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Interview with Kathryn Kadel Regarding CCC (FA 81)

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TRANSCRIPT

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INTERVIEWEE: Kathryn Kadel

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PLACE OF INTERVIEW: Cave City, KY

OTHER PEOPLE PRESENT:

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Transcribed with the support of a Transcription Grant from the Oral History Commission of the Kentucky Historical Society.

KEY: KL=Kelly Lally
KK=Kathryn Kadel

Italics= emphasis

// = overlapping or interrupted speech

[] [not part of recording]

Lapsed time represented in left column by minutes and seconds (i.e. 5:50)

? or * = transcript needs to be checked

0:00 KL: This is Kelly Lally, and I'm here in Cave City, Kentucky, with Ms. Kathryn Kadel. Today is August the 14th, 1987. When were you born, Ms. Kadel?

KK: I was born September the 9th, 1918.

KL: And where did you grow up?

KK: In Cave City.

KL: Did you live there most all of your life?

KK: Well, no, uh, I was married in 1935, and I lived in and around Fort Knox a number of years, and um, then my husband was sent overseas to the Philippines, and he was missing in action for about three and a half years in the Philippines, and he was on the Baton Death March. But then I stayed in Kentucky and Tennessee, and traveled, and worked for Western Union during those years that he was away. And then after he came back, we, he retired, and we moved to Florida. And we've been living down there. Had lived down there for about forty years or more. And uh, he passed away October, 1983. So I'm just here visiting my father now.

KL: So when you were younger and your family lived in Cave City, how many people were in your family?

KK: Well I just had the one sister. There were just the four of us.

KL: Uh-huh. And what did your family do for a living?

KK: Well my father was in the insurance business. He was also a tobacco auctioneer for fifty-three years. Then he bought this farm. He's been on this farm now for forty years.

1:58 KL: How did you meet your husband?

KK: I met my husband through the CCC camp. He was commander of camp number 516, across the river on the north side of Green River. And um, I met him through Henry Scott and Helen Scott. She was a close friend of mine, and I heard about Lieutenant Kadel from her. And said that he would like to meet me. He had seen me in town one time. He said he'd like to meet me. So we planned a date together, and it happened to be on Thanksgiving. And we had this turkey dinner out at the camp 516, and uh, Lieutenant and Mrs. Scott were there, and Lieutenant Scott's mother was there, and another good friend, Mrs. Willis, lived here in town. She and her son owned the drug store. And so we went out for Thanksgiving dinner. And it was kind of a cool, crisp day, and we took pictures and they had a turkey, and Richard carved the turkey at the table, and it was tough. So he told the striker to take the turkey back out into the pantry and bring him another one. So they brought him one that wasn't quite so tough. But the one that was tough was the one that had been given to them from around in the neighborhood there. Some of the local yokels had given him this turkey! [laughs] But we had a marvelous dinner, and that was the beginning of a friendship and a courtship, and finally, marriage.

3:40 KL: What did your husband do before he came to Mammoth Cave?

KK: Um, he had, he was a civil engineer. He was a graduate civil engineer from Rose Polytech in Terra Haute Indiana, and he had been doing bridge construction and 'course at the time of the crash, the stock market crash, and the Depression, the big Depression that we had, he was out of work. But he had maintained reserve commission in the Army. As a matter of fact, he graduated, he took ROTC in school. And he graduated with military honors. And um, so he had kept up his commission. And then when they started the CCCs, they were looking for men, material for officers. And so they, he came in on the CCCs, and that's—His first place was at the—Martinsville, Indiana. Then he was transferred down to Mammoth Cave, and he stayed down here until 1934, I guess it was. He was transferred to Fort Knox. And that's where he finished up with the CCC, was at Fort Knox. But then he came back to the park in the engineering department later, after he retired from the CCCs.

4:58 KL: So you met—What was his rank when you met him?

KK: Uh, second lieutenant.

KL: You met Lieutenant Kadel during 1933, and '34, is that?

KK: Yes, uh-huh, uh-huh.

KL: When did you get married?

KK: In 1935, June of '35.

KL: So did you have sort of a long distance relationship when he first moved to Fort Knox?

KK: Yes, that's true.

KL: How did you spend the early years of your marriage?

KK: Um, let's see if I can remember. It's been over fifty years. Um, gee, I'm trying to think. Oh, he was stationed in Fort Knox, and oh yes. We lived near Fort Knox. We didn't have quarters on the post, but we lived in Vine Grove, we lived in Elizabethtown was the first town that we lived in. Then we lived in Vine Grove, and then we lived out near the camp, out from Fort Knox. And we were there in 1937 when they had the big flood at Fort Knox. You remember the big flood? You don't remember the big flood!

KL: I hear about it!

KK: [laughs] But that was loads of fun, that flood. I mean, I felt so sorry for those people, but we were marooned. We couldn't get in and out. And all we had was lamb. They confiscated a railroad car that was full of fresh grapefruit from Florida and lamb. And that's all we had. The fresh meat we had was lamb. And grapefruit, but that was good. We didn't starve, I'll tell you that.

6:27 KL: So, your husband's time at Mammoth Cave, you all were basically courting then.

KK: That's right.

KL: You hadn't gotten married.

KK: No.

KL: Would you see each other very often when he was //

KK: Well yes, oh I'd say, once or twice a week we would see. It all depended upon his duties and so forth. We couldn't have a date every night. [laughs] But it was loads of fun, and um, sometimes he would come in, he would bring two of the men with him. He had two black men in his company, and we would take them to Horse Cave to the movie. And they would drive, one would drive the car, and the other one would be the doorman. And um, we would go to the movie and take them along with us. And that was loads of fun, because eyebrows were always raised in front of my house when that car would stop out with two black men in the front seat! [laughs] That was loads of fun. But, there were a lot of cute things that happened down at the camp. Um, one I remember quite distinctly. I wasn't there, of course. But this one native that lived close by, he was always coming over to the camp, and they would, if it was lunchtime, they would invite him to have lunch with them, you know. And so one evening, it was late in the evening, he decided he would come over to camp, and they—In those days, they had what they called a great big square grease trap. You see, they had a cesspool there to take care of the water, and the dishwater and all that business, and the latrines and the bathrooms. And so he came over—they were cleaning that out. And he came over that one particular night, and he had on his overalls and his straw hat, and all of his garb, you know. And some reason or other, it was

dusk, and he didn't see that open pit. And he fell right into that thing. Well, he came up with a sputtering and the spitting, and grease all over him, he was just a mess from top to bottom. So they took him out and got him cleaned up, and gave him a shower, and gave him all new Army clothes to put on [laughs] and he was the happiest lark. I don't think he ever took those clothes off for six months.

8:51 KK: Another funny thing that happened over there was this first sergeant, this Jimmy Lenkins, had terrible teeth, and um, he had saved his money. Of course, they didn't make very much money in the CCCs, and they, it was just a nominal thing, you know. But he had saved his money and saved his money. He wanted a set of false teeth. So Richard had helped him get an appointment and get to the dentist and this that and the other about his teeth. And he was so proud. He came in one day, he said, "Hey Louie, look, I've got my teeth!" And Richard said, "Okay, now, you be careful this weekend when you go to town, that you don't lose those false teeth." "Oh, I will, I will, I will." So okay. They came to town, and they got, having a little fun, and he'd had a few beers, and he got back to camp, and he got sick at his stomach. And you know what, he lost those false teeth in the latrine.

KL: Oh no!

KK: And he hadn't had them a week! [laughs] Isn't that awful? Richard said he felt so sorry for that poor boy. But there were loads of things that happened, you know. But they, those men did wonderful work. They worked hard, and they liked their work, and they really worked hard, and enjoyed it. But of course, whenever you get a group of people like that together, there's always problems. And of course, that's what your commanders are for, is to help solve those problems. But it was, it was interesting, and I enjoyed it. I liked to go out there. Sometimes I'd go out there on a weekend for Sunday dinner. And that was nice. And then Helen and Henry and Richard and I would go different places together. So we had a good time together during those few months and years.

KL: Is, was your husband's nickname Louie, did you say?

KK: Hm?

KL: What was your husband's nickname?

KK: Well, most of the people called him Dick. His name was Richard. Richard Kadel.

KL: Uh-huh.

KK: But everybody called him Dick. But he was a lieutenant, and they called him "Louie." That's how much they thought of him, you know, and he—But of course, they didn't call him Louie when anybody else was around, but it was just kind of a friendly sort of thing.

11:21 KL: So your husband was the camp commander.

KK: Yes.

KL: What was his, what were his duties? What kind of duties did he have?

KK: Well he had to, he had to see that the camp was run properly. He had, Joe Kolesza was the company clerk. He had to run all the organization. There were two lieutenants, there was Scott and Richard. And one would take part of it, and one would take the other part. Then there were the foreman that worked details, that Richard would organize those men to go out and do this work, you see. They were the ones that worked in the park, and cleared land and did things like that for the park, so that it would be a pretty place, you know, for all the people to come.

12:13 KL: You say that Richard and Henry Scott kind of split duties?

KK: Yes. Uh-huh.

KL: Were they on the same level, or did Richard have the //

KK: Well Richard was in command, but he and Henry worked together. And they even had an educational advisor out there that would teach the boys that hadn't had the proper education. Of course, Richard had to do all the buying. They would have to clear things through Richard before they could do these things, you see. But Joe, Joe Kolesza and this Lenkins could run the camp. They could run it. They knew all about it. And they were very very good help, and marvelous. But that's how Joe got his start, and he was very very thankful for that. He's a fine man. A fine man. You'd never want to meet anybody any nicer than Joe.

KL: Oh yes, I've met him. He is wonderful.

KK: Oh yeah. He's a doll, really is.

13:19 KL: How much free time did Richard have when he was camp commander here? Did he have much time?

KK: Well no, you didn't, you didn't really have any time. 'Course evenings you had free. Uh, sometimes you had to stay there in the evenings, you know, you were on call. And weekends. As I recall, they would have to take weekends. They would be on duty on the weekend, you know, maybe one weekend for one, be Henry, and the next weekend it would be Richard's time to be on duty. But someone in command had to be there at all times. And um, then if they wanted to take any time off, they would have to get a leave of absence. Say if they wanted a week's vacation or something. You accrued your leave, just like in the Army, like in the regular Army, you accrued your leave. And so, if you had enough time, you could take a week, or you could take two weeks. And uh, have that time off. And then whoever was second in command would take command at that time. So if Richard left, then it would be Henry that would take over the command.

14:27 KL: Describe what camp number four looked like.

KK: Well, you know, it's too bad. I have some beautiful pictures of it. Did Joe have any pictures?

KL: I didn't see any of Joe's. I've seen other pictures. I'm not sure if I saw any of number four, though.

KK: Well I had a beautiful aerial picture of number four camp. The flagpole, to me, was the most impressive thing they had there. And it was over to one side. Then you would have your officer's quarters, and then, then you would have the offices where they conducted their business would be close to that. And then your barracks, and you'd have a separate kitchen, and then the barracks would be back in through there. Then you of course, they had so many Army trucks and equipment. And then the foreman would have a place where he kept all the tools they used, and they had to account for all those tools. I guess Ellis Jones told you all about that, did he not?

KL: Yes, he told me about the tools.

KK: Yeah. [laughs] And um, then of course, you see, they had places where they stored their supplies, like the sheets, the blankets, the pillowcases, and the towels. And they had to take inventory of all of those things, periodically, to see that someone hadn't absconded with a few of them. Just like they did for the tools. So um, it was a beautiful camp. There weren't any trees around it. They always put it in a clearing. But it was a beautiful camp, and as I say, the flagpole was very impressive.

KL: Did you see any of the other camps?

KK: I don't—I did, but I don't recall any of the other camps, just to be honest with you. I really don't. There were several of those camps. I think there were four or five, weren't there?

KL: Four.

KK: Four. Mm-hmm. But I don't remember seeing the other camps. But there were loads of people that lived in town. The town was inundated with people. You know, families with places to live. It was hard to find a place for them to live. But uh, we knew a lot of the people from the other camps. I do remember meeting a number of the people from some of the other camps. But I don't know where they are now. I have no idea.

16:49 KL: So the people from the different camps //

KK: Yes, like number one camp, number two camp, they would be married, some of them were married, and had their families here, and some of them had families while they were here. And uh, they had apartments downtown, like over one building, there was a drug store, and there were apartments up above that. People converted them into apartments. They weren't palatial or anything like that, but they certainly were livable.

KL: Were these just the boys themselves, or //

KK: No, it was the commanders. The ones that were in charge of the camps, had command of the camps.

KL: So the leaders pretty much interacted.

KK: Yes, they—mm-hmm, yes.

KL: What about the boys, do you know if they interacted much, the different camps?

KK: That I don't know. But now they were allowed to come into town. They would bring them in, like, say for instance one night a week, they would be allowed to come to town and do what they wanted to do. Maybe a Saturday night, or maybe one night during the week, they would be allowed to come to the picture show. And they would get in the big Army truck, and whoever wanted to come could come. If there was enough for two trucks, then they would, two trucks would come. You know, many wanted to come. But of course, a certain amount had to stay in camp. They were on call, you know, to stay in camp. But the majority of them could come and go as they pleased.

18:14 KL: Do you remember what particular projects were worked on in camp number four, by chance? Although a lot of the camps did a lot of the same things, like plant trees and things, seems to me there might've been some specific jobs that number four did.

KK: I think most of their work was across the river. And I really don't know just exactly what they did do, to tell you the truth. But clearing a lot. I know they had to clear a lot of land. That was one thing. But for what, I don't remember. Have you heard that in some of your other //

KL: I'm thinking they were putting up telephone lines.

KK: Well, that could be true too. Homer Salisbury from Prestonsburg, Kentucky, he was in charge of—He was the head foreman out there, and he was quite a worker. And he had charge of all those projects. And he and his family lived here in Cave City. And as a matter of fact, he had two daughters who were the age—well one daughter was the age of my sister, and they were quite good friends, but he's dead now. And I think she still lives in Prestonsburg, but I'm not sure. She would be in her eighties I guess, at this point.

19:33 KL: Let's see. It sounds like your husband had a pretty good relationship with the boys. Did he get along well with them?

KK: Oh yes, oh they loved him. They really did. And they just cried, some of them cried when he left and had to go to Fort Knox. They didn't want that at all. But he always had a good relationship with his men. Whenever. Even later when he was in the Army, he had a good relationship with his men. He always did.

KL: Did he socialize much with them, or take part in any of the recreation activities?

KK: Oh sure. Oh yes, they played touch football and baseball and all that sort of thing, you know. And they had a recreation room over there where they could play ping-pong, and the boys enjoyed the camp over there. They really liked it over there. It was a nice place. 'Course, it was a little desolate, I mean, it was a little secluded, you might say. They didn't have access to a lot of fun, but they made their own. They pitched horseshoes, and games and things like that, which they enjoyed very much.

KL: And your husband joined in now and then?

KK: Oh yes, oh sure. He liked that. He was quite a sportsman, and he liked all kinds of sports. He was quite a marksman with guns. He loved guns. And he loved to fish and to hunt. And he hunted with some of the natives across the river, quail hunting and duck hunting. He enjoyed that a lot. And um, so he really did get with it over there. He loved it. He liked it very much.

21:06 KL: Could you tell me again the story you told me about when the ferry got, was on the other side after the //

KK: Oh yes. When we started courting, they had a ferry that went across Green River. They still have a ferry, but this was an old, old ferry. And Bruce Dorsey was the ferryman. And he became a good friend of my husband's. He was a little leery of him at first. He didn't know just exactly how to take that man with a uniform on, you know. And so he decided one day he'd try him out. So he asked Richard, he said, "Hey Lieutenant, you see that squirrel up in that tree?" Or "bird up in that tree?" I don't remember whether it was a squirrel or a bird. And he said, "Sure." He said, "Can you hit that?" "Sure, I can hit that." And um, so he drew a bead with this pistol, and shot that bird out of the tree. Well from then on, he and Bruce were real close friends. He didn't question him anymore. So one night, Richard and I had had a date, and he had gone back across to go back to camp across the river. And when he got down to the ferry, the ferry was on the other side of the river. And he thought, "What in this world?" So, well, he had to take off his clothes, and he didn't want to get his uniform all dirty, so he swam across the river, got the ferry and brought it back. And the next day, Bruce heard about it. [laughs] He told him he'd better leave a rowboat or something over there across that on *this* side. [laughs] He didn't want to be caught like that anymore. But thank goodness it wasn't cold weather. I don't know what he would've done if it had been cold weather. I guess he'd'a come back to Cave City.

KL: Probably so.

KK: Yeah, I wouldn't've blamed him.

23:02 KL: Do you remember if the CCC boys played many pranks on each other? Did you hear about those very much?

KK: No, I really didn't. I'm sure it happened, but I don't remember any of those stories at all.

KL: What kind of stories did Richard used to tell you? About funny things that went on in camp?

KK: He was telling me about the false teeth that Jimmy Lenkin lost. And about the little old fellow that fell in the grease trap. And uh, other than that, I don't remember any stories. 'Course you know, I was courting, and I could've cared less! [laughs] But sometimes he would tell things, you know. Just like the tough turkey, you know. He couldn't even carve it at the table. [laughs] But that's about all I recall. Oh, Richard was quite a speedster. And uh, when we were courting, there's a—there was a big curve out here on the Mammoth Cave road, and they'd say, "Lookout! Here comes Kadel!" He'd take that curve on two wheels! [laughs] But they used to, I can't tell you any particular stories or pranks that they played on each other. I'm kind of wandering a little bit. But I did remember this, that they used to have to come in—They'd come into the shoe shop and bring all the shoes, and Mr. Duke had a shoe shop here in town. Little bitty old place in the wall. And Richard would bring, they'd bring all the shoes in to be repaired for the boys, you see. And just things like that, you see. And that's how he got know the local people. And then of course they had the setup at the Peoples Bank, they had to set up bank accounts. And Helen Scott's father was president of the Peoples Bank. And that's kinda how we got—And she was working in the bank, and that's how she, we kinda got together on Richard and Henry. [laughs] We figured we shouldn't let that pass by.

25:14 KL: Did your husband get along very well with the local residents?

KK: Oh yes.

KL: It sounds like it.

KK: Yes, yes he did. He really did.

KL: Did he have much of a problem when he first came in? I know there was a lot of tension because of the park being developed.

KK: Well no, he really didn't. Um, another good friend of his was Gordon Brown with Glasgow Ice Cream Company. He owned the ice cream company. And you see, the people—he would go to the local people to supply their food and things, you see, which helped a lot. And that's how he got to know the local people. Saint Charles market over in Glasgow. And they did a lot of buying from them. So this Gordon Brown was a very good friend, the ice cream company. 'Course, I wasn't the first one that Richard ever dated around here. He had some other dates before me. [laughs] But anyway, it all worked out to my advantage.

26:11 KL: You were also a local resident. Um, you were born here and you were raised here.

KK: Yeah, mm-hmm.

KL: Tell me about what the people around here thought about, not the CCC, but the park being developed in general.

KK: Well, I think they were happy about that, as much as I remember. I think they were very happy about the park, because they realized that it would bring more to our town. And this was a booming little town when those camps were here. And um, it gave them a lot more business. And 'course, they couldn't handle *all* of the business, but they handled most of it. And I think that they were very very happy about it. So um, that's—But I think they were very very happy about that. Because it did help the town, very much.

KL: I know that some people who lived on the park land were displaced and had to move off.

KK: Yes, that was hard for them. They did undergo hardships, that is the truth. However, the park service was good to them, the government was good to them. But it took them away from their habitat. And from their local surroundings, which was bad. And they resented that. And it's understandable. So um, it was bad in that respect. But other than that, it was very good.

[cut in recording]

27:51 KL: How did the white people feel about the presence of blacks in a camp nearby?

KK: Well you see, number four, I don't know whether number four was the only one that had blacks or not. I don't think so.

KL: Number one was a total black //

KK: It was? See, I'd forgotten that. Is that too much noise?

KL: We'll be okay.

KK: Um, I really don't recall that. I know that out at number four, there were only those two. And they got along alright. There was no problem with that. But as far as number one—I had a little experience with one of them. With the blacks. I had been selling tickets down at the movie theatre one summer, just—the manager and his wife had gone on vacation, they asked me to sell tickets, and I did. So I was going home, and I was walking up this street, and this one black boy followed me and tried to grab my purse. And I screamed and hollered and—like I was—and then I acted like I was going to hit him. With what, I don't know, except my purse was all I had. I didn't have the receipts from the movie theatre. But they had been there that night, and they thought I did. And um, so anyway, I ran back to town. And 'course, that upset the town, but they never did catch him because he got on the truck and they went back to camp, and that was the end of that, you see. But that's just one of the many things—You know, I don't think there was ever too much of that that went on. But I think they, because we had black people here in our town, but—And I don't know whether they had a relationship with each other or not, I really don't. But I think those black people were from everywhere. So I really couldn't give you too much information.

KL: Okay. I'm gonna turn this over.

30:03 KL: This is the second side of the tape of my interview with Ms. Kathryn Kadel. Well, how successful do you feel like the CCC was in relieving the affects of the Depression?

KK: I think it was very successful, and I think that's what we need today, is something to take care of this unemployment. Because there's so many depressed areas, and I feel that the Job Corps was a good thing, except that it didn't go far enough. But I think that the CCC was a wonderful thing. And it gave a lot of men a start that they would've never had in life. And they got an education, they learned a trade, they learned how to become a part of society. And I really think that it was a marvelous thing. And I think that if we had more Roosevelts we would be a lot better off.

KL: Do you think it made a difference for the economy of the local area? We talked a little bit about that earlier.

KK: Yes, it did at that time. Of course, since then, things have changed a lot. And of course, this town has gone down because most towns do that go to shopping centers. But um, it has, it's taken its toll. I mean the economy of this town was terrific when the CCCs were here. They had all those camps. The tittle town was booming. But of course, it has taken its toll.

31:29 KL: Do you think the main economic feature right now would be the tourism?

KK: Yes, that is the main thing now, is the tourism. And of course, we have here on I-65, we have a lot of restaurants and hotels and things here that does help, because it employs people. Whereas if we didn't have I-65, those things would not be available. And of course it does help. And of course, it's hard to find a place to rent right now in this town. Most people own their

own homes, and there are some lovely homes here in town. It has built up in the last few years. Lovely homes here.

KL: Are there a lot of park employees that live near here?

KK: There are quite a number of park employees that live here. And that work at the cave. They live here in town, and work—I think go to work every day. As a matter of fact, my brother-in-law retired from the national park service. He was in the purchasing department. He was also a retired major in the Army. And he retired from out there.

32:42 KL: What would you consider to be the greatest contribution of the CCC?

KK: Well, I think, to be repetitious, to say that they had a place in society, they learned a trade, they furthered their education, or got an education that they perhaps would've never had. And um, I think those are the things. I think that was marvelous, as far as the CCC was concerned.

KL: Do you think it made a difference in the military for World War II?

KK: In the military what?

KL: Do you think the CCC, being during the Depression, right before World War II, do you think it made a difference in the makeup of the military, or the way the //

KK: Well yes I do. I think that it prepared those men for World War II, and they didn't go in scared to death, because they had an idea of regimentation, and of how to follow orders. I think that was very important. Yes, it's quite true.

KL: Did you see any problems in the CCC? Either at Mammoth Cave, or later on, with your experience?

KK: Uh, problems, for instance, what type of problems do you have in mind?

KL: Um, any organizational problems, uh //

KK: No, it was well organized. And um, each man knew what he had to do. And of course, in anything there's always somebody that's gonna complain. There's going to be complainers. You can't have that many people together without having some complainers. But um, I really think that when—At Fort Knox they seemed to get along alright. I mean, the Army men didn't resent the CCC boys, and they did, 'course they did all the hard work for the Army boys. [laughs] They did the dirty work. But they still were on a nice Army post at Fort Knox. And they had a lot of advantages there that they didn't have out here at number four camp. But um, it was interesting. They um, 'course, the wives of the officers up there, there was two camps up there as I recall. They had, we had club privileges, and we had a nice social time. We had to go to all of the social things up at the post, which was nice, and we enjoyed that. And you met a lot of people, it broadened your scope of friends, and and those men, they met friends which were lifelong friends. So I think that is an advantage too.

35:31 KL: Well tell me the rest of the story. After Mr. Kadel, or Commander Kadel was sent to Fort Knox, and you all had been courting //

KK: Well, we were married in June of 1935, and um, he was stationed at Fort Knox when we were married. Then after we were married, we moved to Elizabethtown. We had a little apartment in Elizabethtown. Then we moved to Vine Grove, and we stayed there. Then he got out of the CCCs, and then he came back, we came back to Cave City to live. And we lived here for a few years, and he was working out at Mammoth Cave with the park service as an engineer. He was with the engineering department there, at the park. And um, I've forgotten how long he worked there. Must've been two, two or three years. And then he was called back into the military service. That was in 1939, or '40 that he was called back into military service. And he was made a first lieutenant, and—well he was made a first lieutenant before that. Made first lieutenant while he was in the CCC. And um, then he went—He was still stationed at Fort Knox, and he was in, he got in because of his love for guns and ammunition and so forth. He transferred into the ordnance department. And um, he was in the 19th Ordnance Company, battalion, rather. It wasn't a company. It was a battalion. And he took the, they formed the 17th Ordnance Company out of the 19th Ordnance Battalion, and he commanded that and was sent to the Philippines before Pearl Harbor. And he was over in the Philippines when Pearl Harbor, when they struck at Pearl Harbor. And then the next day they struck the Philippines. And he was a prisoner of war of the Japs for three or four days, and had a miraculous escape out of a schoolhouse. And um, he was in the death march. I don't know how many days. He got back into the death march. And then he fell along the wayside, and he thought sure he would be bayoneted, but he wasn't. And um, after that, he met this, he was just lying there, practically unconscious, and he was with an American civilian. And the Filipinos came and picked them up. And so then he joined this guerrilla band. And um, he was a guerrilla over in the Philippines, and I didn't know whether he was dead or alive for three, three and a half years. And he was gone all of that length of time. And um, so he was back in the hills, and trying to keep out of the way of the Japanese and still give them a hard time. So that's what he was doing all that length of time. And then he returned in 1945 and he was hospitalized at Fort Knox—I mean in Louisville at Nichols General. Walter Reed in Washington. And then in 1946 he was retired, and that's when we moved to Florida.

38:54 KL: How old was he when he retired?

KK: Ooh, let's see. 1946, and um, he was forty-four years old when he retired. But it was due to his health.

KL: Yes.

KK: Yes. His health.

KL: So did he enjoy his retirement years?

KK: Yes, he did. We really did. We traveled. We went back to the Philippines in 1977 and had a nice two weeks. And he met a lot of the natives over there that helped him when he was back in the hills. And we still correspond with those people. Oh yes. He fished, and hunted, he loved to duck hunt and fish. He did a lot of that in Florida, and then his health gradually became worse. We used to go to up to North Carolina in the summertime. Stay about six months, and then come back to Florida in the wintertime and spend six months. So that was nice. We enjoyed it very much.

KL: And when did he die? In '83, did you say?

KK: Uh-huh. '83. Mm-hmm.

KL: Those years when he came back to work as an engineer, the CCC was still there? At the park? '36 and '37? Or seven and eight, or something like that, or nine?

KK: I don't remember. I really don't. Have you heard anybody else say anything about when they left here?

KL: I think they stayed until '41. I didn't know if—I guess you would've known if he had anything to do with them anymore.

KK: Well no, he wasn't connected with them anymore. He did—What he used to do, he used to survey down in the cave, or if they had a parking area that they wanted to put in, they would survey that. Or they surveyed, I know one time for a camping area. And he did an awful lot of surveying for different things. And then if they had a different entrance to the cave, they'd have to go down into the cave and survey. And my husband was tall. He didn't like that, going down to that cave and surveying, because he couldn't crawl through all those little holes very well. [laughs] But he enjoyed it. He enjoyed it out at the cave, because he knew so many of the people that he had known before when he was out there. And the guides and all that sort of thing. It was quite interesting for him. And of course, then he met additional friends. And I think at that time, um, I don't know whether Joe had gotten out of the service or not. Joe, of course, was in the service too. And um, he had to curtail his activities with the National Park Service. But I don't believe Joe was out there at that time. I'm not sure where Joe was at that time. He may have been a ranger. He was a ranger for a number of years at different parks until he got to be superintendent.

41:49 KL: You all were in both—both at both Mammoth Cave and Fort Knox even though you weren't married while you were here. Could you tell me—was there much different in the two camps?

KK: Well yes. Those two, the camps up in Fort Knox were entirely different. It was an entirely different organization. They were more or less a headquarters camp, whereas these were not headquarters camps. By headquarters, I—I really can't tell you what the difference was. But it was a much larger camp. And um, they had a lot more activities, and they did a lot more work up there at Fort Knox, I guess. Different types of work, I would say. Whereas out at number four, it was more or less, like you say, building electricity lines and poles and clearing the land and all that sort of thing. But at Fort Knox it was entirely different. I can tell you one thing that the CCCs—Oh I almost forgot to tell you this. That Richard's CCC men dug the gold vault at Fort Knox. I almost forgot this, and I think this was really something. And we used to watch the progress. And as a matter of fact, we were allowed to go into the gold vault before they put the gold in, of course! [laughs]

KL: That's something to say you did!

KK: But the day, the day they brought the gold into Fort Knox, they had a spur, a railroad that went right behind all these officers' quarters. And years ago, 31W used to run right through Fort Knox as you went north, or south, whatever. And they brought the gold in there one day by

railroad. And they, I mean, every snitch of that post was guarded within inches of your life. You were not allowed on the post. If you didn't live on the post, you were not allowed on the post. And they had a guard about every five or ten feet on that railroad track that went up to the gold vault. And I guess some of the CCC men were the guards too, but they all did the digging of the pit where the gold is. And um, there was one major. He was, this major was, he was the commander of the post exchange. And he went home for lunch, and he couldn't get back. They wouldn't let him go back to the post exchange! [laughs] So that was quite interesting. I remember that quite well. I was visiting someone on the post that day, because I was determined to see that gold go in there. So the CCC men did dig that, and it was Richard's company men that dug the vault at Fort Knox. So I'm sure that you hadn't heard that little story.

KL: No, I haven't at all.

44:50 KL: Well let's see, um, you were at Fort Knox for just a couple of years or around there?

KK: Yes, um, yes. He was up at Fort Knox—Oh, well you see, he was there in the CCCs. Then he came back here. He was only up there a year or so, I guess. And then he came back and worked for the National Park Service. Then when he was back in the, called back into the service again, the military service, just before World War II, we were back at Fort Knox. And that's the only post I was ever on, was Fort Knox. And my sister and her husband were on umpteen of them. [laughs] She worked at Fort Knox too, just, well, during the war she worked up there too.

45:43 KL: Well when you all were married, did you have much to do with the CCC boys when you were up there? Did you interact very much with them?

KK: Well no, we didn't have to, because I was the only wife up there. But during the 1937 flood, everybody had flu. And all the ladies on the post would go and meet those trains. They brought these trains down from West Point, and all those people from Louisville, some of them came down the river, and they would go down to Brandenburg, and meet them in Army trucks and bring them up there. And the ladies would all go, and we'd have to help and get them organized and to do—where they were gonna stay, and we gathered up clothing and this that and the other to take to them, you know, because a lot of people didn't have clothes to wear. And we did that sort of thing. And of course, the usual bridge playing, and the luncheons at the club. We entered into all of those sort of things, which was loads of fun. [chuckles] But the activities were nice, and you know, you met a lot of nice people.

KL: So you had more to do with the other officers and their families moreso than the boys themselves.

KK: Well I didn't have too much to do with the boys. 'Course I knew a lot of the boys. Lot of the strikers that would come in to service the pot bellied stoves, they'd bring the coal in if I was down at the camp, and a lot of times I would go down and eat with them in the evening. And I know this one striker kept my car clean all the time. And he would bring my car out to me, and he'd wash it. He almost washed the paint off of it. [laughs] But he was real cute. He was a little Polack. Puchack was his name, and he was a doll. But I did know quite a few of the men, whom I've forgotten now. I don't remember them now.

47:31 KL: Well, when your husband went off to the Philippines, what did you do?

KK: I went to work for Western Union, and I traveled all over Kentucky and Tennessee with Western Union. And made vacation reliefs and managerial reliefs for when people were sick or had vacations. And um, that's what I did.

KL: And did you stay with them when your husband came back?

KK: Yes, well, ah, no, I didn't. And then they called me to come back to work. And I worked for Western Union for about twenty-eight years, then I retired, finally retired from Western Union.

KL: So you still live in Florida.

KK: Yes. I still have our home in Florida.

KL: And you come up //

KK: Periodically to see my father who's ninety-five years old.

KL: Oh yes. Have you been out to the park?

KK: Uh, yes I have. I was out to Mammoth Cave hotel and had lunch—Well it was Sunday dinner one Sunday, and had a delightful dinner out there. It's changed so much. My only regret is that they tore down the old hotel. I wish that they could've maintained that. Because that—It was so much fun out there, that big porch, the big veranda they had with rocking chairs. And it was loads of fun to go out there. I knew so many of the people that worked in the hotel. And the cook they used to have out there in the Mammoth Cave Hotel, Grace Bethel, she was a marvelous cook. I don't know whether Joe mentioned her or not, but she was a wonderful cook. And when my husband got back from the Philippines, the Cave City Woman's Club and the Cave City Chamber of Commerce, Chamber of Commerce had a big banquet out there for him, at the Mammoth Cave Hotel, and they had the governor and his wife. Governor of Kentucky and his wife were here, invited down. And that was quite—I don't know how—I think there was about three hundred and fifty invited people that came, and they could've had more if they'd'a had more room.

KL: Well it sounds like you //

KK: So I've had an interesting life with the CCCs and the Army and Western Union.

KL: Well I guess the CCC had a big impact on your life.

KK: The CCC was the start of my life. And I always have a warm spot in my heart for them. I have a lot of memorabilia from camp 516 that Joe Kolesza gave to Richard, and I kept it all these years. Like pennants and pictures, and just loads of things from camp 516.

KL: That's wonderful.

KK: Yes it does.

KL: Well, is there anything else you'd like to tell me?

KK: I can't think of anything. I've just about told you my life's history. [laughs]

KL: That's great, that's what I wanted. Well then I guess I'll turn off the tape now. Thank you.

KK: Thank you.

[CONCLUSION OF INTERVIEW]