

Name: David Klein
Date of Interview: 12/13/13
Location of Interview: Home of David Klein in Fairbanks, Alaska
Interviewer: Karen Brewster

Brief Summary of Interview:

David Klein talked about his time in basic training and coming home. He spoke of his job working in the woods, his vehicles, his learned experiences with them both, and the people he met while working, which led to the trip to Alaska. He talked about their drive up, car problems, finding jobs, and Fairbanks. He related his experience working on roofing/repairing homes, and the dream of starting a lodge at Wild Lake, and the work they did do at Wild Lake, and how after that year it was never meant to be.

[TAPE 1]

KAREN BREWSTER: Today is December 13, 2013, and this is Karen Brewster here with Dave Klein in his home in Fairbanks. And we left off last time, I think, you'd graduated from high school, and so tell me what you did after high school?

DAVID KLEIN: Okay. That was in 1945. And we're still at war, the Second World War, in the Pacific, the Japanese. And so it was generally understood that -- and I was 18 on 18th of May, and we graduated about the first of June, so I was 1A for being drafted. And that, so -- I didn't like the idea of just being drafted. [wait for end of loud background noise from water pump] Hm. That doesn't make sense [referring to why water pump is running. Gets up to turn it off.]

KAREN BREWSTER: Pause. We'll start again. 18 years old in May at high school graduation, 1945.

DAVID KLEIN: So, there was then an assumption that I was going into the military and my older brother and older sister were already in. My brother in the Air Force, and my sister in the WACS. And it was generally understood that the Second World War, although both parents were pretty much pacifists otherwise, that well, it was critical and Nazism was overwhelming. And so at any rate, I heard about this pilot training program for the Navy. And so I went down and checked on that, and they said, "Yeah, you can apply. You gotta take a special exam to see whether you got the -- did well enough in high school." I thought, "Man, I will probably flunk out for sure." "And a physical." So the mental I passed, and the physical they said, "Now, you got a problem. I don't think you can -- you got a heart murmur." And so I said, "But --" "We have to pass this information on." And then they contacted me and said, "We want you to come in for another physical." And they did a more intensive EKG or whatever and they said, "Yeah, you got a heart murmur, but it's apparently the kind that you don't have to worry about." And in my later years, I found out that my brother had a similar one. He went into the Air Force and got by fine. And so they let me go into the program. So, this was a program, I think it was called B5, so you had to have about an equivalent intensive of about a year and half to two years of college with heavy focus on math and trigonometry and all those kinds of things. And plus, basic college things like literature or composition, and so you

could use the English language well. And, so, I got shipped to the University of Richmond where we lived in dorms and we wore uniforms, Navy uniforms, and went to class and it was -- it was not a bad deal at all because -- Although, I wasn't -- math wasn't my strong suit, I nevertheless sometimes had to get help from my buddies. And made it through that semester and then they moved us to Duke. So we were getting high quality teaching. And started the semester there, I think the second semester of the year in Duke, and then the war was over. After the -- It was quite unexpected. Of course, because of the dropping of the atomic bombs on Nagasaki and Hiroshima, which ended the war in effect. And saved millions. Well, I don't know whether millions, but a lot of lives, especially of American soldiers or military. But at the expense of a lot of Japanese civilians that died in the dropping of the nuclear bombs on the cities, which even then I wondered about that. I mean, I thought, you know, did this spare my life? Because the war was over and the Navy -- as a Navy pilot, and if we had have to invade the island of Japan, the Navy would be playing a major role and then the losses would be large on the American side as well as on the Japanese side. But still, I didn't feel good about dropping the atomic bombs. The threat was okay, but it would have been better if they could have done it more remotely on some military location. But on the other hand, the Japanese were deliberately putting in military locations in civilian areas, for that very reason. At any rate, that happened. And then the word came down through channels that well if we're gonna -- When we had signed up, we signed up for the duration of the war plus six months thinking the war would go on for an extended period of time. And so here it was, three or four months after -- in, and the war was over. So the Navy said, "You can go on through the training because we do not -- we do want to have pilots trained in the Navy. And you have to agree though to sign on for staying in through the training period which would be about two more years. And then for six months afterwards, after you get your commission, and your wings, etc. Six more years, which was, of course, reasonable in terms --

KAREN BREWSTER: Six more years or months?

DAVID KLEIN: Years.

KAREN BREWSTER: Wow.

DAVID KLEIN: Like I said -- I mean it was like -- like the Navy -- or like the academic program, whatever it was called. I mean, they put a lot of money -- The military puts a lot of money into your training and education and they have to have some pay back.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DAVID KLEIN: And, of course, if you went in and six months you probably would want to stay in the military career. And that's what their long-term goal would be; to have well-trained pilots and -- and you could advance accordingly, etc. etc. And it -- and it was only 20 years of service at that time. But once the war was over, then -- and the Nazis had been defeated, and the Japanese were defeated and I had no desire, and my family felt the same. I mean, my brother and sister were being demobilized right away. And so I decided

no, not to sign up for that. And then -- but the deal was we were already in the Navy, and discharging people was complicated. And here we had all these people that had been in the real fighting coming back to be discharged so they shipped us to basic training, and we were back in the regular Navy. I went to Great Lakes Naval Training Station, north of Chicago, on Lake Michigan. And went through basic training, which wasn't all that great psychologically because I didn't really want to be in the military and basic training was, you know, some of it was good for you, physical exercise, but it was all big groups, you know, doing things together. And so it was sort of get through with that and then we knew we had to stay in for another six months after the war was over. And I had made friends with a buddy from -- he was from Georgia, I think, and we hit it off together. And we both -- He was in a similar program and he had ideas of being a pilot and so -- We struck it off together, but we got assigned, you know, KP duty, kitchen duty, and guard duty on the gates for the base. And it wasn't -- it was just real boring stuff. And we knew we were just killing time. But at the same time we knew that we didn't feel justified in getting out earlier because we were keeping things going so that all these other guys that'd been fighting in the war could come back. And you know we were cooking for them if we were working KP. And, yeah, they deserved to get out, fast, you know, it was a lot of -- it was a slow process for them. It would take two or three months frequently for them to be discharged and get their papers get caught up with them. And so, it wasn't too bad. And we'd get passes and we could go into Chicago, but that was usually in winter when the cold wind was blowing. The Navy uniform wasn't designed for -- the dress uniform wasn't designed for cold weather. It was good wool but it wasn't -- it was always cold and you were happy to get onto the train or into someplace in town. And I wasn't big on going out to the bars and I hadn't really developed a taste for socializing over beer or whatever in bars, and so we'd just hang around. Sometimes if I'd get a weekend pass I'd go in for the day and go to the museums. They had a good planetarium. They had a good museum of science and industry, and an outstanding natural history museum with some of the best scenes and stuffed animals of -- well done of different animals. And for me, that -- especially I was fascinated with the mountain animals, mountain sheep, and mountain goats, and mountain creatures, and the depiction of the vegetation in there because I was an Easterner and had this concept I loved the mountains in New England, but we didn't have any of those beautiful mountain creatures. And that -- that was good for me. I learned a lot but, it was -- it was formative and my curiosity was great in that area for sure.

KAREN BREWSTER: So tell me again the name of the basic training camp.

DAVID KLEIN: Great Lakes Naval Training Station.

KAREN BREWESTER: Great Lakes --

DAVID KLEIN: It was a big one. Still there, right on the lakes. But you didn't get any water training. You were -- It just happened to be there.

KAREN BREWSTER: Is that Lake Michigan?

DAVID KLEIN: Yep. Uh. No. Um. Chicago is in Illinois, isn't it?

KAREN BREWSTER: Yes.

DAVID KLEIN: No, this was in -- just south of Wisconsin, so you could go -- if you wanted to go to Milwaukee, you could go on a pass on the train. But Chicago was closer, and it would cost less, and of course it was a bigger city and Milwaukee didn't -- I never went to Milwaukee. Sometimes on pass, my buddy that was in this basic training with and I -- he was the outdoor type. We would frequently hitchhike to a place in northern Illinois or adjacent southern Wisconsin and where there was water, lake or stream and we'd chip in and rent the very cheapest cabin we could find. And we'd -- where there was a boat, a rowboat, and we'd be on the water rowing on these deals. And we'd just -- we didn't -- we couldn't afford to buy fishing gear, and both of us liked to fish, but we'd -- we just liked this kind of camping out. Or we'd sometimes -- we didn't have camping equipment, so we couldn't camp out too well, so we had the most rustic kind of deals you could get and that was okay. And then -- then we'd hitchhike sometimes around. We did a lot of hitchhiking. And it was good. In those days, people picked up -- if you're in uniform, they'd pick you up and you didn't have to sit with your thumb out for too long before you'd get a ride and drop you off. And we'd check it out to where we wanted to go. And when I was in -- before, when I was in Richmond it was the same way. I mean, I -- here was all this history of the Civil War and if we had a pass, I frequently hitchhiked by myself sometimes with another one, but I would go to one of the national battlefields. And so I was getting a lot of focus on the southern view. Especially Richmond, you know, its park with all of these Confederate generals. Statues of them. It gave me perspective of the South's side of the war, and -- And, you know, the integration hadn't occurred the way it was supposed to after the war. This was before the Civil Rights Movement, so, yeah, there was discrimination -- Blacks -- and I -- something for us coming from New England or from the North there -- and students at the University Richmond, we -- we knew what the situation was, but we realized we were not being exposed to the reality of the world.

KAREN BERWSTER: So, what was that -- ? What did it feel like to not be able to become the pilot that you had wanted to be?

DAVID KLEIN: I didn't really want to be a pilot necessarily. I thought if I'm going to go to the war, I like the idea of being a pilot because you're not so regimented. I mean, the idea of being -- going in the front lines, and just being fodder for the front lines fighting, that didn't appeal to me at all. If it was a cause I believed in, then, yeah, let's do something where I feel like I'd be playing a good role. And of course, the fact that my brother and sister were both officers. My brother was a navigator and warrant officer, and my sister was a lieutenant in the WAC, 's [Women's Army Corps] and they were doing good things for the war effort. And, yeah, I wanted to do what I could do for the war effort. And, especially with the war being in the Pacific now. A marine war. When I went in I realized the Navy is going to play a big role, and the Navy -- I would -- It seemed pointless to be in the Army. I didn't -- And when you were, drafted, they put you where they wanted you. So you might be on ship board as a crewmember. I didn't particularly

think that would be a great one, along with a bunch of other people. And, yeah, I thought it'd be a better bunch of people. That, too. To interact with. And that was the case because these were bright young guys that I was with, and we just bonded well. We – we -- That time together was great. And I thought a lot of -- we thought a lot of one another. And we were, you know, we were a little bit sophomoric on how we behaved, but we were focused on what we were supposed to be doing.

KAREN BREWSTER: Well, you were 18, 19, 20-year old guys.

DAVID KLEIN: Yeah.

KAREN BREWSTER: So you would have behaved accordingly, I assume.

DAVID KLEIN: Well, yes and no. I mean it's like when you go to college right out of high school, I mean, usually you're not too organized as a freshman. But we were much more focused in that regard because we had a cause, we knew what we were in, and you weren't allowed to misbehave either. I mean, we lived in dorms, and we didn't have a lot of supervision, but we did have supervision of people over us whose job was to keep us from acting like freshmen. And keep us focused on what we're doing. But we did all kinds of shenanigans like, we had one section of a dorm that all of us that were close together were in. And, you know, there was a bed check, and yet there -- we weren't locked in, but if you miss a bed check or you didn't show up at the deal in the morning you were in serious trouble, because if you went off the campus, this was going -- would leave without authorization. And that's -- They could have -- That could have kicked you out of the whole program. But we had one young guy who was a little more worldly, lets put it there [chuckles] in terms of his relationship to females. And he would sneak off of the campus and -- He was a good student, but, if there was time and he didn't have a pass -- he wouldn't get a pass every weekend. And because we had homework to do, and so, he would sometimes sneak off, and he'd say, "Well, if I don't get back in time for the --" There was some kind of a security gate, but it wasn't well managed for the campus of the university. And he would say, "Yeah, kinda cover for me if they call or get together or something in some way." And you could always say he was busy doing something else and couldn't make it. So, the bed check thing was -- What he wanted us to do was -- which we did a couple times, is we'd just make it look like there was a body in the bed. So we'd stuff it with extra pillows and stuff. We didn't have a lot of that, but we'd work out something. And it looked like a head, and we'd put his bed in the corner where it was darkest with some light on in the corridor. When the sergeant came around and did the bed check when everything was okay. And then one time, we thought, oh lets pull a prank on this guy. So we took his bed and folded it up, and hung it out the window so there was no bed for him. So the guy came around to check, yeah all the beds were occupied, and then when the guy came home, he didn't have any bed. He just came at three o'clock in the morning and he had of course had to wake us all up. And finally, we told him, "We were covering for you. And we don't know where your bed is." [Laughter] After awhile, we told him where it was and pulled it back up. And he pulled some tricks on us, too. It was a lot of good fun that way Then we went to, yeah Duke, and it was sorta similar, and then mid-semester when we had to quit if we wanted to or stay and swim, or

quit. And then, we went -- and this is where I met this other guy that we hung out together. And we went through this basic training. You know, the emphasis on, you know, getting yourself physically fit and learning what a firearm is and how to march and do other things, But, you know, follow discipline, get up early, and be there and ready to go chipper and have inspections to be sure you folded your blanket properly and all those kind of things. And of course what we thought of as busy work. And so we finally made it and then -- through basic training. After you finish basic training then you'd get a leave to go home for I think a week home. You could go travel by train at that time, so maybe it was 10 days including train travel. That was Chicago that we were leaving from. And we had to go in the morning. We got a pass -- we came -- We'd already lined up on the train, group train. They organized a lot of this for us and there was a lot of -- In basic training, there was a lot of diseases going around. There was German measles, and what's the one where your chest gets red?

KAREN BREWSTER: Scarlet fever?

DAVID KLEIN: Scarlet fever. And two or three other diseases. And so they were pretty conscientious. I don't know -- if you have any signs go to the infirmary right away because they don't want it spread around. I remember we both got up to take showers that morning and I looked at my chest and there were these spots coming on it. And he looked at his chest and it was getting red. And we weren't feeling top notch, but we were all excited about going home, because we hadn't been home. We came directly from Duke up there, and hadn't been home since we had enlisted. And we were all scheduled up to go home and I was looking forward to that and written parents, this was going to happen. And we looked at one another in the shower room. And both of us came to the conclusion that I probably had German measles and he probably had scarlet fever. And so we dressed up and did the inspection in full dress and we talked about this, you know, should we go to the infirmary? If we go to the infirmary we won't get to go on our pass home. And we also talked about, should we go home? We got contagious diseases. Is this a good thing to do, to take it home? No, that's not the thing to do. Finally, the last minute, both of us went to the infirmary. And sure enough, we were both right. They put us in the local hospital and we didn't make the -- that was the end of our leave, and we went through a different procedure. Now we're in the hospital. I stayed in for about five days, and he stayed in for about seven, and we recovered fine. And we were close by, and after we recovered they put us in the same recovery place. But the big problem is, when that -- something like that happens, the paper work, they gotta -- it has to catch up with you before they can do anything else. So, we had to -- once we were in the recovery, like, you know, convalescence, no. We had to start doing things like KP. And not too hard and, you know, we got to eat, and we recovered fast. And then they -- finally the papers caught up after a couple weeks, we were -- and we, said, "Well, you have to start over again because you didn't go through the whole program of basic training. Part of that program is completion and going home on the leave." We said, "Wait, we've already been through it. We've already been through it, and we had the pass approved and everything." "That's beside the point. This is the Navy and this is the way it's done here. That may be some other -- This is the Navy way. And the Navy way is the right way." And so we had to go through basic training again. It was, I don't know, six weeks I think,

and so by -- we were sort of informed, educated guys. So we learned that you always make the morning deal and then you disappear and they never counted if you disappeared and we knew that -- where'd you disappear to? The library was a safe place. Go to the library. And if you could get into the swimming pool, you could go swimming and act as if you're in a swimming class with somebody else. And stay away from the training things. We'd been through all that. We weren't 100% successful, but we were pretty good at this. And try to -- don't irritate any of the sergeants that were there so that they didn't -- and keep away enough so that they didn't recognize your face very well. And always be up to snuff when the inspections in the morning were there, and don't just give them a chance to recognize you. So we went through that, and then we went home on our leave again after the second basic training. In reality, we knew we were going to get out of the Navy pretty soon. So then after we went home for our two week, or whatever it was, came back, then we got -- They put us in this special deal for people like us that were going to be discharged but we didn't have a high enough priority to get discharged right away, because here were all these people coming back from fighting in the Pacific and they had high priority. And for us, we quite understood that, and so, it was just, they put us on guard duty on the gates, and then --

KAREN BREWSTER: So that was after basic training?

DAVID KLEIN: Yeah

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh, okay.

DAVID KLEIN: Yeah, that was after basic training. And I got in trouble there because this nice looking nurse came and talked her way through the gate when I was in charge. And she had a relationship with some guy outside of the field, and, but I was off duty when she came back, and so she got busted for going off without a pass. Not seriously. But she was an officer, you know, and a nice looking gal, probably about two or three years older than I was. So then they hauled me in, and gave me a long lecture. And aid this is a mark against you, you know. I said, yeah I understand. My only defense was to say, well I mean, she seemed like her reason for going out was legitimate. But she had to have this pass, how come you let her -- without the pass? Well, you know, I was -- [laughs] I never saw her again after that.

KAREN BREWSTER: You didn't tell them because she was pretty and she sweet-talked her way in?

DAVID KLEIN: No, they knew that, I'm sure. They assumed that. I felt -- I hope she didn't get -- they weren't too hard on her, because she's a nice person. I'm sure she's a nice person. So that's how it goes. But I didn't have to stay in longer I think because of that. They wanted to get rid of me for sure.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah, you were a troublemaker it sounds like. So were you the victim of any of these pranks?

DAVID KLEIN: Oh yeah. Yeah. And sometimes we'd have wrestling matches and stuff, but it was all in good fun. Like, it was almost like, I suppose, what those fraternity crowd would be, but we weren't at all like them in terms of that. I mean we were not -- it wasn't partying. We couldn't party. We weren't into alcohol at all and drugs and --

KAREN BREWSTER: I was thinking if there were any good pranks played on you?

DAVID KLEIN: There was this prank that was done. One of the standard ones was short sheeting someone when they were late coming back from a legitimate pass. And then you were supposed to be super quiet and you couldn't get into the bed. And military beds were just ideal for short sheeting. You'd start to slip into bed quietly and you can't get down. And then, the other one was -- the one time, we rigged it up for this same guy that would, -- we hung the bed out, we rigged a deal of a bucket of water that he could pull -- we did that twice onto some other one. Bucket of water on the top of the door, so that when he walked in this -- he hit a string on his face, and in the dark, and if you pulled that string, the water tipped over on you. And that worked. And then we did the same thing with coming in at night, and slipping into bed, and then we had a similar thing. It was pretty dark there. With some water that, and the string would be right there when you laid down and the string, and it was just a cotton string, and so you'd pull it. But you only did that once, of course. And a bucket of water came down. That was just a nice kind of prank.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah. Innocent prank.

DAVID KLEIN: Yeah. And -- or you'd break up crackers and put 'em in your bed. You know, the saltine crackers.

KAREN BREWSTER: So when did you get out of the Navy?

DAVID KLEIN: After the year and six months. So that was then -- I enlisted in -- It must have been, I went in around June some time, I think, or July in --

KAREN BREWSTER: In '45?

DAVID KLEIN: I had a few months before the war was over, and -- Yeah, '45. So I got out in '46, yeah.

KAREN BREWSTER: Or January '47?

DAVID KLEIN: Yeah. Duration of the war plus six months. So actually, technically, I only had six months to serve after the war was over. So then I must have got out in 1946 in the fall. Yeah. So then -- Then they had these programs for any veterans back in Connecticut where I lived in Manchester, and my old high school buddies were in the same -- some of them were in the same boat I was in. Had been in the Navy or other organizations, military. And they gave you like, six months of, sort of like compensation for pay if you couldn't get a job right away. And so, a couple of my buddies said right

away, “Hey, this is a good deal.” And I said, “But what if you get a job?” “Well, you don’t get any. I’m not going to try not to get a job until I’ve used it all up.” I just – that didn’t fit my standards. So, and then what kind of a job? They were planning to go to the university too because they had some GI Bill. And I didn’t want to go. I wasn’t ready for the university. I didn’t know what I wanted to do. And I was outdoor- oriented. I’d thought about agriculture, and farming. And I’d thought about, a little about forestry. But I didn’t have any -- There were no good school counselors in high school in those days. They didn’t have any counselors. And it would have helped to know what fields were available. But my family knew this, that I was interested in outdoors and nature, and a little bit in agriculture, and so they through -- my family, my mother and dad -- We had a roomer that a woman who was a teacher in the local elementary school, she taught -- she wasn’t my teacher when I was there. I was in sixth -- I was in seventh and eighth, she was in five and six, but she roomed with us, and ate with us. And we had an extra room, and that was good income for us. We were just a short walking distance from the school. She was really a nice person. I liked her a lot. She’d eat with us. She was helpful for me as a sort of a counselor and trying to get me to focus more on school and be a better student than I was. I had a good teacher, but high school -- or elementary school teacher. She was the school superintendent. She was a nice one. I told you about jumping out of the window, didn’t I?

KAREN BREWSTER: Mm hm.

DAVID KLEIN: Yeah. And any rate, this other woman, Betty Willard, was really nice. She wasn’t married, but she was about in her thirties, and had taught for a while. And did get married later. And -- But she -- she took an interest in me, and she knew -- had a connection with someone in another town that -- knew the forestry of someone who had been trained in forestry at the University of Connecticut, and was heading up a state forest. And thought that might be a possible job for me there after I got out of the Navy. And so they contacted me and suggested that I go down and talk to -- And they probably mentioned that they were sending me down to this. I had a -- I had bought an old car so I could drive down. It was about 40 miles away down river in the state forest. Meshomasic State Forest. And I drove down there and was interviewed by this forester who was a -- well he was a nice guy in his thirties, and after awhile he said, “Yeah, yeah, if you want this woods work, you know, you can learn about that. And working with other young people. Thinning pine plantations and – you know, you can probably bunk -- We have a bunkhouse but we don’t have -- during the war, we had some -- It was used for some forestry work with military people, but there’s one bachelor that works in the field and you can probably bunk in that bunkhouse. We do have a cabin out in the woods. And oh, man [chuckles] -- that needs a stove in it, I think, and they can probably fix that up.” It was pretty remote. You had to -- I had to -- I had this old junker Model A Ford then, and, yeah, so -- “Would that work out for you?” I said, “Oh, definitely.” This is sort of nirvana. I never expected in Connecticut you could get something like that. And that was just the kind of thing that I needed, and -- So that’s when I took the job and there -- they -- there was this -- there was one woods worker who was a retired engineer who had worked for a firearms company during the war making rifles for the military. And he was a fabulous guy. He was in his sixties and he loved woods work and camping. And I met his wife

later on and they had raised a family, but they just loved nature and he enjoyed that work. And then this bachelor guy that I was with was also -- he was in his forties, but he was a nice guy. And then the others -- there were one, two -- two other guys who were veterans like myself, although they had been in the fighting to some extent. To a limited extent. So they were a couple years older than I was. And we worked in the woods everyday. Thinning pine plantations, and then we did some projects outside of the forest that was demonstration projects on private woodlands which were oak and just native species mixed with -- We had a small Caterpillar tractor and a big horrible chain saw that was a two- person chain saw that was so heavy that I wasn't quite up to holding the engine part, which was a good deal because all the exhaust came up in your face. And we didn't wear ear mufflers and they were noisy and just the vibration holding it you could only -- anyone could only work, you know, for an hour or so before they had to switch off because it was so hard on your arms. And, but I learned how to do that, and learned how to -- most of the work we did with our hands, Swede saw, and an axe. And you had to learn how to keep your axe super sharp. You always had a stone in your pocket to sharpen it. And then you had to know how to, if you get a knick by cutting too close to the ground and hit a rock or something, you had to know how to file off this knick. And if you went back to the camp, you could use one of these grind stones, which you could pedal. Grind stones, and with water dribbling down, and then work it back into good condition. And so I learned all those skills. And you broke a handle, you learned how to put a new handle in. And they showed you how -- And you had to buy your own axe and then you had to be responsible for it, and it had to be super sharp. If it was super sharp, you could cut a hell of a lot of wood with a Swede saw. And stack -- We'd stack all these, when we're thinning, all these pine logs which were only five inches or so in diameter and -- Oh, it was four foot lengths and where it could be picked up along the edge of the road. You put in a hard day work, but it was fun work. And we'd take, and lunch -- this was in the winter time -- and lunch breaks we -- and a coffee break, and we could all do that, and we would use dead wood and build a fire, sit around it, have coffee, took a coffee break and cooked over the fire. You know, we just boiled it in the can. And eat our lunch around -- sandwiches that we brought and have a cup of coffee with lunch. And we bonded because we were close together. And the three of us veterans were the ones that started talking about, after a year of working for them in the winter time -- through the whole winter, of doing a trip. And that's what led to the trip to Alaska in 1947, the spring of '47. One of them had come -- the third one who wanted to come badly, his wife -- he had a wife. The rest of us -- the other two didn't. He had a wife and a new baby. And his wife laid down the law and said you can't go and leave her there. And it was just an adventure going for work and he didn't work lined up. And he had a steady job there at the forest, and he was already moving up. He was interested in the local saw mill, and he could do work there. I mean --so at any rate, the two of us finally went on, and made the trip to Alaska.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um, so where in Connecticut was this wood operation?

DAVID KLEIN: The forest operation?

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah

DAVID KLEIN: Meshomisite M-E-S-H-O-M-I-S-I-T-E, I think. Meshomisite [actually is Meshomasic] State Forest, near Portland, which was on the Connecticut River. Near Portland, Connecticut.

KAREN BREWSTER: Near Portland, Connecticut.

DAVID KLEIN: Yup.

KAREN BREWSTER: And a Swede saw, is that the kind that goes up and down?

DAVID KLEIN: No, this is a bow saw. You know the same kind you buy. I have one for cutting wood that's just a deal [making curving motion] and there's a standard-sized blade.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right, okay. That's a Swede saw?

DAVID KLEIN: They call them Swede saws because they were originally invented in Sweden.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh, okay. It's not those two man saws?

DAVID KLEIN: No.

KAREN BREWSTER: No, okay.

DAVID KLEIN. No. I -- that's what I did with my grandfather when we were in high school or maybe junior high and he was cutting up firewood that was knocked down during a hurricane. And it was oak. And some of those logs were so big you had to use some big saw like that. With a handle. [holds hands out wide] And some of those -- of course the ones they used out in the West with the redwood, I mean those were huge things.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah, they're big.

DAVID KLEIN: And so long, I mean it's unbelievable.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah, and some of those ones they'd use them with one guy standing on top and another one below.

DAVID KLEIN: That's called whip sawing. And that's the way they made lumber, that way.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right and that's --

DAVID KELIN: They had a platform. And the one up top pulled up, and the other one

pulled down.

KAREN BREWSTER: I wouldn't want to be the guy on the bottom.

DAVID KLEIN: Well, there was a lot of sawdust.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah, a lot of sawdust.

DAVID KLEIN: But they had good platforms and planks up and stuff.

KAREN BREWSTER: So all that – when you say thinning pine plantations? That was farmed trees?

DAVID KLEIN: Well, this was -- a lot of this state forest was natural forest, but -- which we weren't doing much in. It was there -- It was mainly if trees got blow down across the road or something, the wood road through the forest, we'd clean those out. And then during the CCC days, they had built little ponds to have water for fire control. And usually close to one of these wood roads. But there was a relatively pristine -- there were some deer there where it was most of the rest of the state the deer didn't exist. And then there were ruffed grouse. It was a really good ruffed grouse place. And in -- scattered through there they had areas where they were just uniform red pine plantations, and that produced wood for -- Well, some of the thinning was mostly firewood, but the bigger ones, some poles for telephone poles and things like that. And then they could use for paper production, too. Not too much went into lumber because they mostly used native white pine for lumber, as well as some of the hard woods. But mainly for construction, white -- native white pine. But yeah, big red pine they could make some lumber out of it. And there were small lumber mills in that area.

KAREN BREWSTER: But mostly what you were doing was firewood?

DAVID KLEIN: Yeah, but what we were doing was thinning because they were planted close together and then the plan was to thin it, so then they wouldn't be competing with one another. But then you had firewood and some poles that you could use. In fact, there was an ancient creosote plant close to the cabin where I was staying. And it was still needed some clean up because it was still these pits where they would creosote in them, where they would creosote these things if they used them for telephone poles, small telephone poles, or along the highway. They wanted to have them soaked in the creosote. And so they would put them down in the -- and I think they could heat this creosote so they'd get more penetration. And the wood had to dry out a little bit before they would put it in there otherwise it wouldn't be too absorbent -- the creosote. But once it was creosoted of course, then they lasted a long time.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

DAVID KLEIN. Yup.

KAREN BREWSTER: Well, it sounds like you liked that job?

DAVID KLEIN: Yeah, I loved it. I loved it because I loved that kind of work and learning skills and the people I was working with were -- It was fun. They were sort of mentors, especially was one older man. He was just -- he just related to us very much, but he -- He knew he was a mentor and he enjoyed doing it, and for that reason. And so, you know, we all were interested. Yeah, we were all interested a bit in hunting. But I didn't get into hunting very much at that time. I did a little hunting for grouse when there was -- I had a shotgun, but the ruffed grouse back there are so alert that, you know, you got to be fast. And I wasn't in good training. And you have to get them before they get into the thicker vegetation. So suddenly you hear this fluttering, and by the time you recover and get the shotgun up, they're gone. Unless you're really good. And if you -- with a dog, you usually have some warning.

KAREN BREWSTER: Do you remember the name of that older gentleman who -- ?

DAVID KLEIN: Ferris [sp?] was his last name. I can remember his first name after awhile. It was something like Knight [sp?] Ferris or something. He was really a top-notch guy. And then when I -- And he lived very close to where I lived and -- or where I went to high school. And I hadn't known that at first. And so when I -- after I was in Alaska, and I went back to visit people, I went -- looked him up and went to visit him and his wife. He'd sort of officially retired. And he was probably in his seventies, and I met his wife for the first time, and she was just a really nice person, too. They had a cabin in the hills, which was a house, but it was in the hills, in the forest, and they just loved the environment. And it was a nice place. It had a little view and he was still cutting his own wood and stuff. He was just a kind of person you admired, because he enjoyed what he did, and he enjoyed his work. He was like a gunsmith. That was a specialty in the war, was yeah, making firearms for military purposes.

KAREN BREWSTER: Well, it sounds like he was a very talented woodsman.

DAVID KLEIN: Yeah, he was. Yeah.

KAREN BREWSTER: Just a very special skill.

DAVID KLEIN: Yeah. It is. Yup. I didn't appreciate so much at the time until later on, when I realized I had this skill when I got here in Alaska.

KAREN BREWSTER: Well, shall we talk about the trip to Alaska? How you got here for the first time?

DAVID KLEIN: Sure. Sure.

KAREN BREWSTER: So that was the spring of 1947?

DAVID KLEIN: Yup.

KAREN BREWSTER: Okay.

DAVID KLEIN: So I do have some – I'm not very good at keeping field notes, but I kept a little diary so I have information in a notebook upstairs. The mileage covered each day, and price of gas I think a little bit, and minor problems.

KAREN BREWSTER: Like car problems?

DAVID KLEIN: No coming up, I didn't have many. I had one flat tire, and it was a nail. And I had good tires. New tires I had invested in before I came because I figured, yeah, I gotta have good tires. Where as back there you -- and after the war it was a while before they started making tires again for civilians' use.

KAREN BREWSTER: This was your old Model A?

DAVID KLEIN: No, this was a new one. Because what happened was – Well, first we talked about this trip and to me, like, I didn't -- I thought -- Connecticut, and I'd lived in Vermont for awhile, but I thought, man, I heard so much about the Maine woods and then Canada and the Lake of the Woods, I knew about that. In fact, I used to send away for – I'd see in Outdoor Life or something about cabins for rent up in the canoe country up in Lake of the Woods.

KAREN BREWSTER: Where's Lake of the Woods?

DAVID KLEIN: In Northern Minnesota and Southern Canada and Ontario – Western Ontario. And that was sort of nirvana. That's where Sigurd Olson was based in Minnesota. And did all the writing about the canoe country.

KAREN BREWSTER. Mmhmm.

DAVID KLEIN: So. Then we get to talk about well, they just built this highway to Alaska. To me, Alaska at that time, I thought, there was no way I could even think about Alaska. I don't have a kind of money that you need to go there. And it's so far away. It's the other side of the continent. Which it was! And -- but the more we talked about it, well, you know, they built a road there. You should be able to drive there. So it becomes feasible, and, but then you have to have a vehicle that can do it, and so I -- The three of us sort of bought into this idea, well, we can do it. But, I was always -- one guy with the baby was one of the most eager ones to go. But I was convinced early on, that yeah, ok, so, somebody has to take the initiative. So I thought, well let's see. I kept my eyes on what would be good. Well, I already thought a lot of Model A Ford because I had an old junker that was still going. And it wasn't fancy at all but it was a roadster, too, and it had -- the old junker that I had had a homemade top with canvas on it. Nailed on like a tent. On the top. But it was functional, and they used it in the wintertime. You had this windshield wiper that was based on a vacuum, but you also had a handle inside in case it wasn't working. Up there. You could make it go. And the worst case it was snowing and

ice. There were no side curtains. You could lean forward and reach around with a scraper and try to scrape it on the outside while you're driving. So I went through one or two snowstorms. They were really difficult because the headlights weren't very good in those days. And the snow was blowing and we're up high going into high country and it was farming areas so there were no trees and the drifts and boy you got to keep moving. And you sometimes had a hard time to see the road and I was wanting to get home. I could've stayed in my cabin, but it was a weekend we had off, so it was like about forty miles. And that's quite a ways back in Connecticut. Any rate, I was impressed by those. And I watched advertisements. My brother was back and he was -- had a machine shop and I asked him about cars. And he said, "Well --" And I knew of some local places where I had bought this old junker and said they'd keep their eyes out, but there isn't anything. I mean, they were pretty much in demand, any car. Because they were just starting to make new cars again and here were all these veterans coming back. They didn't have money to buy brand new cars, so they were going to buy used cars. And any used cars are any good. And there was one deal about that I should insert back into the when I first got back after the Navy.

KAREN BREWSTER: Okay. We are out of tape on this tape.

DAVID KLEIN: Yeah.

[END TAPE 1]

[BEGIN TAPE 2]

DAVID KELIN: So it's ready to go?

KAREN BREWSTER: Yup.

DAVID KLEIN: Okay, so --

KAREN BREWSTER: You're inserting back --

DAVID KLEIN: When I got out of the Navy, of course I didn't have any car, and I hadn't ever owned a car. And before I went into the Navy, I got by with a bicycle. And after I got out of the Navy and I lived, I guess, several miles from the high school and where my buddies were, and if I was going to get a job, I would probably need a car. And so I didn't have much money, but I could get maybe a small loan. A no interest loan, from my -- my father was dead now, from my mom, and if I needed it, but -- So I asked my brother about this and my first car, and you know you're sort of desperate, because you're out of the military and you want to interact with your old friends and stuff, and maybe get a job of some kind, like farm work or whatever. And when I was in high school one of the kinds of work that I did in the summer time, I worked for a surveyor who was laying out for new houses or something. And we learned how to set up transits so they were perfectly level and ready to go, and then to lay out these boards for building so the constructors would know where to dig for the foundation and those kind of things.

And it was good training. Heavy on math, which I was not strong in, but I learned some in spite of that. Especially if you had to make a curved road. We had to lay out roads some times. So at any rate, I learned a lot on that, and they were -- and he was a nice guy, and he seemed like kind of a stern guy but he -- he liked helping students that he had working for him. And we were physically fit and had to drive these -- with a sledgehammer drive these posts in the ground and they'll -- It developed our physical skills and he was a good guy. And so, that was good training for me. But going back, to this insert, after I got out of the Navy, before I went to work for the State Forest, I had these few months in the summer time with all my old buddies. And we were all into fishing a lot. We'd go join in whoever -- when somebody had a car, and we'd go to a lake and fish for pike, uh, pickerel, which is like a pike, or other local fish. Perch and things. And have a good time, you know, together. And then, we -- Oh, then this car. I finally -- the only car this one garage that had handled old cars and he knew me and my brother and he knew that I didn't have any money. And I went down and talked. Well, he said, "You know what, I just don't have anything because people come through and -- If I get something in, I'll let you know. But the only thing I have is this one LaSalle." LaSalle is -- was related to the Cadillac. It was a big black sedan. It was 8 cylinders. And of course, it was totally unrealistic to think of buying that because it was such a gas guzzler and the tires and things were -- It was just -- You couldn't afford to buy a tire for it. And he said, "That's all I got. And the price is real low." Because no one in their right mind would want to buy it. And it was black. And it had a couple bullet holes in the back window, so it was probably owned by some questionable people. And uh, so -- I was so desperate, you know, just, I couldn't go anywhere. You know, because I couldn't make connections with my buddies and what. And so I bought this thing and drove it home. I asked my brother later -- I think I even drove it home before I bought it, and my brother looked at it, and he said, "Yeah. I don't think you should buy that. Can't you get something better?" I said, "Can you help me?" And he said, "Well, it's just not available." And I told him where I'd -- and the guy that I was getting it from he doesn't have anything. I told him, "He doesn't have anything. And there's nothing available. And I really want --" So my brother said, "Let's listen to it." And said, "Well, it sounds like the engine isn't too bad."

But you could see the smoke coming out of it, it was burning oil badly. And he said, "Well, --" He became interested. "Well, I'll kind of -- can give you a hand if you need work with this, but it's going to be very expensive. And so you got to be very careful. You can't use it very much." I said, "I don't want to use it very much anyway." And so -- So I -- here I suddenly have this car, and my other buddies didn't have a car. So man, I drove up and picked 'em up and I said, "Ok, first thing I have to do is get gas. I know you can't afford to help me fill up the tank, so we'll just -- we'll get -- if we all chip in twenty five or fifty cents, we can get enough gas to maybe make it to the next gas station." And that's about the way it was. Let alone the oil that it was burning. But it -- Oh man, it sounded so good, you know this big heavy thing. The first time I took it out and I drove them over to my place, and I think we had dinner, my mom cooked up dinner for us, and then I had to take them home. And they said, "Okay." There was this straight stretch on concrete highway as you rounded this corner. In this little village. And this straight stretch. No protections, no buildings, no out turn. "Okay. Open it up, Dave. Open it. We want to see what it'll do." And I realized, "God, I don't dare open this thing up because

the tires. If you have a blow out on this heavy vehicle, you know, it'd be dangerous. And of course, you never wore seat belts or anything. And, but, you know how it is with young people. "C'mon! Are you chicken? You're chicken!" You know -- I sat down on, you know -- I opened this thing up to -- I didn't have it fully opened. I got up to about 80. And it was like, God! In those days, going 80 miles an hour was like holy mackerel! What a powerful thing. And then I, boy -- I had to back off fairly soon, because I was so damn worried about the tires that they were patched up you know, and had boots in them and things. But, it would impress them. And I thought, "Now we got this problem. We probably burned up most of the gas, just opening it up." So we had to go and get -- And we didn't have any money. At any rate, we did a couple of -- we did one trip on it, which was a fishing trip. Let's go out to this lake, you know, it was quite a ways out. So we got to get an early start before its light. And the things -- electric system on this thing, you know, were not too great, because it took a lot of electricity for everything. And we took off, and we got halfway there and the lights went out. The generator wasn't charging. We stopped. What do you do? I mean, we couldn't -- we just had to try to keep going. And so we did. But it wasn't putting enough power out for the lights, so it was important that there was moonlight. So we're driving out to this thing in the moonlight, and fortunately it was four o'clock in the morning and so there was -- [no traffic] We got there, and then made sure to park it on a hill, so we could get it started because there wasn't enough energy to start the starter. Once it'd get going, it would usually keep going, just barely, but it wouldn't have enough energy to put out by itself. So we went fishing and had a great time, and just barely made it back. You know, what happens if it stops? What we do? We couldn't afford to have the god damn thing towed, and worked on it. And you weren't required to have insurance. If you had any kind of an accident, or hit anybody, you know, it would be a disaster, especially with that big car. Then we had one last experience before I finally sold it and got the Model A roadster. We were cruising one evening, like school kids, like seniors usually do, and they were out of the military and we -- we went -- Well, let's check out somebody knows that -- I think it was the first hamburger place that existed in that area. And where people -- And it was a nice double lane road there. We pulled into this thing. And the muffler wasn't in good shape on this thing, so it sounded, ooh, man, you know, big roar when you're driving in. Gather a lot of attention. And we pulled in there, and while -- I don't think we decided it was worth investing in a hamburger and sharing it or something. We didn't have much money. Ok let's try this other place. So we pulled out, and by this time it's just getting dark. And we pulled out onto the main road, and were just starting down the main road and suddenly we get pulled over by the police. And so I had the registration and license. And it was the car that attracted the policeman. It still looked like a criminal's car. And so here are these four guys that were all young and all vets, and he says, "Well, you gotta -- Let me see your license and registration." So I pulled those out, gave 'em to him. And he says, "Now get out. I want to look at something." So he wanted me out. And there was this trunk on the back, an extension that was -- they usually have on a special luggage rack. It was a kind that you could lock or something and it was also black, you know. And there was these bullet holes in the back window. And he opened up this trunk, and points in there. The only thing in there was my axe! And he says, "What's that?" And I thought that was a stupid question, and I said, "It's an axe!" And he says, "What's it for?" And in the mean time, he'd heard this muffler. He probably could've busted us for not having a good

muffler there. And so he's got my license and registration in his hand, and I said, "Yeah, I work in the woods, and --" And, you know, he's listening to me and suddenly this car goes speeding by and another one's chasing it. And this guy is overwhelming -- It's obvious there's a chase, and so he starts running towards the patrol car. He'd forgotten about me. Hadn't found anything yet, and he's got my license and registration. He's halfway to the patrol car, and I said, "Hey, my license! My license!" So he turned around, and I ran up and he gave me this back and he jumped in his patrol car and took off after these racers. And I guess he caught up with them. We heard about that later, but -- and they were -- It was good that he did that, but then so here I was -- and oh man, you know. Got back in the car and then drove on, but that was kind of an exciting experience for us.

KAREN BREWSTER: That was your last hurrah?

DAVID KLEIN: Yeah, for that car. Yeah. So where were we before?

KAREN BREWSTER: So that car was --- After the Navy -- that was when you were -- before you worked in the woods?

DAVID KLEIN: Yeah. Right after I was out of the Navy.

KAREN BREWSTER: So you went on the trip to Alaska with guys who you were friends with from the Navy, or your friends from the Navy?

DAVID KLEIN: No. No, not friends from the Navy. It was the wood workers.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh, the woods -- they were --

DAVID KLEIN: It was -- and it ended up just the two of us. The one with the wife and baby couldn't go.

KAREN BREWSTER: So okay my question is, why did you guys decide Alaska? You wanted to go on an adventure, why did you decide Alaska?

DAVID KLEIN: It was sort of the ultimate North American one. We didn't ever get overseas. Well, he was overseas. He got overseas. But he still wanted to see the United States, too. Ed Was. He was Polish, nice, really nice guy. And but very -- compared to me, very subdued and easy going. And unfortunately, he died of leukemia about three or four years after we did the Alaska trip. But he had served overseas in the military. At any rate, so we -- Then I kept my eyes on the newspaper for -- I was pretty sold on a lightweight car like the Model A roadster. Ford roadster or Chevy roadster or something like that. The Model A had such a good record for being easy to maintain, and lightweight, and easy on the tires, and you know reasonable gas mileage. We didn't think much about that at the time but it was reasonable, and lightweight, you don't wear out the tires very much. And it had a rumble seat. And so at any rate, I spotted this ad that was close to where I was working in the forest. Like it was only three or four miles from where I was working in the forest. There was this Model A roadster, like-new body

condition, you know. It was 1931, and that was 1947, and that would be how many years, 15 years?

KAREN BREWSTER: 16 years.

DAVID KLEIN: 1931, no it was more than that, 1931 1947, so that would be uh, 31, 47, that would be only uh --

KAREN BREWSTER: That'd be 16 years. 31-40 --

DAVID KLEIN: 15 years!

KAREN BREWSTER: 15/16 years, yeah.

DAVID KLEIN: Yeah. So. In those days, that wasn't all that old a car. But it was old because there weren't new cars being made. And that was the last year they made Model A. And then they went to a Model B, which was quite different. So -- And the earlier one was a Model T, the one that -- the earlier one that Henry Ford made all his money on because he could make them so cheap that every person could buy them easily, especially for farmers and what. At any rate -- But it was taken apart, and someone had taken the engine apart, and had the cylinder walls worn out again. And redo the valves' places, and sort of rebuilt the engine, but hadn't put it back together again. So they had the new parts, the new valves, new other stuff, and it was sitting in this barn, and it wasn't put back together. And apparently the reason it wasn't is -- the guy that was doing this was doing it part time when he was working some place, and then he got a job some place, and he had to leave. And so -- and he wasn't well off financially, and he had to sell it. So he put it up for sale. Well, that was a turn off for a lot of people, but -- and it was for me at -- I thought, "Well, maybe this is a good possibility?" Because to buy one in good shape would have been five or six hundred bucks at that time, because, they weren't making new ones, or even new cars. And I didn't have any money. And I didn't have that kind of money. And this one, it was like, two hundred or two hundred fifty. And that was big bucks for me too, so I got a loan from my mom for a hundred or something and we -- and then I went -- after I'd looked at it, and looked -- Like all I have to do is learn to put this back together again. So I had some knowledge because I had that one. I had basic knowledge of how it run, and I had to fix minor things like oil and condenser and stuff. Check spark plugs and such. And then check with my brother, and he could give me advice if I needed it, but this was a long way from where he was. So, I put the thing back together again. So after work, I would go over there with my other one, and spend a couple hours. And it was mainly up on blocks or so I could get under it and to -- when I needed to -- to do that kind of stuff. And I did everything. I put on new seals around the panels and I put that on. And put in new spark plugs, and you know. So everything, it was like a rebuilt engine. I put it together again and yup, I could get it started and then, of course, I still had to get a good battery, and tires, which I did, because I'd saved up for that. I had to be sure that it was in good condition to go to Alaska. And then I drove it around a little while, and oh man, the body was in good condition, and oh man, it was -- it was great. And picked up some of my buddies on the weekends if I was up there and that

was -- and they knew I was Alaska-bound and just waiting for spring to come and it was already on the way. And I had a rumble seat, you know, I could pick 'em up. One of 'em had a girlfriend and a couple of them could sit in the rumble seat, and two people up front, and it was -- You know, we could always crowd a third one in. No seat belts. And so it was really nice and it was good to have this. Gave it some trial runs, and then if there were minor parts that were old and kind of worn, I would check the ones on my old Model A and strip those and replace it. So the old one was in not the greatest shape. And then, worse off, and then put old parts on it, and then I sold it for, oh, I don't know, 75 bucks or something like that.

KAREN BREWSTER: So you got the Old Model A after the LaSalle?

DAVID KLEIN: Yeah.

KAREN BREWSTER: 'Cuz you said the first Model A is what took you out into the woods.

DAVID KLEIN: Yup, yup, yup. Right.

So. Then we headed to Alaska. I forget the date. We had set a date, and we quit the woods work and had everything we needed including some food, you know, that we could rely on. And know we had to stop and get some occasionally. And -- but we wanted to be as spartan as possible. We had cooking gear. And did we have a -- I don't think we had a Coleman stove.

KAREN BREWSTER: Or a Primus stove or something maybe?

DAVID KLEIN: I don't think we did. I don't -- We couldn't afford that. We figured we could build a fire. A campfire, yeah.

KAREN BREWSTER: And you had a tent and camping equipment?

DAVID KLEIN: We had camping equipment. We had a tent. A small tent. And a two-person tent. And pots for cooking, and we had a -- you were required to get a pass to go over the Alaska Highway. It wasn't officially open. And that was the Canadian government decision, because there weren't adequate gas stations. There were big gaps. There was at least 150 miles between some gas stations, and they couldn't be sure that they would have gas when you got there. So you had to have -- you were required to have fifteen gallons of extra gas that you could use to get you by if the one station didn't have the gas. You had to have chains in case the roads were muddy because there was just -- some were real -- not good gravel. Rain would make things muddy. And we used the chains, especially even before we got onto the highway because of going in the prairie road from Edmonton. We had to be inspected in Edmonton at the RCMP's to get the permit to go. And they checked all these things: you had the extra fan belts, condenser coil, you had to have, tools to fight fire in case there was a wildfire along the way, so we had to have a shovel and axe, and had to have at least ten gallons of water. So if you were going to be camping or what, you'd to have this water available. And then, you had to

have -- that was close to what you had to have, yeah. And we had to have the tools to repair -- do repair work. Had to have two spare tires which in the Model A Ford Roadster, they had two spares, one on each side, and tire wells, so that was okay. The two spares were not good tires, but they were -- but the other four were new ones. So. And we didn't have any flats going, I think, going up. We made a mistake, in retrospect, because we should've gone -- stayed in the US and gone through Montana and places and then cut up, but we went through the Lake of the Woods and then across the Canadian prairies. And there, there was no main highway. You know, you would go, like this. And all, none of them were paved. They're all gravel, and sometimes it was dry, they were dusty. And if it was wet -- It was spring, the frost was coming out of the -- you know, frost heaves and chuck holes and stuff. And you couldn't -- You're lucky in some places if you could go 25 miles an hour. And it was cold, too. The wind was blowing on the prairies frequently. This was in May. And the wind would be going right across the highway. And we had no side curtains, so you wore big stocking hat while you were driving and sometimes even gloves, and a jacket. But that was okay though, fresh air. And the farmers' were -- some of them were plowing their fields. But they were -- And they were -- And in those days, you didn't have these closed-in cabs on tractors and they would have big parkas on, and here they were plowing in cold weather. The temperature was probably thirty-eight or forty. But the soils were thawed enough to plow. And, but it was an interesting experience going there. We stopped in Manitoba at Riding Mountain National Park, which was -- that was after we came out of the Lake of the Woods country, which was beautiful, evergreen forest country, and then went into the prairies. And the prairies were a little more monotonous than we thought it would be. But this Riding Mountain National Forest, here was an aspen forest and I remember that was cold weather, and that's one place where we -- there were no official campgrounds in places, and it was like -- it was, you know, it was all private land until we got to this place. And it was colder than hell and then, there was this place, we could smell this wood burning, and it was aspen. It has a unique nice smell. And that's the only wood they had there. And, you know, it smelled good, and thought of a wood fire, but there was no way that you could get wood for your own fire. And for -- when this Riding Mountain, there was some hills and aspen, and then here was this little cabins for rent. And they were like buck fifty a night, you know. Oh, we could afford that. And so we had this cabin with a wood stove. And, oh man, that was nirvana to be nice and warm after all this cold wind blowing across. So, at any rate, we went and passed our inspection to the RCMP Mounty that checked us out. They looked at this and they said, "Well, we turned back a couple that were in an American vehicle because it was just too low. They wouldn't make it. This Model A won't make it." And -- but he checked -- We had to have 200 dollars in cash between us, and which we did, just barely. And we had to have -- in theory, we had to have an appointment to allow us to go over the highway. We lied. We said, "Yeah, we're going to be working up there," and, "fire control," we said, or something like that.

KAREN BREWSTER: They didn't check your papers for -- ?

DAVID KLEIN: They didn't have -- say you had to have papers. And we'd already gone through customs when we crossed the border. But, so he said, "Yeah, you guys'll probably make it, but you got to realize it's -- there's washouts up there now. It's not

open. Because there's -- there'll be local shut downs." And there were. We got to the beginning at Dawson Creek, and they told us, "Well, you can go, but you're going to have to camp for awhile until they get these two culverts washed out." And they were busy working on other more serious washouts because it was a heavy snow year, and then a lot of washouts. But it was nice weather when we got -- by the time we arrived. But we came to the first washout, and oh man, this culvert had washed out, and there was this ditch about this deep, right down the middle of the road.

KAREN BREWSTER: Five feet deep? Four feet deep?

DAVID KLEIN: No. It was about four feet. And it was very narrow. The ditch was only about this wide. And we walked it back and forth, and we said, "Well, if we take this shovel up there, we might be able to get down so we can straddle the ditch with the vehicle." And this -- Ed got up in front, and we did make a place so we could drive down, and put the chains on and straddle this thing. And he kept telling me, "You gotta go this side." So we wouldn't get on one side down in. And we made it up. And we had to shovel out more so we could get back up on -- And so we made it there. And we felt really good about that. And went ahead. And then, we pretty much got along fine. We had this one other place where we had to use the chains that -- there were no campgrounds and so we'd look for a place where we could pull off. Well, sometimes the gravel pit would work, but it was nice to have a -- put your tent up on a nice mossy ground under the pine trees and jack pines. Oh, we came to this really nice place, and oh, we pulled off and had to go down on a little slope, not too much, and we set up our tent. And sure enough it rained that night, and we got up in the morning, and we had breakfast and it cleared off. It was during the night that it rained, and -- but quite a bit. And we packed up, and that whole area was just -- because of all that rain it had got soft. We started going and we couldn't get back up on the road so we had to -- We had to put on the chains then, and we had to cut boughs, and put them across there so we wouldn't sink -- the car wouldn't sink too far with the chains. And once we did that, we got back up on the road, took the chains off and continued.

KAREN BREWSTER: So you kind of made some cordage so you had traction?

DAVID KLEIN: Yeah, we had to do a little bit of that. And we didn't want to spend too much time there. But we made it okay. And then we had one other serious incident in that -- The problem with the -- it had no air filter in those days, so it was wide open at the top where the carburetor, where it sucked in the air, it was pointed up like this. And we knew this problem that I'd already fixed it once before, I think. That gradually if you were driving on dusty roads, it would suck this, and the dust would accumulate in these little jets that jetted the fuel into your intake manifold. And, so, that -- that happened. And we were driving along -- and when it was getting that way, the engine would start hitting on three cylinders, and it was just very erratic. And back firing a little bit too because it was feeding gas into another cylinder, but it wasn't firing yet. And so, it suddenly the -- we're pretty much on a level area, and it backfired, a big bang, and the engine cut out. And, I thought, well, what the hell's going on? And I head out of the car. And it had been super dusty, and walked around. They had these things you picked up to get at the engine from

the side, one on either side that had pins in it. And I got out, and suddenly I could see flames inside.

KAREN BREWSTER: Uh oh.

DAVID KLEIN: So I whipped around and opened it up and – on the – it's the side of the road that we were on close to the ditch. And here the whole carburetor's on fire. And there's gas -- the gas tank is just behind the engine, up high, so it's a gravity feed, right in front of the windshield, just front of the windshield where the engine is the gas tank. And here's a fire right there, and so -- What do you do? I didn't have a gas -- fire extinguisher, and this is a gas fire. And so, I knew that -- we had water and I knew that throwing water on wouldn't do any good. I looked down the ditch and I could see this mud. And I grabbed the shovel that was on back, and scooped up this mud, and put it right on top of the carburetor. Forced all this mud down in there, and stopped the air from getting in there, and stopped the fire. Whew, man. And then, all that mud was in the carburetor along with all the dust, so, it looked like a disaster. I told Ed, I said, "No, I think we're okay." So, we took the carburetor off and took it all apart very carefully. We had a pan or something so we didn't lose anything. And we took some gasoline in a can and washed everything out in the gasoline and blow through these things so to be sure they're going. And then put it all back together again, and put it on and took off. It started up and ran fine because we cleaned out all these jets that were clogged up. And the fire hadn't burned enough to get hot anyway. No damage done. and we took off and made it the rest of the way. That's the only time we did that once, but I did it after I got to Fairbanks once more, I think. So, part of it was I was so familiar with that engine that I could handle these things. And it was good that I'd put the whole thing together again after it was rebuilt. So, it was -- and you know, I had this little brownie camera, the only camera. I took one or two pictures, but I should've taken more pictures. I took the, you know, one, that when we were crossing into Alaska. I took one of Ed standing by the sign, he took one of me by the car, standing by the sign. Those kind of pictures would've been more -- We were just absorbing -- A nice waterfall we went by which now is a -- it was just -- now it's a big tourist stop. But there was nothing there except this waterfall and we stopped, and there was virtually no traffic.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah, I was going to say, how many other vehicles or people did you see on the road?

DAVID KLEIN: Probably a few trucks, but they were mostly maybe road maintenance kind of stuff. So there wasn't a lot of trucking because military, it was over -- There was some trucking, but not too much. And that wasn't a good deal that -- if there was -- if it was pretty good road surface and you could get up to maybe -- if it was smooth, you could get up to about forty-five, and make good coverage per day. But you created a lot of dust and if a truck was overtaking you, that usually wouldn't happen because they had to go pretty slow, but if you -- there was coming toward you, you just pull over and stop because you couldn't see anything. It's sort of like the Dalton Highway at times. You couldn't see anything, you gotta stop. Plus, they threw a lot of rocks if they're going too fast. But mostly they would slow down. And if you tried to overtake a truck that was

going very slow, it was almost impossible, because you couldn't see. They were kicking up so much dust, and you couldn't see when anybody was coming the other way. But that wasn't mostly a problem and we – Sometimes, you would average thirty miles a day, per hour. Not total distance, thirty miles per hour. I have some of that information up there in my notebook. And we made it.

KAREN BREWSTER: How long did it take you from Connecticut to Fairbanks?

DAVID KLEIN: I think about three weeks. We didn't stop and camp for any extended period. It was get going! 'Cuz we realized it's slow going, but you gotta keep moving or you're not going to get there.

KAREN BREWSTER: So was Liard [River] Hot Springs a developed area at all?

DAVID KLEIN: No.

KAREN BREWSTER: 'Cuz you mentioned the waterfall, it made me think of the hot springs.

DAVID KLEIN: The hot springs were not even developed, and we didn't know about it until we went by it. There might have been a little trail up the road, but there was nothing. No indication, nothing like that. Of course, when you went by Kluane Lake, I mean, you couldn't miss all the beauty there, and the road was just really winding there, but it was so spectacular and beauty there. Ah man, it had to be there – and you realized, it's all worth coming this long distance. And it was so beautiful. And, yeah, it was a great adventure and -- And then of course once I was here, and, through the year, it was --I got in the Brooks Range, and it was -- I discovered wonderful parts of Alaska. And it was a whole pioneering atmosphere that -- and plus by this time -- by the time I left, then I realized – and I had to overwinter. We should save this for later, but I'd overwintered and working doing some house construction stuff too, before went up to the Brooks Range. And came back, we had to – we'd chartered planes, and that was – Well, we'll go into that later. But then I worked at the experimental farm, and that was -- that was sort of ideal because I loved -- I loved working with cattle and I'd learned -- I took a few -- I took dairy science or something like that. I took two or three animal science courses because they were there, available, and I worked on an hourly basis each day. I had to get up early for the milking, and handling clean up and feeding the cows. And then I had to be there for the evening milking. But usually I could go to classes if I organized classes, and that was just a short walk to campus. And I took courses. I knew I was going to go back to school, so I took some bonehead math. I wasn't too good.

KAREN BREWSTER: So you arrived in Fairbanks, around, sometime in June?

DAVID KLEIN: June, yup.

KAREN BREWSTER: Of 1947?

DAVID KLEIN: Right.

KAREN BREWSTER: What was Fairbanks like? Or what was your first impression when you got here?

DAVID KLEIN: Well, of course, we knew it was end of the road. And gold mining was what was going on. And we knew it was a military base, too. And so, yeah. Then the dredges were operating out here at Cripple Creek and Chatanika and other places. And a lot of mining going on. The FE company was the mining company that owned all this. That bought up these gold claims by small time people that were drilling down in the wintertime and excavating, getting down to the gold bearing stuff and then they'd bring it all up in the winter. And in the summer, they would get water some way, and then sluice it during the summertime and that was -- but it was, you know, one or two guys working together and hiring help when doing the sluicing and all that. And so it was the old mining days, and really interesting because you could go out and see what was going on, when there was -- that winter and the spring came, I went out to Chatanika to where the dredge had been inoperative all winter and then they fired up the dredge long before the ice went out in the pond that it was in. And then they used -- they produced -- they had this steam engine, too, to produce steam, and then they started thawing the gravels that the dredge was going to go into. So they drive these steam pipes down, and they would then start washing the loess [soil] off there and that whole area, Gold Hill area, that you know, there was a big bluff, they were all fresh and they were cutting those with the nozzle and occasionally exposed mammoth bones and Otto Geist was going up there and picking these things up. And you could go and wander around on this and you'd find little -- you'd find bones and teeth of bison, and thick bison and occasionally if you're lucky, a mammoth tooth, things like that. Because, of course, the miners picked 'em up and those -- most things were left for Otto to take if he wanted because he was getting money from the Frick Museum to do that. And -- But Fairbanks itself was no paved streets, and some wood sidewalks. And then dust and dry weather in the summer. Pretty dusty. I mean there'd be a pall of dust and you'd get a hot spell in summertime. From the university hill, you know, there was this pall of dust over the city and there wasn't air pollution, there was dust. And then, when the frost was coming out, some of the streets were marginally and not -- some not passable. And Model A Ford was great then. We could get around. And this construction work, we used my Model A to carry a big tool box on the back of the -- we had one of these deals a fold out rack where you could -- on the back. Stuff things in the rumble seat, which long ago took the seats out to make more room. And we had a big ladder because we were working up siding, and we did some roofing, but siding, and putting on special shingles that was popular then. And they were pretty good. And they were really tough things. And so, there wasn't too much danger of asbestos because -- unless -- the danger was for us if you -- when you're cutting stuff because you made a dust. And we didn't -- had a -- one of our tools was a big clamp you could cut these things, and bust 'em, and then we had to drill holes through them. At any rate, I survived. (laughs) But they had an extension ladder. Well, how do you carry that on this Model A Ford Roadster? Well, one of us would -- I'd be driving, and the other guy on the other side would hold the ladder just over the -- because there was no window there -- hold up against the car, and it would stick out in front and back while we would

drive around town. We were just moving around town. That worked fine.

KAREN BREWSTER: All the things you do when you're young, huh?

DAVID KLEIN: Yeah. But, oh, well the big thing of course when you first come is all of these cabins and whore houses on one section, which was closed to -- supposedly closed to military personnel. So the fronts of them were -- they weren't allowed to do business from the front of these cabins. So the backs of the cabins opened up onto a boardwalk. And then they had a big, what you might call a picture window, about this size, on the back of the cabin, and then the gals would be over there all fancy. Then early in the evening they would beckon you in. And the military weren't supposed to be there. So there were military police with their arm bands were the only ones that were allowed to walk up and down on this sidewalk in there and check to see whether there were military personnel. Of course, they were in civilian clothes, so it was hard for them to -- And there was a big gate, a boarded gate that said "no military personnel permitted." And you could pull this gate open and walk in there and see what was going on and -- It was interesting.

KAREN BREWSTER: And that was down on like Third or Fourth street in downtown Fairbanks?

DAVID KLEIN: Um, lets see -- First, Second -- Fourth Avenue. Probably Fourth Avenue, yeah. It was either Second -- it wasn't Second, I guess, so it was Fourth, yup. It was just that one big block, yeah. Both sides. Nice cabins. Lot of which are over in Pioneer Park now. And there's still a few there that have been enlarged into houses and still there. Renovated. What have you.

KAREN BREWSTER: So where did you stay when you first got here?

DAVID KLEIN: Well, yeah. By this time, of course, we were looking -- we had to find work because we didn't have much money left because we had to buy the gas. Mainly it was gas, and, of course, then we didn't have a lot of other expenses. We had to eat, and when you're in town, you know and you're looking for work -- So we found that there was this house, about -- the other direction on Fourth, on I think it was on the -- then it would be on the east side of Cushman, there was a house that was a boarding house. Well, it was a standard size house, about the size of this, it had a basement and there were the bunks in the basement where you could -- in the bunks with three or four people and there was just one -- down there, there was this maybe a sink where you brush your teeth, and then there was a one toilet upstairs that you had to wait in line for if you were -- And it was cheap. Like a buck and a half. Relatively cheap. Buck and half per bunk. And then that's where we stayed. But we couldn't afford to stay there too long, we had to find jobs. Ed Was, who came up with me, he had -- in the military he had experience in Europe switching trains in the railroad yard. Where the military was in occupied area in France or some other place. And so he gained -- or had that experience, so he right away got a job at, it was then called Ladd Field, Fort Wainwright. And where there were -- he could do this kind of work. And it was pretty good pay, too. So he got a job right away. I tried to get a job with field crews on the North Slope working doing geological work and then be

a aid. It was the only kind of field work that was available, and we were too late. I mean, they had already hired and were gone in the field. And, of course, it's understandable. And then, we were told that you can always get a job in fire control. But it was a damp spring. No, they were not hiring anybody. No significant fire. And so then I was getting kind of desperate, and then we met this guy in the boarding house that was doing some of the sub-contracting, putting on special shingles on houses -- some new houses that were being built, and the contractors that were framing 'em and doing other work, they would just subcontract to put the siding on. And so he -- and there were all these other older houses they were putting the siding on, too, because it was pretty -- that was -- they weren't too well insulated, and it helped a little bit to put these on. And so he was the one who had overwintered up in the Brooks Range, and was talking about starting a hunting and fishing lodge. Which was thirty years too early, but -- And he'd overwintered at Wild Lake, which was west of Wiseman, and a beautiful place. And he had told us about his experience and this, and that sounded like, for me, nirvana. And he said, "Well, if you want to team up with me, I'll teach you how to --" He needed some guys to work with him on the shingling. And there was me and another young guy, my age, the same situation, from Oklahoma. Chris and the two of us were -- struck up a friendship with him. And he said, "Yeah, I'll show you how to do this. I'm sure you can do it if you had--" He told me had some hammer, sawing experience. And, yeah. He was a nice guy. He was about 35, I think, and he had done this kind of work. And he had a contract he was working on, and he didn't have a car, and this was a good deal because he'd have to get the contractors to haul his gear from one place to another. This way, you know, we could move it with the Model A. And he said, "What the deal would be if you guys work with me, by late summer, and we save our money, we can go up to the lake and then build the first cabin for this hunting and fishing lodge." And, man, that sounded like wonderful. And so we did. We went to work for him, and yeah -- He was good about showing us how to do it and we caught on fast. Chris and I worked well together and we became skilled at this. And we could whip off these things. And then he would go around with my car and try to line up more jobs. Then -- he was good at doing that. And it was, of course, post-War and there were -- hadn't been any housing work done, you know, and so there were people working for the mining and other things, and yeah they -- So, we could -- We didn't have to move a few blocks, and there was another place. And he was good at lining these up, but he also was kind of a ladies man, and he'd go to the bars at night and do the rounds and make out with gals. He probably did. And -- But he was spending money so that we weren't accumulating it very fast. And Chris and I were kind of beginning to feel like we'd been had, because we didn't want to be there unless we had this goal of going up there. I mean, yeah, it was important, it was survival to get the job to begin with. That was great. And both of us appreciated that, but once we got started then there was no future except as survival and we wanted more than that. And we questioned him a couple of times. Well, are we on track for getting this? And he sort of was -- you could tell by his behavior, no, I mean, we're -- we had to get more jobs and keep working hard, and -- which we were doing. And he wasn't doing much work because he was lining up work. Well, that was okay. And sure, he'd come at lunchtime and take us to a restaurant or something, and -- or we'd bring -- he'd bring food. So, he looked out for us, and we were able to stay at this place where he was, which wasn't the greatest, but that didn't make an ounce of difference to us. We had a job, and we're

making money, and we're eating well, but we had a future. And we wanted to be sure we had one. At any rate, finally – you know, he would make these deals and then he would go out every night. And we knew you can't do that. And when you go out to the bar, the drink was really expensive. And neither of us were interested in doing that to begin with, and we thought that's not going to work. So finally we laid down the law, and we said, "We're not going to go on doing this unless we make a commitment. And you have to make a commitment that we're going -- we got to start setting the money aside." Because the big price is the charter aircraft. I mean we knew that. And we would be camping out of a tent up there, and bringing the food up. And getting everything up there, of course, would be costly, but once there, you know, not a big deal. And it would be fabulous fishing and hunting and all that. So, we -- he knew we were serious, and so he started curtailing his behavior. And --

[END TAPE 2 SIDE B]

[BEGIN TAPE 3]

DAVID KLEIN: Okay, so, he bit the bullet and we didn't have to really go on a strike, but we were prepared to and he knew it. Plus I had the car and that was important for moving tools and everything around, so he -- We talked about all of that, and so he was good. Chris and I, we were bonded and wanted to do this and we liked working together and we had a common goal. And it was like -- he presented it to us so that we'd be partners, you know. If we did start this hunting fishing lodge, we could be partners because we're contributing. We're not getting paid a salary. We were putting money into this adventure. And that to me was fair enough. And of course, getting in the Brooks Range. I'd heard a bit about it. And he was -- his experiences. Have you read the -- Arctic Village?

KAREN BREWSTER: The Bob Marshall book?

DAVID KLEIN: Yeah.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

DAVID KLEIN: Well, he stayed with this Frank Young, who was married to a native woman from Bettles and they had dog mushing and trapping in the winter time. Well, he stayed with them over winter, and he went trapping with -- And he fell in love with this -- Tony, who -- our boss, and that's why he fell in love with the area and thought, oh this is gonna -- And it was a great place, and it would've been great, but not for another thirty years.

KAREN BREWSTER: So what was his name? His name was Tony --

DAVID KLEIN: Tony Butler.

KAREN BREWSTER: Butler, okay -- Do you remember Chris' last name?

DAVID KLEIN: No, but I probably have it somewhere, but I think it was -- it might have been Polish or -- No, it wasn't Polish, it might've been -- It was American, but probably second or third generation. European probably -- Might've been Ukrainian or something like that. I don't know -- I didn't think too much of those things at the time. He was a nice guy. Sorta blondish hair. And so then -- In the mean time, this fellow that came up with me, get to see him occasionally when he'd come by and visit when he had time off from working.

KAREN BREWSTER: That's Ed, right?

DAVID KLEIN: Pardon?

KAREN BREWSTER: Ed?

DAVID KLEIN: Ed Was. W-A-S. He was Polish. Second generation from Poland.

KAREN BREWSTER: Was he still staying at the boarding house?

DAVID KLEIN: No. He was staying up there on the base someplace. He had a pretty good deal for housing on the base where they must've had a bunkhouse or something he that could stay in. So he was making good money. And that was sort of our objective when we came -- to leave at the end of summer. And he said, yeah, he was planning to leave at end of summer and I told him that I didn't think I could make it because I couldn't afford to. And I was still working and we were going up to Brooks Range and I don't know when he left, but whether it was when we were up in the Brooks Range, or later. But at any rate, he had the money. He could fly back, which he did. So then -- but Tony Butler also was -- he made friends -- there was another guy at the boarding house who was a guy we called Doc. He was -- he came from a wealthy family in -- His father was a medical doctor and wanted him to be a medical doctor. He had been in medical school and he dropped out. He was bordering on alcoholism, and he came to Alaska to escape being driven by his dad apparently into something he wasn't sure he wanted to do. But he was really a nice guy, and he was sharp and pretty good education so -- especially when we were up there and sitting around talking in the cabin, eating and what, he was just a fun guy. Pretty philosophical. And he was sort of a little bit of a mentor in that regard, I think. But, he was also, it was obvious, he was on dangerous ground because he was -- He wanted to go up with us, and he talked Tony into it. He said he'd do all the cooking and he would -- but he wanted to fish. He loved to fish, and hunt if possible. And so he came. He was a hard worker once we got up there, and he wanted to get away from the alcohol too, I'm sure. And he did. And we went mountain sheep hunting one time, he and I, and he was a great guy to be in the field with. Just loves the country and hard working and pack heavy loads. And I remember we pardoned [?] gear and that was in, you know, getting close to freeze up, and just before we flew out and we're up in the -- little flimsy Army surface sleeping bag and sleeping up there with an air mattress, I think. He and I perched on this ledge, on the side of this mountain, and it was so damn cold. I probably didn't get much sleep, but it was -- the Northern Lights came out. First time I'd

seen them. Well, “Ahh. “Both of us were there, laying there, and it was just ideal, you could lay in the sleeping bag, and there were Northern Lights, and ahh, for both of us. This was worth coming to Alaska for, no matter whether you were colder than hell, or whether you getting any luck hunting or fishing, or what. It was just seeing those Northern Lights. And they went on, you know, and changed and oh it was just -- laying there, that was just – it was much better than if we’d been down at the cabin or something, we wouldn’t have appreciated it -- woods. And yeah, and we, and I -- We finally spotted some rams, and I -- It was sort of feeding out in a meadow on the opposite side of camp, which wasn’t a good deal but -- And it looked like there was no way you could get to them. And finally I said, “I think it would be possible to go behind the ridge and move around and go down this other ridge where they couldn’t see you. Then go way down below them, come across, back into this -- and there was this little drainage -- and just kinda crawl up that drainage.” And that’s what I did. And he said he’d stay up on top because they’d probably -- I would spook ‘em before I got there, and they would come up. Which is what they normally do, whether it’s to escape terrain and he’d be up above. And I figured, well, he’s going to get one for sure because I didn’t think I could do it. And you know, I finally got down there and I’m on my belly and crawling with a rifle and sliding, and watching when they were feeding and making sure they weren’t looking in my direction, and I’d inch a little further over to where there’s a hummock. And I finally got in range, and I shot one, and right through the heart. And it turned out to be a huge one. And so then, there were either two or three. The other one or two went up as expected, but they veered off, and didn’t go close enough for him. And so then he came down, I guess it was, and I said, “I’d have some experience butchering it.” The experimental farm -- No, I hadn’t by that time, but I had back in New England. I had experience butchering a little bit. My grandfather was a butcher lives right in -- So I was -- I knew how to handle it, and had a good knife. So I said I’d start on this. It was mainly just eviscerating because we had to carry this. He suggested he’d carry the whole thing up. I said “No, we’re going to have to cut it up and pack it on pack frames.” Which we had. He wanted to try carrying it up, the two of us. It doesn’t work on rough ground going up hill. Then I said, “Well, I’ll go on butchering it then. Why don’t you go on up and see if those two rams and you can get one.” Well, of course, we had more than we could carry to begin with. But -- So he went up and disappeared over the ridge and he went down the other side a little bit and spotted one of these rams. It was on a ledge, and he shot it, another one of those that -- good size one. But it fell a long distance and bounced in the rocks and pretty much destroyed it and busted one of the horns off. Then he came back, and we packed -- tied this stuff up, and packed it up. All of it. We had to make a couple trips, ‘cuz it was a big one. To get it up to the top of the ridge and there was a good place, leveling off, where we could camp for the night. But we went down and recovered some of his meat from the -- there wasn’t much meat that was salvageable on the one that he shot. And we got the head and the horns, but it was smaller than the one I got. Since he was an ardent hunter, I told him, “You know, I don’t really want the trophy.” I wasn’t into trophy hunting. I’d killed this sheep. That was significant. So then we spent the night, and the next day we carried one load down and, because we had our camping gear too, and that was like about a half a day, a little less than three hours probably to get back to camp. So we did. And then we got the rest of the guys, and came back up and got the rest of the meat and packed it all down the next day, which was --

We weren't as adept at packing and stuff. We sort of boned out more of the meat and got rid of the bones, but here we had strong guys. And, of course, if you bone it out, you have to be more careful and we didn't have a lot of cheesecloth and the things you should have if you're going to bone it out. We didn't take anything like plastic bags. At any rate, but we got it all down there and kept the hindquarters and things in one piece, so it kept well. And we had no way of keeping it, except hanging it, and if you left it in the hindquarters it was great. And we ate highly on that meat while we were still there. And then, -- And they went out, Tony and -- I don't know whether it was Doc went out, and they did -- they got a moose, a bull moose. And I helped pack some of that meat out, which it wasn't too far, but it was a good heavy pack. And we got the moose meat out. And by the time the planes came, we'd consumed the mountain sheep, and pretty much. And we were able to take some moose meat back with us. And Doc had this trophy that he took back with him when he went back to Virginia and he was going to get it mounted and have it in his place. So that was -- it was great lake trout fishing. Doc, with this -- Frank Young loaned us a boat, rowing boat, and Doc, when we were out doing other things and -- we were doing some of the building, he would break off and go out and fish and he'd cook up this beautiful lake trout. He'd troll, and oh man. And he did all the cooking outdoors, and we didn't -- Did we ever have a stove in the cabin, I don't know? We had a stove we could use. Put in the cabin eventually, but it was summer weather and if you're out there cooking, there's a breeze, the lake, so the bugs weren't bad. It was great. And we could, you know, go down, and do a quick dip in the lake, take a bath. It was -- it was beautiful.

KAREN BREWSTER: Now that you started talking about this we have to backtrack a little bit. We might as well just finish this part tonight about -- So, you and Chris were working in Fairbanks, and then how did you get from here to Wild Lake? How did that all come about?

DAVE KLEIN: Okay, then we flew --

KAREN BREWSTER: Obviously, you made enough money with Tony to make this happen.

DAVID KLEIN: Yeah. Right. Although we didn't cover it all. We had to work and pay off the last of the charter after we came back, but we paid off enough so that the companies would respect that we were going to pay it off. So we flew to -- in a Norseman. Know what they are?

KAREN BREWSTER: I've heard of them.

DAVID KLEIN: It was a big single engine freighting plane. Flew there to -- you could pretty much fit all of us in there and our gear -- and to -- Bettles Field had just been built. And before that, you landed in the river or on a gravel bar in front of Bettles. And so the old village of Bettles was across the river from the landing field. So we flew there, and then we carried our gear down to the river, which was not too far, and you know, packed it all down there, and then they flew up a Cub. I forgot which kind of Cub it was, that would hold -- there were two Cubs, I think. And then they were on floats. So they landed

in the river and pulled up to where – by the closer to the airfield they could get. And then they started shuttling us up with these two planes which would -- maybe one of ‘em could carry -- the pilot could carry two passengers, and the other just one. And so -- and I was the last one, and I was -- my responsibility was to be sure we got all the gear loaded on the planes and up there. And we had to bring up -- we had Coleman lantern and we had a Coleman stove -- yeah we had a Coleman stove. And so we had to have fuel for them in ten-gallon cans, and we had to have – We had a window for the cabin with glass, old fashioned multiple panes, and all of our food and stuff. And most of that went up -- you know they’d load up the passengers and get as much gear as they could to get off the river with the floats. Because you couldn’t overload them with the floats or you wouldn’t get off. The last one we got in and I had the window on my lap, and I think some more of the -- we had to have some gas to take up for the planes, too. They had to put fuel in to get back. So we tried to take off and there was no breeze, and we couldn’t get off. It was just too loaded. So we said, well take off ten gallons of gas, and we’ll just set it on the gravel bar and he will pick it up. And he’s going to have to be up there for another reason, and he would be a week or so before he’d get in and bring it up. So we tried it again, and we got off, and went up, and got dropped off and we started our adventure building the cabin. It was crude, rough cabin, we didn’t peel the logs. And they weren’t all that big. They were about this big because they’re getting up there pretty high.

KAREN BREWSTER: Was that like two, three, six inch diameters?

DAVID KLEIN: Yeah. Five to six. But, at any rate, we had to cut them and pack them down from up this little stream valley, where -- We were on this stream down by the lake and so it was down hill, but it was hard on one’s shoulders with those green logs, and -- And we set to work, and we got the thing up in pretty short order.

KAREN BREWSTER: So that was you, Tony, and Chris?

DAVID KLEIN: Yeah, oh and there was one other person I forgot to mention, and that’s important. It was a girlfriend, a Canadian woman who had made friends with us. They were staying -- three of these Canadian gals were staying in there. They were students, I think. And this one older one who was older She was in her mid-twenties where as the others were much younger, and that was fun when they were there. The younger ones were -- Chris and I thought were beautiful young women. They gave us haircuts and things like that. So then -- But she talked Tony into letting her come along. She said she would help with cooking and other things and she came along. She was about your build, and she’d worked hard and helped out. And I was glad to get to know someone like that was interested in seeing the world, but was also -- could do -- and level work, and that was nice. And she was – everybody really liked her.

KAREN BREWSTER: What was her name?

DAVID KLEIN: I’m trying to think. I think it was Barbara, her first name, but I don’t remember. At any rate --

KAREN BREWSTER: Did she help out with the building part or she stayed doing cooking?

DAVID KLEIN: She did anything that was needed, mostly when we're all working on the cabin, she would mostly cook meals and stuff. And so, for that many hard working guys, there had to be big meals. And Doc worked with us during the building stage, after that he's -- when we were doing finishing up stuff -- We split and you had -- with axes, we made a floor of poles, and used smaller poles in the roof and then made a sod roof. And we had some plastic or something to put down and then put the sod on. And yeah, we were able to do this, but with plenty of help and getting sod up with buckets and things. And she was very helpful for that, I remember. and carrying buckets. And hard work. But we got it --

KAREN BREWSTER: What size cabin was it?

DAVID KLEIN: It was probably about fourteen by sixteen. About fourteen was about as -- well maybe it was twelve, no maybe it was probably about fourteen by sixteen. Sixteen was about as long as we could find logs for. Yeah. Yeah.

KAREN BREWSTER: Do you remember how long it took you guys to get it up and finished?

DAVID KLEIN: I might have notes on that.

KAREN BREWSTER: Well, how long were you up there total?

DAVID KLEIN: About over a month. So when we left, it was starting to -- a little ice glazing around the edge of the lake. And so it was getting out before all that. So the coming back --

KAREN BREWSTER: So when did you go? Was it the month of August or September?

DAVID KLEIN: In late August.

KAREN BREWSTER: Ok.

DAVID KLEIN: It was late August and September that we were up there. And we got back at the end of -- late September. And we -- coming back was -- there was one adventure, to, that -- Then they -- I think they had the Norseman and the -- so the float plane could shuttle to Bettles and again carry the stuff. And then the Norseman could take most people and gear back. and then the float plane -- was it the float plane? Yeah, I guess it was -- that -- I'm not sure whether it was the float plane, it was a small plane that I had -- it might have been a -- I think it might have been a three --a two -- a pilot and two passengers. And a Cub of some kind. And it might have been on wheels. I think it was because I remember landing at Weeks Field. That's where we had started out from, and you can't land there with a float plane.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DAVID KLEIN: And so, then it was -- the weather wasn't good, it was raining, and overcast and the forecast was not too good. And I think they -- the Bettles Field had radio contact with Fairbanks, and the Fairbanks weather was clearing okay, but there was -- I don't know whether it was just starting another rainy period or what, but the pilot was eager to get back before the weather fouled up Fairbanks. And he -- but he didn't have instruments for flying in if he couldn't see the ground, and he -- Yeah, I think I was sitting up beside him, and I remember -- No, I guess I was in back. And maybe it was only two passenger because I think I was the only passenger. And we took off, and this -- he wanted to get back before it got dark, too. And it was pushing it late in the season like that. And we took off and the visibility wasn't all that great because of the raining and we -- he was having a hard time keeping track of where he was. And then we were flying in this stream valley and it was hilly, and he turned around and he says, "Can you see which way that water is flowing?" So I realized -- and we'd been kind of -- and he was trying to get over these hilly areas and I don't know whether it was the White Mountains or not, but it was -- I was really concerned because I figured, how's he -- If he doesn't know where he is, how does he know where he's going? I don't -- I think he -- I don't know whether -- he may not have even had a radio in the plane, and so -- And he wasn't all that experienced obviously a pilot. And so I was really concerned and glued my eyes on things. And he finally got in what he considered was a dangerous situation and so he figured he had to go up through the clouds, which he did. And you weren't supposed to do that. He had some ability to do that, but he didn't have good instruments. And so he did. He figured if it's clear in Fairbanks and -- and so we went up above the clouds, and yeah, the clouds were not all that thick. So we were up about five thousand feet and we got over, and broke out, and then I felt, phew, relieved because we're out of -- and couldn't see any mountains sticking up, we were over the mountains apparently. And we didn't go too much longer and it was starting to get dark and then I -- in the distance you could see the lights of Fairbanks. It was still a long way to go, but I felt pretty secure once -- and so did he. And he was fully oriented at that time. So that was a little unnerving. I hadn't had a lot of flying experience, but I knew that there was -- it was tough in those days without a lot of navigational aids at the airports and beacons and what. So that was great to get back.

KAREN BREWSTER: That was quite exciting.

DAVID KLEIN: Yeah.

KAREN BREWSTER: What was your impression of being up there at Wild Lake?

DAVID KLEIN: Impression?

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

DAVID KLEIN: Oh, it was like Nirvana. I mean, I was learning so much about the

animals and the environment and becoming hooked on the mountain terrain. And fascinated with Alpine ungulates, and mountain sheep particularly. Well, that's what -- but there were a few caribou in that area, but mostly we didn't get to see them too much or to hunt them. But the moose, you know, there were moose, and we'd get one. And you'd see signs of wolf sign, and wolf tracks on the mountains, and occasionally a bear track. We never -- we didn't have any bears coming around the camp. And -- But it was exciting, and you could go down with the boat -- go down to the outlet and it was good grayling fishing there. And so we ate a lot of fish, especially before we got the sheep. And it was -- It was a wonderful experience for me. It was like nothing I'd ever dreamed of when I was in Connecticut. That I'd have that wonderful kind of experience.

KAREN BREWSTER: It sounds like you were very fortunate.

DAVID KLEIN: Yeah, I was.

KAREN BREWSTER: There were no other cabins or anything else on the lake at the time?

DAVID KLEIN: Yup. There was directly across, there was another bachelor prospector that had been there for some years. And we didn't see anything of him because I think he was up on the stream away from the lake at the time prospecting and developing what -- his area. But, you know, I remember reading Robert Marshall's Arctic Village about -- he went -- joined up with Frank Young and his Indian wife and comments about how she -- They had dog teams, and she considered it her job to feed those dogs. And they going -- She would set snares for hares and there were enough hares. She would always have plenty of hares for the dogs and sometimes there was some left over for them to eat. You think about nowadays, I mean they didn't -- they lived off the land, but they had dogs and they were dependent upon them and they could -- I don't know what they used in the wintertime. They probably made trips back to the Koyukuk River, Bettles, where she was from, and would maybe fish themselves or put up salmon and use that for themselves. And then have it flown up when they went back up there.

KAREN BREWSTER: So they were living at Wild Lake?

DAVID KLEIN: Yup.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh, okay.

DAVID KLEIN: Or they might've waited 'til winter and come down with the dog team and picked up the fish for the dogs and them.

KAREN BREWSTER: So when you were at Wild Lake, were Frank Young and his wife living there?

DAVID KLEIN: Well, I never got to see them because we had to go up to the head of the lake and that was a few miles of rowing. And mostly we were busy. And we were at this

other place, which had been recommended by Frank Young as a nice place. I forget the name of this stream. I think it was -- it might have been Seward Creek, but I don't remember.

KAREN BREWSTER: So Frank and his wife were way up at on the other end of the lake? But they lived at Wild Lake?

DAVID KLEIN. Yeah. Yeah.

KAREN BREWSTER: Okay. You don't remember her name do you?

DAVID KLEIN: No, but it's probably in the --

KAREN BREWSTER: Probably in Bob Marshall's book.

DAVID KLEIN: Yeah.

KAREN BREWSTER: Well. Yeah. Sounds like an amazing time.

DAVID KLEIN: It was.

KAREN BREWSTER: I think we'll --

DAVID KLEIN: I think I met Frank Young back in Fairbanks when I was up -- when I came back again to be a student. Just coincidentally had the chance to meet him.

KAREN BREWSTER: So this cabin you built was intended to be a lodge, or -- ?

DAVID KLEIN: It was like the first cabin for the idea of building a lodge. And it was somewhat of a dream for Tony. But after we came back, we had -- we still had a debt to pay on the air charter. And so Chris and I went back to work with Tony. And he had one job I remember putting cedar shakes on the outside of a house in Graehl, I think it was. And, but it was getting into early October. And temperatures were really getting cold. Oh, it was really tough going. The main thing was in those days you didn't have nail guns or anything like that. You had to have work gloves and pick your nails -- take your nails out of your pouch and for these -- and it took so much longer to do it than if -- And we could still do good work, but -- And then periodically you'd have to go inside and warm up your hands again, and come back out. And warm up our gloves as well, because you couldn't use mitts, you know, to handle these nails, and the -- the nails for the shakes are smaller.

KAREN BREWSTER: Small nail?

DAVID KLEIN: Yeah. So, that was tough. But -- And we were getting good pay to do this and that was important. I figured that I was going to -- I'm not going to stick with this. The whole plan was that Tony and everyone was going to split. Chris was going to

go back to -- at least for the winter to Oklahoma. And Tony was going to go to California, where he was from, for the winter. He wasn't going to go back up there in the wintertime. He was going to go to California, because he had some family there, and spend the winter there. And there's no, virtually no work in the winter, for what we were doing. We did the shakes and we did some interior finishing on a house that was being remodeled and they did the bathroom, I think, which was sort of a new experience for Chris and I. But we could do it, with the finish work. And then Tony was working with us, too, and -- But it was understood that we'd all split, and they asked -- well I had probably already explained, that I decided that I wanted to go back, and go to the university and study wildlife biology and management because I felt Alaska was a place for me. And I was just going to have to find a job or something because I couldn't afford to drive back. I didn't have the money to drive all the way back or the time. And so I -- As soon as we paid our bills and we finished that shake job and the interior thing and there was not much potential of anything else and they were planning to split, too. And we paid off our charter bill, and I said, "Well, I think I don't want to stick together on the idea of a partnership on the lodge. I think I need to go to school and that's what my calling is. And I'm gonna find a job somewhere." So then I immediately went to -- up to the experimental farm. And luckily, yeah, they said, "If you want to be a helper for the dairy deal and shovel the manure, and feed them, and help with the milking." The guy that was the dairyman was a really nice guy. He was a bachelor, but he was about in his mid or late 40s, I think.

KAREN BREWSTER: So what happened with Tony? Did he ever do the lodge?

DAVID KLEIN: Then I lost touch because when I -- he wasn't back when I left in the springtime to drive back to Connecticut. And we didn't -- he didn't have a permanent address that I knew of. And I lost touch with all of these people. Doc, and Barbara, and -- Ed Was, I did see because he was back there in Connecticut, and with him -- But I got back, but, no I didn't. I just lost touch. The same with in the military, you know.

KAREN BREWSTER: So you don't know if Tony ever did his lodge up at Wild Lake?

DAVID KLEIN: I know he didn't. Because I have -- other people have told me that know a lot about the history. What happened at Wild Lake was -- When the pipeline -- when the oil was discovered at Prudhoe Bay, that Wild Lake had been selected under the Statehood -- all of this area around the lake as potential lots had been selected by the state, which happened before the -- partly because there was already these two mining operations there. and there'd been follow up people that bought out Frank Young's place and the Meaders, who -- Have you heard about them?

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

DAVID KLEIN: Yeah. So at any rate, that -- Then I heard that they had subdivided this, and then these oil workers making big bucks, a lot of them that had airplanes bought the lots. But a lot of it was speculation. But some of them built cabins and fly in cabins, but most of these oil workers were, you know, left after their pipeline was built and things

like that.

KAREN BREWSTER: Did Helmricks [Bud] have a place on Wild Lake, or that was on a different lake?

DAVID KLEIN: It was on North Slope. So he was up – actually on the delta of the – [Colville River delta]

KAREN BREWSTER: No, he had some place on a lake, too.

DAVID KLEIN: Yeah, he did, that's right. That was a different lake. I think it was Chandler?

KAREN BREWSTER: I don't remember which lake. I thought it was Wild, but maybe not.

DAVID KLEIN: I don't think he ever was at Wild Lake.

KAREN BREWSTER: Not when you were there anyway.

DAVID KLEIN: Yeah, but I don't – I wasn't -- kept track of him, too. And others. But I - - and I flew over there once when I was a student and we were doing a caribou survey up in the Arctic and we coming back from Anaktuvak Pass and we -- he flew over there. He knew I was interested in that area. And there was – you could see a fleeting glimpse of the cabin, but there was no evidence of any other activity right in that area. But I think since then, there has been. That that was -- we hadn't proved up on it or anything, so I think it -- but I don't know all of the details on that.

KAREN BREWSTER: You don't know how he had permission to build --? If he had permission to build on that land. He didn't claim a homestead lot or something?

DAVID KLEIN: There was some legislation in territorial times and in early statehood that called -- that you could go out, and if it was state land, or public domain land before statehood, before Native Claims Settlement [Act], you could get a commercial -- for commercial development you could get land. And a lodge qualified for that.

KAREN BREWSTER: It was a commercial, yeah, it was a trade and manufacturing site. It was art of the Homestead Act.

DAVID KLEIN: You got it, yup.

KAREN BREWSTER: But, yeah, you needed to prove up on it.

DAVID KLEIN: Yup.

KAREN BREWSTER: So you never went back to Wild Lake after that?

DAVID KLEIN: I've never been back there. And for awhile I thought I really don't want to go back and see all of this development there. But it wasn't as much as I thought it was when -- You know, it was all subdivided, and lots they were all being sold now, and all the people are , and I thought, "Ah, damn."

KAREN BREWSTER: Who knows if they actually did it or not.

DAVID KLEIN: Well, they didn't all develop but they did some, and I don't know, maybe, it's obvious it's still a beautiful place. And the mining is, I think, phased out. Yeah. That phased out by the Meader's time.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah, it didn't prove to be a successful mining spot. The Meaders were there in the '60's maybe, early '70s something like that. I can't remember exactly.

DAVID KLEIN: They were there in the late '60s, I think. In the early '70s, yeah. Because I remember meeting them. We used to get together when they were through here at Fred Deans and Dogpatch. Where they hung out. Yeah.

KAREN BERWSTER: Well, I think we should call it a night.

DAVID KLEIN: I do, too.

KAREN BREWSTER: Okay.

[END TAPE 3]