

Kattelle Oral History, Tape 1

August 18, 2003

ANDREA McCARTY: Alan, can you tell me where and when you were born?

ALAN KATTELLE: Yes Andrea. I was born in Boston, Massachusetts in what was then called the Lying In Hospital, on March 23rd, 1919.

AM: Did you grow up in Boston?

AK: No. My parents did have a home in Boston briefly, only for three or four years I believe. Then we moved to Newton, Massachusetts where I went to grade school.

AM: I'm going to ask you a little about your first experience with home movies. Can you tell me the first time you saw a home movie?

AK: Absolutely. It was here at the lake, Lake Boone. I don't know the year, but I would guess that it might have been 1927 or '28, somewhere in there. We had a friend and neighbor, had his neighboring cottage here on the lake. His name was Ned Goodnow. And of course a lot of this was recounted to me later, but it seems that one weekend some friends of Ned's wanted to

give their pet goldfish their freedom in the waters of Lake Boone. And, Ned was agreeable and said, “As a matter of fact I have a new movie camera and I’ll take pictures of it.” So the friends came to the lake with the goldfish, and they all went down to the wharf and they carefully lowered the goldfish bowl over into the water so that the goldfish could swim out into their freedom. Alas, their freedom didn’t last very long because out from under the dock came a bass and swallowed both goldfish. And Ned caught it all on film. I wasn’t present at the filming, but I do remember the projection when we were invited to that later. The memory is vivid even today: the darkened room, the mysterious machine in the background whirring away, the beam of brilliant light, and this image on the screen or wall, whatever it was, and there these alive fish—I don’t know. I’ve just never forgotten that experience.

And I think that since then I’ve been enamored of the projected image, if you will. Because another incident from my childhood, somewhere when I was ten or eleven years old, I was given a little microscope. And somehow I discovered that instead of looking down through the lens at the slide on the stand, that if there was a strong enough light coming through the mirror onto the platform, the stage, and up through the lens tube, there would be an image on the ceiling. So, I made some of my own slides by drawing little stick figures on the left side. That was my first magic lantern.

AM: Do you know what kind of camera your neighbor Ned was using?

AK: No. I can only assume it was a Kodak, a 16mm Kodak, but that's not necessarily true. I just don't know.

AM: When you were younger, did you like to go to the movie theater?

AK: Not until I was in high school, although I just met someone at the Home Movie Day, and we both had a—we're about the same age, and the first movie that each of us remember was Douglas Fairbanks in *The Black Pirate*, which I think was 1928 or so.

AM: Did that make an impression on you?

AK: It certainly did. I can visualize him now in that scene where he's up near the top of the mast and he takes this dagger and plunges it into the sail and slides down.

AM: Later on in life, did you keep going to the theater to go see movies?

AK: I didn't go to a lot of movies. I don't know why, but I didn't.

AM: Before we get into talking about your camera collection, I was wondering if you could just tell me a little bit about what you did between being a child and starting a family. Can you tell me about your career or your life as a young man?

AK: Are you talking high school?

AM: Yes. You said you went to grade school in Newton, and then where did you go and where did you end up?

AK: Due to a transfer, my dad's, we were sent to Pennsylvania where I started high school, in Greensburg, Pennsylvania. Two years there and dad was promoted to the New York office, so we moved back to New York. Actually, we lived in Scarsdale. I finished high school at Scarsdale--graduated from Scarsdale High School in 1936. In the fall of that year I entered Columbia College, which I commuted to from a little town called Heathcote. And that was an interesting commute. If this boring, I--?

AM: No, it's not boring at all.

AK: Dad and I both took the same train into Manhattan, or part way in. It was on the Boston and Westchester railroad. The closest that railroad that ever got to Boston was White Plains.

[Chuckles] It was one of those railroads that was incorporated as a financial gimmick I think. Anyway, we road the train into somewhere in the Bronx, and then walked over to Manhattan, where my dad picked up the Third Avenue El going downtown to his office, and I took the 125th Street cross-town trolley.

AM: And that went where?

AK: Through Harlem to Broadway, transferred to the Broadway line, and down a couple of stops to Columbia at 116th Street. My first attempt at Columbia did not turn out well.

AM: Was this Columbia University?

AK: Yes. I was in Columbia College, which is part of Columbia University.

AM: And one question before you continue: What did your dad do that he was transferred from Boston to Pennsylvania to New York?

AK: My father was an engineer with a company called Walworth Company. Their headquarters—they originated in Boston, and that's how Dad came to work for them there. But they had other plants, one of which was in Greensburg, Pennsylvania, and his services were required there. I don't know exactly why. But it was a promotion and he evidently did it well, because after two years in Greensburg he was brought back to the New York office and named Chief Engineer of the Company.

AM: Okay. So tell me more about your first try at Columbia.

AK: It's embarrassing, but what the heck. Manhattan was just too much of an attraction. I was moving for the first time in my life. I was all by myself, on my own.

AM: You were living in the small town where you commuted, or--?

AK: No. I was—Yes, I did commute the first year, and then the second year the folks decided that I should have a dorm—live in a dorm on campus. And that's where I got in trouble, because I just found the attraction to Broadway and Manhattan too much and I didn't concentrate on my studies, with a result that I was told I could not continue.

AM: Do you remember what you were doing instead of studying? Do you remember anything that you were doing at the time that piqued your fancy?

AK: I went to museums. I went to some movies. I frequented a bar. [Laughs] I mean, just an awful lot of things to do. I can't recall all of them, but--

AM: Just the New York stuff?

AK: Yes, exactly. So that would have been 1938. Of course my father--both parents, were terribly disappointed that I had flunked out. Dad said, "What are you going to do now without a degree? The war is coming, and—." So I said, "Well I'll get a job."

So I got a job out in Long Island City in, of all places, a copper refinery. And I say that that way because of my subsequent connection with the copper industry. The job turned out to be pretty horrendous. My job was down in a—working in a lead-lined pit shoveling crystals of copper sulfate out into a bucket under the watchful eyes of a big foreman. And one day I was so bored with what I was doing, I wondered how many bucket loads it takes to empty this thing. So I started making scratches on the lead-lining to tell me how many buckets. And after that, several marks, and I looked and they were gone. I looked up and the foreman was looking over, glaring at me. And he said, "What are you? Some front office spy?" [Chuckles] I was like, "No. Alec," I remember his name. "I was just trying to keep--." "Well I don't want none of them records." That did it for me. I quit the next day. [Laughs] Then what did I do? I went to Monhegan.

AM: Monhegan Island?

AK: Monhegan Island. Now why I went to Monhegan? We'll have to back up chronologically, if you want me to.

AM: That's okay. Tell me, why did you go to Monhegan?

AK: Because I had been introduced to that beautiful place some four years before. How that happened was, when we first moved from Pennsylvania back east, in the course of unpacking our goods, my mother suffered a grievous accident; something exploded in the fireplace and a fragment of metal went into her eye, so she had to be hospitalized and she needed nursing care. My dad was working of course, so I would have been home alone. My mother's sister was a registered nurse and she volunteered to take over nursing mother, but that left her two boys without a mother at home. At that point, a family friend stepped in and said, "I can take care of these boys for the summer at my home on Monhegan Island. I'll take them there for the summer." That was 1934. And my cousin Wentworth and I went out to Monhegan, and my first reaction when we got off the steamer onto this rock, and we were shown to our room in Molly's cottage, we looked at each other and said, "What are we going to do in this place? All summer?" No movie theaters. No cars even. But you know, within twenty-four hours you couldn't drag us away, because we met other kids, and the island kids took us in. I think we went on a picnic on the rocks the second night we were there. So, that was my introduction to Monhegan.

AM: So, you had been on Monhegan as a child, and when you are kind of at a crossroads as a young adult, you decided to go back?

AK: Exactly. And I decided I'm going to be a writer. I'll go to Monhegan and I'll write. I know I can get odd jobs to keep me alive, and I'll start writing. Well, [Chuckles] I got the odd jobs. I didn't do much writing except home for "I needed this. I needed that." [Laughs] The post-mistress on Monhegan Island was very kind. She let me put a little box outside the post office with a sign, "Will Do Odd Jobs – Contact Alan Kattelle." Well, there were a lot of kids on the island who thought that box was the perfect invitation for a lot of peculiar jobs I got in life. [Chuckles]

AM: [Laughing] Like what?

AK: I can't remember. But you know, all ridiculous things. But Molly-this cottage that this family friend owned, was next door to a family of redheads, Mother, father, four brothers and a daughter, all redheads, believe it or not. I didn't get to know them too well that first summer, but I went back in subsequent summers and eventually the redheaded girl and I got to know each other a bit. And in particular, when I decided to spend the winter on the Island, and I got a job in one of the big hotels washing dishes. Natalie, the girl next door, was a waitress in the same hotel. So, we spent that winter getting acquainted. And come spring, we had both come to realize that we were never going to get anywhere on Monhegan. We hadn't at that

time decided we were going to get married. I don't think we just—why we didn't—In fact, we even had a bet who would get married first.

AM: And not to the other.

AK: Not to the other, yeah. But Natalie was offered a job in Boston, taking care of a young woman's three-year old son. I found a job in Hudson because my folks lived there in the summertime, and I spent a lot of my take-home pay going into Boston to visit Natalie. And after a few months of that, we decided that we knew we were in love, and we got married February 8, 1941, in a little church up in Wood Square in Hudson.

AM: So, what did you do for a job when you were working in Boston after you met Natalie and you had married her?

AK: After we were married, through a young couple that we met, I got a job in the machine tool plant here in Hudson called The LaPointe Machine Tool Company. I started out in a low-pay job in the cleaning room, it was called And after a while, I was able to land a job learning how to operate one of the big machines. And after about a year, I could call myself a machinist. I knew how to set up this big boring mill, and set up the work [unclear], and I enjoyed that job very much. But, eventually my number came up. I had a deferment as a defense worker, but after the second time I felt guilty about that and I turned down the deferment, and I was drafted in the Army.

AM: And where did that bring you? What happened when you were drafted? Where did you go and what happened?

AK: I went to Fort Devons, which was a big recruitment center in this part of Massachusetts and, by this time, our first child had been born so it was kind of tough leaving home, but what the heck. All of Natalie's brothers were in the service by that time. I think I was only in Fort Devons a couple of weeks when orders came through. We boarded a train and the rumor had it we were going to Mississippi. And we thought, "Wow, this is great. We're going south. No more New England winter." Well, Camp Flora Mississippi turned out to be not your magnolia blossoms. [Chuckles] Turned out to be mostly mud and rain, cold barracks. But after getting assigned to an ordinance outfit—our group was required to take what was called infantry basic, meaning you had to learn how to carry and use a rifle, how to go on a field march, field pack, and set up a tent.

After a few months of that, we were organized into a battalion and we were shipped to New York. I can't remember the name of the camp right now. We were waiting to get shore leave while we waited to be shipped overseas. And by that time I could tell Natalie more or less where I was, and she came down to visit my folks, who were living in Larchmont at that time, and I could go in and see her occasionally. Then shortly thereafter, we [unclear] shipped to Europe.

AM: What were your duties? Were you a Private in Europe?

AK: I was a Private. My outfit was called Ordinance Maintenance Battalion. And somehow I got a job—well—I'm sorry. After our outfit landed in Belgium, after we—we landed in England first,

then next we crossed the channel and then we were stationed in Belgium. My outfit was strictly a rear echelon outfit, if you know what that means. It means we weren't anywhere near the combat zone at that time. I wound up as a small arms specialist because I'd had a hobby of collecting firearms before I went in the service, and the CO [Commanding Officer] decided that would be a good specialty for me.

AM: So, you had mentioned at one point that you were also a translator while you were a Private in the Army? How did that come to be?

AK: Well that goes back to 1926 when mother and dad and I went to Europe. Mother to study art, and I'm not sure—I've never known exactly what my dad—it must have been business, but I can only guess. We stayed in Paris. We landed in Europe by ship, and we flew from London to Le Bourget in 1926. That was kind of something.

AM: Yeah. That was very early.

AK: Yes, it was. And fortunately I have a photograph of the plane that we took. I was able—through the Aeronautical Historical Association, I was able to identify it. But anyway, Mother told me afterwards, "You know we had kind of a rough crossing on the liner, and you were a great sailor, but that half-hour flight to France you got sick." [Laughs] I don't remember being sick, but anyway, to get back to your question, we lived in Paris for six months or more. And Mother and Dad took [French] lessons. I was sent to school, a French school. And children at that age

pick up a language very quickly. Mother said I became fluent, you know, reasonably fluent, in no time. But afterwards back in the states, she said, "I'd asked you to speak French for somebody, and you refused." [Chuckles] Typical kid.

But, when I was in Belgium, when I was stationed in Belgium many years later [during the war], I met a professor of languages and he thought that I had French ancestry and I related this to him, and he said, "No. I understand. When you learn a language at that age, you don't forget it really." So that's how I became to act as translator formally for my company commander.

AM: When did you leave the Army? When did you return to the United States?

AK: After we were over there through VJ Day—I'm not sure. I'm sorry, I don't know. But it was after about three years overseas.

AM: So near the end of the war then?

AK: Yeah. Right.

AM: During this whole time when you were at college, and then when you were on Monhegan and met Natalie, and then when you went to Europe in the Army, did you have a home movie camera?

AK: No. [Laughter] Unfortunately not.

AM: Okay. So, my next question is, after you got home from your stint in the Army, what did you do then?

AK: Good question. [Pause] Oh. Being that I was entitled, under the GI Bill, with college expenses, and I resolved to go back to college if they would take me. So I applied, and I had the good fortune to get assigned to a very kindly professor in Engineering School, and he looked at my record and he said, "It looks like you could stand a little strengthening in math," and he gave me—I think it might have been a trigonometry textbook. And he said, "Take this,"--this was in the spring I believe—and, "I want you to do every exercise in this book, and keep a record of them, and come and see me when you're finished." And I did, and it evidently satisfied him and the authorities, and they let me re-enroll at Columbia Engineering School.

And we also got veteran's housing at a place called Shanks Village, which is over on the west side of the Hudson near Nyack, New York. So I really—Of course by this time we had a nice, dear little girl and another one on the way. I really applied myself. Well, I just got all I could out of the college experience. I contributed to the college engineering handbook-- I mean yearbook, and all these activities. And finally in the spring of 1950, with my wife and two daughters looking on, I got my Bachelor of Science in Engineering.

AM: Did you find work easily after you had gotten your Bachelors?

AK: Yes, because one of the requirements of the course that I was taking in Industrial Engineering, was that one summer between our junior and senior years, that summer we were required to

get a job, some kind of a job, it really didn't matter, then work at it and submit a report at the end of the summer. And another chap and I, we had become good friends at this veteran's housing place, our families. We both wound up at a company called American Brake Shoe and Foundry Company in Mahwah New Jersey, Mahwah being known as the home of the man who wrote the poem *Trees*. I can't think of his name off-hand [Joyce Kilmer]. So, we were interviewed by a superintendent. Nice gentleman. He says, "Well, I think you boys would find a summer job here useful. Let me introduce you to the man who's going to be your boss, the foundry foreman. And Mr. Tony—I can't think of his last name—came into the office, and he smiled and shook our hands. And we're sitting there in our good clothes. And he says, "Oh, you're gonna go to work for me, are ya? Well you're not gonna look like that by the end of the day." [Laughter] And he [words unclear]. He was sure right. Our first job was scraping and painting ventilators on the top of the Foundry. This was June and it was pretty damn hot. But before long we got promoted, if you will, down to the foundry floor. Is this what you want to hear?

AM: Yes, it is what I want to hear.

AK: My pal was assigned to a miserable, hot, dirty job of changing weights on molds. And I don't want to try and get too deep into the foundry technology, but that's what he had to do. He had to pick up these weights manually and transfer them to another place, for hours at a time. I, for some reason, was assigned to

the maintenance department. That's where I learned how to weld. I also learned that the arc welding torch gives out strong rays, and I wound up the first night with, not a sunburn, but a ray burn on my forearm, not knowing enough to cover up.

But I guess at night we commiserated on our jobs, and we both said, there's got to be a better way to do that job and change the weights the way you're doing. And together we came up with a design, and we showed it to the foundry foreman and he says, "Well it looks promising. Go ahead. I'll give you the shop orders to make up a sample." Well, we made up a sample and it worked so well, we adopted for that whole floor in the foundry, and then they wrote it up in the company magazine. So, understandably, we were both offered jobs when we graduated, with that company. My friend happened to be married to a girl whose father owned a nice, clean company, and he took a job with his in-laws. I went to work for American Brake Shoe and Foundry Company, and it turned out to be a wonderful experience, almost thirteen years.

AM: Wow. So, you learned how to weld there. Is that how your hobby as a sculptor began?

AK: It probably contributed to it, learning how really simple it was to connect two pieces of metal, with the right equipment. I suppose in the back of my mind I said, "Well here's two pieces that look interesting, and now I know how they could be joined." So, I'm sure it contributed.

AM: So, you had a family, and you were living and working the New Jersey-New York area. Can you tell me how you started to collect cameras and projectors?

AK: Yes. At some point, my dad showed me this big folding Kodak. He said, "This is the camera we took to Europe in 1926." He says, "I know you can't get film for it anymore. I was going to throw it away. Would you like it?" I said, "Absolutely I'd like it. It's a great souvenir." By this time I was working in New York, and I discovered that there were things called thrift shops along Second Avenue, and they frequently had cameras, used cameras. And I started to—well, I decided to collect them. [Chuckles] What helped that along was the fact that Eastman Kodak had an information booth in the mezzanine of Grand Central Terminal, right behind the Colorama.

AM: What was the Colorama?

AK: The Colorama was advertised as the largest transparency in the world. It was a transparency about twenty feet tall and sixty feet wide and, of course, it was made by Eastman Kodak. It was obviously made in small sections and then pasted together, and it was hoisted up in Grand Central. I can show you pictures of it. But the point of this yarn was, as I say, they had an information booth up there on the mezzanine, and I began going to them with these cameras that I collected from thrift shops, asking them, "Can you tell me more about them?" And they were very kind. They'd look it up and tell me what year it was made and so forth. I did that quite often so they eventually—people would come into them, you know saying,

“I’ve got this old camera. Would you people like it for your museum?” Well they didn’t really need any, but they’d send him over to see Kattelle in the Chrysler Annex.

[Tape turned off]

AM: So Alan, you were telling me how you would frequently visit the Eastman Kodak booth in Grand Central Station.

AK: Yes. And the manager turned out to be an awfully nice fellow. As I say, they’d always give whatever data they could on the cameras I brought into them. Then one day a man showed up in my office carrying this die-cast aluminum box about so big, and it said Eastman Kodak on it. I didn’t really know what it was, but he said, “Well the people over at Kodak sent me to see you.” So I said, “Oh, it’s for sale?” And he said yes. I don’t remember, unfortunately, I don’t remember what I paid for it, but it wasn’t outrageous certainly. But I couldn’t wait for lunchtime to go over and find out what I had. As soon as they saw me coming over at the information booth, the boss had a big grin on his face, and he said, “Oh, you got it.” [Laughs] I said, “Yes, but what is it?” And he said, “Well, that’s the first 16mm camera that Eastman Kodak made in 1923.” And I was just thrilled. I, in an instant, decided no more folding Kodaks; it’s movie cameras from now on. Very shortly thereafter, I found a [regular] 8mm outfit in a local antique store in my town. A little 8mm camera and projector, and that was the same Kodak

Model 20. And I took many a movie of the children with that Model 20.

AM: Is that the only home movie camera you ever used with your family, or did you move on to Super 8, or did you--?

AK: I moved on eventually to Super 8, yes. I couldn't tell you now without figuring which one it was, but I did move to Super 8.

AM: Did you think Super 8 was an improvement personally, or did you like the 8mm?

AK: No. I felt it was an improvement. For one thing, I had a much better Super 8 projector than the regular 8mm. Made a difference.

AM: Did you ever shoot on 16mm?

AK: No. No, I never graduated to 16mm.

AM: So, you started collecting cameras. Do you still have the first folding Kodak, and do you still have the first [movie camera]?

AK: I think I saved my dad's camera, but I sold a good many of the folding Kodaks.

AM: What about the first [movie camera] that you acquired?

AK: The first [movie camera]?

AM: Yes, the Model A. The first Kodak.

AK: The first 8mm camera?

AM: No, the first 16mm.

AK: Well, the first 16mm was the big Ciné-Kodak. That I have.

AM: Right. The big Ciné-Kodak. You still have that. So you started to collect cameras. When did you start to collect projectors?

AK: That's a good question. I can't put a date on it. Probably since my exhibit space was rather limited when we lived in Connecticut, I think I probably began taking a more serious look after we moved up here and I had this nice big room, [Chuckles] and other places to store them.

AM: Did you ever collect anything else besides cameras, and projectors, and still cameras?

AK: I'm not sure how to answer that, but, yes. Natalie and I collected rocks. I'm not sure when it began, but I have a feeling that our interest in mineralogy came about one day when a lady friend of the family gave me a piece of stone with a peculiar color and explained what it was, that it was—I can't remember the name now. We were living in Chicago at the time, and we looked for interesting places to visit, so we drove out to the Mississippi River, way out to the south—to the northwestern corner of Illinois. To Galena. A town called Galena, Illinois. Named after a mineral. About that time we both got seriously interested in collecting mineral specimens. And eventually I found that there were other people in my neighborhood, and together we founded the Stamford Geological Mineral Society [Stamford Mineralogical Society]. And I was the first president, and Natalie was the first treasurer. And, that society is still going today.

AM: This is in Stamford, Connecticut?

AK: Stamford, Connecticut. And down in the hallway is a plaque where they made Natalie and myself honorary members of the Stamford Mineralogical Society.

[End of Tape 1, Side 1]

[AM: Are you still collecting minerals?]

AK: I wouldn't pass up an interesting one, but as you well know, I've got too many other irons in the fire. But the mineral collection was a problem when it came time to move from Connecticut to Hudson, Massachusetts, and we sold a lot of the collection but I kept some of the more interesting pieces. They're not on display, but at least I know where they are.

AM: Are rocks the only other collection that you've amassed?

AK: [Laughs] I think so. [Note: Alan also has a collection of firearms.]

AM: Well, what I'm getting at is have you ever given a thought to the personality of a collector, or the characteristics that make up a collector? Have you ever thought about that? There are some people who collect things, and there are some people who don't.

AK: I try not to think too much about it because I think that in many people's eyes a collector is sort of a nut. [Laughs] No. The mineral collection, I think was a wonderful experience for the family, because that's something we all participated in. And I used to tell people our children knew how to say "muscovite" before they knew "mama." [Laughs] And we took them with us

to all these quarries and by and large, they had a great time. They've all outgrown it, but all in all, it was educational and it was outdoors and it was fun.

AM: Well that's interesting. So, the rock collecting was a family activity. Has your family become involved with the camera and projector collection?

AK: Not at all. Not in the least.

AM: Except for maybe your grandson.

AK: Except very much for my grandson, yes. [Pause] Dead air here. I'm trying to think. [Pause] I'm sorry, I can't pin it down just when John became interested in the—can you pick another topic?

AM: But John has always been interested in photography, so it wasn't a great leap from photographs to—

AK: That's right. But he and a man in Portland by the name [Earle] Shuttleworth, who was director of the Portland Historical—no, I'm not getting the title right, but he and John organized a marvelous exhibit of early Maine photographs. Including a lot of daguerreotypes. John got so fascinated with the daguerreotypes that he made his own, somewhat to the alarm of his parents because you know the ingredients of a daguerreotype, [words unclear]. But in that little explanatory plaque in the exhibit, explaining what it was all about, John, bless his heart, gave credit to his grandfather for his interest in photography. Very sweet.

AM: That is sweet. So, returning to the collection behind you, if you think back for the—how long have you been collecting now?

AK: Thirty years? From '73, whatever that would be.

AM: So thirty years.

AK: About thirty years.

AM: Thirty years this year. Did you go through phases? How did it start? Did you start with 16mm and move to 8mm, or--?

AK: No. I started while we were living in New York. I almost bought anything in the thrift shop, any movie camera. It didn't matter whether it was 8mm or 16mm. But one of my real prizes I value very highly, one of the dealers got to know me. I went in there so often. And I stepped in one day and he said, "Hey, come on in the back room. Something to show you." And there on the floor was a stack that high of 16mm film cans, and he said, "I don't know anything about them, but do you want them?" And he named some price which was agreeable. And they turned out to be the family movies of a fourth generation New York banker, and they had been carefully shot. They had been titled by Kodak. You know, at one time you could send your films and write out a title and they'd make a title for you. And I was able to go to the biographical section of the New York Public Library and find out about this man, and it was a fascinating story. Northeast Historic Film I believe has the bulk of them. I loaned them to them, and I think they [have] them all.

AM: Wow. Was it interesting to find out the family history of this man?

AK: Very much so.

AM: So, you were telling me about this film collection you found at an antique dealer's shop. What did you do when you got the film? Did you take them home and look at them?

AK: I surely did. And they were fascinating because it was—they were a bit ostentatious if you know what I mean. They filmed Mrs. Clark getting in and out of her limousine, and throwing her furs over her shoulder, and obviously showing off her long pearl necklace. Then there was a film of a party they had, and one of the events was shooting off a rocket, and did Mr. Clark shoot off the rocket? No, the butler came out and shot it off. [Chuckles]

AM: So it really was a glimpse of another lifestyle.

AK: Absolutely. And also, it turned out the more I investigated, the more it seemed that his life was in a way rather tragic. As I recall, they had four children and three of them married, and all three marriages ended in divorce. It was so sad in a way. But it was a great glimpse of how the other half lived.

AM: So when you found those films, did you consider becoming a film collector? Or was your heart still in the cameras and projectors?

AK: I don't think I—No, I didn't seek out films, but I didn't turn them down either when they came along. I accepted them. I was more interested in the hardware.

AK: I get the sense from your book, and the story you told me about researching Mr. Clark, that you kind of like doing the research.

AK: I love doing the research, yeah.

AM: What's your favorite kind of research to do, or what's your take on doing the background work?

AK: Well, as you know, I have a fairly substantial collection of *Popular Photography* [magazine], and I'm thrilled [with] going through these magazines if I find that the editors have written up a specific camera. That always fascinates me. I also got a great deal of pleasure out of being able to interview many of the men who had a great deal to do with the development of amateur films.

For instance, there was a Kodak employee named Harris Tuttle, and Harris was a wonderful promoter of 16mm. He was one of the persons who assigned the first—one of the first persons assigned to use the camera and see what could be done with it. And he subsequently wrote many articles for *Popular* and other magazines on how to use the camera. And I was fortunate enough to have correspondence with him. I found out that he didn't own a Number One Ciné-Kodak, because at one time the company had asked their employees to turn them in. They needed them for some purpose [unclear], and he never got one back. And I offered him one of mine, which he was very pleased, but he said, "No. I'm too old to bother with it now." He was a wonderful man.

AM: Who were some of the other people you remember interviewing who were notable in the history of amateur technology, amateur film technology?

AK: Well, that could be awkward. I interviewed a sales manager, who shall perhaps be nameless, and when I told him that a certain camera had sold for such and such a figure, he said, "Oh no. You must be mistaken. It never sold for that." [Words unclear]. [Laughs] He was mistaken. But by and large, the engineers and executives that I talked to at Kodak were very, very helpful. I had no problems with them.

AM: Were they [easy to find]? How did you know to contact many of these people?

AK: Well, you understand we're going back almost thirty years now, and they were still just on the point of retiring, about like that. And I knew who they were because—for instance when Super 8 was introduced, there was an interview of the Kodak people by the editors of *Popular Photography*, and there I had the names. It was easy from there to go to call them or write them, and without exception they all cooperated.

AM: So I see that *Popular Photography* has been a valuable research tool.

AK: It was extremely—I couldn't have written the book without it. I also was fortunate enough to get my intro or Foreword written by Charles Percy, who was the CEO of Eastman Kodak for many years. And I thought that was very nice of him to agree to do that.

AM: Do you have a full run of *Popular Photography*? Have you always had a subscription, or are there issues that you're still looking for?

AK: I have, but I—there are a couple issues that I'm short, but I couldn't tell you off-hand which ones they are.

[End of Tape 1, Side 2]