

INTERVIEW WITH GEORGE COLLINS BY ROGER KAYE
PHOENIX, ARIZONA MARCH 28, 1993

MR. KAYE: George, could you tell me a little about your background, your history, where you were born?

MR. COLLINS: All right. I was born on May 31, 1903 in St. Paul, Minnesota. And my father's name was Lynne, L-Y-double N-E Collins. My mother was Emma Lincoln Walker. My father was in the newspaper business in St. Paul, with the "St. Paul Pioneer Press." He was a machinist in the composing room. My mother was a proofreader and junior editor for the West Publishing Company in Midway. I don't know where their business offices were exactly, but somewhere between St. Paul and Minneapolis, and we called it Midway.

MR. KAYE: How did you happen to work for the Park Service?

MR. COLLINS: The Park Service? Well, when my parents and my brother and I, with them, of course, moved to California about 1908, or so, we settled in the upper Sacramento Valley. And in 1914, 15 or 16, a Congressman from that district in California was a friend of Steven T. Mather and Horace Albright who were the first two Directors. Mr. Mather was the first Director of the National Park Service. And he was the man who conceived the idea of having a National Park Service. And the Secretary of the Interior at the time was very friendly toward Mr. Mather, and he said, "you know so much about it, and like it so well, you go run it." So that's how Mr. Mather became the first Director of the National Park Service. And Mr. Albright had graduated in Mining Law from the University of California at Berkley, where Mr. Mather had gone to school himself. So while Horace Albright wanted to get into the mining business, Mr. Mather prevailed upon him to become his assistant in the new National Park Service. So naturally, when Mr. Mather had to retire because of illness and age, why, Mr. Albright succeeded him as Director of the Service. Well, my parents and our family up there in northern California knew Mather pretty well and my brother went into the Park Service, and so did I. We just sort of followed along with those people. And I worked odd times in the summer, when I was going to school in Berkley. And finally, what I did at the time was be a Summer Ranger, or worked as a laborer or something for the Park Service. Then I took the Park Service Ranger Examination about 1929, and was appointed to the Grand Canyon. I spent a little time at Yosemite, and lots of time up at Lassen before the time I went into the Service permanently. My first permanent job in the Service was in 1930, at Grand Canyon, as a Ranger. I became not an Assistant Superintendent, but Assistant to the Superintendent, for Grand Canyon National Park. There is a lot of difference between those two titles. See, when I finished going to school, and my folks thought I was never going to quit going to school, and wondered what I was going to do, I became a landscape architect, professionally. And they didn't have any jobs open for landscape architects, and I liked the Ranger work. I liked the idea of being a Ranger, and I had passed the Ranger Examination at the Civil Service, and, as I say, had a couple of little jobs, one at

Yosemite, and one at Lassen. Then I moved to Arizona, and was a Ranger there at Grand Canyon National Park. I spent most of my time as the North Rim Ranger. In those days we didn't have a road all the way out, that is, a good road for tourists.

[tape stops and begins again]

Representation in Alaska improved. We had Sitka, and we had Mt. McKinley, and the big one at Katmi.. Those were rather remote places in those days. McKinley was on the railroad, but not a lot of people got there. I think the first time I went up there, it had a big season, about 900 people or something like that. Anyway, it was about 1949 or 1950 that Mr. Connie Wirth who later became Park Service Director, he was then Chief of Lands, he ran into me in San Diego where I was running an exhibition of Interior Department activities. And he said, "what the hell are you doing here?" I told him and he said, "you go on back to the Grand Canyon, I've got other work for you, more in line with what I want you to be doing." So it was Connie who sent me to Alaska. The idea was to make a recreation survey of the entire territory. And I went everywhere you could get with an airplane and a boat. I went everywhere I thought I ought to go. So I covered that territory and I found that most Alaskans, except for those who fly, professional aviators, and so on, most of them know a lot about their own little part of Alaska, but they don't know very much of anything about the rest of it. I found that they didn't even see the thing in their mind's eye in its full proportion. From down in the southeastern end of the territory, clear up to the islands of the chain and up north to St. George, and St. . . .the names go out of my mind, up in the Bering Sea. Well, I went to all of those places and got a tremendous perspective of the territory. Of course, I just fell in love with that whole country. It was country that I could feel at home in. I liked the people, the wildlife and all that. I was married, with family, and I was torn between Alaska and California where I had my family. At the time, I couldn't think of taking my wife and children up to Alaska. Because they were in school, they had their home, and that's where my home was. I felt at the time like I shouldn't do that, and I believe today that I made up my mind in the right direction.

[tape stops and begins]

Around the top of the world, there were in Lapland, which is pretty well settled, over in Siberia, and elsewhere, in Sweden, and Norway, and so on. There were only four, five or six, nations that had very much to do in the Arctic. There was not a whole lot of activity nationally amount nations that had responsibilities in the Arctic. Well, Canada was pretty outstanding, they took it seriously. They had lot of people, not a lot, the population of Canada, even today, isn't all that big, but there were a lot of people, Indians, Eskimos, and others. There was also an amazing configuration of lakes and rivers flowing into the Arctic Ocean. That always fascinated me. Also, as I went into northeastern Alaska, the first river was very impressive because it started in Alaska, and wandered around, and it too emptied into the Arctic Ocean! The way I was raised, where I went to school, and all, we never thought of any rivers that didn't go south and flow into the Gulf of Mexico, or into the Pacific or Atlantic Oceans or something. Geographically, it was an amazing

revelation to me, to realize that there was an Arctic orientation to a great deal of the country that the United States was responsible for. I won't say, "owned." We don't "own" anything. But we were fortunate enough to have been given responsibility over that part of the world that is up in the Arctic. And we know of it as Alaska, at least the north coast of it.

[tape stops and begins]

My partner in most of the work that I did in Alaska and other activities is dead now. But Lowell Sumner and I thought that we ought to recommend a Conservation Area. We didn't necessarily think it should be a National Park, because you had native people living there who had established themselves and their own ways. They had gotten firearms finally, and some of them still used bows and arrows and spears and so on, and maybe they still do today. I guess they do. But anyway, we didn't want any of that to change. And we thought that the best thing in the world for that northeastern part of Alaska and the northern Yukon would be a great international conservation area. It would be established for the purpose of simply protecting it, and letting it alone, as it was. And that was our recommendation.

MR. KAYE: Did you make this before you went up in 1952, or after?

MR. COLLINS: No, after we'd been there and seen a lot of it. We flew all of the time.

MR. KAYE: You made two trips to the Arctic Refuge in the 1950s didn't you? Didn't you spend two Summers there?

MR. COLLINS: At least, I think I made more than that.

MR. KAYE: Your first trip, was that to Peters Schrader Lake area?

MR. COLLINS: We went to Schrader Lake from Barrow. We didn't know anything about the country. And John Reed didn't know anything about that part of the world, except that he had been in northeast Alaska, and a little bit of the upper end of the Yukon. But he knew enough to realize that what we were interested in from the standpoint of scenery, configuration, and wildlife and all that, was best exemplified over in that region.

MR. KAYE: The northeast?

MR. COLLINS: Yeah.

MR. KAYE: Now, Reed is with the U. S. Geological Survey isn't he?

MR. COLLINS: Yes, that's right.

MR. KAYE: Did he want you to stay east of the Canning River, to be away from his area?

MR. COLLINS: He said, "your National Park." He never did get over referring to my interests up there in other than National Park terms. I explained to him time and time again, in Washington, and up there in Alaska and everywhere else, that I didn't give a damn what they called it. But I thought that a Conservation area wouldn't fit particularly well into the National Park Service system of protection area. And that we'd just have to let people who were more concerned about things like that than I was, decide, in the department, what to do. And my work was at the department level, not any particular organization of the department, except the Secretary's office.

MR. KAYE: The Interior Department?

MR. COLLINS: Yeah, so I looked at this whole thing from a departmental standpoint. The Secretary's office, not from the National Park Service, the U.S. Geological Survey or any of the rest of them. Well that was good, to take that stand, that attitude. It was the only way to do good land use planning. If you started out from a National Park Service viewpoint, or from Fish and Wildlife, or Land Management, or USGS, you would miss an awful lot. So I had to hold a general thought of Arctic land use and conservation in my mind. And right away, I started going over into the Yukon because it's all one country. If you stop at the international borders, you miss half of it. So, I went to Whitehorse, and the Commissioner of the Yukon Territory was named "Collins." That was a peculiar thing to me. There was absolutely no blood relationship that either one of us could imagine. He was an intelligent fellow, except that he was drunk all of the time! He was as drunk as a skunk, most of the time whenever I saw him! And the few times that I got his attention well enough so that he understood what I was talking about, he was fine. And I did more good for our interests in the Arctic by sitting in Whitehorse and help write things for him to sign than I think I did anywhere else. But we got along fine as representatives of the two countries. And the interest in...[unintelligible town name] one of those pretty good sized towns over there, where I used to go and stay, the name won't come to my mind right now. But, those people could never think of anything except mining, and what you could get out of the ground, what you could sell or convert into money. I didn't find a good solid conservation thinker in that whole country over there for a long time. I think there are a number of them now, who are conservation minded. In the sense that you preserve and protect something that is an important part of the ethical concept of your country. You don't have to do anything with it, just see that it's let alone. That's the way that "Doc"[Sumner] and I felt about that whole thing up there. It hadn't been ruined, and why should it be? Well, it should be because more and more traffic was increasing along the Arctic coast between the Canadian outposts and Barrow, and those places, and others in between.

[tape stops and begins again]

Our recommendations were more in line with Fish and Wildlife Service. The head of that organization in Alaska was Clarence Rhode. I had known Clarence for a long time, and we were very good friends. He said, "well, you've got to put this in the hands of some outfit to take care it,

somebody had to be responsible." And Clarence wasn't unhappy, because we both agreed that it should be U. S. Fish and Wildlife. And I think we made the right decision. I don't think that it was utterly National Park in caliber. And there's nothing like it and nothing in the National Park system up there in the Arctic. In fact if I could have justified, in fact, I wrote justifications, in my own mind, that maybe I should recommend a National Park, but I fought against that. I didn't think that that was the proper attitude to have. I think I was right. I think today that this was one of the best decisions in land use management terms that I ever made in my own mind. Which was to keep a National Park out of there.

MR. KAYE: Why was that George?

MR. COLLINS: Because, right off of the bat, if you have a National Park, based on the popular concept of what parks are for, you would have to endorse the idea of all kinds of people going up there. And I didn't want that. I didn't think that there should be a whole lot of people from San Francisco and Los Angeles running around up there. I thought that you ought to preserve what was there, whether or not anybody ever got to see it anymore than they did then. I always felt I was right about that. And Conrad Worth did too. He is a landscape architect himself, and he said, "I'll go along with what you recommend." So, we would have gotten a National Park if any one of half a dozen other guys had been in the position I was in, at that time. Because a lot of people think that National Park means money. What "Doc" Sumner and I were after wasn't going to make any money for anybody.

MR. KAYE: What vision did you and "Doc" Sumner have for the future of what's in the Arctic Refuge? What did you see for it?

MR. COLLINS: Only to make sure that the Canadian people saw conservation in that region pretty much as we did, and would agree that the great thing about it was to let it alone. The international line divided it in half, you might say, and we thought that it should be a common bond between the two nations there, in terms of policy and practice in conserving that whole region. We did a boundary that reached over on the Canadian side, and not many years later, they came out with their own boundary on the Canadian side, and it put ours to shame. They had a much better boundary than we did.

MR. KAYE: You mean a better park?

MR. COLLINS: They did lean towards the park thing. I'm not sure but I believe it is a park now. It was an established singular boundary with provisions for expansion to the south. That surprised us, it surprised me, but I didn't raise any questions about it. Because to have them do anything would help keep those damn prospectors and miners from tearing the country to pieces. This was a big step ahead. Then Fish and Wildlife did establish the area on the American side. That was pretty well taken care of in principal and policy. So that you could, in those main

concepts of government, principal and policy, you could go forward and do more and more with it in terms of protecting and saving it.

MR. KAYE: Let me go back a little ways. You and Clarence Rhode discussed whether the area should be a park, or a wildlife area, who else was involved in those discussions back in the 1950s, and tell me how they went? What things were considered? Who was on what side?

MR. COLLINS: Well, there was a man from Stanford University whose name escapes me for the moment. I've got it somewhere. And he ran the Arctic Research Laboratory for a couple of years up at Barrow. We would go over to Barrow and write up reports. Write up what we thought we had learned. We'd go over there once in a while. And he came over to northeast Alaska and he went down in the Sheenjek too with us. He was a fine professor of geology, I think, at Stanford. He was great guy. He understood exactly what we were doing. And he made available to us stenographic help and things like that over at Barrow when we'd go over there. We were able to keep up our reports pretty well. And they looked pretty good when we sent them outside to San Francisco, and Washington. Of course, that's all gone now. No laboratory up there anymore. I think it's been closed out, which I think is wrong, absolutely wrong! They never should have discontinued that effort. They need something, even though our part of the Arctic is small compared to Canada.
[tape stops and restarts]

The Assistant Director of the National Park Service in Washington, a man I'd known many, many years and most of my adult life, and of course Clarence Rhode. Although Clarence was head of Fish and Wildlife in Alaska, he thought first of the land, and the wildlife. [tape stops] He was a great man, I think. There was this little fellow from Stanford who was ahead of any of us. He could see your point of view, just like that. And I can't think of his name. But I don't think, well, Ben Thompson, . . .

The Superintendent of McKinley was "Mush" Pearson. He was a dog Musher. He could have been up there for 100 years, and wouldn't have known anymore about Alaska than the Alaska Railroad and how to get from Fairbanks to Anchorage. He was a hunter, and just wasn't a conservation minded guy.

Those were the only people who had ever been there, who knew anything. You couldn't discuss this stuff with anyone. There were more people on the Canadian side, by far, than there were on the Alaskan side who could have discussed our views on the Arctic with far reaching views.

MR. KAYE: Let's go back to Clarence Rhode. Did he fly you around? Was he involved in your survey?

MR. COLLINS: He flew me whenever he was up there in that region on his own business for Fish and Wildlife. He'd take the time, I flew a lot with Clarence. He was a good pilot, an excellent pilot. Highly trained, and skilled. Not a man of great formal training or education, but he had enough. Clarence had a tremendous business head, when it came to running his outfit there. He and I talked about it all the time. You might say

that he and John Reed were my strongest confederates in discussions and analysis of what the Arctic was, and why it should be left alone, and things like that. I don't remember other people. You had to have been there and learned a little about it in order to have anything to say about it. I know I couldn't talk intelligently about it until after I had been there for awhile, and I went there for that purpose.

MR. KAYE: Your second trip, was that to the Firth River, Joel Creek area?

MR. COLLINS: No, I don't remember for sure. I made a couple of trips up there to the Artic area before I got a consciousness of the vastness of it. I could see, as anybody would, from a map that it was a big thing, but the personality of the land, and when my concept came to the point of thinking in terms of everything north of the Yukon River being another world. I included the Brooks Range. But now, as I look back, that my mind gradually took the crest of the Brooks Range on up to the Artic as that world in itself. And south of there, I thought, was the Yukon, and more Alaska. It was a normal way of dividing up the land, to even think about it.

MR. KAYE: What was the best area, the area that you most enjoyed in Artic Refuge? You camped all over, Joel Creek, Schrader Lake, and Sheenjok, what did you like best?

MR. COLLINS: Well, it's hard to answer that. I never spent a lifetime there. I never spent enough time to be greatly impressed by, as I know I would have been, by many other places besides Joel Creek. But in the experience that I did have, I felt that Joel Creek was one of the most representative and distinguished parts of the Artic region that I knew anything about. And even now, in my mind's eye when I think about the Artic, I think first about Joel Creek. Where it started over there, up Joel Creek and through the hills a little ways. And then, the next river south, Manchu Creek, which runs into the Firth River. It seemed to me that the difference between those two places, Manchu Creek in its own way, and the Firth in the way that appealed to me so much. Then the whole setting, going back to Peter's Lake and Schrader Lake and the big mountain that sticks up there. I include all that when I talk about the area where "Doc" and I camped and worked so much. You can land a plane in there pretty safely and comfortably.

MR. KAYE: With a float- plane? At Peter's Lake you mean?

MR. COLLINS: No, I meant over at Joel Creek. Yeah, we had that big willow patch. And there was a family of moose that lived in there. And we lived on one end of it. But we went out and dug around a little bit, and made a good enough strip so you could get in and out.

MR. KAYE: Who flew you in there?

MR. COLLINS: For heavens sake, (thinking) it was an Alaskan Airlines guy who lived up on the coast there. Do you remember him?

MR. KAYE: No

MR. COLLINS: He had a place down Fairbanks.

MR. KAYE: Did he live at Barter Island?

MR. COLLINS: No, Barter Island is over on the Canadian side. He lived about half way between Barter Island and Barrow. His place was in there somewhere. I was at his base a couple of times. He also had facilities for maintenance at Barter Island. He knew the country very well, and flew a lot there. I'd have to look up his name now.

MR. KAYE: What kind of plane did he have?

MR. COLLINS: He had a Cessna 180. Of course on the first trip, you always had to take gas in so you could get out, and get in again. We had a regular gas shipment service into Joel Creek. There was more gas sitting there than in the Military almost!

MR. KAYE: How long did you camp at Joel Creek? Do you remember?

MR. COLLINS: Parts of two seasons. We went up to Barrow in the winter. I remember going up once at least. I got home the day before Christmas. It was good to see that great country in the winter. I like it just as well in the wintertime, just as well, if not better than in the summer.

MRS. COLLINS: You came home the first time, though in the middle of your stay up there. After two months you came home for Roxie's birthday. Which was just in the middle of your stay. And you went right back and spent another two months because it was four months you were gone. And gee, it was pleasant! (laughing)

MR. COLLINS: (to Mr. Kaye) Do you have a family up there?

MR. KAYE: Yes.

MR. COLLINS: Well the, you understand what she's saying. Where were we?

MR. KAYE: You were at Joel Creek. You also flew to the Kongikut River didn't you?

MR. COLLINS: That's south.

MR. KAYE: North. It flows north. It is in the western part.

MR. COLLINS: Oh, wait a minute, wait a minute! There's fifty of those damn creeks that rise between there and Barrow. They are all somewhat the same. But each one has a different personality. I wanted to learn that country in the worst way. And feel perfectly at home anywhere there. But that wasn't what I was there for. There just wasn't time. You'd have to go up there to live forever to do that. But I think we learned a lot about the country. We were trained to appreciate

the landscape values, and land forms. We knew enough about geology to know why what we were looking at was there. We could pretty well orient ourselves intelligently in relation to any particular situation we were trying to find out about. "Doc" was far more scholarly about all of that than I.

MR. KAYE: Now, "Doc" was a Biologist, right?

MR. COLLINS: Yeah, but. Yeah, he was. Well, as Dr. Leopold always said, he was the finest field biologist he ever knew.

MR. KAYE: Oh really? Why was that?

MR. COLLINS: Well, he just knew so much. And he loved the land with such spirit. He was never at a loss whenever I saw him, in or on the land. He knew what he was looking at. And he could write. He was a magnificent author of useful reports. Well, where are we now?

MR. KAYE: George, we were talking earlier about people who influenced yours and the Park Service's ideas about preserving a big chunk of Alaska, and you mentioned Robert Marshall. Tell me about Robert Marshall, and how he influenced your thoughts.

MR. COLLINS: Well, it takes me a little while to put myself back in those days. But, he was a New York chap. I don't know whether or not he was born there, but I think so. The Marshall family was quite a well to do family. George who is still living, he lives in London. We correspond some. I remember one peculiarity of Bob Marshall. I would be working at my desk in Washington, and I'd become aware of something, and I'd look up and Bob Marshall would be standing there in front of my desk. He was just waiting for me to wake up and recognize him. He was a very quiet, but nevertheless violable guy. He had an awful lot to say. And if he found a compatible person to talk to, it was a pleasure to him. To visit and talk, and I never had to talk much. He would do it. But he spoke quietly, and beautifully. His sentences were automatically formed so well because he was a highly cultured, educated gentleman. At the same time, he was so devoted to wild land and wilderness, and the idea of wilderness, that I found it a little bit strange that anyone who was a gentle and cultured as he was would find his main life interest in the rugged, wild country. That was the case with him. And I admired him for it, a great deal, and liked him a lot. He would come in, whenever he was in Washington, and that was fairly often. I think that most of the time when he didn't have other things to do that prevented it, he would come to see Ben Thompson and me. I think he spent more time with me in that office than he did with anybody else. Ben Thompson was my immediate superior, and we had adjoining offices. But Mrs. Shepherd, my secretary, who had her desk, and I had big office. She was over there at that lamp with her files, and her desk and all of her paraphernalia. And I was here. When she saw Mr. Marshall, Bob Marshall come in, Nell Shepherd would get up and greet him, and say, "Well now, I'm going to depart, and let you gentlemen alone." She didn't want to be in there because she didn't know what we might be talking about. And she didn't want either

him or me to feel the least bit of restraint. She was a wonderful person, and still is. We are in touch with each other all of the time. She was probably the finest secretary that I ever had. She was very meticulous, and accurate. She did beautiful work.

MR. KAYE: Was she concerned that Marshall might be reluctant to talk about some things that he was proposing or criticism of the Park Service?

MR. COLLINS: No, I don't think Nell ever did. In the first place, she never talked out of school to anybody, not even me a lot of the time. Even when she thought I was wrong about something. Usually, sooner or later, she would tell me so. (pause in tape) But you couldn't be around him without having the feeling that he was a rare person. He was kind, and gentle, and decent in every way. And still he loved land, the more rugged, the better he liked it.

MR. KAYE: Did you see his wilderness advocacy, as extreme?

MR. COLLINS: I didn't understand you.

MR. KAYE: Did you think that Robert Marshall's wilderness advocacy was extreme?

MR. COLLINS: Well in talking to Ben Thompson and me, he was very thorough in expressing his opinions. I do not think that in any sense he could be called an extremist. Except possibly by people who didn't understand what he was talking about to the point that they could follow his thoughts. That's the average guy you would run into in Alaska, or anywhere else. The feeling toward him was that he was a hell of a nice guy, but kind of kooky. And that's because he was such a profoundly dedicated man, so well educated, and so scholarly. You didn't run into people like him very often. I think that most people I knew in Alaska who were highly experienced, like Noel and Sig Wein, not the highly cultured people. But people who had a lot of experience and who respected man and all of his devices, and thought about it a lot. I think that people like that automatically liked Bob Marshall. I don't know whether or not I ever told you about it or not, but I met him in Michigan. Have I told you that?

MR. KAYE: Tell me that again, that's an interesting story.

MR. COLLINS: Well, I went up there from Chicago. I guess I was still in Washington, and moved to live in Chicago. The War, I think, was just getting started, or something like that. Another fellow and I, I can't think of his name but he was in the Park Service, and I was. And we up there to this place in Michigan to examine a rather remote area along the south shore of Lake Superior. The Park Service already had Isle Royale. And a little service area on the north side of Lake Superior opposite that island where you could get in and out with boats. We had kind of a Wanagan that you could use for storage purposes. Some stuff that you could use in the wilderness, tents and things, and we would store it in there. Of course, everybody used them. They weren't locked up, but people were pretty good and putting it back too. I had gone up there, headed up to that country, and stopped to rest a little bit, and heard a

lot of racket, a lot of noise, it sounded like somebody trying to sing. It was Bob Marshall coming down through the wilderness there, yelling with pleasure. He just felt like yelling. He just cut loose, and made all the noise that he could. Here was this other guy and myself, down there, and we didn't have any trouble finding him because we was a noisy bugger. That's the way I met him! Well then, that's the first time I ever remember seeing the man. But he did come in to Washington a good bit. They were a family of lawyers, I believe. I'm not sure, but what Bob and his brother George Marshall is a lawyer who lives in London, there now and with whom I am in touch fairly regularly. He knew more about wildlife, and Biology than he did about law, I'm sure of that. Because I don't believe he ever set himself up in the practice of law. It seems to me that a lot of fellows, in those days, just almost automatically got a law degree. Did you ever notice that? Many people that you run into, ever today who were in college back in those times, in the 1920s and 30s, they took law degrees because they couldn't think of anything else. There was a fellow who worked in my office in Washington, Bob, I can't think of his last name, he's dead now, he said, "I didn't know what else to do, when I went to college, so I took a law degree". He never found himself in conservation until after he had a law degree. Then he settled down and got a minor job with the Park Service in Washington. Ben Thompson and I found that he was indispensable. The man's abilities to ...

MR. KAYE: Tell me about the proposal that Marshall made for a vast permanent frontier in northern Alaska.

MR. COLLINS: Alaska, especially north of the Yukon river was a series of interacting and overlapping landscapes. It was unique because it was rare and isolated. It was a piece of America that ought to be preserved as it was. For no other reason but for there it was, as it had always been, virtually. And it was a great indicator, a fine indicator of the remoteness and the nativity, I'll use that word, of the natural scene in that whole region. It was the finest thing of its kind that he had ever seen up in there. Now, Bob didn't get around in the Arctic as much as you would think, unless you went back and checked up on where he went and what he saw, and so on. What he did see he understood pretty thoroughly. He talked a lot about it, and he wrote about it. Then he died, and we lost him. He would have been a truly great leader. He was anyway, but he would have done so much to help preserve that country if he had lived. And in a monetary sense, he could afford to do anything that he wanted to, and go anywhere, as his brother can today. But his brother isn't as interested as Bob was, in that particular field. Am I answering your question?

MR. KAYE: Yeah. Do you remember when his proposal first came out, for the area north of the Yukon to be made a wilderness, and it was a frontier, what was the reaction to that?

MR. COLLINS: Well, again, most people thought that it was kind of kooky. "What in the hell would you want to do that for? If there's anything up there that can be converted into money, let's go get it! To hell with saving the country for itself." That was a kind of goofy idea in the

minds of most people that I ever met in Alaska. You know? You can go to Juneau, Anchorage, to Fairbanks and Fort Yukon and all around, and you find people who know a lot about a little bit of Alaska. But they don't know very much at all about the whole of Alaska. Not a whole lot of people get to see Alaska, as you and I know it. But think about it. I think that's true today, as it was then. (pause in tape)

Those few people who got to know him. Vic Kallain for example, was head of our wildlife branch. Not in my office, but in another comparable office. We were all influenced, all of those people, including myself, with the feeling you mentioned towards nature, and natural history and so on, they found in him a very affective person, and most knowledgeable. And he was highly articulate. He was a rare bird. Does that answer your question?

MR. KAYE: Marshall was the genesis of the idea of setting a frontier. You've been described as the root of the Artic Refuge. John Koffman, in his book on the Brooks Range, called you "the root of it all". Would you agree with that?

MR. COLLINS: Well, I think he goes farther...I think that Lowell Sumner, who is dead now, and I stood for preservation of wilderness in the northland above the Yukon as much as anybody in the United States. I mean, we stood for it because we talked about, and we wrote about it. And I think that we were greatly influenced by Marshall and his thinking. Mostly just visiting, like you and I are now. It would come out of him as long as you wanted to listen. He never ran down. He didn't bore you at all. He was a great educator. He was just a natural. His brother George is much the same way but of course, George is a family man. He has many varied interests, and lots of them. He is a traveler, and he loves cultural things, music and art and the stage. His life revolves around things like that, I think, more than Bob's did. Bob was not unappreciative of anything that I know of.

MR. KAYE: Did Bob ever seem to get discouraged by the fact that wilderness was being lost in so many places, and in many of the fights he got into, he lost?

MR. COLLINS: I don't think that discouraged is the word. I think he became almost incensed at the thought that so few people knew enough about such country to appreciate it adequately. He didn't think that people were mean, he thought they were just ignorant. He didn't mean ignorant in a bad way, just uninformed. That's the term I should have used. It means the same thing. And in this conversation with you, the term ignorance applies pretty well.

MR. KAYE: Lets move on to your contribution to Artic Refuge, George. Like I said, a lot of people said that you were the "root" of the Artic Refuge. Did you draw the boundaries for the proposed refuge?

MR. COLLINS: Oh, yes. "Doc" Sumner and I tried very hard to define the whole zone of influence of that particular part of Alaska and Yukon. You

didn't get very far east of the Yukon at that narrow part that runs way up there to the Artic Ocean, you didn't very far away from that in the east in Canada before you ran out of it. We arbitrarily, on the advice of John Reed, and one or two others...

MR. KAYE: John Reed is a geologist?

MR. COLLINS: Yeah. He was in charge of the Washington office of the U.S.G.S., and all of the U.S.G.S. interests in Alaska. He was the "Alaska man". But he was tremendously interested in the Artic. And it got to the point where "Doc" Sumner and I know more about that part of Alaska than he did. From the standpoint of being on the ground and seeing it a close range, why, then he came to us for advice and counsel. But he always, and eternally felt that this was one of the rare parts of the Artic of the world. We had something there that was unique in all of the Artic, around the top of the world, not excluding the Siberian side of it, the Russian side. But you have five or six countries that are either considerably or almost wholly, or at least have a substantial amount of the Artic within their boundaries. Ask that question again.

MR. KAYE: About your role with the establishment of Artic Refuge. Was it Reed who suggested you use the Canning River as a boundary? That you stay east of the Canning?

MR. COLLINS: No. That was "Doc" Sumner and I who decided on that boundary, because we didn't to get too close to that region. At the time, and for a number of years it was being exhaustively examined for potential oil and gas and so on, mainly oil. John Reed was famous for me, because he said to me, "if you stay over here with your damn park ideas" he always thought I wanted a National Park up there. I never thought about it. I never thought in terms of a National Park up there. My job was to learn the country, and to think of it in cultural terms. If a National Park seemed to explain itself to us, why, we would say so and make some recommendations as to further study, and so on. In fact, I believe that it was our feeling about the country, and how to handle it, that resulted in the Artic Wildlife Range. Clarence Rhode and others felt that the time had come to do something about it before the Park Service or somebody else went in there. I think that the result of that interest in terms of the Artic National Wildlife Refuge, if that's what it is, even though it doesn't do what Sumner and I always wanted it to do, we wanted a vast, international wildlife refuge. Just to get enough land to include the whole vast habitat of that particular region. So, in defining it, yes, we did draw boundaries, for the Canadians as well as our own people. They were referred to a good deal in the Park Service. I know that they were used by the Fish and Wildlife Service too. I think that they had some useful influence in their thinking. I'll go that far. But I don't want to claim anything for "Doc" or me or anybody, anything special. I hate people to say, "well, I did this, or I did that" because nobody every does anything by himself. And I think your mind works better if you don't aggrandize things.

MR. KAYE: Your reluctance to recommend it as a park, was that because the Park Service was busy developing parks at that time?

MR. COLLINS: I guess because, you mean my reluctance, and "Doc" Sumner?

MR. KAYE: Yeah.

MR. COLLINS: We talked about it a lot up there. But we did not think that the National Park Service at that time. We didn't know anything about it between then and now certainly. But we didn't think that the National Park Service was the best agency of the federal government to administer whatever might be identified and set forth as a piece of country that ought to be preserved for itself. We thought that Fish and Wildlife was better. Because you had for example, you can't talk hunting in a National Park with anybody, and get anywhere, especially among the heads of the Park Service people. Nor can you with me. I think we have to preserve the Parks as nearly as possible as they are. If a few people get eaten up every year by bears or something, that's all right with me. I'm not going to kill off all of the wildlife, or segregate people from it, necessarily. The pioneer guys who were in this country two or three hundred years ago, or even a hundred, they took their chances, and they usually got along pretty well, because they understood how. I thought that it was that kind of spirit and attitude that could flourish up there, and it did with the native people, and a lot of others who weren't natives but loved the country. They got along in it because they knew how.

MR. KAYE: So, you wanted to accommodate native hunters in whatever you developed?

MR. COLLINS: Oh, I thought to myself many times, and I think "Doc" did too, that if you could start in all over, by going back hundreds of years, with the way we feel today, we wouldn't have hunting. But because there they were, they'd been there forever, or however long that could mean. They had to use whatever, spears, and bows and arrows, and all of the aboriginal types of things you find all over the world to use. And they used them. They had to, to get something to eat. Again, I've lost track here. . . I think there was a vagrant notion in my mind at least. I don't think it was very effective. If we had gone in our thinking toward the park idea, instead of the wildlife refuge, we wouldn't have hesitated. But you had to allow hunting. You had to allow things that meant survival to a lot of native people who lived there, and some others who didn't have to be there. But the native did have to be there, that was their home. They couldn't prevail very well anywhere else.

MR. KAYE: And you didn't think that the Park Service could be flexible enough to allow, say, to allow native hunting?

MR. COLLINS: Not under the laws, rules and regulations that we lived by. You couldn't do that very well.

MR. KAYE: George, looking back now, with the knowledge that you have now, would you go for a park, or a refuge?

MR. COLLINS: I'd go for a National Park.

MR. KAYE: Why?

MR. COLLINS: Because it would be the means of preserving the most profound cultural resources of that whole region. That's what the National Park System does. And I think it would be a whole lot better to go in that direction than any other. Not that I am saying that the Park Service is better than Fish and Wildlife. I think its more attuned to the kind of preservation policies that would be most effective if were doing it all over again. I suppose there are people who would elaborate on that a lot, and maybe disagree with it. But that's the way I feel. I'm kind of sorry at times, that "Doc" and I didn't advocate a park. I think we felt sure it was there. And we could argue in favor of it if we thought we should. But I believe we felt it would be a fairly enormous policy change in land management over anything that had happened up there, and for that part, most other places in the Arctic, around the top of the world. It would be a rather upsetting thing to do, and maybe not necessary. Neither "Doc" nor I advocated establishing a National Park unless we thought it was necessary. We thought that the wildlife refuge, on the scale that we envisioned, on the part of both countries, was the ideal answer.

MR. KAYE: A that time?

MR. COLLINS: Yes.

MR. KAYE: How about Clarence Rhode? What was his role in going for a refuge?

MR. COLLINS: Well, he was the regional Director, as you know, of the Fish and Wildlife Service. He was a very skillful and experienced flyer, himself. Who went everywhere in Alaska in his airplane. He was a well educated man. I don't mean that he went to graduate school, and all that, but he was well educated. He was a scholarly man. He thought a lot, and very deeply, about conservation matters. He was an excellent Director for Fish and Wildlife. He saw all sides of problems. We was a kindly man, he was no egotist. He knew what he could do. He loved to fly. And like all great flyers, he loved the land, and had a great feeling about it. Am I getting out what you want to know?

MR. KAYE: Did he advocate for a refuge over a park? Did he get into that question?

MR. COLLINS: We never discussed that question. I think that if "Doc" and I had come out for a park he would have backed us. But we didn't. All three of us talked about things like this. The refuge had our approval, except that it's such a dinky little thing, and still is. It's enormous, I know, the way it has been extended. I think "Doc" and I foresaw that. That it would be extended to the south a great deal in time. But our

original boundary except for over on the Canning River side, I don't where it is now, but we never changed that.

MR. KAYE: Why did you make the southern boundary where it is?

MR. COLLINS: I didn't. I don't know who did that. Maybe you or "Ave" Thayer I guess. Probably had a lot to do with that. Not the Sierra Club, but, what's that other outfit in Alaska that Ginny [Wood] and Celia [Hunter] started?

MR. KAYE: The Alaska Conservation Society.

MR. COLLINS: Something like that, yeah. At least I was always talking to Ginny and Celia. They made at least one trip up there. They went up in the Arctic anyway someplace. Was it you or "Ave" that went with them?

MR. KAYE: It was "Ave" Thayer.

MR. COLLINS: They were sitting up on the hillside up there for a while!

MR. KAYE: I read that you have been criticized for being involved in lobbying, or advocating for protection of this area, a little stronger than a government employee should.

MR. COLLINS: Well, I think I could say that who ever criticized along that line was probably right. Granted, that you have to do everything in government according to the laws, and rules and regulations. You're supposed to. But Sumner and I felt that this was a unique situation. It was very unique. Whatever was done would be known all around the world, the top of the world. All of the countries are all interested, many of them far more than we here in the United States are. Towards the Arctic, it's resources and its uniqueness and so on. Our advocacy was based pretty much on what we thought was necessary in order to get appropriate attention. Interestingly enough, I personally, at least, I'm not committing "Doc" to anything, even though he is dead, I talked wherever I could get an audience with or among people who I thought could be induced to be appreciative. You didn't do a whole lot of that. But it didn't take very much to get your bosses concerned. I'd get called in and talked to. In the National Park Service we had some of the wisest and most intelligent people I've ever known. A.E. Demeray who was the Associate Director and became Director for a year or so before he retired. He always backed Ben Thompson and me and any of the other guys. He would call us in and ask us what we had been up to. Just because he wanted to keep track of what was going on in our heads. He signed a lot of the stuff that we wrote, so he knew pretty well what we were up to officially. But unofficially, what we were thinking and all that. . . .

In our work in the Park Service, we expected criticism. New areas, boundary changes. We did studies of large parts of the country so that the Park Service would know and keep up with the nature of the United States. And not just say, "well, we've studied that", and take it for granted. And not realize how dynamic the country and the land is. The weather, how alive it is. And you have to keep up with it, or try to keep

up with all of the changes in nature that you observe, and those than man induces, and what the results are. Yes, I think I spent a lot of my time advocating the study of the land itself. Whether there was going to be a park or whatever the hell it might be. It might be a cattle ranch or a fruit farm of something . . .

Break for dinner

MR. KAYE: This is March 28, 1993, Roger Kaye, back with George Collins. George, we talked about a lot of things related to your role in the Artic National Wildlife Refuge, what would you like to bring out? What would you like to have on record, on a tape that is going to be around for a long time? Your thoughts of Artic Refuge. . .

MR. COLLINS: Well, as I think I mentioned before, during your visit here today, or maybe I didn't, I don't know. I will try to answer that. I would say that around the top of the world as a whole, there is only one place, on the east coast of Labrador I think it is, that has higher relief in terms of height of mountains above sea level than we have in the Artic Wildlife Refuge. It's the second highest spot. I think the difference in elevation is practically nothing. Maybe 50 feet, or something like that, I don't remember, but it's easy enough to check. Out there on the coast of Labrador, it's a wild wilderness. No one lives there. No one sees it much. Airplanes fly over it all of the time. But it's a true wilderness country. Here's the second highest relief in the Artic, around the whole world, it's right up there in the Artic Wildlife Refuge. It rises right up out of the sea you might say. Because you have Lake Schrader and Lake Peters with the mountain rising up right there by them. So that you have that terrific change in elevation with all the evidences of life and earth history and so on that are a part of the scene. It is always important to me to remember that although that part of the Artic, which is within the United States as we understand the boundaries of our country, is very narrow, very small. Still it is one of the most important and significant parts because it has one of the highest relief, the second highest. And the rest of the area, if you look at the Artic Wildlife Refuge on a map, is little bit of a place compared to the Canadian artic, or Siberian. Even some of the European countries that stick up there have more square miles of Artic than we have. We have some of the most persuasive and most significant of all, despite that fact. I think that in terms of geography, that the kids who are in grade schools and getting some sense of the meaning of the word "geography", there are never told anything like that. They should be.

MR. KAYE: What is your vision for. . . ?

MR. COLLINS: How many people do you know who think in those same terms? Probably damn few in Fairbanks or anywhere else. Now, to get back to the question again, what was it? (laughing)

MR. KAYE: What did you want to say about the Artic Refuge?

MR. COLLINS: I think I said it. It's one of the few places in the world, where the whole sense of the Arctic is right there before you, and it's in the United States, it's part of the United States. We ought to feel happy about that. At least I do. I remember we had a meeting up in Calgary or in Edmonton, I've forgotten which, I guess it was Edmonton, a few years ago. A bunch of Russians came over, and among other things, I chatted with them about, what just that point I was making a minute ago. And about half of the scientists were women. That's the first time I ever saw, on the hoof, so to speak, a representative group of Russian scientists, and realized that the women are all that important in that country. They were listened to. They were deferred to. And they were delighted to visit with me and have me make a point like that. They wanted to know about the life of women in Alaska, and in the north country. I told them about Ginny and Celia, and Mardy [Murie] and so on. It was an interesting visit with foreign people who were very much absorbed in what I had to say. And they were very glad to reciprocate by answering any questions that I might have. Unfortunately, I didn't have very many. I didn't know enough about their country to have intelligent questions, or very many of them.

MR. KAYE: Let me ask you about "Doc" Sumner, your partner on your trips to Alaska and the Arctic Refuge. Tell me about "Doc".

MR. COLLINS: Well, I guess that "Pidge" can tell you more that I can almost, about what kind of a guy he was.

MRS. COLLINS: He was a dear, sweet man. And Lord knows, he was different! He was always on a strict diet. He always said he could come to my house and eat everything on the table. Now, that's not what you care about, but that's what I remember about "Doc", as much as I loved him. He was brilliant.

MR. COLLINS: He had a far reaching and sensible imagination about the future. Wherever he looked in the wilderness, or the wilds, or the parks, or wherever we were together, or whatever I talked about with him, he could always see that it might be like a hundred or a thousand years from now. He lived in the future, in his understanding of the full meaning of the word conservation. I think he was very disturbed by man's indifference to the needs of the natural world, in the sense of protecting it adequately. He thought people should have a chance to see and understand wilderness. He thought that the National Park Service did a pretty good job, maybe not the best job, but a pretty good job of interpreting wilderness to people through the Park System.

MRS. COLLINS: But he knew that there were things that had to happen and had to come to pass.

MR. COLLINS: Yes, he was practical.

MRS. COLLINS: It's like the time he was up in the mountains there at Sequoia and he killed a deer and it fell right where you don't want them to, right down close to the highway..

MR. COLLINS: . . .society, that believed in, espoused, and practiced birth control, as a fundamental need for humanity to continue to exist. That was one thing he felt was important. Far more than I, I gave up on that, I didn't think you could do anything about it. But he did, he preached that to the day of his death, I guess. He believed in it. He had a daughter of his own. He wasn't against having kids, but he was against having too many.

MR. KAYE: About his death, you once told me that "he had no business" dying. How did you put that? It was very eloquent.

MR. COLLINS: I don't know how I put it then. But I thought that he died so far ahead of his time. Because there were so few people with his conception of life and living, and how to manage it. He might have lived on and become another philosopher or world renown. Not during his lifetime, but later, as people read what great minds have said in the past, and lived by what they thought and said to a large extent.

MR. KAYE: The two of you functioned as a pair, or as partners. Weren't you more politically involved or more politically active in the Refuge work?

MR. COLLINS: I was, yes. I was the one who, if we hit on something that seemed pretty good. I was the one who talked it up with the Director of the Park Service, and others. I tried to find out if there was anything in what "Doc" and I fumbled around with that could be used in framing policy at the departmental level, in the Park Service, or U. S. Geological Survey, any one of the other agencies involved with land use. I think we had very good reception at the departmental level, so much so, that we had calls from departmental people quite often. They wanted to see one or the other, or both of us in the Secretary's office to discuss some point that had been raised in a letter prepared for the Secretary's signature. The people in the Secretary's office wouldn't quite know what we were talking about. So they would call Mr. Burlew, who was the Assistant Secretary for years. He was one of the greatest men we've ever had in the department. He would call up and say, "one or the other, or both of you birds get in here. We need to talk". And we would go up to the Secretary's office. Especially with Mr. Echis. Mr. Echis is a lawyer. He was a little guy who was meaner than hell when felt like it.

Which wasn't all too infrequent, I'll tell you. Yet, he read everything that was prepared for his signature, at least in the Park Service. And Ben, and I prepared a lot of those conservation things that we are talking about. Mr. Burlew would say "we're going in to see THE MAN" about this letter."

With Mr. Echis, I think it was as much because he wanted to hear what we had to say, even though he may have already made up his mind whether or not he was going to sign it. But he wanted to know who prepared the letter. Who wrote it and why? I've spent two hours at a time in the

Secretary's office along with Ben Thompson and Connie Worth maybe, but usually Ben and I were together.

We would talk Park Service conservation with the Secretary. Because his wife spent a lot of time at their house in Santa Fe, and loved that county. I had known her, talked with her, and visited with her in Santa Fe, at Lafonda, where I lived quite a bit when I lived in Santa Fe. I think her influence on Secretary Echis was profound. To some extent, she thought in terms of what she and "Doc" and I had discussed about conservation. I don't claim anything from all of that. But that's the way I remember my relationship with the Secretary. He was an impatient little guy. You know, a lawyer, as I said. And he didn't want to get into a whole damned "rigamorall" about the science of anything. He wanted facts, and something that he could make a decision on. Within his own field and authority, as Secretary of the Interior, he could make his own pronouncement. And if it was something more important than that, why, he would go to the White House with it. Sometimes he would take us along. We would get over there, and we might or might not get in to the "holy of holies, the inner sanctum" there. What do you call it? There is some room where discussions like that take place in the White House. The guy I remember best in connection with things like that was President Johnson. I was still in the Service, I had not retired yet, but I was not in Washington. I saw him and Mrs. Johnson several times, very informally. There was always some subject that had to do with Park Service conservation.

MR. KAYE: How would you characterize your partnership with "Doc"?

MR. COLLINS: He was the fundamentalist in terms of scientific persuasion. Because as Aldo Leopold said, he was one of the greatest field biologists he ever knew. I appreciated that, although I didn't know that "Doc" was that highly qualified at the time I heard it. But I knew that he was damned highly qualified just the same. Because no matter where he was, or what he saw, he had a sense of understanding and or empathy with it. When we were in the Arctic together, it was a world that he thought was about the most "classic" of anything he had ever experienced. Is that what you wanted? I think that this was absolutely true. He never expected me to be any more than a contemporary in the same general field. He knew I wasn't a biologist.

MR. KAYE: What was your role in the partnership then?

MR. COLLINS: I am a landscape architect.

MR. KAYE: You once told me that you were the "salesman" of the partnership.

MR. COLLINS: Well, yeah, I was the guy who would take what we had concluded, and write a report. Then I'd hand it over to "Doc" to review and edit, if he had anything to add or subtract. We wrote a lot of reports in either letter form, or outright report form. Formal like. We did that kind of thing all of the time. And we were always behind in our

writing. Because it takes time to do that stuff, as you well know, as well as I do.

MR. KAYE: Let me switch now to some one else now, George. Olaus Murie and Mardy Murie are well connected with Artic Refuge. Weren't you the person who got a hold of Olaus and talked with him about advocating for the establishment of a refuge for northeast Alaska?

MR. COLLINS: Yes, I think so. It slips my mind now, exactly where it was. It wasn't in Seattle or in Jackson Hole.

MRS. COLLINS: I think it was at our house in Ross, when he had Thanksgiving dinner with us.

MR. COLLINS: It could have been something like that. But anyway, we can skip that part, because I can't confirm in my mind exactly where that started. Now, repeat the question again.

MR. KAYE: Wasn't it you who first contacted Murie and encouraged him to advocate on behalf of a preserve or refuge in northeast Alaska?

MR. COLLINS: I think so. I wouldn't say that in just so many words. I don't know enough about their contacts. And if I said it, just as you did, I would be claiming something that I'd rather not do. But I think you are right. I think I was the one who brought up the subject, probably very informally, in a chat like we are having. He could see a lot of point to it and he went to work on it, in his own mind, and in his own way. Now, I have the feeling that Mardy's sense of it all is that it is was Olaus' idea and he did it. But as far as I now, Olaus never was in the northeast Artic. He never got that far up there. He got to Inuvik, and Aklavik, and what's that town south of there on the Porcupine River?

MR. KAYE: Old Crow. He went to Old Crow.

MR. COLLINS: Yes, Old Crow, he got to Old Crow. I'm not sure that he ever got up into that part of Alaska.

MR. KAYE: Who was it that recommended that he go to Sheenjek for his study in the mid 1950's?

Was that you or "Doc" who suggested that he go there?

MR. COLLINS: That who should go?

MR. KAYE: Olaus Murie, that he go to Sheenjek river.

MR. COLLINS: "Doc" and I confirmed what Olaus and Mardy wanted to do. They wanted to do more in that part of Alaska, than had been done before. I think they had been up in on the fringes of that region a little bit. We gave them our full support and encouragement by saying that it would be worth their while to go and do it. We had been there, and way beyond there. To what extent our influence was responsible for their going in

there, I'm not going to say. Because that would again, be like some guy saying, "well they went up there because they told them to." Well, I won't say that about anybody or anything, because I don't think that's right. You do things that are worthwhile because people around you suggest it. Then you put yourself to work on the idea, and you evolve something on your own that you follow through on. You don't do it because you tell me, or I tell you. You do it because of a sense of values that occurs in your own mind as you go along. Of course, a lot a people have everything in the world to do with that. I like to make it very clear, that "Doc" and I didn't lay claim to anything. We didn't like that idea.

(pause)

. . . to see at the top governmental levels in the United States, a more positive grasp of what the Artic around the world signifies. And what the role in that significance is on the responsibility of the United States. So that when you go to Congress and budget time, or for any other specific purpose, you have a reference to something in the Artic that is well founded and understood. You go to Congress for approval of legal endorsement of something you want. A budget or a specific area that you want to have established as a National Park, or some other cause that is important and worthwhile. You have all of your arguments set up in your mind, so that you can discuss what you're after very intelligently. You have to back, time and time again. It may take years of repeated requests to Congress before realizing that what you've been after is being enacted.

It's been a very satisfying experience to realize that I live in a kind of a country where you can do that. You can't to that today, in most countries. But here in the United States, you can raise any question you want. If you are strong and insistent enough, you can get a hearing. That's the way we got the Park Service, and basically, it's the way we got the refuge up there. The steps taken were right along the line, from the bottom to the top. If you keep at it long enough you can get somewhere.