

Name: Dr. David Klein
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Interviewer: Karen Brewster

Brief Summary of Interview: Dr. Klein shares a story about leaving Alaska to go to college at the University of Connecticut, and back to Alaska to work a summer at Kenai Moose Range under Dave Spencer.

KAREN BREWSTER: So today is February 6, 2014. This is Karen Brewster and Dave Klein, continuing on our journey through Dave's life. And looking back at my notes from when we left off back in December, you had finished talking about being at Wild Lake. And that takes us back to leaving Alaska and going back down to Connecticut, correct?

DAVID KLEIN: Right.

KAREN BREWSTER: Take it away.

DAVID KLEIN: Okay so I was -- had to stay over winter because I didn't have enough money to go back to Connecticut, but knew I had to go back and go to the university. So I had already corresponded and they said, because my high school grades were 'C' average, that I would have to take exams even though I was a resident technically of Connecticut. To go to the University of Connecticut. So I was gung-ho now. I knew what I wanted to do and had the motivation and had taken a couple of courses here up at the University of Alaska here in College -- or Fairbanks. And interest courses, but also bonehead courses to improve my math that I had -- Algebra, I remember I hadn't done very well in high school and figured I better do all those -- improve those. Which I did. And I had this Model A Ford, which was up on blocks most of the winter, and then got that into going condition. And was ready to leave in just about the 1st of June, after breakup. But, ooh, what happened. That was a big flood year in Fairbanks.

KAREN BREWSTER: What year was that?

DAVID KLEIN: '48. 1948. And so it was spring break up, and not only here but it was all along the highway -- Fairbanks -- I'd drove downtown a few times and you had to drive really slow because you were driving in water about 10 inches deep. And they didn't want you to make waves because they had sand bags around the railroad station and the other places to keep the water from going into the basements as much as possible. And the road -- highway was closed.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh.

DAVID KLEIN: Because it washed out in several places on the way to Delta. And then in Yukon Territory the bridges were washed out. So we were delayed about ten days before the water subsided enough. Which is, gosh, when you want – when you’ve got a long trip like that ahead of you, that was frustrating. I had two students who wanted to ride with me and share the gas prices, which was a great deal. And one of them was -- I can’t recall his name, and the other one was a girl, a woman. I’ll think of her name, too. She was an upper division junior or senior and she was really a tall, attractive woman who was engaged to another student. And was athletic. And this other guy lived in Portland, Oregon. So the plan was he would ride down as far as that. She would go down -- I forgot where she was from. I think it was the west coast. Her family. And she was going out because her sister was going to get married and she wanted to be out for the marriage. And I think it might have been Seattle or it might have been someplace else. Portland or someplace. So we took off. They got the roads temporarily repaired. We made it to Whitehorse and then the road was closed because they still hadn’t repaired a major bridge. They had to put down pilings, you know, and build the whole bridge from scratch again. And so they said “It’ll be a couple of days.” And that was -- we had a tent, we camped out. And it was really interesting in town because they were getting ready to launch these riverboats on the [Yukon River], right there at Whitehorse.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DAVID KLEIN: And about the second day we were there, we heard, yeah it’s going to be exciting because they get them all ready and there’s a big turnout of people to watch it and they have these -- they’re on these skids down into the river. And everything is teamwork and the workers are there and then they have these wooden chocks that are keeping the boat there while they were working on it or until the ice went out. And they get everything ready to go and the boats all ship shape. And then they time this thing. They blow a whistle and they knock -- it takes about three of them because it’s so long on these skids. And knock those blocks out at the same time with a sledge hammer, and then they start sliding slowly down. They gain a little momentum and they go right into the water, and there’s a wave. Not a big one, but a wave. You know there’s cheering and everything.

KAREN BREWSTER: How exciting, yeah.

DAVID KLEIN: They did two of the riverboats and that was exciting. And, you know, Whitehorse was a unique place like Fairbanks was in those days. Probably even more unique. So we enjoyed being there. The weather was nice and camped out and we could get food and stuff. And then, I’ll have to admit I was getting more and more attracted to this gal, and she to me, I think. And then she -- when they weren’t getting the bridge done, she wasn’t going to make it if she went with us in time for the wedding. So she telegraphed her parents and they sent her some money to fly down, which was -- you

know there weren't many flights from Whitehorse, but she was able to do that. So we had to see her off. I thought maybe in the long run, that's best, cuz our lives were going in different directions. And so Ed -- Ed something or other, was the guy that was with me, and he was a good guy. Very quiet and we got along fine. But then -- We had no trouble coming up the year before. No major problems. We had one flat tire all the way from Connecticut. Up in -- there was a nail and we got that straightened out. But going down, we're driving along and suddenly it stops hitting on four cylinders, only three. And so I pulled over. And you're out there in the middle of wilderness with no facilities or services to speak of. And I knew this engine well. And did all the diagnoses and I couldn't figure it out, for a while. And I said, "Well, probably it's -- It must be a valve." And so we took off the -- undid the spark plug and I had this other guy hold in there and we disengaged the other spark plug so it wouldn't fire. And then I turned over the engine with a crank, which we had, in front slowly. And I wanted him to feel whether the valves were going up and down. He could do that after a little trial and error. And the valves were all going up and down. And then he said, "But the piston isn't going up and down." Well, he couldn't understand how that could be possible because you're turning over this thing. The crank shaft, all these pistons, are going up and down as you turned it over. This one piston that wasn't firing was not -- I mean -- there was spark there but there was a problem when, you know -- And so we figured well, that's -- something's wrong there. But, it wasn't a major crisis in terms of its -- you'd know if it's a major problem you would have heard all the metal grinding and stuff like that. It didn't have that, it just stopped running. So we took the head off. And you have to have a gasket and stuff. And had all the tools and we saw what the problem was that the top of the piston, which is made out of aluminum, and had a ring, where you have rings in. And it had broken. The top had broken off right at one of those rings. So the rest of the piston was going up and down. And it pushed this up to the top and it'd just sit there.

KAREN BREWSTER: It was disconnected.

DAVID KLEIN: It was disconnected. So that's why it wasn't working. But figured well, we're going to have to go on three cylinders it looks like, until we can get it some place where we can get another piston put in there. And we were still -- hadn't reached the highest point on the highway. And figured, "Oh man, we have to gear down with three cylinders to make it up the hills." And so I tried to psych out the whole thing. I said, "Okay, well, we want that to be closed so we wanted to take that piece out because if it twisted it could break and could get bind and could destroy the engine." And the others were going up and down fine without the top on it. But it couldn't work because it was open. So figured, well, probably -- the problem was also you would get gases coming back in there and then they would fire through the manifold. And you could get a slow burn, you know, sounded like a train letting off the steam. So we took that out and then I cut a piece of metal can, and put it right there to cover it up so there's this metal there.

And then put the gasket down and put the whole thing on and then disengaged the spark plug so it wouldn't fire. And then we took off. Well, we didn't go very far when we got a backfire through the manifold. And that pressure blew that thing. Twisted it a little bit. And it's just thin metal, so it's not a big deal if it's up there. And the engine still ran on three cylinders. But you'd go for about five miles and then, you know -- You could gear down if you were on level or slightly downhill and go along at a pretty good speed. But with any grade, you had to shift down. And steep grades, you had to go lowest and just plug away to get up the hill. So we made it up to the top and there was a gas station there. And, you know, there was a possibility that they might be able to do something, but it was only gas. And they didn't know anything about anything else. And so they said the best bet is Fort Nelson, which was down the highway quite a ways, but it was downhill going into British Columbia. And where they had an airstrip and a post office, and a trading post, and they said there's a garage there, a good garage there. And so we took off. And so it wasn't too bad going downhill. But it was every five miles, you'd get this -- some of these oil fumes from the crankcase mixing with the gas and then a backfire and it would sound like a steam engine letting off. It would ignite. And you look in the rearview mirror and this big cloud of smoke would come out and after a hundred yards or so -- The engine's still running. It's all taken care of until another five miles, and you get enough of this explosive -- But it was still going and we didn't have any other alternatives really.

KAREN BREWSTER: So when you say you gear down and you're running on three cylinders, you just have to drive slower, is that -- ?

DAVID KLEIN: If you're going uphill you definitely do, but if you're going on the level, no. You couldn't go too fast on the highway anyway. So we got there to Fort Nelson, and there was this gas station right there as you turned into the village off the highway and it was closed. And there was a sign on it saying "Closed." And so we went into the trading post and post office, and we told them our problem. And they said, "Well, the guy that runs the gas station is on a drunk. He's down in his cabin probably sleeping. And chances are you could use his ramp outside if you asked him. He's a good guy, he might even loan you tools if you need them. But probably your best bet is to telephone the Ford dealer in Edmonton and tell them what you need, the cylinder, and they can ship it up on the mail plane." Which was due in about three days or something like that. So that was our only alternative. We did that. Called them. They helped us get through on the telephone lines and yeah they had that Model A Ford. Then they had replacement cylinder and rings, and sent it up. It would come up on the mail plane, they checked on that. Of course they were used to doing these kinds of things in those days. So we hung around and then the -- finally arrived, pretty close to on schedule, like three days later or something. And of course we were already late getting out.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DAVID KLEIN: At any rate we got it, went down there and we'd also contacted this guy that was on a drunk, and "Yeah, yeah, yeah, you guys --" And we pretty much had the tools that we needed. We might have borrowed one or two. But it was right in the peak of mosquito season now. It was terrible. And you're on this outdoor ramp and you'd be down there and your hands were all greasy and mosquitoes. You just had to rub them off. And we had something like citronella. It was the only thing we had which wasn't very effective. That was pretty rough. But we toughed it out. And this Ed was handy to help when you needed two people. And he was a good guy. He wasn't too good of a mechanic, but he was a good guy. So we got it apart, put it back together again, and put the gasket back on and hoped that -- when you took that off you want to be careful you didn't destroy that because we didn't have a new gasket. But we did it. And I had some special sealant and put it back together and started it up and took off again. So then we went down -- then it was running fine again. The big problem then on was the brakes. On that Model A Ford, it didn't have -- it had levers that were separate axel between the front wheels and then another one between the back wheels, and then there were rods. And there was a bar that stuck up there so that when you pushed down on the brakes in the car, you were pushing -- there was no hydraulic or anything like that then. It was just the harder you pushed the harder it would squeeze the brake deals. But if you were going fast, it would -- you couldn't stop very quickly, but you could stop. And then the -- but the problem was that if you're coming downhill or something and it wouldn't stop and you were getting -- it was just the weight and we weren't going very fast and you push so damn hard and then bingo, you break one of these arms. It was cast iron. And then you were in a bad way, because then the back wheels -- if it was the front wheel, the back brakes would work and the front wheels you had to -- would just pull on that one side and on a gravel road, that's a disaster, you know. You start spinning right away. In loose gravel or muddy. So then you have to get under there and disconnect the front and deal with only the back wheels, which were -- none of them were all that good to begin with. So then you had to learn to gear down when you're coming downhill, and slow way down to put it in low gear and then gradually apply the brakes and even then it took you a long distance to slow down to a stop. Well, then we got down -- got through British Columbia and into -- maybe a little bit of Alberta, and went into Idaho. And International Falls was the next town. And by that time, the brakes were so bad and we had these steep hills and we had all these mountains now to go through. And so we had to stop and get them to weld these things back together. They could do that. But the cost is a factor too. We didn't have all much money to make it all the way back to Connecticut. And so we stopped and the engine was starting to knock. And it was a different kind of knock, then it was the valves. So we stopped at a nice guy's -- a repair place, and it was only one in the town, I think. It wasn't a very big town then. And they could do the welding. And we said, "Well, what will it cost us to do -- ?" We asked them, "What's this knocking noise?" And they listened and they said, "Well, you probably need some valve work,

too. And then it might be the main bearing.” And the cheapest thing just to do the valve job would have been three days or so. It would be like two hundred bucks. I didn’t have that kind of money. So I figured, I got to make it to Spokane. And then the realistic thing is to sell the car and take a bus back home. And Spokane was pretty close to Portland, so the guy would make it home on the bus from there. So that’s what I did. And it was disappointing because I was getting attached to this roadster. But I didn’t have much options. So then I just -- you could -- someplace you could drive up by a post or gas station and you could park your car there and put a “For Sale” sign on it. And you had to be there, sit around and wait, maybe someone would stop. So it took me a couple of days after Ed had taken the bus and I didn’t have a clue whether it was going to sell or not. But I didn’t have any other alternatives. And finally some guy stopped and he wanted -- because the body was really top notch and it was a top that you could put down, and it was still in good condition. And it was a nice looking thing. And some guy that wanted to work on the motor, it was a good deal. I sold it for about two hundred bucks, which was -- if I’d gotten it back to Connecticut and got it fixed, I could have sold it probably for five hundred. But any rate, I had to do that and then bought a ticket, a Greyhound ticket and went -- I still wanted to stop at Yosemite National Park, and one other one there in California. And the Redwoods, and --

KAREN BREWSTER: And Kings Canyon? Sequoia Kings Canyon.

DAVID KLEIN: Yeah. And then I went through the south, which wasn’t the greatest because in New Orleans the temperature was about a hundred and the humidity terrible. And I stayed in the cheapest hotel I could I find, and it was -- you had to open the window. And there was no air conditioning. And then it had all this noise and you just sweat, you know. On the buses it wasn’t so bad because you’re moving and you’d get air movement. So I made it back. And then got a job at a small -- at a family dairy that were doing all of the processing, delivery of milk and etc. And worked there for the remainder of the summer. And then that was not too far from the university. And my mother and sister and her husband and family were living together in the hometown. And I’d get home there on weekends and stuff. And then, oh, once I got back there I needed a car, of course. But I think I got a loan from my mom for a couple hundred bucks and had -- and bought a Model B Ford Coupe and that was a pretty good deal. And it was in good condition. And that was about a 1933 model. The Model A was the last year of the -- Model A was the 1931 Model. So then I had a car and then I went to the university. And at the university, I --

KAREN BREWSTER: So how long did it take you that whole trip coming back?

DAVID KLEIN: I never have calculated days, but I’ve got some notes. I think I’ve got notes.

KAREN BREWSTER: Were you gone a month, you were gone -- ?

DAVID KLEIN: No, I was probably gone about a month total.

KAREN BREWSTER: So it took about a month.

DAVID KLEIN: Right.

KAREN BREWSTER: Do you remember about how long did it take to drive up here originally?

DAVID KLEIN: It was like 20 days, or 21 days. About three weeks.

KAREN BREWSTER: So you lost a week, that's not so bad. Didn't take you --

DAVID KLEIN: Maybe. But of course the bus made better time than we did.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh, okay.

DAVID KLEIN: Yeah. I'm not sure. I'm just estimating. I could look it up.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah, the way you tell the story, it sounds like it took all summer.

DAVID KLEIN: I know. Well, when we left Whitehorse, we were waiting and you know we'd check with the RCMP about the road and they'd say, "Well, they're still working on -- they're starting -- they should have finished the pilings and they're starting to lay the planking for the bridge. So we expect it'll be pretty close." And so we said, "Well, we wanted to get started." And they said, "We don't advise it because there may be -- there was still flooding from the breakup and washouts." And we said, "Well, we wanted to go." And they said, "This one place that the road is washing out, before the bridge, now it's flooding and the culvert is not thawed. And there won't be anybody there right away because they're so busy at other places." So we took off anyway. We figured we could stop and camp wherever and wait. And we hit this place where -- fortunately it was where the culvert was blocked and the road turned and it was on a -- and the water was flowing over this. It wasn't too steep of gradient, so -- it was nice, clear water too from a stream. It was flowing over the road and so it was about this deep.

KAREN BREWSTER: Like three feet?

DAVID KLEIN: And so we got out. And we had hiking boots, but we just waded through there and checked it out. And yeah, it was -- it looked like it was -- the part of it that was washing out was left -- the part left was wide enough for the car. So we started driving through. And we only made it just past that one spot and then it flooded out with the water splashing up. We should have taken the fan belt off because it was pumping up

and spraying this water. And it probably would have worked if we'd taken the fan belt off or disengaged it. So then we got out and the two of us pushed it. And it was light enough, you know, and we're in water this deep.

KAREN BREWSTER: Up to your knees.

DAVID KLEIN: And you could steer it and stay on the side. And it wasn't all that hard because we didn't -- it was a very slight gradient. And so we pushed it through. And then stopped and opened up the hood and wiped out all the water on everything and spark plugs and got the engine started again and then we took off. And then we had to wait at the bridge for the last two or three planks to be put on. We had to wait an hour or two, which wasn't a big deal. That was interesting. I think I took a picture in showing this work. And then they got them fixed and we were among the first two or three cars going across the bridge. And then from then on, we didn't have any more problems with the road. It was the car and the brakes.

KAREN BREWSTER: And what about flat tires?

DAVID KLEIN: Didn't have any. It had good tires, new tires when I left Connecticut. And we had two spares. But we never had to -- And part of it was you could -- don't drive too fast on gravel roads. And in those days they didn't use crushed gravel, so they were all mostly rounded so they're not as hard as the course gravel later on they were putting on there. They'd just eat up a tire so fast.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah right. Did you have the option to drive to Skagway and get on a ferry? No?

DAVID KLEIN: No, there was no ferry system then.

KAREN BREWSTER: Okay.

DAVID KLEIN: No ferry system. There were no other options.

KAREN BREWSTER: Okay.

DAVID KLEIN: And the Haines Cut-Off hadn't been built then. That was a few years later. Or so, then, the Hazelton Highway -- You had to go through Dawson Creek. So there were no other routes.

KAREN BREWSTER: Okay so you --

DAVID KLEIN: And there was still a ferry on the Peace River that you had to take, both going up and going back, because they didn't get around building a bridge there for a couple years later. It's a really wide crossing. But it's a real big bridge project. But it was

a ferry. It was interesting. A cable ferry where they used the current to move the ferry back and forth. And it could take eight or ten -- maybe six cars at a time. The most.

KAREN BREWSTER: Well, it was probably not like there was a huge amount of traffic.

DAVID KLEIN: No.

KAREN BREWSTER: No.

DAVID KLEIN: No, there wasn't a huge amount of traffic.

KAREN BREWSTER: Okay, so you got back to Connecticut and you worked on this dairy farm and then you started at the university that fall?

DAVID KLEIN: I started in that fall and I was able to --

KAREN BREWSTER: So this is fall of '47?

DAVID KLEIN: -- through a connection with a former elementary school teacher where I went to elementary school in Buckland, that little town. She had roomed with us and she was always interested in my well-being. And so she had a -- knew I was interested in and had experience in farming, and had been interested in farming at one time. And she made the connection with the county agent, agricultural county agent that lived about five miles from the university. And he was renting -- or leasing a dairy farm, but he was working -- he had an 8 to 5 job. So he had about four or five milking cows and maybe a total of ten cows. And he wanted to have someone to live in there and they would provide room and board with his family. And he would sometimes be available to help getting started the milking in the morning and then I'd usually have to do the milking at around five. Well, as soon as I came home from school. And feed, and clean up, and wash up the milk. They had a milking machine. And then I would -- they provided meals, family style. They had two young boys and the mom was a very good cook. So it was kind of nice. The only problem was my schedule was -- I had to get up really early in the morning and then I had to go to bed relatively early to get enough sleep. And getting homework done was -- I ended up doing a lot of homework between classes at the university. I'd drive there, so there was no -- for me, you know, a freshman, there was no socializing. I didn't know anybody else. And I was an outsider, which was good, I knew that. I had to do it. Plus I was mature enough now that I realized I got to study like hell and do well.

KAREN BREWSTER: So how old were you at this point?

DAVID KLEIN: So I'd spent -- I'd graduated -- when I graduated high school I was 18. I enlisted in the Navy and I spent a year in the Navy. And then after I got out I spent a

year working for the state forestry department just doing woods work. And then went to Alaska after that year. And spring again and spent a year in Alaska. So that's --

KAREN BREWSTER: So 19, 20 --

DAVID KLEIN: So how many years is that? 18, 19, 20, 21.

KAREN BREWSTER: 21.

DAVID KLEIN: Yeah 21.

KAREN BREWSTER: So you were 21, 22. Well, your birthday's in May, so I guess you're 21.

DAVID KLEIN: Yeah.

KAREN BREWSTER: So yeah, you were an older freshman.

DAVID KLEIN: Oh yeah. And I had all this experience in Alaska. Attended -- taken courses at the University of Alaska, which other students didn't know much about. And I had learned so much. One of my electives was geology, which I was interested in. And I creamed it because I had seen all these things in Alaska. You know the glaciers, and meandering rivers and the dynamics of mountains and stuff. And the professor was a good guy. He questioned me quite a bit about, "You sure you don't want do a geology major?"

KAREN BREWSTER: It didn't work though, huh?

DAVID KLEIN: No.

KAREN BREWSTER: You stuck with wildlife?

DAVID KLEIN: I stuck with wildlife. and the professor was a good guy. He had only been there for a short time, but it was in the forestry program. So some of the courses I took were more forestry. Which were good. And the people -- There were top-notch forestry people, professors. And he was the only wildlife person. There were a lot more forestry students than wildlife. But he was a real mentor and he -- you know, he saw that I had interests and capabilities so he wanted to know if I wanted to try for an honors program for undergraduate honors. And not only wanted to, but he said, "You should do this. And you can do it." So he said, "You have to do a research project of some kind." And he suggested a study of a cedar swamp, which was only four miles or so from the university. It was a white cedar and it was an old, you know, historically, it must have been a lake bed during the post-glacial period. And then because it was just poor drainage so there was a lot of build-up in the thousands of years. 12,000 years or so since the glacier receded. There was a lot of peat there, but the cedar is sort of like a relic from

further north. And so there were snowshoe hares there where there weren't in other places in Connecticut. There're cottontail rabbits, but not snowshoe hares. And so I did sort of an ecological study, which included snaring some hares. And I used -- And it was a challenge for me. I used a traditional native method of bending a sapling over and then making a snare out of wood. And then the hare would go through on a trail and then it'd trip this trigger and it'd spring up and then choke it.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh, it's not the circle kind that they jump through?

DAVID KLEIN: No, yeah, they would try to go through it but the head would go through and then -- like if there was bush there, it would just force its way through because there'd be this opening and it was along the trail. But when they did this, they triggered this thing to pull it and it would get them around the neck and choke them. And so they would either be dead and hanging there a little bit, but it wasn't -- sometimes they'd be hanging if it was a strong enough deal. And it wasn't real cold weather. You know, there was snow on the ground, but if it was real cold, the tree would be frozen and wouldn't pop back up. But you know, I read all this in Boy Scout manuals and things. And so --

KAREN BREWSTER: So what was the name of that professor who was your mentor?

DAVID KLEIN: Franklin McKaimey.[sp?]

KAREN BREWSTER: Do you know how to spell that?

DAVID KLEIN: M-C-K, I think, A-I-M-E-Y.

KAREN BREWSTER: M-E-Y, okay.

DAVID KLEIN: And he was definitely a good mentor and a good advisor. And in that project I got -- I was taking courses, other courses in botany and I took one course in agronomy. The professor in agronomy -- I wasn't all that interested in agronomy, but it was a course that I needed. And I needed some botany courses, so I took systemic botany. And I was almost like a minor in botany. And then in the forestry, I had classes in tree -- forest identification. So this professor in agronomy was a senior professor. He was close to retirement so he was probably in his sixties. And he was interested in the project I was doing there. And so I was advised by my wildlife professor to go and talk to him. And I did. And he said, "Well, what about the history of that cedar swamp?" And I said, "Vague idea about it, but not much because I hadn't studied that. I was thinking about the flooding things there." And he said, "Well, it would be nice to find out how old that is and how deep the sediments are there." And I said, "Well, how can I do that?" And he said, "Well, you can probe it." And he said, "I can probably get the university machine shop to make a probe that -- in sections that you screw together." So it was like steel rods

that were smaller than your little finger. And so they would be only 6 feet. Each one 6 feet. And you could have several of those. And he said, "Yeah, I can get them to do that and it won't be any cost to you. And we could use them maybe in the future." So I said, "Yeah, that sounds good." And he said, "Yeah, I'd like to go out there with you." He lived in sort of faculty housing with a family and he had teenage kids. And he said, yeah, so on one of the weekends coming up, that would be -- yeah, let's do it. And I had my Model B Ford then. And so he said -- and that had a rumble seat. So he said, "Yeah, I'd like to go along and I can --" And I said, "Well yeah, I'd like your advice as to where to do all this." But I knew the place, cuz I'd walked through it and it was a very strange place. It was where you could easily get lost unless you used a compass. And there were roads all around it, but they were just little wood roads and an occasional house. It's all changed now. So before that -- Before that happened I was out there on a weekend, as was often the case. Instead of going home to visit at home, I was working on this project or I'd spend, say Saturday, and then go home. I lived about forty miles from the university. So this time, it was a Saturday morning I went out there by myself and I had hip boots because I know I was going through this marshy area. And there were like sphagnum ponds with this really shallow ones, and white spruce. It was really nice. It was fascinating for me, but you could see it could be kind of eerie if you're in there when there wasn't too much sunlight. And so I was walking through there and I didn't know exactly where I was, but I walked by one of these ponds and there's a skeleton there.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh, my goodness.

DAVID KLEIN: It's a human skeleton. And so I looked and here's a rope hanging from a leaning tree. A clothesline like rope that had looked like it had been used to hang one's self. And then this skeleton had fallen down and then decomposed. So it was obvious it was a long time ago. But there was a pair of big ol' army type hiking boots there close to a stump. And on the stump was draped an old wool overcoat, a wool coat, a long coat. And so I -- and I think even then I could see that there was a little bit of this rope around the vertebrae. But it was laid out straight, so you had this skeleton looking up at you. But there was -- it was long since the flesh decomposed. So then I reached in the pockets and this coat was laid so that it was obviously shedding. It was wool, heavy wool. And there was this letter and glasses in a glass case in the pocket. And this letter. And I opened it up and it was post marked and it was written to this -- apparently this guy about his relatives in Czechoslovakia. And that he was -- apparently had corresponded and said that he was thinking about taking a boat, such and such a boat to Czechoslovakia or to Europe. And listed the name of the boat and the date on it. And so I took that letter and put it in my pocket and maybe I took the glasses, too. I don't remember. And so I hiked back out and I went -- drove back to this little road to the highway where there was a restaurant where we used to go as students, and have, you know, eat a meal there. It was like Italian style food then. And so there was a telephone there. So I figured I had to call

the police and let them know this. So I called up and it was Saturday. By then it was late morning and I said -- I got hold of a woman who was a dispatch. And I said, "I found a skeleton in the cedar swamp where I'm doing a study." She said, "Oh yeah, well why are you calling us?" I said, "Well it's a skeleton out there. It's a human skeleton." "Oh, a human skeleton!"

KAREN BREWSTER: She thought you were telling her about a snowshoe hare skeleton.

DAVID KLEIN: And so she said, "Well, what are the details. And tell me exactly where it was." "I can't tell you, but I can show -- If you send a trooper out, I can show them where it is." "Okay." Well after that, but -- there's formal inspection right now, so they're all in their dress uniforms. I said, "Well, they should not come in their best clothes because it's rough going. And they should have hip boots and it should be -- there's sharp brush and stuff. It's not the best to come that way." So she said, "Okay." She contacted somebody and she maybe called back and said there'd be a trooper out there just within 45 minutes or something. So I had a little something to eat at the restaurant. And finally the trooper showed up and so, says, "Well, okay, let's go out." And so we started out there and he said --actually we had to call the coroner because if there's any [human remains] you have to have a coroner. And that -- they had contacted the coroner. And then they had to call a mortuary to pick this thing up. And so I -- first this trooper didn't know about whether to believe what I'd found. But I had this letter and the glasses and so then we took off. And I was leading the way with my car. And I go by another professor's house there who was my comparative anatomy -- he's a terrific guy, a real young guy. And he was out doing some yard work and it was just a little gravel road so it was a nice location for him. But it would change later with more houses. But we stopped and told him what we were doing and he says, "Oh, do you mind if I come along?" I said, "No." And the trooper said, "Yeah." And then there was a neighbor to him that wanted to come along, too, and help. Because I said we could probably use help because we've got to get in there and I'm not -- I was afraid I wouldn't be able to find this place. So the only thing I had was a red bandana I ripped into strips, and I would put it on a branch as I came out. Because it's all the same, and I wasn't sure exactly where I was anyway. And so I came out -- Well, we all got up there and the police -- And said, "Well, let's go but we really should wait for the coroner." But then he said, "But there's no telling how long it will take him to come. And then there'll be these people from the mortuary." And they were at some kind of a funeral. "So it'll be awhile. So let's go." So here I am, now I'm leading them back in and I don't really have a good fix on where I'm going. I knew where to start but once you got in there -- And so we'd go a little ways and then couldn't see the marker. So I said, "Keeps your eyes out. Let's move just so we're still close enough together that we don't get lost." And somebody said, "Oh yeah, there's a red one over there." So we'd go over there. And we get to this

one place, and we had a hard time finding the other one, and we were separated. And finally the -- well the reason I had gone back there -- This is important. The reason I'd gone back out there that Saturday is because I'd been up there one -- during the weekday in the afternoon and I had lost my field notebook with all my data in it. I should have recorded all this. So I'd lost that, and I went back in the hopes of maybe finding it. But I figured the odds weren't good but I didn't have any other option. So when we were going in there and then we got separated for a little bit, but we were keeping in voice contact. And we were looking for this red one, and the guy said, "Oh I think I found it. I found something." And I thought it was too soon to find the skeleton. And I said, "Well, what is it?" "I'm coming over." So he came over and he had my field notebook. And I was so damn lucky! [laughing] So then we took off and we found the skeleton. And then the coroner -- We heard honking. So the trooper had to go back. And he was a good soul, because he was still in dress uniform, but he did have hip boots. Went back, and then he guided the coroner in. And the coroner had a formal suit on and a long coat. It was springtime, but it was, you know, they were still wearing a long overcoat. And he had just conventional shoes. But he was -- he didn't mind getting his feet wet. We got in there -- he got in there and so I've got hip boots and I'm standing there and I'm pointing it out, and he's looking at things. And then he said, "Well, take a stick and see what -- if there's anything or rope around the neck." And I said, "Yeah." And I dug out some. And he said, "Yeah, that's there." So he could conclude pretty fast that this leaning tree and this guy had committed suicide apparently. And that's about all. Oh and he said, "Put the stick in the skull and hold it up so we see that there's not any injury on the skull."

KAREN BREWSWER: Right.

DAVID KLEIN: No, it was all in good shape. And put it back there. And so then he was satisfied. And then we heard honking again, and the undertakers came. And two guys. They were game people. They were used to dead people. And one of them was a big, little overweight, guy and the other was a smaller guy that was like Mutt and Jeff in size. And they were still -- had formal clothes that they had. They stripped down and took their ties off but they left their suit jacket and stuff. By this time it's getting nice and warm. And so they came in there and they had a body bag that zipped -- plastic body bag. It was sort of like Visqueen, but it wasn't all that good. So they figured, you know, just throw everything in there, including the overcoat, the wet soggy overcoat, the wet boots and all these bones. And anything else they found, too. Like they might have found a watch and maybe a few coins. And so they -- they got all this filled up. And by this time, the trooper's gone back and I said I'd stay there and go out with these undertakers, which I did. They only went just a short distance and a sharp stick ripped that thing open and all the bones came out. The language was not very good. And threw it in, and then they had to hold this thing walking closer together. Well, it's hard enough two guys with this bag with all these bones and you have to step on hummocks and things and try to avoid sticks

from the dead sticks on the trees. And this broke open about three times. By the time they got out, you know, it was just hard to keep all this stuff together. So any rate, we made it out and they just departed. So then -- This still isn't the end of the story because then we get back to this probing, because this was after I'd found this that we worked out this probing deal. So when I went to pick up the professor on the Saturday morning, I guess it was, to do the probing, he said to me, "Is it alright if my daughter and our son -- our daughter and a couple of their friends that are here -- And they had heard about this." It had gotten written up in the paper.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right, the skeleton.

DAVID KLEIN: And so they had heard about that. They wanted to go out there and see the spot. So I said, "Well, yeah." And they were, you know, energetic young teenagers. And so I had this rumble seat and we all crowded into my car, holding outside of the window, out of the passenger side, holding these rods because they're fairly long. And we drove out there, and we went in. And took a while to find that place again. But before we found it, we -- he told me after they were getting ready to go, that they wanted to see the spot. And I said, "Yeah, that's okay with me." So we went out and we first went to the best location that the professor suggested for probing. And we were -- we probed a long way and we had these rods down there about 20 feet or so. And could force it down and screw on another one and then finally pulled it all back up. So that worked out well. We got -- had it worked out like as he suggested. Then it was, "Now can we go to the spot?" So we went. It wasn't too far from that, and I found it again. I was getting to know the woods then.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah, it sounds like it.

DAVID KLEIN: And so we get to the spot and these kids are down there digging around with sticks. Oh they got a vertebrate. Another one. And oh look there's a few coins. They found a nickel, dime, a quarter, or something like that. They were so thrilled, especially a vertebrae.

KAREN BREWSTER: If you've got a bone.

DAVID KLEIN: Human vertebrae. And so they were really happy about the whole experience. And it was a fun time for them, and for me, too. And their dad, as well.

KAREN BREWSTER: Do you remember the name of that professor?

DAVID KLEIN: I can probably find it. And the other professor, that was the comparative anatomy professor. He -- I did well in that course. I got an A. And he -- the final exam came after this episode. And he said -- told my wildlife professor, "That guy has got a wonderful memory because -- " He spent a lot of time in the lab, but there's so

much memory involved in this. And he -- he must have been turned on too by this skeleton. And he said -- then he mentioned it to me and I said, "It's probably true." But I wasn't studying very much. Except out there.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DAVID KLEIN: I know where the vertebrae went.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right. So your study with this snowshoe hares in that swamp, what did you find out?

DAVID KLEIN: Well, it was just -- map -- I mapped -- The project was to map the area, the type of vegetation, because it faded out into some just shrubby areas where there were more willows and things, and that's where the hares were around the edge of this swamp. Not much sign in the swamp. There was not a lot of vegetation because it was like such a dense canopy of the cedar trees. The cedar trees were all about so big.

KAREN BREWSTER: What is that, 12 inch diameter?

DAVID KLEIN: Not quite that big.

KAREN BREWSTER: 10 inch.

DAVID KLEIN: These were white cedar and in New England they don't grow that big, but they -- Actually, it's a very valuable wood because it was cedar, which lasts forever. It's a white cedar, but it's used in cedar chests and things like that. But that swamp hadn't been logged. Never been logged. And I don't know what the status is now. But yeah, and when snow was there, then I could find hare sign very well. And I recorded the birds I saw, and the ruffed grouse, and the smaller birds, and fox tracks and all of that stuff. And I caught a couple of snowshoe hares. I made study skins out of them, which I had learned to do in one class. And gave them to the museum for that college. And that anatomy professor was -- when I came to -- after I'd graduated and came to Alaska to do a master's, he said, "Well, if you find any good bones from mammals, we don't have much stuff from west, marine mammals or --" And one time when I was working in Petersburg, a couple years after I'd -- right after I'd graduated probably with a master's here, we came upon a skeleton of a small Minke whale. And the skull was -- had been there for a long time. It was sort of in a secluded place in a bay that people wouldn't see normally. And we were looking for dead deer, I think. And so I saw that skull and the skull was -- it was in really nice shape. And, so I thought, wow, he'd probably like that skull. So we had a big -- the skull was about from you about there to the end.

KAREN BREWSTER: Is that five feet, four feet?

DAVID KLEIN: Four and a half, probably. And the two of us could carry it and put it in the skiff. And then we took it on a boat that we were sleeping on. And got it back to Petersburg. And I then wrote a letter to -- put that out in our warehouse and it was -- maybe cleaned it a little. And I wrote the professor and said, "Would you guys -- Could you use this?" Got a special delivery letter back saying, "Yeah, just send it. And we'll use the information and we'll pay for the freight." And so I built -- It took a while to build a good crate for it that wouldn't close it up completely but so it could be handled and shipped, and did that. And they were very happy.

KAREN BREWSWER: And that was just the skull though?

DAVID KLEIN: Yeah just the skull. That would have been a big operation to take the whole skeleton.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

DAVID KLEIN: And they probably didn't have room for a whole skeleton of a Pacific Minke whale.

KAREN BREWSTER: No. So this cedar swamp, is it similar to the Pine Barrens? Is there a connection?

DAVID KLEIN: No.

KAREN BREWSTER: No.

DAVID KLEIN: It's a -- If you look at trees of New England or something like that, they'll say the white cedar is found very spottedly in parts of New England that haven't been developed too much, and it's usually a very swampy area. But a special kind of swamp. So it wasn't the kind that would just be cattails and stuff. It had to have a -- it probably had been an old lake bed and then it drained. So it had good quality soil, but it was still sort of a swamp. Sometimes if you stepped in one of those holes of sphagnum you could -- you could hike through there with LL Bean boots if you didn't step in any of those and you just step around them. But if you stepped in them sometimes they would go -- Sometimes they would go deep. Sometimes there were some deeper spots, but not real deep.

KAREN BREWSTER: So with that probing that you guys did, what did you find out from that?

DAVID KLEIN: It was mainly to get an idea on the history. How long -- how much sediment there would be there. So it was long. It was a long time. They probably -- Someone may have followed through and did some peat coring and then you could do dating. They weren't doing that then at that time, and that wasn't part of my -- This is just

an honor's thesis. This was sort of an aside on it. I could speculate a little bit based upon what the professor told me and that was in my write up. I still have a copy of it. It might be in pencil on yellow paper because I think I had my mother type it up for me. And I wasn't -- couldn't type then at all, and she was a good typist.

KAREN BREWSTER: Uh huh. So what else happened while you were in college?

DAVID KLEIN: Well, I was -- Then I moved in, I think, the next year with a high school buddy from Manchester High who was -- he was a year ahead of me because he started -- he didn't go -- He went into the military just like I did, but he didn't do this adventure to Alaska. So he was at least a year ahead. So then I roomed with him, which was a good deal because he was pretty good in math. He was majoring in accounting and I had problems with some of these physics assignments. When there were problems you'd get homework. He was helpful in that. And it was sort of a new dorm we -- No, that was an old dorm. They were military Quonsets. And then they built a new dorm. So then I moved into the new dorm the next year. Then I went in with another wildlife student who I'd made good friends with then. It was a two person room. And that was better for me to do that. And then I -- I was supporting myself mainly through summer work, plus I had a GI Bill. And the tuition -- I was -- I didn't have to work full-time because of the other jobs that I'd had. It was snip and tuck, but it was cheaper for me, too, to live there than drive the car back and forth and work. And I couldn't get study time when I was working. It was a terrific deal. I loved that farm work and I got to learn to use a horse team and haul wood out for their wood furnace in the barn. And haying. Did some haying. That was more in the summer time. I did that a little bit.

KAREN BREWSTER: Do you remember the name of that man, and that family with that farm?

DAVID KLEIN: I probably could pull it out, but I don't think I have it written down.

KAREN BREWSTER: Okay. Well, when you think about things in the middle of the night, you can think of his name.

DAVID KLEIN: But I should say that then -- the summers, the two summers -- What to do in the summer? Well, one thing was to make money, but I'm so spoiled by spending time in Alaska that I just didn't want to take a job. I might find a laborer's job someplace that paid much more than it could for playing. And so I got the idea why don't I go to northern Wisconsin or Minnesota where there're all these wonderful fishing lakes and I knew there were a lot of fishing lodges that were mostly for just families and common people. So I talked to another close friend from high school who was a student at the university also, into going and so we drove out in my Model B Ford. And -- to Hayward, Wisconsin. And there, there was an employment office and we said, "We want to -- Can we work at one of these lodges? Is there any jobs?" "Well," they said, "There's two."

They weren't at the same place. We couldn't get it at the same place, which since I had this one car that -- These aren't too far apart, they're only like four miles or so. And they were both nice fishing lakes, and with some lodge on them. So he got a job at one of them and I another, and I dropped him off there. And worked that summer. And I enjoyed it so much. It didn't pay a hell of a lot, and you had to do -- they didn't have -- They had these cabins that they rented. And they had a central shower and toilets. And my job was to clean out the cabins after people left. And then when people were there I'd wheelbarrow from an ice house where they'd cut ice in the winter and put it in a shed and covered it with sawdust. And I'd go and break up some of those big chunks and put them in the wheelbarrow and put them in their ice chests when people were there so they would have a cooler. So they could keep their food in a cooler. And my job was to make sure I got the ice around there and cleaned up when they weren't there. Mop the floors. They were wood floors and just did standard mopping. And then somebody else made up beds and things. I didn't have to do that, usually. Occasionally I would, but usually not. And I usually had to swamp out the showers. And then there was -- when there was free time they had me cutting grass around with a scythe. Around trails between cabins and stuff. And I was under -- other than the people that run -- The guy who started this, the family that started it was an old Scottish family from Chicago. And he had run it for a number of years. His wife had died earlier, I guess. And then his daughter and son-in-law then came and helped him and then finally he pretty much turned it over to them, but he was there. And he would do little odd jobs. And he must have been in his 70's then. He seemed pretty old. He was probably in his 70's and he was just terrific. A nice guy. And he was my boss sort of. And he'd say, "Now I want you to use -- take the scythe. And have you done any scything?" I said, "No, I don't believe so." I'd used a sickle and I'd used an old-fashioned lawn mower, so I hadn't used a scythe. "I'll show you how." And this old guy, and he'd show me the correct technique, and he'd watch me while I was doing it. "Yeah, you're doing well. Go do it." And then he liked to talk to people, especially because he knew I liked him because he was the kind of guy that I liked to -- and he's so knowledgeable about everything. You know he built this whole thing and cut the ice for the place. So sometimes he would -- he would -- while I was cutting the scythe -- with a scythe he would be standing by me and he would recite Robert Burns poetry, which he had by memory. And man, I couldn't believe -- that was nice stuff and when I went back and I checked out Robert Burns poetry and wow, that was nice. So I enjoyed that. But on my free time I had access to the boats and canoes and had fishing tackle and in the evenings I could paddle out, or row out, and go fishing for bass. There were some muskellunges there. I never caught any. They were big, giant pike like fish, and very popular for sport fishermen. But there were a lot of family groups from agricultural area further south, but they'd like to go out and fish for pan fish, like walleyed pike and sunfish. And then they'd fry it up while they were up there. And so it was nice. And I enjoyed it. And then I went back the next year, the same place. Whereas the guy that

went with me the first time, he didn't go back, partly because he -- we didn't make very much money. You could make more money -- And I had to pay for the gas going out and back. But I enjoyed it. It was because you could enjoy the country there. And we would -- maybe could afford to go to town once. I'd pick him up when we both had evenings off and go to some dance or something. And we used to -- luckily there would be some females that were probably working in these lodges and we -- in cases we could line them up and cruise around and have a nice evening together and then drop them off. Having the car was handy for that.

KAREN BREWSTER: Do you remember the name of that place?

DAVID KLEIN: I've got it written down somewhere. Lost Land Lake, I think is the name of the lake.

KAREN BREWSTER: Lost Land Lake.

DAVID KLEIN: And Hayward, I think. No, that's the name of the town in Wisconsin.

KAREN BREWSTER: Hayward.

DAVID KLEIN: Hayward, I think. It's the closest town. Well, that was about ten miles away, I think. And I don't know what it was called.

KAREN BREWSTER: You don't remember that old --

DAVID KLEIN: It might have been Lost Land Lake Lodge. I might have had it -- I wasn't good at keeping a diary but I might have -- I sometimes kept notes of things.

KAREN BREWSTER: And I'm sure you probably don't remember that old guy's name.

DAVID KLEIN: I know.

KAREN BREWSTER: Sounds like quite the character.

DAVID KLEIN: He was -- He was what my image of an old timer, Scottish origin guy should be.

KAREN BREWSTER: Old tough Scotsman.

DAVID KLEIN: Grandfather-type guy.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah, tough guys.

DAVID KLEIN: Yeah. But there was one interesting -- embarrassing situation. He appreciated that there's this young guy in his twenties. And there was a women's toilet and showers and men's on the opposite side and there's concrete walks going into them.

And he said, "I'll do the women's. I know you won't like to do that." Because you had to put a sign out and you have to make sure there're no women in there when you do, and with men's, there was no big deal, you know, I could handle that. So then he said, one time late in the day, he said, "Dave, I need you to help me in this women's deal. One of the showers is leaking and it takes two wrenches. And I need your help on this." And he was a very considerate guy, you know, and I said, "Yeah, yeah. I'll be glad to do it." So he had already put a bucket out there. When you're cleaning, you just put a bucket out in front and people would know that you're in there. And so we went in there, and there were no women. It's a quiet time of the day. It's in the evening. It was just little after dark. And we're in this shower stall working on these things and trying to get pressure on it and suddenly we hear tck, tck, tck [making a noise] someone's in a hurry coming. And he looked at me. And she came just barging in there. And went to one of the stalls. And you could hear that she was in a hurry. And so I looked at this guy and I'm starting to panic. And I felt, you know, we should have shouted that we were in here. And then he goes like this – Shh.

KAREN BREWSTER: Just put his finger.

DAVID KLEIN: So just be quiet and she'll go away. So here I thought, holy mackerel, we're in here. And anyway, he said, "Be quiet." And about that time she said, "Is there somebody else in here?" He was dumbfounded when she said that. And I grabbed the wrench and I went BANG, BANG, "Yeah we're fixing the shower."

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh, she called out, "Is there somebody else --" Oh.

DAVID KLEIN: Yeah, she called out. So she had heard something when she was coming in but she was in such a hurry, she didn't pay attention to it. And then she didn't see anybody. She didn't know what was going on. [laughing] I thought, oh man, here I am hiding in the women's shower.

KAREN BREWSTER: But it all worked out.

DAVID KLEIN: Yeah. I think -- He was -- Of course, he would have been somewhat embarrassed himself, but he thought he could just by being quiet maybe we could sneak out of it. And I figured, it's too much. The risk is too high.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah, he figured by just being quiet and she'd do her business and leave and she never would have seen you or known you were there.

DAVID KLEIN: Well, but she might have figured and looked in the shower, and here's these two guys crouching down in there.

KAREN BREWSTER: And you didn't mean to scare her, I'm sure.

DAVID KLEIN: Right.

KAREN BREWSTER: Well, hopefully nothing -- It didn't faze her.

DAVID KLEIN: Oh, I'm sure it didn't.

KAREN BREWSTER: Everybody was camping.

DAVID KLEIN: Well, there was one time when we were coming back to Alaska on a Greyhound bus down through the south, and this was the first time I had this experience. We'd pull into a pit stop and the driver would say, "Yeah the -- we're going to be here for ten minutes, the toilets are in and to the right" or something like that. So it had been a fairly long stretch. I was -- I don't know whether I was sitting with another guy or not, but there weren't a lot of people on the bus. I think about six or eight. And it was at night and in the wee hours, that's why there weren't very many people. And so we -- I got off and walked into the men's toilet and standing by this urinal and this other guy was right beside me and here was this women that was in the back of the bus and she was in a hurry. And she came rushing in and she didn't see that it was a men's. And she came rushing in and goes right in to a stall. She didn't see the urinals or anything. And then she may have heard us talking. And she said, "Are there men in here?" And one of us said, "Yes, this is a men's toilet." "Oh!" Scuffled around and went out. And I thought I really missed -- we nearly missed a bet there. We should've said, "Oh no ma'am, this is the black men's toilet." Because there were --

KAREN BREWSTER: Back then they were separate.

DAVID KLEIN: -- they were separate, yeah. But she wouldn't have appreciated that humor.

KAREN BREWSTER: No. That would've -- If you'd been able to think that quickly, that would've been pretty good.

DAVID KLEIN: Yeah, right.

KAREN BREWSTER: I was going to ask you though -- you mentioned living with -- having roommates. If you remember their names. The guys you lived with. The first year, your friend from high school.

DAVID KLEIN: Randall Toop. This is the guy I visited this last October.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh you're stil --How do you spell Toop?

DAVID KLEIN: T-O-O-P.

KAREN BREWSTER: Okay.

DAVID KLEIN: Randall Toop.

KAREN BREWSTER: And then the other guy who was the wildlife student?

DAVID KLEIN: Ted Bampton. B-A-M -- Bamp-ton.

KAREN BREWSTER: T-O-N. P-T-O-N.

DAVID KLEIN: He was, I think, Italian heritage and he became Director of Game Management for the state of Connecticut. And then he died of a heart attack when he was only in his mid 40's.

KAREN BREWSTER: That's too bad.

DAVID KLEIN: It was. He was -- he appeared to be in -- was certainly in good health when he was a student.

KAREN BREWSTER: Well, so you did those two summers at the lake in Wisconsin, and then what did you do for summer employment in college?

DAVID KLEIN: That was in --

KAREN BREWSTER: That was in college, your Wisconsin lake summer jobs, right?

DAVID KLEIN: Well, I was an undergraduate student at the University of Connecticut, right.

KAREN BREWSTER: So that's two summers, and you're usually in college for four years.

DAVID KLEIN: No, I was only there -- I had --

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh, you had other --

DAVID KLEIN: I had some credits from the University of Alaska, I'd say I was only three and a half years at the University of Connecticut because I was able to take full -- maximum they would allow me, 18 credits, I think. And I got a couple credits -- and you had to have physical education and they automatically gave you credits for that for military service. So yeah, it didn't take me long and I didn't want it to take me long. The sooner the better I got through that because I had my heart set on coming back to Alaska. And I knew what I wanted to do.

KAREN BREWSTER: Okay, so you're three and half years at University of Connecticut, and then you graduated in what year?

DAVID KLEIN: '51. And that's when I then -- for that summer I came here and worked on the Kenai Moose Range. I'd been accepted into the graduate program through the Cooperative Wildlife Research Unit. And the head of the unit, Neil Housley, who later became Dean, the first dean of the university. He lined up this job for me on the Kenai Moose Range. And they wanted me up there almost -- they were unhappy because I had to -- I finished all my -- I didn't stay for commencement. I just finished courses and final exams and left. Because I had to fly back in order to get -- so then I borrowed some money from my mom to pay for the flight back to Anchorage. And then the Refuge Manager for -- there was no road to the Kenai, so he flew up in their Fish and Wildlife plane and picked me up. I had a couple of nights in Anchorage, which wasn't the greatest. Anchorage was -- I didn't have much money. I'd spent all my money on the airline ticket and I found the cheapest place in Anchorage, which was a place where there's double bunks. And it was like a buck and a half a night or something like that. And I didn't have direct contact with the Refuge Manager because he's a pilot and he was flying all over the state. And he was out in the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta and so I had to wait an extra day there in Anchorage. And he finally showed up and flew me down. And then I began working there.

KAREN BREWSTER: And was that Dave Spencer was the Refuge Manager?

DAVID KLEIN: That was Dave Spencer, yeah.

KAREN BREWSTER: So what did he have you do there?

DAVID KLEIN: Well, you put there -- indicate that at that stage there was -- he was the Refuge Manager. The only other full-time employee was a maintenance man that kept vehicles going and anything that had to do with that. And his wife was -- they didn't have money to hire a secretary. She was well qualified, so she volunteered.

KAREN BREWSTER: That's Dave's wife?

DAVID KLEIN: Yeah.

KAREN BREWSTER: What was her name?

DAVID KLEIN: Page.

KAREN BREWSTER: No, Page is their daughter.

DAVID KLEIN: Oh, is that right?

KAREN BREWSTER: Well, unless she's named after her mother.

DAVID KLEIN: No you're right. It's -- I'll think of her name. And she wasn't there a lot because he was flying so much, so neither she nor he was there a lot of the time

because she was staying with friends in Anchorage, I think. And they had just sort of moved into this house that needed renovation. The bathroom didn't work and the plumbing was being fixed. So it wasn't a very convenient place for them. And I stayed in the bunkhouse, which was just a little bit of a room in the big barn that was sort of a warehouse. Most of this stuff had been military during the war. And so it was relatively close to the Kenai Airport, which was an important airport during the war. It's an emergency airport alternative to Anchorage. And it's probably one reason why they had the headquarters there then. They moved it near Soldotna later on because it was more into the refuge. But any rate, what he asked me to do was -- Je said, "One of the first things -- one thing we need to do is -- This is a brand new refuge and there's no road to Anchorage." There's railroad to Seward that stops at Moose Pass. And then there was a road from Kenai to Moose Pass, a gravel road. And I think -- I don't think there was a road to Seward then from there. The train went to Seward. And so then the road went by -- have you been down to Kenai?

KAREN BREWSTER: Uh-huh.

DAVID KLEIN: Skilak Lake, you know?

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

DAVID KLEIN: So the road went by Skilak Lake. The old road.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DAVID KLEIN: And so he wanted to build the first campsite and camping site that was road accessible on Skilak Lake. And when they built the road into the lake they just used a bulldozer and then they didn't cut anything. In those days they just pushed the trees into a big pile. And so he said, he and I would be working together when he was around. And he took me up there and showed what he was doing but he couldn't stay around very long. And had a tent -- and he rigged me up with a tent and some kind of a Coleman stove, I guess. And a boat with an outboard skiff with about a 15 horsepower motor. And he said, "So I want you to start working with handsaw, a Swede saw, and an axe" since I had lots of woods work. He knew that I knew how to do these things. And he was competent. And he sort of showed where we probably could work here and cut up these burn piles and make places for tents. But try to do it nicely so that you leave a few trees and stuff. And, "Yeah," I said, "I can certainly do that." But I could see that there was so much other stuff to work with that it was going to take a long time, but you got to start. So he said when he has the time. But mostly he was flying around doing wildlife work, especially a lot of waterfowl work in the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta, Nunivak Island, and Alaska Peninsula, and all over the state because he had this Widgeon, a twin engine. You know the Widgeon.

KAREN BREWSTER: I've heard of it. I don't know airplanes very well.

DAVID KLEIN: It's like a small Grumman Goose. You know the Grumman Goose?

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

DAVID KLEIN: The big one. This looks like one from a distance until it gets up close, and it's smaller but it can carry, without any baggage, maybe eight or nine people, plus the pilot and the co-pilot. And so, yeah --

KAREN BREWSTER: So if he was the Kenai Refuge Manager, why was he flying all over the state?

DAVID KLEIN: Because they didn't have pilots -- enough pilots to do this.

KAREN BREWSTER: Okay.

DAVID KLEIN: I mean their aircraft division in Anchorage was just getting started. It was obvious that airplanes -- they had to have airplanes and they had to have pilots. And like former Governor Hammond was a -- had been a pilot in the war and he worked as a pilot for Fish and Wildlife and did a lot of things. But mostly he was involved in some of the wolf control work. Have you read that?

KAREN BREWSTER: I haven't read his book, no.

DAVID KLEIN: Hammond's. It's good. He's got pictures of him when he's by his plane with wolves that he killed. He says this is something that is difficult for him to live with now when he was Governor.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah. So Dave was flying around and doing wildlife work around the state?

DAVID KLEIN: And you know it included waterfowl work. It included mountain sheep surveys. And so when -- on the Kenai when he was doing the mountain sheep surveys he took me along as an observer. Well, that was nirvana because I was interested in these mountain ungulates. And we did some -- I was already -- one of the Fish and Wildlife people based at that time in Anchorage, I think, was Robert Scott. He was a biologist. One of the first biologists hired post war. He had a Master's from Oregon State. And he was -- later became an important mentor for me. And so I was assigned -- they would work it out with the sheep biologist, Scott, with Dave Spencer that Scott had started some sheep studies in the mountains where he was -- He was well trained and was interested in habitat and though he'd actually built some rustics and closures in some areas that were heavily used by the sheep. He built a, with help from Spencer, built a little tent cabin with a wood frame and wood stove up there in the sheep country. And one of the things I got to do was to do some of the sheep surveys in the plane with Dave Spencer and then

later I had to spend about ten days up there with the sheep. And so he flew me into a small lake near Tustumena Lake, the headwaters, near the head of the lake. I was up about another thousand feet. And then from there we could land with the Widgeon and then I could hike up from there to this hut, which was up in the alpine area. And that was nirvana for me. And so I was following up on some of the work that Scott had done. And mainly they wanted me to do -- after lambing, to do -- raise counts of lambs to ewes. And he was doing that. And I ended up later on going all over the state and doing this when I was -- The next summer when I was student here, then I was doing these sheep surveys. Which was just -- I never expected that I would be so lucky to be up in the White Mountains, and we didn't go into the Brooks Range, but White Mountains, the Chugach Mountains, the Talkeetna Mountains, the Kenai Mountains, and the Alaska Range Mountains. I'd spend four or five days in each one. They'd drop me off and it's mostly -- A lot of them it was -- I was by myself. Occasionally there'd be somebody else with me. But that was nirvana. And so one of the -- so the boat and motor that he left there at the camp place.

KAREN BREWSTER: At Skilak Lake?

DAVID KLEIN: At Skilak Lake. He said you can use this to go around the lake or to get across the lake. And I want you to start a collection, plant collection, for a herbarium. They should have a herbarium. And they knew -- my CV said I had taken systematic botany and knew plants pretty well. And this was just -- and he says, "You do that when the weather's safe to go out on the water. And then when it's not safe then work on the campsite." Though it was a higher priority to collect plants. So I -- that was very fascinating for me, especially if I could go directly across the lake, there was a trail that he told me about that was used for the old timers when there were guided hunts for mountain sheep or grizzly bears with horses. And I could hike up there into the alpine and collect plants. And oh man it was terrific. See the sheep and what.

KAREN BREWSTER: Did you interact with the Anderson family?

DAVID KLEIN: On, on --

KAREN BREWSTER: On Skilak Lake? They had a homestead on an island there.

DAVID KLEIN: Panhandle Island, yeah. Yup, I did. And that was a very momentous occasion for me because his wife had died some years earlier. He was in his '70's then. He had remarried a young woman, who was -- apparently thought she would like that kind of lifestyle. And I think it lasted for a while, but I think he was hanging on when they were living in Seward and he just had such wonderful years out there. And he was a guide, had horses.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah, that's why I asked about it, he'd been a guide.

DAVID KLEIN: Yeah. But he had -- you know, when I went out and visited him, I mean he just -- they welcomed me and he showed me around. And they -- I mean it's amazing what they did, he and his wife. She had beautiful gardens and some of them were wildflower gardens. And she even collected seeds and would sell them. Put them in packets and sell them in Seward and -- You know things like lupine and fireweed and things. And she -- but they had a big windmill that was used to -- had about three crosscut saws like in a line. And then the windmill turned this gear that made these things go up and down. And then it also had a deal that would gradually push the logs through. So once you put the logs in place, you'd be there and make sure everything is going right, but you only could do this when the wind was blowing.

KAREN BREWSTER: So it was a sawmill that was powered by a windmill? I mean, a sawmill to cut logs?

DAVID KLEIN: Yup, that's what it was for.

KAREN BREWSTER: Huh.

DAVID KLEIN: But he also had some small windmills on top of his workshop that he could run a drill press. With a small windmill just with belts and what.

KAREN BREWSTER: Wow.

DAVID KLEIN: But of course he could only do it when the wind was blowing. And the wind blows like hell occasionally there and it's unsafe to be out on the water because it comes off the glacier at the head and comes down. And it's a very dangerous lake and a lot of people lost lives or have gotten into real trouble there because they'd be out and wind came up before they could ashore. But it was probably, you know, you waited too long when it was good fishing or something and didn't get to shore in time.

KAREN BREWSTER: But so he had that wind, enough wind to power those things. Did he use it for electricity?

DAVID KLEIN: No. That's why he had the power drill and things. They didn't use it for electricity because it wasn't steady enough to do that, and they weren't into that at the time. If there had been a stream on shore, and they were on shore they probably would've had a hydro. He was a good guy, and he was a good engineer in science and stuff. And they had a nice garden. They had all kinds of -- Oh the chickens, did I tell?

KAREN BREWSTER: No.

DAVID KLEIN: I'll tell you about the chickens. They wanted to have chickens. Well, how do you get started with chickens out in a place like that? Well, they would have, you know, you went to Seward, you could buy eggs that are shipped up. In the lake, there

were two rocky islands that had cormorants nesting on them. Which I banded some of the young when I was there. But the cormorants, these nests were right there, you could pull up a boat and there was nothing on them except cormorants and nests and a lot of cormorant droppings. And there would be like, on one island there would be 40 or so cormorants. Maybe 20 nests or something on one island. So they got this idea, well they knew that cormorants had a long incubation period. If we could get some eggs that were fertile eggs and put them there, the cormorants could incubate them. So when they had gone to Seward with a boat – and, you know, it’s a long operation lining up the Kenai River, and through Kenai Lake and then a short road -- buggy road from one end of the Kenai Lake to Seward. Fifteen miles or so. So they’d go there and the eggs would come up from Washington or Oregon, and in cold storage. And they just assumed that most people that raised chickens would have -- in the old way you had roosters and you ate some of them and you produced eggs. And so they took a couple dozen eggs back with them and they put these eggs in the cormorant nests. Now I think they might have -- It seemed to me they -- I don’t know how many eggs cormorants have, but I think they had maybe three or something and they usually take one or two out and so replaced that with the chicken egg. And they were pretty close to the same size. And they put them around there and then they went back to their homestead and they figured 20 days. It’s 21 days incubation for chickens. They went back with a big boat that had an old outboard on, and they had one of these big galvanized washtubs. And they put shavings in the bottom. And they brought a lantern. And had a wood cover on it, or maybe canvas. So they went out there, picked up these eggs and put them in this shavings and stuff with a lantern to maintain the heat while they’re out there. And they went back to the island and took them out and kept heat in there and they started hatching the next day. They got, I think, 80% hatched.

KAREN BREWSTER: Wow, 80%.

DAVID KLEIN: It was amazing. He said, “I couldn’t believe it. I didn’t know it was going to work at all.” They didn’t know that they were fertile eggs, but they thought it was a good chance they would be. Because in those days you get eggs and they were usually fertile eggs. And as long as they wouldn’t start incubating or growing -- As long as they’re in the cool storage.

KAREN BREWSTER: That’s pretty amazing.

DAVID KLEIN: It is amazing. But they were so innovative like that. And they had goats, a few goats. And then they had – they had this -- they loved the moose. Sometimes the moose would come out in the wintertime, out to the island, and browse around the island. And walk on the ice.

KAREN BREWSTER: So the lake froze over in the winter?

DAVID KLEIN: Oh yeah. And so they -- And the cows sometimes would come out there to have their calves. To get away from the bears and possibly wolves. So one winter when the lake was freezing up, the moose -- probably the moose population was pretty high then, and they'd kind of overbrowsed on the mainland, but there was more browse out on the island. Some moose, I forget what he said, two or three moose walked out there on the ice and it was clear ice and they slipped and fell. They couldn't get up, because it was so slippery. So what did they do? They cut willow browse, brought it out there, laid it down in front of the moose and then they were able to work with a wagon, a pull wagon like a big wheelbarrow with bicycle wheels or something. And they dug out sand, and of course gravel that was in a place on the island, and they started spreading this all the way out. I think they were closer to the mainland, the moose, so they worked from the mainland, from the moose to the mainland. And laid this stuff. And I think at first they started from the mainland because they didn't want the moose to get up and fall on this ice. And then they spread this stuff around so the moose could get up. And then they -- when they finished it up, they went back to their island. The next morning the moose had gone back to the mainland. It was amazing.

KAREN BREWSTER: So the moose hadn't fallen in?

DAVID KLEIN: No.

KAREN BREWSTER: They were just on top? Wow. And I can't remember his first name, Mr. Anderson.

DAVID KLEIN: I can't remember it either. I might have it.

KAREN BREWSTER: But his -- I -- I -- the reason --

DAVID KLEIN: It might be something like Andy.

KAREN BREWSTER: No, it was -- his son is Val. I interviewed him, that's why I --

DAVID KLEIN: Oh, is that right?

KAREN BREWSTER: -- know the story. I don't know if he was around anymore by the time --

DAVID KLEIN: I don't know. I never met anybody.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah, so that's why I knew about the family. What was the name of the island you said again?

DAVID KLEIN: I think it's Frying Pan Island. That's it, Frying Pan Island. It's shaped like a frying pan.

KAREN BREWSTER: I thought it was a very interesting story to hear about when I interviewed Val.

DAVID KLEIN: If you want another story about when I was out there. Dave said there's another guy, an old timer, a trapper and prospector at the east end of the lake. And a cabin out in the woods. And he said he had stopped by one time earlier in the summer before I got there and talked to him. And he was an elderly, nice, friendly guy, and said, "If you're over around this area I'm not going to be here this summer. I'm going back to Seward and doing other things, or something. This cabin will be there, and just help yourself, you know." So he said, "But there's a lot of bears around, grizzlies, around this cabin cuz it's close -- not too far from this salmon stream." And he said -- he told Dave that when he goes out, washes up in the morning, he has this wash basin, he usually just opens the door, walks out and throws the water out, but he says you have to look closely but there might be a bear right there. So the bears and he get along fine. So then he -- So Dave told me if you're up there, he may still be there, but you could probably stay there if you want. And I wanted to hike up into those mountains behind that, because there were a lot of sheep there and it was -- I wanted to do more plant collecting. So I went up there one day and motored up and pulled up and he was still there. And he said, "Oh yeah, Dave said you might be here." And he wanted to know what I was doing and other things. "Oh yes, you can use the cabin." He said, "I'm leaving today. The plane's going to come in and pick me up from Seward and I'm leaving. But just -- you're welcome to use the cabin." He said, "I did have this bear hanging around here, but it shouldn't be a problem for you." So I stayed there that night. So the bunk I was sleeping in was fairly narrow, it was right close to this window. It was like a window this big and it was just solid pane.

KAREN BREWSTER: Like a two-foot. Like a ship's window?

DAVID KLEIN: Fixed window. It was fixed.

KAREN BREWSTER: No, like a ship. Like a porthole? No, bigger than that.

DAVID KLEIN: No, it was square.

KAREN BREWSTER: Square, or like two feet.

DAVID KLEIN: Or rectangular. But it was fixed. It wasn't an openable window. There was another openable window somewhere. And I was all filled with these stories about bears and I'm sleeping and suddenly I hear -- I don't know whether I was sleeping or maybe I hadn't gone to sleep, but it was dark and, of course, it was -- I had a candle or something, and -- I did have a flashlight, which I took and set by the bed there by the bunk. And I heard this horrible noise, like you put your fingers on a chalkboard.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh.

DAVID KLEIN: Oh! It was right there close to me and I realize it was right there on the window outside. Ahhh. But it was just sort of [crueeee - makes a noise] and then [crueeee - makes a noise] and then [crueeee - makes noise]. So I felt around for my -- for the flashlight and I turned it on and here's this face of a porcupine. And it's trying to climb up, and it's just slipping on the glass. [laughing] I was trying to imagine what a bear doing something like that, but it didn't seem right for a bear. But it was such a weird noise.

KAREN BREWSTER: You would think it was a bear trying to get in, I think.

DAVID KLEIN: Yeah.

KAREN BREWSTER: So did you ever run into that bear?

DAVID KLEIN: No, I ran into one or two bears but I never ran into that particular one. And my experience with bears down there was that they always -- when I was up in the alpine or something, if they saw you they ran away before you got close.

KAREN BREWSTER: So when you were working on that campground though at Skilak Lake, you didn't have bears around?

DAVID KLEIN: It would have been mostly black bears there probably, but it could have been either. But no I think -- probably Dave might have told me to put the food in a separate place or something like that, not in the tent.

KAREN BREWSTER: Do you think there were fewer bears then? Because nowadays that Kenai Peninsula has so many bears. It seems.

DAVID KLEIN: But there's more blacks and reds than brown bears now. But the brown bears had increased, because it was considered sort of a threatened population because it's isolated from other bears. It's all down around the Kenai River and near Soldotna. And they had major problems here five to ten years ago. And then they finally shaped up and stopped selling building lots right along the river, which was stupid anyway. And they had to buy out some people because it's just -- you couldn't have bears and salmon and fishermen without -- and have people living where you've got food and everything. It didn't make sense. It took a big joint effort. That was one time when the refuge, state fish and game, so feds and them, and they worked with the schools and they educated people mainly through the schools. There was Audubon and Nature Conservancy and they hired people to work through the schools and give talks in the schools. And the whole community finally realized, yeah, this is such a terrific resource here and it isn't just like, you know, we're in Alaska, we should be able to build property or have our own

private property wherever we want. You know, right next to the richest salmon river in the state.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah, but there's still a lot of recreational sport fishing on those rivers down there.

DAVID KLEIN: Kenai is -- and up to the date now -- I've just been up to date on it because I'm interested in the area. And the big problem is that sport fishing has increased and subsistence fishing takes priority over commercial fishing. So commercial fishing includes charter fishing. Too many big boats with big outboards, and fishing for king salmon on that area, on the river, but there's also a big run of cohos.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah, but I think with all those people down there and all those bears down there, that would be a conflict.

DAVID KLEIN: Oh, there is conflict, but the conflict is more between -- well, the conflict is between sport fishing, and to some extent between commercial sport fishing, guided, and charter fishing. But also then on the beach right at the mouth of the Kenai River, there's the drift net fishing. Or is it beach --

KAREN BREWSTER: Set net.

DAVID KLEIN: Yeah, they set it at low tide and then the tide comes in while the salmon are coming. It's mostly not the king salmon that they're taking, it's mostly the cohos.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

DAVID KLEIN: And some pink. So then -- now this lawsuit's claiming that they unfairly are shutting down the commercial fishing. And those commercial fishing people are saying, "Well, it's subsistence fishing, too," you know. But the problem is getting very complex. And then there's drift netting is allowed, too. And they wait for the tide and then they set these and when the fish are moving into the river. Before they come into the river. They can't go into the river -- before they come into the river. Now some breakthrough is -- one of those guys that was fishing that way, and wanting to figure out some solutions -- they were catching too many king salmon. And even though they were trying to use a net size that the king salmon were too big, but they'd get tangled up and soon they'd be dead and they couldn't keep them and they wouldn't survive if they just threw them back in. And so, of course, the sport fishermen were mostly after the king salmon and they were up in arms about this.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

DAVID KLEIN: This guy had done some experimental -- using shallower nets that don't go as deep and found that the king salmon are deeper and that when he fished up higher, he was catching just target species of cohos.

KAREN BREWSTER: That's cool.

DAVID KLEIN: And last I heard, Fish and Game said, "Well, this may be a partial solution and we'll have to require the nets be shorter." And so they won't be catching them. And it seemed like well then, commercial fishermen said, "Well, we can probably live with that." Then they had this problem, too, when they were catching so many. When they're running, it's just the tide goes out and there's all of these fish and they're butchering them. And they -- what do they do with the guts? They just leave them there. And tide comes in and it's normal and goes back to the sea to some current extent. But there was so much that -- then D.E.C. [Department of Environmental Conservation] was there and tested the water and the bacteria count was excessive. And so they had to shut down the fishery. And partly it was these people -- they sort of thought that there was a limit to all this stuff. And either have to pay someone to take this stuff away and treat it as sewage or something. Or recycle it, or compost it or what have you instead of letting it there where it could happen. This was this summer.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah, but so when you were down there at Skilak Lake, you said there were not so many grizzly bears, more black bears.

DAVID KLEIN: Generally, the grizzly bears were in the mountains and would come down along the streams close to the mountains. The salmon streams. And when they got further away, they -- It's variable though, because most of the bears were concentrated. The grizzly bears were concentrated around the Kenai River and the Tustumena River. The black bears don't get along well with the grizzlies. They just -- it's too dangerous for them. But the black bears are scattered out and they're more -- their diet is more cosmopolitan. So they get what they can. If there's salmon yeah, but they're not going to be too competitive. But the black bears are major predators on moose calves. So that's where moose are out in the flats where there's a lot of lakes and what -- the cow moose often go to islands to have their calves. And black bears sometimes go there because -- but they have to swim to get there and so it's safer for them where they're around the edges of the lake and moving around. But they're opportunistic. They will take the calves if they're around or try to. And a cow sometimes can defend the calf by just standing its ground. If it's a small black bear they are usually successful in keeping the bear around because if it gets in close, they'll rear up.

KAREN BREWSTER: They'll kick them.

DAVID KLEIN: With their front feet and they're just pile drivers. They can break the skull of a bear.

KAREN BREWSTER: Wow.

DAVID KLEIN: And the big black bears are usually tougher and are persistent. And sometimes can get them.

KAREN BREWSTER: So you're calling it the Kenai Refuge. At the time you started in 1951, was it still the Moose Range?

DAVID KLEIN: It was. It was still the Moose Range when I started. I forgot when it was -- changed the name to the Kenai National Wildlife Refuge.

KAREN BREWSTER: Okay. And you were there just that one summer before you started here as a graduate student?

DAVID KLEIN: But I went -- when I was a professor I used to take classes down there and we would get a tour of the Refuge. And so I kept in touch with the Refuge Managers and knew them well. And had known most of them before, as well.

KAREN BREWSTER: So most of the time you were there, it sounds like you were by yourself. You were out at Skilak Lake or up in the mountains?

DAVID KLEIN: Yeah. The one time I -- oh another student was doing a special study on mountain sheep under the same mentor Bob Scott. On a later summer. So I went down to do the counts. I was doing the counts in -- the lamb/ewe counts on the Chugach Mountains out of Anchorage. And then they wanted me to go down there and go out with this other student who was going to take over this, because I was starting my master's on mountain goats. And couldn't have the time to do all these. And so that was Jack Gross. G-R-O-S-S. He was -- he went on to -- He was strong on statistics and he did a PhD someplace in Colorado, I think. And I didn't get along too well with him. He was kind of a know-it-all kind of guy. He was really sharp, and he's been there, done that, in terms of he was a super outdoors person etc., etc. And then he went into the White Mountains where I'd -- on the instructions from my mentor, there I was again because of my botanical orientation, I was collecting plants and doing transects and describing the vegetation. And I had a tape and I built a small cairn of rocks to mark these. And these were to be prominent and I'd map them and give the locations, approximately. We didn't have GPS, but compass bearings on other things. To be checked in the future. And Jack Gross, when he got assigned to do this -- and I wasn't involved. He knew that I was doing these studies, but he didn't know about the cairns. So he was there and he said -- he felt like he was in a real wilderness area and then he saw this God damn cairns, so he tore them down. He wanted it to be natural, wild area. He didn't have much experience, and hadn't read much about cairns in the Arctic where, yeah, you're expected to build cairns because you might not make it. And you'd leave notes and information in there for other people.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah, they're sort of trail markers.

DAVID KLEIN: Right.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah. Well, so what -- I want to tie up this Skilak Lake part so next time we'll start after that. Winding down here. So can you kind of think about what that experience that summer meant to you.

DAVID KLEIN: Okay. But there's one thing that I did do down there, which was not by myself. There was this whole concept of managing moose habitat there. At that time, the moose habitat was generated by the extent of fires. And so what happens when some of these areas were not good habitat or had been and they're growing up to spruce now. And then, the concept of controlled burns. So then that was with Dave Spencer with the Refuge and working in conjunction with the BLM. I forgot the name of the guy. I think his last name was also Scott, but he was a different Scott. And they planned to do a controlled burn. Experimental. So it was up, in sort of an upland area a bit there in the hills near Kasilof. Near the Kasilof Lake. No, Tustumena Lake, yeah. Which was near Kasilof, but it was near Tustumena Lake but it was up above the lake quite a bit. But it was a shrub tundra kind of situation. And the shrubs were dwarf birch which isn't good moose browse, and there were some few scattered small trees. And so there was a team put together, including Dave and me from the Refuge, and maybe the maintenance guy. All the people they could gather plus BLM. And we were moved out there and we stayed in tent camps. We built a fire line and then we -- there was probably some natural line, maybe an edge of a small lake that we -- And we were waiting for the weather, proper weather. Well, if it was too dry or windy, they couldn't -- it was too great of a risk, they couldn't do it. If it was too wet, it wouldn't burn. So finding the -- we were out there for about four days I think. And we'd finally we tried to start it when we thought it wasn't quite as dry as we wanted but at least it was safe to try it. And we had these tanks -- we could start flame throwers.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh, flame thrower things.

DAVID KLEIN: And walking along starting these fires. And it would come at us, especially where we had piled up some stuff that was more fuel there, and it would get started but it wouldn't carry. It wouldn't go. And we made a big effort and we thought it was going to go, so we were super careful. Had all the stand by. And we couldn't get it to go. So then it rained a little bit. Oh no, bummer. Couldn't do this. And then the weather turned dry again. And we tried it one more time, but we couldn't get it to burn safely. And that was sort of a fail because we couldn't really test it. And the outcome was basically it's almost always going to have an unfavorable wind when it's dry enough to

burn. And plus they didn't want to risk it if it was super dry cuz what happens if a big thunder cloud comes up and you get wind generated and maybe out of control.

KAREN BREWSTER: Well, they do, they have had big wildfires out there since the --

DAVID KLEIN: Oh yeah. There's been wildfires, since then. This was -- There were some areas -- the Refuge has -- they've tried all techniques. And before, while it was still Moose Range, and it was -- this was -- got somewhat controversial. They got, I think because of the fires, the extent of fires, they -- it wasn't always where they wanted them. And there were some of these old burns that had patches of aspen that didn't burn. But the aspen didn't seed in well, and that's good moose browse, young aspen. And they weren't getting -- oh and some -- That area also that -- had come back after a fire, that's right. And so the spruce trees were like eight or ten feet high and of course the moose weren't eating those and gradually there wasn't any significant browse. And too many spruce trees and how do we get rid of this. And so they -- I think they got a lot of money, BLM got a lot of money, not BLM, the Refuge got a lot of money but maybe it was BLM, too, to improve -- As a result of -- It was fire money, but I think they were able to get it for moose habitat improvement on Kenai.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah, so the idea is you create better browse habitat so you'll get more moose?

DAVID KLEIN: So they bought -- they bought specially designed, huge, giant machines that had big wheels, and heavy and cleats on them and that could just mow down the forest. And crush it up so it didn't --

KAREN BREWSTER: So they didn't have to burn it, you -- ?

DAVID KLEIN: -- sort of broke it into -- spruce log would be broken up into chunks this big.

KAREN BREWSTER: Like three feet chunks.

DAVID KLEIN: So this they didn't have to burn and they created some disturbance on the land. But you had to do this at certain times of year because it had to be in the early -- it had to be in the winter when there wasn't too much snow. Because they couldn't operate in too much snow. Because they were so heavy the ground had to be frozen. And sometimes they got them stuck, and they had -- To get them out, it took two to three bulldozers with chains and stuff.

KAREN BREWSTER: So was the purpose of the Moose Range was to keep increasing the local moose populations, so that's why they had to manage so intensively?

DAVID KLEIN: Yeah, but that's where the controversy started coming in. That was mainly environmental groups in Anchorage that were – by this time the road was built and people were appreciating it's a great -- refuge is a great place. And this thing really is part of the National Wildlife Refuge System. And what are the reasons for them? For protecting national habitat and moose, or not moose, and wildlife of some kind. Waterfowl and the whole works. Well, this Moose Range was under the same logic. I mean it's a lot of waterfowl areas and we're managing for those. But it appeared like -- and then it was, yeah but these -- and they were mowing down -- they wanted to mow down the snags after a fire so it looked nice.

KAREN BREWSTER: But that's habitat for birds or something.

DAVID KLEIN: Especially woodpeckers. And so that's when the environmental groups said, "Hey, what's going on? They're decreasing the biodiversity by this instance, all for one species. This is not what refuges should be." Well, I think there was such a strong movement that led to changing the name to National Wildlife Refuge. And then that also came down that we should manage for all the species. And let's do some inventories. What species do we have. More mammals and birds, other than just producing more moose. And that's part of the problem now on the State Board of Game on the Kenai. They want to do wolf control. And the local Fish and Game biologist there was one of my students who worked on a deer project on Kodiak that was a habitat study. He told the Board of Game, he said "No, no. We should have antlerless moose seasons here because there's too many over wintering moose and the habitat can't -- they're knocking down the willows." There's virtually no willows because of continual heavy grazing. And the birches sometimes go on growing, but they can't get higher than this and they get edged. And you have birch trunk this big that's like 50 years old and it's still --

KAREN BREWSTER: They get stunted.

DAVID KLEIN: Yeah. So at any rate, I'm going to talk a little bit about this at this meeting in Alyeska [ski resort in Girdwood, Alaska]

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah, well that's good. So, I mean, that summer sounds like just an amazing experience for a young guy interested in wildlife and biology.

DAVID KLEIN: It was unbelievable. I mean when I came from the University of Connecticut, I thought I'm so damn lucky to be admitted into the graduate school. And I still didn't know what I'd be doing. And it was just – it couldn't have been a better place for me to spend the summer. And Spencer, I mean, he was a guy I had a tremendous respect for. He wanted to know if I wanted to go moose hunting with him. And he says, "You can get to carry." I said, "Yeah." And we got a moose. And he went in the field with me a couple times when I was starting the goat study. And he knew how to look at a mountain side, I didn't have much experience about that. The proper climbing stuff. He

was just top-notch. And then at the end of that first summer, here I'd been doing all these things on my own, got a good start on the plant collecting and, you know, I had asked him about banding the cormorants, the young cormorants. And "Yeah, you can." He was banding waterfowl on the Yukon Delta, working with those. Yeah, he had the right size and gave me the equipment and told me how to put them on and said go for it. And I did that. And then come the end of summer he was busier than hell flying, and so he was gone. He said, "I got this narrative report we have to do it every year and it's due in a short time." He said, "I want you to start doing it. Start the report." I thought, "Me." I was a temporary, summer temporary. And I wasn't told I was going to do anything like this and I don't have that kind of experience. I don't know how to do this. He said, "Look at the previous reports. And there's some photographs and stuff. And go ahead and start it. I can't do it, and you're going to have to start that." And I never thought of myself, at that stage, being a very good writer. I was a poor speller always. Didn't have any spellcheck. And I, you know, with a pencil and a lined pad. And so I started. And he was gone, long gone, and I was there by myself. And he said his wife would be back and she could type it out. So I roughed the whole thing out. And I don't know whether he looked it over before she typed it up or after, but it was probably before. But he went over it and he said, "Yeah, looks like a good job. Let's get it typed up and we can do more editing." So I did the -- wrote the whole report and I thought, I never thought I'd be capable of doing this. Well, that's how you -- you have abilities but you have to be pushed a little to bring them out. And I look at the report now and if I look at it -- it's right in the library there by my office. And, man, it's not bad a report.

KAREN BREWSTER: For your first time, yeah. Well I think, too, how you had the courage or the bravery, whatever, to be out there by yourself and doing all this, you know new things you hadn't necessarily done before in terms of the being in the outdoors part.

DAVID KLEIN: But I -- I had enough training in biology and wildlife ecology and I was sharp enough to know that could figure things out for myself. But I didn't -- I was insecure and lacked confidence, self-confidence. I figured they're not going to hire permanent people unless they've got a master's degree in biology positions. And I was just getting started. And here there's this Alaska. Well, that's one of the good things about Alaska. I mean, I wouldn't have got that kind of experience if I'd gone into Montana or the West, or certainly the Midwest. It would've been interesting work and I would've enjoyed it, but it'd been under closer supervision and less responsibility. I mean it's responsibility. Giving someone responsibility and then you try harder and you want to do it right. And I look back sometimes and I'm just amazed that I was so fortunate to -- and especially the Kenai because since then I've been keeping up on the Kenai because I'd have students working on projects working down there. I couldn't have recommended they do mountain sheep and other projects. And then, now with the Nature Conservancy, there was a lot of -- I've been on the board for quite a while and

there was a lot of focus on the Kenai. I'm on the board and I was -- obvious I was the one with more expertise, partly because being a trained biologist, but also because I know the country.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah. Well you mentioned being insecure and lacking self-confidence. So how did you face that or overcome it?

DAVID KLEIN: It's like, you know, I was always fascinated with exploration, and especially polar exploration. And people, how did they manage it on their own? And I figured I could do that, too. And I was in Boy Scouts, I mean, that's outdoor life and especially in rough, rustic conditions where you make due. And I had the woods experience was good, so I was confident in using saws, and axes, and building fires and cook. You learned pretty fast to cook for yourself.

KAREN BREWSTER: But did you have the self-confidence in terms of doing the science, and collecting the plants, and looking at the sheep?

DAVID KLEIN: Well, I probably -- I realized that it was somewhat of a learning experience, and I realized that I was -- in the case of sheep, I was collecting population data that was being used by -- His plan was to do a PhD, and he started some residence at the University of British Columbia under the same professor that I did mine in subsequently. But his problem was that he -- well he had a couple problems but one was that he was spread so thin working here within a limited budget. And he was just top-notch biologist and a pilot himself. And he was super busy. And then he had a family and they had financial --

KAREN BREWSTER: This was Dave Spencer or Scott?

DAVID KLEIN: Scott.

KAREN BREWSTER: Scott, okay.

DAVID KLEIN: And actually he was among the -- he didn't have a PhD, but he had had graduate work in wildlife at Oregon State, which is a good university. And he was -- his plan was to do this thesis on mountain sheep ecology in Alaska. And he had collected a lot of data but he didn't have time to work this stuff up. And so -- but he was keeping going some of the studies started and that's where I came in. And this, he then was -- Well, then the wildlife unit went through -- the first guy became the Dean of the University. He was only there for a couple of years, but he was there on faculty. And then they hired a professor to teach wildlife while he was -- Well, the first unit leader was there. And then when he became Dean, this guy had moved in and became the Wildlife Unit Leader, John Buckley. So he was my major advisor for this mountain goat study. And then when he -- he was a top-notch guy, and he was mostly focused on waterfowl

and furbearers in the Minto Flats area. And he liked his students to work there because they could all be working together. He was unhappy with me because I wanted to work with mountain goat.

KAREN BREWSTER: Well, I think that we will get into all those details in our next interview.

DAVID KLEIN: But then, getting to Scott -- then Buckley got appointed to a top-notch position in Washington D.C. with Fish and Wildlife. Sort of advisor to the President. And his replacement, Bob Scott, was hired to be -- he was with Fish and Wildlife, he took what became Unit Leader. But he was going through a lot of stress, including his daughter got polio and then his son had some mental problems and he was bit schizophrenic. And his family life was breaking up. And he and his wife separated. He became an alcoholic. And then he -- he was such a talented, brilliant guy and he was just top-notch with students as Unit Leader. But by this time I'm working down in Southeast and so I had interaction with him. And I could see that he was in severe trouble. And so they finally -- they got frustrated and gave a lot of warnings and then they realized best -- and then after he broke up with his wife, then they transferred him to Washington D.C. where they could keep an eye on him and put a bunch of pressure on him. And he straightened up and he became head of Wildlife Refuges.

KAREN BREWSTER: Well, that's good.

DAVID KLEIN: And then he retired, then he re-established his relationship with his to family and his wife. And things went -- and then when he retired from Fish and Wildlife he took a job with IUCN in Switzerland. Geneva, I think it was. And traveled throughout the world working with wildlife-related stuff.

KAREN BREWSTER: And that's International Union for the Conservation of Nature?

DAVID KLEIN: That's it, yeah.

KAREN BREWSTER: So it sounds like that Skilak Lake that summer was pretty exciting.

DAVID KLEIN: Yeah. So all this is leading up to this last part. We can go into it more. So Scott was a major mentor.

KAREN BRWESTER: Sounds like it.

DAVID KLEIN: Dave Spencer was in a different way. And Scott was in a different way. Scott was a good scientist, but he understood the wild nature ecology, and he understood me and I understood him. And so he had a lot of confidence in me and I was capable of

working on my own. In those days you didn't have to have two people, and you didn't have to have a radio and things like that. So I survived.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah, well that's why I say it sounded pretty exciting, be out there all by yourself doing that.

DAVID KLEIN: It was, it was. And I like being on my own and I liked that. I liked being with other people, too. But sometimes he would be flying me out there in a float plane, up in the White Mountains, and we'd airdrop food. I'd have some with me, and then wouldn't airdrop my sleeping bag and some food, and then I could hike up, pick up the stuff. Well, he became pretty confident in how to airdrop, because you can lose stuff.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah, definitely.

DAVID KLEIN: And also, we dropped once, by a cabin in the Dry Creek headwaters. There was a nice cabin there. And we got permission to use that. And I remember, and I had about a 15-mile walk from where we could land a wheel plane. And so we dropped this burlap sack with food and we knew that if you put things in cloth bags like flour, it was better than to put it in a box that might break. And canned goods, if you put them like loose so they're bean bag, and of course you want them to land going downhill when you fly over, so they bounced downhill rather than boom right into the ground. And so he dropped this one close to this cabin, and there was this rock, big rock, boulder by the cabin. And it was like an explosion. The flour busted and it was like -- it looked like it actually exploded. It looked like smoke. And the only thing that was damaged was the flour.

KAREN BREWSTER: Well, that's good. You'd have busted open cans. Well, this has been great tonight. Fun stories.

DAVID KLEIN: Oh yeah.

KAREN BREWSTER: Those early days of field biology were so different from today.

DAVID KLEIN: And you couldn't imagine how I felt with people like Dave Spencer and Bob Scott. And getting to do these things that I'd never thought it would be possible. And the mountains. I was hooked on the mountains from the first time I came here. And the West. It's too tame back in New England.

KAREN BREWSTER: All right, well, I think we will stop for this evening.

DAVID KLEIN: Sounds good.

[End of tape]

