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Herbert Evison's National Park Service Oral History Project, 1952-1999



Jean Pinkley
December 5, 1962

Interview conducted by S. Herbert Evison
Transcribed by Unknown
Edited by Jean Pinkley
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NPS History Collection
Harpers Ferry Center
PO Box 50
Harpers Ferry, WV 25425
HFC_Archivist@nps.gov

Mrs. Jean Pinkley

Reel XXX

Includes changes and corrections offered
By Mrs. Pinkley with letter of Mar. 5, 1964

[START OF INTERVIEW]

Herbert Evison: This is Herbert Evison. This is a beautiful afternoon, December 5, 1962, at Mesa Verde National Park, and across the table from me is Mrs. Jean Pinkley. And Jean, I think your proper title is Chief Park Archaeologist, is it not?

Jean Pinkley: That's right.

Herbert Evison: And the first thing I want to ask you to do is to give me a quick round-up of your National Park Service career, including how you came to start to work for the Park Service in the first place.

Jean Pinkley: Well, I started to work for it because of an interest in the man by the name of Pinkley, Boss Pinkley, whom I used to visit to and from on my way to the University of Arizona when I was going to school, and who got me enthused with it. I was an archaeologist; I took the exam, and the Boos told me their wasn't a chance in the world that I could ever get a job as an archaeologist with the National Park Service. So, he was as surprised as I was when I got one in 1939 in Mesa Verde.

Jean Pinkley: You asked for a resume of my career: It began and is still going in Mesa Verde and has never been anywhere else.

Herbert Evison: You started as an archaeologist?

Jean Pinkley: I started in as a junior park archaeologist on a seasonal basis, as that was the title of the position up here; the job here was as museum assistant. Then I finally met the Boss's son and I married him, left the Park Service, and when he joined the Navy I came back to work for the Park Service again on a seasonal basis, and after his death I went to work for the National Park Service on a permanent basis in 1946.

Herbert Evison: So, you have been a permanent employee now for better than sixteen years?

Jean Pinkley: Well, my actual record, yes, for over sixteen years. I have almost twenty years of service now, counting my seasonal service.

Herbert Evison: And that all counts toward retirement nowadays?

Jean Pinkley: Yes, it does.

Herbert Evison: That's a blessing too, isn't it? Well, Jean, you worked for a great many years under a guy named Don Watson, then.

Jean Pinkley: I certainly did.

Herbert Evison: Then did you become chief park archaeologist at the time he left the Service?

Jean Pinkley: No, no. When he left the Service, Cal Burroughs, who is now staff archaeologist in the Washington office, was sent in here as chief park archaeologist; and the position I had, which was as archaeologist, was reclassified as assistant chief. And when he left - he was here only about fourteen or sixteen months and transferred to Washington - then I went in as acting chief for a little over a year, and then was appointed chief park archaeologist.

Herbert Evison: And when would that have been, what year? About 1960?

Jean Pinkley: It was I believe, Herb, I believe it was March of '60. I am a little uncertain on that; February or March of '60.

Herbert Evison: Anyway, you are going on three years in that capacity. Now, I think a very interesting thing for the record would be just what does the job of chief park archaeologist in Mesa Verde involve? How many people do you have working for you year-round, how many people do you have working for you in the summer season, what are your responsibilities?

Jean Pinkley: Well, the staff consists of myself, an assistant chief archaeologist, staff archaeologist, an anthropology aide, a building repairman, and a secretary.

Herbert Evison: Now, these are year-round?

Jean Pinkley: These are year-round positions. Then we have anywhere from fifteen to eighteen seasonal park rangers, archaeologists, in the summertime; and we have anywhere from three to six seasonal laborers doing ruins stabilization. And what my responsibilities are, are first, for the operation of the interpretive division, and our primary purpose of course is the interpretation of Mesa Verde's prehistoric features. I am also responsible to the superintendent for the preservation and protection of the ruins, to see that they are properly used by the visiting public, used to their greatest advantage and at the same time protected for future generations; to take the responsibility for seeing that there are no archaeological features in the way of construction, or if there are, and construction has to go along that line, that these are properly removed and recorded, and the maintenance of the museums, the exhibits, a supervisory trailside exhibits; and acting in a supervisory capacity to the superintendent on matters pertaining to archaeology, history in the natural sciences, and interpretation.

- Herbert Evison: Now wait a minute; you said in a supervisory capacity. You meant advisory capacity.
- Jean Pinkley: Advisory, I beg your pardon. Did I say supervisory? I mean advisory capacity; excuse me.
- Herbert Evison: I am frank to say I learned a lot just from that statement of yours, Jean, because I didn't realize the ramifications of the job of chief archaeologist. One segment of it that I am interested in is this: You said that you were responsible generally for any ruins stabilization work that was done here. Now, I know about the ruins stabilization work that is headed up out of the Southwest Archaeological Center in Globe, but I judge that ruins stabilization here is carried on independently of that group?
- Jean Pinkley: That's right. We have so many ruins in Mesa Verde, this being the largest archaeological area, and we also have Hovenweep National Monument and Yucca House National Monument, both archaeological areas under us; so that we have a ruins stabilization crew of our own, headed by Al Lancaster, anthropology aide; and I presume you know the wonderful honor that Al just got—
- Herbert Evison: No.
- Jean Pinkley: —the Department of the Interior Distinguished Service Award was given to Al Lancaster on August 6th, 1962, for outstanding contributions to archeology and to the preservation of ruins.
- Herbert Evison: That is wonderful, wonderful hearing.
- Jean Pinkley: So, in Al I have the finest man in the southwest, I think, on my force. I say that I am responsible, but I simply look at Al and say "You know what it's all about, Al; you go ahead and do it." And Al has under him a building repairman and a crew of seasonal laborers.
- Herbert Evison: I am going to be talking with him tomorrow morning, so I won't ask questions of you about his work, unless you think of any phases of it that Al is likely to shy away from, perhaps.
- Jean Pinkley: Well, Al probably won't tell you that he is considered by all archaeologists in the Southwest - and this includes of course men like Doctor Brew of Harvard, Doctor Paul Martin of Chicago, Dr. Frank Roberts of the Smithsonian, but men who have worked and specialized in Southwestern archaeology - Al is considered to be the finest excavator in the Southwest and probably the shrewdest observer; and though he has no scholastic training in archaeology, all archaeologists in the country bow to his knowledge. And several years ago - about four years ago - at the

annual Pecos conference of Southwestern archaeologists, which is usually attended by about 150 people, Al was presented with a special plaque, the only time that the Pecan conference has ever done anything like this, and it was signed by 84 leading Southwestern archaeologists and a number of Park Service people, as a tribute to his outstanding work for Southwestern archaeology and the National Park Service. So, I thought I should tell you, because Al wouldn't tell you at all. You might ask to see his special plaque; I think you'll enjoy it. Connie Wirth, incidentally, signed it.

Herbert Evison: Well, good; I would expect that. Getting back to your own job, one of the things that I am interested in is how successful you are in recruiting these seasonals that you get in here. I remember – I'll tell you why I ask that question: because several years ago when I was in here Don Watson had a seasonal ranger-archaeologist in here who had quite high scholastic attainments and who was a complete frost as an interpreter. And I just wonder if there has been anything that has developed in the meantime which permits – how shall I say it? Well, permits you to make a choice of people for those jobs that at least reduces the possibilities of drawing a lemon?

Jean Pinkley: No, Herb, that hasn't changed at all. We have been very fortunate in that most of the men who want to come here want to come desperately, and a lot of them do come and see us, or they will be referred to us by men like Doctor Haury, Doctor Brew, Doctor Roberts - people who know what we need; that we don't need an archaeologist as such, really, someone to go out and do field archaeology; we need an interpreter; and this is something that I have been carrying on a personal crusade for, is that the interpreter does not need to be a specialist in the field. He takes the material that is given to him by the scientist, and he puts it into the language for the layman. He has to be an intelligent person, and I think on the whole we are very very fortunate in the caliber of men that we get, and I am surprised that we get them.

Jean Pinkley: Now, we are getting less and less archaeologists all the time because many of them are getting good field experience on river basin salvage – the Glen Canyon project, the Missouri Basin project, and many others. These positions pay as much as the seasonal archaeologist position pays here; they do not require the uniform, which is an expensive item, and they do give the boys something more than the working with people. And I have had a number of park ranger generals on my staff in the last three or four years that have turned out to be excellent interpreters. They know their limitations; they know that they can't answer all of the questions, but they can give the park visitor the general background story. If they run into a highly sophisticated visitor who has a good grasp of the subject to begin with, they are very frank in saying "I am sorry, I don't know, but we have archaeologists on our staff; let us take you in; you may talk with them,"

and the end result is that the visitor I think likes it, because we get just letter after letter after letter on the boys. And this past year, for example, we had fifteen men on the staff, fifteen seasonal rangers; we only had one that I would say was not a good interpreter. Some of them were just average interpreters; some of them were outstanding. But only four of those men were archaeologists.

Herbert Evison: What are most of them? Are they still undergraduates?

Jean Pinkley: No, the majority of them, Herb, are graduate students going on for advanced degrees. Now, for example, I have got two applications that just came in from men who have worked for us before; one has been teaching archaeology at a small college in Kentucky for the past two years and has decided to go on and get his Ph.D. degree. He wants to work this coming summer for us and go to school and come back and work for us next summer. The other one is a young man who does not want to work this coming summer; he cannot, because it will be the last season in the field before he gets his Ph.D., but after that he would like to come back and work with us again. And they are both outstanding men, wonderful interpreters, brilliant young men. And it is this that is one of our saving graces, is being able quite often to pick up graduate students, high-caliber men, who want something to carry them through until the academic year starts again for them; perhaps be forced – like this young man who is in the back office right now – he is forced to drop out for a quarter. I picked him up in August; he had worked for me two years before; I needed a man desperately to carry me through the fall; he came to work for us, and he will work for us until he has to go back to school. Because you see we were guiding trips right up until in December.

Herbert Evison: Is that a fact? I didn't realize your season ever ran to that long.

Jean Pinkley: Our seasons now are starting in the latter – the middle or the latter part – of March and they are running until the first of December.

Herbert Evison: Well, now, of this fifteen that you have here this year, how many were people who had been here before?

Jean Pinkley: We had five returning boys this year. Ordinarily our returnees run seven to ten, but this year happened to be a year when three or four of them all at once got grants-in-aid to conduct field work in ethnology or salvage archaeology, something like this, and using this same material toward their Ph.D., so they couldn't come back; and two of these are the ones who are sitting here right now with an application in again.

Herbert Evison: Well, now, these people cannot be employed, as I remember, more than

180 days continuously, and that season of yours sounds to me considerably longer than 180 days.

Jean Pinkley: It works a hardship on us. And here's the thing: You cannot work a man over 180 working days within a calendar year. Now, for example—

Herbert Evison: That's 36 weeks.

Jean Pinkley: —suppose he starts March 15th with us. It will be – between then and March 15 of the next year, he can work 180 working days, and quite often what we do with these boys, where we know, we are going to bring them back in the spring is we'll drop them in the fall, carry another man on, bring them in the spring, so that we won't run into that 180-day block. But actually, it works a hardship on us. If we could carry a man who, say cannot afford to go to school for a couple of semesters and he was to be out the spring semester and the fall semester, and work spring, summer, and fall for us – he would work over 180 days; but we can't do it, you see. But there at the same time we are losing a good interpreter and we are losing a boy that really needs the money to go ahead and make his career. And this is why I think it works a hardship on the men and it works a hardship on us.

Herbert Evison: Well, now, I assume that these people come on in sort of installments. You are probably not fully staffed until maybe the middle of June?

Jean Pinkley: Quite often the last man on will come in about the 20th of June.

Herbert Evison: Well, now, I am very interested in learning how you handle the brand-newcomer, the guy you are convinced has possibilities as an interpreter but he has never done any of it before. What do you do?

Jean Pinkley: He spends his first five days with trained men. He starts out with staff archaeologists on trail trips; he learns the general pattern of a trail trip, the handling of a visitor, the typical visitor question that's going to be thrown, how to time a trip, how to take care of emergencies. Then he works with other trained men - they may be seasonal men, but they are returnees, and they are good men; we pick our best ones and put him with them. He comes in and has at least an hour to two-hour sessions with one of the staff archaeologists every day, with questions that he brings up and things that we like to tell him. He has to attend campfire every night for two weeks, until he is thoroughly indoctrinated in campfire. He sits at the museum information desk; he works through the museum and sits on the porch of the natural history museum. He is never in uniform. He chats with visitors; he listens to visitors' comments; he finds the things you don't do, plus the things you do do. He finds visitors who have commented favorably on something that a ranger has done; well, then, he knows that this is the type

of thing a visitor likes. Then he is put into uniform and for a half day, and he is sent out on a trail trip.

Herbert Evison: With someone else in uniform?

Jean Pinkley: Oh no, he takes his own party. There will be another ranger with another party in that ruin, but he takes his own party. Then he is brought in and he is asked how it went, "Do you feel that this is going to go easily for you?" and the next day he is put in uniform all day long. If he is hesitant, if his speech is uh, er, uh, like this, he is taken out again and he is told "Now, these are the things you are doing wrong. I am going to send you with a certain man; I want you to see how he presents. When a visitor asks you a question, answer him, think out the statements – he won't mind if you wait a second looking at him – then answer him, but don't er and aw at him." He has his campfire, and when he has campfire, he has a campfire aide with him who seats the crowd and sees that his wood is there, and if something should happen – say, that he should break down, just sort of go to pieces on campfire - the other ranger, the trained man, can step in and take over and help him out and perhaps introduce the Navajos. Quite often we have the aide do that for a time or two until the man begins to get somewhat accustomed to it. Most of us are afraid the first time we get up before a crowd of people; you just can't help it.

Herbert Evison: Now your campfire aide is actually a more experienced man than the man who is conducting the program that evening?

Jean Pinkley: That evening, yes; he is an experienced - usually it's one of the staff archaeologists that's there. What they do is, they'll say to him when everything is ready to go, "Now I'm leaving," simply because we don't want that man to have the feeling that he has got an experienced person listening to him. We tell him his later campfires are going to be listened to, but not his first two or three. The aide is off, as far as the speaker is concerned the aide is gone, and he's not worried about having an experienced person there; but at the same time an experienced person is within reach in case the thing does break down.

Herbert Evison: Now, all right; he is started, and you trust him on his own, but thereafter what do you do to see that he doesn't let down?

Jean Pinkley: We keep a constant check on the men. We tell them very frankly that they are going to be listened to, that one of us is going to be in a ruin at some time, they'll never know when; there will be other times when we'll actually be on the party with them but out of uniform; we'll be just like any other visitor and they are told not to pay any attention to us; but we tell them also that we will be in that ruin someplace and we will be listening and that we will keep notes on them; after it is through we'll call

them in and we'll tell them exactly what we think; that this isn't eavesdropping but that it is better for the visitor if he doesn't know that the man is being listened to. And we do this quite frequently with the men; they are checked every week or so, and that's what the assistant chief archaeologist and the staff archaeologist spend an awful lot of their time doing in the summer months. And until a man is well and thoroughly trained and you have got a man that you trust almost as much as you do your staff men, he is checked. And it's good.

Jean Pinkley: We'll bring them in and we'll say "Where did you hear such-and-such a story?" Well, maybe he doesn't know where he heard it; and we'll say "Well, this isn't quite right, and here are the true facts, so let's get it straightened out right now."

Jean Pinkley: Another thing, if a man has done an outstandingly good job, you can tell him so, "That was an excellent presentation. Your party was right with you, they liked you, they responded, they asked questions. You did a wonderful job." Well, of course, the fellow goes off, he's riding on cloud nine.

Herbert Evison: Yes. Do you find that as the season goes through, goes on, very much of a tendency among these people to fall into too inflexible a pattern and give them the same talk day after day?

Jean Pinkley: Occasionally we have had a man who does that, but this is one of the reasons we keep a check on them. We tell them that the first time one of them starts sounding like a phonograph record he is going to be pulled off until he can go at it in a different manner. Another thing we tell them, never handle any two parties alike; never tell the same thing over and over again in the ruin; and another thing we do to break that, Herb, is with a variety of trips. A man, we will say, works Cliff Palace in the morning, Balcony House in the afternoon, and Spruce Tree House the next morning, the desk the next afternoon, Balcony House the next morning, then maybe he goes on a roving ranger detail where he just stops at overlooks and chats with visitors; so that he is never in one ruin more than a half a day; that's the maximum for him to be in one ruin, half a day.

Herbert Evison: You give him a fine variety.

Jean Pinkley: That's the whole thing, to keep him from falling into this habit. Now some of the boys like one ruin better than the other, and they want to trade, they'll want to trade; and we tell them "No you don't," unless it's a physical thing, say a boy has got a sprained ankle or something, we're not going to ask him to go into Balcony House; but other than that we don't let them do it; we just tell them "No, this isn't good."

- Herbert Evison: I was interested in your reference to a roving assignment, because I remember somebody at Blue Ridge having remarked that their most valuable interpretive activity is done by the ranger or the naturalist who stops when he sees two or three cars at one of the overlooks along the Parkway and he just goes over and starts chatting with them.
- Jean Pinkley: I think it's probably one of the most valuable interpretive aids that I know of. This past summer we were not able to do it, and it made me feel very unhappy. But what happened was this: We couldn't get the GSA cars we needed; the GSA said they would either, we'd turn our entire fleet of cars over to them or we didn't get it; they had too many calls for their cars. And the other thing was that this past summer we took a terrific jump in traffic, and actually we needed every man that we had in the ruins at all times because we had to lengthen the hours on our ruins to try to spread our parties out more. But I still – the minute that we can, and we get a jump in staff again - I am going to put a roving ranger back on. I would like to put two, one on either loop, and just have them keep constantly working with people. And it's amazing; a man will make a stop at one stop, and pretty soon he has the same people tagging along and he'll have fifty or sixty after a bit.
- Herbert Evison: It becomes a guided tour then.
- Jean Pinkley: It actually becomes a guided tour that isn't scheduled, and the visitor likes it that way. They feel that they are getting an extra, personal attention is the thing that appeals to all of us, and each person who comes in contact with that roving ranger is getting personal attention, and he reacts and responds to it.
- Herbert Evison: Another thing I remember from being in here oh, I think it must have been back in 1954 – Don Watson was worried then about the increasing numbers of visitors here and in the morning there would be a little orientation talk to really a jam of people out there at the desk; and I remember discussing with him at the time the possibility of doing what is done in so many places - having an orientation talk recorded. Now have you ever done anything of that kind?
- Jean Pinkley: No, we haven't, and I don't believe we will, Herb. We are not even planning it for our new visitor center, though we are going to use an electrical map and a push-button console for the speaker to operate, for this reason: that where you are dealing with ruins and you are dealing with people of all ages, a ranger becomes very clever pretty soon at judging the group that's in front of him. If he has got a lot of elderly people and all, he is going to make Spruce Tree House sound like the finest ruin in Mesa Verde to them, which it actually is, it's the best preserved one; and they'll go there and they have been in a cliff dwelling and have enjoyed it

thoroughly; whereas if they went to Balcony House, got out there and saw those ladders, they wouldn't attempt it, then they would be disappointed. But you have a lot of young people, active, all right, you sell them Balcony House. You have got a lot of photographers: you sell them Cliff Palace. And by doing this you keep the load spread on your ruins rather than concentrating; and with a canned talk, unless you change your tapes every few minutes, you are not going to do this; and if a ranger is inexperienced on that desk, you can tell it immediately. Spruce Tree House or Cliff Palace or Balcony House – one of those ruins will take a terrific jump. The rangers will come in off the trips and they'll say "Good heavens, who was sending everybody to Balcony House today?" And you find your ranger just got set in a pattern, he was inexperienced, he didn't realize, so, you go back and work with him for a while.

Jean Pinkley:

And actually – even when we get Wetherill open, we are going to have to judge our people who are in front of us, and with those people try to give them the most. The other thing is some of them come in here, they have a limited amount of time, and we try to do this: We try to show them how they can do the most for the amount of time they have; also, for those who are going to spend two or three days (and you are just taking it for granted that you have got all of this in one group, everything from the short-stay visitor to the long-term visitor) and in going through this orientation and what can be done you can very briefly go back over it and say "Now if you are going to be here just for this morning, take one cliff dwelling trip and do the ruins roads drives to see the early ruins that build up to the climax story of Mesa Verde. If you are going to be here for two or three days, spread it out; take one cliff dwelling, then go to visit these earlier ruins to see the sequence in architecture and the development of it, then go see another cliff dwelling; go up to Far View and see those ruins," and you have got a visitor immediately who has planned his time, whether he knows it or not, to his own advantage. And this I think is very important for the people, and also this is a protective device for your ruins. And you would be surprised at the times that we judge that crowd; and you could imagine trying to take a stretcher out of Balcony House, you know very well to tell them not to go there. And a tape recorder can't do this for you, or a tape, a recorded message can't do it, though when you are dealing with tremendous numbers this perhaps is the only way, and it is the only way in many areas where you can do it; but here I just don't believe that we could ever really dare try it.

Herbert Evison:

Well, I can see here the physical demands that are made on visitors in different places do make it necessary to establish a form of segregation by physical capacity or by degree of interest or by length of stay. All of those things I should think would be—

Jean Pinkley:

All of those things enter into it; and you would be amazed how you

can take a green boy and in two weeks he can be orienting these groups like an old-timer.

Herbert Evison: Now do I take it that the service on the desk, this orientation service, is rotated just as the other duties are?

Jean Pinkley: The men will work that – we don't work a man over forty minutes on the orientation desk, and then he is relieved by another ranger, or one of the girls will step in once in a while. We also – the Museum Association employs women and girls and if, during our press hours, we need our men in the ruins, the girls will take over and do this.

[END OF SIDE 1]

Herbert Evison: Jean, when I was in Art Thomas' office this afternoon I noticed a topo map of Mesa Verde there and on it were designated the development that is to take place up the Mesa with a visitor center and with a branch visitor center down here and another branch visitor center over at Wetherill Mesa, and I am wondering how you envision your functioning under a physical set-up like that?

Jean Pinkley: Well, I'll say first that in my opinion the Wetherill Mesa project and what it is going to do for interpretation is magnificent. I think it gives us opportunities the like of which we have never had before. It is giving us this, but at the same time it is putting us in a bad position in that we are going to operate what you might almost call a three-pronged operation. We are going to have Chapin, Wetherill, widely spread, but by controlling it from a central point I believe that we can do it very well. And I think that since 88% of our visitors are here in the park less than 24 hours, they are going to be forced by time and by space to spend their time on one or the other of the mesas; they are not going to do them both. The latter is for the returning visitor, for the long-stay visitor.

Jean Pinkley: The one thing is that at Navajo Hill the visitor center there, as I envision it, should be a visitor center in the truest sense of the word; that the visitor gets everything that he needs in the way of information to help him enjoy his stay; he is thoroughly oriented; he is leaving with a purpose in mind when he leaves there; he gets help not only from the interpretive division but from the protective division; any of his needs can be taken care of at that one point. And the story to be told there would be simply a general park story, what Mesa Verde is; it will not go into any great detail; it will be an interrelated story of the archaeology, geology, natural history, history, in just a big broad thing.

- Jean Pinkley: Then on either mesa you have a branch museum. They are truly museums: they are not visitor centers in the sense that they offer every service;1 but they are merely to interpret the parts of the ruins that cannot – pardon me, not interpret parts of the ruins, but interpret part of the prehistoric life of Mesa Verde that cannot be interpreted in the ruins; the things that people made, their arts, their crafts, their industries, the effect of their environment on them, and how they were able to exist here - these are what the museums will do, and they are by the ruins so that the whole story is integrated.
- Jean Pinkley: And I believe in doing it this way, the way we envision it is this: this museum here uses an introductory approach and then it uses a technical manner of presentation; it goes from period to period to period and treats that period completely. What we envision for the one on the other mesa is, again, a summary approach, an introduction, and then – I mean an introduction and then a summary approach, in which we will take various facets of life – agriculture, arts and crafts, stone work, ceramics, weaving – and we will take each from its beginning through its development period to its classic stage, so that an exhibit summarizes on of these things.
- Jean Pinkley: And in that way, while the museums duplicate, because we are going to be having the same material from both mesas, they are not going to be repetitious; and for those visitors who will see both of them, I think the impact will be more lasting with them, it will actually come home to them.
- Herbert Evison: Well, now, at Wetherill Mesa you are going to have, as a result of the work that has been done over there the last four or five years, a rather new kind of material in many directions, aren't you?
- Jean Pinkley: The thing we're going to have, Herb, for the Mesa Verde, is an integrated story; we're going to be able to tell the story of man, not just the story of the ruins, but man and his adaptation to his environment. And here you are taking a group of people who came in, were able to live in the Mesa Verde for practically 1300 years; they were a group of people who achieved success and then lost it; why did they lose it? Why did they gain it to begin with, and then why did they lose it? When we get this whole story together, the physical environment story, everything that every allied discipline is able to give us, we are going to have a true story of man – not just a story of ruins, which is to a great extent what we are doing right now; we are interpreting ruins and the people to the extent that we can, but we can't answer so many questions. We are not going ever to answer all of them, but I think we are going to be able to answer them in a far more intelligent and a far more meaningful manner, for the visitor.
- Herbert Evison: Well, am I not correct in my understanding that as a result of what might be called collateral studies that have gone along with the excavations over

there and the removal of materials, you are going to start over there with a vastly greater knowledge of the physical environment?

Jean Pinkley: That is exactly it, and that in its turn – what we have learned from this Wetherill Mesa project, and when it is all finished and the final analysis is made, where all of these interdisciplinary studies are correlated with the archaeology, is going to improve the story here on Chapin; it isn't going to be just for Wetherill, but the whole story of the Mesa Verde is going to come to life, I think, as it has never come before, because our understanding is going to be so much greater.

Herbert Evison: Well, now, how close has your connection been with the Wetherill Mesa work?

Jean Pinkley: Well, we have done the interpretive planning for Wetherill Mesa; that is, how we are going to interpret the Mesa, the road systems that we want, the stops that we want, the ruins that we wanted excavated. If there is a decision to be made as to whether a ruin is to be kept for interpretation or whether it is to be back-filled - for example, with these mesa-top sites you never know until you get into them what you've got – we'll make the final decision as to whether - we don't make it, I beg your pardon; we advise the superintendent that ruin number so-and-so should be back-filled but ruin number so-and-so should be retained for the interpretive program.

Jean Pinkley: But as far as the actual management of the Wetherill Mesa project, that has been entirely under Doctor Osborne and Mr. Thomas. We merely act in the advisory capacity of what we want for interpretation, then it's up to them to deliver the goods to us.

Herbert Evison: I take it, though, that there has been *a* very close and very good relationship there.

Jean Pinkley: Oh, yes, there has to be. Of course, all my rangers, every time they have a day off, are running to Wetherill Mesa, and so am I when I can possibly get away; and we are all fascinated with it and the work that is being done, of course. The Mesa Verde museum – it has a large collection to begin with. You see we over 10,000 specimens here in the museum before this ever started, and they have already cataloged something like 32,000 specimens from over there; no, it's more than that, I think; but the thing is that we have the big library that they need, we have the comparative material that they need, so that this project when it started out started out on a good footing for the simple reason that the museum was here.

Herbert Evison: Now, you are going to end up by having a central visitor center and two branch visitor centers which are essentially museums. Is that going to involve any disturbances of your exhibits in this museum?

- Jean Pinkley: No, this museum will stay as it is, except rehabilitation of exhibits, and there will be a certain rehabilitation of the building itself to try and allow for an easier flow of visitor traffic through it. It wasn't built to hold the crowds and manage them, as it is doing now; and the strange thing about the Mesa Verde Museum is you don't get people out of it once you get them in it; and so we are going to have to allow for better flow. Well, when we can get a lot of these subsidiary activities out of this one and turn it purely into a museum, we can allow for a lot better flow, I am sure. But essentially this museum will stay just as it is.
- Herbert Evison: I am interested in those comments of yours because I remember being in here years ago when there were great fears as to what was going to happen to this place if annual visitation exceeded any such figure as, oh, 55 or 60,000.
- Jean Pinkley: And we passed 260,000 sometime in October, I think it was, this year. But still managed somehow or other to handle them and have them go away reasonably satisfied. I think they do, I really do; and I think the letters, the bouquet letters we get in, indicate that; and the fact that we have relatively few complaints, and such ones as we have are usually something to do with physical facilities like the sewerage in the campground – I mean that there are too many toilets flushing at one time, you know, and one has backed up; they on things like this, not on service.
- Jean Pinkley: Now this is what pleases me about my men, is that I won't have but one complaint a summer on a single one of my rangers, and then it ordinarily turns out to be a misunderstanding, and the visitor usually leaves feeling that the ranger had his side of it too.
- Herbert Evison: Well, now, here's something very personal: I don't know any other area of the National Park System, certainly none comparable to this, in which a woman heads the interpretive program. Do you find any resistance at all among these people to taking orders from a woman, or has that involved any real difficulty?
- Jean Pinkley: Never. I have had nothing but the utmost cooperation and help from all of my employees. Of course, I think I am very fortunate in that I have had wonderful employees. But never – I never have – I do remember one young man came in here when I was the assistant chief – and one of my old men came back from the club, he told me, "You mean she's my boss?" And the fellow said "Yes," and he said "Well, I'm not going to work for a woman. You don't need to think I'm going to work for a woman." The other boy told him, he said "You're going to work for her and you'll do what she says, too. And I'll tell you another thing, you won't mind it." And when that young man left he came in and told me, he said "You know

when I first came I said I wouldn't work for you. And I want to know, will you have me back next year?" I said "Yes—"

Herbert Evison: I'll bet that was a warming—

Jean Pinkley: But I have never run into that. Maybe once in a while some of the men have felt antagonistic about it but they have never shown it to me, and I have never had one of them ever do anything except bend over backwards to ask for things to do, and "what would you like done?" So, I never have had any trouble at all. In fact, I like working with them.

Herbert Evison: Well, now, as you look back over these years are there one or two or three or four events here with which you were directly connected that stand out in your memory particularly?

Jean Pinkley: Well, I don't know as I would say events; we all have events. I think perhaps the two things that are outstanding are the two men that I have worked under – Don Watson, who I still think is one of the finest interpreters I have ever known, and who is certainly an outstanding museum man in every way; he taught me more than I ever learned in any school; and Cal Burroughs. Cal is an inspiring type of person to work for. He brings out the enthusiasm and the best in you, and he makes you want to plan and use your brain.

Jean Pinkley: And the other thing I can say that to me personally has been the most gratifying thing in my life has been the opportunity to work with Al Lancaster. Al to me is the most outstanding man I have ever known. I just have that much admiration for him. Incidentally, there should have been all sorts of trouble between the Wetherill Mesa project and the interpretive division, because they made us cough up Lancaster; he has been in charge of every bit of the excavation on Wetherill Mesa, and every season, you see, I don't have Al at all; for he has been over there in charge of all of the digging. And when you take somebody's prize man away from them for five seasons in a row, you know, there should have been trouble, but we never felt that way about it. We felt that this is only right, since we had the best excavator in the Southwest, he was the one that should go to Wetherill Mesa. And I think Al has enjoyed it thoroughly.

Herbert Evison: Well, I am delighted with that commentary of yours. I really am looking forward to tomorrow morning when I sit down with him, and I hope that—

Jean Pinkley: Well, I hope Al will talk for you, because Al is a delightful person. As you know, Al is shy, he is very modest; he will tell you "I'm just an old bean farmer and I don't know anything; I don't have any college degrees, I'm just an old bean farmer." But if you let him get over that, then he will start talking, I am sure.

- Jean Pinkley: But going back to your business of events, I just can't think of any that – they have all been so interesting that I can't think of anything, Herb, that I consider really outstanding above anything else.
- Herbert Evison: How about the contacts that you have made in this connection? Are there any of those that particularly stand out in your memory?
- Jean Pinkley: Well, yes, Jesse L. Nusbaum, who is probably as eccentric a character as anyone would ever hope to meet up with. That certainly stands out in my memory. The other was a man of course that I had known before I ever went to work for the Park Service and loved very dearly – Hugh Miller.
- Jean Pinkley: The other has been the opportunity I have had, the three times I got to go to Washington, one for the Museum School, and once for the audio-visual school and the meeting of the cooperative associations, and then the chief rangers – “chief interpreters” – conference. And the people that I met from all other areas, where I began to see far more than I had before the problems that other areas have, because I had worked so closely with one area – and you finally get, you know, where you wonder if you are actually seeing any tree at all; you can't see it for the woods, or you can't see the woods for the tree, I don't know which way it is.
- Jean Pinkley: But contacts, yes; and certainly, outstanding contacts with scientific men who are tops in the field of archaeology who have become close and very dear friends of mine and that I never would have had an opportunity, I don't think, to have got to know as well as I do, simply because of my work here at Mesa Verde.
- Herbert Evison: Well, Jean, I think you do a swell job here; I think you have done a very swell job here in the making of this tape, and I am infinitely obliged to you for having been willing to take the time even without my going and soaking my head in water—
- Jean Pinkley: Even if I was so facetious?
- Herbert Evison: —to do this with me.
- Jean Pinkley: Well, I am glad to do it for you, but on the swell job, let me tell you, when you work for swell men, you can do a good job. And Art Thomas and Vince Ellis are tops. They are wonderful men to work for. And I just fell into the job, remember. They had to put up with me.
- Herbert Evison: Well, thank you an awful lot.
- Jean Pinkley: You are welcome, Herb.

[END OF INTERVIEW]