

RECORDED INTERVIEW OF DAVE SNOW

CONDUCTED BY KAREN BREWSTER

IN ERIE, COLORADO

MAY 1, 2019

ORAL HISTORY 2017-01-98

KLONDIKE GOLD RUSH NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK ORAL HISTORY PROJECT  
TRANSCRIBED BY RUTH SENSENIG

[00:00:00]KAREN BREWSTER: And this is Karen Brewster, and today is May 1, 2019, and I'm here with Dave Snow at his home in Erie, Colorado. And this is for the Klondike Gold Rush National Historical Park Oral History Project. So Dave, thank you for letting me come see you today.

DAVE SNOW: Thank you for coming.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah, and we hope the upstairs rest of your family stays quiet.

DAVE SNOW: Well, they should. If they don't, we'll take another run up there.

[00:00:30]KAREN BREWSTER: Ok. Um so, you did historical architecture work for the Park Service related to Skagway.

DAVE SNOW: Yes.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um, starting in what year?

DAVE SNOW: Uh, it actually started before 1980.

KAREN BREWSTER: Ok.

DAVE SNOW: I worked for the Denver Service Center, and when I was there, we worked on projects all over the country. And Klondike just happened to be one of the projects. I did the Historic Structure Report on the Mascot Saloon, and it was just going up there a lot.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DAVE SNOW: And, you know, essentially, I was on the road so much that I thought, maybe I should just live up there. And so, that's kind of what we did. [00:01:16]Um, you know, I really hadn't been in the Park Service that long. I was a GS-7, and um, I love adventure, but I also had a family and two little kids. I had, you know, a four-year-old and a baby.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh, yeah.

DAVE SNOW: And it was really a traumatic move, as it turned out, but we made the move.

KAREN BREWSTER: So what year did you move to Alaska?

DAVE SNOW: It would be 1980.

[00:01:42]KAREN BREWSTER: Ok. Um, and I'm going to take us back a little bit in your life.

DAVE SNOW: Ok.

KAREN BREWSTER: So we know a little bit about you.

DAVE SNOW: Ok.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um, that, you know, where you're from, where you grew up. Your education, how you ended up with the Park Service.

DAVE SNOW

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DAVE SNOW: Well, I was born in Denver, Colorado, and I had a pretty normal, you know, childhood. We lived out in Jefferson County near Golden. A place called Applewood. And uh, went to Wheat Ridge High School. And then the Vietnam War came, and I think -- essentially, I wanted to leave home. You know, a young man, wanted to get out, seek adventure. And that was part of why I joined the Navy. I also felt that if I went in the Navy, I wouldn't get stuck going to Vietnam because I would've been drafted had I not joined. As it turned out, I went to Vietnam twice anyway. And uh, I was over on the -- a tributary of the Mekong River, and then I was on the USS Hancock, so about two years of my life, you know, either in or near Vietnam. [00:03:00]And then after I got out, I went to school on the GI bill. We lived in San Diego, 'cause that's where I got out of the Navy.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DAVE SNOW: And I got my first two years of college free because in those days, it was free down there.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh.

DAVE SNOW: It was really a great deal. And they had an architectural program in the two-year college that was down there, and so I did that, and then I transferred up to Pomona, uh, California Polytechnic University. And --

KAREN BREWSTER: Not Pomona College?

DAVE SNOW: Not Pomona College. This is -- it's like Cal Poly. There's Cal Poly San Luis Obispo, and then there's Cal Poly Pomona.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh, I didn't know that. Ok.

DAVE SNOW: And they both have architectural programs. The one in Pomona had just started.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

[00:03:50]DAVE SNOW: And a guy named Al Kappe (he says Al, but Google search shows it to be Ray Kappe who co-founded the program) was running that. It was, you know, a very, very beginning type thing, and so it was -- you had to -- you had to be interviewed to even get into the college. It wasn't really a money thing as much as it was just pure competition.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DAVE SNOW: So you had to be -- you know, the two years I spent in the junior college was very beneficial 'cause I had learned how to draw and things like that. So I got into -- into that college, and then it was four years there.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

[00:04:29]DAVE SNOW: And then after I got out of college with my architectural -- I had a bachelor of science in architecture. I did very well in school. And I was gonna, you know, go out and just, you know, take the world, you know, as most young people in college -- after they get out of college. And I, uh, eventually got a job back in Denver. We were living in Los Angeles -- you know, Los Angeles at the time, and I got a job back to Denver, and I took it. And we moved back to -- back home.

[00:05:01]KAREN BREWSTER: And what year would that have been?

DAVE SNOW: That would've been about 1976 or so, or '75. Somewhere around in there. I think I graduated, theoretically, in '76, but -- and I -- 'cause I went into the Park Service in '77.

KAREN BREWSTER: Ok.

DAVE SNOW: It was pretty quick. I wasn't in that firm for very long.

[00:05:25]KAREN BREWSTER: So the job in Denver was with a private architectural firm?

DAVE SNOW: Right. Seracuse Lawler & Associates (official company name was Seracuse Lawler and Partners (SLP)). And it was a good job, but it didn't pay very well. It was like five bucks an hour, you know. I was lucky to even get a job in those days, and so I kept kinda looking for jobs. And this one job came out that said, you'd work for ten months, and you'd take a furlough for two.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DAVE SNOW: And I made more money working ten months a year for this job than I would staying at the firm. [00:05:58]And this was with the Park Service. And there was also another job that I almost took with the, um, Army Corps of Engineers, and I think it was up in Fairbanks or someplace, and then another one in Montana. So I kept getting all these jobs to move north, but as it turned out, I took the one with the Park Service. And came to Denver --

KAREN BREWSTER: So that was the Denver Service Center?

DAVE SNOW: Denver Service Center.

KAREN BREWSTER: Ok.

DAVE SNOW: And I worked for a guy named Harold LaFleur.

KAREN BREWSTER: How do you spell that?

DAVE SNOW: L-A -- La -- F-L-E-U-R.

KAREN BREWSTER: Ok.

DAVE SNOW: LaFleur.

[00:06:36]KAREN BREWSTER: And what does the Denver Service Center do? I don't know if it's -- does it still exist?

DAVE SNOW: Yes.

KAREN BREWSTER: Ok. Well, what --

DAVE SNOW: In those days, it was a design -- it was the design arm of the entire Park Service. They did all the major visitor centers, restorations, you name it, so -- And it was part of the Bicentennial Program.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DAVE SNOW: So they hired, like, thirty architects right out of school.

KAREN BREWSTER: Wow.

[00:07:01]DAVE SNOW: And I considered myself pretty much right out of school then. I had only been with that firm for probably less than a year. So I took that job, and um, the first thing I knew, I was working up at Paradise Inn in Washington, doing the Historic Structure Report on that.

KAREN BREWSTER: Is that at North Cascades?

DAVE SNOW: Yeah. Well, it's up, Mount Rainier.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh, Mount Rainier. Ok. Ok.

DAVE SNOW: And, you know, to give some context to this, I had absolutely no training in historic architecture, ok. I -- they were hiring architects right off the street. They didn't care if you had the background or not. And they would train you. And I got trained. It was a really neat learning environment. [00:07:45]We had one old fellow there, Frank Gurner, he -- he -- he'd gone to school during the Beaux-Arts period. I mean, he was that old.

KAREN BREWSTER: What's that?

DAVE SNOW: It's uh, you know, a period of architecture when they did classical columns and things like that. And, you know, he was drawing ink on linen. We were doing ink on paper. I mean, it was -- everything was hand-drawn in those days.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DAVE SNOW: So it was a -- it was -- it was like working at a super-architectural firm, and really a good fit for me, so.

[00:08:17]KAREN BREWSTER: And so, what kind of training did the Park Service provide you? Did -- was it just --

DAVE SNOW: It was on-the-job.

KAREN BREWSTER: On-the-job?

DAVE SNOW: And that's typically the way it is in an architectural firm. You get out of school, and you think you know everything, and then you learn the real stuff when you start working. And it was the same way with the Park Service. So not only was I learning architecture, you know, from a practical sense, but I was learning preservation architecture. [00:08:42]And I -- I think Harold, my boss, he was very good at it. And he'd been there for quite some time. And it just a whole bunch of guys that had been -- you know, the Park Service had been doing, you know, like, architectural and landscape architecture design since the 1930's.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh, really?

DAVE SNOW: So they -- you know, they had quite a -- kind of an experience at it, you know, so I felt -- I felt like part of a new club, you know. And it was -- it was a good feeling, and I had a good rapport with everybody. [00:09:16]And the work was the funnest I'd ever done in my life. I mean, you just go to all these parks, you look at old buildings, you draw 'em, measure 'em, and learn how to, you know, restore 'em. You learn how to work with historians, archeologists, engineers. You know, and that was the neat thing about the service center. All those disciplines were there.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

[00:09:40]DAVE SNOW: And I think a couple years of that was really beneficial for what later was to become with Skagway, because I had a really good working relationship with all the different disciplines of engineering. I understood compliance. I understood, you know, all the things that I needed to, you know -- I'd been exposed to a lot.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DAVE SNOW: 'Cause once I dropped into Skagway, it was just me.

[00:10:06]KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah. Well, and yeah, how do you learn that preservation part? Because it's sort of a very specific discipline.

DAVE SNOW: Well, it's -- you walk -- for example, you walk through a building with somebody that's been doing it for a number of years. They point things out to you. Uh, you know, this is -- this is such-and-such. You know, the reason this wood is still there is because it's first-growth wood. And you know, all of those just real basic things, you know. [00:10:34]And, of course, back in those days, we didn't have computers or anything, so everything was very visceral.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DAVE SNOW: We would do paint tests by scraping and looking. It wasn't real scientific, but, you know, there was -- there was a connection to some more scientific stuff, but I would

say that the lean of the office was more towards a practical architecture approach. 'Cause, you know, we had schedules to meet, we had budgets to meet, and um, it was important to understand that. Because you couldn't just milk the cow forever, although there were people that did.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

DAVE SNOW: You know, as in any job, but uh, I just -- I -- [00:11:18]like I said, I was pretty adventuresome, and I -- the more difficult, the more challenging, the more remote -- I looked at fortifications from South Carolina all the way down to the Dry Tortugas, you know. In those days, we would go out for weeks, you know, either looking at buildings or measuring them, studying them, researching them. And then we would work with -- we had a lot of old-time historians that we worked with that, you know, were incredible people.

[00:11:51]KAREN BREWSTER: And those historians were in the parks, or they were in the service center?

DAVE SNOW: They were in the service center, actually. Yeah, they -- most of my world before Skagway was very centered at the Denver Service Center.

KAREN BREWSTER: Well, I find it interesting that the Denver Service Center covered the whole US. It wasn't just the western region.

DAVE SNOW: Right. I mean, there was within the service center itself, it kinda went through -- you know, sometimes we'd have portions -- you know, you'd have a group that would work just in the east, you know, and it was that way when I left, kinda.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DAVE SNOW: But I moved around. I've worked on all sort -- well, I can get to that later.

KAREN BREWSTER: Ok.

DAVE SNOW: But when I came back to the service center, I did the -- you know, a lot more stuff, so.

[00:12:35]KAREN BREWSTER: So besides -- so Harold is who hired you and who you worked directly for?

DAVE SNOW: Well, Harold was my supervisor. The guy that hired me, hm, huh, his name escapes me right now. *(Per 4/9/20 email from Dave Snow, this was Vernon Smith.)*

KAREN BREWSTER: That's ok. I was wondering, who else worked in the office and who you worked with and for. So it was Harold. You said Frank was --

DAVE SNOW: Well, there was Frank Gurner, but then, you know, I had just about everybody that came in during those times, I knew 'em, you know. Paul -- well, Paul Cloyd came a little later. Um, but I worked with him some. Um, Randy -- boy, all these names.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

DAVE SNOW: I knew a lot of people.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DAVE SNOW: And um.

[00:13:23]KAREN BREWSTER: I was just thinking if there was any people in particular that, you know, helped you in those early days on the job.

DAVE SNOW: Well, I think it was mainly Harold. Doug Ashley was there. He was -- he worked with me. Now, he was an experienced architect, and I worked with Doug quite a bit, but a lot of times, I would just -- it would be just me and Harold going out to do a job. And that's how I learned, because it was like a one-on-one tutorial.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DAVE SNOW: So it was very good. [00:13:52]And I like to write, so that was another thing. I didn't do much of it before the Park Service, but once I got in the Park Service, I started writing these reports, and there was a lot of technical narrative that I didn't realize I could do.

KAREN BREWSTER: And again, you sort of learned on the job?

DAVE SNOW: I learned on the job.

KAREN BREWSTER: They don't teach you that in architectural school?

DAVE SNOW: Well, back when I went to architectural, there was no historic preservation programs that I was aware of, you know. It was, you learned contemporary architecture, and I learned very contemporary architecture when I went to school. But my mind was still open, you know. Even though in school, it was the international style, and that's what we were kinda getting pushed toward, once I got out, it was like, you know, what is this historic preservation? You know, what is this? I had a completely open -- I was like a sponge.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DAVE SNOW: I just took it all in, and that's how I learned it. And it was, you know, you go off to parks, and you talk to the maintenance people, and you find out the practicalities of things and the problems they were having, and sometimes I was just as ignorant as they were. But you learned, you know.

[00:15:04]KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah. Well, you were how old at this point?

DAVE SNOW: I was about thirty.

KAREN BREWSTER: Ok. Yeah. So you said young and early in your career.

DAVE SNOW: Yeah. I was -- I came in as a GS-5.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

DAVE SNOW: 'Cause I -- I didn't have a master's degree or anything. I just had a bachelor of science, but I didn't want to put myself in more school and more debt, you know.

[00:15:31]KAREN BREWSTER: And how were projects assigned at the service center? Like, how was it that you ended up working at Paradise Inn versus you got assigned to Skagway?

DAVE SNOW: Well, you know, I think they just -- if you needed something to do, they had a list of projects, and um, you know, if you were capable of doing it, you would be put on it. And, you know, early on, like Harold would be the lead on the project. I would be assisting him. But later on, I started doing my own projects.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DAVE SNOW: You know, like they'd say, well, write a Historic Structure Report. And I'd never even heard of one before.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DAVE SNOW: And -- but I just, you know, plunged into it and learned how to do it. And so, anyway, that -- between doing a lot of field work, a lot of writing, I was building up a pretty good reputation.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

[00:16:26]DAVE SNOW: You know, by the time, say 1980 rolled around, and I was traveling up to Alaska a lot. 'Cause we had the Russian Bishop's house going on, and we had Klondike going on, and my friend Randy Conrad, he was -- he was working on the

Russian Bishop's house, and I was, you know, kind of working -- I was really interested in Klondike because I thought it was just really, really neat. I mean, it was in terrible condition, but it was like, I could see the potential.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

[00:16:57]DAVE SNOW: And so I kind of, you know, I told my wife, I said, you know, maybe if we move up there, I won't be traveling all the time. The work'll be right there. And that was kind of what was in my mind.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DAVE SNOW: Bill Brown, I met him up on site. I don't know how Bill's doing these days.

KAREN BREWSTER: He's not alive anymore.

DAVE SNOW: Yeah, I kind of -- he was --

KAREN BREWSTER: It's a recent -- recent -- last couple of years, I think.

DAVE SNOW: Yeah. He and I were pretty close at that time, and he kinda talked me into it, to be honest with you. He said, "Dave, you gotta just come up here." And um, so I did.

[00:17:30]KAREN BREWSTER: And you moved to Anchorage?

DAVE SNOW: No. I moved straight to Skagway.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh, you actually moved to Skagway? Ok.

DAVE SNOW: See, the part -- part of the thing in my mind, I had been in the Park Service long enough, I'd been to enough parks and stuff that I knew that if I went up there, I wanted to -- I wanted to stay an architect. You know, I was worried that if I became park staff, they would siphon me off onto a whole bunch of other things.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DAVE SNOW: And I wanted to do the projects. And that was probably the smartest thing I ever did.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

[00:18:02]DAVE SNOW: Because the -- the superintendent, he really wanted me in a uniform, and he wanted me to be in the maintenance department. You know, he was a traditional guy.

KAREN BREWSTER: And was this Dick Sims at the time?

DAVE SNOW: Yeah. And uh, Dick Hoffman had been up there before him, and Dick Sims replaced him. And Gary Higgins, an architect from the service center, had been up there, and he was living up there, but he had some issues and had to suddenly leave town. So it was like this vacuum, you know. There was a new superintendent. The past historical architect was gone, and they just didn't really have any technical expertise. They had a lot of, you know, Jay Cable was the chief ranger. He was a good friend of mine, and -- but he didn't know anything about historic buildings.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

[00:18:52]DAVE SNOW: And they tended to hire people into these -- into this historic park that didn't have, you know, the background in preservation.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DAVE SNOW: But be it as it may, I just uh, I just jumped right into it. And, course, there's no place to live in Skagway.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DAVE SNOW: And that was the first problem. And so, I had to kind of negotiate my way to -- you know, I told 'em, I said, "I'll live in a -- anywhere, it's just we have to find a place."

And the park wasn't real cooperative with me. They just figured, you'll figure it out. [00:19:30]I finally told 'em, "I'll live in the Moore House." The Moore House is the oldest house in Skagway, and nothing had been done to it in, like, fifty years.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DAVE SNOW: But that's where I moved into.

KAREN BREWSTER: With your family?

DAVE SNOW: With my family.

KAREN BREWSTER: Wow.

DAVE SNOW: And we had no -- no heat. It had nothing.

KAREN BREWSTER: No running water?

DAVE SNOW: It barely had running water. The sewer was plugged. Everything was, you know, it hadn't been lived in in like --

[00:19:57]KAREN BREWSTER: I'm surprised they let you live in it as an historic building.

DAVE SNOW: Well, you gotta remember the times.

KAREN BREWSTER: That's true.

DAVE SNOW: You know, if you go back a little bit, Pete Bathurst, I think that was his name, he had went into the Peniel Mission and done a bunch of work.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh, really?

DAVE SNOW: So he could live there. There just wasn't any place to live.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right. Well, there -- it's still a problem.

DAVE SNOW: I'm sure it is. I'm sure it is.

KAREN BREWSTER: And, you know, in some parks, you know, they provide housing for park employees, but in Skagway, that's not an option, I guess.

[00:20:29]DAVE SNOW: Well, they had a trailer for the superintendent. I don't know if they still have that or not, but it was -- you know, I just told 'em. I says, "We'll move in there. We won't do anything to it. We'll just live in there, and we'll do what we have to to stabilize the house."

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DAVE SNOW: And so, that's what we did. We had 'em put a roof on it, but it was really rough. You know, there was no insulation in it, and we -- we met this couple, uh, Frank and -- let's see, what was his name? Sylvia? I can't remember the guy's name. Anyway, we met a couple, and they -- they sort of adopted us like grandparents.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DAVE SNOW: They liked our kids. He taught me how to build a barrel stove, and that's how I heated that thing, you know, and it was -- this was going on before I really got into any of the work. Because I had to have a place to live.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DAVE SNOW: I had to have a place for my family, and um, the town was not real cooperative with Park Service. They didn't like the Park Service real well.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

DAVE SNOW: And um, but we -- we dug our heels in, and we finally actually were able to kinda live in that house.

KAREN BREWSTER: So who paid --

DAVE SNOW: During the summer time.



[00:21:41]KAREN BREWSTER: Right. So who paid for the improvements? Like you said the roof needed fixing.

DAVE SNOW: The Park Service paid for it because I made sure that whatever we did would be to stabilize it.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DAVE SNOW: You know, like putting a roof on it or something. We didn't make -- contrary to how the Peniel Mission was treated, we didn't do anything in there that would have really improved it just for me.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DAVE SNOW: Other than just stabilizing it, and uh -- 'cause I knew what -- you know, I knew what the ultimate goal was.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DAVE SNOW: And I didn't see that as a permanent solution, and as it was, I could not live there in the winter time. So I had to move into the Peniel Mission, um, after not -- you know, after the first summer because it had heat. And uh, and even at that, it was just -- it was kind of a fire trap. 'Cause they had done some -- they had done a lot of work in there, but not good work, you know.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right. But it was already owned by the Park Service?

DAVE SNOW: Yes.

KAREN BREWSTER: At that point?

DAVE SNOW: Yes.

KAREN BREWSTER: Ok.

[00:22:37]DAVE SNOW: They had spent a lot of their resources fixing that house up previously, rather than working on stuff that I felt deserved more --

KAREN BREWSTER: Fixing which house? The Moore House?

DAVE SNOW: The Peniel.

KAREN BREWSTER: The Peniel, ok.

DAVE SNOW: Yeah. The Peniel Mission. And there was nothing really done to it to help it, to preserve it, you know. When you're doing all interior finishes, that's not really the same thing, so. Anyway, we lived there for a period of time. I'm gonna go through the housing thing first --

KAREN BREWSTER: Ok.

DAVE SNOW: Before I -- and I'll backtrack.

KAREN BREWSTER: Sure. Yeah, no, this is great.

DAVE SNOW: Because --

KAREN BREWSTER: Housing is an issue, so that's good.

DAVE SNOW: Well, it was a big issue.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

DAVE SNOW: And it got to the point where we weren't happy in the Peniel Mission either, and we didn't have the best relationship with the superintendent and his wife, uh, because they didn't like the fact that I was a regional employee instead of a park employee.

KAREN BREWSTER: Ok.

DAVE SNOW: So they weren't doing much to really help us. [00:23:37]So I finally decided, I'm just going to go find a house in Skagway, and I'm going to buy it. So I tried to do that, and there was a house available called the Gault House, G-A-U-L-T.

KAREN BREWSTER: Ok.

DAVE SNOW: They used to call it the White Pass House, mainly because the White Pass owned it. So I went after that, and I ran into a wall because the local White Pass guys didn't want a Park Service person living in that house.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DAVE SNOW: So my wife went up and talked to the guys in Canada. We went over their head.

KAREN BREWSTER: Hm.

DAVE SNOW: And they sold us that house in spite of what the local people wanted.

KAREN BREWSTER: Wow.

[00:24:24]DAVE SNOW: And so I bought the house, and it was a really nice house. Jim Hamilton had owned it previously. He used to -- he's a runner. I think he used to own Kirmse's. And um, he had taken the newel post out of the railroad depot and put it in that house.

KAREN BREWSTER: He'd taken the what?

DAVE SNOW: The newel post. It had a --

KAREN BREWSTER: What's that?

DAVE SNOW: It's a post for a stair.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh, ok.

DAVE SNOW: It's really nice, and it was historic. And he took it out of the admin building of the railroad and then put it in his house.

KAREN BREWSTER: Wow.

DAVE SNOW: So one of the things I did was take that and give it back to the Park Service. But anyway, at least we finally had a house to live in.

[00:25:03]KAREN BREWSTER: Now, where is that house?

DAVE SNOW: It's on 6th and Alaska.

KAREN BREWSTER: Ok.

DAVE SNOW: And it was easy to sell because the woman asked me -- when we left Skagway, she says, "Is that house haunted?" And I said, "You bet it is." She said, "I'll buy it." That was a big thing in Skagway. When I lived in the Peniel Mission, nobody would babysit my kids.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh, really.

DAVE SNOW: 'Cause they -- they felt it was haunted. You know, there's a lot of that ghost stories that go around there.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

DAVE SNOW: And I -- I had a few experiences myself that I'm not so sure there isn't some stuff going on there, but anyway. So anyhow, we eventually had good housing there.

[00:25:46]KAREN BREWSTER: So did that Gault House have to be fixed up? Did you --

DAVE SNOW: No, it was actually -- I had to paint it was the only thing I did to it.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DAVE SNOW: It was in beautiful -- it had been lived in.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DAVE SNOW: You know, things that are lived in are easier to come in to. The Peniel Mission had been lived in, but it just -- the work that was done made it a very dangerous -- you know, it had an oil heater in it which would catch fire, and then it had a wood stove that

was not -- I -- You know, in the winter time, the north wall would ice up in that house, even with the heat going full blast.

KAREN BREWSTER: In the mission?

DAVE SNOW: Yeah, in the Peniel Mission.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

DAVE SNOW: It was not an easy place to heat, even with a heater.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DAVE SNOW: So that was another reason I wanted out. [00:26:28]And I just wanted away from the Park Service thing, you know.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DAVE SNOW: Because Dick wanted to control my life, and I didn't want him to, and I didn't want him to, you know -- I just needed that kind of separation.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DAVE SNOW: So I tried to maintain that firewall between me and the park because it was really a much healthier thing. Because if I slipped into -- into being a park employee and working for the park, then -- then many of the decisions that I would've made otherwise would've been made by the superintendent. And they weren't good preservation decisions. So this way, it gave me some autonomy. [00:27:08]Occasionally, John Cook had to come down and straighten things out, but it helped.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm. And John Cook's role was?

DAVE SNOW: He was the regional director at the time.

KAREN BREWSTER: Ok. Um, so the fact that you were still a Denver Ser --

DAVE SNOW: I was -- I was a regional employee.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh, you were no longer Denver Service Center?

DAVE SNOW: Right. See, here's the irony. I moved up there so I wouldn't have to travel so much.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DAVE SNOW: Well, after I got up there, it was a little bit of a bait-and-switch because they said, "Oh, you're in Skagway. Well, now you can be the regional architect, too." So in addition to all the work I had in Skagway, they wanted me to fly around to all the other parks in Alaska and do things. And that's what I did.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DAVE SNOW: But most of -- 90 percent of what my work was for that four years, from 1980 to 1984, was in Skagway on the structures there.

[00:28:06]KAREN BREWSTER: Now how were you able to work that to come from Denver Service Center and get a position in Skagway? Was it an open position for a historical architect, or -- ?

DAVE SNOW: Yeah, they had an open position there. You know, Gary Higgins was in it.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DAVE SNOW: But I told them I wouldn't go up there if I had to work for the park.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DAVE SNOW: I knew enough to not get caught.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right. But somehow they -- they created a position for you?

DAVE SNOW: Finagled it. They -- they -- well, and I think that's why they made me go to the other parks because that's how they justified it.

KAREN BREWSTER: Ok.

[00:28:36]DAVE SNOW: So I was a regional employee living in a park.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DAVE SNOW: And they weren't real happy about it. I mean, one person -- I got along with everybody but --

KAREN BREWSTER: The superintendent was the problem?

DAVE SNOW: The superintendent, you know, but --

[00:28:50]KAREN BREWSTER: And what about, you know, the community? You were talking about that they were not very happy to have Park Service people there, and --

DAVE SNOW: Well, they were -- they'd been burnt. And I can tell you why. I understand it completely now. At the time, I was beginning to understand it, but I didn't totally understand it. The -- you know, the -- the town is a national landmark.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DAVE SNOW: Ok. Previous superintendent, Dick Hoffman, had led people to believe that he could control what people did to their houses.

KAREN BREWSTER: Mm.

DAVE SNOW: Ok. And it really unnerved a lot of the people in town. You know, just because they're in a national historic -- you know, I've learned since, you really don't have to follow -- you can do whatever the heck you want, you know, unless you've got federal money involved in it. And um, but that was the perception, you know. The perception was that the Park Service had control of everybody's house, and that didn't sit well with people.

KAREN BREWSTER: No, it wouldn't.

DAVE SNOW: You know, and they would lend equipment. You know, there was an agreement where we would lend jacks and stuff to homeowners, but it should've been just left at that, you know.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

[00:30:01]DAVE SNOW: You shouldn't have been able to go in and tell people what to do. But that -- that was the presiding presumption.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DAVE SNOW: And I was working against that a lot when I was there.

KAREN BREWSTER: And did Dick Sims continue that?

DAVE SNOW: Yes, he did. You know, and I think he -- after he had been there a while, I think he was starting to figure it out, but he was so traditional, so kind of old-school about things, it really wasn't in his nature to make that change, you know. [00:30:31]And, I mean, I had some big battles there. There was -- Westours was in there with their hotels. They painted all their buildings black and red, all of them. And so, they wanted me to design a compatible structure, and I did. And I said, "You know, you should change the color scheme on the rest of your buildings." And we went back and forth. They brought in their architects and stuff. And in the end, they decided to do that. But I didn't know at the time that the governor of Alaska, and I don't even remember who it was at the time, had a lot of vested interest in Westours, and I guess I made a lot of ripples that went all the way to Anchorage when we made that color change.

KAREN BREWSTER: Mm. Sheffield? He was --

DAVE SNOW: Might've been.

KAREN BREWSTER: Hickel or Sheffield.

DAVE SNOW: Yeah. Anyway, I just know that I got my way, but it -- at some price politically up the -- up the ladder. But, you know, in those days, I felt I could do anything.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DAVE SNOW: You know, in terms of doing what it took to make the town change.

[00:31:37]And one of the ideas I had, and John Cook said he had an idea, but I -- we might have had the idea at the same time, I don't know, but I felt that we should just start painting buildings. We had done some color testing. We knew what the historic colors were. And I -- I told the park that we should just paint the buildings, even though it's probably gonna -- you know, a lot of stuff will get replaced and repainted, but we need to show them a different appearance, so they can kind of get used to how things might be in the future.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DAVE SNOW: And so, we started doing that. We started painting all these weathering buildings all these really bright colors. Oh, the town just went crazy. They just -- they thought, you're turning this into Coney Island, you know.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DAVE SNOW: I heard that a million times. [00:32:27]But in the end, it -- it really kinda helped open the door, open their minds to historic preservation. Because I told 'em, you know, it probably did look like Coney Island back in the gold rush. It was bright, flashy.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

DAVE SNOW: You know, there was all sorts of illegal things going on. It was a crazy place, you know.

[00:32:49]KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah, I wouldn't have thought that they painted buildings in the gold rush time.

DAVE SNOW: Oh, yeah.

KAREN BREWSTER: I would've thought they were just plain wood.

DAVE SNOW: No. Well, the really early -- you know, you have to remember, the gold rush was over by the time they built these things.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh, right.

DAVE SNOW: You know, the gold rush was like a flash in the pan.

KAREN BREWSTER: And that was tents, a lot of that stuff, yeah.

DAVE SNOW: Yeah, and like Dyea never got to the point where they probably painted anything.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DAVE SNOW: But Skagway, you know, they had -- they were expecting big things there. They had the railroad --

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DAVE SNOW: I think, which drove a lot of things. And there was lots -- I've got some things on paint I'll tell you after. When we get to it, but -- but that was -- that was kind of one of the early, early things that I did, is I made sure that they knew we were coming.

[00:33:34]KAREN BREWSTER: And the buildings that you painted, those were the ones already owned by the Park Service?

DAVE SNOW: They were park -- park buildings.

KAREN BREWSTER: You didn't just go paint the whole downtown?

DAVE SNOW: No, I coul -- it's not that there weren't some people that thought I should.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DAVE SNOW: Because of that perception that we had all this control over everything, but I just -- I kept right on to the buildings that we -- we owned. [00:33:57]And I started trying to make some inroads with the locals. I hired locals.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DAVE SNOW: Um, and when I hired 'em, they didn't like to follow any kind of construction rules. They didn't want to work in the winter time, and I knew that if we did not work in the winter time, we would never leave. I would never finish. So I started a program where we would work in the winter. The Park Service is really not set up for that because it's more a seasonal hiring.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DAVE SNOW: So I kind of worked -- kind of I worked the system. I'd get more people there in the summer 'cause it was easier to get 'em, and then I tried to get other people -- Like, we would even steal the trail crew and use them. 'Cause we were lifting buildings. We just needed -- we needed strong guys.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DAVE SNOW: And um --

[00:34:46]KAREN BREWSTER: Well, yeah, so that would've been, like, Roy Nelson and --

DAVE SNOW: Yeah.

KAREN BREWSTER: Jerry Watson?

DAVE SNOW: You bet.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

DAVE SNOW: I know those guys real well. Jerry -- he was a Vietnam vet.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yep.

DAVE SNOW: He was a Corpsman.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DAVE SNOW: I liked him.

KAREN BREWSTER: I just interviewed him the other day.

DAVE SNOW: Did you really?

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm. We'll talk about that a little later.

DAVE SNOW: Ok.

KAREN BREWSTER: But anyway, those were the kind of guys that you hired?

DAVE SNOW: Oh, yeah. I mean, you get 'em on there, and they're turning these bars to lift the building, and they're bending the bars, you know, they're so strong. [00:35:11]But so, I went after any resource I could find, and I -- I started kinda developing a rapport with people. That's not to say there weren't some people that weren't -- you know, they wanted to homestead some of the jobs in. You know, homesteading is when somebody who works kinda purposely real slow so that they don't lose their job.

KAREN BREWSTER: Mm.

DAVE SNOW: You know, and you have to kinda get -- there's -- Alaska has some of that. I don't know if it's just Alaska, but it's maybe the remoteness, the remote areas, where people -- they like it there. They want to stay there. They want to keep their work. But for me, it was I was -- I had a budget. I had -- I had to meet deadlines. I had to show progress.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

[00:35:57]DAVE SNOW: And uh, and the buildings were in terrible condition. Some of the worst condition of any buildings I've ever seen. The only thing that kept them standing is the fact that they had been built with first-growth lumber.

KAREN BREWSTER: Hm.

DAVE SNOW: And in the early days in Skagway, the tide would come down Broadway.

KAREN BREWSTER: Wow.

DAVE SNOW: Because it wasn't until World War II that they built it out and stopped the tide from coming in.

KAREN BREWSTER: They brought in all that fill material?

DAVE SNOW: Yeah. So before that, those buildings would sit there and the railroad and everything and there'd be water coming in.

KAREN BREWSTER: So up to what, like, 4th the tide would come that far on a high tide?

DAVE SNOW: Well, my theory is, where my house was on 6th, there were some really neat buildings on 6th and it went the other axis.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DAVE SNOW: I really think that -- that's -- that was the beginning of Skagway, and then when the railroad came, they changed the axis down Broadway, you know.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh.

DAVE SNOW: And then they had to deal with the tide. But I think originally they were smart. They kept out of the water.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DAVE SNOW: 'Cause the farther back you got, the higher you got.

[00:37:04]KAREN BREWSTER: Right, and Moore built his house at what is now 5th, right?

DAVE SNOW: Right. Yeah, he was probably -- I don't know if it was high enough, but, you know, those buildings had no foundations.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh, really?

DAVE SNOW: To speak -- well, they had wood foundations.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DAVE SNOW: Treated wood.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DAVE SNOW: They had foundations, but it wasn't the -- what you and I would think as, uh, traditional masonry foundations.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right, and they didn't dig down in?

DAVE SNOW: Right. Yeah. So, you know, that worked on the buildings over the years, and so, it had a lot to do with why they were settling and, I mean, to tell you, they were settling.

[00:37:40]KAREN BREWSTER: Well, and I think those logs eventually would start rotting out if they're just sitting on the ground.

DAVE SNOW: Well, if they stay wet, you know, they probably did fine for a period of time.

When they stayed wet, when the tide kept coming in and out, they were probably fine.

It's when the Corps of Engineers went in and stopped it from coming in, then they dried out.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh.

DAVE SNOW: That's when I think the demoli -- you know, the deterioration started to happen.

KAREN BREWSTER: Huh, interesting. I would've thought the other way around.

DAVE SNOW: Well, keeping something wet, it keeps its integrity, you know.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DAVE SNOW: So, you know, all the buildings had foundation issues, major foundation issues, and --

[00:38:20]KAREN BREWSTER: And you had said first-growth lumber. Can you explain why that is better?

DAVE SNOW: Well, first -- first-growth means that the tree grew naturally, and so, if you look at a piece of first-growth, the growth rings are real close together, you know. That's why wood shingles used to last a long time is they used to use first-growth wood for shingles. They don't anymore, and so now you get ten years out of wood shingles. So if you have - - you've got spring wood and winter wood, and the winter wood is what gives it its strength.

KAREN BREWSTER: Ok.

DAVE SNOW: You know, if it's a fertilized tree, you'll see great big fat wide rings where it's been fertilized, and it doesn't make such a strong tree.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DAVE SNOW: But all that first-growth wood is -- even the buildings that were left at Dyca, there were still some things standing out there, but --

[00:39:07]KAREN BREWSTER: So that was -- those were built out of local trees then that were cut down and -- ?

DAVE SNOW: You know, I don't know.

KAREN BREWSTER: -- lumber made from them?

DAVE SNOW: I've seen pictures of Skagway where there's no trees around it, so I know they cut 'em down.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DAVE SNOW: But whether they used them for -- you know, a lot of the lumber that was used in this was -- it looked like it might have been shipped up for some of those buildings.

KAREN BREWSTER: But it could still have been first-growth, but it was lumber shipped in?

DAVE SNOW: Yeah.

KAREN BREWSTER: Ok.

DAVE SNOW: 'Cause back in those days, I mean, lumber was just better.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DAVE SNOW: Period. No matter where you built.

KAREN BREWSTER: Ok.

DAVE SNOW: And same with the siding and every -- all of that. [00:39:40]So anyway, so my - - the program I started in Skagway was to stabilize all the buildings and restore the depot and admin building. That was basically my goal, and to do it within four years.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DAVE SNOW: And so, I had a crew working on painting a lot of times and just jacking buildings up, straightening 'em out, putting roofs, you know. Just doing things that would keep the weather out of 'em. The problem was, of course, the underpinning. And when I got there, they had done some of this. The Lynch Kennedy, they had that -- that was up on wood --

KAREN BREWSTER: Like blocks?

DAVE SNOW: Lintels. Well no, it was --



KAREN BREWSTER: What are lintels?

DAVE SNOW: They -- they went up -- it was timbers, I should say. The proper terminology. They used spruce. Because there's not a lot of good wood up in Canada and stuff, you know.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DAVE SNOW: It's not like oak.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DAVE SNOW: It's spruce. It's strong and it's light, but it rots easy. So we had -- we had the Lynch Kennedy up on -- they had left it. They had scaffolding in there, and jacks, and spruce, and that's the way -- it was just sitting there.

[00:40:59]KAREN BREWSTER: But so, it was raised up off the ground?

DAVE SNOW: It was raised up off the ground. 'Cause everybody knew that the foundations were not much. And it got so hard for me to find a way to heat my house, I eventually had to make a deal with the Park Service where I could get some of that wood and chop it up and put it in the woodstove, so.

KAREN BREWSTER: So, well, if you took the timbers from under the Lynch & Kennedy --

DAVE SNOW: Well, we had to replace it with something else.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah, what did you use instead?

DAVE SNOW: Well, we used jacks.

KAREN BREWSTER: Ok.

DAVE SNOW: You know. We had hundreds of screw jacks. But there was, you know, there was pieces of it just hanging there. And so, you know, it was hard to know where to start to stabilize stuff 'cause everything --

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah, that was my question.

DAVE SNOW: And everything was in terrible condition. [00:41:44]And some things were -- the Mascot Saloon was not too bad. But the Lynch Kennedy, because it had been a, um, a barracks for the Buffalo Soldiers, and so there wasn't a lot of underpinning. You know, they had moved that from some other part of town, cut it up, and they -- Lynch Kennedy and the gold -- the building that's next to it, I can't remember. The one with the tower. *(Per 4/9/20 email from Dave Snow, it's the Pack Train Saloon.)*

KAREN BREWSTER: Not the Golden North Hotel?

DAVE SNOW: No, that's across the street. Uh, oh, I can't think of the name of it, but anyway, there was three structures, and they had literally severed these barracks buildings and then put a false front around them. And so, they -- structurally, they were terrible. And the people that owned them, you know, the ones that are attached to the Lynch Kennedy, did not like the Park Service, the Brennans. And I tried to get along with him, but I shot my mouth off one day, and his mom heard me. I -- 'cause I mentioned something about, we're gonna -- we're gonna fix this no matter what the Brennans think, and they heard me. So I got in a lot of trouble for that. But, you know, that's just the way it was, you know.

[00:42:55]KAREN BREWSTER: So they still owned it, the Lynch & Kennedy?

DAVE SNOW: They owned -- no, they did not own -- we owned the Lynch Kennedy, but they owned their -- their portion.

KAREN BREWSTER: So it was an attached part?

DAVE SNOW: Yes.

KAREN BREWSTER: Ok.

DAVE SNOW: Yeah, it's a big attachment.

KAREN BREWSTER: Ok.

DAVE SNOW: Yeah, he -- he never would -- Bob would tell Brenna that, you know, there was Buffalo Soldiers in that thing at one time, and he says, "No, there wasn't." It was -- they were racial about it.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh.

DAVE SNOW: He didn't want to think that there had been, you know, Buffalo Soldiers in his building at one time, but anyway. I believed Bob. I mean, he --

KAREN BREWSTER: That was Bob Spude?

DAVE SNOW: Yeah. He did the research on it. He knew.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right. [00:43:36]And so, was that part of the building restored, as well, and like -- ?

DAVE SNOW: Well, the Brennans were working on theirs.

KAREN BREWSTER: Ok.

DAVE SNOW: Doing stuff, and we were working on ours. And I think theirs was farther along, you know, but I -- Lynch Kennedy was just like, I kinda put it in the category of, we'll stabilize it, and we'll move on.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DAVE SNOW: You know, and that's kind of what I did with everything except the railroad depot. That we focused on actually going into it. [00:44:05]And that -- that building on the south side in particular was ready to fall down. I mean, literally. The regional office had gone in there and put some bolts to hold it together and some strongbacks. Because they put a wall of windows on the back of the admin building facing the Lynn Canal.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DAVE SNOW: And it's just like the worst place they could've done that.

KAREN BREWSTER: But who did that, the railroad?

DAVE SNOW: The original builders.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah, ok.

DAVE SNOW: The original design was, it had a flat roof, and it emptied out over those windows. Ok?

KAREN BREWSTER: Ok.

DAVE SNOW: There was a gutter, but, you know, in a big storm, it was just terrible. So over the years, that entire wall, the south wall of the administration building, had rotted away. It was just barely hanging there. The only reason it was still up was because the -- they had put the strong ties in.

[00:45:06]KAREN BREWSTER: And what are strong ties? Is it like a cable system?

DAVE SNOW: It's like -- well, it's bolts and then beams that run across, and then you sandwich -- you sandwich the wall between the beams.

KAREN BREWSTER: So you have a beam on the inside and a beam on the outside?

DAVE SNOW: On the outside, and then -- and then bolts that go through it.

KAREN BREWSTER: Ok.

DAVE SNOW: And that kinda holds it together.

KAREN BREWSTER: Ok.

DAVE SNOW: But I mean, they were rusting, and it was just -- it was bad, you know.

[00:45:31]KAREN BREWSTER: So what -- did you decide to focus on the depot because the park knew they wanted to use that as their admin offices?

DAVE SNOW: Yeah. We needed a visitor center. We were above the grocery store at the time, that little grocery store on Broadway. Reive's or something, I can't --

KAREN BREWSTER: Reiwes, yeah.

DAVE SNOW: Yeah.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah, ok.

DAVE SNOW: And so, you know, I -- I thought, I needed to have a goal because I felt that the crew that was going to work on it needed to have that same goal. [00:45:59]And as it turned out, that was -- that worked out pretty well, because I eventually had a crew that -- that I could depend on. Buddy Honan was the lead carpenter. Bill Hunz was the electrician. And then Si Dennis, all those guys, you know.

KAREN BREWSTER: Andy Beierly?

DAVE SNOW: Andy Beierly was there. Um, we had Gene Ervine for a while, but he and I -- he was a -- he was another story altogether. But --

KAREN BREWSTER: He ended up working on the Bishop's House, right? (Russian Bishop's House in Sitka)

DAVE SNOW: Well, I got him from the Bishop's House.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh, I see, okay

DAVE SNOW: I told him I needed somebody there. Like when I go travel, I needed somebody there to take the lead, but he was not the guy. He just was not well-suited for that position. But anyway, I had him for a while, and um.

KAREN BREWSTER: But his background was also historic architecture?

DAVE SNOW: No.

KAREN BREWSTER: Or construction?

DAVE SNOW: I -- I'm not sure -- I think he had a literature degree or something.

KAREN BREWSTER: Ok.

DAVE SNOW: I don't think he was -- had a technical background.

KAREN BREWSTER: Ok.

DAVE SNOW: I don't care, but, you know, it was --

[00:47:14]KAREN BREWSTER: I was just, for people who don't know who he is, is I was just trying to provide some context of who he was and what he was doing for the Park Service.

DAVE SNOW: Yeah, I think he's -- he worked in Sitka. He worked as a day laborer, you know, and they -- He was just a local that they hired to help 'em.

KAREN BREWSTER: Ok.

DAVE SNOW: And then when I needed somebody, I -- they sent him, so. But anyway.

KAREN BREWSTER: And what was Buddy's last name?

DAVE SNOW: Honan. H-O-N-A-N.

KAREN BREWSTER: Ok.

[00:47:46]DAVE SNOW: I got a -- you know what, I've got some pictures with --

KAREN BREWSTER: Um, well, we can look at those maybe afterwards.

DAVE SNOW: Ok. It has all their names on there.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

DAVE SNOW: I don't remember them real good.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um.

[00:47:58]DAVE SNOW: But anyway, I was evol --

KAREN BREWSTER: This was a good crew?

DAVE SNOW: Yeah, I was evolving a crew because we not only had to restore -- you know, work on the structural aspects of the building, we had to -- we had to rebuild all the windows and doors.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DAVE SNOW: There was just, you know, no way -- no way around it. And at the same time, I'm working with my -- the people I knew at the Denver Service Center, the engineers. Like Pete Tomka was the structural engineer. He and I were good friends for many years, and there was a mechanical and electrical engineer that I got. And I started -- I could call 'em up and consult with 'em.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DAVE SNOW: Which was very beneficial. 'Cause at some point, I -- I would send stuff down to Pete, and he would just design it and send it back. And then we would implement it.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

[00:48:49]DAVE SNOW: 'Cause just to give you an idea structurally, the building was like a giant mushroom. It had a two-story masonry safe in the center, and it was actually on a stone foundation.

KAREN BREWSTER: Wow.

DAVE SNOW: It was one of the few things that I'd ever seen on a stone foundation. But the rest of the building was on a wood foundation. So it had collapsed.

KAREN BREWSTER: Around that.

DAVE SNOW: And that thing was sticking up. And, you know, we had to lift -- you know, we had to excavate under the entire building, and then put lifting beams, and, you know, literally dig a hole for a person to get into so they could put a screw-jack in there, and we would do that throughout the underside of the building. And a lot of these people I had had never dug anything in their life. You know, I got whoever I could get.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DAVE SNOW: And I had people doing things under there that they shouldn't have been doing, you know. You'd say, "Well, I haven't seen so-and-so for a while. Where are -- ?" "Well, they're still under the building." "Well, are they digging, or what are they doing?" You know, so. We had conveyors, and, you know, we just kept -- kept at it till we dug it all out and jacked it all up.

[00:50:00]KAREN BREWSTER: What about archeological clearance for under that?

DAVE SNOW: Well, we -- any time we needed archeological clearance, we got it. I worked with Cathy --

KAREN BREWSTER: Blee.

DAVE SNOW: She was Cathy Blee at the time.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

DAVE SNOW: But, uh, yeah, we would, if we found something in a builder's trench, we would stop, you know.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DAVE SNOW: But we had clearance to do what we were doing at all times.

[00:50:24]KAREN BREWSTER: So what -- but as you -- when you jacked up the building, did archeologists go in ahead of you to look for things?

DAVE SNOW: Well, not really.

KAREN BREWSTER: Ok.

DAVE SNOW: You know, I don't remember them doing that. I -- I do remember that we wouldn't have been digging had they not cleared it.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right. That's what I was wondering.

DAVE SNOW: They probably -- they probably didn't think there was anything that significant under there. But we did find stuff in the builders trench when we started --

KAREN BREWSTER: So what's the builders trench?

DAVE SNOW: That's the original excavation for the structure, that when they built it.

KAREN BREWSTER: Hm.

DAVE SNOW: And you'd find things in there like hats. We found one of those old, tiny hats, you know, that looks like a -- like a race car driver hat. You know, a flat -- I forget what they call those kind of hats. It's got a little, real short bill.

KAREN BREWSTER: Hm. I don't know.

DAVE SNOW: Yeah. I don't know. Anyway, if we would find historic artifacts, we would just stop everything.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DAVE SNOW: And, you know, do what we had to do. And Cathy was out there a lot.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DAVE SNOW: Sometimes she would be on another site, and I'd just say, "You know, you need to come over and look at this." You know, it was that kind of thing. She was doing archeology under the Moore House when I was living in it.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh my goodness. Had they raised it up, or she --

DAVE SNOW: Well, I think they dug under it. I can't remember, you know, to be honest with you, Karen. I think they may have, um, I -- I know she was excavating. She may have excavated.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

DAVE SNOW: That may be. 'Cause she was doing the cabin as well as the --

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DAVE SNOW: As the house. But, yeah, she was -- [00:51:59]we just had all this stuff going on kinda simultaneously. 'Cause we really didn't have a choice, you know. I think we all wanted to save the resources, but you had to balance, you know, preserving the resource with making enough progress to where they would keep the funding coming.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DAVE SNOW: Eventually, it got to the point where I couldn't spend the money I was getting because Stevens, Senator Stevens --

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DAVE SNOW: He went -- and even James Watt.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh, the former Secretary of Interior.

DAVE SNOW: Yeah. He had a big sign he gave to all the parks: Restoration of the Parks. And I thought, yeah, we're doing restoration. So we put his sign up out front, and it says restoration, and we got a bunch of money for boardwalk from him.

KAREN BREWSTER: And that's not what he meant by restoration?

DAVE SNOW: I don't think so.

KAREN BREWSTER: I don't know what he would've meant.

DAVE SNOW: Well, I think he meant restoration in terms of, not historic restoration, but say a park has not had maintenance funds for a period of time --

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh, ok.

DAVE SNOW: I think that's what he was probably after. I don't know.

KAREN BREWSTER: Ok.

DAVE SNOW: But uh, anyway. We um --

[00:53:03]KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah, I was sort of wondering what the pressures were of why you had to be in such a hurry?

DAVE SNOW: Well, part of it was a manufactured hurry so that people wouldn't homestead. If I didn't set goals, people would -- they would literally sit there, you know. And I needed people that were goal-oriented.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DAVE SNOW: And Buddy was like that. Mark Brooker, he was this hippie guy, big guy, nicest guy you'd ever meet. He lived out in the woods, and he was just one of the best carpenters. One of the -- sort of a naturally good carpenter. You know, you could say, we need a newel post that looks like that, and he'd come back and he'd get on -- he'd get on the lathe and come back and he'd have it, you know. And so, we had, you know, I was getting the people onto that crew that -- they liked it. They enjoyed what they were doing.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DAVE SNOW: And I think that having that goal was essential.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DAVE SNOW: Had we not had it, you know it wouldn't've -- it wouldn't've worked. So we kept pushing it, and none of us, you know, I had never built a door before. I had never built a window. I just didn't tell 'em that. And so, they -- and I would watch 'em. I knew what a window should look like. I knew what a door should look like. And it was between my knowing where we needed to go and their skills getting up to where they needed to be, you know. 'Cause a lot of the fellows I got did not know how to use a hammer and a nail.

KAREN BREWSTER: Wow.

DAVE SNOW: They were used to using pneumatic nailers, and we were using hammers and nails.

KAREN BREWSTER: And why?

DAVE SNOW: Well, I think that's -- that was the industry standard. I wasn't getting people that were trained in historic restoration.

[00:54:58]KAREN BREWSTER: No, but for historic restoration, you have to do it by hand with a hammer and nail?

DAVE SNOW: Well, I think it's the preferred way.

KAREN BREWSTER: Ok.

DAVE SNOW: Yeah. It's um, you know, you don't always see it, but, you know, I think, you know, if you're doing siding, it makes sense. If you're doing roofing. I don't know. You could -- there's probably other architects that might say, yeah, you could use a staple if you're not gonna see it, but I just felt we needed to be traditional about it.

KAREN BREWSTER: Ok.

DAVE SNOW: And um, and I think it made -- made them care more about what they were doing. If you get a fellow with a pneumatic nailer, they can kinda go a little crazy with 'em.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

[00:55:41]DAVE SNOW: You know. I had one guy that, um, he was kind of a questionable guy, but when he was doing shingles, and he -- found out he was signing them all. And then I found out he 'd murdered somebody up in the northern Alaska somewhere, so we had -- we had some guys that didn't last long.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

DAVE SNOW: But once we -- once we had a guy that, yeah -- I had a Mormon fellow, and I can't remember his name, but he was amazing. He was a teacher. We had a lot of teachers.

KAREN BREWSTER: Hm.

DAVE SNOW: Because of the seasonal thing, you know. He came in, and he took scrap wood, and he built himself a boat and went fishing in the Lynn Canal with it. And he grew a garden, you know. The guy was always doing stuff. I had another fellow that was a teacher, and he got cancer and passed away, right in the middle of all of our stuff.

KAREN BREWSTER: Wow.

DAVE SNOW: But, you know, I just really enjoyed the guys and the enthusiasm that they had, 'cause it really made the difference. Because we had to go the extra mile. [00:56:47]We learned things the hard way. Like, we built a bunch of doors. They were beautiful doors. And we leaned them up against the wall. Came back in a couple of days to get 'em, and they were all bowed.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh.

DAVE SNOW: They were destr -- we had to destroy 'em.

KAREN BREWSTER: How come that happened?

DAVE SNOW: Well, two reasons. One, you should never do that, but two is that, you know --

KAREN BREWSTER: Meaning you should install them right away?

DAVE SNOW: Yeah. Well, you certainly don't want to lean 'em against the wall where they're --

KAREN BREWSTER: Ok.

DAVE SNOW: -- in an unnatural position. You know, and the lumber we used -- even though I bought the best lumber I could buy, it was not as good as the original lumber that things were built out of. You know, those original doors, they might've been able to build them like that, I don't know, but we learned -- that's the kind of lessons we learned because once you see that, you don't do it again.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

[00:57:38]DAVE SNOW: You know. And we learned some tools would work better than other tools, and --

KAREN BREWSTER: Did you have to make tools?

DAVE SNOW: No, we never had to. The only tool issue I had, a lot of times, I'd get guys arguing over, you know, you took my -- my square, and that was my grandfather's square, and you didn't bring it back. You know, and I'd hear these arguments on site, so I told everybody to put their tools in their trucks, and then I went and I bought a bunch of Navy Seabee chests full of tools, and I said, there's your tools. They're government tools.

Then I never heard any more about it. You know, I just -- I had to learn. You know, I grew up in a construction family, but I'd never done construction. But I knew that when I was a kid, my dad would bring guys in, and he'd have to be really tough with 'em. And you had to be tough with these guys, 'cause it's a tough job. And what you do affects what somebody else does, and on down the line. [00:58:43]So what I was doing was, I was designing as they worked on the building. So I'd go up, and I'd spend like an hour or so doing design work, designing details for doors and windows and things, and then I'd go out and I'd implement the changes, like almost immediately.

KAREN BREWSTER: So you were both the architect/designer, and like the general contractor.

DAVE SNOW: There you go.

KAREN BREWSTER: Supervising the --

DAVE SNOW: Right.

KAREN BREWSTER: -- guys doing the work?

DAVE SNOW: Right.

KAREN BREWSTER: Wow.

[00:59:10]DAVE SNOW: Yeah, and plus I was the regional architect.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

DAVE SNOW: So, and that's why, with my operation, when I had to leave to go out to other parks, it was not a good thing.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DAVE SNOW: And that's why we had Gene come in, but Gene was not capable of -- because we had some guys do some stuff to a building, and there was nobody watching 'em, you know. And just on a side car, we were -- or a side thought here. We had one fellow come up, his name was Herschel Fowler. He was an old wildcatter from Texas. I loved that guy. He really had some grit, you know. And we were removing -- there was -- when the railroad depot, um -- after a period of years, they had connected the front.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DAVE SNOW: There was like a connection. There wasn't a U. There was actually a whole --

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh, the whole front, ok.

DAVE SNOW: Like a hallway.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DAVE SNOW: So we were gonna remove that. And we were having some trouble, and Herschel says, "It's coming down. It's coming down." And he went out there, and he was standing in that thing, and it went down with him in it.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh my.

DAVE SNOW: He just rode it down. It was sorta like Slim Pickens in that movie.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh.

DAVE SNOW: Where he rides the atomic bomb down, but, uh.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right. [01:00:29]So was Herschel in -- was he a heavy equipment operator?

DAVE SNOW: No, he was hired as a maintenance man for the park.

KAREN BREWSTER: So how did he get it to come down?

DAVE SNOW: Well, he probably was jumping up and down on it.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh, I see. Ok.

DAVE SNOW: And the guys were under it, removing the underpinning and the connections.



KAREN BREWSTER: Oh, I see.

DAVE SNOW: And you know. It's just kind of a construction thing, and we were struggling with it, but it was just -- and he didn't get hurt or anything, but it was just sort of --

KAREN BREWSTER: No.

DAVE SNOW: And he had a heck of a time. You know, he moved up to Skagway. They brought his personal goods in on a truck, and they pushed them out the back of the truck. And his refrigerator, the thing just dropped down and --

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh my gosh.

DAVE SNOW: -- ruined a lot of his stuff.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

DAVE SNOW: And so, he wasn't in the greatest mood to begin with. You know, it's like all of us to begin with when we went up there. You didn't have a place to live. If you didn't, you had to find a place, and it was tough.

[01:01:17]KAREN BREWSTER: And were people in town unpleasant?

DAVE SNOW: Some.

KAREN BREWSTER: Was there rudeness?

DAVE SNOW: Some of them were. And sometimes it was -- You know, like we ran out of fuel oil one time. And they didn't want the Park Service to have any fuel oil.

KAREN BREWSTER: Hm.

DAVE SNOW: So they just kinda, you know -- And then the hardware store guy, Benny at the hardware --

KAREN BREWSTER: Lingle.

DAVE SNOW: Yeah. He was a character. He and I would go back and forth a lot. I think he had a good heart, but he still had this sort of, um, chip on his shoulder. I think that's how I would call it. You know, and I think the park poisoned the water by thinking they controlled everything in those early years.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DAVE SNOW: So a lot like people, they had chips on their shoulder, and you had to -- you had to work with 'em to gain their respect.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DAVE SNOW: That's how I saw it. [01:02:09]You know, and one of the things I would do is, you know, a lot of times the guys up there would not wear construction helmets.

KAREN BREWSTER: Ooh.

DAVE SNOW: You know, so I started wearing mine all the time.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DAVE SNOW: And I'd walk up and down Broadway with that yellow construction helmet on and just defy them, you know. And I don't know, after a period -- I would say by two years after I'd been working, I not only had a good crew, but I had gained respect of a lot of the people in town. Plus, I think buying my own house helped.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DAVE SNOW: Because I think they felt that the Park Service subsidized everybody.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DAVE SNOW: So I think that helped quite a bit.

[01:02:52]KAREN BREWSTER: And uh, so with Benny Lingle, because he owned the hardware store, did you have issues with you weren't buying things from him for your projects?

DAVE SNOW: Well, it'd be things like -- I bought a lot of stuff through him, you know. But it'd be like, I'd have my hot water heater go out, and I'd need to get one for my house.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DAVE SNOW: And the hardware store would just make it conveniently difficult to get. You know, that kind of thing. But I don't hold it against any of 'em, you know. It's just -- I kind of understand how they felt, and part of my purpose was to change that.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DAVE SNOW: And so I hired as many locals as I could. There were some locals that were just -  
- they kept the chip.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DAVE SNOW: And I -- I just couldn't have 'em. And they were good people, they were good carpenters, but I didn't need the negativity on the crew.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right. [01:03:44]But I was wondering if you bought locally at the hardware store for the restoration projects?

DAVE SNOW: Yeah.

KAREN BREWSTER: You were able to do that?

DAVE SNOW: Oh, yeah. Yeah. I did a lot of it.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DAVE SNOW: Sometimes too much. I remember I had a whole trainload of particle board we were gonna put down. Found out it was incompatible with the glue for the finished surface that we were going to use, and we couldn't use it. And, of course, particle board, you don't ship back.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DAVE SNOW: So we were giving particle board away for a long time.

KAREN BREWSTER: Wow.

DAVE SNOW: You know.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah, 'cause you couldn't sell it either?

DAVE SNOW: You couldn't sell it.

KAREN BREWSTER: With the Park Service.

DAVE SNOW: You know, it cost so much. It cost more to ship it than it was worth.

[01:04:23]KAREN BREWSTER: Right. Well, and also the Park Service can't go turn things around and resell 'em like that.

DAVE SNOW: Right. Right.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

DAVE SNOW: So we just gave it away. You know, but -- and we -- we helped people where we could. You know, we gave 'em jacks and stuff to borrow.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

[01:04:38]DAVE SNOW: But um, so anyway, we -- we kept pushing on that project until -- I wanted to -- I, you know, I wanted to have it -- I had a date set, you know, four years, I wanted to have it done.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DAVE SNOW: And we did finish it in four years.

KAREN BREWSTER: That was the depot building?

DAVE SNOW: Yeah. Both -- well, the admin and the depot building.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DAVE SNOW: Yeah. You know, it's not to say it wasn't without issues. I mean, I've been even recently in contact with Karl (Gurcke).

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DAVE SNOW: And they're still having trouble with that south wall.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh, really?

DAVE SNOW: Because it's inherently a bad design. [01:05:13]And I told him you almost need a marine architect to give you some kind of guidance on how to seal those windows because I -- you know, we did everything we could.

KAREN BREWSTER: Because that's so exposed to the weather, that side?

DAVE SNOW: Yeah. Even with a storm window on, it's not enough, you know.

KAREN BREWSTER: Hm.

DAVE SNOW: The wood -- the water gets pressed in there at such a pressure 'cause the wind's blowing at fifty, sixty miles an hour, and it's wet. And it just -- and then you got the roof that's draining that direction.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DAVE SNOW: It's all the worst things in the world.

KAREN BREWSTER: Well, even with gutters?

DAVE SNOW: Well, even with gutters. Yeah.

KAREN BREWSTER: Or can you -- ? Maybe you can't put gutters up 'cause they're not historically appropriate.

DAVE SNOW: They historically had a gutter.

KAREN BREWSTER: They -- Ok.

DAVE SNOW: And we put it back, but it -- any kind of storm can be bad enough to overwhelm it.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right. Right.

DAVE SNOW: That -- or after a period of time, the caulking starts to break down, or one thing or the other. So it's a constant -- it's a -- it'll be always a difficult thing for the park to deal with.

[01:06:14]KAREN BREWSTER: Well, I mean, and you restored -- finished it in 1984, right?

DAVE SNOW: Right.

KAREN BREWSTER: And now we're in 2019. That's a lot of years that --

DAVE SNOW: Right. Well, I'm sure they've done a lot to it in the meantime.

KAREN BREWSTER: Hopefully, yeah.

DAVE SNOW: But they're still -- it's -- you know, Karl asked me, well what can I do? Well, I told him, I said, I lost a lot of sleep over that thirty years ago, so. But anyway.

[01:06:35]KAREN BREWSTER: But that building -- so the depot and the admin, it's sort of two buildings, but they're connected.

DAVE SNOW: They're connected.

KAREN BREWSTER: Over the -- with the hallway.

DAVE SNOW: They're connected in the back.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

DAVE SNOW: They're connected in the back. [01:06:48]One of the interesting things, we painted it the wrong color initially.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh?

DAVE SNOW: The depot. And we didn't have really good, um, paint information. We'd had somebody years ago, a professional, come in and give us some -- some paint codes, but they -- you know -- and for the most part they worked. But the depot was an interesting building because I wasn't finding what I thought I should find when we were taking it apart. But I always noticed that in the gutters there was something yellow.

KAREN BREWSTER: Hm.

DAVE SNOW: In the gutters. And I -- I put -- I passed it off to being, you know, a growth or something. You know, who knows. It'd been sitting up there for so long. I finally, by really looking at the history of the building, the historic photographs, and how the chimneys were painted, the roof had been painted yellow.

KAREN BREWSTER: Hm.

[01:07:43]DAVE SNOW: And once I figured out the roof had been painted yellow, I realized that the trim wasn't green. It should be yellow.

KAREN BREWSTER: Hm.

DAVE SNOW: So then the park changed it. That happened after I moved to Anchorage, that change. but -- [01:07:57]And then, one of the other cool things that happened on that building was the chimneys. I don't know where we found this guy. He was a mason, an old-fashioned, old guy. And him and one of my helpers got up there and built a chimney a day.

KAREN BREWSTER: Whoa.

DAVE SNOW: From scratch. And they looked perfect.

KAREN BREWSTER: Out of?

DAVE SNOW: And they're still standing.

KAREN BREWSTER: And they built them out of masonry?

DAVE SNOW: Well, we had bricks.

KAREN BREWSTER: Ok.

DAVE SNOW: We had to re -- the historic chimneys were gone.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DAVE SNOW: They had been gone for a long time. But I always -- [01:08:35]I always tease Karl, and I don't know how serious he thinks I am, but I told him, I said, "You should paint the roof yellow. That's what it was." You know, and then Bob will come back, and he'll -- Bob Spude, he'll say, "Well, they had -- " 'cause it used to have real long eaves and no gutters, the depot. And Bob'll come back and say, "Well, those pictures were made when it still had long eaves. When those eaves were cut back, it wasn't yellow anymore." I keep telling Bob, there was yellow paint in the gutters. So, you know, this kinda back and forth kinda still goes on about things.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DAVE SNOW: But I feel pretty good about the -- I -- I think if they painted the roof yellow, it would actually save them money in the long run. It just -- people can't imagine painting a roof.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

DAVE SNOW: But that's what they used to do.

KAREN BREWSTER: Really. To help it last longer?

DAVE SNOW: Yeah. Well, and I think it was a decorative thing.

KAREN BREWSTER: Mm.

DAVE SNOW: 'Cause it had red chimneys, and they didn't paint the whole chimney yellow, they just -- they did, like, the corbels and stuff. You know, it was probably pretty fancy-looking at the time.

[01:09:43]KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah. But so, the chimneys you got rebuilt out of brick?

DAVE SNOW: Yep. And we used modern brick and somehow figured out a way to size it to make it look like -- 'cause see, brick changes all the time. You're not going to find -- unless you pay a lot of money, you're going to -- you're going to use contemporary materials a lot of times.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DAVE SNOW: You know. So that was interesting. [01:10:06]And then, you know, the administration building was all sheathed with cedar, matched cedar. Beautiful wood. *(Per 4/9/20 email from Dave Snow, he clarifies that he is referring to the interior of the administration building.)* The unfortunate thing is, the roof had leaked for thirty years, and the -- the wainscot was just destroyed.

KAREN BREWSTER: Aw.

DAVE SNOW: So we had to buy all new, uh, cedar, and we had to lay -- because you can't buy matched cedar anymore.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh, really?

DAVE SNOW: We had to lay it all out in a building, and then we matched it.

KAREN BREWSTER: Wow.

DAVE SNOW: So you'll go into some of those rooms, and you'll see one room might be a little darker than another.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DAVE SNOW: But we tried our best to follow the -- 'cause we found there was so much damage. You know, I talked to people that had worked in the administration building, you know, toward the end of its life, and they had to work around the drips.

KAREN BREWSTER: Wow.

DAVE SNOW: 'Cause the roof was just terrible.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

[01:10:59]DAVE SNOW: But uh, then they had safes up there, big, heavy safes.

KAREN BREWSTER: Upstairs?

DAVE SNOW: Oh, yeah.

KAREN BREWSTER: I know there's the one downstairs.

DAVE SNOW: Oh, we had to take one out --

KAREN BREWSTER: Wow.

DAVE SNOW: Because it was overstressing the floors.

KAREN BREWSTER: I'm sure.

DAVE SNOW: And we took it out with a forklift, out -- we actually took out part of the wall.

KAREN BREWSTER: The back wall? The south wall?

DAVE SNOW: No, it was the side wall, actually. 'Cause we were doing windows, you know, and we had it kinda down to its essence.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DAVE SNOW: I don't remember how we made the hole big enough, but we did. We got it out.

[01:11:31]KAREN BREWSTER: And what happened to that safe, do you know?

DAVE SNOW: Well, the park had it. You know, in fact, that came up in discussion just recently, and I was telling Karl that, you know, when I left, all the safes were there.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DAVE SNOW: You know, so I don't know what happens in a park when you're not there.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right. If it's still part of the collection or not?

DAVE SNOW: Yeah, we --

[01:11:52]KAREN BREWSTER: But you left the big one downstairs?

DAVE SNOW: Well, the big one, the one that's built there?

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DAVE SNOW: There was no moving that.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right. That's the one that's on the --

DAVE SNOW: There were -- there were several safes in that building. There was one upstairs, and I think there may have been one even downstairs. I just don't remember for sure, but I know there was one upstairs 'cause it was stressing the floor.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah, I can imagine.

DAVE SNOW: So the one downstairs, we pulled the safe doors. I hired -- there again, there wasn't a lot of pool of talent.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DAVE SNOW: And I hired an artist, and I said, "Can you do pin-striping?" I said, "We need to paint the safe door." And she did a fair job of it. I don't know if it's lasted or not, but she repainted that entire safe door. You had to sandblast the whole thing down, and then repaint it. Whether that was the right thing to do, I don't know. It was -- I think it had been leaked on for so many years that it was just in bad shape.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DAVE SNOW: So we just started over again. [01:12:51]You know, we made decisions that I -- I think at the time, you know, if you look back, if you were making the same decision today, it might not be the same decision. But we made -- the problem I've always noticed in historic preservation, you have to make a decision at some point.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DAVE SNOW: I've seen a lot of preservationists get stuck, and they can't make a decision, and then the resource eventually suffers because of it, you know. [01:13:16]I had that happen with Castillo de San Marcos, the fort down there in, um, in Florida?

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DAVE SNOW: They had been studying that thing for years and years, and, meanwhile, it's just melting away. I finally got involved with that project, and I told 'em, "It just needs a new terreplein. It needs a new roof." And that's what we did.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh.

DAVE SNOW: Fixed the problem.

[01:13:38]KAREN BREWSTER: Well, that was one of my questions about the -- relates to the decision-making is how you decide what you're restoring it back to?

DAVE SNOW: Well, that's a good -- that's a good question, you know, because we really -- we were kinda behind the ball on, um, doing the research on that building. Um, we essentially made decisions right there.

KAREN BREWSTER: Because you said you had thought it was one way, and Bob Spude thought a different look.

DAVE SNOW: Well --

KAREN BREWSTER: So how do you just decide, we're restoring it to the way it looked now versus a different photo?

DAVE SNOW: Yeah, I think that the -- in terms of the paint color, that was pretty much, you know, nobody has painted the roof.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DAVE SNOW: So that has -- that decision never --

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DAVE SNOW: -- was implemented.

[01:14:25]KAREN BREWSTER: But, you know, you had a photo of it that maybe showed gutters, and maybe another photo didn't have gutters.

DAVE SNOW: Right. The problem is, we don't have one with the photograph that shows gutters with painted chimneys.

KAREN BREWSTER: Uh-huh.

DAVE SNOW: So just because we don't have the photograph doesn't mean it wasn't so.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DAVE SNOW: And so, what I'm saying is, I found evidence of paint in the gutters.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DAVE SNOW: So that tells me they were painting that roof after it had gutters.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right. 'Cause it dripped into the --

DAVE SNOW: Right. For many paint jobs.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DAVE SNOW: 'Cause there was a lot of it in there, and that's -- and I didn't even -- like I say, I didn't realize it was paint at the time, but it just sorta dawned on me that that's what it was.

[01:15:06]KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah. But that is the question. How do you, you know -- especially a building where you have so many photographs. And if the building has changed through time, what was your decision on that?

DAVE SNOW: Well, I think at the time, we had done -- we had made decisions on what we -- like taking out that connector.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DAVE SNOW: We knew that was a later connector, and I think we were res -- there was no real set thing that said we should restore it to some period. I think we were doing more. It was really only supposed to be adaptive use, ok.

KAREN BREWSTER: What does that mean?

DAVE SNOW: Adaptive use means you go in and you keep the outside the way it is, historic-appearing, and then you go inside and you do contemporary finishes.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DAVE SNOW: I didn't think that was appropriate, whether it was right or wrong, 'cause everything was still intact inside.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

[01:15:56]DAVE SNOW: And so, I felt we needed to fix up what was in there. Um, we did make some changes, like in the lobby. There was like a ticket booth there, and it made the

lobby really unusable for what we wanted to do it with. So we removed the ticket wall, but then we built a counter that followed the same shape as that -- where that wall had been.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DAVE SNOW: And I don't know if that's still there. They may have changed that by now, but that -- that was the intent.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DAVE SNOW: Was to at least recognize there had been a partition there. So we were trying to -  
- [01:16:33]I would -- in answer to your questions, we really were trying to keep it as much as what was there that made sense.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DAVE SNOW: You know, that connector that was hastily built between the two buildings in the front just -- it was -- it didn't make a lot of sense, and it created a kind of an area in there that was dead, you know, so.

KAREN BREWSTER: 'Cause now that's that open --

DAVE SNOW: Right.

KAREN BREWSTER: -- area, right?

DAVE SNOW: Right. And that's the way it was historically.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

DAVE SNOW: I mean, we had the plan, you know. We knew --

[01:17:03]KAREN BREWSTER: Did you have a historic architectural plan for it?

DAVE SNOW: I'm trying to remember.

KAREN BREWSTER: I know you had photographs.

DAVE SNOW: Yeah, I'm not so sure we had a historic plan. I can't remember. See, we had a Historic Structure Report at one time, and it got lost somewhere.

KAREN BREWSTER: Hm.

DAVE SNOW: Where we had not so much the report, but the photographs. 'Cause one of the historians from Washington, DC, came out, Gordon Chappell. You probably know him.

KAREN BREWSTER: No. I've heard the name.

DAVE SNOW: We used to call him Choo Choo Chappell. He really liked trains. So he came out, and he did a heck of a job photographing that building, but somehow in the midst, we lost all of his photographs, and I don't know where they ever ended up.

KAREN BREWSTER: Hm.

DAVE SNOW: But he had some that he had taken other times, but I would say that with the railroad depot, it was primarily working with physical fabric and just seeing what was there and kinda going with it.

[01:18:00]KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm. So you didn't have a "we want to restore it to, you know, 1900 --

DAVE SNOW: No.

KAREN BREWSTER: -- to 1910" or something?

DAVE SNOW: That wasn't really part of the master plan. It was really adaptive use. It was -- we were actually doing what -- we were going probably to another level --

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DAVE SNOW: -- than they probably would've wanted us to. But you know --

[01:18:22]KAREN BREWSTER: In terms of keeping it as authentic inside as possible?



DAVE SNOW: Yeah. Yeah. You know, 'cause it had some really neat -- it had, like, railroad beams, where you have the, you know, you look at the bottom of a railroad car and how that's sprung.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DAVE SNOW: Well, they had beams in there like that.

KAREN BREWSTER: Wow.

DAVE SNOW: And I couldn't see taking that kind of stuff out of there, you know.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DAVE SNOW: And um.

[01:18:40]KAREN BREWSTER: As long as it's not a safety question.

DAVE SNOW: Right. Well, and, you know, we -- we did some adaptations. We put a theater in there. I had to put a big glulam in there to do that because you had to -- can't have a good visitor center without a theater, so we were -- I think we were responsive to doing adaptive use, but doing it with a little more finesse than, you know.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm. And you have to add, um, disability access and restrooms.

DAVE SNOW: Yes. Yeah, that came back to haunt me. We were three-quarters of an inch off in one of the bathrooms.

KAREN BREWSTER: Uh-oh. For disability access?

DAVE SNOW: Yeah. What happens is we did old-timey dividers between the toilets?

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DAVE SNOW: And we put too much trim on 'em, probably.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh.

DAVE SNOW: Anyway, they had to come back in and fix it because somebody probably had a hard time getting into the bathroom, so lesson learned there.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DAVE SNOW: But.

[01:19:38]KAREN BREWSTER: And then what about an elevator? That had to be put in that building?

DAVE SNOW: Well, you know, probably if we were doing it today, yeah. We didn't. But I would say that, you know, if you have all the functions on the -- on the one level. But since you got most of your offices upstairs there --

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

DAVE SNOW: Yeah, you would probably have to -- if we were doing it again, you'd probably have to.

KAREN BREWSTER: But you didn't have to when you did it?

DAVE SNOW: Well, let's put it this way. I didn't get in trouble for not doing it.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah. Yeah, I can't remember if they had to put one in, or if they use one of those, you know, stair --

DAVE SNOW: I would say put a stair lift in would be the easiest thing to do.

KAREN BREWSTER: That might be what's there. I can't remember.

DAVE SNOW: Yeah. We didn't do it, you know, at that time because it just wasn't -- you know, accessibility wasn't as big as it should have been, but --

[01:20:32]KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm. Um, oh, the thing I was wondering about with the depot and the admin being one or two buildings, when you worked on restoring it and jacking it up, did you jack the whole thing up?

DAVE SNOW: Well, that --

KAREN BREWSTER: You didn't do one part and then the other part?

DAVE SNOW: We did the whole thing.

KAREN BREWSTER: Wow.

DAVE SNOW: And we didn't -- it did -- like I was working with Pete Tomka. We actually designed it with slots. 'Cause we had to get it up, and then pour the concrete, and then set it back down. And like I was saying, you know, it kind of had the mushroom effect.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DAVE SNOW: And what happens with those -- those old first-growth floor joists, once they get set, you've got to cover 'em. [01:21:15] You know, the Boas Furrier, I lifted that building one time. I was going to try -- because the floor was bowed.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DAVE SNOW: I thought, we'll just lift it up and straighten those -- those floor joists out. Well, the whole building lifted out of the ground, and the bows stayed in it.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh.

DAVE SNOW: That's how strong that wood is.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

DAVE SNOW: And it was the same thing at the railroad depot. What we had to do is, we had to cut the floor joists at convenient points where we could put a pier because we couldn't straighten them. So we did a lot of that.

[01:21:43] KAREN BREWSTER: So you put in new straight pieces to fill in where -- ?

DAVE SNOW: Well, we used the original. If we could, we used the original timbers. A lot of it was dry-rotted, and we had to replace it, but it was a combination.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DAVE SNOW: But, uh, we had to get everything up so that we could get in there and pour the concrete. We moved a lot of dirt out from under that thing.

KAREN BREWSTER: You must've.

DAVE SNOW: You know, it just -- and we lifted it, like, well over a foot.

KAREN BREWSTER: Wow.

DAVE SNOW: But it was like, you would pour the concrete in, and then you'd kind of stuff it and then put a -- a form up against it. It was really tight, so. [01:22:21] And we did such a good job, we put -- we did a lot of, um, earthquake resistance design in that building. And we did a really good job, because once I started, you know, actually having my office in that building, --

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DAVE SNOW: -- my lamps would sit there and go like this.

KAREN BREWSTER: They'd shake?

DAVE SNOW: Yeah. And what it is, is they had submarine generators that made the town's power.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh.

DAVE SNOW: Over there by the Pullen House.

KAREN BREWSTER: Mm.

DAVE SNOW: And it literally would -- the vibration from the earth would come up into the building and then be distributed because it was designed like that, you know, to resist

earthquakes. But I never thought about there being a vibration in town that would be coming. So we'd all sit there, and the lamps -- and they probably still do.

KAREN BREWSTER: I don't know. Yeah, they would shake.

DAVE SNOW: Yeah.

[01:23:16]KAREN BREWSTER: I was thinking about the floors. So when you lifted the whole thing up, and you put a new foundation, and you had to put new joists in that were straight or pieces of joists?

DAVE SNOW: Well, we -- we -- sometimes we sistered joists. If we could keep a historic joist, we did.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DAVE SNOW: But as you got toward the outside of the building, the dry-rot was pretty bad, so it was a combination of --

KAREN BREWSTER: But then with the actual floor of the building, did you take that out?

DAVE SNOW: Most of it --

KAREN BREWSTER: Or did you use --

DAVE SNOW: Sometimes we did. Uh, sometimes we didn't. There again, it depended on how much damage there was. If it had -- if it still had integrity, we would leave it.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DAVE SNOW: If it didn't, we would replace it. So if you were to peel that building back, you would find kind of a mix-mash of things. You know, there'd be a lot of plywood and not plywood.

[01:24:03]KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm. Because the floor that you walk on is a, um, a cover -

-

DAVE SNOW: It had a tongue-and-groove floor, a finished floor.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DAVE SNOW: We didn't -- You know, there again, we were doing adaptive use. And the actual finish for most of the floors was battleship linoleum.

KAREN BREWSTER: From the old building, the original building?

DAVE SNOW: Yeah, the historic building. Battleship linoleum lasts forever.

KAREN BREWSTER: And it's ugly.

DAVE SNOW: Well, it may be ugly, but it's historic. And so, we found some rubber that looked like battleship, and that's what we put -- I think they've since changed it to something else, but that's where I had the incompatibility with glue.

KAREN BREWSTER: Hm.

DAVE SNOW: And so, you know, the battleship on the lam -- was -- that -- that's -- you know, that was, you know, it's adaptive use, but there again, we're trying to keep the flavor. You know, as we would find wallpapers and stuff, I had Judy Ronscavage, the DSC interior designer in those days. She helped me find some wallpaper that didn't -- that didn't match it, but that was compatible with it.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DAVE SNOW: So if it was a green patterned wallpaper, we found a contemporary green patterned wallpaper that was similar.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DAVE SNOW: And we did a lot of that, you know, where we were true to the spirit of how the building looked. And I think it turned out looking like that. You know, it has that sort of a sense of an old-time railroad depot.

[01:25:28]KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm. And so you got it done in your four-year period?

DAVE SNOW: I did. For a million and a half bucks. I was always real proud of that. It was within budget 'cause we did everything ourself.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm. Well, and yeah, you say, you know, the guys who worked on it, um, learned a lot along the way.

DAVE SNOW: Oh well, by the time we were done, they were preservation, you know.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DAVE SNOW: They had skills that they probably never dreamed they would have. And because we were -- there toward the end, we were turning out doors and windows, boom. [01:26:05]One of the things that happened early on, we had somebody come in -- We were trying to stabilize it, and so this guy came, and he said, "I'll -- I'll glaze your windows for you." He went in there, and he glazed our windows, and he used silicone. And I -- I was ignorant at the time, but silicone is not what you glaze wood windows with. And ruined a lot of our historic windows on the depot.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DAVE SNOW: Because what would happen is, in order to get the silicone out, you'd have to channel the wood, and by the time you channel that thing, the wood is too thin, you know, to be a window. That's one of the reasons we had to replace all the windows. A lot of it was because of that guy and that silicone that -- It just -- [01:26:49]And all through my career, I battled silicone.

KAREN BREWSTER: Hm.

DAVE SNOW: It's the worst thing that could ever be put on anything. There's no way to remove it. It chemically bonds to whatever you put it on. You know, people use it on fish tanks. Even when you put it on glass, you can't get it off.

KAREN BREWSTER: Hm.

DAVE SNOW: You can get the most of it off, but a remnant stays on there.

[01:27:11]KAREN BREWSTER: And what's the purpose of using silicone, like on the windows?

DAVE SNOW: To seal it.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh.

DAVE SNOW: What he should have used was window glazing. And I had assumed that's what he was going to do because I thought he was a glazier.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DAVE SNOW: Well, apparently, you know, sometimes you get people that sell themselves as something.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DAVE SNOW: And they're not. What he did was not good.

KAREN BREWSTER: So you had to remake all those windows?

DAVE SNOW: Yep. All of them. There's like over a hundred.

[01:27:38]KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah. I think it's amazing, though, that, you know, you look at a historic photo, so you know what the window or the door looked like, and then those guys pretty much copied it.

DAVE SNOW: Yeah. Well, we had enough historic fabric there, we knew what the shapes were. We -- we would just use -- and some -- we'd use it as a pattern, and it worked great until we got to hardware. We couldn't -- and back in the '80's, there wasn't a lot of people that did historic hardware.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DAVE SNOW: So we got somebody to do our hardware. We gave 'em the patterns. We gave 'em samples. And they did the brass hardware, but they did cast brass. And it's not the same as the kind of brass doorknobs and stuff that it had. It was more like a -- I don't know what you would -- it was like -- like tin.

KAREN BREWSTER: Like a shell?

DAVE SNOW: Like a shell, right. What they would end up giving me is a solid brass doorknob.

KAREN BREWSTER: Hm.

DAVE SNOW: Because there was nobody out there that knew how to make these things anymore.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DAVE SNOW: Now, there's probably people out there doing it today, but not in the '80's.

[01:28:45]KAREN BREWSTER: But so you had examples of the original doorknobs?

DAVE SNOW: Yeah, we kept -- kept -- I put everything on a board. I took a sample of everything. And I don't know if the park lost that, 'cause I never really heard whether they had it.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DAVE SNOW: I had samples of all the -- the wood shapes, you know, with paint on 'em and everything and all the hardware. I nailed it to a board, and I said, "You need to put this in the collection." I think there was some debate on whether that deserved to be in the collection. I worry it fell between the cracks, but we did it.

[01:29:18]KAREN BREWSTER: So you didn't use the original doorknobs. You couldn't put those back on?

DAVE SNOW: We did if we could, but there again, most of them were, like, damaged or unusable. You know, if we could use 'em, we would, but I think that the hinges we had built -- and we paid a lot of money to have 'em built, but they didn't -- they did -- you know, they cast 'em. And they don't wear well, you know. Hardware has to be built tempered.

KAREN BREWSTER: Mm.

DAVE SNOW: And if I were doing that job today, I'd be much more particular about the kind of hardware we put on it. I mean, they looked -- what we did looked good, it just didn't work good.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

DAVE SNOW: So.

[01:30:01]KAREN BREWSTER: Well, it's finding tho -- how do you find those kind of specialized artisans who might know how to do that?

DAVE SNOW: Well, today you go on the Internet. Back in the '80's, you just call around, you know, and you see what kind of local tools -- talents you have. You know, like doing the sign on the Mascot. We had a local artist do that. I think she was the same lady that did the, uh, the uh, door --

KAREN BREWSTER: The safe?

DAVE SNOW: Yeah, on the safe. Just local talent.

[01:30:31]KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm. Well, you had talked about the paint, and that's something that I find fascinating, how you could figure out the colors and --

DAVE SNOW: Well, we had had --

KAREN BREWSTER: Since all the photos are black and white.

DAVE SNOW: Well, you look at the black and white photograph, but you also look at your evidence, you know, like --

KAREN BREWSTER: Your physical evidence?

DAVE SNOW: Your physical evidence, and then you kind of develop a chronology, you know. And is it 100 percent accurate, you know? In the '80's, probably not. Nowadays, I think things are a lot more sophisticated. But, you know, we used to crater stuff with a knife, just to see the layers.

KAREN BREWSTER: So, you'd dig out a little area?

DAVE SNOW: Yeah, you just keep cratering it, and then you can see the layers. The problem with the railroad depot, it was in such a state of deterioration, the only place you could really find good paint was under the eaves and stuff. But -- and I don't know where they -- where we got the green paint idea on the depot. I think there was an assumption made, if one green was over here, there'd be green over there. I think it was just a bad assumption.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DAVE SNOW: But, you know, if I see something I've done that I -- that maybe could be improved, I go back and I just fix it.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DAVE SNOW: You know, and we did a lot of that. We had to. Trial and error.

[01:31:50]KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah. Well, it does sound like a lot of research. You say, old photos.

DAVE SNOW: Yeah.

KAREN BREWSTER: Historic documents. And you did all that research? Or do you have somebody else -- ?

DAVE SNOW: I think Bob -- I think Bob did all the historic -- you know, when I do research, I'm going -- I'm going to Bob's files, ok.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DAVE SNOW: So he's done all the -- all the historical research, and he -- you know, he was very thorough, and there was a lot there. It was a well-photographed town.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

[01:32:19]DAVE SNOW: You know, I tried to work with this town, they didn't -- hardly anybody took pictures of anything.

KAREN BREWSTER: Of Erie here?

DAVE SNOW: Yeah.

KAREN BREWSTER: I know. The gold rush time period for Skagway is amazingly well photographed.

DAVE SNOW: I mean, I had a photographer's studio in my backyard of my house.

KAREN BREWSTER: In Skagway?

DAVE SNOW: Yeah, I had three historic buildings back there. Well, I was just talking to Karl. He kept looking for this one called the Pick. We finally realized it was one of the buildings that was behind my house.

KAREN BREWSTER: Hm.

DAVE SNOW: And there were -- I think it was a crib, and I think the other one I had there was a crib. And so, I think there was two cribs and a photography studio. So there was all these commercial buildings. That's why I say, 6th Avenue was probably the -- the deal.

KAREN BREWSTER: Hm.

DAVE SNOW: I need to get something to drink.

KAREN BREWSTER: Sure.

[01:33:07](Break)

DAVE SNOW: Of coming to a solution on -- It was sort of like fast-tracked with the railroad depot, because we just didn't have the time to wait for a lot of the things that we -- you know, if we were doing it today, we probably would be more prudent about it, but it was like -- that park had languished for a number of years. Nothing was being done.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DAVE SNOW: And I -- and I saw that, even before I moved up there. And I thought, you know, I think I can make a difference up here.

[01:33:41]KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm. Well, you mentioned those old buildings behind your house, and that leads me to the question about how much buildings were moved --

DAVE SNOW: Oh.

KAREN BREWSTER: -- in Skagway in the -- throughout its history.

DAVE SNOW: You just have no idea.

KAREN BREWSTER: And how that affects your historic preservation work?

DAVE SNOW: Well, it becomes part of the historic story, you know.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DAVE SNOW: Moving buildings was just -- You know, like the Golden North, they moved that thing all over the place.

KAREN BREWSTER: It's amazing.

DAVE SNOW: You know, and the Pack Train Saloon, that's Brenna's building.

KAREN BREWSTER: Ok.

DAVE SNOW: It just dawned on me. They moved that. They cut it in half and moved it. You know, there was a lot, like any town, there was probably the history when the Buffalo Soldiers were there, who knows what went on, but --

[01:34:34]KAREN BREWSTER: Well, I was wondering, is moving of buildings typical for historic towns?

DAVE SNOW: Uh --

KAREN BREWSTER: Or was something special about Skagway that they did it more?

DAVE SNOW: Well, I think Skagway had the advantage of things freezing. They would move things after -- after it got really cold, you know. And if it -- I don't know if when the tide came in, if that water would freeze or not, but it might've made it like a big ice-skating rink.

KAREN BREWSTER: Hm.

DAVE SNOW: It might've been more opportunity. But I think it's -- it's -- it's like this. You're up there, back in the day of sailing ships, and you need to do something.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DAVE SNOW: Are you going to order it from Seattle and have wood shipped up and build it? Or are you just gonna get a bunch of guys and some horses and just move it where you want it?

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DAVE SNOW: I think that's kind of what -- because it's so isolated, you know. I think the isolation was the big deal because -- course they had the train at some point.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DAVE SNOW: But still, the town itself, doing stuff within the town, I think just made sense. If you liked your building and you want to move it over here, then just do it.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

DAVE SNOW: You know, so.

[01:35:44]KAREN BREWSTER: But they must've used horses, you -- ?

DAVE SNOW: Oh, yeah. I think they used anything like --

KAREN BREWSTER: And skids?

DAVE SNOW: Yeah. Yeah, they may have used tractors. You know, they had --

KAREN BREWSTER: Did they have tractors?

DAVE SNOW: Well, I think they had at some point they did.

KAREN BREWSTER: Well, yeah. Not in the gold rush, they wouldn't.

DAVE SNOW: Well, but, you know, in Skagway 19 -- you know, the gold rush was like, kind of early.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

DAVE SNOW: And a lot of those buildings that we see on Broadway, they are like, 1910, you know. They're a few years after the --

[01:36:14]KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah. Uh, you mentioned, you know, the guys crawling under the depot/admin building, and all I could think of was, what would OSHA health and safety requirements have been?

DAVE SNOW: Well.

KAREN BREWSTER: Were there any?

DAVE SNOW: There might've been. Um, you know, I -- I had never run a construction crew. I had never done anything -- it was, um -- we tried to be as professional as we could. We wore helmets, you know. We wore masks when they went under. But, you know, it certainly depends on the individual. If they didn't want to wear a mask or a helmet, they wouldn't do it, and if they were under the building, you didn't see 'em. But yeah, that was a -- And we did it over and over again. Not only in the railroad. We dug out under that. We dug out Lynch Kennedy, or continued. It had been dug out before I got there.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DAVE SNOW: But we continued digging them out because we wanted to get 'em up off the ground.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DAVE SNOW: And um, we got pretty good at it.

[01:37:30]KAREN BREWSTER: Did you have any accidents?

DAVE SNOW: Uh, we had -- best I can recall, we had one minor accident. I think the guy might have fractured an arm or something. He fell off a ladder. But he was the fellow that was sick.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um, ok.



DAVE SNOW: He had cancer.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DAVE SNOW: And I didn't know it. So I think he -- he just had a weak moment.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

DAVE SNOW: But other than that, no, we never had any --

[01:37:53]KAREN BREWSTER: I'm surprised that jacking up the buildings that something didn't fall down on somebody at some point.

DAVE SNOW: Well, we were extra careful.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

DAVE SNOW: You know, I mean, what we would do is we would just have sessions where we would -- we'd get all the jacks set, and then we'd do it all at once. And everybody, there'd be like a -- a person at each jack, and we'd give 'em a number of turns to do.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DAVE SNOW: And we just kept doing that until it came up. I got a picture of myself in a magazine, standing out there with a measuring stick while they lift the thing up. I can't remember who that person was that -- some kind of strange magazine.

[01:38:33]KAREN BREWSTER: So you could jack it up just high enough for somebody to crawl in?

DAVE SNOW: Well, that was the problem, was getting the access, initial access. You had to just dig down. Like I was saying, they would dig a hole for them to be in.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DAVE SNOW: 'Cause you couldn't really dig out the whole thing. You couldn't get access.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right. And you couldn't lift it high enough?

DAVE SNOW: Right.

KAREN BREWSTER: So people lift it six --

DAVE SNOW: You could only lift it so much farther than where the safe was.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

[01:38:58]DAVE SNOW: So, and that's what complicated pouring the foundation. I could not lift it high enough to really put the concrete in easily.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DAVE SNOW: So we lifted it up, just enough to where we could get concrete and then pack it in.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

DAVE SNOW: You know, 'cause it was -- I knew if we severed that safe, we would be in dire straits.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

DAVE SNOW: And it was in pretty good condition. And it was brick.

KAREN BREWSTER: Wow.

DAVE SNOW: You know, it was --

KAREN BREWSTER: It was on a brick foundation, you mean?

DAVE SNOW: It was on a stone foundation, but it was -- it was masonry.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh.

DAVE SNOW: It was a fire-proof safe.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh.

DAVE SNOW: They expected to put their gold in there, so they -- they didn't mince any money on that, but --

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

DAVE SNOW: Um.

[01:39:45]KAREN BREWSTER: And so, you were now no longer working for the Denver Service Center?

DAVE SNOW: Right. I was working for the regional.

KAREN BREWSTER: But what was -- was there a continued relationship with them and the projects in Skagway?

DAVE SNOW: Yeah. We -- I am not sure how -- sometimes they just gave me their design work for, you know, what looked like on the back of a napkin, essentially. But uh, they were still involved, you know. Like when we were doing -- I did not do structural design. I didn't do any of the engineering. I brought in the correct engineer for whatever discipline we needed. And we would, you know, we would have a line item contract.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DAVE SNOW: Or whatever we did to get the design work.

KAREN BREWSTER: So you -- the project paid for it for a --

DAVE SNOW: Yeah.

KAREN BREWSTER: -- Service Center employee to do the work?

DAVE SNOW: Right.

KAREN BREWSTER: Ok.

DAVE SNOW: Right.

[01:40:39]KAREN BREWSTER: Do you remember who any of those engineers were?

DAVE SNOW: Well, there was Pete Tomka. Uh, god. He was the structural, and I worked with him the most.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DAVE SNOW: Man, I can't remember any other engineers because it just --

KAREN BREWSTER: And then as you said, Cathy Spude or Cathy Blee at the time, she was Denver Service Center, too.

DAVE SNOW: Right.

KAREN BREWSTER: Doing the archeology.

DAVE SNOW: Right.

KAREN BREWSTER: You mentioned the woman with the interior design.

DAVE SNOW: Yeah, Judy Ronscavage. Uh, I went to every expert I -- you know, 'cause I had a lot of acquaintances down in Denver.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DAVE SNOW: And I used my connections. They started to fade after a few years, but, you know, I used 'em while I had 'em, and it really -- that's one of the things that saved us a lot of money.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DAVE SNOW: On the project. But --

[01:41:27]KAREN BREWSTER: And then you worked on the Mascot Saloon, as well?

DAVE SNOW: I did the Historic Structure Report.

KAREN BREWSTER: Ok.

DAVE SNOW: And when we did the stabilization of it, you know, we did roof. We replaced some siding. We, you know, we weatherized it.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DAVE SNOW: Essentially.

[01:41:47]KAREN BREWSTER: So what does a Historic Structure Report entail?

DAVE SNOW: Well, it's -- it's really a pretty academic exercise. You go out and you measure the building. You do up a set of drawings that shows how the building exists, and then you do another set of drawings that shows where you're -- how you're going to treat it. Ok, and then you -- you write a narrative. You describe it, its existing conditions. I'll show you one when we're done.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm. Well, I've seen them, I just -- somebody listening to this.

DAVE SNOW: Oh, ok.

KAREN BREWSTER: It's sort of a description.

DAVE SNOW: Yeah, well, it's a very in-depth analysis of the building. Physical analysis.

[01:42:27]KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm. And is there also discussion of what its known uses may have been in time, that a historian -- ?

DAVE SNOW: Yes. The chronology, and well, usually a historian works on 'em.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DAVE SNOW: You have a architectural section, and then you have a historic section. You might even have an archeological section, depending on what you're dealing with.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DAVE SNOW: But it usually is, like, um, I worked with historians a lot, and we would go back and forth. But my job was mainly, you would go on site, and you would document the building, and then work with people.

[01:43:04]KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah, 'cause the Mascot one, I think Bob Spude was the historian on that one.

DAVE SNOW: Yeah, I think he probably might have been. Yeah.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

DAVE SNOW: I've still got -- got that somewhere around here.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah. I looked at it recently to --a little background.

DAVE SNOW: Yeah, 'cause you'll go in there, and it'll show the treatments. And it's not a working drawing. It's not a, you know, like a construction document, but it goes and it gives you a general idea, like we were talking about, what needs to be restored and doesn't on the railroad depot.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DAVE SNOW: Essentially what I was doing on the railroad depot was -- was writing -- you know, doing the Historic Structure Report in a physical sense. I just didn't have the time to do a document.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right. You just did it along the way.

DAVE SNOW: Along the way. You know, and like I say, parts of it, we had and we kinda lost. That's the disadvantage to doing stuff like that because if you don't, you know, hang onto stuff, that's not a good thing.

[01:43:59]KAREN BREWSTER: Well, that's what I was wondering is, all those drawings and things you were doing of the design along the way, what has happened to that material?

DAVE SNOW: The park still has 'em.

KAREN BREWSTER: They do have it? Ok.

DAVE SNOW: I still have 'em, you know. So they're still -- I don't have the originals.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DAVE SNOW: I think the park has the originals or the regional office, but um, I was always very careful to make sure that any kind of work I did was documented.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DAVE SNOW: You know. Just like that board full of samples. I always worried about that getting lost, you know.

[01:44:39]KAREN BREWSTER: Right. Well, it sounds like a good technique to have that sample thing as a reference.

DAVE SNOW: Well, yeah, you needed it, you know.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

DAVE SNOW: 'Cause then you can go back and re-check stuff as the technology gets better.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DAVE SNOW: So. But if you don't have it, you don't have it. And the trouble with the railroad depot is a lot of the stuff -- you know, a lot of the paint got removed. 'Cause one of the thi -- one of the problems with the paint was especially under the eaves where a lot of the historic paint was, it was so thick that you couldn't put a coat of paint on top of it without it blistering.

KAREN BREWSTER: Hm.

DAVE SNOW: So when it gets that thick, you have to remove it down to the substrate. And once you've done that, you've lost the historic record. That's why I put the samples on the board.

KAREN BREWSTER: Unless they -- yeah. Unless you save those paint chips that you took off?

DAVE SNOW: Right.

[01:45:24]KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah. And when you were working on the depot building, was the Skagway Historic District Commission a functioning body?

DAVE SNOW: Oh, yeah. I was on it.

KAREN BREWSTER: Ok.

DAVE SNOW: Yeah, I worked with the town a lot. That's how I got in trouble with the Westours. I wouldn't say trouble with them, but I guess I tweaked somebody 'cause they had to spend a lot of money to paint all those buildings.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DAVE SNOW: But you go back and look today, you know. That place -- all the paint made a big difference, you know. It's really a colorful place. As uh, I go -- I use Google streetscape and I go down and look at how things look.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DAVE SNOW: It's kind of interesting, 'cause you can't even compare how it looks today with how it looked when I went there in '80. It's really not been that long.

[01:46:13]KAREN BREWSTER: No. Now do you feel you played a role in that change?

DAVE SNOW: Oh, yeah. I think so. I think so. Well, you know, we were all -- I think the regional office was new, and par -- everything was new, so we were all learning in those days, but.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DAVE SNOW: I think, you know, it turned out well at the time, and it seems to -- You know, I look at pictures of it, and they're doing a good job of keeping it up.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DAVE SNOW: Even if they won't paint the roof yellow.

[01:46:44]KAREN BREWSTER: So with the Historic District Commission, can you talk about your work with them, or --

DAVE SNOW: Well, I worked with the town. We worked -- let me give you a typical example. Somebody comes in on -- on the cruise ship, and I'm sitting up there in the office, and I'm watching this lady go down the street. And she's dragging driftwood to one of the empty lots that the Park Service owns. And she's kinda laying this stuff out. She's thinking that she's building a shop. So there would be people that would just kinda blow into town and think they could kinda homestead.

KAREN BREWSTER: Hm.

DAVE SNOW: You know, and we would have things like that, where these people would come to the commission and say, "Well, I want to -- I want to do such-and-such." "Well, you don't own the land." "Well, the government owns it, and I can do it." You know, that kind of stuff. And um, we had a lot of interesting sort of asymmetrical things people wanted to do. You know, everybody wanted to make money quick.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DAVE SNOW: 'Cause they were making money there. I mean, the waves of people come in, but it takes real talent to -- to keep a shop up and all that. You just don't do it overnight.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

[01:48:04]DAVE SNOW: But there was a period when -- You know, like the -- they dragged these small buildings down there. And that's where, you know, I think it probably became a challenge for the park was how to deal with those empty lots. I think they were kinda kicking themselves for getting empty lots, and I -- I kinda -- I had a ha -- and Bob and I kinda probably disagree on this, but I was not that much in favor of us buying a vacant lot and then dragging a historic building onto it. That just, I don't know, it didn't sit well with me.

KAREN BREWSTER: Why not?

DAVE SNOW: Well, I just didn't think that it was historically accurate.

KAREN BREWSTER: But if the town had historically been moving buildings that's --

DAVE SNOW: And that's -- that's -- but see, they historically moved them. When you're doing it contemporaneously like that, that's a different thing in my mind. You know, because you're in the period of history, and whatever you do in that period of history, that's -- that's history. But up here, this is here and now, and you're trying to do what they did back then. I don't know, that's --

[01:49:08]KAREN BREWSTER: Unless you had -- would there have been the chance that there was evidence that the building had been in that lot originally?

DAVE SNOW: Well, now that's a different --

KAREN BREWSTER: Ok.

DAVE SNOW: That's a different thing, I would say. Yeah. I don't think we ever had that situation.

KAREN BREWSTER: Ok. Well, I know, like the Jeff. Smith Parlor building, which is a newer project.

DAVE SNOW: Right.  
KAREN BREWSTER: Didn't they move that? Or George Rapuzzi moved it?  
DAVE SNOW: Yeah, I think it definitely was moved.  
KAREN BREWSTER: But -- but it was moved before the park got it? Ok.  
DAVE SNOW: Right. And I noticed they kept it right there.  
KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.  
DAVE SNOW: And that's what I would've done.  
KAREN BREWSTER: Ok.  
[01:49:46]DAVE SNOW: So to me, these -- these vacant lots we had were sort of like -- I would just as soon see a contemporary, compatible building go there than dragging a historic building there.  
KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.  
DAVE SNOW: And that's maybe why Karl was kind of struggling with this -- this Pick building that's out there.  
KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.  
DAVE SNOW: It's a really neat little crib. And we were both looking at this -- this historic photograph, and this was just like a couple weeks ago.  
KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.  
DAVE SNOW: And he says, "Well, I think that's your house?" Well, let me -- and so I went back, and I checked. And I looked at the -- I have photographs of the house when I lived there.  
KAREN BREWSTER: Right.  
DAVE SNOW: And I was able to compare the siding and stuff on it, and it was my house.  
KAREN BREWSTER: Hm.  
DAVE SNOW: And I remember even where it was because there was a -- there was an area behind the house that was full of sand, and I -- or I think I put sand in there for the kids.  
KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.  
DAVE SNOW: But that's where that building was. 'Cause once you move a building, it takes a long time for vegetation to reestablish. [01:50:42]And so, that had been moved when probably Hamilton had it. He also took the photographic studio and moved it.  
KAREN BREWSTER: So that -- that Pick building and that photo studio were not in the yard behind you --  
DAVE SNOW: Well, they --  
KAREN BREWSTER: -- your house, when you lived there?  
DAVE SNOW: Right. They had -- actually, the photographic studio was there. I'm sorry. The photographic studio was there, 'cause I traded Hamilton that for the parlor stove that was in the Gault house, 'cause he had that. This guy liked to go around and take stuff from buildings.  
KAREN BREWSTER: It's like Rapuzzi, did the same thing.  
DAVE SNOW: Yeah. You know, that's why first thing when I moved in, they had the newel post for the admin building --  
KAREN BREWSTER: Right.  
DAVE SNOW: -- in there, and I traded that. And had the guys spin me up a real simple one for the house as a trade.  
KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DAVE SNOW: And so -- yeah, that -- and I wished I would've never traded, 'cause that was a neat building.

KAREN BREWSTER: Hm.

[01:51:32]DAVE SNOW: But my goal was never to stay in Skagway anyway.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right. But so that Pick building?

DAVE SNOW: That was moved before.

KAREN BREWSTER: But now, is it someplace else that -- ?

DAVE SNOW: Yeah, it's on Broadway. At least, I think it is.

KAREN BREWSTER: That's -- so there's a building on Broadway that Karl's trying to figure out --

DAVE SNOW: Where it was moved from.

KAREN BREWSTER: -- its origins? Ok.

DAVE SNOW: Yeah. And I don't know if it's still there or if it's been moved again or not, you know. It's like, I don't know. I know Hamilton took that photography studio that was behind Kirmse's for a while.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DAVE SNOW: I don't know where it ended up. It was really a neat building. It was a kit.

KAREN BREWSTER: Hm.

DAVE SNOW: And what was -- before I traded it to him, he had cleaned out all the negatives. It had all the equipment in it.

KAREN BREWSTER: Wow.

DAVE SNOW: The plates, the glass plates, all that. He took it all out.

KAREN BREWSTER: It wasn't Dedman's studio, was it?

DAVE SNOW: No.

KAREN BREWSTER: No.

DAVE SNOW: No. This was Kirmse's.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh, ok.

DAVE SNOW: That he owned. [01:52:26]But the photography studio, it was just a -- it was not a very big building. It was like -- it couldn't have been more than maybe fifteen feet long and maybe eight feet wide. It was really small. Just big enough to, you know, have a little studio.

KAREN BREWSTER: Do you know the time period on that?

DAVE SNOW: Well, I'm sure it was there at the gold rush. You know, there again, my theory is that 6th was the main drag.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DAVE SNOW: Early on. And I mean, the kids dug up some jewelry there. I'll show you. I got a piece of it. You know, we could've done historic archeology there. Probably --

KAREN BREWSTER: Well, probably every lot in -- in that part of Skagway has some historic archeology.

DAVE SNOW: Um-hm.

[01:53:06]KAREN BREWSTER: And um. So you weren't involved with the Mascot restoration or the archeology or anything?

DAVE SNOW: No. Just the stabilization. You know, I think -- well, Cathy had been doing -- you know, she was all over the place. She was doing archeology. 'Cause she was clearing.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DAVE SNOW: Before I'd work on it. Or either her or her crew or somebody, you know. And that's why, you know, we maybe probably were doing something at the Moore House, I can't remember. Probably the sewer.

KAREN BREWSTER: Mm.

DAVE SNOW: We were probably trying to fix the sewer or something. I don't know. But she was probably digging it to clear it. But uh, it was a lot -- lot going on.

[01:53:43]KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah. Well, it sounds like the way a project would work, it's a lot of collaboration with the historic architect, the archeologist, the historian, the construction crew. It's a big mish-mosh.

DAVE SNOW: Yeah, it is. And it was sort of like, if I -- if I saw something that was out of my expertise, I started looking for somebody that could do it. You know, it's like interior finishes. I'd much rather have an interior designer do that than me.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DAVE SNOW: And structural engineering. You always want to have good engineering, you know, for any of that stuff, you know. I did have an electrician. Bill Hunz was my electrician, and he was -- he was a local guy. It was kind of funny. He would -- his -- his former wife was a -- what was her name? Last name was Cyr. Can't remember her first name. Alice. Alice Cyr.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh, yeah.

DAVE SNOW: She was a ranger, a part time ranger.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DAVE SNOW: And she'd be in there giving tours, and I didn't know the two had been married. And every time she'd go to do a show, the fire alarm would go off 'cause he would set it. And he was -- you know, I had -- he was one of the locals I had then. And it was -- he did all of our electrical work.

[01:55:01]KAREN BREWSTER: Great. Did you work on other, um, of the buildings in Skagway?

DAVE SNOW: Well, not to that -- you know, not -- I worked on all of 'em in the sense of trying to stabilize 'em.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DAVE SNOW: You know, even the ones that, you know, like the Itjen House was sitting out there, and we just put a roof on it. We roofed them and painted them, and then covered the windows.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DAVE SNOW: And ventilated them. And if they were really down in the mud, we tried to get 'em up out of the mud. That's how I viewed all the other -- with the depot, which took most of my time.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DAVE SNOW: But, you know, it would be like if we -- if we had guys that didn't have anything to do on the depot, we'd put 'em over for stabilization work on other buildings.

[01:55:49]KAREN BREWSTER: So how big was your crew?

DAVE SNOW: Um, I would say there was about sixteen guys at some points. Sometimes bigger, sometimes smaller.

KAREN BREWSTER: And that would've been in the summertime?



DAVE SNOW: Yeah. You know, in the wintertime, it was more -- I was trying to, you know, just think the other day how we did it in winter. I know we worked in the winter, but I can't remember how I worked the hiring. You know, because it was -- I think we did extensions, you know. It depended -- there's different kinds of positions. If you came in as a temp, summer temp, it was one thing. If you were hired by the park on the maintenance staff, it was another.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DAVE SNOW: So I think some of the people that I had more long term, like Andy (Beierly) and guys like that that were on -- Si Dennis.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DAVE SNOW: They -- they were -- they became part of the permanent staff.

[01:56:39]KAREN BREWSTER: And so, what kind of work did you do in the winter? Was it all indoor work?

DAVE SNOW: Yeah. We would put -- we'd put plastic up and put a stinger in there.

KAREN BREWSTER: Stinger. One of those heaters?

DAVE SNOW: Yeah. One of those horizontal gas heaters. It's a good thing we didn't burn anything down. But it was like, if you didn't do that, we'd never be done.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

DAVE SNOW: 'Cause they -- you know, there was -- before I got there, that's literally how -- they'd work, like, three or four months a year. I did the math, and it wasn't good.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DAVE SNOW: I'll be there forever. [01:57:10]And I did not want to be in Skagway forever. It was a neat town, a great place to be, but, you know, I wanted to do other architecture besides that. And by -- besides, my wife would've killed me if I'd have stayed there.

KAREN BREWSTER: She was -- did not like living there?

DAVE SNOW: No. She was not happy there. It -- You know, Alaska is not everybody's place. And then, when you can't get along with -- then when the people are kinda mean to you, that makes it worse.

KAREN BREWSTER: So because she was a wife of a Park Service peop --

DAVE SNOW: Oh, yeah.

KAREN BREWSTER: They were not so friendly?

DAVE SNOW: Well, an example was, they would bring gro -- the ship would come in with the supplies, with groceries, at a certain time. They would never tell us what day it was, you know. So we'd go to the store, and there'd be no food. You know, just -- just subtle little things like that. It wasn't, like, real overt. It was subtle.

[01:58:06]KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm. And were your kids in school yet?

DAVE SNOW: Yep. That was a problem, too, 'cause we had -- I have -- well, my daughter, she was just a baby. But my son, he was, like, in first grade. And I had a teacher call us up and tell us that my son's teacher was picking on him 'cause he's a Park Service kid. You know, that just -- that just fries you right there.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

DAVE SNOW: But that -- that -- that was some of the kind of the subtle things. That, the oil, the food, all that's kind of in the background. You know, and my -- my way of confronting that was to just press that much harder on my goal to get things rolling. And I'm sure I wasn't real popular in the early days when I did things like painting buildings, and, you

know, probably when I wore my construction hat, they probably thought I was being arrogant, but I was really just trying to tell 'em, we're going to do this no matter what.  
KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

[01:59:10]DAVE SNOW: You know. And they -- and the construction guys, you know, the guys that were -- were the stevedores and the railroad -- you know, there was kind of a hierarchy, and they felt that the people -- the guys that worked for Park Service were a little lower standard. 'Cause they weren't union, you know, and that kind of thing.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm. Well, and that they had gone over to the other side.

DAVE SNOW: Yeah.

KAREN BREWSTER: In a way, right?

DAVE SNOW: Yeah, and there was some of that. And so that's why I wore the hat. It was just making a statement, you know. [01:59:41]I had another hat I wore for Dick. And it said, "Howard Roark -- " what did it say? "Howard Roark Lives." You ever read "The Fountainhead?"

KAREN BREWSTER: No.

DAVE SNOW: Well, it's about an architect, basically, that if he didn't get his way, he would do ugly things. And I was just -- me and Dick went back and forth a lot, so I had my other hat that I would wear for him, but I think, like I told him, I says, "You know, you may not agree with everything I'm doing, but you're gonna have one of the best offices in Alaska." I said, "That's the goal here." And you know, and if -- I really didn't want to argue with him about stuff, but he just -- he would get on things. Like I'd have my -- some of the crew -- well, we were stealing rangers, for one thing, and he didn't like that. 'Cause the rangers would find out that they could make more money on wage grade, so next thing I know, I have a lot of ex-rangers on my crew. He didn't like that. So -- but that was --

[02:00:48]KAREN BREWSTER: What were some of the other things that you disagreed about? Do you have some examples?

DAVE SNOW: Oh, we disagreed about just about everything. I don't know, you know. I think -

KAREN BREWSTER: Well, was he trying to give you direction on how you did the --

DAVE SNOW: Yes.

KAREN BREWSTER: -- restoration?

DAVE SNOW: He wanted to -- he would come into the shop, for example, and if he didn't like what he was seeing, he would throw it on the floor. You know, like a guy might be working on a window or something, and there's sawdust. Well, he'd come in, and he'd think it's too dirty. And so, he'd take the work and toss it on the floor.

KAREN BREWSTER: Wow.

DAVE SNOW: You know, there was just this rift between us. And I -- I got along with the chief ranger. Jay Cable was a great guy.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DAVE SNOW: I got along with everybody, but there was this hang-up with Dick. And his wife, you know.

[02:01:39]KAREN BREWSTER: Was he that way to other of the staff that you witnessed, or do you think it was just something with you?

DAVE SNOW: He -- he was -- he was pretty mean to the seasonal employees. You know, he had a very structured thing about, you know, like he wanted room numbers on their rooms so that they went and they changed the room numbers. Oh, he just had a fit. You know, it was kind of like Captain Queeg, in the that um --

KAREN BREWSTER: Moby Dick?

DAVE SNOW: Yeah, well, The Caine Mutiny is what I'm thinking of.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh, ok.

DAVE SNOW: That's what he reminded me of, was Captain Queeg.

[02:02:17]KAREN BREWSTER: Well, that's why I was wondering, if it was his general style of he seemed to want to have a lot of control?

DAVE SNOW: He did. He wanted to have ultimate control. And he wanted me in a uniform, and he wanted to control what I did. He wanted to set my priorities, you know. And he -- and he wanted me to be a park employee, and I just -- it wasn't anything against the park, but I just knew, if I went down that path, I would never finish. I would not accomplish what I did.

[02:02:47]KAREN BREWSTER: Well, and I find it interesting that somebody who's superintendent thinks they can -- they know more about how to restore an old building and do the work than someone who's a trained architect.

DAVE SNOW: Well, I was young. He was old. You know. And I'll be honest with you, the superintendents they sent to Skagway all come there with issues in the old days. They'd put 'em up there -- You know, they might've had a sobriety issue or -- I don't think Dick had that problem, but he had had problems at the park he came from.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DAVE SNOW: So I think that --

[02:03:28]KAREN BREWSTER: And they were near their retirement, and they were using up their last years, kind of?

DAVE SNOW: Yeah. I think it was sort of like, let's put 'em up there, you know. Get 'em out of the mainstream, so. I don't know. It just made our life -- you know, it was the same way in Sitka. They had the same problem.

KAREN BREWSTER: Hm.

DAVE SNOW: 'Cause I, you know, I knew the guys that worked there real well.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DAVE SNOW: In fact, I would go down and oversee that project just from a regional point of view.

KAREN BREWSTER: That was the Russian Bishop's -- ?

DAVE SNOW: Right. And they -- they -- they had management down there that was fighting them all the time. And so --

[02:04:02]KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah, so where else did you do historic architecture work in Alaska? You said 'cause you were regional, you got sent different places.

DAVE SNOW: Well, you know, I went to a lot of places. I never really did much, but I would go places and look at lots of cabins. I went with the Forest Service in a helicopter down to Aniakchak. Way down there.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

DAVE SNOW: We have parks you can't even get into.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DAVE SNOW: Flew in to calderas and stuff, and saw grizzly bears everywhere. And found out that that's where they scratched themselves, was on these historic cabins. If there's anything sticking up, you know.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DAVE SNOW: Um, went to -- Well, let's see, that was after I left Skagway. [02:04:41]I'm trying to think. When I was in Skagway, I didn't spend a lot of time, but there was -- You know, I did go places.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DAVE SNOW: That was back -- I can remember, we had Diner's Club card, and they wouldn't pay for our travel. What a mess that was. I got in Sitka and I had no money, and I had to talk a cabbie into taking me to the airport 'cause I had nothing left.

KAREN BREWSTER: Wow.

DAVE SNOW: 'Cause they wouldn't pay their bills.

KAREN BREWSTER: The Park Service wouldn't?

DAVE SNOW: Yeah. And then I had my -- I used my personal credit card, but I was a GS-7 or 9, and my credit card was maxed out. I had no money.

KAREN BREWSTER: Wow.

DAVE SNOW: You know, and that -- you know, those were kind of external pressures that went on 'round those days.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DAVE SNOW: Didn't make it any easier, but uh.

[02:05:28]KAREN BREWSTER: So why did you decide to leave Skagway?

DAVE SNOW: Well, I think it was always my plan. You know, I -- I saw it as, from the day I got there, as kind of a four-year deal.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DAVE SNOW: And I tried to keep myself on that schedule. Because like I say, if you don't set a goal and try to achieve it, you're probably not going to do that. And it worked throughout my career. I kinda always was able to do that. Um, I had a lot of challenges in Skagway because things were unexpected. And plus, I was still learning. You know, I was learning a lot. I was learning as much as anybody was.

[02:06:10]KAREN BREWSTER: And so, you went to Anchorage from Skagway?

DAVE SNOW: Went from Anchorage. Yeah, went to Anchorage for about another four years.

KAREN BREWSTER: And that's when you were the regional --

DAVE SNOW: Right.

KAREN BREWSTER: -- historical -- what was it? Regional historical architect?

DAVE SNOW: Right.

KAREN BREWSTER: Ok.

DAVE SNOW: And then they made the mistake of sending me to Dominica in the West Indies. And when I went there, I thought, I cannot live in the cold north anymore, and that was kind of the end of my Anchorage deal. And I went to Santa Fe, and that didn't work real well, either, but --

[02:06:46]KAREN BREWSTER: And then you ended up back here in Denver?

DAVE SNOW: Back in the Denver Service Center. I -- I just wanted to do architecture. That was my goal, you know. But I -- I would say overall in my career, I was quite satisfied. It was really a fun time.

KAREN BREWSTER: And when did you retire?

DAVE SNOW: Uh, let's see. 2008.

KAREN BREWSTER: Ok.

DAVE SNOW: My wife had early onset Alzheimer's.

KAREN BREWSTER: Ok.

DAVE SNOW: And I had to take care of her. But I still had my time in, you know.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right. Well, that's a long career.

DAVE SNOW: Yeah. Yeah, it was good.

[02:07:22]KAREN BREWSTER: Um, well, you had talked about all the challenges in Skagway that you faced. What's something that was positive, that you're most proud of?

DAVE SNOW: Well, I think the challenges in themselves were positive, I guess. But I was proud of the fact that we finished on time, and I can still remember putting Gordon Lightfoot in the theater and those locals crying.

KAREN BREWSTER: Really.

DAVE SNOW: That was my best day. They were so happy to see that building restored. Still gives me goosebumps.

KAREN BREWSTER: Cool. Well, and again, given the -- some of the animosity --

DAVE SNOW: Yeah.

KAREN BREWSTER: -- to finally get that validation from the community. Must have felt good.

DAVE SNOW: Yeah, I -- I think by the time I was done, you know, the fact -- I think the very fact that we accomplished something impressed people.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

[02:08:13]DAVE SNOW: And I felt that I had their -- their backing. Sometimes I felt I had more of their backing than I did the park, you know, but -- You know, and like I say, at the end, Dick got the best office, the town got their railroad depot restored, which I think they all really wanted.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DAVE SNOW: Regardless of who they were, that building meant a lot to 'em.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

DAVE SNOW: Most of them worked there.

[02:08:40]KAREN BREWSTER: Well, it's a very significant building in the history of that community.

DAVE SNOW: Oh, yeah.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah. And it would be sad to see it be falling down and --

DAVE SNOW: Well, it wasn't -- it wouldn't have been much longer, I can tell ya.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

DAVE SNOW: It would've -- it would've gone. I'm surprised that south wall didn't go.

[02:08:58]KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah. And during the 80's, the tourism was on the rise in Skagway, correct?

DAVE SNOW: I just know -- I remember tourism always being a big factor, even back then. In fact, it was hard to get guys to focus because people would be distract -- especially when I had rangers that were working for me. They were able to interpret stuff. You know, people would ask them a question about the building, and they would start into their spiel, you know.

KAREN BREWSTER: Put down the hammer and start --

DAVE SNOW: Yeah. A lot of that happened.

[02:09:29]KAREN BREWSTER: So yeah, I didn't think about it, if you were working in the summer that you had a lot of foot traffic. People stopped to talk to you guys, what you were doing.

DAVE SNOW: Oh, it was -- it was just waves of people. And I had a lot of young guys, and the young girls would come in, and it was like -- it was like pandemonium for a while. But, you know, it was refreshing, I think. I didn't mind. You know, I felt if a guy took some time and explained to a tourist or a visitor what -- why we were doing what we were doing, that was good PR for the park.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

DAVE SNOW: And um, I've talked to so many people since I retired that go up there to Skagway. You know, everybody goes on a cruise to Skagway.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

DAVE SNOW: I've even thought about it, but I might actually do it one of these days.

[02:10:18]KAREN BREWSTER: Well, I was going to say, have you been back since 1984?

DAVE SNOW: Well, you know, I have not. And I -- I might just go back.

KAREN BREWSTER: Is there a reason you haven't gone back? I mean, have you been like, don't want to see it? Or it just hasn't happened?

DAVE SNOW: No, it just hasn't happened. I think that, you know, after my wife passed, it took me a long time to re-gather myself.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DAVE SNOW: But, uh, and a lot of what I remember back then involves her.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DAVE SNOW: And that, you know, that kind of brings all those memories back. Even this does.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DAVE SNOW: But uh.

KAREN BREWSTER: Well, hopefully it's some good memories.

DAVE SNOW: Well, it is. And that's, you know, as you get older, that tends to be the way it is.

[02:11:01]KAREN BREWSTER: Right. Well, that's why it's nice to talk about some of the challenges and problems because it's never all just good.

DAVE SNOW: It's like that Jack and Sylvia, the people that adopted us as grandparents.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DAVE SNOW: That was so cool. I mean, I hadn't been in Alaska a week, and this couple comes up, and they just kinda hung with us and helped us. And then they just disappeared. They were sort of like angels.

KAREN BREWSTER: Hm.

DAVE SNOW: You know, I don't know what I'da done without those people, 'cause nobody would babysit, you know. They would help us with the kids. He'd teach me stuff that I needed to know. It was like, I don't know who you are or where you came from, but I'm glad you're here.

[02:11:39]KAREN BREWSTER: Well, and that's a nice example that there was acceptance and help in the community. It wasn't all negative.

DAVE SNOW: Well, these people were from out of the community. I don't know where they were from. Michigan or someplace. They were visitors.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh, they were just summer visitors?

DAVE SNOW: They were summer visitors, yeah.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh.

DAVE SNOW: For a period of time, you know.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh, I thought they were locals.

DAVE SNOW: No. These were people that -- You know, Alice Cyr, she helped us a lot.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DAVE SNOW: She was very open with us. We spent a lot of time with her. She gave Holly a lot of little dishes.

[02:12:12]KAREN BREWSTER: Was your wife working?

DAVE SNOW: No.

KAREN BREWSTER: No. She was --

DAVE SNOW: Yeah. What did she do? Well, she got involved with the church. She was a really good Catholic until after Skagway.

KAREN BREWSTER: Hm.

DAVE SNOW: 'Cause the church had its issues, too, you know. And I always told her, I says, "Well, you never really saw the church up close until you got to Alaska."

KAREN BREWSTER: Hm.

DAVE SNOW: 'Cause everything kind of boils down to its essence up there.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DAVE SNOW: But yeah, she -- she struggled up there.

[02:12:44]KAREN BREWSTER: So was that a lot of -- was that, like, politics between the powers in the church?

DAVE SNOW: Yeah. Yeah.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah. Who was going to be in charge?

DAVE SNOW: Right. I think they argued about where the podium would go in the church. Things like that.

KAREN BREWSTER: Well, it's small-town power struggle.

DAVE SNOW: Oh. Yeah, well, and that's part of it, too. We weren't used to being in a small town where everybody knows everything, you know. And that's -- we -- we're -- not that -- not that I made it easy on my wife because before we moved there, I was in north Denver restoring a house in a really, really rough neighborhood. So Skagway was nothing compared to that.

[02:13:19]KAREN BREWSTER: And did you -- did you get married when you were living down in San Diego? Is that --

DAVE SNOW: Yes. I was married before I -- Well actually, I was married in the Navy.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh, you were?

DAVE SNOW: Yeah, we were married in '70.

KAREN BREWSTER: And how did you meet?

DAVE SNOW: Oh, she wrote me a letter. She worked with my mom, and -- and she wanted to write some sailor.

KAREN BREWSTER: Hm.

DAVE SNOW: So she wrote me. I wrote her back, and then next thing you know, we had a great forty-one years together.

KAREN BREWSTER: That's -- it's very romantic, sweet love story.

DAVE SNOW: Yeah. Well, she waited for me for two tours of Vietnam.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

DAVE SNOW: How many would do that, you know?

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah. That's -- and she followed you all over?

DAVE SNOW: Yep.

KAREN BREWSTER: And helped raise two kids.

DAVE SNOW: Two kids, yep.

[02:14:01]KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah. Um, what was I just going to say about -- oh, so what -- you said, you know, what you were proud of finishing that project in Skagway. Were there things that you would've like to stay longer and have accomplished?

DAVE SNOW: Well, if I'd have stayed, I would've worked on the other buildings that were there, but my -- my sort of, you know, once I moved to Anchorage, I became more of a manager, more or less.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DAVE SNOW: Looking -- overlooking things. And uh, I really wasn't -- you know, when I was in Anchorage, I really wasn't on the boards that much. I would go out, and I would talk -- you know, like I did a lot of work up in Denali.

KAREN BREWSTER: Uh-huh.

DAVE SNOW: I did Historic Structure Reports up there. And a lady took me out sled-dog -- boy, that was a lot of work.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

DAVE SNOW: So I -- you know, I did that kind of thing.

[02:14:58]KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah, I was thinking in Anchorage you say that you would've -- you said you went and looked at cabins and stuff. I was wondering, you didn't actually do any of the restoration, but maybe you wrote a report? Maybe you didn't even write a report?

DAVE SNOW: Well, I wrote reports, like in Denali.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DAVE SNOW: I wrote Historic Structure Reports. Um, I'm trying to think --

KAREN BREWSTER: Did any of them get implemented, to get restoration?

DAVE SNOW: Well, you know, most of what needed to be done at Denali was kind of minor compared to what Skagway needed.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DAVE SNOW: Um, but, you know, it was a lot of managerial type stuff, once I moved up there. You know, show the flag here, show the flag there, kind of thing, so.

[02:15:39]KAREN BREWSTER: Well, I can kinda hear it in your voice that you maybe missed being out in the field?

DAVE SNOW: Oh, I loved the field, yeah. I mean, that's -- once I went back to Denver, I did some of that again.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DAVE SNOW: You know, and then -- then everything changed when Clinton got in, and they out-sourced everything.



KAREN BREWSTER: Oh.

DAVE SNOW: Clinton and Gore, you know -- We had done since the 1930's, done in-house design work, and then all of a sudden, they don't want us to do that anymore. They want to outsource everything.

KAREN BREWSTER: Why?

DAVE SNOW: Well, they think they're going to save money. It's a political decision, you know.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DAVE SNOW: And so, that kind of changed stuff. But I got involved in a lot of stuff after Skagway.

[02:16:22]KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah, that's what I was wondering. Like what did you do?

DAVE SNOW: I did, um, well, a lot of fortifications. I did a lot of work in Boston. Um --

KAREN BREWSTER: In their historic district, sort of?

DAVE SNOW: Yeah, I worked on -- I worked on the USS Constitution Museum. We reutilized a bunch of the structures there. And Allegheny Portage, I worked on that. I worked all over the place, you know. Never -- the more interesting -- you know, I was always kind of a closer. If somebody struggled with a project, I was the guy that came in and finished it. That's what Castillo de San Marcos, they'd been languishing for twenty years, and I knew the guy that was working on it. I'm not going to say who.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DAVE SNOW: But they monitored it to death. And I was able to go down and Pete Tomka kinda changed from structural engineer to roofing engineer. So Pete and I did that together, and it was a lot of fun.

[02:17:22]KAREN BREWSTER: Well, I would think that would make it satisfying to be the closer, 'cause you'd have lots of things that got finished.

DAVE SNOW: Yeah, right. Plus, I was the -- you know, I was the boss toward the end, and then if somebody didn't finish it, then I had to finish it.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh.

DAVE SNOW: You know, there was -- the other thing that made a big change was when we went from hand drawing to CAD drawing.

KAREN BREWSTER: When did that happen?

DAVE SNOW: Whoo.

KAREN BREWSTER: Or I'm sure it happened over a period of time.

DAVE SNOW: Well, it -- it probably was a period of time, but when I look back, it seemed pretty abrupt. But it was after I came back from Santa Fe. And the Service Center had a drafting department, but they were really slow and they used a strange program, so I took it upon myself to learn AutoCAD. And that's where the rest of the industry was going. So I learned it, and a few others learned it, but a lot of others decided they did not want to use CAD drawing. They wanted to do it the old way. And so that was a big problem, and it was a problem until we went to project management. People would -- you would have to go in and do their projects for 'em because they could not draw them on the computer.

[02:18:37]KAREN BREWSTER: And so, when did you go from Santa Fe back to Denver?

DAVE SNOW: I -- after I -- let's see, it would be '86, I think, is when I left Anchorage. '86-'87, somewhere around there.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DAVE SNOW: I spent about a year in Santa Fe. Um, the guy I was working for was a sexual harasser, and park management didn't want to know about it, and I didn't want to stay with it, so I pulled some connections I had in Denver and got transferred back to Denver.

KAREN BREWSTER: So around '88?

DAVE SNOW: Yeah.

KAREN BREWSTER: Around there. Ok. So that's -- I'm just trying to figure out when you went to CAD from hand drawing.

DAVE SNOW: Well, that -- yeah, I would've been, yeah.

KAREN BREWSTER: About then.

DAVE SNOW: About then. [02:19:23]And then I worked on Crater Lake Hotel, did a lot of design work on that. They had an attic that had never been used for anything. I said, "You ought to have two-level rooms." So I did all this great design work, and it had a really difficult egress. Figured that out. Then they brought an architectural firm in, and they took all my drawings and my design and took credit for it.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh, no.

DAVE SNOW: But I'll say this. The guy did come back and apologize to me. That felt better.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh, well, that's nice.

DAVE SNOW: But that was -- that was kind of the beginning of the end of us doing in-house design work. But uh, so I did a lot of -- you know, I did a lot of hotels. A lot of forts. What else?

[02:20:15]KAREN BREWSTER: Historic ranger stations, maybe? Any of those?

DAVE SNOW: Oh, yeah. We did, um, down in Grand Canyon.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DAVE SNOW: I almost went to work at, uh, you know, when we were having a big down-sizing, I almost -- went out to Yosemite and spent about a month. They really wanted me to move out there. But it was that same kind of thing. They wanted me to come out there and be a member of the park staff. You know, and then it would've been all over again, the same thing I went through in Skagway. And there's no place to live, and, you know -- And plus, it was really hot. God, it was the hottest place I can ever remember.

KAREN BREWSTER: Well, it's not in the winter.

DAVE SNOW: No, I'm sure it's not, but El Portal was one of the hottest places I've ever been. I thought, no. I couldn't put my family through that again.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DAVE SNOW: So I stuck with Denver and eventually ended up in a quality assurance group, which was all old codgers like me, and it was fine.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

DAVE SNOW: It was a good deal.

[02:21:15]KAREN BREWSTER: So are you -- how do you feel about having worked in Skagway?

DAVE SNOW: Oh, I think that that was my -- one of my greatest projects, you know. Because it was where I learned everything. You know, I had to -- I had to teach myself, plus I had to teach others. And it was very satisfying from that point of view.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DAVE SNOW: Plus, I just think it's a -- it's a heck of a resource. The beauty of it was everything was so well-preserved.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

DAVE SNOW: You know, we talk about buildings were ready to fall over, but considering how long they had stood, you know.

[02:21:52]KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah, so it's sort of a unique place in that way within the park system?

DAVE SNOW: Yeah, yeah, I think so because it's just so -- it's so remote, and it's so well-preserved. I mean, the whole fabric of the town. You know, I compare it, like with this historic town here. It's just overrun by contemporary development. And, you know, I -- I could see things that are historic, but nobody cares.

KAREN BREWSTER: Hm.

DAVE SNOW: There, you know, I think the townspeople did care about their history. A lot of them were descendants of the gold rushers.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DAVE SNOW: So I think there's that, and I think they were proud of that. And, you know, that was part of my thinking when I did stuff. You know, I -- I -- I knew that at some point they would embrace what we were doing. It just was going to take some time.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right. And they needed the right --

DAVE SNOW: They needed the stimulus.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right. Or the right -- as you say -- the right --

DAVE SNOW: Vision. I -- I --

KAREN BREWSTER: The right person, I guess.

DAVE SNOW: Well, somebody that was crazy, you know.

[02:22:58]KAREN BREWSTER: Well, it was some -- versus the -- you know, the superintendents who wanted to do big stuff. They needed the right person to do it in the way that would work on their terms.

DAVE SNOW: Here's an example. I think it shows -- it shows the -- graphically. We had these vacant lots, and in the springtime, there'd be these great flowers that would come up.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DAVE SNOW: And Dick would go out there and mow 'em, you know. And he wanted to keep it mowed. You know, and I'm thinking, this is Alaska. This is -- you know, these are wildflowers. It was beautiful. When I take you down to show you my railroad downstairs, I'll show you some pictures of how it looked.

KAREN BREWSTER: Well, and Skagway, one of the things it prides itself on is it was the garden city.

DAVE SNOW: Yeah.

KAREN BREWSTER: At some point in its past. And -- and that's now come back.

DAVE SNOW: Right.

KAREN BREWSTER: There's lots of homes with just beautiful flower gardens, and --

DAVE SNOW: Yeah.

KAREN BREWSTER: So having gardens in empty lots kinda makes sense.

DAVE SNOW: Well, or just letting it be natural.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

DAVE SNOW: You know, but that was always kinda the battle. He wanted to have a manicured park.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DAVE SNOW: Which was hard for me to understand because I always -- You know, even if you're in one of the original parks, you don't manicure those parks.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DAVE SNOW: You know, the military manicures. You know, you -- you go over to Vietnam and there would be the headquarters, and there would be a manicured lawn out in front of it with some shell casings and ropes, you know.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right. Or you know, a city playground --

DAVE SNOW: Yeah.

KAREN BREWSTER: -- where they mow the lawn. I mean, yeah, that's different.

DAVE SNOW: Right. Right. We didn't see eye to eye on much of anything.

[02:24:40]KAREN BREWSTER: Well, I'm surprised you lasted the four years, then.

DAVE SNOW: Oh, I'm stubborn, you know. I mean, he tried to push me out. He tried real hard. I'll say one thing for John Cook. He stood beside me. But there's a -- one anecdotal story that's pretty interesting. He came down there. We would have these back-and-forths, and so John Cook and Doug Warnock, who was the old ranger, you know, they'd come down there to talk to Dick. And, of course, anytime anybody would come to Skagway, he'd take 'em to Dyea.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DAVE SNOW: 'Cause that was a, you know, place you could go. He took 'em out there and ran out of gas.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh, no.

DAVE SNOW: And I thought, how appropriate. I don't know how they got back, but I thought to myself at the time, I said, "Now you know what I'm dealing with."

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

DAVE SNOW: So.

[02:25:34]KAREN BREWSTER: Well, you had mentioned ghost stories. I wanted to circle back to that, if you have any that you want to share.

DAVE SNOW: I have one in the Peniel Mission. I was -- One night, I got up. I swear to God I saw somebody sitting next to the window in my bedroom.

KAREN BREWSTER: Inside?

DAVE SNOW: Inside, and looking out the window. And there was a window that looked up the -- up toward the White Pass.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DAVE SNOW: And the weather had been just terrible, and I woke up, and I swear I saw this guy sitting there, looking up that pass. Because it had cleared off, you know. And it's just like anything else, maybe I was dreaming, but boy, it scared the life out of me.

KAREN BREWSTER: And he was a stampeder type?

DAVE SNOW: Yeah, he was like, old guy.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

DAVE SNOW: You know, and the houses -- you know, the house that I lived in, the guy kept a record. The historic people who lived there in the old days. He kept a record in pencil. And they did that a lot. They did that in the railroad depot, too.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh, really. On the wall?

DAVE SNOW: Yeah, you would see sketches of sailing ships and stuff.

KAREN BREWSTER: Hm.

DAVE SNOW: Or Heney, the guy that built the railroad. They didn't like him very much, so they would sketch him and say bad things about him.

KAREN BREWSTER: What happened to those sketches?

DAVE SNOW: Uh, I think we preserved them.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

DAVE SNOW: There may be one that's, like, got a frame around it or something.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh, ok.

DAVE SNOW: But, uh.

[02:26:57]KAREN BREWSTER: But so, in your house, there was that kind of --

DAVE SNOW: Yeah, there was -- the Gault house had that. Like I say, the Gault house was -- there was a lot going on there at one time. I think it was a saloon.

KAREN BREWSTER: Mm.

DAVE SNOW: But that's just speculation. I don't know for sure. But I -- and I never saw any ghosts there, but when we sold it -- the person asked me. And we were having a tough time selling it.

KAREN BREWSTER: Really.

DAVE SNOW: And I said, "Sure. I think -- I think there is ghosts."

KAREN BREWSTER: In most places, that would turn people off. But maybe in Skagway it was a selling point?

DAVE SNOW: Nah, she was looking for a haunted house.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh, she was?

[02:27:33]DAVE SNOW: Yeah. The only other time in my career I've even had anything like that was at Castillo. When we were putting the terreplein on, the contractors were complaining that they saw soldiers going in and out of a certain door.

KAREN BREWSTER: Hm.

DAVE SNOW: That's not there anymore.

KAREN BREWSTER: Wow.

DAVE SNOW: And we went out there and looked, and historically, that was the -- the prison part of the fort. So, who knows.

[02:27:59]KAREN BREWSTER: What about in the Moore House, when you lived there?

DAVE SNOW: I don't remember much there, you know. I think it was pretty rough living there, and we weren't there that long.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

DAVE SNOW: I do remember the -- the barrel stove glowing red. I didn't realize they would glow red when they got really hot.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh. So you almost burned the place down?

DAVE SNOW: Probably. The only time we almost burned one down, or not us, but it was the seasonal rangers who were in the Peniel Mission, and they still had that wood stove in there that I had put in there. Or I don't know if I put it in there, or if it was there, but anyway, there was a woodstove in there, and they were burning trash.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh.

DAVE SNOW: And they got it -- I don't know if it was a chimney fire or what, but they got it put out pretty quick. Yeah, we had a few things go on, but I would say, considering the amount of stuff that we did, amazingly, nobody got really hurt or anything.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

DAVE SNOW: So.

[02:28:56]KAREN BREWSTER: So the Lynch Kennedy, you didn't do any restoration work on it?

DAVE SNOW: No.

KAREN BREWSTER: Other than just stabilizing it.

DAVE SNOW: Right.

KAREN BREWSTER: Ok.

DAVE SNOW: Well, it was a -- it was a tenuous thing just to do stabilization because it's got a really high false front, and I can remember, we had a lift and you could get up pretty high in it. And when the wind would blow, that front would be like a flag waving.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh my god. [02:29:19]And the wind does blow in Skagway.

DAVE SNOW: Mm. Oh, I can tell you stories about that, too. I can remember coming on the ferry with my family and getting off the ferry, and unable to get to my car because the wind is blowing so hard, and you can't even walk against it.

KAREN BREWSTER: 'Cause it was a north wind coming down?

DAVE SNOW: And we -- it wasn't that I was necessarily trying to get to my car. I was just going to walk home.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

DAVE SNOW: But you couldn't walk in it. It was just so bitter. And we had to have somebody with a car come get us and take us home. That's how it were.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DAVE SNOW: It was just -- I'd never seen anything like that. 'Cause we would get -- you know, it was actually a chinook wind.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh.

DAVE SNOW: 'Cause it was fifty below up on the Yukon, so it was only twenty degrees when it got to Skagway, but it was blowing at sixty miles an hour.

KAREN BREWSTER: Well, it must've been a south wind, then, if it was com -- a chinook?

DAVE SNOW: It was a what?

KAREN BREWSTER: Would it have been coming from the south, off the ocean?

DAVE SNOW: It would come from, um, from the north or the south.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh, ok.

DAVE SNOW: You get wind either way.

KAREN BREWSTER: I know, but I was thinking, a chinook being warm would've been coming from the south.

DAVE SNOW: It no -- No, chinook comes from the mountains because it's a Venturi effect.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh, ok.

DAVE SNOW: You know, it squeezes between the mountains, and it warms up. The same thing happens here in Colorado when the wind comes over.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah. Well, we get them in Fairbanks, and we -- they're chinooks because they're bringing the warm in off the mountains, but --

DAVE SNOW: Oh, ok. Well, it's probably the same thing.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

DAVE SNOW: It compresses the air.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

[02:30:50]DAVE SNOW: And uh, but yeah, you -- the wind from the south is really worse because it's wet.

KAREN BREWSTER: Mm.

DAVE SNOW: That's why that -- the admin building suffers so much.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DAVE SNOW: So, and I don't know, you know.

[02:31:05]KAREN BREWSTER: But with the work crew on the depot building, did weather get in the way?

DAVE SNOW: Yeah, all the time. You know, sometimes it would get so bad, we'd have to shut down. Especially when we were digging underneath it, you know. But most of the time -- a lot of that digging happened during the summertime, so it wasn't too bad.

KAREN BREWSTER: So the -- the rain in the summer wasn't a problem?

DAVE SNOW: They don't get that much rain. You know, I think they only get about thirty inches of moisture a year. It's mostly just cold wind.

KAREN BREWSTER: Ok. That's what would shut it down.

DAVE SNOW: Yeah. If it -- if -- I would say that -- I don't remember ever actually shutting down for any long period of time because of weather. Now, Sitka, that was a bigger deal down there.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DAVE SNOW: They rained all the time.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DAVE SNOW: But in Skagway, it was pretty dry most of the time. It was just cold.

[02:32:00]KAREN BREWSTER: But -- right. But so, you'd shut down for a day, or during a storm or something?

DAVE SNOW: Or, yeah. I just remember we just put a lot of Visqueen up and heated it up. You know, we turned the Pantheon into a wood shop, which drove Dick nuts because that's where we got sawdust on the floor.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh.

DAVE SNOW: He didn't like that.

[02:32:22]KAREN BREWSTER: And the whole time you were working on the admin building, they kept their offices above the grocery store?

DAVE SNOW: Right. Yeah, and I'd go back and forth there all day long. And I'd watch the avocados. They used to think when the avocados got soft, you'd throw 'em out.

KAREN BREWSTER: Hm.

DAVE SNOW: That's when I -- they'd give 'em to me for free.

KAREN BREWSTER: From the grocery store?

DAVE SNOW: They were just ready to eat.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah, that's that fine line of when avocados are good.

DAVE SNOW: Well, I can tell you, going up that stair above the grocery store, sometimes the smell could get pretty ripe 'cause they did have stuff going south down there.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh, really?

DAVE SNOW: Yeah. [02:33:05]I can remember when they had pigs in the dump.

KAREN BREWSTER: Really.

DAVE SNOW: Oh yeah, they used to have pigs up in the dump, and they never smelled 'til they took the pigs out of the dump.

KAREN BREWSTER: So they were pigs used to control the --  
DAVE SNOW: I don't know if they were used. They were just there.  
KAREN BREWSTER: Oh.  
DAVE SNOW: But they worked -- you know, they were symbiotic with the -- and the dump was on fire most of the time.  
KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.  
DAVE SNOW: But those pigs would be up there, wallowing in it and --  
KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.  
DAVE SNOW: We used to call it K-mart, because they would take stuff up there and dump it, and sometimes the stuff was still good. And people would rush up there and get food.  
KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.  
DAVE SNOW: Anything they --  
KAREN BREWSTER: They'd have to fight off the pigs for it.  
DAVE SNOW: The pigs were pretty docile, you know.  
KAREN BREWSTER: And then what happened to the pigs?  
DAVE SNOW: I don't know. You know, they probably -- probably the state got after them for having them up there, I would think, or maybe somebody thought they were being cruel.  
[02:33:55]KAREN BREWSTER: Well, I don't know, I wonder if they were somebody's personal pigs that they just let roam free?  
DAVE SNOW: Probably. I don't know. The pigs liked it.  
KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah. I mean, because, you know, back in the gold rush time, they had pigs and cattle and chickens.  
DAVE SNOW: Yeah. They may have been from the gold rush, for all I know.  
KAREN BREWSTER: I don't think -- they probably -- those would be old pigs.  
DAVE SNOW: Well, they'd be generational.  
KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah. Yeah. [02:34:16]Well, this has been great fun. I don't know if there's anything else that you -- you know, when I brought up this idea to do this interview, that certain things you wanted to share and talk about?  
DAVE SNOW: Well, you know, I think that once we decid -- once you told me about it, a lot of this stuff kinda came back to me as I'm just sitting around and think, "Oh yeah, I remember this. Or I remember that." So yeah, it's a good -- plus, while you were -- right when you had contaced me, I was just finishing my, um, streetscape of Skagway in the basement.  
KAREN BREWSTER: Oh. Oh, great.  
DAVE SNOW: I built train for my grandkid a number of years ago, and I was always going to do a streetscape of Skagway. So I had already started that, and then when you decided to come, I finished it.  
KAREN BREWSTER: Oh, right. Well, good.  
DAVE SNOW: I'll show it to you.  
KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah, I'd like to go see it. Well, thank you very much. I guess we'll turn this off for now.  
DAVE SNOW: All right.