

RECORDED INTERVIEW OF FRANK NORRIS

CONDUCTED BY KAREN BREWSTER

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

[00:00:00]KAREN BREWSTER: This is Karen Brewster, and today is May 8, 2019, and I'm here with Frank Norris in the Federal Building in Santa Fe, New Mexico, for the Klondike Gold Rush National Historical Park Oral History Project. Thank you, Frank, for making the time today.

FRANK NORRIS: Glad to be here.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um, and as I said, you were interviewed before about your time in Skagway in 1988 by Sandy Faulkner at the time, now McDermott. So that covers some of your background and how you got to Skagway, but I'm just do a little summary of your background and where you're from originally.

FRANK NORRIS: Ok. I was born and raised in the Los Angeles area. Got a master's degree in '76 from the University of Arizona, and while, um -- in the early '80's, I was working for a consulting company as a historian in San Diego, the work started to peter out, and I started looking for other opportunities. Um, I had worked for the Park Service as a volunteer in parks in '81 at Custer Battlefield National Monument. I found that I very much enjoyed working for the Park Service, so I, um, applied as a seasonal for the summer of '83 and fortunately was, um -- was, um, granted a position. And I ended up spending six summers working for the National Park Service in Skagway as a seasonal or other, you know, non-permanent situations.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm. And what is your master's degree in?

FRANK NORRIS: In geography.

KAREN BREWSTER: Mm, not history.

FRANK NORRIS: It is. I later got a PhD, again in geography, but both my thesis and my dissertation were on topics of historical geography.

KAREN BREWSTER: And where's your PhD from?

FRANK NORRIS: University of Washington in Seattle.

[00:02:13]KAREN BREWSTER: Ok. Um, so why did you pick Skagway for that seasonal job in '83?

FRANK NORRIS: Back in those days, you were given an option of applying for any two parks in the system. There was a recognition on that kind of master application form that, um, certain parks were easier to get into than others. They -- they -- they were pretty consistent about, don't bother trying for Yosemite and Yellowstone because you're not going to get in. And indeed, most of the historical parks along with cave parks and certain reservoir parks and that kind of thing, had asterisks beside them in which, um, in which they -- they said, you know, these get

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fewer applications. And being as somebody who loved history anyway, this fit very neatly into what I wanted to do. I had done some historical work on homesteading in the California and Arizona deserts, and so my other application was to Homestead National Monument in Beatrice, Nebraska, and as fate would have it -- and, of course, Klondike was the other application I sent it into. As fate would have it, the Chief Ranger from Klondike called me on a Tuesday and offered me a job. And on Wednesday, the superintendent of Homestead called and asked for a job. But life takes its twists and turns.

KAREN BREWSTER: And who was that ranger from Skagway who called you?

FRANK NORRIS: The Chief Ranger at the time was Jay Cable. He started in '78 and continued working there for, I'd say fifteen, eighteen years, and then later transferred over to the Anchorage office. So he and I had a chance to work together for many years.

[00:04:07]KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm. And the job in '83 was to do history, or it was interpretation?

FRANK NORRIS: No. Um, every year, the park would hire about five seasonal interpreters for staffing the visitor desk, for doing walking tours, for giving programs either in the afternoon or evening. Just, you know, the usual variety of seasonal ranger interpretive kinds of tasks. When the Chief Historian, Bob Spude, found out about some of my expertise, you know, as a -- in terms of historical research, um, we got to talking, and he arranged for a number of projects that kept me busy oftentimes during the spring or fall months, so. It worked out well for him. There was somebody on the ground, particularly so because Bob really enjoyed Klondike Gold Rush and Skagway. He had spent two years there in the late '70's, and in terms of the parks -- park units in Alaska, Klondike and Seattle -- Klondike and Sitka, excuse me, were the only two that had a historical emphasis to it at that time.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

FRANK NORRIS: So he really liked having the idea of somebody on the ground there that could essentially do the work that, given the inclination, he would've liked to have done himself.

[00:05:36]KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah. So in '83-'84, when you started doing those history projects, Bob was already the Chief Historian in Anchorage?

FRANK NORRIS: Yeah. Bob was the Chief Historian the day I got off the boat in '83.

KAREN BREWSTER: Ok.

FRANK NORRIS: And, you know, I've -- I served my usual summer, and then during the fall, I think, we probably got in touch.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

FRANK NORRIS: And I think I worked for him for just a month in the spring of '84, but then in '85, '86, and '87, it was either working on Chilkoot Trail projects, on National Register nominations, on you know, various things. There was even a little White Pass work that was done. But to me, one of the real thrills of working in Skagway was it was a new park. I can't find anything more exciting to work on than a gold rush. I mean, things are so, you know, out of the ordinary, and -- and Bob had essentially staffed, really, a pretty good library.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

FRANK NORRIS: Uh, so there was a lot to work on, and there were just an awful lot of untapped, uh, scholarly topics that I, um, couldn't wait to dive into. And, for instance, at the Alaska Historical Society meetings in 1984, I gave a report on the role of the military in Skagway's history during the kind of extended gold rush period. And, you know, particularly having come from both southern California and from the Custer experience, uh, it was a breath

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of fresh air to see that so many interesting, important topics just had not been done. So -- so that was something that I was able to sink my teeth into a lot of topics that were just waiting to be completed.

[00:07:34]KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah, well, we'll get into some of those specific projects. Uh, but your role of the military, yeah, I went to the Seattle Unit on this trip.

FRANK NORRIS: Ok.

KAREN BREWSTER: And I hadn't been into their exhibits before. They talked about the Buffalo Soldiers. I had no idea.

FRANK NORRIS: Um-hm.

KAREN BREWSTER: That there was military up there at the -- kind of the gold rush -- I know about the World War II part now.

FRANK NORRIS: Yeah.

KAREN BREWSTER: From doing the research, but I didn't know that --

FRANK NORRIS: Company L, 24th Infantry. Yep. Captain Hovey was a white guy, but everybody that served under him was African American.

KAREN BREWSTER: And they were there as law enforcement on the gold rush trails?

FRANK NORRIS: Yes. They were in a position, though, that by the time they arrived, it was either -- I think it was late '99, early 1900.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

FRANK NORRIS: And it was a pretty sleepy area by that time.

[00:08:27]KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah, that was kind of my memory of the exhibits, is by the time they got there, it was kinda too late.

FRANK NORRIS: Yeah. Yeah. I mean, it was the transition period. The gold rush was calming down. The railroad, um, White Pass Railroad was just completed, and Skagway was quickly being converted from a gold rush town into a railroad town.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

FRANK NORRIS: And, in which, during the railroad period, or the gold rush period, there had been up to, arguably, twelve to fifteen thousand people in town. Once the railroad was completed, it was a town of eight hundred to a thousand people.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah. So the Buffalo Soldiers didn't stay for very long?

FRANK NORRIS: They stayed for probably two years before they -- the army repre -- was represented in Skagway off and on from the spring of '98 all the way up until 20 -- uh, 1904. Um, and so, the Buffalo Soldiers were after several units had been there and before a couple of others were, so there was kind of a -- a churn, a turmoil in the exact representation of military units.

[00:09:40]KAREN BREWSTER: So what was the reason for sending the military up there in the first place?

FRANK NORRIS: Uh, to provide American might if need be, because at the time of the gold rush, the border between the United States and Canada had not been -- it was kind of a long story, but there was a very vaguely defined border between the US and Canada. Canada, of course, being represented primarily by the English at that time. Canada was just starting to emerge with its own independent foreign policy. But the Alaska boundary settlement did not really get finalized until sometime in 1903.

KAREN BREWSTER: Ok.

FRANK NORRIS: And it was the result of Theodore Roosevelt kind of putting the hammer down on this sort of bilateral commission that had been created. What the Canadian Mounties did was in a kind of an extra-legal way, in February of 1898, in the midst of the winter and in the midst of the gold rush craziness, they -- they established a command post at the top of both White Pass and Chilkoot Pass and essentially said, everything behind us is British territory.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

FRANK NORRIS: And -- and in kind of a serendipitous way, that kind of ad hoc decision turned into what became a permanent boundary, you know.

KAREN BREWSTER: And they -- and the Mounties there were enforcing customs -- what now we would consider customs and crossing the border regulations, right?

FRANK NORRIS: Essentially, they were guaranteeing public safety because there were a bunch of Americans that had absolutely no knowledge of what life was like on the Canadian side, and they enforced a -- they -- they -- they called it "a ton of goods."

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

FRANK NORRIS: But essentially, they were there to make sure that people had eleven hundred pounds of food and four hundred pounds of other equipment. And if you -- and if the -- you couldn't convince the Mounties you were reasonably well prepared to spend the rest of the winter and on into the summer, you know, with what you had with you, they turned you around.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right. They didn't want you dying or lost in the middle of Canada someplace.

FRANK NORRIS: That's right. Yeah.

[00:12:04]KAREN BREWSTER: But did the US soldiers, were they positioned --

FRANK NORRIS: No.

KAREN BREWSTER: Did they have stations up at the border?

FRANK NORRIS: No.

KAREN BREWSTER: I guess people weren't coming the other direction?

FRANK NORRIS: No, they weren't. They -- at first, they were stationed both in kind of ad hoc, uh, residences or tents in Skagway itself. There was also a dock that had been built over on the Dyea side.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

FRANK NORRIS: It was called the Dyea-Klondike Transportation Company dock, and they were camped over there. Um, and uh, you know, there was a parade ground in town, in Skagway, and it's a little unknown in terms of exactly what they did.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

FRANK NORRIS: There are not that many diaries or documents that talk about them physically patrolling the trails. They were there, you know, on -- on kind of a macro scale. If -- if there were any threats from the British government, anything having to do with typical crime and punishment matters, they -- they did not play any role in.

KAREN BREWSTER: That's what I was wondering was crime and violence on the -- in Dyea and Skagway or on the trails, was the military the law enforcement, or who did law enforcement?

FRANK NORRIS: There wasn't much law enforcement.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

[00:14:20]FRANK NORRIS: And, in fact, there's a well-known case up in Sheep Camp of a kangaroo court in which a man was executed because he'd stolen somebody else's provisions.

And that was meant to not only deal with him specifically, but to spread the word up and down the trail that, uh, you know, we don't want this kind of thing.

KAREN BREWSTER: Sends a good message.

FRANK NORRIS: Yeah. I mean, the typical person, for them to get up and over the trail, would make thirty or thirty-five trips, hauling things on their back up to a certain point. And there was nobody at those cache sites until somebody came up, brought in, you know, the last of the -- the provisions, and then they'd move it on to the next point.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

FRANK NORRIS: So there was a huge amount of trust involved.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

FRANK NORRIS: And sometimes that trust was violated.

KAREN BREWSTER: I think there would be a good economic opportunity to say, "Hey, pay me, I'll guard your stuff."

FRANK NORRIS: That's right. [00:14:23]Well, and then the local Native Americans, they made a killing because for people that didn't want to have to carry all the things themselves, they -- um, there was an -- there was an "Indian village," quote-unquote.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

FRANK NORRIS: In Dyea and at Chief Isaac, who was -- who essentially saw to it how much the Indians got paid. And they got paid very well.

KAREN BREWSTER: I would hope so.

FRANK NORRIS: Yeah.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um, that was a lot of work. Well, we kind of got off the sub -- off. Us historians, you know, we're going to wander into all these interesting sub-topics. [00:14:59]Um, so that first summer in '83, you were doing interpretation?

FRANK NORRIS: Yeah. I was a standard, in-town ranger, and, in fact, for three years, that's -- you know, during the mid-summer months, May to September, that was my job, a GS-4 interpretive ranger.

KAREN BREWSTER: And um, I know you talked about this a little bit in the previous interview, but that was a long time ago. So the programs that you gave and the tours you gave, were you given a canned program, or you developed it yourself?

FRANK NORRIS: No. Bob, during his years of -- Bob Spude.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

FRANK NORRIS: When he had lived and worked in Skagway, had -- his primary, uh, product was what was called the Ten Buildings Survey, or Ten Buildings Study, in which he had made thorough analysis, not only of the history, but of the kind of architectural development of each of ten buildings that the Park Service owned and had plans to -- to, you know, do some reconstruction or, you know, renovation on. And so, based on those histories, he had -- he had probably a long paragraph about each of those buildings. But he also wrote thumbnail sketches of all the non-NPS buildings up and down Broadway between 2nd and 7th. And so, we used that as the grist to put together a walking tour, which would usually take, I don't know, an hour or an hour and fifteen minutes, something like that. And a couple of times a day, we would take people from the visitor center up and down Broadway and -- and, you know, point out other things along the way. We also were responsible for a -- and we could develop any kind of interpretive program, but, you know, just something that we gave in the Park Service auditorium to, you know, on a topic related to the gold rush, so.

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[00:17:04]KAREN BREWSTER: And you could pick your own topic and write your own presentation?

FRANK NORRIS: Sure. Well, and -- and um, previous, uh -- interpreters over the years had taken slides and put them into a pretty comprehensive slide file, so there was this enormous bank of images where we would talk and then -- and then move the slides forward as part of our presentation.

KAREN BREWSTER: This was back in the day when you used a slide carousel, not PowerPoint.

FRANK NORRIS: Uh, PowerPoints were not part of the landscape at that time.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

FRANK NORRIS: Yeah.

KAREN BREWSTER: And did you have films that you showed? Because now, I know there's - - that's a big part of the programs.

FRANK NORRIS: There were. One of the primary films was called "Days of Adventure, Dreams of Gold." Uh, put together by William Bronson, I believe it was. That had come out in an hour-long format, but the interpreters, knowing that people wanted a shorter version, working with the Harpers Ferry center, they cut it down to twenty, twenty-five minutes, something like that. [00:18:14]Um, another major interpretive product was a presentation by Steve Hites, who is -- he now runs a major building in town and -- and, you know, conducts tours very much like Martin Itjen used to. I think he actually has one of Martin's old cars. But -- but, at that time, he was just kind of a man-about-town and working seasonally here and there. But he had a gift for songwriting, and he loved to -- to -- to sing. And so, he had put together -- he had written a song about the gold rush, which actually I still have a copy of on a 33, although I'm not sure if I could play the thing, in which he sang that song and then we went ahead and added a series of slides to accompany his words from the song.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

FRANK NORRIS: So it worked out very well. It was about a ten or twelve-minute presentation. And I think every hour on the hour, we would put -- we would run either Steve Hites' presentation. Usually once in the afternoon, we would find some longer movie. Pierre Berton had done an excellent black and white film called "City of Gold" about Dawson City, um, which had won some awards. He had put it together from 19 -- probably from the '50's at certain time. Of course, Pierre had grown up in Dawson City and was a, you know, as far as the Klondike Gold Rush was concerned, he was considered the ultimate authority.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

FRANK NORRIS: Historians since that time have really done -- they've kinda, you know, recognized that there were certain shortcomings or biases in his work. And, of course, that's going to happen with anybody's work, but -- but to this day, I still have a very high opinion of the work that he did. He came out with his book "Klondike," in the US, it's called "Klondike Fever," in '57, '58. And then, just about the time I started working there, he came out with a photographic accompaniment to that book called "Klondike Quest."

KAREN BREWSTER: Hm.

FRANK NORRIS: And so, you know, those books, I think, are still in print and are being sold, particularly in places like Skagway and Whitehorse.

[00:20:54]KAREN BREWSTER: Right. Well, do you have some examples on the changes and the views on the history of what he came up with that have been questioned now as maybe not accurate?

FRANK NORRIS: Oh, I would -- I would say, uh, Pierre came out of a journalistic background. And -- and he was very strong on tapping into the excitement of the gold rush. And he was a very good writer, um, but he's also a proud, patriotic Canadian. He's been dead for several years now. But -- but I think there -- that -- that a sober, objective historian out there, if such people existed --

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

FRANK NORRIS: Would -- would say he probably leaned toward, um, including Canadian sources more than American sources and showing the more positive or virtuous side of Canadian viewpoints and perhaps highlighting some of the more wretched sides of the American experience. It was pretty nuanced, though. I mean, it -- it stands up today still as very good history. I had once written to him, saying -- because "Klondike Fever" is not footnoted, and in an explanation, he said, "Uh, you know, the footnotes are out there. If anybody is interested in this, call and let me know." So when I wrote him, he said, "I think over the past twenty years, three people have written and asked about footnotes, so I decided not to go ahead with it."

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh, so you weren't able to get them from him?

FRANK NORRIS: No.

KAREN BREWSTER: But, as you say, that's the difference from the journalistic side versus a historian. A historian would have footnoted every single sentence, and source.

FRANK NORRIS: I wish he had.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

FRANK NORRIS: But -- but, you know, he did what he did, and -- and I suppose if a historian went through there, he could -- he could kind of going in the back door find out pretty well where he got his information.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

FRANK NORRIS: But I, you know -- I don't know if anybody's actually taken that step.

[00:23:09]KAREN BREWSTER: Right. But so, you don't have any specifics in it that were questionable, that you remember?

FRANK NORRIS: Oh, no. I mean, he never committed blatant falsehoods and errors. It was -- it was more of a nuanced thing.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah. Well, as you say, it's sort of -- I can think in other pieces of history and the way things get told that some things get maybe quote/unquote "romanticized."

Doesn't mean it's wrong. It's maybe not quite --

FRANK NORRIS: Actually, an author just in the last couple of years has really approached this topic head-on in an issue of "Alaska History" journal. So um, and this is a historian who's, you know, put articles in "Alaska History" many times before, so I'm -- I'm -- I'm glad to see that being done. And it -- it -- it just sort of recognizes, um, Berton's work for -- for what it is. I don't think it particularly diminishes it, but, you know, history's an ongoing process of people writing and then other people critiquing existing work and building on it, so. It's all to the good.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right. It's all -- that's the standard practice in academia, whether it's history or some other subject.

FRANK NORRIS: Yeah.

KAREN BREWSTER: You -- you keep building, and you look at what somebody else found. And oh, I found a new perspective on it.

FRANK NORRIS: Yeah.

KAREN BREWSTER: Or certainly, the way we do history has changed, with you say, you know, is there such a thing as unbiased?

FRANK NORRIS: Yeah. Um, before Berton's book came out, Kathryn Winslow had come out with a book called "Big Pan-Out" in the early '50's, and other than that, there really weren't, um, volumes that tackled the entire gold rush experience head on with any kind of, you know, widely approved quality to them.

[00:25:03]KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm. So when you showed up in '83 to be an interpreter, did you have to very quickly become an expert on the Klondike Gold Rush?

FRANK NORRIS: I think the typical experience with anybody showing up as a seasonal interpreter pretty much anywhere is -- is the chief ranger or the chief interpreter gives you a series of materials, tells you that you have a week to prepare some kind of presentation, or prepare information for a walking tour or whatever you're gonna do, and then, you just kinda build up from that. An awful lot of people, of course, in those experiences just stick around for a summer or two. Um, I was in a position where I -- I kinda really fell for it big. Yeah.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah. That was my question is, why did you decide to stay in Skagway?

FRANK NORRIS: I was in a position both professionally and personally where I wanted to live in a small town. I saw some potential to do a bunch of research. I was not in a position, you know, in terms of, you know, wife and children, of which I had neither one. I was in a position to just kind of live in a fairly minimal way. And uh, explore a small town in Alaska. I consider those some of the best years of my life. I -- I lived in Skagway, not continuously, but most of the time, from the spring of '83 until the fall of '88. So very rewarding times.

[00:26:45]KAREN BREWSTER: And, you know, nowadays, people who go to Skagway have a hard time finding housing. What did you do about housing, and was that problematic?

FRANK NORRIS: It was not problematic at all because the White Pass and Yukon Railroad had run continuously from 1900 until October of '82, and so, in '83, a number of railroad workers had left town, and the town was hurting economically. And there were a number of vacant places. In fact, I was able to -- I mean, the people I worked with in this instance were wonderful people, but they had a single-wide trailer that they wanted to make sure they kept the heat up on, and they -- they essentially said, we'd really love to have you be there. We'll charge you rent during the summer when you're working, but other than that, we just want to make sure the place stays in one piece, so I stayed there for several years. It was a very satisfactory, you know, arrangement.

[00:27:51]KAREN BREWSTER: And the park was still in its early days then?

FRANK NORRIS: Yes, the park was -- was established by Congress in June of 1976, and um, the first staff came on in '77. And so, it gradually evolved from there. The superintendent was there in '77. By the time I arrived in '83, there was a superintendent, a chief ranger, a chief interpreter, a chief of maintenance, um, several maintenance crew people. An awful lot of the employee activity was revolved around a fairly large maintenance crew that was going through a number of the various buildings as part of kind of a master plan of taking the gold rush-era buildings that we had purchased in the late '70's and, you know, renovating or restoring them according to those plans.

KAREN BREWSTER: And do you remember the names? Like, who was the superintendent?

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FRANK NORRIS: Um, let's see. It was Richard Simms when I showed up.

KAREN BREWSTER: Ok.

FRANK NORRIS: Dick Hoffman had been the first superintendent, but he had -- I think he started in '77 and stuck around until, I'm going to guess, '81.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yes.

FRANK NORRIS: The administrative history would be more specific about that.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right. Um, and then, the Chief of Interpretation was?

FRANK NORRIS: Uh, Betsy Duncan-Clark.

KAREN BREWSTER: Ok.

FRANK NORRIS: And the Chief Ranger was --

KAREN BREWSTER: Jay.

FRANK NORRIS: Jay Cable. Chief of Maintenance was John Warder.

KAREN BREWSTER: Ok. Um.

[00:29:50]FRANK NORRIS: But there was a historical architect from the Anchorage office who was permanently duty-stationed in Skagway. His name was Dave Snow, and he was in charge of all of the various, you know, reconstruction and restoration operations.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right. And so, when you got there, the railroad depot that has been restored and is now the headquarters.

FRANK NORRIS: Um-hm.

KAREN BREWSTER: That was not yet completed?

FRANK NORRIS: It was still being worked on.

KAREN BREWSTER: So where were the park offices?

FRANK NORRIS: The park offices were in the Arctic Brotherhood Hall.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh.

FRANK NORRIS: So the first -- if you walked into the Arctic Brotherhood Hall, there was a stairway that headed upstairs. I think there were two rooms in there. One of them was for the superintendent, and one, I think the -- there was an administrative assistant who was in one corner, and there may have been desks for a couple of other people there, but it was a pretty economical operation there.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

FRANK NORRIS: And -- and I believe it was in March of '84 where the depot/administration building of the White Pass was completed and so, '83 was the only year in which we gave -- you know, we lived and worked out of the -- the AB Hall.

[00:31:15]KAREN BREWSTER: And then, the programs and the visitor center interchanges, was that in the downstairs of the AB Hall?

FRANK NORRIS: It was in the auditorium of the AB Hall.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh. I didn't know they had an auditorium in there.

FRANK NORRIS: Yeah, if you kind of swing around the right side, 'cause there was -- you'd walk in, there was kind of a small anteroom.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

FRANK NORRIS: There was a -- there was a visitor center desk in which we kept brochures and that kind of thing. Then you swing around the right side, kind of down a narrow hallway, and it feeds into an auditorium.

KAREN BREWSTER: Sounds like pretty tight quarters.

FRANK NORRIS: And upstairs, there was a place where we had rigged up some film equipment, where we actually had projectors, you know, with the -- that you put the spools on and run that. So oftentimes when that took place, we -- you know, there would be somebody on stage and somebody else up top making sure that the projector cooperated.

[00:32:10]KAREN BREWSTER: Um, what was the visitorship like?

FRANK NORRIS: Um, visitorship then, as well as now, was largely determined by the number of cruise ships in port on any given day. Um, cruise ship industry has transformed Southeast Alaska, and for that matter, a number of other coastal areas in Alaska. In '83, we all kind of -- our staffing numbers were largely determined by the number of cruise ships in port on any given day, um, and I think the largest number of ships in '83 would've probably been three at any given time.

KAREN BREWSTER: Three in one day?

FRANK NORRIS: Yeah, because the White Pass dock could fit two ships, and then the Anvil dock over on the other side could fit a ship. But that -- I think Tuesdays had the maximum number of ships. But -- but a large ship in 1983 held 600 passengers. I -- I understand that there are some cruise ships that go up there these days that have 4000 passengers in them. But I remember that there was a ship called the "Daphne," and there were a number of other Princess boats, and then Holland America, you know, would -- would wander in. Actually, I'd -- I'd better take back the Holland America. I'm not sure that they had a presence during the earliest years that I was there, um.

[00:33:45]KAREN BREWSTER: But they -- they started to come in in the later '80's when you were still there, do you think?

FRANK NORRIS: Well, there had been cruise ships coming into Skagway ever since, I would say early to mid-'70's, something like that. There was a fellow named Chuck West who was instrumental in kinda getting the cruise ship industry off the ground.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah, Westours.

FRANK NORRIS: Yeah. Exactly. And he -- but by the time '83 had come around, uh, West himself was running something called Arctic Exploration Tours. It was actually one of the smaller companies operating in town. Um, but Princess, um, was -- was the largest corporation, you know, arranging for ships, and then you had the, um, the main hotel in town, which later became a Westmark hotel, was simply called the Klondike Hotel. Um, and I would be hard put to tell you who ran that hotel in those early days.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah, I always -- I always assumed since it's called a Westmark that Westmark built it. I didn't know it had a previous life.

FRANK NORRIS: Um, yeah. In fact, this may give some description about -- about the early cruise ship industry.

KAREN BREWSTER: In the admin history, yeah.

FRANK NORRIS: Yeah. And uh, you know, these things have slipped.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right. And actually, if you think about it, tourists were coming up there since 1900.

FRANK NORRIS: Uh-huh.

KAREN BREWSTER: In a different way.

[00:35:21]FRANK NORRIS: Well, one -- a chapter of the Administrative History shows that there, um, that shortly after the Park Service established a presence there, um, the city organized a historic -- a district commission.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

FRANK NORRIS: You know, they outlined, you know, an area kind of roughly, um, Broadway, 2nd to 7th, with a few lips, uh, extensions on either side. And part of that was a -- was a requirement that any new building that took place in the historic district had to architecturally conform to, you know, some notions of what gold rush buildings looked like, and this Dave Snow that I mentioned essentially helped craft the -- the requirements there. And then the Historic District Commission would weigh various proposals of new building in town and see to what extent it conformed. So the, um -- there is a dining room that fronts up against, um, Broadway, which is an extension of what we called the Klondike Hotel, and that dining room front had to be approved by the Historic District Commission as fitting into vaguely gold rush-looking architectural guidelines.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right. And they enforce, like, color of paint and the font of the signs, and --

FRANK NORRIS: Yeah, you -- you know --

KAREN BREWSTER: All that kind of stuff.

FRANK NORRIS: Encouraging board and batten or shiplap or whatever were approved methods, because we had a wonderful bank of historical photos at the Park Service to show what buildings looked like that time, and it -- it helped create a list of dos and don'ts.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right. Um, so the visitorship, um, it was mostly cruise passengers, and it was smaller than what it is now?

FRANK NORRIS: Well, I would say that -- and you'd need to talk to like, a CVB (Convention and Visitors Bureau) head to know more, but in those days, because the cruise ships were not enormous, I'd say that somewhere around two-thirds to three-quarters of the visitors to Skagway between May and September were off the cruise ships, and the rest was rubber tire traffic off the highways.

[00:37:51]KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm. But in those years, as you say, the railroad was no longer running.

FRANK NORRIS: That's right.

KAREN BREWSTER: So do you think that brought more visitors into park activities?

FRANK NORRIS: Um, what takes place whenever cruise ships are active in a town, they strive for vertical integration. Vertical integration being the idea that if -- if somebody comes off of one of their cruise ships, they want to see to it that they are busy doing cruise ship-approved activities, be it walking tours, driving tours, gold panning demonstrations, you know, the salmon fish fry. Whatever they're doing, they want to be able to be responsible. They don't want those walking -- they don't want their cruise ship passengers taking idle walks around town. They don't, you know, given a choice, and I'm being, you know, over the top here when I say this. They would rather have them shop in a cruise ship-approved gift shop, perhaps with an inducement, you know, for ten percent off that is -- that they receive while on board the cruise ship, so um, that -- those techniques got more and more sophisticated over time. And there were a number of independent, um, gift shops, restaurants, snack bars, that kind of thing, that got a considerable amount of activity that that kind of thing, you know, the competition got more intense over the years just doing the few years I was there.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

FRANK NORRIS: So. And, of course, the cruise ships got bigger and more companies got involved. [00:39:37]One excellent antidote to these relatively large cruise ships is there were a

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number of what we called explorer boats, and these were boats that held maybe 75 to 110 people. And people that really wanted to immerse themselves in what they could learn about Alaska rode on these, uh, like the "Majestic Alaska Explorer." They -- they would come up -- they had their own itineraries. They would go over to Glacier Bay and seek different parts of the bay than other people did. They would go into various coves and fjords that, of course, the cruise ships either couldn't go into or didn't want to. Um, and -- and people would come off of the explorer boats and ask questions that were just very, um, sophisticated and keen, whereas, and -- and I say this as kind of a dramatic way of the other end of the scale. Some people would come off of the larger cruise ships saying, "I heard there was a gold rush taking place here. Tell me something about it." So -- so there were widely varying levels of knowledge and interest in the gold rush experience. Some people just wanted to go into town, you know, pad up and down, look at the gift shops, and go back to the boat. Other people, you know, had a great deal of interest in the gold rush. Um, so um, one of the challenges of being an interpreter was to recognize how people wanted to know about the gold rush, to what degree did they want, and to recognize that not everybody was going to be intensely interested in the historical nuances of the gold rush. That you needed to meet them and deliver a message that would appeal to all varying levels of -- of visitors to the visitor center.

[00:41:39]KAREN BREWSTER: And now, were there any exhibits in that visitor center at the AB Hall?

FRANK NORRIS: There were a number of very large photographs that I think had been prepared by the Harpers Ferry folks. These were probably, you know, eight feet square, something like that. There was a major photograph of the Golden Stairs. There was a shot showing chaos on the Dyea waterfront, with, you know, a lot of goods packed up, you know, in a pretty chaotic fashion. And a couple of others along that line, too, in which there was not a great deal of, um, interpretive variety, and a lot of that waited until the completion of the visitor center, which was, you know, just a year --

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

FRANK NORRIS: -- after that.

[00:42:37]KAREN BREWSTER: Now, I talked to somebody who had been an interpretive ranger for a summer in the late '70's.

FRANK NORRIS: Um-hm.

KAREN BREWSTER: And he mentioned the large photos. He -- his memory was, they were in the old railroad depot, but not restored. Have you ever heard that?

FRANK NORRIS: My recognition, when I showed in '83, is that, of course, the AB Hall was all we had.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

FRANK NORRIS: And so, there -- I think there were some of those photos either in that anteroom area as you walked in, or in the auditorium area. Those are the only areas it could have been.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right. But you haven't heard that in the '70's, they actually used the old railroad depot in its less-than-ideal condition?

FRANK NORRIS: Actually, now that you mention it, um, in '77, which was the first year in which any interpretation was done.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

FRANK NORRIS: As you enter the, um, the area where the current visitor center desk is in the railroad depot, that was the -- the railroad, or I'm trying to think that by '77, I think the Park Service owned it, or maybe it was the National Park Foundation owned it. Because they were kind of a holding company that actually purchased the -- the depot building and held it for a number of years. But visitors could go into that area, and -- but beyond that, there was, like, heavy drapery that was -- that prevented people from going beyond because the rest was either dangerous for construction reasons, or there were probably upturned nails, or it just wasn't ready for prime time.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right. Right. So that was -- that space was used in '77?

FRANK NORRIS: Just that corner area --

KAREN BREWSTER: Right. Just --

FRANK NORRIS: -- around, you know, where that corner window --

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

FRANK NORRIS: You know, there are doors on either side.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

FRANK NORRIS: You know, the visitor today, once they go past the visitor center desk, they can wind around to uh, there's a display room with -- with some materials, and then you continue on after turning left, and you go into the auditorium.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

FRANK NORRIS: None of that existed.

KAREN BREWSTER: No, I know that, but -- but that confirms that in '77, when he said they were in that small --

FRANK NORRIS: In that corner area, yeah.

KAREN BREWSTER: -- corner, that matches. 'Cause he talked about large photos, and now I'm like, oh well, maybe he was getting it confused with the AB Hall, but it sounds like not.

FRANK NORRIS: Yeah.

KAREN BREWSTER: So that confirms that.

FRANK NORRIS: Ok.

[00:45:08]KAREN BREWSTER: So you -- after that first summer, you stayed in Skagway and what was the first thing you did for Bob Spude that fall?

FRANK NORRIS: Um, let's see, in the -- in the -- actually, I -- the first time I worked for Bob was starting in about March of '84.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh, ok.

FRANK NORRIS: And I just spent a month working on him on, gosh, I can't tell you what the short-term project was.

KAREN BREWSTER: Was it the Dyea -- I know you worked on Dyea stuff. Uh --

FRANK NORRIS: Yeah, in both '85 and '86, I worked on various, um, I'd call them vignettes, short reports having to do with the, um, Dyea and the Chilkoot Trail. That eventually became a -- a -- an informal report. In '85, I did primarily reports about Dyea, and then in '86, I kinda walked up the Chilkoot Trail and wrote reports about that. The -- I now remember, in '84, what Bob asked me to do was to create a map showing what Dyea looked like during the gold rush. And the reason this was important to him was, nobody really knew how geographically Dyea was laid out. There were no existing plat maps or any other accurate maps that showed the totality of what Dyea looked like.

KAREN BREWSTER: I'm surprised.

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FRANK NORRIS: Dyea -- there -- there was in the magistrate's book, a grid map showing Dyea between the wharf area and about 6th or 7th Street. Once you got beyond that, was a -- was a Camp Dyea military reservation, and just beyond that was the Indian village. And beyond that, there was kind of a suburban or northern end of Dyea, with the -- the main street, I think it was called River Street, and possibly one other street a little farther inland that wound all the way to the far northern end of town, which is where you would angle over and cross the -- the Taiya River. And, you know, you got out onto the -- the trail itself. Um, but nobody had ever tried to take all the information that um, had been gathered about Dyea and try to spatially put it into -- onto a map, so um, that's what I did in '84. What I had done during the winter of '83-'84 is I had gone into the magistrate's books and had gone through all the various grantor/grantee index guides to say -- to find out where all the businesses were and um, and where were they -- you know, I'm being redundant here. Uh, where were they located, and what kind of hints could that give me in terms of how the town was laid out. So there were a lot of extraneous pieces in there that I tried to create the best, kind of corporate hole as I could. I found out later, um, and this was probably ten to twelve years later, that the map that I created needed to be compressed just a little bit in the middle of town, but all in all, it was -- it was a really -- a pretty good rendition of what it is. [00:49:00] Now what's happened in more recent years is, the archeologists have gotten out there, and through a number of pretty sophisticated methods have been able to find out where the streets were, where certain businesses may have been located. And -- and so, what I did was not only create a map, but I also created kind of a business guide which tried to place where all of the businesses that were advertised or in these magistrate books or whatever, where they were located. So -- so that -- that -- that later became helpful to the archeologists when they're saying, you know, I ran across this scatter of stuff. What could it have been? And -- and sometimes I was more conclusive than at other times, but at least it gave them some evidence to go on.

KAREN BREWSTER: So the magistrate records, how does that tell you what a business is and where it's located?

FRANK NORRIS: Well, because the grantor/grantee indexes, essentially saying, you know, I gave my property from Person X to Person Y, they would have to say where this place was. In almost every case, it was -- it was, "on the east side of 3rd Street, north of River Street," or something like that. They didn't have street numbers. And oftentimes, they would be given in reference to, like, one of the major hotels in town. The Olympic Hotel was by far the largest hotel in town, but there were certain other places that they would use as kind of demarcation points. And -- and so, using a lot of these other kind of rough, relative terms, you just try to mix and match and put things together as best as you could.

[00:50:48] KAREN BREWSTER: And were there old newspapers that had advertisements that you could look up?

FRANK NORRIS: Excellent. There -- and I'd say a primary method that I used in this business guide and map was either "The Dyea Press" or "The Dyea Trail." And both of them had -- you know, one of them published only during 1898, and the other one in both '98 and '99. And to be honest, Dyea was, you know, it -- it -- it was a -- an active town, but it had an effective life of about eight or ten months.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

FRANK NORRIS: Because once the decision was made over on the Skagway side to start building that railroad, everybody in Dyea knew that its days were numbered.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

FRANK NORRIS: Um, I guess I should say, the -- '97 and early '98 were days of wild speculation in which there were probably thirty or forty companies that announced their intention to build a railroad. Most of these were stock market scams, but, you know -- but what was obviously different about the White Pass, it had London money, and it had Mike Heney, who was a construction contractor who saw to it that working with the Close Brothers of London, they got a railroad built through some very treacherous terrain. Right.

[00:52:23]KAREN BREWSTER: Well, um, I was just thinking about the businesses in Dyea and how you figure all that out, because a lot of it may have just been a tent. They didn't necessarily have a building.

FRANK NORRIS: Most of them were tents. Yeah. I mean --

KAREN BREWSTER: Did they also probably -- the whole --

FRANK NORRIS: There were tents, there were log cabins, there were frame buildings. This Olympic Hotel that I mentioned, um, I don't know if it was built on site, but -- but after the gold rush, the whole thing was loaded onto a raft and taken down to Douglas.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh.

FRANK NORRIS: And later became a hotel down there for another fifteen years or so.

KAREN BREWSTER: And, as you say, the town itself was pretty short-lived. I would think some of those businesses didn't last the whole two years. You know, they were there --

FRANK NORRIS: Oh, most of 'em lasted two months, five months. I mean, because people would open up a business in a tent or a kind of a rough log building, and then they'd head for Dawson, too.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

FRANK NORRIS: And -- and it's not surprising that there are certain business names that we saw first in Dyea, and later in Sheep Camp, and later in Dawson.

KAREN BREWSTER: Or it was the same business that then somebody else took over, that says, "I'm leaving. Here, you run it now."

FRANK NORRIS: Um-hm.

KAREN BREWSTER: But it seems like incredibly difficult to figure out what those businesses were and where they were.

FRANK NORRIS: And -- and --

[00:53:42]KAREN BREWSTER: And did you use photographs, as well?

FRANK NORRIS: Oh, yeah. The photographs were hugely helpful. And once again, I -- I -- I have to thank Bob for having gone to the major archival sources, uh, in Alaska, in Washington State, in Fort Worth, Texas, in DC, and other places, to uh, you know, assemble a really very good series of photographs.

KAREN BREWSTER: That was one of my questions, is how that the Klondike photo collection came to be. Bob went out and acquired images?

FRANK NORRIS: Bob, yeah. Bob was the chief, uh, architect of that. I think others since that time have made small, incremental changes.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

FRANK NORRIS: I spent a week at the public archives of Canada in the late '80's and at other times, you know. There have been additional newspapers that have come on and incremental changes, but Bob is largely responsible for it.

KAREN BREWSTER: Well, and certainly since, probably in the '70's when the park started, and then since then, individuals show up with family collections of things.

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FRANK NORRIS: Absolutely.

KAREN BREWSTER: But in terms of the archival ones, how -- well, maybe this is a question for Bob, is how do you know where to go look for these photos?

FRANK NORRIS: Actually, we -- one additional item of help we had is, back in the late '70's and early '80's, in other words, during the years of the oil boom, um, the state was able to spend good chunks of money on history and archeology, much so -- more so than they did during the oil bust and some later years.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

FRANK NORRIS: And -- and -- and there was a gentleman, I think his name was Dale Sterling, who provided enormous help to anyone who follows the Klondike Gold Rush, in which he -- in which he sent postcards to, like, nine hundred different repositories. You know, we're talking county historical societies and genealogical societies, and, you know, other people that may -- that anyone who may have had bits and pieces of Klondike lore. And -- and so, I guess I need to step back here and say, this was not just for Klondike Gold Rush information. But he wanted to find out from relatively obscure places outside of Alaska who had good stuff about Alaska. Because otherwise, you just don't know.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

FRANK NORRIS: And so -- and so, he put together actually two different volumes through this Alaska Commission on -- on History. You know, he was funded, I don't know, a thousand dollars or something just to put this stuff together.

KAREN BREWSTER: And was he a state employee, or he did that as a contract, a grant from the commission?

FRANK NORRIS: It -- it was a grant from the commission. It was something different from any work he may have been doing for the state.

[00:56:51]KAREN BREWSTER: Ok. Well, that's good to know. Um, so you did that -- that Dyea thing. You also worked on, I don't want to call it Historic Surveys, what do you -- HRS's, whatever you call those. Did you do some of those in Skagway?

FRANK NORRIS: Well, one -- one thing I did, I worked on National Register nominations.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

FRANK NORRIS: And the -- and Bob asked me to revise the National Historic Landmark nomination for Skagway and White Pass. I guess -- I guess I also wrote a National Register nomination for Dyea and the Chilkoot Trail. The Dyea-Chilkoot Trail one was bureaucratically fairly easy to do. Um, because -- well, I'm, um, I'm trying to remember. But uh, that one was the -- the revision was approved fairly readily by the -- by the -- the keeper of the National Register. Once again, you're kind of making me think about this stuff for the first time in a long time. I think that Dyea and the Chilkoot Trail had a National Register nomination. I don't think the NHL nomination ever was approved. So bureaucratically, I was writing an NHL nomination for the first time.

KAREN BREWSTER: And so, an NHL, the landmark nomination, would have been for the whole region? It would've had a broader scope?

FRANK NORRIS: For the whole corridor between Dyea and the top of Chilkoot Pass.

KAREN BREWSTER: Ok.

[00:58:29]FRANK NORRIS: Um, what complicated things on the -- on the Skagway side were two major factors. First, there was an existing NHL nomination that had been approved way back in, like, 1963. The first NHL's were in 1960. And -- and on the heels of that, there was kind

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of a top list of -- of NHL possibilities in which various people put together kind of quickie versions of NHL's for what everybody recognized were some of the most important historical properties in the country. And the Skagway-White Pass NHL nomination was about four pages long, ok? It -- it -- and it covered the waterfront. This was back in the days, even before the National Historic Preservation Act was passed of 1966. And so, there really weren't any criteria or very sophisticated methodology about how to put these things done. So -- so they wrote these, you know, these relatively brief forms, included five or six photos to go along with it, and without a lot of historical precedent to them, the Secretary of Interior signed off on them. I guess it was Stewart Udall at the time, or one of his assistants. And -- and -- and it became implemented. By the mid-1980's, there had been a pretty large and fairly sophisticated bureaucracy going on with, what's needed in a form like this. And besides, because we had a park that had been established and we knew a lot more about these trails, what had been a four or five-page report turned into about a sixty-page report with thirty photographs. And there were various committees that all wanted to have their hand in seeing what was in it, and how it should be worded, and that kind of thing. We -- we -- and when I say we, I mean Bob and I, turned in what we thought was a pretty good version of a Skagway-White Pass nomination, and let's face it, Bob knew way more about the bureaucracy. I was just there to, you know, input information. By the time that got approved and implemented, the revision, I think it took fourteen years.

KAREN BREWSTER: Wow.

FRANK NORRIS: Yeah. So it was -- it was many years after I had started in the Anchorage office. But uh --

[01:01:09]KAREN BREWSTER: So it is now a registered national landmark?

FRANK NORRIS: Yeah, as of about 2000. And, in fact, that -- that came in very, very handy over the years because in, I'm going to say in about 2005, there was a concerted push to build a highway from Juneau to Skagway, and it -- it would have involved having a road coming from the lower Dewey area, kind of sliding down into town. It would've been a massive construction effort, and it would've, in my opinion, grossly disfigured the landscape setting of Skagway. And largely because of the existence of that NHL, um, that effort was stopped.

KAREN BREWSTER: Well, it's still under discussion.

FRANK NORRIS: Ok.

KAREN BREWSTER: Well, I don't know about that particular route, but a road to Juneau comes up every once in a while.

FRANK NORRIS: It's probably one of those perennial garden-variety, if -- if you're a boomer, you want to see a road between Skagway and Juneau.

[01:02:20]KAREN BREWSTER: Right. So um, but it's nice to know that that having that landmark status might help protect it. But you -- so I'm looking at the transcript from your '88 interview, and you're talking about that you did a Historic Structure Report for the Chilkoot Trail.

FRANK NORRIS: Ok. The Historic Structures Report is that compilation of, I would say, thirty write-ups on various places in Dyea and along the Chilkoot Trail. There were probably eight or ten write-ups of various individual structures around Dyea. For instance, there was -- there was a façade for a, um, oh, the AM Gregg Real Estate Office. And what had taken place, in the mid-'70's, is some Skagway folks had come out. They had wandered around Dyea and had seen this front wall, which was in pretty good shape. Now knowing the destructive qualities of freeze and thaw and of damp ground and of -- of, you know, snow melting on it, they lifted that façade up,

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you know, and gave it a little more structural integrity, I think probably by adding a couple of 2x4's on the sides. And then, once it had been propped up, they -- they had kind of a horizontal bar that they hooked into a couple of local tree branches so that it would stay up. And believe me, if they -- if they had not done that, that resource would probably not be here today.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

FRANK NORRIS: Because there -- there's very little in terms of major constituent stuff.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

FRANK NORRIS: All -- you know --

KAREN BREWSTER: And those were private people who did that, or the Park Service?

FRANK NORRIS: I think -- well, no, it was just private people, you know.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

[01:04:25]FRANK NORRIS: I'm not sure if you've spoken to a fellow named John Jackson.

KAREN BREWSTER: I did.

FRANK NORRIS: Ok. We called him JJ, and uh, and he had various jobs around town when I was living there, and -- and he was one of the people that took care of that.

KAREN BREWSTER: I didn't know that. He talked about moving the cemetery.

FRANK NORRIS: Oh, he did? He was part of that crew, too?

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

FRANK NORRIS: Ok. Um, and -- and that was necessitated because there was a perception that the Taiya River was going to come through and undercut all of that cemetery.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm. And now, was the Patterson Cabin there?

FRANK NORRIS: Um-hm.

KAREN BREWSTER: Or what's called the Patterson Cabin now?

FRANK NORRIS: Yeah.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah. And then the Hosford Sawmill? Was there anything left of that?

FRANK NORRIS: Um --

KAREN BREWSTER: 'Cause I think you've written about it. Or maybe Bob wrote about it.

FRANK NORRIS: Well, it was in a lot better shape in the early '80's than it was in the late '80's.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

FRANK NORRIS: And when I walked by in 2011 -- I hiked the trail just a few years ago, and it had pretty well crumbled away. Keep in mind that the Hosford Sawmill, while having some historical importance, was not built until the '50's or '60's, so.

KAREN BREWSTER: Well, nowadays, the '50's is historically important.

FRANK NORRIS: Well, you're right, but -- but also, the Park Service always has these periods of significance that we need to worry about.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

FRANK NORRIS: And we oftentimes interpret certain buildings at a slightly different time than other buildings. But in general, most things that the Park Service cares about most greatly started in about 1887, which is when the Captain Moore cabin was built.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

FRANK NORRIS: And lasts until about 1906, 1908, something like that.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right. That's sort of the -- the mission or the focus of the Klondike park is that period?

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[01:06:13]FRANK NORRIS: Well, the remarkable characteristic of Skagway is that a huge amount of building and activity took place between 1887 and 1908. And with about two or three exceptions, that town did not change at all, in terms of new building --

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

FRANK NORRIS: -- until 1947.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right. But they moved a lot of buildings, which I find fascinating.

FRANK NORRIS: They did.

KAREN BREWSTER: I don't know that that's common in other communities, that you move things around like that?

FRANK NORRIS: I can't answer that question.

[01:06:46]KAREN BREWSTER: Um, well, so that -- the Chilkoot Trail, what was -- what was that like in the early '80's? What was the --

FRANK NORRIS: Ok. The Chilkoot Trail was -- was begun, uh, was essentially recreated, starting in 1961, through the Division of Adult and Youth Authority of the State of Alaska. And over about a four-year period, the US side, the trail on the US side was -- was routed out by people -- you know, various people from the Youth Authority, not based on a lot of sophisticated historical research, but if they found chunks of the -- what they thought of as the historical trail, they used it. Most of the first six or seven miles between Dyea and Canyon City, they did not use existing trail. So one of the ongoing jobs that we had as sort of insipient historians and archeologists in the 1980's was to find, to the greatest extent possible, where the historical Chilkoot Trail was. Um, and we were more successful in some cases than in others. Because the Lower Taiya River was periodically flooded over the years, one of the best bits of evidence that we found was -- in fact, I was on an archeological crew with Karl Gurcke on this, there were a number of insulators that were nailed into trees where a phone line would follow the trail itself, and it was those insulators that helped guide us to, you know, perceive locations of the -- of the wagon road. Because the wagon road had gone all the way from Dyea to Canyon City, and then had stopped at Canyon City right where the canyon narrows and gets really steep.

[01:08:47]KAREN BREWSTER: Oh, so they -- so the stampeders could have their supplies hauled in by wagon up to Canyon City?

FRANK NORRIS: There were some that did, yeah.

KAREN BREWSTER: The rich ones, maybe?

FRANK NORRIS: And there weren't a lot of rich ones.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

FRANK NORRIS: Those probably would've been businessmen, or -- or wealthy people that wanted to establish stores in -- in Dawson City, and, you know, would either use a wagon or hire a lot of packers, most of whom were Native, not all of them.

[01:09:19]KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah. Well, I was wondering, how do you find where the historic trail is? But you -- those insulators, but were there other clues that you were looking for?

FRANK NORRIS: Um, there were places where the actual metal of the telephone line could be found, usually under a lot of duff.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

FRANK NORRIS: So -- so that helped, too, so um, yeah. It was the summer of 1986 where Karl and a fellow named Scott, sorry, don't remember his last name, and um, it would be in the book, and I -- kind of, we made a lot of horizontal, weaving transects through the devil's club and uh, whatever the other vegetation was out there.

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KAREN BREWSTER: Alder, probably.

FRANK NORRIS: Alder and willow and yeah, it -- um, we got up face to face with nature. And if -- we walked between Dyea and Finnegan's (Point) that summer. I'm not -- we may have gotten a bit beyond there, and then later crews continued farther on up the trail.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

FRANK NORRIS: In later years.

[01:10:37]KAREN BREWSTER: Um, so with all the historical research, did you also talk to local residents?

FRANK NORRIS: Um, there's about a sixty-year gap there between -- between when people started heading out on the trail again and when the gold rush took place. There was one old-timer in town who I found very valuable. His name was George Rapuzzi. Um, Bob had interviewed him a number of times in the late '70's. George had -- and I interviewed him three times, I think it was. Um, George is somebody who worked for the railroad. I think he worked in -- I'm not going to be able to tell you which section. I think it was bridge and building, but I'm not sure. But -- but he was quite the hiker and sort of entrepreneur in that area. So he, for instance, climbed Mount Harding shortly after it was -- President Harding came there in 1923, and I think within a year or so, he and some buddies, you know, paddled across the bay and climbed on up. Um, other people -- he also had led a film crew up toward Chilkoot Pass sometime in the early to mid-'20's. 'Course, the film "The Gold Rush" with Charlie Chaplin in there, uh, its Chilkoot Pass scene was in around Truckee and, you know, the Donner Pass area of California.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

FRANK NORRIS: But -- but either for that effort, or perhaps for some other effort, somebody said they wanted to make a film about Chilkoot Pass. Um, the film was never made, but George led people up to Chilkoot Pass. And apparently, seeing the real thing wasn't -- wasn't right for them. It was -- it also meant, you know, hiking thirteen miles up a trail that didn't exist.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right. And Truckee and Donner Pass, you could drive to.

FRANK NORRIS: Or take a train or -- it was way more accessible.

[01:12:50]KAREN BREWSTER: Right. Um, so what was George like? Because by the time you interviewed him, he was probably quite elderly.

FRANK NORRIS: Yeah, he -- George died in '86, and -- and the beauty of George is that he both had a very good memory, and he also kept a pretty substantial museum of -- of gold rush-related artifacts. He had a -- he collected things sometimes for collecting's sake.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

FRANK NORRIS: And I'm sure there are people at the park who can tell you in intimate detail about --

KAREN BREWSTER: Yes.

FRANK NORRIS: -- exactly what it was, but when -- when I knew him, he was very giving and open about showing me the kind of stuff he had. But there was a huge overburden of -- of old car parts, of construction materials, and other things that I would call, you know, just kind of dross that -- that -- but he knew where some of the more valuable gold rush-related materials were, and so we'd climb in and around this stuff. It was -- it was kept in the -- either in the old Soapy Smiths parlor, or in what was called the Meyer building/YMCA.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

FRANK NORRIS: At the time. And that's where he kept his -- his car, you know, his Itjen --

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

FRANK NORRIS: Tour mobile.

[01:14:08]KAREN BREWSTER: Well, I was just wondering what George was like as a person since not so -- the Rapuzzi Collection is part of the park now and is a big deal.

FRANK NORRIS: Yeah.

KAREN BREWSTER: But he was long gone by the time any of the people who worked with the collection came along, so I was wondering --

FRANK NORRIS: He was craggy and independent, uh, you know. He called a spade a spade, and -- and, you know, I -- I don't think he was wild about the idea of the Park Service coming in, and because he kinda ran the show there for about ten years there. You know, during -- between the mid-'6 -- the early '60's and the early '70's, he -- he uh, you know, showed his Soapy Smiths parlor to a number of people. Kind of in his early retirement years, and maybe as part of his late working years, as well.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

FRANK NORRIS: He would -- he would arrange to have it open. And it, you know, there was a fascinating collection of stuff, which is kind of -- belongs in sort of a homemade, cute era that a more sophisticated tourist might not appreciate. But uh -- but for somebody who would have come off of a, uh, a small cruise ship, or had, you know, somehow made it into town on a ferry boat or something like that, and you kinda had the place to yourself. It was quirky and really quite appealing in its own way.

KAREN BREWSTER: Well, you know, there's plenty of small-town little historical society museums or private things around the country that it's sort of an odd mish-mosh collection. It doesn't fit the professional standards of museum exhibits.

FRANK NORRIS: Yeah.

KAREN BREWSTER: You know, and that's ok.

FRANK NORRIS: Yeah.

KAREN BREWSTER: It has its place.

[01:15:51]FRANK NORRIS: Ok. Well, and -- and people would arrive in town essentially looking for someone to say, "Hey, show me what this town has got."

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

FRANK NORRIS: And you're going to be at the behest of whoever does the showing.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

FRANK NORRIS: And -- and George was -- was really very good with mechanics. Martin Itjen -- who I think there had been kind of a brotherly or -- or father and son kind of relationship between Martin Itjen and George, because a lot of that stuff was deeded to George.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

FRANK NORRIS: Uh, Martin died in '42, I think it was, and I'm sure he knew him quite well from those days. And, in fact, George had a number of press clippings that Martin had -- had gathered. Apparently, he had signed onto a subscription service so that when he took his car down to Hollywood and met with Mae West and such, you know, he was able to get all the different papers' renditions of how that, you know, kinda cutesy interview ended up.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah. Um, what was I just going to say about George? I just totally forgot what I was going to say.

FRANK NORRIS: But George, regardless of any feelings he may have had for the Park Service, was quite cooperative with Bob and -- and, you know, he -- he was a little -- a little on the gruff side, but he was cooperative with me, as well.

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[01:17:26]KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah, that was what I was going to ask, was the feelings towards the Park Service, and do you think, sort of building rapport with George on a personal level helped?

FRANK NORRIS: Well, in fact, on kind of a larger extent, in the early '80's, some people in Alaska, as well as in Skagway, really had very antagonistic ideas toward the National Park Service. Uh, the Alaska Lands Bill (ANILCA) had passed in December of 1980 after a long, almost decade-long fight. And a lot of people that were longtime Alaskans really didn't like the idea of a major federal presence and a -- the creation of a lot of, you know, huge parks, preserves, wilderness areas, this kind of thing. Uh, and they didn't understand and didn't appreciate this huge, um, kind of movement in -- in the Lower 48 about wanting to save large portions of Alaska. But there's also a recognition that, and I saw it time again where people would say, "I don't like the Park Service, but I like you." And I may not like what the Park Service is doing, but we bowl every Friday night over at the Elks Lodge, so let's get along together as best as we can. And -- and virtually everybody in town, if they didn't like me or like the Park Service, they kept their feelings to their -- to themselves. And this may have popped up at certain times at city council meetings or, you know, in conversations over at Moe's Bar, or what have you, but I was always treated very respectfully, uh, with one exception, and, you know, you just kind of toss it off and let it go. Um, there was a -- there was a hunter in town named Jay Frey, who was always very polite to me. And -- and he once, you know, told me, "You know, I wish the Park Service wasn't here, but, you know, there's nothing I can do about it. And, you know, I think you're a nice guy." So that kind of attitude was probably pretty common.

[01:19:46]KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm. Um, yeah, I mean, I've heard stories, or it's in your admin history, I guess, you know, that in the early days, in the '70's when the park first started having a presence, that there was quite a bit of animosity from the community.

FRANK NORRIS: Yeah, um, there was a study done of -- a very early study done, I think through the Denver Service Center. It's called "Skagway: A Study of Alternatives." And one of those alternatives, which was reflected in the, I think, feasibility study, um, or master plan, I think it was called, in 1971, was to take a number of White Pass locomotives and have them as a standing display in the middle of Broadway.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh god. Well, it was to re-create when the tracks went down the middle of Broadway.

FRANK NORRIS: That's right. And some planner thought that this was going to be sort of a historical re-creation, and -- and, you know, we were laughed at a lot, you know, for things like that. Um, we did the best we could to work with the existing authorities, and I think it's really to our, um, to the good over the long run, that there were a number of people that were in town early on that went out of their way to, you know, have coffee with local residents, to be around so that if people had questions, you know. In other words, there were a number of people that were the face of the National Park Service who were nice guys. And I say nice guys because most, if not all, of them were men in the early days.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

FRANK NORRIS: And -- and they comported themselves well. They didn't try any kind of top-down approach, saying, I'm from the government, and we're going to make you do X, Y, and Z. So um, I think that, you know, that that really helped in terms of getting people to accept the Park Service. [01:21:59]Also, we hired a number of local people.

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KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

FRANK NORRIS: And particularly after the railroad closed down, the -- I think the town's perception of the Park Service went way up, saying, uh, we may not like these guys, but they're putting beans and rice on our -- on our table.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm. Yeah, it did provide a lot of employment with that historic building restoration work.

FRANK NORRIS: That's right, yeah.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um, and I mean, I think you're right that the individual employees building trust with individuals in the community, I can see that would've helped.

FRANK NORRIS: Yeah.

KAREN BREWSTER: And -- and -- and employees who stayed and lived there and made that their home, like you did for a number of years.

FRANK NORRIS: Yeah.

KAREN BREWSTER: I think that helped.

FRANK NORRIS: Um, as a -- as a seasonal, I would say that people could sort of take me or leave me as they wished, and probably some of them expected me to head off on the next boat. Um, because after all, I mean, it was -- it was not all that common for someone in a seasonal position to stick around as long as I did.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

FRANK NORRIS: I think a lot of these perceptions had to do with, you know, who's the superintendent, who's the chief ranger? Um, and -- and uh, most of those people went out of their way to try to meet locals halfway. And if they sensed that something was sort of collectively bothering the local townsfolk, you know, they -- they would find ways to meet with - - with the mayor, with council people, with the head of the railroad, with other city leaders, and try to meet 'em halfway.

[01:23:47]KAREN BREWSTER: Right. And as you say, the superintendent would be particularly the face of the Park Service. So what was Dick Simms like as a superintendent?

FRANK NORRIS: Uh --

KAREN BREWSTER: What was his management and his relationships with the community?

FRANK NORRIS: Um, I think I'll skip that question.

KAREN BREWSTER: Ok. Ok.

FRANK NORRIS: I mean, I have my own private reasons, and he was an ok superintendent. I would not call him glorious.

KAREN BREWSTER: Ok. During his tenure, what was the relationship like between the park and the community? Can you talk about that?

FRANK NORRIS: Um, well, once again, um, I suppose it depends on which part of the community you're talking about, but while the railroad was still running, up until October of '82, I think a lot of people regarded the park as being, you know, sort of the federal government, and there was probably a level of annoyance. 'Cause it -- as long as the railroad was running, everybody was working and the -- the town was really in pretty prosperous -- a really pretty prosperous position. Once the railroad shut down, and -- and Dick was the superintendent, you know, at that time, um, people looked to the Park Service, and, you know, saw us in a different light.

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[01:25:13]KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm. Um, I've heard that in the early day -- when the park first started and they were buying buildings, there was the perception that they were going to take over the whole town and make it, you know, this sort of Disneyland, quote, unquote.

FRANK NORRIS: Sure.

KAREN BREWSTER: Was that during Simms' administration, or that was Hoffman?

FRANK NORRIS: Most of that would -- Hoffman dealt with, and uh, you know -- and a lot of what I'm telling you is kinda stories that I had heard from previously.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right. Right.

FRANK NORRIS: I didn't show up there until eight months after the railroad had shut down.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right, well, that's why I was asking about what you'd heard about previous, because maybe it's in your admin history or something, but that there was this sense that the Park Service was just taking over, and I don't know if that was a superintendent giving that impression, or that was just misinformation on the part of residents. What you may have heard about that?

FRANK NORRIS: Um, I don't think that any superintendent ever tried to be a strongman. Um, and in fact, both the superintendents and, you know, chief rangers, architects, other people who would be kind of the face of the Park Service went out of their way. Because it -- it's a difficult concept for an agency to create a park in which, we own Building A, B, C, and D, but not E, F, G, and H.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

FRANK NORRIS: And so, this -- this is kind of a new idea, and so people thought, well, if you're going to draw a line around the downtown area, I guess that means the Park Service either, you know, owns it now or plans to -- plans to own it. And this idea that we would take some buildings and turn them into interpretive vehicles, but buy other buildings, spend, you know, a couple of million dollars on renovating it, and then rent it out for, you know, somebody's curio shop, this was new, not only in Skagway but in the Park Service. I mean, it's just not the kinda thing that people did.

[01:27:15]KAREN BREWSTER: Right. So how did they figure it out? Trial and error? Or did they have --

FRANK NORRIS: Just -- just by doing. I mean --

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah. There was no model to look at.

FRANK NORRIS: Yeah, I mean, um, I -- I think the history goes into, there were a whole series of iterations in which Park Service professionals, some of them planners, some of them historians, I know Bill Brown was a historian that took a major role in this, and -- and others, they tossed around, well, which building would be good for what kind of purpose? Uh, you know, some buildings weren't big enough to really do much with. You know, the Goldberg Cigar Store or -- or the Martin Itjen House. You know, should we move any of them? Because the Itjen House was moved down to -- down to its location from another place. You know, how many of these should simply be static displays? Um, would people be interested in renting out building -- you know, certain buildings, and it was usually some of the larger buildings that we rented out. Like, Lynch & Kennedy is a pretty sizable structure.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

FRANK NORRIS: So -- so um, I think people just kind of made it up, and -- and as best as they could, but as you see in the admin history, a number of these buildings first were deemed to have one potential purpose, but as time went on, those purposes changed.

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[01:28:47]KAREN BREWSTER: Right. Um, I was just looking again at this transcript. There's a name mentioned here I wanted to ask you about, Paul Sincic. Is that --

FRANK NORRIS: Sincic, yeah.

KAREN BREWSTER: And who was he?

FRANK NORRIS: Um, let's see. I had a chance to talk to Paul when he was down in Douglas, you know, near Juneau.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

FRANK NORRIS: He had seen to it, and I don't know how he got them, but he was able to find a real treasure trove of old photographs, and sort of ensure that they continued to live. I mean, they were found in somebody's attic or behind a wall or something like that. Um, to the best of my knowledge, and Bob can give you a better answer than I can, I think he worked for the railroad, but he really enjoyed working with the local museum, as well, the Trail of '98 Museum.

KAREN BREWSTER: Well, yeah. You say here the Trail of '98 Museum. What was that? That's not the current city museum, is it?

FRANK NORRIS: That is the city museum.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh, ok. That's what it's called.

FRANK NORRIS: And it was located in City Hall.

KAREN BREWSTER: Ok.

FRANK NORRIS: Yeah.

KAREN BREWSTER: But now, it's in the old college building. Is that the same museum you're talking about?

FRANK NORRIS: That's the same thing. I mean --

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh, ok.

FRANK NORRIS: See, in my perception, when I was there in the '80's --

KAREN BREWSTER: That was where City Hall was.

FRANK NORRIS: The museum was on the second floor of the old McCabe College building.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

FRANK NORRIS: And all the -- and on the first floor was the city manager's office. You'd walk in, and that meeting room was where the city council meetings would be. And there's a little shoebox of a building right behind there where the magistrate's office was. A lady named Jean Worley was the magistrate at that time, and she had all these historical, um, volumes of court records and deed books and all kinds of things. And I spent a lot of that winter of '83-'84 just kind of working with Jean and going through there.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

FRANK NORRIS: And then, she'd rig me up with some table or bench or something in the City Hall chambers, and I'd just work from there.

[01:30:54]KAREN BREWSTER: Right. So Paul was -- he didn't -- he didn't -- did he create that Trail of '98 Museum, or he was just --

FRANK NORRIS: No. The Trail of '98 Museum was established back in about '63, and I think I made a reference to that.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

FRANK NORRIS: But I think he -- he may have directed the museum for a while. He -- he was not in Skagway by the time I showed up.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

FRANK NORRIS: But, you know, everybody knew him, and, you know, people told me about what his contributions had been.

[01:31:24]KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm. Because -- so when you were there, who was the head of the City Museum? Was that Glenda?

FRANK NORRIS: Uh, well, Glenda never ran the museum.

KAREN BREWSTER: Ok.

FRANK NORRIS: Uh, she did some contract work. Her major job with the museum was, she inventoried everything.

KAREN BREWSTER: And we should say, Glenda Choate.

FRANK NORRIS: C-H-O-A-T-E, yeah.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right. Ok.

FRANK NORRIS: Yeah. And Glenda, um, she wore a lot of hats. She was a historian. She was an archivist. Um, you know, she did various kinds of consulting work. But in 1980, I think it was, she was asked to take all of the flat materials in the museum and kinda process them, list them, inventory them, put what was really necessary in acid-free folders, that kinda thing like that.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

FRANK NORRIS: So by the time I came along, it, you know, it -- it was far more manageable and easy 'cause there was an index guide, as well as, you know, the volumes themselves. And -- and while I didn't use city, um, city archival stuff a lot, it was really nice to know that it was there. [01:32:38]What I -- what I did do, oftentimes, is in one corner of the museum were all of the, um, grantor/grantee index books for all of the properties in town. You know, in other words, not the stuff that was in the -- the magistrate's office, but, for instance, I could go upstairs, and for any parcel in town, by simply going through all of the annual property tax deeds, I could find out who owned property every year from 1900 to, you know, the present. And I could also find out whether -- how much people paid in property taxes and whether they were improved or not. This is enormously valuable to someone, you know, in the kind of work that I was doing, where I was often trying to find out, you know, how old a certain building was.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

FRANK NORRIS: 'Cause, you know, a year after that, you know, you'd start paying for the improvements on it.

[01:33:39]KAREN BREWSTER: Right. And then, uh, so when you were there, Glenda was -- she was the one you worked with to find materials?

FRANK NORRIS: No.

KAREN BREWSTER: No, who?

FRANK NORRIS: A lady named Eileen Rohlf, R-O-H-L-F, was the curator of the museum. And she -- she was kind of an old-school museum curator. She felt that the job of the museum was to, you know, was to spray down the display cases, and, you know, to open the door and, you know, she -- she was not exactly -- you know, she didn't insist on the latest, you know, museum-quality curation techniques.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

FRANK NORRIS: But then again, the museum, um, had a number of excellent 3D items that had been donated by local families, and tourists seemed to really, um, enjoy going there.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah, I don't know what their exhibits are like now. They've changed since the '80's.

FRANK NORRIS: I would hope so.

KAREN BREWSTER: I don't know.

FRANK NORRIS: Yeah.

[01:34:48] KAREN BREWSTER: Um, so the other projects that you did with Bob. So we talked about Dyea and the trail.

FRANK NORRIS: Yeah.

KAREN BREWSTER: You did the gardens book, but that was a separate project.

FRANK NORRIS: Yeah. And another separate project I did was working with Dave Neufeld from Parks Canada to write a, um, a history of the Chilkoot Trail.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh, ok.

FRANK NORRIS: The book came out in '96, and it was called "Chilkoot Trail: Heritage Route to the Klondike."

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh, yeah. I've seen it.

FRANK NORRIS: Ok. And, uh, it was a challenge because I was working in Anchorage. He was working in Whitehorse. And, at that time, email had just come out, but you couldn't attach anything to emails.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

FRANK NORRIS: So whenever we wanted to send anything substantial between each other, there was a bus once a week that would go between Whitehorse and Anchorage. It's kind of this low-rent affair, and so, you know, we'd work -- that probably happened five or six times, I'd guess.

KAREN BREWSTER: And now, was Dave -- I know his name. Is he a historian with Parks Canada, or he was the trail ranger guy? I can't remember.

FRANK NORRIS: No. He's -- he's now retired, but I think he's still living in Whitehorse.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah, he is.

FRANK NORRIS: And -- and he was the designated historian for all of Yukon Territory.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh, ok.

FRANK NORRIS: For -- for Parks Canada. And, of course, Parks Canada has had a number of different names and incarnations over the years. Sometimes it's been called Environment Canada Parks, but we -- we just call it Parks Canada.

[01:36:27] KAREN BREWSTER: Right. Well, I'm surprised that a history of the trail had not been done prior to that.

FRANK NORRIS: Well, and -- and -- and it was kind of an odd way of approaching it because -- because this was something that both sides, both bureaucracies allowed us to do even though what was going to come out of it was going to be a commercially available product. I mean, typically, anything done by the Park Service, we -- we worked through GPO.

KAREN BREWSTER: Government Printing Office.

FRANK NORRIS: Yep. And -- and we asked for maybe a hundred copies, maybe 300 copies. We'd give 'em out to people that we think are interested in them, and we are not interested in making any money off of it. 'Cause any money that would be made would just go into the general fund anyway.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

FRANK NORRIS: I mean, it's not -- the idea of a book making money is just kind of foreign to us. So we were able to get -- or Sandy was able to steer through and get the necessary clearances, and have us work together, and -- and uh, you know, I spent most of a year, I guess. But -- but --

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but Dave and I working together worked out very, very well because there were certain things about the trail where he was the master on the Canadian side, and I was, you know, the chief cook and bottle washer on the American side. But, for instance, when it came to Native influences and impacts, he knew more about my side than I did.

KAREN BREWSTER: Hm.

FRANK NORRIS: And when it came to tourism and more modern years, I knew more about the Canadian side than he did.

KAREN BREWSTER: Hm. Interesting.

FRANK NORRIS: So -- and but, he -- he -- he knew a lot. I mean, he'd been there, up there, since '85, I think it was. And so, the book really kind of wrote itself. And -- and nothing substantial of any kind of reaching out to the public had ever been done about the Chilkoot Trail.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah, that surprises me.

[01:38:27]FRANK NORRIS: Well, but -- but like I said, you know, when I showed up, the park had only been around for seven years. And, you know, there had been some kinda parochial or sort of homemade efforts to go ahead and write about Skagway and the gold rush. 'Course, you know, you had Pierre Berton.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

FRANK NORRIS: And like, leaving the gold rush aside, most people talked about the totality of the gold rush and considered the Chilkoot and the trail experience, you know, a chapter.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

FRANK NORRIS: Or perhaps a little more. And -- and uh, and they loved to, you know, focus on Soapy Smith and all the --

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

FRANK NORRIS: -- chicanery along the trails. And we were a little more technical and a little more even-handed. And from what I've heard, that book is still being printed.

[01:39:19]KAREN BREWSTER: And did the work you did previously on the trail, with the surveys and all that --

FRANK NORRIS: Oh. Oh, yeah. I mean, I didn't use it on a verbatim basis, but some of the -- the items I created, like that -- like that business -- that -- that business guide and map.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

FRANK NORRIS: A lot of that was just picked up and transformed and plunked down.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

FRANK NORRIS: And other of it just became kind of the basis for the narrative about the trail.

KAREN BREWSTER: And I would think a book like that, the narrative is more narrative, whereas your Historic Structures Report might be a little dry for a general audience.

FRANK NORRIS: Uh, I think you would be correct. Um, and um, I also think that -- that it was -- we wrote it through Lost Moose Press, and they had people in Whitehorse who looked over what we wrote and probably had a chance to goose up some of, you know, the language that Dave and I wrote.

[01:40:18]KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm. And then, the gardens book.

FRANK NORRIS: Um-hm.

KAREN BREWSTER: How did that come about?

FRANK NORRIS: I'm trying to remember. Let's see. Um, the word came out that the Alaska Association of Garden Clubs was going to be meeting in Skagway at the end of a certain year. I can't remember what it was.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm. I can maybe tell you because it was around, uh, well, you said the garden club was formed in '83.

FRANK NORRIS: Ok.

KAREN BREWSTER: So it was somewhere after that.

FRANK NORRIS: I'm going to say, 'cause it was while I was living there, so it was probably either '86 or '87, something like that.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right. And because this interview was '88, and it had already happened, so.

FRANK NORRIS: Ok. But what took place was during that first winter that I was there, I not only spent a lot of time going through all those deed books, but I also went through all of the early newspapers.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

FRANK NORRIS: Of both Dyea and Skagway. And there were certain topics that I was really quite curious about. And I had lots of time on my hands. And I was in a position where I ended up putting together just random notes about eight or ten topics. And that was the best thing that ever happened to me, because that provided kind of a bank of information, which for years and years afterwards, I was able to draw on, and as a result, one of the things that I was curious about as just kind of my canvassing of these newspapers, I was curious about gardens. So I probably had sixty or eighty little line-item notes, you know, taken from all these day-to-day things. And - - and I knew pretty much from day one there that Skagway, that, um, the gardens in Skagway were a big deal for a while, because --

[01:42:25]KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah, they used to call themselves the "Garden City of Alaska," right?

FRANK NORRIS: Well, what happened is, for -- during the '20's, '30's, '40's, the Canadian Pacific boats would come up the Inside Passage. They would stop in Ketchikan, Wrangell, Juneau, whatever, for four or six hours. But when they got to Skagway, they stopped, and they spent a night there. Now, people would spend the night onboard their ship, but -- but for two days, they were looking for something to do in this dinko little town.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

FRANK NORRIS: So as a result, there was this enhanced need for somebody to do something. And a number of people who had been there ever since the gold rush were really good gardeners and were just really proud of what they did. And so, a number of those, Charley Walker, the Blanchards, and three or four others, would go ahead and open up their gardens and have people, you know, wander through them during their time off the CP boats. So this is what, I think, brought about the moniker "Garden City of Alaska." And -- and a number of these gardens really became pretty well known. And they also became featured parts of Martin Itjen's street car tour around town.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

[01:43:46]FRANK NORRIS: So I used those notes, and that kind of -- the knowledge that Skagway was -- was known for its gardens, to just kinda go out there and find out anything I could about, not only gardens, but some of the Dyea farms, as well.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

FRANK NORRIS: And -- and put it into a -- a book that -- that I -- I -- I -- I remember I worked through Charlotte Jewell, who was the head of the Skagway Garden Club at the time.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

FRANK NORRIS: And I don't -- I think she paid me something. I --

KAREN BREWSTER: But you didn't do that as part of your Park Service work?

FRANK NORRIS: No. It was totally a side job. And -- and what I did was, I -- I had, you know, essentially, a double-spaced manuscript that I gave to Charlotte to be there in time for the garden convention.

KAREN BREWSTER: Mm.

FRANK NORRIS: I don't remember if I gave a presentation to the convention or -- or what I did, but Charlotte wanted that, you know, that manuscript, and then I probably gave her a for instance to a number of photos. It wasn't until, I'm going to say ten years after that, that Jeff (Brady) wrote to me, saying -- "through the -- my Lynn Canal Press, which is you know, kind of the thing through my newspaper, um, I'd like to work together with Dimitra (Lavrakas) and put together a -- a um, a -- " it's kind of a historical chronicle. And then also, interview a number of the -- the biggest gardeners in town these days, talk about some of the present-day gardens, and - - and then Dimitra would take pictures of a lot of the present-day gardens. We'd taken some of those historical photos and, you know, all that early stuff that I wrote could be feathered in there.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right. And we should say, it's Dimitra Lavrakas, who worked for Jeff Brady and the newspaper for a while.

FRANK NORRIS: Skagway, um --

KAREN BREWSTER: News.

FRANK NORRIS: Skagway News, thank you.

[01:45:44]KAREN BREWSTER: Yes. I did wonder in that book, why -- there didn't seem to be a history of Jewell Gardens mentioned in a book about the gardens of Skagway, and I wonder why.

FRANK NORRIS: Um, I can't answer that question. Because anything that was not historically related was not really, you know, my --

KAREN BREWSTER: So Jewell Gardens was too new is what you --

FRANK NORRIS: Well.

KAREN BREWSTER: It was after your period of significance?

FRANK NORRIS: I -- you know, from when I've looked at the -- at the -- at the, you know, Jeff's book, I think that there is some reference to Charlotte's garden. It's right there at the turn of the highway, just on the other side of the river.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

FRANK NORRIS: Isn't that right?

KAREN BREWSTER: Right, yeah.

FRANK NORRIS: And I think there's a reference to it, but it may not have been called that or be as big as it is. I mean, I have no idea what it looks like these days.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right. So when you were there in the '80's, was Jewell Gardens a thing?

FRANK NORRIS: No.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh.

FRANK NORRIS: She was running a jewelry shop.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh, ok.

FRANK NORRIS: Yeah, you know, she had a -- she had a baby, and she loved to garden, and I'm sure she had a garden in her own house, but she didn't take it to the next level and open up --

KAREN BREWSTER: Ok.

FRANK NORRIS: No, this whole thing out at what we would call Seven Pastures was the area just on the other side of the -- of the bridge, that didn't exist --

KAREN BREWSTER: Ok.

FRANK NORRIS: -- when I was there.

KAREN BREWSTER: Ok. So maybe that's why it's not in the book, 'cause maybe it didn't exist yet?

FRANK NORRIS: Well, it would've been something that was probably established between when I left town and when Dimitra and I and Jeff did the --

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah, right.

FRANK NORRIS: -- did the book.

[01:47:18]KAREN BREWSTER: Um, the other sort of big topic in Klondike Park is the White Pass Unit.

FRANK NORRIS: Ok.

KAREN BREWSTER: So you worked on some documentation of the White Pass?

FRANK NORRIS: In 1986, we'd just had a new superintendent. His name was Clay Alderson. And -- and one thing led to another, and I was able to find some snippets from, I don't know, it was a deed book or somewhere, that showed that there just -- that the White Pass trail crossed the Canadian border at a certain point. And so, I loved to hike and kinda get lost in the weeds anyway, and I'm always looking for a different place to, you know -- And if I can combine a hike with a little historical explanation. So what I did was, I drove to the top of the highway White Pass, and it takes about forty-five minutes or so to walk through the kind of tundra fields from the highway White Pass over to the railroad White Pass. You're going east. And then, east of there, I'd seen on this map that showed that the Trail of '97 -- and keep in mind that the Trail of '97 looked different from the Trail of '98 on the White Pass side.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh, really?

FRANK NORRIS: Yeah.

KAREN BREWSTER: I didn't know that.

FRANK NORRIS: The Trail of '97, which crossed the Canadian border about a mile east of the railroad White Pass, was um, you know, that -- that I knew about where to look for the line, and also that the border is marked by these pretty impressive stone towers, you know, that might be six feet high or something like that. And I think they were put up by a boundary survey in, I don't know, 1911 or something like that. So I was able to find that stone obelisk, and sure enough, within a few feet of that obelisk, I could see absolutely clear markings of where a trail had been. And you're way up above timberline there, so you can follow this thing. And it was really quite exciting to me to see that, you know, the trail was there. And because it's so remote, both from the railroad as well as the highway, nobody'd been over there. I'm sure some people had, but to a relative degree, it was an untouched resource. And so, I found shoes, and I found, you know, other gold rush-era paraphernalia, and I followed it all the way back down to where the bushes got high enough that you really couldn't follow it anymore, and that was right around the 18A tunnel. 18A tunnel is right near what we would call the 18A bridge, which is this abandoned but very beautiful trestle structure that crosses the upper Skagway River.

[01:50:22]So based on that, I think I followed that up by trying to find ways to get down to White Pass City, and I -- and I did that at one point. And we wandered around. A lady named Caroline Carley had done some archeological work in White Pass City during the summer of 1979. And I also, kind of following along on this same thematic bent, I also did a good deal of

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clambering around on the west side of the Klondike Highway, right around the customs station, which was probably about 5-Mile, 6-Mile, somewhere in there. Because the old maps unmistakably showed that there was -- that the Trail of '97 went through this area. And I was really hoping to be able to find pictures of that because we really didn't have a very good idea of where the Trail of '97 went. We know very well where the Trail of '98 goes 'cause that is the Brackett Wagon Road and its extension. And the -- and beyond White Pass City, which is where the Brackett Wagon Road stopped, it kinda went right up that kind of narrow neck that -- that connects White Pass City and the -- and the top of the pass where the railroad goes. But try as I may, I went a number of times doing transects from the border station area up Porcupine Creek and in other areas, and I never found the kind of proof positive of where that trail went, or any evidence that goes with it. I thought I knew for a while, and maybe I found some things, but it was never conclusive.

[01:52:15]KAREN BREWSTER: What about the Brackett Wagon Road? Did you find evidence of Brackett's route?

FRANK NORRIS: Oh, yeah. It's real easy to find, and -- and uh, you know, today I can go out - - it was a ten-foot-wide road that wagons served, um, White Pass City for about a year or so. In fact, there's a book, I think --

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

FRANK NORRIS: -- available in bookstores, in which somebody was able to find a bunch of photos from a special collection that shows a lot of George Brackett and his wagon-making activities. So starting at about 7.4-Mile, below that there's a scree slope that you lose out on, but all the way from about 7.4-Mile all the way to where you drop down to White Pass City, you can walk on it today.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm. I didn't realize -- Why did the Brackett Wagon Road end at White Pass? Why didn't it keep going?

FRANK NORRIS: Um --

KAREN BREWSTER: White Pass City, I mean.

FRANK NORRIS: Because by April of '98, which is as far as he'd gotten, the gold rush was winding down, and I think he could see, um, you know, the road -- the topography really gets a lot steeper there.

KAREN BREWSTER: And the railroad was under construction.

FRANK NORRIS: Mm --

KAREN BREWSTER: No?

FRANK NORRIS: No, I don't think it was. Maybe -- see, um, what had happened, though, was the Close brothers ended up buying out George Brackett so that they would have exclusive use of all commercial travel over there. And maybe once they recognized that these guys were serious enough to buy him out, then he wasn't gonna, you know -- Well, probably he couldn't after that point.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

FRANK NORRIS: Some of those historical details, I've forgotten, but uh.

[01:53:58]KAREN BREWSTER: Right. But, so you weren't able to do any more of a history of the White Pass trails and the Unit up there?

FRANK NORRIS: Actually, a lady named Julie Johnson put together, it's called, what? "A Wild and Dangerous Mess?"

KAREN BREWSTER: "A Wild and Discouraging Mess," I think.

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FRANK NORRIS: Exactly.

KAREN BREWSTER: Something like that.

FRANK NORRIS: And she -- I kinda looked over her shoulder as she wrote it 'cause we were both in the Anchorage office at the time. And she was able to put together some really good stuff about the White Pass Unit. The Park Service has never chosen to fully immerse itself in developing or interpreting the resources of the White Pass Unit. I think because they feel that there needs to be a more thorough archeological survey of both the Trail of '97 and the Trail of '98, and that has not been funded for whatever reason.

[01:54:54]KAREN BREWSTER: Well, that was what I was going to ask you, is whether you think there should be some more focused management like there is on the Chilkoot side?

FRANK NORRIS: Well, I don't know if should has anything to do with it, but Karl's the person that would know.

KAREN BREWSTER: Do you think it would be beneficial, I guess, maybe?

FRANK NORRIS: Well, what Karl did with -- with, you know. He was appointed or given the job of being the cultural resource officer in '87, and he immediately went out to Dyea and did some more -- much more sophisticated archeological stuff. I think he -- I think he mapped the town site, and -- and then investigated certain of the more --

KAREN BREWSTER: And you mentioned that you guys worked on the -- the -- the Dyea wharf.

FRANK NORRIS: That's right.

KAREN BREWSTER: That you had done that.

FRANK NORRIS: And that, once again, was just a total lark, if you want to call it that. I took a look at the tide tables, because there's a huge tidal range in -- in that area, and when the tide is low, you can see an awful lot of the wharf pilings there. So -- and I think it was with this Scott fellow as well, Scott Zimmerman?

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

FRANK NORRIS: Ok.

KAREN BREWSTER: That's what it says in that transcript.

FRANK NORRIS: Ok.

KAREN BREWSTER: It's coming back to you.

[01:56:11]FRANK NORRIS: Scott Zimmerman. Um, what we decided to do -- he had something called an EDM, which was like a sophisticated surveying instrument.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

FRANK NORRIS: And so, that was able to show not only the exact number of feet and inches between Point A and Point B and such, but he also, um -- but also how much grade and declination there was between the high point of the beach and, you know, getting down to the tide -- tideline. So, we went out and, you know, I think it was early May, and, of course, the days were real long there, and I think we were out there by four in the morning or something. And we wanted to get there probably an hour before the lowest low tide, because the idea was that we wanted to be able to hold up a survey pole and measure the location of every one of the pylons that made up the Dyea wharf. And so, the -- you know, and that's what we did. I'm sure there are pylons that go farther than that, but, you know, it's not like we had scuba gear or anything like that.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right. Right.

FRANK NORRIS: So we put that together and then made it into a map later on.

[01:57:22]KAREN BREWSTER: Right. So you -- in '87, Karl became the cultural resources -- he was hired as the cultural resources person?

FRANK NORRIS: Yeah.

KAREN BREWSTER: Was that a job you had been interested in?

FRANK NORRIS: It was, yeah. And so, we both applied for it, and Jay Cable, who made the decision about that, essentially said -- and this is common in a number of units of the Park Service, that it's better to have an archeologist who can do history than a historian, most of whom cannot do a lot of the very standard techniques required of archeologists. You know, how to dig out a 1x1-meter test pit. And so, for whatever, you know -- Karl got that job. I continued to work for the Park Service in Skagway, summer times in both '87 and '88, but, you know, by that time I was, you know, other factors in my life had intervened. Starting in the fall of '87, I got into the PhD program at University of Washington, and -- and got married during that winter, so, you know, things just took a different turn in my life.

[01:58:35]KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm. And so, when did you -- you left Skagway in '88?

FRANK NORRIS: The fall of -- Yeah, late summer of '88.

KAREN BREWSTER: And did you go to Anchorage to work in the regional office?

FRANK NORRIS: No, I was a fulltime grad student.

KAREN BREWSTER: Ok.

FRANK NORRIS: Between the fall of '88, 'course that would've been the beginning of my second year of class work there.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

FRANK NORRIS: Um, I stayed in Seattle until, um, late fall of '89, when Kate Lidfors, the regional historian, chose me to become a permanent historian up in Anchorage, and I started in Anchorage as a historian in mid-January of 1990.

[01:59:29]KAREN BREWSTER: Ok. Um, and so, we talked a little bit before we turned the recorder on about the difference between being cultural resources and historians based in Anchorage versus being based out in the parks.

FRANK NORRIS: Sure.

KAREN BREWSTER: And can you talk a little bit about that, sort of, administrative history?

FRANK NORRIS: Well, um, the Alaska Lands Act, Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act, was passed in early December of 1980. And one of the provisions in that act was that the Alaska Area Office became the Alaska Regional Office. Prior to the passage of ANILCA, there were, I think just a couple of cultural resource people working in the Alaska Area Office. But having an Alaska Regional Office gave the long term potential of building up staff. And so, during the 1980's, John Cook was the regional director at the time of the passage of the Alaska Lands Act. His philosophy recognizing the potential pitfalls of any other management course, he spent the next several years reaching out to communities and individuals, to the state and everybody, just trying to get along, not trying to play, um, you know, not -- not at all trying to be antagonistic, but trying to recognize information and education were the key words during those years. Later regional directors, Roger Contor and then Boyd Evison, were a little more assertive in the role of the National Park Service. But -- but John started out by being real easygoing and -- and meeting everyone halfway. [02:01:14]Over the 1980's, the -- the number of staff in the Alaska Regional Office slowly built up, and there became a regional historian, a regional architect, you know, a regional archeologist, and so on and so forth. And that number continued to climb primarily by the acquisition of a number of term personnel, many

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of whom were on for, uh, four-year stints. Ok, so -- so we essen -- so when I showed up, I was a permanent employee, but there were a number of people that were hired as terms. That continued until 1994, when President Clinton, as part of, um, you know, as an action primarily working with Al Gore in a reinventing government initiative, um, made a number of recommendations to the National Park Service, or to government agencies, which in the Park Service's case meant, get people out to the parks rather than trying to operate your programs in a more centralized format. And one direct result of that is that a number of people who were term employees, and many of whom were getting ready to -- who were in a pretty precarious position anyway because their terms were coming to an end, and the Park Service was having a hard time justifying keeping them as long-term term employees, um, they were essentially giving a -- given a choice that if they wanted to work in a park, they would find a way to give them favored status to be able to become a permanent employee. But they had to leave Anchorage and move to Glennallen or to Fairbanks or to --

KAREN BREWSTER: Healy.

[02:03:24]FRANK NORRIS: Uh, yeah. I mean, wherever the places may be, and become head of park-based cultural resource programs. So that's what took place in '94, and we lost a lot of seasonals from the office, but the total amount of work getting done in the region didn't change appreciably, because we still had most of those same people, just working in more remote locations.

KAREN BREWSTER: So most of the existing staff chose to go out to the parks instead of quitting and going doing something else?

FRANK NORRIS: I -- I would say, some to most, yes.

KAREN BREWSTER: Ok.

FRANK NORRIS: Yeah. Not -- not all of the term employees were given the option to, you know, to be able to go out to a park. And so -- and some people were ready to move on and work in private sector, or for the state, or for other opportunities. So it -- it wasn't a clean, um, it wasn't a clean process, but it kinda sorted itself out over, I'd say, a year, year and a half, something like that.

[02:04:35]KAREN BREWSTER: And reflecting back, do you feel whether that was a successful change or not?

FRANK NORRIS: Um, it's not really my call. I mean, it didn't have anything definitely to do with my particular job. It was just something that I saw while working in the regional office.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

FRANK NORRIS: Um, I guess I could offer an opinion, but my opinion isn't any better informed than anybody else's.

KAREN BREWSTER: Well, it's whether you saw that it was efficient and working, or there were challenges to it?

FRANK NORRIS: I could understand the necessity for getting people out into the parks, and I think it was a good idea that these -- that the staff at the parks had, you know, a broader series of expertise. Um, it did make for some difficult personal circumstances in terms of housing and the remoteness of living. You know, a number of these people had lived in just places like Fairbanks and Anchorage for most of their working lives.

[02:05:33]KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm. Well, and now, you were based in Anchorage working on projects, say, in Skagway.

FRANK NORRIS: Um-hm.

KAREN BREWSTER: Was -- instead of you'd been in Skagway. Was that problematic to be so far away from where you were working?

FRANK NORRIS: Not at all, because in my position as a -- as a historian in the regional office, I had different kinds of job assignments. I mean, one of the first job assignments I had was working way out at Aniakchak National Monument out on the Alaska Peninsula, and so, I wrote a short report about a -- about a, you know, fisheries building out there. At the same time, immediately after that I wrote an administrative history of Katmai National Park and Preserve that included Aniakchak in that report. Um, starting about '94, I started working on the Klondike, um, administrative history, and as part of that, I was asked to include a couple of chapters on the Seattle Unit. There was kind of a -- a side agreement made between Sandy and the Pacific Northwest Regional Office, uh, in order to allow that to happen, and I'm glad it did. Because of my knowledge of Klondike, um, and because there were so many records available in Anchorage about Klondike's history, I -- the -- the mechanical process, logistics, were not really that difficult. I probably took a couple of, uh, a couple of field trips down there for to gather specific information, but most of it, I, you know -- was information I was able to obtain in the Anchorage office.

[02:07:19]KAREN BREWSTER: That was one of my questions on the admin history is just method and process and how you go about putting such a big report together and what resources you used?

FRANK NORRIS: Well, one -- one thing I typically do when I finish a -- a some kind of historical study, particularly with the government, is I take all the files that I've used, and then I put together kind of a finding aid guide so that -- because I know that, you know, five years, ten years, twenty years down the line, other people are going to want to both find out what I know and they'll want to know where I got the information. 'Cause a historian, if you can't reproduce the information, it's not worth very much. So -- so as a result, I think everything about the Klondike project went into four, you know, Hollinger boxes, big white ones.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right. Those --

FRANK NORRIS: In other words, bigger than banker boxes, but, you know.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

FRANK NORRIS: Kind of black and white archival boxes.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

FRANK NORRIS: And so, you know, they're labeled and with finding aids inside them and all that sort of thing.

KAREN BREWSTER: And where are they?

FRANK NORRIS: Uh, they should be in the -- down on the first floor of the Alaska Regional Office.

KAREN BREWSTER: In their archives?

[02:08:34]FRANK NORRIS: Yeah. Karl may know something that I don't, because there were at least, you know, like, during the ten years after this thing was finished, I think Karl probably at one point took one or more of those boxes and brought 'em back to Skagway, but to the best of my knowledge, they're, you know, there's a -- Alaska Region Archival Collection Room.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

FRANK NORRIS: Which Stephanie Stevens used to run. But I think she's in DC now. But uh, it -- you know, that and my Katmai work and several other things should be down there.

KAREN BREWSTER: The admin history is so detailed of -- did you go back and look at, like, all the correspondence from all the previous administrative folders?

FRANK NORRIS: There's a lot of correspondence. Well, it -- it should all be self-explanatory, just by looking at the footnotes.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

FRANK NORRIS: Um, but uh, you know, the -- a lot of correspondence had been collected right there in the Anchorage office. Um, I did not spend time -- a lot of time back in the Skagway office going through, um, correspondence files at that time. There may have been, you know, a few planning folders or so that I went through, but, you know, most of my work was done, uh -- you know, there were some -- some interviews that I conducted with Skagway people.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

[02:09:58]FRANK NORRIS: But -- and then, also one thing that the superintendent insisted on was that once I had a draft done of this, I ran it by, you know, the mayor and by two or three other people that -- and some of whom were not necessarily friendly to the park's aims. And I said, "Regardless of how you feel about me or the Park Service, do you want to look at this and make any -- " And most of them didn't, but at least by offering that gesture, it provided us an opportunity to say, we did our best to try to, you know, share this and to get commentary from other people.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm. Now, you've written a number of admin histories for Alaska parks. Is that a type of work that you enjoyed?

FRANK NORRIS: Uh, yeah. I now work for the Trails Office here in Santa Fe, and I've written an administrative history of the trails program. So I guess it's just something that, you know, I've developed a certain facility with.

[02:11:06]KAREN BREWSTER: And when you were in the Anchorage office, how -- how were you assigned your particular duties?

FRANK NORRIS: Usually, these things just kind of evolved at certain times. People -- you know, and of course, this is something that Sandy would know better than I would. Are you planning on talking to her by any chance?

KAREN BREWSTER: Um, I don't know yet.

FRANK NORRIS: Ok, because I can give you contact information if you need it.

KAREN BREWSTER: Ok. That would be good.

FRANK NORRIS: But, you know, she was my boss for twelve years.

KAREN BREWSTER: Ok.

FRANK NORRIS: And a fellow named Ted Birkedal, who was the head of cultural resources. I saw him just a few months ago.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

FRANK NORRIS: So I could get you in touch with him, as well.

KAREN BREWSTER: I've been in touch with him, yeah.

FRANK NORRIS: Ok. And -- and I think what takes place is that after I had been there a while, and people could see that, you know, I could put a sentence together and that it -- that I wasn't, you know, I seemed to be doing ok. But I think people would come to Sandy or Ted and try to grab my -- my time. And they would be the people who would sort of ration those out, and decide, um, you know, who would be doing what. So uh --

KAREN BREWSTER: Big --

FRANK NORRIS: Go ahead.

KAREN BREWSTER: I was going to say, there are big comprehensive reports, not only the admin history, that history of subsistence. Didn't you do that one also?

FRANK NORRIS: Yeah.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah, it's big topics.

FRANK NORRIS: Well, and in this case, Paul Anderson, who was the deputy regional director, and he was in charge of superintendents' activities, said, supe -- you know, subsistence management is so complicated. And I didn't know squat about subsistence management until he approached me about this. But he said, "We really need to have some idea about saying, not only what is subsistence management now, but how did it get to be that way?" And it's a very complicated situation in which -- what that meant was it was just very satisfying to kind of rip it out by the roots and say, how did subsistence get from kind of its historical lifestyle, and how did the whole thing get codified and bureaucratized? And, you know, to me ipso facto, it's absolutely necessary that subsistence resources need to be managed and -- and regulated, because, if not, there are a whole lot of urban hunters out there that would just decimate populations. And hunters themselves recognize the necessity for rationalization and -- and -- and ways of protecting these herds, and they recognize that caribou herds swell and shrink and move and split off. And -- and, you know, what does government do in -- in its best possible way without becoming oppressive? And there's no easy answer for it. It takes a 200-page book to nail it down.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

FRANK NORRIS: So.

[02:14:07]KAREN BREWSTER: And then, as soon as you're done with that 200-page book, something's changed.

FRANK NORRIS: Yeah.

KAREN BREWSTER: In the policy or the management or the politics.

FRANK NORRIS: Well, fortunately, I was able to kinda walk it through the whole process until -- 'cause for a number of years, hunting was regulated but fisheries wasn't. And then, Katie John came along, and there was a whole lot of, you know, legislative activity that tried to approach and deal with -- with that, but after a while, you know, the state legislature just either couldn't or wouldn't.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

FRANK NORRIS: And so, for better or worse, you know, we began, you know, managing subsistence fisheries resources after a while. And, you know, it was a brand-new ballgame. And so, structurally I think that the major steps, at least up to 2003 were done. What's happened since then, I mean --

KAREN BREWSTER: That's what I mean, it's lots of changes.

FRANK NORRIS: That's for somebody else to write another administrative history.

[02:15:06]KAREN BREWSTER: Well, you -- you mentioned the Seattle Unit of Klondike, and I want to get back to that 'cause in the '88 interview, you know, you were asked about other projects and -- that you thought should be done. And the -- Seattle's role in the gold rush is one thing you mentioned.

FRANK NORRIS: Um-hm.

KAREN BREWSTER: And so, I was wondering if you have any experience to see whether you think that has been better represented and studied now?

FRANK NORRIS: Well, I guess I ended up answering my own question by including a couple of chapters in there. I had a chance to go down and talk to Willie Russell, who was the superintendent, and a long-time superintendent at that time. And I'm glad I did, because he had been superintendent for I'd say, eight or nine years, and for medical reasons needed to retire not long after -- after I had a chance to chat with him. But the Seattle Unit was established and is entirely there as -- as an interpretive unit based strongly on education with local school districts and with people coming to visit Pioneer Square. And -- and so, its focus is entirely different. And -- and because of its position in the Pioneer Square area, it attracts different kinds of employees, and their length of tenure is far different than it would be if they were in a park where a lot of, you know, nationally significant resources are -- are close by and being interpreted, so.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

FRANK NORRIS: So it -- it was a wake-up call to talk to -- because -- because I -- I asked to have a chance to interview a number of, you know, people who were working as interpreters there as well.

[02:17:00]KAREN BREWSTER: So you think that -- are you saying that their staff tends to be more short-term people than in other parks?

FRANK NORRIS: Historically, it's shown to be that way.

KAREN BREWSTER: Ok.

FRANK NORRIS: Because -- because the primary purpose is interpretation and educational, oftentimes with school groups and um, and the number of -- I think between the kind of pay that's offered and -- it's usually not very high. And -- and Seattle economic opportunities and costs, I -- I think people just don't last there for a very long time.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

FRANK NORRIS: Or they use that as a way to hop into a more permanent position in something, you know, in some other park.

[02:17:48]KAREN BREWSTER: So when you were working for the park in Skagway, what was the relationship like with the Seattle Unit? Was there any mixing --

FRANK NORRIS: None.

KAREN BREWSTER: None?

FRANK NORRIS: Yeah. When the park had originally been created, and I go into a couple of sentences in the admin history, there was some hope that -- like, for instance, Dick Hoffman wanted to consider that he was the superintendent of both parks.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

FRANK NORRIS: He didn't get very far with that notion, primarily because you're talking about two regional outfits that are -- that are -- you know, the legislation calls for both units, but the way that the Park Service administers its units with different funding pots and -- and different access to various funding opportunities, it just didn't work out very well.

KAREN BREWSTER: Because the Seattle Unit's part of the Pacific Northwest Region, right?

FRANK NORRIS: It had been part of the Pacific Northwest Region. It's now part of the Pacific West Region.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh.

FRANK NORRIS: Because in '94, there was a reorganization of the Park Service, and both the Southwest Region, where I am, and the Pacific Northwest Region, both disappeared.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh, ok.

FRANK NORRIS: They were subsumed within other regions.

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KAREN BREWSTER: Ok. But -- but the Seattle Unit is not part of the Alaska Region, so you'd have Klondike Unit and the Seattle Unit together, but under different regions, and that was problematic.

FRANK NORRIS: And it's always been that way.

[02:19:19]KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah. But there wasn't any cooperation with interpretation and education material?

FRANK NORRIS: So far as I know, um --

KAREN BREWSTER: At the time you were there?

FRANK NORRIS: I think I talked to the superintendent, you know, Clay Alderson, and I think he said once every year or two he gets together with the superintendent, but it's almost like, you know, a lunch meeting.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

FRANK NORRIS: It's -- it's -- it's nothing mandated. There's no assumed uniformity of purpose. I think it's just more or less keeping in touch and trading ideas back and forth.

KAREN BREWSTER: Any sense whether that's changed?

FRANK NORRIS: I have no idea whether it's changed.

KAREN BREWSTER: Ok. [02:19:59]Um, I also wanted to ask you about the Moore House.

FRANK NORRIS: Ok.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um, well, wait. Before I do the Moore House. On the Seattle Unit, do you feel like the Seattle role, the story of the Seattle role, is that now being represented at the Klondike park? Or did you do any work with that?

FRANK NORRIS: Well, the Seattle Unit, just the nature of what the unit is, it really focuses in on what happened in Seattle --

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

FRANK NORRIS: -- and Puget Sound during '97 and '98. Lisa Magetto wrote a very good historic resource study. It was a contract job. She worked for Historical Resource Associates. Um, and -- about the role of Seattle during the gold rush. One thing I'd been curious about, and a number of others also, is what was the role of the Klondike Gold Rush in determining which city had supremacy, commercial supremacy, in Puget Sound. And there are those that claim that the Klondike Gold Rush was the major factor in Seattle becoming prominent over Tacoma or Everett or anybody else.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

FRANK NORRIS: That's -- that's a little over-the-top to say that. You could say that it was one of a number of factors that -- that resulted in Seattle's supremacy, but it was um, certainly not the major one.

[02:21:31]KAREN BREWSTER: And in Skagway's interpretation exhibits, publications, do they ever talk about the Seattle side, or they just focus on the Skagway?

FRANK NORRIS: Well, they do, but they talk about San Francisco and Victoria and -- and ,you know, the whole nature of how people got to Skagway and kind of larger aspects of the gold rush experience.

KAREN BREWSTER: Ok.

FRANK NORRIS: They tend to concentrate on the arrival end of things rather than the process of how they got through on the way there.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right. And they don't talk about people who maybe did well in the gold rush and went back to some other place in the Lower 48 and used that money.

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FRANK NORRIS: That's pretty tangential to -- to what Skagway talks about.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

FRANK NORRIS: Because most of what Skagway talks about is getting off the boats, getting through town, the -- the difficulties, like, with public safety and such of getting through. Arriving in Skagway, taking a flat boat over to Dyea, um, arranging for somehow getting up the trail. What the different towns were like during the gold rush, um, what the routes were along both corridors.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

FRANK NORRIS: Getting up there and how those routes changed. What kind of resources were along those routes, both in terms of, you know, how well-populated -- I mean, there were scads of stores in Canyon City and Sheep Camp, as well as in Dyea.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

FRANK NORRIS: Just what a non-wilderness experience it was, if you want to call it that.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

FRANK NORRIS: About how the White Pass is much more of a commercial route, whereas the Chilkoot was, you know, as ugly as going over Chilkoot Pass is, it's -- it's a shorter trail, and most people took that trail. Whereas it was the commercial packers, you know, Bartlett brothers, I guess it was, and then -- and then, that -- and then, of course, the railroad --

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

FRANK NORRIS: -- focused things on the White Pass side.

[02:23:40]KAREN BREWSTER: So but the Moore House. Did you have anything to do with that property and the --

FRANK NORRIS: Are you talking Moore Cabin or Moore House?

KAREN BREWSTER: Well, I guess I should -- yes. Both.

FRANK NORRIS: Ok.

KAREN BREWSTER: The Moore Cabin, I guess, was the first one?

FRANK NORRIS: Yeah. The Moore Cabin was built in '87, and it is where the Moores lived until the Moore House was completed in about 1896. It was completed before the -- the main gold rush took place, I think, although the Moore House -- there's been a Historic Structures Report written about the Moore House, and it shows different configurations and sizes of that -- just like any house. You know, they've added a bunch of new rooms over time, but uh.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right. You didn't do that Historic Structures?

FRANK NORRIS: No.

KAREN BREWSTER: No, ok.

FRANK NORRIS: And -- and really, when I think about the Moore House and Moore Cabin, I've been more of a broad-brush historian and not specific structurally related, so I would always stop at Moore Cabin and Moore House along -- as one stop on the walking tours that I would give.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

FRANK NORRIS: And uh, like, I was fascinated by all the newspapers on the inside and -- and such. [02:24:55]I was not part of the decision-making process by which the Moore Cabin, um, was essentially dismantled and put together again. Because the Moore Cabin was made out of -- an awful lot of cottonwood logs went into it.

KAREN BREWSTER: Hm.

FRANK NORRIS: And so, by the time I showed up in '83, the cottonwood logs had essentially caved in.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

FRANK NORRIS: And were -- were not very structurally sound. Of course, there was a lot of Sitka spruce in the area that held up better, but the Park Service made kind of the command decision to -- that the most valuable resources in that cabin were the newspapers on the inside. And -- and Moore's personal role, which is not a definable, or, you know, it doesn't have objects that go along with it. So -- so they essentially rebuilt that cabin.

KAREN BREWSTER: Hm.

FRANK NORRIS: There -- there are some cross pieces under the eaves that are original, but I think virtually everything else is not only new, but they also jacked the whole thing up so that it's like, I don't know, I'd say two feet off the ground now, which I guess is good in terms of, you know, ensuring that freeze and thaw and everything is not going to impact the building. But none of those decisions I had anything to do with.

[02:26:19]KAREN BREWSTER: Ok. And there was the controversy about the property line and the street and realigning all that.

FRANK NORRIS: Um-hm.

KAREN BREWSTER: Was that during your tenure?

FRANK NORRIS: No, that was way before my tenure. But it's something that caused some ire with the local townspeople because the Park Service insisted that because the Moore lot was not part of the town grid, and, of course, all the old plat maps reflect that, they -- they really want -- wanted a chunk of the Moore lawn to be taken out (cough), excuse me, so that tour buses could go from -- what would that be? 5th Avenue, I guess.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

FRANK NORRIS: Swinging over to Spring Street.

KAREN BREWSTER: Around the lumber yard there?

FRANK NORRIS: Yeah.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

FRANK NORRIS: And the Ice House and that kind of thing. And -- and -- and the Park Service would not give on that. But I played no role in -- I mean, that was an established policy, and no one was changing that.

KAREN BREWSTER: 'Cause I thought it was during Clay Alderson's time as superintendent that there was a big battle over that.

FRANK NORRIS: Well.

KAREN BREWSTER: Maybe that was about the fence?

FRANK NORRIS: Well, there probably was, but it wasn't the first one.

KAREN BREWSTER: Maybe that was about the fence? I don't --

FRANK NORRIS: Yeah.

KAREN BREWSTER: But you didn't have anything to do with that?

FRANK NORRIS: Oh, no. I mean, remember, all the way through the '80's, I was a seasonal. And then I -- and then, you know, I -- I wrote this thing.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

FRANK NORRIS: From 500 miles away.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

FRANK NORRIS: So I've -- I've never been a policy person, is what I'm saying.

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[02:27:40]KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah, well, I didn't know if, yeah, any of the -- if you had done any research or your work had been used in any of those discussions and that you would have gotten involved somehow, but it sounds like not.

FRANK NORRIS: Um, actually, Bob put together a major, um, set of material that was put into a microfilm roll that talked about the, um, the Moore -- it was called the Moore Townsite File. In other words, when -- Moore owned about two-thirds of what today's lower Skagway is.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

FRANK NORRIS: You know, about sixteen, eighteen, blocks, something like that. And when Frank Reid and the other kind of ad hoc town founders came in there during the winter of '97-'98, they kinda played god and told the Moores, you know, there's ten thousand of us, and there's two of you. You know, why do you deserve to keep much of any of it? And I -- I think both of the Moores were just as nasty as Frank Reid was, um, and -- and so, they were able to keep that chunk of land that they did, probably with a lot of acrimony involved. But Moore also had a house over at about 5th and State or 5th and Main, and I think Berton writes about how he, you know, he was out there in the middle of the street, trying to forcibly prevent the townspeople from moving that building away and taking it from him. Because I think when they laid out the grid of the town, his building was in the middle of the street. You know, so -- so they essentially said, this is not yours. We're -- we're either going to tear it down or move it someplace. And you know, Moore couldn't do a thing about it.

KAREN BREWSTER: Because they were now the city leaders, I guess?

FRANK NORRIS: Yeah.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah, that'd be -- [02:29:38]Um. So um, you've talked all these different things you've done, and um, to me, it sounds like you got paid to do research and write, which sounds pretty good to me.

FRANK NORRIS: I guess that's what historians do for a living.

KAREN BREWSTER: Is that what it was?

FRANK NORRIS: Well, I mean, that's what historians do for a living. We research and write. We spend way too much time on other bureaucratic tasks, but fortunately -- fortunately in my case, I was able to spend a good deal of my time in Anchorage actually research and writing.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

FRANK NORRIS: Yes, and not, you know, supervising programs or supervising other employees. So yes, I'm -- I'm proud to say that I was able to -- to immerse myself in a number of projects, some of which we've talked about here.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

FRANK NORRIS: I was able to write, you know, things that I thought had a huge amount of interest to me personally. And uh, maybe somebody's gotten some benefit out of it. I mean, you never know. I mean, you put something out there, and it takes on a life of its own. Maybe somebody'll look at it, and maybe it won't. But that's not your problem.

KAREN BREWSTER: Have you gotten any feedback from people about your various publications?

FRANK NORRIS: Oh, um, I'm not sure how to answer that. Um, every now and then, people come back and say, you know -- they want to know more information about a topic that I've written about in the book, and in a book. I think more often, I probably get feedback from articles that I've written for the, um, in Alaska History Journal, something like that.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

[02:31:31]FRANK NORRIS: One thing that we haven't talked about is about 2000, I think it was, I essentially examined the role of Skagway as a company town.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh.

FRANK NORRIS: Yeah. This was 2000, 2001, somewhere in there. And because I'd had conversations with a number of people in Skagway that -- that talked about the -- the -- let's face it, the predominance of White Pass in --

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

FRANK NORRIS: -- in determining city affairs, and -- and I knew it was never a classic company town, but when one company hires everybody, you know, in -- with, um --

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah, I mean, the way I've --

FRANK NORRIS: All the major jobs in town, you can't help but wonder.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah, I've sort of thought of it as a company town in a way, and I've wondered about that.

FRANK NORRIS: Uh-huh.

KAREN BREWSTER: So -- because it does feel like during a certain period with the White Pass, it was a company town. How was it not a company town?

FRANK NORRIS: Well, but -- company towns can be defined in different ways. Sometimes in an oppressive, you know, "I owe my soul to the company store" kind of way, but in other ways -- and in fact, this is true in White Pass's case, they -- they saw to it that they kept -- like, when the Depression hit, they were down to two trains a week going between Skagway and Whitehorse. And they saw to it that a whole bunch of people kept working in town that by any kind of economic efficiency probably should have been, um, you know, let go.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

FRANK NORRIS: And probably some people were let go. Because something like that happened in the 1930's. I don't really know that all that well. [02:33:12]But -- but this gave me an arti -- a chance, for instance, to talk about Skagway's role in building the Klondike Highway.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

FRANK NORRIS: Because there were a whole bunch of -- of attempts. You know, people knew back in 1902 that they wanted a highway connecting them with Whitehorse, but between cost and the logistics of it, you know, it just never happened. But -- but there were -- there were times in which, um, you know, twenty guys would be out at the end of the road with shovels and, um, and other really, you know, like garden equipment, and trying to add another five or ten feet onto the highway, just as kind of a demonstration to show how much they wanted to see a route out of town. And, of course, this -- all that activity really needed to wait until the -- the '70's, when the State of Alaska had the money to be able to work with it. And apparently the government of either Canada or Yukon Territory also had some funds. You know, they could see that if -- if we were -- we had an interest, then they were able to reciprocate that interest. Um, so.

[02:34:25]KAREN BREWSTER: But the other thing is I think the role of Skagway in the construction of the Alaska Highway as well, right?

FRANK NORRIS: Um-hm. That's right. And -- and probably more should be written about, um, Skagway's role as an Alaska Highway town, because we have maps in the -- upstairs in the -- in the park office that shows probably eighty or a hundred Quonset huts, you know, just constructed around town. Sometimes Quonset huts, sometimes log buildings. And of course, a lot of these things were later moved onto people's property, so you see examples of what they look like.

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KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

FRANK NORRIS: But um, you know, but yeah. Uh, starting in about March of '42 was when they started bringing people in to start working on the highway. And, you know, really, Whitehorse played a much larger role, but Skagway was kind of the funnel through the way it all went. And, of course, the White Pass, which was in a pretty derelict condition all through the '30's 'cause nobody had any money, all of a sudden there were -- you know, in 1943, there were, I don't know, eight trains a day in each direction.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

FRANK NORRIS: That were going, hauling construction equipment up there to, you know, get the highway built.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right. So what else did this article you wrote about the role of Skagway as a company town, what were some of your conclusions?

FRANK NORRIS: Um, it -- that it was to a large extent, but it -- but -- but the role of White Pass officials was in most case -- most cases, was pretty benevolent. You know, I -- I uh, yeah, I think I'll leave it at that.

[02:36:16]KAREN BREWSTER: Ok. Um, so, you know, we just talked about the good part of the job being able to -- you know, a historian who gets paid to research and write and not have to teach and not have to do all that other stuff. Were there particular challenges or obstacles that you faced that were --

FRANK NORRIS: Uh, when I was working in Skagway or working in Anchorage?

KAREN BREWSTER: Both.

FRANK NORRIS: Ok. Um, the nice thing about -- about Skagway is that, all the time I worked there, I had a nice work area and was able to do what I wanted to do. But being a seasonal means on the one hand, you don't get paid very much, and you don't get paid all year round. But nobody tells you what to do, because uh, you're -- you're not important. I mean, you're -- you're marginal. Everybody else is part of, kind of a -- a hierarchy. Um, my boss, to a large extent, was Bob Spude in -- in Anchorage, and every week or so, I guess I'd report in to him and -- and, you know, he knew I was doing good work, so we just kind of talked like buddies, you know, when we wanted to bring things up. I'd send things in to him. He had this enormous knowledge about -- about the -- the sources and -- and uh, bibliographic side, and so, he'd both make sure that I had those sources and also, if I turned in a draft and I missed a few sources, you know, he'd -- he'd mention them to me. But that was a very easygoing relationship to --

KAREN BREWSTER: And how often did he come to Skagway?

FRANK NORRIS: Oh --

KAREN BREWSTER: I can ask him that question, but.

FRANK NORRIS: Yeah. Really not much. I -- I almost got the feeling that he had official reasons, other than seeing me, but that when we talked, we'd head down to the Sweet Tooth (Cafe) or something --

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

FRANK NORRIS: -- and talk. And it gave him a chance -- because he had a passion for Klondike.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

FRANK NORRIS: He really liked the gold rush, and -- and -- and so, it would give him a chance to come back into town, see old friends, walk the streets, dig into the library, pull things out that he'd thought about. You know, maybe he had some other project he was working on.

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KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

FRANK NORRIS: But, uh, you know, I -- it was all very comfortable. [02:38:37]Once I -- once I got to Anchorage, and maybe I'm looking at this through relatively rose-colored glasses, um -- Because I was a historian without -- I didn't have any employees under me, um, and I didn't have large structural parts of my job that demanded I do something different than what I was doing, I spent most of my time, you know, researching and writing. Um, I had three local libraries near. Um, and every now and then, I'd go out and, you know, travel for some other purpose. But I think people, and this is just supposition, um, the Alaska Regional Office had had its share of characters.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

FRANK NORRIS: And when I say characters, on the one hand, you can say, you know, people look at life a little differently, but also, you know, they -- you always know that people are kinda keeping an eye on you, saying, "You know, is he doing his job? Is he a gold brick? Is he -- is he, you know, working on another job, you know, on -- on work time?"

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

FRANK NORRIS: Gross stuff, you know, like that. I mean, people -- people typically give you the benefit of the doubt, but -- but, you know, they watch you for a while, and then after a while, they recognize you're ok, and they just give you a nice, long rope because it wouldn't do any -- any good. Well, I mean, there are people that-- bosses that give you a very short rope.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

FRANK NORRIS: Even though you don't need one. But so, I had bosses that were wise enough to just give me, you know, a lot of slack. [02:40:23]Um, Sandy became my boss starting in about October of '91. A lady named Kate Lidfors hired me. And I had a few bumps with her in the first few months, but she moved on, and so I had -- Sandy was a boss from '91 until probably 2004, and then Ted was my boss from then until I left the office in December of '07.

KAREN BREWSTER: Ok. And why did you choose to leave Anchorage?

FRANK NORRIS: I was in a position where I could see that if I didn't leave, that I was going to retire there. And both my wife and I were in a position to say, we'd like, um, as much as we've enjoyed Anchorage, we are not dyed-in-the-wool Alaskans. Um, it's ok, but we were both feeling a little adventurous. Um, and um, I think -- 'course, being in Fairbanks, we might've talked to you about this, but it -- it um, this wasn't anything dramatic, but the darkness of the winter kind of, you know, bugged us a little bit.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

FRANK NORRIS: You know, we had those SAD lights that helped us kind of get started in the morning, and we used full spectrum and that kind of thing. I don't need to go into a lot of detail with you about that.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right. Right.

FRANK NORRIS: But we were just in -- in -- in the position for a change. And there are not really a lot of alternatives that a person in a specialized position like this has coming, so um, I think this was my second attempt to -- to go someplace else, and the boss said yes, and I came on down. Left in early December and showed up here in early January.

KAREN BREWSTER: So this was sort of like a lateral transfer within the Park Service?

FRANK NORRIS: Yeah. I was a -- I was a GS-12, and I just stayed that way and still am.

[02:42:26]KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm. Um, are there things in Skagway and the Klondike Park that you think still could be researched, stories that haven't been told yet?

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FRANK NORRIS: Well, we've talked about the White Pass Unit.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

FRANK NORRIS: And I -- I -- I personally would really like to see more archeological work and more ability to -- to open up that unit. I think it's -- it's a little difficult for us -- for that park to have a major unit which is essentially -- it's not closed to the public, but -- but it's -- it's also not a very easy unit to open up, because both topographically, you know, it doesn't go down into town kind of like --

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

FRANK NORRIS: -- like the Chilkoot Unit does. It's -- it's kinda remote and isolated. I would like to see some kind of recreational trail built through that area.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

FRANK NORRIS: And, of course, you'd need to work with the state or with somebody else on the logistics of that trail. I mean, you're not asking me as a historian.

KAREN BREWSTER: No.

FRANK NORRIS: But there's a lot of really interesting history. I understand the need for the park to not open it up immediately, because there is such a wealth of resources out there, but, you know, that's been a park now for forty years, and I would think that -- I would like to see that park eventually opened by having a trail go through there.

[02:43:58]KAREN BREWSTER: Ok. And any other little historical topics? You said, one thing is, you know, there's all these parts that hadn't been studied yet.

FRANK NORRIS: Well.

KAREN BREWSTER: When you were talking at the beginning about --

FRANK NORRIS: And -- and -- and I guess I followed that up by actually doing some of those.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

FRANK NORRIS: Like for instance, I -- I was able to find, when I was down at the archives down in -- in Juneau, I got to know the state archivist pretty well, fellow named John Stewart, and he apparently did some digging on his own and was able to get out some, um, commissioners' records that listed all of the various civil and criminal, um, cases that had developed during the gold rush period.

KAREN BREWSTER: Hm.

FRANK NORRIS: And so, I was able to find out, you know, you'd -- you'd heard all this -- a lot of kind of easy talk about the number of prostitutes in both Skagway and Dyea. Well, sure enough, I was able to find an area where, you know, one day when the commissioners weren't doing everything else, they visited every prostitute in town and fined 'em ten bucks. You know, for I don't know.

KAREN BREWSTER: Just 'cause they could.

FRANK NORRIS: Yeah, because they could. I -- I -- I think the term was, they were loitering, you know, so. But I think that happened to prostitutes all over the West.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

FRANK NORRIS: And, you know, they were just hassled and then -- and then forgotten about. I mean, they -- they could've prosecuted 'em and thrown 'em out of town, but you don't make ten dollars that way.

[02:45:28]KAREN BREWSTER: But so, even though the gold rush story seems so well-documented, you think there's still things that a historian could pull out?

FRANK NORRIS: Uh, believe me, somebody -- if somebody really wanted to take it on, they could write a gold rush history, a more even-handed one, one -- 'cause, you know, when Pierre (Berton) wrote his book in 1957 --

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

FRANK NORRIS: -- there just wasn't a whole lot known. And he knew it in his bibliography.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

FRANK NORRIS: Um, I'd like to think that, you know, based on the work that the Park Service has done and a whole lot of other people as well, that there could be a more even-handed, more balanced between Canada and the US, something that would go in and talk a little bit more about the broader migration routes. You know, where people came from.

[02:46:22]KAREN BREWSTER: I know you did some work on immigrants in Alaska, as well, right?

FRANK NORRIS: Yeah. That was "North to Alaska."

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

FRANK NORRIS: Yeah.

KAREN BREWSTER: But so, yeah. The -- the people who came for the Klondike, where they came from?

FRANK NORRIS: Yeah. How many of them were -- were -- were international? You know, how many were -- were Canadians? How many were US? And, you know, are records available that they can help tamp that kind of thing down?

[02:46:49]KAREN BREWSTER: And it seems like the Klondike Park is also expanding little bit to more recent history of Skagway. It's not just gold rush; it's other parts of the stories of the town.

FRANK NORRIS: Ok.

KAREN BREWSTER: And, you know, and as you said, the role of the military and things. I think they are expanding a little bit.

FRANK NORRIS: Yeah, um --

KAREN BREWSTER: I don't know if that's officially in their documents, but --

FRANK NORRIS: Well, like for instance, Lynch & Kennedy is a building that was, uh, that housed troops for a while, but I don't think there's any interpretation done that -- that demarcates that.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

FRANK NORRIS: You know, that was that whole pack train complex there.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right. [02:47:32]Um, so my last question is, you've had a long career with the Park Service. Why have you stayed working for the Park Service?

FRANK NORRIS: Because I love working for the National Park Service.

KAREN BREWSTER: Well, why?

FRANK NORRIS: I get up in the morning, and this is what I want to do.

KAREN BREWSTER: What is it about the Park Service?

FRANK NORRIS: Um, I find that the people that work for this agency, by and large, not all of them, are very dedicated people who all have high standards of work. And so, there's no, you know -- and yes, there are some, but very few people are content to just get by. I find it very gratifying, 'cause I -- I feel better when I'm doing hard work to do a job really well. And it's very comforting to know that the people that I work with feel likewise. That is not true in a lot of jobs. And so, I have a good boss. I have good coworkers. I -- people put a lot of trust in me. I

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enjoy working with a lot of non-NPS partners. In this job, we work with a lot of trail associations, with Trail of Tears Association, Santa Fe Trail Association. And I enjoy working with them on a business arrangement, and I enjoy having beers with 'em every now and then. You know, what's there not to like?

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

FRANK NORRIS: Um, so. I mean, I'm going to retire in a few months, but -- you know, because I love history, and because of the kind of work I've done, it's been a very satisfying career.

[02:49:12]KAREN BREWSTER: Some people would say, what's not to like is the bureaucracy of an organization like the Park Service.

FRANK NORRIS: Oh, um, I find that -- that the bureaucracy of the Park Service is either necessary, and I can kind of understand it, or it doesn't get to me.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

FRANK NORRIS: Yeah, there's a lot of stuff going on in Washington, DC, that I think, well, that's not my call.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

FRANK NORRIS: So, you know, doesn't bother me.

[02:49:45]KAREN BREWSTER: Ok. And in terms of your work in Skagway and Alaska, are there particular things you think you've made a contribution and would like to be remembered for?

FRANK NORRIS: I'll let others decide that.

KAREN BREWSTER: Ok. Anything else you'd like to add that I haven't asked you about?

FRANK NORRIS: Oh.

KAREN BREWSTER: That you can think of.

FRANK NORRIS: Oh, I suppose I can go back and look at my resume and say, hey, have you thought of that article? Or something else. But, you know.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah, I was trying not to focus on the specifics. Somebody can look up your name for all your publications.

FRANK NORRIS: Yeah.

KAREN BREWSTER: If they're really interesting -- interested.

[02:50:25]FRANK NORRIS: Um, uh, you were talking about specific assignments when I was a seasonal.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

FRANK NORRIS: At one point, I filled out National Register forms. A National Register form for the National Park or National Historic Park, as well as the NHL forms for the, you know, the Dyea-Chilkoot Unit.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

FRANK NORRIS: And the Skagway-White Pass Unit. It was more or less a secretarial exercise because all of the elements of those forms had already been included in one of those previous NHL's. So I think my name is on -- is on part of that, but it's not really very consequential, only because there's kind of a bureaucratic requirement for every national -- historically-based park to have a National Register nomination for it.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh, really?

FRANK NORRIS: Yeah.

KAREN BREWSTER: And so, has that been accepted for Klondike? Is it officially on the National Register?

FRANK NORRIS: Oh, yeah. I mean, it went through sometime in '86-87, sometime like that.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right. I would have assumed. [02:51:25]And so it's not -- each building is not nominated, it's the district? The whole park?

FRANK NORRIS: The building elements of that were all of the Park Service-owned buildings in Skagway. I don't -- it was one of those things, because it didn't have new information into it, I didn't really think much about it. And because it wasn't controversial, I never had to -- to spend a lot of extra time, you know, dealing with it. Like, I know the Skagway-White Pass nomination fairly well because we'd send it in, and, you know, a year and a half later, somebody in Washington, DC, would come back and say, you know, you've written too much about this area and not enough about this area.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh, really?

FRANK NORRIS: And you gotta -- well, the -- the -- the notion of NHL boundaries was constantly -- it was kind of a political topic in Washington, DC, and there were people that said, unless you can prove that there are contributing resources, you know, then -- then you have to eliminate that area. But other people would -- had a more relaxed approach. More of a landscape interpretation, rather than trying to -- to justify structures and -- and contributing corporeal areas, uh, related to the gold rush period.

KAREN BREWSTER: I -- I just didn't realize that that process would have a back and forth. I figured, you write your report and request, and it gets submitted, and it's accepted or not accepted.

FRANK NORRIS: No. Sandy can tell you more than I can, but -- but I found myself thinking in, like '93, '95, '98, I thought, I'm going to make sure I stay in this job long enough to be able to see this thing through. Eventually, somebody in DC gave in and signed off on the thing.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah. Hard work. [02:53:14]Um, do you have any sense of the relationship between, you know, the Klondike Park and Regional Office? Was there push-pull? Was there resentment that regional was doing stuff that the park thought it should do or -- ?

FRANK NORRIS: If anything, um, I would have personal conversations with superintendents, and -- and Klondike, as important historically as it is, is twelve thousand acres. Ok? Gates of the Arctic has eight million. Wrangell-St. Elias has twelve million. Lake Clark has four and a half million. Katmai has, you know, three and a half or four. So somebody like Clay would go to a meeting of the superintendents and just feel overwhelmed or intimidated, because all these superintendents, you know, would -- would be talking about not only much larger areas, but they'd be talking about superintend -- about subsistence, and about wilderness, and about a number of other topic areas that just didn't concern, you know.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

FRANK NORRIS: Uh, Sitka or Klondike. So um, other than that, no. No further comments.

[02:54:30]KAREN BREWSTER: Ok. And the Clay you mentioned is Clay Alderson, who was superintendent. And he became superintendent when you were still based in Skagway?

FRANK NORRIS: Yeah. He -- he was acting superintendent in '86, and I think he was -- he became the superintendent, you know, just a few months after that, and then stayed -- stayed there for probably six, eight, ten years, something like that.

KAREN BREWSTER: So '99.

FRANK NORRIS: Was it that long? Ok.

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KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

FRANK NORRIS: Yeah. I think the last I heard of him, he became part of -- he worked with the Office of International Affairs and represented the Park Service in Mongolia for a while.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm. Do you have any comment on his superintendency?

FRANK NORRIS: No. None that I'd like to share on tape.

KAREN BREWSTER: Ok. Um, anything else you'd like to share on tape before we --

FRANK NORRIS: I think we've pretty well covered things.

KAREN BREWSTER: Ok. Great. Well, I appreciate your time.

FRANK NORRIS: I'm glad to help. Yeah, gosh, we've talked --