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**Beulah Sanborn  
December 1, 1962**

Interview conducted by S. Herbert Evison  
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MRS. H S. (BEULAH) SANBORN

REEL LIV,

SIDE 1

As reviewed by Mrs. Sanborn

## [START OF INTERVIEW]

Herbert Evison: This is Herbert Evison at Sedona on December 1, 1962, and with me are Beulah and H. S. Sanborn. Beulah tells me that her national park experience dates back to Yellowstone in 1916, and I know that she has some very interesting things to tell about Yellowstone in 1916 and in some of the years, not very many years after that.

Herbert Evison: Beulah, how about just letting me turn you loose?

Beulah Sanborn: Okeh. My father and I took a trip to the West and came back into Yellowstone through West Yellowstone, and we were waiting there for the stagecoaches to take us into the Wiley camps. I noticed some of the stagecoaches only had two horses, and some were bigger, had a seat way up high and they had four horses. So, I just uttered a little prayer and said, "Please, dear God, have a stagecoach come along with four horses and a high seat for us." So, when they called our names, lo and behold, we got up on a stagecoach just exactly like I wanted it. Our driver's name was Ladel Atkins, as I remember it. I am saying this because if this tape is ever given, some of his descendants might remember the name.

Beulah Sanborn: Well, we went from West Yellowstone to Madison Junction. At Madison Junction, Ladel Atkins, the driver – I forget whether he was called a scissorbill or a skinner, one or the other – said to me, "Would you like to ride up on this seat with me and help me drive?" Well, this to me was just like an invitation to going up into heaven. So, I jumped up on this high seat, and he let me drive up the old Madison Junction hill, which has been eliminated now. Of course, the horses couldn't do anything but just stay right on this dirt road. But I enjoyed that ride to Old Faithful.

Beulah Sanborn: At Old Faithful that evening about the time for the entertainment, somebody said "There's a bear up a tree," so we went out to look at the bear up a tree, and I thought, "Oh, how foolish to have anybody stay inside and not see this bear in a tree." It was my first sight of a bear. But I saw these college kids working, and I thought oh, how I would like to stay and work, as it wasn't time for school to begin. So, I went up to the manager and asked her if she had a job, that I would like to stay and work. She looked me over and said no.

Beulah Sanborn: So, then we went out to Thumb, and I encountered the manager there and asked if they had a job; no. So, then we went on to Canyon. By this time, I said, "I just simply have to stay here and get a job." Well, we went up Mount Washburn, and while we were up there – of course I didn't know the rules – I picked a few wildflowers and brought them back and presented them to the manager upon my return and asked her for a job. The manager said, "Can you peel potatoes?" I said "Oh, yes." She said,

“All right, you can have a job beginning tomorrow.”

Beulah Sanborn: So, the next morning I found myself in the kitchen with three big sacks of potatoes before me; peeling them by hand. And about the second or third day my poor fingers were bleeding. Oh, it was just awful. I looked over and I saw an old man washing the pots; the water was kind of greasy and boy, it looked good for these poor hands of mine. So, I ran over to the old man, and I said, “Aren’t you tired? Wouldn’t you like to sit down and peel my potatoes, and I’ll wash your pots?” “Oh,” he said, “that would be nice.” So, he went over and started to peel the potatoes, and I was washing the pots in the rather greasy water.

Beulah Sanborn: Well, to go ahead a little bit, Mr. Miles, who was then president of the Wiley Way, told me later, he said, “Beulah, I nearly lost my health certificate that day when we came into the kitchen and found you washing the pots in that greasy water.”

Beulah Sanborn: Well, while I was washing the pots, one of the cooks on the range became sick, fell over, they pulled her out of the kitchen, and the place was vacant on the range where she had been. So, I said to myself “Somebody had better get over there and help dish up this stuff.” So, I went over and began to dish it up. People didn't know me very well there yet, – I had only been there two or three days – so a waitress said to me, “Who are you?” And having heard a cook say this once, I said, “Well, I’m the second cook. Take it away.” Of course, I wasn’t the second cook at all; but by the end of the day the cook said to me, “Beulah, I wish you would stay right here with me.” And I said, “What about that cook that fainted, and you took off?” They said, “She isn’t coming back.” And I said, “You want me to stay here?”

Beulah Sanborn: And about this time Lady Mack appeared and she said, “Yes, Beulah, we would like to have you stay right here on the range and help the cook.” So, my salary was raised immediately from potato peeler-pot washer to cook, a rapid advance.

Beulah Sanborn: Well, about this time, Miss Hamilton, who was the head waitress, got real stingy with the skimmers and scissorbills and the employees in the employees’ dining room, and she wouldn't give them enough butter. So, these drivers of the stage coaches, they decided they would do something about it; so they brought a horse into the employees’ dining room, and the horse kicked and reared and turned over some of the tables, and I looked in there and I said to myself, “This is really the wild West,” and I was just tickled to death, you know, to have something like that happen.

Beulah Sanborn: Well about this time, a little bit later they said there was going to be a railroad strike, and they’ll just have to send the employees home; and I

said to myself, "Well, I don't want to go; I'm not ready." So, they said "Come and look at the list of the people that are to leave; we'll just leave a skeleton crew." And I looked at the list of the people that were to leave, and here was Beulah Brown. So, I had to think real fast, and I went to another employee who was a teacher in Pocatello; her name was Brown. And I said, "Aren't you anxious to get back to your school in Pocatello?" And she said "Yes." I said, "Now listen: when they call off the names for the stage coach, to leave, all you hear is the name Brown, and jump on that stage coach, and I will not be able to be found." "Oh," she said, "I would be so glad to go, Beulah, instead of staying."

Beulah Sanborn: All right. So, the morning the employees were to leave, I was out in the woods, and this other Brown answered to the name of Brown, jumped up on the stagecoach and away she went. So, after a while I meandered around, and the manager said, "Beulah, I thought you were on the list to go," and I said "Well, Miss Brown from Pocatello left. She is gone." And he looked at me and he said "Well, it doesn't make much difference." So, I felt a good deal better about that.

Beulah Sanborn: Well, the skeleton crew that was left at the Wiley Camp, of course, we had a lot of work to do. And I might add a little something funny about the Wiley Camps as it was then. For instance, the tent where my father and I stayed, was divided into four compartments. In the center there was a stove, and there was just canvas curtains in between these four beds. And if you wanted to get dressed by the stove, of course you had to go out in public; but you kind of dressed in or on your bed and then you went out to the stove to get warm. And on the beds, they had cotton blankets. Well, a notice came from the Health Department that they were not to use these cotton blankets anymore; they had to have sheets. Well, what the maids did with the cotton blankets was just take a whiskbroom and whisk them off and leave them on for the next party. And I said, "Well, I tell you, I just think people will freeze to death on sheets," and a lot of other people said, "I think so too; I think it's a terrible rule." But the rule had to be carried out.

Beulah Sanborn: Well, about this time there was a skeleton crew over at the Shaw and Powell Camp also, and they said they were going to have a dance over there. The Army, instead of rangers, were in control of Yellowstone at that time, and a soldier from down there at Canyon Camp asked me if I would like to go over to the dance, and I said "Yes, but how are we going to go?" And he said, "I guess we'll have to walk." So, about this time a woodcutter – I forget what his name was – asked me if I would like to go to the dance, and I said "Well, how are you going to go?" He said "Oh, we have got some horses and we're going to hitch up and we have got a carriage here and a lot of us are going." "Oh, good," I said, "that's fine." And I told Andy, I said "We're going to ride over in the coach, and I'll

just ride up on the front seat with the driver, and you can too.” So, each fellow thought I went to the dance with him. And on the way over, I said to myself, “Now, the first dance you are supposed to dance with the person that escorts you there, and I don't know how I am going to manage.” And I don't know how I did, but I guess I got along all right.

Beulah Sanborn: Well, that was my first year in Yellowstone. The next year was the year that I was teaching in Deer Lodge, Montana, and I said then, “I'm just about as near to Alaska as I'll ever be, so I think I had better take a trip up to Alaska.” That is a long interesting story which I won't go into now. So, when I came back from the Alaskan trip there was a note there at Deer Lodge and it said, “Dear Beulah, when you get back from your trip to Alaska come over to Yellowstone and we'll have a job for you.” So, I went back, and they had a job dishwashing by hand. And I must say it was very good exercise: bend down and wash, bend down and rinse, bend down and wipe. So, I enjoyed the rest of that season, and I took all the time that I could to do some hiking.

Beulah Sanborn: The next year I worked in the curio shop, and that was the only job in all my life that I didn't like, because here I was, caged in, walking back and forth behind these counters (and I couldn't make change, anyway), and so just as soon as I got out from behind the counter I would see people sitting in the lobby not doing anything; so I would go up to them and say “Wouldn't you like to take a hike toward the Canyon?” and I spent all the rest of my time taking people out to look at the Canyon, with no thought of remuneration, and of course I didn't get any.

Beulah Sanborn: The next winter down in Ogden, Utah, where I went next to teach, Mr. Hays or Mr. Miles, I forget which one it was, came down and said, “Beulah, we've heard about you taking people out for hikes up at the Canyon, and we would like to have you come back this year and be a guide.” And I said, “What else would I be supposed to do?” “Oh, just be a guide.” “Oh,” I said, “just be a guide? That would be wonderful.” So, back I went.

Beulah Sanborn: Well, the first day, I took a trip down Uncle Tom's Trail with my party in the morning; the next afternoon I took them to Artists Point. But the next morning, Lady Mack came to me and said, “One of the cooks is sick, Beulah. Will you go in and help Mrs. Angel?” And I said “Why, yes.” So, they didn't get any cook to help Mrs. Angel, and so I found myself on the range frying fish, opening cans, and heating up the vegetables. And my sister, who was at that time in Yellowstone, went to Lady Mack one day and she said “I just think you're imposing on Beulah, Lady Mack,” and Lady Mack said “I know I am, and just tell her she doesn't need to stay in the kitchen anymore; she must go to her guiding.” So, the next morning I started out again, guiding, down the trail every morning to the bottom of

the Lower Falls and to Artists Point in the afternoon. And never in all my life have I ever enjoyed every solitary moment of the day. Then in the evening, of course, we had our entertainment. Well, I had already learned some readings, which I gave, and then I decided I would make up a reading of my own, called "Mrs. Casey in Yellowstone Park," which I gave for years and years.

Beulah Sanborn: And then Robert Sterling Yard came through the park and was going to give a prize to the camp which gave the best entertainment; so, I composed this little skit called "Loading the Bus," which a great many people I suppose still living have seen.

Herbert Evison: What was that called, again?

Beulah Sanborn: "Loading the Bus." And we had a real yellow bus drive up, the transportation agent call the names, and different characters that were true to people that traveled through the park, were called from the audience, and got into the yellow bus. Well, we played that for years, and at Old Faithful, one of my children was the little Hamilton girl; and when I would get into the bus as Mrs. Casey with these kids, I would push them in and I would push them so hard that they would fall out of the other side of the bus, on their heads. In fact, I had Johnny Nichols and his brother Dean as my children at Mammoth. But they were all tough, and then they would climb back into the bus.

Beulah Sanborn: Now, I don't know where to go on from there, except then I went on to teach at Spokane, Washington. But one day Mr. Hays came to Spokane, Washington, and he invited me to breakfast at the Davenport Hotel and said, "Beulah, I would like to have you be manager at Mammoth." "Manager," I said, "at Mammoth! I have no ambitions along that line. I have been the guide and recreation leader at Canyon." "Well," he said, "I just feel like I am taking you to the brink of a precipice, but I believe you can do it." So, I did, and I was at Mammoth for two years as manager, and later at Old Faithful for five years. Then after that – or before that, I was married, and that's another career.

Herbert Evison: Beulah, this afternoon you called my attention to the fact that you had in print an account of the winter you spent at Old Faithful, and you haven't even mentioned that; and while I know that anybody interested if he searches hard enough can get your printed story somewhere, I would certainly like to have you put some of the highlights of that winter on tape. First, why you were there, what you were doing, and what it was like to spend a winter at Old Faithful.

Beulah Sanborn: That was the year in 1922 when I was at Canyon. And I knew Mr. Musser, the transportation agent at Canyon Hotel, and his wife, and I knew that

they had three children who had never had a chance to go to school but had tutors in the summer. So, I asked Mr. Musser if he would like to have a teacher for the children during the winter, and he said yes, and he said he would give me \$50 a month and board and room.

Beulah Sanborn: I had only taught in high school, but I got some grade schoolbooks and went in with the Mussers to Old Faithful. So, I was snowed in at Old Faithful from about the first of November until May. Mr. Musser had a little house down by the side of the Inn which he had heated with hot water. He took a pipe and laid it from his house over to the kitchen door of the Inn, so that I could walk from his house without having to shovel snow, up to the back steps of the kitchen on Old Faithful Inn, and he fixed a school room and a bedroom for me upstairs over the kitchen of Old Faithful Inn. So, I was the only person that slept in Old Faithful Inn.

Herbert Evison: Now you referred to him heating with hot water, but you didn't say anything about where that hot water came from.

Beulah Sanborn: I'm not sure what spring he used for heating his house, but there was a reservoir up above Old Faithful Inn that had warm water, and with that warm water he fixed a small electric plant for his house, and it never froze, of course. And then his bath house, he had water from a hot spring for that. We took our nice tub baths in this bath house. Then he had a greenhouse that was heated with hot water, but when he irrigated, he had to cool the hot water in order to grow the radishes and onions and cucumbers and strawberries and so forth that he had for us.

Herbert Evison: And that you had in there during the winter months?

Beulah Sanborn: Oh, yes. And then there was a piece of warm ground back of the Inn where he built a chicken house, and he had a supply of fresh eggs and chickens all winter long. And in this warm ground he would put wheat, and it would come up in just little bits of sprouts, and the chickens even had green stuff to eat. So, all of us were very happy eating green fresh foods all winter.

Herbert Evison: And fresh eggs.

Beulah Sanborn: And fresh eggs.

Herbert Evison: And I suppose an occasional fresh chicken.

Beulah Sanborn: Yes, sir. Every time we had a birthday, – and we tried to always have birthdays in winter, – we had great feasts. Mrs. Musser, a Norwegian cook, had marvelous food for us. Of course, he brought in his meat, everything for the winter.

- Beulah Sanborn: Now, our only visitors during the winter were two rangers from West Yellowstone who would come out once a month with the mail. They would ski up, and when a great big dish of green salad was put before them, it disappeared very quickly.
- Herbert Evison: Another thing that you haven't mentioned here was the fact that having decided to spend the winter there, and being snowed in, you learned to ski.
- Beulah Sanborn: Yes sir; skied every afternoon.
- Herbert Evison: I think I would like to have some more detail on that. And I was particularly interested in realizing that you had hiked – or skied – all the way from Old Faithful to West Yellowstone. I don't remember just how far that is, but its 25 or 30 miles, isn't it?
- Beulah Sanborn: It's about 30 or 32 miles. And Mrs. Musser and I of course did a good deal of skiing before this day in February when we started out on a trip to West Yellowstone. And we probably wouldn't have started on this trip except Mr. Musser finally was persuaded, after hearing that some rangers had said that we couldn't do it, and he took that as a challenge. And the morning that we started out skiing, he carried our packs for about five miles and gave us a boost. But it was dark before we got to Madison Junction ranger station, where we spent our first night. And we had quite a wild time there, because in the first place we wanted to go down to the Fire Hole River and get some water, and we couldn't make it; so, we just melted a little snow to have something to drink.
- Beulah Sanborn: Then the next morning, of course, we skied from Madison Junction ranger station into West Yellowstone. Well, the people knew that we were coming, in West Yellowstone, and we had a great reception in West Yellowstone. In fact, the night that they had the dance for us it was 48 below zero, but everybody in West Yellowstone came, and they had some kind of home-made beer that was a little warming. We stayed several days, and Mr. Musser called and said he and the boys were getting out of bread and he wished we would ski back. So Eivind Scoyen and I think Roy Frazier broke the trail for us back to Madison Junction, and they had some food cooking for us when we got in, as we couldn't ski as fast as they did; and then they skied back to West Yellowstone that night. So, we had great help.
- Beulah Sanborn: The next day we started up Madison Junction hill and because of a terrific blizzard – they said it was the worst in eleven years – we only made five miles all day long, and luckily got into the Fountain ranger station to stay all night. The next day (we of course had the phone there, and we called Mr. Musser and said we would start out the next morning) it was 36 degrees below zero and not good skiing weather, but we started out

anyway, and Mr. Musser said he would meet us.

Beulah Sanborn: Well, Mrs. Musser and I saw what we thought was a short-cut, but I noticed as we were making the short-cut that I was making very slow progress. She was breaking trail then; and I looked back, and I was going through to water, or to kind of a slush. And I heard Mr. Musser over in the woods, and he yelled, and he said, "My God, you are on Goose Lake! Get over here." And that was a warm water lake, and because it was 36 below zero it wasn't open, see, and that was why I was going through; I was heavier than Mrs. Musser. So, we got over in the woods. I had to take off my skis, and he had to make a fire and re-wax those skis before I could go on to Old Faithful.

Beulah Sanborn: So we were there until May, when we got out.

Herbert Evison: Beulah, when you went to Old Faithful to spend a winter there, if I remember rightly, you had never been on skis in your life before, and yet before the winter was over, you were able to make a trip to West Yellowstone and back. How did you learn?

Beulah Sanborn: Well, I didn't know that I was learning. The Musser family, of course, father and mother and the three boys all had skis, they knew how to ski, so they just gave me my skis and said, "Put on these skis and ski." So, it never occurred to me that I would fall down like beginners do now because they see other people falling. So once in a while I did fall, of course, and I thought my, that was surely most unusual and terrible. So, I feel that the psychology of not seeing people fall, and not ever hearing that anybody ever fell on skis, helped me to stay upright.

Herbert Evison: I was looking at the little book that you wrote about your winter in Old Faithful, and one of the things that I noticed was a picture of yourself with your snowshoes and your skis. And one of the surprising things about that to me was what seemed to me like a tremendous length of ski. They look like they're about nine or ten feet long.

Beulah Sanborn: I believe that I had an eight-foot ski; and I think that Eivind Scoyen skied with a six-foot ski. Not everybody had the same length ski.

Herbert Evison: Beulah, you mentioned a Lady Mack several times. Can you give us a little bit more of a name for her and an identification?

Beulah Sanborn: Miss Margaret McCartney, who was associated with the Wylie Camp and the Yellowstone Park Camps Company until she was seventy years old, when she retired. She at first in the Wylie Camp had charge, I think, of all of the camps, supervising them as to the housekeeping and kitchens and dining rooms. I might have mentioned about the Wiley Camp and told

you that we slept in tents. Well, the dining rooms in the Wiley Camps were also tents, and they had sawdust floors, long oilcloth-covered tables, and benches to sit on.

Herbert Evison: How long a table? Or how many could sit at a single table?

Beulah Sanborn: Well, I would think twelve or fourteen, if I remember rightly.

Herbert Evison: Not a table, in other words, that went the complete length of the tent. I had a vision of something like a logging camp, where you have one great long table going the length of it.

Herbert Evison: Before dinner, when we were talking over your years in Yellowstone you mentioned the fact that you made a trip around the world, and you told how you got the money to do it. I think that's a very interesting story. How about getting it on the tape?

Beulah Sanborn: Well, after I spent the winter in Yellowstone, it evoked a great deal of interest. In fact, the day that I came out of my hibernation, Mr. Hays asked me to speak to a Rotary Club in Livingston, which I did, and they seemed interested. So, I got the idea of writing up the story. That winter I was teaching English in the Lewis and Clark High School in Spokane; and with the help of the English Department, I wrote this little booklet. And when I found out from the superintendent of schools that I couldn't teach the next year unless I would go to summer school – which of course I wouldn't consider doing – then I thought I must get this publication out to earn some money to take a trip around the world.

Beulah Sanborn: So not only did I have this book, *My Winter in Geyserland*, published, but I published my collection of camp songs, which were contributions of many of the savages that are employees; then I also published my monologue, – *Mrs. Casey in Yellowstone Park*. And the remuneration from these booklets gave me enough money to go around the world.

Herbert Evison: Thank you very much.

[END OF INTERVIEW]