

Name: Dr. David Klein
Date of Interview: November 4, 2013
Interviewer: Karen Brewster

Brief Summary of Interview: This interview focuses on Mr. Klein's early life, concentrating on his family, where they were from, places they lived, and just growing up.

KAREN BREWSTER: Today is November 4, 2013. And this is Karen Brewster and I'm here with Dave Klein on the first of our life history interviews, and we're here in Fairbanks, Alaska. So, Dave, hello.

DAVID KLEIN: Hi Karen. Let's get going.

KAREN BREWSTER: Let's get going. So shall we start from the beginning?

DAVID KLEIN: Well, I can't. My memory of the birth is not good, but we can start close to that.

KAREN BREWSTER: And so when was that. What's the date?

DAVID KLEIN: May 18, 1927.

KAREN BREWSTER: All right. And your parents' names.

DAVID KLEIN: Norma Peverley, her maiden name.

KAREN BREWSTER: How do you spell that?

DAVE KLEIN: P-E-V-E-R-L-E-Y, I think it is.

KAREN BREWSTER: Okay.

DAVID KLEIN: Klein.

KAREN BREWSTER: Okay.

DAVID KLEIN: And my father's name was Ferdinand.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh.

DAVID KLEIN: No middle name. Klein. K-L-E-I-N.

KAREN BREWSTER: Okay, where were you born?

DAVID KLEIN: I was born in Fitchburg, Massachusetts. And my parents were living in a little suburb called Lunenburg, but I was born in the Fitchburg Hospital. And dad had a job with Iver Johnson Arms and Cycle [Works]. They made firearms, and motorcycles, and bicycles.

KAREN BREWSTER: Hm. That's an interesting combination.

DAVID KLEIN: It is. He was a small tool machinist. He had interned -- He grew up in -- he was born in Brooklyn, New York and grew up there. And then was working as an internist in Massachusetts in Cambridge when he met my mother.

KAREN BREWSTER: You said internist. I mean, he was an intern? Or an internist, I think of as medical doctor.

DAVID KLEIN: No, in those days, if you wanted to become a professional in any field, especially mechanics or carpentry, or any finish carpentry, or anything like that, you worked as an intern. Which you got a room, maybe room and board, but you didn't get a significant salary, but you were learning. And then as you learned, you gradually became more dependent on your salary, and your salary increased accordingly, etc. And you were -- your CV -- if you had this, your chances of getting a job would be great.

KAREN BREWSTER: Sort of like an apprentice back in the Middle Ages.

DAVID KLEIN: Yeah.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah, okay. So your parents met in Cambridge?

DAVID KLEIN: That's true. And my mother's father was -- he had sort of raised her. He had a butcher business in Cambridge, Mass. But he had lost his wife and his oldest daughter during an influenza episode. I think it was around 1918. And so then he went ahead and was a single dad with one daughter, and he raised her there.

KAREN BREWSTER: So can you tell me a little bit more about your father's background? The name Ferdinand is somewhat unusual.

DAVID KLEIN: Well, my father's parents had emigrated from Switzerland. And they had lived in the French speaking part of Neuchatel, but his birth certificate shows that his parents were German. And they were from an area in western Germany. I forgot the name of it. And then he apparently immigrated, and maybe his parents did, too, to Switzerland before he was -- yeah they must have --

KAREN BREWSTER: As a family.

DAVID KLEIN: So he was born there. And then he married. He apparently was trained to be a small tool machinist and apparently was involved in watch making. And then he married a French woman who was in Switzerland, but apparently born in France. And I was never able to get enough information. My father died when he was 59, I think. And so I never got to know him very well when I was an adult. Partly because I was -- out of high school I went right into the Navy during the Second World War. And he was working. Before that time, he was working 12-hour shifts in Hartford, Connecticut. And we didn't -- we had time with him mealtime and he was working night shift. And it was financially good for us after a Depression that they'd gone through, which we as children, we never really understood that because we lived well up in Vermont close to where my grandfather had a farm. And we had our own garden and some animals and chickens and what and made it through the Depression okay, but my dad was a Jack of all trades. And he got work in the little Vermont village we lived in. He was the only person that could handle if there was a problem with the power line, he could handle it as a lineman. And he was a good electrician, a good plumber, a good carpenter, and a good machinist. And so he got by. We got by financially, but we were living as much off the land and gardening as what is possible.

KAREN BREWSTER: So back to them being in Switzerland. You said he was a machinist and a watchmaker and he married a Swiss woman, that was your dad or that was your grandfather?

DAVID KLEIN: He married a French woman.

KAREN BREWSTER: Married a French woman. That was your father, so he was married before he came to the U.S.?

DAVID KLEIN: So that would have been my grandmother on my father's side. So they were married --

KAREN BREWSTER: So it was your grandfather who married --

DAVID KLEIN: His wife was French.

KAREN BREWSTER: Your grandfather's wife.

DAVID KLEIN: Yeah. I never met either of them. They died before --

KAREN BREWSTER: Okay.

DAVID KLEIN: They were my -- no they were, yeah, my grandfather and my grandmother on my father's side, right.

KAREN BREWSTER: But they had --he --

DAVID KLEIN: They had immigrated to Brooklyn, New York.

KAREN BREWSTER: From Switzerland. But that grandfather was German, who moved to Switzerland and married a French woman?

DAVID KLEIN: Who was -- moved to Switzerland from France.

KAREN BREWSTER: France. And together they immigrated to Brooklyn. Do you know when they immigrated to Brooklyn or approximately?

DAVID KLEIN: I can get that information, but I'd dig it out. So may make a note to that, but I can't pull it off the top of my head.

KAREN BREWSTER: But it was --

DAVID KLEIN: My father --

KAREN BREWSTER: When was your father born?

DAVID KLEIN: Good question, I can pull that out.

KAREN BREWSTER: Well, let's go backwards. You said he died at age 59, do you know what year he died approximately?

DAVID KLEIN: Yeah, 1946. No '45. 1945.

KAREN BREWSTER: So we can do some math.

DAVID KLEIN: I think he was 59.

KAREN BREWSTER: Well, if he was 59 in 1945, he was born then -- You're better at math. That doesn't make sense. Oh 18—No. I can't do math. 1876? That doesn't make sense, does it?

DAVID KLEIN: Well, let's see.

KAREN BREWSTER: Anyway it doesn't --

DAVID KLEIN: If he died in 1945. No it wasn't that early, it must've been 18 --

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah, that would make -- if -- anyway somewhere in -- they must've moved to Brooklyn --

DAVID KLEIN: 1880's, late 1880's, I think.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah, something like that. Okay, now that we've distracted ourselves.

DAVID KLEIN: I can dig that stuff up.

KAREN BREWSTER: That's okay. So that grandfather, who moved to Brooklyn from Switzerland, what did he do in Brooklyn? You never met them? Do you know what he did?

DAVID KLEIN: See, they were dead before I was born.

KAREN BREWSTER: Okay.

DAVID KLEIN: And he had been a watchmaker in Switzerland, so it's anybody's guess what he did and it might have been something related to that. And there was probably a demand for people with his training at that time in New York.

KAREN BREWSTER: But your father never really talked about his parents -- ?

DAVID KLEIN: Not much, no. In fact my mother said that he was never -- he never talked very much about his parents or his -- He had a sister and he said that they didn't get along very well together, and that he'd never kept track of her and she'd gone west. He didn't know whether she got married and had family or what. And the big question in my mind at times has been, since I didn't have a chance to really discuss these with my father and he may not have wanted to talk about it anyway, was why his parents left Germany and moved to Switzerland at the time that they did. And why his mother, who was French, left France and went to Switzerland. Well, there was a lot going on -- a lot of upheavals and especially in France. And so she may have been unwelcomed there -- her family. I mean she was -- often people left because their family left. So I don't know what- - and my sister, older sister, six years older than I am, has made some attempts to try to get more background on this and went to France with a French woman who she met in Florida where she lives. And made a little progress. And my sister now claims she's going to spend more time with the genealogy of the Klein family. She's done that with her husband's family, but she hasn't had time and she's super busy volunteering and helping other people frequently. But she's got a lot grandkids and great-grandkids, too.

KAREN BREWSTER: So you don't even know -- you were saying you wonder why they moved to Switzerland. Well then, the next question is well, why did they move to Brooklyn?

DAVID KLEIN: Yeah, well except that a lot of people that came to the United States, through New York, in that era sometimes came via Switzerland, because Switzerland was this sort of a neutral place and they may have felt unwelcome in their countries for whatever possible --

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah, why did they choose to leave Switzerland? I guess we don't know that either.

DAVID KLEIN: Well, Switzerland is a difficult place to stay because it's hard to – it's a different country but there're not that many jobs frequently. Or there may be jobs but they're only for skilled people and Switzerland was -- If you left because of some problems with your philosophy or political leanings or religious leanings and you went to Switzerland, they weren't a problem. But to be absorbed into the Swiss culture was a more difficult thing. And true of any -- I mean this has been the case right up through modern times when after the Second -- during and after the Second World War, Switzerland was a stepping stone. It was one place where people from the Communist zone or during the early stages of Nazism, that people could go there. And they may have been -- felt oppressed or even threatened if they stayed where they were. But also for their belief system if they were, for example, so many Jews went to Switzerland, but there were so many people from other faiths and they realized that they were – if they had been political active. And plus they didn't have as many options politically because frequently the only options were fascism or Nazism, which was fascism. Or communism. Yeah, it was communism or fascism. And that wasn't necessarily a solution for a lot of people and understandably. And the United States was such an attractive place because of our open society where we welcomed immigrants and supposedly it was a melting pot and provided tolerance and freedom of expression of your own views as long as they were done through a democratic process.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right. And I've asked you this before, the name Klein. For many people, that's associated as a Jewish name. But you don't consider that you have a Jewish family? Or do you?

DAVID KLEIN: Well, there's no indication, directly, from my youth that -- and relationship my father. My father was -- my mother was moderately religious and so she attended -- When I was growing up in Connecticut and she wanted us kids to go to Sunday school in the Congregationalist church, a liberal Protestant Church. And we lived in Vermont, I remember that she -- We rented for a period a little small home and the rental was cheap during the Depression, and it was a parsonage for the Methodist Church. But the family thought the Methodist church too conservative. And my father was tolerant of religious beliefs, but he didn't believe in organized churches. And I assume that he had leanings towards Christianity, but I think he was an agnostic. He belonged to the Masons, which usually requires acknowledgement of a God, but not a specific faith. And he was a Boy Scout leader. But he didn't like organized churches. And so he was more like an old school, early American leaders like George Washington, for example, who's a deist probably, but he even questioned that. And I guess you could say Thomas Jefferson was in the similar category. But some of these are my assumptions based upon knowing what I grew up with.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right, but your father never gave any indication that there was a Jewish background or that's why they had left --

DAVID KLEIN: Not directly. He was pretty knowledgeable. He was very aware. He had a high school education but he was extremely well-read. He considered himself a sort of -- with an engineer's training he was impressed by the advances due to engineering and

technology, bridge building but also steam engines and beginning of the internal combustion engine, etc., etc. And he understood this very well and was well-read. And he had also studied a lot of things that related to it like civil engineering and mapping and surveying and things of that nature. He had a very broad interest. And I was impressed, in later years when I went through some old books of his, and there were notes that he had made when he was reading Haeckel's book on evolution. In which Haeckel coined the term ecology, and he had made note of all of this. And he was -- certainly believed in evolution. And he would kid my mom at times. And when at the dinner table we'd be talking about something and he would explain things in an evolutionary context. And she, you know, he would joke with her about this and she -- they were both tolerant of the other's understandings. And got by fine. But he didn't -- He felt that we should be free to make our own judgment as to whether we wanted to continue with the Sunday school after, I think it was ten or eleven years of age. Then it was our decision, not mom's. She might have her recommendation, but it was clearly stated and they both agreed to that. But he was not an active church member. He went there on special occasions, mainly for cultural reasons, family reasons.

KAREN BREWSTER: So did you continue Sunday school after you were given a choice?

DAVID KLEIN: No, I didn't, but at the same time I was connected to the church to some extent because we had the Boy Scout troop that met there. And then there was a young people's organization, and a social kind of thing. And I did sort of just join that. And in fact then there was a -- the preacher at that time was a real intellectual young guy about 30, and he related very well to young people. And maybe one of my attractions for that was that it was during the Second World War and I was in high school and I knew I was going to be drafted when I got out of high school. I would be 18 and draft age. And there were -- most of the members -- There weren't very many boys my age or a little older because they were already gone off to the military, so there were a lot of young women. And I got a lot of attention because I was -- I think I was elected president of that organization, but as far as I was concerned it was a real social organization. I enjoyed it.

KAREN BREWSTER: Did it have a name, that group?

DAVID KLEIN: It was like most churches, Protestant churches have something like that. A youth group or something like that. But they did things like we'd put on plays and we'd do evening -- play ping pong and they'd sometimes do outings on weekends to play softball or picnics. And then there was a problem when the church deacons, I guess, felt that -- they approved of all of this and the minister's good relations with the young people, but then they thought that we all should be -- planned to join the church. But in order to join the church you had to go through some training. Well, this was borderline for me, but I figured I'll go through it and it was the minister who did the training and he sort of went through the basics of what we had to presumably believe. And -- but he was very understanding and he couldn't explain things when we asked him difficult questions like, you know, if there's this Trinity of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, well, how -- who's

the real God there? And what about the Devil? Do we -- Mostly this church didn't buy into the Devil, but other churches, Protestant churches did -- more fundamental. Well, that must be a God then if it's not under control of the one God, so there must be multiple Gods like the Romans, early Romans and the Greeks had. And, of course, later on I began to realize, yeah, that Judaism made a real effort to try to avoid the might of the Gods, but they also had to make some concessions. And this Trinity seemed to be like -- The minister explained all these things in a pretty good way. He was well informed. He had good training and he said, "Well, if some of these questions, don't feel like you have to understand them." He says, "I don't still. And I don't expect that you should just for the sake of joining the church." So I never realized whether I actually joined the church or not. And two years after I was in -- after I had graduated and gone into the Navy, and then I never really went to the church after that. And didn't feel I needed to for any specific reason. And then I heard that the minister had -- he had felt it was time for him to resign and he went back to do more theological studies. And I had a lot of respect for him because he was a man that didn't -- he felt that he couldn't find all the answers in the Bible or understanding of the faith unless you really went into it. And he would give it a try. And I don't know whether he ever stuck to it or not in the long run. But he was such an open-minded guy and he understood us so well that I've -- It was a nice part of my life to have that experience with him even though I was never really convinced I wanted to join the church.

KAREN BREWSTER: And now I didn't ask you about your siblings. You have a sister you mentioned?

DAVID KLEIN: And a brother. My sister is six years older than I am.

KAREN BREWSTER: And her name is?

DAVID KLEIN: Elizabeth Prior, her married name.

KAREN BREWSTER: P-R-Y-O-R?

DAVID KLEIN: P-R-I-O-R.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh, okay.

DAVID KLEIN: And my brother, who is two years older than I am, is Richard Arthur Klein.

KAREN BREWSTER: Okay. And so why don't you tell me a little bit -- Oh we -- we -- You mentioned that your parents met in Cambridge, but what was your mother doing? Was she working in the butcher shop, or -- ?

DAVID KLEIN: She had a couple of jobs there, and I'm not sure exactly which one she had at the time she and my father started getting together. But one job was she was trained -- she had some training -- she went to a special school beyond high school to get

clerical and accounting experience. So women with that kind of training could stand a chance of getting jobs. And my grandfather was foresightful in that regard. But he also -- I think she had some artistic abilities and I think she had a little bit of art training, but one of the jobs she got while she was still living in Cambridge and before she was married, was working for a company that produced fine china for dining and what. And very high quality stuff with a lot of floral designs. And so she was employed on painting these floral designs usually from photographs, or pictures, or paintings. And it was mainly the design that she was doing and working with was virtually all of flowers, plants. And fruits, foliage, like apples, or cider pouring in small glasses. Most of this was sold to wealthy people, and so it was pretty expensive stuff. After the painting, it was fired. And so it was very permanent. I have a few of her pieces and my sister has several of them. and it's beautiful stuff.

KAREN BREWSTER: Do you know the name of the company?

DAVID KLEIN: I don't. Maybe I can check? There's one or two items here.

KAREN BREWSTER: That's okay. We'll look later.

DAVID KLEIN: We can probably get that from my sister, probably.

KAREN BREWSTER: Okay. So how did your parents -- What's the story of how your parents met?

DAVID KLEIN: I really don't know that exactly. My sister may have more of that. I have some -- a little -- copies of a couple of my mom's diary but it was mainly not regular. And I know that they went -- sometimes would rent a rowboat in Boston Harbor and go out and fish out in the bay. And he liked to fish a lot. He was an ardent, sort of an ardent fisherman. And he liked to fly fish, and stream fish, and lake fish, and he was also a hunter. But when he was courting her, they would go out there, and she commented, I remember that she tended to get seasick if it was wave action, sitting out there and the boat was rocking. But she could handle that if she had a book to read, which she could do that. She enjoyed doing it though. And being out there. And later in life she did enjoy fishing herself. And they both loved that, getting out on the water. They were both people that loved to be close to the environment, the natural environment, or close to the soil where they could get their hands in and do some gardening. Both of them did. And having animals. And my mother was -- always had lots of house plants. And when we lived in Vermont and Connecticut, she had a big flower garden. But also she would work in vegetable gardens, but the rest of us would do a lot of helping in the vegetable gardens. And my dad and then her father, my grandfather, was living with us, too, after his wife had died and he had sold off the farm in Vermont. He lived with us and he took over responsibility. He loved gardening and he took over responsibility for the vegetable garden. But she did the flower gardens. And she was great at arranging flowers. She had a real sense of aesthetic sense for displaying them and appreciating flowers and loved wildflowers. And she had a big impact on me, I think, in this regard. And in the springtime when the wildflowers were starting to come out and on a Sunday she'd say,

“Well, who wants to go walk – for a walk with me and maybe see some wildflowers?” And we’d go through the woods and the fields and I was usually always immediately saying “Yeah. I would.” And so I learned a lot from her and became fascinated with learning the wildflowers and gardening. And she had a big influence on me in terms of plants. And even house plants, you know, she taught me how to start gloxinias and things. She liked gloxinias. And how to root them and how to be patient.

KAREN BREWSTER: Did you learn other things from her? Well, were you influenced by her in other ways besides the --?

DAVID KLEIN: I was influenced by her and my father tremendously and some which I didn’t appreciate so much at the time. But I’ve had -- and especially as I get older I realize, yeah they had a big impact. And she certainly supported my interests, and my interests in aesthetics and landscaping and art. And she convinced my father that even though we weren’t – we were -- he had a good job then but we had bought an old house and land, and we didn’t have surplus money. It was surviving, recovering from the Depression. And they agreed to -- I’d take a few art lessons, which was okay, but I was already doing some nice stuff but I was very slow, meticulous. The teacher I had was a young woman who would give us this assignment. You’d have three minutes to make big free hand things with different colored crayons or whatever it was. And it was not my way of doing things. After, I think, two lessons I told my mother this woman doesn’t understand me at all and I didn’t understand what she was trying to do. She was a nice young woman, but I thought it was a waste of money because she was just telling me I was doing everything wrong.

KAREN BREWSTER: And how old about were you?

DAVID KLEIN: I think I was about maybe nine, about that age. Eight maybe? I always tended to be a rather shy guy. Maybe if I’d been more outspoken she might have adapted? I basically felt that she was the wrong person. That if it had been a different person it might have worked. But I’ve certainly appreciated that they, my mom and dad, were going to pay for some special lessons. Which, you know, those kind of things were - - They did a little bit of that for violin for my sister. And my brother didn’t get any of that kind of help but he didn’t show any interest. He was more interested in mechanical things.

KAREN BREWSTER: So what other ways did your parents influence you?

DAVID KLEIN: Well, my father was such a handy man and both my brother and I wanted to be – I mean, he was a terrific role model and he was a terrific -- we all loved him and appreciated the time we had with him. And it was especially during the war when he was working these long shifts, and it was good financially because he’d get extra pay for working long and at night, and it was the war effort. And he didn’t have much time to be with us. Like he was working night shifts, and we’d have dinner with him and that’s the only time we’d see him because he’d be sleeping during the day when we’re off to school and then he’d have to get up and have dinner and then go to work afterwards.

But those dinners were all important that we could -- the whole family could be there and all of us had different things. All of my siblings, we were different and different age. But being part of that was important for me, and I'm sure it was for my two siblings. So, we were really intact -- a very intact family that was benefiting from wonderful parents who were intelligent, and taught us a lot. And my mom was -- and my dad were also, they'd play games with us and different kind of card games we'd play. And we realized that they were both top notch competitors and that they enjoyed playing together and they enjoyed -- I learned cribbage from my dad and solitaire, dual solitaire with my mom. And yeah, you had to think fast, and they encouraged all of that. And it was fun. And it was good times for sure. And then, yeah, all of that.

KAREN BREWSTER: So I want to take us back a little bit, because you were born in Massachusetts, but then you were talking about Vermont and then you end up in Connecticut. So what's the -- what happened?

DAVID KLEIN: We were born in Massachusetts and that's where my father was working for the Iver Johnson Arms and Cycle. And then the Depression hit hard. And it looked like he had a good future, but then they cut back and the Iver Johnson virtually folded. They got rid of virtually everything except the firearms. And then they covered a little bit during the war but they didn't survive too well. So, that's when the family moved to Vermont. I think it was partly survival. There we could rent a place with land and have a garden and have a few animals. And my dad could get part-time jobs because he was so skilled in different things. And the community didn't have -- like in a city, if they needed some electrical work done, he was available.

KAREN BREWSTER: What was the name of the town in Vermont?

DAVID KLEIN: Hartland.

KAREN BREWSTER: H-A-R --

DAVID KLEIN: H-A-R-T-L-A-N-D. And it's on the Connecticut River, north of -- almost opposite Dartmouth College in New Hampshire. It was a small community with - - it had one store, and one gas station, post office, and a tiny town hall, which was brick and classic and still standing there. And a four-room school where I went to first and second grade, so that was -- In first and second grade it was the same teacher in one room. And there were two grades per room.

KAREN BREWSTER: And did your dad lose his job, was he fired because they downsized or he just left before that -- ?

DAVID KLEIN: I think they just laid off people and no guarantee that they would be employed and that was happening across the country. So yeah, he went to Vermont where he felt that -- and it was my grandfather, my mother's father, had this -- He'd remarried and had this small farm that was sort of referred to as subsistence farm. He had six or eight milking cows, a team of horses, cut his own hay and raised his own silage for the

cows. And had a big garden, and had a big apple orchard and a sugar bush. He made maple syrup. And he loved having a small farm like that. He loved the diversity and being his own boss. He normally didn't have to hire any help, he did most of it himself. And his wife, the second marriage was to a woman who was a widow. She was a good – from our perspective a nice step-grandmother because she was just warm to all of us and friendly and a good cook and fit well within that setting.

KAREN BREWSTER: Did you think of her as a step-grandma or she was just grandma? Cuz you didn't know the first one.

DAVID KLEIN: Well, but we were told and, you know, it – we definitely thought of her as a substitute grandma, who was, as far as we were concerned, we didn't have a real grandma. So and on my father's side, they were all gone. I never knew them. And so we had her and my grandfather. And yeah, we thought of her as a grandmother.

KAREN BREWSTER: So the town, Hartland, where you went was near your grandfather's farm?

DAVID KLEIN: It was only about three or four miles away.

KAREN BREWSTER: So that's why you went there?

DAVID KLEIN: I think that was the reason, largely the reason. But it was also the place where they could get by and not be real dependent upon my grandfather. But at least it was an emergency fallback, if occasionally -- if we went out there we always came back with great quantities of apples and some meat maybe. And I think he gave us calves a couple times. We raised them for veal.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh.

DAVID KLEIN: And we had a lot of chickens and some geese that we raised for eggs and for eating purposes. That was right in this village that was right at the -- within walking distance to the school. We rented this old farm building, which had sort of a barn, and so that we could have these other animals and a garden there. And there was kind of an aging orchard, but we had plenty of things like apples and stuff. And got by very well. We tapped some of our own sugar trees and made some of our own syrup. But when we'd go out during sugaring time at my grandfather's farm, then that was really fun for us kids because he had to use a horse and a little sled and hauled the buckets, a big wooden container on the sled then that he'd empty the sap in. And then grandmother would be boiling down in a big special shed where the steam would be coming out and they'd maintain the fire with hard woods that you'd harvested from the land for fuel. And then she'd boil down some of it, maple syrup so that it would get thick and then just take a ladle and throw it out on the snow and it would turn to candy. It was wonderful.

KAREN BREWSTER: I forgot to ask you that grandfather's name.

DAVID KLEIN: Richard Peverley.

KAREN BREWSTER: And then his first wife died, who you didn't know, but this woman he married, the grandma, what was her first name?

DAVID KLEIN: I have that upstairs.

KAREN BREWSTER: She's just grandma.

DAVID KLEIN: Right. I knew what it was at one time but I've forgotten.

KAREN BREWSTER: Okay.

DAVID KLEIN: It's upstairs.

KAREN BREWSTER: We can fill that in. Well, it sounds like -- so you must have been a small boy at this point in Vermont during the Depression?

DAVID KLEIN: Yeah, say I was -- we moved there when I was -- about a year after I was born.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh, so 1928.

DAVID KLEIN: So then from two through end of second grade, that would be seven or eight. Then we moved to Connecticut.

KAREN BREWSTER: Okay. And so, why did you -- ?

DAVID KLEIN: Okay then we moved to Connecticut because all this time my father was trying to find a job, a full-time job. And so he found a job in Hartford, Connecticut with the company that was founded, I think, to make Sikorsky helicopter parts. And that was '30 something, 193-what? I was born in '27 and then eight years, '35, so it was about '36. And so just when helicopters -- Sikorsky had developed a helicopter that was functional and there were a lot of efforts that hadn't been successful. And so my father got a good job there as a machinist, and then stayed there and worked his way up. And then during the Second World War that's when they were very important and he would work these long shifts because everybody did for the war effort. And then he supervised a big section of the workers and machinists that he had been when he started out.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah. Well, he'd been there long enough, he'd moved up to supervisor.

DAVID KLEIN: Yeah, but he was good because they put him in charge fairly early on. And he appreciated that, however he had some problems because he was -- eventually some of these workers became unionized and I think he was, too. And he was in support of that, of unionization. And so they got improvement in mainly salaries for the work

they were doing. But then when he became manager, he could no longer be part of the union.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh, he had to become part of management.

DAVID KLEIN: Yeah, so then he -- my mother told me this, he was pretty unhappy because he was really on the side of the workers. But he couldn't be proactive. He had to maintain a very low profile in these conflicts. And that hurt him because his loyalty was to the workers. But this is always a problem, I'm sure in other situations, but he survived. And they went on doing -- producing helicopter parts.

KAREN BREWSTER: Well, it was certainly during World War II, producing helicopter parts was quite important.

DAVID KLEIN: Yeah, right.

KAREN BREWSTER: I can see why he worked long -- they were a busy company.

DAVID KLEIN: Yeah. And you know in the interest of -- from the standpoint of companies, they were producing these essential parts. I mean they were making big money but at the same time, you tend to put the focus on you're supporting the war effort and let's get pump this stuff out. The workers volunteered to work harder etc., etc. And they had taken advantage of somewhat even if it's not deliberate. And that's a strike in order to weld. We should be getting more pay for this. And, of course, in other industries it was much worse when there were more women learning these skills and working in machine shops and what. And they got all these awards and everything from the government. The President helping the war effort, but the salaries frequently were so miniscule. Even though they were far better than they had been for any woman, and there were opportunities where women could do these things and be trained to do them just as well as the men. Like Maggie the Riveter [Rosie the Riveter] and all these kinds of things. But building aircraft and pumping them out so fast. And it was an era of change. But there's always that problem in an era of change that things are slow in catching up.

KAREN BREWSTER: Well, you're right, they often don't recognize in all that, the recognition of women, they really don't tell you, oh well, they didn't get paid as much as the men. But it's interesting, you're right, there were a lot of women in that industry. How come your father was able to stay home and work and he wasn't in the military?

DAVID KLEIN: Well, partly because he was in an essential job. But also he -- in that time they didn't take a father away and leave the family with kids on their own. In those days. I mean, maybe if you were just freshly married, and had one child, that would be one thing. It was all important. A lot of people stayed out of the military because they were considered essential for their family. A lot of men who were physically capable and didn't -- met all of the physical requirements. And then that was one thing that was admirable about the United States, where other countries might have said, well we will compensate women and we'll put them in a group living or something like that. Well,

that wasn't realistic. Farming, people involved in farming, got out of the military because it was so important. And essential jobs were important.

KAREN BREWSTER: And you're right, the idea of leaving your mother a single woman with three children, how would she have been able to support herself in that era? It would have been difficult.

DAVID KLEIN: And there was so much emphasis on doing -- my father was, before the Second World War, was a pacifist. Although he didn't -- as kids, we didn't get exposed to that very much because there was no need to it. He was a pacifist, tolerant of other belief systems and gracefully tolerant. Those two in New England and Connecticut, there wasn't -- a lot of racial tolerance wasn't a big issue. But we knew of the history of the slavery in the United States, and we knew in the case of Jews, oppression of Jews, and there was some of that in the United States. And then when during the war and Nazism, my father was quite aware of what was going on. And he'd keep in touch, and he knew people through his work that had relatives in Europe. So he was not very supportive -- he was certainly conservative, a fiscal conservative Republican of the old school. Very much supportive of the environment and protection of the environment. But when during the war and Roosevelt was President, and taking drastic steps to get out of the Depression and then also to lead our country during the war. And he was very supportive of the war effort and the need to support our government, so he was very understanding. And he was a good citizen in terms of being well informed. And I can say that we, all of us and my mom as well, benefited from his feeling that you don't just ignore -- if things are going well, you just don't ignore the government. You have to -- He understood the Depression and what it was caused and he wanted to see the country revive and get back economically in good shape. And he was happy when he could get a job and things go well. But he was very well-read on -- and I remember even just before the Second World War and during it, that subsistence living was -- he was fascinated by it. And I remember -- I've never been able to find, I went to look for it one time, a publication that was put out. Was it Sunset Publication in California? I'm pretty sure it was Sunset. They had this one edition that emphasized home gardens, and self-sufficiency, and with instructions how to proceed. And he -- I remember explained about that, and the book was around for a while. And it was fascinating. And he was into doing it right in terms of gardening. And we had this problem in Connecticut with pretty good soils but you'd get a hard pan layer. And when soils were used over a period of time. And it was related to some of the leaching of podsols [sp?] and you'd -- this hard pan layer and then it was hard for the roots to get down where there was still nutrients below. And you had a shallow workable soil. And what was needed was some deep plowing, periodically, like once in five years or so. And he did a lot of this on small vegetation plots by hand and then would fertilize it with -- stir the soil up and put in compost, and the compost also included chicken manure, which we had chickens. And my brother and I had that not very enjoyable job of cleaning out the chicken sheds in the springtime with all this accumulation, and that went into this. And we understood it, he explained the whole thing. And it wasn't this, "You guys have to do this period. This is why we're doing it." And it was complicated, and he explained all that to us, so we understood. We didn't like the work but -- and I would frequently negotiate with my brother, because he hated it worse than I did. He didn't like

to have the job of watering the chickens and feeding them daily and gathering the eggs. That's the part that I liked. And so I said, "Well, I'll do it for most of the time, but you have to take over major responsibility for the cleaning."

KAREN BREWSTER: The cleaning.

DAVID KLEIN: And I'd give him a hand, because to do it by yourself it was psychologically depressing because it was so much to do. And so messy.

KAREN BREWSTER: Must have smelled, too.

DAVID KLEIN: Oh yeah. You got used to the smell after a while, but when you went into the house, I didn't -- they knew you'd been out there. Or if you didn't change your clothes before you went to school.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah, oh God! Well, it sounds like you got the better end of the deal. Your brother -- You just had to feed and water them.

DAVID KLEIN: He was usually better than I was at wrangling some things so that he got out of it, but in this case, you know, I had such good bait that in saying, "Well, I'll do these things that you won't do and I'll do it for a long period of time. Take that over as long as you do this other." We did this sometimes with shoveling snow in the driveway.

KAREN BREWSTER: So what would you swap out for shoveling snow?

DAVID KLEIN: I don't recall. That might have been the timing when it was done because he might have argued that he was going to do something with his buddy and that if dad came home and it wasn't done, then he would get -- he didn't really want to do it badly and so would I do his share. So I did it sometimes that way. He might have done it for me that way.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

DAVID KLEIN: Yeah. He was a good guy. As a big brother he took advantage of me a lot of times, but on the other hand I got away with quite a bit, too.

KAREN BREWSTER: It sounds like you got him back with the chickens.

DAVID BREWSTER: Yeah.

KAREN BREWSTER: I think I lost track of where we were. We were talking about the chickens. Well, so all this you're talking about your father and what he was like, so tell me a little bit more about your mother. You said she was artistic.

DAVID KLEIN: Father was tall. We got our height -- all my siblings and I. I'm 6'2, I think. And my brother was about like 6'3, and my sister was about 5'10 ½ or 11, something like that.

KAREN BREWSTER: So you're all tall.

DAVID KLEIN: All tall and slender, like him. And mom was slender but pretty short. I forgot, 5'5 maybe or 4. But I'm not sure exactly. But you know, when we got older it was obvious she was the small one in the family. But she was just very kind and loving. Understanding, I think that would be a good one. And was good at -- and she had a lot of the time with us especially when we were pre-teen and teens when dad wasn't around us as much. Things like why do you table manners, and eating properly. Well, since my dad had diabetes that came on at about age 30. And it probably was some genetic type similar to youth-onset, because he was not obese and he was very active. But fortunately insulin had been discovered, and so he -- it was just standard that every morning he would -- had to boil his needles and syringes and he'd give himself a required shot dependent upon the work he was doing and estimating the dosage in relationship to what he's eating. And then mom learned along with him, from the doctor, you know, what kind of diet he should have to help as much as possible. And he was certainly physically active and there wasn't any need to emphasize that. But at first, you know, it was a problem with that kind of treatment was that they didn't -- the main problem was maintaining a reasonable balance of the blood sugar level. And if it got too high then you had problems and you could go into a coma, but also it was detrimental because your liver was being damaged. If that was the case then kidneys as well as could affect your eyesight, etc. And so he had -- when he went to work he always had something stand by if he felt weak he could eat a candy bar or something, but couldn't have too much sugar. And so he'd like sweets and desserts, and so mom cooked things differently. She made a cake for him with a nice frosting. He would barter it. He wouldn't eat his frosting and he'd barter that to us kids. Not so much barter, but try to divide it fairly. And -- but we lived and ate healthfully because we had the garden and chickens and what. And had some understanding, but in those days, of course, you didn't go to the supermarket and buy the greens and fresh vegetables in the wintertime. You just didn't eat those things. But we had things in the root cellar, carrots, and beets, and things. A lot of things were canned, the green beans canned, and we had a lot of things. And even before freezing was an option, and then you could start -- but that wasn't until towards the end of the Second World War that freezing was an option. And early on we didn't even have a fridge, we had an ice chest. The icemen would bring ice by once a week or something.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh, a block of ice would last that long?

DAVID KLEIN: You'd try to get a big enough place to put it in the refrigerator at the top and that would keep the things cool. Of course in wintertime, you didn't need so much because you could put box outside and put things in that. And a lot of things you didn't -- when your having a lot of canned foods and stuff you didn't need it for -- if you -- meat if it's just cool, it's not a big deal. And we're going to have a chicken, and my

grandfather would butcher it, or my dad would butcher it. They used different techniques.

KAREN BREWSTER: What were their techniques?

DAVID KLEIN: Well, my father was good at taking the -- we had a basement with a furnace. And he'd take -- would get a chicken to be slaughtered and bring it in and tie the feet together and tie the wings back. Hang it from the feet, I think, from a rafter in the basement. And then he would pith it.

KAREN BREWSTER: What does that mean?

DAVID KLEIN: You'd have to specially go up the beak with a very sharp knife into the brain. If it's done properly, you pith it and the feathers relaxed.

KAREN BREWSTER: The wings relaxed, you mean?

DAVID KLEIN: The wings, usually holding the wings back. One person, or he would, or you could tie them back so they won't flap. But if you -- and of course when they're upside down they would try to flap and what. But this way you'd just grab the head and pull down and stick this up there, you'd used to do that in -- for things when I was in college in the lab to working with wild chickens. We did do some autopsies on chickens and learned how to caponize chickens, so you'd get to operate on them. But sometimes you just learned how to kill them, too. And with killing them it's this pithing. It's very tricky, because you've got to hit this one little spot and do it just right, and dad was just good at that. And then when the feathers relaxed, the animal's dead, and then you can bleed them. And then you can pull off most of the feathers while they're still hanging there. They don't stick. Whereas if you kill them by chopping the head off or something, which my grandfather preferred, then often the feathers wouldn't come out very well. You'd have to dip them into scalding water after they were dead and then you could pull the feathers out.

KAREN BREWSTER: Huh, that's interesting.

DAVID BREWSTER: Yeah, it has something to do with these muscles that hold the feathers in place and cause -- you know they can expand the feathers and bring them down like hair on your body in relationship to the cold or whatever. Or displaying them. The rooster displaying. So yeah, then there was an interesting session I remember. I was very attracted to my grandfather. After his wife had died and he sold his farm in Vermont, we were down in Connecticut. We had this house that had room and a big garden, and so he was invited down. My mom invited him down to stay with us. And he was still in pretty good health then. I don't know how old he was then. He probably was about 68 or 70. And he came down and he took over the gardening. And a little bit he would handle any other things that needed to be done. But he just loved it. And I used to hang out with him and help him because I always -- there'd been a hurricane, one of the rare ones that came up through New England the year before when we lived in Hartford.

And so there were a lot of -- this place that we bought had a big wood lot and a lot of trees -- big oaks down. And we had a big wood fired furnace that heated the house that was in the basement. And so he just took over salvaging all this wood. Cutting it by hand with the big saws. But sometimes us kids would go out after school and he would show us how to hold on to the one end of the big saw and saw through these huge trunks, and then he would split all those things up. And just loved to do all that kind of work. At any rate, one time mom wanted to have chicken for Sunday dinner, and there was one big rooster they thought time for him to go. So grandpa said, "Okay, I'll do it. I'll take care of it for you." So he said -- I forgot what they called me then, Davey, I think. "Davey, might want to watch it." She said, "I don't want to watch it." And he said, "We'll do it behind the woodshed." So we went out there and there's a rooster and got it down there and took the axe and clunk, and dropped it. You know, the thing runs around for a while.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right, with its head cut off.

DAVID KLEIN: Yeah, she didn't want to see that. She didn't quite approve of him showing me, but she knew what it was like.

KAREN BREWSTER: So you went and watched?

DAVID KLEIN: Oh for sure. I wanted to see it.

KAREN BREWSTER: But your mom didn't want to see it.

DAVID KLEIN: Yeah, she didn't want to see it and be sure she can't see it from the kitchen window. But we enjoyed the chicken for dinner.

KAREN BREWSTER: So did you end up then butchering chickens, since you learned so well how to do it?

DAVID KLEIN: Yeah, but I got in trouble one time. I learned how to do it, and I did a few but not much. When I was working at the experimental farm they had some chickens and the husbandry -- animal husbandry man there was on the faculty there and head of the animals at the farm; really nice guy. And he sort of -- I was working part-time, and he sort of adopted me and he wanted me to go into agriculture. And I told him I was so committed to wildlife now that -- I was interested in agriculture and I took agriculture courses, several of them, because I was really interested. But they had some chickens. And he told a story -- I wasn't involved in this one. But he told a story about pithing a chicken. And he'd brought this chicken home. He was a Mormon and he'd only been here for a couple of years and his wife was a young housewife and they'd just a -- they had one baby or something. And they were both just terrific people, but -- so she wasn't used to a farm background apparently. And so he brought this -- and they were living in campus housing, one of these old houses down there where there's still a few left. And he brought this chicken home, alive. And he says, "We're going to have it, and you can help me." So she wasn't too excited about this. And they -- I think they had a screen door from the garage into the house so the mosquitoes wouldn't get into the house. And

because of the mosquitoes they were doing it in the kitchen right by that door. And he said, “I just want you to hold the chicken and the wings back so it doesn’t flap. And I’m going to pith it. I’m going to pith this thing.” And when the thing relaxed, she just fainted; fell through the screen door. Fortunately, she didn’t get hurt. Into the garage.

KAREN BREWSTER: So did you butcher chickens as a kid then?

DAVID KLEIN: Yeah, I did that.

KAREN BREWSTER: Which method did you use? Your grandfather’s or -- ?

DAVID KLEIN: I did the pithing.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh, you did the pithing.

DAVID KLEIN: I did the pithing, yeah, I thought that was a good way. But then I got into trouble once when I went out with my partner, Heather McIntyre, to visit her son and wife who were starting to try to farm in Wisconsin. And they had a garden and they weren’t big on -- they were mostly vegetarians. They weren’t big on killing animals. But knew they would probably get into it. And they were in a rural area and we stayed with them. And they came home and they had two chickens. And someone of their friends who were about like them had got these as chicks and raised them. And they didn’t -- they didn’t want to kill them, but they were ready to be eaten. And so they gave them to them. So they had these, and then so Heather said I knew how -- she told them that I knew how to pith a chicken and makes it easier. They didn’t know, “How do you kill a chicken?” They didn’t want to kill the chicken, but “How do you do it?” And we wanted to eat it. And so I took it out and hung it on a tree. And I tried to remember everything just right. But I didn’t get it. No, it didn’t work. It was flapping like mad. No. Blood was starting to come out. It took me too long to do it and they decided they didn’t think they wanted to have chickens after all.

KAREN BREWSTER: It does sound quite horrible to think about.

DAVID KLEIN: But it’s really quick and humane to kill them so quickly.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah. It does seem a little -- if you do it right, it does seem a little more humane than cutting the head off.

DAVID KLEIN: Yeah, it was. When I was working at the experimental farm, they were doing an experiment with pigs. And they had a lot of young pigs, and when they got to about so big. And just good for -- ready to slaughter, then they -- I was working mainly with the dairymen, and they said, “Well, we’re going to need your help as well as the dairymen’s when we’re slaughtering.” And they had a little slaughterhouse there, and I was interested in getting involved in slaughtering and seeing how you do it. And so I said, “Yeah, yeah, that’s fine, I’d like to learn.” One of the things I learned is that they drive some of these pigs up a ramp into the slaughterhouse. Just before they got in there,

you'd go out and then get them narrowed down and you'd get a gate so they couldn't run back. And then one guy would grab it and it'd be squirming a bit, you know, and try to hold it steady. And they used a small sledge. And you hit them right in the forehead.

KAREN BREWSTER: You hit the pig right in the forehead?

DAVID KLEIN: Yeah, right in the forehead and it knocks them out. Then you immediately cut their throat and let them bleed. And then you bring them in the slaughter shed and they have a trough there so that you can wash everything down and catch it out as it comes out. All of the entrails and stuff. So you don't just throw it out. And then they had this boiling water and you scald them, and scrape all the hair off and everything. And then butchered them and they -- I learned all this how to butcher. And then we went through this each day -- they had about, over a hundred pigs, and each day we'd go through about thirty. And it was hard work, but it was so efficient. But towards the end, there were only, say, a dozen pigs left. And the pigs were wary because then they couldn't get them to -- couldn't drive them. They would run away because --

KAREN BREWSTER: They knew what was up.

DAVID KLEIN: They must have known what was up. Because they were able to escape up until that time, so then they had to -- one of the guys used a rifle with a scope, and would shoot the pig. Then we'd rush out there and pick it up and bring it in and put it -- you know they'd finally get all the rest of them. Well, then some time later, the animal husbandry man, Ben Hollis, he said, "Oh, we got a -- we're going to -- this one dairy cow, old dairy cow has stopped milking and she wouldn't breed -- they couldn't get her to breed, so we're going to have to slaughter her." So I said, "Yeah." This was -- there was just the two of us going to do the butchering on this. And so he said, "I want you to -- do the -- I'll be holding it and I'll show you how to handle it." And then he had a special pistol for killing animals. And so it had a short barrel and you hold it right up against the spot on the head. And he said, "Now," -- I think he was holding it and I was going to do the shooting. But I don't really remember that. I think I was holding the halter. And the cow was totally dosed out, you know, it was just standing there. Didn't have a clue to what was going to happen to it. So then I remember him making a little cross in the hair, and that's where you have to hit it. And I don't know whether it was me holding the pistol or him. And he put that right up there. Or I did, put it right up there just exactly as he said, pulled the trigger. And the cow didn't even flinch. Took it away and, you know, there was this hole. But it didn't go through the skull apparently. Well then, he got a little panicky. And "Oh." And so he did it a second time. And still the cow didn't go down. But the cow wasn't unruly then, it was like you could just hit it on the head because it was misbehaving or something. So then he had had enough. He went into the shed and got a sledgehammer. And he made that cross again. And he wanted me to hold it really steady. And he hit in that spot and [makes a pop noise] he went right down.

KAREN BREWSTER: And that was it.

DAVID KLEIN: And everything went fine. The old fashioned way was a better way.

KAREN BREWSTER: Poor cow.

DAVID KLEIN: No, I mean that's better than what just putting it in a grinder without killing it.

KAREN BREWSTER: No. No, but all those pigs, you said they had the pigs for research purposes? And then they were done with the research so they had to get rid of them – they had to slaughter them?

DAVID KLEIN: Yeah, at the end of the study -- it was a growth study with some kind of food. I think they were trying to feed crab waste from canneries in the coast, mixing it with other things and seeing how the growth was. It was a well-designed study and they all had to be weighed, too. Right away. That was one of the first things you did. And both whole, as well as the carcass. And so it was a good study. And then I think they announced in the paper that you could buy a half or a whole pig carcass after it was slaughtered and cooled. For a good rate. So people could come out --

KAREN BREWSTER: Well, that's good.

DAVID KLEIN: -- and buy them, yeah.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah, that's good. So I was going to have you tell me a little bit -- Oh, I know. When your grandfather moved in with you in Connecticut, do you have a sense of how old you were?

DAVID KLEIN: Well, I'd have to check on that, but I think he was either late 60's or 70, maybe.

KAREN BREWSTER: No, but how old were you?

DAVID KLEIN: So I was -- I would have been probably -- that was in Connecticut, I had to be in sixth and seventh grade.

KAREN BREWSTER: Okay.

DAVID KLEIN: Or maybe even freshman, but I think -- and I forget when he died and what he died of. But it was probably an unknown kind of cancer or something like that.

KAREN BREWSTER: But do you know how old you were when he died, like you were in high school or you were in the Navy?

DAVID KLEIN: I'd have to go and look. I can check on that.

KAREN BREWSTER: The reason I was asking how old you were, because I have this sense from you that you had a really strong attachment to him. He meant a lot to you.

DAVID KLEIN: Yeah. Especially once I got into high school, I don't know whether he was still there or still alive or I just -- I'm pretty sure he had died cuz it seemed to me he went -- he went somewhere else when he got sick. He might have gone back to Syracuse where he had other relations. Cousins or something. And he might have gone back there. My memory clearly indicates that. And that's where my mom was born. In Syracuse.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh, okay.

DAVID KLEIN: And they were from -- all from England -- from America via the English -- they immigrated -- first the family to Canada for a generation or two, and then from Canada to upstate New York and adjacent Vermont.

KAREN BREWSTER: And I didn't ask you, did either of your parents, did they have siblings? Did your mother have brothers and sisters?

DAVID KLEIN: My mother -- her mother and her older sister died in the influenza.

KAREN BREWSTER: Okay, oh yeah, so she was an only child.

DAVID KLEIN: She was left as a sole child, right.

KAREN BREWSTER: And then your father?

DAVID KLEIN: He had a sister and he -- my mom said he didn't get along very well with his sister when they were growing up.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh, that's right, she moved west, that's right. So you didn't, you didn't have aunts and uncles around when you were growing up?

DAVID KLEIN: We had a great uncle and great aunt. I guess the aunt was through marriage. Or was it through marriage, I don't know. Or was he through marriage? But they had been like uncles, but they were a generation older than my parents. And -- but they were very close to us as a family. But the connection was through my mother. And he was the VIP. He was a well-educated guy and VIP at the -- vice-president I guess he was, at this Iver Johnson Arms and Cycle. He was an expert at gun design. And then when the -- he before -- and I think when -- and he probably got the job for my father that he had lost. And then he had to move to another gun company in New Haven, Connecticut. I think it was Marlin Arms [Marlin Firearms]. And he got a top position there. And so he and his wife -- And they may have been -- while we were still in Vermont during the Depression they would come once a year. They had a house trailer. A nice one. You know, in those days it's pretty expensive. And they had a big car like a LaSalle or something or a Buick, I think it was, to tow it. And it was a nice one, you know. And they would come and park their car there we lived and then visit with us, but they didn't have to move in with us. She was -- I think he had married her when she was a showgirl or something. My mother didn't -- She was awfully like -- I don't know how

to describe her. From my perspective she was fine, but she was – and she was kind and a nice person. And she took a real attraction to my sister. And so they would invite her to go with them in the trailer. They could take -- had room for maybe one to go. And so she liked to have my sister because she would -- you know, being a woman she could help her with her sewing and things like that. And learning and dressing and going -- And my sister enjoyed going off with them.

KAREN BREWSTER: So they did not have children of their own?

DAVID KLEIN: No, they didn't have any children of their own. Never did. And so then they'd go off with them. And then when we moved down to Connecticut, we went down and visited them in New Haven. And he was starting to have heart problems because he was living too richly. And they both were getting older then. So they must have been in their -- probably in their 70's, early 70's. And I remember he was -- he was doing writing that related to -- and my brother and I have tried to follow up and find anything that he published. But he was -- I'm quite sure -- he had a wonderful library and he gave me books on early conservation, especially small game, and non-game migratory birds, before the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, book. I still have one or two. Hornady was really pushing this. And he had been an ardent hunter and still – he was especially a bird hunter, and with trained dogs. But he was also very much supportive of better game laws and prevention of overshooting. And need for a bird treaty and the beginning of -- He probably was influenced -- knew of Aldo Leopold, but I didn't see any reference to that in his relationship. And he had some influence on my father as a result of that, too, on environmental management and good wildlife management. And then he died of a heart attack. And she went on for a few years. So we didn't know them too long. They were very kind and nice people. And during the Depression they'd come and we didn't even get an allowance because my parents didn't have any cash to give you an allowance, and they wanted to give us an allowance. And I think maybe if they gave it, it would be five cents, you know, something like that, a week or so. But when, my sister would go with them, they gave her twenty-five cents. Which we thought, "Holy mackerel, that's nirvana!" My brother and I. But she accepted it. She was enough older and a girl so that she could do that.

KAREN BREWSTER: She could get away with it.

DAVE KLEIN: Yeah.

KAREN BREWSTER: Now you sort of implied that your mother was not too fond of -- what were their names?

DAVID KLEIN: Arthur Percival Curtis. C-U-R-T-I-S. And I forgot what her name was, but it was Curtis, too. So my brother who is an ardent hunter and sort of a redneck but appreciative of these connections, too, that I'm talking about. He and I both, independently, tried to run down publications cuz my mom was doing some typing. She was a good typist. So she was doing some typing of handwritten manuscript that A.P. Curtis was asking her to do, and paying her for it. But as of authors in those days, I mean

he told mom that “Just don’t advertise what I’m writing about because it’s not published.” So we never knew. And then I asked -- I might have asked my mother once when she was still alive and living with my sister in Florida and was dying from breast cancer, but -- about what she was typing. And she didn’t really remember all that well. And maybe that was just deliberate that she didn’t -- she typed -- a lot of people that do typing that -- of that nature they just don’t pay attention to what’s -- they’re writing because they don’t want to. There’s no point in thinking about that.

KAREN BREWSTER: Well, also, I mean, I think about if you’re typing, you’re just looking and typing you’re not reading it. You’re not putting the words together. They’re just letters.

DAVID KLEIN: Yeah, exactly. And then my sister, I asked her and she didn’t have any clue either. And we couldn’t -- of course, there’s no manuscripts because this was strictly between her and him. But my brother and I both tried to search this and there’s good places to search. And we found some many publications by an A.P. Curtis, but we found out there was another A.P. Curtis. And they always had to do with hunting and outdoor stuff, but we never have been successful. And after a while we both gave up. I thought we could maybe run something down, but haven’t.

KAREN BREWSTER: But you sort of implied that your mother wasn’t so fond of his wife.

DAVID KLEIN: Well, it was a combination of things. One, that she made a big deal out of -- she was pretty ritzy when she’d just married into it. Into the wealth that her husband had. And that also when Betty would come back after they’d been on a trip, you know, Betty would say that she was -- put the emphasis on the wrong things. You know, emphasis on the façade, whereas, you know, she’d see that part of her daughter going out. But her daughter was already sharp enough and old enough to see that herself and realize that. And still liked this woman and enjoyed the opportunity they had for getting around and see a little bit of the country and what. Which was a good experience for her. And basically us. And if I mention it now my sister would be the same and say yeah, it was good for her and she appreciated they’re doing that. And yeah, she would say, she was kind of a prissy woman that her values were placed differently than us in the family, but she was understanding and tolerant.

KAREN BREWSTER: Well, yeah, and as you say, she saw the benefit -- your mother saw the benefit of letting your sister go with them and didn’t stop that.

DAVID KLEIN: Yeah. She did, I’m sure. And because my mother didn’t -- see, she understood this, but she probably also felt that she should’ve taken a stronger role in trying to curtail her husband from taking too much alcohol and having these big, rich dinners for guests. And eating so much roast beef with a lot of fat and gravy, and all that stuff. But at that time, you know, that was --

KAREN BREWSTER: That’s what people did.

DAVID KLEIN: -- what people did. And he was -- He would pass out hunting and hiking around the countryside. Then he was office-bound most of the time. And he had good pay and was doing a good job and he had time to write on the side. And that's one of the reasons why I wanted to see. Because I'm pretty sure the books that he had and was reading and sometimes were marked up a bit. He was really focused on conservation and good management of wildlife. And opposed to -- in those days, shooting hawks because they're -- all hawks were called chicken hawks.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right. Well in -- I don't want to go into it now because it's been a long evening, but we'll come back to talking about your influences with conservation and management and all that. So I'm sure we'll come back to talking about him, so don't think I'm forgetting that.

DAVID KLEIN: I know you won't, I know you won't. There's so much other stuff here that --

KAREN BREWSTER: I don't want us to get too far off on that subject tonight. That's a whole conversation in and of itself.

DAVID KLEIN: No, I understand that. And I appreciate how you're approaching this.

KAREN BREWSTER: Cuz I can tell that, you know, you've had -- from the way you're talking, you know, you're growing up in Vermont that time and your grandfather and your father and then this man, Curtis. I can see how it's all building.

DAVID KLEIN: Yeah. One more point with regard to my mom, and her appreciation for the environment and aesthetics of landscape. One of the things she loved before the war and then didn't have so much opportunity during the war because the gasoline rationing was -- to go for a --- well, if dad wasn't working and was around and didn't have to work on the house or whatever. And sort of relaxing after the -- it was usually a big Sunday dinner, roast beef often. And it'd be one o'clock you'd start and then you have the afternoon and then -- Now this is all -- We appreciated all this as kids. But then young people, especially young boys, then we wanted to be free to go outside and play with buddies or do other things. And -- or sometimes the weather, they wouldn't be doing that because the other families might be doing other things and especially if they were church-oriented, they wouldn't be available or whatever. Any rate, she liked to go for a ride with dad and anybody else in the car that we had to look at the landscape. Especially in the fall when the beautiful foliage and things like that. Especially in the fall. Yeah.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

DAVID KLEIN: See in spring, she liked it too, but she liked to be on the ground when things were growing and that's when I liked to go with her. Well, on these Sunday afternoon rides -- well it was partly that I was the youngest one and my sister and brother

often had arrangements with buddies on Sunday afternoon to do something. And I could join them sometimes, but they would -- and I knew that I was often a tag -- Well, not my sister, she was so much older, she had her own things. And my brother and I, sometimes I would want to tag along with him and his buddies, but I was -- sometimes I was definitely a tag along and I knew that. But they were tolerant to let me tag along. But it wasn't all that great. And other times, then when my dad would ask her if she wanted to, mom, if she wanted to go for a ride, and said, "Yeah." Or she might suggest it even. And so, you know, it'd be for an hour and a half or two hours and stopped at some places. And not a lot of super highways. It was all small roads and beautiful fall colors and stuff. So I always wanted to go along whereas the other kids, you know, especially my brother, it was kind of boring because they went so slow. He was into speed. So then, as we grew up and after the war, and my brother and I were still at home and then -- yeah, on weekends because I was off and same with him, working or something, and weekends -- and then my mom missed these rides. And for a while my brother had a car, but I didn't. And she'd say to him, "Dick, I'd sure like to go for a ride." So he would say, "Yeah, okay let's -- how fine that would be because I want to do something like this later in the afternoon" or something. And by this time I frequently would have something else to do, too. She had a problem with him, because he wanted to go at high speed only on the super highways that just had been built. He said, "You can see so much in a short of period of time this way." And she would say, "You know, I really appreciate you taking the time to give me a ride, but I really don't enjoy driving at high speed." And then again, she's thinking you're going so fast and the new highway you don't have much view yet because they hadn't recovered from tearing up the countryside to build. And then when he finally moved to a different place in Connecticut. Up near the Massachusetts border, it was right -- To get from there to where mom still lived, they could get there in -- he had it timed like exactly -- going so many miles over the speed limit, you'd get there in just maybe 26 minutes or something like that. So if she needed a ride someplace and he said, "I can get there in a hurry. When do you want to go?"

KAREN BREWSTER: Look at his watch.

DAVID KLEIN: "I don't want to go at high speed."

KAREN BREWSTER: So she always liked going slower?

DAVID KLEIN: Well, when they were driving, she had -- dad had trained her because it's always the passenger that needs to be trained if they're going to assist the driver rather than you volunteer to assist, because you've got to be in total communication with someone who's assisting. So if you say, "Check to see if there's any traffic coming from that direction." They want to take that really seriously and they may be some way down the road and they have to make the judgment. And then say, "Yes, you can do it if you go right now" or something like that. Well, she didn't -- It worked well with her husband, our dad and her husband, because they had it worked out. And so -- I forgot what he called her. Her name was Norma, but he called her something else. But at any rate, he'd say, "Is it clear now?" She'd say, "Yup." But she realized it was her job when you're turning left on the highway and the cars are coming from the right to be sure that it was

clear. So he was really conscientious and especially a lot of times cars didn't have signal lights in those days. Some might, some might not and some didn't work. So it worked out fine. But my brother, he was his own driver when he was driving.

KAREN BREWSTER: He didn't need an assistant.

DAVID KLEIN: Right.

KAREN BREWSTER: So your mother never learned to drive herself?

DAVID KLEIN: No, no. She took the buses and used the bus system. She never had to. Where we lived there, she'd just walk a block and a half to where you catch the bus going into Hartford. And she worked in there. She'd take it back. She didn't really want to.

KAREN BREWSTER: My grandmother never learned to drive either.

DAVID KLEIN: She might have learned to drive at one time, earlier, but I don't think she ever wanted to follow up on it.

KAREN BREWSTER: So what did your father die from? He died so young.

DAVID KLEIN: It was a combination of a whole bunch of things. It was probably diabetes and a breakdown of the kidneys. I think it was primarily a kidney breakdown. And he -- while he was declining, when I was in high school, he was still working right up to -- He was still working when I went into the Navy right out of high school in 1945. He was still working, but he was having problems. And it was obvious to her and him that he was going downhill fairly fast. And then seems like when -- yeah, that's true, because it -- Maybe it was in high school that he was spending -- Before I finished high school, I think, he stopped working. And he was going to the clinic frequently and had some bouts in the hospital. So he was declining, but it took place rather rapidly. And he would never imply that he was suffering, in pain, or anything to us kids. And he was always upbeat. And it was only after I got into the Navy, and then he died while I was in the Navy. And my mom would send letters. She was saying that he's having these problems and they're getting much more serious, etc., etc. And so it was obvious that he was going downhill fast and it couldn't be -- At that time, it couldn't be corrected.

KAREN BREWSTER: Well, it makes sense the connection between diabetes and kidney failure.

DAVID KLEIN: Yeah, right.

KAREN BREWSTER: For sure. Now, you know you mentioned your sister goes by the name Betty?

DAVID KLEIN: Elizabeth Betty --

KAREN BREWSTER: Elizabeth Betty.

DAVID KLEIN: Betty's an in family name, yeah.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right. And your brother, Richard, goes by Dick.

DAVID KLEIN: Dick, yeah.

KAREN BREWSTER: Okay. Just so when you refer to them we – to make sure --I knew you were talking about the same people, just so people know.

DAVID KLEIN: However, our grandfather, my mom's dad, was Richard Peverley. And he was called Dick, too.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah. So was there junior and senior, or -- ?

DAVID KLEIN: Well, I think we used the term grandpa.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah. Well, your father Ferdinand, did he go by Ferdinand?

DAVID KLEIN: No. Sometimes Fred, but I think my mother called him Bud, B-U-D. Yeah.

KAREN BREWSTER: Because Ferdinand is a little bit of an exotic name.

DAVID KLEIN: Especially one, only one name, no middle name.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

DAVID KLEIN: Ferdinand. But apparently it was not uncommon at that time in the 1800's. And probably there was some important king or something in Germany that was named Ferdinand.

KAREN BREWSTER: I think there was a King Ferdinand, I'm sure. Well, I have many more questions, and lots of things to explore, but I'm thinking should we take a break for tonight.

DAVID KLEIN: Sure. I'm ready.

KAREN BREWSTER: Are you talked out?

DAVID KLEIN: I'm never talked out, but it's just as well. But if we're talked out, I don't want to feel like I'm meeting a deadline to finish up.

KAREN BREWSTER: No, we're not. But I don't want --

DAVID KLEIN: I rather do these like we've done it and keep it casual. And then if something, we can pick next time.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah. I just don't want to end in the middle of something.

DAVID KLEIN: Okay. Are we okay to end now?

KAREN BREWSTER: So, I don't know. It feels okay to me. It feel okay?

DAVID KLEIN: It feels definitely good for me, yeah.

[END OF TAPE]