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## Interview with Sharon Ganci (FA 1098)

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## Kentucky Folklife Program Interview Transcription

**Project name:** Ranger Lore (LOCRP)

**Field ID and name:** #0029; Sharon Ganci interview

**Interviewee:** Sharon Ganci

**Interviewer/Recordist:** Brent Björkman

**Date:** 6/3/2014

**Location:** Glasgow, KY

**Others Present:** N/A

**Equipment used:** EOS 70D DSLR Camera

**Microphone:** Rode, VideoMic Pro Compact Shotgun Microphone

**Recording Format:** .mov (converted to .wav audio file)

**Recorded Tracks in Session:** 1 audio track (compiled from 4 video files)

**Duration:** [00:38:53]

**Keywords:** women rangers, women's uniforms, environmental education programs, teacher training,

**Corresponding Materials:**

Forms: KFP2014LOCRP\_0029\_BBms0001 - KFP2014LOCRP\_0029\_BBms0003

Audio recording: KFP2014LOCRP\_0029\_BBsr0001

Video files: KFP2014LOCRP\_0029\_BBmv0001 - KFP2014LOCRP\_0029\_BBmv0004

**Context:**

**Technical Considerations:** Audio file was created from the compiled video files for the purpose of transcription

**Transcription prepared by:** Jennie Boyd

**Transcribing Conventions:**

Use of square brackets [ ] indicates a note from the transcriber.

Use of parentheses ( ) indicates a conversational aside.

Use of em dash — indicates an interruption of thought or conversation.

Use of ellipses ... indicates a discontinued thought.

Use of quotations “ ” indicates dialogue within conversation.

Use of italics indicates emphasis.

Use of underline indicates movie, magazine, newspaper, or book titles.

Names of interviewee and interviewer are abbreviated by first and last initial letters.

Time is recorded in time elapsed by the convention [hours:minutes:seconds].

**Note:** This transcription is as accurate and complete as possible. In any question of interpretation, the researcher is referred to the recording itself as the primary document representing this event.

**[time elapsed in hours:minutes:seconds]**

[00:00:00]

SHARON GANCI: My name is Sharon Ganci, and the last position I held at the park was the education specialist for the park.

BRENT BJÖRKMAN: Okay. Sharon, can you tell me a little bit about how you first got connected to park? Kind of the, the origin story [ ].

SG: Okay. I started working when I was going to Western, as a student. It was a seasonal job. It was just kind of a lark, I, I guess you'd say. My father suggested it actually. He said, "Why don't you apply to work at Mammoth Cave?" And I had worked at the hotel, actually, before I started working for the park service. I was a hostess in the dining room. And—

BB: Did your family live close to the park?

SG: Yes, we lived, I lived in Edmonson County, and we visited the park a lot when I was growing up. We would have family reunions and picnics, and we'd go hiking sometimes, me and my friends. And my dad suggested it, he said, "Well, why don't you try working for the park service?" He said, "You get paid a lot better," and he said—and I think I thought at that time, I thought, I wouldn't have a chance of getting that job. But I applied and the reason I got the job was that someone had dropped out one summer. And they backfilled behind that person. And that was the beginning of my career.

BB: When was that?

SG: That was about 1969.

BB: Okay. Right. So what was the, the first week or the first day or the first week of work like? And, you know, what was, what did the job entail, and how did the learning process go for that?

SG: When, when I first began, to me, it was almost overwhelming. There was so much to learn. And we had training. And we would have a lot of experts come in, a geologist, and archaeologists, and all kinds of people that would come in to tell us about the park. And I thought, oh, my lord, I'll never learn all that. But you learn it gradually, and you finally realize that the people that you're talking to, you'll know more than they know about it. And it becomes less intimidating when you look at it that way. And you learn everyday that you work there. You learn something different. And the history of the place really fascinated me. I've always liked history. And just how long people have been there was one of the things that really fascinated me, especially in the cave itself.

BB: Did you have a cohort that you started with, or did you have some initial mentors, or—

SG: Yes. There was one, one girl that I started with. Her name was Brenda Brazzell. She was from Franklin, Kentucky. And we still keep in touch. She lives in Wyoming, and her husband was the superintendent at Fossil Butte, I think was the name of the park, in Wyoming, and she was here just a few days ago. And we still keep in touch. So you make lifelong friends, that's for sure.

BB: Yeah. Absolutely. So, did you start out guiding?

SG: Yes.

BB: Um-hm.

SG: Started doing tours.

BB: Did, did you start that right away or is that, what's the process?

SG: When, when I started, you didn't start doing tours right away. You, you would be a trailer. They called it a trailer. You walked behind the group. And you learned a lot. I st-, I worked with Joe Duvall a lot. And he was almost intimidating because—

BB: How so?

SG: He seemed to know so much. He'd been, he'd already been there along time at that time, and he, he was so good at it. He was so good, so professional. People used to say, is, some of the people on the tour, when we'd get off, would say, they'd come up to me and they'd say, "Was he a Baptist preacher?" (laughs) That was, that was funny, just his manner of talking, I supposed. But I worked with him quite a bit. And then I would work with other people who would want you to start guiding right away because they just didn't want to do it anymore, you know. So they would kind of push you to do it. But a lot of people would just let you gradually work into it, and, but you just learn as you go.

BB: Yeah. Did you add things as, as time goes on? [0:05:00] Did you have time to learn things on your own, or how did that—

SG: Yes. I think everybody has to do a lot of research just to, just to get the knowledge base down. And I don't know, for a while I was very nervous doing that, doing the talking part.

BB: Had you done public speaking of any sort?

SG: No, I had not done any public speaking. Probably a few things in classes, you know, nothing big. And I remember one time I got up to do it, and it was almost like it just clicked. And I felt comfortable after that. And I don't know why that happened. But I, I just remember I thought, oh, this is fun. I think I relaxed and just started enjoying doing the job. And I was never intimidated after that.

BB: Did you have favorite, favorite tours that you did? Or did that grow over time or—

SG: I think I liked, I always liked the Historic Tour. It's not a beautiful part of the cave, but just that, like I said, I'm interested in history, and so I really, there was, I think that part of Mammoth Cave is what makes it different than any other cave in the world really. And so that's what I liked. I liked the Historic Tour.

BB: Right.

SG: And I was probably, me and Brenda that I just spoke of, and a few other girls were some of the first women to do the Wild Cave Tour. And—

BB: What year would that have been?

SG: That was probably in the early '70s. And I remember there was one older man who worked there. His name was Ed Logsdon. Have you heard that name? And he just could not believe that we wanted to do that. [ ]

BB: Why, why was that? What, tell us, tell us a little bit about the—

SG: Well, I think he thought it was not a safe thing for women to be doing. Because he said, "Well, what if you get in there, and you have 14 men, and it's just men and you?" And I would always say, "Well, I know the way out of the cave. They don't."

And he'd say, "You're just going to get in there with a bunch of hippies. And, you know, what, what's going to happen then?" And he was just, he just didn't think it was an appropriate thing for a woman to do, a, a tour like that by themselves. And at that time, we did do it by ourselves. Now they have, I think they have two park service people on the tour now, but at that time, we did it alone.

BB: Was that because he was, was he, like, was, was there a change in interpretation, like, was he, was there an old school way of doing things or—

SG: There was. There was.

BB: How were those people different from—

SG: They, I remember they talked about, and some of these people, a few of them, maybe had been there when it became a national park. And they, they had to work for years. They were not allowed to do the guiding part of the tour. They had to trail the tour. It was almost like a caste system. And it was, that, that was one the ways it was really different than when I started. But I, I would hear them talk about how you had to earn that right to be the guide of the tour. And that was interesting, listening to them talk about that.

BB: Did you, did you remember hearing anything about, about accur-, accuracy of stories, or maybe you were there to give people a good time, and maybe it wasn't as much transfer of knowledge or anything?

SG: I think it was more of an entertainment thing for some of them.

BB: Um-hm.

SG: They knew, I think they knew quite a bit about the park. Some of them lived there, they had lived on land that was a part of the park before it became a park. So it was almost like their home. That was their home. So, and I don't think, before it became a national park they might have been able to accept tips. After it became a park, of course, that was taboo, you did not do that. But they may have, at one time, if they had been there before that, they might have been able to accept tips, so that might have been an incentive to make it more of an entertainment type thing. I don't really know that for certain, but I suspect that might have happened.

BB: So, I'm sorry, I was kind of, I, not derailing, but I wasn't getting right to it. So, you were some of the first women to, to guide some of the tours, the newer tours, the, which tours?

SG: The Wild Cave Tour.

BB: So, tell me a little bit about what that was like, you know, you told me how your one particular guide cohort thought it was perhaps inappropriate.

SG: Right.

BB: But, you know, what was that period of time like? The entire environment, not just his, you know, did you, did you, were you paid the same? Were, was, was the dress the same? You know, how did, how did that go?

SG: The pay was the same. The dress, [0:10:00] when I first started, was really different. Our uniforms, the women's uniforms did not look anything like the men.

BB: And today, they're comparable.



SG: Today they're pretty much exactly the same. But when I first started, they, it was, I had to find a uniform from a woman that worked there. I'd forgotten about this. And I'm rather tall. She was rather short. (laughs) And it fit pretty much, except the skirt was really short. And we had to wear skirts, which was so—I think they thought women that worked for the park service at that time, all of them worked in an office. And they didn't think about them being out in the field doing stuff. And then they changed to another type of uniform that was a, kind of a double-knit type stuff. It, and that was skirts for a while too, and then they finally did come up with some pants to go with that. But it was not practical at all. One of my friends did an evening program around the campfire. And a spark flew out one night, and it just melted holes in her uniform. So it was not practical at all.

BB: Because it was polyester?

SG: It was polyester. And I, I, I'm, I don't even remember the year that we started wearing the same uniform as the men.

BB: Were they green?

SG: No, they were beige. They were a beige color, and they had kind of a white, collar type thing that came up around your neck. So, you could probably get on the Internet and find those somewhere.

BB: Do you have a picture of it?

SG: I don't think I do. I don't think I do. I'll have to look and see if I have anything. I'll have to look through my old photos.

BB: This is like a stewardess uniform, sort of?

SG: Yes. Yes, it was. We didn't even have a hat, I don't think, at that time. But it was, it was definitely—

BB: Did you have a little badge or no, no—

SG: There was a park service, the arrowhead patch, I think on it. But, and then people would come up to you, and they'd say, "Do you work here?" You know, because we looked so different than the men, of course, the way we dressed. So it seems like, it sounds like it's a hundred years ago. (laughs)

BB: Wow. Do you think the, did you guide and trail with, with men rangers too?

SG: Yes. Um-hm.

BB: So did, did women ever lead and you were trailed by a man? Or did, was it, for example—

SG: Yes. I mean, eventually it was, everything was pretty much the same.

BB: Yeah.

SG: And I, I, I, I was never really harassed or anything. Now, in the guide lounge, anything was game there. I mean, they would tease you unmercifully there. But, and some of those guys would probably get charged with sexual harassment now. I'm sure. So they could, they just, it was just, that was their place and, and, and we were very welcome. It wasn't that we weren't welcome. They just enjoyed teasing us and getting a reaction is what it was all about.

BB: And you knew how, you knew how to handle that. You could, you could handle it well.

SG: Yes.

BB: Were there some that didn't handle it so well? Or did, was everybody pretty, the other women [ ]?

SG: I think most of us knew that if they knew they were getting to us, it was going to get a lot worse, so we just let it roll off our back. And, but they would, they would love to tease us.

BB: Did moving up in ranks and things, the different, was it, was it a, was it male-dominated as far as supervisors throughout your career?

SG: Yes. Yes. I did have one woman supervisor, Rachel Wilson. Have you talked to her?

BB: Uh-uhn.

SG: She was, and she was the first woman to, to be a supervisor there within our division. And now she, I think she was probably given a hard time among some of those older men. And she could probably tell you some stories about that. But, but most of them were men, almost all of them were men. Lewis Cutliff was one of my first supervisors, and you've talked to him, I think.

BB: Um-hm. I have talked to him.

SG: Yeah.

BB: Yeah. He'd been around for quite a while.

SG: Uh-huh. His father worked there. Did he tell you about that?

BB: Yeah.

SG: Okay.

BB: Yeah. A little bit about it. I'm not sure how much he did.

SG: His father was the one that discovered the Indian body—

BB: Okay.

SG: That was found in the cave.

BB: Lost John, wasn't it?

SG: Uh-huh, they called him Lost John. Yeah.

BB: Yeah. It's amazing those family connections. I mean, you lived around there yourself.

SG: Um-hm.

BB: Didn't have, did not have family who worked—

SG: No. Uh-uhn, I didn't.

BB: Dispossessed of their land?

SG: No, I did not. I did not.

BB: Um-hm.

SG: But a lot of those people were from around, out around Park City, Cave City. Out in that area.

BB: Um-hm.

SG: And, but most of the land in the park is in Edmonson County. [0:15:00] I just, it just didn't affect my family in that way.

BB: Um-hm. Yeah. And you worked for some vendors prior to coming to the park. You said you worked for the hotel.

SG: I worked, yeah, it was, like, they called it a concession. National park concessions is what it was called at that time.

BB: Um-hm.

SG: And I remember the first year I worked for the park service, the man who was over the, over the concessions, his name was Garner Henson, and he called me and wanted to know why, why I didn't come back to them, you know. Of course I s-, I said, "Money had a lot to do with it." Plus it was just a lot more f-, it was a more fun job than working out at the hotel.

BB: Um-hm. Were you there, what period of time—when 65 was built was in the '60s, is that right? So you were there, 65 is a full interstate highway at that period, is that right?

SG: Oh—

BB: How did that change, you know, was there a change in how people, you know, what types of people came because of that, or what types of people weren't, didn't come? Do you know?

SG: I just remember the early '70s, we had humongous crowds. We would have, maybe that was at, I don't remember when the interstate was finished. But we would have huge crowds in the summer there. You would come into work, and they would be lined up all the way out to the parking lot, waiting for the doors to get opened to buy tickets. That was before they, they had the reservation system, of course. And the tours would sell out right away. And when the, the Wild Cave Tour that I spoke of, they did not take reservations at that time. And there were only 14 people that could go on that tour. So they would, it was, it was, it was almost dangerous to a degree, because they wanted to get those tickets, that, and they wanted to get in that door. And so it could be a little scary almost. But they finally started taking reservations within the park, at that time, only for that tour, to avoid those situations. And they didn't take reservations for the other tours, but they took them at the park for the Wild Cave Tour. So that their, they wouldn't have just those people trying to get in and push through to get their tickets.

BB: How was it different between if it was slow or if it was busy? How did, how were you able to process, and how did you do a tour for 25 as opposed to I don't know how many sometimes. What could it be, up to, some of the tours could max out at what then?

SG: A couple of hundred in the sum-, when I first started.

BB: How would you be able to transfer that in-, what kind of information, you know, what was the dynamic about a smaller and a large tour?

SG: It was very different, very different. On the longer, like the long, four-hour tour, you were in there four hours whether you had 200 people or you had 15.

BB: Which tour was the name of that tour?

SG: At that time, it was called, I think when I first started, it was called the Scenic Tour. And then they called it the Half-Day Tour. And I'm not sure what it's called now. But, but it was, you were in there four hours whether you had, you know, a bunch, or whether you had 25. And so you really had to have information when you did those winter tours. You had to have, you had to find things to talk to them about.

BB: Um-hm.

SG: And it could be really fun, or it could be, if you had a, a really nice group of people, it could be a lot of fun. But if you had somebody who would get a little bored with the whole thing, maybe it wasn't what they thought it was going to be, it could be a long tour. (laughs)

BB: Right.

[INTERRUPTION—RECORDING STOPS]

SG: Trying to think.

BB: Maybe something that was, like, on a tour that was unexpected that happened, or maybe was there a crisis that you had to deal with or some, somebody was, gave you some feedback that really made you feel, "Wow, I really—" you know, I don't know if that's something in particular. Or maybe it's something that a colleague said afterwards that—

SG: I just remember after I had done it for a while, and I felt really comfortable with it, people would come up to me sometimes, visitors, and they'd say, "You really enjoy what you do, don't you? You really, I can tell that you really enjoy your job." And that would make you feel good. And then you would have situations sometimes, I remember one summer, you would have people that would go on those long tours that really, it was too much for them. And I [0:20:00] remember one time there was this overweight woman and she'd gotten like halfway through this tour, and she was exhausted. And she just didn't think she was going to be able to make it. And I was trailing the tour, I was walking behind, and of course she started getting farther and farther behind. And after a while, you get, it's just you and that person, and you're pretty far behind the rest of the group because they can't walk fast enough to keep up. And we had telephones in the cave, of course, and I remember calling out and talking to Lewis Cutliff, and he said, "You're going to walk that woman out. I don't care how long it takes." Because, he said, "We can't carry her out." And sometimes people would be carried out of the cave if they couldn't walk. And that was an ordeal when that happened. It really was. So she and I walked out. But we probably were an hour and a half late getting out.

BB: Would you have to do it, or would you call reinforcements like law enforcement to help you?

SG: Yeah. We would, everybody pitched in when something like that happened. We had some people that were trained in the medical field, EMTs, and then we had some of the maintenance guys would come in and help us. So whoever was available, they would come in and, and help get those people out.

BB: Um-hm.

SG: And it was, it was quite an ordeal. There were a few deaths. It never happened on my tour. But there were a few people that had that job.



BB: But you were around, you were there that summer?

SG: Yeah, um-hm, I would be there. And that was, that was terrible when that would—

BB: Yeah. So the camarad-, sounds likes there, you had a lot of camaraderie. I guess I'm thinking you probably lived at, did you live at home then when you were working there?

SG: The first—

BB: I'm thinking, I'm wondering about the seasonal housing and, and a lot of single peop-, you know, a lot of, like—

SG: Yeah. The first summer I worked there, I think I lived at home with my parents. And after that, I lived in the seasonal apartments. And there was a lot of camaraderie. At one time I lived in a house with, where some of the offices are now. They were called the Mission '66 houses. They were those long ranch-style houses. A few of them are still there.

BB: Um-hm.

SG: And me and two or three other girls lived there. And that was a lot of fun. That was a lot—we really had a good time there. I worked, after a while, I worked some long seasons when I got out of school. And we would work from spring all the way through fall, sometimes, and it was me and Brenda, the girl that I was telling you about. And there were about four or five, maybe four girls that lived in there. And we would have parties sometime, and invite all these people, and even the superintendent would show up sometimes. And so-, I remember some of the older

men who were married, they would want to come to our parties, and we would always tell them, "Well, you can either come, or you can come and bring a note from your wife." Because the wives would get upset if they thought they were coming to a party at all these single girls' houses, you know. So that was kind of funny.

BB: Never brought a note. Never came.

SG: No, they didn't come. We knew that would, that would do it if they had to bring a note from their wife.

BB: Right. Right.

SG: But that was, that was fun.

BB: So you began in '69?

SG: Um-hm.

BB: And then all the way to 2000- and?

SG: Two thousand and five. And I think, you know, I do not remember the year I became a permanent employee. I just, I don't remember the exact year it was.

BB: Seventies? Eighties?

SG: Probably '73. Something like that. But there was, there was four or five of us that were hired at the same time. Henry was one of them and myself and Brenda. There were two or three girls and a couple of guys, I think, that were hired at the same time. And we lived in that house all year long, that I was talking about, and in the winter, we didn't work that much. But there were some of the older, permanent men

that worked there. And they would work in the winter. And sometimes we'd get really bored, and we'd go over and hang out in the guide lounge, and we'd talk one of them into calling in sick the next day, because they'd call us into work if they needed help. They'd say, I'd say, "You don't look like you feel really well." (laughs) So sometimes they would call in sick, and then they would call one of us into work. That was—

BB: So, so you were, that's the way Christmas-time into the spring, there wasn't a lot of things that—

SG: No, there, it was, it was very, it was pretty slow in the winter there.

BB: So you weren't getting paid then?

SG: No. Uh-uhn. No. We may have drawn unemployment. I don't remember, really. And then when I first got permanent, we were hired, it was called sub-[ ] to furlough. And we would be furloughed for a couple of months in the winter. And I think we could draw unemployment at that time. And I'd travel a little bit at that time, and it was—

BB: So you didn't pick up extra work or anything? [025:00]

SG: No, you really weren't off long enough to, to do much else. So I would travel a little bit. We would, some of us, we would take a trip South somewhere. And go to Florida, or we went to New Orleans one time I remember. Two or three of us did it together, and that was kind of fun.

BB: Um-hm. You said you have, you have a son. Did, did he grow up—of course, he grew up, you were his mother—

SG: Um-hm.

BB: Knowing about the park and—

SG: Um-hm.

BB: Was it something he embraced or thought about or talked about or just—

SG: I think he was proud of what I did. He, he never really expressed an interest of working there that much. He, when he was in college, he worked at a restaurant, and he knew that he could work there pretty much every night. And at the park it was kind of a seasonal thing. And he didn't really want to drive back and forth, I think. And he d-, I know a lot of employees that have children that have worked there. But he never really seemed to, to be that interested in doing it.

BB: Hm.

SG: He was involved in sports and, I don't know, just was into all that kind of stuff.

BB: Sure. Do you have any certain, if somebody wanted to get into being a park service employee today, do you have any kind of words of wisdom that, you know?

SG: I would encourage them to do it.

BB: Um-hm.

SG: But you, I would encourage them to also be patient if they wanted a permanent job because it just doesn't seem to happen that much anymore. Not, I don't know whether that's park service-wide or whether it's just Mammoth Cave. It's probably park service-wide because they depend so much on seasonal workers and I think a

lot of it has to do with, like, lots of other things, they don't want, they, they can't afford all the benefits. And it just, it has gotten to the point, I think where they, they can't hire the people that they would want to hire because of that. And, but I would definitely encourage people to do it because it's, you learn so much. You learn, I think you learn a lot about yourself, what you can, you can do things that you didn't think you could do. It builds your confidence like crazy because—and you meet so many interesting people. You meet people from all over the world. And, and doing what I did in the education program—

BB: Yeah, tell me more about that.

SG: I worked with the local schools in the area. We worked mostly with the Brad area, if you're familiar with that. It's like a—

BB: [ ] I've ever—

SG: Tent development district. And I think it's a 10-county area. And we worked a lot with them. We would have schools that came from father away too. But, and we worked with Western a lot, their educational program. We got to the point where we would, anybody that, all of the people that did student teaching, as a part of that, they would come to the park and, and go through our education program so that they would know, when they became a teacher, what was available to them. And that was a, that was a really nice thing that we did with Western.

BB: It's gratifying too, for you.

SG: Oh, it was very gratifying, yeah, that they, they recognized us that way. So we worked with Western pretty closely. You got to know a lot of teachers, and I always said it was the best of both worlds, because you got to work with students and teachers, and teachers, of course, they have that same class day in and day out. If

they have a problem child, they're going to see that problem child the next day. And, and we could send them home. (laughs) So that was the, that was the good part of it. But that was really a lot of fun. And I really enjoyed that part of it. And we would have teacher workshops. We got to the point with Western where we would do a week-long workshop with Western in the summer. And it was done through their math, science and environmental education program at, at Western.

BB: So how did the week, how did that week go? Like, what was the first few days, and did you lead to a certain practical thing?

SG: We, we did a lot of, yeah, we did a lot of surface things, we did, there were projects like, it was called Project Learning Tree or Project Wild. These were national, kind of curriculum type things that we would do. We also wrote, wrote curriculum at our program. And we would match it to the state curriculum so that it would be more enticing for the teachers to, to use it. And when the teachers came there in the summer for our week-long thing, we would, we did a lot of water testing because [0:30:00] water and the karst area, that's such an important thing. And we would go outside the park and test water out in the streams outside the park. We would spend a whole day on the Green River in canoes. And we did a lot of fun things, we really did. The teachers loved it. It was, it was a fun project.

BB: Wow. Did you ever see teachers come back, the same, any of the same teachers come back when they had a class trip? Or would that—

SG: Oh yeah, that happened a lot. That happened a lot. So that was, we felt like we were really, it was just a great connection for us.

BB: You've worked with a lot of people. We spoke before the interview started formally that some people are from the area and stay working here. Some have jumped around. You don't have the experience of going to other parks, but what do

you think is special about this particular area, this park? I mean, we're just about, how many miles away from it right now? Twenty miles?

SG: About 20 miles away.

BB: Yeah.

SG: There's just a connection there, somehow. I'm not sure, it, it's hard to pinpoint it, but I think it, a lot of it has to do with the people, the people that, that work there. And just the place itself, it, it just draws you in, I think. To think that, to think how long tours have been going on there I mean, we talked about 200 years. We're coming up on the anniversary of 200 years of people walking through there. I remember I used to walk through the cave, and I would just imagine all those people that had gone there before me, especially the prehistoric people and how they saw it. I guess I have a really vivid imagination, and I would just imagine what it must have been like for them. And the old tours, the women, the way they dressed, they had costumes for them to wear, that they would rent from the hotel. And—

BB: Really?

SG: Yes, they were called bloomers. Nobody told you about that?

BB: No. Tell me about it.

SG: They were kind of like, they looked like harem pants, if you know what that is. They were just kind of, you know, real billowy—

BB: Blousy and baggy.

SG: Pant-type things. And they would rent those from the hotel for the women to wear because they had long skirts at that time. And we even made one of those for our program. One of the girls that worked, one of the ladies that worked with me, she was better, a better seamstress than I was, so she made one of them to show them to students, of what they looked like. And they would have little, seems like they had bells on the bottom of them, or something. And maybe so they wouldn't get lost, I'm not sure what, why they did that. But, and there were probably no trails. They just had to climb over the rocks, and, and I worked there when, when the Indian body was on exhibit. And I remember that face.

BB: Was it in like a glass sarcophagus?

SG: It was in a glass case.

BB: Um-hm.

SG: And people would, could walk by. It was, when you think about it, it's pretty disrespectful, really. But I'd think, I would, I would let my mind wander, and I'd say, "I bet when we're not here, he gets up and dances around." (laughs) I would always think about that.

BB: Were you there during the period of time, was that, was that, was that Native American repatriated into, into the cave, or was that during the time you were there, too?

SG: Yeah. They took it off display. I remember one summer. And Lewis, I think Lewis was involved in that. And from what I've been told, it's still in the cave somewhere, but apparently only a few people know where it is. And I remember when, the summer they did that. I don't remember what year it was. But I remember them going down to, to get ready to move it.



BB: Was that a, was that a big controversy that they, they did or didn't? Or do you, do you remember? Were there local papers, or was it—

SG: I don't remember a lot. I'm sure there were some things in the paper, but I remember some of the people that worked there. They didn't like it. They didn't like that it was, it was part of the, they considered to be a part of the history of the place. And they thought it should stay there. But I could understand why Native Americans would not want that to happen. It was, it was pretty disrespectful because people would walk by and almost make fun of the, the body, you know. And it, it could be pretty disrespectful, I thought.

BB: You've seen some changes.

SG: Um-hm. Yeah.

BB: What are your hopes for the future of this place?

SG: Of the park?

BB: Yeah. The people that work there, or for the, of the park itself.

SG: I just, [0:35:00] I wish they just, I just wish they had more funding, of course. That's always the thing. And, and the environmental education program. I guess there was, we always knew, and we, we were very, very fortunate that nothing was ever taken from us. To a degree it was, because we started out with some permanent people, and then as they left, we had to fill in behind with seasonals, but they've had to do that all over the park. So, I just wish they had more funding. I wish that they could just see the importance of these really special places. Not just Mammoth Cave, but all of the parks. They just need to be recognized. And they're,

they're the only thing, that's the only part of original America, I guess you could say, that's left behind. I, I used to go do a talk every once in a while, to a Rotary Club, or something like that, and I would say, "Just imagine if there was no such thing as a national park, what it would be like." I remember going to Gulf Islands National Seashore one time, and there was condominiums built up to the boundary of that seashore. And if there weren't national parks, nobody would ever know what that beach looked like without a condominium on it. And I always thought, well I bet somebody would have, and they almost did, they built a hotel right above the cave entrance, which they almost did anyway, but there would be development all over these beautiful areas and there would be nothing left for people to see. Only the really rich people, probably, would be able to see some of these things.

BB: Would, we, we spoke briefly, what did Stegner, was it a Wallace Stegner quote from, from Ken Burns's thing: "America's greatest idea."

SG: Right. Exactly. Exactly. It was. It was. And it all started in our country. That's something we can be really proud of, I think, that the first national park was in, in our country.

BB: Um-hm.

SG: And then it's an idea that spread all over the world, of course, but it all started here.

BB: When did it, when did Mammoth Cave start, get the designation of World Heritage Area? Were you there?

SG: Yeah.

BB: Yeah. Did that change any, who, who visited?

SG: Not dramatically, I don't think. Not like it becoming a national park. It's a world heritage site, and it's a, there's some other designation. UNES—

BB: UNESCO?

SG: It seems like. Maybe I'm wrong. But, no, it's prestigious, I know. But I wouldn't say it changed. There may, now, it may have attracted more scientists, people like that, but that's, the resource management people would probably know more about that than I would.

BB: Sure.

SG: But it might have attracted more people like that. But it's—

BB: Do, do you have anything else you wanted to, to share with me. We've shared quite a bit of things.

SG: Yeah, I just, I think if anybody's thinking about doing this as a summer job, especially, when you're in college, give it a try because, I think when I talked to you on the phone, I told you that when I first started, I could have cared less about a day off or not, because you just have so much fun when you're a seasonal employee because you don't, you're not worried about becoming a permanent employee if you're going back to college. There's not a lot of pressure on you to, for anything else, but it's just, you just have so much, and you meet so many, you make some lifelong friends when you do that. It's just a, it's just a great experience.

BB: Thank you.

SG: You're welcome. I hope I did all right.

[END OF INTERVIEW]