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James and Shirley Hannah
October 25, 2014

Interview conducted by Janell Byczkowski
Transcribed by Teresa Bergen
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ANPR Oral History Project

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[START OF TRACK 1]

Janell Byczkowski: All right. This is Janell Byczkowski with Jim and Shirley Hannah. This is October 25, 2014. We're at the ANPR Rendezvous in Estes Park. And we're just going to get started here with Mr. Hannah's, a little bit of biographical information. Take it away.

James Hannah: Okay. I was born in Indiana. In Martinsville, Indiana, November 2, 1942. My parents lived on the farm. That's where I grew up for a couple of years. Then I have a sister. She's three years older than me. Anyway, we moved to Indianapolis, Indiana, and we lived there, oh, I'd say 24, 25 years. We went to the school system there in Indianapolis. Shirley and I both went to Howe High School there in Indianapolis.

Janell Byczkowski: Is that where you met?

Shirley Hannah: Yes.

James Hannah: Well, yeah. We sat next to each other in senior English.

Janell Byczkowski: Okay. [Laughs]

James Hannah: We double dated, but not with each other. Then we started dating between my freshman and sophomore year in college. Like I said, we just celebrated our fiftieth anniversary June 24th.

Shirley Hannah: July 25th. [Laughter]

James Hannah: Anyway.

Shirley Hannah: 1964.

James Hannah: I knew the date, '64. Anyway, so—

Shirley Hannah: After we married, where did you go to college?

James Hannah: Well, yeah, went through elementary school, high school. I was in athletics, and kind of played a leadership role with the team, and with the Fellowship of Christian Athletes. Had some great teachers that were more mentor type people for me. I graduated in 1961 and had a full athletic scholarship to the University of Louisville, or Louisville, [pronounces the city's name two different ways] however you want to say it. If you're a local, it's Louisville.

James Hannah: So, I graduated from college in June of '65. I got a teaching position back in the Indianapolis public school system.

Janell Byczkowski: Did you get your degree in education, then?

James Hannah: No. I got it in biology and education.

Janell Byczkowski: Okay. Okay.

James Hannah: That set me up for a job in a junior high in Indianapolis. It was an inner city junior high. At that time, the civil rights and the kids were being

bused from the interior schools into some of the suburban schools. So, anyway, I got along well with the kids. There were some problems. Some racial type issues. But when I went into the junior high, I followed a lax teacher. The second year I was there, we won the football in the district and basketball, and third in track. So, I taught there for two years.

Shirley Hannah: And you coached.

James Hannah: And I coached. Coaching. And the safety patrol, which we got some awards, you know, the school did, for the safety patrol program and everything like that. Had a good Southern lady that was the principal from Memphis, Tennessee. She was very strict, down the line. The kids at that stage and with the racial type tension, you needed a structured situation. So, she was very good and that kind of set the tone for me in my teaching career. Plus, some mentoring. The coaches I had, the teachers I had, when Shirley and I were going through school. So, with that, I applied to a high school. I became a biology teacher at Arlington High School, which was a suburban high school. What was kind of interesting about that was some of the teachers, well, the principal that we had at Arlington, he was our senior advisor in high school for both of us.

Janell Byczkowski: Oh, okay.

James Hannah: Then my freshman coach I had in high school, he worked there as a coach and a teacher. And oh, the head of the department of biology or science, he was my biology teacher in high school. So, I don't know if I had an in or what, but anyway, I got there as a freshman coach and biology teacher. Stayed there two years. In the meantime, I was working on my master's degree, an MS, and that was in science and education, or science and counseling. And I got that—

Shirley Hannah: School administration.

James Hannah: School administration. Education. So, I completed that. I graduated from Louisville in '65. Got my masters completed in '68. While I was working, you know, when you're a teacher you get laid off in the summer, so you had to find another job. Shirley was working at International Harvester, and I got a job in the foundry, which was good money, the third shift. And before football practice started in the fall at the school, I would go out to my cousin's here in Colorado. He worked for the Colorado Division of Wildlife, more like a game warden type, manager of lands. So, I kept thinking here I am dealing with formaldehyde worms and live frogs and fetal pigs and stuff like that in the classroom. I'm saying, this is pretty neat to be out here in the outdoors and doing things like he did. You know, doing basically wildlife management and enforcement. So, he kind of got me started. Anyway, that's kind of where, after two years and kind of reevaluating where I wanted to be in my life, I put in for a seasonal job at the Dinosaur National Monument, in western Colorado and in Utah. I was a naturalist at that time. They called us naturalist, not interpreters, but

naturalists. That was in the summer of 1969, and it was also the centennial for John Wesley Powell.

Janell Byczkowski: Oh, yes.

James Hannah: The one-armed Civil War veteran that explored the Southwest, the Colorado River--you know, Green River into the Colorado. And then he followed up in '72 and did a lot of land surveying and meeting with the various Indian tribes, the Utes and the Paiutes. So, I kind of got interested, and one of my evening programs was John Wesley Powell and what he did in developing and opening the West. So that kind of like, hey, this is pretty neat. He was first on the ground, getting all this information. I did that for four years. I thought, you know, here I am a hot teacher and everything, the park service is going to want to hire me right off the bat. Well, that didn't happen.

James Hannah: I got involved in the community, playing softball.

Janell Byczkowski: So, during this time, Shirley, were you back in Indiana? Or you came out with him?

Shirley Hannah: Yeah.

James Hannah: Yeah.

Janell Byczkowski: So, you're teaching in western Colorado as well?

James Hannah: No. In Utah.

Janell Byczkowski: Oh, you're teaching in Utah during the school year. And working—

James Hannah: Right.

Janell Byczkowski: Okay.

Shirley Hannah: Teacher/counselor and coach.

James Hannah: Yeah. I was a counselor there.

Shirley Hannah: We had a one-year-old daughter when we moved out.

James Hannah: And our parents thought we were crazy.

Janell Byczkowski: Because you moved out with just a seasonal—

James Hannah: Yeah.

Shirley Hannah: We sold our home. Sold everything. Because he knew he would get on. But it took a long time. At that time, you could have too much education for lower positions.

James Hannah: For what I wanted to do.

Shirley Hannah: He had his masters – I mean, that was what we were told.

Janell Byczkowski: I see. Okay.

Shirley Hannah: So, it took a while. [Laughs] So he had the same struggles that some of the ones are talking about now.

Janell Byczkowski: Oh. Uh huh.

James Hannah: So, you have to pay your dues being a seasonal. We did that for four years. You know, summer seasonal. My second year at Dinosaur, I became a backcountry ranger. It was a back-country river position along the Green River. So, we were meeting a lot of the commercial river guides coming down on the Green. In high school, I did some canoeing and stuff with friends, so I was always around water. I always did hunting with my dad, and fishing, so I had my outdoor direction from my parents.

James Hannah: Let me back up. When I was growing up, when I was about 9 to 13 years old, my mom and dad sent me to my uncle's farm in Iowa. Probably number one, to get me out of the city, and number two, to teach me some good work habits. And that did. My uncle believed in the old way. We had three teams of work horses that we farmed with, and two riding horses. So, we did the chores. Put the hay up and did the oats and all that stuff. So that's how I got a real good working ethic. You know, growing up on the farm.

James Hannah: After coming back and my upper elementary school, I had my paper routes and stuff like that. In high school, I worked as a stocker at a local store delivering groceries on a bicycle, to little old ladies, and worked myself up where I could be a cashier, check out. It was a little store; you know, it was a Mom and Pop type operation.

James Hannah: In high school, I worked at a country club. Again, one of the teachers, they took me under their wing, and I had a summer job at this, it was called the Miramar Country Club. So, I met a lot of girls. Not Shirley. I was dating another girl at the time that we double-dated with. Anyway, going to school, I was on a full athletic scholarship for football. Paid for my room and board.

Shirley Hannah: You were with the Christian athlete.

James Hannah: Hmm?

Shirley Hannah: You were with the Christian athlete program. That was really good with the students.

James Hannah: Yeah. In high school, this one coach that I had as a freshman coach that I later taught with at Arlington High School, he was in charge of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes, and that gave me some direction. My mom and dad, more my mom, mainly, and sister, we always went to church. You know, insisted on doing that. Then one of our Sunday school teachers, mine, he was a rival coach at Indianapolis. Still a good friend now. He's getting a little older now. But again, another mentor type person. A good Christian man. So that was important at that time in my life.

Shirley Hannah: Well, you were working with young people in the wilderness. You would take them to camps like this.

James Hannah: Yeah. Yeah.

Shirley Hannah: More remote.

James Hannah: We did projects. Like we went to a camp and did some projects, planting trees and stuff. But in high school, again, good teachers. Good educators. Good mentors. After I got out of college and was teaching myself, you know, I always went back and saw them and told them how much I appreciated their interest in me and that kind of stuff. Let's see.

Shirley Hannah: But that didn't get you hired fulltime.

James Hannah: That didn't get what?

Shirley Hannah: That didn't get you hired fulltime in the park service.

James Hannah: Well, no. No. But moving on, after working on my masters in the summer and winter, had some National Science Foundation grants, because as a science teacher, so that applied towards my masters and MS. Anyway, got that in '68, finished the school year. Well, in '69, I got my summer job at Dinosaur. So, like Shirley said, we kind of sold everything out. Our parents, well, our parents said I was crazy. Because we gave up a lot. A fulltime job. Had one daughter and a nice home.

Janell Byczkowski: You were following your dream.

James Hannah: I was following my dream. So, you know, working at Dinosaur, as I said, as a naturalist, backcountry ranger. Then my last two summers as a seasonal, I was a boating ranger for the park service. A job came up at Grand Canyon National Park for a boating ranger, so I applied.

James Hannah: Maybe backing up – while I was at Dinosaur as a seasonal, I got involved in wildland firefighting, search and rescue, survival types of training and things like that. Continued my hunting and fishing, which I enjoyed, and playing basketball with other schoolteachers. We'd play in different Indian tournaments around the state. And hunting and fishing. Not home much at all. So, it was fun for me, kind of hard on Shirley.

Shirley Hannah: And another daughter.

James Hannah: And another daughter.

Janell Byczkowski: I see that. Okay. [Laughs]

James Hannah: So, we did that for another four years. Got on at Grand Canyon, '69. No, it was '72, the spring of 1972.

Shirley Hannah: Furlough, wasn't it? Subject to furlough? Or 37-hour appointment.

James Hannah: I was a subject to furlough, which was less than fulltime, and did that for three years at Grand Canyon.

Shirley Hannah: What did you do there?

James Hannah: What?

Shirley Hannah: What were you doing there, though?

- James Hannah: We didn't have enough status, because housing was tight at Grand Canyon. So, we lived in what they called the Albright Apartments, which is a training center. So, we met a lot of people coming through the training sessions. Bill Wade was one of the instructors there, and we were involved in the social activities at the training center. My boss was real good about letting me go and sitting in on training sessions, mainly in the wintertime, because summers we were busy either on the river, doing trail work. Winters, it was pretty slow. We worked on equipment, purchased things and did rescue type training with people who would go down and overextend themselves. You'd go look for them at midnight or one or two o'clock in the morning. Did some search and rescue there, and some body recoveries as far as people going down the trails, trying to swim in the Colorado River down by Phantom Ranch, they'd drown. Just cold water, 55 degrees. So, they would die. So, you'd be involved in a search there.
- James Hannah: Some of them went there to commit suicide. So, you'd get involved in some of those searches. You know, you'd find a vehicle, or the rim rangers would notice a car, or a vehicle parked at a viewpoint or something for a day or two. So, doing the investigation, they'd find out that this guy was depressed, and so you'd start looking for a body at that time, or the person. Anyway, you know, you'd be hiking along the base of the rim.
- James Hannah: So again, I was in firefighting, wildland firefighting there. Got involved in that. Helicopter searching. A lot of trail work coming into the river. We would take down, other park service employees for a river orientation these were park service back-country float trip.
- James Hannah: We were going through a river management plan at that time. So, we would take down, we called them the muckety mucks, the high muckety mucks from Washington, D.C. or superintendents from the surrounding parks, or chief rangers, because managers wanted them to be involved in the input of the management of the river. At that time, there were about 17 river concessioners, commercial river concessioners, and about a third of them were the ones I worked with at the Dinosaur on the river. So, I knew some of the boatmen. Had a good working relationship with the boatmen.
- James Hannah: Our main job was to kind of patrol the river, check with the concessioners, make sure that they were not trashing out the campsites, or some of the more scenic hikes--Elves Chasm, Deer Creek Falls, some of the really more spectacular hikes. There's several archeological sites along the river, so we would hike up to them and make sure that no one was digging them up or anything. There's a lot of old mines, asbestos mines and mainly those. So, we'd check out some of the resources. You'd meet hikers on the trail and provide them with water or some trail information. They'd hike down, or they'd been hiking in the canyon for a couple of days. You'd pull in, talk to them. If you had extra beer cooling in the river, you'd give them a couple. That made their day for them.

- James Hannah: If there was a boating accident on the river, you know, somebody flipped a boat, a lot of times a beer bag or the beer that wasn't tied down, it would be floating down and floating in the back eddies. When I was running, Coors aluminum cans were the only ones that would float, because the rest of them were tin and they would sink. So, Coors, we always called it the Colorado Kool-Aid. Anyway, it was kind of like booty time. You know, you pick up the river booty and stuff.
- James Hannah: So that was fun. It was great for me. Again, tough on Shirley and the girls because if we did a motorized trip, because that's what part of the management plan we were dealing with, the motorized trips were eight days and the rowing trips were 14 day. When we were doing the management plan, some of the conservation clubs wanted to get rid of the motors. You're in a park wilderness, you've got the motors versus the non-motors. So, this was what we were dealing with the boaters, the dory people, the rafting people. There was some tension there as far as the commercial operators who ran motors were thinking that the parks were just going to come down and say, "You're in a wilderness. We're going to get rid of you."
- James Hannah: Well, like a lot of things in government, the politicians got involved. I think management was thinking and our thinking was, if you're on a rowing trip, there's more interaction with your crew. You can talk more about the flora and fauna, and the birds and the bees, and park issues, and more interaction. Whereas if you're on a motor trip, the boatman is usually in the back. You know (motorboat sound), you pull into these different sites. You talk to your group. You get back on the boat (motorboat sound) until you get into camp. So that was one of the main issues was a quality type trip. And right now, they have both. While I was working there I had about 24 river trips. Since I retired, I picked up another six or seven as private river trips. Shirley's been on four or five of them.
- Shirley Hannah: So, you were hired as a boatman when you went there. You never did say what you were hired as.
- James Hannah: Okay. I was hired as a boatman. Because I worked for the inner canyon manager, Bob Yearout the Grand Canyon river manager now lives in Durango. We have lunch with him. Again, trying to build up relationships. Not just, I'm working for this guy, I'm not just working for the organization, you know. I try to be more personal, whether it's in the community or with my bosses. I only had one jerk as a boss in my career, in my 30 years in the park service, and he didn't last long; he transferred. We overlapped about a year. And we lived right next to him at Bryce Canyon. So anyway, it worked out.
- James Hannah: So, after Grand Canyon, the training center. Shirley got involved with the training center. She was a volunteer for the park. I was taking classes. In 1976, the park service passed the Authorities bill, and that meant that rangers were going to be trained law enforcement people. So again, when I

was working there at Grand Canyon, I got to sit in on different skill training – search and rescue, firearms, you know, driving, driving classes. Again, knowing people, coming through the classes, knowing the instructors, like Bill Wade and his wife Karen, who was later my superintendent at Wrangell-Saint Elias, it opened up a lot of doors for us, meeting a lot of people.

James Hannah: Getting back on the river management plan, taking down different superintendents, chief rangers, I met a superintendent named Chuck Budge. He was the superintendent of Bryce Canyon National Park. And I got a ranger in-take program at Bryce Canyon National Park. I got promoted, I guess, or went into a ranger intake program. Because I was a park tech on the river, park technician, less than fulltime, so I got taken in as a ranger intake program at Bryce Canyon, which Chuck Budge was my superintendent. Again, when Chuck was on the river on the one trip, you know, he liked hunting and fishing. I liked hunting and fishing. We hit it off just great. So, when this intake ranger came up at Bryce, I was on the list, so I got hired there.

James Hannah: So, I started out—

Shirley Hannah: [Inaudible].

James Hannah: Hmm?

Shirley Hannah: What did you see first?

James Hannah: Right. From Grand Canyon with this Authorities bill that was passed, they took in 100 rangers that needed the training. They were kind of backlogged for law enforcement training. So, we went to Washington, DC for 14 weeks. Shirley and the girls, our cat went. We lived in a 14-story high-rise apartment building next to a low-income housing area, and it was an eye opener for Shirley and the girls. The parents, females, usually traveled two or three together, at this Alexandria Plaza, 14-story deal. There was kind of little gift shops, grocery store and stuff like a barber shop. Well, it got ripped off [robbed] 12 out of the 14 weeks we were - there.

Janell Byczkowski: Oh, my goodness.

Shirley Hannah: On the bottom floor.

James Hannah: On the bottom floor.

Janell Byczkowski: Oh, yeah. Oh, dear.

James Hannah: So, it was a cultural awakening for, probably for Shirley and the kids.

Shirley Hannah: But good training for you.

James Hannah: Yeah. While I was there, besides the law enforcement training, well, let me back up to Grand Canyon. In 1972, after I arrived there, I went into an EMT program, emergency medical technician training, because again, doing search and rescue, drag out people getting hypothermia or

heatstroke and all that stuff. So that was my first basic official training class that we went back to Camp Lejeune in North Carolina, and we went through the navy corpsmen program. It was Marine-based, Marine-navy. And we got to do anything we wanted, basically. We could do suturing. We could give shots. You know, Marines were expendable. They were captive. So, we got to do that. It was great training. I continued my EMT training and teaching later on for almost 25 years, throughout the park service. I became an EMT instructor, went up to an EMT II, where you could do IVs and things like that, more advanced type EMS stuff. So that was between Bryce or between Grand Canyon and Bryce.

James Hannah: After the D.C. training, we came back to GRCA before we moved to Bryce, rent a U-Haul, and moved everything to Bryce Canyon. We had a good house there, three-bedroom, nice Mission 66 house.

Shirley Hannah: It was great.

James Hannah: Great deal.

Shirley Hannah: After living, you know, in the Albright apartments and everything.

James Hannah: After living in a two-bedroom apartment with paper-thin walls.

Shirley Hannah: It was like college dorms, living at the training center.

Janell Byczkowski: Oh, dear. [Laughs].

James Hannah: But it was good because again, I got involved with different things, different people. I did help out Bill Wade on some of the classes and some of the search and rescue and mountaineering type classes. I just volunteered to go do that. Again, my boss was very good about letting me do those things. Most of that training was in the summer, or wintertime.

James Hannah: So, where else? Bryce Canyon, intake. I was a GS-7, fulltime.

Janell Byczkowski: Okay. So, this is your first fulltime ranger position?

James Hannah: Yeah. Fulltime. And we did everything. We did horse patrol. We did road patrol. We did trail patrol. Gave evening programs. Search and rescue. Wildland firefighting. So, it was a broad, broad experience for me. Shirley was teaching at the local high school or working in the office at the local high school. We got involved in the community. We square danced in the community. Got involved with some of the local maintenance people that liked to hunt and trap and all that stuff. Gather wood.

James Hannah: The square dancing, we got involved with the people that ran the horse and mule concession, and they're still good friends with us there in Utah. So, while I was at Bryce with the Authorities Act and being interested in law enforcement because that was kind of another way to improve your skills, just like the EMS program, the firefighting – if you get that skill, you can check that off. If you're in law enforcement, if you have so much training, you can check that off. Search and rescue. So, you know, you kind of evaluate where you want to go and what skills you need and kind

of pursue those skills. This was before the park service became more specialized. You either had to be law enforcement or resources management or interpretation, administration or maintenance or something like that. In the early park service, you got to do a lot of different things.

Shirley Hannah: What was the title, IRM, or something like that?

James Hannah: Interpretation Resource Management, IRM concept of park service.

Janell Byczkowski: Oh, okay. So, did you have like a goal where you wanted to be in the park service? Or were you just kind of taking advantage of the opportunities around you as you went along?

James Hannah: My goal after teaching in the classroom and being inside the classroom, I wanted a job – I wasn't really concerned about the grade, but I wanted a job to be outdoors because my cousin background in Colorado Division of Wildlife. I wanted to stay outdoors and do those kind of activities, and that was kind of my goal all the way up until I retired. I had opportunities to become a chief ranger on several occasions in my career. Some of them I got turned down on. Others I saw that those guys were stuck in the office doing a lot of supervision, and they didn't get to enjoy the park resources. And that's why I joined was to be outdoors, have fun--you know, basically getting paid to have fun and working with park resources.

Janell Byczkowski: Right.

James Hannah: And doing my job. So, I was on the Rocky Mountain Special Events Team, the SET team, because of my size, my interest in law enforcement. While I was teaching in Vernal, I worked part time as a deputy sheriff, with the sheriff's office and Utah Highway Patrol. Anyway, a friend of mine suggested to the sheriff you might want to have this guy [me] and to just fill in. So, while I was teaching, I'd fill in on Friday, Saturday and Sunday. I'd be a part-time deputy sheriff. That was interesting, too. I guess it was an eye opener to a lot of family problems. You know, alcohol and abuse. Another incident was a head-on collision that killed three people. Going over to their house, the couple, they just kind of left it like they were coming back. So that was kind of like, hmm, this is a real deal [law enforcement], and I don't know if I could deal with that.

James Hannah: Another one was an alcoholic-related problem where kids were involved. The dad got drunk, threatened the wife, and it was kind of a situation where myself and a highway patrolman got in a situation where if the guy comes out with a weapon and he would not comply that we'd shoot him, if he wouldn't comply. So that was another reality check about law enforcement. It was uncomfortable. I don't know if I was really ready to deal with that. I was thinking more game warden resource, protecting the resource instead of dealing with people problems. I'd rather deal with wildlife situations. Again, you can get killed there, too, because you worked alone.

- James Hannah: So, anyway, that's kind of where my law enforcement went more into resources protection, protecting archeological sites or cultural sites or old historic mining sites, the boating operation. I didn't want more law enforcement in my career like go to Lake Mead or Glen Canyon where you have a lot of recreational boating, drinking problems, and hell-raising stuff. That wasn't for me.
- Shirley Hannah: You didn't seek the park service right away because that's what you wanted to do. I think that was requested [inaudible] the goal to do that. Was it once you got involved did it, I mean, you can't be more dedicated to the park service mission and so forth now. But was that yours to begin with?
- James Hannah: Well, no, I guess I don't understand where you're going with that.
- Shirley Hannah: She asked you what your goal was in the park service, did you—
- James Hannah: Well, my goal was to work outdoors. That was the bottom line, whether it was in resource protection. Again, I didn't want to be in a heavy law enforcement. I wanted to be in resources. At Bryce Canyon, after my intake program, we went through a reorganization where we became more specialized. You could either go in interpretation, resources management or law enforcement, and I chose resources management.
- James Hannah: While I was at Bryce, we had a YCC program, Youth Conservation Corps. We had an SCA program, Student Conservation Association. I was in charge of those youth groups with my background, my interest in education and my mentoring with my past teachers and everything. I wanted to pass on my skills and knowledge and my love for the outdoors. So that was an avenue, working with young people doing that.
- James Hannah: We had a 24-member residential camp at Bryce Canyon that we got involved with. Most of the kids were from Utah, so they were basically Mormon kids, LDS [Latter Day Saints]. Pretty squared away. I mean, they weren't from the city where a lot of them have different interests and stuff.
- James Hannah: So, we had two high school SCA groups that worked in backcountry projects for us as a resources manager. But also, I was on the SET team, the Rocky Mountain Special Events Team. It was during the mid- '70s where Russell Means, the American Indian Movement, was going on. We had different park assignments. The SET team is a group of law enforcement rangers that we'd go into a park and assist their park staff. Instead of pulling all their staff and working on let's say a potential law enforcement situation, they would bring in the SET team that would take care of any problems – crowd control, any law enforcement situations.
- James Hannah: So, we got involved with Custer Battlefield, now it's the Battle of Little Big Horn, because that was pretty big medicine for the native people. Every fall they had the Crow Fair; there's a lot of native people there. Maybe some drugs and alcohol. So again, being right next to the monument or the historic site, this was powerful medicine for them,

because Custer got killed. With Russell Means and that movement--well, one situation, they were going to come in and try to take over the park, and we got word of that. There's 24 of us on the SET team. Twelve on each shift. One day shift, night shift.

James Hannah: We went to the Battle of Little Big Horn, Mount Rushmore, because they were going to dump a bucket of paint on George Washington's nose because of the Black Hills Treaty was broken, and other broken promises made by the U.S. Government. So, we went in on that.

James Hannah: We also went in on some visitor's center dedications when they'd dedicate a new visitor's center. So, we'd go in and help with crowd control and provide information on the event. It wasn't all strictly law enforcement. It was mainly just to help out the park with extra bodies, so things ran smoothly. There's were usually dignitaries, you know, regional office or Congress people or whatever, you know. So, I was on that team probably five years.

Janell Byczkowski: So, did you have any, were there any altercations? Like especially during the American Indian Movement?

James Hannah: Luckily, no. we had one situation where there's probably 150 native people coming up to the gate at, I'll call it Custer Battlefield. I mean, Little Big Horn. So, there was myself and another guy, then the other rangers. Myself and this other guy were the big guys. So, the big guys got to be the front line on this consultation. So here they are. They're beating their drums, coming up the highway towards the gate. There's a cattle guard in front of the gate to keep the livestock out.

Janell Byczkowski: Okay. Right.

James Hannah: So, we were thinking to ourselves, what's going to happen here? The superintendent at that time did not want the rangers armed. No physical weapons or defensive gear or anything like that. No stun gun. No baton. So here you're out there with your uniform on and a smile. Luckily as they came up, there was a turnstile off to the side of the gate where people could come in and keep the livestock out. So luckily when they got within 20 feet of the gate, they stopped. And just started peeling into the turnstile. They went up to the grave site and did their thing. Went into the visitor center. Did their thing. And everything was happy. Everything was kosher on that.

James Hannah: So that was probably one of the more tense situations that I was in as a park ranger on a potentially tough situation.

James Hannah: And what else? So that was at Bryce. Again, Shirley was teaching. Our girls went to school there. We were in school activities because – they tried to recruit us as Brother Jim and Sister Shirley. We did not go down that route. I don't know if you're LDS or not.

Janell Byczkowski: [Laughs] I'm not.

- James Hannah: Okay. But again, at Bryce Canyon NP most of the maintenance people were local hires. I got involved with them because I liked the outdoors, and most of them knew where the resources were. Where to fish. How to trap. Where to get wood.
- James Hannah: This one couple that we became very good friends, he was a custodian. He made more positive contacts for the park service picking up trash and talking with visitors at viewpoints. You know, he had his cowboy hat on and maintenance uniform on. The times I'd be on patrol, I'd stop, and he'd be talking to people, pointing out [things], because his parents homesteaded that area. He was probably in his sixties then. Anyway, that couple kind of took us under their wing. They were Mormon. You know, they weren't trying to convert us or anything. They were just good friends.
- James Hannah: Later on, I had an opportunity to buy some property at the original homestead. There was four or five, four sisters and a brother.
- Shirley Hannah: Four sisters and a brother.
- James Hannah: One of the sisters' sons wanted to sell. So, I bought 7 ½ acres, we did, about 15 miles outside of Bryce Canyon. A little place called Henryville, Utah. It's now surrounded by the Grand Staircase, Escalante National Monument now. So, the property had irrigation water. There was an alfalfa field. So, we still have that. And it costs about 1200 bucks a year for the irrigation water, which is worth more than what I paid for the property.
- James Hannah: After five years at Bryce Canyon NP we transferred to Big Bend NP, Texas. There I was a district ranger, GS-11. While there I worked on Mexican border problems with Border Patrol and U.S Customs along with river resource activities. I learned to fly. I was ask to be a member of the Alaska Task Force in 1980 and was stationed in Yukon-Charlie National Monument. I met several NPS people and transferred there in the spring of 1981 as the Chitina district ranger.
- Janell Byczkowski: Right.
- James Hannah: I'm going to jump ahead real quick here. When we retired from Wrangell-Saint Elias in 2002, we really didn't know where we wanted to go. Shirley wasn't willing to go to Henryville. Well, we rented for two winters, and there's no social life, being non-Mormon. So, the social life wasn't there for Shirley. The fishing and the hunting aspect was there for me. Again, I did a lot of hiking when I was at Bryce. I really enjoyed that country, the slick rock country.
- James Hannah: So anyway, we still have the property. I was thinking about selling it last year. My daughter says, "Dad, I want the property. Whenever you want to sell it or you guys pass on, I want the property." So, we bought that property in '76 and we've had it ever since. I go over there usually two or three times a winter.

Shirley Hannah: Yes. But you didn't tell her that while you were at Bryce you got to do the horse care duties. I mean, skiing patrols, snowmobile back-country, snow surveys all that good stuff.

James Hannah: When I went there as an interpretation and resource manager intake, we did snowshoe walks, we did cross-country skiing, we did snow surveys. Is that what you mean?

Shirley Hannah: And the horse patrol.

James Hannah: Horse patrol. You had your Class A uniform on, your flat hat and your tie. And kids just loved you.

Shirley Hannah: Oh, they love it!

Janell Byczkowski: Oh, yeah.

James Hannah: Take a picture of the ranger on a horse. You'd ride the horse through the campground. It was just a great tool to contact people. Answer their questions. You know, the kids want to come up and pet the horse, all that stuff, which was good public relations. I can't think of anything else. Our whole role has been working with the community, whether it's Mormon people or in a hostile Alaska environment. Shirley's probably a better people person than I am, just because of her personality. But we both wanted to get along with people, treat people the way we want to be treated. I think that's helped her career with the native people in Alaska and got me involved with the native people in Alaska.

Shirley Hannah: I just think your whole career was more like, they're always talking about the partnership. It seems like that's what you implemented in every place that we went, by becoming part of the community and getting them involved in all different aspects.

James Hannah: Yeah. More so, yeah. More so maybe in Alaska because of the hostility and doing that stuff there.

Janell Byczkowski: So, I'm really curious about your time in Alaska. Because you keep mentioning that with the hostile communities.

James Hannah: Yeah, we'll—[Laughs].

Shirley Hannah: He's almost there.

Janell Byczkowski: Okay. Okay.

Shirley Hannah: He's got one more park.

Janell Byczkowski: Oh, okay.

Shirley Hannah: A short one.

Janell Byczkowski: Yeah. No worries.

James Hannah: I'm not going to go for, what did Bill Wade say, he went for three—

Shirley Hannah: Six and a half hours.

James Hannah: Six and a half hours.

Janell Byczkowski: Oh!

Shirley Hannah: Three days. He's going, oh, no, I've got a family!

James Hannah: And Paul Anderson, who's being interviewed now, has already gone for three hours and hadn't even—

Shirley Hannah: He hadn't even gotten to Shenandoah.

Janell Byczkowski: Oh, wow!

James Hannah: I said, I'm not going to do that, I don't think. [Laughter].

Janell Byczkowski: Got you. Okay. As long as we get there sometime. I'm just so curious. [Laughs].

James Hannah: No, keep coming like that. Quickly—

Shirley Hannah: Bryce was one of his favorite parks. Until Alaska.

Janell Byczkowski: Okay. Okay. I have yet to go to Bryce, but it's on my list of places to go.

Shirley Hannah: It's very small. If you're not really into, you can just drive through in no time and out, and say you saw it. But it's like any other park. You really need to get into it and do some of the hiking. It's gorgeous. Well, there's a picture downstairs.

James Hannah: In one of the magazines. But backing up to Dinosaur, there's a district ranger that came in from, at that time, McKinley National Park. It's now Denali. But he came in, he had these mountains, he had these hunting stories, he had these—

Shirley Hannah: Oh, Dave Todd. [Laughs].

James Hannah: Mountaineering.

Shirley Hannah: Oh, no, Scott [inaudible].

James Hannah: That was my—

Shirley Hannah: [Inaudible].

James Hannah: Right. That was my supervisor.

Shirley Hannah: Supervisor. He wasn't [inaudible] okay.

James Hannah: But this other district ranger had all these skills, loved to hunt, was involved in search and rescue, firefighting, wildland and structure. And taught survival classes at Rangely College where Rick Mossman has the seasonal law enforcement training academy. He did survival classes there.

James Hannah: I got involved more with search and rescue, I guess mountaineering techniques – rope, rappelling, belaying, climbing. I was a little lighter then, and I was into jogging. So anyway, he sparked my interest in Alaska. In '79, when I was at Bryce Canyon, a buddy and I that ran the river at Dinosaur went up for two or three weeks to Alaska and just kind of rode

the train, did the hiking, and just kind of looked around. I thought hey, this is really pretty nice.

James Hannah: From Bryce Canyon, I went from a G.S.7 to a G.S. 9 in resources management. I put in for a job at that time, it was called the Rio Grande Wild and Scenic, which is on the border. So, I went down there as a chief ranger.

Shirley Hannah: Texas.

James Hannah: And there's only two of us, the superintendent and me. We started going to these public meetings, and we were just getting hammered by the Texas folks because 99.9 percent of Texas is privately owned. You know, the Rio Grande River, half the river is in Mexico and the other half is in the U.S. The ranchers didn't want these river hippies on their land. So, like I said, we were getting really hammered at these public meetings that we were going to. I thought, holy crap. I don't know if I want to deal with this or not. You've got half the river. No one wants you on their land. Some of the problems with the smuggling and contraband in Mexico. And I'm thinking boy, I don't know if I want to deal with this in a new park, new area.

James Hannah: So, I lateraled to the district ranger at Big Bend, I was already a GS-11. The new Rio Grande Wild and Scenic River way was incorporated under Big Bend.

Janell Byczkowski: Yeah. [Laughs].

James Hannah: So, I bailed, and I went to the Rio Grande district ranger. Which later on included the wild and scenic river way. So, I had over 312 miles of river activity. You know, half the river was in the U.S. I had two sub-districts in Big Bend National Park. We lived at Panther Junction, which was kind of the headquarters. Shirley worked at the two-room schoolhouse. Had a great social life.

Shirley Hannah: We won't go there. [Laughs].

James Hannah: Okay. We won't go there. And the kids would come back from the playground, at dark. And they'd have their feet up by the handlebars because the snakes would come across the warm road at night—

Janell Byczkowski: Oh my goodness.

James Hannah: —the black pavement because it was warm at sundown.

Janell Byczkowski: Oh, yeah.

James Hannah: At Big Bend, I only worked there about a year and a half. Shirley finished school up at Bryce Canyon and she came down. So, our oldest daughter was kind of in elementary school. When she was going into the ninth grade in high school, we'd have to board her out at Alpine, Texas, 110 miles away. We said we're not going to do this.

- James Hannah: So, in the meantime, between working with Border Patrol, U.S. Customs, all these activities that were going on in the border. Not so much as it is now with the human smuggling and drug smuggling. We did have human smuggling, you know, coming across the river, and you'd have people meeting them on the U.S. side and taking them to the interior. So, working closely with U.S. Customs and Border Patrol, which was also, for me, it was a good working relationship. It was more dealing with, not heavy law enforcement, but more securing the borders of the U.S. with the contraband everything. So, I stayed there for a year and a half.
- James Hannah: In the meantime, I came up to Alaska with my buddy in '79 and fell in love with wild Alaska. In 1980, I got involved with the Ranger Task Force. When Jimmy Carter established the new national monuments in 1978 in Alaska, it was all federal land. It was Bureau of Land Management land, most of it. I mean, it had private and state land also. So, when he established these national monuments in 1978, they didn't do anything. There wasn't any funding or anything. In '79, they wanted to start making a presence that these were, you know, federal lands, but they were more under the park service management. I didn't go up in 1979 and that year the Task Force Ranger were threaten, refused services and had an airplane burn. They were refused any kind of lodging.
- James Hannah: So, I went up there in '80 and got to know some people. It wasn't called a regional office. It was called the Alaska Area Office. So, I got to meet some of the players. In the meantime, my superintendent at Bryce Canyon, Chuck Budge, he was up there and acting a superintendent at Mt. McKinley NP. And was later assigned to Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve. So, when I went up there in '80, another guy John Chew, he was from Shenandoah and I; we went into Yukon-Charley, which was kind of a hotbed for the anti-monument movement and the Antiquities Act. They thought the park service was going to come in and really change their lifestyle and implement all sorts of rules and regulations. When we went into our assignment in Yukon-Charley, Eagle, Alaska, there were these big four-by-eight sheets of plywood that says, basically, we will refuse you service. You can't change our lifestyle; you might as well leave.
- James Hannah: On our assignment we went up there prepared to be self-sufficient and camp. We were briefed before we went up there. We had to go down to Skagway and pick up this boat that hadn't been used for three or four years. It was called the White Elephant, basically. So, we took that up to Eagle, Alaska, to be used on the Yukon River to contact people and do our river patrol to become more familiar with the park boundary and resources. We met several people some were friendly, but most had negative comments and wanted us to leave. We stayed there for six weeks and developed a couple good friends that would buy gas and other food supplies for us at the hostile stores. One friend let us stay in a log cabin but would not take any money, so we cut firewood for our cabin use. The

friend was Vince James and he worked cutting firewood for the sternwheelers in the early days. The cabin was in pretty bad shape, but it beat sleeping in a tent.

James Hannah: Some local saw the writing on the wall that the park service was going to be here forever and ever. They'd go down and buy boat parts for us.

Janell Byczkowski: Okay.

James Hannah: We were there almost six weeks. And the main thing was to make a presence. Not do any law enforcement, but just talk to people and listen to people. Mainly listening to people.

James Hannah: Well, this boat that we had was a jet boat and was not very efficient at all. Our first river trip that we had took 90 gallons of gas. We were stopping and talking with these river folks who were kind of like free-spirited, that kind, that went to Alaska to get away from all the rules and regulations and do their thing. They would see our boat and ask how much gas we used; they saw the extra gas cans in the boat. We told them that we were going to use about 90 gallons, and they would say that how much gas they used all summer. And they would say "You guys work for the park service a conservation agency."

James Hannah: So anyway, that was our first and last trip with that boat. So, we worked it out with the guy that was in charge of the team, task force, where we could charter with a boat operator there in Eagle, going downriver. But again, we didn't put that person in a situation where the community would turn against him.

James Hannah: In the meantime, returning to Big Bend, after my first trip to Alaska and meeting Ernie Scott, the district ranger from Dinosaur National Monument that worked at Mount McKinley National Park, Ranger Scott was a pilot. He gave me this information, "Being up there, you know, those people fly; they fly more than they do drive because that's just the terrain that you have to deal with.

James Hannah: So, when I returned to Big Bend, I started my flying lessons at a place called Marfa, Texas. I did this on my days off. I'd drive approximately 150 miles one-way, do my flying, stay overnight. Fly like a Saturday, Sunday, and drive back to the park and do my regular job. So, I soloed there.

James Hannah: Then in the meantime, the district ranger job came up at Wrangell-Saint Elias National Park and Preserve. That was in the spring of '81. Chuck Budge, who was my superintendent at Bryce Canyon, that I had a good relationship with. I put in for the job. Got the job. Again, as a lateral from a GS-11 to a GS-11. I was the Chitina district ranger, which was over almost five million acres. You look at Yellowstone, which is six million. My district was almost as big as Yellowstone National Park. There's three of us: the superintendent, Bill Palleck was my chief ranger; and me as the district ranger. That was it for the staff.

James Hannah: The community, again, throughout Alaska, towards the park service, was, you know, they didn't want us there. We were supposedly going to change their lifestyle and come down with all these rules and regulations, so they refused service. Anyway, I soloed in Marfa, Texas. Then we went to Wrangell-Saint Elias. Well, the air taxi that had a rental plane would not rent to me because I was a parky.

James Hannah: So, you know, I was in limbo for about what, a year? Almost a year.

Shirley Hannah: Probably.

James Hannah: So, this guy and his wife that we square danced with at Bryce Canyon came up with his father, and he was an airplane mechanic in Panguitch, Utah, and he rebuilt airplanes for insurance. So, we got talking about my flying program. He said, "If you're really interested, I'll start looking for an airplane for you." I said, "Well, if I'm going to have a flying career up here, I've got to have an airplane. No one's going to rent it to me."

James Hannah: So anyway, he found me a plane. It was in Omaha, Nebraska. A fellow died, real estate guy. So, we talked on the phone. He flew back, checked the plane, checked the logs and everything, make sure it was current and everything, as far as the books.

James Hannah: So, he calls me up. We send him the money. Took it out of the girls' college fund, in the meantime. Bought the plane. He flew it back to—

Shirley Hannah: His place to check it out.

James Hannah: Yeah. No. He flew it to Salt Lake. My buddy and I that came down from McKinley, that was at Dinosaur, he was a pilot. So anyway, he came down. He was still working in Alaska for the state parks. So, this fellow, Scotty, which is the guy, the district ranger that was at Dinosaur National Monument, and I, went through the plane from propeller to tail. Went completely through it, the whole plane. So, it was good for me to understand the systems and everything. We spent a week there. I got some more flying. I was flying off an airstrip, or an airport, that was at 8,000 feet. Which the density altitude, weight and hot weather and all that stuff, it just takes a lot longer runway.

James Hannah: You know, your performance of your airplane and everything. We spent a week. Flew back to Alaska. Almost killed myself coming back with my buddy, because I was trying to get back to Alaska. I was pushing the weather, and by the time I decided that this wasn't a good idea, I was about 200 feet off the ground. Turned around, went back to the airport I just fueled up at. I guess it scared me enough that we stayed four days on the ground and waited for the weather to pass. Once it passed, we came on up to Wrangell-Saint Elias in Glennallen.

James Hannah: Then I continued my flying. The government wouldn't help me out with my flying program until I passed my commercial and instrument ratings and take my tests and everything. They worked out a program where they would pay me a certain amount of money to fly, you might say, patrols in

my district. I couldn't fly passengers or anything. I had to have insurance on my plane. So, I'd built that up. I built up 300 hours. Once I had the 300 hours plus my commercial and instrument passed, then I started flying the park airplanes, government airplanes. That was starting my flying career, probably in '83? Something like that? We went up there in '81. Probably '83. For the first I don't know, three or four hundred hours, I could fly equipment, gear for people, but I couldn't fly passengers until I got X number of hours and get checked out again on the NPS airplanes. It was a government airplane, but I could only fly luggage, you might say. And it was okay. I got my hours built up.

James Hannah: So as a district ranger, I guess the main thing that we tried to do in the community, besides the school activities with our two girls, Shirley worked for the native corporation. I was invited, to participate at some of the shareholders' meetings. Alaska and to explain the newly established role.

Shirley Hannah: Native shareholders meeting.

James Hannah: Yeah. Native shareholder meeting. In Alaska they tried to, well, they got away from the reservation system because the reservation system doesn't work. Still not working.

Janell Byczkowski: Right.

James Hannah: So, they thought, well, they'll divide the pie up [land ownership] between the state, the native organizations and the feds. So, the native corporations, they got about 44 million acres and a billion dollars. These different corporations, like Shirley worked for the Ahtna Corporation, they got so much money and so much land, and they set it up like a business. They could, you know, do the mineral rights, timber rights, recreational stuff on their land, and they had part of the 44 acres. The a billion dollars was divided, by the different native corporations and that was their nest egg for their corporation.

James Hannah: The one that Shirley worked for in our area was one of the smaller ones. Basically, they were Athabascans. Coastal Indians were the Tlingits and the Haidas, and ones in the northwest were more Eskimos and ones down on the Aleutian chain were the Aleuts. So those kind of tribes or bands, whatever you want to call them.

James Hannah: Anyway, Shirley working with them. Got involved, I gave some programs, worked with some of her managers. I was a familiar face, even though I was a parky. Because the park service and the natives had more of a parallel path as opposed to the state, the hunting guides, the mining people, more the resource extractors. The natives and the park service was more into taking care of the resource but utilizing the resource. So that helped out the park service presence.

James Hannah: I remember we were invited to one shareholder meeting. This other fellow who was a seasonal and I went up there in a Class A uniform. We

were going to give a presentation. We showed up in our Class A uniform. Walked in the back of the shareholder meeting. Shirley's up front. And everybody turned around and looked at us like we're the Border Patrol. Some of them didn't have good relations with law enforcement. Some had alcohol and drugs problems. So, anybody in uniform was probably out to arrest them or something. So that's what they thought. We gave our program. We ate lunch with them and socialized and answered questions and all that. So that helped with the shareholders understanding and started a dialog.

Shirley Hannah: No. I don't—

James Hannah: In the community, and our girls were involved in sports and school activities. We were involved in the Kenny Lake community organization. In Alaska, it's basically, it's not organized. There's no county or city government or anything like that. So, in our community, most of the revenue comes from the oil revenue. There's no county or, like I said, no bureau or anything. So, we were involved in the Kenny Lake community league, that would get grants from the state. Put on the Kenny Lake Fair. Have grants to provide for the community water well that we used. Got grants for fire protection, for fire extinguishers.

Shirley Hannah: The first one. [Laughs].

James Hannah: Yeah. First one. I was supposedly the fire chief because of my background. I'll help out. So, we got involved with that. This other fellow and I, we ran around the community and kind of canvased them and said, you know, how many fire extinguishers can you use? How many smoke detectors? And how many of these Chemfex, which were used for stack fires, for woodstove stack fires. You throw this flare-like devise in, and it would knock out your stack fire.

James Hannah: So, anyway, we'd go around the community. Some of them maybe at that time didn't realize I was a parky. So, I was welcomed. So, we got this equipment, and then we distributed it through the Kenny Lake Community.

James Hannah: At the school activities, with our kids, we assisted with different events. You know, you'd go to the school activities, volleyball or basketball, whatever, some other school function. And they knew you're a parky because there's only three of us in the park. We lived in our, my district. So, we'll get into that story. At halftime or after the game, while we were waiting for the girls, the oldest daughter to get dressed, they'd come up and hammer us with questions about the park service. "Can I do this? Can I do that? Can I go wear this?" So, your only safe haven was back home with your family. And Shirley and her write-up, she wants to explain some of this.

James Hannah: When we went there, there was no government housing. We came from Indianapolis with a nice house. Went to Grand Canyon, where we were in

the Albright Training Center apartments. Bryce Canyon and Big Bend, we had park service housing. Three-bedroom, nice Mission 66 homes.

Shirley Hannah: They were great.

James Hannah: So, we go to Alaska, and we spent three weeks in a motel. I was learning the job, and Shirley and the girls were looking for a place to live.

Shirley Hannah: It's about you.

James Hannah: Okay, it's in here. Basically, she contacted the school secretary before we went up. When we got there, the school secretary said, "I'll help you look for some housing." She says, "I'll go with you," because there were threats on the park rangers' lives.

Janell Byczkowski: Oh, my.

James Hannah: Assaults and stuff like that. So, she would go around with Shirley looking for these—

Shirley Hannah: She would drive me, drive me so that they wouldn't shoot her car. She would drive us down these lanes. The whole thing would be – there was no housing, period at that time, anyway. And what was possibly available were old cabins that trappers had been living in them. We were hoping that maybe, if we could find one, that they would let us do it. Some of them we looked in the windows had been boarded up forever. A couple we did go through had dirt floors and a dirt wall.

James Hannah: Dirt walls.

Shirley Hannah: It was built up against that. Of course, no water and no electricity and no plumbing and no anything. So, when we finally found one little cabin that had—

James Hannah: After three weeks.

Shirley Hannah: —been fairly newly built and the person didn't live there. He lived in Fairbanks. So, we contacted him and were able to, it looked like a mansion after the other—but no insulation there. It was only two little tiny rooms. Wasn't finished.

Janell Byczkowski: Oh, man.

Shirley Hannah: We'd have to hold our feet up. It could have ice up to about, oh, like a foot in the winter months. So, your—

James Hannah: In this log cabin.

Shirley Hannah: Because there's no insulation from the elements.

Janell Byczkowski: Really.

Shirley Hannah: So, we'd sit with our feet up to keep from getting cold.

Janell Byczkowski: Oh my goodness.

James Hannah: So, you'd have that or down booties on.

Shirley Hannah: I'm from the city. I thought all houses had water.

James Hannah: We had an outhouse. Had to haul water.

Janell Byczkowski: How long were you there in that—

Shirley Hannah: Three years.

James Hannah: Three years.

Janell Byczkowski: Wow.

Shirley Hannah: But we did improve it some.

James Hannah: So, we heated with wood. That first winter, we went through 10 cords of wood because again, the house was, the log house was built on pilings. Log pilings and the squirrels had removed most of the ceiling insulation for nesting materials.

Shirley Hannah: Because of the permafrost.

James Hannah: Because of the permafrost. You didn't want to heat the permafrost because it would start melting and you'd get unevenness. So, she was driving 70 miles round trip a day to her work with the Ahtna Corporation. I was driving 50 miles the other direction to the native community of Chitina.

Shirley Hannah: Yeah, you didn't have a place the first year.

James Hannah: And the first year, didn't have a place. No one would rent to us for the park service as far as an office. My Blazer vehicle was my office, or our kitchen table. A little bigger than this. We had our own Smith Corona electric typewriters that Shirley was—

Shirley Hannah: His secretary.

James Hannah: She was a hell of a lot better at typing than I was. No computers or copy machines—

Shirley Hannah: Carbon paper. Ever hear of carbon paper?

Janell Byczkowski: Oh, my. Uh huh.

Shirley Hannah: And the government has that many different layers.

James Hannah: You type up these case-sensitive reports, and it was like five copies. And when I'd type, my hands are big. So, Shirley would come home, and I'd say, "Shirley, can you type up this report for me?" And she would. Because the boss I had, not Chuck, but my chief ranger, was—

Shirley Hannah: Very strict.

James Hannah: Very strict. Probably at the end of the summer I was almost ready to quit. Because of the community stuff with his riding my butt. I mean, he was trying to save our lives. But he was a very strong supervisor, I'll say that. We became real good friends after the first summer because I just said, "Bill, I can take the pressure from the community. But I can't take it from you."

Shirley Hannah: Can't take it from your coworkers or your boss.

Janell Byczkowski: Right.

Shirley Hannah: You need that support from at least within your own organization. You know, your family.

Janell Byczkowski: Yeah.

James Hannah: So that's, after that, the first year, is like, hmm.

Shirley Hannah: We'd have to borrow everything from the Alaska National Park Service district office, anything they were going to throw away or something that the agencies were going to throw away when they finally found a place to partially rent. I mean, it was kind of fun, though. I mean, it's like going on a scavenger hunt. You could get whatever you wanted.

Janell Byczkowski: Set it all up.

Shirley Hannah: And you're building it from the beginning. How many people get to start a brand-new national park? And it's the largest national park. So, you're the first ranger, the first everything. I mean, not many people get to do that.

James Hannah: So, the first park service office was probably about the size of the bed, this size here. That was in the back of the air taxi office. We had the old Royal manual typewriter, you know, with the high back.

Janell Byczkowski: Oh, yeah.

James Hannah: That was the NPS office.

Shirley Hannah: She saw those in museums. She's too young, she's too young. [Laughs]

Janell Byczkowski: Or movies. [Laughs].

James Hannah: But like Shirley said, we got a lot of the hand-me-downs from the area office in Anchorage.

Shirley Hannah: From BLM

James Hannah: BLM. FAA [Federal Aviation Administration]. They were decommissioning an FAA station. So, we got desks, we got beds, we got a lot of stuff like that from them. So that was a beginning.

Shirley Hannah: Still couldn't get gas in town, though. Still couldn't eat at some places. Still couldn't – and when they finally did let us go in, you'd have stares, people stared at you. Then you'd get terrible service because they had to, they thought, at that point. Or they'd be heckling. Especially the men would be on the side, saying things about the park service, or him. And we're sitting at the table with our two young girls.

Janell Byczkowski: Yeah. How did your daughters handle this?

James Hannah: They ate at home a lot. Yeah. They ate at home.

Janell Byczkowski: Did they have problems in school and stuff?

- Shirley Hannah: No, they really didn't. The community that we picked was the best place to actually live as far as that was concerned, because the kids, if they didn't like them, they didn't like them because of who they were. Now the parents were a different thing. But it was maybe one child of one family that carried home what the mother and father said. But they were, you know, turned 13, which is a bad time. But the other one's two and a half years less. So, it worked out. But when we'd go out to eat and they'd see that kind of stuff. Somehow it was over their head. I mean, they really didn't understand some of the digs. His personality is why he was chosen to go up to Alaska. Because he could handle that, let it roll off his shoulder and not respond, you know, to the comments. I, on the other hand, am not that tolerant, so we didn't go out much after that.
- James Hannah: Yeah. I think with my counseling background, dealing with young people and their parents, you know, that helped me see through a lot of the problems and situation. But like Shirley said, it was not good. When we left Big Bend, she didn't want to leave because she had a good social life there. When we went to Alaska, there's the superintendent's wife who spent half the time in Anchorage. The chief ranger's wife didn't want to be there, and they lived almost 50 miles away. So, there's no, there's nothing for us other than our family to support each other.
- Shirley Hannah: Which is good, but you know, that was our first time to live outside of a park. So, it's amazing how, we always talk about the park service being a family situation, but it truly is. It's a lot like the military, also. You have your house; they're going to dictate where you're going to live. But they already have the welcoming committee waiting for you. You have rules and regulations that you're going to follow. You're accepted because everybody has the same, hopefully, the same goal. You're there for the same reasons. And when you go out of that, it's difficult to start all over again and try to make it, and then when you go into a hostile situation, it's even worse. So, it's not like the two wives he was talking about would not have been there for me if the situation was different. But the superintendent's wife, the home that he had lived in, the superintendent, was a trailer with a hole where the toilet used to be.
- James Hannah: Oh. Right.
- Janell Byczkowski: Oh my God.
- Shirley Hannah: So, it's not like, so she chose to live – well, I would, too – in Anchorage, where she could for half of the year, and came out. They were wonderful in that respect. It's just that the situation presented itself that—
- James Hannah: You know, Thanksgiving, I'll tell you this one story. The one district ranger up north, who lived about 150 miles away, invited the superintendent, chief ranger and myself, and he was a district ranger. He ran a lodge. We drove up there. It was like 30 below. It turned down to be about 40 below before we left. We had to go outside about every 30 minutes, start the car, to keep it from freezing up. So, we did that.

James Hannah: Our first winter in this cabin, for seven straight weeks it was in the minus 40s Fahrenheit.

Janell Byczkowski: Oh my goodness.

James Hannah: —going down to 63 below. School was closed at 50 below.

Shirley Hannah: Fifty-five then.

James Hannah: Fifty-five, then? So, it was closed a couple of days. The kids had to walk from this log cabin up maybe 200 feet to catch the bus. They had boots and, not like these young kids with the short skirts on and the boys with T-shirts on, waiting for the bus. So, when the girls are going for some different athletic events, they had to have all their winter gear and all that stuff before they'd even let them get on the bus to go on a school activity.

James Hannah: The one thing about the small schools up there, they got to go to places like Barrow, which is up on that Arctic Ocean, to play. They got to go down to the Kenai Peninsula, which is down south of Anchorage, maybe let's say 200 miles. They'd go out to – did they get to go to Kodiak. Anyway, they got to travel around to all these different places, because the schools are so spread out. And our community, if you went 70 miles in any direction, there'd be about 2,000 people. So, it basically was a very rural, kind of a farming community. But it wasn't productive enough where they had to have a summer job to carry on their farming hobby. So that's kind of where we were living at the time.

Shirley Hannah: Well, he did get a ranger station, finally, in his district.

James Hannah: Yeah.

Shirley Hannah: A log one that they currently are still using.

Janell Byczkowski: Oh!

Shirley Hannah: It's been refurbished.

James Hannah: Yeah. It's a historic building.

Janell Byczkowski: Yeah, that's awesome.

James Hannah: It was with the first Alaska Road Commission that was built in 1929 as a log structure. And we worked out a deal where I could rent it for 50 dollars a month. No electricity at the time.

Shirley Hannah: It had been a restaurant.

James Hannah: A restaurant.

Shirley Hannah: And something else before that.

James Hannah: I had this desk, metal desk, like a military or the early desk. Had a wood barrel stove. When we got electricity, I had an electric heater underneath the desk. Then I had a propane space heater. Once you got it warm, it was okay, but it would take almost two hours to get the place warm. So that was the first Chitina district ranger station. And like Shirley said, it's there

now. They have seasonal interpreters there providing park information. But when I got the structure, we had no seasonal housing. So, we converted the back one-fourth, put bunk beds in there, had a little kitchen where they could cook and a refrigerator which was surplus from the FAA. And some of the bunk beds and stuff we got from surplus from the FAA. Dressers and stuff.

James Hannah: So that was the beginning. I had two seasonals quit me because one of them, she had worked in McCarthy, which was 61 miles down the road, a gravel road. She was staying in a cabin where she'd do chores for the people that she was staying with, which was a very awkward position. Because this lady that she was a partner with, she wanted the money, but she didn't want any of the park responsibilities. She had a young baby at the time. So, trying to get her involved in hikes, or if there was a first aid problem or an emergency problem, she didn't want people to come to her house. It was one of these, I want the money, but I don't want anything to be involved with. So, this seasonal, Mary Ann Hoyne had the park service experience, was there.

James Hannah: I wanted to fire the one girl that wouldn't do anything. My boss says, "You can go fire her, or you can try to fire her. It's going to take the rest of the summer. It's not going to happen. Just give her, when you evaluate her, give her a rehire and competition, or something like that in her evaluation."

James Hannah: So, the next summer, I didn't hire her. So, she just turned like a snake on the park service.

Janell Byczkowski: Uh oh.

James Hannah: And really put pressure on Mary Hoyne and this other seasonal that I had there. He was homesick, homesick for his girlfriend. They were living in a building that had nothing in it. An old cabin with nothing in it. It was a rainy summer that year and with the pressure in the community they quit.

Janell Byczkowski: Oh, dear.

James Hannah: So, anyway, Shirley flew out with an air taxi in a 206, which is like a four-place plane. Shirley was going to stay at the airstrip. We were going to fly these two seasonals to a back-country trailhead, or an area to hike, because we didn't know what was going on. We didn't know where the resources were. We didn't know where the wildlife was. We didn't know where a lot of the mining operations were. We had over probably 20,000 acres of mining claims, which was new to the park service. You know, placer mining for gold. Patented mining claims that had to be proved up on by the operator. So, we had this conglomeration of land status. Inside this 13.2 million acres, we had a million acres of private land. Half of it, 500,000, was native. There's mining claims. There's private in-holdings. There were hunting guide cabins. So, you had this whole jumble of land status. And we didn't know what was going on. We were there to find out.

We were on the ground. So, I'd say the first five years was just to find out where things were. Meet people, greet them, try to hear their stories. Some of them said, "Don't come on my property. I'll shoot you." And some of them I've walked away looking over my shoulder, because I just felt like hmm, this is not a good situation.

James Hannah: I was with Mary Hoyne on one of the uncomfortable situations. And the miner, same thing. Anyway, he kind of challenged me. He had a rifle on his pack of gear. They had screwed up an airstrip, and it was an attractive nuisance as far as liability on the park service's part, because it was owned by the park service. So, I went in with an air taxi guy that now is working for the park service. He started flying probably when he was 14, before he even learned how to drive. His dad was a hunting guide in the park.

Shirley Hannah: Yeah. He was flying way before that.

James Hannah: He's got 30,000 hours of flying. Anyway, he was kind of against the park service in the beginning but now he's working for us. Anyway, we went in there and started talking with him. At the time, I had a concealed carry weapon. I never carried a visible weapon, other than when I was on a law enforcement detail. We started talking. He thought the state owned the strip. And we said, "No, you've got to clean this mess up, because if somebody comes in here and wrecks, you know, we're liable."

James Hannah: So anyway, trying to explain that to him. He walked over, where his rifle was leaning against his pile of gear. He looked at me and anyway, he started to reach down for the rifle, then he stopped. He wanted to see what kind of reaction I had.

Janell Byczkowski: Yeah.

James Hannah: When I got back on the plane, the pilot asked, "What would you have done if that guy went for his rifle?" I said, "I figured that I was close enough and athletic enough that I could jump the guy." And I felt that way.

Janell Byczkowski: Yeah. My God. [Laughs].

James Hannah: Anyway. That story.

Shirley Hannah: Back to flying in when you, when she quit.

James Hannah: Oh. [Laughs] With the two seasonals, the second year we were there. We circled the airstrip because you don't know if there's wildlife or somebody's taken off because it's not a controlled airstrip. It's just a gravel place. So, Len's flying over the strip and he's looking out the left side and I'm on the right side. He said, "There're going to take all that shit."

James Hannah: I look over and I said, "No, I think we got a problem, Len." They had all their gear at the airstrip. They wanted out and they quit.

Janell Byczkowski: Oh.

James Hannah: They said, “We can’t take the pressure.” You know, this sweet guy that’s homesick and with his girlfriend and all that. So anyway, we did a couple of shuttles and got their gear out. The two people resigned on me.

Shirley Hannah: That was a hard place for a seasonal, especially if you’re there in a remote and hostile setting.

James Hannah: Let me back up. We had my boss, before we got up there in April or May, he had hired some local people. One of them was kind of a dope smoker and an alcoholic. I’ll just say that. I had a seasonal; Les Inafuka who’d worked a couple of years at Yellowstone National Park. Real solid guy. Anyway, he couldn’t get this doper to go out on hikes with him. And we always said that because of the bear problems, the river or the stream crossings and the problems, environmental problems, we always sent two people out together, with a shotgun for bear protection.

James Hannah: Anyway, he was smoking dope, staying up all night drinking. Wouldn’t get up in the morning. So, I fired him after a month. I didn’t want to deal with it. Well, he—

Shirley Hannah: He’s a local.

James Hannah: He’s a local, from Chitina, which is right where our ranger station was the second year. That fall he got in an argument with what we called the Wildman of the Wrangells. A guy from Michigan that came in, wanted to live off the land in a remote area of the park. So, he was the Wildman of the Wrangells, Don Van Asdale. In the meantime, this Bruce Barrett, he quit, was working in local construction. There’s a bar on this dirt road going out to McCarthy and along the way is this Silver Lake Bar. Anyway, this is like, we had one shooting that fall in Chitina. People were going around stoned and a hitchhiker came in, drinking. Anyway, they got in an argument. The guy plugged him. That was the first killing in my area. [Laughs]

James Hannah: The second one was this Bruce Barrett the Chitina seasonal that I fired. These guys get in an argument over which is better, dog team or snow machines.

Janell Byczkowski: Oh, geez.

Shirley Hannah: Bruce Barrett used to work for the park service temporarily, right?

James Hannah: Yeah. He was the seasonal for one month. Bruce.

Shirley Hannah: Yeah, but you didn’t tell her that.

Janell Byczkowski: The guy you fired?

James Hannah: Yeah. The guy I fired.

Janell Byczkowski: Okay.

James Hannah: So that winter, I don’t know, it was around December, something like that. We get a call from the state troopers. “One of your rangers has been killed

- out at Silver Lake.” Well, shit, there’s only three of us. The superintendent, chief ranger, and me.
- James Hannah: So, the chief ranger got the call from the troopers. Called Chuck, that’s the superintendent. Well, Chuck’s home.
- Janell Byczkowski: Yeah.
- James Hannah: So, he calls me next. I’m home. So, he said, “Well, who is this? Who got killed?” Anyway, it was this Bruce Barrett. We went out the next day with a trooper to help investigate the situation because it was on private land, but it was in-holder in the park. And we were establishing a good relationship with the troopers as far as doing some backups and stuff like that. Because again, the lone ranger out there. No backup, no radio communication. We had nothing.
- James Hannah: At the ranger station, we didn’t have a telephone. There’s a satellite community telephone at the community store. So, you’d go in there and try to talk. If there’s anybody in the store, they could hear your side of the conversation. You know, you couldn’t do any resource protection. Anything that you said would get out in the community. Local people would inform town people what you were going to do. One time I’m going down the road, checking out on a trapping situation, somebody left a snare and a neighbor’s dog got caught in the snare and the snare was left there after end of the trapping season. So, I had this kind of thing going on. And again, being basically a public phone, they couldn’t deny me to go in there and make the phone call.
- James Hannah: So, we got a phone put in the second year. But where we were living, we were on a party line.
- Janell Byczkowski: Oh, yeah.
- Shirley Hannah: Have you seen those in movies?
- James Hannah: So, two teenage daughters trying to do some social things with their friends. Neighbors saying, “You’re on the phone too long!” Or you’d hear it click up and down a couple of times where they were listening and stuff. Anyway, more interesting situations.
- James Hannah: So, at—
- Shirley Hannah: Bruce Barrett. I thought you said Bruce Barrett, you were trying to figure out where you were at.
- James Hannah: Well, his brother, when he got shot, this Wildman of the Wrangells was collecting firewood for his room and board at this bar. We came around on this dog sled and this thing had been going on between the brothers and this guy. Well, they shoot him with a shotgun. He always wore like a buffalo hide because of the cold, and thick leather and hair. When they shot him with a shotgun, it just knocked him off the sled. They thought he was dead. So, they go in the bar, ha, ha, ha, you know, and start drinking.

Janell Byczkowski: Oh, my goodness!

James Hannah: And the Wildman comes in the back of the bar with a Colt .45, pearl handles. Comes up, bang. They were sitting at the stool. Shot Bruce, the oldest, the guy that worked for me. So, the other brother drops to the floor, crawls out of the building. There were four or five people and they're drinking, you know, local drunks. They tried to get the weapon away from the Wildman. So, he holds them off with the gun. He's drinking whiskey and finally passes out, and they get the gun away from him and call the state troopers.

Shirley Hannah: Just like the movie.

Janell Byczkowski: Yeah.

James Hannah: Then that's when somebody called. There's kind of like a single-side band radio communication. And that's how they got communication out of remote areas. Or somebody drove to Chitina and used the public satellite phone. I can't remember how it was. But that's when the phone calls were made to the three of us.

James Hannah: So, we go out with a trooper the next day. And again, that was—

Shirley Hannah: 1983?

James Hannah: That was killing number two. In the wintertime I'd go out on a solo snow machine patrol. It was so cold when you'd pull your truck and trailer that I'd take a stove pipe with an elbow and a weed burner. You would place the stove pipe under the engine to pre-heat before you could start it.

Janell Byczkowski: Yeah. Yeah.

James Hannah: You'd have to stick that up underneath your engine. Not high. To preheat your engine, because it wouldn't start at 30 or so below.

Janell Byczkowski: Okay. Yeah.

James Hannah: I'd go out on trap lines with local people who were trapping in the park and preserve at that time. Just to get to know them. Let them know me. You know, if they had any questions about the policies or regulations that we had, that was my contact. Because everything slowed down in the winter. You know, people were trying to make a living in the summertime, either construction with DOT, Department of Transportation, or fishing, or whatever. So, everybody was kind of home in the wintertime, just trapping or hunkered down, doing basic living. You can only read so many books in the wintertime. That's why the cabin fever is alive and well in Alaska. So, you'd go out on these trap lines, then I'd go out to McCarthy. And it was March of '83, March third of '83. I went out there, spent a couple of days with two brothers, different brothers, that lived in the community of McCarthy, and they invited me up to their place, up what they call McCarthy Creek. So, I went up there and spent a couple of nights with them. I talked to them about park policies. You know, what's the park

service going to do? How are they going to manage these private in-holdings, blah, blah, blah.

James Hannah: So, I'd had fuel caches different places along the way for my snow machine. I'd talked to people and I could store five, ten gallons of gas for my snow machine along the McCarthy road in backcountry cabins. So anyway, I went out, did that, and I'd been trying to get a sled across the river, frozen river, to another backcountry station or cabin I wanted to work out of. I dropped my sled at the McCarthy airstrip, the one where my seasonals got picked up. So, I dropped my sled with my survival gear, propane tank, heater and all that stuff.

James Hannah: My gear. So, I drove about 15 miles to where this Nizina River was. And I couldn't get across because it was open running water. And I didn't want to cross it; I was by myself. So, I came back, loaded my sled up, topped off my snow machine and started pulling out of McCarthy. This was like four o'clock in the afternoon. It gets dark about five or so that time of year.

James Hannah: So, as I get about four miles out of McCarthy along the McCarthy Road town, my air-cooling belt on my snow machine breaks.

Janell Byczkowski: Oh, no.

James Hannah: My drive belt – I had an extra drive belt, but I didn't have an extra cooling belt. [Laughs] So I'm thinking shit, what do I do? I don't want to burn up my snow machine engine, and I'm approximately 55 miles from where my truck is. How am I going to get this back? I guess I could have gone walked back to the cabin in McCarthy, but I didn't want to impose on their hospitality.

James Hannah: So anyway, I thought well, I got fuel at 10 more miles down the road. I have permission to put my fuel and stay in a, like a sauna structure with a wood stove for a sauna.

James Hannah: So, I get there. And I always carried a thermos with me. I get in there and I'm thinking I'll cook up a hot meal and, hot liquid. And I think what the hell am I going to do? At this time, I'm about 45 miles from my truck. And I'm thinking, how am I going to do this without ruining my snow machine engine? There's not that many people are not that many people living along the road in the wintertime.

James Hannah: So anyway, I decide I'm going to drop my heavy sled. I had one of these plastic, like an orange plastic sled that kids go downhill with. I always carried that. I thought well, if I put some of light survival gear and my propane tank so I can preheat my truck, I can probably go maybe three miles before the engine heats up too much. And it was probably at least 10 below. And I had my big parka on, gloves, and all that.

James Hannah: So, I'd drive a while and then I'd stop, open my engine cowl and let it cool off. And I'd just lay on the snow machine resting and look at the stars. You know, after maybe 10 minutes or so, I'd—

Janell Byczkowski: Go again.

James Hannah: —start it up and go again. So, I did this all night. Well, Shirley calls my boss at midnight and informs him that I not home.

Janell Byczkowski: Oh, dear.

James Hannah: I finally get to my truck and preheat the engine and drive to Chitina and try to call Shirley and my boss. Both lines were busy. I drive toward my house and the NPS aircraft flies over and make contact with a ground to air radio.

Janell Byczkowski: Oh, no!

Shirley Hannah: That's another 35 miles or 30 miles.

James Hannah: "Bill, I'll just give you a call when I get home. Explain the situation." So anyway, I get home. Explain the situation. This was Sunday morning. Monday, we had to go into Anchorage for our annual law enforcement training in Anchorage that afternoon. The following Tuesday at the law enforcement training we receive a call about several people that were killed in McCarthy. Six people had been killed and two wounded.

Shirley Hannah: It's been on TV a lot of times, the Massacre at McCarthy—

Janell Byczkowski: Okay.

Shirley Hannah: —Airstrip. I saw it this summer, back to back. Not 100 percent accurate, but it's pretty accurate on what was going on and stuff.

James Hannah: We flew Tuesday afternoon to McCarthy to assist the state trooper investigate the shootings. We were requested by the troopers because we knew where people lived. There's 13 people that lived in that community in the wintertime. Well, they didn't know how many people were dead. So, we go in with the troopers. And here's three elderly people where I stored my fuel at their home. They're dead. The shooter was Louis Hastings a retired computer programmer in the air force, going through a divorce. They had a little cabin up by Kennecott Mill site area, which is five miles up from the town of McCarthy. Anyway, he went bozo. He went crazy. He had shot one of the guys that lived up there first underneath the eye with a small handgun but only wounded him. Well the kid that he shoots first had a knife, stabbed the guy in the thigh and got away. And he went up to this lodge, the Kennecott Lodge, and tried to get in. But it was all locked up for the winter.

James Hannah: So, Hastings tracks him up through the snow and figures that he is in the building and torches the building. He figures that he killed the kid by burning him up.

James Hannah: In the meantime, the kid couldn't get in the building and goes on up the hill, breaks in a cabin, gets some clothes, and gets warm and everything, because This was March third of '83.

James Hannah: So, this Hastings, the shooter, is starting to walk down to McCarthy where people come in to get their mail. His plan was to kill them all. Kill every one of them [13].

Shirley Hannah: Not park related. None of this was park-related, though.

Janell Byczkowski: Right.

James Hannah: This was all basically on private land. So, he goes down there, and he has a mini 14, 223 semi-automatic rifle, with high-capacity magazines. He goes in there and shoots these three elderly people that came in to get their mail and a social type thing. Once he shot them with the 223, then he'd shoot them behind the ear to make sure they were dead. And he threw them in the back bedroom, you know, just to clear them out so when other people came into pick-up their mail, he could kill them.

Janell Byczkowski: How horrible.

James Hannah: So, in the meantime, the first guy that was shoot goes to some other people that lived in the area that were there for the winter and they help him down to the McCarthy airstrip; they had a snow machine. So, they're taking him down towards McCarthy. They didn't know where Hastings was.

James Hannah: In the meantime, Gary Green a local pilot is preheating his airplane. The couple that bring down Chris Richards, the first one shot and loads him in Gary's airplane and flies Chris to the Glennallen Hospital.

James Hannah: In the meantime, the mail plane's coming in to drop off the weekly mail. Hasting's plan, after all this happened, was kill the people in McCarthy, all 13 of them. Commandeer the mail plane, go back to Gulkana Airport outside of Glennallen where he had more ammunition in his van. And he was going to commandeer a large fuel hauling truck and ram the pipeline.

Janell Byczkowski: Oh, my.

James Hannah: And destroy the North Slope fuel pipe system.

James Hannah: In the meantime, Gary Green flying towards the hospital makes radio contact with the mail plane pilot and turns him around. The troopers are notified and get in a helicopter. The troopers [2] stop Hastings as he was leaving McCarthy on a snow machine. Chris Richards arrives at the Glennallen hospital and tells what was going on. But he didn't know totally what was going on with the other people that were killed.

Janell Byczkowski: Right.

James Hannah: They see this guy about 15 miles outside of McCarthy, coming down the road. They land and make the arrest on Hastings. So, this trooper said, and he was loaded for bear. I mean, he had a high-powered rifle, winter gear. I mean, he had been a trooper for a long time in the bush.

Shirley Hannah: Quite experienced.

- James Hannah: Yeah. So, he gets dropped off at 90 degrees to where the helicopter's going to land, so he's got a bead on Hastings. So, the helicopter, and the sergeant who's dressed in like basically street supervisory type clothes, they land. This trooper's got the bead on him, and they walk up. Well this Hastings had a full magazine, in front of the handlebars and the cowl or the windshield. All he'd had to do was, raise his rifle up and kill all three of them; They would have been dead if the one trooper had stayed the helicopter when it landed in front of the snow machine.
- James Hannah: Anyway, Hastings tells the trooper that I'm Chris Richards. He's the one that got shot first.
- Shirley Hannah: The one that he shot. He's telling them that—
- James Hannah: —the one that he shot.
- Janell Byczkowski: Oh, dear.
- James Hannah: So [laughs] anyway, the state troopers know this is bogus. So, they arrest him and take him in.
- James Hannah: And so, the next day my boss and I fly into McCarthy to assist with the investigation. I knew where the local residents lived. Troopers usually don't get in the back country unless there's a fatality or something like that. They do the road work, and the fatal car accidents. So we went in and in the meantime, before Hastings left the area, the two people that brought Chris down to get on the plane, he had snuck around on a dog trail and killed them, and threw them over the snow berm to hide their bodies and wait for the mail plane and other locals to come get their mail. Hastings wanted to keep the runway open for the mail plane to come in.
- James Hannah: So, he kills those two. So, you've got five people dead now. There's a person who lives out about 15 miles. She had an abscessed tooth, and a neighbor who was a local hunting guide brought her in on a sled on a snow machine. She was going to fly out on the mail plane to see a dentist. So, Hastings after he shoots the two people and throws them over the snow berm, he hears a snow machine coming. So, he ducks down behind the snow berm and as the snow machine and sled go by, he gets out on the runway and starts shooting at them from the back. Well, he shoots the one gal in the upper arm. She's dressed heavily with winter clothes, down and all that. Anyway, she's in pain. And I guess there were a couple of bullet holes in the snow machine windshield.
- James Hannah: Well, the driver turned around and turns over his snow machine and breaks his leg. The gal tries to help the injured man off the airstrip, but he tells her to save herself. Same thing when these two people got shot. Hastings walks up and shoot the snow machine driver in the back and behind the ear.
- James Hannah: The gal runs into the mail cabin for help but smells the gun smoke. Sees splattered blood on the wall. And she says, I'm not staying here. So, she goes out. Up there, there's spruce trees. So, the snow kind of builds a little

area underneath a spruce tree where you get into. So, she goes in there. And again, she's got heavy gear on to control the bleeding, I guess.

James Hannah: After Hastings kills the guide, he goes toward the mail cabin, where he figures the girl is. Anyway, she's Skookum enough that she didn't stay there. So, Hastings is call out to the gal its OK, you can come out. I'll help you." So, he was trying to lure her out to shoot her. So, he got six people dead. He got two people wounded, Chris and the girl. And the mail plane's not coming in because a certain time, it usually gets there like eleven o'clock in the morning. Well, it's passed that. So, he figures at that time he better get out of town.

James Hannah: So, he takes the snow machine that got rolled, and he's going down the road towards where he can get in his van or whatever and ram the pipeline. So anyway, the guy died in prison there in Alaska.

Shirley Hannah: Good.

James Hannah: Yeah. So that was number, killing number eight in my district.

Janell Byczkowski: Yeah.

Shirley Hannah: For the first two and a half years.

James Hannah: First two and a half years. And I'm thinking, shit.

Janell Byczkowski: Oh my gosh. Welcome to Alaska.

James Hannah: I'm thinking, I thought the border at Big Bend National Park where I transferred from was tough. Anyway.

Janell Byczkowski: Yeah.

Shirley Hannah: That was, it was like oh, my goodness, thank goodness it didn't stay that way.

James Hannah: As part of this Kenny Lake Community League, shooting number nine, killing number nine, we got grants from the state to maintain the well and everything. It was a community well. This one guy was kind of an anti-development and a John Birch type person that didn't want any development. Well, part of the money that they were trying to raise was the Kenny Lake Community League got some land from the state to sell off, to maintain their league fund and everything, instead of relying on grants every year to maintain the well, replacing the pump or whatever.

James Hannah: So, this guy and the president of the Kenny Lake Community League got into an argument. One guy was killed. And that was the tenth killing in my area.

Shirley Hannah: The guy that was killed was an Alaskan Native but a local.

James Hannah: Yeah, a local. So, he's over there like at 5:30 in the morning, filling up – you know, everybody hauls water in this community, 99 percent of them. So, he's got a big truck, like a three-ton truck, with a gas tank you have to

step on to get into your cab. He's over there shaving, waiting for his tank to fill up.

Shirley Hannah: Because there's electricity.

Janell Byczkowski: Okay. [Laughs].

James Hannah: So, he sees this guy coming. So, he gets in his – they've been exchanging word and arguing, hot debates and all that. Sees him coming. So, he gets up in his truck and is sitting in his cab. And the guy comes up; they start arguing. The guy on the ground has an Uzi, which is a 9-millimeter, like a handgun, but it's a short, semiautomatic gun. So anyway, he sprays the side of the door and hits the driver in the hip area in the left leg. The guy falls over. Well, he's got a .357 on the truck seat. So, when this guy steps up to look in the cab, this guy plugs him right in the chest. So, he's dead. The driver can't engage the truck clutch to put it in gear because his hip and his leg's got shrapnel in it. So, he crawls maybe 250 feet or so to the highway.

Shirley Hannah: It was a pretty good distance downhill on gravel.

James Hannah: So, a DOT worker, a Department of Transportation worker, was going to work. Picks him up and takes him into the clinic, which is approximately 50 miles away. Well, I have an eight o'clock flight physical with a doctor there. So, I'm in there. The doctor comes out and ask if I knew the injured guy. I said yes. So, the doc who knows me because I'm an EMT and park ranger and all that stuff, he comes out and he says, "You might want to come back and get a dying declaration from this guy."

Shirley Hannah: He says, "You know this guy."

James Hannah: Yeah, "Do you know him?" I said, "Yeah. We worked together with Kenny Lake Community League." So, he said, "You might want to come back and talk to him." For some reason, the troopers weren't there. Whatever. So anyway, he's still alive. He's still in the community.

Janell Byczkowski: Oh, good.

James Hannah: But he's become a hermit.

Shirley Hannah: That was number ten.

James Hannah: That was number ten.

Shirley Hannah: But that wasn't immediately that year, though.

James Hannah: Anyway, so here's, that was in the spring of '83, I think, also.

Shirley Hannah: Are you certain?

James Hannah: Or maybe '84. Anyway, the first three years it's like, you know. In the meantime, this district ranger of what we call the Nabesna District which we went up for Thanksgiving, he's a local, has a business. A big guy, like 300 pounds. Big guy. Red James. Part native. He was well known in the community, and he went to work for the park service. He went up to Tok

for a meeting, which is another maybe 70 miles. Long story short, he gets assaulted by three guys when he comes back from Tok, Alaska.

Shirley Hannah: They ambush him.

James Hannah: They had masks on. Anyway, they assaulted him. So, he quits because, you know—

Janell Byczkowski: Was it because he was working for the park service?

Shirley Hannah: Yes. Yes.

James Hannah: Park service.

Janell Byczkowski: Wow.

James Hannah: He knew all the players and what they did illegally in the community you know. The good guys and the bad guys. And he had a business. And he had been threatened to have his business burned down if he continued working for the park service. So, he resigned.

Shirley Hannah: Then we had the plane situation.

James Hannah: Yeah. In Yakutat, which is on the Gulf of Alaska coast. Wrangells is so diverse. You've got marine mammals on the coast, from sea lions to sea otters to shorebirds to big brown bears. The NPS aircraft was spray painted while it was parked in Yakutat.

Shirley Hannah: Good fishing. [Laughs]

James Hannah: Everything. So, you've got that on the coast. You got mountains that are over 14,000 feet that are not even named in the park. So, you've got the high mountain ice areas. So, you got moose, you got caribou, you got wolves, you got black bears, you got trumpeter swans, eagles. Well, I'll jump ahead. A lot of my flying was for resource projects. For tracking wolves, tracking caribou, doing moose surveys. Counting eagle nests. Counting swans. So again, besides doing law enforcement district ranger, I did resource projects. I mean, it was great for me because a lot of variety.

Janell Byczkowski: Yeah.

James Hannah: Anyway, we were making illegally taken wildlife cases because the trophy Dall sheep, the white ones, they were in the park. We worked joint operations with the park wardens from Kluane National Park, Yukon Territory. We worked with the special agents with the U.S. Fish & Wildlife. We worked with the state fish and wildlife protection. We'd have joint projects where there wasn't enough of us, so we'd concentrate on an area. So, we'd blanket an area with law enforcement people and some of these guys, all they wanted to do was get a trophy animal, whether it was a moose or a sheep or whatever. We were known for our sheep.

James Hannah: So, we made several good cases like that of people flying into the park and hunting illegally in the park and taking trophy animals. Not the meat. Just

the head and the horns and the cape. So, it wasn't fun, but it was a good working relationship with the different law enforcement agencies and different jurisdictions. We all worked together to get the bad guys.

Janell Byczkowski: Yeah. Got you.

James Hannah: Same thing, we provided backup to the troopers, to the Fish & Wildlife protection. We did joint operations on aerial wolf hunting with the US Fish and Wildlife Service special agents out of Fairbanks. So, we had a real good working relationship.

James Hannah: Going back to some of my early training, and some of the locals, this one guy named Severt Jacobsen was an old-timer prospector. He was with the Alaska Scouts. He was a non-native. The Alaska Scouts during World War Two, because of their survival techniques and everything, they'd put them down on the Aleutian Chain so they could monitor Japanese movements or whatever. So, he was an Alaska Scout and really knowledgeable about survival and trapping skills. He was living in my district. He didn't own any property. He was just basically staying on different gold mining claims in cabins. One of them was called the Silver Hilton, which was just a metal building, and he'd store his food in a 55-gallon drum that was kind of cut in half. So, he could slide, he'd put his food in, slide the top over, wire it down so if a bear came in it couldn't get his food. So that's old Jake.

James Hannah: Anyway, my boss, the first winter, and he had a relationship with this Severt Jacobsen, who was a Norwegian and a carpenter by trade. He said, "Jim, I want you to go out and spend a week with Jake." His name was Jake.

James Hannah: So, I go out there with a snow machine and spent a week with him on his trap line. I learned a lot, you know. Winter surviving techniques, how to trap with snares and eat trapped animals and all that stuff. So, I learned a lot. And he would chew snus, had a long beard. Made some pretty good coffee.

Shirley Hannah: He did make good coffee.

James Hannah: And we're in a cabin about the size of this area here. A bunk here, a bunk here. There's a little stove and a door and a woodstove over here. I learned a lot as far as surviving the country. You know, his life and everything. So that was a great experience. And he, we got him signed up as a volunteer for the park service to monitor and take care of backcountry cabins.

Shirley Hannah: Oh, the gold? The gold in the chili, and the—

James Hannah: Oh, yeah. In these spice cans, like pepper or whatever, paprika, he would put his fine gold in these spice containers. I guess when I was in there, he'd shake it and he'd say, "You know what that is?" I said, "No." He said, "That's my gold poke." You know, for storing his gold. Anyway, he said one time he forgot what he had in there. And he sprinkled his chili with flaked gold.

Janell Byczkowski: Oh, geez. [Laughs]

Shirley Hannah: That was the best chili ever, I think.

James Hannah: He was a great guy. But every so often he'd go to town. He'd get with some of his native friends and get shitfaced drunk, and he'd just go off the deep end.

Shirley Hannah: Then he'd come back to the Wrangells.

James Hannah: Yeah. He'd come back with the air taxi guy. He'd urinated on himself and had clothes he never changed. So, he refused to put him on the airplane until he kind of sobered up and got some clean clothes and got cleaned up. So, he would fly back in over May Creek. We kind of hired him as a volunteer caretaker. We'd take him in a 100-pound propane tank. We'd take him in a couple of tubes of snus. And whenever I went in, I'd take him something. So that's the relationship we had with him.

Janell Byczkowski: That's cool.

James Hannah: Again, just a character like there's many characters in the state of Alaska, and most of them are at the end of a road where they want to do their own thing. They don't want to be bothered by anyone, any authority or anything like that. So that's a Jake story. Let me look at my notes real quick here.

Shirley Hannah: Her tape's probably running out.

James Hannah: Huh?

Shirley Hannah: Her tape will be running out.

Janell Byczkowski: Yeah. I'll have to—

James Hannah: I think when I said, I set up the SET team there in the Alaska region. The supervisor in Anchorage wanted to set up a SET team for emergency situations like we had at McCarthy – to go in and help people, investigate the scene, support the troopers or whatever. Bad guys go to the parks, whether it's Lower 48 parks or up there. So, the SET team we had, I think six of us. With my experience with the Rocky Mountains Special Events Team, I set this up. We had a group. We went to training. Got called out on, I think, two things. One of them, a guy down at Glacier Bay assaulted a boating captain that had taken some natives in to talk about a cultural site that they used to use for like a fish camp. Well, this boat captain left the group, went back to his boat, and this guy comes out of the woods and threatens to shoot him if he says anything.

Janell Byczkowski: Oh, dear.

James Hannah: So, the two rangers, the chief ranger, Randy King, and another ranger and the elders are going back to the boat. And they get on the boat and the captain looks at Randy and says, "I don't know if I should take you guys around." He said, "Well, what happened?" He said, "There was a guy came out of the woods and was going to shoot me."

- James Hannah: Anyway, so this thing went down. So, we spent almost two weeks. The guy had a sniper rifle, and during the investigation, he was planning on digging like a pit house and just hunkering down and living off the land. Anyway, did interview the native guy that, this was a non-native, that took him in. So, we came up with a plan. We got the troopers involved. And we had surveillance trying to figure out this guy, where he was. For the first week or so, he didn't build a fire. Because we had some people on the high lookouts just trying to figure out if he came out on the beach. He was in a heavy wooded area. So, I don't know, a week and a half, ten days, the guy builds a fire. So, the smoke's going up to the trees, so they knew where he was. So, we set up a plan on taking this guy that took him in on the boat with this old leaky boat and motor. We had the guy dressed up with a little goatee like the guy that took him out.
- Janell Byczkowski: Okay.
- James Hannah: Anyway, long story short, the guy got apprehended. Come to find out he had assaulted a young girl in a native community. So, he was kind of an outcast there, too. So, I guess he was just trying to hide out or whatever.
- James Hannah: So that was the SET team.
- Shirley Hannah: You might want to take a break here, stand up.
- James Hannah: Talked about Shirley and the school. The girls were playing basketball, but I wouldn't officiate. I officiated basketball games, but it's usually the junior varsity boys. I wouldn't do the girls. I was off on Fridays and Saturdays. So, once we got a routine established and we moved to Glennallen, which was 50 miles from our log cabin. And I was flying more out of Gulkana airport, which was six miles away. We had a real nice house. Four-bedroom, full basement, double car garage. Running water. Toilet. Close to the school. Shirley only had about a half mile to go. I had six miles to go to the airport.
- Janell Byczkowski: That's awesome.
- Shirley Hannah: Yes.
- James Hannah: So anyway, we didn't have to spend my days off cutting wood and hauling water. Getting the laundry ready and doing all that stuff.
- James Hannah: So, I started substitute teaching on Fridays. Again, helping the youth, trying to be a mentor type thing for them, too. I renewed my teaching certificate. So, at that time, a substitute teacher could get 90 bucks for a day subbing. In the wintertime., you'd do your job, but I wasn't a motor head. I didn't have a snow machine. I didn't have an ATV. It was too cold to go out snowshoeing or cross-country skiing. So, I went to work substitute teaching and officiating. So again, that was another community-type deal.
- James Hannah: With the girls, with visiting teams, we always helped out, cooking or cleaning up or officiating or whatever.

James Hannah: Anything else on that, dear?

Shirley Hannah: Not on that. But you haven't talked about when you changed jobs, your positions changed. And, you know, you haven't talked about your Harry Yount Award, I'm proud of that.

James Hannah: Oh, the Harry Yount? Okay.

Shirley Hannah: You know, I don't know how much time we have or what you want to do, what your agenda is.

James Hannah: We won't go six hours.

Janell Byczkowski: Okay. Yeah. I'm thinking my ride is probably getting ready to go. But I mean, I don't want to cut off the rest of your career. But. [Laughs]

James Hannah: Okay. This is just getting interesting.

Janell Byczkowski: I know! [Laughs].

Shirley Hannah: Well, we can finish it tomorrow with somebody else. Or you could do it another time, we could do it over the phone or whatever you want to do.

Janell Byczkowski: Yeah. I did talk to Lu Ann earlier. I was talking to her about if there's ever follow-up, if she ever does follow-up interviews. She says sometimes they do. But sometimes it's like through email, because then they already have it all typed up. But I don't know.

James Hannah: Okay.

Shirley Hannah: That won't work. [Laughs].

James Hannah: I'll give you one more thing.

Shirley Hannah: [Inaudible] that won't work [inaudible].

James Hannah: I'll give you one more story. It's an award I got from President Clinton in the Oval Office.

Janell Byczkowski: Wow.

James Hannah: The Harry Yount Award, which Harry Yount was the first protection ranger in Yellowstone in 1872. They have this annual award in the regions. Then you have a national award. And it's for people that, I guess, are outstanding in the field doing resource protection.

Janell Byczkowski: Okay.

James Hannah: So, I got the Alaska region Harry Yount Award. Then I was put in the pool with all the other regions in the United States, and I was selected to go back to D.C. and receive the national Harry Yount Award.

Janell Byczkowski: Wow!

James Hannah: And at that time, it was in the Oval Office with President Clinton.

Janell Byczkowski: Oh, that's really cool.

James Hannah: So anyway, Bruce Babbitt was the secretary of the interior.

Shirley Hannah: Rockefeller.

James Hannah: The director of the park service, the *New York Times* who sponsored that.

Shirley Hannah: Rockefeller.

James Hannah: Oh. Laurance? Laurance Rockefeller and his wife, he was in there to receive an award, the Theodore Roosevelt Award for contributing land, or for the conservation movement. So, both of us, with our spouses. Shirley got to go back. Pre-Monica, Le Monica. [Laughter] Anyway, I'll just say one thing. It was a great honor to be recognized by my spouse, or—

Shirley Hannah: Your peers.

James Hannah: My peers. Then going into the Oval Office, you know, and receiving that award. Clinton, I'd vote for him tomorrow. He's a very personable individual. He broke the ice when he came in. He kind of sparred back and forth with Bruce Babbitt because in Arkansas, Arkansas Hot Springs was kind of the first national reserve or something like that?

Janell Byczkowski: Right. Right.

James Hannah: So, it was kind of interesting that he came in and broke the ice. He just has that personality. We both got our awards. We left. And the next day we thought well, shoot, we never got to the White House.

Janell Byczkowski: Oh, yeah.

Shirley Hannah: [Laughs] The real, I mean, the other White House. We went to the [inaudible].

James Hannah: The one that the tourists go through.

Janell Byczkowski: Right.

James Hannah: So, we're out there standing in line and we're thinking, we were just in the Oval Office—

Shirley Hannah: Being treated like royalty. [Laughs].

James Hannah: And we got to stay in the Rose Garden before the presentation. He was giving some kind of a talk about—

Shirley Hannah: Budget.

James Hannah: About what?

Shirley Hannah: Budget.

James Hannah: Budget or something. So here we are in the Rose Garden, and that's when the plane crashed into the Rose Garden. You could still see where the maintenance people were still trying to repair it.

James Hannah: But anyway, the next day we're in line and we're walking in—

Janell Byczkowski: You're just another person. [Laughs].

Shirley Hannah: Just another person.

James Hannah: Yeah. We were just on the other side of that big door, you know.

Janell Byczkowski: Oh. Well, it's really cool. No wonder you're so proud of it. What a great honor.

Shirley Hannah: Well, it represents the park, I mean, like he said, his peers are the ones that nominate you. He didn't know anything about it.

Janell Byczkowski: Oh, that's really special.

Shirley Hannah: There hadn't been very many. And they do it every year now. It doesn't go in the White House, but it's the most prestigious award that any ranger can get.

Janell Byczkowski: That's really, that's really amazing.

Shirley Hannah: [Inaudible] ranger can get. [Inaudible] everything that it stands for. So, like I said, he was hired for that area up there because of his ability to work with people.

James Hannah: And we didn't get involved with the association here until '94.

Janell Byczkowski: Okay.

James Hannah: Because we lived in Alaska. And when we did leave Alaska, we always had family obligations. We got to go to your parents, her parents, my parents. All that stuff. So, we didn't get involved until '94. That was in Durango, or outside Durango. Tamarron, which is north of Durango on 550. And again, it's my peers like Bill Wade, Rick Gale, Butch Farrabee, Jim Brady, the guys that I knew at the training center, or had been involved with in something. Rick Gale, he was the North Rim unit manager when I was at Grand Canyon. Rick and I just hit it off. I did hunting patrols for him. Instead of being on the river, I was up there hunting, on hunting patrol. So anyway, Rick Gale and several others working with the river management plan or working with the SET teams in the Rocky Mountain region or in Alaska.

James Hannah: I always tried to see where I wanted to go and how I was going to get there. Either an EMT, law enforcement, resources management, of being a pilot, being a SET team member, leading the SET team, doing resources protection as far as wildlife, cultural resources. That's probably why I wanted to go to Alaska. Because you have big ecosystems where you don't have to worry about the elk running down into Estes Park. It's big enough that they can stay in the boundaries, basically. I mean, they don't. But the sheep, they're pretty much stationary. So big ecosystems from the marine mammals to the goats, mountain goats, to sheep, wolves, the whole thing. To me that's what the park service is about. Protecting the resources.

Shirley Hannah: But look at what the park [inaudible] I mean, started out and they're always talking about this new partnership that we need to be doing with communities and stuff, other agencies. Well, we've been doing that for

years. That's how we started with this park. You know, and he's been working with all the—

Janell Byczkowski: Right.

Shirley Hannah: You know, with Canada, no less. You know, sharing [inaudible] with the troopers and BLM and getting the schools and then the native corporations to working with them.

James Hannah: There's so many opportunities for working with, like Shirley said, Parks Canada. Great friends. We still have maintained contact with them. The native corporation, the one girl that worked for Shirley when she was coming up through the ranks, she's now the chairman for the local subsistence resource commission. So, you look at those people, look at some of the people that I supervised. One of them is in [inaudible], Northwest Territory, as a ranger pilot. When the two seasonals quit on me, he was in the country, coming up through. He was born in Sitka. His dad was a district forester. He was 19 years old, redheaded kid. Strong as a bull. Very sound, very mature. So, we hired him. He worked for me. So, he's a ranger pilot out of [Kotube?] in the Northwest Territories.

James Hannah: Another seasonal, Pete Reinhardt, he just retired as chief ranger at Crater Lake. Again, it's like the coaches that helped me, you're trying to instill that to. That's—

Shirley Hannah: And you did that. I mean, they've written you letters thanking you for the influence that you had on them and helping them with their careers. And this is what the park service has been like. I mean, the family concept comes back in there in helping each other.

Janell Byczkowski: That's really cool.

James Hannah: Your reward as a teacher – as coaching, you had some immediate reward. You know, winning, losing, or the kids, you could see them develop physically and mentally and spiritually. As a teacher, sometimes they'd come back and say well thanks for doing this in biology for me or helping me out.

Janell Byczkowski: Yeah.

James Hannah: But you don't hear that very often. So, the rewards in the park service have been very, very rewarding. Well, you can read this [career review and notes for interview] at the end. Some of my comments.

Janell Byczkowski: Okay. I'm going to go ahead and stop this.

[END OF TRACK 1]

[END OF INTERVIEW]