

**Transcription:** Grand Canyon Historical Society Oral History

**Interviewee:** Sheriff Joe Richards (JR)

**Interviewer:** Tom Martin (TM)

**Subject:** Sheriff Richards recounts growing up near Flagstaff, conducting search and rescues in Grand Canyon, and being on a Colorado River trip

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TM: Today is August 26<sup>th</sup>, 2017. This is a Grand Canyon Historical Society oral interview. Today we are interviewing Joe Richards at the home of Tom Martin, and that's me. Joe, thank you very much for being willing to participate in this.

JR: Thank you.

TM: What year were you born?

JR: In 1936, March 17<sup>th</sup>, 1936.

TM: Where were you born?

JR: Lubbock, Texas.

TM: What were your parents doing there?

JR: They were farmers and affected by the Depression like so many people. Texas was a dust bowl. My mom tells me five days before I was born she was pulling a hundred-pound cotton sack down the row picking cotton and (laughs) so that's kind of the background. We starved out like so many people, so many families, Okies and Arkies, and moved to a little town in Glenwood, New Mexico. I was about 3 years old, between 3 and 4 years old when we moved there. My dad worked for the CCC's and my mother ran a little pie shop there. In 1942, when the war broke out, they moved west and were originally heading for all the jobs in California but the jobs didn't pan out. It was sort of like the Grapes of Wrath. They stopped originally in Seligman and then back to Bellemont when the Navajo Army Depot opened up as a munitions depot during the war. My dad worked there for the next 33 or 34 years as a munitions foreman, as a security guard. He was one of the first mounted guards in the depot that patrolled the perimeter of the fence by horseback. He was one of three or four guys that were hired to do that. Then later on they became mechanized and used trucks and pickups and stuff like that. That's kind of the background of our life there. I grew up in the community of Bellemont and went to Flagstaff schools, Emerson School, Flagstaff High School, and then got both of my degrees from Northern Arizona University. So I'm an almost a native.

TM: Almost. I'll say. What did you get your degrees in?

JR: In police administration, both of them, both Bachelor's and Master's.

TM: What drew you to that as an education, to get a degree in that?

JR: There was an interesting event in my life. The little community of Bellemont was a mixture of different kinds of people of different backgrounds, different ethnic groups. One of our neighbors that lived there was named Henry Singelton. A group of bad guys from south of here, down by Mormon Lake in that area...

TM: How do you spell Singelton?

JR: S-i-n-g-e-l-t-o-n.

TM: Thank you. Sorry. So some bad folks there.

JR: They were four of the Blevins brothers. B-l-e-v-i-n-s. I don't recall all their names but there were four of them. One night they got drunk and were gonna go out to Bellemont and beat up on Henry Singelton. They banged on his door and revved their engines and called him out. He stepped to the door and he says "Get out of here and leave me alone, you're gonna get hurt. Get out of here." They refused to. One of them's making an aggressive move and the other ones going to go around and rattle the back door. He stepped out the door with his shotgun and bang, bang, bang, shot three of them and wounded the fourth. The buckshot hit our little tarpaper shack there where my parents lived and woke us all up. That was my first introduction to really violence and the consequences of violence and blood. I was 10 years old. That was on May 10<sup>th</sup>, 1946 when that homicide occurred. Before morning the sheriff came out, Jay Perry Francis. He was the sheriff of Coconino County. He had another deputy with him. This guy was about 6' 3"/6' 4", tall like yourself, and had a uniform. Here's a little kid named Joe Richards looking up at that. It was sort of a commanding appearance of this guy and it made an impression on me.

TM: Wow.

JR: Now, between law enforcement and cowboys and the west, I was thrilled with that. So when I got out of high school I went to work for the county sheriff's office in the first of 1960. I had worked three years previously for the U.S. Post Office as a mail carrier/mail deliverer.

TM: While you were going to high school?

JR: Umm hmm. Started out working three days in the field and three days in the jail division. There were 14 deputies working for Coconino County in that time for the second largest county in the United States. There was a lot of long hours. It was exciting. You get to do things that you always dreamed about.

TM: Can you back up for a minute because I'm kind of curious about Bellemont in the '40s and '50s and when today when we drive past Bellemont I can see the depot to the south of the interstate.

JR: Yes.

TM: To the north is some newer looking tract housing. What was Bellemont like as far as where were you all living and what was it like there?

JR: This was prior to the big overpass being built.

TM: On the interstate?

JR: Old Bellemont was Highway 66. There was no interstate at the time. U.S. Highway 66, the main drag where people were going back and forth to California to find all these jobs.

TM: Route 66, sure.

JR: My dad built a small little house for us. It was only about 75 yards to the entrance to the Navajo Army Depot where big trucks and stuff like that were bringing in munitions and supplies. It had probably 2500 employees when it was up and blooming. It employed a lot of Native Americans. They had a Hopi Indian camp and a Navajo Indian camp. We got to have interaction with a lot of those two cultures. It was a great learning experience. My mother ran the post office at Bellemont and there was a little general store there ran by a man by the name of Delbert Thompson. He had a sawmill. So that's some of the background. This little community of Bellemont probably had 20 to 25 families, very small, and most all of them were workers in the Depot in various jobs. So that's kind of where I grew up. The Atchison Topeka Railroad was about 100 yards away. If you see Old Bellemont right now there's a huge black tower that rises up about 150 feet. That was a pump for the steam engines and the locomotives to stop and get water on their way to California. And a little side note—it was interesting, when the troop trains would come through there my mom and some of her neighbor friends would make sandwiches and coffee and go over and give the boys sandwiches and coffee. It was a love gift for a lot of young men that would never come back.

TM: That's right. That's right. Yeah.

JR: That was a kind, loving act and it still touches me as I tell about it. Anyway, the people got along well there and were very compatible with each other.

TM: It sounds like maybe Bellemont was its own town removed very much from Flagstaff in a way.

JR: Yes, it was. It would be 11/12 miles west and it was...

TM: Which was a day's walk or...

JR: Uh huh. Now, just west of that was a little community called Branigan Park where it had another little community group of people. Then just west about 15 miles was Parks, where you go up to Spring Valley, and there was another bigger community there. Most all of these people were either employed for the munitions or worked in Flagstaff, or some of them worked for the railroad. There was a section house right there by our place where the switch master, the guy who is in charge of the railroad's safety and stuff like that, lived with his family. So it was I would say a very eclectic little community, a lot of interesting people there. They had ammunition boxes that were surplus and they were all empty and piled in there. They made delightful playgrounds for young boys wanting to play cops and robbers, building houses and forts and stuff out of those boxes. A lot to keep boys interested and involved.

TM: Uh huh. So when you went to grade school, was that there in Bellemont or did you come in...

JR: No, in Flagstaff.

TM: Was there a bus?

JR: I rode the bus for 12 years back and forth.

TM: All right.

JR: Yeah.

TM: How long did it take to get the bus out there?

JR: Probably 45 minutes. We'd catch the bus about 6:15 or 6:30 in the morning in order to get to school.

TM: Uh huh, uh huh. And come into town.

JR: And a lot of snow. It was a deep freeze kind of community in the winter months. There's pictures in 1948 of our house sticking up out of the snow. My mom would... You can see her standing outside level with the snow. It looks like a bunch of little stovepipes. People all burned wood. It was a hardship winter, but it was exciting at the same time. We loved it.

TM: Yeah. Nice. Nice. Okay, so then worked for the post office during high school. Was that the Bellemont Post Office that your mom was in?

JR: Uh huh. It was a little single, in fact, it was in our home. They had set up the little mail boxes for her. The mail would come off and they would drop it off at the train as it came by, roll it off, and she would go bring the sacks down. Or sometimes trucks coming from Flagstaff would haul mail out and drop it off there. All the residents that lived at Bellemont, Navajo Army Depot/up at the Depot itself, and these other little communities would go there to pick up their mail. It was a first name, she knew almost everybody in the whole region.

TM: I bet she did.

JR: Yeah, it was great.

TM: I'm assuming that the mail volume would have been fairly substantial for the Depot.

JR: It probably was.

TM: I mean, more so than Parks or any other community. They didn't have basically a large factory there where people lived. I mean, it was a military base.

JR: Oh, no. The base itself was a huge attraction to the employment for the whole region. I think Flagstaff probably had 6500, maybe 7,000 people in 1942, and this huge influx of people that wanted viable government paying jobs. There was a little railroad that went around to all the igloos. There was a lot of construction of warehouse and ammunition igloos and storage facilities. There was a hospital there. Fact I had my tonsils taken out there. It was a government-ran hospital and my mother worked up there for a period of time in the kitchen helping cook meals for the patients and things. It was exciting.

TM: Okay. So after school then would you walk the mail rounds? How did you work that? Or did you just help sort mail?

JR: I didn't work, no. What I meant, I left Bellemont, I went to high school and then I got married right out of high school.

TM: Okay, wait a minute, back up a second. Did you guys move into Flag? You said you left Bellemont and went to high school.

JR: I left home when I was 16...

TM: Thank you.

JR: ...and I moved into Flagstaff. Here's another great story. I met Platt Cline and Barbara Cline. They were wonderful friends. They were like another mother and father to me. I was next to a brother of their own son, Robert Cline. We were buddies all through high school. Had a double bunk bed. We had all the fun that young teenagers do. Upon graduation of the high school, I got married and I'm still married to the same sweet lady. We just celebrated our 63<sup>rd</sup> wedding anniversary.

TM: Oh, congratulations.

JR: I laughingly tell everybody we were married young. I was 9 and she was 8. (both laugh) It brings a big guffaw out of everybody. But it's been great. We have four lovely daughters.

TM: How did you meet your wife?

JR: In high school. I was sitting there in a typing class.

TM: What grade?

JR: Oh, I was probably a junior. And so we fell in love. She had moved here from California. Her folks had a restaurant down in Sedona. We fell in love and I would hitchhike from Bellemont. Go get on Old 66 and hitchhike down to Sedona to get to see her. So that was our courting arrangement. Great, great relationship.

TM: Very fun.

JR: It's worked out really well.

TM: Okay. So you moved into Flagstaff. Did you stay then with the Clines?

JR: Yes, for a period of time during the time of high school. Then I got married soon after high school so I did various jobs—construction, working in service stations, doing carpentry work and things like that—kind of a jack of all trades. I think it was in 1957 or '58 I went to work for the U.S. Post Office and I had two routes. One was a walking route for 12 miles, this region where you're living, and the other one was a 16-mile route. I also drove a parcel post truck for them. I did that for three and a half years. In my off-time... I really wanted to be a deputy so I began to hang around the sheriff's office. I began to make

myself available and known. I joined the Sheriff's Reserves. There was a group of probably 8 or 10 guys that would help out for parades and different events and things like that. So it gave me firsthand knowledge of what goes on in a county sheriff's office. Cecil Richardson was the sheriff who hired me, and that was in 1960. I worked for him for like 11 years and then was a state highway patrolman for about a year or so. I was a criminal investigator for the county attorney's office for a little bit more than a year. Then in 1972 I ran for sheriff. I was elected and then ran eight four-year terms, 32 years in the county sheriff's office. It was a great life, great experience. I tell everybody after 44 years in law enforcement I was almost off probation. (both laugh)

TM: That's great.

JR: It was a great life.

TM: So let's bring Grand Canyon into this equation then.

JR: Okay.

TM: You live in Flagstaff. Well, you live in Bellemont, growing up in Bellemont. When was the first time you saw the Grand Canyon or heard that there was a big canyon up to the north of you?

JR: Well, I think it was an attraction to our family. I think we drove up there once or twice where we got to just walk around the rim and look and see, realized just what a tremendous piece of geology that was.

TM: This would have been when you were a young boy?

JR: Yes. Probably I was in teens. It was a great experience getting to see it. So I was aware of the Grand Canyon and the beauty of it and stuff like that. But I never did hike down and I never did go down in it.

Then after working for the sheriff's office we'd do search and rescue. There were plane crashes, there were drownings, there were lost people, there were suicides, all kinds of things that attracted people to be involved in at that canyon. That meant that law enforcement had to respond to it. So we worked closely with the National Park Service and we had our own search and rescue team and we did a lot of the canyons. Some body recoveries. People would take a nose dive off, either accidental or on purpose. There were drownings, different types of drownings. There was an interesting homicide of a young couple in 1977, I believe. Perhaps I can recall the name of it here in a minute. Powell Memorial, on the west end, is where their bodies were found. He was a young dentist in the military, I think in the Navy. They stopped there, I guess, on their way back, they were headed for the coast. Their bodies were both found there, side by side by the Powell Memorial. Apparently a robbery and murder. To my knowledge that murder has been unsolved. There's been a lot of trails that led up to loose ends and bad ends and finding guys in prison that you interviewed and stuff like that. But as far as I know that is still one of the unsolved mysteries of Grand Canyon.

TM: Hmm. Tell me more of your relationship with the Canyon. You mentioned plane accident and the first thing I thought of was 1956 when TWA v United...

JR: I was aware of that because Clark Cole was the undersheriff. He was stationed over in Williams. He worked for Perry Francis. He went up there to the Grand Canyon and some guys went down into the Canyon. Chuar Butte, and I forget what the other one, where they crashed into these two big planes.

TM: Temple Butte. Sure.

JR: It was exciting to hear about it. Some of the photographs that came back out showed where they strewn the mountains and the bodies all over the country up there. It was a major national, maybe even international, catastrophic event because many of the people that were on these planes probably were nationals. That was an exciting event. That was 1956.

TM: That's right.

JR: I can't remember the date. But anyway these two planes crashed. That was one of the first ones that came to my attention. There were several others. There were two planes that crashed together in the Inner Canyon almost straight out from the viewpoints down where the lodges are, where Hopi Point and down that direction. It seems like that there was a regular little plane, not a biplane but a regular small craft. There were two smaller crafts. I think one of them had several passengers in it. Anyway, there was a crash there and so then we had to go down to the canyon. We hooked a ride with the National Park Service or with the National Guard. Coconino County did not have, and I don't think still has, any air machines. We'd go down there and do body recovery, photographs, identifying next of kin, preparing it for the mortuary and stuff like that so the bodies could then be transported back to be identified by relatives once they were notified. It was hot and rocky and all kinds of stuff. It gives you, those kinds of things, a really firsthand knowledge of the terrain, of the difficulty of it, of the hazards of it. It was just one of those kinds of things that...

There was another significant thing. In 1974, a senator from Nevada called and advised that his son was overdue for a couple of weeks. I think his name was Dennis Debol, D-e-b-o-l, I believe. I'm not completely positive. My mind might be a little rusty on that spelling. But anyway, his name was Dennis. Tall young man, 6' 4", well built. He had left and hiked down in the Canyon shortly after Christmas, around New Year's. Had hiked down through there never to be heard of again. Now, I don't think that there was a registry of him going down there, it originated from his folks and other relatives calling and saying "Have you heard anything." So from there the identification started narrowing. "Has anybody seen anybody?" "Yeah. Well, we found somebody here that saw a hiker matching that description. He was alone" and so forth. He was found near the Tanner Trail, off the old Tanner Trail. As you know, it runs down on the South Rim. He had his pack still with him, just jettisoned his pack and fell forward. I think he died of exposure because his body had laid there for a number of days before we found him.

During that period of time there was another great natural event taking place, an inversion, in which the clouds, I've got pictures of this, the clouds rolled into the Canyon and it was almost like a great mystery. They would take us by National Guard helicopter, our crew of guys that would go down, and we'd puncture this stuff and go down into it. Then when you get down there it's eerie because you have all the shaded clouds. It's not dark but its subdued light.

TM: Right.

JR: So we would take our team of guys going here and there looking for tracks and stuff like that. That ultimately is what led to the finding of the young man's body. But the beauty of that inversion. You've probably seen pictures of it from up at one of the lookout points, how the clouds were just floating by. Well, I was down there for a number of days with the guys. They let us down and give us a box lunch and

pick us up in the evening. A couple of guys had communication so you could stay in touch with the guys. It was an interesting time. Learned a lot about the Canyon itself.

TM: Who did you work with in those days? Who was your Park Service liaison?

JR: Oh, my. I'd have to look it up. I'm sorry. Right off hand it doesn't spark to me.

TM: You know who comes to mind would be Gary Branges's father for a while. I think he graduated in '74 and I think his dad was head of law enforcement for four years or so that they were there.

JR: For the Park Service?

TM: Yeah.

JR: I'm sure he knew about this and maybe had led up a team of park rangers that were there. We worked with them but that name does not... Tom, it doesn't ring a bell with me.

TM: Hmm. No worries.

JR: There was another guy for search and rescue early on during that period, Dick North. North?

TM: Well, there was Jim Northup, but he was much later. He was in the '90s.

JR: No.

TM: I thinking, of course, we go back too far we're back into the '50s but that's Lynn Coffin back in that time. I'm trying to remember who would have been in law enforcement. Oh, Von der Lippe would have been in there in the late '60s, early '70s, George Von der Lippe. He was the head of the river unit, law enforcement ranger. I'm trying to remember who he...

JR: Okay. I'm sorry, I'm not prepared for that. I'd have to wing it.

TM: No worries.

JR: I mean, if it comes back or if I'm told, yeah, this guy we met. Cause you meet a lot of guys. You go out in the morning, you shake hands, you get their names and stuff like that, you hand your equipment out, and then you go do your work. In the evening you come back and you may not see that guy again on that same search.

TM: Hmm. How did it work with law enforcement, cause I think of the small gateway community of Tusayan and there was no deputy stationed there.

JR: No, there wasn't.

TM: There was for a while a deputy stationed, Bud Dunnigan. I'm sure you know Bud.



JR: Yeah. Bud's a neat guy.

TM: Yeah. Bud, of course, was stationed...

JR: He's a mule guy, you know.

TM: He's a mule guy, yeah, yeah. Dorothy's gone through this, what we're doing here cause I wanted to learn about the clinic. So Bud was actually stationed there in the park as county sheriff's deputy. He had a vehicle.

JR: He had been out of Williams. That's where he was from.

TM: Okay, and he had a radio in the car and so there was communication potential. Then after Bud left there would be a time in there in the '60s and '70s, where we really don't know what happened. I was kind of thinking how would... If there was a bar fight in Tusayan I'm assuming that the park would send their rangers out.

JR: Well, they would many times.

TM: And you guys would drive, it would take you an hour and a half or more.

JR: Yeah, yeah. It'd be the Williams officer that would get up there. That would be the first guy to interact and find out what went on. Because you're right, I cannot remember offhand when we stationed the first officer up there. Maybe it was Bud. We had one on the North Rim in the little community of Fredonia. Cecil Cram was up there for years and years. He was a local guy that worked in the community for a long time. I think his wife taught school. Just a delightful man.

TM: He would have to drive, then, from Fredonia up to the North Rim if there was an issue there.

JR: Yeah, yeah. He handled the problems on the North Rim. And so, you know, you got a 200-plus mile jog to get around there. It was like the old days (laughs).

TM: Well, it really was.

JR: It was. I'm trying to think of another. If you want to jump forward, you asked me the other time that we visited about my experience with the Grand Canyon river. I've been fortunate to be there a number of times, go down the river, a lot of them with the Park Service on recon. A lot of them for search and rescue operations, missing bodies. A plane crash and looking for that and things like that. I knew Jerry Sanderson. He had a river shop out of Page.

TM: How did you know Jerry and how did you first meet him?

JR: Page is one of the substations for Coconino County. There's Fredonia, Page, Williams, Sedona, Grand Canyon, Blue Ridge, Forest Lake Estates, and then later Tuba City. There was I think eight or maybe nine substations for the county. It was a really interesting experience because I could say I could travel 3,000 miles a month in Coconino County and never leave it, just by going around and checking with the rural communities and stuff like that.

TM: Wow. Just checking on the substations.

JR: Uh huh, and the people that were there, burglaries or thefts, or deaths, either accidental or suicides or other kinds of things.

TM: Umm hmm. So how did you meet Jerry?

JR: I met him in Page. He was an interesting guy and we just happened to get acquainted up there. He said "Hey, if you want to ever come up would you like to take a ride?" I said "Oh, it was a dream come true." So later on, several months down the road, I had that opportunity. We boarded up there at the head of the outfit above Rainbow Bridge.

TM: At Lee's Ferry?

JR: At Lee's Ferry. And went down riding on Jerry's. It was a great adventure for me. I try to be an artist. I have sketched and painted most of my life. I'm an amateur painter. I got my first set of oil paints from my mother. She was kind of a backdoor painter herself. I kind of took that up and began to sketch. In fact, in class when I met my wife in high school, I was sketching instead of doing my typing class. (both laugh) She relates that story. Anyway, back to this, I was just enthralled with the Canyon, all the events. I'd heard about them and read the books and all the stuff. You go, oh, Vasey's Paradise and all that stuff.

TM: What year was this that you did the trip with Jerry?

JR: 1974.

TM: 1974? Okay.

JR: Yeah, it was the summer of 1974.

TM: So you had already been exposed to the Canyon on your various searches and types of events.

JR: Umm hmm, umm hmm. But I had never had a river trip.

TM: Exactly. What do you remember about that trip?

JR: It was fun. I was a swamper. I set up the toilets and fixed the fires and did the gopher work. That's what you get to do, and I loved it. It was an exciting opportunity. I remember that I heard stories saying how cold that water is, 44 degrees. So in the evening we're gonna go down, we're gonna take a little bath in the river. I thought man oh man, it was like jumping in a deep freeze. It was exciting. We went on through the Canyon pretty well, uneventful. Stop and cook and all the good things. We hiked up to the cliffs, I forget the name of it, up in the upper Canyon.

TM: Nankoweap?

JR: Nankoweap, by Nankoweap.

TM: Where the granary is and you look downstream?

JR: Umm hmm. Yeah, yeah. I got some pictures from there and I thought, oh, that would make a wonderful...

TM: I'd love to see those photos.

JR: I think I might have some, but I don't know. Who knows. Anyway, you're talking ancient history.

TM: Uh huh, yeah.

JR: I was just thoroughly enthralled. We got down to where the Little Colorado flows into it and you see this blue-green water flowing into this, because it had rained a time or two and some of it was muddy there. So it was interesting. Got to do a little side hiking. Never did go up that far but later on, when we were on other searches, I got to hike up that canyon to where the sipapu is.

TM: Nice.

JR: The sipapu is a travertine built-up structure, probably 40 or 50 feet around. It is very sacred to the Hopi people. In fact, there are prayer feathers on willow branches all the way around it where they would come and have ceremonies and say their prayers. Beautiful place. Quiet and this blue-green water bubbling up out of there. Then on down, where they used to mine salt, where they would bring salt up the Salt Trail and up the Blue Springs Trail and stuff. I thought I'd seen some steep trails, you look at that Blue Springs Trail and Salt Trail, one wrong step and you can travel a long distance (laughs) before you hit anything but rock. Anyway, it was an exciting time.

Going on down the river and getting to see some of the other sights. I don't recall all of them. We had this anticipation building up because, well you know, we've had wrecks in Lava Falls and all like that. So the pucker factor is alive and well. I'm building up some anxiety as we get down there. We had two boats. The first one went on through, it was kind of a ride. You'd see them going down like that. We thought they did it, we can do it. So we go down in this thing and completely unexpected, we dive in, come up with this big, huge wave. It would come up and the raft shudders just like this and then it begins to fold over (sound effect) like this. There's a picture in this magazine that shows the beer sack, where you carry beer out of a gunny sack, and it's making a big, beautiful arc (sound effect) over the river. There under the lower part of it is the background, the boat, and the last guy on the lower left-hand side has blue trunks on. I'm coming off, and that's me. (both laugh) Me and the poophouse got unloaded at the same time, the portable toilet. I see this thing, it was sort of like the Poseidon Adventure where things were just floating around all over. I thought I could see the sign, sheriff drowns in Grand Canyon. (both laugh) So it was an exciting thing but eventually I came up. Fortunately I was near the raft. I had come up beside and I got ahold of the bow line, pulled myself up on top of the raft. There was a guy struggling at the other end and I crawled down there and got him. He was a dentist from someplace. I don't remember the guy's name. But anyway, I pulled him up. The raft was going on down and it kind of went into a little back eddy as we got over. We managed to stabilize it and get ahold of a tree and pull it over gradually. Later, when everybody got back together we righted the thing. It was like tipping over a huge mountain. But we got the boat righted up and nobody really got hurt. One guy, when he came up by a ledge, he was so excited, he says there was a rattlesnake poised there going (sound effect), like that, and he thought, oh, my goodness. So apparently he went down a little bit further.

TM: (laughs) To get to shore.

JR: Yeah.

TM: So the first boat made it okay. The first boat would have been down below you, they started picking up the...

JR: And they are the ones that did the picture. The one guy was on there was a foreign photographer, I think he was from Germany, but he did these photos. In fact, the written story in this Bunte magazine is in German and we had to translate it. We got a copy of it. I've still got that. It tells the story, shows the pictures where you go under the bridge up at Marble Canyon, and a lot of things, at Elves Chasm and stuff like that, bathing where you're laying in the mud and everybody gets up and does the booger thing to everybody else. Those were just really special memories of our adventure there. So it kind of locked in my mind for...

TM: Did you lose anything off the boat? I mean, how much besides the pooper, I guess, what else...

JR: Yeah. Oh, (laughs) I lost a guitar and a pair of boots but that was... I had other stuff. You're living in your skivvies, you're living in shorts.

TM: Do you remember who was driving the boats?

JR: Jed, Jed.

TM: Was Jerry on that trip? Was he driving?

JR: Yes, yes, he was there.

TM: Okay. So Jerry would have been driving one boat.

JR: Uh huh. And Wolfman, Wolfman was there. I forget his name but... Then, goodness, Jed was the boatman. In fact, there's a picture of him in this magazine. He's got an old umbrella that's got about three veins sticking up and he's got it over his head like this (both laugh). I don't remember his last name, but he was an interesting guy. He was a boatman also.

TM: Hmm, hmm. So you got the boat back over, everybody got back together, nobody was hurt?

JR: Yeah. Yeah. Nobody was really hurt. I mean, a few little scrapes and scratches.

TM: And off you went.

JR: I was a scared guy, I can tell you that. (laughs)

TM: I bet. So down to Diamond Creek then and took the boats all apart. Put them on big trucks and got in the back of the truck and...

JR: Hauled back out. Yeah, it was great. Hot. I can remember that part, it was a hot day. But it was a great adventure.

TM: Did you do anything like that again on the river or was that your...

JR: No, we never flipped.

TM: No, no, I mean, did you go on more river trips.

JR: Yeah, yeah. Well, I went on another one in '93. Bill Diamond, and I got to take my wife on that one. Diamond River Expeditions. I think that was in '93 maybe, '95, something like that. It was a later trip before Bill passed away. I was fortunate that my wife and I got to go together. It was during the fall so we wore a lot of yellow raincoats cause it was rainy and stuff like that. But it was a great adventure.

I went several times with the Park Service. Going down looking for plane crashes. One of them, a guy had plummeted into the river. That little plane apparently submerged and wasn't found for a long time. I forget the circumstances but I remember that there was a plane crash. That was one of the things. Then they did another expeditionary thing where they would go and get to walk up through some of these side canyons. That was one of those that I got to go up to the sipapu. The other one was up at some of these other side canyons where there's a lot of petroglyphs and old dwellings and stuff like that. Firsthand chance to see these beautiful sights. How many people get to see that? So it was a once in a lifetime experience.

TM: Excellent. What else do you remember about park management, superintendents, working with the Park as your career went on? It sounds like maybe as your career progressed more and more in the politics and day-to-day bureaucracy of things.

JR: In the management of it. Uh huh. For the most part, there was a really good cooperation between the Park Service and the county sheriff's office. We had a deputy at Grand Canyon that was there for years, Steve Luckeson. I don't know if that name ever hits you. I think he still works up above Bullfrog. He may have retired by now. He worked for the Park Service up there. Anyway, he was our resident deputy there at the Grand Canyon for a number of years. His wife's name was Cheryl. She worked at the Canyon Squire. No children. He was the shotgun for our group up there.

TM: Okay.

JR: If you're fortunate enough to have some of the names of the early superintendents I'll probably say yes or no. I regret not being prepared.

TM: No worries. In the 1970s it would have been Dick Marks, Superintendent Marks.

JR: Umm hmm, umm hmm. I remember him. Who was the deputy superintendent? Bruce Shaw. Bruce Shaw was there. I was friends with Bruce. Ah goodness. Any later ones that you can...

TM: Well, Boyd Evison, I think, was in there. There were a number of superintendents in the 1980s. Marks was in the '80s. Course then Superintendent Arnberger came in in the '90s and then Superintendent Alston and Martin, who am I missing? Rob Arnberger, Joe Alston, those are some of the people from the '90s and 2000s. I'm trying to think of who... Must have been Dick Marks in the 1980s.

JR: Yeah, I think it was. I think it was. But anyway, I knew many of those guys. We had a very cordial relationship because usually they would do us the courtesy. They usually would be the first ones to get

the information from a search or from some sort of catastrophic event. Then we could kind of mobilize and get up there. They were, for the most part, the initial response. Particularly when it becomes either cars driving off the edge intentionally or jumpers going off the edge, committing suicide. They had a crack team. I had never done any technical climbing before. We got to see the movies the night before and do all the things, get all our equipment together. I went up there thinking I don't want to ask my guys anything that I won't do myself. So I went up there and we got to the edge (laughs) and it's like this, you think, boy, I didn't realize it was that far down. (TM laughs) We did the basic rappelling, we did the basic knots, belays and stuff. It was my first introduction to technical rock climbing. Got a real crash course in it, a real appreciation. It just whetted my appetite. So over the years I'd have an opportunity to go do that, whether it's in Walnut Canyon or some other places. I never got to be expert at it but at least I got where... I did the last three years of my career here. I was on the technical rescue team for helicopters. I had never done that before. So learning all the stuff... Being able to suit up, they put a sling on you and you snap down. The helicopter will be over here running, about a hundred feet away, and then you snap their line into here, and he lifts you up so you can place a guy either on the edge of a cliff or strategically trying to make a body recovery. Then from there you determine can you get a litter down, can you get the guy; is there someone that can stabilize him; is he out of it or is he dead or whatever. That kind of experience of learning how to use those things. Never got over the thrill of when they put you on the end of the line and they're doing maneuvers. The helicopter's swinging like this in a hard turn and you're out on the end of this pendulum, you think, whoa, you pull some G forces. (laughs)

TM: Oh, my gosh.

JR: That was really a pucker factor. It's just great.

TM: I bet. (both laugh)

JR: Just great. I got to do that often. Some on real rescues, a lot of it on training, that gave me a lot more confidence. The first time I rappelled out of a helicopter there was another pucker factor. I thought just me and this rope? Yep, just me and the rope. (laughs) We did a lot of training down at Oak Creek and some of the other canyons around Flagstaff. It was a great experience because they had access to the DPS helicopter at that time. We got to be close friends with those guys. Very competent guys, much like the park guys that did the flying up there.

TM: I bet. So not only was it Grand Canyon National Park that you shared jurisdictional work with, but I would assume it was also Mojave County.

JR: We would work closely. There was a real close understanding among the sheriffs—if you need help, you call us and if we need it we're gonna call you. To the degree that help was there, to the degree that they could spare it, they would give it, no cost or anything, just gratis. Yeah.

TM: Nice.

JR: It was a really good turn of... And you got a chance to get acquainted with the other sheriffs of the other counties, learn what some of their problems were. In my years as sheriff, and there were 32 years, I got a chance to do a lot of really close friendships and bonding. Learned about these men, their backgrounds, and appreciate, learning what makes them tick. So it was good.

TM: Nice. Yeah. I think about Grand Canyon, which encompasses two counties in the state here, Mojave and Coconino, so it's a geographical place that shares many different jurisdictional boundaries, Native American issues and...

JR: We had a lot of search and rescue on the North Rim because our officer up there, Cecil Cram, would learn about it. Jason Bundy was the other officer in later years that was there. He just got through retiring this last year. Jason Bundy. Good guy. He just finished his 30 years. So we would do search and rescue, bring the guys up and start looking. We, many times, had kids that would wander off from their parents looking at the sights and doing different things and just get lost. Getting lost in that country's pretty hazardous, especially a kid, frightened. Deep canyons and cliffs and stuff like that. There were a number of those. I have memories of some of those that were heartbreaking because you find them and have to explain to the family.

TM: Yeah. Just recently, a year or two ago, there was a group of hikers and one person went one way and they never saw him again. I mean, the vegetation's very heavy, very thick. It's very easy to get separated and then hard to get home.

JR: The Peaks have been a major attraction for that. When I was first elected sheriff, I think it was over the New Year's holiday, there was a major snowstorm that had come into the Peaks. I mean, this thing hit. The people that went up there, I think there were five people, one of them was Clint Smith's son. Clint Smith was the Maricopa County Manager. It was his son, a very large, very heavy young man, and some of his friends and a girl went up the Peaks with them. They hiked up, not really prepared for any kind of weather, not having any technical equipment stuff. The storm hit and they got chilled, they got confused. They got in big trouble. The girl apparently chose not to get in a sleeping bag with one of the guys and she froze to death. Clint Smith's son froze most all of his fingers off, a couple of his toes. Several of his fingers were frozen, lost them to frostbite. It was a real tragic situation.

TM: That was 1974?

JR: Uh huh. January 1, I think it was, in 1974. There were five people up there. She was the only fatality, but a lot of the others suffered. We learned a lot about mountain rescue at that thing. In another search, there were some young men that, and I forget where they were from, they're Fernandez brothers. We had another storm come in and we learned about it after the fact—"My family was up there hiking. We don't know, they were supposed to be back two nights ago, we haven't heard from them." So we're getting a late time notification. We finally located them in a couple of days. They were all naked. They had pulled off all their clothes and died completely of exposure, probably 75 yards apart from each other.

TM: Yeah. (pause) For the decades that you were sheriff, what changes did you see? I was just curious, you mentioned when you first settled with your family in Bellemont, the population of Flagstaff was 6,000 or 7,000.

JR: Yeah, it was very small.

TM: Now it's 60,000 or 70,000.

JR: Yes, it is. The university is a major source of growth here. I think they've got like 28,000 students. Every place you drive you get new chicken houses built up seven stories to house the students. So somebody's making some money from it, I guess.

TM: So these changes that you've seen to Flagstaff as it builds up and now deals with infrastructural issues, road issues, the roads aren't big enough, as you mentioned you've gotta drive across town to pick up your wife and come back to this side of town and you're thinking, well, I'm gonna need an hour to do that. I used to need 10/15 minutes.

JR: Umm hmm, umm hmm.

TM: What changes like this did you see within the sheriff's department when the sheriff's department related to either Grand Canyon or Mojave County or up to Page? What other things have happened that you've seen?

JR: There were more and more calls for service in the outlying areas. Hence, for the first time... For instance south of Flagstaff, south of Mormon Lake, there's a little community called Blue Ridge. Developers had gotten private property and developed a little housing unit. They had got some water and a few wells and stuff, but mostly the people, they had electricity, they had to have propane, a lot of them had wood stoves. It becomes a burglar's paradise because it's so remote. People leave, some of them use it for summer homes, and they become a target of opportunity. Other people go up and they get lost or the kids go out in the woods so you get search and rescue going there. Then you got some stupid people that do things like firearms, shooting around houses and stuff like that. In a county this size we have no shortage of nuts (laughs). I think they come here. Traffic, though, is one of the main things, I think, that has affected Flagstaff. Just the day-to-day life—traffic volume, traffic control, traffic accidents. When you put this many people in the same volume of area, you create problems with each other. There's unhappiness, there's space requirements. For the most part the old folks that live here, old like me, appreciated their independence. They came from self-sustaining people and they appreciated that privacy. They didn't like the crowding hence they move out to the other side, Doney Park, out through these rural areas. Many of them still continue that process. But they work in Flagstaff. They work either for the university or for W. L. Gore, a lot of the other institutions and things around here. So the increase in people that find viable jobs here in this region have played a big role. Most of it good because it brings a greater economy and wealth into the community. The builders have been able to build more and more homes, so subdivisions are not lacking in this area. I find some of the traffic and just some of the restrictions that come about with that.

TM: You know, it was interesting, I was thinking about our next door neighbor here, Jim Sanders, who you had mentioned taught you English in high school.

JR: Uh huh. (laughs)

TM: Jim and the Northern Arizona Hiking Club that Harvey Butchart was a member of wanted to go to Rainbow Bridge. They borrowed a stake bed truck from the county here and drove all the way out to Rainbow Bridge. They made their hike and drove all the way back. I mean, it was a time when...

JR: Umm hmm, you could do that.

TM: ...as a community you kind of knew people.



JR: Yeah.

TM: What people of the community do you remember? You mentioned Platt Cline, Jim Sanders. Harvey. Did you know Harvey? Did you talk to Harvey?

JR: Not personally. I knew of him. I saw him a time or two. He was a wonderful guy and a wonderful hiker, but I never did really get acquainted with him. I mean, he carried this legend about himself. A loner, you know, just a guy who was the one who wrote *The Thousand Mile Summer*. He was a noted hiker and he wrote a book about it. Anyway, he was another one of those kind of independent guys that would go back and against all knowledge... Well, again, at that time you just do it, you just do it, I think. He was a noted hiker. I don't think the Park Service put any restrictions on him saying "You can't go down there, you can't go down there, you ought not to do that."

TM: They did for crossing the river with his air mattress. There was much...

JR: Oh, okay. (laughs)

TM: ...kerfuffle. And, of course, Boyd Moore drowned on a river crossing with Harvey. That was in the '50s, though. It's interesting because you were mentioning why people came to Flagstaff, resilient people that wanted some space, that wanted some room, and now today those resilient people have left (laughs), they're moving out.

JR: They have. I find a great respect for people like Platt Cline. People like the Babbitts who have invested when they first came here from Cincinnati in business, in dry goods, in groceries, clothing, pharmacies, I think they had pharmacies, and lumber, and automobile things and, of course, the ranching. They did very well. They started in the outlying area of Indian trading posts and interacting in a very positive way with the native people so that brought in a real cross-cultural thing that exists to this day. I gotta say I've really been blessed with my knowledge and my interaction with the native people here, primarily Navajos, because that is the dominant tribe. But Hopis as well. Platt and Barbara Cline introduced me, when I lived with them, as almost like a son. They had many Hopi friends and they would come into Flagstaff from Moenkopi and across the Second Mesa and some of these other places of communities for the Hopi people. They would bring the Clines baskets and little pots. Love gifts.

TM: Nice.

JR: The Clines treasured those. So I picked up on some of that and in later years as a young officer, prior to even being a sheriff, I would go out to Moenkopi and I met Daisy Nelson. Daisy was a friend of the Clines. She lived there and she said "Come on in, Joe. I'm fixing to make piki bread." I thought, oh, this is great. There's a little, small shed out in back, probably six feet by eight feet, like a overgrown doghouse with a little door you go in and there she sits down. There was a small place for stones and a fire that they would build. They would feed it with like kindling out of cedar wood and it would have such a pleasant aroma, the smoke and the thing, and feed that fire. It would pop and crackle. The stone where they'd make this piki is a local, native stone that is like a flagstone and over the period of time it looks like Teflon. They would take watermelon seeds and put on that. The watermelon seeds would fry and they would smooth it and it would season. The oil from the watermelon seeds would season that. Then they'd take the piki bread, which is blue corn ground real fine, and mix that into a batter, thinner than a pancake batter. Then take their hands and put it in the cup of their hand and (sound effect) it would hit

this hot stone and go (sound effect). Then they would roll it like this. It would make almost like a cinnamon roll thing, but in this case made out of real thin fry bread, blue corn fry bread. I would sit there and she would tell me the stories of their origins, the origin of the people.

TM: Wow.

JR: How they would come from the sipapu. It would touch my heart, it still does. To be invited into that culture and share with that people, and try to pick up one or two words. But to learn of the rich things, their kachinas and stuff like that. As a Christian I don't hold to that but I have grown to have a real appreciation and a real respect for what makes those people who they are.

TM: Oh, yeah.

JR: They have probably more than any other tribe been able to protect their beliefs and their religion and their ceremonies far greater than a lot of the other tribes have. I would learn a little greeting like you say to a Navajo woman "[Navajo phrase]" which is a greeting. I did that to a Hopi woman recently. I said "[Navajo phrase]", she says "I'm Hopi." I says "Oops. [Hopi phrase]." She says "That's better." (both laugh) I said, that's about the extent of my Hopi. (laughs)

TM: That's gotta be hard for all the Native American groups to hang onto their tradition.

JR: It is. Oppressing of the culture, working, education, all those kinds of things.

TM: Absolutely. All these things.

JR: And then economy. Most of the people out there are dirt poor. They're just dirt poor. My heart goes out to them. I think the Navajo grandmothers hold this tribe together. They're the glue, they're the epoxy that holds a lot of the families together. The other youngsters, they go out and get drunk and do things, have kids, and Grandma winds up taking care of the kids, supporting them and feeding them. So they are a rich diamond in that culture, in that tradition.

TM: You brought some material here today. What did you bring us?

JR: This is from Wupatki, it's an interesting little story. One morning we get a call early from the National Park Service guy at Wupatki National Monument, about 30 miles north of Flagstaff saying "We got a guy up on our flag pole. We got about a 35 foot flagpole and he's tied a small plastic boat up on this thing and winched himself up there during the night. Underneath it he has got a facsimile of a body hanging underneath it with the name of the President, George Bush, and he's got a flag hanging down." He's quite a character. They've had trouble with him before, he's been a problem employee. So this guy has winched himself up on top. J.D. Protiva was his name, P-r-o-t-i-v-a, and he had been a troubled guy. The Park Service had had problems with him for taking his mules and going up on the back side of the Peaks up the old water works road and being up there. So they've had a lot of interchange with him. Anyway, he did this to make a big statement. So I went up there. I had known of the guy. They had a couple of mattresses underneath this flagpole like if he does a nosedive on there we're gonna try to catch him. Well, somebody had, from another construction site, one of these scissor lifts. I said, "Let me try to get up there and see. "If you come I'm gonna jump. I'm gonna jump, Joe." I said "Well, JD, you hang on, I want to get up there and talk to you." He managed to hang on and I got up there. They jacked this thing up. Now, the wind up there's blowing about 30/35 miles, so we're both going... He's on the flagpole and

I'm on this thing. I thought, Lord, I sure hope he doesn't jump (laughs). Anyway, I talked to him at length and finally talked to him and I said "JD, you don't need to hurt yourself. You don't need to do this." "Well, the Park Service, they're not gonna give me my retirement," which was an issue that he had a fit over. I finally talked to him and got the guy down. But it was touch and go there for a little bit because he had this rope around his neck, you can see it here and it was tied. He tied it around his neck so, in other words, if he does jump he's gonna...

TM: He's gonna hang himself.

JR: ... hang himself up on top of this flagpole. It was kind of a fun thing. It wasn't really fun, it was exciting (laughs), but anyway, to be able to get him down like this. We kind of became a little bit more friends after that. He hung around for a period of time. I don't know that he still lives up here. He was an interesting guy. He found himself a large magnet so he didn't have to pay his electric bill. He put a magnet on his meter.

TM: And that stopped the little wheel.

JR: Yeah, it stopped the little wheel from turning. (laughs) Anyway, like I say, he was a character. There's some of the things on this that talked about him. That was an exciting thing. That was one of the little nuggets that...

TM: I think of the Protivas, a local family here, and Frank Protiva, who perished in a plane crash with Tom Moody. It was back in the 1990s, 2000s-ish. They ran into maybe ice stuff flying out of Flagstaff trying to get down to the Valley and they went down south of town.

JR: I've seen a lot of plane crashes like that.

TM: Hmm. Yeah, the altitude density. I mean, here we are pretty high and I think pilots weren't figuring that the air is so thin. You load up with fuel, and then you run out of runway. They can't get up. Anyway, I digress.

JR: We've seen that. One of the kinds of things that I have grown to appreciate all the time, I appreciate the history of our people here, the ranchers. My grandfather worked for John Babbitt. He would cut fence posts and corral posts and stuff like that and haul them in his old truck up and build fence for Babbitts. So I became acquainted with some of the Babbitts and, of course, I worked for my grandpa. He would go down to... He worked out by Ash Fork cutting posts and I had a little personal thing. You take a double bitted axe, we didn't have chainsaws. You'd cut everything with an axe. You bury your axe in the side of a tree and you take your file. If the axe is buried like this, you file into it like this to sharpen it and then you turn it over and file the other side. That makes it really razor sharp. So I (sound effect) and I thought, uh oh. So anyway, I cut this around here. This one was a later accident, but I cut this around here and, man, the old blood, and it hurt like the dickens. I cut it clear to the bone. I took my bandana and wrapped it and Grandpa comes up. He says "What do you got?" I said "Well, I hurt myself." "Well, let me see it." I said "Well, okay," so I unwrapped it. "Oh," he says, "that's just a learning scratch. Let's put some coal oil on it and you can get back to work." (both laugh) The dry sense of humor of an old Texas cowboy. But I learned a lot about hard work. I learned about honor. I learned about trust and I learned a lot about sweating from that man. Anyway, he was friends with John Babbitt. There's a book called *The CO Bar* which is their brand for the Babbitt ranches, he authored that book with some of the great stories and the sights around Babbitt's ranches. He gave me a copy of it. It says "To Joe Richards,

the best sheriff Coconino County has ever had.” It just touched me again. Just a great guy. Anyway, here’s some of the kinds of things. This is a picture that was built by a guy that Platt Cline knew.

TM: This is a picture of a wonderful cabin. It’s a two story cabin. It’s got a porch in the front. It’s got an upstairs window. It’s got a corrugated tin roof, a couple different fireplaces.

JR: It’s up on Hart Prairie Road.

TM: Who built this, do you know?

JR: Oh, my. I just had a blank, maybe I can think of it here. Anyway, he built this place. He would come into town. When he was about 90 years old, he and Platt were friends. It’s George Hochderffer, George Hochderffer, I think it is. Anyway, he was one of the early German families. The Michelbach’s were another. I was privileged to know Pete Michaelbach [sic], M-i-c-h-a-e-l-b-a-c-h. There was another old German by the name of Friedland. You’ve probably heard of Friedland Prairie being named after him.

TM: Yes.

JR: These families, they moved to this region. He homesteaded this land and he would go back and forth from Flagstaff. Many of them would plant potatoes. Grandpa Michelbach, when he would come into town, he’d bring his wagon full of potatoes. I remember as a boy going to Emerson School, he would go right down in front of it down Aspen Avenue. All the kids could get to run out and jump up on the wagon when Grandpa Michaelbach was there with his mules taking them out. He grew those potatoes up on the mountain near this place here. So anyway, George Hochderffer, was friends with Platt Cline, he walks into Platt’s office one day and Platt says “George, how are you been doing?” “I’m doing alright.” He says “What’s the cane for?” He says “My doctor told me I should carry a cane.” (both laugh) A little story like that was just a real nugget.

TM: I’m gonna ask you to write on the back of these photographs names of the people, what you remember about them. Don’t have to do it today but the first thing I do when I see a picture like this is I look on the back. Where, what year, who, how.

JR: If I can get some of that. This guy has some interesting things over here at the Pioneers Historical Society. One of these photographs similar to that is a painting and I think I did one of the sketching of that thing that’s over here in the Pioneers Historical Society.

TM: It’s a gorgeous cabin.

JR: It is.

TM: Is it still standing?

JR: Yes, and it has been bought by the people that own the light company. They’re living up there right now, commuting back and forth. They’re having another home adjacent on the property built for themselves. Delightful people. Here’s another old homestead that was up there that has a lot of beautiful...

TM: This is great. This actually looks like possibly a barn building. A high pitched roof, split rail fencing here, grass, aspen trees, looks like pines in the background.

JR: This one here is up on the side of the Peaks, and that was hand built by a German guy. Let me see if I can think of his name. I should have written some of this stuff down, but I didn't.

TM: But you're gonna.

JR: Yeah, I'm going to. Anyway, you can see they have tongue and groove.

TM: Which is a really nice.

JR: This cabin has been taken down and restored and it's over here in the city park right now.

TM: Oh, wow. Okay.

JR: It's completely redone. This had a basement in it. It now doesn't, but it's essentially the same thing. As a boy we would go up there. Platt Cline's son and I would camp out by this cabin and cook out and occasionally miss school. (laughs)

I'm not sure, I think that was up on the north side of the Peaks. It's an old well where they would roll the buckets down.

TM: There's a picture of a well. There's a building in the back which almost looks adobe.

JR: It does. Now, that would be I think near some of the Espiel/Auza. They were sheep people that came here and still [do]. In the old days they would bring sheep up, herd them up here, and then in the winter they would herd them back down in the valley. In the summer months this would be some of their grazing lands.

TM: In theory, the Schnebly Hill Road was used to get the sheep from the Verde up to the highlands in the summer and then right back down again.

JR: Yeah. That old road you can still see it, it still exists. I don't know if I have stories of this one. It's on the east side of Mount Elden where they blasted through that. That's an old tunnel that goes to the inner basin of the Peaks. It's called the Water Works Road.

TM: The Water Trail Road.

JR: I jogged that a time or two with a police officer. It's about 17 miles, that thing. Every step you take you get less air to breathe.

TM: It's right uphill, steep climb.

JR: By Locket Meadow.

TM: These are great black and white photos. They're 10" by 12"s. They're really nice pictures. A picture of the Peaks here.

JR: Here's the one that shows the old... This is an interesting sight because I've done a painting of this one, right up here. It's interesting to me because it represents the site of a 1940-something B24 bomber and they all perished in a snowstorm. My dad was one of the guards at Navajo Army Depot. He went with the rescue crew up there to retrieve the bodies and bring them down.

TM: Is that right? Is that right?

JR: Yeah.

TM: Did he talk about that? Did you talk about it much?

JR: No, not much. No, he just said...

TM: "We did that."

JR: ...we just did that. This is up near that cabin. Thick, beautiful stands of aspen trees.

TM: Gorgeous aspens. Nice black and white pictures.

JR: They are one of my favorite trees to paint. (pause) These are petroglyphs up on the rocks of deer being hung on a lodgepole. They're still viable and they're still up there.

TM: This is in the basalt rocks up on the sides of the Peaks there.

JR: Umm hmm. I wish I could connect right now with this guy's name. I'll have to add to that later. But anyway, the source of this cabin's water, there were a series of three or four springs that he dug out a little pond and made it there. There's a still a little concrete cabin about the size of this table and the spring's still up. It's a little concrete basin, but it provided water for the cabin.

TM: It's a spring house. Yeah, yeah.

JR: Interesting.

TM: Nice. Well, water was a big deal and to have water here at the Peaks, that's what got the railroad up here. I mean, everybody was looking for water. It was key.

JR: Yeah.

TM: Those are some great pictures.

JR: This is on the north side of the Peaks.

TM: When did you take these pictures?

JR: Oh, 1960-ish. Long time ago.

TM: So these cabins were clearly from the 1800s is my guess.

JR: Oh, yeah.

TM: This is a picture of a cabin from the 1860s. Most of the shingles are off major parts of the roof.

JR: I went up there with Cecil Richardson, the former sheriff. He was quite a photographer. He told me that the story of this is that a bear got into the cabin. He went up here in his attic and the bear just absolutely ravished the lower part of the cabin and apparently left and went away. I guess the guy wasn't hurt or anything like that.

TM: Oh, my gosh.

JR: But it was kind of an interesting little story. I wish that I had brought some more of those things that I could use for talking points, but I didn't.

TM: No worries, no worries.

JR: Have I left anything that you want to talk about?

TM: You know, I typically wrap these interviews up with a question.

JR: Okay.

TM: What would you want to say to someone who's gonna listen to this tape 50 years from now?

JR: (pause) Hmm. I have been blessed to be a part of the history, the rich history, of this community. Of its people, the ranchers, the forest people, the Native people. Being exposed to those kinds of things, whether it's the cattlemen or whether the Navajos. I have been privileged to go to Navajo weddings and funerals and house blessings and things like that. It has added a great richness to my life and my experiences. I went to school here, was brought up here, got married here and raised our children here. We have four lovely daughters and a whole passel of grandkids. The Lord has been good to me in my career. In 44 years in law enforcement I never had to shoot anybody and I never got shot. I've come close a time or two, I really did, sitting across the table from a guy with a gun just like we're sitting right here. But the Lord watched after me and I've had a really great life, and a safe life, and good health. Until the past couple of years I've been a long-distance runner. I would just love it, that was my life, in all kinds of weather and snow and ice and everything. I miss that, I really do. My wife used to say "Boy, you're grouchy. Why don't you go out and run?" (both laugh) So those are some of the little things that I think I'm proud of. My life experiences, the things that I have been privileged to be a part of, whether it was tragedy or a lot of fun things. That's it.

TM: Sheriff Joe Richards, thank you very much for participating in the Grand Canyon Historical Society Oral History interview. Today is the 26<sup>th</sup> of August, 2017. My name's Tom Martin. This has been a real pleasure. Thank you very much.

JR: Thank you, sir, for having me.