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Oral History Interview

Joseph Kerntz

with

Elwood R. Maunder
(7/3/64)

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This is an oral history interview between Elwood Maunder and Joe Kerntz at the Wilderness Research Center on Basswood Lake, July 3, 1964. I'll just go right into it but first of all Joe maybe I had best ask a little bit about you.

MAUNDER: You were born ~~here~~ ^{in this area} weren't you?

KERNTZ: Right

MAUNDER: Where were you born?

KERNTZ: I was in Ely _____, Minnesota, near Sh _____ Lake, and went to school there in Ely.

MAUNDER: When were you born? What was the date of your birth?

KERNTZ: I was in 1903, on July 26th, and grew up there of course and finally got working in dorm school vacation time and finally ^{when I} got to be 18 got to guide and I started to guide with various tourists without many outfitters in town at all at that time.

MAUNDER: There weren't.

KERNTZ: No, just ^{sort} of private outfits that had their own canoes and tents that would take people out and that's what we did, when we first started out and my first trip was taking out some deer hunters onto Bernside Lake about 6 miles out of Ely and ~~we~~ were out there about ten days and got a deer and got back with the people all right and everything went on all right so finally the following summer I went on a canoe trip for my first time out with these people and we all had fun and liked it and kind-a enjoyed it.

MAUNDER: You hadn't done this as a kid growing up.

KERNTZ: No, nothing, I'd been out on canoes and on water all my life you know and...

MAUNDER: But this was really the first trip

KERNTZ: First canoe trip, the very first one.

MAUNDER: What did your father do, what kind of work was he in?

KERNTZ: He was working in the mines there in Ely.

MAUNDER: He was.

Kerntz: And I suppose what made me go to work so early there because he died when he was 49 years old and died during the flu epidemic in 1918. He was sick 9 days and then he passed on. So it made me really start to work, with my mother and four boys and I was the oldest one, so I really had to go and earn a dollar to help her a little bit and had job working in the winter in logging camps and go back _____ in the summer and finally got married

MAUNDER: You married a local girl, I take it.

KERNTZ: Yes.

MAUNDER: What was her mainde name?

KERNTZ: Edwards, Irma Edwards. So that got me going a little stronger in life.

I mean I was really hustling then.

MAUNDER: Were you ~~supppp~~ supporting your brothers at the time?

KERNTZ: You bet

MAUNDER: You had your own family and mother and the younger boys.

KERNTZ: That's right -- about the second year after I was married, their second brother got old enough so he got a job, and then the third and so on things were going better all the time. While we did that in working, we bought a piece of land out at Eric Lake, it's about 11 miles northwest of Ely and we really started in there thinking that we'd have a chicken farm, poultry house, so we did and got going very strong and we finally got up to about 1500 layers of leghorn and that's what happened in '29 when the old crash came in. The eggs were selling as low as about 16¢ a dozen so we just couldn't buy the feed in order to keep things going so we had to get rid of them. So we got out of that and then start ~~getting~~ ^{building} a few ~~rattle~~ cabins by ourselves /in a slow way, not too much money and finally we made a few boats for ourselves and ...

MAUNDER: Right there on that lake..

KERNTZ: Yes right on that lake and finally got this resort going and finally the brothers walked out and they left me there alone and they went down into the city then got into the mines and they didn't care about all four of us being there, so they left me there and so I guide in the summer with the tourists and in the winter I used to run the school bus to get people off the little route into the city every morning and back in the evening and meanwhile I used to put up various ice houses on _____ job to keep things going and finally got started that way and then the companies in town, outfitting companies started building up.

MAUNDER: Was this during the depression that they started building up?

KERNTZ: Yes, '29. And Basswood Lodge was started then, and they started building that up and that summer before the lodge was built out of logs, it was just a tar paper shanty for dining room and kitchen and then I got guiding there

MAUNDER: Is that the big ~~now~~ they're now going to take down.

KERNTZ: That's right. So that worked up into a job all summer. I was really busy and didn't get home very much and my wife was taking care of the little place we had out ~~there~~ at _____, kept going on it and finally I got working at the mines and worked down there five winters, in the spring I'd leave it and go back guiding in the summer.

MAUNDER: What did you do in the mines?

KERNTZ: I was down doing regular ^{mining} ~~mining~~ work underground. So that got me going... of course on these guiding trips were _____ on one of these trips and finally ...

MAUNDER: Do you remember what year it was?

KERNTZ: No, I don't ...

MAUNDER: Around the middle 30s?

KERNTZ: Let's say in '32 or something like that, and went out guiding with them with _____ and that's how I got started working with him. I got on

this 18-day canoe trip and got to know one another a little bit and finally the following year it was the same old thing, I mean we went right back again and he brought another fellow with him and pretty soon we had two canoes with four people and it worked up that way and finally the year after that, his wife and children came up and it kept coming come year after year, I mean other people that I worked with and till it finally got to be 36 when ^{we} were up north here quite a-ways and coming back we were ^{through} in some awful heavy forest fires and the Canadian Rangers wouldn't allow anybody into the _____ ~~part~~ part at this time but he gave us a special permit ^{go through to} to get back home here from up north. We were north of the park, _____ park, so that brought us back to Basswood Lake safely which we battled blazes and we were hot, a lot of smoke and hot sparks were flying right into the pack sacks into the canoe and we had to keep throwing water to put them out so that the packs wouldn't burn but we finally we made it and got down here all right. So right there and then as ^{we} were coming along, a fellow by the name of Bab Watts ^{who} ~~which~~ was managing Basswood Lodge were willing to _____ us at that time. He told us that there was some man named Lander who was going to log this area out, this was the only piece of virgin timber was left on the American side here on Basswood. #

MAUNDER: How do you spell Lamper's name?

KERNTZ: Lampa. So when I heard that, finally got talking about it and I thought maybe we could buy it .. he said he'd look into it, which he did. He went to the _____ found out about it, who woned it and finally found out some widow in Michigan and he got in touch with her and finally bought it and we thought well then that we ought to build some kind of little _____ shanty or something where we could lease things and fish in the summer and maybe _____, so that's how the camp ~~EM~~ started here.

MAUNDER: You bought it in about 1936?

KERNTZ: In the winter of 1937 we finally got three men, Eli is one of the them
Frank _____, Bill N _____

MAUNDER: What were the names again, Eli what, what was his last name? How do
~~up~~ you spell it?

KERNTZ: Eli Runkin

MAUNDER: How do you spell that? I think Cliff spelled out his name yesterday.
Who are the other two men?

KERNTZ: Frank Hren and Bill Mackey

MAUNDER: Were all three of these Finns?

KERNTZ: No, there were two Finns and one Austrian.

MAUNDER: Hren was the Austrian.

KERNTZ: So they then we rented a little house boat from Jacob _____ and we
moored to a shallow bay here back of this point and left that little place
there and froze in for them to lunch and try and keep warm when the bad days
cam along but we did rent a cabin on Basswood Lodge and walk over with their
lunch every day and and cook their coffee in this little shanty, this little
houseboat and that's how they got to start working and cleaning up the wind-
falls and whatnot that was here on the ground ~~when it froze down~~ that the winds
blew down. We had a horse also that we had rented to skid out this timber
and while it was skidding out this timber and decking it up all winter long and
burning
~~breaking~~ up the brush on the tops and whatnot to get the place opened up. I'd
come up every week-end and walk in from Ely.

MAUNDER: And far a walk is that?

KERNTZ: It was about 20 miles. So then I'd come up on a Saturday and go back on
a Sunday and I would bring up whatever I could on the sleigh or something for
them, that they were a little short of and get going that way all winter. In
the spring when the ice left, the wilderness had a barge on both lakes on
_____ Lake and Basswood. And we moved in a little portable sawmill
and while we moved it in here we got a crew of 18 men in here and we lived
in tents and slept in them and got this mill set up and start ~~xxx~~ sawing

and we sawed out 55,000 board feet of lumber that spring. Well, the minute the first boards were coming off the mill, they were taken by horse and dray to the camp for the present bunkhouses and we put up just a tar paper shanty for a bunkhouse and cookhouse and the mess hall and then the ball started to roll, I mean we could then house men and the lakes were open and we could get in the supplies and gasoline that we needed to get the operation going cleaning up the place to get them to start building the log cabin which is the original bunkhouse now. Well, Mr. Hubachek would come up in the spring and during the summer a little bit, in the fall in October and then he'd come up in February to come up and see me and we'd make plans of what we should do and what not to do and got the things going which we'd draw up a lot of sketches and fuss over them of how we thought it should be and then we'd get them to work in building these log cabins and get them set up so the place was cleaned off so nice^{ly} and everything in '38 that there was quite a little room here after all these windfalls came out that _____ decided that he might like to plant some trees, so sure enough we got the trees in the spring from the nursery and we got a crew in here and we started planting trees, and when he came up, Mr. Hubachek when he came up he lived right in with the people working ~~in~~ here and we'd all live in one ~~x~~ place in the bunkhouse and naturally we had a lot of bad trouble and these tar paper shanties would get torn up in the night and we had to shoot a bear every now and again to keep from getting all our groceries -- it was quite a lot wilder then than it is now, of course.

MAUNDER: Can you recall any of these events, any bear stories of that time?

KERNTZ: Yes, I sure can.

MAUNDER: Tell us a couple of them.

KERNTZ: ~~Next~~ Naturally we digging these big garbage pits in order to throw the garbage in and we put a big board cover on it and when we filled one of them we'd bury it and dig another one. So, when we did that and start dumping garbage in, of course, that brought the bear in and they would tear up these

board covers and make quite a mess for us all the time so we had dug a 12-foot hole and about 10 x 10 square and put on a timber, heavy timber cover with a timber door on it and thought that maybe that would keep them away. After a week or so of dumping in there, nothing was happening until one morning when the fellow who was driving the horses by the name of Tony Fryer was up early in the morning and naturally he'd always get up and go up and feed his horse and what chores he had to do before breakfast and then he used to go down to the job and on his way down he could see that there was some disturbance at the garbage pit, there was some digging around the timber and the timber door was open, so he walked over and was inspecting the heavy timber top where it was cracked around, he could see where a bear had been around and couldn't figure out why somebody had left the door open when everybody went to bed. Well, he went over to grab the cover to close it, Mr. Bear was down there, he made an awful lunge about that time and wanted to get up ^{through} that hole there and this poor Tony dropped over backwards and boy, he didn't have to go to his job...that was the end of it right there, that was one of the hardest stories we ever had out there. We finally got a gun and shot him and we pulled him ^{out}, he weighed 300 lbs. It was really quite a big one, frighten anybody who saw him. A big black bear. Although we had a lot of bear around, at one time while we were sleeping in this bunkhouse, I was sleeping at the door, near the door in the top bunk, little Eli was sleeping ~~at~~ in the bottom bunk and Mat _____ on the other side in the bottom with the rest of the crew there and around about 2 o'clock in the morning, Mr. Bear comes around and Matty _____ heard him and poked Eli, Eli had the rifle near his bunk always and he jumped up and grabbed the rifle when he did look to the ~~xxxxx~~ screen door, there was Mr. Bear standing there with both paws on the jambs of the door, so he just aimed and fired right through the screen and right alongside of my ear when I was dead asleep, so when that shot went out, I went straight up in the air to the ceiling and howled and bellowed and the

next thing I heard the bear growling outside. When I came to I didn't know what in the world was happening there for a little while, it was really something.

MAUNDER: Did Eli shot just wound him or what?

KERNTZ: No, it killed him all right but it took a few minutes, we had to do away with him but, of course, Otherwise

MAUNDER: Bears never molested anybody or molested the horses or anything.

KERNTZ: No, never had any trouble like that at any time with them although we've had to kill them before we finally got quieted down. Not only that, but for about six or seven years it was really bad, there were just too many bears around.

MAUNDER: The bears reduced in population so they were no longer a menace to you.

KERNTZ: Yes, that's right. Not only that but we don't have the garbage pits any more and we have an incinerator there and all the garbage is burned daily so that doesn't ~~INDUCE THEM~~ induce them to come around.

MAUNDER: Do they still come around occasionally?

KERNTZ: No, it's so rare that it's ~~a~~ maybe one summer they may be attracted but it doesn't bother us a bit. There's nothing there that they want, they can't smell anything, there's no garbage around for them to eat on, so that all quieted down. But in working naturally we had to build docks in order to be more convenient for us to move equipment and whatnot and during the winter we'd drive piling on the ice with pile drivers and whatnot so this one time, talking about Eli, got over to H _____ Bay 4 miles portage putting in the dock and the men would go out in the morning to work by jeep, this open jeep trucks and while they were there my brother was with me at that time, he was a foreman, he had a...

MAUNDER: Which brother was that?

KERNITZ: Frank. So he had to take Eli to come back to camp to get a little more equipment which they needed that day so they got back to camp here and loaded up the jeep and started back and when they started back, Eli wanted to sit in the back/^{end} because it was pretty crowded with nails and whatnot on the seat, and he said he'd sit back there, so while he was back there, brother kept going, it was cold, and they were bundled up in open jeeps, probably 20 below zero or something and naturally at some places these drifts of snow would be on this little ploughed road we had and the roads would be frozen hard, so there would be quite a lot of bumps on the road. Well, as he was driving he was going quite fast and hit one of these bumps quite hard and that bounced Eli up in the air when Eli came down, the jeep wasn't there, he landed in the snow. Of course, my brother didn't know anything about it, so when he get down to the portage, he got out and turned around looked ~~back~~ up behind his collar to have Eli ~~mk~~ help unlaod this stuff and Eli wasn't there. Well, he just couldn't imagine what in the world happend to Eli because he knew he had him on the jeep when he started. So, he collnd't believe he fell off, so he turned the jeep around and started going back and when he was about half way, there was Eli walking. So when he came up to him, he said "what's the matter Eli," Eli said: "You go to God-damned fast." He said he fell down on the ground in the snow, I don't catch doctor and you/ keep going ~~and I~~. Well I ~~didn't know~~ 'm sorry but when I got there I didn't know you were not with me when I looked around you were gone so I thought I had better come back and see where you were. So that was one of things that happend to Eli and a lot of other things. Well, I think the toughest one that ever happened to him was: we were in this little Army type green jeep that we had out here, still have it, we got that in 1945, war surplus jeep, that we're talking about, and it was in April, the first week in April or the second week in April and Eli was in camp for quite a while that winter many months and he ~~got~~ thought he'd like to come to town just before the ice

thawed out and I had hauled in my last runs on the ice with meat and yeast and things they needed here before the break-up, so I hauled in 5 loads of fodd from town we really needed ~~for~~ so we wouldn't run out until the ice would go and Eli comes with me on the sixth trip down and we are going to call it quits. So we started down town about 1 in the afternoon and he got on _____ Lake and there⁹/quite a lot of water here and there all over the ice and we got over by Mile Island my gosh if the front wheels didn't break through all out right now and I hollered: "Jump Eli" and I no more than said that when the whole jeep was down and we hit down and he just kind-a froze there and I tried to make ^{attempt to} him/jump out but the ice knocked me back into the jeep as we were sliding through and I finally got out maybe within ~~one or two~~ ^{a foot or two} ~~of the~~ ^{under} ice and I finally free and ~~slammed~~ slammed out and rode up on the ice and here was a great big hole there with a lot of steam and oil floating, bubbles bubbling and I finally was looking for Eli down there and I couldn't see him any place, waiting there and waiting there, nothing was happening and I figured the poor guy never made it. So I started pushing some of the ice aside ^{with my} ~~by~~ hand, looking ~~down~~ ⁸⁹⁶ there to see if I could/him down there, to see if there was any movement of any kind, pretty soon I see Eli coming, stroking very slowly but he was coming up to the top. Well, his motions were getting less ~~hazy~~ as he approached the top and slowing down so it seemed like he wasn't gaining to come up so I knelt down on the ice and with my right hand reached down as far as I could to try to get a-hold of him and all I could do was to grab him by the hair and lost him and that naturally jarred him when I touched him and pushed him down a little ~~deeper~~, got him to move a little bit more with his arms which he did and that brought him up a little bit so I could really grab him by the collar and finally swam up and rolled myself on the ice and pulled him out and got him up on top and...

MAUNDER: You mean you got back down into the hole to get him?

KERNITZ: Yes. And finally got him jerked out and he was all in and about to die I guess, I gave him artificial respiration and rolled out a lot of water from him at first and finally he gasped for air pretty soon he started fighting and wanted to turn over and I wouldn't let him do it till he really got out and everything and finally he wanted to get up on his knees and I finally got him up a little bit and, of course, he was kind-a _____
8 there and I finally got talking to him and told him he's got to start and walk and we had to walk fast to keep warm or we'd freeze out here.

MAUNDER: How cold was it?

KERNITZ: Oh maybe about zero. So I finally got him to walk a little bit, little step at a time but i knew that we'd never get anywhere by walking the way he was, so I ~~stix~~ kind-of forced him to try to run with me a little bit; then while we started to run, sure enough a fellow by the name of Bill Winston came out with ^{the} car.

MAUNDER: L₁cky break.

KERNITZ: And we finally jumped on the fender of the car, him on one side and me on the other, there with the windows open and I had a hold of his hand and he had a hold of mine so that we couldn't let go and he took us down to where my truck was on the road and we started it up and it had a good heater in there and got the heater going and we finally got downtown, got a doctor quick for him and had him in my house and put him right in the bath tub because he was really chilled and he was really blue and tried to get him warmed up some way. So when Doc. Snyder ~~xxxxx~~ came and wokred ^{on} him a little bit he asked me if I had a little liquor there, I did, and he told me to ~~fix~~ fix up a drink for him because he neededa drink so we gave him some of this liquor and that brightened him up pretty quick. So after a bit, he thought he'd like to have another one and finally got talking and he was quite cheerful and we gave him another drink and he was coming around all right so a fellow by the name of El Brown, who runs a whole bunch of shops ^{now} at the 4-mile portage, came around

and he said: "Well, well _____, how you fellows coming?" I said: "Just fine, Eli is just as happy as can be." Doc was there so first thing Brown says to him: "Well Eli, ^{in the world} what/happened?" He says: "Well, we go ^{bottom} through the ice." "Well" her says "Did you go to the ~~back~~?" He says: "Yep, I go right to the ^{bottom} ~~back~~" and he says "God, what/did you there Eli when you're down at the bottom." ~~Thought about it?~~ "Well" he says, "I look around a bit and I see some kind of hole up there, I figured that's the place to go." It was really something the way he answered the thing, we never forget that. Well that's how things go. I mean we dropped through the ice, I dropped through the ice 7 times in 26 years.

MAUNDER: Is that right?

KERNTZ: And swam through it each time, lucky enough to get out.

MAUNDER: Were you in an open jeep each time?

KERNTZ: No. I've been on foot and we dropped three tractors through already through the ice and got them out and I guess it takes all that to make up a camp to get things going. But Mr. Hubachek would really be with us in a lot of cases just like that. For instance, one fall when he came up; we were coming up here and he and I started from Ely up on Fall Lake, the weather wasn't quite too bad but it was getting cold and we had this boat and motor but... and we had one motor and two boats one in each lake, we'd carry that motor all the time, so when ~~we~~ came across the 4-mile portage in Fall Lake, the motor froze up on us coming across this so when we did get to Basswood we got it in the water and I couldn't turn the fly-wheel because the loaded grease and everything was so stiff and I figured the water temperature would probably take the frost off of there so I could get the _____ circuit tripped; well by doing so and trying and trying and it was getting dark on us in the evening and the wind dropped and there was no breeze and the lake quieted down and ⁱⁿ ^{weather} the cold/it started jelling

_____ and ice; so about that time I finally got the motor free and got it started but when I did start it, I had to run it slow and we had a wooden boat and we ran it as far as the narrows, that's about a mile, this ice was getting thicker and we could see that we could never make it with this wooden boat because it start chewing the planking at the waterline, so I turned around and tried to use my same route going back where I came up/~~from~~^{on} to Peterson's fish camp/~~which~~^{at} ~~was~~^{there was} a caretaker, an Indian, and we though we'd stay ~~there~~ for the night. So when I did come back on that same trek I had to turn off to go to this resort which was about a block and, of course, we had ice to break there and while we were breaking this ice going on to camp, we were taking in a lot of water into the boat and our seats were in water, it started coming in that fast. He kept shoving clothes and things into these holes to hold it so that we could the shoreline. Naturally, the ice was a little thicker coming to shore, it was harder for us to break it so the only thing I could do was to open the motor up, wide open and just take that chance of making that shore~~line~~ and then we'd have to swim if we couldn't make it but by God Almighty we finally made it and got into the shoreline and when we got to the shore, the boat sank at the dock and there's where it was froze in that winter, motor and all. So he was on some of these trips that were kind-a hard too ~~much~~^{before} he ~~was~~^{left} in the camp. I'll never forget that, of course, there were others that were just as bad, things that happened. But we kept going on, building, building, planting more trees, the place was getting bigger and got more trees planted and we finally got about 100,000 plantad here, trees, and finally he thought he'd like to go into research work and that's how that started and it began going, that was about 1948.

MAUNDER: Tell me a little bit about Mr. Hubachek's _____ with the local people around here. He was telling us the other night about this fued he

had with the Indians, remember that? The Indian who threatened to shoot him.

KERNITZ: Yes... I couldn't really tell you too much about that. What I mean is that as we were going along year after year ^{well, then,} and airplanes started coming in pretty heavy and ~~and~~ the air ban was ^{on} and they thought it was all his fault doing it and people got a little idea around the city about it...

MAUNDER: Well, who put the air ban on? The foresters?

KERNITZ; Well yes, the forestry department and it made a lot of trouble.

MAUNDER: You mean the local people blamed Hub for....

KERNITZ: Blamed Mr. Hubacheck for all of that, just like he has the power to do ^{anything} ~~what~~ he wanted to do but which he really didn't, I mean one man couldn't do anything. But yes, there were plenty of times when many times people were talking about this and were kind-of mean about it as I was going in life with him and the worst I think that ever came about was that they told me right in the city there that one of these days when Mr. Hubachek was coming with me down the street that there was going to be a very dirty _____, they were going to kill him and you'll drop with him alongside of him. But we didn't frighten, we kept on going, so far so long we're still here and for all these years.

MAUNDER; But there was antagonism?

KERNITZ: Yes, there was quite a lot. A lot is quite different now, till they finally got to see it, I mean it took many years ^{for them} to realize just what is happening. They thought that just because he loved the forest so well that he was doing all these things and...

MAUNDER: Well, did they feel this was cutting off their jobs or something?

KERNITZ: That's right and cutting out everything, I mean in labor and work or they figured they couldn't get up in the wilderness any more, if they wanted to go back -- you know, I think things like that happen.

MAUNDER: Why couldn't they get up into it?

KERNITZ: Well because they didn't want a canoe, that's the trouble, they wanted to use a boat and motor for transportation instead of canoes and they

figured that resorts are going to go out and which are finally going out and that got them worse and besides the _____ and thought that there'd be so many canoes strung along here that there'd be room for nobody pretty soon and there would be no wilderness around and it's hard to say just what it was, but anyway they have a different feeling now as far as I can see. I think that they ^{'re getting to} realize that he really done a lot for this country and I think that the school here, the college that the students are out here is helping a lot because they realize it's not for himself, for somebody else to get the benefits of it instead of himself, and he gave a lot of work and spent a lot of money in wages and supplies in the city. Always buys everything locally, never buys it out of town, never do, buys everything right in the city regardless of what people say to him.

MAUNDER: Hardware and all the rest of the things, everything, food, building supplies

KERNITZ: Everything, never buys anything out of town.

MAUNDER: Has he gone himself to speak to any groups in town to sort of explain things?

KERNITZ: Yes, many groups that were here...

MAUNDER: What groups for example did he...

KERNITZ: Well, the ~~Yacht~~ ^{Gun} Club, we were down in the Community Center in Ely with big audience, the public themselves, the mayor and everybody else...

MAUNDER: And he had gone and spoken to them personally

KERNITZ: Yes, directly to the mayor too

MAUNDER: Well Joe you were telling us about some of the experiences you had in growing this place and something about the men with whom you've worked here. Were there other stories you could tell us about the crew or Mr. Hubachek and his experiences working with you?

KERNITZ: Well yes, take like Eli and the other men, of course, but as is happening right today, the 4th of July they all have to go to town and Christmas,

Thanksgiving and Easter. Those were the great days when you're out in the bush all the time to get into the city and, of course, regardless of how much they make, it doesn't matter because I've tried that with Eli. I've got him finally agree with me to start putting some money in the bank with Mr. Hubachek's help and we finally got him started on that so he would give me his checks and endorse them and we'd bank them and give him an account for them but for Christmas he'd always have a little money to go down and he'd get into town and be there for a couple of weeks and really get to whooping it up and drinking and finally wind up in jail, no place ^{else} to go and _____ take care of him and they'd call me up and I'd have to go up and see the judge and get him up there in front of the judge and they'd fine him a few dollars, I'd bail him out and get him back to camp ~~again~~, he'd work until pay all his _____ again and then he'd be all right. But Eli started to complaining about the beds in the jail, that they were kind-a hard, so while Mr. Hubachek was up with me one time, we got to talking with the chief of police, I was telling him that Eli was complaining about the beds in the jailhouse there, so Mr. Hubachek asked if they couldn't get a little better spring for Eli, so the chief did get him a little better mattress or spring for him to stay and he was very happy from then on when he flew up there because he really knew he had a good bed.

MAUNDER: Because 'd land
~~MAUNDER:~~ ~~MAUNDER:~~ he ~~was~~ always ~~laying~~ in jail

KERNTZ: Always land in jail every trip he'd go because he'd always get drunk ~~or~~ falling over so he couldn't do that on the streets so the boys would pick him up, the officers would take him up there and the next morning they'd call me up and I'd have to go and get him out and get him back to camp again and he'd be all right. He was harmless, he never hurt anybody.

MAUNDER: Was this true with some of the other members of the crew.

KERNTZ: Yes, it was the same thing with the others, I mean they're all not

as bad maybe but then, of course, some were worse. We also had a fellow by the name of Ricco, Mac was here with us for a number of years nad he would do the very same thing and was getting a little worse every year, he'd stay up here and make quite a little money, get downtown and the longer he'd stay the more money he'd have, the longer he'd be in town and just drink and drink every evening and seemed like he'd just get kind-a numb and get out of their minds. This one time when he was hauled up in jail by the officers, they put him in the cell and he went to sleep which would take very long, they'd go to sleep pretty fast when they're there. Well he got up during the night sometime and took his leather shoelaces that he had and by God if ~~he~~ didn't hang himself right there in the cell. When the officer got there about 4 o'clock in the morning, he was hanging there on one of the bars with his feet box sitting on the floor when they found him dead -- poor guy. And this fellow here as I say was such a good worker that it's just hard to believe what that man would do for us. In the spring while the high water came and there was still ice on the water in the lakes, he was driving a team and he was skidding out these logs to the lake on the shore and the men would go ~~on~~ ^{with} the boat in order to chain it pipe poles ~~in order~~ ^{get it} to/near shore so they'd get horses to pull them out. He thought that work was going on too slow so he'd walk up to his waist in water, chain the logs and hook them himself and drive the horses in and get these logs out without anybody else helping him and he'd do that all day long.

MAUNDER: Wet with icy water.

KERNTZ: I could never believe that, nobody would unless you could see that. But that man worked for _____ week that way and I used to beg him not to do it, and he'd say you don't know what you're say to me.

MAUNDER: Hard as nails.

KERNTZ: That's how he did away with himself.

MAUNDER: These men were for the most part single men.

KERNTZ: All single

MAUNDER: And they all had experience working ~~in~~ with logging camps.

KERNTZ: That's right, I mean they were really good axemen and men of the woods.

I think they were pretty near good for anything you wanted to put them on to. Talking back to Eli because Eli's been with me so long but he was just a little different ^a than anybody else around in the woods than anybody I've ever noticed because he would, because the cook ~~would~~ quit on me or something or sick, I'd put Eli in the kitchen and he'd cook, he'd make just as good a bread, home-made bread, rolls as any cook that I ever seen anywhere and I've had many of them here and he'd cook these meals for a month or so before I'd get another cook or two weeks or whatever it happened to be, and not only that he'd also go out guiding on the lake with people, he would take a log_____ and go guide in one of these big boats or he'd go out and saw logs out or he'd peel logs to build the cabins and regardless of what you put him on he could do it and wasn't afraid of it

MAUNDER: Jack of all trades.

KERNTZ: Yes, he sure was -- you could put little Eli anywhere and he'd come through with it.

MAUNDER: These log cabins you have around here are real works of art as far as axemanship was concerned; who was responsible for them?

KERNTZ: Well, Harry _____, Eli Runkin, Matty Sequile, ^T Otto _____, Abel White, Al Fitz, All these people were doing it.

MAUNDER: They have a knack for it.

KERNTZ; That's right, they just have the art of doing that, lot of patience in doing so, it's really wonderful, I really enjoyed every bit of it while I've been here and I still am.

MAUNDER: Is that art dying out?

KERNTZ: Yes, very much so. The young fellas are just not picking it up.

MAUNDER: I don't suppose there's quite as much call for it any more as it once was.

KERNTZ: No, there really isn't but still there's a lot of people/~~going~~ into that want it and it's comin commercializing now. They run these logs out on lathes and _____ and you can buy it prefabs and put up your own log cabin without all this art work that used to be done with your hands.

MAUNDER: But it was all done manually before.

KERNTZ: Yes, every bit of it, log for log.

MAUNDER: Did most of ~~the~~ these logs that you have used in these cabins come right off of this piece of land here?

KERNTZ: Yes, right off of this property. And also the lumber and the material we're using in these buildings are all cut and planed right here.

MAUNDER: You still mill a little lumber when you need it?

KERNTZ: Yes, every spring we cut a little. We pick up the windfalls and the wind~~flows~~ during the summer and the winter and gather and we cut every April when the snow starts to melt, it's rather bad in the wind so we start up the mill and we work round the mill at that time.

MAUNDER: And then you air-dry it here then?

KERNTZ: Yes, air-dry it and plane it and put it in the lumber shed and we use it as we need it. Of course, we're not building any more but it's repairing. We've got to keep repairing because a lot of these buildings are over 20 years old, some of the floores are getting rotted so they've got to be fixed up.

MAUNDER: I noticed you made your own gutters.

KERNTZ: Yes, they're all hand made with chisel and axe. They still are.

MAUNDER: How large a crew do you maintain here now?

KERNTZ: Well in the winter months we generally try to keep about 12 people on the payroll to keep the camp up and keep it going and the crew do a lot of pruning during the winter and in the summer, they'll run up to about 25 to 26 on the payroll.

MAUNDER: Some of whom are women who come out and cook and clean. What about members of this crew, is there a big turnover every year or do you have most of the

same people coming back?

Ah? /
 KERNTZ: No, most of the same people coming back, I've got still the oldest men with me and he is ~~Henry~~ ^{Henry} A _____ at this camp. He's 76, the 10th of November and he is still on the tractor and on the launches for me and who is the oldest man and the rest of them are all younger. My regular crew we started out with are all passed away already, everyone of them. So we've got some people living in here now some about 10 years or 12 years again, it's coming up again some of the oldtimers and, of course, there's some new ones also like cooks, couples I would have would last up till 8, 9 or 12 years. I have a couple I have now who've been with me 30 years now, they just stay with me here year round...

MAUNDER: In other words, they go back before this camp was started is that right? 30 years would take you back to 1934...

KERNTZ: 3 years. So I generally keep a cook pretty steady and my winter crew is about 10 to 12 years, the oldtimers are still with me all the time and as I said Henry is the oldest who's been with me all the time and he's still going good and works every day, never misses a day, including Sundays just the way we started and we still keep it that way, routine all the time.

MAUNDER: Are these fellows rarely retire from the job, they go right on until they die.

KERNTZ: That's right.

MAUNDER: There's a story about little Eli, the time he died -- can you tell that story?

KERNTZ: Yes, he worked in the kitchen at that time, my cooks were on a 30-day leave ~~with~~ which they do have, they work 11 months out of the year and they get paid for 12, with 30-day paid vacation, and I get a replacement when I do let the cooks out on their vacation for 30 days.

MAUNDER: When is that -- usually during the winter time?

KERNTZ: Yes, usually during the winter when we're not so busy and I've got to

replace with somebody and at that ~~time~~ it was little Eli. When I had him here I usually put him in the kitchen for 30 days and he didn't ~~mind~~ it at all and he enjoyed it. But this last trip that he was in the kitchen for the 30 days, he wasn't feeling too well, I mean he was ailing, complaining about different pains and he was losing quite a lot of weight that winter and he told me that when the cooks came back he would like to go to town to see the doctor, to see Dr. Snyker and see what's wrong with him that he wasn't feeling too good. So when he told me that I wanted to take him down at once but he wouldn't allow me to do that but he said that he would wait till the cooks got back. So when the cooks did get back that very day I took him right to town and he had a few bills that he wanted to pay and doc wanted to let him off but he wanted to pay these things and he went over and got a brandy and then he went down to see the doctor and the doctor check him out and asked him that he had better go to bed to the hospital that he wasn't too well and got to the hospital and at 12:30 that night he passed away, ~~with~~ it was a stroke....

MAUNDER: Mr. Hubachek was telling us a story of how he had a foreknowledge that he was going to die.

KERNTZ: Yes, he did say that before he left the camp here, he was telling Henry whom~~e~~ he knew so well and telling me that he didn't feel too good and he figured that probably this was his last day and when he did leave the camp with me that day, he also said that he looked back and said: "I don't think I'll see this camp any more." ~~A~~ It was very true...

MAUNDER: He laid out his clothes....

KERNTZ: Everything. Got everything put away and gave me all the data that he knew of what to do with his relatives because he had no brothers or sisters or father or mother, he was left all alone in the world so that _____ but he had 17 nephews and Eli had quite a little money in the bank and said that he'd like to leave all this with the nephews which he told me about, 6 months before that and I asked him to get a will made and finally the

attorney in Ely made the will for him and that was in the safety deposit box when we opened it . So this money was distributed between 17 nephews.

MAUNDER: How much did he save up?

KERNTZ: About 20 thousand dollars.

MAUNDER: Is that right, all from his wages out here.

KERNTZ: Yes, all from his wages out here from the first day we started putting in.

So it's really quite a ^{man at that}, he drank a lot, had a little fun while he was in town but was harmless, he wouldn't hurt a soul and he was as kind as any man ~~xx~~ ever was.

MAUNDER: Real northwoods character to be remembered.

KERNTZ: He sure was and we sure remember him.

MAUNDER: He was kind-of a legend around here.

KERNTZ: Yes. So at his funeral instead of people buying a lot of flowers , Mr.

Hubacheck thought it would be much better if we could do something for the church that he used to send a little money to every once in a while.

MAUNDER: Eli used to used money to...

KERNTZ: Yes, to this little church...

MAUNDER: Which church was that?

KERNTZ: Lutheran church...

MAUNDR: Finnish Lutheran?

KERNTZ; Yes. So they started collecting a little money and the church needed an organ real bad, so I think, I'm not so sure exactly what amount but I think 1500.- came in to contribut to that organ from Eli.

MAUNDER: Where did this money come from?

KERNTZ: From various people that he knew.

MAUNDER: People that he had guided you mean?

KERNTZ: Guided and people ^{in Ely he} ~~whom Eli~~ knew very well and everybody in camp, of course contributed towards it, we shut the camp down, we closed the camp entirely

that day when we went down to funeral. There wasn't a soul left in here at the camp.

MAUNDER: He must have been quite a man.

KERNTZ: He was.

MAUNDER: He was a little fellow evidently. How tall was he?

KERNTZ: About 5' ~~8~~, I think he weighed about 130 lbs. Light hair, blue eyes. Still had all his hair when he passed away.

MAUNDER: Is that right... and he knew this area very well.

KERNTZ: Every rock and every nook and corner. He was ^{quite} a trapper, just a nice fella all round, wherever he was he was always happy, never a complaint, I don't think I ever heard him complain once.

MAUNDER: When did he do his trapping, in the winter?

KERNTZ: During the fall generally and he used to trap in the spring for beaver when the seasons were open and he loved to hunt deer but not small game. He very seldome went small game hunting, ducks or something like that but he'd go out deer hunting every year.

MAUNDER: Then some of his savings were built up from ^{his} trappings, is that right?

KERNTZ: Oh yes sure.

MAUNDER: When did he find time to do that, was this apart from his work here?

KERNTZ: Yes in the evenings and week-ends. In the mornings he'd get up at 4 o'clock and look at his trap line before he'd come to breakfast. He sure was up and at 'em all the time, just working all the time, doing something, never quiet. Even when he was in camp, he would never be still, he was that type of man who always had to do something.

MAUNDER: How old was he when he died?

KERNTZ: I think he was 71.

MAUNDER: He lived to a good age then. Did you have any other characters that worked around here; you told me about this other fellow who was a, had a horse logger and wound up on the end of ^{his} shoestring in jail but...who were

the other people? Did you have any interesting cooks, ~~you said~~ besides Eli. Sometimes the cooks are quite colorful people.

KERNTZ: Yes they are but the fellows I had were pretty quiet sort of fellas and like the other men who are working here, they were pretty much following Eli's tracks, I mean when they'd go into town, they'd all get drinking, the only thing is that I couldn't get them to save any money. They'd save a little and for some reason or another they'd want to take it out and drink it up. They wouldn't want to keep it, seemed like it hurt when they had some money, but this Henry Ahoo who is here now, he is going to be 76 in November, he's got quite a little savings too, although he drank most of his life and he still does a little but not as much. When he does go into town he will always come back the very same day. Now Les, he goes to visit his sister in Duluth and then he'll go overnight but otherwise he's right back. He just doesn't stay out any more like he used to.

MAUNDER: This is home.

KERNTZ: This is his home and he comes right back

MAUNDER: Have you ever had any experience with hiring any Indians[?] around here?

KERNTZ: Well yes but it's not too good. No, they just never stay, they make a few dollars for a week or two and then they go on. They want their pay and they go into town. No we never did have much Indian workers ~~right~~ round here.

MAUNDER: They get a few dollars and then they're off. Can you tell us something about the ~~proplems~~ problems you've had with the weather up here -- you've had some pretty tough winters, storms and things to deal with, haven't you?

KERNTZ: We sure have, it was rather tough . _____ -- on this tractor and I'd be on the big snowplow with the big truck, four-wheel drive, and tried to keep the road open to get our supplies in the winter time. We'd start out at 8 o'clock in the morning with the lunch box, we'd wind up at 2:30 in the mornings perhaps before we'd get back the two of us. We'd be out all day and part of the night battling the weather, road and the water,

and everything that goes with it in order to make a road...

MAUNDER: Had to dig yourself out all along the line..

KERNITZ: Yes. Well on^f of the stories is quite interesting to me. This was way back in about '42 maybe. We had a horse here, ^{a fella by} ~~by~~ the ~~name~~ name of Dave Lightner was working here at the time with us and I had to down to get these supplies. I had a truck and I got caught in a snowstorm after I got on Fall Lake and when I hit the 4-mile portage, it was really bad, it was snowing quite hard and the road was getting plugged ~~up~~ on me and I could see that I would never make it and I had about \$250 of groceries. So, the only thing I could do was to bury the groceries in the snow to save them because my blood started to smell when I was working the truck so hard and I knew I could never make it to camp. So I shoveled out a big spot there right alongside ^{of} the road and opened it up and I had two bales of straw with me for the horse and I opened that up and spread it around on the ground a little bit and I piled all these canned goods and food down into it and I had a big tarp with me and covered it up and buried it with a big heap of snow to keep it from freezing and turned the truck around and started back to Ely. When I got back about half way on Fall Lake when the clutch finally let go and so I had to leave it and I took the snow shoes and started to walk home, worrying about these groceries. It was about 30 below that night. So I got up early in the morning and got into another truck with snowplow on it and started ~~follow~~ plowing this road up to the place and when I got to the spot where I had left the groceries, it was 12 o¹/₂clock noon the next day and when I got there, all the groceries were gone, every bit of it. So I couldn;t imagine what in the world could have happened to the groceries but I knew somebody took them. Of course, the tracks were all buried in the snow, it was hard to say who came and got them. So I _____ nothing about and quite worrying about the groceries because they were gone ~~awa~~ anyway and I kept plowing the road till I finally got to camp that night and when I got to camp here that night, I told what

in the world happened and they were all laughing and I said I didn't know what happened to the groceries, they said well it was in the woodhouse here. They knew I was coming through that day and I didn't show up so about 9 o'clock in the evening, they harnessed up the horse and with lanterns and got into the sleigh and two men went down to meet me and when they got over to _____ Lake, they could see this place where I had turned around and this mound of snow so they kicked that open and saw the groceries there and they loaded them up on this sleigh and the horse brought them. Isn't that something, that was really something. I was surprised to see that, I thought had to lose all that and it was all home. So the men were a whole lot different than they are nowadays, I mean nobody would go out in 30 below zero at 9 o'clock at night to look for you.

MAUNDER: You don't think they would same as they did

KERNTZ: No, I don't think that would ever happen because it seems that many times when I go out with the boat, I don't show up nobody comes looking for me any more. Just one of these things.

MAUNDER: Different sort of spirit.

KERNTZ: Sure is but it was different in them days. It was really something.

MAUNDER: It was sort of a comradeship among the men that doesn't exist any more.

KERNTZ: That's exactly right.

MAUNDER: Why do you suppose that is.

KERNTZ: Well, I just don't know. I think that people just don't want to work any more like they used to. I have a lot of people right here now working that they hardly till it's 5 o'clock so they can quit work. Well, in those days we didn't quit at 5, we used to work till 7 or 8 in the evening many days. Certain job would come along and they'd all work till it got done; now they don't do those things any more. I guess everybody's got a little too much of everything, too easy to get, don't really have to work for it you know.

MAUNDER: Well Mr. Hubachek is certainly not an example of that kind of attitude.

He's got plenty of money but my gosh he works like a Trojan doesn't he?

KERNITZ: He sure does, I mean he never...when he gets here he's on the go all the time, not only do we work all day long but he works late at night with his office work when he gets back into his cabin. Yes he sure does, he goes on log trips which were really hard, cold and miserable but he'd stick right with us, every moment when he comes up when he comes up for his vacation or something.

MAUNDER: Can you remember any of the stories, anything you can tell us about some of those trips? Something that will help us to understand and see Mr. Hubachek as a man?

KERNITZ: Well, yes there is a lot of things that he did. I mean in every way working with us, he'd eat right off the kitchen, put on lumber, hauling logs, working around the mill when he comes up, around the lake, rafting logs, getting the boomsticks closed in on us¹ to raft the logs in. I mean he'd be right out there in bunkhouse in the _____ we used to have and live right out where we did and work with us and enjoyed every bit of it while he was here and many other things that he does, still does. Yes, he's a great man to have for being educated and helping them along and he's helped a number of youngsters ~~in~~ this area to get through school and still loves to do that and he's very nice about those things, get somebody who showed that he would like to go to school, his marks are average, he'd help, never turn~~ed~~ him down.

MAUNDER: Kids in the local high school.

KERNITZ: Yes, kids from high school here in Ely....

MAUNDER: Kids who didn't have the money to go to school or college

KERNITZ: Yes, he'd help along to get through.

MAUNDER: Well that must have made some impression on the community.

KERNITZ: It sure does. I mean a lot of people just think the world of him in the city.

MAUNDER: What do you think is happening to this area Joe, it's changed a lot ~~since~~ ^{in the years} you've lived here.

KERNTZ: Yeah, I was here when Basswood Lodge was being built in '29 and I've been here and glad I could be here when all the resorts are going out again. That's a long time and I never thought I'd see that they'd start tearing down buildings in the area after seeing all of these being built up into great businesses. Now you take Basswood Lodge alone has been quite a resort, At one time we had a forestry meeting and I had 125 people over there for 3 days, and we'd all sit down in that dining room at one time, 125 people ~~over~~, so it was quite a resort.

MAUNDER: You used to run that didn't you? You had an investment in it.

KERNTZ: Yes, I.. my wife and I had control, not controlling it, we had the largest stock owners at that place.

MAUNDERS: That was Wilderness Outfitters Incorporated.

KERNTZ: Yes, that's right.

MAUNDER: How did that come into being? ^{Was that} An offshoot of this resort that you set up originally up on the other lake?

KERNTZ: Yes, it was, originally the man that built this by the name of Joe B _____ that built Basswood Lodge got hot one fall for duck hunting and accidentally dropped in a canoe back here and _____ so his widow tried to run it and it didn't go too well as _____ went into receivership and it was going bad as a receivership then and nobody was giving anything on it so there were nine of us in Ely here ^{through} ~~and~~ Mr. Hubachek's help ^{we} made a stab at buying it in the courts and buying up the creditors who were indebted ^{to} so bad and so we got it bought up and finally got it working again with building bathrooms and putting in hot and cold running water in each cabin and the lodge and finally worked it up into quite a big business. It used to be a full camp, all ~~the residents~~ with reservations and our boat transportation from Winton, Fall Lake and across the 4-mile portage and down Basswood were using two big boats, 60-passenger boats, Fall Lake in a 50-passenger boat on B _____ and there were many days when moved in 200 to 250 people, many,

many days in canoes and the lodge used to be filled up and our payroll at the resort was about \$33,000 a year and our grocery and the food we used to get there and supplies would run into about \$14,000 a summer; That was for about 90 days.

MAUNDER: What was the business grossing in a year?

KERNITZ: It would gross about... I forget, I just couldn't tell.

MAUNDER: What had become of the books of the company, are they still in existence?

KERNITZ: Yes, I have.

MAUNDER: The old record books?

KERNITZ: Yes, I've got all the books.

MAUNDER: You have?

KERNITZ: Yes, I've got all the safes, everything in my possession.

MAUNDER: You have, You know those old records Joe would be interesting from a historical point of view because the history of the resort, the recreational history of this area is all lodged to a considerable extent in those records, and it would be nice thing if you would arrange some time to see that those records are safely preserved so that they can be used to retell, at some future date, the history of this resort business.

KERNITZ: Well, I have our annual report from the auditors of every year.

MAUNDER: Do you have any, do you the daily sheets, income and outgo?

KERNITZ: Yes. There was this girl named Helen R_____ that worked for us in the office, bookkeeper, and the auditors at Duluth did a very good job, did a wonderful job with us, we feel very happy about it and we made money, I'm very happy with it. Of course, the government bought it out now, it's all gone.

MAUNDER: Well, some day I hope that you will gather all that stuff up in one place and arrange perhaps to deposit it ⁱⁿ ~~at~~ some good library. One place I think would be a good place ^{to put that} / would be at the University of Minnesota at Duluth.

They're building up now down there a pretty good library on the history of northern Minnesota and that's the kind of stuff they ~~it~~ ought to have in that library. ~~It~~ It's not just the books that are written about this area like Zig Olson writes but the business records you see, because it's in those records that is set down the real flesh and blood history of what ~~is~~ happened up there and you can't understand the story ~~until~~ unless you can get at that stuff. So I hope you'll...

KERNTZ: Well, I sure will keep them, I don't want to destroy them and I never did. I thought I'd better take the whole thing home with me and I've got a safe and it's in the safe.

MAUNDER: Good, Well, if you any help at all in placing that stuff, I hope you'll give me a little note or something or other and I can...because I have a lot of contact with librarians, people in these institutions, I could arrange to see to it that they would come and get this stuff from you and take it away and keep it under terms that are acceptable to you. If you want to keep it private for a period of time; well, they'll keep it private for you. But sooner or later ^{in the distant future} when there's not problem of security on it, well then they can be opened up and used.

KERNTZ: Well, I figured I want to keep all this stuff for about ten years. All the records that we have you know for safe keeping. If something should stir up, I'd have something to show.

MAUNDER: Right. But you ought to have it set down somewhere, either in your will or somewhere else, just exactly what should be done with this ^{things} because I'd like you to do that and take _____ because nobody cares a damn about them but you and they'd be just junk to people who don't understand what their worth is and I don't think you'd want that to happen, so you ought to put that down in writing so that eventually if you don't outlive the point where you want to put them there yourself, well then it will all be taken care of safe and _____, and this should be done too with the records of the Center here. Somebody ought to begin to think now about how the history of this

Center and this whole operation can be collected and preserved in one place and I can't think of a better place for it than the University of Minnesota at Duluth library because they've got the facilities there and they've got the dedicated people ^{who} are concerned about the history of this region, will look after it. I understand you've got a little historical society in Ely but these little local historical societies, they don't have the personnel, they don't have the trained people to handle this kind of a job, you've got to go where they've got people who know how to handle these things and see to it that they are properly cared for.

KERNTZ: Yes, it's been quite a resort. It sure was built up. I'll never forget when I went down to look for the boat, I was flying down to Memphis, Tennessee to pick the 60-passenger boat. Well, the board of directors chose me to go down to look at this boat to decide to buy it or not. So when I got down to Memphis, I got into this boat, got out into the water and tried ~~to~~ it out and it was all right, it was a good steel boat with diesel engines and everything, two screws in it, it was really quite a boat and I thought it was the thing all right but the price was quite high and I decided to take it and I hired a man ~~to~~ pilot the boat ^{to} ~~from~~ Saint Paul for me to the Yacht Club and I picked it up there and got it loaded up on the truck and brought it to Fall Lake. And when I did get into Ely, the board of directors pretty near chewed me up for spending all this money for such a big enormous boat, it's still down there now, you probably saw it, Well, I didn't think so as the business was growing and the boats are always too small with the load that we were carrying. So when we got this big boat we put on a daily excursion trip to Basswood which we started it out with \$6.50 per person, then we would take them all the way from Ely from 8:30 in the morning, taken to Basswood Lodge, give them their lunch at noon, a hot lunch, and give them an excursion ride on Basswood and return them by 6:30 that evening, all for six and a half dollars. So that first year, we moved 1400 passengers, daily trips only, and when I got this

boat in the water, we got the operation going and in 30 days the boat was too small. We were making two round trips a day and we had to put a third trip per day. It couldn't take care of.....

MAUNDER: And it was ~~xxxxxxxxxxxx~~ ~~with the~~ acquainting a lot of people with the lodge, getting them to come back...

KERNTZ: Yes, that's what made it so good.

MAUNDER: ^{Joe} You've seen things change radically here over the last 30 years or more and what would you have to say about the difference between the use that is made of the border area waters now as compared with when you were young man and just beginning your work in this field of guiding people and setting up recreational facilities up here, isn't there a radical change between the use then and the use now, how would you describe that and what do you think it means for the future of this area?

KERNTZ: Well there sure is a big change all right, there's no ~~oubt~~ about ~~that~~ it but now when I first started out guiding and when we go out on these trips naturally we'd try to keep down the loads as much as possible to go on these trips because you carry everything on your back and ~~what~~ we did get out it wasn't just canoeing and fishing. We'd also stop for two or three days in a camp and we'd clean it up and burn down the brush to make up a little camp and we'd make a table, we put in benches, we put in some fire places. It wasn't that only I was doing that, but all the rest of the men and the people were doing that...

MAUNDER: You mean even the people who were hiring you to take them out took an interest in improving the place.

KERNTZ: That's right, we built a lot of tables and a lot of fireplaces and cleaned up all these places here, they were really neat and we had some wonderful spots through this whole Canadian and U.S. country here. well, the changes sure been a lot now. How, I don't know just how to say it, the canoists coming in nowadays seems like they've got to have everything in

in order to make a trip , including hauling a lot of beer along and not only beer also a lot of pop, soft drinks that are in cans and it's hard to believe the number of cans that is put around the camp sites nowadays, not only there are a lot of foods in cans but it's all these drinks you got to have along or they're don't seem to be happy. ^{for instance} Now/since this year, the opening day the first week-end, Saturday and Sunday, on Pipestone Falls, the people that came in for the week-end, long week-end fishing, the government men would go there to clean up after them, with a few men cleaning up behind these tourists, take 40 sacks of beer cans at these camp sites at ^{this} one fall and bury them and put them away. So I mean there was nothing like that in those days. People wanted to keep the place clean and I can see more and more of that right along and I've said that many times lately that there isn't going to be room for canoists to all come here in the summer like they want to ^{come}. There'll be some restrictions and I'm sure that that's coming.

MAUNDER: What kind of restrictions would you...

KERNTZ: I'd like to see imposed...there're going to be such restrictions as when you can go and when you can come out into the parks here, not into the parks but this wilderness area because there isn't going to be room for everybody. You'f have to get reservation in order to get in here and I think that's coming and I really believe it because it's getting greater and greater every year. There're are more and more people coming and I'm sure that that'll happen. It seems like it's getting messier. Now you take the canoists that goes out for him to think of building a table or working ~~around~~ around the place a little bit or repairing what there is there, but right now the government is building the table at a terrific cost to build them and treat them and deliver them and set them up, and I don't know the figures these camps ground they're putting in but it's just a tremendous lot of money that's being spent by the government; and what do some of they do but chop them up for kindling wood. It's happened so many times right on this lake alone. So

I don;t know what people think now, I just don't know what makes them do things like that.

MAUNDER: What other restrictions do you think they're going to have to impose, are they going to be restricted as to the kinds of food that they pack in, no beer in cans, no pop bottles...

KERNTZ: I think so. I think that's going to come because it's going to be so that nobody ~~ix~~ will want to go to a camp around here/^{any more} because it's going to be too dirty and filled with cans because they just won't be able to put them away, they wouldn't have enough money to hire people to put them away, it's going to be too great. There is a lot of food now being prepared already that they are taking out, dehydrated, that don't need to have cans. So, I think that that's what they'll have to start with. Now they've got meats, they've got chops, they've got steaks, all that stuff is done up with that now so you're not carrying the water, you're not carrying the weight and they've got to get the people educated to do that.

MAUNDER: It makes a lot of sense to carry that kind of food instead of/^{this} bulky stuff.

KERNTZ: That's right. I think ~~ixix~~ there are more canoists now than ever was and I think in the next 5 years there's going to be a lot more, just a lot more because it's increasing, the number is increasing every year.

MAUNDER: Couldn't the outfitters operating out of Ely principally and Winton influence this more than they do by showing the canoists who come in there to rent their equipment what they have to have and saying: "Now look this is the ideal package for a trip of the number of days that you plan and the kind of food that you should take in and have a balance diet is this, and here's a whole package of it made up for you and this is not only the best food but in the long it's probably the cheapest food that you can take in." Wouldn't that help to ^{alleviate} ~~alleviate~~ this problem.

KERNTZ: I think some of them are doing that. I know most of the outfitter

companies have this food right on their shelves and try to get the people to take it but a lot of them don't, they still want to be carrying these cans along with them. I know they'll come to that.

MAUNDER: I ~~know~~ ^{noticed} ~~because~~ the other day when we came out from Winton that ~~the~~ several canoe parties there were taking out about 6 cases of beer. Now, good Lord that's heavy stuff to be lugging over portages.

KERNTZ: That's right, that's too much and that's what's messing up the forests. It's too bad they couldn't have some kind of container that would dissolve or rust out or something in a year or something but if they start using aluminum cans into the country, well, I don;t know when they'll dissolve or rot away. So I think it was smart to have at least the cans made out of steel, tin cans would at least rust out in about two years but you start putting up aluminum and these various cans they're trying to put out now and I don't know what's going to happen .

MAUNDER: What about policing the activities of these people. I suppose it's pretty difficult to keep tabs on them.

KERNTC: I think it would be awfully hard to do anything like that. It's the people themselves who've got to do something and show some effort to help to keep it clean and keep it right.

MAUNDER: Well don't they have rangers, ~~mean~~ who are on patrol who would drop in on these camps and look them over from time to time.

KERNTZ: Yes, they sure do.

MAUNDER: What ~~happens~~ happens when they find people being messy or destructive?

KERNTZ: Well, they'll arr~~est~~est them, naturally they'll ar~~rest~~rest them ~~when~~ if they catch them but but it seems like it's so hard to catch up with anybody, to be there at the right time, like anything else. But last year, whoever did it, at this one camp site, chopped down 7 beautiful Norway trees, I mean the trees were about 14 to 15 inches in diameter and all it was was they had the pleasure of dropp~~ing~~ing them and leave them lay there without touching them, 7 beautiful

trees in one camp. That really messed it up for the next _____.

MAUNDER: Just vandalism.

KERNITZ: That's all.

MAUNDER: Did they ever have any idea who was responsible?

KERNITZ: No, they sure tried to check on that and everything. We went out to clean it up from this camp, took the boat and the crew and the saws and went up there burned up the brush, took out the timber, cut it up into firewood, just to clean the place up, made ~~us~~^{you} feel so bad that we thought we'd better go up and do it.

MAUNDER: You have a very friendly and cooperative relationship with the Forest Service and the Canadian forestry people I take it.

KERNITZ: Yes, very much so, I like to work with them, I think they're all nice people. I sure like to do whatever I can for the crew and Mr. Hubachek never complains when I do something like that. I mean he's very cooperative and let me do things to help out the _____ in one way or another.

MAUNDER: You keep in touch I suppose with Mr. Hubachek all the time by mail and telephone.

KERNITZ: By telephone, always. I'm in constant touch with him at all times. He knows where I am and I know where he is, nearly every moment. Wherever we travel around the country, or wherever ~~we're~~ we are we sure know where one another is in case we got to see one another or whatever happens we grab the phone and catch him if he's down in Florida or California or up in Canada.

MAUNDER: His business takes him or ^{his work} as a lawyer takes him all over the country I suppose.

KERNITZ: Yes, all over the world, I mean he really travels, and keeps going. Year round we always have a lot of nice meetings here, I mean with various people, forestry departments and game and fish departments, just everything that pertains to wilderness and how to help it along to preserve it in some way to help it, keep it clean and keep it green.

MAUNDER: He does a tremendous job of education, doesn't he?

KERNITZ: He sure does, he's very much interested in that, I mean he's really great and he puts a little of his time into it, not loaning money but a lot of his time in helping these youngsters along.

MAUNDER: This associated colleges of the midwest camp next door here is again a product of his imagination isn't it, his generosity.

KERNITZ: Yes, he's put a lot of money into it and effort, I mean we all have, we've all done a lot of work trying to get it just right.

MAUNDER: Well it certainly is a dandy thing for these kids. I was over there with my wife the other day when Mr. Hubachek drove us over to show us the camp and while we were there, I remember we went into the bookhouse and the lady who cooks for the youngsters over there ^{was} in the kitchen, he went in and we were standing around talking with her and rightaway he wanted to know what problems she had and she told him some of the problems she was up against for space and you could see rightaway his mind was working as to well now let's see how we're going to solve this problem -- how about pushing this wall out here in the kitchen about so many feet and then we'll have to push the end of the..we'll have to build out from the other end of the dining room because we'll have to get more room for tables and you could see he was figuring out just exactly how that building was going to have to be re-constructed so that it would meet her needs.

KERNITZ: That's right that's already in our plans for this fall's work. We'll start on that in September and building on to the dining room making the kitchen a bit larger, put in a cooler system in there for them and really keep things going. Yes, he's always that way, always very much interested Not only in the big things but even the small little things -- he's just rais that way, brought and taught to do all these things I guess. It's the same as anything else. He might ~~give~~ ^{it} \$100 away to somebody to do something or whatever/isbut when I do sell something and it's \$2.04, I've got to pick

up that 4¢ just as much as I do the \$2 and that's the way he runs things, no different and that's the way things have been since he and I have been together and I guess we'll wind up that way.

MAUNDER: Well, you work together very well.

KERNTZ: Sure, we chew the fat, get mad at one another, we come out all right just the same.

MAUNDER: You do have your differences occasionally.

KERNTZ: Oh sure

MAUNDER: Do you remember any real good chew sessions you had with him? Where do you bump heads mainly?

KERNTZ: In the building of a building.

MAUNDER: He wants to do it one way and you want to do it another.

KERNTZ: Yes, so we finally got to come to some kind of head but we sure give it a good thrashing ~~and finally~~ and find out the real points of it and the stresses and ^{every} things ^{else} to see if it's going to hold and finally come to a head ~~and~~ and we're going to do it that way. He wins sometimes and I win sometimes, that's the way life goes.

MAUNDER: You can't win them all I guess.

KERNTZ: Yes, but we get it done.

MAUNDER: Well, you certainly have something to be very proud of here and it's been a real pleasure for me to have a chance to come and see ~~you~~ it, with my family around too.

KERNTZ: I'm glad you had a chance, I'd like to see a lot more people come .

MAUNDER: I think it does a lot of good to expose them to this kind of thing. I think this whole idea of the wilderness is beginning to dawn on a lot more people these days but I don't think that the public gets any real understanding of it yet. A lot of confusion about it. I think some of the confusion is created by some of the people who act as if they are the most ardent defenders of the ~~wild~~ wilderness but the more I see from coming up here and talking with you people who live on the ground, ~~and~~ the more I

realize that maybe the spoilers of the wilderness are some of the people who make the most noise about defending it. We really aren't dedicated to preserving it in the way it should be preserved. Certainly their actions don't go along with their words.

KERNTZ: Yes, it's wonderful I've just enjoyed every bit of it from the time I got going ⁱⁿ guiding to my days now I still like it, I just hate to leave it. I don't care what happens I just made up my mind that I'm going to stay with it until it closes up I guess.

MAUNDER: Well do you think it's a very live possibility.

KERNTZ: Yes, we're going to leave here in 1975. This will be government property in 19__ , it is now but we have the rights to stay here and made arrangements till 1975.

MAUNDER: Well, do you think the government is going to want to see the research work that's being done here in this educational program next door where the colleges push ^{ed out of} ~~down~~ the area, I can't conceive of that being a good idea...

KERNTZ: No, I don't think that's going to be pushed out. I know that the research will go on and I'm sure the government is not going to push that college out of there.

MAUNDER: Well then what will be going?

KERNTZ: I mean the immediate area of where we are now, we'll have to leave it. I mean as far as Mr. Hubachek and his families, and myself and my crew, that we've built up this place, will leave here in 1975. Now the research work will go on, how it will go on I couldn't answer that and I'm sure I don't think the college will go that the government will let the colleges come in every summer.

MAUNDER: Well it seems to me that the government would be missing a tremendous bet if it terminated the existence of any part of what is here now because so much of what you're doing is of such a good educational value, It seems to me what you're doing, the way you're exposing people to a better understanding of wilderness and preservation is a kind of thing that would help them rather than hinder them.

KERNTZ: Well that's right but what will happen here when we leave the college itself will have to come up in the spring and make the repairs or whatever they need to do to get the place in operation and get it going and then close it down in the fall.

MAUNDER: But they are going to have help to do that, aren't they Joe, they're not going to be able to do it all by themselves.

KERNTZ: But they will I'm sure, I'm sure they can do that by getting somebody up here a week or two before and come up and get the things in operation and make minor repairs, and in the fall when they close down and go back to the cities, well they might have to make some repairs then also.

MAUNDER: Well ~~that would be~~ is there some possibility then that you will move your camp to a point just outside the area where there's no restrictions of any kind and carry on the work from that point.

KERNTZ: Well it could be, yes. That could be, we talked about that, but the thing is that the place here itself, we're not moving anything off of it when we leave it in '75, it'll be government, the buildings and all.

MAUNDER: Oh I see, ^{it'll be} ~~is~~ returned over to the Forest Service to be administered by them.

KERNTZ: The Forestry Department is going to do whatever they want to do, whatever they think is fit.

MAUNDER: They will probably want to carry on where you leave off.

KERNTZ: They probably will or whatever their plans are then at that time, but we'll leave and I just really don't know if a thing like this will be moved further west and south from here but it could be and another thing started there with Mr. Hubachek's boy...

MAUNDER: That's Bill...

KERNTZ: Yes...

MAUNDER: He takes a keen interest in this too...

KERNTZ: Yes, very much, he just loves the country and... as much as his father...

MAUNDER: Well that's good that he has that same attitude toward it...

KERNTZ: He sure has, I do a lot of hunting with him and fishing and everything else; any time he has a moment I'm with him. He'll be up now on the 10th of July...

MAUNDER: Does he have any sons coming along, and taking the same interest?

KERNTZ: Yes, he has two boys and a girl and they're all for the canoe trips, both children have been out. His youngest, Steve, I think he was only about 10 was out on one of these field trips I guess it was two years ago and jumped on a moose's back and rode him as the moose was swimming across the lake...

MAUNDER: Kind-a risky isn't it, going moose-back riding.

KERNTZ: Mr. Hubacheck never did that, he was always talking about it and never had a chance on our trips and Bill Hubachek tried awful hard to get a moose ride, but by gosh, Bill's boy sure made it.

MAUNDER: How did he get off?

KERNTZ: He got ~~xx~~ off and swam out.

MAUNDER: What did the moose do?

KERNTZ: He ~~swam~~^{headed} for the shore.

MAUNDER: Was it a big bull or a cow or...

KERNTZ: A cow, it's really something how things can happen.

MAUNDER: Joe, do you have any kids?

KERNTZ: Yep, I have a boy and two girls...

MAUNDER: And what are they doing?

KERNTZ: Well, the boy is a baker, the girl is married in Ely and has six children, five boys and one girl, and the youngest one is in school right now and she'll be through this coming winter, college, she'll be graduating.

MAUNDER: Well you have your family right round you right here

KERNTZ: Yes...

MAUNDER: That's nice.

KERNTZ: Well ~~was~~ of the boys is in Minneapolis and the girl is in Ely and the other is in _____.

MAUNDER: Well, I want to thank you for giving me so much of your time, I know you're busy and you've got a lot of things to do around here but it's been a real pleasure to sit down and talk with you and get this background and some of the personal history, and ~~if~~ we ~~can~~ I hope have a chance again sometime to do something like this.