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



Leigh Hinrichsen
October 4, 1978

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

Dorothy Huyck: 00:00 The date is October 4th, 1978. I'm Dorothy Huyck. I will interviewing Leigh Hinrichsen, spelled L-E-I-G-H H-I-N-R-I-C-H-S-E-N. She's a park technician at Petrified Forest.

Dorothy Huyck: 00:19 First, Leigh, how you became acquainted with the National Park Service?

Leigh Hinrichsen: 00:27 I was living in Oakland with my parents and going to school down there, and some friends of mine at school said, "Say, we're going up to Yosemite National Park, you want to come along?" I said, "I said what's a Yosemite?" That was in 1968, I believe it was, and I just fell madly in love the moment I saw it, and I really wanted to find out more about that gorgeous place. I don't think I got back again for another year, though, and that was with my fiancé. He felt the about it the same way I did, and we ended up going every single weekend for nigh under two years, and I'm just trying to find out this and that about what kind of tree is this, why does it grow here and what's this Yosemite place all about, why is it here? And it led from wanting to know about Yosemite into wanting to know how the park came to be a park. What is a park? Not just what is a Yosemite park, and then National Park Service got to be something kind of special to us because it was preserving these places that we loved so much. That was basically it.

Dorothy Huyck: 01:36 Did you go to other parks in addition to Yosemite?

Leigh Hinrichsen: 01:39 Just spotted here and there around San Francisco area.

Dorothy Huyck: 01:43 Point Reyes?

Leigh Hinrichsen: 01:43 Yeah, Point Reyes and – I can't even remember the ones. We just got so thoroughly stuck on Yosemite. We used to claim that our car had made groves in the road, and we tried to turn it off those groves, but it just wouldn't do it so we had to go to Yosemite.

Dorothy Huyck: 01:59 Did you camp?

Leigh Hinrichsen: 02:00 Yes, invariably. It was after I got laid off of my first job in Yosemite, with the National Park Service, that I finally stayed in a motel room up there.

Dorothy Huyck: 02:12 Let me go back in history now. Where and when you were born?

Leigh Hinrichsen: 02:17 August 14th, 1948, in Mankato, Minnesota.

Dorothy Huyck: 02:20 Were you by any chance an only child?

Leigh Hinrichsen: 02:24 No, I had one older sister, two-years older.

Dorothy Huyck: 02:32 Where did you grow up? In Mankato?

Leigh Hinrichsen: 02:34 Well I grew up in a Navy family, so for – we were lucky, though, we didn't move around that much. A few years in Minnesota, a few years in Southern California, New Jersey, Brooklyn, back to California. But I didn't really – I don't have roots any place, except now I feel like I have roots in the Park Service. If I have a home, it's Yosemite.

Dorothy Huyck: 02:57 Was your father a college graduate?

Leigh Hinrichsen: 02:59 Now he is. He wasn't until he got out of the Navy. I think he graduated just 10 years ago.

Dorothy Huyck: 03:04 And what was his role at the Navy?

Leigh Hinrichsen: 03:07 He was a flyer of all sorts of things. Blimps for one thing, kind of fascinating little period of our life there, and helicopters, jets, single engines.

Dorothy Huyck: 03:21 And after he got out the Navy he went to college and got a college degree?

Leigh Hinrichsen: 03:23 Mm-hmm (affirmative). He went UC Berkeley and got himself a degree in accounting, I believe, and got himself a second career with County of Alameda as a tax accountant. Just wasn't about to slow down.

Dorothy Huyck: 03:36 And your mother?

Leigh Hinrichsen: 03:37 She has been – she was a college graduate. Golly, she must've gotten hers 20 years ago, and then she's been social-worker, teacher, jeweler and most recently she was a customs inspector out in the San Francisco area. She got that job about the same time my father took this thing with the county. Once his kids got out of the house, they just both started having a lot of fun.

Dorothy Huyck: 04:03 Very cool.

Leigh Hinrichsen: 04:04 Mm-hmm (affirmative), very. It's been a lot of fun.

Dorothy Huyck: 04:06 Where did you attend high school?

Leigh Hinrichsen: 04:09 One year in Toms River, New Jersey, a little town – it used to be a little town, now it's a big town, tourist attraction. And then the other three in Brooklyn, New York.

Dorothy Huyck: 04:17 And you graduated high school in Brooklyn?

Leigh Hinrichsen: 04:18 Yeah, Fort Hamilton High.

Dorothy Huyck: 04:23 What about college?

Leigh Hinrichsen: 04:24 Well, a year at University of Chicago. A little bit in Merritt College, Oakland, and some at Los Angeles City College and then some here at Northland Pioneer College in Holbrook.

Dorothy Huyck: 04:35 Do you have a college degree?

Leigh Hinrichsen: 04:36 No.

Dorothy Huyck: 04:38 What have you been majoring in?

Leigh Hinrichsen: 04:40 Lately law enforcement. I'll be changing to geology, and I have been in romance languages and mathematics in the past.

Dorothy Huyck: 04:49 When you said you were going to change to geology, is this with the intention of getting a degree in geology?

Leigh Hinrichsen: 04:54 Yes.

Dorothy Huyck: 04:56 When do you expect to graduate?

Leigh Hinrichsen: 04:58 I wish I had a decent idea. It'll probably take another three or four years, because I'm only doing it at the rate of a semester each winter while I'm off work here from Petrified Forest. I have a special arrangement with the park. I'm subject to furlough and normally would be working 11 months out of the year. But I talked to the superintendent some years ago and he agreed that it would be a good opportunity, and since I am still the subject of furlough, not

on permanent with the restriction that go along with that, I could get off when things are really slack here and get that degree which is going to help me in my career, hopefully, and without which I think I'd have trouble with a career. Besides, it saves them some money not having to pay for me year-round.

- Dorothy Huyck: 05:46 Are you going to college during your furlough period at Holbrook?
- Leigh Hinrichsen: 05:50 No, I'm going out to Los Angeles for that. That's a matter of convenience more than anything. I have my sister in Los Angeles, and I can live with her, have her nearby.
- Dorothy Huyck: 06:00 Then is this Los Angeles City College that you're attending?
- Leigh Hinrichsen: 06:02 Right now. I'm in my last couple of courses there, just looking for the AA in law enforcement there.
- Dorothy Huyck: 06:10 Where do you hope to take your geology career?
- Leigh Hinrichsen: 06:14 Probably Cal State.
- Dorothy Huyck: 06:16 I'd like to ask about the encouragement from – when you were in high school and during the various college experiences you had. Is there someone who has encouraged you? Either members of your family, or teachers, or professors or possibly somebody related to the Park Service who has provided any encouragement, if anyone?
- Leigh Hinrichsen: 06:46 Towards a career type of situation?
- Dorothy Huyck: 06:48 Towards your school and college education.
- Leigh Hinrichsen: 06:53 Well, parents, of course, number one. I've got to compliment my parents, they're both very intelligent, rational human beings. Very sympathetic and very supportive. When we kids would get an idea of something we wanted to do, they'd back us in so far as it'd remain within the balance of reason. No matter the idea if it was something – if we decided we wanted to go professional, okay you know, they'd help us as much as they could finding the routes there. Or, I remember at one point I gave up hope and I was just going to be a secretary or something, and they said, "Okay." We sat down, we talked

about it a lot and, again, it was my decision, and they were supportive of it too.

- Leigh Hinrichsen: 07:42 On the other hand, though, I've had some instructors, I can remember one calculus instructor that was not so much personally supportive of me, just inspiring. I could look at her and want to emulate that kind of professionalism and happiness with the work I was doing. The obvious fulfillment she was getting out of it. I've had a couple like that now.
- Dorothy Huyck: 08:10 Was she someone at the college, or-
- Leigh Hinrichsen: 08:13 Mm-hmm (affirmative). Yeah, that was at Merritt College in Oakland. Yeah. High school teachers I can remember, too. My particular favorite was again a math teacher. I suppose that's why I started off in math. I did awfully well in high school and so I got a lot of positive feedback from my instructors in general.
- Dorothy Huyck: 08:33 Did you take math and science courses in high school, and both?
- Leigh Hinrichsen: 08:35 Mm-hmm (affirmative). Loved them.
- Dorothy Huyck: 08:36 Were these courses that might more frequently be more taken by a boy?
- Leigh Hinrichsen: 08:42 The guys more frequently excelled in them, but we had – there were sort of required courses for people who were bound for college. This wasn't one of the high schools where you – where they treat it like the new colleges these days, I understand, where you pick and choose what courses you're going to have. So, if you're in the college preparatory program, then you are going to have to take analytic geometry, and calculus and whatever. So, any girl that wanted to go to college simply did end up in these classes.
- Dorothy Huyck: 09:18 You mentioned that boys tended to excel in these classes.
- Leigh Hinrichsen: 09:21 Yeah.
- Dorothy Huyck: 09:21 But you did well too I gather?

- Leigh Hinrichsen: 09:23 Yeah. Science and math were always my favorites. Mechanical things always fascinated me. If I had to do it over, I'd probably be an auto mechanic. For the Park Service, of course.
- Dorothy Huyck: 09:38 In all your moving around, in a Navy family, did you play with boys as a child?
- Leigh Hinrichsen: 09:49 Funny, I hadn't even thought of that. No, I mean yes, but not – I didn't choose playmates, quote, unquote, on the basis of whether it was a boy or a girl, just whether I had anything to share with a particular person. I can't remember having a large crowd of kids that I hung out with, either in grade school or high school, but it was pretty well mixed with just the kids that were about in the same grade level that I was and same achievement level. I sort of liked to have my intellectual peers around me. Gee, don't I sound snobby?
- Dorothy Huyck: 10:33 These would've included boys?
- Leigh Hinrichsen: 10:34 Sure, yeah.
- Dorothy Huyck: 10:35 Were you by any chance considered a tomboy?
- Leigh Hinrichsen: 10:39 I never knew. I guess looking back I would consider myself a tomboy. Yeah, I used to climb trees and fences, and dig holes in the ground. Yeah, I guess I'm a tomboy.
- Dorothy Huyck: 10:50 And became a teenager, were you supposed to be, or expected to become something more of a lady?
- Leigh Hinrichsen: 10:55 No, I don't remember any pressure along that line at all. I was in a group of girls in – Oh, yeah, I guess I really was quite a tomboy now that I'm looking back on the high school days. I was in a group of girls who were in this special physical education program, and that was a pretty unfeminine sort of thing to be a member on. Gymnastics and field sports, and all of that stuff. I can't remember what I was leading to there. Oh well, proceed.
- Dorothy Huyck: 11:33 Were there extra-curricular activities that you were involved in, in high school or in your college years, that were then later helpful in your Park Service work?

Leigh Hinrichsen: 11:42 Let's see. Most of the physical education stuff, strangely enough. Not directly, but just in terms of my interest in out-of-doors types of things and my willingness to get involved in things that involved physical, quote, hardship. Putting up with a snowstorm, oh, terrible. It's not like that. That more than anything, I think. It just put my awareness outside of myself.

Dorothy Huyck: 12:13 In thinking back over – well, let's ask this. When did you actually enter the Park Service?

Leigh Hinrichsen: 12:20 October of 1971. October 5th, 1971, to be honest. Red-letter day.

Dorothy Huyck: 12:30 Where was that?

Leigh Hinrichsen: 12:31 That was Yosemite Valley with the Naturalist Division.

Dorothy Huyck: 12:33 In what position?

Leigh Hinrichsen: 12:36 I was on the information desk.

Dorothy Huyck: 12:37 What was the grade?

Leigh Hinrichsen: 12:41 Three I believe. Yes, three and then it became four after about six months.

Dorothy Huyck: 12:48 How long did you stay in that job?

Leigh Hinrichsen: 12:48 Until the end of September of '72.

Dorothy Huyck: 12:48 So that's a seasonal job?

Leigh Hinrichsen: 12:54 Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Dorothy Huyck: 12:56 And then what?

Leigh Hinrichsen: 12:57 I got laid off and my husband got laid off. We split at that time, and he went to Los Angeles. I stayed at Yosemite, I still had my old compulsion about Yosemite, and I simply couldn't leave, so I was staying with friends and I was allowed to stay in my tent for another month and a half, or so, until the bears wiped me out.

Dorothy Huyck: 13:15 The bears wiped you out?

- Leigh Hinrichsen: 13:18 Yes. [crosstalk 00:13:19] It was over Thanksgiving weekend. We were in one of these tent cities, they've got there a canvas-covered framed tent and there must've been about six or seven of us left after the Labor Day crush finally petered out around October, and every single tent had gotten broken into by bears and things wiped out, eaten up and trampled over and whatnot, except my tent. Joe and I were so proud because we were the only ones that hadn't been broken into. We were so meticulous about keeping everything clean, but right at Thanksgiving the last other person moved out and there'd been this mother and, strangely enough, four cubs hanging around the campground and I guess they were getting hungry because we still had everything meticulously clean, except for the fact that we must've been the only tent that had any human smell at all, and they figured well, where there's smoke there's fire. So, they opened up about four new doors in the walls and they found the food, and just made havoc out of the place, so they kind of ended that as far as living was concerned. Unfortunately, they did away with those bears. Well, I don't know if it's fortunate or not, they'd been trained into some pretty bad habits.
- Dorothy Huyck: 14:31 When you say they did away with, did they actually shoot them?
- Leigh Hinrichsen: 14:33 Yes. That was unusual and there was quite a number about the bear program. They didn't want to draw any more publicity than was necessary, as I gathered things from my position at the bottom of the totem pole. But those particular ones, apparently, they made enough problems that they just did shoot them.
- Dorothy Huyck: 14:57 Where was the location of this, I take it, employees camping?
- Leigh Hinrichsen: 15:00 Yeah, it was in Yosemite Valley, not very far from the village. It was what's called Camp Six, and that's about to wiped out now, I understand, from – I just read the draft management plan.
- Dorothy Huyck: 15:17 Once you had been wiped out by bears—
- Leigh Hinrichsen: 15:18 Yes. After being wiped out by the bears, I mooched off of friends for quite a while. A good month, month and a half, but meanwhile I was traveling back and forth to Oakland

where my parents were, and I was taking a training class from a fellow who ran a tax accounting place down there and I was going to be an auditor. I did that, I went ahead and left Yosemite in January, and did the taxes until the end of tax season and then just went roaring back to Yosemite as fast as I could. I had to find some job, any job, in Yosemite, and sure enough I was helped by a friend in getting a job out at the hospital. So, I book kept there for about four or five months until suddenly a secretarial position opened up overnight, here at the resources management division, and I just—

- Dorothy Huyck: 16:09 In Yosemite?
- Leigh Hinrichsen: 16:11 Yeah. Excuse me, I said here, didn't I? I still think of Yosemite as home. I just got under the wire on that and lucked into it.
- Dorothy Huyck: 16:20 What grade was that?
- Leigh Hinrichsen: 16:21 That was a four clerk-typist. I was doing bookkeeping for resources management and sanitary engineering services. Steve Hart [phonetic] was the sanitary engineering chief and Dick Riggle [phonetic] who was resources. Two entirely different ends of the Park Service spectrum there, it was really strange being in the middle. Fun job, though. Secretary stuff for both of them and, golly, all the personal stuff and the payroll stuff. They did eventually make me a five though, that helped make up for it.
- Dorothy Huyck: 16:56 How long did you stay in this clerk-typist position?
- Leigh Hinrichsen: 16:59 Gee, about 15 months.
- Dorothy Huyck: 17:03 And then what?
- Leigh Hinrichsen: 17:05 And then this came up. Petrified Forest had sent out a vacancy announcement early fall. I think it was like September and I was about, at that time – See when I was a kid I swore to myself I would never be a secretary, I just wasn't going to have any of that. But, for the sake of Yosemite a lot of resolves go down the drain and I was sticking it out 'cause I just love the place and I love the Park Service, but this vacancy came out and the requirements were such that amazingly enough I fit into it. And just about that time I was kind of having a rough time

with being a secretary and one of my supervisors and I were kind of beating our heads against each other. I guess I was little hard and handed at that time, still am.

- Leigh Hinrichsen: 17:59 He said something to the effect of – oh, we had a shouting fight – and he said, "If it was up to me you'd be looking for another job by now," and I said, "Well, by God, I just happen to have a vacancy announcement for it," and made out my 171 right on the spot. He sort of got contrite a couple weeks later when he found out I had seriously had put in for it, and then I ended up getting the job.
- Dorothy Huyck: 18:21 How was it titled?
- Leigh Hinrichsen: 18:22 It was a GS-4 position. I believe it was park technician.
- Dorothy Huyck: 18:32 When did you actually come through?
- Leigh Hinrichsen: 18:33 January 4th, 1975.
- Dorothy Huyck: 18:37 And you've been here since?
- Leigh Hinrichsen: 18:38 Yes.
- Dorothy Huyck: 18:39 Subject to furlough?
- Leigh Hinrichsen: 18:40 Right. I was here year-round, taking only one-month furloughs until the end of the summer of '76, so I was here two winters and two summers. Then since then I've been coming back in May and leaving in October.
- Dorothy Huyck: 19:03 Will you be doing that this year?
- Leigh Hinrichsen: 19:04 Mm-hmm (affirmative), in fact I have only about six more working days. Sorry.
- Dorothy Huyck: 19:13 What are your responsibilities?
- Leigh Hinrichsen: 19:15 Law enforcement primarily. That is a big part of it, at least a big part of the job description. Mostly what I end up doing on the job is interp though, because I consider my big thing to protect the physical park. We've got this huge problem with stealing of petrified wood, and I consider that sort of number one. I mean outside of really life-threatening situations, but that's – So in order to find people who are trying to steal petrified wood, you have to be on site. When

you're on site, you're conspicuous and people will come and want to talk to you. So, every time I'm out there looking for petrified wood theft, I'm doing interp. Everyone now and then I'll ticket here, warning there. Have to go talk to somebody about a dog off leash or something every now and then. So yeah, I'll say I'm interping.

- Dorothy Huyck: 20:13 Your law enforcement duties are primarily with the regard to the theft of petrified wood?
- Leigh Hinrichsen: 20:18 That's what it turns out to be. The training covers all phases of it though because if anything comes down, we're it. It doesn't matter if it's an armed robbery or a lost kid, boy we better prepared for anything.
- Dorothy Huyck: 20:30 Have you had an armed robbery?
- Leigh Hinrichsen: 20:32 Mm-hmm (affirmative).
- Dorothy Huyck: 20:33 Where you in involved with it?
- Leigh Hinrichsen: 20:34 Well, after the fact. The only one that I got involved in was the summer of '76, and it was a fellow who'd gotten beaten up, and tied up and had his car stolen. He was dumped off the edge of the Painted Desert, and he was found after he finally managed to get himself loose and crawl up the edge of the desert again, so visitors got him.
- Dorothy Huyck: 20:57 Did all this take place within park boundaries?
- Leigh Hinrichsen: 20:58 Mm-hmm (affirmative), yeah. But our responsibility there was mostly just protecting the scene, getting the initial facts, getting the guy to medical help, and then wait for the county sheriff and do the actual investigation. So, we are proprietary jurisdiction, and so they do it all apparently. The big stuff.
- Dorothy Huyck: 21:20 How do you define proprietary jurisdiction?
- Leigh Hinrichsen: 21:24 Well, without our county deputy cards we can only enforce the code of federal regulations, the misdemeanors. The other crimes fall under state law, and so we have to be deputized in order to enforce those.
- Dorothy Huyck: 21:43 And are you?

- Leigh Hinrichsen: 21:46 Mm-hmm (affirmative), yeah. We were each giving commissions in Navajo and Apache Counties. This end of the park, up until about a quarter mile the other side of that intersection out there is Navajo County, the whole rest of the park's Apache County.
- Dorothy Huyck: 21:59 In the case of this crime that you just referred, was that situation solved?
- Leigh Hinrichsen: 22:02 Yes. Amazingly enough these people who'd stolen his car were still driving his car when they were found in Colorado, and of course an all-points bulletin was put out and the idiots hadn't even dumped the car, so Colorado people got them. Apparently, they were involved – they were in process of preforming another armed robbery when they were caught, so Colorado got them first and then I think some place else wanted them and Arizona's not going to see them for a long time.
- Dorothy Huyck: 22:29 But the Park Service function is out of the picture at this stage.
- Leigh Hinrichsen: 22:33 Yeah, for now, unless they come up in court here and then they want some more information from us.
- Dorothy Huyck: 22:41 You referred to lost children. Is that a problem also?
- Leigh Hinrichsen: 22:43 No, actually no. I can't remember there being any people actually lost. There's been separated parties.
- Dorothy Huyck: 22:50 But the bulk of your law enforcement therefore is directed towards theft of petrified wood.
- Leigh Hinrichsen: 22:56 Yeah, in practice.
- Dorothy Huyck: 22:58 People find little chunks, or do they carve off little chunks?
- Leigh Hinrichsen: 23:03 Yes and yes, and they take big chunks, and they try and wrestle huge logs into their cars.
- Dorothy Huyck: 23:11 Do they succeed?
- Leigh Hinrichsen: 23:14 Yeah. I'm told that a couple years before I first came here, a bunch of high school guys had gotten a piece that, from the size description that I got of it, must've weighed about 1,000 pounds. Managed to get it in their van, but they were

caught. Some visitors saw them doing it and got really irate, came down and screamed at them, people down at the entrance station, and they were caught. It's mostly small pieces, but the number of small pieces that people will take has no limit. Golly, a guy two-weeks ago found – was it only two weeks? Yeah, I think. Found one fellow taking 115 pounds worth of small pieces in the car.

Dorothy Huyck: 23:56

Did you just happen onto him?

Leigh Hinrichsen: 23:58

Boy he did. The guy that was closing the park at night happened to run into a car who was trying to leave by an exit that was by then closed, he couldn't get out that way, so he had to be turned around. The ranger stopped the man and shone his flashlight in car, explained the situation to him and just happened to see a little bitty chunk of petrified wood on the seat next to him, and said, "Sir, did you remove anything from the park?" He said, "Yeah," and took some out of his belt pouch and the ranger had him step out of the car, and he searched the car and found flight bags full of it, boxes full of it, sweaters wrapped around it and just everywhere you can imagine there was petrified wood. My big haul was 52 pounds.

Dorothy Huyck: 24:46

Where did you find that?

Leigh Hinrichsen: 24:48

Some people at Crystal Forest about six miles up the road from here. I just happened to pull up to Crystal Forest and saw some people pull over on the side of the road. It's a common place for people to want to pull over and take pictures of this one particular formation, the Battleship Rock, but they weren't taking pictures, they were walking out on the petrified wood. I just got out my binoculars to see what they were doing out there, and they kept walking back to the car and going back out again. So, when they drove away I stopped them, again asked if they had taken any and the girl said yes and she took a piece out from behind her seat. I said, "Well, do you have some more?" "Well, yes," so they took another piece out, and this went on for about 10 minutes while she kept taking out one piece at a time, every time I'd ask her. Added up to be 52 pounds.

Dorothy Huyck: 25:41

As a woman do you have any resistance to law enforcement functions?

- Leigh Hinrichsen: 25:48 I sometimes feel like people resent me approaching them in a law enforcement function, yeah. Men, of course, in particular.
- Dorothy Huyck: 25:56 In that they would resent you because you are a woman—
- Leigh Hinrichsen: 25:59 Because I'm a woman.
- Dorothy Huyck: 26:01 —or resent any law enforcement person?
- Leigh Hinrichsen: 26:02 I feel like there have been some cases where I'm resented as some uppity chick trying to tell him what to do. Especially some uppity young chick trying to tell him what to do. As a matter of fact, there been more than one situation where some person that's given me a rash on – yelling on and on at me about how I don't know my job or, you know, the normal thing you get, and make some crack about youth. And I'd say, "Well, you know I got out of the kid category when I passed my 30th birthday." It's 180-degree turn they take. Back down, "Oh, yes, yes. Well, oh, no well, what can I do or how do I take care of this ticket ma'am," kind of thing.
- Dorothy Huyck: 26:46 It's almost as if age were more import than whether you're male or female.
- Leigh Hinrichsen: 26:50 At least as, but I get a lot of people trying to cutesy me out of law enforcement things, parking tickets or speeding tickets.
- Dorothy Huyck: 27:01 How do you handle that kind of situation?
- Leigh Hinrichsen: 27:05 By not getting angry. Number one is just trying to be as professional as I possibly can because their thing seems to be that a woman can't do a professional job. I mean this is just the vibes, if I can call it that, that I get out of them. That, how can you know what you're doing, you're just a girl, you're just a chick, a kid, and I try and stay as professional as I can. But friendly professional, because they do expect girls to be cute for them and if they're not cute for them by God they blow up. They really get pissed.
- Dorothy Huyck: 27:43 So if you're not being cute, that is a source of irritation in and of itself?
- Leigh Hinrichsen: 27:47 Mm-hmm (affirmative). So—

Dorothy Huyck: 27:49 Being professional is irritating?

Leigh Hinrichsen: 27:53 It's a fine wire, yeah.

Dorothy Huyck: 27:55 Is that correct? I don't want to—

Leigh Hinrichsen: 27:58 To some people.

Dorothy Huyck: 27:59 How would you phrase it?

Leigh Hinrichsen: 28:02 Well, yes, that's correct for some people.

Dorothy Huyck: 28:06 And for others?

Leigh Hinrichsen: 28:08 Other people just take a cop as a cop, no matter who you are. Either, "I did wrong" or "I don't agree with you officer, you know, you're full of shit, regardless of who you are I wasn't speeding, I told you." Excuse me. That's basically the way it comes across. But yeah, the people that are getting angry, they don't think that women belong in that position, or young people. No young person and no woman, and/or no woman is going to tell me what to do. "I've been visiting parks since before you were born," that kind of attitude. I've got it in exactly those words, too.

Dorothy Huyck: 28:51 But in the long run, using the professional approach you, what, hand them a citation?

Leigh Hinrichsen: 29:00 If that's what I was originally planning to do. I try not to let their attitude change my intended purpose. If I wasn't going to give them a ticket in the first place, if they were only going seven miles over the limit let's say, or they only took a little piece of wood and they gave it right back, I generally wouldn't give a ticket and no matter how pissed they get, I'll just stick with that.

Dorothy Huyck: 29:24 So that's part of your professionalism.

Leigh Hinrichsen: 29:25 Yeah.

Dorothy Huyck: 29:26 To go along with your original intention.

Leigh Hinrichsen: 29:28 Mm-hmm (affirmative), or if I was going to give them a ticket, not to back down from it. But I will take the time to try to make extra effort to explain to them what's going on, why I'm doing it, why it's my job, why I feel I have the

right or responsibility to do this instead of just your normal, "Since, sir, you were speeding, here's your ticket," kind of thing. If they're giving me a hard time I'm not just going to try and shove them off, I want them to go away with good feelings towards me and towards the Park Service, and towards the law as a general category. So yeah, I try and stay professional but not cold. I try and be feminine without being cute, because there's just no reason why a woman needs to stop being a woman because she's in a uniform, although their expectations for women may be somewhat different from mine. They expect, "Oh, she-"

- Dorothy Huyck: 30:32 In the long run he probably does accept your role and function?
- Leigh Hinrichsen: 30:35 Mm-hmm (affirmative).
- Dorothy Huyck: 30:35 I mean not initially, but once you maintain this professional stance it does become acceptable.
- Leigh Hinrichsen: 30:41 Yes, usually. There's been a couple times when we have had to get the supervisor in on the job and then he comes along and he says exactly what I said, and they go away happy. No more troubles. I just wonder what would happen if my supervisor happened to be a woman.
- Dorothy Huyck: 30:58 That's an interesting thought.
- Leigh Hinrichsen: 31:02 I've wondered about that several times.
- Dorothy Huyck: 31:04 [crosstalk 00:31:04].
- Leigh Hinrichsen: 31:04 Yeah. I hope.
- Dorothy Huyck: 31:07 Speaking of supervisors, without mentioning names, have you found your supervisors to be encouraging or discouraging, or possibly you've had both kinds of supervisors.
- Leigh Hinrichsen: 31:18 I've had one of each here. [Laughs and sings] Oh, memories!
- Dorothy Huyck: 31:25 I'm thinking of your Yosemite work and the whole of your Park Service career.

- Leigh Hinrichsen: 31:30 Yeah. Well working back in time, my present supervisor absolutely couldn't be better, he's tremendous. He admits, off duty, that he is a male chauvinist and never will be anything different, but on duty he's really supportive. He backs his guys and girl, and no difference, whatever. When there's responsibilities to be handed out, he'll just divide it right down the line, and when there's work to be done – unless it's something I'm absolutely physically incapable of. He doesn't go, oh, no, no, you don't have to do – if I say I'm going to change the spark plugs on the control something he'll say, "Okay, here's the plugs. Go to it, there's a ranch around the corner." None of this oh, no, let a guy do it, and oh, is that too heavy for you kind of thing. I'll open doors for him, he'll open doors for me. It's really nice. It doesn't affect his attitude towards me one bit, that fact that he's got this little core in him that says, "Ooh, women."
- Dorothy Huyck: 32:34 Is it, by chance, changing that little core in him?
- Leigh Hinrichsen: 32:39 I think so because he has, over the years, had to work with and over women, not by choice. He popped into this one, I was already here when he came. I was sort of foisted on him, poor fella, but he seen some really fine work. For instance, he was with Ginny Rousseau at the Las Vegas training academy there and boy he sure saw one woman who knew what she was about, and there's just no denying that. He's intelligent enough that he can see what he's seeing and acknowledge it. Yeah, he's great.
- Leigh Hinrichsen: 33:16 I had one previous supervisor who was exactly the opposite. I've never had such a hard time out of any guy in my entire life, and it was really rough having it be a direct supervisor. Women just absolutely didn't belong in uniform for any reason, whatever, and any excuse he could have to keep me off the road was enough for him. I'd just about an EEO suit on him but, well there was very little that was documented, although I did finally come up with something that was quite blatant. And still, when it came right down to it, I took it to the chief ranger, and I got no support out of the chief ranger either. Just, "Well, what's your problem? Well, is that a problem? Okay, what do you say Chet? Okay, well see that's what he says. Bye." So, I figured I could either push it on a regional level and go full EEO, and make enemies out of them, and I have them probably destroy my career, or I can just sit tight, really, and outlast them, so I did the latter. They're long gone.

- Leigh Hinrichsen: 34:25 Yosemite days, I had the two guys at the same time. I don't think they understood me. One really wanted a secretary, thought women made great secretaries and wives, and the other one wasn't quite sure – could see that women were going some place other than into the secretary jobs and barefoot and pregnant role, and wasn't going to try and stop it, but didn't really understand it. Kind of old fashioned. Sweet old fella. [Phone rings]. Great. Just that he wouldn't stand in the way is all. He found out I applied for this job, and he was baffled, couldn't understand me wanting to do it, but by golly, "Well, good luck, Leigh." He's great, and my first supervisor, of course. He was the one that encouraged me to take the job in the first place and hired me for that first job, and he's still a personal friend and we're still in touch, and he and his wife are really good friends of mine. So all in all I've had it pretty darn good.
- Dorothy Huyck: 35:36 Has any of these persons acted as a mentor, as far as your career at the Park Service is concerned?
- Leigh Hinrichsen: 35:45 No I don't, can't really say as I've had a mentor in this career. I've sort of had to get ideas and make decisions, and try, as the inspiration struck.
- Dorothy Huyck: 36:00 The person who was discouraging you. Evidence of this in terms of assignments that he would not give you?
- Leigh Hinrichsen: 36:10 Mm-hmm (affirmative). In particular, this was the time when the requirement for X number of hours of law-enforcement training was coming into being and in this park the policy was we don't have anybody on patrol that isn't armed, but nobody's going to be armed who hasn't been to police school. There were two of us, one male and one female, who had not been to police school, and both of us, up to that time, had been doing a small amount of patrol. And well, we needed somebody else on, there simply wasn't enough manpower at the park to keep all the shifts covered, so he gave them all to Stan. Not supposed to mention names. Stan was an alright guy. In any case, it wasn't his fault, it was the supervisor. I brought that up to him and said, "Well look, Stan hasn't been to police school either," and his reply was, "Well, we got to have somebody out there and I just feel more comfortable with him on patrol." Period. There was no defense against that. I simply was not going to get out of patrol if he had anything to do

with it, and he did have all to do with it. He made all the decisions.

- Dorothy Huyck: 37:25 At that point it was not possible because of visitation or whatever, lack of staff, to send both of you to police school?
- Leigh Hinrichsen: 37:32 Right. They did eventually. Stan, I believe, went just a couple of months after that, possibly the December session. November, December, something like that, and I went the following March.
- Dorothy Huyck: 37:50 Was that same person the supervisor after you'd been to police school?
- Leigh Hinrichsen: 37:54 No, he retired very suddenly, while I was gone.
- Dorothy Huyck: 38:00 So you had no experience post-police school under his supervision?
- Leigh Hinrichsen: 38:03 No, and I'm glad I didn't quite honestly.
- Dorothy Huyck: 38:07 There are some people who think of the National Park Service as a rather male-orientated organization. Do you?
- Leigh Hinrichsen: 38:20 I really don't have an answer for that. I really am not that much aware, except at times like when I had a supervisor like that, of people's male-female attitudes. It's just people with jobs to be done, who either do them or don't, and either like them or not and hire whoever's qualified and they either work out or they don't. So, I really – I haven't been looking at that aspect enough to really answer that.
- Dorothy Huyck: 38:52 In addition to police school, have you been given other opportunities for training courses?
- Leigh Hinrichsen: 38:58 Well I'm sent to the 40-hour refresher every year, which is awfully nice of them because it does fall in the middle of my furlough period, invariably, and they have to go through all the trouble to bring me back on and pay for my travel from Los Angeles to wherever I'm going. Other things are, I haven't gotten the breadth of training that I'd like to have. I need certain things like fire stuff, wildland fires or a structural fire, either one. I need accident investigation and things that actually – particularly accident stuff, it really does have application to my job, but I'm gone

so much of the time and they have such a turnover here with so many people that they are having to send to various things that I'm more or less here as a fill in when there's other people missing. I'm the extra person. So given my present situation, and the agreements that I've made with the park about being here for the busy season to be an extra person, I really can't complain too much. I am, for instance, going to be getting emergency medical training this winter. It's on my own time, but it's given by the park, they're going to let me have housing here while I'm doing it. So, all in all, it's been fair. Hasn't been very broad but it's been fair, all things considered.

- Dorothy Huyck: 40:22 Do you find you do a good deal of interpretation?
- Leigh Hinrichsen: 40:25 Yeah.
- Dorothy Huyck: 40:26 Where have you picked up your background for that?
- Leigh Hinrichsen: 40:29 Purely on my own. I've been delving into park records and old historical leaflets, and construction reports on this and that road, or this building or some other – just looking for things, myself. But I'm not aware of any naturalist training here. Well, they do have a park orientation for seasonals, but that always happens about a month before I get here, so I just find the guys that know. Grab off Johnny Johnson and say, "What's that flower, Johnny?" and then he tells me and then I put it in my little mental notebook and over the years it's built up quite a little background. There used to be an old fella with the name of John Warren, who had been here since day one, and got an awful lot of good information out of him and out of records that he had kept and hoarded away. Just here and there. Same way, I guess, just about every interpreter does.
- Dorothy Huyck: 41:26 Would you say that your specific talents and training are being well used by the Park Service?
- Leigh Hinrichsen: 41:35 Mm-hmm (affirmative). Yeah. My big thing is people, and I think in general I manage to get along with people quite well, even in sticky situations. Got a fast mouth, I can talk my way out of anything.
- Dorothy Huyck: 41:49 Do you think that being a woman has, in anyway, effected your opportunities for added responsibilities or promotions?

- Leigh Hinrichsen: 41:57 Yeah, I think it's helped. It got me this job. I guarantee that. I was the only female that applied for it, and I caught hints of the fact that that was why I was chosen, because they needed their EEO program boosted. And just word of mouth that I get here and there, I think it's going to continue to help. I don't think it's necessarily fair that it should. I don't like seeing preferential treatment other than on the basis of qualifications, but I don't look a gift horse in the mouth too often.
- Dorothy Huyck: 42:28 Are there any jobs in the Park Service that you think a woman should not tackle?
- Leigh Hinrichsen: 42:32 Yes. Let me modify that. I don't think most women should be, for instance, campground patrolling Yosemite Valley, but Joanne Cross is perfect for it. She's just got the image, the come on, that initial presence that's just fine. It establishes her authority. Most women that I've seen in uniform, and I really think myself included, would probably get stomped on real quick doing that because there just is something in these really volatile situations which those campgrounds are zoos in the summertime. That there's just something about a guy, a good, solid male standing there that, you know, a brick wall that isn't going to let you walk over him, that most women can't emulate.
- Dorothy Huyck: 43:35 But for the Joanne Crosses, is it all right?
- Leigh Hinrichsen: 43:37 Absolutely, 100%. She's beautiful in it. Ginny handles herself really well, but I've sort of argued this with myself, back and forth, about women in law enforcement in general. I had a lot of people try and encourage me to join the LA Police Reserves on my time off down there, and I still haven't really come to a positive conclusion about that. That particular question is one I'm really not sure about.
- Dorothy Huyck: 44:04 As far as a Park Service per se, are there jobs that women should not have?
- Leigh Hinrichsen: 44:11 I cannot categorically say no to that question. I don't think there is any job that some woman couldn't take. Now that I think about, same jobs there's an awful lot of men that shouldn't be taking them either.

- Dorothy Huyck: 44:30 Have you given or received any assistance from other women, with regard to identifying job decisions or opportunities?
- Leigh Hinrichsen: 44:37 No, I haven't been looking for it. Right now, I'm sticking with Petrified Forest and not even looking for outside other promotions or positions because I do have this very special agreement, and I do need my degree and I am going to stick with this. Perhaps later on I'll have use for that.
- Dorothy Huyck: 44:54 In what year were you married?
- Leigh Hinrichsen: 45:00 1970.
- Dorothy Huyck: 45:01 And you've been divorced?
- Leigh Hinrichsen: 45:02 Yeah, that was – we split up at the end of '72 and actually got the divorce finalized in the middle of '74, so it was about three and a half years. It was a very amicable divorce, so we didn't really rush into getting the papers through. As it turned out, in fact, when I started working in resources management, Joe started getting all the old Yosemite bug, and he wanted a job back there so badly. I got him one in Resources Management Division, and in fact now he's working up in the office where I was.
- Dorothy Huyck: 45:31 So your former husband is currently with Park Service?
- Leigh Hinrichsen: 45:34 Yeah, he's working with Jan van Wagendonk on the resource – backcountry management program there.
- Dorothy Huyck: 45:43 Was he with Park Service and then, I think not from what you say, at the time that you were married?
- Leigh Hinrichsen: 45:49 No, when we got married, we weren't. We both joined in '71 at the same time, worked for the interp division for one year and then the next year I got back into it, and the year after that I got him back into it. Then I left Yosemite and he's still in Yosemite, that lucky dog.
- Dorothy Huyck: 46:07 Do you have any children?
- Leigh Hinrichsen: 46:08 No.
- Dorothy Huyck: 46:15 If a person, just out of school, came to you, a person who say had a B.A. and was considering the Park Service for a

long-term employment, would you suggest it as a viable career? Not a woman, just a—

- Leigh Hinrichsen: 46:29 Yeah, absolutely. Not if they were looking to make a lot of money, though. I always have to modify my answers, but it would depend on the person. I value my own judgment a lot and if I thought they were the kind of person that I thought would promote the Park Service image, the ranger image, then yes, I would encourage them along.
- Dorothy Huyck: 46:53 How do you see the future for women in the Park Service, for say 5 or 10 years?
- Leigh Hinrichsen: 46:57 Very, very good.
- Dorothy Huyck: 46:59 What makes you feel that? What makes you—
- Leigh Hinrichsen: 47:02 I see a lot more women getting interested in it, and if nothing else, just the pressure of women wanting to get in is going to have some effect. Plus, with these upward mobility programs and whatnot, they seem to be making a positive effort in the Park Service, and then really strong EEO push. Constantly I'm seeing EEO being pushed.
- Dorothy Huyck: 47:25 How does you see the EEO program?
- Leigh Hinrichsen: 47:31 Not particularly effective, quite frankly, but it's there and it's being forced on people's minds, even to whatever small degree. People are aware they have got to be looking for women, minorities and whatnot, and yeah seeing people like Mike Hackett and all these other women getting into really high positions is very encouraging to me. Heck, Mike Hackett used to have the very job that I had with resources management not five years, it was even less than that, by the time she was superintendent, so women can go places. You got to qualify, same as the others. I would just hate to see it get to the point where women are jumping above men who are more qualified, just for the sake of filling up a quota. I hate quotas. That's my major bug on EEO, because I see, I can't even remember what it was, somebody recently was being forced to hire 20% women by such and such a date, and that's just – that's unreasonable to my mind, unless at least 20% of the applicants of the women, 20% of the qualified applicants are women. Then I can see making that quite of quota.

Dorothy Huyck: 48:55 Have you had some particular experience with quotas that—

Leigh Hinrichsen: 48:59 No, this is just looking from the outside, drawing a conclusion.

Dorothy Huyck: 49:06 I've been asking you quite a collection of questions. Is there something we have not talked about that you'd like to come out?

Leigh Hinrichsen: 49:17 As far as like women? Park Service women?

Dorothy Huyck: 49:23 Whatever seems appropriate to Park Service.

Leigh Hinrichsen: 49:31 No, you pretty well covered so I don't have anything.

Dorothy Huyck: 49:34 Thank you, Leigh.

Leigh Hinrichsen: 49:35 Thank you.

[END OF TAPE]

[END OF INTERVIEW]