympic once before when I was working on the Payette, went up to Hurricane Ridge and had that flash in my mind that, yeah, this would be a great place to work. So I was off to the Olympics.

TM: Okay. Well, if you don’t mind I’d like to drag you back to Grand Canyon...

RH: That’s fine.

TM: ...because it seems like you spent four really... Well, the first year really tough but then once things kind of all fell into place through some pretty damn hard, good hard work it sounds like you did, you kind of got it figured out from the heat and all that needed to be done. So I’d like to just hear more about what do you remember about, oh, my gosh, the Paul Winter trips, and Sam West, and Kim Crumbo and Kimmie Johnson and that river crew that was working down there, and soup to nuts. Where do we start?

RH: Well, one of the things I remember... I remember a lot of things but, like I say, if I had one word for the Park Service in that time it would have been White male rangers, managers, and not very diverse whatsoever. I remember playing on the softball team. Most of them were law enforcement rangers, there was me, and there was a guy by the name of Pat Horning that I had hired as a seasonal. Everybody else, the other 10/11 people on the team, were all rangers. I remember a huge, huge double standard. I was different. I wore my hair fairly long. I said what I thought needed to be said. So we would play these softball games. It was a small league, maybe five or six teams. There was a field out in Tusayan. I think we were sponsored by Tusayan Babbitt’s and there was that Best Western Hotel there. After a game...

TM: That would be the Squire Inn?

RH: Yeah, Squire Inn, I think. Yep. But after the games we’d go in... There was a little bowling alley downstairs if I remember right. Yeah. Those rangers would get so f***** up drunk and then drive back to the rim. And maintenance guy, you know, I mean, I didn’t have the get out of jail free card. But then they would hassle... I had, like I said, I had a diverse crew by that time. One Apache kid, Candido Apodaca. I’ll always remember Candi just because he got beat on so bad by the rangers. One of them didn’t like him. I guess my point being is that there was a double standard. There was a two-way street. There was them and us. I think that’s kind of the way I did look at it. Okay, just keep your... And I became good friends with a couple of them, especially Curt was on the team, a guy by the name of Fred Hempfield, who basically married Butch’s wife/ex-wife Annie.

TM: Oh, after they split up?

RH: Yeah. Yeah. But it was heavy law enforcement orientated. You know, the South Rim they did get a lot of people, but if you weren't one of them then you better watch your P's and Q's. That's the way I saw it anyway. I was a few years away from doing the revolution stuff but they cops, cops first. They didn't mind breaking the rules or breaking the law but by God you better not. I remember that. I remember how they just hassled Candi so friggin'... And another guy on my crew they also worked pretty hard. Crumbo... Oh, a little story before I forget, we were talking about Tusayan. Somebody decided, I think it was a benefit, but to have a prom at Tusayan at the Squire Inn. I don't even know if Kimmie remembers this. So anyway, well attended. I mean, you know, a whole bunch of people, live band, all that stuff. I don't know who the benefit was for. I'm not sure. But anyway they had a vote or something, but Kimmie and I became king and queen of the prom.

TM: (laughs) Okay.

RH: (laughs) It made it into the Williams News, picture. I still have a picture of Kimmie and I, king and queen of the prom. I didn't smoke a lot of pot there. In Idaho, it's just, man, I was gone, I was out in the woods in the afternoon or whatever, but there you lived in the park, you never knew when somebody was gonna knock on your door. I think that was good for me. It's not like I was high all the time but I did like to smoke a joint now and again. Curt and I became really, really tight, and his ex-wife, Connor, were neighbors. It was a real nice... You've been through the housing area up there on the South Rim. You met anybody who was to become, or everybody who was to become, anybody if you were at the Grand Canyon, whether they were coming through Albright for ranger courses or maintenance courses, whether they had hooked a ride on the river for a week. You ended up meeting a lot of people that would go on to do really nice things for the Park Service during the next 20 years, 25/30 years. That was a bonus. And Crumbo was Crumbo.

TM: Tell me about Kim.

RH: Kim, I think, I knew the first time I met him that he'd been into s*** but I think it was almost a year before we talked about it. We're really good friends to this day. He's by far the best trip leader of anybody that... I've made 25 trips, I guess, and Crumbo was by far the best trip leader. Had a great friggin' sense of humor, had a incredible focus on the resource, didn't mind having fun. He was a Navy SEAL. When he told me that I kind of went, "Ooh, bro, hard knocks," and he just goes, "Yep." I said, "Where were you stationed?" He said, "Down in the Delta." I go, "Oh, okay, that's a shitty place." He saw a lot of shit there. He was SEAL Team Eight and probably the most physically fit guy I've ever met in my life. He looks like a fire hydrant. When the River Unit broke up and all of that Crumbo didn't want to be attached to like law enforcement and all that kind of crap. That's when he went over to Resource Management and worked over in Resource Management for a while. He's one of those guys, man, that he says something you can take it to the bank. And Becky was...

TM: His wife?

RH: Yeah, just a sweetheart. She put up with a lot. I read the report on Ranger A, Ranger B, Ranger C during the...

TM: Oh, you did, good.

RH: Yeah, I saw all that. I would say that there was definitely river romances, but I never saw what was going on five/six/seven years ago.

TM: Umm hmm, right. But I'm gonna ask you about that, though, because the River Unit as you mentioned was broken up and Curt Sauer had talked about that. It was really distressing for him because it was a good team, they all worked together. They reported to the top, not to a district ranger that then talked to the chief ranger, you know, a different line of command.

RH: Right, right.

TM: What was it that broke that apart? Was it simply Dick Marks wanting to restructure or what?

RH: Yeah. I think so. My feeling on it was that it was political. For some reason he didn't get along with the f***** nicest guy in the Park Service, and that's Marv Jensen. But, yeah, I think that that was basically it. I don't know the whole dynamics of it. I think that happened right when I was leaving but, like you say, it sure put a new dynamic on the whole idea. Then there was a battle. Anybody that worked there when it was the River Unit, pretty much all of them, I think, just went, s***... Tom Workman stayed on at Lees Ferry.

TM: Was Tom on the river as part of the river team there?

RH: He would take a trip now and again but he was the check-in guy, he was the liaison to all the concessionaires, he was the Lees Ferry ranger but still was working for the River Unit.

TM: Okay. Oh, all right.

RH: Yeah, yeah. But, yeah, he's a trip. I'm pretty close to Tom, too.

TM: Is he living in Flag now?

RH: He's living in Borrego Springs. He's got a place in Flag. He's arm candy for a 81-year old, very rich lady that likes to travel the world (laughs). He's something else. Yeah, we just talked the other day. We got real close. He was the superintendent of Kalaupapa. He was the first one to bring me over to Kalaupapa which, you know, was one of the highlights of my career was being able to work in that park for so many years. We spent a lot of time together back in the early 2000s. What else do I remember there? I remember (laughs), they would have suggestion boxes in all the deals, like in the maintenance compound there'd be a suggestion box, over in interp, employees could make suggestions or write comments down. I remember writing out a piece of paper that... I read a lot of the superintendent's memos and he always signs them "Richard Marks, Superintendent, Grand Canyon National Park." I wrote down that it seems like a superintendent could save a lot of time if he just signed his memos "Dick, Head of Park" and I signed my name.

TM: (laughs) Yeah, I bet that did go real well.

RH: Real well, but that's all right. You know, I've always been a...

TM: Why do you think Marks and Chapman were crossing swords, do you have any idea?

RH: I think Dick was probably the one that didn't respect authority. I think he might have had conflict anywhere he went. But, you know, he was an interesting guy. I ran into him probably eight or ten years after I left Grand Canyon. I'm not sure what...it was a symposium, a week long, in Colorado, at Aspen, off season. It was right at the time when cell phones were first coming out and it was gonna be a talking/thinking session for the next 20 years. I don't know how I was selected to go. I was the only f***** maintenance guy there.

TM: Wow, the only maintenance guy there, hmm.

RH: Yeah, the only maintenance guy that I knew there. He came up to me at that and he said, "It's good to see you. I understand you're still working trails at Olympic." I said, "Yeah, yeah, loving it." He says, "Why don't you let us use you?" Basically, he was saying you need to just get out of having fun and come in and let us use you. Move up, become this, become that. That really made me feel good because our time at the Canyon was basically conflict. For him to come up and say that eight/ten years after I'd left made me feel pretty good. I think he's passed away. I'm not sure why Howard and he...maybe it was the deal. Maybe he thought that... 'Cause that was the only real contact I had with Howard was those few days after the flood down on the river and maybe Dick thought that asking for money from the regional office would look unfavorably on him and that's why he didn't want to... That's why he got mad at me saying we need this and we're not getting the support we need here in the Park and yada, yada, yada. I don't know, but I know that they did not like each other.

TM: I get a sense from what you've helped me understand here, that when you arrived at Grand Canyon if they had a good trail crew program it had all kind of fallen apart.

RH: Yeah. Yeah, and I asked Adrian. It was my understanding that only two people in the Park Service applied for the job that I got.

TM: Oh. Oh, my gosh.

RH: Grand Canyon kind of had a reputation that, you know, you don't go there. It was more of a place you went to die. I found that just kind of surprising 'cause a search anymore would have 20 names on them. One of the guys on the search was from Glacier, where Adrian had been, and Adrian didn't really think this guy would do much of a job. When I first had my interview, like I say, Adrian came over to Mather Campground, we sat on a picnic table there and had a couple of beers. He asked questions and I answered them and I guess that he liked what he saw when he interviewed me. I'm not sure, you know. But, yeah, no, they didn't have much. The foreman, whose job I took, was a guy by the name of Lamar Shakespeare. My understanding is that he never went in the canyon. He didn't want anything to do with the river, didn't want... He was older. Actually, I ended up hiring his son as a seasonal, Darryl Shakespeare. Lamar went to Zion, they were Mormons, went to Zion as the roads and trails foreman and I guess had a pretty good career there where he could... But he just wasn't a trails guy. Never hiked them, never friggin', you know, never got out on them. I think he had been there six or seven years and that's a long time for not even walking a rim trail or something.

TM: That's tough because by, well, this would have been probably '72 to '80, you know, the river was a happening scene. There were a lot of people down there, as you mentioned, hiking to Saddle, hiking to Nankoweap, the granaries up there, Tapeats Creek running around, Deer Creek, that loop there, and Stone Creek and, and, and. There would have been a time when it needed work down there.

RH: Remind me... We gotta wrap this up, we're like an hour and ten minutes and I've got things I've gotta do.

TM: Oh, my gosh, where have we been? Okay.

RH: Yeah, I'll finish it while it's fresh in my mind.

TM: Yeah, that'll be good. This will conclude Part 5 Oral History Interview with Richard Hanson. Today is October 20th, 2020. This is a part five interview. My name's Tom Martin. Richard, Aloha Friday. I love that.

RH: Yeah.

TM: Thank you so very much.