L. Keville Larson

Forestry Consultant

An Interview Conducted by

Steven Anderson

Durham, North Carolina

Laurens Keville Larson (1937–2023)

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Location: Larson & McGowin Offices
Mobile, Alabama
Interviewee: Keville Larson (KL)
Interviewer: Steve Anderson (SA)
Also Present: Lauren Bissonette

An Interview with Keville Larson

Steven Anderson (SA): This is Steve Anderson, starting at the front end and conducting an interview with Keville Larson on July 12, 2023. This is our first session. We're in the offices of Larson & McGowin in Mobile, Alabama. Keville, I think we'll start off with things that we've covered before, just to set the stage for everyone who's going to read this, about you. Tell us where and when you were born, and then we'll start talking about what it was like growing up.

Keville Larson (KL): Alright, thank you very much. Born in New York City. Grew up in a suburb of New York, in Queens County. Douglaston was the name of the town, very—on a peninsula, so sort of an isolated community, on a bay off of Long Island Sound. And interesting, it was a 1735 house that's built, giant beams underneath and rock walls two, three feet thick.

SA: You ever figure out what those beams were made of?

KL: Yes, and I can't remember. (laughs)

SA: Okay, don't worry about it.

KL: But that was just an interesting—and it did interest me in the history of New York a little more because of the Dutch being there and this house being built and then a farming area which grew into a subdivision.

SA: What did they grow?

KL: I don't know.

SA: Oh.

FL: I have no idea, but it was a Dutchman's farmhouse. Ceilings were pretty low.

SA: Okay. All of the old houses were. So, what was your interaction with forests or trees while you were growing up at that time?

KL: Well, growing up, I just loved being outside and playing outside and watching—especially watching, my father wanted to take care of the trees on the property he had, and so he always used an arborist. And watching the arborist work was always interesting, and interested me more. And then just playing in the area, the neighborhood, in the swamps on Little Neck Bay. Or outside areas anywhere, but I liked being outside most of the time.

SA: How tall were the trees? What kind of trees were they on the property?

KL: They were—this was interesting, the town of Douglaston, Mr. Douglas from England, had brought over all kinds of trees and planted them all over. I mean, we had an upright English oak in our front yard. There were other specimen trees all around the town.

SA: Wow.

KL: Which—and I guess that was part of his farming. I really don't know what kind of farming he did.

SA: How many acres was your place?

KL: Two or three acres, four, something like that.

SA: I'm kind of curious, what kind of tools were they using to—with the arborist for the trees and things.

KL: Oh, well they had saws and chainsaws. But the rope climbing is what I liked the most watching.

SA: Right.

KL: Later learned to do it, but I didn't do much of it.

(laughter)

SA: Some of those fellows were pretty wire-y, swinging around. (laughs)

KL: But it was a really wonderful environment because we had the water and quite a bit of open space just in the way of vacant lots and other properties.

SA: So, a pretty rural type of feel.

KL: It was a rural feel even though it was one mile within the city limits.

SA: Oh really. Well, good. Well, tell me a bit—I'd like to know about your parents and their families. Just, we have some oral histories with your father and your uncles, but just set the stage here and start with your father.

KL: My father was born in Wisconsin. He was—his father was an immigrant from Denmark. Ten children in that family, and my father's father was the oldest of them. And they had come in the 1850s or so and they were very disappointed because they had sent some money to an uncle who had told them about the wonderful opportunities and beautiful sights, and he would fix them something. Well, when they arrived in late-fall, it was a log cabin with—not even chinked. And they had a rough getting used to the area, and they had come from a more comfortable situation in London and they—my great grandmother never forgave that uncle. It was not what she had expected.

SA: That was in the fall, did they chink it up pretty quickly for the winter?

KL: They must have, that's (coughs) that's what she described it as, unchinked.

SA: Interesting.

KL: They were—in Wisconsin they got into various—my grandfather ended up being a sort of merchant who ran a store here or there. When I knew him, he had more or less retired and graduated to being a barber. But most of the family was involved in farming of some kind. My father loved visiting and describing going to his Uncle David or other farms. And he took us out there when we were young, this would be in the early 40s.

SA: Where in Wisconsin?

KL: Neenah, Wisconsin.

SA: Neenah, okay.

KL: Right.

SA: We know about the eventual paper mills that were there.

KL: Yes, which was what my father ended up—but he went to Lawrence University, it was a college then, in Neenah. Also went to Oxford, was a Rhoades Scholar and went to Oxford. Met Earl McGowin, who was my mother's brother. My mother had grown up in Alabama, their family had a sawmill and lived here, and my father and Earl McGowin struck up a friendship and did a lot of things together. He said they loved to go into town, go to the shows and things. And Earl—they loved the music part of it. My father sang in glee clubs and various things, Earl played the piano. And so, they said they'd go, and Earl would make notes on the music and my father would copy down the words and then they would play them at parties or other places they would go.

SA: While they were Rhoades Scholars?

KL: In Oxford, yeah. They were in different colleges, but they were good friends. And eventually, let's see—how did they get—when—

SA: Well, let's go back to your father.

KL: Oh, okay.

SA: And his—

KL: Oh, yes. He grew up in the paper mill town and after he'd gone through school there and Oxford, he came back. He had a job with Reed Paper Company, or Reed something.

SA: Wisconsin?

KL: No, in London.

SA: Oh.

KL: And he worked for them for a while and then he came over—came back to the United States and worked for them some more. But eventually was hired by Weyerhaeuser Timber Company to start and run the New York Office, pulp and paper sales. But at some point, Earl had called my father and said, 'Oh my sister's going to catch a train in Chicago, she's going with a roommate from Vassar to Hawai'i.' Said, 'Would you see that they get—' so my father did that, met them, put them on the train. He said they barely made the train and if they hadn't, they wouldn't have been able to get to Hawai'i for a time. But after that there was a couple of contacts, but not a lot, between my mother and father. But then he was invited down to Mardi Gras in Mobile and my —there was a courtship and my father and mother got engaged.

SA: Oh wow, okay so this is Estelle?

KL: Estelle.

SA: McGowin.

KL: She was in a family of five with Earl McGowin being one of the brothers. She had four brothers: Floyd, Earl, Julian, and Nick. And they owned and ran a sawmill in Chapman, Alabama. South Alabama area.

SA: So, what did your father do for Weyerhaeuser?

KL: He was pulp and paper sales in New York.

SA: For his whole career?

KL: I think that was the area he worked in, whole career. And he was the only employee for the beginning, and then they had a couple of other employees, and they had that office.

SA: So, he's in pulp and paper for 30—

KL: Thirty-something yeah, he retired—that was in the early 30s, and he retired in about '58 or '9.

SA: I think—actually, I was reading something last night that said, I thought, that it was 1964 or so that he retired. Because I was looking up Kieckhefer Paper Company, we talked about. And it turns out that Weyerhaeuser merged with Kieckhefer in 1956 or so. So, your father was there for—

KL: I guess he may have had—

SA: An overlap—

KL: --extended into ’64, may have been his retirement time.

SA: I see.

KL: But from both my father and my mother’s family, I got lots of exposure to forestry and growing trees and timber as a crop. Things like that.

SA: Oh, from Weyerhaeuser.

KL: From Weyerhaeuser.

SA: Let’s talk about that for a moment. Because it’s one of my—you said timber is a crop. I look back at this concept, where that came from, and it goes all the way back to the 1800s and Germany and things like this. But Weyerhaeuser came out with one of their annual reports in the 1940s, with the title “Timber is a Crop.” So as a forester, I’m thinking, they want people to understand that as a crop it’s planted, it’s grown, it’s harvested, and you start again. Right?

KL: Yeah.

SA: And then, into the 1950s and 60s, “timber is a crop” grew as a concept across the industry.

KL: Right.

SA: But I’ve always wondered whether that—it kind of came out of favor a little bit somewhere along the line, because of communications to the public. Did you ever feel that, or is it still relevant today?

KL: Well, I think they don’t have to sell the idea anymore, that it is a crop that you continually grow. But no, in the 40s was when I was brought home lots of propaganda, information from Weyerhaeuser. In fact, I have some really, really nice advertising things I maybe want to give you, from then.

SA: Well, we'll revisit that later if we want.

KL: I would like to do that.

SA: So, your father met your mother.

KL: Yes.

SA: So, tell me a little bit more about your mother's family, and did you visit the sawmill?

KL: Oh yes. They bought a sawmill in 1905, the family did. My mother and her brothers were born about that time, they were just—when it got to—and their father, the man who ran the company, died in the early 30s when the brothers and my mother were still relatively young. But they took over management and ran the company. There were other stockholders too, stockholders just more removed. They helped put up some money to start with, but they didn't—weren't involved in the management of the property. But it started with, I think, maybe around a hundred thousand acres and they eventually grew it to two hundred thousand. We'll get into that with Pomeroy, later.

SA: Okay. What did they produce at the sawmill?

KL: It was a wide variety, mostly pine. Some hardwood flooring, but it was—this is basically a pine forest area, that the mill was. As far as the products, other than boards, I think they made—I can't even think of what they were using, but I think eventually they got to all the different things. Bowling alleys, pallets.

SA: Were they kiln drying?

KL: Yes. Yes. Something like that.

SA: I wonder when that started, kiln drying.

KL: What they started?

SA: When. When kiln drying may have started. Early on, probably.

KL: Oh, all the time I remember it was kiln drying. Well, some of it was stacked. Air stacked.

SA: How big a company was it at that time, comparatively?

KL: You mean as far as production?

SA: Yeah, to the rest of the industry. Rather on the small side, medium?

KL: Eventually, by the time I got to forestry school, and I told Zeb White—or no, I told some of the other—Zeb knew the company, for sure. Zeb was a forester with Pomeroy & McGowin. Then had transferred to teaching at Yale. But I told one of the forestry—one of the professors—we were going to make a southern forestry tour, the class was. I said, 'Well my family owns a small sawmill in south Alabama.' He came back to me later, he said, 'That's not a small sawmill.' They were producing—I don't know the volumes produced.

SA: So they—at least medium, if not on the medium-to-large side, comparatively.

KL: Right.

SA: Very good.

KL: In fact, I may look that up and find something more to tell you on that.

SA: What else did you learn from these uncles who brought you around the sawmill?

KL: We would—we came to Alabama every year. Usually, in the beginning, for Christmas and things like that. And as we got older, we came for summers, spring vacation, anytime I had, and it was either on the train. The first times we came driving, and the other time it was on the train

from New York to Montgomery. Or just below Montgomery, Greenville. In fact, one time my father put my sister about 12, me about eight, my brother about four, on the train in New York. But he forgot to give us a ticket. (laughing) And he said the next thing he knew the FBI was at his door wondering what he was doing, sending children out of state like that. (laughs) But that was a really important part of our life, just the fact that we had this connection in Alabama, and we'd come down and be here frequently. As far as we were concerned at that time, just playing. But then eventually I did a summer job working for the company later, and got more of a feel. But they had—my uncle Julian was involved in the forestry side, he was not a graduate, professional forester but he had always been interested in it. And he took me, more or less, under his wing, just would take me out into the woods, see the logging operations, go out hunting, doing things outside and that was, I think probably the thing that cemented me as far as liking forestry and going into that area. The other brothers—the oldest, Floyd McGowin, born in 1898, was I'd say—he went to Oxford also, he was another Rhoades Scholar, he went to Oxford. And he was an Anglophile, I would say. And he was very strict and straight and if you had dinner with him, after dinner he would get out and read a book to you. To whoever was there. It might have been Johnson's—Boswell, Boswell's "Johnson." They had made a contact with the lady—there was a museum of Johnson, that's what it was. So, they had an affinity for her. But he was very uptight and strict about being proper. Got his clothes from London. Then the next brother, Earl, was much more of a people person. He worked, helped with the selling of the lumber and—oh, he was the one who was a Rhoades Scholar, and the father. The next brother was Julian, I talked about, who helped introduce me. And the youngest brother was Nick, who became a lawyer and decided not to stay in the company because there was too many of them already. He became a lawyer.

SA: Did you go around at all with Earl, with the selling? Anything?

KL: No.

SA: Never sold, anything like that?

KL: Nothing like that. He was somewhat removed.

SA: How old were you when you—I'm sorry—when you had this first kind of job?

KL: 16, 17. For a summer.

SA: So, you were in high school, perhaps?

KL: I was just at the end of high school.

SA: And what did you do?

KL: Girdling trees. They had stopped, or burning had slowed down so much that now when you had regeneration, anytime they cut it was brush that came back. And they were—or hardwood trees. And the girdling was killing the hardwood trees to release pines underneath it. Painting land lines. I remember going with a surveyor one time when they were re-tracing, trying to establish where the lines were. And he'd stop and want to survey, we had a crew of three of us and I was a machete man. He would stop every once in a while, pull out something and look at it, and after a while I said, 'What are you looking at?' He said, 'These are the government survey notes from 1832. It says that this corner we're looking for, over that way, should be a stump of a pine over here, should be a stump of a hardwood,' various things. But that intrigued me, that we were trying to re-establish lines done a hundred years before.

SA: Did you find some of those markers?

KL: We did find some of them. Yeah. They didn't find the marker, but they found the witness trees.

SA: Right. And that continues for many decades to be a good way to look at changes in forest composition over time and things like that.

KL: Right. Yeah.

SA: So, you had one summer.

KL: That was all summer. Other times it would be for a month or so, in the spring or summer. And the other attraction of course, they had horses, and I learned to ride and loved to ride with my mother, and Julian was really the only brother that rode horses much.

SA: Where'd you ride?

KL: In the woods. In the one hundred thousand, two hundred thousand acres. Just all over.

SA: Between your father who worked for Weyerhaeuser and your uncles who owned a sawmill in Alabama, you were kind of predisposed, at least, to enjoy the woods.

KL: That's right.

SA: In that way. I'm kind of curious, how was high school?

KL: High school, I went to PS98 up to eighth grade. And then high school I went to a Quaker school. I wasn't a boarding student, I could commute, but it was 30, 40 minutes away. That was an excellent education, I really loved that Quaker school. They didn't promote any religion in any way, except they would have a weekly meeting. Which was always an interesting thing to me. Sort of inclined me to be quiet and introspective about my feelings with religion or other topics.

SA: Why the Quaker school?

KL: It was just a good school nearby, good private school nearby.

SA: It's interesting.

KL: They had no affiliation before, and it didn't teach—it was not a religious oriented school.

SA: All the regular subjects and classes? Or something special they offered?

KL: Nothing really. All the usual—biology, math, Latin, French, history, and whatnot.

SA: How good were you at languages?

KL: Not too bad. Latin, I don't speak Latin. The French, I used that later.

SA: In what way?

KL: I worked in France for a summer.

SA: So that helped. I'm sure the Latin certainly helped with scientific names perhaps.

KL: It did, very much for that. But the other interesting thing, one time I did use it. I was working in Sweden one summer. And they had various students, one from Austria, one from Hungary, one from somewhere else. The Hungarian didn't speak any English at all, or Swedish. And I was learning a little bit of Swedish. But we would try to converse. And one day he said something about circa. 'Circa! Oh, you speak Latin!' (laughs) We used Latin words for Swedish words or English words, communicated that way. It was an interesting time, when the Russians were invading Hungary, took over Hungary and they were very disappointed that the US didn't come help Hungary.

SA: Well, we'll talk a little bit more, maybe, about those jobs in a bit. But that—those were jobs following college?

KL: In college.
SA: In college itself. So, how do you end up in Stanford? In geology, right?

KL: Well, I knew the south and I knew the east. I didn't particularly like the Ivy League college scene and so I decided I just wanted to see somewhere else. I really wanted to go west, and I

wanted to apply to Wyoming and Colorado, but my father guided me to Stanford and said that's where you need to go, and so I did. And I liked it, loved it.

SA: Why geology?

KL: Geology?

SA: Oh, geography. I'm sorry.

KL: Geography. The natural sciences interested me. Climatology, geology. Various subjects that seemed to fit for me. And then I realized that geography covers everything. You got economic, you got political, you got all of that kind of thing. And I couldn't decide on—I hadn't found a major I wanted yet. I thought I'd take everything and something would turn me on. And I took some astronomy and architecture, none of them turned me on. But every summer I kept working in the woods.

SA: You're going to Stanford, a four-year program?

KL: Yes.

SA: In geography. What were your other summer jobs?

KL: First summer job was teaching sailing. Which we did where I grew up. And after that it was always forestry. And I think—

SA: Sailing, because you were already naturally on the bay. You knew sailing. So, you were teaching it on the Long Island Sound.

KL: Yes.

SA: What kind of people did you teach?

KL: Young people. Most people worked—most were in New York City, the ones who were commuting in and out. And it was a good mix, it wasn't—I wouldn't say it wasn't any ethnic slant to it at all, then. Later, it became—there were Catholics, Jews, Protestants. After that, they began getting influxes—oh, and Irish there too, in the beginning. That's what I think of as the ethnic makeup of the town. So, we were mixed, no Blacks at all.

SA: What do you like about sailing?

KL: Oh, boy. It's—sometimes when I'm burning in the woods, it reminds me of sailing. Because you've got to know what the weather is going to do. What direction the wind is coming from, how strong it's going to be. What's the humidity. I like the idea of sailing, because that's what you're engaging with. I did a fair amount of racing in small ones, sailboats, and liked that and had success with it. Encouraged it.

SA: You won some meets?

KL: Yeah. In fact, in the summer we'd have weekly races. I ended up the top of the season a time or two and went other places.

SA: Races with a club?

KL: Yes. We had a club on our side of the bay, there was a club on the other side of the bay, and then if you went out Long Island Sound there were lots. This bay was interesting because it was right at the west end of Long Island Sound. A fort on this side, Fort Totten. A fort on the other side, Schuyler. And then you got into the East River and could go all the way down to New York.
SA: How far did you go on your sailboat?

KL: I never went down the river because you couldn't depend on wind and current. Later, when I got to crewing for other people, bigger boats, we'd sail around Long Island or go off on long distance races. But the sailboat—day sailing, once in a while you'd go to a beach somewhere and camp for the night.

SA: Great. Good. Let's take a short break.

SA: Okay. Let's go back to your education a little bit. You mentioned at Stanford that during some springs you camped out around there. Where was that?

KL: In the foothills, almost part of campus but not. The climate and everything was so different out there and I really loved it. The smell and the temperature, which of course was always good. And it only rained—rain started in November and quit in about March. I never spent an entire summer there. But school would go from September to June, about. And we had—I didn't join a fraternity. I didn't particularly like them. But later, I joined an evening club. That was just what I wanted because you eat, get your meals, I played soccer so went to the gym every day. We had social things with the eating club, but we didn't have the fraternity activities.

SA: Why were you camping out?

KL: One of my roommates was Land Lindbergh, the second son, after his lost son—but his brother had been at Stanford, John Lindbergh. John was an interesting person. The rest of the family, all of—they were very lowkey, they didn't want to be promoting their name in any way. John was the other one, I heard someone say one time, 'John Lindbergh would walk up a mountain backward just to get a little publicity.' I don't know if that's true of him. But Land Lindbergh and then Tom Logsdon who was a farmer from Illinois. Land ended up being a rancher in Montana. So, the three of us had similar interests, I guess, in the outdoors. And I loved having the tent, because I had the eating club, I had the showers from soccer, I would go to a library to study. But it was nice, it was fun.

SA: Okay, so you didn't live on dorms on campus.

KL: Not for those two semesters.

SA: I see, semesters camping out. Anybody ever object?

KL: No, we asked permission. In one case it was a friend of Land's that let us camp on her property. Another time—it was a farmer that leased campus, rural campus area. We just asked and he said okay.

SA: Interesting. I'm not sure that could happen today. (laughs)

KL: Well, it does in San Francisco all over the place.

SA: I know. (laughs) Do you remember any faculty from Stanford?

KL: I really don't. There was a Professor White, and I can't remember his first name. Charles or George. And he was in geography. I think I liked him. In the beginning I wasn't doing very well, but when I wrote a paper on forestry he said he was impressed, because he thought I was going to fail. He said, 'No, you know what you're doing.' And that was because my uncle, who was the lawyer, Nick McGowin, had given me a subscription to Forest Farmer magazine. And so, I started reading that and getting interested in various aspects of forestry, when I was a sophomore, junior in college.

SA: It's a powerful—I want to say aphrodisiac, when somebody says you're good at something.

KL: Yes, it does.

SA: What—

KL: Just one other thing. The soccer was a big thing for me in college, and I loved it. I played in high school and then played on the Stanford soccer team for three years, four years. I had some successes there, too.

SA: What position?

KL: Forward.

SA: Forward.

KL: Just to brag on one part of the—after my first year playing, coach wrote in the yearbook and said, 'He has great promise, he scored 11 of the 18 goals the team scored the whole season.' And that made me feel good.

SA: Was that high school or college?

KL: College.

SA: College, that's great. And that's something you kept on through your later years.

KL: Until I was 60.

SA: I hear you played until you were 60.

KL: Yeah.
SA: Was it only because you enjoyed playing?

KL: Oh, yeah. Nobody made me. Nobody had to put a gun to my head to go do that. It's funny, exercising. Which you might have to do just to try and keep in shape. I could chase a ball around the field for two hours and not feel it. And yet, to go do an exercise, no I'm not going to do that.

SA: That is wonderful. So, you're then at Stanford, what summer jobs did you have?

KL: The first one, worked for Rhinelander Paper Company in Wisconsin. And that was a contact of my father, he had—Weyerhaeuser's paper in the sawmill there, I mean they're a paper company. Ben Cancell was the president of Rhinelander Paper Company and he gave me the job. I had a friend from Maine who went with me, he was also 17, Chris Hutchins. And his father was with the Dead River Paper Company. So, all these connections came together. Chris and I drove out to Wisconsin, spent a summer there, and did forestry work. I found that Wisconsin can get

just as hot as Alabama does, on certain days. We would be measuring things, or burning brush, or—I can't remember a lot of the specific chores we did, but we worked sometimes with the forestry crew or sometimes on the jobs they gave us to do.

SA: When you're measuring things, these are trees?

KL: Trees.

SA: What were the species that was up there?

KL: Poplar was one. But then the—white pine, I guess, some of it. Spruce.

SA: Some red pine?

KL: Probably red pine, too.

SA: What was the company most interested in?

KL: They were making paper out of softwoods. The pines and the spruce.

SA: Did you enjoy Wisconsin?

KL: Oh, yeah. That was fun. We rented a house and lived there. Ben Cancell, who was the president, he had some children a little younger than we were. We would go visit, do things with them. He had a house on a lake, a cottage on a lake. He would let us use his motorboat to water ski and do various things. It was a nice time. And the people I worked with, the foresters I worked with, one of them was named—his last name was King, and I don't know if his title was Chief Forester or not, but something like that. He taught us and helped us, and we learned a lot from him. One time, one period of time, they put us working in the lab where we tested paper things. They had glassine-type paper, and they would have us run tests. For instance, one of them was a folding test, you put a strip of paper in the machine and the machine goes dun-dun-dun-

dun, until it broke. They wanted to find out how many folds it took. Another was putting oil on them and see how long it took to penetrate the paper or not.

SA: What kind of paper were they making?

KL: Well, that was a glassine-type they called it. It was coated, like wax paper, but more. But I do remember one time, while we were doing that work, they had a fellow guide us. But he would go into the mill. I never knew exactly. He took me several times on his rounds. And he would go out, get wood samples, bring them back, dry them out, time it, everything else. One day he said, 'Okay, well you go do this.' So, I went off and made the same round, picked up the pieces of wood, brought them back. He says, 'Oh, no. You didn't take enough time.' (laughs) Because he would stop and visit with people, just to stretch out the morning. (coughs)

SA: So, these wood samples from the yard—

KL: No, from—well, yes. They're just cut offs that they wanted to measure, whatever was going in.

SA: You didn't really grab on to all the chemistry and the testing and everything else. You'd rather be outside in the woods. And on the lake. Well then, I think the next year—

KL: The next year I worked in Alabama, at the sawmill. I mean, not in the mill, in the woods. And we did a lot of girdling of—releasing pine, natural pine seedlings that were overtopped by bigger hardwood trees. Painting land lines, being a machete man for a survey crew.

SA: This was with W.T. Smith?

KL: W.T. Smith Lumber Company—

SA: In Chapman.

KL: That's right. The family-owned company.

SA: Okay, and worked mainly all the family-owned lands?

KL: Oh, yes. No. Some of it was—Julian had a lady friend from Montgomery. He was married, not that kind of a friend. Acquaintance and family friend. And she owned three thousand acres in eastern Alabama and needed help. Julian said, 'Okay, we'll just send our crew over there to paint your land lines,' or what was needed. Mark timber. Later, Larson & McGowin ended up (mumbles) still manages that land, that three thousand acres. So that whole period of time, from '57 to now.

SA: Who?

KL: Her name was—well, she was married a couple times, but she was from the Oates family in Alabama, one of them had been a governor, her father I guess. And she became a Washington, DC, socialite.

SA: Did the lumber company, for helping out, had some first rights to the timber?

KL: No, it was just a service he could offer and give her.

SA: But she paid.

KL: Oh, she paid. I guess, I don't—they were charging our hours out.

SA: How far did the company go out for timber? Or only from their lands?

KL: From their lands, and occasionally buying other land. Because they did accumulate some during that time. But they'd go out, I don't know, 30 miles might be a reasonable distance.

SA: It's longer today.

KL: Yes, you go a lot farther.

SA: 60 miles or more?

KL: Today?

SA: Today.

KL: Yeah, they can. The closer the better.

SA: What was your favorite part about working that summer?

KL: Just being in the woods. We had a crew of high school kids. One of the things I always remember. Today, axe throwing has become a popular past time. But we did that for our lunch breaks, we'd take our axes and whomp, throw them at a dead tree or something. Sometimes it would be up there too high, and you'd have to throw another axe up there to knock it down. (laughs) That sort of thing was fun. And being with these other—they were all local people from Greenville.

SA: Were you doing any burning?

KL: No, they didn't do burning, not back then. They were opposed to all fire at the time.

SA: Why?

KL: Because fire was bad. (laughs) In forestry school, I did get exposed to the burning and realized the relationship with growing pines. Had to talk my uncle into—but first I burned some, my mother owned a small part of—each of the family had a small part. So, I said I was going to burn that, and after a while—the company had a bad experience with somebody telling them they could burn. They went out forty acres, long unburned, but fire around all four sides of it (sound of fire shooting up) just killed it. That and there was another situation where they had a problem with a fire, so Julian had gotten a horrible taste of trying to burn. But when he eventually saw what I was doing, and I convinced him, not necessarily that summer but later as I was starting

forestry work. He said, ‘I don’t know why it took me so long to realize this connection, the brush and the fire.’

SA: Well, a couple bad experiences will kind of set you on a different path.

KL: Yeah.

SA: Well, that’s good, that he was willing to listen and make some amendment.

KL: He had always—in fact he had done some travelling in Europe, looked at some forestry things, but he’d always been interested in controlling the undergrowth and how you could do it. He took pictures of forests in Europe and things, where they had different ways of controlling the brush.

SA: It’s very regulated, the forest in Europe.

KL: Yes.

SA: Okay. So, you’re halfway through Stanford, and then you had another summer job.

KL: Oh, in France. Julian had made a contact with a man that—Papeterie Gascon—paper mill in Landes, which is the southwest corner, just north of the Pyrenees and the Atlantic Ocean. And it’s flat pine, and—

SA: Paper company?

KL: Paper company, yeah. And that was another area with a fire, they had some bad experiences. In fact, in the 1940s, they had a couple of fires, some fires that killed tourists and things. And they just absolutely would not – every once in a while, we’d drive by a place and they’d say, ‘We had a fire here.’ And I’d say the trees look pretty good. And, ‘No, no, no, no.’ In fact, later we had a French boy that came over and worked for us for a year here. He recently sent me something, and I sent him a book about—that book, “Longleaf, As Far as the Eye Can See.”

Talked about—I wrote him something about the burning. He said he'd talk to his father about burning, and his father said, 'That's interesting, but not here.' He said that he had been working with students, telling him, and they are beginning to do a little bit of interest in burning, prescribed fire. So, but that was a good job. Working with—

SA: What did you do with them?

KL: I followed the forester around most all the time. It wasn't as much work, in that situation. But for a whole summer, following him around. Learning a lot of—that if you know the right place to go, you can find some excellent food, even way out in the country. This forester would make a big deal out of eating lunch.

SA: (laughs) What species of trees did they have?

KL: Pinus pinaster is the name of it. And it looks like a first cousin to longleaf. That's what I think it needs fire. I guess it's some planting and some growing of natural trees, and thick, thick stands.

SA: So, you're following a forester around, were you measuring trees? Were you just looking at—

KL: Looking at and talking, he did talk to some landowners and things because they would occasionally cut from other properties. They also—they were cutting mine props, is one of the things that was a big deal. They had the right sizes. But turpentine. They didn't do it, but there was a good bit in there and they showed it to me. The interesting thing—they use a blade on a pole way up, way up, I mean 20 feet up there it looked like. They'll do it for a few years, gradually they'll do it, and then they'll do it to death, they said, scrape it all the way around before they cut the tree.

SA: What was the—was the advantage to that, that it would preserve the quality of the lower bowl of the tree?

KL: You know, they never said that, but I think it did. It accumulated turpentine in the lower part, which preserved it more. I think.

SA: They must have been doing that—so they were collecting the resin?

KL: Well, this company wasn't. This was just—I could see, they would take me places and show me that. One of the interesting things in this Landes country, if it's not pines it's going to be brush. And the sheep herders, they didn't try to graze sheep, they would follow their herds on stilts so they could get up above the brush and see where the sheep were.

SA: Did they ever try to reclaim those areas and brush?

KL: They did, they would come through—in fact one of their control of the brush was debroussaillants—a rolling chopper, and they would just go through the area and cut the brush down. I think that was—the stilts was just history, a thing they had done, and other people had done for years if they didn't try to control the brush.

SA: Did they then probably burn? No? Afterwards? Pile it up?

KL: No, they didn't push it up, the chopped it in place.

SA: Just chopped it up.

KL: Like disking.

SA: So, you had another summer job.

KL: In Sweden. The next year, that was about my junior or senior year. Junior year. That was a contact from my father with paper, pulp and paper business. I worked for Stora Kopparburg. Big copper mountain. It was a forester that invited me to come and stay and work. The company had a program, they wouldn't bring in—said they never had an American, but they had others. That's where I met the Hungarian, Austrian and a German. And we lived in a camp house or something

and worked together. There, we would, the interesting thing—we'd walk, it seemed like we walked for miles, more than any place I know where they didn't really drive to exactly what they wanted to do. So, we'd go out and go a certain distance, and you might—I remember one activity was, I think it was spruce trees (clicks tongue). Yeah, that's right, I'm getting confused with something. Wisconsin. In Wisconsin one time, the poplar comes up naturally and we would go through and chop down and leave the best ones and let them grow because they weren't very big. In this one, we were de-brushing, debroussaillants, and you trampled down the grass around seedlings that were being sort of smothered. That's a job, a good job. Also, the Austrian fellow had some forestry, and we did some measuring of areas and clearcut sites and lots of different things. They did use fire in Sweden, but it was always after a clearcut. Clearcut and then burned. That and I recently was reading some of Stephen Pyne's books on that, and he talked about in some of the boreal areas, the fire would—if you didn't—anyway, it was between the humus and the subsoil that you really needed to get seedlings down to that, even if you planted.

SA: So how big were the clearcuts there, then?

KL: Pretty big. I would guess up to a thousand acres or more.

SA: And when you say you were out there measuring, was that you were measuring regrowth, or measuring the trees beforehand?

KL: Measuring the area.

SA: Oh, just the area.

KL: Yeah.

SA: Okay.

KL: Which, we do in different ways here. Not just by foot.

SA: Do you remember how many acres the company might have owned? Big company?

KL: Big company. Big, big. They were in other businesses, besides forestry and lumber. It's called Stora, today, the name of the company.

SA: Instead of just Stora Kopparburg.

KL: Yeah. Large, big.

SA: But it's not—what am I remembering, Stora Enso?

KL: Yes.

SA: It's different.

KL: No, I think it's a merger. I think.

SA: Oh, a merger that happened. Okay. Interesting. Then, that's into the late-50s, and you then actually make some decision to go to forestry school.

KL: That's right, I had not been to forestry school during this period. Let me see.

SA: Why don't we take a break.

SA: This is session two. Keville, we ended up talking about Stanford and camping out and your summer jobs. Why don't we start talking about how you ended up at Yale for your master's in forestry.

KL: Alright.

SA: I think if I remember correctly, was it your father was guiding you that way?

KL: Yes. I think I said, I went to college, undergraduate, I didn't know what I wanted to do, was going to find something that turned me on. I found interesting subjects, but nothing that turned me on for a career. And I thought because I hadn't gone to forestry school, I couldn't be a forester. But then my father, again, advised me that no, if you could pay for it—or, he could—you could go on to any graduate school. And Yale's was designed for non-forestry undergraduate majors to come for two years for their graduate level. I think the—I'm not sure there's a lot of difference between going to a four-year forestry school or two years post-graduate at Yale. I think you get about the same kind of thing. But yes, my father guided me to Yale. He set up some interviews for me. One of them was with St. Regis, I think, that had an office in Park Avenue where my father's office was, in New York. Paul Dunn was the St. Regis president, I think. And so, once I found out that, okay I hadn't found anything I liked better, and I really do like going to the woods and spending my summers in them. So decided to go to Yale for the two-year course.

SA: What's the connection between St. Regis and Paul Dunn and Yale?

KL: My father guided me to interviews. He introduced me to Paul Dunn, who was president of St. Regis near his office.

SA: So, you could interview him about being a forester, or jobs.

KL: Well, he interviewed me to give me a recommendation or something.

SA: Okay.

KL: But anyway, I did get to Yale School of Forestry at that time.

SA: By that time, you're thinking forestry could work out.

KL: Oh yeah, I was committed.

SA: You've got a lot of fieldwork behind you already in these summer jobs. Your history and your family kind of sets you up.

KL: You did, and it was a real advantage at Yale. I just knew a lot more than most of the others did about forestry.

SA: And practical.

KL: Yes. Been there, done that. Some of it.

SA: I guess at Yale, if you didn't have all that background, really the only—a lot of the fieldwork stuff you'd get would be at a summer camp.

KL: Yes, I think so. But Dave Smith was my favorite course, because silviculture. And I really got interested in manipulating the trees and vegetation in the forest. I liked that one. I don't remember a whole lots of other courses. Meyer—what was his name? Something Meyer.

SA: W.H. Meyer.

KL: W.H., okay. As I mentioned, White was teaching at Yale at that time, and he gave some good courses. Of course, he had a lot of experience, and he knew especially the south. There was someone else.

SA: I think you mentioned at summer camp there was a Herb Winer.
KL: Herb Winer, yes. Well, he was—we had a spring course where we went to forestry—Crossett at Arkansas. Lived in a little camp there. The year I was there, there were three professors and four students. We were really close with Herb Winer, Meyer and Zeb White. All of them would spend some time at Crossett with us.

SA: What was that camp like? What did you do at Crossett?

KL: We were studying things. Just seeing what they did, we were not there to work. We were there to learn from what they were doing and how they were doing it. One of the things was a computer. I don't know that I can remember the fellow who was—Synnanon(??)? Was that the

name? Anyway, somebody was in charge of a computer, and they were starting to computerize various things. Mostly just information that they—on stands, or properties and things.

SA: What year was that?

KL: ’60.

SA: Somewhere around there. On the front end of getting computers integrated into forestry.

KL: Yes. In fact, that was the first place, I think, that I had been introduced to the use of computers in forestry. But also, the experience of being out there. We did some fieldwork, but we weren’t working for production, nobody was keeping track of our hours or timing us or anything. I do remember, one time we were following—doing a time and motion sort of study with a logging crew. So, we had a clipboard and a bicycle-like wheel, and we’d follow a tractor around where it was going and put down the times it took to do all this. I remember one time I was riding with a truck driver; the truck was loaded, and he was taking it to the mill, and all of a sudden he pulled off the side of the road. I didn’t know, I said what are you talking about, he said, ‘It’s a funeral.’ So, we had to wait for the funeral to go by. But that was for a time and motion study where you’re trying to be efficient most of your time. Other places weren’t thinking about that kind of thing, but in that part of the world they did.

SA: So, he was imagining a funeral?

KL: No.

SA: It was a real funeral.

KL: There was a funeral coming by and the polite thing to do was to pull over to the side of the road and take your hat off.

SA: That's right, understood. Tell me about Dave Smith, anything else specifically you remember.

KL: I don't remember a lot of specifics. He was quiet spoken, but knowledgeable and certainly years and years of experience in that. He was maybe nearing retirement by then. But I don't—I can't think of anything personal about him.

SA: Do you remember H.H. Chapman?

KL: Yes. That was—he was there writing his memoirs, working and he would come and go, and I would see him all the time. I just hate that I wasn't smart enough, or informed enough, to ask him questions. Because then I was travelling in places he had been. In Chapman and Brewton and various places in south Alabama. I didn't realize, and he had—fire was one of my interests that I developed later, and he had been instrumental in saying look, if you grow longleaf you've got to have fire. But he was certainly an interesting person. Later, when I read his history, or read various things about him.

SA: Where was Yale's summer camp?

KL: At Crossett.

SA: Oh.

KL: Yes, at Crossett, Arkansas.

SA: Okay. So, I'm trying to figure out the progression of things at Yale. Because there was summer camp in Connecticut.

KL: The first thing was a summer camp in Connecticut.

SA: You begin with a summer camp.

KL: Yeah, before you've been anything else.

SA: What did you do at Yale summer camp?

KL: That was practicing forestry things, where you'd cruise areas. I remember laying out a road so that it didn't have more than this degree and had to be these specifications, and you had to figure out which side of the mountain were we going to get up there to. That kind of thing. Aerial photography, mapping cartography.

SA: You ever throw a chain?

KL: Oh, God. That was Pomeroy & McGowin—that was the way they counted trees.

SA: Was it.

KL: We were talking about that the other day. We still have a couple of old chains around somewhere.

SA: Oh really.

KL: I think I could throw one, I'm not sure anyone else in this office could. Because they all came along after chains.

SA: We did—at the summer camp at Rutgers, we threw the chains, but it was kind of on the end, just for historic purposes at that time.

KL: Yeah.

SA: I think at the Forest History Society, we don't focus on artifacts. But I'd consider accepting a chain. (laughs)

KL: Okay, if I can find it. And it really is—that's a fascinating subject for somebody. Back when we had compasses and chains and everything. And now you've got a cell phone and a GPS.

SA: Okay. Then you're graduating from Yale, with a master's in forestry, where did you decide to go then?

KL: Well, I had two choices. Or, I had two offers. One, my uncle had tried to convince me to go work here, for him, before I went (mumbles) I said, 'No, if I'm going to work in it, I want to have the degree and training.'

SA: When you say here, you meant Pomeroy & McGowin?

KL: Pomeroy & McGowin, yeah. And I kept thinking, that's the easy way to go, go back to a family group and it's easy. And the other opportunity was Kopparburg, Swedish company. Forester was in Nova Scotia, where they had built a mill and did some work. He offered me a job to come up there. I thought about it long and hard, but this one was harder to turn down, because it was what I was going to be doing. And when I came, he had—Julian and Mr. Pomeroy had made a partnership back in 1938, when Pomeroy was just passing through and stopped at a sawmill, talked to Julian, they hit it off, and realized that forestry could help them. Mr. Pomeroy, they did a cruise—no, he had—who did the cruise? I'm not sure that W.T. Smith had people who were just doing cruising. But somehow, he got an estimate of how much timber was on the property and showed Julian that you could shut down some of the outlying sawmills, small sawmills they had, and run the company forever on the rest of the property.

SA: Why was that important?

KL: To continue the operation. To continue—

SA: No, I mean why was it important to consider shutting down a couple mills?

KL: Oh, it was using up—they were on a cut out and get out model, otherwise. And that's what the family thought before 1938. They thought, 'Well, one day we'll cut over everything that we own, and we'll have to shut down.' But Pomeroy showed that, no you can run this thing forever, if you cut less than you're growing.

SA: So, the implication is that they were cutting more than they were growing.

KL: Oh sure, yeah. I think most companies at that time in the south were cut out and get out. They weren't going to—I don't know who were the first companies to start, to continue sustained management.

SA: So, they, at that point in time they started looking at managing on a sustained yield basis?

KL: Yes, Pomeroy guided them to that and the selective cutting. Of only cutting, instead of clearcutting, which they had to do with the railroads. But the railroads had disappeared by the early 30s and you could then afford to go in and cut part of a stand and come back, leave the rest of it, and go back later after growing some more.

SA: Were there particular principles of selective cutting?

KL: Oh, sure. You're cutting the worst and leaving the best was the basic premise. You were giving space to the trees that were going to be left, trying to find the healthiest ones, and the ones at the right growth stage. And there were sometimes specifications, well you're going to leave the trees that will grow to poles the most. Or that are already saw timber size and don't worry about the small trees. But in general, they went through forest area cutting the poorest, diseased, crooked, that sort of thing. Hoping you just end up with good trees and that those trees—because they weren't talking about planting, they were thinking they were going to grow another crop after that from natural regeneration.

SA: That was successful?

KL: Oh, yes. They did for years, they did that. And the only thing—and I did, too. As a consultant. We did small landowners. The selective cutting was really the best tool to use for them. But eventually the logging equipment got so big, and genetic improvement came along and sort of—the logging equipment especially, I mean pulp and paper companies built bigger and bigger machines, faster and faster moving skidders in the woods. And nothing—when they came and cut, they couldn't afford to just leave the rest of the good trees. So, it was clearcut and let it regenerate. Sometimes people did leave seed trees, occasionally. But planting wasn't widely done because it was expensive, and you do get some free trees from the trees you had already grown.

SA: What time period are you talking about?

KL: I'm talking about the 50s, 60s. Sixties is when I started and that was the thinking at that time. The paper companies were already beginning to do clearcutting planning. Had been doing that for—I think that started more in the 50s, early 50s.

SA: Partly due to size of machinery, because the larger machines couldn't navigate through woods with a lot of trees still on it?

KL: That was our thinking, that we can't afford to do selective cutting anymore. That transition didn't really happen until—that's probably 70s or 80s. But there was small equipment up until then. Even horse logging, some places.

SA: When did W.T. Smith shut down, or get sold?

KL: They didn't, they got sold.

SA: Sold.

KL: To Union Camp Corporation in 1967.

SA: Okay.

KL: And of course, it got shut down because of the number of owners it had become, getting up near 50 or 100 people, and some of them—one group had moved to California and the California cousins, after a few years, said, 'How much is that property worth?' And they told them and they said, 'And how much am I getting from it? I can do better with my money. Just sell it and give me my money.' And other companies, in hindsight, I would have said, 'Go borrow some money, buy them out and take your time to pay the money back.' And people did. I mean, Georgia-Pacific was one of the first one that sort of was doing a lot of that. Borrowing money. Julian and the forestry interested people in the company said, 'Oh no, that's too risky, we can't do that.' So, they wouldn't even deal with Georgia-Pacific, they wouldn't even talk to Georgia-Pacific when they got ready to sell. Because they didn't like their practices.

SA: Their forestry practices?

KL: The borrowing money, financial.

SA: The borrowing money part. So, they were risk adverse.

KL: Yes, conservative to say the least.

SA: And the family had grown.

KL: Family had grown—

SA: Lot of shareholders—

KL: You had people scattered around the country, but still it was a close minority. In fact, when it came to a vote it was 50/50 just about.

SA: How did—well, if it was 50/50, how did it get resolved?

KL: Well, no. It was—out of 100,000 votes it was within one or two hundred votes.

SA: And that carried the day, to sell the company.

KL: Yeah, in fact Julian said at the time, he promoted—he was advocating dividing the company and let each person or group of family take their share of the property and do what they wanted to do. And they all said, 'You'll make this place—' the ones who were running it said, 'You're going to make Chapman a ghost town then.' They just couldn't see the possibility. Julian said, 'Don't worry,' he says, 'There'll be a sawmill, you can sell this.' They didn't like that idea. So, they voted, and the vote was to get rid of the company. And Julian said, 'Well if you vote that way, I'm going to move to Mobile and won't be involved in running the company.'

SA: Interesting.

KL: It was a family split.

SA: I've asked this question of other families during my tenure here. Of how they navigate those decisions. I remember specifically talking with Westervelt, perhaps you were on the board for its (crosstalk) when we had a board meeting then in Tuscaloosa, following tornado damage. But they—I remember, they said that in their family that one person was given 51 percent voting rights, or shares. And so, no matter what happened, a decision could always be made. In case of discrepancies. I found that interesting, for their family.

KL: Yeah. Well, that is—I mean, most of the family ownerships have had to find some solution for that problem because different objectives of the owners. One of the only ones that hasn't is TR Miller Mill Company. Because they struck oil, it makes the trees grow. But we did a lot of work with families, not with sawmills necessarily, just ownerships. It might be a few thousand acres and two or three owners, or it might forty, fifty thousand acres and more owners. Or it might be a thousand acres with two owners. And we did lots and lots of divisions, which usually solved the problem. Each owner had his share of the property, and he could what he wanted to do it. Some would sell, some would acquire more timber land, some would just keep and manage what they got out of it. But I've often said we've kept more families together than most psychologists. Otherwise, they fall out and they start fighting and can't get along.

SA: So, there's a guidebook for forestry consultant.

KL: That should be part of it, it really should be.

SA: Interesting. If you can remember, what might have been most complicated example of that?

KL: Well, the one where I was a judge. I was hearing a case, seven half-brothers and they owned—I've forgotten how much acres it was, but it wasn't a great deal. Three, four thousand acres maybe. And the judge says, 'I don't know enough about this timberland part. We can divide the money or anything else.' So, he appointed me, special master, to advise on dividing this property and giving equal value to all seven of them. Boy, we did that as thoroughly as possible. He was a judge; we were reporting to. We had a timber cruise, we had a mineral appraisal, we had to do some surveying to determine exactly the acres. We did appraisal of various parts of it. And then we made a division. We sat down, took all those numbers, and we presented it to the judge. Said, 'Here judge, this is what we think is absolutely fair. Each one gets one of these pieces.' And the half-brothers looked at it and said, 'That's not right! That's won't work!' They took it home and overnight came out with a different division. We didn't think the values were equal at all, but they felt it was good, fair division for the seven of them.

SA: So, they scrapped your solution?

KL: Yeah.

SA: That you, on paper, was pretty fair from evaluation standpoint.

KL: From evaluation standpoint, that's right.

SA: And it forced them to find their own solution.

KL: Yeah.

SA: Perhaps with characteristics that weren't necessarily just based on value.

KL: Yeah.

SA: Perhaps.

KL: But a lot of the others were ones where we did the same thing, went through a process of assessing the value. And put numbers in a hat and they'd draw, one out of five gets this, the other—one time, we did a division like that. I thought, oh boy, this is going to be fun, now they get to draw. So, I had—my father had an old top hat that popped up. So, I said, okay, and I was all primed to say—they said, 'What are we going to draw out of?' I said, 'Well, I've got this.' So, I popped out the hat, put the numbers in it, and one of them said, 'Wait a minute! Who goes first?' (laughs) And I said, 'Well I was thinking of going in alphabetical order.' 'No! Once one person draws then the others—' Well, we finally got over his objections, but (laughs) I thought that was funny.

SA: Related to that topic, we'll talk about these other forestry issues later on, too, but it seems to be that those kinds of issues, as a forestry consultant, and dealing with landowners and families and the issue of forest fragmentation—how have you looked at that as a forestry consultant over time?

KL: Well, that was a hot topic not too many years ago. I did write some, gave some talks and wrote a paper on that kind of thing. What we've seen with the companies that we have, places where we have divided it, some sell right away to someone else in the group. But you get a fair amount of—you do get some fragmentation (mumbles) still, it doesn't fragment at all. Some of them even become big accumulators and start building back something bigger. I'm not—I have not seen fragmentation as a serious problem in the management or care of these forests.
SA: Does it matter, kind of, the size of ownership you're talking about? Whether a family has three, four, five thousand acres, versus three to five hundred.

KL: Yeah. No, I mean still, they are all going to do the same thing. You think things are changing a lot in forestry or culture. I remember getting after, writing to—what was his name—Al.

SA: Al Sample?

KL: Al Sample. And Brett Butler, because they kept talking about, 'Oh boy, this is going to be the greatest transfer of—' because of the age. Average age was 55, 60 years old, something, of owners. Of all little private properties in the country. Said, 'It's going to be the greatest transfer of wealth, or property, in history.' I wrote him back and said, 'Wait a minute, look the average age has increased only this much in the last so many years. It's not causing a real problem, it's not a devastating forestry thing.' But they were always, Forest Service was always getting on the topic that they could work with, do something with, talk about, write about. And that was one of them that I think was a fad that came and went. They haven't said anything about it lately.

SA: Forest fragmentation, I guess. How do you—you mentioned Al Sample and then Brett Butler. Brett has worked for the Forest Service doing the small woodland owner surveys, something.

KL: Right.

SA: I'm not sure the title's right. But what do you think, besides forest fragmentation, do you have any comments on that government survey that they do periodically?

KL: They're not doing it anymore, are they? You mean the inventory?

SA: Well, not the forest inventory analysis, but the survey with—or maybe that's what they're doing.

KL: I think they still may do something along that line, but I haven't seen anything lately. They used to—in fact, I think I wrote it—what was the man's name? Patterson something, from Washington, that area. I had a long conversation with him, talking about it, and wrote to him

after awhile. He said, well the problem today is there isn't any real problem for the non-industrial, private owners. I said, 'Well, hmm, that's a good thing.' (laughs) But they were looking for work.

SA: Well, thinking of the recent publication put out by the Society of American Foresters, by Brett Butler. That looked at small or family forest ownerships indicating their analysis. Some of my background is in extension. Going through extension, you always hear about the ten million forest owners and the amount of acres that they own, and what they own land for. What are their purposes and how do you reach them when others feel like, in the analysis, they might have missed the boat. The larger question is, what happens on those lands or larger ownerships? You know, of a thousand acres or more, and how important is that to the larger question of forest management across these lands.

KL: Well, you know—I think like we mentioned yesterday, nobody ever thought you'd see the industry selling off its land and going into individual or a family ownership of some kind. And we have. And I think the same thing is going to happen with some of these TIMO lands, probably.

SA: Okay, well let's save that topic, an issue for later on. So, you decide here to take a job with Pomeroy & McGowin, managing and consulting services?

KL: Yeah. Pomeroy & McGowin, they called them forest managers, then consultants. And Mr. Pomeroy lived in Arkansas, and Julian lived in Alabama here. And they formed a partnership and they got along perfectly for many, many years, until they died. Julian had seen the need for—it was basically cruising work that they, was their biggest thing. And they cruised millions of acres, in industry particularly, because from the 30s to later, the paper companies were acquiring and moved into this part. Well, they moved all over. But they acquired sawmills and properties, timberlands, and they needed—when they got to wanting the value question, they needed to know how much timber was there. So, they did it. There were some that—in fact, I remember one time Julian said, 'Oh, we've got to go out to Texas this weekend.' And that was a weekend where there was going to be—holiday, it was Labor Day weekend, I was going to get to go

sailing, race on the boat. And he said, 'No, we've got to go out there.' So, we went out to Diboll, Texas, where Temple Lumber—or Temple Land, whatever they called it. Arthur Temple, we met with him and told—said, 'Well look, I've got this offer from Time magazine to buy the whole thing.' And Julian—and he wanted to know whether it was a decent offer. So, we looked at it, Julian looked at it, and decided alright, Pomeroy you go this way, Julian you go that way, and Keville you go that way and see what you come up with, a guess on the value on the timber stocking. So, we did. Came back, Julian scribbled down Pomeroy's number, my number, and his number on the back of an envelope, and told Temple, 'No, that's not a good enough offer.' And he said okay. That's a quick way to do things. I did another—we did a division that way, too. The opposite of the seven half-brothers, where it was two sawmill related people together owned three, four, five thousand acres. They owned it but they wanted to separate it, divide it. And so, they called on me and Fred Stimpson, who was running the Gulf Lumber Company here in Mobile at the time, and they said the same sort of thing, 'Come back with what you think the value is, relative value on this land.' And we did, Fred—we rode together for a day or two days, driving over the properties. In fact, Fred reminded me not long ago—he retired here, and said, 'Keville do you remember when we went and looked at that?' I said yeah. He said, 'We drove around and you kept saying, oh boy they need to burn this, or they need to thin that. They need to do this, that. After awhile, you finally said, damn there's a lot of timber on this property.' (laughs) But as a consultant I was looking at something to do on it. But let's see, how far did I get in that one? I forgot, I got to back up a minute. Got sidetracked talking about—

SA: Well, you were saying that there's example of a family, kind of the opposite of the seven half-brothers.

KL: Well, that was after that one. I guess we covered that.

SA: Okay. Well, let's go back to your first job.

KL: Oh, first job. Oh, right. That's where we start.

SA: A few questions ago.

KL: And then I got onto—

SA: And then you chose that, versus going up to Canada.

KL: But I was talking about Pomeroy & McGowin, started in ’38. Julian was camping out in(??) in Arkansas. When I got out of forestry school, Julian had started another company, or Pomeroy & McGowin had started another company. They called Pomeroy & McGowin Forest Service Company, because we were going to be servicing landowners and giving them consulting help or management help on the ground. That was—they started ’57, I got out of forestry school in ’61 and that’s where Julian had various people sort of trying to run an office here but starting with some family lands and trying to sell that idea to a lot of others. In fact, it was selling the concept of management. So, I got hired and that’s what this company was doing.

SA: Okay, let’s take a break. And then we’ll go back to that same point a little bit.

KL: You don’t want to answer the question about hurricane damage.

SA: Well, I’m going to put it down.

KL: No, I like the other idea.

SA: Okay, I’m just going to put this down in our parking lot.

KL: A lot of talk about hurricanes because I have a lot of stories.

SA: Okay, good. Because I really don’t think you hit on that in your other stuff.

SA: Okay, Keville, so you came to Pomeroy & McGowin Forestry Services, for landowners, and that’s a subsidiary of Pomeroy & McGowin—

KL: Forest managers.

SA: Forest managers.

KL: And consultants.

SA: And consultants. And you picked that, you selected that job over working with Stora in Canada, and so what were the first things that happened? I'm sure there was some training that went on.

KL: Well, our offices here in Mobile had one forester that they had hired to run this office and one or two other employees in forestry. Basically, they were trying—they would work on these family properties and others that had signed up and said, 'Yes, I'd like you to manage my property.'

SA: Were these like long-term contracts? Or yearly management?

KL: Yearly management contracts. Right. That would be the main thing we did. But it would involve making timber sales and painting land lines and just giving advice about how to manage. But a lot of timber sales. That's what I started doing with Pomeroy & McGowin Forest Service Company. One time at a forestry meeting, I met somebody who worked for the Forest Service and they said, 'What, you're trading on our name? The Forest Service?' And I had never thought about that. Just, we were providing services. But it was basic forestry work. Marking timber, cruising timber, painting land lines, we even started some burning back then. The office had been started here with a forester; Don Harper was his name. And his few helpers. And for ten years, I guess, at least, that's what I was doing. I'd be in the woods every single day.

SA: Did the timber sales, did you run the bidding process? Was there a bidding process?

KL: Yes. And in some parts of Alabama, eastern Alabama particularly, that wasn't the way buyers thought about buying and I think one of them said, 'I ain't cutting no spotted timber.' (laughs) He didn't like the idea of not just going in and cutting the timber, all of it.

SA: You're talking about where you painted—

KL: We marked the tree at eye level and on the stump, so you would know that's the tree that had been marked.

SA: So, they didn't like having accountability, perhaps.

KL: Right. But the accountability was to—one interesting story. The stump mark, of course, would show you that was, when you came back later looking, oh yeah we intended to mark. Well, one time we had one where the operation was being cut. The logger was not there at the time, but he had cut these trees. I walked in and we had painted yellow spots of paint on stump and above. Walked in the woods and right away I said, 'That smells like paint.' And this logger had gotten house paint, which smells pretty good and strong, and our marking paint doesn't smell at all. So, we had to challenge him on that. Getting him to pay back.

SA: So, they'd be marking trees that weren't marked to be cut? Or harvesting trees.

KL: Yeah.

SA: Kind of stealing trees. (laughs)

KL: Yeah. But that's why we marked them, too. We mark one to take the worst trees and leave the best, and the other to show that that tree was one we intended to have cut. But for those first years, that's all I did, was working in the woods. Every single day. We had a secretary that ran the office and kept inventory and bills and our payrolls. We were working six days a week.

SA: What were the range of acreages?

KL: Oh, these are—we had some family owned that was around ten different ownerships, each of them owning about two thousand, twenty-five hundred acres. That took some record keeping in order to keep them straight and send them bills and that sort of thing. And we had some other

tracts. I mean maybe ten thousand acres would have been the biggest one, that we just did the work on them for a year agreement.

SA: Did most of them renew, year after year? Or it was just dependent on when they were ready to sell timber?

KL: Most of them renewed at that time. We were trying to set the business up on the fact that we had this group of owners that wanted us to manage their property for a period of time. After about ten years, I guess maybe we hired another employee or two. But the business wasn't really growing much at all. And we gradually realized, well, no, some of these people only want individual services on a short-term basis. So, we didn't try to get them to sign up for a budget for a year. We'd just say, 'Oh sure, you want to make a timber sale? Oh, we can do that.' Or you want to cruise your land, or you need to get something planted or a road built or anything else. So, it evolved from the longer term to the shorter term.

SA: When they were on the longer-term kind of things, did it always start off with developing a management plan? Or was it just other types of activities?

KL: It wasn't necessarily, we didn't do much plans back then. It was more just the owner needed money, wanted us to cut it. Or—and it took me a few years to really realize what you have to—you think of these landowners, a lot of times, it was just, 'I want to do the right thing, I want to take care of this.' Well, wait a minute, there's ways to do this, what's the right thing and not. We didn't do pure, what later became management plans, it was just for that year, with the idea that we're going to come back to this stand, or that stand. We could look at it and see, we sort of knew what was going to come. But we didn't really describe that to the landowner. So, it was more handling the individual service.

SA: Were any of these clients in the Tree Farm program?

KL: Let's see, there was a Tree Farm program—may not have, when did Tree Farm start?

SA: Actually, this is interesting because Tree Farm started in 1941. But you also have, I think in Alabama here, Alabama Treasured Forest. That started later.

KL: That started a little later. Yeah.

SA: So, if you're talking about the 60s into the 70s, then I'm just curious as to—sounded like small percentage of your clients would actually have been in the Tree Farm program.

KL: True, and a lot of times because they felt like they were already doing that, they didn't need to join a program like that.

SA: Since they were working with you, they didn't need to join.

KL: Yeah, they knew what they were doing. And even today, as a matter of fact, I was giving a talk, said we never stuck to a management plan, we just go with the basic objectives and year to year decision on where needs cutting or when you're going to cut.

SA: Any other issues in the bidding process, besides one of the loggers saying they're not going to do that?

KL: No. It was sealed bid. High bidder gets the—I don't remember any issues. I remember one issue though. Made a timber sale for the bank, the Trust Department had some lands and so we were managing it. Bidder came in and one of them was a logger from south Mississippi, and he—when we opened the bids, he had left a couple of hundred thousand dollars on the table. He made a mistake or something. And he went outside and threw up. (laughs)

SA: You mean—

KL: He overpaid.

SA: He over-bid.

KL: He over-bid. By a lot.

SA: But you accepted it.

KL: Well, that was the bank's decision. Whether they did or didn't, but they did. Other times we had were the buyer, like Gulf Lumber Company one time, bid on a landowner in town, where people know everybody. Gulf over-bid but it wasn't a lot, $10,000 or so. But that landowner always went back to Gulf to sell timber, didn't use the bid process anymore. He said, 'No, I'll—that was their mistake.'

SA: So, there was still some honor in the system.

KL: Yes, some people.

SA: (laughs) You mentioned before about having some forestry interns besides this small group of people.

KL: Yeah, in the late 70s I guess, we had a French boy came and he was a contact from Julian from where I'd spent a summer over there. He was—adapted to the work perfectly, gave some good interest to our foresters who worked with him. And was also just a good, nice to have somebody that you socialize with, and you could do things with here. And I've often thought that consultants in general—in fact I've talked with Ed Steigerwaldt one time up in Wisconsin, big consultant. I said, 'You know, we had these experiences, these people that came. Ed, what do you think about exchanging foresters? And I'll send one up here to you in the winter, and you send one of yours down here for the summer, and both of them will appreciate where they came from.' (laughs) But we never did it, but I still think the whole idea of just having somebody different, completely different, come and intermingle with your people and they learn something from it.

SA: Because you had somebody from Sweden, too?

KL: Yes, and I had the son of the man that had—forester Hans Lindberg, his name was Lars, Lars Lindberg came. And he worked for a summer, little bit more. And he did—he had some connection out in Washington state, and he did start out there and worked for the logging for a little bit. Came down here and just did all the various things that we were doing.

SA: You talk about the benefit to your operation for some of that diversity. But I'm sure them, as they go back, they're bringing an incredible amount of knowledge.

KL: I just think it's great exchange.

SA: Okay, I'm going to suggest that we stop there for the afternoon. And then continue our session.

KL: We don't have to.

SA: Just want to have a little bit here. We stopped off here talking about your first ten years with the company, that's where we'll pick up there. But off camera we were talking about hurricane things, I had asked you before. Actually, if you'd done some hurricane work. So which ones come to mind?

KL: It's not the work, it's the experience of being in it. Just like you asked Lauren if she'd ever been in a hurricane. Well, if a hurricane comes to the town you live in, you've been in a hurricane. And the interesting thing was, when I came, the first hurricane was Frederick, 197—I think it was '76. But the interesting thing was, they had not had a hurricane here for 50 years. None. And yet I grew up in Long Island, we had three when I was young. Thirty-eight, '45, '52, and a lot of other ones. And so, I knew more about hurricanes than a lot of the people here who had never been through a hurricane, didn't know anything about them. I just sort of found that strange. And then a few years later, when Hugo came, I think we had—no, it wasn't Hugo, because Hugo didn't come here, but we had two hurricanes. Might have been Katrina and something else, back-to-back, one year and the next year. So, it can vary that much.

SA: With Frederick, I guess it's your first hurricane down here, you remember what category it was?

KL: Four or five.

SA: Four or five, we can look that up. So, what kind of damage to the forest resources down here?

KL: Oh, gosh. There wasn't as much, a lot of rain with that, and the pine trees snapped off halfway up, ruined the bowl for logs. But there was a lot of damage, that was—I can't remember the mileage—it was Category Five, but I can't remember. And we had to get loggers together and start salvaging what we could. A lot of places it was just anything that you could get out of that. And then of course there was some tax bases information that you had to submit or prove to the IRS that this is what it was.

SA: Was that difficult to determine sometimes?

KL: You mean the—

SA: The tax bases for the landowners that you worked with?

KL: No, it was mostly just up to us to give a fair value for the part that was damaged but not salvaged.

SA: I see.

KL: And we did our best and the IRS didn't question it.

SA: So, they would have their tax attorneys or somebody—

KL: Somebody looked at it up in Washington, but they never came down here or asked anything about it. But it was interesting to try to go out and reconstruct how much board feet was all these trees that were snapped off, or some of them are. Not all of them are.

SA: The IRS would consider the standing tree with volume in it still good?

KL: Yeah, if it wasn't broken, it wasn't damaged. Reminded me a little of the project that Kelly Niemi was a consultant out in Washington. I've lost touch with him, haven't had any contact here for years. But Mount Saint Helens and the flood that came down when companies had landing—the logs were already there, and some of it went all the way down and had to be caught down at the end and his job was to figure out who had what. Because different companies owned that land, and they used aerial photos and various other things. I always thought that was an interesting project. But this one, you just tried—you got out in the woods and you took a plot, made a measurement, tried to put it back together, what was this before it got damaged?

SA: How far inland was the damage?

KL: Frederick, not very far. The serious damage, maybe 50 miles. Yeah. They don't go very far inland with damaging winds. The storm goes on and causes floods or something else.

SA: Well, but it probably affected a lot of landowners.

KL: Oh, yes. Oh, sure. And so, we were busy taking care of our regular clients and then other people would come and need it too. Yeah.

SA: Okay. Well, okay, I'm going to suggest that we stop there.

KL: Okay.

SA: And we'll pick that back up tomorrow morning.

SA: Okay. This is Steve Anderson with an oral history interview with Keville Larson, at Larson & McGowin on Thursday, July 13, in Mobile, Alabama. Day two, session one. Keville, we finished off yesterday talking about the beginnings of when you joined Pomeroy & McGowin in a consulting capacity. Talked, kind of, the first ten years, about the company was growing a bit during that time. The—where is my paper, here. In 1964, you moved from forester with Pomeroy & McGowin, to forester and manager, then to Pomeroy & McGowin. You might start there, talking about your increase in responsibilities.

KL: Alright. Just start?

SA: Yeah.

KL: Yes, Pomeroy & McGowin was the partnership that was formed in 1938. But in 1957, Julian saw a need for helping small landowners with forestry here in this area. So, he founded Pomeroy & McGowin Forest Service Company. That was just our small group here, where the major company of Pomeroy & McGowin cruised millions of acres all over the south, based in Arkansas. At first, the first few years, yes, I was just stumbling along just doing forestry work. I had done enough things before to have some, but I wasn't—I got indoctrinated into forestry by the people that were already here and doing timber marking or land line painting or burning or things like that. Gradually, I got enough confidence and understanding, knowing of that kind of thing, and the forester that had been here, Don Harper, had run the organization for four or five years, and he left about '64 or '5, somewhere in there. And so, I was the manager of the company. Well, I hadn't expected to be doing business like that, I thought I was just going to be in the woods doing things. But there wasn't a large group, and I could—we didn't have, I didn't have any trouble. We already had an accounting thing in place and a secretary that knew how to do that, so as far as running the business, I was dealing with clients. And gradually, we grew and began consulting with people other than landowners. Able to do any kind of forestry work except large cruises. Pomeroy & McGowin always kept—they are specialized in millions of acres, hundred of thousands of individual cruises. We did small cruises and served small owners in this area. It was just a long time.

SA: We need to stop for a moment. We got—that's good, I like it cooler myself.

KL: Yeah, yeah, we want the cool but not the noise.

SA: So, you were saying that the parent company, Pomeroy & McGowin was handling all the larger cruises and things like that.

KL: Yes, they worked across the south.

SA: Across the south, and your group, the Forest Service Company, was working with smaller parcels.

KL: That's what we were set up for. I think I mentioned yesterday that we started out with a year-long budget agreement with landowners, and later transferred to services just as needed. Some people still wanted to budget for the year. I think it took me, almost twenty years to sort of get comfortable with the idea that, oh yeah, we're going to grow, we're going to go someplace. In fact, in the beginning I didn't—I thought this was nice, let's just keep it like this. Learned through doing that you've got to grow.

SA: Yeah, I found that with other interviews, too. Where, if you don't grow, you can become stagnant. It can fall into dilapidation of the business in some way, that way.

KL: I remember having some salesman or something or other, some business, and he said something about growing, I said, 'Well, we don't want to grow, we want to stay this.' He said, 'You can't do that.' He was right, too. But, as we grew, we could cover a larger area and we could provide additional services and we were, I would have to say, we were a too-early adopter of some things. For instance, the computer—the first computer we got was $20,000 IBM, and within a year you could get in on a little small, handheld something. And that was too much money to have paid for a computer that we didn't use too much. And then the same thing with a dendrometer that bought. Because the Forest Service came and was teaching. I was interested and thought we could do something using a precise measuring instrument, of height and

diameter. And used Three-P sampling. I haven't talked about it in so long, I'm not sure I can remember exactly. But basically, using random number lists, you estimate on tree, tree, tree, and then all of a sudden the program tells you, now you have to measure. So, you only measure certain randomly picked trees to measure very precisely. It was supposed to let you take less plots and also increase the accuracy. And we used it on one or two, and forestry suppliers touted that I was a "bastrouo"—a Barr and Stroud, I can't remember what it was, tool owner. I always laughed at that. It didn't sell very well, and dendrometers are used, I guess, mostly in research and people that are really doing something with it. It's not used in everyday work.

SA: Yeah, the Three-P sampling was still based on plots?

KL: Yes.

SA: How did your firm navigate or go—years ago, we did strip cruising.

KL: Yes.

SA: That's what we learned in summer camp and things like this. How did you feel about strip cruising versus plots?

KL: Well, yes, we—Pomeroy & McGowin, for those millions of acres they cruised in the south, strip cruising was the way. Mr. Pomeroy had brought it in and said that's what you're going to do. Other people were using plot cruising, but we stuck with the strip cruising for a long, long time. In fact, until computers came along. Handheld computers, that would let us—well it was the check cruising that drove us to the plots. Strip cruising, in order to follow an area where somebody had been, we stapled two-by-three cards on a tree, and you couldn't always find that when the person came back to check cruise. And check cruising was important, we thought we needed to do that. But when computers came along and let you keep each plot separate, and you could go back and check on the plot, every tree that was in it into a handheld computer. That's—we preferred the strip for a long time, but then went to plot cruising.

SA: So, is it a bit more accurate, but maybe saved time and money for checking in?

KL: It also let you go to a one-man cruiser, instead of a two-man crew.

SA: Interesting. Okay, so you became a forester and manager of Pomeroy & McGowin Forest Service Company, 1964 to 1968. You didn't feel becoming a manager was that big of a challenge at that time. But in 1968, it becomes—you become vice president, secretary, and part-owner of Larson & McGowin. So, tell me a little bit about how that transition happened. What happened with Pomeroy & McGowin and then making the change into Larson & McGowin.

KL: You know, I was just manager until '68 and then changed to vice president.

SA: Vice president in '68.

KL: Well, Julian of course was the owner. Julian and Mr. Pomeroy. Julian McGowin. They were the ones that promoted me, gave me those titles. Okay, you've learned enough, move you to manager, okay we'll make you a vice president, that sort of thing. That's all there was to it, as far as they thought I just had the ability to keep going and doing different things. In '68, but Julian McGowin died in 1973. And so that's when it became quickly that I became president and bought the company from his trust at the bank. So, I was sole owner for some time. I did—I don't remember when I first brought on the ownership to others, I'm not sure if I ever did. But people like Barrett McCall who came along, he would made an officer until the time when I sold the company to him.

SA: Let me get this a little straight, because in 1968 the company was Pomeroy & McGowin.

KL: Oh, yes.

SA: Julian passes away in 1973. But in 1968, it becomes Larson & McGowin.

KL: Yes.

SA: So, while he was still alive, what happened.

KL: That was a separation with Pomeroy & McGowin in Arkansas. L.K. Pomeroy and a couple of others were owners of the partnership out there, and the Forest Service Company here. Julian thought, well we need to separate from them. We're growing enough ourself and so let's just separate the two companies. And that's when we changed the name too.

SA: What was involved in separation?

KL: Well, it had always been a partnership. And they were just doing different things, and we were struggling to find our way in what we were doing.

SA: So, Pomeroy continued.

KL: Yes, oh Pomeroy & McGowin still exists in Arkansas. It did not grow like most other consulting firms did. I guess because of the people who purchased it.

SA: Okay. So, what was—did you feel that much was different in 1968 to '73 when you became vice president and part owner? What other responsibilities might have been handed to you?

KL: You're still doing everything, from working and doing the fieldwork and the office work. I didn't feel much difference.

SA: Drumming up new business.

KL: Yes.

SA: How about when you became president and owner, in '74. Did things change?

KL: No, still doing the same thing. But that was a period—'68 was the time that I became aware of the Association of Consulting Foresters and found other consultants and what they were doing

and started going to meetings that involved others. I guess that was the beginning of me not just running the business but participating in outside organizations.

SA: Getting involved in other issues that were important to your clients.

KL: I really, looking back that's when it got more interesting. After you learn how to do forestry, you're looking for something else. Well, the lobbying work or the promoting good forestry or giving talks at various organizations. That made things a little more interesting than just doing the forestry and running a small business.

SA: Do you feel that a lot of that came back as valuable to your clients?

KL: Oh, yes. It raised our exposure, go places and you start getting invited to talk here or there and I don't know, you're bound to promoted to new clients. It exposed myself and the company to a wider range of people.

SA: You mentioned that during those years you had an opportunity, or the company kind of expanded into some international work. Three areas in particular came up. I'm just wondering if you can kind of go through them and tell how it came about, what it was about. What the end game was. The first one I had down on my list was cruising Crown owned timber on Andros Island in the Bahamas, for a paper company.

KL: Right. So that was interesting, all three of those especially were very interesting. But cruising in the Bahamas, I'd tell people I'm going cruising in the Bahamas because it's not what they expected. We were—I guess I can, the companies don't matter, I guess I can talk about it. From Owens-Illinois, had a mill in Florida. They bought the timber from the Crown in England and brought it over there. Andros Island was very interesting, it was a coral island, and they sent a big crew. Oh, by the way this was not our office, that was from the larger Pomeroy & McGowin partnership was hired, engaged to do that, but they needed some help and so they asked me if I could take the time, so I did. But Andros Island, a coral island, and we had about 20 people I think, living in railroad cars on a barge going to work by helicopter, airplane, boat. It was something very different.

SA: How big was this island?

KL: Don't ask me. (laughs) It's not giant but it's larger of the Bahamas islands. Not as developed.

SA: And obviously enough timber to be of interest to everyone.

KL: Slash pine just sprouts right out of the coral. But the funny thing was, after a week, everybody—they had to fly in a plane load of boots because we tore up our boots on this coral. Another interesting thing about the coral, I remember one day somehow I didn't have enough water, you could take a grass straw and put it down into one of the water pools, it's just right under the ground there, because it was coral and it was clear, but it was rainwater I guess, mostly. But that was an interesting job, and the—

SA: So that timber would come to a mill in Florida.

KL: Yes, we never got into the cutting or what they did with it. They just wanted—in fact, I guess they hadn't done any cutting there yet, they just acquired this concession and they were wanting to know how much of it was there and how long it might take them.

SA: So, Owens-Illinois had a concession, they didn't purchase the land.

KL: No, right.

SA: Interesting. The other one you mentioned was fifteen thousand acres concession again, in Colombia.

KL: Yes, that was another Pomeroy & McGowin cruise. They had been hired to—a man had a sawmill in Pascagoula, Mississippi, and they brought out cativo logs from Colombia and they had a concession. They needed some estimate of how long that was going to last. So, for this job, we didn't have 20 people, we had four of us, and first they sent an advance scout, one of the

Pomeroy & McGowin foresters. He went down and looked all over and said, 'Yeah, condition is pretty good.' We said, well what about water? Because we were worried about carrying enough water, we were going to be going on long tours. He said, 'Oh no, they've got these vines that grow on big trees. And you cut off the vine and yeah, you see its pores, and you cut it off again up above and water gushes out.' And he brought some, had it tested, and it's great. So, you didn't need to carry a canteen, even. Just walk over and find a vine, cut it.

SA: Do you remember the name of this vine?

KL: No, I don't. But it's interesting, this is the same area that today, migrants that are coming here from other parts of the world, their route is coming through the Darien, between Panama and Colombia, and they say it's the most dangerous route. So many of them die during the crossing. This is area of central South America where there is no road going from Panama down to South America. They built—they have a highway from Alaska to Terre del Fuego, but they don't have any highway there. Part of the property that we were cruising, there was some construction for the Panamanian highway, but they were using mules and scoops to move dirt. It didn't have—I don't know that they had any tractors, we never saw that. But they could only work in the dry season. And then the wet season, then drove back up again when it started going back to the dry season. But it was an interesting area.

SA: And who owned, who had the concession?

KL: The—the sawmill owner in Pascagoula, but there were other owners in Colombia that I never, we never met or knew anything about them. But the conditions working were perfect. I loved it because it was not like our hardwood. It was completely clean underneath. Not completely, but there was no big brush. Except every once in awhile you come across this palmetto type things and you had to machete your way through that. But otherwise, it was just good cruising.

SA: Tell me about cativo. How do you spell that?

KL: C-a-t-i-v-o.

SA: Cativo.

KL: I'm not sure what they were using, for furniture, I think. Making. But it was a nice, fine-grained wood. Looked pretty, had a good look to it. But the process of cruising was interesting. They took us up in a boat, each of us separately, and put us—we had already mapped out—first, Pomeroy & McGowin had sent the first man that went down there, also marked some points by spreading sheets on the ground so that when they could take some aerial photographs, they would have some control on the area. But to do the work, they'd send one person. Me, or one of the other three, up the river to a location and send us out. We had a track to follow, again—strip cruising. There were about two weeks, two or three weeks, worth of being out there in the woods, carrying our supplies on our back, stopping and camping on our cruise line at night, get up in the morning and keep going. I had a crew of four Colombians, who didn't speak English and I didn't speak Spanish. But I learned enough words pretty quick to direct them, and things. I was the tallier. I taught one of the guys to run the compass and that worked fine except, I don't know how many days into the cruise, at some point I looked up and here he is holding his compass and a machete next to the compass. I said, oh how long has that been going. Well, it didn't—we still came out close enough. And the last, we were left—all four of us had a route to do in that two or three weeks. The last week, they ended up with one run, so they said, 'Okay, you two, you start here, you start here, and you all meet in the middle.' And the longer we went, I kept thinking we could only be a little ways off and we wouldn't even hear each other, but we met. We did. That's running a chain and a compass. And if you're careful enough, it's accurate.

SA: Great. So as far as you know, the cruise came out—

KL: Yes.

SA: On point.

KL: Oh, that's the other thing about the cativo, it grows in pure stands. Where so many of those South American species are individual trees, lots of them mixed in each other. And that was part of the purpose of the cruise, to find where are the good mixed stands of this. Because we would occasionally go through something that wasn't part of the cativo stand. So that was an interesting experience.

SA: So, it's a hardwood.

KL: Yes. Yes, it's a hardwood. But just the experience of sleeping on the ground, on your cruise line and getting up and keep going. Oh, that's the other thing, the first round, they all carried their food on their backs and things. Mostly beans and rice. And about—almost near the end, but about three or four days out, and they said we don't have anymore food. Had eaten up everything they had. I said uh oh, and I had mostly freeze-dried food, which I found out they didn't like. But I gave them some of the best ones I had. And saved for myself one can of sardines. On the last day I ate it and I say I still love sardines. It was so satisfying to have something like that when you needed it.

SA: Let's see, the third area was assessing forestry potential for a large property in Guyana, South America. For British investors.

KL: Yes. And we never met the investors, but they called us and we did a little checking on them. They were sort of wheelers and dealers, but we said, we'll they're going to pay us for it. We—no, it was just me. I was the only one who went down there, that's right. The main thing was to, I think, was for them to have some assurance that this is a place that could be cut, and it wasn't a cruise. It was just looking at the terrain and the transportation methods that they might use. And write it up in a report. And that was about—I spent maybe a week down there.

SA: Was that for a—was it going to be exported, was it for a mill down there?

KL: There was a sawmill there, but I think they were going—they needed to sell this to people that would give them money to buy a stake in that or something. I never knew how it came out.

SA: Interesting. Well, the—

KL: That last job was not a Pomeroy & McGowin. By then we had grown enough, and people could find us and knew that we could do lots of work, and did that.

SA: You talked a little bit about being an expert witness.

KL: Oh gosh, yes.

SA: You want to tell us your favorite story?

KL: There were a lot of them. I remember one of the ones that some of my lawyer friends here in Mobile love to hear is—it was an oil, a seismic line, they had run a seismic line through a man's property, and he claimed they damaged it. Well, it wasn't damaged. I mean, they had cut a few brushes and things like that. But he sued them and so next thing I know I'm in the stand, and this is in Clark County, north of here, where the lawyer—one lawyer there—who runs the town, it was his jury and his judge and his courthouse. Everything. And he looked at my resume as they always do, to try to discredit you as being an expert, and this was during—I've forgotten the years exactly, maybe '67. But Yale was in the news for all sorts of riots or bad things. Just had a bad name at the time, especially down here, I guess. He looked at my resume, looked at the jury and said, 'Yale!' That was all. That was his method of discrediting me. That was one. Others—

SA: What—you mentioned, I'm just curious about the unrest or riots. What was going on at Yale?

KL: At Yale? Oh, it was the times.

SA: The war, or—Vietnam War?

KL: No. I don't know, no telling what they were doing. They just demonstrate every once in a while.

SA: Those Elis.

KL: (laughs)

SA: You had some expert witness that you did for some land down in the south I guess, but it had to do, or was used for some long-term management leases in Alaska?

KL: Well, the long-term management leases were here, but Alaska was for the IRS. They were trying to establish—they didn't have many comparables out there for what large properties would sell for. So, we did some studies down here. But I did have to go out there, I've forgotten exactly why. I thought it was strange.

SA: To Alaska?

KL: I didn't get to Alaska, but to—or maybe I was just meeting with the agents that were dealing on this. It was taking the comparable sales here of very large ownerships and putting it down in a report to them that they could use to say, in their negotiation, that here's what property sells for when it's in a large ownership. Like that. Because there weren't many large ownerships changing hands out west at the time.

SA: When you say Alaska and long-term management lease, I'm thinking the southeast Alaska agreements with the US Forest Service.

KL: Yes, but—I think—I don't think I actually got to Alaska.

SA: I was—

KL: Canada. Vancouver, some of that area. But it wasn't—it didn't involve land changing hands at all, it was just—

SA: Okay, let's take a short break.

SA: Very good. Well, we were talking about being an expert witness. And you had a couple more examples.

KL: I've been trying to think of the ones that are interesting. But no, there were a number of them involved in the long-term lease agreements with a company. The Forest Products Company will manage the lands of a large landowner. And they would sometimes get into disputes over—especially near the ending of a lease, you know. 'Wait a minute, what's the condition you're going to leave it in? Cut that—' and they were, most of the time, they weren't that difficult. But once in awhile you'd get into some that were really stressful. I remember two days in Atlanta. All day long, depositions, two days. I remember going out and running on the sidewalk, the streets of Atlanta, just to get some of that—and then on the way back, when I came back, I got to thinking, how much would they have to pay for me to do that again. And I decided no, I don't know, they couldn't pay that much.

SA: Which side were you representing?

KL: Sometimes on the landowner's side, sometimes on the company's side. Which was interesting, both ways.

SA: For example, what forest products company was involved?

KL: Well. Container Corporation in one case. International Paper Company.

SA: What is an example of—length of the lease, condition of the lease? What size?

KL: I'm just going to have to—I have a document that I can look at, that will help me with that. I have a listing with all of them, but I just, it's just gone.

SA: Commonly, in a lease in those situations, how long, or the range they would last?

KL: Leases? Could—some of them went to 30 or 60 years. They were long-term let to grow, continually grow and cut timber on it.

SA: You said part of the issues were how they left the land.

KL: Or in one case, the owners didn't like the way the company was managing it. I don't know if they just wanted to break the lease or get out of it, but they sued them for mismanagement. Said, 'You didn't plant these areas here, you're not doing it right there, or why can't we get more value out of this?' Just complaining about any conditions they could find. God, I'd have to—

SA: Were they usually resolved on the landowner's side, or the company's side, or both?

KL: More often on the company's side. Because the companies knew what they were doing.

SA: Yeah, I suspect that there would be—you know there's a contract or the lease, that you know, would lay out what was supposed to or not supposed to happen.

KL: Right, but some of the times it would come down to good forest management. Well, who's going to define good forest management?

SA: Right. Interpretation.

KL: Next time we take a break I'm going to go down to my office down there and pull up my list of jobs like that.

SA: I'm kind of torn, between getting into some issues versus getting into, starting discussion of working with other organizations. But let's stay with private landowners for a moment.
KL: Yeah, good.

SA: You worked with them as a consultant all the time, you're very knowledgeable about their issues because you talk with them all the time. Through my career, one of the issues that came up was endangered species. Particularly in my time was red-cockaded woodpecker. It became on the threatened and endangered list and Fish & Wildlife Service had come up with some guidelines. Do you remember when that?

KL: Oh, yeah. Landowners almost got paranoid after the Forest Service started identifying species and putting limits on what you could do or couldn't do. You always were worried about, were they going to come in and find something or—but no, the red-cockaded woodpecker, they came out with a draft statement, the Forest Service did, no—the UPA?

SA: Well, it would have been probably the Fish & Wildlife.

KL: Fish & Wildlife, that's right. They had the most draconian terms in this agreement. This is the way you're going to have to manage your land because you have some red-cockaded woodpecker out here. And it would be things like, well you're going to have to create conditions that they can live and they can feed and they can have the woods conditions that they need to live with. And you're going to have to watch out for all these things. And in fact, they said, every citizen should report to the Fish & Wildlife Service that they saw an endangered species someplace. Golly. But I did, I wrote a lot of people about the first draft of this, I said, 'Look, we can't have this.' And they didn't. They backed off and they wrote something different, changed it. Luckily.

SA: I remember at, about that time, that some landowners were so scared or concerned about what may happen that they caused them to harvest their timber.

KL: Yes, they did.

SA: Maybe prematurely. Did you—

KL: No, I knew landowners were doing that, and some did say that, but they never got really into it. In our dealing, they were pretty scattered. I mean only, we had some here, we had some other places. But on lands that we were dealing with. But it didn't cause a problem, we really adjusted well enough to protect. Even though, crazy thing, you had to provide the conditions for their housing, because you have to have the right kind of tree. Their feeding area, foraging, so you have to give them housing and food. And protect them from bad things that might happen. I do remember the—we mentioned Hugo yesterday. Hugo, the red-cockaded woodpecker trees are

weak where the hole is. And so many of them just broke off, right where the woodpecker hole was. Maybe we should have been getting rid of woodpeckers through hurricanes.

SA: Like in that situation, what would be the landowner's responsibility?

KL: The hurricane?

SA: Yeah.

KL: That's an act of God.

SA: Right. How was that generally resolved? In the end with the change, the final regulations that came out, what happened for the landowner.

KL: They were things you could live with, and I think Fish & Wildlife began to realize they had to accommodate the owners needs and rights, too. It hasn't been a big problem for anybody that I know. But I do know there was some landowners who did cut trees because they didn't want them to be—but I think when something new like that comes along, some people react quickly and do something they maybe didn't need to. But we've learned to live with red-cockaded woodpeckers. We'll see what comes next.

SA: I'm going to get into some tax kind of things, retained economic interest in a bit, when we talk about the organizations. But what do you think are the biggest issues for private landowners now?

KL: Protecting their rights is one of the main things. And that's either from tax problems or management restrictions or being able—but, you know I mentioned yesterday that Richard Patterson with the Forest Service, had been in a meeting with him and he said, 'Well, the problem is there isn't any real problem for private landowners these days.' I told him, isn't that wonderful, no problems. But they were looking for problems to solve. And as far as—I think, compared to what it was when I started, landowners are knowledgeable, and they have plenty of places of getting both help and information. Knowledge, and they just have to learn enough to

figure out how to—or find people who can advise them on, 'How do I take care of this property to get what I want out of it?' Just like, one time I had a lady from Mississippi call, we didn't manage her land, but she said, 'I've got pine land, and it was cut over, but the hardwoods are all coming back. Every forester who's looked at it says we have to get rid of all these hardwood trees. I don't want to. I like the hardwood trees.' I said, 'You don't have to get rid of them, just let them grow. You don't have to do anything.' It is—a lot of landowners will come to you and say, 'Well, I just want to manage, take care of this.' But then you start listening to them, they're really needing money to do this or that with. And the organizations that are available, if they get interested enough, and gosh I've seen some landowners who just become expert foresters just about, from taking care of their own land and getting help from the government, from consultants, somebody. And they love it.

SA: How about—well, I'm just going to follow that track for a minute. I know that there are master woodland owner programs. Like you said, there's a lot of help out there. How do you think those programs, if at all, when landowners are taught and they feel knowledgeable enough to make decisions and do things, how does that affect their view of the role of a forester? Does it—like I say, does it undermine our thinking of what a forester is?

KL: No, I don't—no. I mean, the typical response from people when they say, 'Oh, you're a forester?' I say yes. They say, 'Well doesn't it get lonely up in that fire tower?' But you know, that's not true anymore, people have seen enough and heard enough and even the ones that don't own land, to understand the need for things like prescribed fire. It's not—they understand the problems there are. The landowners, well the other place that they would get help was from the buyers. And that was one of the things that we tried to, ACF would try to promote. Wait a minute, that's not—they've got a conflict of interest, you ought to be getting advice from somebody who doesn't have conflict of interest to deal with. Some—the Forest Service and state forestry units were still the ones who were trying to give advice to landowners. But after awhile, they realized that they don't have a conflict of interest, but they just don't have the knowledge base to give them good advice or provide services for them.

SA: About things for private landowners that are concerns, how about markets and the price of timber?

KL: Oh, well that's going to be always up or down, where it is. But yeah, we need some markets for any of the tree products you can get. This—the laminated woods.

SA: Mass timber?

KL: Mass timber, but there's another word. Cross-laminated timber.

SA: Cross-laminated timber.

KL: That's a good new market that's come along and I think we'll grow and it's going to be good for the landowners. Another market. But in general, and for us managing the smaller properties, the management style had to change when the big equipment came. But the management style also changed because genetically improved seedlings. Before, when we worked so much for natural regeneration. Well, now unless it just comes easily and you don't mind that it's not genetically improved stock, most people aren't always working for natural regeneration. You get a lot more clearcutting and planting. Really because the equipment got too big to not damage trees that are going to be left if you only take some of them.

SA: When you talk about clearcutting and planting, you know, I think I have in my mind mainly pines.

KL: Pine, yes.

SA: So, over the years, how has it changed. You mentioned just now about knowing what a landowner wants out of their land. Right, in order to make recommendations. So, if they want to grow timber and have revenue in the future, that's one thing. This lady you talk about wants hardwoods, she likes them, wildlife habitat, whatever. But even so, is there—it's an art and a

science of whether or not hardwoods or pines are going to have increased value in the future. Is there some cases where hardwoods would be better to grow than pine?

KL: You know, in hindsight, looking back, hardwood trees increase the most in value because they didn't use it for pulp originally. When I was starting there were very few paper mills using hardwood. And so, we were girdling the hardwood trees that were overtopping pines. But if you look back, pick certain time periods, the hardwoods went from being negative value to having some value as much as the pines had. And you didn't have to do anything. Even in areas that was naturally pine land, but the hardwood invaded and now they're getting bigger. That sort of change are ones you couldn't have seen, or you didn't.

SA: Interesting. I just wondered about from a forestry consultant's point of view, if somebody's asking for what's the best to grow in the future for revenue. It's a big guessing game.

KL: It is, but again the landowners are so informed these days, that usually they tell you if you don't tell them. (laughs) Whether they're going to grow pulpwood on a short rotation or whether they're going to grow for saw timbers and poles.

SA: How have you seen the perception of consulting foresters change?

KL: Oh, I think it's—first the awareness is what had to come around. People didn't, but no, I think there are some excellent consultants, we've grown a whole lot. I've forgotten the numbers on ACF but they are a visible source now of help and work in forestry. I think they're seen positively and accepted as a positive influence in growing trees. And people have gotten the message, we pumped it out a lot that there's no conflict of interest when you're dealing with—they don't want to cut your trees to make wood out of it. They're going to help you do what you want to do.

SA: I think I read one of your papers where someone was predicting, or they looked at history where there was—it started off with a lot of maybe government foresters, and in the late 1900s a

lot of the foresters were led by company or corporate foresters. The next stage might be private consulting foresters. Does that still hold?

KL: Well, it wasn't necessarily consulting foresters. But there was a consultant in California named John Miles and this is 50 years ago, he wrote a paper and he talked about that, that nobody could practice forestry except the government in the beginning. And then the industry came in and they started saying, 'Oh, we can grow these trees.' And it was evolving to the point where private forestry and people giving advice and helping private forestry was going to be the dominant, in the whole field.

SA: That came to pass.

KL: Well, it is. It's going that direction. I mean, the private forest ownership is the largest in the country. Of private property.

SA: Well, this might be a good segue into your work with the Association of Consulting Foresters.

KL: Yes.

SA: Let's take a moment, a break.

SA: So, we're good, great. Okay, Keville. Back at—from 1974 to 2001, you were president and owner of Larson & McGowin. And as you approached that time, considering selling the business, what were your thinking, your issues as you came up to that time?

KL: Well, I was getting close to 65 I guess, and I was thinking that's when people usually retire and do things. I had to retire from playing soccer because I got to be 60. And in fact, one of my reasonings there was I might get my knee hurt so bad that I can't walk in the woods, and I don't want to not walk in the woods for the next so many years. It was really having the right people in place. You always wonder, who would want to buy this or how would I sell it? In fact, my

brother at one point was in the business of selling businesses, helping people. There isn't any one way to do it, and you just have to figure out—he does, interestingly, he thought I should have done this, he puts it out just like we do a timber bid. Anybody in the country, here's something you can buy. But other than that, you go through a valuation on the business, financial aspects of it. And I had good people, we had good people. We'd grown, in fact the company had grown from probably five people in the beginning to 30 or more. Required a good bit of management.

SA: How many states were you in, at that time?

KL: States? Well, offices we had some in Texas, Louisiana, Georgia, Alabama. I think that's—yeah. But I had good people in place. Barrett McCall, Alexander McCall. Unrelated McCalls.

SA: Really?

KL: Yes, one from Louisiana, one's from Montgomery. But they were very young and able to do things and were already moving the company. And I said, 'Well boy, I need to keep them around or they need to stay around. They are a buyer prospect.' And so, I just decided that—I've forgotten what the year was, 2000 or so, then I said no, I'm going to sell to them. So valued it, offered it to them, and they wanted it. And they have done very, very well with it. Grown it so much.

SA: What was the effect of the transition of land from corporations to TIMOs? That started in the 1990s, and then concluded by 2010 or so, in general. How did that effect you before you sold it, during and after?

KL: The effect is that it really was a boost for consulting, for all sorts of people helping. These were—some of those TIMOs built their own staff and did the management, but they soon learned that they could hire this consultant or that consultant for specific things. They thought that was more efficient. But the consultants, consultancy, became a bigger part of forestry when that—because those staffs of the forest products companies who managed their land, now somebody

owned it, so they had to have somebody to manage it. But they did and they do, but a lot of them found that this is better to contract out the forestry work as they needed it.

SA: Which TIMOs have you worked with, or the company worked with over time?

KL: The Forest Lands Group. They've changed, some of them changed just recently, but I've got to go look that up to.

SA: Okay, well go take a look. I'm curious. I know that some of the TIMOs like to work with different consulting firms.

KL: Yes.

SA: You know, not just get tied into—

KL: Long-term, you can just sort of sit on pins and needles waiting for when they're going to change and say no, we're going to change to some other way. That was also—the older I got, the thing about the good people I had, I got more and more nervous about people problems. People all of a sudden leaving and now you have to—boy that's big. In fact, that's the worst, that's to me the problem of running and owning a small business. I never got over the idea that gosh, several of these people could leave and I'd have to build it up again. It made me nervous thinking about that.

SA: Did you ever consider a situation where you might develop shares for upper management, middle management?

KL: No, I never really did. I know some of the other consultants have done that and did that, but I didn't. I remember worrying about just—yes, I had a number of people early on in the business tell me about, 'Well, don't bring anybody else in there, it'll cause problems.' But then I remembered Pomeroy and Julian both saying they never had one minute's problems or disagreements in their 30 years of Pomeroy & McGowin. And so, but I still felt nervous.

SA: So today, like 20 years later, it's still in ownership by the McCalls.

KL: Yes, well they've given ownership to a couple of other people.

SA: I see, okay.

KL: Yeah, so they—

SA: Is that, I'm just curious, is that like giving shares or percentage of ownership?

KL: Percentage of ownership.

SA: Somebody buys in.

KL: They buy in, yeah. I don't know the numbers because that's not something I—

SA: Seems to me like it's comparable, whether you're talking about shares or percentage of ownership. Somebody's making an investment, somebody gets revenue from the business and helps it grow.

KL: I'm just thinking about this worry that—in the payment, they were going to pay me over 10 years. And they did, but it got near the end where they added something to it. They needed—they were worried about the business not going, and I said, 'Oh no, absolutely, I'll give you' – however we were doing it, more time or more something. I said, later, I told them, 'I had more faith in the company than you all did.' And I guess it was a general feeling I had in the beginning.

SA: Who were your major competitors, over time?

KL: Oh, competitors. Locally, nobody. In fact, in the beginning, there were no consultants here, that's why I had never run into any. Gradually, the consultants grew, some were getting bigger, Resource Management was in Birmingham, they were one of the big ones. And at first, we saw

them as competitors and F&W in Georgia. But because we had started a bit earlier and we had a little more visibility and awareness, the small one-man firms never did bother us too much. And in the very beginning it was the paper company with their free services that we thought was our worst competition. And now, the F&W, Resource Management, and a number of good firms in Alabama, none of them quite as big as those two or us, but we get along with them, don't compete, don't feel like it.

SA: Can you talk a little bit about the timber companies, landowner programs? You just mentioned those. That they were, you did have concerns.

KL: In the beginning.

SA: Because this was, my understanding, is that they would enter into agreements with landowners or they'd provide services and free advice, and actually in some cases, or most cases, they'd have the first right of refusal when a landowner started to sell timber. So, what was the concern and how did it—

KL: Well, the concern was just in educating the landowners to the fact that they did have a conflict of interest, these companies. In giving their advice and growing the timber, but particularly in pricing. But that—after a while—now there aren't any companies around doing that. But they're offering free services to take care of your land, but you give us first refusal. Ooh, that was competition for a while. And that's why we had to educate them about the difference.

SA: So basically, it would skip the consulting forester level.

KL: Yes, oh yeah.

SA: And go right to a company. Kind of, not the same but kind of like selling to a logger.

KL: Yes, that's right.

SA: How long did those programs last? Ten, 15 years or more?

KL: That's interesting, I haven't really thought about it because I hadn't realized they're gone. But they started in the 50s or 60s. Yeah, I think the programs didn't really start, probably in the 60s, then faded out whenever TIMOs sold out. I mean, TIMOs bought Forest Products Company's lands.

SA: I thought they might have faded out before then.

KL: Maybe they did. No, we had a good—

SA: Perhaps the companies might have thought that at some point in time they didn't need to make that investment in the landowner programs in order to compete or buy timber.

KL: They all had some. But even there's one sawmill here, north of Mobile, that does management work. And they've just had a history in the area where they buy timber having a management arrangement with the owners. But other than that—

SA: Who's that?

KL: Scotch Lumber Company.

SA: Scotch Lumber.

KL: And now it's called—I forgot. It's been bought by somebody. I forgot now.

SA: Not related to Canfor, is it?

KL: I think Scotch merged with Gulf Lumber Company.

SA: Gulf Lumber, which—

KL: And it was Scotch Gulf and then Canfor did buy.

SA: Right, right. Okay, good. I think we're going to take a break, get some lunch, come back this afternoon, relax and we'll get into association work.

KL: Okay.

SA: Association people. So ACF, Association of Consulting Foresters, seemed to take a front and center relationship with you. But I think you said that around 1968 or so you kind of found them. Why don't you tell us about what happened?

KL: Oh, I can turn it off, I'm sorry. There, that's—sorry about that. Yeah, that was, there were no consultants in this area that I knew. The timber buyers would sometimes say they were consultants, but they were out procuring timber. (laughs) (train whistle in background) I think it's gone. Okay. But ACF, it turned me on when I got to know there were other people out there doing the same thing, but it was a small organization even then, started in 1948 and run by Ed Stuart who was one of the original founders. And the founders included foresters from Georgia, Vermont, Virginia, small group of consultants. But I just loved the idea that here's people promoting what we're doing and running into the same problems I have of telling owners what they can do and can't do, that they need somebody with good advice. Impartial advice. So, once I got involved with them, and part of the—I can't remember if it was a requirement, but every year they would hold a week-long meeting. Well, they had an annual meeting that moved all around the country. But then they also had a practicing foresters institute that would just address topical issues and would hold those around the country. The more I got exposed to, the more I liked it and liked the idea, here's these other guys all doing the same sort of thing. Gradually, I got involved and became president. At the time that the original founder, president was—he needed to scale back and they needed to bring in some other way, so anyway we hired a director. And that was a good process, going through finding a retired forester from—Minnesota. Had worked for—I can't remember which company he worked for. But Art Ennis was his name. And he lived in Washington area, and he was just a good person. Suited for that kind of work. And we helped, particularly the big message was to improve the image and visibility. And so, with annual

meetings we'd move around. In fact, my children, our family vacations for at least 12 years were going to all these places. Went from New Brunswick, Canada, to California to Wisconsin to Florida, all over. So, they got a little education seeing all those places.

SA: They didn't mind going to these places?

KL: No, they didn't complain. They were small enough, reached the point where they could have their own ideas about what family would do.

SA: Usually they are in places that are somewhat enjoyable.

KL: Yes.

SA: What else can you tell us about Ed Stuart?

KL: Ed Stuart was—he was in the army in the Second World War. And a really outstanding piece, memory about what he did, is he was tapped to go into Germany and bring out Carl Schenck. And there was much more—he never told anything else, much more about it other than that it was a routine thing. But I've always wondered how the army knew to send, or somebody knew to send him over there to get this man who had already been working at Biltmore before that, and then he'd retired and gone over there. I do have a letter from—it was a Resource Management employee at the time, but he got a letter from Carl Schenck talking about having worked in the south. But I always remember he said, 'God bless the red dirt of the south and those who keep it productive.'

SA: God bless the—

KL: The red dirt of the south. And those who keep it productive. And I thought, oh yeah, he's talking to us.

SA: He's an interesting character in himself. I think he had, he was tapped by Germany, the Nazis, to run some of the wood procurement and forestry things during that time. And I won't go into a long expose about it now, but he was always torn. He said that Germany was his father, but America was his mother, and so he constantly was trying to understand both and support both, and things like this. But he was pretty much forced into the work with the Nazis in order to protect his employees. Because otherwise they were, they had threatened to take away their pensions if they didn't work and support. And actually sign something that they supported the Nazi regime. But I think his whole focus was all about the forest. What's the best for the forest, in that way. When Ed probably went back, and somebody asked to go find Carl Schenck, it was probably to engage him on what was happening right after the war, I would suspect. And that's about the time that ACF gets started, right, 1948.

KL: Yeah, '48. The other thing I remember is in this letter that he wrote to Dave Hampe, who was at Resource Management, he was reminiscing about his time working for Biltmore, Vanderbilt. And the fact that eventually he sold—I forget how that Vanderbilt property was terminated, but he—oh, Dave Hampe was working for W.T. Smith Lumber Company at the time. And he wrote and said, if that can happen to Vanderbilt it will happen to W.T. Smith too. W.T. Smith was always saying, 'Oh, we're going to run this thing forever.' But of course, it's a family-owned thing and eventually it reaches an end.

SA: Well.

KL: So, he predicted it.

SA: To answer your question, it was eventually, because Vanderbilt passed away early on, in the 1910s, it was his wife that sold a large part of their acreage to the government. Which, under the 1911 Weeks Act, that allowed them to establish a national forest east of the Mississippi. So, the Pisgah is one of the first—is the first forest that was established under that kind of program around 1916. Or so.

KL: Interesting.

SA: But even before that, they had issues about actually making money from forestry. Because Pinchot was there trying to show that forestry could pay, and Schenck and he didn't get along about how to do the logging. But the—in any case, that's kind of a little bit of background about what happened there.

KL: Yeah, thank you.

SA: So, who were the other people you met at ACF?

KL: ACF. Well, Eley Frazer was one of the first consultants, for F&W Forestry from Georgia. I think we was president at that time. And then just the consultants—Harry Murphy and Tom Newman and some other employees of Resource Management Company. John Bradley of course was the owner. John Bradley and Harry Murphy started Resource Management.

SA: Was it called Resource Management Service originally? Because that's what I noted it is now, RMS. Right?

KL: I can't remember that, for sure. Sounds like.

SA: Well, what about—what were the issues when you came on—you were there as president, and they were hiring Arthur Ennis. What were kind of the issues that he had to grapple with as a first executive director?

KL: Well, first was—Stuart ran out of his home, and so we had to find an office beside our location.

SA: Where was that?

KL: Well, the first place was, I think was Arlington, I think. Outside of Washington, but in the Washington area. Then Art Ennis, we said, alright, we were growing and so he did find that whatever those acres are called, wild acres, where the SAF had their—so they allowed us some

space. There were other resource-oriented organizations that had rented space from. But you mentioned the other day that that's ironic because the SAF was the one who would not—didn't want to set up a division about consulting forestry.

SA: Yeah, you said they might have had some discussions about that? People remembered that part?

KL: Oh yes, Harry Murphy was the sort of one who always kept us abreast of, 'Well, forestry's done this before.' And he reminded me, he told me about that, I'd never heard about it, and he'd send me articles from old SAF magazines.

SA: I think there was—actually their office up at Wild Acres was hosted by another organization. I'm wondering, around then, so this is '78 into the 80s, I'm wondering if SAF had entered into a relationship with RNRF by that time. Or not.

KL: During our time there, they did.

SA: RNRF was Renewable Natural Resources Foundation.

KL: Right.

SA: So that's a whole 'nother story.

KL: It sure is. I don't really know all the details, but—wasn't good for them.

SA: Yes, so they, without getting into it, there were other—they were trying to establish a campus of natural resources organizations. Of which ACF probably piggy-backed on someone else and had an office there.

KL: I think that's right.

SA: Eventually that all blew up in everybody's face, unfortunately.

KL: I can't remember—I was trying to remember the name of SAF person.

SA: Right. He was actually the leader of both organizations, which is what caused the conflict of interest and all those things. It doesn't sound like ACF really got involved in all that.

KL: Not in the politics of the organization.

SA: So, Ennis was trying to move the organization ahead.

KL: Yes, and had no money. No real—we didn't pay high dues at the time. So, there was not a lot of money. We did raise some funds every once in a while. We'd say, 'Look, we all need to get together and put something in this.' But even before that, Art had gone out. We weren't paying him hardly anything, gave him a car and paid him a little bit, not much. But he went out and bought a computer then with his own money and gave it to us. But we were all struggling along, trying to make an organization. But it grew and we began getting a lot more recognition because the profile of the organization could be seen and what it was. Started giving talks a lot of different places, and involved, being involved—all of the foresters who belonged were also involved. Alabama Forestry Association and some others. By being there, that raised the visibility among forestry groups too.

SA: Besides the organization itself having to continue to raise funds, pay Arthur Ennis and deal with some growth and visibility, were there other kind of special forestry issues while you were president there?

SA: ACF had to—

KL: Would have to be, but I'd have to dredge that up.

SA: Okay, because you know, I'm interested. Did they have position statements at that time? Or not really?

KL: No, they didn't, not right then. Code of ethics was always a big issue, and things like the original code said no, a client should get a—well, I've forgotten how it was worded, but a second opinion. If you start talking to a consultant, you shouldn't start talking to another one. But they changed ethics things like that.

SA: So, both internal—I would think that from an ethical standpoint, you'd want to protect a landowner's right to go—

KL: Right.

SA: Evaluate different consultants, working with them. So, the code of ethics, I think I remember from maybe later on at that time, that one of the ethical things was that the consultant couldn't take material participation in a logging sale.

KL: Yeah, no. Conflicts of interest, however it came about. But the ACF had a different code of ethics than the SAF. And now I'm trying to remember exactly what those differences are. But it was always—the conflict of interest was always emphasized. You just can't take—or the appearance of a conflict of interest. Even if you owned an interest in a—if you ran a small sawmill, you couldn't be a member of ACF.

SA: Right.

KL: Because they wanted—and that was the kind of promoting we did. Just to teach, let people know that we were different than others, timber buyers or other people that might come to you and give you different advice. No, we're pure.

SA: Did you ever kick someone out?

KL: No, I don't remember that. I really don't. Though there were a couple of questions. And I've forgotten how we resolved them.

SA: I suspect that if someone was found having, you know, a conflict of interest in that way, that rather than go through a review or something, that they would be asked to leave.

KL: I think that's what—

SA: Or give it up.

KL: I think there were a couple of places where we pointed out, wait that could be a conflict of interest, you can't do both of those things. But I don't remember any of them—either they chose to stay with ACF and get rid of the other conflict, or work more with the conflict's side and leave. But it was really fun. I feel a lot of satisfaction from the role that I played just in helping the organization. What it does now, it's a well-known established part of the forestry scene in the country.

SA: You were on the executive board from 1978 to '86, and then was president in '82 to '84. But then you kind of, later on in 2004, 2005, you found that you were a consultant editor. Was that the editor of the magazine? The Consultant?

KL: Yes. What happened there. It had—we developed a magazine, it had been a newsletter and then it grew into a magazine, but I think there was—whether it was—I think I served as editor for a year or two. But I didn't have to do much.

SA: You don't remember it as being a painful experience, editing a magazine?

KL: No, no.

SA: Were others helping with that?

KL: Yeah.

SA: Okay. Then somewhere overlap there, you were involved with the Forest Industries Committee on timber valuation and taxation. FIC-TVT.

KL: Right.

SA: Tell us what that was about and your role in it.

KL: It's interesting, and in fact I think Billy Stimpson with Gulf Lumber Company would attend, was a member, or he represented his company there. But he first introduced me and invited me to go with him to one of those meetings. And I don't think there were any private landowner representatives there, it was all companies. Sawmill, paper. And so, I was a little different duck up in that group. But I liked it and realized that there's a need for lobbying and some of these things, going to Congress and telling them things. That was my first exposure to any kind of political activity or lobbying there. That's FIC-TVT.

SA: You know one of the things that I think you worked on during this time was this, 631-B, the retained economic interest. Just explain what that was?

KL: It was interesting, there's a law passed in 1944 that said if you sell timber, you have to keep an interest in it. And it really was designed to avoid people cutting over property and leaving it, that was the reasoning about why that law was good. Well, 20 years later or more, people were so aware of taking care of land, managing it, there was no need for the law anymore and it was a burdensome procedure to have to sell timber under that agreement. Other than just lump sum. So okay, just pay me the money, you cut those trees. And we always—the consultants were interested in the simplest way of doing it, we didn't want to have to use these contracts that made you jump through hoops and do all sorts of things.

SA: Did it have tax implications?

KL: Yes, oh yes. That's what it was all about. Cutting timber was allowed capital gains treatment and so they paid—cutting timber, you paid less tax. But the 631-B said no, if you sell timber, you have to do it this way. We said that's burdensome, making it a problem, let us just sell it. And it took—the first person I told about that was Jeff Sessions, he was a landowner and a Senator, our House back then. And I remember going to his—we were doing a little work; he had some property we worked on. I remember sitting in his kitchen telling him about it. I didn't tell him too much, but I said, this is a problem we have up there. And the next time was with a group of foresters who had gone to Washington to do some lobbying. And we met with Jeff. And one of the others started talking about this way, this problem we had, and he said, he turned to me said, 'Yeah, you told me about that in my kitchen.' And I didn't think it had even registered with him. But he worked on that, and for several years he would put something in the bill that says—oh, and the IRS didn't object to having that law changed. 'We don't need 631-B.' But getting it passed. I remember telling Bill Condrell, 'I tried to get FIC-TVT taken—' Oh no, that's not something they were interested in at all. Well, they were sort of on the other side of it, for one reason. Their main issue was the capital gains tax, they wanted to max sure nothing happened to capital gains. That was Weyerhaeuser's—and they sort of ran it, or everybody knew that's the big issue here. But Jeff put it on one bill, and that bill got—or that got removed from the bill. Put it on another bill, and they did something else to it. Put it on the third bill, it finally passed. It was a very unrelated bill that was about something else, but this little paragraph, addition at the end, gave us what we wanted. In fact, Bill Condrell told me, 'That would take an act of Congress to get that thing passed.' Well, it did, but it took 25 years when we first started on it. Makes you realize, things can get changed but you have to work at it.

SA: So, for the landowner, if you weren't able to show an economic interest or material participation, then—

KL: You didn't get capital gains treatment.

SA: Right. Which means you would have to handle it as ordinary income, probably?

KL: I guess so, I don't know what else. It had to have been, sure. And for most of that period there was a pretty good difference, capital gains. But both of those exposed me to Washington and how things, and what things you might get done up there and not.

SA: It's tough. I remember—I think in a talk with Bo Shaw, he said that you and he worked together on some language, or for maybe the bidding process.
KL: Yeah, one of the persons that started the FIC-TVT, Charlie Briggs from Minnesota, and I'm not sure his position was, but he had written a lot on tax laws and things, and I corresponded with him about, 'Well maybe would this way do it, could we still retain our interests by doing this?' And Bo Shaw had started at the same time, trying to figure out. So, the two of us realized, oh yeah let's work on this together. So, we just both encouraged the other in trying to get a contract that you could sell almost lump sum, but not really. And still get capital gains treatment. And it eventually became not necessary once they changed the law.

SA: Well, why don't you tell me about the Alabama Forestry Association?

KL: Oh, alright.

SA: Your involvement.

KL: It was a good organization. My uncle had helped start it and it was—

SA: Which one, Julian? Or Earl?

KL: No, Earl. Well, maybe both of them. But it was mostly a lobby group with the state. They didn't get any federal lobbying group. If there were laws or things that the forestry commission needed, more money here, more money there, the Forestry Association would help them find ways to get it. Or would go to wherever they needed to go to expose the idea that needed changing. Yeah, they tried—they had individual landowners, but they weren't the big ones. It was mostly the major corporations, pulp and paper, sawmill. And they tried to expand, too, to giving advice and representing private landowners. And they did have—by now they have gotten

around to where they're doing some of that. Which is a conflict with the consultants. Not a serious one.

SA: So, the Alabama Forestry Association is acting to provide advice?

KL: Yes.

SA: To landowners.

KL: Yeah. And one of the other ones I have written in there, is about when the state forester wanted to start a forestry incentives bill, where landowners could get money by doing certain things. Or even just apply for government funds to help them do—so they decided, 'We'll take the severance tax—' that all timber owners pay when they get paid, when they cut timber—'and we'll take some of that and give it to people that need help.' And Bill Moody was our state forester at that time, he was a good salesman. But this was a place you could help forestry, he wanted to help forestry. But I didn't like the idea of government money coming into—in fact that was one of my problems all along. I don't like taking money from the government for things. And once it passed, they voted on it and it passed, and I heard about it and I looked at it and I said, 'Wait a minute, what are they going to do, take severance money from the people who cut timber and give it to the people who have done a bad job growing?' So, I just said that to them and apparently it made sense to the board because they changed their mind.

SA: How about your time with the Forest Landowners Association?

KL: Oh, boy. Let's see. From the time I was 15 years old, until now.

SA: But your father—or your uncle gave you the Forest Farmer magazine.

KL: Right, that was my uncle who was a lawyer. Nick McGowin. He just—I was in high school and so he subscribed me to Forest Farmer magazine. And I'd look at it sometimes and read it and so on. So, it was always there, sort of part of my exposure to forestry ideas and things going on in forestry. So, I—I don't remember. I guess when I became a forester and got down here and

started, I would go to their meetings every year. Grew, again, much like as ACF, they were promoting private property ownership and management of timber lands. So, I identified with that a lot. I worked with them for all the different areas, the lobbying and educational work that forest land owners would do. Wrote articles for their magazine.

SA: Were you unique in terms of being both a consultant and a landowner there?

KL: In that organization, I guess I was, yeah. I mean, a lot of other consultants are landowners. Yeah, so I guess I came at it with a little—the industry people there were out to buy timber, where I was more from the side that would want to sell timber. And very aware of the conflicts of interest that occur.

SA: I could imagine that you heard once or twice from people about their experiences selling timber.

KL: Yes. Yes. We always—but the people belonging to something like Forest Landowners were already aware of all the problems to look out for, generally. Sometimes you might find a forest landowner member who was under a company assistance program. But you'd get to meet them at these meetings, and we could talk to them and tell them about our view of that.

SA: Forest Farmer magazine—by the way, that title is reminiscent of "timber as a crop."

KL: It is.

SA: You know, in that way. But they changed the title to Forest Landowners magazine. How do you look at the changes in FLA over time?

KL: I think it's been good, Barrett's been president, and I think a great educational role for getting landowners—people like my daughter Jessica, in fact she goes to FLA meetings all the time with her children. She's got a whole coterie here in Mobile of girls who are daughters of people who own timber, and it really helps educate them and anybody.

SA: Seems to me that the last five to eight, ten years, that they ramped up their lobbying effort. Is that true?

KL: Well, Barrett had a big part in working with the—I've forgotten what they call it, but—anyway. And they have. I don't know if there's been any real big successes, but I think we've probably educated a fair number of politicians to the basics, that they wouldn't pass a law without—anyway, we'll see, I think. Something else about Forest Landowners—but there've been an awful lot of good people there.

SA: How did other people in FLA react to your stance against using or accepting government subsidies?

KL: Well, I didn't come on too strong, but everybody knew my preference in that. And not to say that it was—the majority of forest landowners as I know, do not go with government programs. Some of them do, and they've done everything they do based on getting the money from the government to do this. For some reason I've just been very averse to it, and I spoke up about it frequently.

SA: It included programs like the Forest Stewardship Program, Forest Incentive Program. I think there's another part through the old Soil Conservation Service.

KL: That's CRP, their program. And it is, there are a fair number of them who were able to build a good forest from using government programs and getting government money.

SA: Anyway, you remember seeing the graphs of tree planting over time. So, it kind of starts in the 1900s, comes up early, a big blip and the Soil Bank Program right during the 1930s or 1950s.

KL: Yeah, 50s.

SA: 50s. And then it kind of comes up again and blip for CRP. You know, a lot of it was on eroded lands, abandoned farmlands and things like that to get it into productive forest.

KL: No, there was some good done that way. There are probably some people who could not have done a good job managing their forest without that. In fact, they might not have been able to own land if they had to spend money on it, a lot.

SA: But I see your point, about if you're having, taking money—it's one thing having government subsidies, it's one thing building up that subsidy from people who perhaps have managed wisely and then gotten a stand to sell their timber. I guess you could also have a stand of timber and not have managed wisely.

KL: Yes, oh yes, it happens. That's where the forest came from. That was my other area that I was always talking about. Timber famine was still a shadow that people remembered. They were always talking about, in the Forest Service. 'We're cutting more and we're growing.' Holy cow, they thought that was terrible. But they just didn't have enough faith. In fact, I remember one time driving Julian McGowin from Chapman down to Mobile, and he hadn't been to some areas, he hadn't been through for years. And he just said, 'I can't believe how much timber is growing here, and how well this is done.' I don't know why we had to sell the idea that we've done something here. That's why I like to write about the success of the forest, that's been one of the greatest successes we've had, I think. Maybe I shouldn't complain about government money being spent to do that.

SA: Well, it's interesting. Before I forget, what was the area that you were driving through with Julian?

KL: From Monroe County down to Mobile.

SA: Okay. But historically, they might—the early conservation movement was based on the eventual timber famine that would happen. So, when people bring up, spark the conversation, sound the horn, then other people—it starts discussions, usually something happens to prevent that catastrophe to happen. It's probably happened several, happened continuously over time so we never had the timber famine in the early 1900s. Probably there are similar throughout the analysis of the South's Fourth Forest work.

KL: Yes, right.

SA: Saying, you know, 'We had the first forest, second forest, third forest, and where's our timber going to come from at this point?' And there was no downfall.

KL: Yeah. I guess it's—Billy Humphrey around this "bad news sales." (laughs) And I think some of the forest service tended that way, to keep it sounding like we really needed to do something on this. But, just from having worked with natural regeneration, looked at it, seen it, I just thought there isn't that kind of worry, there's no crisis that you have to change something or do something or spend more money on.

SA: You can't keep the forest back.

KL: Right. Yeah, it'll overtake anything you don't tend. I remember in one of those expert witness cases where I was talking about—oh they were complaining about a company hadn't planted enough trees, or planted all the areas. I talked then, and the company that I was working for, they did plant trees but didn't plant them everywhere. I remember saying to the lawyer, 'Well, we like free trees.' Other than having to go buy trees, put them in the ground and wait. Free trees are good.

SA: How was—what was your involvement with the Society of American Foresters?

KL: I joined when I was in Yale, as a student member. Served here in the local areas, chapter this or that. But I didn't—I didn't have a lot of involvement, but I was occasionally on a committee that looked at—one of them I remember was certification, which had problems, or the—what do they call it—health and environment or something. No, I served on some committees, did go to some annual meetings places. And got along with them, but I didn't—they just didn't excite me at that scale, and a little too much Forest Service, government involvement.

SA: You just touched maybe on a couple of issues there. One was forest certification.

KL: Yeah.

SA: The other, I think you were getting at, was health and the environment but sustainable management of forestry. Is this related to that little green book that they put out? Do you know what I'm talking about?

KL: No.

SA: Never mind. Tell me what you feel about forest certification. Okay, so this started in the 1990s, kind of a push from the Forest Stewardship Council, right, and AF&PA reacted with the SFI program, Sustainable Forestry Initiative. And ever since that time, they've kind of been knocking heads. And you know, some of it happened when people started hanging from the rafters at Home Depot and things.

KL: Yeah.

SA: So, what's your view of forest certification?

KL: Well, Weezie and I went on an FLA trip to Scandinavia. And it was great, we really enjoyed it. Foresters and wives and everybody. But I remember talking to a forester in Denmark and he was—we asked him about, because they didn't have a government program, but they were sort of working the certification and all those things. And we asked this forester, he spoke pretty good English—we said, 'What about these government programs and the certification?' He looked and said, 'Is bullshit.' (laughs) It was funny. And there was—when I was at Yale for that teaching fellowship, there was a professor Christina—Christina… oh, it'll come to me. Anyway, she left Yale and got hired by a Washington state—oh no, she went to university out there. She was an academic. Christina, do you remember?

SA: It'll take me awhile.

KL: But she had some similar reservations about certification. And she wrote about it. She got cancelled, that was the first case that I ever remember seeing of somebody being cancelled, and this was back before 2000, or about 2000. But it was just something they didn't want to hear about, the university she was working for at the time. So, they said no, can't talk about that.

SA: Interesting.

KL: And that really was an early days cancel culture.

SA: I remember being introduced to this in a talk to extension foresters, in the probably mid-90s. And it was pretty apparent that the message was that this is a train coming down the track. You're going to listen—I don't know if getting on board is the right word, or you're going to be run over because it's happening one way or another. All the—and it did.

KL: It did. One of the first—a book about certification by a Finnish forester. It got widely circulated, but he said something about, "from an idea into an obsession." (laughs) and that did describe the way it went. In fact, it's gone a certain way in certain areas, but it hasn't really done what I worried it would do, I guess. But if you want to join one of those certifications, you have to do some, but it doesn't prove much.

SA: Well, that's partly why I was asking. Some companies and those who have been certified would say, 'Well it has helped.' In some ways it's changed their perspective on their lands or they're measuring more things, or they're talking with adjacent landowners or whatever it is. But there is a cost. Since the 1990s to today, it's kind of become a cost of doing business.

KL: Yeah.

SA: For whoever owns the land.

KL: No, we—I don't think we have many clients here. Maybe some of the TIMOs are, have a degree of certification. But for private landowners that were managing their land, I just never

saw any need for it. What did they get out of it? Well, it was going to cost them to get into a program or do something.

SA: Well now, they can garner certification, I guess by doing a little bit extra through the Tree Farm Program.

KL: Yes, that's right.

SA: At least with the Sustainable Forestry Initiative.

KL: Yeah.

SA: Even the companies. Talking about what their main benefit over time, has been more access to markets than any premium that they get for the product. So, it's been a challenge that way. But I think it was obviously driven from, you know, special interests rather than demanded by the population. That's what I think you were saying.

KL: Yeah, I think the academic side probably had more input and that sort of thing. And even Tree Farm Program, we don't have hardly any members that are—maybe some of the TIMOs just because they feel they have to be up there. But we say it really doesn't help these landowners. They're managing it, they're doing a good job and some of them like it for the recognition. Yes, and that's what it is, it's partly a recognition program to people growing trees. And a little bit of a cost to it. So, most landowners—not many of them have asked about it, but most of them just never have joined.

SA: I think what would make a difference, if it became known that the local mill where they sell their timber would be paying a premium if they were certified or not.

KL: That's right.

SA: Then people might start paying attention.

KL: Absolutely.

SA: You mentioned before, teaching at Yale for a year. On a fellowship. What were you—how did that come about, and what did you teach?

KL: There's a Weyerhaeuser fund to have a teaching fellowship. This was for a quarter, a semester, I guess. January to June. They just brought—I'm not sure who all else they have in there, but they wanted me to talk about the private forestry. Or that's what they recommended me for. And so that's what I did. I started—I gave lectures, brought in people, brought in landowners, consultants, and various people to just talk to the students who hadn't been exposed to a lot of those things before. And it was a lot of fun. I didn't—at one point they said, 'Wait a minute, they want to hear more from you, you're bringing in all these other people to talk.' Yeah, okay, well I wasn't a natural professor. We lived in—Weezie and I moved there and lived in graduate student housing. And of course, the stove didn't work Weezie said, so we had to eat out every night. And New Haven has got a wonderful assortment, eclectic collection of restaurants. So, we enjoyed that, and a lot of the time we'd be going out with students or taking our visiting person I brought it, and all of us would go to lunch, to supper. It was—they got a lot of exposure to different people. It was fun. And then I brought them, at the end of the time, I brought them on a southern—they have a southern forestry tour in the spring. And so, I brought them down, I can't remember what was the first time, but I took them on the southern forestry tour, and then I did that about six or seven times more after that. It was a lot of fun, would be 18, 20 people. Most of them not from this part of the world, and so they got to see it. I had a tour in South Carolina, one in Florida, one in Texas. Two or three starting here and just going out and seeing different things. That part was especially fun.

SA: That's kind of a continuation of what they did many years ago with the southern forestry tour.

KL: Yes, in fact this book from 1938 has a picture of University of Michigan people visiting a sawmill in Alabama.

SA: This was after—your teaching gig there was after the seventh American Forest Congress.

KL: Oh it was after, okay I couldn't even remember when that was.

SA: Yeah, I think it was the late 1990s. So, you were involved with that.

KL: Yeah. And that was interesting, too. We did talk about it. It's only been—when was the first one? Y'all said?

SA: Well, the first one was 1885, I believe. You know, established by the American Forestry Association. Second one was 1905, also hosted by the American Forestry Association, but that's where Pinchot and Teddy Roosevelt got together, trying to move the forest reserves from the Department of the Interior to the Department of Agriculture. So, they've had, historically, some—and after that, the Forest Congresses kind of had less, perhaps, impact here and there. Some, but by the time the 1990s rolled around, I don't think that the seventh American Forest Congress was really hosted by American Forests, which had become the American Forestry Association. You know, beforehand. But it's run by Yale, right? The seventh American Forestry Congress.

KL: I didn't even know that.

SA: Yeah, well I think it had down there that—it was in DC, held in 1996. So again, these American Forestry Congresses brought together a lot of people with diverse interests in the forest.

KL: I mean, I met so many people through all the things, but if the Yale people—I didn't even realize they were the ones that had some of the impetus for it.

SA: Yeah, I think they had a contract to kind of run that. John Gordon was heavily involved with all that. I would have to remember some of the other people, but I was there. I thought you were on some kind of management committee for that.

KL: Well, I did—they did, somehow I got on that.

SA: You were the chair of the management committee.

KL: Okay. And that was to prepare some material that would let people know what's going on in private, with forest lands being managed in the private sector.

SA: I see, so it was some advance information.

KL: And that was really interesting because I wouldn't share what to do, how to go about it, how to tell that this is going on—I ended up just kind of telling people, 'Give me a hundred-word profile of what you're doing with your property.' And I wrote tribes and universities and all kinds of people, and I ended up with 120 hundred-word profile of how people were managing their land. Had practically every state, I guess. And I think they put it together and passed it out to those who were going to be interested in it. And I still have that group—I mentioned, I think somebody ought to keep that somewhere.

SA: Well, if you find it send me a copy.

KL: Oh, I will.

SA: Because while I participated in that, I don't remember seeing that specifically. You didn't then attend the Congress?

KL: Oh, I did.

SA: You attended the Congress.

KL: Yeah, and Jessica was there too, she worked various things. Always found it interesting. And it was—the environmental, there were some objections from people who were going to protest, and I think they had planned a walkout. But after they started hearing people and realizing well,

wait a minute, no that's not going to be productive to walk out, there's some good ideas coming here. I think the basic conclusion is that private forest lands are where we better be paying attention. That's the need for the future. Is that what you remember?

SA: Well, that was one of many ideas that came out of that. I think I was particularly taken back by—they're talking about sustainable forestry, sustainable management, at the high level everybody can agree that's a good thing, and a good goal. They would get in and then they'd start trying to define what it looked like and things, and soon it became apparent that everybody had really different ideas about whether it included clearcutting or not, for example. But I remember that they didn't have really enough continuing funding to all that analysis and follow-up that they would have liked, and in the end it didn't result in—at least from my point of view—a big policy determination, in that way. But it was surely an interesting exercise.

KL: Oh, it was.

SA: Bringing people from all these diverse backgrounds and interests together in a thing. So that was the seventh, go ahead.

KL: I was going to say, the item I wrote in there about the environmental, the woman carried a stuffed monkey around with her. And a logger from Mississippi said, 'What are you doing there?' Oh, 'This is to highlight all the monkeys who are lost when you cut trees.' And he said, 'Ma'am, where I come from, there ain't no monkeys in trees.' (laughs)

SA: That's—

KL: The communication between diverse interests.

SA: That's right. That's right. You need more time than just a day-and-a-half or couple day congress to make a lot of that happen.

KL: That's right. But it is different than just this group getting together and talking about their ideas. And somebody else over here. And then it's scattered everywhere. But once in a while you do need to pull them together for something, might spark.

SA: Do you remember ever hearing about the Quincy Library Group, in California?

KL: No.

SA: Okay, I'm not going to go into it. It's just another example of some interest—all the cutting was shut down around an area and everybody is fighting it out and stuff, but some local people got together. The loggers, foresters, environmentalists and stuff kept meeting, you know like every week or every month over a period of time, and came up with a solution that would work, everybody would agree to and apparently when it was put out the headquarters of some of the environmental groups in DC and other places said, 'We don't abide by that because it wasn't run through the national office,' or something, it's not our thing. So, they—even when you come up with a solution, sometimes it doesn't stick. I know you wrote a little bit about the prescribed fire councils.

KL: Oh, yeah.

SA: Do you want to share with me how you got involved and what they did? They're still going.

KL: Yeah. Yes. I guess, I don't know how I got involved. We have one here—a prescribed fire council in Alabama started to just promote the idea, but also to see that people got properly trained in it. But then somewhere the idea came up, let's make this national. Oh, yeah, in order to speak at the national level we needed—again, this is ACF, visibility and image, you got to get it out there. So, they put Mark Melvin, who runs the Ichauway plantation, and they had more or less headquartered it there, there's no—and he did the book work and keeping things together for it. But that was fascinating, I loved it, because it's longleaf and fire, and that's what I work with a lot. In order to educate everybody about it, they'd go to different parts of the country to visit the interagency fire place, out in Colorado some place, but all of them I just found were really

interesting and they really helped me appreciate—I'd always wondered about why they didn't do more prescribed burning out west. After seeing the condition, and of course reading the books on The Big Burn and anything else, it's just, it's impossible to do the kinds of things we do down here out there.

SA: What are the solutions out west?

KL: What are the solutions?

SA: Yeah.

KL: Well, it's beyond me the solution. But this is one of them, this would help in places, in lots of places.

SA: You mentioned Mark Melvin, at Ichauway, that's with the Jones Center.

KL: Yes. (mumbles) money.

SA: What?

KL: Coca-Cola money.

SA: Coca-Cola. Well, one of the people I talked with suggested I ask you a little bit about the Stoddard-Neel approach to management.

KL: Yeah, right.

SA: And that—can you explain a little bit about that and why you may or may not agree?

KL: Well, no I agree. I don't have any problem with that. But it's what we've been doing for 50 years or more here. But in fact, the man who runs it now—what's his name. It was Neel, I can't recall the whole name, but we were together at a forestry meeting somewhere, we were talking

about it, each one of us had given a presentation and when I got through, he came up to me, he said, 'I didn't know there was anybody else doing exactly what I'm doing.'

SA: When you're saying that, you're talking about single tree selection.

KL: Yes, single-tree selection and working for natural regeneration. The burning was just taken for granted, nobody—we didn't need to worry about that, think about it. But yeah, it was quail plantations in Georgia and a lot of those have been, they're almost museums of old growth longleaf pine. But that's kind of what we had, we didn't do it for quail, but we just used the same management method to grow longleaf pine.

SA: I thought I had heard around that some of the Stoddard-Neel approach to that was not exactly define-able in terms of the choices out in the field and how you would choose between trees. Maybe I'm mistaken.

KL: Yeah, no we'd have to get down in the weeds on that one.

SA: Okay.

KL: But I remember that same meeting where he was—Eley Frazer gave a talk, and I gave a talk and Neel gave a talk. And they called Eley's description, they said his forestry was "rape and scrape." (laughs) They said Keville's is "pick and poke." (laughs) Because we had such different approaches to it. He was clearcutting plants is what they did, we didn't do much clearcutting.

SA: And Neel's? Leon Neel.

KL: Leon, thank you.

SA: Leon Neel. What did they call his approach?

KL: Oh (laughs) they were only contrasting Eley and me.

SA: Okay.

KL: But it was—every time I listened to Leon Neel talk it was, yeah we've done that, we do that. And there's some variations in this or that, sure.

SA: Okay. I'll tell you what, I'd like to—you served on the board of the Forest History Society.

KL: Oh, I did! Another spectacular place. (laughs) No, really. It really did. Steve, the experience of hearing—well one, I knew a little about forestry and all the different parts, but the idea of keeping records of it and having it together and putting it in one place where it can serve as a research and valuable use. And the people I met were all so interesting, very, very. But I thank you very much for the opportunity.

SA: Well, the board had visited once and the people who attended that meeting really appreciate your instruction about prescribed fire and a chance to—

(crosstalk)

KL: That's right, I forgot that. I had the Mississippi Forestry Commission come over to make sure it wasn't going to get out. No, we've done that a couple of time. We've had the Longleaf Alliance has met twice, 20 years apart on our property out there. Most everybody that gets to go out and especially see the burning remembers it and likes it.

SA: From a forestry standpoint, what do you think the value of history is?

KL: From forestry—especially because of the long-term nature of how long it takes to grow trees, and how long you have to work at it, the things that are done this year, ten years later, in any other field it might be completely forgotten. But here, teaching what we went through, what it was, and what you're going to have to do to keep doing it, I think it applies more to forestry than a lot of other subjects. It's more important to forestry to know and realize, I guess.

SA: Good, well why don't we take a break or end there for a moment.

KL: Okay.

SA: What I'd like to do, perhaps, is spend a few minutes to make a list for tomorrow morning.

SA: This is Steve Anderson, on day three with Keville Larson doing an oral history interview in Mobile, Alabama, at the offices of Larson & McGowin. About 10:00 a.m. or so, and day three. So, thank you. Well, it's been very interesting talking with you Keville. One of the things you shared with me yesterday was some of your family land that you had acquired, particularly the Pierce tract that I think your family acquired in about 1925 or so, but there was some history to it beforehand. And that you, eventually, have managed it for longleaf. Why don't you just start at the beginning of how that property came into the family and how you came to manage your part of it.

KL: Alright. Thank you. The property was twenty-six thousand acres bought for a dollar an acre in 1926. I haven't calculated the percentage return on this, the land value. And it was held together for almost, well for 50 years, and then they decided to divide it into family groups because there were several families involved. My uncle—each of my uncles, and my mother, that's five, and there were about five others who were connected and living in this area.

SA: This was cutover land?

KL: Yes, it was cut over in 1926 right, because of the hurricanes primarily. It was just cut down, hardly anything there. So, they had begun a little bit of picking at some timber sales in the 40s, so not as far as '52, but '52 is when they divided the lands between owners, owner-family groups. And one of my uncles, my mother would have a parcel and there were 11 parcels of other groups, family. And because it had been cutover land and all we'd done was try to protect it and protect the land from encroachments and straighten out land lines and make sure we got leases if people were using the land, grazing or something else. So, it wasn't much forestry work, it was more land protection work, I think, in the beginning. Property usages were a little lax back then,

as far as—these are absentee owners and I live right next to it and so I can build a hog pen over there, or graze this property or something. But it was a long process going through that many acres, finding all of the encroachments that there were. But we worked it out and for the most part amicably with people. A lot of times if they were using the property for something, we would turn it into a lease and then pay a small amount in the beginning.

SA: How—what was the acreage of your part?

KL: Oh, well in 1952 my mother received twenty-five hundred acres. But then it came down through my brother and my sister and me, and a few years after that, we divided it between the three of us. I ended up with seven hundred, eight hundred acres and there was one tract that was grazed. And this is right on the border of Mississippi and Alabama, state line road. And Mr. Pierce was the man, Harold Pierce, grazed the property and had for years, and burned it when he wanted to and that sort of thing. But it helped bring the longleaf back. And it was the first property that I ever saw of those properties. I came down when I was about 15, 14 years old, on a trip to the south, just visiting my cousins and people here, and the forester who was taking care of the property at that time, he wasn't a forester, just a caretaker, but he took us out to a couple of places and the Pierce pasture was one of the places, and he drove up to the spot which is the gate that I use now going into that property and talked about it, and I was a little surprised that the property would burn all the time, without the managers knowing anything about it or asking for it. But it did create good conditions for growing longleaf. And later as we—as I came to the area and started working and became really the manager of all of those properties, the part that I had gotten from my mother was a little bit split up, 120 here and 200 there, so much over here. So, I worked at consolidating them and ended up eventually getting them into two reasonably sized properties, one 700 and one 300. But buying it or trading it with my cousins who owned parts of it and buying some. But that's how I ended up with the property that we have. I did the caretaking of it for, well from '61 on. It's an interesting scenario of all the different times because it was interspersed with hurricanes and timber sales and generational changes or acquisitions, bringing it together. But eventually—and it now is a good longleaf property to exhibit. The Longleaf Alliance twice has come down, 20 years apart, they've come down and had a tour or had their annual meeting there. But the last 20, 10 years—10 or 15 years, I've

changed completely one of the objectives. And that was breaking pine straw and selling pine straw. Before, we cut timber and you sell poles, pulpwood, and soft timber. But one of the problems was cogongrass had invaded this area. It was brought in by Japanese nurserymen to cushion their crops when they were—things that they brought over here. And they got, it's invasive and really took over some of the areas. So, I began spraying to try to get rid of the cogongrass. And I remember the first time, I just said, 'Just spray along the side of this road and then we'll see what happens.' Well, what happened was the grass was gone, no other weeds were there, and the pine straw was there, and a pine straw man happened to see it. He was over in Mississippi. And said, 'Oh, you know, we could rake pine straw here.' So, I set out to open up as many areas that were suitable for pine straw. And these were all natural stands, none of it was planted. And they were generally overstocked, longleaf stands. Trees anywhere from—only four or five inches up to (mumbles) high. But we kept those areas open by spraying.

SA: What did you spray?

KL: It was RoundUp and Triclopyr. You needed one for the waxy-leafed stuff, but the cogongrass, the RoundUp took care of that.

SA: Interesting.

KL: We used quite a bit of it.

SA: What did you—how do you—how does one pay you for the pine straw? Is it by bale? Is it—

KL: In this case, it's by bale. And this is a nursery man who brings in crews of Mexicans to help with his nursery work, but he also rakes pine straw and sells to other nursery men. But yes, it's by bale, there are a number of operations I know, and I've looked at them, but we have a good relationship and trust. There is no absolute way to count the bales before they leave the property. We sort of struggle with that all the time, but we do trust him. And the Mexicans count carefully, the bales and a container truck will come in and pick up bales. About a thousand bales in a container truck.

SA: How many bales per acres, perhaps?

KL: Oh, up to two hundred—one-fifty to two hundred.

SA: And what do you get paid per bale?

KL: We're only getting seventy five cents a bale. But that ends up making $150 or so.

SA: And so, I forget what a bale goes for on the market.

KL: Oh, gosh. You can go to the hardware store and buy $17 a bale.

SA: You think? Do they—do they have to do some cleaning of it, or they just bale it up.

KL: No, they only rake where it's clean. And that was—that's one of the efforts we have to make to maintain the raking areas, is kill the hardwoods that are there, or spray them one way or another. I've considered—I'm still considering—it has—these thick, thick stands. Any forester who looks at it says, 'You need to thin this.' Well, no, I say I'm growing pine straw, I'm not growing for lumber. And I forgot what I was going to tell you on that one—

SA: If you're going to leave—or you have the opportunity to leave the stand as it is, or grow anything there, is there any opportunity to get paid for sequestering carbon on a stand like that?

KL: Haven't done that yet. I've looked at it some but haven't—I don't. We don't know where the carbon sequestration is going, for one thing. But the other thing is that I have so far avoided that sort of thing.

SA: Why?

KL: Why?

SA: Why, because it's complicated? It's uncertain? You don't philosophically agree with it? What—

KL: On the carbon?

SA: Right, yeah.

KL: Oh yeah, no, it hasn't shaken itself out yet, it don't know what it's doing. The carbon market doesn't—there are some that will say, 'You've got to sign up for all the crops forever, for a hundred years,' or something. And others say, 'Oh no, just one year, sign it.' Well, it's very uncertain. And we've worked with a number of landowners who have come to the same conclusion. They say, 'No, maybe someday but not yet, not now.' And most of the foresters that really deal with it say it isn't doing anything, it's not accomplishing what they want. If you say that you won't cut this stand for X period of time, well the sawmills that buy timber, well they can buy someplace else until you are ready to do that. Until you get them to shut down their production, you're not going to get any gain from carbon sequestration. Yesterday, I walked by an office, a room with three foresters sitting around. I said, 'Oh, what are you all doing just shutting the bull here?' And they said, 'Yeah, but we're productive, once in a while if we say carbon we get a credit. And then we can talk a little longer.' (laughs)

SA: It's tax deductible then. How—you say you kind of started taking it over, the management of this tract, around 1961 or so. What were some of the things you did to encourage longleaf pine?

KL: Fire. Mainly. Because we didn't do any planting of longleaf, so it was always fire and creating the conditions to catch seed and not burning the seedlings when they—

SA: How often would you burn?

KL: Well, it depends on the age of the trees. But about three years. But if you had young seedlings coming up, you might have to wait five or ten years before you burn so you can get the fire to go underneath the buds on the seedlings.

SA: Right. So, the fire releases the longleaf pine—

(crosstalk)

KL: Yes (mumbles) and then would be released.

SA: But you want those buds above the ground fire.

KL: Right.

SA: That must be, after ten years, a little touchy.

KL: Well, ten years they get—well you're right, it's not much over your head high. So, you've got to find just the right conditions to back the fire underneath that size.
SA: Very good. How did you handle—

KL: Just to say, I did—we haven't made a timber sale now for several years. These—I do think about creating corridors through these overstocked stands where the trees are so thick the tractor can't, nothing can get through there. But generally, the rakers, they use a small machine and hand rake with rakes. But I think I need—well, whoever takes this is going to do some experimenting with other ways of opening up the land.

SA: So, you'd think first about strip thinning corridors?

KL: Yes, that's what I'm thinking about.

SA: How—I noticed that there were a number of hurricanes that hit this property and sometimes you salvaged, but sometimes you didn't.

KL: It just depends on the amount of damage, whether it's an operable volume to be—that could be salvaged. But yes, the history of hurricanes just on the Gulf Coast, if you're gonna have them,

it was interesting for me because I grew up in New York and we had hurricanes pretty regularly. 1938 was a particularly bad hurricane for the east, for Long Island Sound and that area. And then another one just seven years later, and another one seven years after that. And so I—again, my father took care of our yard and had arborists come and take down trees or the ones that blew down. So, I got to see the way it worked with a hurricane. But down here, sometimes they were really, really devastating. Just snapping off trees half-high and only being able to get some of the volume from it when they salvage it.

SA: So, the hurricane comes through but there wasn't enough volume to have a timber sale, you kind of just leave it alone?

KL: Yes, right.

SA: Sounds messy.

KL: It is. It is. You know, it'll grow back, things will grow back. And eventually those bowls of the trees will get burned and rot and eventually they're gone. But a lot of them are large pines, so it stays awhile.

SA: Well, it certainly sounds like a stand that you're proud of.

KL: Yes, I am.

SA: Helping people in a kind of demonstration type of working.

KL: Right, and it will probably change, it will be different markets, different ways of selling your pine straw.

SA: Did—you were born in '37, let's say by the mid-50s, you were doing, starting some forestry type of activities. Did you ever see turpentine operations? During the—

KL: Not on properties that we managed or had anything to do with, but I certainly did see them in places where they were. In France, when I worked in France, they did a good bit of turpentining there. And it's a cousin to longleaf pine, Pinus pinaster.

SA: Okay, so maybe by that time that you got into the field, they were getting more of the resins and other things during the pulping process.

KL: That's right, tall oil. But also, the family sawmill, W.T. Smith, they didn't believe in the turpentining, they said it ruined the best part of the bowl. So, none of the family lands that had been, were turpentined.

SA: Is that true? That it ruined the best part of the bowl?

KL: Depends on, I guess, what you're going to do with it. I guess in France, they made pit props out of the pine, and seems to be that that infiltrated with turpentine sort of preserved the wood and maybe that was an appropriate use. But—

SA: By pit props you mean like mines?

KL: Mines.

SA: Mine props, okay.

KL: Took me awhile to figure out what they were talking about when they kept saying pit props.

SA: Well, thank you for that. We mentioned before, we were talking about whether you or the company did much work with the national forests at all.

KL: We never—I don't ever remember doing a job, work for the forest, national forests. We would of course see them on forestry tours, and we knew a lot of the foresters that managed them, but no, there wasn't any other real interaction with the government forest service land.

SA: Was—if you met some of them during tours and meetings and things like this, was management on the national forest somewhat instructive at all to private landowners? Or not related?

KL: Well, there was an example. Yes, especially when it got into protecting endangered species and things. They were the first to get into doing that, and even though it may not have been mandatory, if a landowner wanted to pursue that goal then we had some places to go and ask or look or be told about it.

SA: What other interactions did you have at all with state and private forestry people?
KL: State and private forestry is interesting because their role was to go out and educate people about forestry. And yeah, we had some contacts with Jim Space was one of the fellows who worked, and some others. I can't remember the one who introduced us to Three-P sampling. But—

SA: What did Jim Space work on?

KL: He was in state and private forestry, and he was promoting—I really can't remember what he was trying to tell us about.

SA: But forest management.

KL: Yes.

SA: And on the tax side?

KL: Tax side. No real coordination other than some of their foresters, or lawyers who would attend the other forestry meetings and we'd get to know and we'd ask them, and we had a good working relationship even though we weren't doing work for them.

SA: And you mentioned already that most of the clients that you had weren't really taking advantage of the stewardship programs.

KL: No—most of them did not. CRP, some when some CRP money was available, some did use it. But most of them didn't.

SA: Well, I'm sure over the decades experience you had with the company, that you had employees that stayed around a long time and helped build the business. Is there anybody that you'd like to mention?

KL: Yes. There was, it was interesting, especially in the beginning when there were—there was one forester and maybe four woodsmen that worked on doing, on the properties that Pomeroy & McGowin managed. There was one older fellow, he was probably in his 70s but he was still marking timber and doing all the things. I always enjoyed working with him, he had a lot of the old sayings that—'That's a regular old trash mover, that rain.' Or the one I always liked, he said, 'Well that old potato wagon's rolling.' And boy, when I listen to some thunderstorms, that's exactly what it sounds like, the potatoes rolling around in a wooden carriage.

SA: Do you remember his name?

KL: Yeah, Red Danley. And he's the one who—we were just instituting the first health coverage for the company. And had Blue Cross, and the Blue Cross man came, met with us in our sort of garage office, field office. And he was convincing them that this was a good thing, and we were giving it to the employees. He said, 'Well, everybody's been to the hospital.' And Red is sitting over there, 'I've never been to the hospital.' What? The Blue Cross man, 'What? You've never been to the hospital?' And Red says, 'No, and neither has my mother.' (laughs) The Red Cross man hadn't run into some of the country growing up situations.

SA: And they hadn't had any insurance either.

KL: No, this was first building the company and trying to produce benefits.

SA: You say you had four woodsmen. What did they do?

KL: They did all the work. (laughs) Marking timber. I would mark with them, but together we'd just go in and start, especially if you're going to mark timber, and you've got a fairly sizeable tract, well one of them would start taking a strip out this one, someone behind marking. Well, he didn't mark the next area, and so we worked together well.

SA: Did you find it fairly easy to communicate how to mark? I mean, it's—

KL: You mean which trees to mark?

SA: Right.

KL: Oh sure, no no. It was just the old standard of take the worst and leave the best and space them out and improve as you can the forest that you're working in. There was one—there was also a forester when I got there who was, moved down here by Pomeroy & McGowin to run the business. His name was Don Harper, and Don grew up in Arkansas, and he had a good understanding, had some training with Pomeroy & McGowin, a lot of cruising and other things. And so, he was running the office, and I was working under him for the first five or ten years.

SA: Had any of the people been to forestry school?

KL: No, not—except for the forester, like Don.

SA: Like Don had.

KL: Yes, I think he was University of Arkansas or some place. I've forgotten.

SA: When you got to the point, when you were hiring foresters, what did you look for?

KL: Looked for somebody that had some—already knew the basics of managing timber, selling timber, marking trees, things like that. But not, not so experienced that I had to pay a whole lot to them. And sometimes just on a sort of whim—one of the—let's see, who was it that we had, maybe Alexander McCall was working at the time, and we were looking for another forester. And I was choosing, or I was going—and Alexander said—or—anyway, someone came to our attention that a forester from Greenville, Alabama, was available. I always remember asking around, I started calling people and called one of his professors about Robert, to get a recommendation. And he said, 'He's a diamond in the rough.' Because Robert was a country man and he hadn't had as much—but he was an excellent student, forestry student. And he's still working for the company. Hired him just after Chris Lawrence that you met, who is serving his 50th year.

SA: Do you favor certain forestry schools? Or where did most of your people go to school?

KL: Most of them were southern forestry schools. Auburn, Clemson, Georgia, Mississippi, LSU. Louisiana Tech, actually. So, it was southern-oriented, then they understood the silviculture and the forestry work that you were going to do. And they were comfortable with the culture in the area. Didn't hire any Yale forestry students.

SA: Interesting. I know that it could be a challenge, the communication part. If you're working with landowners especially. I won't go into the stories I have about a New York forester, myself, moving to run the extension program in Oklahoma. (laughs) Just challenges with understanding the accents, the language, and things like that. I can see that. You mentioned Chris.

KL: Chris Lawrence. He was Louisiana Tech and working now for the company for over 50 years. That's longer than I actually worked for the company. So, we had a big party for him, a few weeks ago.

SA: I asked him if he was planning to retire. He said, 'No.' (laughs)

KL: Good for him. (laughs)

SA: Looks like he's still enjoying.

KL: Yeah, I think he is. It's not—some of the young ones would say he gets the cushy jobs because all he does is check on timber sales. Well, that's driving a lot of hours and places and seeing different things. But he knows about timber, about logging and timber sales and he has to check on them.

SA: Other people come to mind?

KL: I did have one forester who actually came from Mobile, and he had gone to Louisiana Tech or something, one of those schools out there, and his family came from a landowning company. He did some things very, very well. But we couldn't keep him, we just had a little trouble with him doing the right thing, or saying the right thing. In fact, that was another thing, in choosing a forester you want one that can communicate with landowners. And even though we sort of screen for that, you get some that are just a little abrupt with the landowners and don't fit. And others who just have a knack for dealing with people. I remember a lady we worked for in Mobile, and she had some timberland in Mobile and she needed some help. She, occasionally, needed help. So, she needed some help, and one of the older foresters who came from International Paper Company, no, Scott Paper Company, Ed Stanley, he turned out to be an excellent—we hired him after he retired from Scott Paper Company. And boy, he was a good one, because of his people skills and his knowledge of forestry. But this owner, Harriett Kelly, an older woman that my family knew and so on, we had several people who had worked on her property. Ed Stanley was one and boy, she got along with him. But then we had to send another time, Ed was busy or something, we had to send somebody else. And Harriet called me one day and said, 'Keville, before I have to run off another one of your foresters, send me somebody that I can work with.' So, we had to send Ed Stanley back up there.

SA: Interesting. When you're interviewing for a forester who's going to be doing that, you said you try to screen for that. Is there—

KL: Well, you don't know. It's just a gut feel. Like, can this fellow talk or is he overbearing or whatnot.

SA: Listening skills.

KL: Yes. Listening skills. One of the ones we have now is named Patrick McGow, and he had been in consulting himself. He's Auburn, I think so. But he—what was I going to tell you about him. Oh, he takes care of these lands here, the Pierce pasture and others, if I need forestry things done there. I did a lot of it myself, but I can't do it anymore and if I need somebody I'll go to Patrick and he knows the property, knows me, knows what I want to do. So, it's good having people like that available.

SA: Anybody come to mind that's more office-based? That was in the office.

KL: Here?

SA: Yeah. Helping out over time, that stayed a long time, between—

KL: You know, we had some secretaries that lasted a long time and did well. We've got a bunch of them, bookkeepers, and it's grown to—the office staff before was just a secretary who sent out bills and kept our timesheets and that sort of thing. But now it's gotten a lot more complicated.

SA: What's the—how many employees now?

KL: I've got to ask Barrett, I can't keep up with it.

SA: Okay, well last time you were—when you sold the business. How many employees?

KL: Twenty-something.

SA: Twenty-something, okay. Because you said, you know, had offices in four states.

KL: Right.

SA: And how many acres in total did you end up managing?

KL: You'd have to ask Barrett that, but it's up in the—when the TIMOs started, by then, the acreage you're dealing with jumps up a whole lot. But I mean, our close-in management, something over one hundred thousand, two hundred thousand acres.

SA: Okay. Good. Well one of the—since we're still on the business, what do you feel that has been your biggest success? I mean, obviously growing the business that way is just terrific, but do you have something in particular that you're proud of?

KL: You know, in the forestry, every property you work on has problems and you may help solve the problem. I think one of the things that I realized we were really helping families, often, more than the forestry help with—teaching them they had to work together, or they could work together. Or teaching them, look you all better separate your lands. And so, lot of the division work we did, did help families, and there are still a lot of them in Mobile area that I know that are going to need that help, if they don't have it now, or have gone through it.

SA: I think that's a really commendable way to look at it. It sounds like there's an element to it—I don't know if this is correct or not—that when you're helping families in that way, whether they're sticking together or dividing apart, there's also an element of what's best for the forest.

KL: Right.

SA: Or how to continue to have the forest be managed productively.

KL: Right. And then then that's when you get into the different needs and wants and desires of the multiple family owners. And so many times we found that it's just too diverse, you've got to divide, you can't or won't be able to live together. We don't tell them that, necessarily. Just like that, but that's what it is.

SA: Did you ever, or do you like your people to have, taken a psychology course?

KL: Well, it probably would help many times, but I don't know if any of them have ever had one.

SA: Interesting. How about on the other side of it. What do you consider a significant failure?

KL: The only failure I really think of is that I was just too slow to build a business, to think business instead of forestry. In the beginning, it was exciting to start doing forestry work and I liked doing it and was content doing it. We had properties to work on. But I should have been paying more attention to growing a business that provided services to people. Just like we began with an annual budget for most of it, thinking that well we've got to have it, and taking too long to figure out, no wait a minute, just give them the service, the individual service they want. I think that may have come from Julian, thinking we ought to build the company and in order to build a company you've got to have lands to take care of and be sure of that. Well, make them sign a budget for a year.

SA: Well, there seems to be some element that, in an odd way, would be comparable to running a non-profit too. Like, the Forest History Society, because you're trying to grow your membership or programs, right. But keeping your core strong and renewals for members are still important to make all that happen.

KL: Sure, yeah.

SA: Were there any acquisitions that you—

KL: You mean the company acquiring another company?

SA: Yeah.

KL: Well, since Barrett, after they bought the company, yes. I never had looked at that possibility. For a few years I thought about Pomeroy & McGowin well, maybe we ought to go buy there, because we came up in the same sort of teaching. But the fellows running that didn't

want to move from where they were. But Barrett and Alexander have grown it with—first was a programming company, computer programming. Because there are a lot of programs used in the forest, and they have built that business up a whole lot. Silvics is the name of the one that they bought.

SA: Solutions? And Silvics Solutions?

KL: Yes. And those were companies that provided some things that this country needed to give, the programs. But those two companies were in a situation where they needed to have some change in ownership.

SA: You mentioned in some of these things, also, then following that, there was a purchase of IFMS from Plum Creek. Do you know what IFMS?

KL: Yes, it's forest management information system. It's just a—

SA: I see. They're computer software.

KL: Right.

SA: Okay. Well, tell me about—as you're growing the business and you're having productivity, and had involvement with all kinds of forestry associations professionally, you also volunteered in the community, quite heavily. Do you want to mention a few?

KL: Alright.

SA: Why that is?

KL: Yes, I did. Mobile is not that big of town, and it does need people to help out in various parts of it. I was—my mother was a pianist, not professional but she did do sort of what I'd call semi-professional, she made a tour through Alabama and had another lady that was—they did two

piano and play concerts here and there. And I can remember one time, talking to an elderly woman over in east Alabama and she said, after a while, she said, 'Yes, I heard your mother play right here in Troy,' or wherever it was. But that gave—helped tie things together again in her family, and this, and so on. But anyway. What was the other one—I was talking about, what was the question?

SA: Volunteering in the community.

KL: Oh, volunteering, yes. Well, partly because of her musical interest, and she had studied in Paris and was a good piano player. And she gave me piano lessons. But I didn't take to them as much as she thought I ought to, so she gave me violin lessons. Well, okay, I did that too. I just wasn't really enthusiastic about getting into music, especially classical music is what she did. But I did begin, okay, I got some buddies, and I got a cello, that was the next thing, cello lessons. So, I started using cello as a bass and had some friends that played piano or did something else, and so we never really performed anywhere, but it was just fun doing that kind of thing. And let's see, recorder lessons, that was another one. I think that's most of the instruments, and I didn't take to any of them. I enjoyed music and I wish I could play the piano well. But—I've lost track again.

SA: Well, you became president of some of the local, the greater Mobile—Mobile concerts, Mobile opera.

KL: Yep.

SA: Mobile—and this is interesting—Mobile Organization of the Jazz Obsessed.

KL: Yes. (laughs)

SA: What's that?

KL: Well, that's musical group, or membership organization that brings in jazz people and listens to it. I liked that, and I think when I was younger, I was more oriented toward jazz than the

classical music. I do appreciate it all now, in fact country music is one of my favorites. My mother, she wondered why I would listen to Hank Williams and all that. Hank Williams grew up in the town where she was. But the others, the opera and the symphony, was just my way of giving back to the community and using some of what my mother gave me. I enjoyed it. I got to—even some operas I would listen to. Not bad. I forgot—one of the groups I worked with in Mobile, but it was mostly in the arts area because of her interest.

SA: What about the—we haven't talked a little bit about your family and how they fit into the whole—

KL: You mean my immediate family, my brother and sister, mother and father.

SA: Or your—I'm thinking more about your wife Weezie and your kids, and work-life balance. How did you look at all that?

KL: Alright.

SA: Want to take a break?

KL: No, I'm okay. Well, when I came down to Alabama, when I worked that summer when I was in college, somebody set me up—one of my cousins, another cousin, set me up on a blind date with Weezie. Okay, here we were, 16-year-olds, 17-year-olds, and we hit it off pretty good. But I was going back to college, I went back to Stanford and then I went to Yale, and we corresponded some during that period. Which, she still has letters that we haven't gone through lately. And it makes you wonder about what's going to be preserved for other families. Emails are not going to stay around a long time, and they won't have it to look at. One thing along that line, my grandmother had kept letters from all five of us children. And the attic was full of them, and her house, and one of my cousins has taken on coordinating the—in fact, the typing of all those letters, putting them in a book with pictures and comments about—that's going to be a wonderful thing. She's done it for all of them now. She talked to the University of Alabama, and they said sure, they'd like a collection like that. But I've forgotten now.

SA: How'd Weezie help you in your business?

KL: Oh, yes. Well, she—I mean, anytime we were going to meetings, forestry meetings and things, she would go when she could. Having children, she was busy for a while there, but when they got old enough to go to—especially on the summer vacation, she would always make sure, and she got to know so many of the consulting foresters and forest land owner people. And she was, I don't know if whether it's because she was a southern girl and she was mostly meeting southern-grown people that they always seemed to enjoy her and being with her. Looking forward to seeing them. I can't remember about that one. But—

SA: Did you ever feel like she helped smooth out that you were from New York?

KL: Well sure, that gave some credibility that I wasn't completely lost. But, her family, her father was—rehabilitation was his first work. He did a lot of vocational rehabilitation. In fact, during the Second World War he would hear and help place people in Brookley Field, doing things that—he would see opportunities. 'Well, a blind man could do that work.' And he would get somebody to do that, and he had some real background in it, and he covered south Alabama. He got to know people in all the different communities. And eventually they moved from Greenville, he gave up that area, that business, and he went to Florida State University, and he started their vocational rehabilitation program there. And spent several years, got his doctorate. Weezie's mother was a teacher, school teacher, in the rural schools in central Alabama. One of the first ones was a handicap school and she worked with handicapped students here in Mobile. So, she had—the family had pretty good educational listing. And her brother—she had two sisters and one brother, and her brother ended up going to the University of Georgia, got a PhD in teaching, went to Vancouver where he's been ever since. One sister went out to California and worked in radio, and I think other things. And the other sister married my first cousin, Greeley McGowin, and was married to him at the time I had the blind date with Weezie. So, it wasn't the family connection that put us together, but there was. And now—so our cousins, well whenever we get together those two families, it's always such a mix because my first cousin and I married sisters, and we get all kinds of things.

SA: So, you took the family, when you say summer vacations, these are the meetings for the Association of Consulting Foresters?

KL: Right, and Forest Landowners.

SA: Forest Landowners Association.

KL: Right, but we'd go everywhere from Wisconsin to Maine to California to Washington state to Florida, and things like that. And they were always in a nice rural setting, usually. And in fact, one of the things I remember always—I like swimming and I always said, if the natives can swim, then I'll swim here. Well, these meetings were always in early June and some places—golly, Wisconsin? Water at that time of year? Washington state water? Or Lake Tahoe? God! So, a lot of the times I said I went swimming, but I jumped in and jumped out. (laughs) But they were—that was, I think, my family would say those meetings were valuable. But overall, what you're asking about, I would have to put one of my failures as spending too much time on business and not enough on family. As people often say.

SA: I understand, it's a challenge. Well, is there anything else that you'd like to share as we finish up today? About the business or a topic or is there something you'd like to say to forestry consultants who are getting started today? Or foresters in general?

KL: I don't have a whole, what I would say is excellent, good advice. Except just like in my beginning, I was so isolated from others doing the same thing I was that—find your interest group early on and immerse yourself in them and learn from them and share with them. And when they get—when they spend enough time in their career, and they're getting ready to retire, see about going on the board of the Forest History Society. (laughs) Because it really does tie together what you spent your career on and things you've been doing, gives some real meat to the subject and the people that you're going to meet are high quality. And especially if they replace Steve Anderson with a decent director, executive director. (laughs)

SA: Well, we thank you for that. And the only thing I'd modify is to come in before you're getting ready to retire.

KL: I remember Steve, you asked me several times at meetings, and I said, 'No, I couldn't.' And at the next meeting you asked me again, 'Are you getting ready to do this?'

SA: Well, it is. It's volunteer, it's a passion. Some people have a passion for history. You know, you met, probably during your time on the board, you met Ed Brannon from the Forest Service at Grey Towers, right? I always enjoyed him, he always called himself a "history buff with an attitude." (laughs) I look at our board members in that way, they don't have to know forest history, don't have to have grown up in the woods. Even practice forestry. But they should have enjoyed and have a passion and value history in a way that it can encourage the preservation of materials, right, and help grow the organization, accomplish our mission.

KL: Thing is, I'm sorry that I didn't get in earlier because my children were too busy, couldn't come to the annual meetings, which would have been a real education for younger students.

SA: It's funny how we all appreciate a little bit more as we get older. That part is true.

KL: Funny about that.

SA: Yeah. So, it's a challenge as we try to attend to diversity of our board and this stuff, and our programming. So, it's important.

KL: I hope I can get over to see your building, because I haven't been there yet and I'm not doing much travelling much these days.

SA: Well, if you get anywhere close, you and Weezie have a standing invitation for a personal tour.

KL: Alright.

SA: I think you'd be impressed with—and you've seen the old building, right? The previous building.

KL: Yes.

SA: Well, we love giving tours to people who have seen that part, because it's all that more impressive. I look forward to doing that.

KL: Good. You're going to still be there?

SA: I'm going to be in the area, and if you're going to come in anyway, I'll come in.

KL: Okay.

SA: We'll see everybody, no problem. Well, thank you.

KL: Thank you.

LAURENS KEVILLE LARSON

◊ PERSONAL BACKGROUND

Born New York City, 1937. Stanford University 1959, Bachelor of Arts Degree (Geography). Yale University 1961, Master of Forestry Degree. Continuing education courses at University of Washington, Yale University, North Carolina State University, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and others.

◊ EMPLOYMENT

2000-Present Chairman of the Board of Larson & McGowin, Inc.

2000 F. K. Weyerhaeuser Fellow, Yale School of Forestry & Environmental Sciences

1974 to 1999 President, Treasurer and Owner of Larson & McGowin, Inc.
A diversified forestry consulting firm providing complete forest management for large and small ownerships and individual consulting services to various attorneys, individuals, financial institutions and corporations.

1968-1973 Vice President, Secretary and part owner of Larson & McGowin, Inc.

1964-1968 Forester and Manager, Pomeroy & McGowin Forest Service Company. Responsible for all management and consulting.

1961-1964 Forester, Pomeroy & McGowin Forest Service Company. Engaged in land management, timber sales, timber estimates and appraisals.

◊ PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

Registered Forester
Alabama (License 499), Mississippi (License 318). Georgia (License 1831), South Carolina (License 1099). North Carolina (License 682)

Alabama Forestry Association
Chairman. 1994-95, President, 1993-94, District Director, 1980-83

Alabama Forestry Council
Chairman 1998-1999; Vice-Chairman 1997-1998,

Alabama Forest Resources Center, Inc.
Director, 1987-1992

American Forest and Paper Association
Forest Industries Council on Taxation - Board Member, 1992-1995
Private Forestry - Board Member, 1992-1995

Association of Consulting Foresters
President 1982-1984; Executive Board 1978-1986

Forest Industries Committee for Timber Valuation and Taxation

Chairman 1985; Executive Board 1978-1985, Director 1978-1991

Forest Landowners Association

President 2001-03, Regional Vice President 1998-2000; Director 1991-1997

Forest Landowners Tax Council

Board Member; 1996-Present

Practicing Foresters Institute Trust,

Trustee 1991-1995

Seventh American Forest Congress

Board Member, Management Committee Chairman 1995-96

Society of American Foresters

SAF Certified Forester 1999-2002; SAF Fellow 1988; Alabama Foresters Hall of Fame 1988 Alabama Chapter Chairman 1977, Secretary-Treasurer, 1973;

Yale Forest Forum External Advisory Board

Member 1998-2001

◊ ACTIVITIES

Greater Mobile Concerts, Inc., Past President

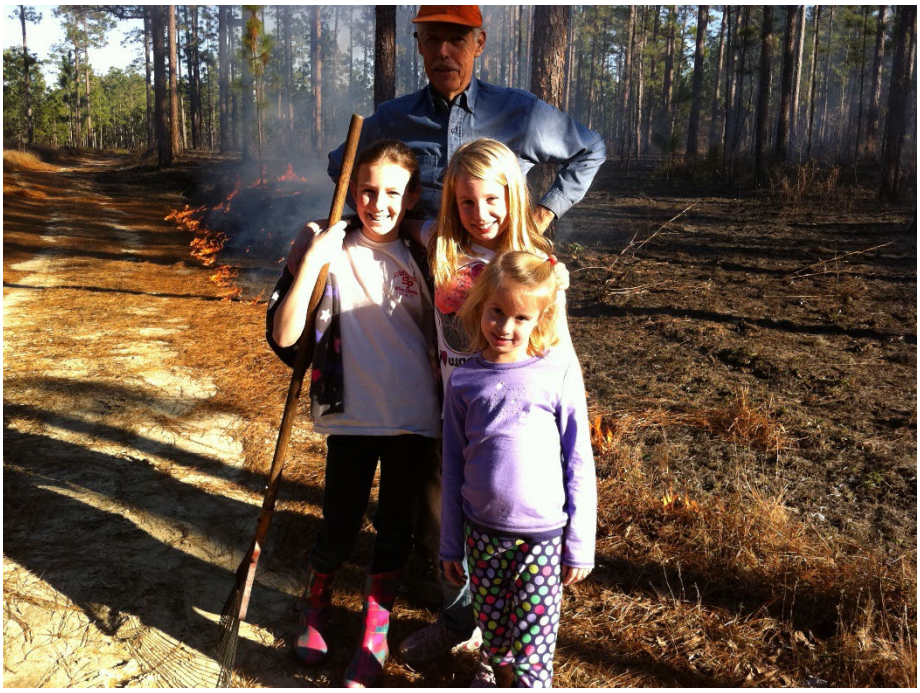
Allied Arts Council of Metropolitan Mobile, Past President

Mobile Rotary Club, Past President

Mobile Opera, Inc., Past President

City of Mobile Museum, Past Board Member

White Smith Land Company, Inc. President 1980-99, Director 1999-02

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