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



Nancy T. Curriden  
October 12, 1978

Interview conducted by Dorothy B. Huyck  
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NPS History Collection  
Harpers Ferry Center  
PO Box 50  
Harpers Ferry, WV 25425  
HFC\_Archivist@nps.gov

[START OF TAPE]

Nancy T. Curriden: 00:03 As a job? I was working—

Dorothy Huyck: 00:05 Or maybe you traveled, or camped, or did something in parks long before you were [inaudible 00:00:09]?

Nancy T. Curriden: 00:09 Well, yes. When I first came out here to the Southwest, I went and saw some of the parks for the first time because I'm originally from New Jersey, and of course from growing up you go see Valley Forge and all that. As a child, I became acquainted with them. Went on trips with my parents.

Dorothy Huyck: 00:29 In the East, primarily?

Nancy T. Curriden: 00:29 Yeah. The first time I came out here was in '71. I went to a field school, and that's when I decided that I'd been born on the wrong side of the country and did something about it.

Dorothy Huyck: 00:37 Well, maybe we should ask about that. Where were you born?

Nancy T. Curriden: 00:40 New Jersey.

Dorothy Huyck: 00:41 Where though?

Nancy T. Curriden: 00:41 Pennsville.

Dorothy Huyck: 00:43 And when?

Nancy T. Curriden: 00:44 1948.

Dorothy Huyck: 00:47 Were you an only child?

Nancy T. Curriden: 00:49 No, I had a brother. Older brother.

Dorothy Huyck: 00:51 And how many years older?

Nancy T. Curriden: 00:55 Two.

Dorothy Huyck: 00:58 Did you grow up in Pennsville?

Nancy T. Curriden: 00:59 Yes, I did.

Dorothy Huyck: 01:00 And did you graduate from high school there?

Nancy T. Curriden: 01:08 Yeah.

Dorothy Huyck: 01:08 And when was that?

Nancy T. Curriden: 01:10 Oh, '66. Yeah. It's getting back there now.

Dorothy Huyck: 01:14 Were your parents college graduates?

Nancy T. Curriden: 01:16 No.

Dorothy Huyck: 01:18 And what was your father's occupation?

Nancy T. Curriden: 01:20 Foreman, operator in a chemical plant.

Dorothy Huyck: 01:26 And your mother?

Nancy T. Curriden: 01:26 She had originally owned a beauty salon and then she became a housewife.

Dorothy Huyck: 01:35 And where did you attend college?

Nancy T. Curriden: 01:37 Douglass College. It's in New Jersey, a women's college in Rutgers.

Dorothy Huyck: 01:43 And you graduated from there?

Nancy T. Curriden: 01:44 Yes, I did.

Dorothy Huyck: 01:48 What year?

Nancy T. Curriden: 01:48 '70.

Dorothy Huyck: 01:48 And what was your major?

Nancy T. Curriden: 01:49 English.

Dorothy Huyck: 01:49 English?

Nancy T. Curriden: 01:51 Yeah.

Dorothy Huyck: 01:51 Have you done graduate work since then?

Nancy T. Curriden: 01:53 Yes.

Dorothy Huyck: 01:54 At?

Nancy T. Curriden: 01:56 University of Virginia, one year.

Dorothy Huyck: 01:58 What field?

Nancy T. Curriden: 02:00 Anthropology.

Dorothy Huyck: 02:00 And?

Nancy T. Curriden: 02:03 And here to get my master's at the U of A.

Dorothy Huyck: 02:07 How close are you – Have you finished your master's?

Nancy T. Curriden: 02:09 Oh, yes. Yeah.

Dorothy Huyck: 02:10 What year did you get your master's?

Nancy T. Curriden: 02:14 Let me see. I finished my coursework in '75 but I missed a bureaucratic deadline, so I didn't get the master's until '76.

Dorothy Huyck: 02:24 And your master's is also in anthropology?

Nancy T. Curriden: 02:27 Yeah, that's how they presented there – unless you take the – They have a new section now for cultural resource management, specifically, but they didn't have that when I was going so I got an anthropology, but I have a lot of archeology courses.

Dorothy Huyck: 02:43 Any chance of your going out for the PhD?

Nancy T. Curriden: 02:46 Well, I have enough credits for a PhD now, I just got kind of burned out. So, we'll have to see.

Dorothy Huyck: 02:55 I understand you're an ABD?

Nancy T. Curriden: 02:56 No, I'm not an ABD because I never did a preliminary paper or anything, or a proposal for a dissertation. But I'd have enough credits to get it here, but I wouldn't do it here. And I don't feel like doing it anywhere else right now.

Dorothy Huyck: 03:18 Mm-hmm (affirmative). During this educational process, way back in high school, who encouraged you, if anyone? A parent, teacher, somebody in the community, a professor, or maybe no one?

Nancy T. Curriden: 03:27 In any of my academic work?

Dorothy Huyck: 03:28 Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Nancy T. Curriden: 03:28 Oh. My parents.

Dorothy Huyck: 03:29 Who were the encouraging people?

Nancy T. Curriden: 03:30 My parents. Really, they were the motivating force. And it came easy to me, I was intelligent. Still am, I guess. It was fun. I really enjoyed learning and I think it was mostly from the atmosphere at home. There weren't any pressures and there was a lot of positive reinforcement.

Dorothy Huyck: 03:52 Did this extend on into college?

Nancy T. Curriden: 03:59 Yes.

Dorothy Huyck: 04:02 And even at the graduate level?

Nancy T. Curriden: 04:02 Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Dorothy Huyck: 04:02 So your parents, who may not have been able to go to college, were very happy [crosstalk 00:04:06]?

Nancy T. Curriden: 04:05 Oh, yeah, that's typical middle-class America, though, isn't it?

Dorothy Huyck: 04:11 Back in high school, did you take courses in math and science?

Nancy T. Curriden: 04:15 Yeah.

Dorothy Huyck: 04:16 Was there recommended ones or college prep ones?

Nancy T. Curriden: 04:19 College prep ones.

Dorothy Huyck: 04:20 Were these standard for both boys and girls or were they more frequently taken by boys?

Nancy T. Curriden: 04:25 There was usually a larger male population than female in those courses.

Dorothy Huyck: 04:30 And did you do well in math and science?

Nancy T. Curriden: 04:31 Yeah. I didn't understand math, but I did well in it.

Dorothy Huyck: 04:39 Did you play with boys as a child?

Nancy T. Curriden: 04:41 Oh, yeah. I was a tomboy.

Dorothy Huyck: 04:44 You were a tomboy.

Nancy T. Curriden: 04:44 Yes.

Dorothy Huyck: 04:50 You beat me to it. As you became a teenager, were you expected to become something more of a lady?

Nancy T. Curriden: 04:54 Oh, well, I ceased playing tackle football but that was – I didn't run around in the swamps anymore. I guess, you know, peer group pressure determines your behavior at that point, but I continued to play sports on the teams in high school.

Dorothy Huyck: 05:12 And then would you say you were expected to become more of a lady?

Nancy T. Curriden: 05:16 I guess, yeah.

Dorothy Huyck: 05:17 Did you go along with that?

Nancy T. Curriden: 05:18 Oh, vaguely. You know, within reason.

Dorothy Huyck: 05:21 Did you rebel against it?

Nancy T. Curriden: 05:22 No, not really. I was very acquiescent.

Dorothy Huyck: 05:28 Were there extracurricular areas that you were active in that have since been helpful in terms of your employment?

Nancy T. Curriden: 05:37 Oh, goodness. I don't know, I suppose sports. Of course, that doesn't help right now, but they used to. What else is considered extracurricular? All those things they used to make you do in high school. I guess, no, that's probably it, really, that I can think of now.

Dorothy Huyck: 06:09 When did you first begin working for the Park Service?

Nancy T. Curriden: 06:14 I'm pretty sure it was the – Let me think. I think it was the fall of 1972.

Dorothy Huyck: 06:21 And what did you do at that time?

Nancy T. Curriden: 06:27 I was listed as a museum aide. I was helping a man who worked here, he doesn't anymore, catalog and process artifacts from a site up near Globe, as a matter of fact, and did some of the bibliography and did some drafting for him.

Dorothy Huyck: 06:49 What kind of site was that?

Nancy T. Curriden: 06:50 A Salado site. It was underneath where a subdivision was going and the contractor let the man dig it, which was kind of them. They didn't have to.

Dorothy Huyck: 07:06 And what grade were you at that point?

Nancy T. Curriden: 07:08 GS-5.

Dorothy Huyck: 07:08 And you were then a graduate student?

Nancy T. Curriden: 07:14 Yes, I had just started my first semester out here as a graduate student.

Dorothy Huyck: 07:16 Were you working full time?

Nancy T. Curriden: 07:18 No, part time.

Dorothy Huyck: 07:18 Part time. And how long did you continue this?

Nancy T. Curriden: 07:22 That job ended March or April of the next year because I had received an offer to work over at the university in a thing called the Bureau of Ethnic Research, which had to do mostly with cultural anthropology, and I wanted to give that a try.

Dorothy Huyck: 07:45 So you went to work for the Bureau of Ethnic Research?

Nancy T. Curriden: 07:47 Right.

Dorothy Huyck: 07:48 And how long were you there?

Nancy T. Curriden: 07:53 Oh, dear. Let me see. Probably a year.

Dorothy Huyck: 07:54 And what were you doing there?

Nancy T. Curriden: 07:57 I was categorized as a research assistant. And it was strange, I sort of got in on the tail end of one project, so I was doing corollary work in another town about juvenile

delinquency and crime patterns in border towns. So, I went down and interviewed a lot of officials in the town and looked through the records and such. That was supposed to be correlated with the main project, but it never was, so there's a lot of work sitting somewhere in a file that needs to be computerized sometime that I did.

Nancy T. Curriden: 08:33

And the second project that I did there was also independent research, and it dealt with a small group of Indians living up in Payson, Arizona. And they were fighting to get recognition as a tribe so they could receive the benefits of that from the federal government. Again, it was a wrong selection. We shouldn't have done that tribe as part of the larger project which had to do with business management problems in small reservations. The large reservations seemed to be able to get all the grants and such because they have the facilities and such, but a lot of the small reservations don't even have any information about these things, there are communication problems.

Nancy T. Curriden: 09:17

Well, these people weren't even a reservation yet. They weren't even a tribe, so you can imagine I'm going up there and talking to them about filing cabinets when they could have cared less because they had been hassling with the government for years to get declared as a tribe. And they were, finally. So that was interesting for me but didn't contribute much to the final report. But I liked it.

Dorothy Huyck: 09:42

And at the end of that period, did you come back to the Park Service?

Nancy T. Curriden: 09:47

Oh, let me see. I should have my 171 here with me. Yes, I think I did. At that time, I was working here. Yeah, I began working here part time and I also had a teaching assistantship over at the university.

Dorothy Huyck: 10:02

What year are we talking about?

Nancy T. Curriden: 10:06

Oh, must have been part of '74. Does that seem right? Yeah.

Dorothy Huyck: 10:12

And what were you doing during that time with the Park Service?

Nancy T. Curriden: 10:14

At that time, I was writing cultural resource management plans for the parks in Southern Arizona. And my boss has

always been Keith, Dr. Anderson. He hired me initially because I could write. And that's what they needed back then was somebody who could write.

Dorothy Huyck: 10:35 And when you write a cultural resource management plan, what do you write?

Nancy T. Curriden: 10:38 Oh, goodness gracious. Let me see. Well, they do it per park. I guess they still utilize them, sort of little program packages, and within them was covered prehistory of the area, any historical background that might be meaningful, any information about ethnological groups that may have used it, the environment in the present, and the affected environment, which was the environment that pertained to the prehistory, recommendations for what sort of future research should be done in the park. I'm sure there's some other things. And there was an environmental impact statement attached to the back of every one of those, which has to deal with mitigation under certain circumstances, whether there was going to be irrevocable damage if a certain development project would be done.

Dorothy Huyck: 11:31 Did you visit each of these parks to put together the data, or were you taking somebody else's material and writing it up?

Nancy T. Curriden: 11:38 Oh, I see. I visited – I know I visited some of them. Keith went along a couple times. I must have visited at least three, and I can't remember how many of the things I wrote. After a while, I discovered that originality wasn't exactly called for. They wanted a nice sort of fill-in-the-blank thing. So, once I got the first one down, I just filled in the blanks. Except for the culture history.

Dorothy Huyck: 12:07 How long did you—

Nancy T. Curriden: 12:08 Do that?

Dorothy Huyck: 12:09 —stay at this Park Service job?

Nancy T. Curriden: 12:12 Oh, dear. Where are we now? We're at '74?

Dorothy Huyck: 12:16 Yeah.

- Nancy T. Curriden: 12:20 Oh, goodness. I must have had one of those 11-month graduate student appointments then, so I was probably at that and other things for a year.
- Dorothy Huyck: 12:28 Which brings us up to '75.
- Nancy T. Curriden: 12:31 We're getting there, aren't we? Boy. I had a teaching assistantship until '76, so I was working part time. And I think I worked full time in the summers, occasionally. I can't remember. But I don't know what I did next. That's terrible. Oh, dear. There's a maybe year and a half blank. Could I go get my 171 form?
- Dorothy Huyck: 13:07 Sure.
- Nancy T. Curriden: 13:09 I'm just reading it. I worked for the Bureau of Ethnic Research from March 1973 to the time that I filled out this form, which was April the 23rd 1974. And I must have gotten the job, so I must have been working for the Park Service from 1974 to some unknown time, doing something. From April '74 – Goodness, that's really terrible. I jump around a lot. The jobs sort of mush into one. I can't think what I was doing. Whatever it was, I was working part time and I was working for Keith.
- Dorothy Huyck: 13:52 Here at the Southwest?
- Nancy T. Curriden: 13:53 Here at this center. Yeah, always here.
- Dorothy Huyck: 13:56 Mm-hmm (affirmative). Do you have any idea what you were doing?
- Nancy T. Curriden: 14:01 I just can't think right – Isn't that terrible? I can find – I think I have an up to date 171 at home if you're going to be here tomorrow. I'm sure that would certainly clarify the problem.
- Dorothy Huyck: 14:12 Should we ask what you're doing currently?
- Nancy T. Curriden: 14:14 Yes, that would be nice. I know what I'm doing currently. Well, in June I supervised the excavation of the historic site that I was telling you about, the homestead.
- Dorothy Huyck: 14:24 Where was this homestead?

- Nancy T. Curriden: 14:26 It's located on Drachman and 6th Avenue in downtown Tucson, and it's the site of our new building.
- Dorothy Huyck: 14:34 How did it come that you were excavating this site?
- Nancy T. Curriden: 14:38 Federal legislation. GSA is building the building, so federal agency, they'd neglected to perform their required duties. They didn't have an archeological survey before they approved that site and contracted with a construction company to build there. Because we are basically interested in archeology here, Keith sent out a couple of guys to survey the site and they found evidence of a homestead. There wasn't much above ground evidence because the adobe that had been there had been razed in 1962.
- Nancy T. Curriden: 15:16 Some terrible local tragedy had happened in the area. A little Mexican girl had been taken into an abandoned house and molested and killed. The people who owned the property didn't want that to happen on their property, so the city of Tucson demolished this building, which was built in 1880, a beautiful place, but it was gone. So, we needed there to be subsurface features because 1880 is certainly before indoor privies had become popular in Tucson. So, we took some aerials from the police helicopter. They were kind enough to fly us over.
- Dorothy Huyck: 15:53 Aerial photographs?
- Nancy T. Curriden: 15:54 Aerial photographs, yeah. And we had to excavate it. It's federal legislation. It had to be done before any building could be done.
- Dorothy Huyck: 16:03 What did the aerial photographs show?
- Nancy T. Curriden: 16:09 Mostly they showed the use patterns of an abandoned lot. They did show the surface features that we had found, and you could sort of get a better idea of the relationship. They also showed the outline of a building that we couldn't see on the surface, so that was good. And you could sort of see, vaguely, the lines of the foundation of the original adobe house.
- Dorothy Huyck: 16:32 Now, I'm ignorant. Is this, in part, thanks to infrared photography?

- Nancy T. Curriden: 16:37 Infrared would have been helpful during the rainy season, but I called Tom Lyons in the Southwestern Region, he's in Santa Fe. He's written a couple of books on remote sensing, and I called him and talked to him about it. He said it wouldn't have been worth it to try that. So, this was just regular film.
- Dorothy Huyck: 16:53 Did you take the pictures?
- Nancy T. Curriden: 16:54 No, I sent up somebody because I was writing a research design for the excavation at the time.
- Dorothy Huyck: 17:00 But you did do the actual work on the site?
- Nancy T. Curriden: 17:03 Oh, yes. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah, I supervised the excavation, had an Indian crew, Papagos from San Xavier, and an assistant who has worked here off and on. It took us about three weeks to excavate.
- Dorothy Huyck: 17:20 And what did you find?
- Nancy T. Curriden: 17:21 Oh, goodness. Lots of things. Lots of features, subsurface features. Couple of privies. As I said, the foundations of the – not the big adobe but the little one that we could just see the tracings of on the aerials. We dug down to that, discovered it was probably a little bit before turn of the century. Lots of trash, trash pits. A well, which we dug to 12 feet. It went to 16 feet, but the sides started caving in and I didn't want to lose any of the workers. We had shoring and it wasn't adequate. Even though it was adequate by OSHA standards, but I didn't feel too safe about it because there was no way to shore – there was no sturdy surface to shore from 12 feet down. So, we couldn't complete the well. Let's see, a couple of cesspools. The outline of a cistern.
- Nancy T. Curriden: 18:24 There was nothing left of the larger house, though, of the house that was supposed to be the first one build there. They had really demolished it. And contrary to a lot of historical archeologists' belief, you're not always going to find a foundation where a building was. This one was built directly on the caliche, which is the mineral carbonate stuff that you get in the Southwest from the leeching of the soil and stuff. Well, the caliche layer is solid over that whole site, and begins anywhere from one to six inches below the topsoil. So, it's certainly a nice, strong, sturdy base on

which to put adobes. So, they just plopped them right down there.

Nancy T. Curriden: 19:02

So when they demolished the house, that was it. Nothing left. But it's interesting to find below ground features in that caliche. You go around with a probe, a very heavy probe, about an eight-foot steel pointed probe. You just probe around, and when the probe goes down, you know that somebody took the trouble to dig through the caliche to make a pit. So that's how we found a lot of the features. That and the help of the construction company's backhoe operator. He did a lot of blading for us. They had to blade the site anyway, so he bladed for us. And the people, when they've worked on those machines long enough, can almost sense when they're hitting a change in anything in the soil that they're dealing with, so he got pretty good at finding things. So, he did find a couple of features for us.

Dorothy Huyck: 19:57

Did you find artifacts?

Nancy T. Curriden: 19:58

Oh, yeah, certainly. Everywhere.

Dorothy Huyck: 20:00

Such as?

Nancy T. Curriden: 20:00

Oh, goodness. Well, the man who owned the place was a butcher. He owned the meat market downtown, so we found a lot of quantity of butchered bones, bones showing evidence of butchering. And I found out, also – It's interesting to do this. I've never done historical archeology before; I found some informants in town who are still living. In fact, the little old lady who lives across the street was the daughter-in-law of the woman who lived there, and she walked around and told me what some of these features are that otherwise, you know, you could have said, "Goodness gracious. It's a trailer pad." It could have been anybody's guess.

Nancy T. Curriden: 20:34

But she told me that they raised squabs and chickens and turkeys. And that was certainly evidenced in the bones. We found a lot of them. And we found a lot of butchered beef bones and probably lamb. I have someone else doing the faunal analysis because I've only done a little of that and there's too much other stuff. So, she's going to do that for me. But that should be interesting.

- Nancy T. Curriden: 21:03 Ceramics, lots of different kinds of crockery. Some Papago sherds, Indian sherds, which I think are probably from the earlier – from the man who owned the site first. The ownership of the lot gets kind of finagly in there around the turn of the century. There's a little speculation going on. But the first man who owned it, I believe, is probably the one who's responsible for most of the Papago sherds being there. Because the Papagos used to come into town and hawk their pottery. It was very good for keeping water cool here, because pottery sweated. So, as it evaporated, it kept the water cool that was in the urn. So, we've got a lot of that.
- Nancy T. Curriden: 21:42 A lot of metal artifacts. Lots of glass. Lots of beer bottles and whiskey bottles in the outhouses, and kids' toys. I think they probably dropped them through their pockets or something. Pen knives and all sorts of things fall down into outhouses. It's kind of interesting. And they're pretty early. The artifacts, they're pretty early because, as I said, a man being a butcher and owning a meat market was pretty well-to-do and got indoor plumbing and city water as soon as he could. So, they were probably from the first man's time period, and I think there were probably some tenants off and on the lot before the Webbers finally moved in and stayed there.
- Nancy T. Curriden: 22:23 The Webbers bought the land in 1904 and Mrs. Webber lived there until 1957. That's kind of too bad because they demolished it. And there were a lot of grandchildren, so they took away a lot of the things that would normally have been deposited somewhere on the lot. So, I think the things that I'm looking at are probably, some of them are theirs. I know the shotgun shells are. Mr. Webber was a—
- Dorothy Huyck: 22:52 The what shells?
- Nancy T. Curriden: 22:54 Shotgun shells. There was shotgun casings in every one of those features that we found. Mr. Webber was a member of the local shooting club, so we've got lots of shotgun shell casings and busted clay pigeons. He may have popped off some of the real pigeons, too, because there are an awful lot of pigeon bones in some of those privies.
- Nancy T. Curriden: 23:15 So now I'm analyzing all of this and we'll write the final report, which was supposed to be due June 1st. So, I have to do archival research, artifactual research, and talk to the

informants, because the grandchildren are around, of one of the sons, and they lived in the house when they were kids, when they were young. I've talked to a couple of them. I have to go talk to them some more. But it's interesting to get the corroborating information.

- Dorothy Huyck: 23:48 And when your report is written, that ends the project?
- Nancy T. Curriden: 23:51 Yeah, that's it.
- Dorothy Huyck: 23:53 And you don't know where you'll be then?
- Nancy T. Curriden: 23:57 Right. That's been what my lifestyle has been since – Let me see. When did I start? I started doing field archeology in 1976, in January. That's what it says here. I worked for the Arizona State Museum until – Oh, they didn't put a date on it. Until July. So, I worked for the Arizona State Museum for six months when I first started doing it. Then I must have been hired by Keith. Yes, I was. And I've done another report for Keith. It involved doing survey up at Lake Mead. I completed that report. That's not it. Anyway, I completed that report. Then I worked for the museum again as a supervisory archeologist on various projects. Let's see, last winter, I was up in Springerville for about three months. That was really nice.
- Dorothy Huyck: 25:11 What were you doing in Springerville last winter?
- Nancy T. Curriden: 25:11 Oh, there is what's going to be part of a coal power plant that Tucson Gas and Electric is doing. They're probably one of the better sponsors that we have to deal with concerning federal legislation and such. So, they had contacted the museum. We do most of their work for them, the museum, not here. This is the State Museum. And a survey had determined that there were 14 sites in this nice little valley, just a nice little microcosm of what was going on there. And the valley was going to be used for silt, the byproduct of burning the coal. So, we were to excavate. Our project director was Dr. Doyle and myself and another person or crew chiefs, crew supervisors. And we excavated the sites. They were from about 1780 AD to probably 1280 AD. Nice stuff.
- Dorothy Huyck: 26:15 As in the 1200 demarcations and everybody start to disappear?

- Nancy T. Curriden: 26:19 We missed that. I think these were probably before that. It was a strange little valley.
- Dorothy Huyck: 26:23 But it comes up to that point.
- Nancy T. Curriden: 26:24 Yeah. Yeah. We didn't see any of that. It was kind of strange to figure out what all those sites were doing there because the nearest water was like four miles away, which is even a little excessive for Indians. Although, ethnographic studies have shown that people who are used to it think nothing of walking a six-mile radius from their base camp to get to anything. It's not really an imposition on them.
- Nancy T. Curriden: 26:52 But Dave, Dr. Doyle, thought they were probably doing some sand farming like the Hopis used to do, and that's probably the case. They got enough moisture coming down off of a mesa that was just north of all the sites. And the sunlight was enough that they could raise a crop of corn. And there were small pueblos, they got three small pueblos there. One that was excavated. Two, three – Yeah, two others we found. One of the guy who did the survey missed them. He was on his honeymoon, though, so he had other things on his mind.
- Dorothy Huyck: 27:22 If we can be more specific about just the era when you worked for the Park Service [crosstalk 00:27:28].
- Nancy T. Curriden: 27:29 Okay. If I can remember them. Okay.
- Dorothy Huyck: 27:32 Without necessarily mentioning names, when you think about the persons who have been supervisors during your Park Service work, have you found them to be encouraging, or discouraging, or have you encountered some of both?
- Nancy T. Curriden: 27:46 Well, mostly encouraging.
- Dorothy Huyck: 27:50 How is that evidenced?
- Nancy T. Curriden: 27:53 They keep hiring me. Archeologists are not at a premium in Arizona. With the university right here, it's cheap labor. It's a great labor pool, and then I keep getting hired. It's encouraging. But once I wrote the first – Once I proved that I could write, which is an important thing that a lot of

archeologists don't seem to be able to do, and that I'm competent in the field, I should be rehired.

- Dorothy Huyck: 28:28 Have you encountered any that were discouraging? I meant within the Park Service.
- Nancy T. Curriden: 28:35 Yeah, I understand that. I've always had the same supervisor so, in effect, the same guy at the very top. I could use a little more positive reinforcement sometimes, but that's just my basic insecurity. And that's a little discouraging at times but not enough to make me feel like I should chuck it all and go become a checkout clerk.
- Dorothy Huyck: 28:58 And have you been given any categories of training that Park Service has provided?
- Nancy T. Curriden: 29:07 You mean like all those grid things and such?
- Dorothy Huyck: 29:10 Yes.
- Nancy T. Curriden: 29:10 No, because I've always been a temporary employee. I had a four-wheel driving course, which was pertinent to me, and first aid. I mean, just sort of a handy dandy, fast, two-day course of first aid but that's it, which is understandable. Those things cost money.
- Dorothy Huyck: 29:29 Some people think of the National Park Service as a rather male-oriented organization. Do you?
- Nancy T. Curriden: 29:35 Oh. Well, we've got some male chauvinist pigs around here, but they're all fighting against it.
- Dorothy Huyck: 29:41 They're all fighting against it?
- Nancy T. Curriden: 29:44 Well, they keep hiring females. There just happen to be a bunch of competent female archeologists around and that doesn't – the femaleness doesn't seem to get in the way of our being hired. I think it's male-oriented in the parks, still. You really hit that in the staffs in some of the parks. Some of the supervisors are still a little archaic.
- Dorothy Huyck: 30:15 Do you think that your specific talents and training are being well-used by the Park Service?
- Nancy T. Curriden: 30:21 No, I think I should have a permanent job at about a GS-9.

- Dorothy Huyck: 30:24 What is your grade?
- Nancy T. Curriden: 30:25 It's GS-7. I mean, I certainly deserve at least a 9. I really do. I keep getting these little nibbles of job offers—
- Dorothy Huyck: 30:36 You've been given other job offers?
- Nancy T. Curriden: 30:38 Well, you know there's inquiries as to availability. And one job offer as a GS-9 just recently.
- Dorothy Huyck: 30:45 And you were unable to accept that because you'd made a commitment here?
- Nancy T. Curriden: 30:48 Yeah, that's probably more my problem. I don't think a man would do that. I think a man would drop it and run.
- Dorothy Huyck: 30:56 Seriously you do?
- Nancy T. Curriden: 30:57 Yeah, I do. I think that my upbringing included--It's just something I feel morally obligated. I certainly feel morally obligated to finish this site, to finish the report. In fact, I just told some people I wasn't available for a career conditional. Of course, it was in Barstow, which might have had something to do with it, too. But still, it was a career conditional and I really thought about that, but I decided that I really did want to finish this report, having done the excavation. But I've done that a few other times. Twice, I think. Two other times. It gets a little discouraging.
- Dorothy Huyck: 31:37 Where you've had a commitment to a situation and have not felt that you want to drop that—
- Nancy T. Curriden: 31:41 Yeah.
- Dorothy Huyck: 31:43 —[crosstalk 00:31:43] of a more opportune—
- Nancy T. Curriden: 31:43 That's true. I don't know. Maybe that's just me. I think it almost behooves me to finish the report, partly because I am a woman, partly because it's my personal viewpoint and also because I don't want people to get the idea that [inaudible 00:32:08] a man could do it and it wouldn't be any hassle. "Oh, well, he just saw the greater opportunity." Women do it and, "Stupid bitch. Leaves me here with a report half written."

- Dorothy Huyck: 32:18 So let me ask this, do you think that being a woman has affected your opportunities and the opportunities, shall we say, for added responsibilities and promotion?
- Nancy T. Curriden: 32:34 Probably. I don't know. I started off with – It was luck that I got my first job in the field. But as I say, I'm reasonably intelligent. I'm highly intelligent, it's just unrealized potential. And I could have gone up faster. It's partly my problem, too, though. I have an inability to throw myself at anyone to present myself assertively. So that's been in my way. And there aren't permanent positions here. I think that some permanent positions that I've been offered initially, in fact, I know they've been given to veterans with probably not as much experience or intelligence as I have. Nothing against veterans. Yes, something against veterans. I resent the 10-point veteran preference and I think that that's probably gotten me out of a few jobs that would have come up. Not around here, I think I could get paid more around here.
- Dorothy Huyck: 33:53 So going back to the original question, do you think that being a woman has affected your opportunities?
- Nancy T. Curriden: 33:59 Yeah, I do. I do.
- Dorothy Huyck: 34:02 Do you think there are any jobs in the Park Service that a woman should not tackle?
- Nancy T. Curriden: 34:06 No.
- Dorothy Huyck: 34:08 Has anyone acted as a mentor for you?
- Nancy T. Curriden: 34:10 A mentor. Not full time. But yes, there have been some people who have guided me through some stuff.
- Dorothy Huyck: 34:24 Do you belong to some professional organizations?
- Nancy T. Curriden: 34:28 Yeah, the Society of American Archeologists, SAA. And I guess I'd better join the Society for Historical Archeologists, too, when I finish this report. In fact, I'm supposed to give a paper there to their convention in January. And I'm sure I have to join before I can give the paper.
- Dorothy Huyck: 34:52 Do you see women forming any kind of an old girl network within the Park Service?

- Nancy T. Curriden: 34:57 There aren't enough of us old girls to do it yet. So, I don't see that pertain. I see – Well, Yvonne can probably talk to you more about this, but I see Yvonne getting into part of the old boy network. As certain superintendents are willing to accept her as a professional, although she's a woman, and she's able to use that—
- Dorothy Huyck: 35:22 Although she's?
- Nancy T. Curriden: 35:22 Oh, yeah. I think so. She'll be able to clue you in about that.
- Dorothy Huyck: 35:27 Do you feel that you are accepted although you are a woman?
- Nancy T. Curriden: 35:32 Oh, probably. When it gets down to it, I think so. I think I may be considered a fluke.
- Dorothy Huyck: 35:40 As you phrase it, that's somewhat condescending. "Although you are a woman."
- Nancy T. Curriden: 35:44 It's posed to be. I think that's how we get considered. Not so much over at the museum, I didn't catch that.
- Dorothy Huyck: 35:55 I'm thinking in the Park Service.
- Nancy T. Curriden: 35:55 I know, I'm just trying to make some comparisons in my brain. No, I don't think – I've seen that in parks, when I've gone to parks, that's been there.
- Dorothy Huyck: 36:08 I'm sorry—
- Nancy T. Curriden: 36:10 When I've been doing field work and I've been out.
- Dorothy Huyck: 36:12 Yes.
- Nancy T. Curriden: 36:13 I see that. I see sort of a condescending attitude sometimes. Back here, sometimes it's there but it's subtle and very often it's done just to – Yeah, it's supposedly humorous. That's not humorous. Black people don't appreciate jokes about niggers, and I don't appreciate jokes about women.
- Dorothy Huyck: 36:35 I'm especially interested because there have been women archeologists in this organization for quite a while.
- Nancy T. Curriden: 36:42 Yeah.

- Dorothy Huyck: 36:44 Neigh on 40 years.
- Nancy T. Curriden: 36:45 Mm-hmm (affirmative). I think they've all done it, "although they were women." You really have to be a strong lady to really make it out there. Yvonne has talked to me about becoming more and more assertive, adapting a lot of male behaviors in interacting with people over the phone. Just, you know, a certain brusqueness that she wouldn't have had before. She no longer equates assertiveness with being bitchy. And if you [inaudible 00:37:18], that's all right. You can gap that, get over that gap that's there and the people you're dealing with no longer think of it as being bitchy, they think of it as being assertive and that's all right. It's always all right when a man does it. Well, not always, but you know, most of the time.
- Nancy T. Curriden: 37:38 So I think that the women who have made it in the Park Service must have been pretty assertive women. I think now that the Park Service is getting so big, lot of tentacles out and stuff, I could find a comfortable spot somewhere and not have to assert myself and do all right. But if I wanted to get anywhere, I'd have to learn how to be assertive.
- Dorothy Huyck: 38:00 Where would you like to be, say, five years from now?
- Nancy T. Curriden: 38:04 Wow. Somewhere—
- Dorothy Huyck: 38:06 I don't mean geographically.
- Nancy T. Curriden: 38:07 No.
- Dorothy Huyck: 38:09 As in professional development?
- Nancy T. Curriden: 38:10 Well, that's a paradox. I want to continue to do field work but I'm 30 now. I know I can continue to do field work for forever but, once you get into the Park Service in a permanent position, it seems what they do is they kick you upstairs. So I'll just have to analyze where I want to be along the way. If I could combine field work with some desk work, I wouldn't mind. I can manage. I can be in a managerial position. I just need to be trained. But I know I can supervise people. I've done that in the field and that can be a pretty difficult situation, there. The problem is

they don't have managerial positions with field work four months a year.

- Nancy T. Curriden: 39:01 But I think as you get older, you sort of look for some security and security means a career position which usually means sitting behind a desk most of the time, so I might go for that.
- Dorothy Huyck: 39:16 When you look down the road as to possibilities for women in general, what do you see in the Park Service, say, five years from now?
- Nancy T. Curriden: 39:33 Archeologist positions are pretty few in the Park Service. But we're putting out some good women archeologists now. It should even out. I should think there would be opportunities as much as for anybody. It's going to be the buyer's market again, and if the veteran preference thing stays, it's going to be mostly men doing the jobs. Unless you use the good old boy network to get your – Which, you know, the Civil Service doesn't do a whole lot to get rid of that.
- Nancy T. Curriden: 40:05 Somebody must have told you about the ways they can get around really hiring somebody they don't want, you know? You write a job description specifically for one person and nobody else could ever fulfill and that person gets the job, which is how some of my friends have gotten career positions in the Park Service. The job descriptions are written specifically for them. You know, if it works.
- Dorothy Huyck: 40:30 Have you, at any time, been married?
- Nancy T. Curriden: 40:32 No.
- Dorothy Huyck: 40:34 If, at some time in the future, you should consider marriage, would you want to combine that with a career in the Park Service?
- Nancy T. Curriden: 40:41 Yeah. I can't see myself without work.
- Dorothy Huyck: 40:50 Are you financially responsible for anyone other than yourself?
- Nancy T. Curriden: 40:54 My dog and cat. And some of my friends sometimes. No.
- Dorothy Huyck: 41:05 I've been asking you quite a collection of questions.

Nancy T. Curriden: 41:06

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Dorothy Huyck: 41:08

Is there something concerning your work in the Park Service that we've not talked about that you would like to comment on?

Nancy T. Curriden: 41:14

No, I think this has been pretty complete. I can't think of anything else.

Dorothy Huyck: 41:18

Fine. Thank you.

Nancy T. Curriden: 41:21

You're welcome.

[END OF TAPE]

[END OF INTERVIEW]