

RECORDED INTERVIEW OF SUSAN "SU" RAPPLEYE

CONDUCTED BY KAREN BREWSTER

IN DAYTON, WYOMING

MAY 3, 2019

ORAL HISTORY 2017-01-99

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

[00:00:00]KAREN BREWSTER: Ok, today is May 3, 2019, and this is Karen Brewster. And I'm here with Sue Rappleye at her home in Dayton, Wyoming. Thank you for letting me come visit you today.

SU RAPPLEYE: Sure.

KAREN BREWSTER: And uh, this is for the Klondike Gold Rush National Historical Park Oral History Project. And um, so I know that you worked on the Skagway Historical Commission for a long time, right? But before we get to that, let's get you to Skagway.

[00:00:33]How did you end up in Skagway?

SU RAPPLEYE: Oh my. Well.

KAREN BREWSTER: And when?

SU RAPPLEYE: Um, I got to Skagway in 1991. I actually managed to come over on New Year's Eve, 1990-91.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

SU RAPPLEYE: And I met the whole town. We had dinner at the Eagles and a dance at the Elks, and everybody was there. I met the whole -- the whole place. And the next morning, the darling guys over at the ferry terminal called me up and said, "Didn't you mean to be on this ferry today?" I said, "Yeah." And they said, "Well, the wind's blowing really hard, and we can't hold it, so run down here and jump on." It's like, ok. Off I went. [00:01:21]I had taken a -- I was a -- a news reporter, working for Alaska public radio stations. And I had -- hm, something had happened. I -- I've -- I've been in several of 'em. I'd been in Wrangell and Petersburg, and then I started doing short-term stints because all the stations needed news people, and I got to go all sorts of places. With that, spent a couple of months in Kodiak doing the fish report, and um, my last little stint was in Haines.

KAREN BREWSTER: Ok.

[00:02:02]SU RAPPLEYE: And um, Skagway didn't have a reporter right then, and they hired somebody. And he showed up with -- he was a black man, and he had a license plate that said "Lover Boy," and he only lasted three weeks and then he was gone. He just disappeared in the night one time. And uh, so I was trying to cover Skagway from Haines, but my three months was almost up with them, and I had a chimney fire and said, "You know, um, I -- give me that job over in Skagway 'cause I'm not staying here any longer." And -- and convinced 'em, and they did.

SUE RAPPLEYE

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[00:02:50]KAREN BREWSTER: And so what's your background? Where are you from originally?

SU RAPPLEYE: I grew up in -- I was born in Chicago and grew up in Tennessee. We moved when I was, um, seven, down to Tennessee. And the first Christmas, I got to go outside in shorts on Christmas Day. And I went to school in -- at Sullins College, which doesn't exist anymore. It's a girls' school in Bristol, Virginia-Tennessee. And I went up to Springfield, Massachusetts for my third year. And then I got married and uh, de-de-de -- finally -- Actually it was his idea -- We got divorced, but it was his idea to go out west, and we took a Christmas vacation -- or a summer vacation and did all that. So I moved to Montana, and from Mon -- in Montana is where I learned to do radio.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

SU RAPPLEYE: And it was real expensive there, so I started --

KAREN BREWSTER: You said you lived in Bozeman?

SU RAPPLEYE: In Bozeman. And it was real expensive there, and I started looking for another job. I'd graduated from college. Uh, I'd gone back a little while to try to get my -- my masters, and a teaching certificate, but what I wanted to do for my project was a radio show. And my advisor said, "There is no place for entertainment in education." So that was the end of that, and I was like, ok, fine. So I -- I moved up to Missoula and had a job at commercial radio there.

[00:04:31]I was the first woman on commercial radio in Bozeman. I was the first woman on commercial radio in Missoula.

KAREN BREWSTER: Wow.

SU RAPPLEYE: And --

KAREN BREWSTER: And that was in what year?

SU RAPPLEYE: That was in '78.

KAREN BREWSTER: Ok.

SU RAPPLEYE: '77 and then '78. And um, I, eh -- Missoula stunk in the middle of the night because of the pulp mills.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh.

SU RAPPLEYE: Two o'clock in the morning, it still stink.

KAREN BREWSTER: Wow.

[00:05:04]SU RAPPLEYE: So I was looking in "Radio & Records," and my sister lived in Hawaii and suggested I just come over there, and I told her she didn't have -- she had false seasons in Hawaii. And I had all my winter clothes, so I found a job in Dillingham, Alaska.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh.

SU RAPPLEYE: And I went straight there. Do not stop in Anchorage. Do not, you know.

KAREN BREWSTER: And it was a radio job?

SU RAPPLEYE: Um-hm. Um-hm. I was public affairs for KDLG in Dillingham. And uh, agreed to stay there 'til July 1st, I think it was. And July 2nd, I was on a plane outta there. Three wee -- three -- the weather in Dillingham at that point, every three weeks it changed. So for three weeks, it would thaw. And then for three weeks, it would freeze. And for three weeks, it would thaw. And I was two miles out of town. And so when it was frozen, I could walk across the -- the field.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

SU RAPPLEYE: Which was permafrost.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

SU RAPPLEYE: And when it was thawed, then I had to walk all the way around.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

SU RAPPLEYE: So I didn't stay. [00:06:15]And I went back to Anchorage and I worked for -- uh, I forget what the name of the -- which radio it was, but it was out in Big Lake.

KAREN BREWSTER: Hm.

SU RAPPLEYE: And did some advertisements for the Department of Energy. We still had a Department of Energy at that time. Learned to figure out where I was in Anchorage by the four tall buildings. And uh, what happened? When I -- when I got to -- I was in -- I got to Dillingham two days before the cut-off for the very first Permanent Fund Dividend.

KAREN BREWSTER: Hm.

SU RAPPLEYE: I think it was October 29 or something. Um, but I passed a test as an energy auditor.

KAREN BREWSTER: Hm.

SU RAPPLEYE: And got a contract and went to the southeast and did Wrangell, Petersburg, Angoon, and Hoonah with energy audits. [00:07:27]Ended up staying in Angoon for three years.

KAREN BREWSTER: Wow.

SU RAPPLEYE: Um, then I left there, went back to Wrangell. Got a job at the radio station. Um, I left there and went to Petersburg. Had a job as the news person in Petersburg. Ended up as manager in Petersburg. A good friend was an airplane pilot, and he died. And uh, after that, I quit my job, and that's when I started doing just stints.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

SU RAPPLEYE: Short stints.

KAREN BREWSTER: Ok. And then that gets us to Skagway.

SU RAPPLEYE: And that got me to Skagway.

KAREN BREWSTER: Ok. And now probably our tea water is maybe hot. (pause)
[00:08:17]Well, that sounds like quite a long and varied radio career.

SU RAPPLEYE: Um, yeah. It was. I did that fifteen -- fifteen to twenty years. I don't -- I never figured out exactly how -- I think it was about fifteen or seventeen years. And then, um, I was over in Skagway. John (Jackson) was my first, um, radio interview in Skagway.

KAREN BREWSTER: Your husband, John.

SU RAPPLEYE: Yes. That's how I met him. Um, uh, then they fired me for refusing to move back to Haines. They did that twice, I think.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah, because the Haines and Skagway radio stations are all kind of under one umbrella?

SU RAPPLEYE: Yes. The main station is over in Haines, and -- and there's a Haines-Skagway rivalry.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

SU RAPPLEYE: That's always been there. So um, they uh, they figured that they were the most important ones.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

SU RAPPLEYE: And I wouldn't move back. I didn't even want to go for a short time.

[00:09:31]So um, that was -- got me to '93, and in '93, then I quit 'em for the last time, and uh, bought a store. Glenda Choate --

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

SU RAPPLEYE: -- had Miss Kitty's something.

KAREN BREWSTER: Miss Kitty's Buttonhole.

SU RAPPLEYE: No, that was mine.

KAREN BREWSTER: That was yours. Oh.

SU RAPPLEYE: Yeah. I'm not sure. I'll ask John when he comes in. He'll remember. But it was the cribs.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

SU RAPPLEYE: Down the alley from the A-B Hall (Arctic Brotherhood Hall), and she was getting out of it. And then she started another store down the street for a short while.

[00:10:15]Um, but John came up with the name Buttonhole, Miss Kitty's Buttonhole, and uh --

KAREN BREWSTER: Because it was Miss Kitty's being referred to the crib. For people who don't know, the cribs were where, in the gold rush time, the prostitutes would be, right?

SU RAPPLEYE: Right. So we told those stories all the time. Um --

KAREN BREWSTER: You have some photos.

SU RAPPLEYE: I went and looked this morning.

KAREN BREWSTER: Ok.

SU RAPPLEYE: And we put Madeline out front.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh, the mannequin?

SU RAPPLEYE: Yes.

KAREN BREWSTER: I see.

SU RAPPLEYE: And --

KAREN BREWSTER: She's dressed like a gold rush prostitute, I would assume.

SU RAPPLEYE: Uh-huh. Uh-huh. See the front?

KAREN BREWSTER: All right.

SU RAPPLEYE: And --

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh, and with bloomers on the --

SU RAPPLEYE: Bloomers hanging there, yeah. And, eventually, I got two more mannequins.

They were standing up, and they were -- they were -- one was right in front of the sign, and the other one was back a little bit further. Because it got so -- [00:11:17]We were down the alley.

And when the people get off the cruise ships, they -- and starting in '93, it was still a lot of seniors that were traveling the cruise ships. There weren't as many kids, young people. It was older folks that were taking the cruise ships. I had a lot of people ask me for senior discounts. I was like, no. No, no, no. But they'd come up the street, and they'd walk right by the alley and not even look. Not notice.

KAREN BREWSTER: And this alley is between which streets? It's off Broadway.

SU RAPPLEYE: The A-B Hall is right across the street.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh, so between like --

SU RAPPLEYE: So it's the first block up.

KAREN BREWSTER: Ok.

SU RAPPLEYE: So 2nd Street is really the first one.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right, that's where the depot is?

SU RAPPLEYE: Right. And this is between 2nd and 3rd.

KAREN BREWSTER: Ok.

SU RAPPLEYE: And um, but if one person turned and looked and headed down my way, then they would all come. And so, we tended to open up the back door. Um.

(Shuffling photographs)

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh, this one?

SU RAPPLEYE: This one.

KAREN BREWSTER: That one. The end of the building. Ok.

SU RAPPLEYE: This one. The end of the building. We had that one covered up. Uh, so the end of the building. So they'd walk all the way through and then come back around the side. So um, they'd play with the mannequins sometimes.

KAREN BREWSTER: I'm sure they took lots of pictures in front of the mannequins.

[00:12:40]SU RAPPLEYE: Yes. Yes. And most of what I sold was hats.

KAREN BREWSTER: Uh-huh.

SU RAPPLEYE: Um, hats come, one small, two medium, two large, one extra-large. There's six hats in a box. They don't weigh a lot to freight them up. That's good. I only sold brimmed hats. I sold, um, every different kind of brimmed hat that I could find because that's what the men wore when they came up.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

SU RAPPLEYE: They were all wearing hats at that time.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

SU RAPPLEYE: And they, uh, from wherever they lived, they'd be wearing different kinds of hats. So we had every different kind of hat that you could think.

KAREN BREWSTER: So this was the -- sort of keeping with the gold rush theme?

SU RAPPLEYE: Yeah. Yeah.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

[00:13:30]SU RAPPLEYE: And um, the psychology of watching the couples when the man decides he's going to buy a hat, and the woman has to stand there as he tries everything on, and it's a real psychology that's going on between the two. And I met a guy who runs a hat store in San Francisco, and he -- he was a psychology major, and he would take his class over to the hat store, to work, to interact with people and watch what was going on. It was pretty interesting.

KAREN BREWSTER: So what would be sort of the standard practice? What was going on?

SU RAPPLEYE: Um, either they were supportive or they were not. Um, or they'd turn around and go into the back room and look at the women's clothing and the lingerie. I had lingerie in the back, and I had a few women's hats, but not so many. 'Cause I figured that wasn't going to go on a trip like that 'cause they were all supposed to be big and --

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

SU RAPPLEYE: Yeah.

[00:14:33]KAREN BREWSTER: I was thinking that the -- the women sitting there, waiting for their husband to buy a hat would be comparable to men going with their wives dress shopping.

SU RAPPLEYE: Yes, well. There were no chairs to sit down in.

KAREN BREWSTER: A-ha.

SU RAPPLEYE: There was only 500 square feet in there.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

SU RAPPLEYE: And uh, and I'd taken up some of it with my stuff. This is, uh, this is a picture of my mom. She came to visit. But I had a -- an old dresser with the big mirror and the low-cut, um, what do you call it?

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh, like a dressing table.

SU RAPPLEYE: Yeah, like a dressing table was there.

KAREN BREWSTER: Old-fashioned dressing table.

SU RAPPLEYE: With different knicks and -- knick-knacks here.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

SU RAPPLEYE: And some antique-looking jewelry and stuff. So they could poke around in the rest of the store, or they could stay right there and harass their husbands. Um.

[00:15:23]KAREN BREWSTER: And did most of the men who tried -- got to the point of trying on hats end up buying them?

SU RAPPLEYE: Uh-huh. I sold more hats than anything else.

KAREN BREWSTER: Really?

SU RAPPLEYE: Yeah. More than 50 percent of my sales were on hats.

KAREN BREWSTER: So even if the wives --

SU RAPPLEYE: I refused to sell ball caps.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah, well, that was my -- I was going to say, yeah, but the wives, even if they didn't support them, the men ended up buying them once they got to the trying-on stage?

SU RAPPLEYE: Um-hm. Um-hm. Um-hm. Um-hm.

KAREN BREWSTER: Cool.

SU RAPPLEYE: Oh, the trying-on stage happens as soon as you walk in the door. Whether they're gonna buy 'em or not, they were trying them on.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right. Right.

SU RAPPLEYE: Yeah. [00:16:01]And sometimes we dressed up the gals, 'cause these were all things that we were selling.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

SU RAPPLEYE: Uh, there was a gal in -- she was in North Carolina or Virginia, making period clothes.

KAREN BREWSTER: Neat.

SU RAPPLEYE: And so, um, I had a good rapport with her going on, and -- What's this picture? Who are these people? I don't know. Oh, that's from the house.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah, when we're done, if you don't mind, I'd like to take pictures of these pictures.

SU RAPPLEYE: Sure.

KAREN BREWSTER: Because they go nicely with the interview, especially of the building.

SU RAPPLEYE: Sure.

KAREN BREWSTER: To see what it looked like then.

[00:16:44]SU RAPPLEYE: I had a little issue with the Park Service.

KAREN BREWSTER: Ok. I was gonna ask.

SU RAPPLEYE: When I wanted to paint the red.

KAREN BREWSTER: Ok. So it's a white building with red trim.

SU RAPPLEYE: Yes.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh, this -- originally, though, it looks like it was brownish trim.

SU RAPPLEYE: Yeah. Yes. So I got 'em to change it to red.

KAREN BREWSTER: Ok.

SU RAPPLEYE: It was time to paint the building, and I said, "Ok. Well, this is what I want." And they were like, "What? No, no, no, no, no. You can't -- " And I said, "Of course." I was like, "You know they'd paint it red if they had red." They didn't paint anything at all, so. If they had red, they would've painted it red. I had geraniums growing in -- there's a --

KAREN BREWSTER: Where the sign -- oh, this one here.

SU RAPPLEYE: Yeah, where the sign is.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

SU RAPPLEYE: See, I always put the red geraniums in there. But red is -- the color red has the longest wave length. You can see it further away than any other color. Um, and I'm sure the women knew that, too. So anything to catch somebody's eye as they're walking by the end of my alley. But um --

[00:17:49]KAREN BREWSTER: So you had to fight with the Park Service over it?

SU RAPPLEYE: Well, we did -- it wasn't really a fight.

KAREN BREWSTER: Well.

SU RAPPLEYE: But I said, "Ok. I want to have white and red." And they said, "Well, rr, rr, rr (mumbling). And I said, "Well, rr, rr, rr (mumbling). So we talked it out, and we looked at things, and we came up with this. And -- and they painted it for me, and they admitted that it looked good.

KAREN BREWSTER: Well, that's -- and why did you have to go through the Park Service?

SU RAPPLEYE: They were painting the building.

KAREN BREWSTER: Was it their building?

SU RAPPLEYE: Yeah.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh, ok.

SU RAPPLEYE: Oh, you didn't know that?

KAREN BREWSTER: Well, I'm -- I want you to tell me the story of that. Yes.

[00:18:23]SU RAPPLEYE: Oh, well. Glenda was already in there. Glenda had the lease.

KAREN BREWSTER: Ok.

SU RAPPLEYE: Glenda Choate. And I bought the store from her. So when I bought the store, I just bought the -- the right to the lease and the space.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

SU RAPPLEYE: So I didn't -- I think I got some amount of inventory from her, but not much.

[00:18:48]KAREN BREWSTER: But, yeah, so this was an example of -- this was one of the buildings that the Park Service had purchased, fixed up, and were leasing back for local businesses?

SU RAPPLEYE: Yes. And I don't know exactly when Glenda had it. Um, I got to town in '91, and her store was already there. But it was always -- the amount of time on the lease was always sort of fuzzy in my mind, and then Reed extended it for a year.

KAREN BREWSTER: McCluskey?

SU RAPPLEYE: McCluskey. Extended it for a year because it ended in July. And so, he said, Well, we'll just -- "

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

SU RAPPLEYE: Yeah. Get it over the winter.

KAREN BREWSTER: And so, did you then have to apply for a lease on your own?

SU RAPPLEYE: Uh, that's when I quit -- that's when I killed Miss Kitty.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh.

SU RAPPLEYE: And that's a whole 'nother story.

KAREN BREWSTER: Ok.

SU RAPPLEYE: Yes. Um, the -- the store itself -- I finally -- (Shuffling photographs)

[00:19:54]KAREN BREWSTER: (referring to a photo) Oh, this is an old --

SU RAPPLEYE: Model A.

KAREN BREWSTER: Model A kind of truck/car.

SU RAPPLEYE: It's --

KAREN BREWSTER: Or was it a Model A that he added the enclosure on the back?

SU RAPPLEYE: Um, Leppie, the Leprechaun, got a hold of that, and he redid it. And he was building it, and I was fine with it until he painted it red and black. And I said, "Well, then I have to have it." So I got it, and I -- is this -- That looks different to me. Hang on just a minute.

KAREN BREWSTER: Ok.

SU RAPPLEYE: We never put anything on there.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh, on the -- the sign on -- on the vehicle?

SU RAPPLEYE: Yeah. But I had forgotten all about that, but this is the picture that I'm used to.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh.

SU RAPPLEYE: I sold it to her.

KAREN BREWSTER: Who's that in the picture?

SU RAPPLEYE: Um, the gal I sold it to. And she --

KAREN BREWSTER: All dressed in gold rush --

SU RAPPLEYE: She took it down to California.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh.

SU RAPPLEYE: And near -- on the coast somewhere, and there was a big sale.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh.

SU RAPPLEYE: And she took it out there and dressed like that to sell it. I think she did. I didn't hear from her again. But I parked this right where that is.

[00:21:17]KAREN BREWSTER: You parked the -- the Model A in front of your store?

SU RAPPLEYE: Uh-huh. In front of the store, right behind the sign and right behind the red geraniums. And that, too, pulled people down.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

SU RAPPLEYE: Some people would like to get in it, and I had some trouble with that, but yeah. It was another draw.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yes. Well, my notes here say that Glenda --

SU RAPPLEYE: Choate.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah. She leased the Verbauwhe's building in '85-86.

SU RAPPLEYE: Ok.

KAREN BREWSTER: But that's a different building than this Miss Kitty's Buttonhole in the cribs?

SU RAPPLEYE: Um, well, they call the Verbauwhe's building the building that was right in front of it.

KAREN BREWSTER: OK.

SU RAPPLEYE: Uh, there's only a little walkway between the Verbauwhe's and Miss Kitty's.

KAREN BREWSTER: Ok, then I know where -- yeah.

SU RAPPLEYE: And the Verbauwhe's is where Casey McBride had his jewelry store.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right. Right.

SU RAPPLEYE: And they might've called -- they -- I think they tried to call it Verbauwhe's Alley. They tried to call my building the Verbauwhe's, as well, but um.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

SU RAPPLEYE: I insisted it was French Alley.

[00:22:25]KAREN BREWSTER: Right. Well, and say, my notes from Karl (Gurcke) do say it was a crib building.

SU RAPPLEYE: Uh-huh.

KAREN BREWSTER: So you know, that does match.

SU RAPPLEYE: It was two or three pushed together.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

SU RAPPLEYE: Buildings pushed together.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right. Yeah, 'cause originally, those cribs were pretty small, little --

SU RAPPLEYE: Big enough for a bed.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right. That's all you needed.

SU RAPPLEYE: Um-hm.

[00:22:46]KAREN BREWSTER: Um, so that was in '93. So then, how did you -- when did you get on the Historical Commission?

SU RAPPLEYE: I don't remember. Um, soon after that. I went to the HDC and got permission for my mannequins. Um.

KAREN BREWSTER: And HDC is the Historic District Commission, is that what --

SU RAPPLEYE: Yeah.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

SU RAPPLEYE: And, um, 'cause there were rules. So I had done that right away in '93, so that when I opened the store that spring, um, Madeleine was out there.

KAREN BREWSTER: And they were ok with the use of mannequins?

SU RAPPLEYE: Well, I told them that I was on a sidewalk that didn't go anyplace, and there was a rule that you couldn't have 'em out on the public right-of-way.

KAREN BREWSTER: Uh-huh.

SU RAPPLEYE: But um, it was like, "Well, it's not really a private right-of-way. It doesn't go anywhere except my back door." And they said, "Oh, yeah. Ok." [00:23:47]Um, later on I had some issues with the city manager, who tried -- brought it back up again and tried to take 'em away from me, and I fought him and won, because I already had my permission to have them.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah, why would it matter to the city manager?

SU RAPPLEYE: Because at that point, I was on the HDC, and I was stopping someone from getting what they wanted, who went to the city manager and complained. And he came back at me and so, yeah.

KAREN BREWSTER: So how -- how -- I don't know how to say this. [00:24:35]As a local business operator --

SU RAPPLEYE: Um-hm.

KAREN BREWSTER: -- what was that like to have this commission deciding what you can and cannot do?

SU RAPPLEYE: Um, I went in and got permission for my mannequins, and that was ok. Later - - then I got on the HDC itself, and there were -- there were rules, um, that we tried to keep an eye on. We'd go out and walk the streets and look around.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

SU RAPPLEYE: And we'd find people doing things, and we were like, "Wait a minute. You don't get to just do that." And um, it depends on -- it depended on -- sometimes on who it was. And uh, there were some people who would tell you anything you wanted to hear in order to get

through and get permission to do what they really wanted to do anyway. [00:25:47]There was a lot more problem when the HDC decided that they were going to put restrictions on colors.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

SU RAPPLEYE: Um, but it was because we had one that was painted like McDonald's that we figured we'd better do that. You can't just tell somebody, um -- You can't just count on someone, uh -- What do I want to say here? Um, not everybody thinks the same. Not everybody has the same judgment. Not everybody has the same, um, things that they like. And we were trying to keep it looking like a historic town.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right. And if you said, just keep it gold rush colors, not everybody knew what that meant?

SU RAPPLEYE: Yeah. Yeah. And so, we tried to keep some of the darker colors. We tried to get enough variety that there were a lot of things in there. Turns out, somebody came to us, and they wanted to paint something white. And we didn't have white in there. I don't know how we missed that, but we didn't have white. So I guess I snuck something in when I did this one.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah, 'cause your building was white.

SU RAPPLEYE: 'Cause it's white, yeah. But um, Charlotte wanted to paint, uh, a little -- a little place next to Jim Hamilton's store. I think it's actually historic, too. I can't remember what it was. She wanted to paint it white, and we were like, "Oh, it doesn't say that you can here."

[00:27:41]KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah, I mean, all those historic architects could tell you the research they'd done on whether that paint existed back then or not.

SU RAPPLEYE: And that's what we went by.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

SU RAPPLEYE: We took all the stuff from the Park Service that they had on the histor -- history and the colors and stuff, and tried to put a palette together for people to choose from.

[00:28:00]KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm. So when somebody came in with a new business, how did they learn about these rules and that they -- there was a Historic District Commission that they had to apply to?

SU RAPPLEYE: It might be that they just went to the city. Um, the city -- I went to the city here in Dayton (Wyoming) and said, "Ok. I'm an accountant. I'd like to run my business out of my house. What do I have to do?" And she said, "Oh, nothing." And I thought, "Oh, that's interesting." I went -- came home and looked it up online for the State of Wyoming to make sure that was right, and it was. Uh, the accountants are -- are exempt from all sorts of things. Um, so my guess is that once they walked into City Hall in Skagway, they -- they'd say, "Oh, you're a new business? Ok, you need to do this and this and this." Because they wanted to sign -- everybody had to have a business license, which is how they got their sales tax forms.

KAREN BREWSTER: Ok.

SU RAPPLEYE: If they were in the downtown area, they would tell 'em immediately about the HDC and give 'em some ground rules. [00:29:11]At one point, we had a book. And it had pictures in it. It talked about, um, the community. It talked about the history. It showed what the -- I don't know who wrote that.

KAREN BREWSTER: Was it --

SU RAPPLEYE: Well, Glenda was part of it. But it showed, um -- I don't think I have any more of those. It showed the different ways that the buildings were built. It showed -- it talked about roofs. It talked about doors and windows. All the structural things that were involved. And we -- we upgraded it a couple of times, going through it and making edits and stuff and working with

the city -- city crew. And um, I don't remember when the last time it was that we did that. We knew it needed to be done again. And I think the -- it was finally done again, and I think it was on CD.

KAREN BREWSTER: Mm.

SU RAPPLEYE: So it could be just handed out to somebody that way. I think that one somethi -
- I'm sure Karl will have those someplace.

[00:30:24]KAREN BREWSTER: Well, yeah. Um, and it -- Also this is if, I mean, in that downtown historic core, there are buildings that the Park Service has purchased and fixed up and they lease out to local business -- or to businesses. People apply.

SU RAPPLEYE: Yeah.

KAREN BREWSTER: But then there also are buildings that are privately owned, correct?

SU RAPPLEYE: Yes. And this went for everybody.

KAREN BREWSTER: Ok. And what if somebody wants to build a new building down there? Do they have to build it to look historic?

SU RAPPLEYE: Yes. And they have.

KAREN BREWSTER: They have?

SU RAPPLEYE: When I got to town in '91, there must've been -- Well, let's see. I counted 'em at one time. There were at least eleven vacant lots downtown.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

SU RAPPLEYE: And there aren't anymore.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

SU RAPPLEYE: They're gone. They're all built. So uh, yeah. So -- and there was a lot of building going on during that ten years or so, so -- twenty years. Um, and they'd all have to come to us, to the HDC, and we tried to take at least two meetings, if not three, if there were questions, things that we'd watch. [00:31:47]Um, and most of the time, they were built according to what they told us they were going to do.

KAREN BREWSTER: You say most of the time.

SU RAPPLEYE: Most of the time they were built according to what they said.

KAREN BREWSTER: So do you have an example of when -- ?

SU RAPPLEYE: I'll have to think about that for a little bit.

KAREN BREWSTER: Or what -- what they said they were going to do that they didn't? Like, what would be an example of something that you'd say you were going to do, and then you end up not doing it?

SU RAPPLEYE: I have to think on that.

KAREN BREWSTER: Ok.

SU RAPPLEYE: That just sort of came out of my mouth, and I'm -- I'm thinking now --

[00:32:25]KAREN BREWSTER: Well, what -- what would HDC do if, you know, they -- they said they were gonna do something, and then they didn't? They sort of violated their permits, is that what you -- ?

SU RAPPLEYE: There's not a lot you can do except go to -- you're trusting the, um, the city person to inspect things as things go along. I know we had trouble with, I think it was Moe's (Moe's Frontier Bar), um, when Moe's went out of business, and somebody bought that property. And they were talking about -- they were -- it was a nice old building, and they were tearing out a wall and connecting to the next building and making a big jewelry store in there, and they wanted to change the doorway. Is that the one that was on -- I think they wanted to make an

angled doorway, thinking that that would bring people in. And we had a big argument about the fact that the angled doorways were really only on corners, not alleys.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

SU RAPPLEYE: And so, that -- I think we won. But -- but it was a long fight. Um, it's hard to remember how many different new buildings there were down there during that time.

[00:33:58]Um, we watched 'em redo the Red Onion. We watched 'em redo the, um, Trail Bench.

KAREN BREWSTER: The Golden North?

SU RAPPLEYE: Uh, yes, well. That might've been one of those that was, uh -- we really couldn't say anything about what they did inside. All we could touch was the outside. And so, that was kinda disappointing, what they did in the Golden North, changing it all around inside. Um, they attempted to have, uh, an outside eating area. They had a bar in there on one end, and they attempted to have an outside eating area. And so, they told us what kind of fence and what kind of chairs they were going to have, and then they weren't at all. Some wrought-iron thing that they came up with that didn't look at all period, and so that was sort of an argument, but we didn't get anywhere with it.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah, so --

SU RAPPLEYE: They'd already spent their money.

[00:35:30]KAREN BREWSTER: And the city inspector doesn't have any authority, or the Historic Commission doesn't have any authority at that point?

SU RAPPLEYE: The -- the -- the Historic District's authority has to go through the city employee. And I can't remember who we had first. We had somebody that was really good. They were always there. They were talking to us. They were in the meetings. They were helpful. We'd tell 'em we wanted something, and they'd go do it. They'd take care of everything for us. And that person left, and we got a new guy. Cannot remember his name. I probably don't want to remember his name. It was Shelby, um -- Shelby's husband.

KAREN BREWSTER: Do you remember the name of the guy who was so helpful?

SU RAPPLEYE: No.

KAREN BREWSTER: OK.

SU RAPPLEYE: I'd have to go back. I don't.

KAREN BREWSTER: But anyway, this next one was not.

SU RAPPLEYE: But this next one really didn't want to work. They finally got rid of him. I complained to the mayor several times. He wouldn't listen to me. I was like, I'm telling you. And uh, so then, there was nothing we could do about anything. We had absolutely -- you know, we could vote whatever we wanted to, and it really didn't help.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

SU RAPPLEYE: Hm, so.

KAREN BREWSTER: That must've been frustrating?

SU RAPPLEYE: It was, very.

KAREN BREWSTER: And I know that there's one --

SU RAPPLEYE: That got me off finally.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh.

SU RAPPLEYE: I finally just said, "No, I'm not renewing." 'Cause the mayor wouldn't help, and the city manager wouldn't help. I'd been to both of them.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah. Yeah, and then what's the point of having a commission if you don't have any authority?

[00:37:20]SU RAPPLEYE: Yeah. The darling policeman came in. Ray Leggett came in and talked to us one time and told us that he wasn't going to give anybody a ticket for first offenses. We're like, "Ok. There's -- you know, there's these laws that are on the books." He was like, "rr, rr, rr." (mumbling) So he was no help either.

KAREN BREWSTER: Well, like, first offenses for, like, parking in the wrong place, or --

SU RAPPLEYE: First offenses for, um, having merchandise outside your store.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh, I see. Ok. Right, right.

SU RAPPLEYE: For hanging out signs that had never been approved. For, you know, simple little things like that, that it seemed to us that between the employee and the cops, they ought to just write a ticket and stop it right then.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

SU RAPPLEYE: Because we would -- At the end of each meeting -- I mean, we had a regular agenda of stuff that was coming up for us. At the end of the meeting, we'd go around and say, who saw what? Is there something we need to attend to? And then we'd send the employee out to give 'em a warning or give them a ticket or something. And the employee would go and try to explain it to the people that, no, you can't do this, and then report to the cop so that the next time it happened, they'd take care of it. So it's like -- The cops like --

KAREN BREWSTER: I didn't realize that it could be enforceable with a ticket by the police.

SU RAPPLEYE: They -- it's written into the, um, into the law, that um, you can't do this, and that there are fines.

KAREN BREWSTER: Fines. Right. [00:39:06]And again, it's for these businesses that are like right on Broadway and a couple blocks either way?

SU RAPPLEYE: The Historic District goes from 2nd to --

KAREN BREWSTER: 8th? 10th?

SU RAPPLEYE: Maybe 9th.

KAREN BREWSTER: Actually, I have a map.

SU RAPPLEYE: I'm trying to remember where they are, too.

KAREN BREWSTER: I have a map in my car.

SU RAPPLEYE: 6th is the, um, Eagles.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

SU RAPPLEYE: And 7th is the Skagway Inn.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

SU RAPPLEYE: And 8th is, uh, the SOS and -- no. SOS must be across from the Skagway Inn.

KAREN BREWSTER: Skagway Inn. Is SOS --

SU RAPPLEYE: Well, they built something else on the next --

KAREN BREWSTER: Past that?

SU RAPPLEYE: Yeah. Yeah, there's another block past that.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

SU RAPPLEYE: So I think it would be to the 9th.

KAREN BREWSTER: Ok. And then it's Broadway and State Street, or is it just Broadway?

SU RAPPLEYE: It's just Broadway.

KAREN BREWSTER: It doesn't go over to State?

SU RAPPLEYE: It doesn't go to State.

[00:40:15]KAREN BREWSTER: Well, but the Portland House.

SU RAPPLEYE: The Portland House asked to be -- it is included, but the building across the street, the old Tanner House.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

SU RAPPLEYE: We used to live in Upper Tanner Manor. The Tanner House, which was -- Lemon Rose Bakery was in there for quite some time.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

SU RAPPLEYE: Um, that's not in it. Because when they laid it out, the people that owned it argued against it, and so it doesn't go that far.

KAREN BREWSTER: Well, and then across the other way from the Portland House is the YMCA-Meyer --

SU RAPPLEYE: Right.

KAREN BREWSTER: -- Building that the Park Service is restoring, but that's a Park Service building, so --

SU RAPPLEYE: And they're not in it. But they're not in it. It doesn't go across State Street.

KAREN BREWSTER: Which I guess makes sense 'cause State Street and west is more residential anyway.

SU RAPPLEYE: Yeah. Um, 2nd Street, it goes up to the -- the large -- as far as the large building that's had several different things in it, but it doesn't go any further than that. And it's not across the street. There are a couple of residences across the street, and it's not on that side of the street.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

SU RAPPLEYE: So it's sort of in and out and around.

KAREN BREWSTER: And then on -- say -- the other direction, it doesn't cover the Westmark Hotel, for instance? They are --

SU RAPPLEYE: It doesn't do the Westmark, um.

KAREN BREWSTER: Or Sgt. Preston's would be another one.

SU RAPPLEYE: But it does do, um, Moore's house.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm. Right.

SU RAPPLEYE: Down to APT (Alaska Power and Telephone Company). APT is not in it.

KAREN BREWSTER: No.

[00:41:58]SU RAPPLEYE: The dead animal museum along Spring Street is not in it. Um, mostly Spring Street isn't in it.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

SU RAPPLEYE: Because, that's -- true. And some things, it goes almost over to Spring Street, but not quite. On -- on which street is that? Must be 3rd. No, 4th. Hardware store's on 4th.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

SU RAPPLEYE: Um, there was a historic house right behind --

KAREN BREWSTER: The hardware store?

SU RAPPLEYE: -- the hardware store. And it had been so badly treated, uh, in the last -- maybe its last ten years, that we went into it. We looked at it. We -- we considered all sorts of things, and we finally said, "Yes. She can tear it down." And that was -- it was kind of a hard decision 'cause I hated -- we hated to see it go, but there was really no way they could -- Well, they wanted to tear it down. We considered having them move it.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

SU RAPPLEYE: And we were afraid that it wouldn't be able to be moved, it wouldn't be able to be picked up, that they had changed it so many times. [00:43:23]I knew the guy who owned it and had been in the house back when he owned it, and when I went in when -- to look at it for this, it had been changed terribly. They'd -- the people who had owned it had built walls and stuff to make it house, maybe six or eight people.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

SU RAPPLEYE: As opposed to one. But it goes -- it went over -- I think it went the whole -- all the way over to Spring Street there because we had a new building on the corner. Uh, I can't remember his name. He's on the council now. He's a real estate --

KAREN BREWSTER: I have no idea.

SU RAPPLEYE: -- evaluator. He built a -- an apartment building on the end. That was one of the new buildings we did.

KAREN BREWSTER: And did that have to --

SU RAPPLEYE: And the Starfire.

[00:44:15]KAREN BREWSTER: And did that have to -- that new apartment building have to be Historic District-appropriate?

SU RAPPLEYE: Um.

KAREN BREWSTER: Or it was all -- outside of the perimeter?

SU RAPPLEYE: It was still inside, and it's -- it's a very simple building. It's not a lot of decorative work, but it pretty much followed the -- followed everything. And then they built all those new ones on 2nd Street across from the -- from the depot.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh. Steve Hites area?

SU RAPPLEYE: Steve Hites.

KAREN BREWSTER: The liquor store.

SU RAPPLEYE: And the two of them that are next to it, yeah. All that was --

KAREN BREWSTER: That's all new?

SU RAPPLEYE: Yeah. All that's new.

KAREN BREWSTER: But it looks -- it looks -- that's why I said, "Oh, it's new?" Because it looks appropriate to the time.

SU RAPPLEYE: Yeah.

[00:45:02]KAREN BREWSTER: And did you have a particular date range that people had to build to look like?

SU RAPPLEYE: Yeah.

KAREN BREWSTER: Do you remember what that was?

SU RAPPLEYE: Hm. I can't give it -- it's -- it doesn't go to 1920.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right. Ok.

SU RAPPLEYE: It doesn't go that far. It doesn't go twenty years.

KAREN BREWSTER: Those rules were already in place when you got on the Commission?

SU RAPPLEYE: Yeah.

KAREN BREWSTER: So, somebody else fought about all that?

SU RAPPLEYE: Yeah. Yeah.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um.

SU RAPPLEYE: And I think Glenda did a lot of that. Glenda Choate.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah, well, she did -- she had a historical research business for a while, right?

SU RAPPLEYE: Yeah. Yeah.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

SU RAPPLEYE: Yeah.

[00:45:44]KAREN BREWSTER: Um, so, you know, as a business person, how did it feel to have to abide by all this stuff, and did it feel -- was it a burden?

SU RAPPLEYE: I thought it was fun. And like I said, we got people dressed up sometimes. We -- we tried to stick to the era. Um, and there were rules about -- I had to go get my -- my signs approved and things like that, but it -- it -- it didn't seem like it was bad. But that was '93.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

SU RAPPLEYE: And by 2003, lots of things had changed.

KAREN BREWSTER: Such as?

SU RAPPLEYE: The amount of people that came through town.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

SU RAPPLEYE: It looked like the jewelry stores from the Caribbean had moved into Skagway for their winter. So that, you know, it was -- it was an off-season sort of thing.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

SU RAPPLEYE: That everything is deductible, it looked like. Um, and uh, the personnel were different. [00:46:58]People started shopping for memories, as opposed to things. It -- oh, just -- there was a lot of big difference. We had -- slick-looking jewelry salesmen would stand out on the boardwalk.

KAREN BREWSTER: And was that allowed?

SU RAPPLEYE: Um, not if they were selling out there, which they assured us they weren't.

KAREN BREWSTER: But they definitely would say, "Oh, come in and look at my stuff."

SU RAPPLEYE: Uh-huh. Yeah, that's what they would do. Yeah.

KAREN BREWSTER: And that's allowed?

SU RAPPLEYE: We already went through how -- what the HDC could do.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

SU RAPPLEYE: I mean, unless there was somebody being a sleuth out there, no way to prove things like that, so.

[00:47:50]KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm. Who approved what businesses would come into town?

SU RAPPLEYE: Any business can come into town that wants to. Oh, there was somebody who tried to get permission to do those -- those machines that -- they did have a post.

KAREN BREWSTER: Like a Segway?

SU RAPPLEYE: And then they just floated.

KAREN BREWSTER: Segway tours?

SU RAPPLEYE: Yeah, somebody tried to get Segway tours. And they -- they didn't get in. The -- they went -- the council went after them. They said, "No. We don't want you."

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm. But, yeah, I mean, anybody -- if they have to get a business license and apply to the city. The city says yes to everybody? The city doesn't have rules about this is gold rush-appropriate as a business?

SU RAPPLEYE: No. No. And um, one of the -- one of the Southeast stores put a limit on the number of jewelry stores that could be there.

KAREN BREWSTER: One of the Southeast communities?

SU RAPPLEYE: Southeast communities, yeah, put a limit on how many jewelry stores could be there. And Skagway never did that. They said, we can't do that.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right. [00:49:02]What was the -- well, when you were doing it, were most of the owners local business people, or was there still this, people come for the summer and leave?

SU RAPPLEYE: It was -- there were a lot more.

KAREN BREWSTER: A lot more which?

SU RAPPLEYE: A lot more that were locally owned.

KAREN BREWSTER: When you were doing it?

SU RAPPLEYE: When I first started.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

SU RAPPLEYE: Yeah. And little by little, off they went.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

SU RAPPLEYE: Because people would come in and offer 'em a lot of money. Sometimes they'd sell their building. Betsy Albecker sold her -- she had a building on the corner of -- it was Keller's, so I think it's right across the street from the Mascot. That would've been 3rd. Um, she sold that building. Uh, I think the Jewells sold their building. Uh, William and Anthony. That's the corner of 5th, Southwest corner of 5th. Um, and --

[00:50:14]KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah, I was wondering if the buildings might still be owned by one person, and they lease out the operation, the business space, to somebody else. That happens?

SU RAPPLEYE: Yeah, that happened. Uh. Oh, I said Kellers, and it's not Kellers. Kellers is up on -- up --

KAREN BREWSTER: Well, Betsy Albecker's, she --

SU RAPPLEYE: On 5th. Like on 3rd.

KAREN BREWSTER: She was Barbara Dedman Kallen's daughter.

SU RAPPLEYE: Right. Yeah.

KAREN BREWSTER: So would -- was it Dedman's Photo Shop?

SU RAPPLEYE: No. That got sold just recently.

KAREN BREWSTER: Ok.

SU RAPPLEYE: Um, her -- her -- Betsy's daughter sold that.

KAREN BREWSTER: Ok.

SU RAPPLEYE: Uh, just recently.

KAREN BREWSTER: So Betsy had a different building?

SU RAPPLEYE: Yeah. She had, um, the one across the street from the Mascot.

KAREN BREWSTER: Ok.

SU RAPPLEYE: And Kellers is up -- that's Jim Hamilton's building, and he has leased that several times. He had Little Switzerland was in there for a while. And then Cara Cosgrove got a hold of it, and she kept trying to get him to sell it to her. And he was into leasing it, and he told her he would sell it to her, and then he said, no, he wasn't going to sell it to her. So she quit. `

KAREN BREWSTER: Um.

SU RAPPLEYE: Doing her store.

[00:51:43]KAREN BREWSTER: What was I just going to -- oh. So if there's a building owner and then a lessee for the business, who's responsible for going to the Historic District and making sure everything meets their standards?

SU RAPPLEYE: Just depends on who wants to do it. The business owner is -- is the one that should do it. If it's a matter of the building itself, then it ought to be the business -- the building owner. So --

KAREN BREWSTER: So if it's painting it, it might be the owne? If it's the sign, it might be the business?

SU RAPPLEYE: Yeah.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

SU RAPPLEYE: Yeah.

[00:52:16]KAREN BREWSTER: Um, so as a -- when you were doing Kitty's Buttonhole, what was your relationship like with the Park Service? As a business owner to the Park Service?

SU RAPPLEYE: Um.

KAREN BREWSTER: And you can say whatever you want. There are no restrictions here.

SU RAPPLEYE: Um.

KAREN BREWSTER: That's why I'm asking, 'cause they do want to know.

SU RAPPLEYE: In the beginning, um, it was pretty good. Um, there was a time when I was having issues with the maintenance guys, and I cannot remember his name. I've been trying to remember his name. He lived up the hill. And he was a good friend, and he got really disgusted with me. But I complained, because little things that they could do, you know, on non-ship days or a different time of the day, they didn't. They'd come and do it right when everybody else was there, which was sort of annoying. And, of course, we always hated the freight guys because the freight guys came at the wrong time, too, but. [00:53:25]My biggest complaint with the -- with the Park Service came when it was time for my lease to be up, and I had to do another -- if I wanted to stay there, I had to do another lease. So I put in for, um, for a re-up. But they had raised the rent by 30 percent or something. I'm down the alley. It's hard to get people to go down the alley. I never knew when I was going to make any money. And uh, so I put in for less than they said. Ok, so they were -- the lease was going to be up at the end of the year. They started this, like, in February. I needed to know by the Fourth of July whether I was going to have the place or whether I needed to sell everything at rock-bottom and get rid of it.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

SU RAPPLEYE: And they wouldn't tell me. And they wouldn't tell me, and they wouldn't tell me, because some guy that was a tour op had also bid on the building, and he'd bid the full amount. And uh, the superintendent couldn't make up his mind. He didn't want the tour op in there, but I had not bid, um --

KAREN BREWSTER: High enough for the rent?

SU RAPPLEYE: High enough to make it a regular bid. And uh, and it went on and on and on. In August, I finally wrote Senator Stevens and said, "You know, maybe the Park Service shouldn't have buildings that they lease out. If they don't understand what the business community has to do, then maybe they shouldn't have the rentals." And um, I guess I caused an uproar. Um, Stevens got into it. I'd met Stevens, being a reporter.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

SU RAPPLEYE: He, and I really -- I generally just vote for people that I really like. He's the only one who came and looked when we had the oil spill. He's the only one.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

SU RAPPLEYE: Um, so he went to bat for me, I guess, and I got a letter from the legal representative for the Park Service that said, "You didn't put in a good enough bid." But that hadn't ever been -- I mean, easy enough for somebody to say that.

KAREN BREWSTER: In July.

SU RAPPLEYE: Yeah, in March, maybe, you know. [00:56:03]Reed McCluskey comes over and he says, "What did you do that for? Why did you put in a low bid?" I said, "Because if no one else bid, you would've given it to me." "Oh. Yeah. We would've." He'd done it the year before for somebody else. So they were stuck with this guy. Um, I also bid that time, not only on Miss Kitty's, but I also bid on Lynch Kennedy 'cause that was up. 'Cause I could see this hat store --

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

SU RAPPLEYE: -- floor to ceiling. And I didn't know if I wanted to do that or not. But um -- and I was bidding against somebody who was already in there. And I didn't bid real high. Uh, and they hadn't told me about that one, either. You know. They hadn't -- they hadn't made any of the decisions. [00:57:00]So, I think Bruce must've been the superintendent at that time.

KAREN BREWSTER: Noble.

SU RAPPLEYE: Yeah.

KAREN BREWSTER: Ok.

SU RAPPLEYE: I think he was the one. And we have stopped to see him since then. He's at a -- he's at a park in Colorado.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

SU RAPPLEYE: And we went through there and spoke -- and asked for him, but he was someplace else, so. I don't know that he would've wanted to see us anyway. But um, so I caused a little furor.

[00:57:29]KAREN BREWSTER: And so the Lynch Kennedy, you didn't get that bid either?

SU RAPPLEYE: No. No. And I have no idea -- maybe it was -- all that they'll -- the information came out after that. I got 'em to move. I got 'em to do something. So it was like, "Ok, fine." And I got rid of the rest of my stuff and got out and said, ok. Killed Miss Kitty.

KAREN BREWSTER: So, if you had gotten the bid, though, you would've continued in the business?

SU RAPPLEYE: I don't know. The last -- I had more fun doing the books than I did talking to the people. I was getting a little disgusted with these people. I'm open from nine until six or seven, and they either all come at one time, or they don't -- you know.

[00:58:15]KAREN BREWSTER: Well, that's what I was going to say, like how -- wha -- how was it as a business? Was it successful running a hat business?

SU RAPPLEYE: It was successful. I made money. But I -- I wasn't, you know, I wasn't real thrilled doing it.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

SU RAPPLEYE: Like I said, I had more fun doing the books.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

[00:58:33]SU RAPPLEYE: So the last three or four years of my, um, of my lease, I took all the accounting classes through distance ed out of Juneau, um -- And so, when the store was gone, that's ok. I started doing payroll and bookkeeping and stuff for everybody in town. And so, I had another career to go. I talked to my advisor at the school and said, "So what do I do to get a degree?" She said, "You already got a degree. Why get a degree? Go take your test." It's like, ok.

SUE RAPPLEYE

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So I went and took the test for the IRS, and I'm an enrolled agent, which means I'm a tax accountant.

[00:59:20]KAREN BREWSTER: Great. And what did you do during the winters when you ran Miss Kitty's?

SU RAPPLEYE: We'd go to, um, we'd go to shows. Uh, we -- and we'd plan, and uh, think about things and what we could do.

KAREN BREWSTER: So you'd go to, like, buying shows in the Lower 48? Is that what you mean by shows?

SU RAPPLEYE: Yeah. I went once to Anchorage, but everybody else was there. I went once to Seattle, but everybody else was there. So I went to San Francisco. I went to Atlanta. I went to -- where was that other one? There was another one. Texas, I think. The one I found that I really liked the most was Vegas, and I'd go down to Vegas and have four days, and they opened up that big convention center. It's the Men's Apparel and Gifts show. And they had miles of men's suits. I took John once in there, but he -- he'd get so distracted. I was like, "Come on. We're not going to buy this." But they -- they set up -- they started having a Women's Apparel and Gifts and a Children's Apparel and Gifts in conjunction with the other one, so I was able to do all my shopping right there, and that worked well. [01:00:42]The first time I went to a buying show, uh, that first year that I -- I bought the store, I slipped on the ice outside of the Eagles on New Year's Eve and broke my leg.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh, no.

SU RAPPLEYE: Broke my -- yeah, it was the leg. And um, so I was in a wheelchair when we went down to Seattle, and um, Nola Cole was with me, and she was dealing with hemorrhoids. And Eileen Smith was with us, and I forget what -- she lived in Seattle, I think, but they -- they'd push me around and leave me for a while and go do something else, and then we'd get back together. And they sort of taught me how to do the buying. And with apparel, everything is -- like the hats. I told you, one small, two medium, two large, one extra-large. That's pretty much what you get with any sort of apparel. Even lingerie comes that way.

KAREN BREWSTER: Hm.

SU RAPPLEYE: So you sorta have to --

[01:01:49]KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah, I was going to say, how did you learn the business of -- how did you know where to go to buy -- how did you even know that you're supposed to go to shows?

SU RAPPLEYE: I went and talked to a couple of operators in town that had -- that I knew well that had shops and talked to them. I talked to -- Dave Hunz's wife talked to me about shows. And she doesn't have that store anymore. Somebody else does. It's across the street from Duff's. It wasn't then. Where was it then? It was on Broadway.

[01:02:38]KAREN BREWSTER: And then what was the relationship like with the park just with other businesses and the community?

SU RAPPLEYE: I think there's a love-hate relationship between the city and the park, and I think that is spotted throughout the community. It's government, you know, and there was a real fear, I think, when the park moved in, exactly what they were going to do. And you still hear it in the council, division between the two. Um, even -- who did I -- where did I see that? That was HDC. It was somebody on the HDC. I think that had to do with the new cribs that they put in. Um, somebody from the Eagles was on the HDC and voting against the cribs being able to be there.

KAREN BREWSTER: Because they're just across the alley?

SU RAPPLEYE: Because they're right across the alley. And just the proximity was getting too close there. It was having government agents right across the -- right across the alley. I suppose that's what it was as much as anything. [01:04:14]But um, there's a -- a sense of distrust of government that's just sort of built in, and I think that it hits all walks. I mean, this -- if -- if the individual person was faced with, um, the government -- governing of the city, and the governing of the park, they'd back away from both of them. But when it's the two, they're gonna take their city because at least those are the people that live there all the time and that are accountable.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

SU RAPPLEYE: And I don't know how much the park is -- and the park people integrate into the city. So many of the park people come for the summer.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

SU RAPPLEYE: And they -- they don't. Um, and uh, I'm not sure -- I've always wondered if there are some sort of, um, rules about participating. It seems to me, there were. That Karl ran into 'em, being on the HDC.

KAREN BREWSTER: Hm. He was a member of the HDC, not just the Park Service rep?

SU RAPPLEYE: Yes.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh.

SU RAPPLEYE: He was a member.

KAREN BREWSTER: I didn't know that.

SU RAPPLEYE: And I think it was the park that told him he couldn't do that.

KAREN BREWSTER: Probably.

SU RAPPLEYE: And he had been on there for a long time. They were kind of late coming to the party to suddenly decide that, but yeah.

[01:05:59]KAREN BREWSTER: Because I know that they do have somebody who attends the HDC meetings, but they're not a voting member.

SU RAPPLEYE: Right.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

SU RAPPLEYE: Yeah. Yeah. But Karl used to sit right at the table with us.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

SU RAPPLEYE: And even when they took his vote away from him, we still wanted him up at the table with us.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

SU RAPPLEYE: 'Cause we'd be talking about things and say, "Wait a minute. Karl, tell us something, you know." And he could always come up with --

KAREN BREWSTER: 'Cause he's been the historian there for thirty years or something, yeah.

SU RAPPLEYE: Yeah. Yeah.

[01:06:31]KAREN BREWSTER: Um, what about -- well, you mentioned that, you know, the park, a lot of people are only there in the summer, but the business tourism community, now a lot of them are only there in the summer, too. Is there a conflict between local businesses and those visiting businesses?

SU RAPPLEYE: Um, for starters, there's not a lot of local businesses anymore.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right. But when you were doing it?

SU RAPPLEYE: Yeah, um, well, you tended not to know 'em.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

SU RAPPLEYE: Um, there was -- there's some who have been coming for year after year after year.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

SU RAPPLEYE: And they're -- they're well-known in the community, and they're involved in the community. And that's a difference from the people who just come for the summer and -- and only for their business, and they're not interested in the community itself.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

SU RAPPLEYE: And uh, yeah.

[01:07:40]KAREN BREWSTER: Ok. Was there pushback from local businesses on these HDC rules and regulations, like you have to have your sign written in the right font, and the colors?

SU RAPPLEYE: I was not there when the HDC started.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

SU RAPPLEYE: And when those rules went into place, so.

KAREN BREWSTER: So by the time you were on it, people were ok with following those rules?

SU RAPPLEYE: Oh no. They'd keep complaining, or they'd want their own or something like that, but it was all laid out. I mean, we even had -- all the fonts were there. We updated them to offer more because it was getting into the digital age when people could do 'em themselves. You know, they didn't have to use stencils from something. And uh, there's always complaints. It seemed to be that the ones that complained, complained about a lot of things, and you sort of expected it out of them after a while. But the rules were in the laws, so.

[01:08:53]KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm. Were there ever any people who said, "Uh, I don't -- forget it. I'm leaving." They didn't get what they wanted, and so they didn't start their business there?

SU RAPPLEYE: No. If they decided to go into business, um, they did it. Uh, I'm trying to think of -- we almost had trouble with that -- that group. That last group, that last block. That 8th Street, eight to nine.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

SU RAPPLEYE: And they came in with a plan one time to build an arch from one building to the next -- to the other side of the street. This big arch, because they were trying to pull people up the street. Some people don't walk that far.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

SU RAPPLEYE: It's only eight blocks -- six blocks or something, but they don't walk that far. And so, and it's just like me trying to get people down the alley, you know. You're trying to find something. And I -- I understood what they were trying to do.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

SU RAPPLEYE: But there was nothing in our history that had anything like that out there. And uh, we voted against it, and they -- if -- if they don't like our vote, they're allowed to appeal it to the council.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

SU RAPPLEYE: And several people had done that for different things. And they tried it, but the council didn't go with them either, so they lost out.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah, that does seem a little bit outside of the historic guidelines.

SU RAPPLEYE: Well, there was nothing in there that addressed it at all, so we had to really think and come up with some -- our reasons.

[01:10:44]KAREN BREWSTER: Were there other ones where that, yeah, it -- it wasn't in the guidelines, and you thought about -- had to think and added something new?

SU RAPPLEYE: Oh, well. Corrington put in a, um -- and I think he just put it in without any approval and then came to us. Tended to do things like that. It was this six-foot Indian, cigar-store Indian. And there had been a cigar-store Indian, of course, in Skagway years ago, but this was Chief What's-His-Face, you know, with the headdress and all. And it just, we're like, "But." And um, but the rules on mannequins and statues and things said that they had to be full-life, and look like that, you know. And it did. So there was nothing we could do. And he ended up -- he had to chain it to the building, and one day it disappeared and went up the hill someplace.

KAREN BREWSTER: Even though it was chained to the building?

SU RAPPLEYE: Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah.

KAREN BREWSTER: But you didn't add into the regulations, "Cigar-store Indians are ok."

SU RAPPLEYE: No.

KAREN BREWSTER: You just made that decision?

SU RAPPLEYE: Yeah.

[01:12:08]KAREN BREWSTER: What about their garden at the cor -- don't they have a garden at the corner of one of their buildings, the Corringtons?

SU RAPPLEYE: Well, there's a -- the rhubarb plant is at the corner of 5th. There's another area where there's -- well, that's Park Service. Park Service put a -- put a kids' garden in, uh, with -- 'cause I gave 'em my wheelbarrow. I thought it was Soapy Smith's wheelbarrow.

KAREN BREWSTER: 'Cause I know there's a garden in one of the lots. And that's ok by HDC standards to have a garden?

SU RAPPLEYE: Well, we dealt with Skagway Inn when they wanted to put in their garden.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

SU RAPPLEYE: And we talked a lot. I mean, gardens are historic in Skagway.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

SU RAPPLEYE: So we had no problem with that. It was some of the things that they wanted to put in there. Um, they wanted to put, I can't remember if it was a tent or a pavilion of some sort, and then we questioned the materials they were using and stuff. And um, I think we didn't agree with it cause I don't think it ever went in. There was an arch of one sort, and that did go in and was approved. But it was materials. It was the materials they were using that we were concerned about. The garden was fine.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

SU RAPPLEYE: We got no problem with gardens.

[01:13:47]KAREN BREWSTER: Ok. So why did you end up becoming a member of the HDC?

SU RAPPLEYE: To be a part of my community. To be helpful. To be, um -- and I think probably Casey told me that they needed -- you have to have a certain number of business people who have downtown businesses that are on the HDC. And so, I said, "Ok." I went and joined the Eagles right away. I served four terms as the president. Five. Five times as the president. So I just get involved.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right. And did you enjoy the work that you did with the HDC?

SU RAPPLEYE: Some of it.

KAREN BREWSTER: Do you have examples of what you enjoyed and what you didn't?

SU RAPPLEYE: Um, some of it is the people that I had to deal with.

KAREN BREWSTER: Was the good or the bad or both?

SU RAPPLEYE: The bad. I mean, the ones that I knew would lie to me no matter what, just to get what they wanted, that I never really trusted. I didn't -- I didn't like that so much. I really didn't like the -- the employee that gave us so much trouble.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

SU RAPPLEYE: But generally, just doing my part and working with the other members on the commission, I enjoyed. I enjoyed the times when we reworked things. We'd go through and edit stuff and try to update to what we had.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

SU RAPPLEYE: That was good. [01:15:18]I was on there for a long time.

KAREN BREWSTER: Do you remember how long?

SU RAPPLEYE: I did two different stints. 'Cause I quit for a while when, um, when the city manager had given me so much trouble. And then I went back on later. And then I had ran into the city manager and the -- and the, um, mayor, uh, just being so staunchly not listening to me about what was going on. Um, it must've been near twenty years.

KAREN BREWSTER: Hm.

SU RAPPLEYE: Just not all in one thing.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right. Is there anything in particular you're especially proud of that you accomplished in that time on that commission?

SU RAPPLEYE: If anything, it would be that, um, keeping the downtown area looking like 1898.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

SU RAPPLEYE: It was work, but uh, the town is -- the town is impressive, I think, when you first go in there. [01:16:42]We had one problem that we found. Like, how did this happen? They built a cement-based barbeque area across the street from the Starfire.

KAREN BREWSTER: Hm.

SU RAPPLEYE: And had not ever come to HDC. And we didn't get very far. We couldn't get rid of it. We wanted them to at least put in a -- cover the cement with wood, you know.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

SU RAPPLEYE: Put a -- do this, do that. And that was in the time that we had the unhelpful person helping us. Um, the other thing they did was they moved, um, a building, the old Union building from 2nd Street over to across from the Starfire, and it -- and left it at an angle somewhat, and all boarded up. They had said -- we had told 'em they could move it. That was real early of me getting on here. We had told 'em that they could move it over there, but they had to make sure that it was good foundation under it and -- I can't remember who built that building. Maybe that was -- Brenna built the building across from the depot.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

SU RAPPLEYE: 'Cause that's where it used to be.

KAREN BREWSTER: I don't know.

SU RAPPLEYE: And uh -- And we called 'em in to talk about it, and they assured us that it was just fine. And we can't force our way in to look or to do anything like that. The owner said, "Oh no. It's fine. It's all taken care of. It's fine." That was disappointing.

[01:18:46]KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah, so that was one of my questions. Is there something that you wished you could have done that you weren't able to do?

SU RAPPLEYE: Uh, take care of that building.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

SU RAPPLEYE: Concerned about it.

KAREN BREWSTER: Well, I know you have to get off to your next thing.

SU RAPPLEYE: I haven't even turned my computer on yet.

KAREN BREWSTER: So thank you.

SU RAPPLEYE: Sure.

KAREN BREWSTER: I have lots more questions, but I'll let you go, and maybe --

SU RAPPLEYE: We can do it after lunch.

KAREN BREWSTER: We can do more later after I talk to John.

SU RAPPLEYE: Uh-huh.

KAREN BREWSTER: And so, I'll stop us for --