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Leslie P. Arnberger
December 7, 1962

Interview conducted by S. Herbert Evison
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LESLIE ARNBERGER

REEL CV

START OF TAPE

- Herbert Evison: This is Herbert Evison. I am in Santa Fe on a beautiful bright sunshiny afternoon. It's December 7, 1962, and right now I am at the home of Les Arnberger, who is one of the three Assistant Regional Directors for what used to be Region III of the National Park Service, now the Southwest Region. And Les is that assistant director who is concerned with resources, recreation resource planning.
- Herbert Evison: Les, let's start this off by sort of a quick round-up of your Park Service career. I am interested in what background that you had that you brought to the Park Service, educationally and otherwise; what attracted you to the Park Service in the first place, then what jobs you have held.
- Leslie Arnberger: Well, I think it might be interesting to start out and tell you how I got interested in the Park Service. Like some of the other people you have visited with, I needed a job; but above and beyond that I think I have always known right from the beginning that the Park Service was for me. I had been attracted to this for many years, right from the time of childhood.
- Leslie Arnberger: Many years ago I had the privilege of going through Casa Grande National Monument, down in Arizona – I grew up in Phoenix – and in Casa Grande a very marvelous guide took me through the ruins.
- Herbert Evison: And his name was Pinkley?
- Leslie Arnberger: No, it was not. I had the privilege of meeting Pinkley; that's right, it was in Pinkley's time, but the guide turned out to be Natt Dodge, a gentleman I have worked with now right here in the Southwestern Regional Office. And I was just a youngster. I was impressed with Natt; more than that, I was impressed with the kind of work that he was doing. And after the trip, why, I walked up to this guide, to the ranger, and said, "Ranger, how do you get into the National Park Service?" And I can remember very clearly to this day how understanding and sympathetic and kind Natt was to me. He was interested in me as a person; he told me all about the Park Service and the advantages of Park Service employment. And because of that contact I think I am in the Park Service today. And this to me illustrates something that I think is very important: That people in the Park Service today, all of us, when we meet visitors, should keep in mind this possibility of stimulating an interest in young people and so on to go into the Park Service as a career. So Natt is the man that got me started.
- Herbert Evison: What did you train for?
- Leslie Arnberger: Well, in high school I developed a great and consuming interest in biology and in living things and in the out of doors, and this interest continued

when I went into college. I finally majored in botany in college, at Arizona State College up at Flagstaff, and of course that school was marvelously located as far as Park Service opportunities are concerned. Not only that but at Flagstaff I became acquainted with Wayne Bryant, the youngest son of then superintendent Bryant at Grand Canyon National Park; and in time Wayne and I even became roommates at Flagstaff; and through Wayne I gained a greater understanding and appreciation of the parks, and became acquainted with Doctor Bryant and Mrs. Bryant, who today stand out in my memory as some of the finest Park Service people I have ever had the privilege of meeting.

Herbert Evison: So, with that training, you started in the Park Service when and in what capacity?

Leslie Arnberger: Well, it might be interesting to tell you how I actually slid into the Park Service. This occurred in 1945 in a seasonal capacity. In the spring of '45 I got back from my military service, having flown 36 missions with the Eighth Airforce over in Europe, and I had a month leave at home in Phoenix, and during that month I took the opportunity of visiting Grand Canyon to renew old acquaintances up there and to see Grand Canyon again. And during my short stay at the canyon I stopped in and said hello to the Bryants, as would be expected. Doctor Bryant at that time told me how anxious they were to have seasonal rangers. This was a period of course of great scarcity of manpower. All the available young men were away in the Service, and I had had the good fortune of getting back rather early. However, I was still in the Service and I cursed my luck that I was not available at that time to take one of these seasonal ranger jobs that the good Doctor Bryant told me was available. So I told him that I regretted not being able to go on the seasonal force, that I had to go on to I presumed Japan.

Leslie Arnberger: Well, as luck would have it within six weeks I was discharged from the Service, and so all of a sudden I turned up at Grand Canyon again, completely unannounced that time, and when I arrived I told Doctor Bryant, "By golly, I am available now for one of those seasonal ranger jobs," and this really left the Doctor speechless. It turned out that in a little overgenerous statement when I first visited there perhaps the opportunities had been overstressed, and really they were out of money, as so frequently happens with the Park Service, and there was no job and there was no money.

Leslie Arnberger: I was turned over to John Davis, who was assistant superintendent, and John finally struggled manfully with the budget and found a position for me as junior laborer at sixty-three cents an hour. And so that's my

beginning in the Park Service in Grand Canyon, and frankly, it's a position that I am very very proud of.

Herbert Evison: How long did you work at it?

Leslie Arnberger: Well, not long enough to go into utter and complete physical collapse, anyway; but I think I was on that junior laborer job for about a month. I worked on a rock crusher with mostly a group of Havasupai Indians, and it was a marvelous experience in many ways. It was just exactly the type of thing I should have after the experiences I had been through in the Service, and so it was therapeutic.

Leslie Arnberger: After about a month, a position opened up as a seasonal ranger and I took this job. I held it for about two weeks, and then lo and behold what should open up but an opportunity for a seasonal ranger-naturalist position. So right there in that one summer in 1945 I went from junior laborer to seasonal ranger to ranger-naturalist. And in this last position of course I had the wonderful opportunity of coming under the guidance of Louis Schellbach, and for my money Louis is again one of the milestones in my career, and we need more people like this. He shaped my career, he shaped my attitudes, and more than that he developed in me an appreciation of the fact that the Park Service was more than just a job, it was a way of life, I think, in many ways. He gave me an appreciation of the deeper things, and that's what we all need.

Herbert Evison: Well, I would expect that of Louis. I am lucky enough to have known him for a long while and be one of his very profound admirers.

Herbert Evison: Well, that was a seasonal job. Where did you go from there?

Leslie Arnberger: Well, I spent three seasons at Grand Canyon, '45, '46, and '47. At the end of the '47 season things were a little lean. By golly, no job turned up. I had finished college and what was I going to do? Well, I wound up buying a house trailer at Grand Canyon and got back onto the GI Bill of Rights and went up to Utah State Agricultural College, then frantically wrote all over the country to the Park Service trying to land a permanent job. That's when, believe me, it was more than just a way of life, it was bread and butter then. And the job did turn up in the spring of '47. John Davis, who was at that time assistant regional director in Santa Fe and in charge of the Southwestern National Monuments, remembered me and remembered some of my feeble efforts at Grand Canyon, I guess, and put me on as a permanent ranger at Casa Grande National Monument. Interestingly enough, again, the place that I really got my first inspiration from Natt Dodge, and there I was, leading visitors through there.

- Leslie Arnberger: And of course at Casa Grande I came under the guidance of Al Bicknell, one of the real old-timers of the Service, and certainly I got the Yellowstone story from Al in many many ways.
- Leslie Arnberger: From Casa Grande – I was there for about two years; actually about a year of that time I was in Washington on this Departmental Management Training Program, about which we will perhaps say more later on. After the training program I got a promotion as a park naturalist, finally; this is what I wanted to be in the Park Service, was a naturalist; and I came to Santa Fe in 1950, in the fall of 1950, as a park naturalist under Dale King, who headed up the interpretive program.
- Leslie Arnberger: I stayed in Santa Fe about two years, until the Southwestern National Monuments organization got their own headquarters down at Globe. As you may recall, they took over Gila Pueblo. And I and my family were the first Park Service people to actually occupy the new area there at Gila Pueblo. We were there on election night in 1952. I can remember it well. We had no furniture, and my wife and I were ensconced in one of the rooms at Gila Pueblo on air mattresses; we had nothing to sleep on. We had a radio, and we listened to Mr. Eisenhower being elected President. And it was a week or so after that, I guess, before any of the other Park Service people turned up.
- Leslie Arnberger: At Globe I spent about two years there, and then I moved back to the Blue Ridge Parkway, which was really in many ways a traumatic experience for a southwesterner like me, to go back to the great unknown of the east.
- Herbert Evison: Except for your time in Washington, you had had no previous experience with the east at all?
- Leslie Arnberger: None at all; none at all.
- Herbert Evison: And had you ever seen any part of the Blue Ridge Parkway?
- Leslie Arnberger: No. I had hardly even heard of it, and what little I had heard of it of course at that time I was, like so many Park Service people, I was inclined to scoff at this parkway idea; this was a boondoggle, you know. Well, if nothing else, my stay at the parkway was educational. It changed my mind a great deal. I frankly am a parkway enthusiast now, if we can get them of the caliber of the Blue Ridge, anyway. This is a magnificent area.
- Leslie Arnberger: But to give you some idea of how green I was when I went back there: As you probably know, Sam Weems has always had pretty good public relations with his newspapers and so on, and every time he got a new employee the first thing that happened was that a newspaper reporter came in and interviewed him. I was interviewed and my picture appeared in a Roanoke newspaper, and the heading of the article, as I recall, was

something to this effect: "New Parkway Naturalist Has Never Seen a Hickory Tree." This was embarrassing but it was true.

Herbert Evison: Now, would you have preceded Bill Lord?

Leslie Arnberger: No. Bill Lord was before me. I took Bill's place. Bill sort of grew up there with the program and did a real fine job, and he moved on and I came in and took it on for another couple years.

Herbert Evison: You were there for two years?

Leslie Arnberger: Just about two years, yes, and then the opportunity came to come back here to the southwest; and while I must say I loved the Blue Ridge and I liked the East, it was just too big a temptation to have the opportunity to come back to the country of my childhood and my real home country, the Southwest, and also it was a promotion; so with some regrets I left the Parkway and came back here; I guess it was in 1956; and I have been here ever since.

Leslie Arnberger: The job I took here in Santa Fe was regional chief of the National Park System planning, and the big activity then was investigating new areas and working on boundary adjustments.

Herbert Evison: Who was your chief at the time you reported in here?

Leslie Arnberger: My immediate supervisor was Bill Bowen, and he is in the Washington office now. And Bill, without a doubt, is one of the other milestones, memorable people in my career. I can think of a half dozen or so but Bill and Doctor Bryant and Louis Schellbach and those people, they stand out in my memory as people we really need more of.

Herbert Evison: People with a spark. Well, since that time of course some changes have taken place. First, Bill Bowen went to Washington. Did you move into his position when he did?

Leslie Arnberger: Yes, I did. This gives you some idea of the dearth of talent in the Park Service at that time. I moved in.

Herbert Evison: Then of course with the reorganization of late 1961, although I guess not right away but not until several months after, you became an assistant regional director.

Leslie Arnberger: That's right. I – That job of chief of the division of recreation resource planning was upgraded, at least name-wise, to an assistant regional director job and I took over then.

Herbert Evison: Well, then that brings us right up to December 7, 1962, so let's go back again.

Herbert Evison: One of the principal reasons why I wanted to get you on tape was because of the fact that not only were you a Departmental Trainee but you were a member of the first group that, with people from other regions and from other agencies, underwent the experience of Departmental training. I don't know exactly what questions to ask you about that, Les, but what I am interested in getting is something to this effect: What was that – 1949-50?

Leslie Arnberger: That's right.

Herbert Evison: In other words, you finished that up more than twelve years ago, and there must be things, impressions that you have of that seven or eight months that you spent in Washington, some sort of appraisal, I would suppose, at this distance, of the strengths and the weaknesses of that first attempt to broaden the horizons of young and promising Park Service people. And that's what I would like to get on the record, if you can give it to me.

Leslie Arnberger: Well, I will try, but it is hard to give you in a nutshell really an appraisal of that program. It was a long time ago. This of course was the first program. It was a guinea pig program in many ways, and those of us that were in the program felt like guinea pigs during much of the time.

Leslie Arnberger: The program lasted for me, as I recall, from about September through – September '49 through May of '50. Most of that time was spent in Washington; the first two weeks I believe were spent on what was called orientation. The representatives, frequently the directors of the various agencies, would come in day after day and tell us about the programs of their various agencies. After that we took assignments at different levels in the Department of the Interior. Each of the trainees had to have an assignment at the Secretarial level, then an assignment in another agency other than his own agency, and then finally an assignment at his own home agency.

Leslie Arnberger: My assignment at the Secretarial level was up in – I have tried to remember the name of that organization; today it is represented by the Resource Program staff; it was the coordinating group in Interior, that tried to take care of the gaps and the overlaps, as I recall. And for about six weeks I was in that group, and it was like being in fairyland. I learned something, I am sure, but I'm darned if I can tell you exactly what it was that I learned. This, I felt, was not too beneficial to me. I was too young and at too low a grade, and too unsure of myself to really take advantage of the opportunities to learn and to soak up the information that was available at that level. This was too far above my head.

Leslie Arnberger: I think one of the big problems was the fact that, this being the first course, the various supervisory people in Interior had not had a chance to discover just what they were expected to do with trainees that were

assigned to them, and as a result, goodness, for two and three weeks at a time I was just cast adrift up there with the wheels, and I was an awfully small spoke, you know, in the wheel.

Herbert Evison: And without too much feeling that you were accomplishing anything, I take it.

Leslie Arnberger: That's right. Well, so the Washington part of it was, as I say, frustrating and really not too beneficial.

Herbert Evison: You mean the Departmental part?

Leslie Arnberger: Yes, that's right, the Departmental part of it, not the Washington part, the Departmental part. So much for that portion of the training.

Leslie Arnberger: The next part of my training, as I recall, I was assigned to the Fish and Wildlife Service. This was my assignment to a sister agency. And I wound up with the Division of Wildlife Research, which at that time was headed up by Logan Bennett, I recall. And I had a very nice time there. I am not sure it was too educational but certainly it was enjoyable. I was sent out for a three-week assignment to the Patuxent Research Refuge and I lived there and I cooked my own meals there and batched there at the Refuge. And the first thing I fell into was a rabbit hunt at Patuxent. This Refuge is operated strictly for research, out there at Maryland; it's a farm, a large farm of a good many thousand acres. And the research problem at the time I went there was to try to determine ways and means of fitting in farming methods that would be compatible with wildlife needs, and to grow not only corn and farm products but to grow wildlife as well. And every year they harvested not only their agricultural products but they harvested their wildlife products too. So I got there for the rabbit harvest, and we went out and spent a day or two hunting rabbits with shotguns, and this was marvelous. As I say, I don't think I learned much but it was fun. Not only that but I met some remarkable people there. I discovered that the Park Service didn't have a corner on the market for naturalists. One of the finest field naturalists I have ever run into in my life was out there at Patuxent, a gentleman by the name of Francis Euler, and was every bit the equal of Louis Schellbach in his own special way. So much for the Fish and Wildlife part of it.

Leslie Arnberger: After that I had my assignment with my home agency, with the Park Service, and I wound up in Personnel, of all places. But this was fortunate in many ways, because I met another one of the milestone characters in my career, as far as I am concerned, and this was Hugh Miller, who was at that time Personnel Officer. And Hugh to this day is one of my fine friends. I had the privilege of working for him later on; he was my Regional Director here in the Southwest. I have learned so many things

from Hugh, a terrific man, and the Park Service is poorer for his departure when he decided to retire.

Leslie Arnberger: The job I had with Hugh was something that stretched my imagination a little bit, which didn't occur too much in these other assignments. But Hugh felt there was a need to develop some sort of a procedure for evaluating candidates for superintendency in the Park Service, and this was assigned to me. And I could let my imagination go to full rein, and I devised check lists and charts and procedures that have never been put into effect, as far as I know they have never even seen the light of day. But it did acquaint me with many of the practical problems that the Service was faced with in selecting superintendents, and many of the criteria and the factors involved, that have been of great value to me in later years.

Leslie Arnberger: This carried me through the training period then until, oh, I guess it must have been around February. And in March, as I recall, I was sent out to the Region IV office in San Francisco. This hasn't occurred in any of the other training programs; as far as I know they keep the trainees right there in Washington with their noses to the grindstone. But I was given a field assignment, and this was by far the most beneficial, I think, of the assignments I had. I went to the Region IV office and there I got in on the general administration training course, as Mr. Tolson insists on calling it, but it will still be called Tolson Tech by everybody else, I am sure. And this two-week training course without a doubt was the highlight of my entire training experience. And Mr. Tolson I think deserves a great deal of credit for that course and everybody that works with him on this course.

Leslie Arnberger: After that course was wound up – incidentally, I won't blow my horn, but I did make third place, as I recall, in the grades in that thing, John Rutter being number one and I think Nelson Murdock was number two on that little episode, and I brought up as third. After the training course I had a two-week assignment at Yosemite, and following that a two-week assignment at Sequoia. And this was a marvelous opportunity to see how a big park operated. At Yosemite I had full rein at the place; I was able to go right in and sit in the superintendent's office and watch him superintend; and I did learn some things from this.

Herbert Evison: Who was superintendent there then?

Leslie Arnberger: Carl Russell was superintendent, a marvelous person and a very helpful supervisor in this kind of a training assignment. And then of course at Sequoia Eivind Scoyen was superintendent there, and goodness, what I soaked up from Eivind would take two or three of these tapes to record; I got a great deal of benefit from that.

- Leslie Arnberger: Then finally, after the Sequoia assignment, I went back to the Region IV office for about a two-week mop-up, clean-up assignment, and I worked in the office there and sort of spent a day or two in each one of the divisions and got acquainted with regional office procedure, then went back to work, back to Casa Grande as a park ranger.
- Herbert Evison: You wound up then in the Region IV office; you didn't go back and rejoin the group in Washington.
- Leslie Arnberger: I didn't go back, that's right. I wound up in the San Francisco office. All in all, just as a final appraisal, I would say it was a wonderful training experience. I don't think I got as much benefit out of it as I should have, but I think this was partly due to the fact that it was the beginning training experience. Doctor Stromsen, who headed up the training program, was feeling his way. Certainly the Department had not developed any set procedures and techniques for training. I think one of the big problems, the Agencies had not really accepted the idea of this training program and there wasn't a great deal of sympathy on these Agencies' parts.
- Herbert Evison: And I take it that when trainees were assigned to an Agency they didn't bestir themselves very enthusiastically to see that you were usefully employed.
- Leslie Arnberger: They did not. I think that has certainly changed now with the later programs. But what you got out of assignments – out of an assignment – depended entirely on the quality of the supervisor that you wound up with. If you had a fellow with imagination and interest in you and in the training, you had a marvelous experience.
- Herbert Evison: How did you find it within the Service? Well, you have indicated from your assignment with Hugh Miller. I don't remember now, you weren't assigned to anybody in the Washington office except in Personnel?
- Leslie Arnberger: No, just in Personnel, that's right. I spent oh, six weeks I guess, something like that.
- Herbert Evison: Did you come away from there with the impression that the people in the Washington office who were called on to work along with the trainees were sympathetic or were as helpful as they might have been?
- Leslie Arnberger: Yes, I think they were sympathetic and I think they were as helpful as their information and knowledge at that time would permit them to be. But the Department just simply hadn't done its homework; it hadn't plowed the ground and prepared the ground for trainees, and all of a sudden some division chief in Washington would find some stranger in his office who was supposed to learn something, and for six weeks you just sort of wallowed around with each other.

- Herbert Evison: The man who was supposed to give you the experience was not given advance opportunity to work out the proper schedule?
- Leslie Arnberger: I think that was one of the basic shortcomings.
- Herbert Evison: Well, now, I would take it that in the intervening years you probably have made contact with a lot of people who have taken that Departmental training and have swapped experiences with them; and what conclusion do you draw from what you have been able to draw from those people about the way it is conducted now or has evolved?
- Leslie Arnberger: I think it has greatly improved, without any doubt at all. Not only that, but I can only conclude from the people I have come in contact with that the training program is eminently successful now in turning out really fine trained people, trained to go ahead and take higher positions in the Service. Now I have two ex-trainees working for me now in National Park System Planning – Bob Burrell and Norm Herkenham. They both are trainees, and you can't find any better people than they are.
- Herbert Evison: They are fine. You are very fortunate there. I didn't remember even that those two had been trainees. Of course an awful lot of them came and went during the years that I was there.
- Leslie Arnberger: Yes, that's right. And the first year, of course I was all alone. No, that's not quite true; I was the only field trainee from the Park Service; there was one other trainee from the Washington office, a young fellow by the name of Hagland, Conrad Hagland. He left the Service shortly after the training course. But now each region gets a trainee, as I recall, and they are turning out some good people.
- Herbert Evison: I certainly have gained the impression that it is much more carefully planned, that it is much more specific in its character, and certainly I know that the Washington office of the Park Service does a much better job now than it did with the early trainees in thinking out useful and the developing kind of assignment.
- Leslie Arnberger: Yes, and not only that, but as an example, Washington now has I believe a training officer, and one of his specific duties is to take these trainees, these green kids, and to work with them and to see that they get the maximum benefit out of the training program. Well, at the time I was there, Personnel had no training officer; you were just cast adrift, and as a result we missed many of the opportunities.
- Leslie Arnberger: I think one of the greatest opportunities in this training assignment is the opportunity of personal contact, to get acquainted with the top people and get some idea of what their thinking is. And, gee, I missed an awful lot of

this. I was kind of a bashful kid, I guess, and I didn't push my way in. I should have. With a training officer I think that helps you.

Herbert Evison: Oh, I am sure that is so. And they have had two very good training officers – Frank Kofski and Julius Eittington, very competent people.

Herbert Evison: I would like to go back to your Casa Grande experience. I want a little something on that and on your Southwestern Monuments assignment in Globe. Let's go to Casa Grande first. That was your early one. Of course you were in there long after Boss Pinkley had passed on, but I guess it could be said that his spirit hovers over the Southwestern Monuments still. In what way do you recollect, if any, that the influence of Boss Pinkley was still alive down there?

Leslie Arnberger: Well, it's alive even yet; it is not just in the Southwestern Monuments, or in those monuments that used to belong to that group, but in the entire Southwest, I think, and it stems from Boss Pinkley. I think Boss Pinkley's influence shows up in the esprit de corps, the pride that people in the Southwest have for these little areas. Not only that, but I would say it shows up in the fact that Southwestern Park Service people seem to give first importance to the visitors coming into their areas. This is certainly true of the monuments. He is not just another person coming through the gate but he is an individual and each person is to be treated individually and given the benefit of the best service possible. And this I think reflects the Boss's attitude.

Herbert Evison: I am sure it was his attitude, there's no question about that.

END OF SIDE 1

Herbert Evison: When you were in there at Casa Grande, Les, how much of a staff was there?

Leslie Arnberger: There was a superintendent, a park ranger (I was the park ranger), there was an archeologist – that was Dan Davis, now at Sequoia I believe – and a maintenance man. That was the size of the organization.

Herbert Evison: No clerical help?

Leslie Arnberger: No clerical help at all.

Herbert Evison: Everybody pounding out his own correspondence by the hunt-and-peck system?

Leslie Arnberger: That's right. I was real happy that I had had a little bit of typing when I got on that job, I needed it.

Herbert Evison: And of course Al Bicknell was your superintendent?

- Leslie Arnberger: He was.
- Herbert Evison: One of the real characters of the Park Service. Well, now, what sort of chores did you as park ranger have to do there? I would take it for one thing that you were a participant in the interpretation.
- Leslie Arnberger: Oh, goodness yes. We had a ranger and we had an archeologist but there was no division at all in duties, as far as that goes. Dan, the archeologist, did exactly the same kind of work that I did; he just had to know a little more about archeology than I did, and if I got in a bind on a question I would go to Dan and hope to get the answers; but basically, call us what you want to, we were all guides really. We spent our time most of the time taking parties of people through the ruins. We didn't turn them over to a self-guiding booklet or to a self-operating device; it was the Boss's influence lingering on there, you guided your people and you gave them personal attention. And, incidentally, that is still being done at Casa Grande, the only place in the Southwest that I know of that hasn't turned its interpretation or part of its interpretation over to a self-operating system.
- Herbert Evison: I have understood that that was so. I have understood that one of the reasons it was so was because Al Bicknell was so thoroughly imbued with the idea that the value of the experience there was so much greater if it involved a competent personal contact.
- Leslie Arnberger: That's right. And I think Al is right in that attitude. I am surprised and I am pleased, really, to see that this system is being maintained today under another superintendent, Al having retired a year or so ago. I think that is the best way to give interpretation.
- Herbert Evison: Well, I think most interpreters and most people who know anything about interpretation would agree as to the much greater desirability of personal contact, if you are adequately staffed to give it so that you don't have to continue men in a role that tends to become monotonous or too tiring.
- Leslie Arnberger: Well, that's one of the hazards at Casa Grande. It was also a hazard at that time at Tumacacori and other – we called them – merry-go-round – monuments. And they were merry-go-round monuments. You started in at 8 o'clock with your tours, and by 5 o'clock you laid off but it was just one constant merry-go-round all day long, answering the same questions and going over the same points. And it wears you down.
- Herbert Evison: Takes a tremendous depth of enthusiasm, I would suppose, to sustain it 8 hours a day in a situation like that.
- Leslie Arnberger: That's right. The hardest time to do this was in the summer, interestingly enough. I think some people look forward to the slack season as the time

to recharge their batteries, so to speak, and rest a bit; and the slack season at Casa Grande is in the summertime. But really that was the hardest season there. You only got a very few people during the day, that is very true, but it only took a very few people to keep you going constantly. Instead of having a party of 35 or 45 or occasionally 100 people as you would in the winter time, you would have a party of two people, and it was 120 degrees in the shade and they were tired and you were tired, and this was a hard time to work at Casa Grande.

Herbert Evison: I can certainly believe that. Well, now, Les, I want to get on here too something about your Southwestern Monuments experience. Now, you went down there to Globe; did John Davis go on as superintendent at that time? He has been previously supervising Southwestern monuments activities out of the regional office.

Leslie Arnberger: Yes, but under the title of assistant regional director, his responsibility being Southwestern National Monuments. And as I understand it, he was given his choice with continuing with that title or taking the title of general superintendent of Southwestern Monuments; John chose the latter and went to Globe.

Herbert Evison: Well, what is there in your experience down there that you look back on as being unusual or especially interesting or significant?

Leslie Arnberger: Well, I suppose this was the time of pioneering down there at Globe. Gila Pueblo, as you may know, was the plaything of a millionaire, is what it amounted to. Harold Gladwin was a millionaire who had developed Gila Pueblo as a privately owned archeological research institution, and Gila Pueblo is a tremendous massive rambling building that covered almost acres of ground, and the thing was built right on top of an old Indian ruin. As Gladwin dug the Indian ruin, why, he built some of his new buildings right on top of the old walls.

Leslie Arnberger: So when the Park Service went down there we had a new frontier ahead of us. This was several years before the current new frontier, and those two years were full of frustrations and full of pioneering. The house that we lived in was interesting. We lived right in the Pueblo itself. We had a nice big living room, two tiny bedrooms, a bath, but no kitchen. Our kitchen was located across the patio, the patio being the remains of a prehistoric patio, I suppose, and we had to go outside of the house and through what down south they call the dog trot, I suppose, to get to the kitchen. And my wife was about at her wit's end, I know that, from this arrangement.

Leslie Arnberger: But I think the finest part of this was the sense of closeness that everybody developed down there. We were all in the same boat, so to speak. This move to Gila Pueblo had been subject to considerable criticism from other

parts of the Park Service; just how much, frankly, I don't know; I wasn't in a position to know what the top brass was thinking at that time. But in my capacity at that time I couldn't help but be aware of some of the tensions that were involved. And this drew the people together, I believe, who had a greater sense of esprit de corps down there than I can recall ever having anywhere else. We were all united in one goal and that was to weld the Southwestern Monuments into the best outfit in the Park Service.

Herbert Evison: Of course I know that John Davis still believes it was a great mistake to have abolished that organization, and I suspect that there are others who were members of it then who still think the same.

Leslie Arnberger: Yes. I am not among them, however. I hope you don't play this tape for John!

Herbert Evison: Well, I don't think that John would have any feeling about anybody who disagreed with him on that point.

Leslie Arnberger: No, I don't either. But in retrospect I think the monument areas are perhaps better off now. It was time for them to stand on their own feet.

Herbert Evison: Well, don't you think, Les, that Mission 66, with the increased staffing that has come through it, the practical ending of what used to be known as one-man monuments, perhaps justified the abolition of the Southwestern Monuments office as much as anything? Don't you think that the individual areas are much better equipped today to take care of their own problems than they were say ten years ago?

Leslie Arnberger: Most certainly. They have been staffed; they have got more people in the areas now; they have clerical help; your superintendent doesn't have to spend all of his time on the typewriter, he can be an administrator. I think another thing that happened was the philosophy, I guess it has been called the captain of the ship philosophy, that Connie enunciated as a part of the reorganization back in '54; and certainly this meant that the superintendent was captain of his own area and he had to run it and not depend on some higher office to make the decisions for him; so that removed part of the reason for a headquarters office, I believe.

Herbert Evison: Yes. Which, under a situation like that, just became one more stopping point for business along the way to whatever point decision had to be made.

Leslie Arnberger: That's true, although I don't want to underrate the contribution of that headquarters office at all. I think in many many ways it provided the services to these small areas that were invaluable. I think interpretation: the areas in those days had no real interpreters of their own, and so the interpretive personnel I think did provide service, they did help.

- Herbert Evison: Well, now, that would have been part of your job, I take it. You say you worked under Dale King, and he was the – what was it? – chief naturalist?
- Leslie Arnberger: Chief park naturalist of Southwestern Monuments, that's right.
- Herbert Evison: Now did that mean that you would circulate among the monuments, that you would work with the people to improve the quality of their interpretive service?
- Leslie Arnberger: That's right. We did quite a bit of traveling. We had, as you know, monuments in Arizona, New Mexico, Colorado, and Utah; we went clear up to Great Sand Dunes at that time. And we traveled between those areas, spending sometimes as much as a week or two in the area working on a specific project and working right there with the superintendent or with the ranger to do a complete interpretive job.
- Herbert Evison: And I judge that in those the people expected to do the interpretation, with whom you worked, were more often rangers than anything else.
- Leslie Arnberger: Yes, goodness yes. I am amazed these days at how much importance we place on the different divisions in the field areas. If you a ranger, why, you just range, I guess; you don't do anything else. But it didn't use to be that way.
- Herbert Evison: Well, of course, I would contribute to this tape this remark: that it depends a good deal on the area and a great deal on the superintendent. It depends to a degree, to an important degree, on the chief ranger and on the chief park naturalist; because I have observed tremendous disparities in the way in which rangers and interpreters work together.
- Herbert Evison: Les, I don't think we ought to end this up without something about your responsibilities and some of the things you participated in as chief of National Park System Planning and in your present position in charge of Recreation Resource Planning. The floor is yours.
- Leslie Arnberger: Well, all right. I don't think I have ever had a job in the Park Service I haven't enjoyed; I have liked everything I have ever done; some jobs have been more difficult and more frustrating than others. But, frankly, I feel that the work I am in now, the work that I have been in for the last five years, has offered the most opportunities, the greatest challenge, to really leave your mark for conservation, of any position I have ever been in. While it has this great potential for doing something, it still was full of the most terrific frustrations that I have ever been faced with.
- Leslie Arnberger: It seems that I could go for years without ever really having any real sense of accomplishment, and yet for those same years, having worked myself to the bone to try to advance Padre Island as a new national seashore, or

Canyonlands as a new national park, and yet due to the vagaries of Congress and political influences and so on, nothing comes of your efforts. However, after working on Padre Island, for instance, for some four years or so, we finally got Padre Island authorized as a new national seashore by this last Congress. And, goodness, this is the result of the work of many many people. But I know I have had a direct part in this, and it's a wonderful sense of participating in something that is worthwhile. That thing, Padre Island, is a national seashore and will be there from now on. My kids and their kids and other people in the future will use this thing. Whether my name is there or not doesn't make any difference; I know I had a part in this thing. So I am counting up the praises now of National Park System planning, of building of a bigger and a better and a more adequate National Park System for people.

Leslie Arnberger: This job has been full of enjoyment, too, in many ways, particularly in the contacts I have made with people, the trips that I have had, the places I have seen. I have done things that very few people in the Park Service have had the opportunity of doing.

Herbert Evison: Like what?

Leslie Arnberger: Well, in the last two years I have gotten to know the Secretary of Interior, for instance. I even call Mr. Udall Stewart, but not very often. But Mr. Udall knows me. I have been amazed to be picked out of a crowd by Mr. Udall and have him say, "Hello, Les." Well, this gives you a certain sense of belonging or a sense of participating.

Leslie Arnberger: One of the most wonderful experiences I have ever had in my life, and I am sure I'll never have a greater experience in my career, was the trip that I took with the Udall party over a year ago, – it was in July of 1961 – through the Canyonlands area of southeastern Utah. And the Canyonlands, as you probably know, is an area of some million acres roughly surrounding the confluence of the Green and Colorado Rivers in southeastern Utah. And in July of '61 the great trip took place. Secretary Udall came out there, and Secretary Freeman of the Department of Agriculture was on the trip; Mrs. Udall was there, the three Udall children; a party of dignitaries of some thirty or thirty-five people. And they spent five days exploring the Canyonlands country. And I was elected to go along as a Park Service representative. Well, it was a marvelous experience, something I'll never forget. Would you like to have a little description of the trip? It is one of the real milestones, I think, in the Park Service, or it will be once we get Canyonlands as a national park, and I am confident that we will; we will get something there.

Herbert Evison: Yes, you bet.

Leslie Arnberger: This was a trip you might say by land and by sea and by air – at least by water, if not by sea. We started out on the first day with boats going down the Colorado River. We left Moab about noon, had a fleet of about 15 outboard motorboats. This fleet had been organized by Frank Wright, one of the fine old river runners down in that Colorado River country. We camped out the first night on the banks of the Colorado down below Dead Horse Point, right down in the bottom of the canyon. The two Park Service people on this trip consisted of Bill Bowen, who at that time had just recently moved into the Washington office, and myself. I was sort of the office boy coming along to pick up the loose ends, I guess.

Leslie Arnberger: That first night, however, we had kind of a catastrophe. Bill Bowen was walking along the Colorado River beaches in his bare feet and succeeded in stepping on a sharp stick and drove the stick right into his foot and was absolutely and totally incapacitated. They had to take him out of there the next day, so that left little old me as the only Park Service representative on the trip.

Leslie Arnberger: Well, the next day we went on down from the camp at Dead Horse Point on down the river to camp that night just below the confluence of the Green and Colorado Rivers. And during that day I had the pleasure of having Mr. Udall as a passenger in my boat and we got acquainted. I showed him pictures of the Canyonlands and drew out the area on a map that I felt, as a result of our investigations, warranted national park designation; and got quite well acquainted with him. We also spent some time that day just floating down the river. We put on life vests – Udall did this too – and just jumped into the river and just floated right along with just our heads sticking up and our big toes, out of the river. In fact, a picture of Udall doing just this appeared in Life Magazine, you may recall, sometime after that trip.

Leslie Arnberger: We camped out for the second night just below the confluence of the Green and the Colorado. The third day on the river we went upstream on the Green River to a place called Anderson Bottom, an old abandoned river channel there where the canyon wall had broken down somewhat and there was a level space, a camping space, there. And that night at Anderson Bottom there took place a press conference. The largest number of people in this group actually were reporters and press people. They had Jay Ireman of Life Magazine and Bert Hanna of the Denver Post, and others prominent in the journalism field.

Leslie Arnberger: And after dinner that night we had this press conference. This was practically in the dark. And Secretary Udall and Secretary Freeman sat together and began to discuss the Canyonlands proposal. We all listened to this with a show of fellowship and cooperation between two competing

Departments, and I think it marked a change for the better in getting some cooperation there. And all of a sudden, why, Udall said, "And Les Arnberger here will tell you now what the boundaries of this new park will be," and that kind of caught me flat. But I got up in the dark and proceeded to describe the boundaries the best I could. I drew a line around approximately one million acres, extending cliff to cliff, from the east to the west, and on the north going up above the San Juan-Grand County line and extending on the south clear down to the vicinity of Dark Canyon, all of it perfectly magnificent country.

Leslie Arnberger: This press conference there I think is somewhat similar to the famous meeting, campfire meeting, at the junction of the Firehole and the Gibbon, is that right? And if we get a Canyonlands national park I think some record of this press conference at Anderson Bottom should be included in the story of it.

Leslie Arnberger: Well, so much for the first three days.

Leslie Arnberger: The fourth morning five twin-rotor Army helicopters – Air Force helicopters, excuse me – came down and sat down at Anderson Bottom and picked up the Secretaries' party and took us up out of the canyon and deposited us up on the plateau up on the area we call the Island in the Sky at a place called Tin Barn Flat, as I recall; and there we were met by Governor Clyde of the State of Utah. Tom Allen joined us there and I lost my distinction of being the only Park Service representative. And also waiting for us up there on top was Bates Wilson. Bates was, incidentally, the real kingpin of this whole darned operation through the Canyonlands. There again is a man among – that really stands out, Bates Wilson, of Arches.

Leslie Arnberger: Bates had organized the Grand County jeep posse and the posse was waiting there to jeep us around up on top of the Island in the Sky. They took us down to Grand View Point, and from Grand View Point we went out to Upheaval Dome. There the Moab Chamber of Commerce had very thoughtfully provided box lunches, and the Secretary and the various other dignitaries sat there and had box lunches. And later that afternoon we went out to Dead Horse Point, which was then, and still is, a Utah State Park. And the 'copters came in again and picked us up there at Dead Horse Point out on the plateau and took us from Dead Horse Point down across the canyon country and dropped us off in the middle of the Needles country in a place called Chesler Park, just a magnificent area.

Leslie Arnberger: There we spent the night. This was the fourth night, as I recall. Bates had arranged for food in there, and believe it or not, in that wild inaccessible country Bates had managed to get a caterer in there to Chesler Park, and

getting him in there must have been a major operation. He brought in stoves and serving tables and the whole works. You would never believe it. We each had a great big T-bone steak that night for dinner and all the trimming that go with it, and we wound up with ice cream, in the middle of the wilderness.

Leslie Arnberger: It was really a trip that I'll never forget. The San Juan jeep posse was waiting for us in there at Chesler Park, and the next morning – this was the fifth day – why, we got into the San Juan County jeeps and they jeeped us on through the Needles country. We looked at the various features of interest in there, and finally that night, the fifth night, we got out to Monticello and for the first time in five days got a shower and got all that red dirt washed off from us, and so on. Had a fine big banquet at Monticello in the Mormon Church, when the Secretary made the formal presentation of his Canyonlands proposal. And it was a grand beginning.

Leslie Arnberger: Unfortunately, as you know now, the Canyonlands proposal has run into all sorts of difficulties, political and otherwise.

Herbert Evison: It had all the fat and most of the meat trimmed off of it.

Leslie Arnberger: Yes, that's right. We started out with a nice plump one-million area that was really small in terms of all of that country that is there that is qualified; and now we are down to a proposed 332,000-acre park, which is a pretty sad compromise, I am afraid.

Herbert Evison: And also subject to – prospectively, anyway – subject to adverse uses.

Leslie Arnberger: That's right, that's right, very true. And yet this is one of the things I have learned in this business, is you can't have your way always, and this is, right at this point, the point I think that separates the men from the boys; in a way, you have to make a decision finally: How bad do you want the thing and what uses are you going to take in order to get it and what compromises can you make and still retain your integrity, and so on. I don't know. I don't have the answers. I have the problems right now.

Herbert Evison: Of course, it is I know disappointing to a good many Park Service people, the prospect of having to accept something both so much smaller than it is felt it should be and subject to possible hunting, possible grazing, possible mining, all of those things. But I guess generally it's good, if you can't get all that you would like to have, get the most that you can get.

Leslie Arnberger: I think so. If you get a beginning you can always build onto it in time.

Herbert Evison: Well, Les, I notice I am going to have to chase along pretty quick, but do you have any final points that you would like to get onto this tape?

Leslie Arnberger: No, I don't think so. I think I have rambled on here at great length as it is.

Herbert Evison: Well, you rambled very interestingly, I want to tell you. I am obliged to you for being willing on an afternoon of leave to let me come down here and take up this much time. I think I have gotten a very interesting tape. I am obliged to you.

Leslie Arnberger: It has been a privilege to contribute.

END OF TAPE