

RECORDED INTERVIEW OF DEBRA "DEBBIE" "DEB" SANDERS

CONDUCTED BY KAREN BREWSTER

IN STAR VALLEY, ARIZONA

MAY 13, 2019

ORAL HISTORY 2017-01-108

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

[00:00:00]KAREN BREWSTER: All right. This is Karen Brewster, and today is May 13, 2019, and I'm here with Debbie Sanders at her home in --

DEBRA SANDERS: Star Valley.

KAREN BREWSTER: Star Valley, Arizona, right near Payson. Beautiful spot. Thank you for letting me stop by today.

DEBRA SANDERS: Oh, you're welcome.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um, so I know that you were the curator at Klondike Gold Rush National Historical Park, and I should say, this recording is for the Klondike Gold Rush National Historical Park Oral History Project. Um, so before we get into talking about what you did there, can we get you there? So where are you from originally?

DEBRA SANDERS: I'm originally from Colorado. Um, born in Denver, raised in Steamboat Springs. And I went to college at Fort Collins, Colorado State University.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm. Um-hm.

DEBRA SANDERS: And was thinking about a career in Park Service.

KAREN BREWSTER: What did you study in college?

DEBRA SANDERS: I studied environmental interpretation in the College of Forestry and Natural Resources. And then started out working seasonally. I was at Mesa Verde for a couple of seasons. Um, went to Carlsbad Caverns for a season. Went to Bandelier for a season. Um, Zion for a season, two seasons. Bryce. Um, Hubbell Trading Post for a season, which is where I got on as a museum technician permanent.

KAREN BREWSTER: What's Hubbell Trading Post?

DEBRA SANDERS: On the Navajo Reservation, up near Ganado, Arizona. It's still a functioning trading post.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh, really.

DEBRA SANDERS: It's very, very cool.

KAREN BREWSTER: Huh.

DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah. Very cool. That -- I really had a good time there. I learned to weave and speak a little Navajo and stuff.

KAREN BREWSTER: And what time period are we talking about?

DEBRA SANDERS: Um, that was in the early '80's. '83 -- '83-'84, is about when I got on.

KAREN BREWSTER: At the -- at Hubbell? Ok.

DEBRA SANDERS: At Hubbell Trading Post, yeah. I started working seasonally in '76.

DEBRA SANDERS

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KAREN BREWSTER: Ok. And when did you graduate from college?

DEBRA SANDERS: '76.

KAREN BREWSTER: '76, ok. [00:02:05]Um, so how -- how did you get from environmental interpretation to museum curating?

DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah. I don't have any college degree in museum studies at all, but when I was at Hubbell Trading Post, um, I was working a lot with the rugs and stuff like that. And it just so happened, they had a position come open, and I was able to get on the -- the CERT. At that stage, they were doing the OPM CERTS. And um, and got hired, and so then, here I am working with collections. And I realized I really liked it. But I still wasn't sure, so when I left Hubbell, I was there for about four years, I took a job at Mount Rainier as an interpreter, but I was also responsible for the collections in the libraries.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DEBRA SANDERS: So then I was doing both. It kind of gave me a chance to do a little bit of both. And then, from there I went to Chiricahua National Monument down in southeast Arizona.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DEBRA SANDERS: Um, Faraway Ranch was brand newly opened, and I was the first ranger in charge of Faraway. And so there again, I was in charge of tours and collections, so I was still doing both.

KAREN BREWSTER: So is Faraway Ranch a historic building?

DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah. Yeah. Yeah, it's kind of on the edge of the monument, and it was -- it used to operate as a guest ranch.

KAREN BREWSTER: Ok.

DEBRA SANDERS: Back late 1800's, early 1900's. So, and it's a really -- it's a beautiful stucco building with some property and stuff, so.

KAREN BREWSTER: And so, it had collections?

DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah, big collections.

KAREN BREWSTER: In the -- in the building?

DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah. Yeah, it had quite a bit that we acquired when the Park Service acquired the ranch.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DEBRA SANDERS: A lot of the collections just came -- came right with it.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DEBRA SANDERS: So we were able to, you know, furnish it with its original materials.

KAREN BREWSTER: Cool.

DEBRA SANDERS: So that was pretty fun.

[00:03:52]KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah. Well, you moved around a lot.

DEBRA SANDERS: And then from there to Skagway.

KAREN BREWSTER: And that was in 1991?

DEBRA SANDERS: Yes.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah, well I guess that's sort of typical Park Service that you -- every couple years, you're moving someplace else.

DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah. Well, actually, I forgot one. I went to Grand Portage in Minnesota.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh.

DEBRA SANDERS: For just a year and a half. As a chief ranger. And from there, I went to Skagway.

KAREN BREWSTER: Ok. [00:04:19]And so, in all that time, you know, you said you were working with collections and libraries and things. Did you get any training officially along the way?

DEBRA SANDERS: Just Park Service training.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

DEBRA SANDERS: You know, um, I would go to curatorial skills, and, you know, various Park Service classes that were offered at the time.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DEBRA SANDERS: And a lot of them, you know, everything, so.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

DEBRA SANDERS: But never did I -- I thought about going back to school, but by then, I didn't really need to. I didn't feel like I really needed to. I kind of had acquired the skills I needed, you know, on the job and with Park Service training.

KAREN BREWSTER: So you felt like those Park Service training courses provided you enough background --

DEBRA SANDERS: Yes. Yes.

KAREN BREWSTER: -- and experience?

DEBRA SANDERS: And I did go to a couple of private -- Campbell Institute, which is in Illinois.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DEBRA SANDERS: Central Illinois. Um, it's private, but they offer a whole bunch of different museum classes.

KAREN BREWSTER: Hm.

DEBRA SANDERS: So I was able to go to a couple of those also, you know, like a month's worth.

KAREN BREWSTER: And did the Park Service pay for that training?

DEBRA SANDERS: Yes. Yeah. Yeah, they paid for that.

KAREN BREWSTER: Now, some of the other -- the Park Service trainings, were those in Harpers Ferry, or -- ?

DEBRA SANDERS: Yes. Yeah.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah. Ok.

DEBRA SANDERS: And then I was also able to attend ranger skills at Grand Canyon, and that included everything. That was law enforcement, firefighting, curatorial, interpretation. You know, it was kind of all-encompassing.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh, yeah. You know, when you're in that museum collection, you need firearms experience.

DEBRA SANDERS: You do.

KAREN BREWSTER: You gotta keep those --

DEBRA SANDERS: You do.

KAREN BREWSTER: -- dirty fingers off of there. [00:05:53]Um, so why did you decide to go to Skagway in 1991?

DEBRA SANDERS: Well, um, when I was at Grand Portage, I really did not like the upper Midwest. I needed to go to Alaska to get warm.

KAREN BREWSTER: I've never -- first I've heard that.

DEBRA SANDERS: Oh, man. Lake Superior --

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

DEBRA SANDERS: -- is just frigid.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah, I mean, anyway. And I don't know, by then, I just decided I wanted to stick with curation.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DEBRA SANDERS: I was really enjoying that, and I thought, Alaska. Why not? You know, that'd be fun. So yeah. And people would always say -- people that are not Park Service would say -- you know, I moved there in October.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DEBRA SANDERS: "You know, what are you doing moving there in October? And do you know anybody?" And I'd say, "Well, what does it matter? It's the Park Service. Everybody knows everybody."

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DEBRA SANDERS: Or you know somebody that knows somebody else, you know, so. It never seemed like a big deal to move.

[00:06:47]KAREN BREWSTER: So it was just -- it was a job advertised in the federal system?

DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah. Yeah. And it actually was a GS-9 Museum Specialist position, and then, after I was there for a year or two, I got upgraded to a -11 Museum Curator. And actually, I was the very first museum person in the field in Alaska.

KAREN BREWSTER: What do you mean?

DEBRA SANDERS: There were no other parks had a curator in the park.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh.

DEBRA SANDERS: Does that make sense?

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah, 'cause there was a regional curator.

DEBRA SANDERS: There was a regional curator.

KAREN BREWSTER: Jean --

DEBRA SANDERS: Jean.

KAREN BREWSTER: -- Swearingen Rodeck.

DEBRA SANDERS: Yep.

KAREN BREWSTER: Was the regional curator.

DEBRA SANDERS: Yep. Yep. And at the -- at about the same time I was hired at Skagway, they were thinking Sitka also really needed a curator. They were going to have me do both.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh, yeah.

DEBRA SANDERS: And then they realized that wasn't gonna work, so then, pretty much at the same time, they hired Sue Thorsen as a museum specialist at Sitka. So we were the very first two

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KAREN BREWSTER: Oh, ok.

DEBRA SANDERS: -- actual curator people or museum people in the parks.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DEBRA SANDERS: And then, after that, they started adding a few.

KAREN BREWSTER: Didn't Denali get one pretty soon?

DEBRA SANDERS: Shortly after that.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

DEBRA SANDERS: A few years after that.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

DEBRA SANDERS: Um-hm.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

DEBRA SANDERS: Glacier Bay has one now. I mean, you know, it kinda grew. I think there's most of the parks do have somebody now.

[00:08:06]KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah. Um, did -- did you ever get an idea of why they decided to create that position in the park instead of sticking with regional?

DEBRA SANDERS: I think because probably that collection was growing so fast.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DEBRA SANDERS: With the archeology, primarily. All the archeology that was going on. It was a huge collection. And I think they just realized they needed somebody right there, you know, to -- to deal with it.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm. And, but, before you got there, then, do you know, how was the collection being handled?

DEBRA SANDERS: It was being sent out in bits and pieces. Um, I think some of it actually even went to Harpers Ferry. I could be wrong on that. I think it did.

KAREN BREWSTER: For conservation, maybe?

DEBRA SANDERS: Well, for curating, too. I mean, for cataloging. And then, region was taking it in. Um.

KAREN BREWSTER: Now was there any Klondike staff like Karl Gurcke or Betsy Duncan-Clark who had been doing some of that just as part of their "duties as assigned?"

DEBRA SANDERS: Karl was probably the one closest to doing a little accessioning and stuff like that. They probably shared it a little bit, too, at the time.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DEBRA SANDERS: So I think Karl was the one that was kind of trying to keep up with it somewhat. But yeah, most of the collections were getting sent out.

KAREN BREWSTER: Hm.

DEBRA SANDERS: To get -- to get cataloged.

[00:09:26]KAREN BREWSTER: Right. Well, what -- what was Betsy's role -- was she at the park when you were there?

DEBRA SANDERS: Yes.

KAREN BREWSTER: What was her role?

DEBRA SANDERS: She was chief of interpretation.

KAREN BREWSTER: Ok. Um, 'cause I was thinking that, yeah, as chief of interpretation, you might have some role with the collections because they get used for interpretive things.

DEBRA SANDERS: For sure.

KAREN BREWSTER: But -- but you're not aware of that.

DEBRA SANDERS: No, and I know they were wanting to use stuff. I know when I got there, I created an interp collection.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DEBRA SANDERS: Of stuff that we really didn't have a provenience on or anything. So that they were able to use that for their talks and all that kind of stuff.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DEBRA SANDERS: So, but they hadn't anything like that. Um, they weren't doing much. I mean, when I got there, the Mascot exhibits were brand new. Um, the old depot exhibits were brand new. I know they've redone all those now again.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh, they have?

DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah. Yep. That's according -- that's what I heard from Deb.

KAREN BREWSTER: Ok. Yeah. Deb Boettcher. She would know.

DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah. And then, I was there in the midst of the Moore House restoration.

KAREN BREWSTER: Ok.

DEBRA SANDERS: And that was my -- that was my baby.

[00:10:33]KAREN BREWSTER: Ok. Well, before we get to that, tell -- so, how did you approach this big collection that obviously hadn't been cataloged, managed very well?

DEBRA SANDERS: Well, I think I was very fortunate in having good regional office support.

KAREN BREWSTER: Uh-huh.

DEBRA SANDERS: You know, Jean was great. Um, she was always there. Um, and we just took it a step at a time, you know, and I was able to hire a couple of seasonals.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DEBRA SANDERS: And they cataloged like crazy. And Deb Boettcher after about, what, she came on -- I might have been there three years or something when I hired Deb on.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DEBRA SANDERS: And she, you know, she catalogs like crazy. So yeah, we just --

KAREN BREWSTER: That's what I've heard.

DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah. So you know, it was just a matter of a little at a time and getting able to hire the seasonals. And we just kept -- and then the archeology slowed down.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh, ok.

DEBRA SANDERS: You know, after that -- all the project archeology slowed down, then we were able to start doing, like, Chilkoot Trail stuff, and -- You know, and then, of course, then they acquired more buildings. But there -- you know, the core buildings, once that archeology was done --

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DEBRA SANDERS: -- then it slowed down.

[00:11:46]KAREN BREWSTER: So you didn't keep -- have constant incoming collections? You could kind of work on the backlog?

DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah. And then start working on archives, and then start working with the natural history collection, and, you know, just add -- add other things into it.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm. So the -- the object collection, there's archeology, and then there's, sort of, cultural ethnographic pieces, do you differentiate that?

DEBRA SANDERS: And history.

KAREN BREWSTER: History?

DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah.

KAREN BREWSTER: So ethnographic's different than history?

DEBRA SANDERS: Yes.

KAREN BREWSTER: Ok.

DEBRA SANDERS: Ethnographic would be, um, if it's associated with a certain tribe.

KAREN BREWSTER: Ok.

DEBRA SANDERS: Or group.

KAREN BREWSTER: Ok.

DEBRA SANDERS: Does that make sense?

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah. And then history would be more, you know, like things from the gold rush.

DEBRA SANDERS: Right.

KAREN BREWSTER: But like whole -- objects that haven't come up out of --

DEBRA SANDERS: Right.

KAREN BREWSTER: -- dug up out of the ground --

DEBRA SANDERS: Right.

KAREN BREWSTER: -- in an archeology project?

DEBRA SANDERS: Right.

[00:12:34]KAREN BREWSTER: Ok. And then, there was an archives?

DEBRA SANDERS: Then there's the archives.

KAREN BREWSTER: So what is in the archives?

DEBRA SANDERS: That would be all the papers. Photographs, all the documents for things. Any reports, um, yeah, photographs.

KAREN BREWSTER: Old diaries?

DEBRA SANDERS: Old diaries, yep.

KAREN BREWSTER: Letters.

DEBRA SANDERS: A diary could be considered a historic object, too.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh, it could? Oh.

DEBRA SANDERS: If you're looking at it more for the object and not what's inside of it.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh. I didn't realize that.

DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah. It could be -- that's where it gets fuzzy, those kinds of things.

[00:13:07]KAREN BREWSTER: So how do you -- how do you decide that when you're doing the curation?

DEBRA SANDERS: Well, for example with the Moore House, we had some diaries, but they didn't -- you know, those were more objects. They didn't really document that much of the Moore House history.

KAREN BREWSTER: Hm.

DEBRA SANDERS: So it was more -- we had it out on exhibit.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh, yeah.

DEBRA SANDERS: So it was more of an object.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah. That makes sense. Um, and then letters go in there.

DEBRA SANDERS: Letters.

[00:13:31]KAREN BREWSTER: And so, is that archive, does that also include the record of the park and documents produced by the park?

DEBRA SANDERS: Yes.

KAREN BREWSTER: And communications and internal memos and all that stuff?

DEBRA SANDERS: Yes. Yes. So once somebody retires -- For example, when I retired, Deb ended up with all my papers. You know, everything that still was in my file drawers. And, you know, I was there long enough that I would turn things over.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DEBRA SANDERS: So I didn't just have file drawers full of stuff.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DEBRA SANDERS: Like some of the staff did.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DEBRA SANDERS: But um, yeah, like when chief of maintenance retires, you go in and you clean out their office, and you take what, you know, what is needed for the archives.

KAREN BREWSTER: So it creates the archive of the park's sort of administrative processes and things?

DEBRA SANDERS: Exactly.

KAREN BREWSTER: Ok. And then --

DEBRA SANDERS: They're really going to have fun with Karl.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yes, they will. Is Deb prepared?

DEBRA SANDERS: She doesn't think she'll still be there.

[00:14:29]KAREN BREWSTER: Um, because yeah, and like, cataloging papers -- accessioning and cataloging papers and letters and those, you know, staff records, is that different than cataloging, you know, archeological objects or historical objects?

DEBRA SANDERS: It's very different. Yeah, it's very different. Um, the cataloging system that we use has modules that includes everything. But um, with archives, there's record groups. You know, you kind of have to create a hierarchy.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DEBRA SANDERS: And so that you can find them again.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DEBRA SANDERS: Things have to be retrieved.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

DEBRA SANDERS: Um, so you're dealing a lot more with, um -- it's actually more detailed. It -- it takes a lot longer to catalog archives. 'Cause you have to organize them, like, by date.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DEBRA SANDERS: Or you know, all that kind of thing.

KAREN BREWSTER: And you don't necessarily catalog every single piece of paper?

DEBRA SANDERS: No. No. Not unless, again, it's like more of a historic item.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DEBRA SANDERS: Like maybe historic letters, even.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DEBRA SANDERS: That what -- the content of them is really important, you might give each one a separate number.

KAREN BREWSTER: Uh-huh.

DEBRA SANDERS: But for the most part, it's a group.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DEBRA SANDERS: But then you have to have a count.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh, of how many pages in that group?

DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah.

[00:15:45]KAREN BREWSTER: So if it's somebody's work files of correspondence, would you break that up into correspondence about Subject A versus Subject B?

DEBRA SANDERS: Yes.

KAREN BREWSTER: Or it's just one big correspondence?

DEBRA SANDERS: No, it would be separated out if you could.

KAREN BREWSTER: Uh-huh.

DEBRA SANDERS: Say, like, for example, um, archeology archives.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DEBRA SANDERS: You might, you know, divide it out by the -- the project.

KAREN BREWSTER: Ok.

DEBRA SANDERS: You know, like this was the depot.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DEBRA SANDERS: And this was the Mascot. And so you'd have it divided out by projects that way.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right. But then within that project, would you then divide it by either date, like this was the year of the project?

DEBRA SANDERS: Um-hm. Then you'd divide it by date.

KAREN BREWSTER: Or this was, you know -- 'cause some of those projects went on multiple years.

DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah.

KAREN BREWSTER: And then, within the year, would you say, ok, this is correspondence, this is reports?

DEBRA SANDERS: Reports.

KAREN BREWSTER: This is analysis.

DEBRA SANDERS: Yes.

KAREN BREWSTER: Ok.

DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah. And if it's a report, you don't have to count the pages.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DEBRA SANDERS: It's one report.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right. But if all -- if it's all their field notes before the report --

DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah.

KAREN BREWSTER: -- that's separate than the report?

DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah. Yep.

KAREN BREWSTER: Ok.

DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah. And those might be in those little field notebook things, you know.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DEBRA SANDERS: So that would be one count, too, but uh, a lot of times, like, their maps.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DEBRA SANDERS: Would be individual pages. So those is -- are counted individually.

[00:17:07]KAREN BREWSTER: Oh. And another thing, the field notebooks, yeah again, like is it by the pro -- like, the Mascot project, 1990 field notes, or is it Mas -- you know, and then 1992 would be field notes?

DEBRA SANDERS: Uh-huh.

KAREN BREWSTER: Or is it, Mascot project field notes, all the years are together?

DEBRA SANDERS: We would usually do by year.

KAREN BREWSTER: Ok.

DEBRA SANDERS: It just seemed like it made it easier 'cause, for example, when Karl's looking for something, he's asking for year.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DEBRA SANDERS: So you kinda -- sometimes you start out archiving a certain way, and then you realize, oh, you know what, that's not how people are asking for it. That's not how they're

searching for it. So then you might change your process, and, you know, organize by date instead, you know, or have that a more critical thing.

KAREN BREWSTER: Uh-huh.

DEBRA SANDERS: Within the project. Yeah.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah. Deb's gotten so good at that.

[00:17:58]KAREN BREWSTER: Right. But so, the idea is sort of to think about how people might in the future search and want to find things.

DEBRA SANDERS: Yep. Yeah, archives are no good if you can't retrieve it.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DEBRA SANDERS: You know, it's just no good.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DEBRA SANDERS: So you do have to be able to find things again.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah. And yeah, but you don't always know -- yeah, I say, how do you know how people are gonna want to use it in the future?

DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah, it's hard. You know, and you do -- so it's kind of a learning game as you go.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DEBRA SANDERS: And some things you never find again.

[00:18:26]KAREN BREWSTER: Um, well, and what about photographs? I mean, it's a fairly large collection of photographs, right?

DEBRA SANDERS: Yes.

KAREN BREWSTER: So how is that handled?

DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah, that's a hard one. Again, um, if they're photographs with -- let's say, documenting archeology.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DEBRA SANDERS: You know, then you've got 'em right in there with the year, the project, that kind of thing.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DEBRA SANDERS: Um, Karl's the king of that kind of thing. You know, he was always taking our photographs, like our historic photographs --

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DEBRA SANDERS: -- and digitizing them.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DEBRA SANDERS: And then, he had a system, kind of, to help for a finder's aid, so that people could, you know, look them up.

KAREN BREWSTER: Uh-huh.

DEBRA SANDERS: But again, then you would -- you would have to do a category, like a building or a person or -- um, we would get photo collections in.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DEBRA SANDERS: And then, it would be -- oh, like what was that one guy's name? Anyway, there were glass lant -- oh, Harper? Hooper. Hooper. It was a glass lantern slide collection that we got in. So that was the Hooper collection.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DEBRA SANDERS: But then, what we ended up doing with those, so that they could be usable -- this was years ago, right?

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DEBRA SANDERS: Is we turned them into slides.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DEBRA SANDERS: 'Cause this was before --

KAREN BREWSTER: Right. Before digitizing, and glass slides aren't practical.

DEBRA SANDERS: Right.

KAREN BREWSTER: But then, you -- you number each image?

DEBRA SANDERS: Yes.

KAREN BREWSTER: Whether it's a slide or a print or whatever. [00:19:52]And then, you have some way of describing what it's a picture of?

DEBRA SANDERS: Yes. Yeah. And we had kind of a standard way of doing it. We'd start out by the format. Well, like a glass lantern slide.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DEBRA SANDERS: Or if it's a print, black and white or color, you know, that kind of thing.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DEBRA SANDERS: And then we would try to describe, you know, its importance. Why is it in the collection? And then, if there was anything, you know, like so-and-so is wearing a derby hat.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DEBRA SANDERS: Or, I mean, you know -- Or there's a dog in the picture, or -- you know, we just kind of add in some description. That way, too, like if people are searching for a certain photo and they're not quite sure what it is, if we have a good enough description, so we're not having to pull out photos all the time for people to look at. You know, if it's a good enough description, they can say, "Oh yeah, that. I need to see that photo." You know.

[00:20:42]KAREN BREWSTER: Right. And how do you come up with those content, um, themes or wording?

DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah, there again --

KAREN BREWSTER: Vocabulary, that's the word I'm thinking of.

DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah. There again, it's kind of a trial and error. You know, you kind of learn what people are wanting, and are searching for. And also, you know, some of those Park Service classes I took, they would kind of help you set up.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DEBRA SANDERS: You know, this -- this is gonna be important.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DEBRA SANDERS: You know, and kind of tell you, this needs to be in the description. Um, the size is gonna be down in another field.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DEBRA SANDERS: You know, so you don't need to put that in there.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DEBRA SANDERS: You know, kind of a deal.

KAREN BREWSTER: And date, if you know it. And as you say, a person's name, if you know it. Yeah, I mean, some collections probably come with lots of identification information, and some don't.

DEBRA SANDERS: Exactly. Exactly.

[00:21:30]KAREN BREWSTER: Um, and I was thinking about standard vocabulary, too, that would be different from one park to the other, probab -- to some extent.

DEBRA SANDERS: Um-hm. Yeah.

KAREN BREWSTER: Does the Library of Congress standard cataloging vocabulary -- is that useful?

DEBRA SANDERS: No, we haven't -- I've never really used that. As a librarian at Mount Rainier, I did.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

DEBRA SANDERS: But for cataloging, I never -- I never used it.

KAREN BREWSTER: For cataloging photos and things, you just came up with your own words?

DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah. I think some parks do. I think they do, you know, pull that in.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DEBRA SANDERS: But I never -- never did.

[00:22:08]KAREN BREWSTER: Ok. Um, and then, of course, once you get into digital records -- did you deal with digital records?

DEBRA SANDERS: Towards the end.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah. Towards the end. And I was starting to take pictures of artifacts and include 'em in our cataloging database, too. That was something very new.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah. But yeah, we were -- actually, the Rapuzzi Collection, we were digitizing. We were digitizing all those photos that came from that collection.

KAREN BREWSTER: Uh-huh. Ok. And then how do you keep track of all those photos, and what -- you catalog them the same way?

DEBRA SANDERS: Yes.

KAREN BREWSTER: In terms of the descriptions in the field and everything?

DEBRA SANDERS: Yes. Yeah. And then, on the catalog record, you could, um, have the digital number.

KAREN BREWSTER: Uh-huh.

DEBRA SANDERS: You know, associate that with -- with it. And that works out really good. 'Cause then people can just scan through, you know, images.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DEBRA SANDERS: And not -- you don't have to pull out the original image.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DEBRA SANDERS: You know.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DEBRA SANDERS: Which you try not to do.

[00:23:08]KAREN BREWSTER: And what -- what kind of file naming of the electronic file did you use? Did you come up with a standard system?

DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah. There again -- and we had some help. There was a gentleman by the name of David Curl, who you maybe have heard his name. He was a seasonal, but he was a photographer, and he did a lot of documentation of the buildings for us. But he was coming in with the Rapuzzi Collection, and he was doing the digitizing. And he had ideas, 'cause he was already familiar with the park.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DEBRA SANDERS: And again, we were kinda using the same sort of categories, you know, because of the buildings.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DEBRA SANDERS: And the people, certain people.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DEBRA SANDERS: So we just kind of kept using that same thing because that is what people were interested in.

KAREN BREWSTER: And so, is the electronic file name, you know, is that the accession number? Is that --

DEBRA SANDERS: No, that'll just be another number.

KAREN BREWSTER: It's just a random number?

DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah. Yeah. 'Cause like, the accession number is -- is really broad.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh, ok. Each photo doesn't get its own?

DEBRA SANDERS: A catalog number.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh, a catalog number. Oh, ok.

DEBRA SANDERS: Like the Rapuzzi Collection?

KAREN BREWSTER: Uh-huh.

DEBRA SANDERS: Is one accession number.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right. But then each object gets a catalog number?

DEBRA SANDERS: Catalog number.

KAREN BREWSTER: That's my misuse of the terminology.

DEBRA SANDERS: Yes, but I understand that because with a lot of archives --

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

DEBRA SANDERS: -- then those are called accession numbers for --

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DEBRA SANDERS: It's used differently.

KAREN BREWSTER: Ok.

DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah.

[00:24:33]KAREN BREWSTER: But so, when you have a digital photograph, does it get -- the file name of that digital photograph, how do you come up with that name? Is there a system you use? Because each of the --

DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah, let me think of how we'd do that.

KAREN BREWSTER: Each of the hard-copy photos has --

DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah.

KAREN BREWSTER: -- is own number on it, right?

DEBRA SANDERS: Correct.

KAREN BREWSTER: And so, the digital ones have a --

DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah. You know what we would do is somehow on the digital image, we would incorporate the catalog number into it.

KAREN BREWSTER: Ok.

DEBRA SANDERS: To connect them together.

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

DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah. That's what we would do.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um --

DEBRA SANDERS: And then, on the catalog record -- 'cause then the digital image also had its own somehow or other little, you know, letters afterwards or whatever.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right. Right.

DEBRA SANDERS: And we would always put that in. There's a category on the record for other numbers.

KAREN BREWSTER: Ok. In the database?

DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah, so that's where that would go.

KAREN BREWSTER: Ok.

DEBRA SANDERS: But the catalog number would always be tied in to the digital image.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right. Ok.

DEBRA SANDERS: 'Cause the catalog number's what's important.

[00:25:37]KAREN BREWSTER: Right. So yes, you're doing what I was thinking, it's just the terminology. And the -- so all of this is being cataloged in an electronic database system?

DEBRA SANDERS: Yes.

KAREN BREWSTER: And is that -- what system do you use?

DEBRA SANDERS: You know, I think they're calling it something different now. Um, we were calling it -- it was Rediscovery.

KAREN BREWSTER: Ok.

DEBRA SANDERS: And I've heard Deb call it something a little bit different the other day. So I think they're -- you know, they've probably upgraded it, and they've probably renamed it since I was there.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DEBRA SANDERS: But it's kind of the same.

KAREN BREWSTER: And was that a Park Service computer pro -- program?

DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah. Park Service-wide.

KAREN BREWSTER: Ok. So in theory, all the parks use the same system?

DEBRA SANDERS: And you go to training to learn it. Yeah.

[00:26:24]KAREN BREWSTER: Um, other collections. We were talking about archeology, ethnohistory, history, archives, what else -- oral history.

DEBRA SANDERS: Natural history.

KAREN BREWSTER: Natural history.

DEBRA SANDERS: Oral history would fall into your archives, usually.

KAREN BREWSTER: Ok. 'Cause I know you guys do have -- or you're -- I know Klondike has oral histories, as well.

DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah.

KAREN BREWSTER: And so, natural history.

DEBRA SANDERS: Natural history. Um, that started when I was there, too.

KAREN BREWSTER: Ok.

DEBRA SANDERS: We did not have a natural resource person at all.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DEBRA SANDERS: Um, I was attending the natural resource conferences for the region. Yeah. Um, and I kind of was pushing the fact that we really needed somebody on staff, whether it be a seasonal or whatever.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DEBRA SANDERS: And so, they did finally. They hired seasonal to start with, because we were already -- you know, we had plant collections. Um, what else? We had, you know, I think we had some fish. I think we had a few, you know, birds. We had a few odds and ends that people just would collect.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DEBRA SANDERS: And so then, yeah now, it's like a full-blown program.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

DEBRA SANDERS: And, you know, they've had permanent people on staff for probably twenty-five years.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

DEBRA SANDERS: For that now.

[00:27:41]KAREN BREWSTER: So that first one, was that Elaine Furbish?

DEBRA SANDERS: Uh --

KAREN BREWSTER: Or somebody before her?

DEBRA SANDERS: Trying to think if she was actually the first permanent full-time. She was close to it, for sure.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah. I can't remember if she was, um, seasonal first and then.

DEBRA SANDERS: No. I think she was hired permanent full-time, but I'm trying to remember if there was anybody before her.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

DEBRA SANDERS: I can't remember.

KAREN BREWSTER: I can't remember. She did a lot of the plant collecting and the lichen work.

DEBRA SANDERS: Yes. Yeah. And then, Meg -- then Meg came in. Meg, what was her last name?

KAREN BREWSTER: Not Jensen?

DEBRA SANDERS: Yes.

KAREN BREWSTER: Ok.

DEBRA SANDERS: And then Dave Schirokauer.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DEBRA SANDERS: And he was still there when I left. He was headed to Denali.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah. [00:28:33]Um, yeah, so managing a natural history collection is, again, a whole 'nother field, right?

DEBRA SANDERS: It's a whole 'nother field. And there, I was fortunate that I had a natural history background. You know, that's kind of what I had been for -- to be an interpreter.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DEBRA SANDERS: You know, that's kind of what I had been studying, so I already knew plant classification, and I already knew that stuff. So that was just an easy kind of thing to blend in.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DEBRA SANDERS: But it was just a lot.

[00:29:01]KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah. And what about storage for all these collections? Is it all stored in the same place?

DEBRA SANDERS: Two different rooms. Separate. You know, like, archeology even is separate. You know, it's in the Mascot.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh.

DEBRA SANDERS: Upstairs Mascot.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh, ok.

DEBRA SANDERS: Most of the archeology is there. I think all of it is there. Used to be. History, a lot of the history and archives is in the Pantheon.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DEBRA SANDERS: But then there's a separate room that -- in the Pantheon, that holds the natural history collection.

KAREN BREWSTER: Huh.

DEBRA SANDERS: So it's off -- it's got to be by itself.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah. And then, of course the -- what we call the SSB, which is Rapuzzi Collection.

KAREN BREWSTER: And SSB stands for?

DEBRA SANDERS: Stands for Stuff Storage Building. We made that up. It's stuff.

KAREN BREWSTER: Well, that's true.

DEBRA SANDERS: And the name stuck. So SSB. That's what it's still called.

KAREN BREWSTER: That's good. [00:30:01]Um, and so, those storage areas, are they climate controlled?

DEBRA SANDERS: Yes.

KAREN BREWSTER: They are?

DEBRA SANDERS: Yes. The one that has the worst trouble is the natural history. I think they've done some work on that, though. I think it's better. It just had kind of an air cond -- it had a heater, but it didn't have any air conditioning in it at all.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DEBRA SANDERS: And it would get stuffy up there in the summer.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DEBRA SANDERS: But I don't know, I think they've added something to that now.

KAREN BREWSTER: And so, was it any impact on the collections?

DEBRA SANDERS: No, we were pretty lucky, as far as I knew. We didn't -- we never saw mold, or we never had -- we never had insects, which is pretty amazing in a natural history collection.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

DEBRA SANDERS: I never noticed any insects. Not much, anyway.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DEBRA SANDERS: You know, just an occasional something.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DEBRA SANDERS: But no infestations or anything.

KAREN BREWSTER: And no roof leaking in any of those old buildings?

DEBRA SANDERS: 'Cause they'd been restored. They'd all been restored.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah. Nope. No roof leaking.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh. [00:31:00]Ok, so now tell me about the infamous Rapuzzi Collection.

DEBRA SANDERS: Oh, gosh.

KAREN BREWSTER: Your -- your -- your side of the story.

DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah, 'cause um, when I was hired, I was informed that we were getting this collection. This was in 1991.

KAREN BREWSTER: Ok.

DEBRA SANDERS: I was told, "We're acquiring this new, huge collection." And they even leased or bought a big Suburban van for me. 'Cause they knew I was going to need to be moving this collection around. Well, it didn't happen. So I actually let the natural resource crew and the archeologists have the Suburban 'cause I didn't need it, you know.

KAREN BREWSTER: That was nice, yeah.

DEBRA SANDERS: So anyway, that -- they ended up with that. So then, you know, it just kind of fell through, there to start with. Um, and then it was revived. The whole idea of acquiring this collection was revived. Um, I don't remember exactly what year it was, but um, anyway, I was there for the entire going through it.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yep.

[00:32:06]DEBRA SANDERS: I was there when we acquired it, and, you know, it was Judy Munns.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DEBRA SANDERS: The city's curator and I, that went through the entire collection and we had, you know, Deb and one of Judy's techs that were over helping us a lot and doing the inventory. And who claims what, and putting tags on it, and entering the data in the database. And it was fun. It was really fun. It was -- we just never knew what we were going to come up on, you know.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DEBRA SANDERS: And it got less fun as we got into some of the side -- the back storage buildings, which were just full of moldy equipment and, you know, stuff like that. It was less fun, but we still found some pretty amazing, you know, stuff in there.

[00:32:53]KAREN BREWSTER: Do you have some examples of some of those great finds?

DEBRA SANDERS: I'm trying to think of some of my favorite. Oh, I -- I loved everything that came out of Soapy Smith.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DEBRA SANDERS: You know, all the different baskets, and the mannequins.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DEBRA SANDERS: You know, the old Martin Itjen mannequins. And some of the -- some of the weapons that were found. You know, that were -- there's one old rusty pistol that was a very rare find.

KAREN BREWSTER: Hm.

DEBRA SANDERS: Which ended up -- you should probably cross that off your list because that became controversial. Anyway, um, some really neat, you know, just individual Rapuzzi stuff. Stuff that they had collected, like books.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DEBRA SANDERS: And um, oh my gosh. There was just so much. Photos. You know, the photos out of that collection are phenomenal.

KAREN BREWSTER: So, I didn't realize he had photos, as well.

DEBRA SANDERS: Um-hm.

KAREN BREWSTER: And they were in decent shape?

DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah. Yeah. Decent, really good shape.

KAREN BREWSTER: Huh.

[00:33:58]DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah, that's -- that is when we started digitizing, is that collection of photos.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DEBRA SANDERS: And there's some images we'd never seen before that came out of that collection. That could be the most valuable thing out of that whole collection, is those photos.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

DEBRA SANDERS: But um, I would love to be able to -- I didn't see Soapy's finished.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

DEBRA SANDERS: I was involved in furnishings. I was involved in the land -- the wallpapering and picking what was going to go where.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DEBRA SANDERS: You know, figuring all that out. Actually, figuring out which artifact was gonna go there. So I was there for that. And then I retired.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DEBRA SANDERS: So, um, I'd love to see -- I mean, I've seen photos. People have sent me photos and stuff, but I think that was a really fun project. That was a really good one.

[00:34:47]KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah. So the Rapuzzi photo collection, what's the time period?

DEBRA SANDERS: Um, you know, there's gold rush-era photos, all the way up 'til the '80's.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh.

DEBRA SANDERS: 'Cause the Rapuzzis were still in town in the '80's.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DEBRA SANDERS: So it -- it really -- and the whole Martin Itjen story, with the Soapy Smith Museum.

KAREN BREWSTER: Uh-huh.

DEBRA SANDERS: It included all of that. So there were all these pictures of the Soapy Smith Museum.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah, cool.

DEBRA SANDERS: You know, every corner of it, practically.

KAREN BREWSTER: Wow.

DEBRA SANDERS: So you could see, you know, what was where, and, you know, that was invaluable.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right. That -- so that -- those photos were used to help recreate the concept of the -- what's the museum now, the Jeff. Smiths Parlor.

DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah. Yeah, absolutely. [00:35:32]And then, I never quite have figured out how -- now, what's Ron's last name?

KAREN BREWSTER: Klein.

DEBRA SANDERS: Thank you. Yeah, he was friends with Phyllis Brown, who owned -- she was the last Rapuzzi, you know, really, that owned that collection, and somehow or another, he got to be friends with her, and he knew that collection inside out. So he would come up and

spend time, you know, and go through -- That's, geez, I wouldn't have been able to know what half of that stuff was if it hadn't been for Ron.

KAREN BREWSTER: And is he -- he was the photographer from Juneau?

DEBRA SANDERS: Yes. Yes.

KAREN BREWSTER: Who does those --

DEBRA SANDERS: Panoramic.

KAREN BREWSTER: -- panoramic ones. Right, ok.

DEBRA SANDERS: Yes. Oh -- oh. [00:36:09]You know, probably one of the coolest things out of that collection is the Martin Itjen street car.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh, that was that collection?

DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah.

KAREN BREWSTER: Ok.

DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah. That -- that is just one of the coolest things.

KAREN BREWSTER: And what kind of shape was it in?

DEBRA SANDERS: Good.

KAREN BREWSTER: Really?

DEBRA SANDERS: They used to -- up until, I think, right before I got there, they used to crank that thing up and run it in the Fourth of July parade.

KAREN BREWSTER: Wow. I guess you guys decided that was no longer a good idea?

DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. And it was stuck away in this other building.

Nobody knew where it was. 'Cause they didn't want it sabotaged or anything. You know, they were really careful to keep that quiet. So now I think it's restored, and, you know, they've done a lot with it. So but that was really a cool thing.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah, very cool.

DEBRA SANDERS: Yep. Yeah.

[00:37:04]KAREN BREWSTER: And my understanding that the Rapuzzi Collection was in multiple buildings?

DEBRA SANDERS: Yes.

KAREN BREWSTER: In Skagway.

DEBRA SANDERS: Yes.

KAREN BREWSTER: So yeah, how do you even know where to start?

DEBRA SANDERS: We didn't. Well, and that was one thing, is that, um, some of the buildings that were in really poor shape, Ron had removed the stuff. And Phyllis owned another building called the Alascom. It was the old Alascom building. And she had a house on one end of it.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DEBRA SANDERS: And so, the other end was just open, and so, Ron brought in shelves, and he just hauled a lot of the stuff and put it on those shelves. And so, he saved a lot of the stuff, you know. Um, a lot of the buildings that were still in really poor condition, like the 5th Avenue warehouse and commissary, um, it was mostly great big equipment and, you know, stuff like that that was still in it.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DEBRA SANDERS: When we got there. [00:38:02]The Rapuzzi house was still absolutely full of stuff, and they had an attic and a basement.

KAREN BREWSTER: Wow.

DEBRA SANDERS: But that stuff was in pretty good condition, 'cause the house was still in pretty good condition. But I think, you know, Ron saving all that stuff out of the Soapy Smith Museum --

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DEBRA SANDERS: -- and those other two buildings that were in pretty poor condition, um, you know, that's what kinda saved it.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DEBRA SANDERS: And then we had everything -- so that's the stuff we started with first.

KAREN BREWSTER: Was the stuff Ron had saved?

DEBRA SANDERS: Yep. Yeah. 'Cause we figured he was gonna pull the good stuff.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DEBRA SANDERS: And we would need to deal with that stuff first.

KAREN BREWSTER: And did he pull the good stuff?

DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah, he did. He did. Um, there was -- you know, he didn't worry about the house.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DEBRA SANDERS: Because it was in good shape.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DEBRA SANDERS: But most of that stuff, I mean, there was some older things in the house, but most of that was '60's, '70's, '80's, you know, later --

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DEBRA SANDERS: -- later stuff.

[00:38:58]KAREN BREWSTER: Well, I was thinking, in some of those older buildings that were maybe structurally not as sound --

DEBRA SANDERS: Um-hm.

KAREN BREWSTER: -- was that an issue for you guys, going in? Were there safety concerns?

DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah, and, you know, especially -- well, and asbestos and --

KAREN BREWSTER: And mold and --

DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah, it was. It was. Like, there were a couple times when we were working in the 5th Avenue warehouse that we came up on something that had asbestos, and we had to close down. You know, and wait and get it mitigated, and then we could go back in again. So, yeah, and -- it was -- we were kind of a pilot project. You know, working with something like this collection where we didn't know what we were going to be coming up on.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DEBRA SANDERS: We did the best for establishing our safety protocol. You know, I had written up safety things.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DEBRA SANDERS: But some of the staff were still not good with it. I -- you know, and I couldn't do any more.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DEBRA SANDERS: We would wear masks. We would wear gloves. We would, you know, do the best we could. But we could open up a box of something in the collection, and we didn't know what was in it.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

DEBRA SANDERS: So you know, you had to be kinda willing. You had to be kinda easygoing about that kinda stuff. And it was kinda hard for some people.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

DEBRA SANDERS: To deal with that.

[00:40:16]KAREN BREWSTER: I was going to say, did you ever open a box and find critters in there?

DEBRA SANDERS: Oh, yeah. You know, dead -- dead stuff, usually.

KAREN BREWSTER: Usually dead stuff.

DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah.

KAREN BREWSTER: So you didn't open and find a live mouse had settled in there.

DEBRA SANDERS: No. I can't remember that happening. I mean, we'd have mice running around and stuff, but um, no, I don't recall that.

KAREN BREWSTER: And in Skagway, thank goodness, you don't have snakes that might come out of the box.

DEBRA SANDERS: No. Oh, I'll have to tell you my snake story from this morning later.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh, ok.

DEBRA SANDERS: Oh, my gosh. It's interesting.

[00:40:48]KAREN BREWSTER: Um, but I was thinking there are some employees who might be excessively sensitive to mold or dust.

DEBRA SANDERS: Yes.

KAREN BREWSTER: Or things like that. So.

DEBRA SANDERS: We had res -- we actually had respirators, you know. If it -- um, we kind of left it up to individuals, depending on where we were working.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DEBRA SANDERS: A lot of times, we'd at least require --

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DEBRA SANDERS: -- mouth -- you know, a dust mask.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DEBRA SANDERS: But we had available, you know, full gear respirators.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DEBRA SANDERS: And so, if anyone wanted to wear 'em, they sure were more than welcome to. We never, you know.

[00:41:20]KAREN BREWSTER: Were there staff that said, "I can't work on this. I have to do something else."

DEBRA SANDERS: Well, ok, but the people we hired specifically for that project.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DEBRA SANDERS: They had to be aware. But I did lose one of them, too.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah.

KAREN BREWSTER: Because just the -- the health reasons?

DEBRA SANDERS: Um, yes.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah. Yeah.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah.

KAREN BREWSTER: 'Cause yeah, it's certainly not for everybody.

DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah, and she wanted me to have a crystal ball and be able to know what, you know, everything we were going to encounter.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right. And there weren't some other duties you could give her, like back in the office, so she wouldn't have to --

DEBRA SANDERS: She was a -- she was hired specifically for Rapuzzi Collection.

KAREN BREWSTER: Well, I didn't know if you could sit at the computer and do the database part while somebody else is doing --

DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah. Well, we did that as much as possible.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right. But --

DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah.

KAREN BREWSTER: But they -- the people you hired had to be able to do everything?

DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah. Yeah. We really did because, you know, um, certain days, we would need, you know, everybody in working, you know.

KAREN BREWSTER: Ok.

DEBRA SANDERS: If we'd be working hard to try to move things around or whatever, we would just need, you know, all hands on deck, so to speak.

[00:42:26]KAREN BREWSTER: How many people did you have ever at one time working on that project?

DEBRA SANDERS: Mm, let's see. Counting Judy and I, five or six. Six, I think, at the most.

KAREN BREWSTER: Ok. Um, as we said, we know it was you, Judy, and Deb Boettcher.

DEBRA SANDERS: Um-hm.

KAREN BREWSTER: Anybody else you care to mention specifically?

DEBRA SANDERS: Um, two of Judy's -- well, let's see. Um, Deb Hewlett from the museum.

KAREN BREWSTER: From the city museum?

DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah. She was -- she was pretty involved with it.

KAREN BREWSTER: Ok.

DEBRA SANDERS: I'm not sure she's still there.

KAREN BREWSTER: I don't know. [00:43:02]Um, I was wondering how you and Judy Munns went through and made the decision about who gets what?

DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah, that was pretty fun. Um, you know, for the most part, we had no problem with that. The way we sort of had it set up is that pretty much anything that was gold rush went to the park.

KAREN BREWSTER: Ok.

DEBRA SANDERS: Although you start ending up with stuff that's duplicates.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DEBRA SANDERS: Then it's easy, you know.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DEBRA SANDERS: Um, things that are more Skagway history-related went to the city museum. Um, but then where we ended up having to do some wheeling and dealing was some of the stuff that we ended up needing for Soapy Smith's museum. Um, that had been claimed by the city. But -- 'cause we did that before we figured out furnishings for Soapy's.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh, ok.

DEBRA SANDERS: We claimed stuff before. Um, but Judy was always really good about, you know -- And if there was something we both really, really wanted, we'd wheel and deal a little, you know.

KAREN BREWSTER: You didn't arm-wrestle for it?

DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah, or ok, you can have that if I can have this. We'd do that kind of thing.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DEBRA SANDERS: You know, we worked together, actually, very, very well.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DEBRA SANDERS: It was very fortunate. We could've been duking it out.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah. [00:44:21]Well, and did you both have, um, collection -- what are they called? Management plans, or --

DEBRA SANDERS: Yes.

KAREN BREWSTER: Like -- like a mission statement.

DEBRA SANDERS: Yes. Yes.

KAREN BREWSTER: What's that called for a collection?

DEBRA SANDERS: Collection management plan.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah, that said, this is the type of material we have.

DEBRA SANDERS: Yes.

KAREN BREWSTER: And that -- so you could use that to guide you.

DEBRA SANDERS: A scope of collections.

KAREN BREWSTER: That's the word.

DEBRA SANDERS: Scope of collections statement.

KAREN BREWSTER: Scope of collections, thank you.

DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah, I had to -- see, I'm rusty on these.

KAREN BREWSTER: Me, too. I couldn't think of the word.

DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah. Scope of collections.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

DEBRA SANDERS: Yes, we both did.

KAREN BREWSTER: And was that helpful?

DEBRA SANDERS: Yes, except that Judy's spilled over to the gold rush.

KAREN BREWSTER: Hm.

DEBRA SANDERS: You know, because that is part of Skagway history.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DEBRA SANDERS: So that's where she was also wanting gold rush stuff. So, I mean, you know, sure. Some of it. You know, it worked out. [00:45:10]And then because the Park Service couldn't have any sales.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DEBRA SANDERS: You know, the stuff that neither of us wanted.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

DEBRA SANDERS: Well, we would designate that with -- see, we would do -- we had colored -- colored little dots. And we had a code, like, um, blue dot was city-owned. Red dot was park-owned. And yellow dots, nobody really wanted.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DEBRA SANDERS: And then we had a numbering system. Like, I think A -- let's see, how'd we do that. K was for the park or something, and I don't know. I can't remember. But it seemed like A was for the yellow stuff that nobody really wanted. But the city still had to claim responsibility for that 'cause they could sell. They could have auctions.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DEBRA SANDERS: They could offer it to other museums or whatever, where the park couldn't.

[00:45:59]KAREN BREWSTER: I know the park couldn't sell it, but the park couldn't acquire it and then offer it to another museum?

DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah, we could do that.

KAREN BREWSTER: Ok.

DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah, we could do that. But that's harder. That's kinda hard.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah. And the way -- my understanding -- clarify, that the way the collection was acquired, it was actually sort of all bought and given to the city so that they could sell what was to be disposed of?

DEBRA SANDERS: I believe that is true.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

DEBRA SANDERS: I believe that is true. But then, the Park Service paid --

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DEBRA SANDERS: -- actually, for it, too, but to start with, I think, that is exactly true.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right. And because --

DEBRA SANDERS: That's the way they were able to do it.

KAREN BREWSTER: Because there was so much that was going to have to be disposed of.

DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah.

KAREN BREWSTER: And the park would have a problem.

DEBRA SANDERS: That's right.

KAREN BREWSTER: Doing that.

DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah, that's exactly right. Yeah, and I -- you know, I think Judy has had some sales now, but it took her forever to be able to get that together.

[00:46:49]KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah. Well, it's an issue in museum collections everywhere, and archives --

DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah.

KAREN BREWSTER: -- too. Is what do you do with the stuff that you can't use or doesn't fit with your scope of collections?

DEBRA SANDERS: That's hard.

KAREN BREWSTER: So were there other things in the Park Service collections that you had to deal with that?

DEBRA SANDERS: No, I think, you know, the Rapuzzi Collection, because we were -- well, I'm trying to think of some of the other collections we may have gotten in as a whole. It wouldn't be that much that didn't really fit, so we would just keep it.

KAREN BREWSTER: Ok.

DEBRA SANDERS: For the most part. Just not make an issue of it.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah. So the Park Service has different policies than other -- than, like, public museums or private museums?

DEBRA SANDERS: I'm sure they are.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah, I'm sure they are. Um, yeah, we're very, very strict as far as when you -- you know, when you acquire something. You know, and yeah, you can't sell or, you know, you just can't dispose of very easily.

KAREN BREWSTER: And you can't just throw it in the trash?

DEBRA SANDERS: You can -- you can deaccession. If -- if things are just so deteriorated and it doesn't fit your scope or whatever, you can, you know -- you have to deaccession, though. It has to still be documented.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DEBRA SANDERS: And then you can deaccession.

KAREN BREWSTER: And then dispose of?

DEBRA SANDERS: Um-hm. Dispose of. [00:48:05]Yeah, one of my first projects was of a disposal. The Mascot Saloon, all the Rainier Beer bottles that are in there -- uh, Harpers Ferry is the one that did that project. And so, they contracted out those beer bottles to the lowest bidder, which happened to be Jamestown Glassworks, which hand-blows their bottles. Well, Rainier Beer bottles were never hand-blown.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DEBRA SANDERS: So we ended up with this collection of bottles. They were all different. Kinda neat, right?

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DEBRA SANDERS: But they weren't historically correct. So we were able to find, actually, a beer bottle collector in Washington who kept -- would find 'em for us.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh.

DEBRA SANDERS: And I can't remember that guy's name, but um, we -- so we would acquire a few at a time from him. We would buy 'em from him.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DEBRA SANDERS: 'Til we had -- we needed two hundred.

KAREN BREWSTER: Wow.

DEBRA SANDERS: 'Cause they're all over in the window.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DEBRA SANDERS: And everything like that. And then, um, I -- you know, we deaccessioned all those beautiful bottles. But one of the maintenance guys and I took 'em out to a trash bin and smashed 'em. 'Cause we had to.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

DEBRA SANDERS: 'Cause otherwise, they're going to end up --

[00:49:16]KAREN BREWSTER: But why did Harpers Ferry get those created to not -- not match?

DEBRA SANDERS: Who knows. That was just -- you know, they make mistakes like that.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

DEBRA SANDERS: They just do. They should've just said no, we can't do it that way, but I think it was kind of their quickest, easiest way to do it, and that's what they did.

KAREN BREWSTER: Well, I didn't realize. I thought all those bottles in the Mascot came from the excavations.

DEBRA SANDERS: No. No.

KAREN BREWSTER: They're repro -- no, they're not reproductions.

DEBRA SANDERS: They're original historic bottles.
KAREN BREWSTER: But not necessarily from --
DEBRA SANDERS: But not from --
KAREN BREWSTER: -- Skagway?
DEBRA SANDERS: Correct. Yeah.
KAREN BREWSTER: Sneaky.
DEBRA SANDERS: We're good at those things.
KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah. [00:49:55]Back to the Rapuzzi and the weeding all that out.
DEBRA SANDERS: Um-hm.
KAREN BREWSTER: So the Park Service did not get extra things? You got what you identified?
DEBRA SANDERS: Correct.
KAREN BREWSTER: All the extra stuff, Judy in the city has to deal with?
DEBRA SANDERS: Correct. Yes. Yeah, that's exactly right. Yeah, we only claimed and then cataloged the stuff that fit our scope of collections.
KAREN BREWSTER: Right.
DEBRA SANDERS: That we wanted.
KAREN BREWSTER: And which was how many thousands of objects.
DEBRA SANDERS: Phew!
KAREN BREWSTER: Do you remember?
DEBRA SANDERS: No. You know, the -- they said that that whole collection originally was supposedly millions. I can't even remember what they said.
KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.
DEBRA SANDERS: And by the time we weeded it all out, really, and we didn't catalog every single piece of paper.
KAREN BREWSTER: Right.
DEBRA SANDERS: You know. It turned out to be more like, I think it was around thirty-three thousand or something like that.
KAREN BREWSTER: Right.
DEBRA SANDERS: Don't quote me exactly on that number, but it was a lot less than what they anticipated. And I just don't recall how many thousand. Deb would be able to tell you that.
KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah, Deb -- I was just -- the general number of -- you know, it was a lot.
DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah, it was a lot. It was a lot. But not as many as Judy ended up having to deal with.
[00:51:07]KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah. Well, and I was, you know, wondering -- I've heard about the Rapuzzi Collection and he had so many multiples of things. You know, like, old vacuum cleaners or machine parts and things, you couldn't just leave those in the buildings and shut the door and walk away and not even take them?
DEBRA SANDERS: Well, except, you know, they had plans for each of the buildings.
KAREN BREWSTER: Oh.
DEBRA SANDERS: Eventually.
KAREN BREWSTER: So --

DEBRA SANDERS: Sure, you know, otherwise -- And we did end up, like the 5th Avenue, we cleaned out quite a bit of it 'cause they were needing to do a lot of restoration work. That thing was falling apart.

KAREN BREWSTER: Uh-huh.

DEBRA SANDERS: And everyone had claimed what they wanted it to be. But uh, Deb said they still haven't decided. They're still going round and about.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DEBRA SANDERS: About what to do with that building.

KAREN BREWSTER: Is that the -- is that the, um, what they call the YMCA?

DEBRA SANDERS: Yes. Meyer's Meat Market?

KAREN BREWSTER: Meyer's -- yeah.

DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah.

KAREN BREWSTER: That's the building that -- ?

DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah.

KAREN BREWSTER: They've been in active restoration, at least on the building. The interior, yes, is probably still being debated.

DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah. So that's why we had to kind of empty it out.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

[00:52:06]DEBRA SANDERS: And another one that had so much stuff in it was the commissary building next to Soapy's.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DEBRA SANDERS: Which belongs to the city. They own that building.

KAREN BREWSTER: And that was a World War II building?

DEBRA SANDERS: Yes. Yeah. It's a pretty neat building, really.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

DEBRA SANDERS: And I don't know -- I mean, we didn't have it cleaned out when I left. Things were already, you know, inventoried and stuff.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DEBRA SANDERS: But so -- but Judy was still acquiring storage buildings and trying to figure out where she was going to put everything.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

DEBRA SANDERS: Too.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah, I mean, it's not all in her museum collection area in her -- the McCabe building. That's where they are, right? Yeah.

DEBRA SANDERS: No, she had to acquire all sorts of storage sheds, and -- not sheds, but what do you call those units?

KAREN BREWSTER: Like ATCO units?

DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah. Yeah, she was just -- yeah. I felt bad for her.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

DEBRA SANDERS: Here, we were getting the state-of-the-art building, you know, for the Rapuzzi Collection, and she was struggling to find places to put stuff.

[00:53:04]KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah. And that's interesting that that commissary building, because it's city-owned, the restoration and maybe use for exhibits isn't happening because it's not Park Service?

DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah, it's not a pri -- yeah. Not a priority for the city.

KAREN BREWSTER: And the Park Service won't do it for non-Park Service buildings? They only do that restoration on buildings they've acquired, right?

DEBRA SANDERS: That's correct. Yeah. That's correct. They'll help. You know, they'll advise.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DEBRA SANDERS: And stuff like that. And help other people that are trying to restore a historic building.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DEBRA SANDERS: And they'll help 'em get grants, maybe.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DEBRA SANDERS: Or you know, that kind of a deal. Yeah.

KAREN BREWSTER: They won't pay for it?

DEBRA SANDERS: They won't pay for it.

[00:53:45]KAREN BREWSTER: So in all that negotiation with Judy, as you said, you guys sometimes kinda bartered, um, are there things that you wish the Park Service could've gotten that you didn't get?

DEBRA SANDERS: Just the stuff that ended up needing to go into Soapy's. You know, which I -- I don't know how they ended up doing that. Whether they're just on loan from the city.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DEBRA SANDERS: That kinda stuff, or whether Judy ended up -- 'cause that was after I left.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DEBRA SANDERS: Um, but you know, if -- if we'd had a chance -- but we couldn't. I was going to say, if we'd been able to do it vice versa. If we'd been able to figure out a furnishing plan for the Soapy building first --

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DEBRA SANDERS: -- it would've been a lot easier. Then I would've said, well, we need this for Soapy's. But we couldn't do that 'cause we hadn't -- we didn't have the photos to study yet, or we couldn't do it.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah. Yeah.

DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah.

[00:54:36]KAREN BREWSTER: And do those things have to be in Soapy's, or could you have used other objects in Soapy's?

DEBRA SANDERS: Uh, it would've been noticeable. I mean, some of the, like the baskets and the bottles, covered bottles and um, the cigar cutter that's on the counter, and, you know, some of those items are so distinct that, you know, we could've maybe had a replica made or something, but uh. You know, that's such a cool thing about that building is all the stuff is original in there.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah. Yeah. And it's because you had the photos to know what had been there originally?

DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah.

KAREN BREWSTER: That the idea was to replicate that?

DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah. Yeah. Those photos were wonderful.

[00:55:21]KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah. So yeah, talking about replicas, what's the sense in exhibit work of using replicas? What's your take on that?

DEBRA SANDERS: Well, you know, you don't if you can help it.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DEBRA SANDERS: But um, well, the Moore House, we ended up having to quite a bit. Or similar items. Maybe not replicas, but, you know, similar historic items.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DEBRA SANDERS: Like the Rainier bottles.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DEBRA SANDERS: Um, I mean, if you -- if you need to to create the scene, you know, then that's ok.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DEBRA SANDERS: But you -- you let people know. Like I would always have a catalog book for the cur -- or for the interpreters.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DEBRA SANDERS: And it would tell what was original and what was a replica or what had been purchased for the exhibit. So if somebody, you know, on a tour asked, they had the information, you know, that they could go to. So that they wouldn't say, "Oh yeah, it's all original." You know.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DEBRA SANDERS: They would have that information.

[00:56:16]KAREN BREWSTER: Um, I have questions about the Moore House, but you brought up the exhibit -- what's the, um, connection or the role of a curator in exhibit planning and design versus the interpretation exhibits person?

DEBRA SANDERS: You're both involved pretty heavily. But the curator -- really the interpreter is going to be the content, you know, what's said, pretty much.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DEBRA SANDERS: But the curator is involved with any of the props, you know, any of the artifacts or anything like that that's going to be in there.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DEBRA SANDERS: So you work together. You know, I actually was involved with helping out with several major exhibits while I was there, and yeah, you -- it's fun. And then, you usually end up contracting somebody else out to actually come and do the -- the work.

KAREN BREWSTER: The fabrication?

DEBRA SANDERS: Harpers -- yeah. Harpers Ferry used to do most of it, but they don't anymore. It's just too much. So they still get involved, but there's Cornerstone out of Portland, Oregon. I mean, there's different companies now.

KAREN BREWSTER: That do the fabrication part?

DEBRA SANDERS: Yes. Yeah. And so, they'll come to the park and work with the interpreter and the curator and whoever else, you know, and get an idea of what -- get an idea of what, you know, what -- what exists that can be used for the exhibit already.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DEBRA SANDERS: And then, just kind of work off of that.

[00:57:35]KAREN BREWSTER: And so, what were some of those exhibits you worked on?

DEBRA SANDERS: Um, well, I was there to finish up the Mascot.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DEBRA SANDERS: But the Moore House, and the Moore Cabin were the big ones, yeah.

KAREN BREWSTER: Ok. And so, um, you said the interpretive person, sort of -- they write the text, sort of the narrative, first?

DEBRA SANDERS: Um --

KAREN BREWSTER: And then they show it to you, and you say, "Oh, I think this object could go there. This could go there."

DEBRA SANDERS: Well, you know, actually, the company that gets hired ends up even doing the writing.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh, really?

DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah. They'll work -- you know, they'll work with the interpreter to kinda see what the story needs to be.

KAREN BREWSTER: Ok.

DEBRA SANDERS: And the interpreter might help do the writing, but pretty much everything I've remembered, the actual writing is also done by the contractor.

KAREN BREWSTER: Uh-huh. But then again, you -- so you're involved at the beginning with the discussion about what's the story that needs to be told?

DEBRA SANDERS: Yes. Yes. Yeah. And then, also you know, what -- what do you want to tell? And then, what can you use to tell the story?

KAREN BREWSTER: Ok.

DEBRA SANDERS: You know, so that they get a whole idea of that kind of an idea. And the park will have a concept of what they want, you know, to go into a building or a room.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DEBRA SANDERS: And then, the contractor works with the park to help design the cases, if there's cases, or, you know, the text and the little display units, and, you know, all that kind of stuff.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DEBRA SANDERS: 'Cause they're the experts, you know, on that kind of stuff.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right. But so let's say that contractor, they come to Skagway. Do you take them through the collections and show them things?

DEBRA SANDERS: Sure. Yeah, you kind of get an idea ahead of time, you know, as to what could be used.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DEBRA SANDERS: Um, and then that gives them a concept, you know, of what could be used as a prop. And that might sway their wording a little, or, you know, that kind of thing.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right. Or yeah, if you have a great object, you don't have to use the words at all.

DEBRA SANDERS: Right. Right.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right. [00:59:28]So tell me about the Moore House and Cabin project. 'Cause that sounds like that was your -- a biggie.

DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah. Yeah. You know, the Rapuzzi Collection kind of was the icing on the cake at the end, but um, the Moore House was the last of the original buildings the park acquired to get funded for restoration.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DEBRA SANDERS: And it was decided to turn it in -- The cabin had already been restored, but we ended up doing a lot more work to it. The cabin, just quickly on that one, what we ended up doing because it was -- it had original newspaper all over the walls and the ceiling and everything, and that was where the Moores originally -- that was their very first building that they built.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DEBRA SANDERS: Um, and we were losing that newspaper right and left. So we hired a paper conservator to come in. Eileen Clancy, and she's -- she used to be out of Calif -- Oregon? I don't remember. She's moved around. She's done several projects for us. But so, she ended up coming in and helping document, photographing every inch of that. And then, we had a company replicate the newspaper.

KAREN BREWSTER: Hm.

DEBRA SANDERS: And put it back up. But we left all the holes where -- you know, we didn't try to fill in what wasn't there already.

KAREN BREWSTER: Ok.

DEBRA SANDERS: And they'd have 'em on these panels so that you can actually in the winter time, remove 'em.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh.

DEBRA SANDERS: And store 'em, you know, somewhere climate controlled.

KAREN BREWSTER: Ok.

DEBRA SANDERS: And then, that's one of Deb's things she does.

KAREN BREWSTER: In the spring.

DEBRA SANDERS: In the spring, is puts those panels back out in the Moore Cabin. And so that was -- that was a really interesting project.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

DEBRA SANDERS: We were finding Ben Moore's signature on the wall, and, you know, stuff like that.

KAREN BREWSTER: Now, behind the newspaper, or on the newspaper?

DEBRA SANDERS: Up above on one of the little boards that we hadn't noticed -- that nobody'd really noticed it before, you know, kind of a deal. So that was kind of fun.

KAREN BREWSTER: And that's --

DEBRA SANDERS: And they were keeping a tally of different things, and --

[01:01:27]KAREN BREWSTER: Did they preserve some of the original newspaper?

DEBRA SANDERS: We preserved all of it.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh, you did? Ok.

DEBRA SANDERS: Yep. It all got sent to a conservator.

KAREN BREWSTER: Ok.

DEBRA SANDERS: And it's all in folders.

KAREN BREWSTER: In the collections?

DEBRA SANDERS: In the collections. Map drawers, you know.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

DEBRA SANDERS: All labeled to exactly -- you know, each little section had its own numbers.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DEBRA SANDERS: And letters.

KAREN BREWSTER: It was mapped out. It's like a log cabin where you number each log and take it apart and put it back together?

DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah. Yeah. It's perfect. You know, that was just a really fun project.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

[01:01:57]DEBRA SANDERS: So the Moore House, they decided it was -- it was -- nnn. When I first moved there, they were using it to store old park furniture that they -- you know, desks and

tables and stuff like that. So, you know, we got all that stuff moved out, and yeah, then I was -- I got involved with the whole thing, the whole restoration project. Working, you know, with the conservators that were working on the building. Um, working with our crew doing the restoration. Um, working with Cornerstone to do the exhibits. And Harpers Ferry was involved with that. Um, working with the furnishings plan.

KAREN BREWSTER: And there was archeology done, I assume, for that house.

DEBRA SANDERS: Yes. Yeah. That was just being finished up when I got there. Cathy Spude.

KAREN BREWSTER: Ok.

DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah, was doing that stuff. Um --

KAREN BREWSTER: Well -- go ahead.

DEBRA SANDERS: No, I was just going to say, so yeah, it was like, um -- In this situation, we didn't have a whole lot of the original material from that house because then it had been upgraded, and someone else had lived in it.

KAREN BREWSTER: And the Kirmses lived in it?

DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah. Yeah, the Kirmses lived in it.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

DEBRA SANDERS: So we were able to -- actually, the Kirmses ,while I was there, had an auction when they were moving, kinda getting out and Georg -- George -- Georgette? She had -- no, Georgette was still there. She came to the dedication. I visited her in her house. Georgette Kirmse. Anyway, they had an auction, and we actually recognized a couple of items from the Moore House that we were able to purchase.

KAREN BREWSTER: Ok.

DEBRA SANDERS: To have put back in. But most of the items in the Moore House are replicas, or you know, historic pieces, but not original to the house. [01:03:48]Yeah, and we were getting close to the -- I'll always remember this. We were getting close to the dedication, and uh, Jeff Mull, who still does restor -- he does his own construction stuff in town now, but he was involved in a lot of the restoration work in town.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DEBRA SANDERS: He was a good friend of mine. And I was noticing, he was getting kinda grumpy. And so, one time I said, "Well, Jeff, you know, what's going on?" And he said, "The building is not going to be done in time for -- for the dedication." "What?" So he said, "No. This is what we still have to do." So we put the word out, and even Clay Alderson, the superintendent, was over there painting, sanding boards, you know. And we got the whole -- everybody on staff that could, spent any time -- I was over there every day. You know, anybody that could, we were over there putting our -- everything in, to get that done. And by golly, barely.

KAREN BREWSTER: Barely?

DEBRA SANDERS: Barely. We got that building put together by the time we needed it. But poor Jeff, he was, you know -- He just didn't think it was gonna happen.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

DEBRA SANDERS: And it wouldn't have, you know.

KAREN BREWSTER: Well, it's impressive that a superintendent would go and pick up a paintbrush.

DEBRA SANDERS: He was great. Too bad you can't -- I don't even know where -- are you going to get him?

KAREN BREWSTER: I already did.

DEBRA SANDERS: Yay.

[01:05:10]KAREN BREWSTER: So how did you know what the inside of the Moore House might have looked like?

DEBRA SANDERS: We had some pictures. But the majority of that collection is at the University of Alaska Fairbanks.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh.

DEBRA SANDERS: So I spent a week there. Um, Ben Moore had a photo album, and it had the house, room by room. Unfortunately, the page that was labeled "Moore House kitchen," the photo was gone.

KAREN BREWSTER: Ugh. I hate when that happens.

DEBRA SANDERS: And I think there was one other photo that was labeled that wasn't there.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DEBRA SANDERS: But it had, you know, several of the parlor. It had the bedroom. You know, it had everything else.

KAREN BREWSTER: Great.

DEBRA SANDERS: Oh, I know. The main -- the living room area was only partly photographed, so that's the area where we ended up -- the kitchen and that is where we ended up putting the cases with the exhibits and the text. You know, to tell the story.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DEBRA SANDERS: And then, the rest of it that was well documented, we refurnished.

KAREN BREWSTER: Ok.

DEBRA SANDERS: Is what we did.

[01:06:16]KAREN BREWSTER: And then, did you have in the collections all that period -- those period pieces? You say it wasn't necessarily what had been the Moore's, but did you have things you could put in, or did you have to go acquire?

DEBRA SANDERS: Harpers Ferry had to end up acquiring a lot of that stuff. Um, yeah, Brown, whatever his first name is, Bill Brown.

KAREN BREWSTER: Mm.

DEBRA SANDERS: He was the one that was involved with that. He had been at Harpers Ferry forever. He was really experienced at going to auctions and estate sales, you know, antique stores, stuff like that. And he already knew, you know, what was needed. Um, we did have -- I mean, we had items that belonged to the Moores, like diaries and, you know, photo albums and photo frames.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DEBRA SANDERS: And ivory pieces and some things like that, that ended up in the cases.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DEBRA SANDERS: 'Cause it didn't show them in the photos. So, you know, that's how we -- we did that.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DEBRA SANDERS: But so, yeah, most of the stuff in there, other than the original items, probably came from West Virginia, or you know, somewhere like that.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah. [01:07:21]Now how did you know that these pieces you had had belonged to the Moores?

DEBRA SANDERS: How did we get that collection? Georgette? I think.

KAREN BREWSTER: So when the Kirmeses moved into the house, they had them or something?

DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah. I think -- I can't remember exactly how that handful of wonderful Moore memorabilia, I mean, with Edith -- there's an autograph album for one of the girls.

KAREN BREWSTER: Cool.

DEBRA SANDERS: You know, all that kind of stuff that's just really cool. The -- you know, Ben Moore did her autograph for her -- signed, you know, did something for her.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

DEBRA SANDERS: And so, his writing is in there. And um -- but, I am trying to remember for sure where that collection came from, and I can't quite remember.

KAREN BREWSTER: But you think it was some sort of a local donation?

DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah. Yeah. I'm sure it was.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

DEBRA SANDERS: But I just don't remember who it was.

[01:08:10]KAREN BREWSTER: So when you say that you worked with the restoration crew, and you were there every day, what -- what is the curator doing out there in the field in a building?

DEBRA SANDERS: Helping them. And I only helped, actually, like in the maintenance building at the end. But I worked with the, um, like, who was do -- I'm trying to think who was doing the restoration plan on that. Who from the regional office?

KAREN BREWSTER: What was the date, uh, '90's?

DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah, it would've been late '90's.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um --

DEBRA SANDERS: Oh. Um, it wasn't Grant Crosby yet. It was Steve --

KAREN BREWSTER: Steve Peterson.

DEBRA SANDERS: Peterson. Steve Peterson.

KAREN BREWSTER: Ok.

DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah. He and I got to be friends. But, you know, I don't know, there's just something about when you're working with just figuring out the restoration of a building, too, it's an artifact. You know, when you think about it, the building is also an artifact. And so, they like having, you know, our input. Not that we're hanging around all the time.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DEBRA SANDERS: But they like our input. Yeah, Steve Peterson was a real fun one to work with, too. And Grant's great. He's, yeah.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah. [01:09:24]Um, but so what do you say, your input, what does that mean? I mean, what are you telling them? Like --

DEBRA SANDERS: Well, you know, ok.

KAREN BREWSTER: Did you stand there with a photo and say, "Ok, look at this."

DEBRA SANDERS: Well, you know, there again, when you go into the Moore House, if you take out everything, it still has the wallpaper up. It still has, you know, original flooring.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DEBRA SANDERS: Ceiling. One of the rooms actually had a painting.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh.

DEBRA SANDERS: Around the lamp or around the light. So then, you start talking about, "Well, ok, that's important. That has to be redone." That -- that painting needs to be re -- you know, preserved.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right. Don't tear out the wallpaper.

DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah. Yeah. Don't tear off the wallpaper. Ok, this is tongue-and-groove wall in here. There's some original wood board flooring. We need to preserve that.

KAREN BREWSTER: Ok.

DEBRA SANDERS: That kind of --

KAREN BREWSTER: Ok.

DEBRA SANDERS: Just that kind of stuff.

KAREN BREWSTER: But that helps, that sort of detail. 'Cause what -- what are you doing in there?

DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah.

KAREN BREWSTER: There are no objects in there anymore.

DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Just that kind of -- the fabric.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm. [01:10:25]And so, did the Moore House project get finished while you were there?

DEBRA SANDERS: Oh, yeah. Yeah. So that was --

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh, that's right, you said you had that celebration.

DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah. Yeah, that was -- when did we dedicate that one? '90 -- late '90's.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DEBRA SANDERS: I can't remember.

KAREN BREWSTER: Was Clay still the superintendent?

DEBRA SANDERS: Yes.

KAREN BREWSTER: So it would've been -- he left in '99.

DEBRA SANDERS: Ok. It was '97 or '98.

KAREN BREWSTER: It would've been before that.

DEBRA SANDERS: David Eslinger was the new chief of interpretation. And I was always angry because he got to cut the ribbon, and he'd just gotten there. He had no part in it.

KAREN BREWSTER: That's right.

DEBRA SANDERS: Oh, funny.

[01:11:06]KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah. Now, the Peniel Mission, which is behind the Moore House, was that a project you were involved in?

DEBRA SANDERS: Nnn --

KAREN BREWSTER: That was before?

DEBRA SANDERS: You know, the only way I was involved in that is helping put in -- helping to pick out furnishings -- furniture for the seasonal quarters.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh. That is not historic or --

DEBRA SANDERS: It was already -- no, it was already done. But our chief ranger at the time, Bruce Reed.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DEBRA SANDERS: Um, he was kind of put in charge of picking out the beds and the couches and all that for me -- you know, for that building.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

DEBRA SANDERS: And so, he wanted help. So I helped him with that. Other than that, no, it was -- it was done. That project --

KAREN BREWSTER: So you became an interior designer?

DEBRA SANDERS: I became the interior designer.

KAREN BREWSTER: Well, I stayed there. Thank you. It's lovely.

DEBRA SANDERS: Oh, you have?

KAREN BREWSTER: I don't know if it's the same furniture, but --

DEBRA SANDERS: Probably. Probably.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah, probably. [01:11:59]Uh, well, that Moore House does sound pretty exciting.

DEBRA SANDERS: It was fun.

KAREN BREWSTER: To go from beginning to end.

DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah. That was fun. That's the only time I've ever done that. You know, 'cause Faraway Ranch, when I got there, the restoration was done at Chiricahua.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DEBRA SANDERS: That was done, it was just putting the furnishings back in, so.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DEBRA SANDERS: But to start it from the beginning and see it through to the end was very rewarding. Yep.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah. [01:12:26]Are there, um, things that you wish you could have completed? Well, you said you wanted to see the Soapy thing.

DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah. Soapy's -- I would've -- I just didn't want to stay that long.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah. How about in terms of the collections management and the -- the process?

DEBRA SANDERS: No, I think, um, I felt pretty good. You know, I wan -- I really wanted to get the Rapuzzi Collection, um, you know, figured out.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DEBRA SANDERS: To get that done. And to figure out who's getting what, and to get it pretty well cataloged.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DEBRA SANDERS: You know, that was important to me. Um, I had no worries about leaving it at that stage. The -- yeah, Soapy Smith's was the thing. You know, that would've been -- 'cause I was very involved in the beginning of that.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DEBRA SANDERS: Um, that would've been fun, but um -- And, you know, I knew Deb knew what she was doing for cataloging, and, you know, I knew they'd get another good curator in and stuff, so I really wasn't -- that was all fine. That was all fine. I think I left it at a pretty good time overall.

[01:13:34]KAREN BREWSTER: Uh-huh. And the Soapy Smith, so you were involved in some of the exhibit planning, we should put this there and that, but you weren't there to actually physically put it in?

DEBRA SANDERS: No.

KAREN BREWSTER: So with the exhibit designing and planning, do you feel like it was going to be a good building?

DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah. Yeah. I think it was going to be super. I think just, you know, because it's original materials in there.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

DEBRA SANDERS: You know, you can say pretty much for everything, that was originally in here. That, you know, it belongs here. So, you know, and that really adds to it, I think.

[01:14:07]KAREN BREWSTER: And you don't worry about the impacts to those objects being out on display?

DEBRA SANDERS: Well, you know, I think they're being very, very careful. Yeah, you always do. You know, as a curator, you know, those automatons that are moving around in there.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

DEBRA SANDERS: And all that kind of stuff, you know. But as a curator you do, but I think it's more important to have 'em. And I think the way they're doing their tours now, too. They're not just letting people wander through, and they're restricting the numbers and all that. I think they're doing the best they can, you know, for making sure things stay good. And I don't know what they've done for climate control.

KAREN BREWSTER: I don't know.

DEBRA SANDERS: I really don't know. But those moose in the back, you know, those were a nightmare.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

DEBRA SANDERS: But it all came together. And from the pictures I've seen, it's done very, very well.

[01:14:58]KAREN BREWSTER: Now is the Mascot climate controlled for the exhibits?

DEBRA SANDERS: No. Nope. They -- they put those doors wide open in the summer. At least they used to.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm. And so, is there a plan to rotate objects off exhibit?

DEBRA SANDERS: You know, most of the stuff -- you know, they were even talking about redoing that whole exhibit.

KAREN BREWSTER: Hm.

DEBRA SANDERS: And I know Deb fought against that.

KAREN BREWSTER: Why?

DEBRA SANDERS: She likes things the way they are. You know. And sometimes, you know, because the chief of interp at the time, can't think of his name. He came after I was there. But um, he was into the new stuff, you know, where you can carry around a little box, and listen to --

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

DEBRA SANDERS: Or push a button and listen to stuff. And Deb likes the old-fashioned, you know, the mannequins at the bar, and, you know, she -- she just likes that all -- all that kind of stuff. And you know, part of me does, too. Part of me does, too. There's something about old museums and old --

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

DEBRA SANDERS: -- you know, exhibits that, um, have a charm to 'em.

[01:16:00]KAREN BREWSTER: So how do you negotiate that, um, difference of perspectives?

DEBRA SANDERS: I think it depends on your superintendent. Which direction they go, you know.

KAREN BREWSTER: So they're the final say?

DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah.

KAREN BREWSTER: If there's conflicts?

DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah, usually so. And then, if they can get money for it. You know, then you have to come up with funding if you're going to redo something.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DEBRA SANDERS: And I know they have. I was told they redid the exhibits in the depot and the admin building over there.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DEBRA SANDERS: Which I don't have any qualms about that anyway. Those were just cases, and, you know. That's -- that didn't matter.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DEBRA SANDERS: But the Mascot, one of the mannequins, I know they fashioned after Frank Norris. It looks just like Frank Norris.

KAREN BREWSTER: That's fun. Little -- little secret fun fact. [01:16:56]Um, yeah, well, and that's a question I was going to have about funding for collections versus other aspects of park activities. And how that went while you were at Klondike?

DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah, you know, a lot of funding, and I'm sure it's still that same way, it all depends on the curator or other people putting in these project statements.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DEBRA SANDERS: That you compete, you know, PMIS.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DEBRA SANDERS: And all these other systems that you just have to come up with some really good projects that get regional office's attention, you know, to get funded. So it, really, I think a lot of it is that. You know, just getting out there and putting out those projects.

KAREN BREWSTER: Do you feel when -- while you were there that your -- you were being supported by the park administration and were getting -- ?

DEBRA SANDERS: I'd say, yeah. Pretty much. I think so. It seems like it was -- you know, I had -- I felt like I had good support.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DEBRA SANDERS: Especially with Clay, yeah.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah. Did you have to fight for your dollars?

DEBRA SANDERS: Not too bad. Not too bad. It seem -- 'cause I don't know, I wasn't as greedy as a lot of the others were, either. I think the things that I was asking for were really legitimate needs, you know, kind of a deal. Instead of, oh, wouldn't it be nice to have this, or whatever.

KAREN BREWSTER: So there's recognition that the collections mattered?

DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah, for sure.

[01:18:22]KAREN BREWSTER: Now, in the structure of the park, the curator is under the cultural resources person?

DEBRA SANDERS: That's how it turned out. Um, when I first came on board, I was under the chief ranger.

KAREN BREWSTER: Ok.

DEBRA SANDERS: Um-hm. 'Cause we didn't have a chief of -- of cultural or natural resources.

KAREN BREWSTER: Ok.

DEBRA SANDERS: So -- and then, it was later on that they added the chief of cultural resources, which was under the superintendent.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DEBRA SANDERS: They really changed it around.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right. And -- and that first person hired is the chief of just resources in general. Was that Theresa Thibault?

DEBRA SANDERS: Yes, it was. Yeah. That's my memory, anyway, is she was the first one.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DEBRA SANDERS: And she was there quite a while.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm. [01:19:05]And how did that work, that structure? Did that -- how did that work?

DEBRA SANDERS: I think it was -- it was good. It doesn't really make sense to put it under the chief ranger.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

DEBRA SANDERS: You know, as such. And then, we had one person, you know, like I told you, when I first got there, there wasn't any natural resources.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DEBRA SANDERS: But then -- then they had that hired. So then to have somebody that oversaw both, you know, made sense. And Theresa was very capable of that. I felt like she did a really -- a very good job. She -- her background is cultural.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right. She was an archeologist.

DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah. But she still did well with the natural. I felt she was good that way, too.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm. And did she provide any input on collections and use of material or --

DEBRA SANDERS: Yes.

KAREN BREWSTER: -- preservation things?

DEBRA SANDERS: She, hm -- only if she felt she needed to, kind of. You know, if it was a major project that was affecting the whole park or whatever. But she was pretty good at letting me kind of do -- do my job, as such. Yeah. She kept -- she kept us informed pretty well. You know, there's always issues, but I think overall -- I think overall, it works that way.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm. [01:20:16]Well, and I was thinking, you know, Klondike is a smaller park.

DEBRA SANDERS: Um-hm.

KAREN BREWSTER: There are fewer staff.

DEBRA SANDERS: Um-hm.

KAREN BREWSTER: And so, you know, how the staff, you know, got along, interacted, or if there were issues, how issues got resolved?

DEBRA SANDERS: Um-hm. Um-hm. Well, yeah, then it would be meetings, you know, and just get it resolved. But uh, I don't know, we seemed to -- overall, we seemed to get along pretty well. 'Course, you talk to -- to Elaine, she quit the park 'cause of Theresa.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

DEBRA SANDERS: So there's gonna be conflicts. You know, and nobody's ever gonna -- everyone's not going to get along.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DEBRA SANDERS: But um, and that was too bad.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

DEBRA SANDERS: 'Cause I thought Elaine was doing a really good job.

[01:21:00]KAREN BREWSTER: So you felt if you had issues, that they got -- do you remember if there were any issues, and how they might have gotten resolved?

DEBRA SANDERS: Um-hm. There were issues, which I -- there was one major one, which I don't think I better actually bring up, but I was very well supported on it. Let me just put it that way.

KAREN BREWSTER: Can you talk about it in a general sense? Like, was it a --

DEBRA SANDERS: It had to do --

KAREN BREWSTER: -- conflict with an individual's behavior?

DEBRA SANDERS: It had to do with the one seasonal that was hired for the Rapuzzi Collection.

KAREN BREWSTER: Ok.

DEBRA SANDERS: That felt like I was not being safe.

KAREN BREWSTER: Ok.

DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah.

KAREN BREWSTER: And that got resolved.

DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

DEBRA SANDERS: It got resolved.

KAREN BREWSTER: Ok. We want to be -- I understand the concern about people's privacy.

DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah. That was a very bad -- that was -- that was a bad enough situation that I almost quit. Yeah.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah.

KAREN BREWSTER: Because that employee was compl -- they were complaining about you?

DEBRA SANDERS: Yes.

KAREN BREWSTER: To the higher ups?

DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah. Yeah. And she knew what she was getting into, but she still felt like I needed -- I wasn't, you know, protecting them enough. Because I didn't -- I guess she felt like I should already know what was in the collection.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DEBRA SANDERS: You know, and that was what we were doing.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

DEBRA SANDERS: So, yeah. That was, you know, that was another reason I retired when I did, is I ended up with this kind of a bad situation. And that got resolved.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DEBRA SANDERS: You know, to where I didn't deal with that my last two years. But it was still a bad -- it was a bad situation.

KAREN BREWSTER: It left a bad taste in your mouth?

DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah. Yeah. Yep.

[01:22:34]KAREN BREWSTER: And that's what I was wondering, is how leadership and the administration --

DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah.

KAREN BREWSTER: -- handled that?

DEBRA SANDERS: Um, they supported me.

KAREN BREWSTER: Ok.

DEBRA SANDERS: They totally supported me. Yeah. But the em -- that employee made things so bad.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah, that's too bad.

DEBRA SANDERS: So that's where the bad taste comes from. It doesn't come from the administration.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DEBRA SANDERS: It came from that situation with her. She was pretty nasty.

[01:23:00]KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah. Were there other things along the way in the years that were particularly challenging?

DEBRA SANDERS: Uh.

KAREN BREWSTER: Just, you know, the job in general, different tasks, different projects?

DEBRA SANDERS: Um.

KAREN BREWSTER: Personalities, whatever?

DEBRA SANDERS: Oh yeah, there's always -- Seems like some of the bigger issues came with the natural resource collections. Um, the -- Dave, when he was there, he was very -- he's very smart.

KAREN BREWSTER: Schirokauer.

DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah.

KAREN BREWSTER: That Dave?

DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah.

KAREN BREWSTER: Ok.

DEBRA SANDERS: And he got, you know, he got lots done and stuff, but they were doing more lichens collecting still during that time. And um, he -- somehow or another, he ended up with a collec -- he had a key to that collections room, and he would go in on his own and -- well, a bunch of lichens disappeared. He sent them out, and we never got them back.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DEBRA SANDERS: You know, so stuff like that. So I don't know, we -- it seems like -- and, you know, no matter who you're working with, um -- sometimes getting the archeologists to deal with their archeology collections, instead of just, like, well, here is everything. You know, turn it over to you. They can't do that. You know, they have to at least do some processing.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DEBRA SANDERS: So there were always little issues that way. And we'd end up with backlogs, you know, just stuff -- 'cause that's not the fun part for the archeologists.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DEBRA SANDERS: They'd rather be out digging around, you know. They don't want to process.

KAREN BREWSTER: So that means they have boxes of stuff under their desks that -- that they're supposedly analyzing?

DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah. Yeah.

KAREN BREWSTER: And they don't want to give it to you.

DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah. Or they'll give it to us, but we're not supposed to take it if it's not already, you know, accessioned and stuff.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh.

DEBRA SANDERS: But they want -- they'll want us to store it.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh, ok.

DEBRA SANDERS: And then, it's out of sight, out of mind, for them.

[01:24:49]KAREN BREWSTER: So you're not supposed to take it until they've somehow processed it?

DEBRA SANDERS: Correct.

KAREN BREWSTER: In -- that they cat -- they organize it in groups or something?

DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah.

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

DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah.

KAREN BREWSTER: I thought that the museum people did all that.

DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah, they're supposed -- 'cause they're the experts. They're the ones that were out there with it, you know. And they're supposed to do the basic cataloging, but then, you know, then it gets turned over. We enter the data.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DEBRA SANDERS: The curators enter the data.

KAREN BREWSTER: But you as the curator don't decide that this is --

DEBRA SANDERS: No.

KAREN BREWSTER: -- a nail, or this is uh, porcelain, or this is ceramic or -- ?

DEBRA SANDERS: Hm-mm. That's them.

KAREN BREWSTER: They do that? Oh.

DEBRA SANDERS: They're supposed to.

KAREN BREWSTER: Ok.

DEBRA SANDERS: Doesn't always happen, but they're supposed to.

[01:25:28]KAREN BREWSTER: So then, yeah, how do you organize an archeological collection that comes to you en masse, not --

DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah.

KAREN BREWSTER: -- processed?

DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah. You don't. You can't. I mean, you know. 'Cause it needs to have -- you know, for archeology, it has to have provenience.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DEBRA SANDERS: There's -- has no value.

KAREN BREWSTER: Which square grid it came out of.

DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah.

KAREN BREWSTER: And all that.

DEBRA SANDERS: It's no value otherwise. And that's from their field notes. That's, you know, everything -- they're the ones that put the codes on the bags.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DEBRA SANDERS: You know, and stuff. So you know, they hand it over to the curator, and you're like, ok. You know, this doesn't mean anything. So they have to, you know, really be the first ones to have their hands on that collection after they get it out. And they're supposed to do the cleaning and stuff, too.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right. Right.

DEBRA SANDERS: Um-hm.

KAREN BREWSTER: They're supposed to do that out in the field, in theory.

DEBRA SANDERS: And Deb's so good at it because that's what she started out doing, was cataloging for the archeologists.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh.

DEBRA SANDERS: So, you know, she knows how to do all that.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah.

KAREN BREWSTER: But most curatorial people do not?

DEBRA SANDERS: No. No. You know. I mean, I've done archeology, too, so I do, but we're not supposed to have to. And without having it put together, you know, with the field notes and all that, um, that takes forever.

[01:26:40]KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah. I've been wondering about the use of archeological material, findings, analysis, in exhibits. And how do you use that material to teach the public something?

DEBRA SANDERS: Do you mean the actual artifacts?

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah. Well, the combination. The artifacts or --

DEBRA SANDERS: Oh, I see.

KAREN BREWSTER: -- what the artifacts are telling them. How do you get the public to understand the importance of these pieces of --

DEBRA SANDERS: Ok.

KAREN BREWSTER: -- whatever that comes out of the ground?

DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah. We used to do some temporary exhibits.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DEBRA SANDERS: Um, we had two different -- two or three different exhibit cases that we would rotate every year. You know, every summer or spring, we'd put in a new exhibit. And those exhibit ideas and stuff are all archived.

KAREN BREWSTER: Ok.

DEBRA SANDERS: But, you know, like for example, one that we did was called, um, "How Archeology Artifacts Helped Tell the Story."

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah. There you go. That's --

DEBRA SANDERS: So we would do that kind of thing, where we'd have, um, you know, artifacts, and then, archeology information and how it pieces together and what it tells. You know, kind of an idea. We would do exhibits on medicine bottles that were archeology, you know, that were dug. That way. You know, we would explain where they came from and how they were found. And then -- then we'd maybe get into the manufacture, you know.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DEBRA SANDERS: And just some interesting information about the bottles. So we did a lot of archeology exhibits, you know what I mean, using that information. And so, I think kind of that way, it would help the public to kinda understand.

KAREN BREWSTER: That explains it. I was thinking about the bottle one, too, you could say - - you could get into the manufacture process, but was there also a component of what these bottles maybe tell us about the people and their lifestyle and --

DEBRA SANDERS: Sure. Sure.

KAREN BREWSTER: -- the use of medicine or not?

DEBRA SANDERS: Sure, absolutely.

[01:28:37]KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah, ok. Well, that helps. Because a lot of is -- you know, think of archeology, like, you know, my classic example is bags of wood chips.

DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah.

KAREN BREWSTER: Like, who needs that?

DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah. Yeah, exactly.

KAREN BREWSTER: But apparently, the archeologists need that.

DEBRA SANDERS: They at least need to save a sample, I guess. You know. They need to weigh it and figure all that out, and then maybe save a sample. But, you know, a lot of times you end up with, in your collection, big bags of charcoal.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

DEBRA SANDERS: Which you don't need.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DEBRA SANDERS: But, you know, as long as they've already recorded the weight and all that, and maybe save a sample, yeah.

[01:29:11]KAREN BREWSTER: But so when an archeologist brings you a collection, and let's say it's got all those bags of charcoal, would you say, we don't want all those. We just want the sample.

DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah. Yeah. Sometimes we'd end up having to just, you know -- like I've gone through some of the old archeology collections.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DEBRA SANDERS: And Deb's helped me. And we would go through some where the whole box was full of samples.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DEBRA SANDERS: And we would ourselves weigh it, you know, record that information on the catalog record, and then just save a sample. And then, make a note that that's what we'd done so that we wouldn't have all that stuff that wasn't needed.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

DEBRA SANDERS: And, you know, we'd talk to the archeologists about it, and they'd be ok with it.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DEBRA SANDERS: But they just never would do it themselves. They just wouldn't.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah. It's hard to get rid of things.

DEBRA SANDERS: You might need it.

KAREN BREWSTER: Exactly. You might need it. [01:30:02]Um, so what was the community of Skagway like, and what was it like living there?

DEBRA SANDERS: That -- you know, the fact that, um, I'd lived in so many parks, little bitty, tight communities.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DEBRA SANDERS: You know, not in this town, but actually in the national park, I was kind of used to little community-type stuff. Um, the last -- when I was in Minnesota, I was living in Grand Marais, so that actually was a town, but Skagway -- it didn't really seem that small to me 'cause I was used to isolated parks.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DEBRA SANDERS: But the first thing I was told, you know, when I got there, is be careful who you talk about because they're gonna be related to somebody or somebody used to be married to them or, you know, that kind of a thing.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DEBRA SANDERS: You know, that it's a very tight, tight community that way. Um, I found people were, you know, very friendly. You know, a few people weren't so happy about the Park Service coming in.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DEBRA SANDERS: But you have that anywhere, you know.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DEBRA SANDERS: Um, it's -- what's never changed is the housing situation in that town. I was fortunate in that a rental came open.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DEBRA SANDERS: And I remember talking to Evelyn, the admin person, and saying, "Should I take it?" You know, 'cause I hadn't even gotten there yet. She said, "Oh yeah. Yeah. You take it. There's no housing in this town, you know." And I get there, and I find out, yep, that's for sure. And that's been an issue -- you know, Deb says it's even worse maybe right now.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

DEBRA SANDERS: For people to have housing. And I rented a house twice, two houses, and then I was -- I was able to purchase a house, finally.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DEBRA SANDERS: Um, which was hard 'cause everybody wanted it, too.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

DEBRA SANDERS: You know, it's like anything that comes open in Skagway.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

DEBRA SANDERS: It -- (scoop noise). You know.

[01:31:51]KAREN BREWSTER: Was there any ever discussion within the Park Service to build Park Service housing someplace?

DEBRA SANDERS: Well, they --

KAREN BREWSTER: 'Cause as you say --

DEBRA SANDERS: They did for seasonals, you know.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

DEBRA SANDERS: And -- well, I guess they're still working on that.

KAREN BREWSTER: Because you say, in other parks in other places, you live in park housing.

DEBRA SANDERS: Right.

KAREN BREWSTER: And Skagway doesn't seem to have much official park housing.

DEBRA SANDERS: No.

KAREN BREWSTER: And if that's ever been discussed?

DEBRA SANDERS: It has, but, you know, the reason that they've done that in the past is they feel that people that live in a town that work for a park should support that town.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DEBRA SANDERS: You know, they -- that the Park Service shouldn't provide housing.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DEBRA SANDERS: But -- but that's if there's housing available. You know, if there's just -- I can see that, you know. You shouldn't just have, you know, Park Service housing if there's housing available in the community.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DEBRA SANDERS: But yeah, that's been the issue, you know, that they should support the community by renting, or, you know, that kind of a thing.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

[01:32:53]DEBRA SANDERS: But, you know, they've had that dairy -- that area that's now mostly customs housing.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DEBRA SANDERS: That started out to be permanent Park Service housing. The ones that the park had.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DEBRA SANDERS: But it was supposed to be the -- the lower graded employees that couldn't afford a rental or to purchase a house.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DEBRA SANDERS: Until Susan Boudreau came in, and she didn't want to buy a house 'cause she still had her house in Glacier Bay, so then all of a sudden, chief of maintenance, superintendent, the chief of interpretation, all those people were living in those low-cost houses. Yeah. And that was an issue.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DEBRA SANDERS: That was an issue. And I think they've kind of gotten away from that again now, but they're talking about -- Deb was telling me they're talking about building sort of like a bunkhouse there next to the Pantheon that would be seasonal again, though. Seasonal housing.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DEBRA SANDERS: Um, the cedar house, one of the seasonal houses, I think they're leaving open for the new superintendent. So they are kinda, you know, having to look at that a little bit.

[01:33:59]KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah. Um, so while you were there, see, they hired the resources person. Was there sort of a major shift in the top leadership positions? The chief of maintenance, chief ranger, chief admin, was there a big kind of, um, upheaval and people left or anything?

DEBRA SANDERS: Not at the beginning, you know, it was like, when Clay was there. And let's see, we had an administrative technician, Clydeen, who's now still there, but she's at the library. Um, she was the admin tech. We didn't have an admin officer. John Warder was the chief of maintenance, and, you know, they both stayed there quite a bit longer after I was there, when I got there. Um, Betsy Duncan-Clark was chief of interp for a long time 'til she finally went to Klondike Seattle. Um, people tended to stay during that time.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DEBRA SANDERS: And then, you know, Clay left, and John retired, and, you know, things started -- you know, Betsy transferred, but it wasn't all at once.

KAREN BREWSTER: Ok.

DEBRA SANDERS: It was kind of a slow -- just a normal change.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah. You don't feel it was that there was something going on that --

DEBRA SANDERS: No, not at all. [01:35:19]Um, I know we had some issues when Bruce was -- Bruce Noble was there.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DEBRA SANDERS: I didn't have any, but the chief of admin, which we had by then a chief of admin and our chief ranger, got the regional office involved.

KAREN BREWSTER: Ok.

DEBRA SANDERS: We had a little pow-wow.

KAREN BREWSTER: Ok.

DEBRA SANDERS: And um, and I know that some people feel that after that a bunch of people left, but I think it was -- I don't think it had anything to do with that. I think it again, was just normal moving.

KAREN BREWSTER: Ok. Yeah, the Park Service people do move.

DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah. Move a lot.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

DEBRA SANDERS: You know, not everybody. There's Karl.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah. Well, and you were there from '91 'til --

DEBRA SANDERS: I was there nineteen years.

KAREN BREWSTER: So you left in 2010?

DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah. Which is amazing, considering all the other parks I worked at.

[01:36:12]KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah. So why did you stay in Skagway for so long?

DEBRA SANDERS: I liked it. You know, I actually, at one stage, I was -- when I was working on the Moore House, a position came open back at Hubbell Trading Post as curator.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DEBRA SANDERS: And I applied for it, and I got it. And I was right in the middle of the Moore House. And I went and I talked to Clay. And I said, "Clay, do you feel like I've been here too long, and maybe I'm kind of losing a little spark, and you think maybe I should take this job?" He broke into tears.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh.

DEBRA SANDERS: "No!" And then we were both in tears. And so, I said, "Ok, I'm staying." I said, "I really want to see this project through." So, you know, and then after that, I -- I just -- I liked Alaska. You know, I really enjoyed being there and everything, and, you know, I'd probably still be there if it weren't for, you know, medical.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DEBRA SANDERS: And just, you know, all that kind of stuff. I probably still would. But um, no, that was -- it was, um, it was -- that was kind of interesting. And I just ended up liking it. And then, I'd get involved in other projects, and, you know, I was making friends there. I was moving around so much before, I kind of hesitated making friends.

KAREN BREWSTER: Hm.

DEBRA SANDERS: You know, really.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

DEBRA SANDERS: 'Cause then you'd leave, you know, and stuff. Or other people would leave. Your Park Service friends would leave.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DEBRA SANDERS: And it's kinda hard that way.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm. But in Skagway, you were willing to set down some roots?

DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah. Yeah. And I, you know, bought a house, and I liked the house, and it was -- it was good. Deb and I were really good friends.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DEBRA SANDERS: She was one of my better friends, and yeah, it was -- I really enjoyed it. And, you know, overall I enjoyed the staff that was there, and, you know, there's always issues here and there, and people you don't necessarily get along with, but I thought overall, it was a very professional staff. And, you know, overall, people I thought did -- did pretty well.

[01:38:07]KAREN BREWSTER: So there wasn't a time where it was just everybody was grumpy and low morale and --

DEBRA SANDERS: Well, I guess that -- that -- it didn't affect me. Let me put it that way. 'Course, I was in a different building, too.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DEBRA SANDERS: That helps. I liked that. But, you know, I think that must've been a bad time, just because of them calling the regional office in.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DEBRA SANDERS: And stuff. It must've been.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DEBRA SANDERS: But I kind of go -- I kind of had to sit through that whole thing, too, and kinda going, why am I here? Or what's going on?

KAREN BREWSTER: You didn't feel the direct effects.

DEBRA SANDERS: Not at all.

KAREN BREWSTER: Well, as you say, being in a separate building can help.

DEBRA SANDERS: It helps a lot.

[01:38:51]KAREN BREWSTER: And then, in terms of the community of Skagway, did you -- you said there was some, um, skepticism towards the Park Service. Did you feel that personally?

DEBRA SANDERS: No. No, I never did. Um, you know, I would hear people occasionally talk about well, when the Park Service first came in, especially.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah. Right.

DEBRA SANDERS: People were leery about it.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

DEBRA SANDERS: But then when they saw, you know, what was -- what they were doing, and the buildings being restored, and um, influx of tourists and stuff like that, which is what most of the people there are all about. Not all of them.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right. Right.

DEBRA SANDERS: I think overall, the Park Service was pretty well respected in that town.

KAREN BREWSTER: By the time you were there?

DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.[01:39:37] And then, did you find ways to integrate into the community and get involved in activities and things?

DEBRA SANDERS: Um, I helped -- I helped start the first animal shelter there.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh, cool.

DEBRA SANDERS: I was pretty involved with that kind of thing. I still am.

KAREN BREWSTER: Uh-huh.

DEBRA SANDERS: But so, I would do -- I did that. And I was on the city museum board, so I was involved with -- with the board -- with them that way.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DEBRA SANDERS: Um, and just, you know, out and about, having coffee with people and stuff like that. But, you know, it was just stuff like that.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

DEBRA SANDERS: Nothing major. Not like here where I'm volunteering every which way.

KAREN BREWSTER: Well, you were working.

DEBRA SANDERS: Exactly.

KAREN BREWSTER: But -- but you did get involved and make friends with people and --

DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah. Yeah.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

DEBRA SANDERS: And it was not hard. You know, it was very, very easy. I had a couple of the teachers I was close friends with.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DEBRA SANDERS: You know, and we would ski together and hike together and I married them on the Chilkoot Trail.

KAREN BREWSTER: Nice.

DEBRA SANDERS: So kinda fun.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah, um. Yeah, it's sort of the, as you say, the small town --

DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah.

KAREN BREWSTER: -- can be good, and it can be not good.

DEBRA SANDERS: Yep. Yeah. Yeah. And, I mean, I was careful about not getting involved with stuff. You know, but, you know, just being friendly and just being a part.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DEBRA SANDERS: It was not hard at all.

[01:41:02]KAREN BREWSTER: Um, any other -- did I miss any other collection, curatorial things? Particularly interesting collections you worked on?

DEBRA SANDERS: You -- you want me to tell you my favorite artifact?

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh, yes. Of course.

DEBRA SANDERS: When they were doing restoration up on the Pantheon, on the Pantheon, they were on the rooftop.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DEBRA SANDERS: They came across a swallow's nest that still had the eggs in it. And the bedding was made from the pink feathers from those ladies' boas from the Red Onion.

KAREN BREWSTER: How cool.

DEBRA SANDERS: So this whole little nest was lined with these pink -- this pink boa.

KAREN BREWSTER: Wow.

DEBRA SANDERS: And I guess they scared off the parents when they were doing the work.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh.

DEBRA SANDERS: But anyway, so they -- the guys called me up over there, you know. And I said, "

Oh, you know, that's too bad, but how cool is this?" And so, I collected it and put it in the --

KAREN BREWSTER: Well, it's cool they called you.

DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah.

KAREN BREWSTER: They didn't just destroy it.

DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah. So that's in the collection.

KAREN BREWSTER: Cool.

DEBRA SANDERS: Isn't that fun?

KAREN BREWSTER: That's fun.

DEBRA SANDERS: It's just kind of a neat little, you know, story, you know.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DEBRA SANDERS: That kinda ties the gold rush to the tourism and natural history.

[01:42:18]KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah. Um, the Chilkoot Trail made me think about Dyea and the Chilkoot Trail. If, um, objects in the collection from those locations?

DEBRA SANDERS: Actually, I -- um, I was involved for a few years of doing a, oh what did we call it? Collections Inventory and Monitoring on the Chilkoot Trail. So they -- somebody had started that years before. They had numbered and identified objects in Dyea and objects in Canyon City, and, you know, on up the trail all the way to the top. And so, the idea of this was just to check on if they're still there. You know, how badly are they deteriorating. You know, some things were ended up being collected. You know, some things like that, but that was pretty fun. You know, that got me out on the trail a couple different years.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah. So was there a change in those items?

DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah, you know, there -- there would be. And, you know, like the one thing that I really hated to see while I was there is at Canyon City, there was a -- was it a saw that was stuck in a tree, and it'd been there since the gold rush. And one year, the handle had fallen off. You know, so that's kinda, you know, that's kinda too bad. You know, a lot of things, like the stoves, we -- we would conserve 'em. We would just clean 'em. We'd knock the moss off of them, you know, just the plants, so they're not eating away at the metal. So we would do that kind of work on the trail for the metal objects.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DEBRA SANDERS: And, you know, but after -- after a while, they're gonna -- they're gonna go. But that again, is part of the Chilkoot Trail, you know, just seeing artifacts and stuff along the way.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

DEBRA SANDERS: So there again, that's a hard -- a hard call. None of that stuff is cataloged. You can't, 'cause you can't protect it.

KAREN BREWSTER: But it's --

DEBRA SANDERS: Inventoried.

KAREN BREWSTER: -- inventoried and numbered?

DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah, but it's a separate system.

KAREN BREWSTER: Ok.

DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah, it's just an inventory system.

[01:44:14]KAREN BREWSTER: Ok. And so, were there items that when you were out there, they'd been inventoried in the past, and they were gone?

DEBRA SANDERS: Um-hm. Not too often, but sometimes maybe we just didn't see it.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DEBRA SANDERS: You know, sometimes things got covered. Like, bottles, little things, you know, got covered with dirt.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah. Right.

DEBRA SANDERS: And maybe we just didn't find 'em. And there were times in the past, like -- we were doing this, like every three years.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DEBRA SANDERS: Somebody would go out and inventory, if we could.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DEBRA SANDERS: If we had the money. Didn't happen. But supposedly. Um, maybe one year, something would be missing, but then the next time you were out there, there it was. You'd find it again.

KAREN BREWSTER: Did people pick it up and move it?

DEBRA SANDERS: Maybe. Or you just missed it the one year, just somehow missed it.

KAREN BREWSTER: So was it mapped? Were the locations mapped?

DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah, but you know, it was still kinda hard to -- this was before GPS marking, you know.

[01:45:05]KAREN BREWSTER: And were there some items that you collected for their own protection?

DEBRA SANDERS: There was that -- yeah, occasionally. There were occasionally some pretty cool things that were unique. Um, a wooden bucket, for example.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DEBRA SANDERS: Some of the breakdown boats that were stashed part way up the trail.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DEBRA SANDERS: We actually brought in two or three of those. One of them's at another museum. Can't think where it is. Um, because otherwise, I mean, those were pretty unique.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

DEBRA SANDERS: You know. Oh, one of them we actually sent off to a conservator. Two kits, and they actually re-assembled it.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh, cool.

DEBRA SANDERS: Put it back together. And I can't remember where that is now, either.

KAREN BREWSTER: Hm.

DEBRA SANDERS: But so, you know, we did that kind of thing just to conserve 'em.

KAREN BREWSTER: Because those would've just fallen apart.

DEBRA SANDERS: Oh yeah, 'cause it was just, um, like, canvas and wood.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

DEBRA SANDERS: So yeah.

KAREN BREWSTER: I'm surprised they were still there in as good shape as they were.

DEBRA SANDERS: They were covered with snow most of the time.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh. [01:46:02]Well, that's an interesting thing, is that with changing climate conditions, less snow, are things coming out?

DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah.

KAREN BREWSTER: That weren't there before?

DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh, I never thought about that.

DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah, those boats used to be just covered. Maybe hardly exposed at all, you know, is what I understand.

KAREN BREWSTER: Hm.

DEBRA SANDERS: And now, there they are.

KAREN BREWSTER: So it adds to the curatorial duties on the trail.

DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah. But there again, you figure if you've got samples, good samples of 'em.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DEBRA SANDERS: You know, then you've done what you can.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DEBRA SANDERS: You don't need all of them.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DEBRA SANDERS: But as long as you have a -- one or two of them conserved.

[01:46:41]KAREN BREWSTER: Hm-mm. And what about, then, the White Pass Unit? Were there things that got brought in from there? Did you have anything to do with that?

DEBRA SANDERS: They were -- they had done a little bit of archeology years ago out there.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DEBRA SANDERS: And I think they've done some since. But um, we had very little. Because there again -- you know what? I don't think they had actually done archeology there. They had just walked around it and maybe collected a thing or two. I remember a blue bottle that had come from there.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DEBRA SANDERS: That shouldn't have really come in.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DEBRA SANDERS: You know what I mean? Because they hadn't really done archeology to mark provenience yet.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DEBRA SANDERS: So it was more a matter of wandering around and just seeing cool stuff.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah. Surface finds.

DEBRA SANDERS: I had one opportunity -- I did have an opportunity to go down there.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh, you did?

DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah. Just one.

KAREN BREWSTER: Uh-huh. Tell me about that.

DEBRA SANDERS: We got to go across the river on a zipline. That was fun.

KAREN BREWSTER: Wow.

DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah. But it was neat.

[01:47:38]KAREN BREWSTER: So were you going to White Pass City?

DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah.

KAREN BREWSTER: Uh-huh.

DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah, we took the train. And then, they dropped us off, and then we went down, down, down, down.

KAREN BREWSTER: Ok.

DEBRA SANDERS: And then, somebody had set up a pulley-ropey thing across the Skagway River.

KAREN BREWSTER: Wow.

DEBRA SANDERS: And um, the thing that we were noticing, though, is that bears, moose, broken artifacts. See, that's the issue. Not from humans, 'cause you -- you know, hardly anybody knew how to get down there or anything. But things were getting broken a little bit from the wildlife.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

DEBRA SANDERS: But there was, you know, there was a lot of stuff laying around down there.

KAREN BREWSTER: So do you remember what year you went?

DEBRA SANDERS: Oh, maybe '92 or '93.

KAREN BREWSTER: Early on.

DEBRA SANDERS: It was right at the beginning, yeah.

[01:48:26]KAREN BREWSTER: What was the purpose of going, and who did you go with?

DEBRA SANDERS: Um, it was a big group. Clay went. Um, the chief of maintenance went. You know what, they might've been starting to think about -- you know, they keep thinking about doing archeology or surveying. Maybe it was just a survey trip, just to see how things were looking.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DEBRA SANDERS: Uh, I'm pretty sure that was the reason. Nobody'd been down there for a long time, and it was just a way to see how it looked.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

DEBRA SANDERS: But I remember Clay went, and uh, our chief ranger went. And there was probably about -- I bet there were about eight of us.

KAREN BREWSTER: Was that -- was Tim Steidel the chief ranger yet?

DEBRA SANDERS: No. You know who was there, was Jeff --

KAREN BREWSTER: Reed?

DEBRA SANDERS: Oh, you know who was there, was Jeff Mau.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh, Jeff Mau, ok.

DEBRA SANDERS: Who wasn't chief ranger, but he was the ranger.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

DEBRA SANDERS: That was before we really had that -- we didn't have a chief ranger, either yet.

KAREN BREWSTER: Really.

DEBRA SANDERS: Really.

KAREN BREWSTER: Huh.

DEBRA SANDERS: Jeff was kind of it, but he was more like a district ranger, kinda.

KAREN BREWSTER: Hm. Ok.

DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah, 'cause um, Bruce Reed --

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DEBRA SANDERS: -- was the first chief ranger to be hired. I'm pretty sure.

KAREN BREWSTER: Well, no. Jay Cable was before.

DEBRA SANDERS: You're right.

KAREN BREWSTER: He was before.

DEBRA SANDERS: You are right, and that's when I got hired.

KAREN BREWSTER: And so, I think he was chief ranger.

DEBRA SANDERS: You are right.

KAREN BREWSTER: And then there was --

DEBRA SANDERS: But then he went back to the region.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah, I don't know. I just know the names.

DEBRA SANDERS: You're right. You are right.

KAREN BREWSTER: There was also Bruce Reed. I don't know what --

DEBRA SANDERS: He came next.

KAREN BREWSTER: There was a Reed, Reed McCluskey also.

DEBRA SANDERS: Yep, he was there, too.
KAREN BREWSTER: But I don't know if he was --
DEBRA SANDERS: You're right.
KAREN BREWSTER: Chief. I don't know who was in that role.
DEBRA SANDERS: Yes he was. Yep. You are right. Jay Cable was there. He had gone back to the regional office when I moved there. [01:50:05]And actually, Clay was on a detail. He didn't hire me.
KAREN BREWSTER: Hm.
DEBRA SANDERS: Somebody that was acting from the regional office is actually who hired me. Can't think who that was either. And then, um, Bruce Reed came in. He -- he was the next one hired.
KAREN BREWSTER: As chief ranger?
DEBRA SANDERS: Chief ranger. And then, when he left, then Reed McCluskey was hired as chief ranger.
KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.
DEBRA SANDERS: But then he ended up as chief of administration, and Tim Steidel ended up as chief ranger.
KAREN BREWSTER: Chief ranger. Right. I knew there was some --
DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah.
KAREN BREWSTER: -- reorganizational --
DEBRA SANDERS: But you are right. There was already a chief ranger.
KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.
DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah. But Jeff Mau was there. I think it was in transition still at that stage.
KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.
DEBRA SANDERS: So Jeff Mau was kind of in charge, and he's the one that had the rope rigged up and everything.
KAREN BREWSTER: Cool.
DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah, it was fun.
KAREN BREWSTER: And who was chief of maintenance then?
DEBRA SANDERS: John Warder.
KAREN BREWSTER: Oh, John Warder, ok.
DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah, John was the chief -- chief of maintenance. And he was there for quite a few years still after that.
KAREN BREWSTER: It must've been quite a bushwhack, down there through alders and everything.
DEBRA SANDERS: It was. It was. Yeah, it was fun.
KAREN BREWSTER: Hard to come back up.
DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah, it was not easy. Yeah, it was fun.
[01:51:15]KAREN BREWSTER: Ok, so you said favorite artifact. What -- is there something that was the hardest, worst material or collection to work on?
DEBRA SANDERS: I really didn't like the rusty archeology stuff. I just didn't. Um, I liked glass, you know, working with glass and stuff like that.
KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DEBRA SANDERS: But um -- I liked the historic collections. You know, I liked archives. I liked the natural history. I love ethnographic collections. That's my favorite. We didn't have much of that.

KAREN BREWSTER: Well, that was my question is, you mentioned ethnographic before. How much was there?

DEBRA SANDERS: Not much. Um, the fact that Minnie Moore was Tlingit.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DEBRA SANDERS: There were a few Tlingit-related items in the collection. Some carved ivory. It's in the -- it's actually in the Moore House exhibit.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh, ok. So that, even though it was potentially from the Moore family --

DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah.

KAREN BREWSTER: -- it's considered ethnographic because --

DEBRA SANDERS: No, you know what, I don't think that one was.

KAREN BREWSTER: That would be historic?

DEBRA SANDERS: I think that one was considered --

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

DEBRA SANDERS: In that collection, I think that was historic.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah, we had very little. We had acquired a little bit of Tlingit stuff here and there. Baskets.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DEBRA SANDERS: We had some baskets and that kind of thing, but yeah, very little. Very little.

KAREN BREWSTER: Does --

DEBRA SANDERS: I bet you there's only -- no more than a dozen --

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

DEBRA SANDERS: -- ethnographic items in the collection.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um, yeah, 'cause the Park Service -- well, I guess it somewhat tells the Native story, but it's not as much a part of their storytelling.

DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah. Just, you know, the Minnie Moore story.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DEBRA SANDERS: Was the big part, and she was, you know, pure --

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DEBRA SANDERS: You know, she was all Tlingit.

KAREN BREWSTER: And then the packers.

DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah. Yeah.

[01:53:10]KAREN BREWSTER: Now does the city museum have a more ethnographic collection?

DEBRA SANDERS: Yes. Yes, they do.

KAREN BREWSTER: Ok.

DEBRA SANDERS: She's -- Judy's got some pretty cool stuff.

KAREN BREWSTER: Ok.

DEBRA SANDERS: She's got a duck blanket that I love, made out of duck feathers.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh, lovely.

DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah, it's beautiful. Yeah, she's got -- she's got quite a bit more stuff 'cause they do tell more of that story.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DEBRA SANDERS: Um-hm.

[01:53:29]KAREN BREWSTER: Besides the Rapuzzi Collection, what kind of a relationship was there between the city museum and the Park Service collections?

DEBRA SANDERS: Not much. Not much. You know, the interaction we had was, um -- well, there for a while, I was on the city museum board, and Karl was also, at a time. And Karl and Judy have always been good friends.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DEBRA SANDERS: You know, so they've always just worked together for, you know, photos and things like that. But as far as actual, you know, collections, not until the Rapuzzi Collection did Judy and I really interact that much.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DEBRA SANDERS: Um-hm.

KAREN BREWSTER: And it worked out all right?

DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah.

[01:54:12]KAREN BREWSTER: What about with the Seattle Unit of Klondike? Did you have any interaction with them?

DEBRA SANDERS: Um, a little bit, and that was in them -- let's see, did they borrow some artifacts? Yes, they had some artifacts on loan from us as part of their permanent exhibits. And then, what else? There was one other -- not much. There was some other conservation issue that came up, that I worked with them on. But they had -- one of their interpreters was a -- his collateral duty was collections.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

DEBRA SANDERS: So.

KAREN BREWSTER: Well, um, but that doesn't mean they know --

DEBRA SANDERS: No, they don't have much.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah. So they don't have a very big collection.

DEBRA SANDERS: No, it's very small.

KAREN BREWSTER: So you don't feel they needed a regular curator?

DEBRA SANDERS: 'Cause they're, you know, they're a building, basically.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

DEBRA SANDERS: Is what their site is. It's a building.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DEBRA SANDERS: And just exhibits and visitor center.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um, so you were never called down to go down there to help them with anything?

DEBRA SANDERS: I was down there once, and I'm trying to remember why. I was there with their collections.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

DEBRA SANDERS: And I don't recall why.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh, so you were -- you did help them with something?

DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. It must've been on the side when I was down there for some other purpose. But I don't remember exactly. It had to do with some conservation issue, but I don't remember exactly what it was.

KAREN BREWSTER: Ok. Yeah. But so that, I'd say in a place like that, having curation as collateral duty works?

DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah.

KAREN BREWSTER: But it would never work in Skagway?

DEBRA SANDERS: No. Huh-uh. No. No. It's just too much.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

DEBRA SANDERS: Too much to deal with.

[01:55:55]KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah. So did you get through the backlog in your nineteen years?

DEBRA SANDERS: You know, there's -- there were still archives backlogs, just because people -- well, I left 'em arch -- I left 'em backlog archives.

KAREN BREWSTER: Well, every employee that leaves then creates a collection, right?

DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. And there were still those odd archeology collections that hadn't been -- but not much.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DEBRA SANDERS: Not much. I think there was like, one or two years of some projects that hadn't been processed properly when I left. Um, but other than that, we were up to date on our natural history collections. Um, yeah, all that was cataloged and entered. Um, we had the Rapuzzi Collection. Yeah, everything else, you know. Everything else. But the growing ones are always the archives and the archeology.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DEBRA SANDERS: As they're doing more projects. So those are always going to continue job security.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah. There you go. You have good -- good staff turnover so we have job security.

DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah. Yeah.

[01:57:03]KAREN BREWSTER: Um, now did you retire when you left?

DEBRA SANDERS: Yes.

KAREN BREWSTER: You didn't come to do some other job down here.

DEBRA SANDERS: No. No, I -- I had thirty years in.

KAREN BREWSTER: That's --

DEBRA SANDERS: I was fifty-six.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

DEBRA SANDERS: And I just decided, you know, I could've earned more if I'd waited, but I just decided that was -- that was good enough. And I was -- I was ready. And, you know, I don't re -- I don't regret retiring. I miss the national parks. I don't miss the National Park Service anymore. I think things have gone a bit downhill.

KAREN BREWSTER: And what do you mean?

DEBRA SANDERS: Administration from the top. I'm -- you know, I've talked to more and more people, friends of mine in the past that are retired or still there.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DEBRA SANDERS: And I'm hearing, you know, the same thing. You know, the people that have just retired. A friend of mine, Tim Stone, who retired as a superintendent back east, um, says, you know, he says, "Debbie, we were there at the right time." You know, he said, "It's just things are crazy now. It's just not the support that we used to have." Um, it's just different. And I don't know, maybe the baby boomer age was kinda -- I don't know. It was just kinda the right time. [01:58:19] You know, when I first started working for the Park Service, women were just -- just then put in uniforms.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh.

DEBRA SANDERS: And we had to wear men's.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DEBRA SANDERS: 'Cause there was not a woman's uniform at the time. And that was at Mesa Verde National Park, where part of giving tours is crawling through tunnels and climbing up ladders, and the first women's uniforms were skirts.

KAREN BREWSTER: So you had to do that in your skirts?

DEBRA SANDERS: I think there they let people -- I don't know.

KAREN BREWSTER: You don't remember?

DEBRA SANDERS: Well, they let me -- at that stage, they were letting us in men's uniforms.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DEBRA SANDERS: But that was right at the beginning.

KAREN BREWSTER: But so, yeah, when you started, you know, and you were doing natural history kind of interpretation stuff, were there many women?

DEBRA SANDERS: No. No. No. Um, I remember going to -- when I was going to college, even, the College of Forestry in Fort Collins, we had a summer camp. Between certain years. Sophomore, junior, something.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DEBRA SANDERS: And, you know, it was all phases of natural resource stuff. And I think that whole group, there were only two or three women in -- in that, even.

KAREN BREWSTER: Wow.

DEBRA SANDERS: And yeah, very few women.

[01:59:39] KAREN BREWSTER: So at the time, as you say, it was a field that women weren't as involved in. Why did you decide to go into that field and -- and study that?

DEBRA SANDERS: I remembered as a kid, we used to go -- we used to visit national parks. And some of my better memories are that, and attending evening programs, like campfire programs.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DEBRA SANDERS: And listening to these male rangers.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DEBRA SANDERS: But, you know, talk, and just this whole thing. You know, just that whole natural thing. And I just thought -- I started out going to a different school, and um, Adams State College, and going -- was going to study art. And then, all of a sudden after my freshman year, I said, that's not what I want to do. And I don't know, I just started thinking about it, and started looking it up, and found out that Colorado State University had a really good school. And applied, and went, and yeah. It was -- it was just great. It was great. And that was, you know, really at the beginning, and um, they even had an annual naturalist award given at that university. The Merlin Potts Outstanding Naturalist Award, which I was the recipient of one year.

KAREN BREWSTER: Very good.

DEBRA SANDERS: So, you know, that was just fun. And very supportive professors. You know, some of them I stayed in touch with for years afterwards and stuff, so.

[02:00:55]KAREN BREWSTER: And do you feel as a woman getting into the Park Service in those years, was it more difficult to be hired?

DEBRA SANDERS: When I went -- when I went to Mesa Verde, we had a assistant superintendent, who was actually a very nice -- very nice-looking man. I learned that he would go through the applications -- that was all paper applications at that stage.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DEBRA SANDERS: He would go through the women's applications, and at that stage, you had to put down your height and your weight.

KAREN BREWSTER: Did the men have to also?

DEBRA SANDERS: Yes.

KAREN BREWSTER: Ok.

DEBRA SANDERS: He would -- he would pull out any that he felt were fat.

KAREN BREWSTER: Wow.

DEBRA SANDERS: But he only did that with the women.

KAREN BREWSTER: Hm.

DEBRA SANDERS: So isn't that weird?

KAREN BREWSTER: No -- Well, by today's standards, weird. By 1970's?

DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah.

KAREN BREWSTER: Maybe not.

DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um.

DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah.

KAREN BREWSTER: Unfortunate.

DEBRA SANDERS: I was told that later, that that's what he would do.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right, but you got the job?

DEBRA SANDERS: I got the job.

[02:02:00]KAREN BREWSTER: Um, and but so, you were working in a more male-dominated environment.

DEBRA SANDERS: Um-hm.

KAREN BREWSTER: And what was that like?

DEBRA SANDERS: It was, you know -- I think that the guys were kinda glad to see women coming into it.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DEBRA SANDERS: I think they really were. 'Cause I was always treated with respect, and, you know, not babied or anything. I was always treated with respect, so.

KAREN BREWSTER: Do you have any idea whether you were paid the same as the men?

DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah, we were. 'Cause it was all the GS wages.

KAREN BREWSTER: Ok.

DEBRA SANDERS: So yeah, we were -- we were paid the same.

KAREN BREWSTER: But obviously, they could've made the position they hired the woman for a GS-4.

DEBRA SANDERS: Yes, they could've.

KAREN BREWSTER: And the man was in a GS-5.
DEBRA SANDERS: Yes, they could've. They didn't.
KAREN BREWSTER: But they didn't?
DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah, we were -- we were all the same. Yeah.
KAREN BREWSTER: Ok. Well, that's something.
DEBRA SANDERS: GS-4's.
KAREN BREWSTER: Right. But by the time you were in Skagway, in the -- by the '80's, '90's, that male-female kinda balanced out?
DEBRA SANDERS: It sure had. Oh, yeah. Long before that, really.
KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.
DEBRA SANDERS: It seems like it just -- that was in the '70's was when it just started -- you know, women were just joining right and left.
KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.
DEBRA SANDERS: And I was just kind of, you know, right there.
KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.
DEBRA SANDERS: So that was kind of fun.
[02:03:13]KAREN BREWSTER: Um, we were talking about the sort of top down, um, management that may be happening more now in the Park Service. Is it sort of more coming from DC instead of a park itself? Is that what you mean?
DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah. I'm thinking it's kind of just trickling down that way.
KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.
DEBRA SANDERS: And I think morale is lower.
KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.
DEBRA SANDERS: That's just what I'm hearing, you know, and the feelings that I'm getting. I kinda stay out of politics.
KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.
DEBRA SANDERS: I don't really --
KAREN BREWSTER: Well, I was -- the reason -- that was my lead-in to, so when you were in Skagway at Klondike, do you feel like the local team were sort of in charge of their own destiny, or was there a lot coming down from regional?
DEBRA SANDERS: I think -- I think that when I got there, the park was going from where there was more regional impact, you know, 'cause curator and stuff.
KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.
DEBRA SANDERS: To where as it went on, where we got more positions, they were kinda leaving us alone a lot more.
KAREN BREWSTER: Ok.
DEBRA SANDERS: But when I first got there, there was -- it seemed to be still a lot coming down from the regional office.
KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.
DEBRA SANDERS: And then, other than kinda what jobs they're supposed to do, like the restoration specialists, you know.
KAREN BREWSTER: Right. The historic architects and stuff, yeah.
DEBRA SANDERS: Steve Peterson and Grant Crosby people, and that's what they do.
KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah. Right.
DEBRA SANDERS: So -- but they always were very good at including park staff.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DEBRA SANDERS: They weren't, you know, like on their high horses or anything like that.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm. [02:04:41]And you worked under two superintendents, under --

DEBRA SANDERS: Three.

KAREN BREWSTER: Three? So Clay?

DEBRA SANDERS: And then Bruce Noble.

KAREN BREWSTER: Bruce Noble.

DEBRA SANDERS: And then Jim Corless.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh, ok.

DEBRA SANDERS: He was there when I retired.

KAREN BREWSTER: Ok. Um, just in the general sense, management styles. How they

differed, what worked, what didn't work? And you don't have to say who did what.

DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah.

KAREN BREWSTER: We can -- We're talking on the general terms. Like oh, you know, it was this kind of style worked.

DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah.

KAREN BREWSTER: Or this kind of style didn't, you know what I mean.

DEBRA SANDERS: Um.

KAREN BREWSTER: 'Cause I can tell you don't want to talk names. So I'm trying to --

DEBRA SANDERS: I'm throwing them out every once in a while.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah. But in this case, I'm trying to get the general sense of, you know, working under different superintendents and how that worked. And what worked and what didn't work.

DEBRA SANDERS: Oh, I don't even mind throwing out names on this one, really.

KAREN BREWSTER: Really? Ok.

DEBRA SANDERS: 'Cause I mean, obviously I think you can tell, Clay was my fave.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

DEBRA SANDERS: Clay was very down-to-earth. He was very sensitive to his staff. He involved everybody. When -- when it was time to hire, uh, Bruce Reed, he called Betsy and Karl and I in to help him select. We got to go through the applications and help him decide who to get, you know. And that's not a normal superintendent thing.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right. Right.

DEBRA SANDERS: So he was probably the biggest team player of -- of the three.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DEBRA SANDERS: There that I worked under. [02:06:12]Um, Bruce -- he's very quiet. He's a very quiet person. Um, you know, very to himself. So I always saw him, you know, not a -- not a great team player just because he was not a great communicator.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DEBRA SANDERS: I liked him. I had no problem with him. But um, he probably was the most difficult of the three. Jim Corless, that was his first superintendency. I actually went to ranger skills with him. So we knew each other already, kinda, you know. And I thought he did fine, too, but he was, you know, they use Skagway as a first superintendent --

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DEBRA SANDERS: -- park a lot. I think Bruce -- I think all three of them were. But Jim, you know, he was there for a few years. He did fine.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DEBRA SANDERS: Clay was the team player.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah. I guess that's --

KAREN BREWSTER: Right. So what you're saying is, Bruce, who was more of a quiet person, would you say he kinda kept to himself more.

DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah.

KAREN BREWSTER: And didn't involve the staff in things?

DEBRA SANDERS: Yes. Yeah. [02:07:27]But like I said, I still don't know quite what the issue was with him.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DEBRA SANDERS: But there was an issue.

KAREN BREWSTER: There was?

DEBRA SANDERS: Big enough to --

KAREN BREWSTER: Is that why he -- why he left?

DEBRA SANDERS: No, you know, he stayed there -- well, I don't know. He stayed there longer. He was there another couple years, I believe, before he transferred. I think he -- well, his wife was also Park Service. And I think that was really a hard thing. I think she was still -- she was working out of, like, the regional office when he was in Skagway.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh. So she wasn't --

DEBRA SANDERS: Pat. Pat Noble.

KAREN BREWSTER: She wasn't in Skagway with him?

DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah, she -- she was, most of the time, but I think she was, like, um, working from home, sort of, or --

KAREN BREWSTER: Well, yeah, because she couldn't have worked for Klondike if he was superintendent?

DEBRA SANDERS: No. No. And I think they just didn't really like Skagway.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DEBRA SANDERS: To be honest with you. I think they just didn't like Skagway.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DEBRA SANDERS: And I think Jim Corless, too. That was -- he just was kinda ready to get out of Skagway.

[02:08:15]KAREN BREWSTER: Well, and as you say, um, Skagway was often for people, this is the first job. I learn the ropes, and then I move someplace else. And so, that's what it sounds like Corless was --

DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah. Yeah.

KAREN BREWSTER: And did he similarly kind of keep to himself?

DEBRA SANDERS: And Susan Boudreau. I worked for four.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh. I don't know Susan Boudreau's, um --

DEBRA SANDERS: She wasn't there very long.

KAREN BREWSTER: She was?

DEBRA SANDERS: She was --

KAREN BREWSTER: After Jim, or between Bruce and Jim?

DEBRA SANDERS: Yes. Between Bruce and Jim.

KAREN BREWSTER: So she was maybe a temporary?

DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah, but she was full hire.
KAREN BREWSTER: Oh, she was?
DEBRA SANDERS: Yep. She came from Glacier Bay. She was the natural resource specialist at Glacier Bay.
KAREN BREWSTER: Hm.
DEBRA SANDERS: She went back to Glacier Bay as superintendent.
KAREN BREWSTER: Ok.
DEBRA SANDERS: Now, she's retired.
KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah, I don't know her name.
DEBRA SANDERS: She was an interesting one. Maybe she -- she was right there with Bruce as far as not easy to work for.
KAREN BREWSTER: In what way?
DEBRA SANDERS: She -- she liked to be in charge.
KAREN BREWSTER: Ok.
DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah. Different from Bruce, but she liked to be in charge. She maybe micromanaged a little more than she should've.
[02:09:30]KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm. I was wondering if there's a difference between a female superintendent versus a male superintendent.
DEBRA SANDERS: Hm. I'm trying to think if I've worked for any other women superintendents. Hm-mm. I've worked for all men, other than Susan. But maybe. Maybe they feel like they have something to prove or something? I don't know.
KAREN BREWSTER: But so, Jim, since he was -- he was only there a few years, right?
DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah.
KAREN BREWSTER: Did he interact and engage with staff and the community?
DEBRA SANDERS: He -- it seems to me like he -- I can't remember what he was doing. What did he do in the community? He was involved.
KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.
DEBRA SANDERS: I think people overall liked him in town.
KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.
DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah.
KAREN BREWSTER: And what about Bruce?
DEBRA SANDERS: Don't know. I don't know. People liked Clay.
KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.
DEBRA SANDERS: You know, for the most part.
KAREN BREWSTER: Right.
DEBRA SANDERS: I think they really liked Clay.
[02:10:28]KAREN BREWSTER: And your -- Clay makes me think of the Moore House property debate and the road. Was that during your time there?
DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah.
KAREN BREWSTER: Did you have any role in that? Or you were on the sidelines?
DEBRA SANDERS: No. Well, you know, I could voice my opinion on it, but yeah. That -- that was pretty interesting. Yeah, that whole corner thing.
KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DEBRA SANDERS: With the Moore House property. And I know then they -- we planted some trees to make it look more authentic and some stuff like that, but yeah, I wasn't real involved with that project. Or that issue.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm. And did you feel like it was resolved well?

DEBRA SANDERS: I do. I think that turned out to be fine.

KAREN BREWSTER: Ok.

DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah. I know they were talking about what a safety hazard that corner was and all that kind of stuff, but --

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah. Um, that's the -- the city versus park politics, I guess.

DEBRA SANDERS: Yep. That's part of it. Yeah.

[02:11:23]KAREN BREWSTER: Did you have any role with the Historic District Commission?

DEBRA SANDERS: No. Karl did.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

DEBRA SANDERS: He was the --

KAREN BREWSTER: He was the guy.

DEBRA SANDERS: He was the always-onboard person for that.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah. Yeah, ok. [02:11:34]Um, any other thing you want to say about working in Skagway or something -- ? Things you miss about it?

DEBRA SANDERS: I don't miss the busy, busy cruise ship days.

KAREN BREWSTER: Did that affect you?

DEBRA SANDERS: Not real -- well, just trying to get home.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh, yeah.

DEBRA SANDERS: Or get to the post office.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

DEBRA SANDERS: Or you know, that kind of thing. But it was kind of fun, really.

KAREN BREWSTER: But it didn't affect you being able to do your work?

DEBRA SANDERS: No. No. Not at all.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

DEBRA SANDERS: Not at all. No. Um, yeah, I mean, in certain ways, I really -- I miss Skagway.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DEBRA SANDERS: You know, I'm glad I'm not there in the winters.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DEBRA SANDERS: 'Cause that was getting really, really old. But, you know, it's such a gorgeous spot.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

DEBRA SANDERS: It's just such a gorgeous spot. But -- No, overall I'm, you know, I'm glad I'm where I'm at, and all that. I think it's -- it's been good. I'm glad I spent the time there. I'm glad I had that opportunity. 'Cause it was a lot of good experience and --

[02:12:30]KAREN BREWSTER: I was going to say, are there things you learned?

DEBRA SANDERS: Oh, yeah. I mean, you know, you make mistakes and you learn. So but, you know, there were -- there were -- both the Moore House, I mean, that -- like I said, was a brand-new thing for me.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DEBRA SANDERS: That whole process.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DEBRA SANDERS: Um, you learn how historic furnishing reports are done. You learn -- you know, you learn all that kind of stuff. You learn research. You --

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DEBRA SANDERS: You know, all that kind of thing. But, you know, the Rapuzzi Collection was just mind-boggling.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

DEBRA SANDERS: That was mind-boggling. It was -- I feel so fortunate, other than the unhappy incident that happened.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DEBRA SANDERS: You know, to have been considered a part of that. And to be -- to have been there during that time.

[02:13:13]KAREN BREWSTER: Did any of you guys ever write professional papers about, this is what we did, and the process?

DEBRA SANDERS: We should've.

KAREN BREWSTER: To the museum world.

DEBRA SANDERS: We should've.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah. But I guess maybe that's not in the purview of Park Service.

DEBRA SANDERS: Oh, no. We're -- we're supposed to.

KAREN BREWSTER: Ok.

DEBRA SANDERS: That's one of those things, kind of like the archeologists that don't do their processing.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DEBRA SANDERS: You know, working with the artifacts and sorting is a lot more fun than writing the re -- writing stuff.

KAREN BREWSTER: Or also, there's maybe a time pressure that, we've got to get this collection --

DEBRA SANDERS: Exactly.

KAREN BREWSTER: -- organized. We don't have time to go write about it.

DEBRA SANDERS: We had a time frame.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

DEBRA SANDERS: That we were having to stick to.

KAREN BREWSTER: For the Rapuzzi Collection, yeah?

DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah, we did. We had three years.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh. Why? What was the reason for a time frame?

DEBRA SANDERS: That was all in the agreement with Phyllis Brown. Yeah, it was all in that purchase agreement.

KAREN BREWSTER: Hm.

DEBRA SANDERS: We had this length of time. I'm not sure why.

KAREN BREWSTER: But the -- that was just for the inventorying and separating?

DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah. Yeah.

KAREN BREWSTER: That wasn't for the cataloging?

DEBRA SANDERS: No.

KAREN BREWSTER: Because I think, isn't Deb still cataloging?

DEBRA SANDERS: I'm sure she probably is.

[02:14:18]KAREN BREWSTER: Um, is Phyllis Brown still around?

DEBRA SANDERS: You know, she -- I know that about the time I moved there, she came back to Skagway.

KAREN BREWSTER: Hm.

DEBRA SANDERS: And was actually living there.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah. Well, Karl would know, I know, so.

DEBRA SANDERS: And so would Deb.

KAREN BREWSTER: He would've told me -- they would've told me, and I can't remember.

DEBRA SANDERS: I bet she's not there anymore.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

DEBRA SANDERS: She's pretty old.

KAREN BREWSTER: Did you have a relationship with her?

DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah.

KAREN BREWSTER: What was she like? I don't know anything about her.

DEBRA SANDERS: Oh, she was a very stern, straightforward person. She was very -- we got along fine.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DEBRA SANDERS: But you had to learn to work with her. She was very assertive. And had to be her way. And if she didn't like what you were doing, she'd tell you. Yeah, she's very interesting.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah, but you -- but -- 'cause obviously, not everybody probably could get along with her.

DEBRA SANDERS: Right. Yeah. Thank goodness, Judy did, too.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DEBRA SANDERS: I think we both just sorta learned, you know, how to -- how to talk to Phyllis. You just kinda had to, you know, baby her a little. And just be real polite and --

KAREN BREWSTER: Let her --

DEBRA SANDERS: Let her --

KAREN BREWSTER: Let her feel like she got her way?

DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. But yeah, she was -- she's getting up there, so.

[02:15:39]KAREN BREWSTER: Was she involved in any of the -- you know, once the collection was acquired and you guys were going through it, was she involved at all?

DEBRA SANDERS: No. She had spent her time with Ron Klein.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DEBRA SANDERS: I think, and kinda passed her in -- her knowledge, what she had, which wasn't a whole lot really. She just all of a sudden had acquired this collection.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

DEBRA SANDERS: Um, you know, but, she kinda turned it over to Ron, as far as being responsible and answering our questions and all that kind of stuff, so.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah. 'Cause I wondered how much you and Judy interacted with her, and for what reasons would you interact with her?

DEBRA SANDERS: There for a while, she was living in the Alascom house.

KAREN BREWSTER: Ok.

DEBRA SANDERS: And we were working in that building, so it would just be kind of seeing her leave and come, and she'd occasionally come over and say hi and see what we were doing.

And, you know, just that kind of interaction. Nothing, you know, nothing too -- oh, and the Rapuzzi house, too, 'cause she -- she was living in the Rapuzzi house for a while. And so, you know, she would still -- when we'd be over there at times, she'd pop over. It was just across the street.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

DEBRA SANDERS: And she'd pop over and just see what we were doing and stuff.

KAREN BREWSTER: And did you consult with her on what's this, or how did this get -- ?

DEBRA SANDERS: Occasionally.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

DEBRA SANDERS: Yeah, occasionally, we would. And um, lot of times, she'd say, "You have to ask -- you have to ask Ron."

KAREN BREWSTER: Ok.

DEBRA SANDERS: Said, will do. [02:17:11]I can't really -- I'm trying to think. I'm glad a couple things like White Pass came up. You know, that was good. Hadn't really thought about that, but uh. No, I can't really think of anything else significant.

KAREN BREWSTER: Ok.

DEBRA SANDERS: Or not.

KAREN BREWSTER: Or not significant. Well, we will stop for now, then, and if we think of something else, we can turn it back on. All right. Thanks, Deb.

DEBRA SANDERS: Um-hm.