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Dorothy Huyck's National Park Service Oral History Project, 1942-1987



Mary G. Gonzales
September 22, 1978

Interview conducted by Dorothy B. Huyck
Transcribed by Rev.com
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[START OF TAPE]

Dorothy Huyck: 00:00 The date is September 22nd, 1978. I'm Dorothy Huyck. I will be interviewing Mary G. Gonzalez, who is payroll supervisor in the Southwest Regional Office, Santa Fe.

Dorothy Huyck: 00:13 Could I ask how you first became acquainted with the National Park Service?

Mary G. Gonzales: 00:22 Actually, it was referred to me by a friend. I was staying home at the time between my federal service. I resigned to stay home with my youngster, who's now 11. I stayed home about eight months. That was the extent of it, but then I was interested in getting back to work. I had a youngster that was a junior then at the time. So, I figured I needed rest in between and better get to work because he's going to need money for school.

Dorothy Huyck: 00:55 And you worked for the federal government again?

Mary G. Gonzales: 00:58 Oh yes, I've got 25 years service. Over, now.

Dorothy Huyck: 01:01 What agencies had you worked for before the Park Service?

Mary G. Gonzales: 01:07 Well, 12 years Selective Service and, oh, three with other – I started with the VA back in 1950. Then I worked with the Navy Department when my husband was in the service, then Selective Service and Forest Service in between, back to Selective Service. Then my stay home awhile and with Park Service in '68.

Dorothy Huyck: 01:38 Since '68. And in what position did you enter the Park Service?

Mary G. Gonzales: 01:43 Clerk-typist.

Dorothy Huyck: 01:44 And what grade?

Mary G. Gonzales: 01:46 Three.

Dorothy Huyck: 01:58 And what grade are you currently?

Mary G. Gonzales: 01:58 Seven.

Dorothy Huyck: 02:01 Between the time that you came in 1968 and your current position, you must have gone through a lot of changes.

Mary G. Gonzales: 02:04 Actually at the clerk-typist job, I was there approximately two weeks and a vacancy occurred in payroll and I had done payroll work before. So, I was moved into that position as a four, later given a temporary promotion to a five that was made permanent later on. Then when DIPS came into being, I was promoted to a six and later on to a seven. I think it was 1973 that I got the promotion to the seven. There's been no activity since then.

Dorothy Huyck: 02:41 Can I go back in history a bit and ask you where and when you were born?

Mary G. Gonzales: 02:46 Here in Santa Fe, October the 31st, 1931. I told you October 31st. That's my daughter's birthday. Gets pretty bad if you can't remember your own birthday! The 19th.

Dorothy Huyck: 03:01 Thank you. How many brothers and sisters did you have?

Mary G. Gonzales: 03:05 One.

Dorothy Huyck: 03:07 Were you the oldest?

Mary G. Gonzales: 03:08 No, my brother's older than I am.

Dorothy Huyck: 03:14 How many years older is he?

Mary G. Gonzales: 03:15 Five.

Dorothy Huyck: 03:15 And you grew up in Santa Fe?

Mary G. Gonzales: 03:23 Yes.

Dorothy Huyck: 03:25 What was your father's occupation?

Mary G. Gonzales: 03:28 My father died when I was about two or three years old.

Dorothy Huyck: 03:30 And what about your mother?

Mary G. Gonzales: 03:35 My mother was a dishwasher.

Dorothy Huyck: 03:40 Mm-hmm (affirmative). In a restaurant?

Mary G. Gonzales: 03:41 Mm-hmm (affirmative). She's a deaf-mute.

Dorothy Huyck: 03:45 I see. Had you [inaudible 00:03:47]?

Mary G. Gonzales: 03:46 No.

Dorothy Huyck: 03:47 Is she still alive?

Mary G. Gonzales: 03:50 She lives with me now.

Dorothy Huyck: 03:52 You attended high school in Santa Fe?

Mary G. Gonzales: 03:55 Yes.

Dorothy Huyck: 03:56 And graduated from Santa Fe High School?

Mary G. Gonzales: 03:58 No. Loretto Academy.

Dorothy Huyck: 04:11 I see. And what year did you graduate?

Mary G. Gonzales: 04:11 '49.

Dorothy Huyck: 04:11 Did you have any schooling after?

Mary G. Gonzales: 04:15 No. Married and had over half a dozen kids.

Dorothy Huyck: 04:22 If your mother was a deaf-mute, who was it that encouraged you? Maybe your mother did – while you were in high school? Who was it that encouraged you? Or maybe no one did.

Mary G. Gonzales: 04:35 Possibly my mother and teachers.

Dorothy Huyck: 04:39 Teachers. And did they encourage you to think of continuing after high school?

Mary G. Gonzales: 04:48 Yes. In fact, I was eligible for a scholarship at the time, but at that time it was just a matter of the tuition and not board and room and finances were such that I couldn't take it.

Dorothy Huyck: 05:01 And where was the scholarship going to apply?

Mary G. Gonzales: 05:05 This would have been Kansas. What is it – It's not the Heights, Loretto Heights?

Dorothy Huyck: 05:13 Oh, Webster College?

Mary G. Gonzales: 05:15 Webster.

Dorothy Huyck: 05:16 Kansas City.

Mary G. Gonzales: 05:17 Right. It was run by the Sisters of Loretto at the time.

Dorothy Huyck: 05:22 I think it is no longer?

Mary G. Gonzales: 05:23 No longer.

Dorothy Huyck: 05:25 But it only provided tuition?

Mary G. Gonzales: 05:25 Right.

Dorothy Huyck: 05:25 It would've been up to you to find your funds for room and board?

Mary G. Gonzales: 05:31 Right.

Dorothy Huyck: 05:34 Did anybody make any suggestions about how that might have been done?

Mary G. Gonzales: 05:37 No, not really.

Dorothy Huyck: 05:40 So you had some encouragement from your teachers during the high school process, although not for anything after, is that right?

Mary G. Gonzales: 05:49 Right.

Dorothy Huyck: 05:51 Did you take math and science in high school?

Mary G. Gonzales: 05:52 Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Dorothy Huyck: 05:59 The usual college preparatory course or—?

Mary G. Gonzales: 05:59 It was chemistry. And what other courses were offered at the time? Geometry. Chemistry. [Unintelligible] math. It meant that was—

Dorothy Huyck: 06:14 Did you do algebra?

Mary G. Gonzales: 06:14 Yes. That was as freshmen.

Dorothy Huyck: 06:22 As you were growing up, did you play with boys?

Mary G. Gonzales: 06:26 I was very much a tomboy, played baseball with them.

Dorothy Huyck: 06:32 And as you entered the teenage years, were you encouraged to become something more of a lady?

Mary G. Gonzales: 06:40 Probably, going to – It was – Loretto was an all-girls school. Probably so, because there was the all-boys school across the bridge a ways.

Dorothy Huyck: 06:52 And did you go along with them?

Mary G. Gonzales: 06:54 Yes.

Dorothy Huyck: 07:01 Were you able to participate in any extracurricular activities in high school that have been helpful in your Park Service career?

Mary G. Gonzales: 07:09 Not really.

Dorothy Huyck: 07:12 And had you been to any parks before you started working for Park Service?

Mary G. Gonzales: 07:17 The Caverns.

Dorothy Huyck: 07:19 Carlsbad?

Mary G. Gonzales: 07:20 Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Dorothy Huyck: 07:23 Since you've been in Park Service, have you found your supervisors to be encouraging, or discouraging, or possibly you encountered both?

Mary G. Gonzales: 07:35 Both at different times.

Dorothy Huyck: 07:39 How was encouragement shown?

Mary G. Gonzales: 07:43 Well, my work is praised. I've taken on, I guess, responsibilities that really nobody would have tackled, that's a thankless job in there. It is, but it's been all right. It's been gratifying.

Dorothy Huyck: 08:03 And how was discouragement shown?

Mary G. Gonzales: 08:07 Actually, I think it's in the series that they hold us in. That five, four – four series on payroll. They say you can go no higher on it.

Dorothy Huyck: 08:17 It's essentially a dead-end process.

Mary G. Gonzales: 08:21 Right.

Dorothy Huyck: 08:22 Have you reached the end of the line?

Mary G. Gonzales: 08:25 In that particular one, yes, and I'm not mobile.

Dorothy Huyck: 08:31 Is that a major factor, that you're not mobile? Is that important?

Mary G. Gonzales: 08:35 I would think so. Although I've seen positions created for men.

Dorothy Huyck: 08:41 Who were not mobile?

Mary G. Gonzales: 08:43 Well, they say they're mobile. I haven't seen them move.

Dorothy Huyck: 08:49 Have there been positions created in the same series or office for men?

Mary G. Gonzales: 08:55 Office. Not from the same series. In fact, it was, well, that kind of limited your applying for them because it was made a professional series.

Dorothy Huyck: 09:04 Is there any way that a person in your series can transfer into a professional series?

Mary G. Gonzales: 09:09 I don't believe so, without the training.

Dorothy Huyck: 09:12 Have you been given opportunities for additional training?

Mary G. Gonzales: 09:19 Supervisory training, but not training in another field. So that kind of limits me.

Dorothy Huyck: 09:29 Would a man have been given opportunities in additional training in another field so that he would be less limited?

Mary G. Gonzales: 09:36 I'm not familiar with that.

Dorothy Huyck: 09:37 So discouragement really is related to the series, one that's mainly because it's a dead-end kind of situation.

Mary G. Gonzales: 09:59 And I really feel I could do something else. I really – That would create a vacancy for somebody else as well. And I'm dead-ended at the job I'm at, unless I move.

Dorothy Huyck: 10:13 If you move, why wouldn't you be dead ended there?

Mary G. Gonzales: 10:18 I think some of the other series let you go further.

Dorothy Huyck: 10:22 Oh I see, you don't mean move geographically.

Mary G. Gonzales: 10:25 Well, geographically as well.

Dorothy Huyck: 10:29 If you were to move geographically to another location, and you stayed in this series, wouldn't you be up against the same problem?

Mary G. Gonzales: 10:35 Right.

Dorothy Huyck: 10:36 But you could conceivably move into a different series.

Mary G. Gonzales: 10:39 Right.

Dorothy Huyck: 10:39 Would you be training for that?

Mary G. Gonzales: 10:42 I would imagine I would. Anybody would in a different job to some extent.

Dorothy Huyck: 10:48 Does any of your background in working for the Forest Service or the Selective Service, the VA and the Navy and so forth, give you any qualifications for being in another series?

Mary G. Gonzales: 10:56 Yes. I've been a fiscal accounting clerk, I've been a personnel clerk, personnel assistant. I guess I'm good with figures, I end up doing that. I've been in accounting, I like that. Like I said, I've been in personnel.

Dorothy Huyck: 11:13 And these would all be in different series?

Mary G. Gonzales: 11:13 Yes.

Dorothy Huyck: 11:13 Have you ever inquired about the possibility of a different series?

Mary G. Gonzales: 11:24 Where I'm at? I was a 301. I was changed from a 301 to a 544, but because supposedly the duties were predominantly payroll. This was after we had babied it along. Because initially, when we went on the computer, the coordinator took on a 301 series because it was so varied, and it was computer and nobody really knew what they were doing. But once we got it settled, it was changed to a 544. The 301 series would have carried me further. But then that's the

way it was classified. I – This is true of my counterparts in the different regions.

- Dorothy Huyck: 12:14 So it's true across the whole country?
- Mary G. Gonzales: 12:16 Yes.
- Dorothy Huyck: 12:16 Yes.
- Mary G. Gonzales: 12:18 I understand they're still – Well, Rocky Mountain has an 8 and Washington has an 8. And although I understood Western was going to be reduced, she still retains her 8 and it's been more than two years. So, I really don't know what it's based on.
- Dorothy Huyck: 12:36 Any coursework that you've taken has been primarily supervisory?
- Mary G. Gonzales: 12:47 Yes.
- Dorothy Huyck: 12:47 How many people do you supervise?
- Mary G. Gonzales: 12:52 Three and a half, if you want to call my student. She comes in part-time with the other three.
- Dorothy Huyck: 13:17 And do you think that your specific talents and abilities are being highly used by Park Service?
- Mary G. Gonzales: 13:17 The abilities I have in payroll, yes. But not the others.
- Dorothy Huyck: 13:21 Is anybody acting to specifically encourage you? Have you encountered in Park Service any individual who's been particularly interested in encouraging your efforts?
- Mary G. Gonzales: 13:39 No, not really.
- Dorothy Huyck: 13:40 Do you think being a woman affects your opportunities for added responsibility and promotion?
- Mary G. Gonzales: 13:50 To some extent.
- Dorothy Huyck: 13:51 How did you see that?
- Mary G. Gonzales: 13:57 Probably the mobility bit. A man is, well, generally the major wage-earner, so he can move around, and his wife

will go with him. And most of the higher positions are held by men.

- Dorothy Huyck: 14:14 Do you see that changing at all?
- Mary G. Gonzales: 14:16 Very slowly. It is changing. Hopefully it'll change more.
- Dorothy Huyck: 14:25 As you look ahead, say over the next five years, would you expect that things would shift and provide greater opportunities for a woman? Or how do you see it, say five years from now? How does that look?
- Mary G. Gonzales: 14:41 I can only judge from the past. It's been slow. It's been slow. Unless things drastically change, I don't imagine that they'll go that much at a faster pace.
- Dorothy Huyck: 14:57 There are some people who think of the National Park Services as a rather male-oriented organization. Do you?
- Mary G. Gonzales: 15:08 Well, here at Southwest it looks like it's getting quite a few women. We've got how many women superintendents now? Three? Well, Mintzmyer used to be, but she's deputy now. It's coming along. Probably not fast enough to suit me.
- Dorothy Huyck: 15:38 What would suit you, to use your phrase? In other words—
- Mary G. Gonzales: 15:43 I'd like to raise my high three before I retire. At my age, I'm 46, I'll be 47, I've got eight years. I've got over. I'll have over the 30, but I really won't have that much in retirement, if you look at it that way. Maybe it's a selfish point of view, but—
- Dorothy Huyck: 16:05 Well I think any person [inaudible 00:16:06] has to look where they've been and where they're going. [inaudible 00:16:17] So you could see these changes?
- Mary G. Gonzales: 16:21 Yes.
- Dorothy Huyck: 16:22 How slowly?
- Mary G. Gonzales: 16:23 Slowly.
- Dorothy Huyck: 16:25 If a young woman just out of high school, or maybe out of college, came to you and asked about working for the Park Service, would you encourage her?

Mary G. Gonzales: 16:35 I did. My daughter worked for Park Service for a while. She's trying to get back in, but she wants to stay home, but we've got that nepotism. So – and she's under my roof, so she's not looking here. She worked at Western region, she worked as an employee development clerk. Then she went to the Grand Canyon and resigned there because she, well, actually she was going up with a boyfriend up to Youngstown, but she's back home now. And she started as a three in three years. She's about – She quit as a six. Talk about mobility, she could have. And she still can if she gets back in. Yes, I encourage it. Especially with Park Service, they are good people. That I feel. It is kind of family oriented. When I say family-oriented, they take care of their own. I don't mean hiring families. I mean, they take care of their own. They seem to.

Dorothy Huyck: 17:43 Are there any jobs in Park Service you think women should not tackle?

Mary G. Gonzales: 17:57 No, if they're given the proper training, I think they can tackle almost anything. Especially if they want to and have the desire.

Dorothy Huyck: 18:12 May I ask if you are married?

Mary G. Gonzales: 18:13 Yes.

Dorothy Huyck: 18:13 When were you married?

Mary G. Gonzales: 18:16 Lord. 1950.

Dorothy Huyck: 18:20 And how many children do you have?

Mary G. Gonzales: 18:22 Seven.

Dorothy Huyck: 18:24 They're all living?

Mary G. Gonzales: 18:24 All living.

Dorothy Huyck: 18:28 And you managed to combine a career with raising your family, apparently. And you took how long a period of off?

Mary G. Gonzales: 18:36 Well, I've had periods in between, but none of them over a year.

Dorothy Huyck: 18:47 And what is your husband's occupation?

Mary G. Gonzales: 18:47 He's a banker.

Dorothy Huyck: 18:47 Here in Santa Fe?

Mary G. Gonzales: 18:47 Yes.

Dorothy Huyck: 18:59 I assume that he has been cooperating in some way or other or encouraging you some way or other if you maintained a family and a—

Mary G. Gonzales: 19:06 He is, he is. We get along very well.

Dorothy Huyck: 19:13 I've been asking you all kinds of questions. With regard to the Park Service, as differentiated from the Forest Service or the Select Service, is there anything else you'd like to comment on? That we haven't commented on?

Mary G. Gonzales: 19:31 Not that I can think of right now. I'd probably think of it as I was walking out the door.

Dorothy Huyck: 19:44 We can turn this off and let you think.

Mary G. Gonzales: 19:44 I really can't.

Dorothy Huyck: 19:45 All right, thank you.

Dorothy Huyck: 19:50 After she left, Mary Gonzales referred at some length to several other subjects, including mobility. Mobility in a geographic sense and mobility in an upward job mobility sense. She said that men are usually assumed to be geographically mobile, whether they are or are not. She also referred to positions that permitted men to be mobile by moving out of a dead-end series and into newly created positions in other series. This seems to be something she's experienced very specifically herself. She also referred to her own position as being stifling. She used this word twice in describing her own situation where, because of her series, she cannot move up and where she is not being given any training so that she could move laterally into another series and then possibly assume greater responsibility and be promoted. Finally, she referred to traditional attitudes in this part of the country where supervisors who are men are likely to be more traditional out of a Spanish heritage, more inclined to a macho, and that is her word, attitude toward women. And that this

attitude and tradition carries over into providing fewer opportunities for women.

[END OF TAPE]

[END OF INTERVIEW]