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AN INTERVIEW WITH STEPHANIE KIP

FOR THE

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INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY

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TRANSCRIPT BY

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Mohammad Athar: This begins an interview with Stephanie Kip in Bloomfield, New Jersey. The date is August 16, 2016. I'm Mohammad Athar, the interviewer. To begin, can you tell us where and when you were born?

Stephanie Kip: I was born in Ossining, New York in 1954.

MA: 1954. I want to start off with some of your family history. Starting on your mother's side, do you know where they came from?

SK: Way back when in Ireland. She grew up herself in the Ossining area.

MA: Did her family immigrate or were they in the United States?

SK: Yes, many generations ago.

MA: On your father's side, that's where the Kip family line comes from.

SK: Right. Well, supposedly, the Kip family originally were French Huguenots, so the last name was Dekype, D-E-K-Y-P-E. Then when the Huguenots were kicked out of France, they came to Holland, and then they came over here. I think it was about 1623, and so we're related to the first Kip, who settled in Manhattan. In fact, Kips Bay, we're a direct descendant of that area, [which] runs in Manhattan from, I think, 34th Street to 42nd, from 5th Avenue to the river.

MA: Wow.

SK: [Hendrick Hendricksen] Kip was the original Kip settling here.

MA: Did your father ever share any stories with you about the family?

SK: Yes, quite often, and his mother did. They were quite interested in family history, both about the Kip side of the family. My Grandmother Kip was also from Montclair. The family histories were always interwoven with the history of Montclair. She was a Cruikshank. Then, Charlotte Williams, we heard a bit about. Apparently, her family ancestry was traced all the way back to William the Conqueror.

MA: Wow.

SK: Charlotte Williams was the person who married Frederic Ellsworth Kip, who built Kip's Castle.

MA: Did your father share any stories with you about the construction of the castle or how his grandfather built the castle?

SK: Well, my father was born in 1922, so he only remembers visiting the castle once when it was still under family ownership because it was sold in 1926 when his grandmother, Charlotte, died. So he did speak about this one visit he made when he was three years old. He always said

it was his first lesson in morality when he went into the carriage house, which is also a lovely part of the whole property. At that time, they had livestock and stuff in there. So he picked out an egg from one of the chicken's nests, and then went back to get another one, and the chicken pecked his hand, and he dropped the egg. So the moral of the story is be satisfied with what you have. So that was the only time he recalled going up there when it was owned by the family. Of course, his grandfather came to live with him after the place was sold and there are a number stories about that. Then we went back there with my father when Bhagwan's group was in. [Editor's Note: Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh was the leader of the Rajneesh Movement cult. His group lived in Kip's Castle for some time in the early 1980s. He himself lived there for a short time as well.] It was initially sold to some friends of the family. Then we went back when the law firm [Schwartz, Tobia, and Stanziale] owned it. So most of my father's stories were about Frederic Ellsworth Kip, i.e. F.E. Kip, who was his grandfather.

MA: What were some of those stories? What was Frederic Ellsworth Kip like?

SK: Well, on one hand, he was a very successful businessman. He started a textile factory in Lyon, [France] which is probably where he saw Norman castles that influenced his wish to design Kip's Castle, or Kypsburg, as it used to be called. The year that Detroit switched to vinyl car seats was the year my great-grandfather had expanded his plant in Lyon to make plush car seats, so his business failed. So that was the end of that. Then he switched over to running gas stations. Eventually those faded out. So my father had many stories about him. He was quite a character. He and his wife did a lot of travelling, which, I think, may account for why the interior of the castle down on the ground floor is not all that big. Like the dining room, the table in it, you really only can be comfortably seating twelve people. I think that was because they travelled a lot, so they weren't home all that often. My great grandmother Charlotte also was a member of the Women's Temperance Union, so she did not even have vanilla ice cream served up there. But I mean, they did receive people up there like George Inness, a local artist whose stuff is exhibited in Montclair Art Museum, Harry Fenn, et cetera. My great-grandfather was very wealthy, of course, and hung out with the likes of John D. Rockefeller. There's one story of how he came home early one Sunday morning after a hunting trip. It was very early. And as he was rounding the corner to his home, in his Packard, he took the curve too sharply, and the car tipped over. So he just very calmly got out of the car, went and had breakfast and had ordered a new Packard by six A.M. Meanwhile, there was a whole trunk full of ammunition in the back of the car, and when the car burst into flames, this ammunition went off. They said the neighbors thought it was World War III. In his later years, he lived with my grandparents. He only had one son, who was Ruloff Frederic. My father was Ruloff Frederic, Jr. When F.E. Kip and Charlotte would travel to Europe, they would leave their son at home with this old spinster aunt, who had a book that she kept a list of every infraction her nephew made. So he was kind of a lonely fellow. Then my grandfather, Ruloff Kip, when he was, I don't know, mid-thirties, was in a bad accident where his spinal cord was somewhat injured. So he had permanent curvature of the spine. So he really couldn't work independently, and he ended up working with his father at this series of gas stations called Standard Oil. I will tell you one story about that. My great-grandfather was interested in shooting off all sorts of legal opinions and treaties that were published. One of them was all about his scuffle with the Montclair Township. Late one December, he had people dig three big holes in some property in a zoning area that he owned. Now, connect the dots. This is a man that owned gas stations. One can assume those holes were

for tanks to put oil in. So the cops came by and arrested him, and they felt so embarrassed and badly that they just put him in the Montclair Inn. They didn't put him in the jail.

MA: Wow.

SK: Well, the next day, this truck pulls up with these three huge evergreen trees that they put in the holes. My great-grandfather claimed this was his Christmas gift to the neighborhood. So he was a little bit of a slick guy, and he liked the finer things of life. He had this whole book of genealogy put together. He had a huge yacht running, The Carlotta. My grandmother, Charlotte, by the way we all call Carlotta. He also had silver plateware made with our coat of arms. He had a family coat of arms also developed, and the family slogan is under the coat of arms in Latin; it says, "Never look back," which is a good slogan, actually. But he just couldn't face the fact when the Depression hit that he no longer had all of his money. So what he did was he had his son who was also in this business with him co-sign loans, fifty thousand dollars of loans, to keep his lifestyle up and running. I don't remember when my great-grandfather died, but he killed himself. He did that by carbon monoxide poisoning. At that time, his family, of course, assumed it was because of all his financial troubles. It was only five years later that they found out that it was more, that he had been diagnosed with terminally ill cancer and given less than a year to live. He just didn't want to have to deal with that. So his relationship with Charlotte, I don't know--back then, people may have had more of a companionship. They also wanted to marry somebody of the proper social class. So they were well suited in terms of that. They also had a big fondness for the castle, how it was designed. Charlotte was very involved with the rose gardens in the back, which right now are no more, but I think as part of the restoration, the Essex County NJ Parks Department may rebuild it. She was a distant figure, and she did not get along well with her daughter-in-law. Remember, she only had one son. So her daughter-in-law was my grandmother, Alison. My great-grandmother Charlotte built a family mausoleum, which is over near Paterson. She stipulated that the only people who could be buried in that mausoleum, other than herself, were people who were born Kips. This was seen as a direct poke in the eye to her daughter-in-law, my grandmother, who couldn't be buried there. So my grandmother, Alison, ended up being buried in Salem, New York, next to her family. Well, immediately after my great-grandmother's death in 1926, my great-grandfather started fraternizing with another lady. I think her name was Louise Taylor, and he married her. She died soon after. My father says my great-grandfather's family really liked this woman, Louise Taylor. My great-grandfather had her [Louise] buried right next to him in the mausoleum, which I think is hilarious; kind of a poke in his wife's eye. My father told me a story about how F.E. Kip wanted to encourage entrepreneurship with his grandsons and offered to pay them for every rusty nail they found in the driveway. My father and his brother, Phelps, did pick up rusty nails, but after the first batch of money that they made, they ran out and bought more nails and put them in a bucket of water to become rusty. [laughter] When their grandfather found out, he thought this was great. I don't know. My father had mixed feelings about his grandfather. On one hand, Dad had a very nice time with his grandfather when they went out west on this two-month long trip out to remote Indian reservations. My great-grandfather and his wife were very fond of the southwest, and they bought a number of artifacts there, Navajo rugs, Zuni pots. In fact, they bought a painting of an Indian chief by a famous painter. I don't know what his first initials were. His last name was Sharpe, S-H-A-R-P-E. So that painting hung in our house for a long time. Many items from Kypsburg--when Kypsburg was closed, my great-grandfather put a lot of

these things in storage. Then when he died, his son took them out and dispensed them to some of his adult children. So one of the things my family was given was this picture of this Indian chief smoking a pipe. Over the years, it got a little dark and all of that. One day, my father called me because--he had given the painting to me before his death, and he said, "Hey, I've been looking at *Antiques Roadshow* and you might want to check that painting out." I work as a librarian. If I had a nickel for every person that came by saying, "Oh, I've got a painting and I think this is worth something, I'd be rich!" So I'd check the database of fifty thousand artists, and I'd have to say to the library patron, "I don't think so." So when my father said the Indian painting might be of value, I was like, "Yes, yes." But I did contact the Montclair Art Museum. It's got a wonderful Native American Department, and they advised me of a gallery out in the Midwest. They immediately recognized this painter and said, "Take a picture of the painting and send it to us." When I did, they were ecstatic. They said, "We did not know this picture existed." So that picture sold for half a million dollars.

MA: Wow.

SK: Yes. So that was very nice. Another thing that my great-grandmother Charlotte had given to her daughter-in-law--this was kind of a surprise--the daughter-in-law she didn't really care about, was a broach. Alison Kip passed it on to one of her granddaughters, my cousin Joan, this lovely--I think it was an opal broach. My cousin went on *Antiques Roadshow*, and somebody assessed it. They said, "Oh, yes. This is a Tiffany-made brooch with rubies around it." So that had come from Kypsburg. But that was the only piece of jewelry. We were surprised because we thought Charlotte would've had a bunch. Not that we were like--my family is not very materialistic. In fact, my father was kind of embarrassed at this cache of mostly furniture and pictures and other stuff that his father had accumulated, but the house itself was thirty rooms, so you did have to furnish it. I don't know if you want me to describe the house a little bit.

MA: Yes.

SK: Well, it was built in 1902 to 1905. At that time, my great grandparents lived in a house in Montclair temporarily, 110 Bellevue Avenue. The house is made of a local stone, basalt, with a sandstone trim. It's on top of a mountain. I think it's the First Mountain range. So from the turrets on top, and even a master bedroom upstairs, you can see the New York City skyline.

MA: Yes, I've heard it is a very nice view.

SK: Yes, it's great. Mostly you can see that from the ground level in the winter, but certainly from the master bedroom and the top turret you can see NYC any time of the year. So they have a stone veranda that goes around the entire building, and a lot of the turrets have arches and deep set windows. There are six fireplaces in the house. One in the master bedrooms is pretty fabulous. It has a whole mosaic of a peacock and then next to that room is a bathroom where the entire interior are tiles done in a motif of dolphins swimming. That was always something that we really enjoyed. I think I mentioned downstairs the dining area wasn't that big. The kitchen was very small. I don't know if they cooked downstairs. I don't think so. There was a small elevator. There was a chapel that has a della Robbia ceramic painting over a fireplace, and that was where my father was baptized.

MA: The chapel was in the castle?

SK: Yes. That's where I got remarried in 2010. I've heard that *Weird New Jersey* has run stories about some mad monk in Kypsburg, and that there is a secret passage leading from the chapel to wherever. I asked my father. He said he had never heard of any secret chapel. What else can I tell you? Well, of course, Bhagwan's people moved in there before the law firm moved in there. How that all came about was Bhagwan was located in India while one of his devotees, Ma Anand Sheela, was a student at Montclair State. [Editor's Note: Ma Anand Sheela was an assistant to Rajneesh of the Bhagwan cult. She was found guilty of attempted murder in Oregon, served over twenty months in prison and now lives in Switzerland.] So she was aware of the Kypsburg property and said to him, "Hey, this is as good a place as any to move to the U.S. and set up your headquarters." Of course, he was known as the Golden Guru. He had ninety Rolls Royces. One of his big appeals was that unlike other religious philosophies or beliefs where "less is better," he was very much into the belief "more is better." So he appealed to people of wealth. He also believed in the whole free love philosophy. Adjacent to the Kypsburg property is a monastery. So these poor fellows who'd be taking their afternoon walk would see some of Bhagwan's devotees having sex on the front lawn. His devotees wore these orange robes with a medallion of his picture. They'd come down to Montclair sometimes to make an appearance, and I heard the townspeople just were not happy with them. I don't know if they were afraid their kids were going to get involved in this whole group or not. But while they were there, I contacted them to have my family come up and visit. By then, most of the group had moved out to Penelope, Oregon, and that's a whole other story. They were run out of there too. [Editor's Note: Shortly after the Rajneesh cult moved to Kip's Castle, they left and moved to The Dalles, Oregon to create a commune. In 1984, to get voters sick for the upcoming election in which they were attempting to seize power, the cult poisoned salad bars at local restaurants with salmonella. No one died from the incident, but hundreds were hospitalized.] We did meet some of their members, and they were very pleasant and all that, but I do remember walking into the place, and you would not know anybody lived there. I mean, not a hair brush, nothing of any personal effects there. There were only three or four people we saw in the place when we went. As we were leaving, there's a group of forty people standing on the lawn all in their religious garb. So that was weird, if not a little creepy.

Then the law firm of Schwartz, Tobia, & Stanziale bought it. We were very happy about that because they really put a lot of money into it. One of the attorneys in particular had a strong interest in history and did research. They found pictures from the *Star Ledger* that were taken of the interior in the 1930s. The law firm found out that Bhagwan's people--by the way, when they came in, although they improved the place structurally, they did stuff like white wash all the interior oak paneling--took out a number of the Tiffany windows, took out fireplace mantles, all that stuff. So the law firm had these photos of what the place used to look like, and found out which antiques dealers--I think there were a number of them in Newark--had bought a lot of this stuff, and then they were able to trace where the items still were. So the law firm restored a number of areas. In fact, when you go to the castle, you can see the 1930s pictures that are hung in the particular corner or the staircase that the law firm refurbished. They also put up a nice family tree picture on the walls. So they seemed very interested in honoring family history, doing their best to restore it, but the place is expensive to keep up. I mean, somebody told me

just the heating alone was sixteen thousand a year, and the taxes in this area are just astronomical. So I cannot imagine what the taxes were. So they thought, "Well, let's sell it to a realtor," because right down the road is another property. I don't think it was part of the Kypsburg property, but it's some very high end condos called Kips Ridge. They're built in the form [of Kip's Castle] with the basalt and the turrets and all that stuff. So I guess these developers thought, "Well, we'll just replicate that," and they were going to use the castle as a clubhouse or the main headquarters of a new condo development. The property is split between the Montclair and Verona lines. The Montclair Historical Society was concerned, but I really do feel it was the Verona people who were the most concerned about Kypsburg's future. A number of neighbors got together, did a lot of extensive research, and were successful in stopping the sale of it to a private real estate developer. So that's when the county [Essex County, NJ] came in in 2007 and bought the place. The county itself, I think, invested about 900,000, but then they got--what was it?--2.8 million from the Green Acres Grant and another 2.8 million from some other trust fund. I think it's the Essex County Open Acres. I'm sorry if I'm confusing these two.

MA: That is all right.

SK: So they bought it. There's a twelve-person advisory committee that's set up, and they completely restored the carriage house, which is very nice now. That's about six-thousand feet. They use the top floors of the castle for administrative offices, the Essex County Cultural Department and the Recreation Department. Downstairs they have meetings, et cetera, and they do have cultural events, mostly during the summer where they show movies every Friday evening.

MA: Yes. I've read they do movie events.

SK: Yes, that's so nice. They'll have this portable movie screen, and families come up and sit on the lawn. I know they've had Victorian tea parties and antique car shows, things like that. Now people do rent the premises out for weddings, and I don't know how they do that because the actual interior of the house--as I mentioned, the dining area certainly is small. When you walk in the immediate lobby, there is some space next to this huge fireplace. Adjacent to that big lobby is this area where the law firm uses a law library. It's lovely. A number of its windows that look out on the garden. That seems to be where people, if they want to have a wedding, set up tables and this and that, but I think there's a legal limit of only forty people that are allowed in there.

MA: Yes, the inside is forty or fifty, and outside is around two hundred.

SK: Yes, so it'd make more sense to setup a tent outside. But I never have understood that. If you're going to rent a mansion, why would you set up a tent?

MA: Exactly.

SK: I went to Robert Lincoln's place up in Manchester, Vermont. It was the same thing. People rent the place out but they don't even go inside it.

MA: Exactly.

SK: When I got married there in 2010, it was just my father, the mayor of Montclair at that time, Jerry Fried, and two friends as witnesses that attended. I kept it pretty quiet. So, I don't know. Any other questions you can think of?

MA: Well, it sounds like throughout the years you have kept up with news of the castle and the restoration and the different owners.

SK: Right. I haven't been as involved as I would like to be. It seems like there are a number of different aspects of--I mean, the castle, they're working on a restoration project. So that involves raising money privately from their Conservancy group going and then getting Essex County funds. I know they did replace the entire roof, which was well-needed and you wouldn't be able to tell; it looks like the original. Two years or so ago, they were gathering money to repair the Tiffany glass. Some the glass was restored when the law firm went and found the stuff that Bhagwan's people had sold. The law firm also stripped all of the whitewash that Bhagwan's people put on the oak paneling. So now it looks more the way it used to look.

MA: I also heard some of the windows got shipped from Scotland or something around those lines.

SK: That's possible. See, the people in Verona really know, maybe even more than I do, about the actual castle's architecture and current status and all that.

MA: Okay. Was there anyone else in your family who stays involved with the castle?

SK: No. My siblings live in Reno, Ohio, whatever. So the fact that I lived in Montclair for twenty years, my dad who grew up in Montclair just lived about an hour away, it made sense that I was the repository of family stories.

MA: You said your family sold the castle in 1926.

SK: Yes.

MA: So the sale wasn't affected by the Great Depression because you said before your grandfather was [inaudible].

SK: Yes, I think it was after the Great Depression that he lost most of his money. Yes, he moved out of it primarily because his wife had died, and it's a big place to rattle around in.

MA: Did your father live in the castle?

SK: No, he only visited once when he was three years old that he can remember. Of course, he was christened there when he was a tiny baby. I find it kind of amusing. They do have events up there. They have some very nice holiday open houses to the public, where they decorate it and people can come by. So once or twice I've been there, just to be one of the hostesses. When I mentioned that my great-grandfather built it, I was often asked, "Oh, did you live here?"

[laughter] "No. I wish I did." I know that at one point when it was sort of falling into repair, local kids would go up there and hang out. There was never any graffiti or anything. Now, there's usually an Essex County Sherriff's car parked up there, which is fine. They've got these lovely gates that have little turrets on top of them, at the entrance of the castle, at the base of this long windy road. Those gates aren't locked. I guess they have faith that the public isn't going to make trouble. When they do have big events, what they do is they have shuttle buses that bring people up because the actual parking lot up there isn't all that big.

MA: You mentioned before the story of your great-grandfather who was driving his car and it tipped over, and it had ammunition inside.

SK: Yes.

MA: How did he come to have ammunition in his car?

SK: Because he was hunting with J. D. Rockefeller.

MA: Wow.

SK: J.D. Rockefeller often gave out dimes to numerous people. He'd say, "Save this and you'll become rich like me." So J. D. Rockefeller gave dimes to my great-grandfather, which he passed along to his grandsons, my father and his brother.

MA: So were the gas stations he was running, was that tied to Standard Oil New Jersey?

SK: Yes, they were. One was in Montclair, where an Express Lube shop is. That's not too far from being a gas station. There was one [on] the corner of Bloomfield Avenue and Pompton Avenue. I don't know what happened with that business, but I always heard the story that my great-grandfather made and lost two fortunes. I'm trying to think of any other amusing stories. Well, when he took my father, who was twelve, on this two-month trip out to these Indian reservations in the middle of nowhere, my father suspected that his grandfather took him because his wife, my father's grandmother, was still alive and my great-grandfather had his girlfriend along. I don't think that was the case because when I think about the timeframe, my father was about four when his grandmother died. Okay, that was an erroneous story. [laughter]

MA: Did your parents ever share with you any stories of the Depression period and how that was for them?

SK: Yes. My mother's father was a lawyer and a town judge, so he was involved in the rationing board, which of course didn't make him Mr. Popularity. Or, to the converse, everybody wanted to get to know him to get more rationing coupons. My father did say that it was difficult. I think his mother had to sell some of her jewelry, and because his father didn't work regularly because of his disability they were always in a bad state. His sisters worked at Hahne's, which the first Hahne's was actually based in Montclair. [Editor's Note: Hahne's Department Store was a department store chain in northern New Jersey. It was in operation from 1858 to 1988.] But my father's parents, other than inheriting all this furniture from Kypsburg, didn't get any money

from F.E. Kip. In fact, they had a five thousand dollar debt they had to pay off, because my grandfather, whose was also [a] very sweet man, had loaned somebody the money. This guy just took off and didn't repay my grandfather, so they had to sell their house. Now, the house that my grandparents lived in, they called it their little dream house. It was at 53 Porter Place in Montclair. My great-grandfather had built this house for his son. So when hard times hit and this fellow took off with my grandfather's $5,000 dollars, they had to sell that house. From that point forward, it was just a number of houses they rented in Montclair. So my father does not recall growing up wealthy. In fact, he attended "Teacher's High" as they called it, which was located on the current campus of Montclair State University. "Teacher's High" was a high school where teachers were trained to teach students who really excelled academically. So my father went there, graduated at the age of sixteen, but then he went to Andover. His parents felt like he needed a gap year, I guess they call it that now. He was a scholarship boy. So they just did not have a lot money. Then my father went on to Princeton, and so on. He became a lawyer and worked for AT&T. But yes, the Depression--I certainly saw it in my father's behavior throughout his whole life. He was very generous with everybody else, but was always conscious about saving money and not taking things for granted.

MA: Was he able to find employment during the Depression?

SK: Well, my father was, I think, a student during the Depression. He was too young. But certainly the ramifications of it--I mean, anybody that grew up, even if they were young, they felt it. As I said, my father was generous, but was always mindful of wanting to leave enough money to take care of his children when he was gone. But my father always lived in Montclair. His parents and great-grandparents, F.E. and Charlotte Kip came from Montclair originally. Another family story--I'm kind of giving you all the family dirt, but hey, who cares. When my grandfather, Ruloff Kip, was a young man, his parents, F.E. and Charlotte decided to go to Europe. So they decided to invite a young lady, my grandmother, from town, because I think they thought it was time that their son started to think about marriage. At that time, my grandmother Alison, I think was sixteen years old. So she did go on this cruise with them, but when they got back, she was pregnant. So what did my great grandparents do? They immediately shipped my grandparents back to Europe and told all the neighbors, "Oh, they liked it so much they decided to just have another nine-month stay there," and, of course, they got married. I think it was only recently that their first daughter discovered this, but I guess that's what people did that back then.

MA: Do you know the story of how your parents met each other?

SK: Yes. My mother was a student at George Washington University, and my father was going to law school there.

MA: Both of your parents attended college.

SK: Yes. My father, well, he graduated from Princeton, Class of '43, with an engineering degree, and he had an interesting story during the Navy. He was an officer, and he was on the last destroyer escort to be sunk in the Atlantic by a German sub. The ship went down in less than twenty minutes, and two-thirds of the crew died. There were only three out of twenty-one

officers that survived. So, my father was part of that. He also was part of the five ships that captured the *U-505*. [Editor's Note: The German submarine, *U-505*, was captured by the American Navy on June 4, 1944. It is now in the Museum of Science and Industry in Chicago.] Maybe you've seen the movie, *Attack and Capture: The Story of U-Boat 505* that came out in 2002. They had a video of the actual capture, and they showed my father's boat. There was even a squirrel that was the ship mascot in the video. [laughter]

MA: Yes.

SK: That was the German sub that had the Enigma code machine on it.

MA: Yes.

SK: Right. So after this whole sinking of his boat, he was on survivor's leave and found out that the next assignment he had was out in the Pacific. At that point, it was at the end of the war and the Japanese were just bombing any boats they saw out on the water. To protect the Destroyer Escorts, the Navy would send out these smaller boats ahead of them, like a hundred miles out. They called them picket ships, just like a picket fence. The Japanese didn't care who they hit. The average time out of port for a picket ship was forty-eight hours before it was bombed. So my father, two months later, was ready to go out to another assignment, and was waiting in Boston at that time. He said, one day, all of a sudden, all these church bells started ringing and whistles and people screaming, and the war with Japan was over, so it was right in the nick of time.

MA: Wow. Did he tell you how he was able to survive that sinking of his ship in the Atlantic?

SK: Yes, we have a whole oral history of that that I want to send to some veterans' oral history group. One of the other three officers, Phil Lundeberg, was actually the naval historian for the Smithsonian. So, he was the only one out of the three that is still alive. My father was actually not even a regular member of that crew. He was visiting to try and fix the radar. Because he was just a guest, he wasn't given a regular state room. He was all the way in the back of the ship, a converted potato bin. So when the torpedo hit, it hit mid-ship, and that's what pretty much saved his life. He always tells the story how as the boat is going down, first he helped un-detonate the depth charges. Most of the depth charges were undetonated, but some of them still did go off, and some of the guys in the water died. He also went to the payroll master's office. The safe was open and he grabbed the manifest, the list of all the guys who were on the ship. Although, I'm sure the Navy would've had that in their files. Then just when he was ready to jump off the ship, he realized how cold it would be, and in fact, some of the guys died of hypothermia. So he ran back to his room and grabbed his Princeton sweater, which I still have. It still smells kind of oil. For some reason, the paperwork got all delayed about him getting a Purple Heart, and it was his friend, Phil Lundeberg, that started pushing the government to give a Purple Heart to my father. His congresswoman, Nita Lowey, who is still in New York State, also pushed it. So fifty-four years later, he was given his Purple Heart, but it was a big deal. It was on the *Intrepid,* and PR [public relations] covered it.

MA: Wow.

SK: Yes. So that really made him happy to have that acknowledged. The thing that's interesting about the survivors of this boat called the *F.C. Davis* was that they, just a few years after the sinking, got in touch with the commander of that German sub and his crew, and the Germans started attending the *F.C. Davis* reunions in the States.

MA: Wow.

SK: If you saw the movie *Das Boot*, which probably you didn't because you're too young, it's all about a German submarine crew. I think less than a third of German subs came back because they were just dispatched willy-nilly, deliberately sent into areas where the higher ups knew they would probably be torpedoed. My father said after watching that movie he had a different appreciation for what it was like for the crew members because initially he was not happy about his fellow survivors inviting these German crew members to his Navy reunion.

MA: Yes.

SK: I will say, when we went to see *Titanic*, my father said afterwards it really brought up a lot of bad memories for him.

MA: How long was he in the water? Do you know?

SK: Well, he was in the water for four hours, and it was up near Newfoundland or some other place where it was really cold water. Fortunately, he had something he was holding onto, a life raft or something. He was submerged in the water the whole time. His boat was one of a few other boats that was patrolling. So the other ships just sped right past all these survivors because they wanted to catch the German sub before picking up the survivors. So they did rescue them, and, as I mentioned, some people died of hypothermia. One of my father's duties, as soon as he got back to shore, being one of the three remaining officers, was writing letters to all the family members, documenting it for history, et cetera.

MA: Wow.

SK: So yes, the Navy was a very big part of my father's life. Although other than this reunion he went to once every two years, he wasn't a member of the VFW [Veterans of Foreign Wars] or anything like that.

MA: Did your mother tell you about her experiences on the home front during the war?

SK: Well, she was a child, I think a teen, because as I said, her father was part of this rationing board. My mother pretty much was a homemaker, and she did a lot of volunteer work in prisons, VA psychiatric hospitals, and raising money for an orphanage in Haiti. As a young woman, she went to a Navajo reservation for a summer. She brought back a lot of Navajo artifacts--they weren't antiquities--they were stuff that were made for tourists. When I was growing up, our house had a lot of stuff from Kypsburg and stuff that my mother brought from the reservation.

MA: Did she ever participate in any wartime industry?

SK: No, because she wasn't that old. She was, I think, five years younger than my father. He graduated from Princeton in only three years instead of four because they wanted to make all men available to fight in World War II. After the war was over, there was a woman that my father had met in Princeton that he was in love with, but he went off to war. I guess she didn't know if and when he'd come back. So she did marry somebody else. At the end of the war, he said, "Well, gee, what is the rush to get back to the States?" So he did sign up for another hitch and went to Nagasaki, which, of course, he said was horrible. He did tell me a story of how the Allies determined that the Japanese submarine fleet had to be destroyed. So he said there was this whole ceremony, where all the Japanese boats came out of port and they were set with detonation charges inside. Out of the--I don't know what it's called where the periscope is--the top part of the submarine, they all had Japanese cherry blossoms.

MA: Wow.

SK: He said that even him being part of the Allies, it was sad in a way that the whole country, [Japan], had fallen to rack and ruin. I will tell you one thing. My father, as he got older, got more and more liberal. He'd started out as a Republican and ended up as a flaming liberal. He was furious when the [National Air and Space] Museum in D.C., part of the Smithsonian, was going to have the *Enola Gay* exhibited. That was the airplane that dropped the bomb. [Editor's Note: The *Enola Gay* is the B-29 that dropped the atomic bomb on Hiroshima, Japan on August 6, 1945.] He was one of the people that felt it wasn't necessary to bomb Japan. You hear stories that the United States was negotiating with the Japanese, and they just wanted to demonstrate that this nuclear bomb that they'd been working on all these years was effective. I don't know. Other people don't feel that way. They felt that bombing Japan kept many more of our servicemen from dying.

MA: Was he ever politically involved?

SK: No, no he wasn't. He had one or two friends that ran for office. My father worked in New Jersey at AT&T. He was the head of their intellectual properties department because he was a patent lawyer. He commuted about an hour and a half each way. My parents lived in Ossining, New York, so that was a bit of a haul for him. My parents were both very involved in raising money for this orphanage in Haiti. So they went down there numerous times and they also visited churches to raise money for Haiti. So that was his main volunteer work. He also volunteered at a local food bank, and he sang in the church choirs.

MA: Can you describe what your early childhood was like and the people around you?

SK: Okay. Well, Ossining is known as home of Sing Sing prison. In fact, my mother tells a story, which I'm sure is true. When she was pregnant with me, they lived in this not so great house--this was their first house as a married couple--pretty close to the prison. So it was a hot night, and they were taking a walk outside, and they saw the lights dim. The Rosenbergs were supposed to be executed the next day, but the government had heard all these people were going to come up and protest, so they executed the Rosenbergs the night before. [Editor's note: Julius

and Ethel Rosenberg were tried and convicted on charges of espionage in 1951 for plotting to pass United States military intelligence concerning the atomic bomb to the Soviet Union. They were executed in 1953.]

MA: Wow. It happened in that prison.

SK: Yes.

MA: Wow.

SK: It sounds like folklore that the lights dimmed when they used the electric chair, but in this case, I guess it was true. The prison, gee, that's been there since the 1820s or whatever. My sister did volunteer work as a literacy counselor there. We were more on the outskirts of town, a mile away from Maryknoll, which was the earliest U.S. base Catholic missionary to the Orient. So that building is really cool. It's on top of a hill, and it's done in the style of a Chinese pagoda.

MA: Wow.

SK: It's a huge stone edifice. So my father and all of us kids would often go up there to walk around. The brothers had a swimming pool, tennis courts. That was nice. But the grounds were beautiful. In later years, they had a book publishing company that really promoted liberation theology. I don't know if you know what that is.

MA: I am not familiar with that.

SK: Well, Maryknoll's first mission was in the Orient, but then when China went Communist, the missionaries were kicked out, so they moved down to Central America. The four Maryknoll nuns were killed down there, one of them actually wasn't a nun; she was a layperson missionary. [Editor's Note: On December 2, 1980, four female Maryknoll missionaries were murdered in El Salvador by five members of the El Salvador National Guard.] They had a very strong interest in Central America, and liberation theology leans on the posture that when Jesus came, he came for the poor. Liberation theology encouraged poor people to become empowered, et cetera. So, again, I mention that my father, in his later years, was interested in more liberal philosophies. Robert Ellsberg was the head of Maryknoll's publishing company. He is the son of Daniel Ellsberg, the guy that released all the tapes about the Pentagon and the Vietnam War. [Editor's Note: Daniel Ellsberg was an employee of the RAND Corporation who says he released the Pentagon Papers to the New York Times in 1971. It revealed the dysfunction within the government over the Vietnam War.] So my father used to go up there and visit with Bob Ellsberg a lot, and bought a number of his books. They have a cloister up there, and the nuns make these beautiful greeting cards. A lot of them have Emily Dickinson poems on the cards. My father was a big fan of Emily Dickinson. Later in his life, he stopped going to church. He felt it was too organized. But Emily Dickinson has a poem, something about nature is my spiritual cathedral or something. My father related to that. So Maryknoll was a big part of our life.

MA: Growing up, was religion important to you?

SK: Well, we all went to the Episcopal Church. A lot of my parents' involvement with this Haitian orphanage was based out of their church. My father sang in the choir, all that. Of course, they made us kids go until we were sixteen, and then we went our own ways. Some of us still do go to the Episcopal Church, others of us don't.

MA: How big was the town?

SK: Maybe twenty-thousand, or something like that. I'd like to tell you a little bit more about my childhood. My father had a brother Phelps, who lived out in the Chicago area. My uncle Phelps, when he was thirty-seven, he died of a brain tumor. It was melanoma that converted into brain cancer. So anybody that just blows off the whole idea of melanoma, this is something you should take a look at. His wife, who was always very artistic and all this, she just drank herself to death three years later. My parents had, years ago, made an agreement with my Uncle Phelps and his wife, "Oh, if anything happens to either of us, we'll take your kids." So these three cousins, who had our same last name, came to live with us on my thirteenth birthday. I've always thought of them as my brother and sisters. One of them is eight months older than I am, and she lives in New York. Another one, my cousin Sandy, who's a year younger, lives in Reno. He's a doctor. Then my cousin Katrinka, who's seven years younger, is a doctor also living in Reno. So that was a kind of interesting configuration of having three cousins. I know in other countries, people live in extended families and all that--but here it was a little bit unusual. My parents were extremely good about treating their nieces and nephew just like their own kids. I liked it. I mean, having one brother one day, and then having three more siblings the next day was great. [laughter]

MA: What was school like in your early childhood?

SK: Well, it was the typical grade school. Our high school was built to replicate Yale University. It was a nice stone edifice in downtown Ossining. We lived a good, I don't know, five miles away from the school. My father, at that point, was working at--I don't know what the original name of AT&T was, but he would commute way down to the bottom of New York City. So it was fine. All of us were involved in different activities, sports, music, whatever. But all of us, with the exception of my youngest sister/cousin, Katrinka, decided at one point or another to go away to private school. Carlotta and I went away our senior years. My cousin Sandy went away his entire four senior years, and I think my brother Nick did too. They both went to prep schools in Connecticut. Our public high school was pretty big, so I think that was a good part of the reason why we wanted to go away and study at a smaller school.

MA: How are we doing on time?

SK: Okay. I can talk another ten minutes, if I have anything to say.

MA: We can end here, or we can continue for a little bit.

SK: I don't know how much more you have to ask me. If you feel like it will run another half hour, we can do it another time.

MA: Yes, probably. I think we will stop it here, and we will pick up another time.

SK: Okay.

----------END OF TRANSCRIPT----------

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