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Fred Koegler
October 24, 2015

Interview conducted by Lu Ann Jones and Thea Garrett
Transcribed by Thea Garrett
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ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

WITH

FRED KOEGLER

By Lu Ann Jones

and Thea Garrett

October 24, 2015

The Ranger Rendezvous

Transcribed by Thea Garrett

ASSOCIATION OF NATIONAL PARK RANGERS

The narrator has corrected this transcript

[START OF TRACK 1]

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Lu Ann Jones: So, I am going to start formally here and just do the introduction I usually do. This is Lu Ann Jones and I am here with Fred Koegler and Thea Garrett and it is October 24th, now, 2015. We are at Black Mountain, North Carolina, for the 35th Ranger Rendezvous for the Association of National Park Rangers.

Fred Koegler: 38th.

Lu Ann Jones: Oh 38th, (laughter) I'm inaccurate about that. We are here this morning to talk about Fred Koegler's fifty years as a seasonal ranger at Yosemite National Park as part of this oral history project. Thanks so much.

Lu Ann Jones: Can you tell me a little bit about your growing up before you ever decided to go to Yosemite, kind of sum up the personal background, biographical background a little bit?

Fred Koegler: Okay, as I said I was born in Los Angeles, grew up in Hollywood, California, went to Hollywood High School. My dad was in the film industry, he was a technician building motion picture cameras, the Mitchell Camera that they use in lot in films.

Fred Koegler: He met some friends back in the late thirties that had a place they called Paradise. And so, he said, well, okay, let me go up there and see what it's all about. So, he and my mother they drove up to a place called Tuolumne Meadows, Yosemite National Park. And my dad was just glorious; he thought that was like going to heaven because of the great mountain peaks around there, and the meadows, and especially the lakes he could fish in. So, he and my mom went up there until the war started and then they couldn't go anymore.

Fred Koegler: So then, when I was about six years old in the late forties, that's my first experience of being up in Tuolumne Meadows, and from that time on, for the next ten years, as a child I – we would go up there for a two-week vacation, that's all he had. Every two weeks we went up there and every other day my dad took me fishing to all the different lakes, taught me how to fish and I just fell in love with the outdoors. So, I decided, well, maybe I would like to have this kind of life because while we were there my mom would invite some of the park rangers that would patrol the campgrounds at Tuolumne Meadows to come for dinner and they'd tell stories. We had the legend, Carl Sharsmith, who was one of the longest tenured rangers in

Yosemite, over sixty years as a naturalist, and so I went on hikes with him and I said, God, this is great! I might want to do this in my life.

Fred Koegler: So, I went to Hollywood High School during my junior year; two other friends of mine, we hiked the John Muir Trail from Tuolumne Meadows all the way to Mount Whitney in twenty-eight days before I had to go back for my senior year and when I was out there I said, God, this is a great life. I would like to be in the mountains and do all this stuff.

Fred Koegler: So yeah, I went out and I still was fishing around to see what kind of college I went to, so I went to Los Angeles City College and then finally wound up at Humboldt State University – College, it was Humboldt State in those days in the sixties. And I was going to go into forestry, and I started forestry and I said, God, this is tough courses, I don't know if I can handle this. So, I went into another field called physical education. I was a track runner and a football player in high school, so I said, well, maybe I'll try teaching (laughter).

Fred Koegler: So anyway, in 1964 I got a job with the U.S. Forest Service. I didn't know too much how to get into the Park Service, but I got applications for Forest Service and put in for the Inyo National Forest and I started out there in 1963, going back since 1963 as a fire control aide and drove around and said, "Oh, this is great," you know, go to fires and do this and that. And then the next year I was on the Tioga Road project; at that time, they were rebuilding the whole Tioga road going into Yosemite National Park and I was a fire control aide above the project in case there was fires up there, when they had the road closed they couldn't get the equipment up there, so I did that. I was close to Tioga Pass at the entrance station so in my spare time I drove up there and talked to the rangers who were my age were all, Gosh, why don't you come up and join us?

Fred Koegler: Going back a little bit, the district ranger when I was growing up was Herb Ewing, an old-time ranger and he got to know my dad—

Lu Ann Jones: What was his last name?

Fred Koegler: Herb Ewing, E-W-I-N-G. His father was a park ranger, his grandfather was Gabriel Sovulewski, who was one of the trail foremen and built all the trails in the park, so he was a Park Service family. And he was the old-time ranger that my dad got to know and he knew me and so when I was there that year, '64, I went down and talked to him, I said, "How can I get into it?"

Fred Koegler: He said, "Fred, you know everything about this place. You've been with your father fishing all over. I could use you to issue fire permits and things working in the visitor center."

Fred Koegler: So, I said, “Okay.”

Fred Koegler: He says, “You apply and I’ll make sure I pick your name up.” And that’s how I got to Tuolumne Meadows in 1965. It’s who you know sometimes, not what you know. And so, I was still going to Humboldt State in ‘65 and so I started my career as a park ranger and I was assigned to the visitor center and all I did is sit there and write fire permits because Herb didn’t want to be disturbed at night and during the day I had to issue fire permits. So, myself and my roommate Dallas Koehn, who eventually became a district ranger in Glacier, but anyway, we roomed together and so we worked out great and so for two years that’s what we did, (laughter) issuing fire permits. And then I had the great opportunity to work along with Carl Sharsmith who was a ranger naturalist, as they called them in those days, work at visitor center and I’d get a lot of knowledge off him of everything you needed to know. So that’s how I started in Yosemite National Park.

Lu Ann Jones: When did you start going back there – you were considered a seasonal at that point?

Fred Koegler: Yes, I was a GS-4. (laughter)

Lu Ann Jones: So, when did you go back there in between teaching? Did you start—

Fred Koegler: Oh, okay. So, I went back up there in 1966; that was my second year. I graduated from Humboldt State in ‘66. I met my wife Debbie up at Humboldt State, and that was a nice interesting story. On our way home from college we had to take the Greyhound Bus because I was living in Los Angeles, it was a long bus drive, and she’s from the Bay Area, Mill Valley, and so my roommate and I got on a bus and there were two girls there and my roommate says, “Well, why don’t you sit with her and I’ll sit with her and we’ll go home.” That’s how I met my future wife on a Greyhound Bus (laughter) going six hours down the road to – where was it? To San Francisco.

Fred Koegler: So, it was ‘66, we graduated, Debbie came up; she had to be escorted by her younger sister because her mother wouldn’t let her go up there by herself (laughter). Side note to that was that we had tent cabins and we were right behind our little contact station – as we called it in those days, it wasn’t a visitor center – and there was a double tent which was a minister’s tent – they had revolving ministers every two weeks, they had a ministry that gave church services at the campfire circle in those days – and so they had an extra tent and the minister said, “Oh yeah, why don’t you have your lady friend stay with us.” And so, her sister and Debbie had the tent, and our tent was maybe a hundred yards away (laughter). And so, she spent the summer with me, well part of the summer, her mother and

father called her back home because they said, you need to get a job because she graduated too. So, in '66 I went back to school to start working on my teaching credential.

Fred Koegler: In '67, Debbie and I got married at the Presidio of San Francisco. And right after we got married and went on our honeymoon we went straight to Tuolumne Meadows and started our life together in Tuolumne Meadows in '67 and then we stayed there until they closed the road; Herb kept me until the very end. We didn't know what we were going to do, we were just a young couple; we had no idea. I still hadn't finished my teaching credential and she was a home ec teacher and she got a job. She finally wound up with a job at McCormick and Schilling and she worked in the Bay area – that was before we got married – and when we got married she gave up the job. To convince her to marry me – she still kids me – I called her one night I says, “How would you like to be my wife and cook over a wood stove during the summer?”

Fred Koegler: And she says, “Yes.” (laughter) She had this test kitchen with the highest quality stoves and everything. Well, I said, you can bake and do your cooking on a wood cook stove in a tent (laughter).

Fred Koegler: We got married, as I said, in '67. We didn't know what we were going to do after '67. I didn't have a teaching job; she didn't know what she was going to do. We went down and we lived in the valley, in Yosemite Valley. I worked at the entrance station, I worked on a night shift, and I did everything else. And we saw the last fire fall in 1968 that was there.

Fred Koegler: And so, as the Park Service goes, they said, Okay, we'll hire you for December, January, and maybe February. So, January came around and at the end of January, “We're out of money, you're terminated in two weeks (laughs).” That was it. So we said, Good. What are we going to do? So, I got on the phone real quick and called Cal State Los Angeles College and said, “Can I get in? Because I've got to finish up my teaching credentials.”

Fred Koegler: “Yeah! You're in time, come down.”

Fred Koegler: So, we rolled down to Los Angeles and I finished my degree stuff for my teaching credential in 19 – this was 1967; my wife went to work as a bank clerk to make us some money for us to live. Then the next year we went back to Tuolumne and kept on going. I had a park ranger friend who was up in Tuolumne Meadows, he was an interpreter also, and he taught for LA Unified School District. Anyway, he said, “Fred, don't go to the Park Service. You can have two of the best worlds. Number one, you can be a teacher from September to June, and then from June to September you can be a park ranger.” I thought about that, and I said, Hmm, that would be, maybe, great. So that's what I did (laughter).

- Lu Ann Jones: I was going to ask you why, given you got that much experience so early on, why didn't you decide to go with the Park Service and try to do it full time?
- Fred Koegler: I tried at that time and there were just no jobs in the sixties. I said, "Well, how can I get a permanent job?"
- Fred Koegler: "Well, we're not hiring anybody."
- Fred Koegler: Mostly in Yosemite it was all seasonal and you really had to, I guess, be on the – I didn't know how to apply and stuff in those days, and so I just made a decision at that time, I said, Well, I could work – and I didn't know how long I was going to do this job and so it worked out for the best.
- Lu Ann Jones: So, you said for a few years you were issuing fire permits. How did your duties and responsibilities change?
- Fred Koegler: Okay, so it was a contact station in the Park Service – in the sixties there were no visitor centers, they were just little contact stations where people came, got information, and if they wanted to go into the backcountry there were no wilderness permits, nothing. You said, I want to go to such-and-such lake, or I want to go here, and you just wrote out a fire permit and you said, "Make sure your fire is with rocks around it so it doesn't get away. This is what you need to be in the backcountry," and also gave out information. The people come in and they wanted to know where so-and-so features of the park were. And what they could do, and the other thing, you were in charge of the campgrounds and Tuolumne Meadows was one of the largest campgrounds in the National Park system. In those days, we had over seven hundred sites because people just squeezed in any place.
- Fred Koegler: Then we were there for emergencies in case we had emergency calls from somebody. Going back to those days we had crank phones; we didn't have a regular phone system, we had no electricity either; for our tent cabin we had generators. Our generator ran all night long and we couldn't have anything in it. Well, maybe a coffee pot would work, but nothing else. Well, there weren't even microwaves or any of that stuff in those days, toaster ovens – but you cooked on a woodstove and you did everything there and that was your heat, we had a couple light bulbs in the tent and that was it. If you had an iron, there was a board out at the washhouse where you would take the board so somebody knew you had the board, and everybody wouldn't iron. Sometimes at nighttime that the generator – woody generator would go down and I would have to get up in the middle of the night, I was closest to the generator and start it again (laughter) and then we had one telephone in the whole compound. We had five tents –

ranger tents surround and that was the crew up there at that time, plus the two permanents.

Thea Garrett: Was there one person per tent?

Fred Koegler: It was families, in those days we were families, yea. At the entrance station that had a house up there and they put in three people up there who worked the entrance station and that was a crew in that time. We had maybe ten people the whole time. And then ranger-naturalists we'd be interspersed with each other. Carl Sharsmith would have a tent cabin, another ranger would have a tent cabin and there'd be two people in a tent if their wives didn't come.

Fred Koegler: Then you had this crank phone and there's three crank phones in the whole district, one at the district office, and one extension outside on a tree, and then one at the entrance station, and one at the contact station, so each one had a different ring, two rings, one ring, four rings and you answer it. When the phone rang whoever was the closest person would run down and answer it; it might be an emergency call. "I need help," or "I need to talk to my family member. Can you go get them?" So, you run to the next tent and tell them, "Hey, you've got a telephone call." They had to go down and use the phone, so that was in the sixties and that went all the way until almost '72, '73 before they got a power line and a telephone line coming up to the high country, so it was rural living (laughter). People would call and we'd answer the phone and say, Yeah, okay, we'll try to look for your friend in the camp. And we'd go in there and try to find them and they'd give a sort of description of what they did and give them the emergency message that they might have.

Fred Koegler: So, we'd give information out, you know tell people where to go if they didn't have any ideas where they wanted to go backpacking, so we'd tell them that and so forth. So basically, my roommate and I would split the shift. I would work starting at two in the afternoon until midnight because the district ranger didn't want to be disturbed after six o'clock in the evening so we sat there, had a fire going, people would come in and talk to us and that was my first year of working.

Lu Ann Jones: And you know, it is interesting, one interview I did several years ago was with Laurel Munson Boyers.

Fred Koegler: Oh yeah, yeah. I knew her real well. I just saw her this summer.

Lu Ann Jones: Yeah, she was talking about when she was backcountry there, well she starts in the seventies.

Fred Koegler: Yeah, I remember the day she started.

Lu Ann Jones: You do (laughter)?

Fred Koegler: I have a picture of her in the kiosk; when we went to wilderness permits she was the only blonde looking gal we had (laughter) and she was in sitting in there writing, and we didn't have to do [fire] permits anymore, they had to do wilderness permits (laughter).

Lu Ann Jones: Well, she was talking about those are the years, the late sixties especially and the seventies, where backpacking really takes off. I mean you were kind of in a prime location to see – what was going on in terms of use of Yosemite backcountry in those years? Did you get to see any difference in just volume use, or the kinds of people who came there to use——

Fred Koegler: Yeah, mainly there were a lot of old timers that start backpacking; not too many young people were backpacking, but more the middle-aged people were coming in and then it was also the start era of rock climbing. They started rock climbing down in the valley and did all the things, but in the high country it wasn't really established yet. What we would do for rescues in those days, we wouldn't do rock climbing. We would hike to the top of a peak and then lower rope down or something like that. We never knew how to climb straight up a wall. I started learning that back in the late sixties when rock climbing came in.

Fred Koegler: And we had to deal with the – in those days it was, you know – free type of people who came in there, long-haired hippies, shall we say, which evolved into the 1970 Yosemite Riots, which I'll talk about a little later. And so, these people start, you know, they had no money so they would try to get away with a lot of the things they couldn't do. You used to chase them all over the place, to make sure they were camping in the right place. They'd take their sleeping bag and go anyplace.

Fred Koegler: Yeah, it was the era where a lot of people come in and they want to just go out – they had new backpacks which came in those times, so people would bring their equipment up and start hiking. Go in maybe five or six miles backpacking some place, to a lake and then come back out. Since we're close to San Francisco, Los Angeles area a lot of people would come up. We wouldn't have the great tourism where people would come from all over the United States coming through the park, because people just didn't do that really. There were people, but mostly just local people.

Thea Garrett: You said that there were three different categories of people that you were seeing in that era, the hippies, and then were there two others that you mentioned?

Fred Koegler: Oh yeah, the long-haired, that was the style in the sixties, and then there were the middle-aged people that were coming up there to camp. The

campground was such that people came up there, families came up all the time and they stayed for the whole summer – there was no limit. Dad would bring up the family, kids, and all that stuff for the summer vacation and they'd sit there for maybe twenty, thirty days for the summer and then father would go home, work and come back on the weekends and do what he had to. So, we had a lot of family groups, which was that era, and then finally in the seventies, they put in the limits. Everything changed in the seventies. In the sixties it was still wide open, you could camp at – go on a backpack trip to a lake that was only a mile away and sit there for four or five days, or a couple of weeks if you wanted to backpack and stay out overnight and then you could go down to the store and get your stuff and go back, it wouldn't be too far. Nowadays you've got to be at least four miles out from Tuolumne Meadows proper to go stay overnight camping, so a lot of things start changing in the seventies that didn't happen in the sixties and fifties.

Fred Koegler: You know, when I was there as a kid too, it was the same thing. We stayed up there for a two-week vacation, maybe extended it thirteen days, fourteen days, that's about it, that's all my dad had, but a lot of people stayed there for the whole summer. We had old-timers come in there and pitched their tents and be there for the whole summer. One guy was like the mayor of the campground, he knew everybody, and he'd tell you as the rangers, "Come by after you work, I'll give you a little Schnapps," stuff like that (laughter), you know?

Fred Koegler: We had a guy by the name of Johnston, and he would come in in his backpack with a complete suit on and tie and come in to backpack, from the old days when they did that, and he'd come in and stay for the whole summer too. Finally, some of the word leaked out and the newspapers start picking up. And oh, Park Service, oh, shoot. You've got to do something about it. So, I can remember the poor day when one person who was there all the time, we had to tow his trailer out of the park and said, "Sorry, you spent your time there and you can't come anymore. You can only come for two weeks." That shot everything down, that changed everything for camping; that was about 1973.

Lu Ann Jones: What triggered that change?

Fred Koegler: That's the change because people will stay all the time and the Park Service says No, we need the space for other people. Because at that time I think the visitation started picking up. And that would be, well if you guys have got people staying here all the time there's no place for other people to come in and camp. So, they finally put a limit on fourteen days coming back in that time. So that shut all the old-timers out. It was a big roar about that, but we had to do that.

- Lu Ann Jones: Was it the implementation of the Wilderness Act? Was that—
- Fred Koegler: Yeah, that started – I think the Wilderness Act came in in 1964, but it wasn't really implemented until almost the 1970s. I said Laurel was one of our wilderness rangers in 1972 when we started going to wilderness permits. You couldn't go to a local Dog Lake, which was like a mile away, or Elizabeth Lake was two miles away. For people with families they could hike there and stay overnight real quick with their family. Okay, now we said, you've got to be four miles away, it is no longer a fire permit; it is now a wilderness permit. You can only build fires in certain places. Before people would build fires any place they wanted to as long as they put a rock ring around it and didn't let the fire get away. So that's where the Wilderness Act started managing the backcountry and so that took care of a lot of issues.
- Thea Garrett: Were you dealing directly with people's responses to the new regulations? Do you have memories of that?
- Fred Koegler: Yeah, being there at the contact station – we didn't have a visitor center, it didn't come in until the seventies where we had another building that we established as a visitor center and the contact station went to just being a campground kiosk building where you – because they brought in fees then. There were no fees in the old days; you just came in and it was free. All that it would cost you was three dollars coming into the park or something like that that was the fee for a fifteen day pass, as I recall because I had to work later on in the late sixties, I had to work at the entrance station. So, when you work, you were hired as a general ranger and I was a general ranger in protection and if you want to be a ranger-naturalist you went into the interp division or maintenance – there was no resource divisions or fire divisions. Oh, they did have a fire division with fire crews, but there were no all these other divisions as you have now. So as a Protection ranger you were in charge of the resources, you were in charge of everything and you did, number one, you did road patrol; you did horse patrol, the park had horses; you did firefighting; you did rescue work; you did bear management, which there was no bear management in those days; and you took care of anything that happened, so you were a jack of all trades as a general ranger. So, I did all of those things, I learned all those things because I didn't know much of anything. You worked the entrance station so you rotated, you weren't just a specialist for entrance station or interp or resource, or bear, fire, or SAR [Search and Rescue], there was no big thing.
- Fred Koegler: So, if there was a fire – I remember my second year there, Herb said, "We need you to go up the hill here and take care of a fire. I'll have a helicopter in the meadow, and you get in the helicopter and he'll fly you up to the

ridge and you help the fire guard that's up there overnight fight the fire and I'll pick you up the next morning and bring you back."

Fred Koegler: Then another time, he said, "There's a small snag fire, you and one of the other rangers, you guys go up there and take care of it." And while I was sitting there with the backpack pumping water onto the fire, a guy comes up to me and he says, "You carry that stuff up here? I'm Mr. Kelty of Kelty Backpack Company," and he says, "You should get one of our new Kelty packs to put that little bladder of water in and carry it." And I said, wow, you meet some people.

Fred Koegler: So, going back to the fire deals, the district ranger, as I said, didn't want to be disturbed. One night there was people, I guess, started knocking on our doors. There was a fire about five miles down the road, up on a ridge and he says, "I'm tired of answering these questions, you and Dallas" – my roommate – "you go lock up the contact station, get a truck, take your fire gear and go down there and put the fire out. I don't want to be disturbed anymore." (laughter) And so we go down there and fight the fire for about three hours, put it out, and come back, and I walked up, and we said, Oh God, we did this great job. I walked up and we said, Let's go tell Herb that we got the fire out. It was, like, midnight, and I said, "Oh, that was a big mistake." So, we drove up and the door was open because it was summer and he was sleeping in there and we could hear him snoring away. Said, "Oh, we better not even talk to him. He'll get mad." So, we went back and the next day we told him we put the fire out (laughter).

Lu Ann Jones: What kind of training would you get to do all these things?

Fred Koegler: That's the good question. Luckily, when I worked for the Forest Service I went through some fire training, so I knew how to fight fire. Road patrol, being a law enforcement officer, because that's what you were, you were in road patrol. I didn't get to do road patrol until my second or third year there. Herb says, "Okay, now it's time for you to get out in the car and start chasing speeders and doing that stuff."

Fred Koegler: And I say, "Okay."

Fred Koegler: He says, "Okay, number one, there's a gun and a pair of handcuffs in the glove compartment. If you need them, there's a key on a key ring. You can open the glove compartment and put it on the gun and the handcuffs and do what you had to do, but otherwise, leave it there." We had no protection equipment and nothing in those days, we couldn't wear anything – remember we had long-sleeved shirt with a tie on, oxford shoes and wool pants – that was the uniform in those days, even in the summer and not until they changed everything in the seventies, we were getting kind of hot, we could go to short-sleeved shorts and—. Oh, when we went

on a firefight we could wear our long-sleeved shirt, we didn't have to wear the tie and we could wear green Levis and hiking boots to go to the fire (laughs), not like today it has all changed, this is way back when I started. Yeah, they taught us, a couple, maybe once in a while—

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Fred Koegler: —somebody from down in Yosemite Valley, law enforcement people that knew a little more about law enforcement would come up and talk to us about it and that was about it. We learned by doing.

Fred Koegler: Horse riding, I'd never rode a horse in my life, the only time I ever rode a horse was going to Griffith Park on a pony ride in Los Angeles area. One day, my second year he says, "I need you to go on a horse patrol."

Fred Koegler: I said, "Well, I don't even know anything about a horse. I don't know how to saddle and whatever."

Fred Koegler: He said, "Well, I'll have one of these other seasonal rangers who have been around here for a while that have had horse experience, they'll show you everything you need to know."

Fred Koegler: So, they take me down, they show me how to saddle, put the bridle in the mouth and somebody says, Okay, this is how you pull to the right, pull to the left, pull back, and that's all you need to know. You take your legs and kick them a little bit and he'll go (laughter). So, I said, Okay. So, I went out that second summer and rode horses. (laughter) That's how I learned; you learned by doing it.

Fred Koegler: The third year – the second year after we were married he says, "I want you to go backcountry and be the Merced Lake ranger. There's a cabin back there, you and Debbie go back there and I'll give her a riding mule and you'll have a pack mule and you'll have a horse." That there was my third year doing this or fourth year – third year – and I sort of knew what horses were about but I didn't know anything about packing. So, he said, "Well, I'll send you another ranger down there and he'll show you how to pack a mule." So, I spent two hours packing it and said, Okay I guess I can do this. And so, my wife and I take all our belongings and we put it on this mule, we packed it up and half way up to Merced Lake – it was like a fourteen mile ride in there – my wife is behind me and she says, "Hey, there's something wrong with that pack; that pack is going like this off the top," she said. "We'd better stop." (laughter) We had to untie the whole mule and repack the whole thing we had to relearn, so we went back in there.

Fred Koegler: We sat back there for four weeks and came out and we had all our supplies with us for four weeks in this cabin and it was a wood cook stove and all that stuff. We patrolled around; she would go with me on the mule, and I would ride the horse and we'd ride around and check all the places we needed to check and come back. Every day we went different places.

Fred Koegler: It was nice that we had a trail crew about a hundred, two hundred yards away from us camping and they had fresh supplies every time. So, when we were low on something they used to give us some fresh vegetables and stuff like that.

Fred Koegler: There was a High Sierra Camp, and I don't know if you're familiar with Yosemite that we have five High Sierra Camps days apart with Tuolumne Meadows Lodge; you go down to Glen Aulin; then you go over to May Lake; Sunrise down to Merced Lake, which was where we were stationed; and then up to Vogelsang, which is at 10,000 feet and then back to Tuolumne. People do the loop trip. In those days it was really cheap to go, have your meals and sleep in the tents and go around. We had a lot of old timers would come to Merced Lake, which was one of the larger camps, and so a lot of times they would invite—" Oh, we'd like to have a ranger over for dinner and his wife." So we'd get down there and they'd give us dinner. (laughter) So that's how I learned to do that stuff.

Fred Koegler: And then come back to rescue work, I never knew anything because what we did in those days you just hiked to the top. You were a mountaineer, not a rock climber. So, in those days you had a mountaineer and you might walk up to the top of a rock and we didn't have that much problems because people didn't attempt to go up cliffs until the rock craze came in in the sixties, you know, and people started learning how to climb and then all the climbing gear came in and so forth. I never knew anything and finally they gave us a two-day course in rock climbing, we did the rock climbing, so we caught onto that a little bit and did that.

Fred Koegler: Anyway, another sidebar to that story, going into the seventies, '69 my wife and I were still there, we stayed until the fall because I had no teaching job. We were substitute teaching – going back a little bit, after I got my credential after the 1967 when we were first married we stayed down there and I went back, so at the end of '68 I had a teaching credential and my wife, because she had a degree in home ec, she could substitute teach. So, we went back in off season and we just went out every day, that's how we got money, substitute teaching in Los Angeles. Herb calls up and he says, "Yeah, come back up" – as soon as the snow got out of the place and they opened Tioga Pass – "come up and work." So, I said, "Okay, fine."

- Fred Koegler: So, it was great being a teacher, make some money here and go up to the park where I loved that. We get into the seventies, so that built up to the 1970 riot down in the valley, which was the uprising of the young people because they wanted it their way and the Park Service wanted it their way. It all erupted on July 4th, where all the young kids just started sitting in Stoneman Meadow down in the valley and they wouldn't leave even when the ranger said so. The rangers started getting the force, they got these rangers and anybody who could ride a horse with an axe handle, and they had helmets on and they started going in – they were no match for these guys, they start throwing bottles, rocks, everything at them, so they had to retreat.
- Fred Koegler: I was up in the high country. We knew something was going to happen, but we didn't know when. Fourth of July we usually go down to the little town down below, Lee Vining which is at Mono Lake, and they had a firework show, so that particular night, ah nothing is going to happen Fourth of July, so we drove down to the show and we came back and, God, this camp is dead, where is everybody? Get on the phone, well at that time we had transitioned – no we still had a crank phone in 1970 and get on, called my boss and said, "What's going on?"
- Fred Koegler: "Oh, we got a big riot down here." "Do you want me to come down?" "No, you stay up at Tuolumne because you're the only ranger that's left there."
- Fred Koegler: Everybody else left because I wasn't there when I went with Debbie down to the Fourth of July firework show. He said, "You stay there and guard the place in case something happens we need somebody up there."
- Fred Koegler: So, I missed the big action down in the valley. I got into it a little later, but yeah, everything went to hell down there – excuse me, but that's what happened – and so they finally had to call in the deputy sheriffs and Highway Patrol officers from local counties and they finally got it under control and arrested over two hundred people and then cited them in the court, told them to come back later. After that day they had an emergency meeting and said, "Okay, now you rangers are going to have to work" – 1970 – "you're going to have to work twelve hours a day with only one day off a week instead of two."
- Fred Koegler: So, we start working twelve hours a day and what happened was, "Some of you ranger-naturalists we're cutting your program down." And one of you rangers would ride with one of us in a patrol car and we would patrol around and anytime you saw a large crowd of kids you went in and dispersed them, we didn't want a big group of young kids. Then we had to go up to Tioga Pass and every fifth car we would have to search but we did selective enforcement, if we saw anybody with long hair or anything

like that we started saying, Well, there's something wrong with your car, you can't come into the park, to get them out. And so that was the whole summer, we worked twelve hours a day.

Fred Koegler: Going back to teaching again – I was a sub, and our families said, “Well, you guys are going to have to start getting a regular job, you know.” You know how parents were in those days.

Fred Koegler: “Okay, we'll start looking.”

Fred Koegler: So, my friend who told me about being a teacher and Park Service person he was a teacher at a high school in Los Angeles and he said, “Well, maybe I can get you a permanent job.”

Fred Koegler: So sure, enough at the end of September they gave me a call and said, “We've got a job for you, a permanent job in the LA Unified school district. Can you come?”

Fred Koegler: I said, “Well, I have one problem. I just bought plane tickets to go to Europe” – because we made so much money, I thought it was a lot of money in those days, we could go to Europe. We bought a Volkswagen, brand-new 1971 Super Beetle when they came out, we're going to go to Europe, and I didn't know I was going to get a permanent job. And you can't do this nowadays, but the principal said, “Okay, why don't you go to Europe. I'll keep your position open, put a substitute in it and when you come back in October you can go teach permanently.”

Fred Koegler: I said, “God, thank you.” We had to drive down and get all of our stuff to go to Europe and met with the principal and talked to him and said, Yeah, fine. So again, this is a connection of who do you know and who you don't know. But as a young kid when I was going to LA Unified High School, the LeConte and Hollywood High School, we had youth groups at the Hollywood Presbyterian Church and he was one of the elders there and he got to know us as kids and he said, “I know who you are,” and all that stuff, and so I just lucked out (laughter).

Fred Koegler: As I said it in one of these articles here why I spent fifty years in the Park Service seasonally was luck, it was health, and it was supervision, three things – I just lucked out in a lot of places along the line.

Fred Koegler: So anyway, my wife and I went across Germany and came back in October and that's when I started permanent teaching and then that's how I start seasonal work from then on up until right now. I went teaching until 2002 when I retired and then I just kept the Park Service job and I start earlier. So now I work from June 1st until almost October 3rd. In those days we came in – I was lucky again because I was in Tuolumne, they

didn't want you up there until maybe the middle of June when school let out and then they usually kicked us all out in the end of September. As years went by the Park Service wanted you longer and a lot of teachers could not come in May and I was still lucky – that word luck came in, they still wanted me to come in June because Tuolumne Meadows usually didn't open because of snow and all of that and there wasn't that many people coming in at that time, they could handle it with a staff of three or four people. So, I lucked out and then in September they said, "Okay, you can go home." In the old days, what we used to do in the seventies, we all went home right after Labor Day. Before you could go home you had to take all your dressers and the beds and the mattresses out and store them and you had to take the canvas off the tents (laughter) and then you could go home. Nowadays it's not like that anymore. We still have tent cabins; we're probably one of the only outposts in Tuolumne Meadows that still has tent cabins and not regular apartment units and things like that in a lot of parks around the country.

Fred Koegler: But going back to those years, that's how I started and got the permanent job. I stayed at the high school that I started with until 2002, I spent 34 years at the same high school and I was a track and cross-country coach and took over for this ranger who was up there, he was there cross-country coach, I took over his program when he retired, he was a lot older than myself in those days, and so as a matter of luck I got the cross-country job and then that led into the track job. My main job was Driver's Ed instructor and I got credential for that before and they knew I was that and they hired me – that's what they hired me as a driver's ed instructor, not a coach.

Lu Ann Jones: I was going to ask you, you said that supervision was part of the formula for—

Fred Koegler: The three things.

Lu Ann Jones: Who were some of your supervisors, how did your duties change over the years?

Fred Koegler: Yeah, in the high country we had district ranger; it was a district up until the seventies and then everything changed in 1970 with the park organization. Herb Ewing who was a district ranger for a long, long time there, he got promoted to district ranger over the Mather District, which is now three sub-districts. Tuolumne became a sub-district and then you had the Mather, the Hetch Hetchy area, which was a district, and then the Mather District, so had three sub-districts and he was over it all. So, he left us, my immediate boss, and we had sub-district rangers come in and what they'd do is pick somebody in the valley, a permanent ranger to come up and work as a sub-district ranger. So that worked for a long time and the

assistant would be maybe a first-time permanent ranger. As you heard through the Park Service that seasonals would train the supervisors and up there in Tuolumne we only had two rangers. Now we have a sub-district ranger who gets hired, he doesn't get picked by somebody in the park, they come from the outside and then they have three assistants so you have four permanent rangers with the seasonals. Seasonals got cut down nowadays, so we're down now to maybe five seasonal rangers and myself and so forth, and a couple of other people.

Fred Koegler: But going back to those days they were supervisors that came up, but Herb was still over – he made all the selections of who would come as a ranger, so I lucked out with that because he kept us all on. In those days we were all teachers; we had a core of teachers that were ranger protection and we all stayed together for ten years while he was still district ranger and it all changed in 1976, '77 when he retired, and everything changed again.

Fred Koegler: That is the year where we were all rangers with no formal training, doing the job and learning on the job, and were doing everything almost we do today, but a little different. The Authorities Act in 1976 came in because of the riot. They said, the Congress, the President and everybody else said, well okay, we need a more permanent ranger force for our National Parks because of what happened. The rangers weren't really equipped to handle all that stuff. So, they brought in the Authorities Act of 1976 and that said only certain people could do law enforcement. Prior to that everybody in the park was a law enforcement ranger; you as a ranger could write citations, you as a ranger- naturalist – what they were called in those days – could write citations, the guy who was the garbage driver could write a citation, if he wanted. He could write out, your dog's off leash, he could write a citation. It didn't happen that much, but that was there.

Fred Koegler: So now they said only certain people. So here in the park we had all of these seasonal people and they weren't formally trained, so what's going to happen? There is no academy to train rangers and as teachers we couldn't take – what the six weeks off at that time, seven weeks and go to a training academy, it was unheard of. So, the Park Service was in a [quandary] because they had – What are we going to do? So, what they said – okay, we had spring break at that time it was called Easter vacation and we all had the same vacation – so they said, Okay, you guys if you want to have this job as a law enforcement ranger you guys have to all come up here Easter vacation for one week and we're going to train you.

Fred Koegler: We started at 8 o'clock in the morning and went until 10 o'clock at night and went through all courses and at the end of that one week, from Sunday through Saturday, they said, Okay, you are now law enforcement rangers. They blessed us and said if you come back every year you don't have to go to academy and you can be a law enforcement ranger, if you take time

off or leave and want to come back two years later you are going to have to go to an academy. So that started weeding out all the teachers that were in the Park Service from the fifties, sixties, seventies and so forth. So, I got blessed in as a grandfathered ranger and so did a lot of other people; that's how we did [it], as long as you did your forty hours each year and you did everything else.

Fred Koegler: A lot more things came in later in the nineties, so again, I kept my job until when they had the age limit thing come in when you turn 57. We were not under 6C as they said, in those days, everybody was 6C – twenty years from 37 to 57 was your twenty-year career. So, we all got eliminated as rangers when we turned 57. So, what are we going to do? So, a bunch of us seasonals all across the United States fought the law and we said, Hey, you want to pay us retirement?

Fred Koegler: It worked and so we were just seasonals. We finally, I think it was 2001 they decided that, no, seasonal rangers were exempt from 6C and you could come back. So, I didn't have my three years up yet so I was still lucky – and the word luck came in – where I could return as a seasonal ranger, as a grandfathered ranger, so I came back in 2002 as a seasonal ranger, but I didn't take a break because what I did, I just changed jobs. I went to assistant supervisor at Tioiga Pass as a fee collector for two years, so I still got my 50 years as a ranger, but only as a supervisor. I still rode my horse on some of my days off. And the supervisor she let me ride horseback or do the rescues when they needed me.

Fred Koegler: Anyway, so I came back in 2002 as a law enforcement ranger and then met all the criteria for law enforcement and I kept it until 2007 and in 2007 the sub-district ranger took over and she said, "I got a better deal for you; you don't have to do all this law enforcement stuff going up and down the highway, stopping cars and writing tickets" – which I did for 45 plus years – "I'm going to make you a general ranger again." When I started as a general ranger back in the sixties I went back to a general ranger. "I'm going to put you in charge of horse patrol, and you are going to be riding every day and you're going to be in charge of the barn and make sure all the horses are fed and the whole thing."

Fred Koegler: I said, "Great." I said, "I'll give up my law enforcement commission and I'll be a horse patrol ranger."

Fred Koegler: So from 2008 until this day, that's what I've been doing as a full-time horse patrol ranger, just riding every day and doing the horse carry outs and taking care of the barn – you know, mopping it up, making sure all the horses that we have up there – we're the second largest barn in the park, the one in the valley has the most horses, but half those horses come up to us – so I'm in charge of making sure they're all taken care of and all that

stuff, so that's my job now and I patrol the backcountry under the watershed.

Fred Koegler: That's another story, I should go back to 1988, there was Bob Johnson, who was also a member of this organization [ANPR], was the district ranger and he said, "Well geez, we're having a hard time funding all these positions." He says, "We could do something, we're part of the Hetch Hetchy Project. You know all the water in Tuolumne goes to Hetch Hetchy and then [becomes] drinking water for two million people in the Bay Area. "I'll maybe get the Hetch Hetchy Project" – which is part of San Francisco – "to pay rangers to patrol the watershed." Because at that time they didn't have a regular filter, or a big high-technology of purifying the water because it was all pure water. So, they said, We'll have rangers patrol the watershed and make sure it is pure. And so that's what he got in, and so since 1988 or beyond that we're all paid up there by watershed money. So, to this day, my salary is being paid by San Francisco. San Francisco puts some money in the budget, and the Park Service pays us and all the rangers up in Tuolumne Meadows, because we're the watershed of San Francisco, we're protecting the watershed. So, all the rangers, all the interpreters – because they talk about the watershed and take the people out hiking – maintenance people, collecting, doing all that stuff, they're all paid under watershed money from San Francisco.

Fred Koegler: I did that prior to that but I really took it up when I changed jobs, my other three days are my horse patrol days. Two days I go into the campground and patrol the campground because the river is right next to it, talking about watershed stuff, and a lot of people have never seen a person on a horse, they've never seen a ranger on a horse and the kids have never seen a horse sometime. So, Saturday and Sunday are the busiest days in the campground. Now I go and patrol on horse and I talk about the watershed and talk about anything people want to talk about. Every year I talk to almost seven thousand people patrolling and then the other days of the week instead of patrolling the campground I patrol the watershed.

Lu Ann Jones: Well, I think you mentioned in one of the articles about your long career there that just the kinds of visitors have changed, and I think you—

Fred Koegler: Yeah, in that article I said the scenery is all the same. The trees might have fallen down, but you're looking at where we live, you look at the Cathedral Range you still got the eleven-thousand-foot peaks, snow is still on them, the big rock like Lumbert Dome, the granite rock, people still hike up there, hasn't changed. But I said, the type of people that come to the park have changed. The visitation before – some people, the schools get out earlier, when the schools were still on the traditional system, and you get people coming from Texas, you knew they came in early because they start early, back in August, already where everybody in California

usually didn't go back to school until after Labor Day and that has changed now and this last summer we saw a diversity of a lot of different people coming in, mainly a lot of Asians. I mean, we were, somehow the word got out to Yosemite. We had an overload of people coming in this year, just tourists coming in day after day. Weekends I would be on horse trying to tell people you can't park here because we have no parking for you, you have to keep going. We have no space. Just a period of people coming from all foreign countries, I think as I mentioned in the article, I did that I got pictures of me from every country in the world and all fifty states.

Fred Koegler: But the type of people that come are different. They are not the old-time campers that used to camp and go in. We still get the big flux of backpackers that come in. Some of them are not equipped – that's where I come in, my horse and carry people out of the backcountry – they're not the tough people in the early days, that were backpackers, and you got a different type of people. They get off their job at 6 o'clock on a Friday night and drive up to Tuolumne and the next morning they start out doing this – they see all these things, you know backpacking, hiking – they start hiking and they get into trouble because their physical condition is not that great or they get into the high elevation and they get pulmonary edema or altitude sickness because they didn't drink enough water and they are not just that equipped as [what] you saw in the fifties, sixties, seventies, and eighties almost, you saw people that knew what they were doing. But just because they see these articles in the paper and everything else, "Go backpacking, do this, do that." And they come up there and they are really not equipped. The diversity of people that come up and they don't have the equipment to go hiking and all this stuff, I've seen people in high heels hiking on the trail (laughter) and you wonder, wow, what are these people doing.

Fred Koegler: One story, where a family had to come up and the girl had an ankle injury, and her father made her hobble with crutches all the way to a High Sierra Camp. Sure enough, the mother couldn't say anything about it, the father was dominating and "You're going with the rest of the family. We have a family vacation. I paid all this money to go down to the High Sierra Camps, you are going. I can't afford keeping you someplace else." So, she hobbled down with crutches six miles to this High Sierra Camp in Glen Aulin. She got down there and her ankle just turned worse, and I think it was even broken before she started. And so here I was called to go down and pick her up on a mule and her mother was so appreciative. I never did see the father, he just went off on his own thing and he never said a word to me, I never saw him. So, you get that type of people, I was saying, that you deal with nowadays are different than the old days. You have different nationalities that really come into the park now. They hear the news

around, Come to Yosemite or any National Park. They have bus tours, van tours, you name it, they come through and do it.

Lu Ann Jones: Were involved in particularly difficult search and rescues, for example, or was that something that other people were—

Fred Koegler: Well, yeah, up until, well probably in the eighties where the rangers were better equipped to climb and do that, and we hired climbers to be climbing rangers and stuff like that. At that time, I was getting older, and I said, “I’ve had enough of this stuff.” But in the old days, yeah, I was one of the rescue rangers, along with all my other stuff because I was younger than most of the other rangers that were up there. Most of the guys that I was working with, they were older because they’d been there for a while, and they were all school teachers and they really didn’t want to get into that stuff and I was young and I was doing it. The other reason I did a lot of this stuff, I go back to 1971 again, I was driving along the highway, guy flagged me down and he says, “I just got my climbing gear stolen out of my car—”

[END OF TRACK 3]

[START OF TRACK 4]

Fred Koegler: I start taking a report and we start talking and says, “I’m from Los Angeles.”

Fred Koegler: And I says, “Yeah, I’m up here and I’m just doing a seasonal job. I teach down in Los Angeles.” This is in 1971.

Fred Koegler: He says, “Hey, you might want to come join LA County search and rescue team and do some rescue work volunteer as a reserve deputy sheriff in your off time, you know, when you are teaching and you’re not doing, go.” Okay, that sounded good.

Fred Koegler: I said, “Well, maybe this would give me more training (laughter) and also some law enforcement training,” so I said, “Okay, fine.”

Fred Koegler: So, I went to their meetings and there was a sheriff station, sub-station, near my house called Montrose Search and Rescue Team which patrolled the Angeles National Forest. I said, Well, this might be interesting. So, I went down to their meetings and sort of got involved. So finally, I became a member in 1972 on the Montrose Search and Rescue Team which was part of LA County Sheriff, I had to go to sheriff’s academy. I went there for eighty hours; it was a lot more training than I got in Yosemite. So, I got some training in to do law enforcement and also learned to do a lot of rock climbing technique that I didn’t learn in Yosemite because it was just

starting and it was starting in our area. For forty-three years now I have been on that team too, LA Country Sheriff's Rescue Team, Montrose. Anyway, I have been out on over one thousand calls with the search and rescue team down in LA when I'm down there, but from June to September I don't do anything with them and then I go back, out and back. That's where I got a lot of experience and learning a lot of stuff from the search and rescue stuff.

Fred Koegler: That was the era when they started getting all the rock-climbing gear and all that stuff so I had my own gear and more than I had up at Yosemite. That's where I started learning a lot of stuff back in the seventies right after, it was like '72 all the way through that era. So, I did do some climbing there, doing some rescue work.

Fred Koegler: But so, I did going out on one rescue that I just talked to Butch [Farabee] about was probably one of the more, not thrilling rescues, but agonizing rescues. We got a call – in fact right before that I was stopping a drunk driver, talk about a diversity of [calls] – possible drunk driver. We got a call, “We got this guy up on Cathedral Peak at eleven thousand feet. We think he fell and he's dead” – or something like that – “We need you to have somebody else do the rest of the follow up on the car stop.” I raced down and got my gear and went and got some other people – we had, going back a little bit, up until the 1970s after the riot we had no extra help up there for rescues. Then we start getting the SAR teams in. We hired rock climbers who liked to climb and then we put them up in the campground – and we hired ten ladies and men, mainly guys in the old days, we now have two or three gals on the team too, and we give them a campsite and they are a SAR team. So, when we get a rescue we put a page out to them. In those days we had to go over and call them because we didn't have the type of radios that we did nowadays and we had to get them to help us do rescue work because they were good climbers and so they start taking over, going up the wall and all that stuff for us. We had to deal with all this other stuff; since we were law enforcement, we can switch doing all this stuff. We had to have people patrolling and taking care of other problems.

Fred Koegler: I still did a lot of that stuff but one of the more memorable rescues was on Cathedral Peak. So, I get together a bunch of people and we start hiking up there and we get up to Saddle and the guy wasn't dead. He was still alive. We had to, it was now dark, and prior to that we had tried to get the helicopter coming in, but the winds were so bad that one of our rangers, who was our lead climber, he was doing something else in the park with the helicopter, I guess, doing some training, and he said, “Yeah, I just can't get there. Do the best you can.” So, we got up there and we had, in those days EMTs just came in, in 1982 I became an EMT also, I went to school because of the LA County Rescue Team, I got to go to EMT school

and get that out of the way. I was one of the, in 1982, EMTs, and, (cough) excuse me. We hiked up there and we started dealing with them and we said, “Hey, we can make it, but we need to get this guy off here because if we have to carry him out of here he might not make it” – for this was the middle of the night still, you know, two o’clock in the morning.

Fred Koegler: The winds were really bad, so our helicopter couldn’t do it. They said, “We’ll get the Navy ship from Lemoore” – that Yosemite uses, in those days [Yosemite] used the military helicopters. So, at daybreak, like, five o’clock in the morning, the helicopter came in and we were going to do a short haul off the thing, which means that they drop a cable down and we hook it up and they reel him into the helicopter.

Fred Koegler: So, I’m saying, “Okay fine, bring them in. We’re ready to go. We have him all packaged up in the litter and have all the hookups and we just need the cable.” So, they came in and said, “I don’t know if this is going to work.” The wind was blowing at forty miles an hour up on top of the ridge and this helicopter we could hear coming in. I said, “Okay we’re going to try. This is going to make it fast.” So, he came in one try, I try to get the cable, as soon as I trying to get it and boom, the wind took it off and he’s dropping straight down. You’ve got to be careful. It took five tries and the fifth try I just managed to grab the cable and hook him on, and it took the patient away in the helicopter, (cough) excuse me, and we got him off and then the rest of the day we took all of it to take all the equipment back down. In fact, we had one guy on horseback came around and brought a litter up to us on a mule as high as he could. That was a rescue that I can go back on and look at, one of the big ones, I think, I was on. I got a nice letter from the US Navy saying, “Thank you for all of your help on the rescue.”

Lu Ann Jones: Did your wife continue to go with you every summer?

Fred Koegler: Yeah. She—

Lu Ann Jones: What role did she play?

Fred Koegler: In those days, it was lucky because we had families. We were there for the first couple of years, and she sort of got a job as a first female working in what was called contact station and now called visitor center. She would sell books for the Yosemite History Association, and she would work there and she had her stuff, so she’d do that for a while.

Fred Koegler: Then finally we had our first baby son, and he was born in Yosemite. That’s another story. 1971 and she was pregnant and wasn’t going to come up to Tuolumne. She said, “I’ve got to stay home because the baby is going to come right in the middle of summer.”

- Fred Koegler: I said, "Okay, I've got to go to work." So, I went to work and left her at home, and she started calling me – finally, we had telephones we could call and communicate, in the seventies we had the regular crank phone was gone. '71 they brought in a telephone line that came up from Yosemite, up Indian Canyon and they put it all along the road, telephone cable all the way up to Tioga Pass and we had communications finally and so I could call. She'd call me, she said, "I can't stand it here; the babies not coming."
- Fred Koegler: And I said, "Well, let's see."
- Fred Koegler: She said, "Maybe I could have the baby up in Yosemite."
- Fred Koegler: So, she called the hospital, which was called Lewis Memorial Hospital, in the valley [which] was a full-fledged hospital in those days where they treated people with [injuries from] rock climbing, car wrecks, you name it. They had three doctors, a staff of nurses and all that stuff. So, they said, "Sure, we have an intern up here and he can deliver the baby for a hundred bucks."
- Fred Koegler: So, she said, "Okay, come down and pick me up." So, I went down there on days off and picked her up, brought her back and baby still didn't come. We were sitting there, she was just enjoying herself. I was out and one day in July she said, "I think we got to get down to the hospital." So, I drove her down to the hospital and stayed at our sub-district ranger's house; he was up at Tuolumne, so I stayed in his house.
- Fred Koegler: They called me at four in the morning and said, "Yeah, the baby is delivered; come on over. We had a baby boy and since it was born on my birthday—
- Lu Ann Jones: What?
- Fred Koegler: —he's now the third (laughter). He was born on July 29, 1971. And she got to stay in the hospital for five days which is uncalled for now, she had a nice room by herself, and her mother came up. Then we said, Ah, it is not too good to bring a baby back up to the high country. So, she went the rest of that summer, from July until September, until I came home, she went home to her mother's house in San Francisco, Mill Valley area, and stayed there the rest of the summer. So, the next year we brought the little one up and she became a mother and she didn't have to work and we had family housing so she just spent all the time with our youngest son.
- Fred Koegler: Another thing is we had other families and they had kids, too. By the time my son got to be four or five years old we had a lot of kids in camp, up to seven, and they all lived up there during the summer, it was a great

summer vacation. And we had our second son, he was four weeks old back in '76, he came up there and we had to bundle him up to keep warm from the cold weather because Tuolumne at nighttime you get temperatures down to 20 degrees even in the summer and daytime temperature could be in the 60s or 70s. She was just a housewife until the kids all got to, we all stayed up there with kids through high school, they were up there. And when they turned fourteen Martha Miller who was a manager at Tuolumne Meadows Lodge said, "Hey, since you have housing for kids, I'll hire them at fourteen to come over to the lodge and they can start working, making beds, chopping wood for the fires that the stoves they had in their tents and all that stuff. So, every day a couple of them would get together on their bikes and ride over half a mile to the lodge and start working for the day and that's how they got to work until sixteen, seventeen.

Fred Koegler: Then my son transitioned into – what happened, they start collecting fees in the campground called Ticketron came in, so they had an outside vendor come in, Ticketron, with a ranger supervising it. The rangers were checking people in, but Ticketron would be workers. So, they got hired at sixteen and seventeen to do the registration for people coming in wanting campgrounds. My oldest son did that and when he got to be college aged he got transitioned to fire and helicopters. He saw his dad always get in a helicopter and fly off to searches and rescues and stuff like that and so he wanted to be a helicopter pilot. And so he went to school down in LA to UCLA ROTC and he went in the Air Force and to this day he's still in the Air Force. He's just made colonel in the US Air Force, he's in charge of the presidential fleet in DC at Andrews Air Force Base. In fact, I was just back there a week ago—

Lu Ann Jones: How about that.

Fred Koegler: And he's flying everybody under – he's not with Air Force One that flies the president and vice president and some other dignitaries, but they're all on Andrews Air Force Base. He's in charge of the helicopter group that flies everybody else, senators, or congressmen or anybody that needs to be flown; that's what his job is. Marine One flies the president and vice president now. They used to fly the VP, but not anymore. That's his job; he just took over for two years as commander, so he has a great lot of dignitaries that come in. From a small boy, showing him rock climbing and all the way up and doing all this fun stuff with dad.

Fred Koegler: You know they were both Eagle Scouts and so forth and the second son, he decides – he saw me, we had a fire truck, and I became the captain of the engine company, so I did all the fire stuff and training all the guys. I thought I knew a lot of stuff about firefighting, and I learned stuff and they knew I was interested, so they made me the captain. So, every year I came

back I took care of the fire truck and rolled the engine to every fire, tent fires, vehicle crashes and that stuff. So that's how I got interested in fire, rescue, (laughter) ambulance.

Fred Koegler: We had – we didn't in those days, the ambulance, I'm going around here, but in the old days we were all just trained in first aid and all we did was somebody would get injured and we would throw them in the back of our station wagon, which was our ambulance, and we drove them to the valley down in [Lewis] Memorial Hospital, and tried to get them there before they died and many times they did die before we got them there. We didn't have the regular ambulances. Not until the eighties where we all became EMTs and we got a regular ambulance. Nowadays it is really sophisticated we have park medics and everything else and the SAR guys some of them are paramedics so we use them and we hire them and they get hired when we have incidents.

Fred Koegler: In those early days we just had to do what we had to do. I know my wife used to help us out when we were up there early. Before as I said, going back again, I'm sort of going around here, but we'd come up earlier because we weren't full-time teachers up until the seventies – that chopped off coming up early, like I do now. So, we got to do everything.

Fred Koegler: So, the youngest one and the oldest one saw me do all this stuff, so he became an LA County fire paramedic and that's what he does in his life. They live in Mammoth Lake so my wife can go over now and babysit the grandkids over there. And my other son, that's why we went to Washington DC this last week before I came here was to babysit her because he's working, and his wife got airlifted over to Germany for a weeks' vacation.

Fred Koegler: But she was also in the military. She was a lieutenant colonel, and he was colonel. She's retired now. My other daughter-in-law is with the Forest Service, she is an archeological person, now she's got Mammoth Mountain, I'm sure you've heard of Mammoth Mountain, the big ski area near Mammoth and she's in charge of that now, she just got promoted to do that. That's a little background on the family, how they evolved, because of me working in Tuolumne every year. Then my wife didn't really have to work, she was a housewife just like the other mothers who were up there, housewives. But then the '90s came in and the crunch came up at they said, "We need tent space, and we need to put two people – unless your wife is working she no longer can come." So that took care of the rest of the wives; they didn't want to work, and my wife decided, okay, my kids are now in college and so she went to work, first, as a fee collector in the campground and then at Tioga Pass for thirteen years. So, she quit that as soon as I got my new job, because, going back to that, we lived in a tent cabin and we raised our kids in a tent cabin and as they got

older we put a tent outside the cabin and they slept in the tent. And so, when this new job came along the sub-district ranger said, "Now, I can't afford giving you a tent because I need it for law enforcement people." She said, "You've got to bring your own transportation." So, I had to go out and buy a travel trailer in two-o-[o-]seven, so that's where my wife and I lived, right near the barn so I could open the door and the mules and horses would look at me, they'd know every move I would make.

Lu Ann Jones: How many animals were you taking care of?

Fred Koegler: Well, personally, for my ranger job I have four horses and two mules because I rotate the horse and I also have other guys that have gone to horse school and ride, too. So, I have four horses but there could be stock of, maybe sometime during the summer, we have forty head in there, mules and horses because we also have trail crews in the backcountry and we have packers that come up and take their mules to pack, supply the camps, I mean the trail crew camps, not the High Sierra Camps; that's done by the concessionaire. We have a lot of mules and a lot of horses to do that. Some of the wilderness rangers have a horse too which they board up there and they ride every summer. So, I have a lot of stock to take care of during the summer a lot of times.

Fred Koegler: But anyway, going back to the wilderness, in 1972 they decide to make the wilderness a different district. That way they could get more rangers. So, they hired rangers to be permit-issuers like Laurel and a lot of people, and they'd write permits and they get to go out and hike and do patrols and they have backcountry rangers riding horses, and now they have permanent rangers – not permanent but for summer – back in Merced Lake and all that. So that became a district and so we sort of got out of the wilderness patrols and like in the early days, anything could happen but we were still in charge of the district, in charge of search and rescue in the backcountry so that's where I get into doing carry outs, taking the horse and the mule going into the backcountry. Like this last summer I did seven carry outs last summer, the summer before I did nine. I've done ninety-two in my career because in the earlier days I didn't do that many because there were a lot of other old-time rangers that did a lot of stuff. In those days the Park Service wasn't doing carry outs, if somebody was stuck in the backcountry, they just called a concessionaire and they'd send a horse in. They got paid for it and bring them out. But then everything started changing in the nineties because of liability, the company didn't want to take responsibility for a patient being hurt in the backcountry and bring them out, if something happened all of the sudden they were going to get sued or something like that, so they turned it all over to the Park Service so that's why I only have ninety-two, but primarily a lot of those are from in the two thousand range where I did all that, but I did do some

in the earlier days but not as much because I was doing a lot of other things.

Lu Ann Jones: Well, when did you get involved with ANPR?

Fred Koegler: Okay, (laughs) that's another good story. In those days we had all the good old-time rangers, Rick Smith, Tim Setnicka, Butch Farabee, you name all – Rick Smith, they were almost all my supervisors at one time or another, and Dick Martin. In fact, it was mainly all the rangers in Yosemite that started the organization, and they were talking about it in 1976. And in 1977 they finally said, "We're going to get together and we'll meet in" – where was it?

Lu Ann Jones: I think it was Jackson Hole.

Fred Koegler: Jackson Hole, yeah, right. So, we're going to meet in October. I said, "Well, you know." They talked to me about it, and I said, "I can't really take time off from school at that time to go do it."

Fred Koegler: So, they said, "Okay." They started and then they said, "Why don't you join?" I didn't join until 1978 or '79. Those days I just was a member, I paid my dues and did what I could, but I couldn't come to the Rendezvous because it was the wrong time of the year for me to take days off. Finally in the nineties Debbie and I – if there was a Rendezvous over a school holiday like in November there is a holiday, Veterans Day you could take three days – I started going to them. I think the first Rendezvous I went to was up in Minnesota and then I didn't go to any others because I just couldn't do it. Finally, what was it, the 25th anniversary in 2002, I had just started retiring from school teaching so we went up to the 25th and from that time on after I retired I've been to every one, until – I missed a couple – last year. Then I said, "Well maybe I'll do something for the organization," so the Rendezvous up in South Dakota they were looking for a seasonal concern person and I said, I'll talk to Debbie and said, "Well, I've got some time why don't I just do this." I got elected in 2004 I think, and I took over in 2005, 2006, 2007, I was a three-year member on seasonal concern. And what I did for the organization they were talking, hem-hawing around about insurance, health insurance, for seasonals, so I said, "Okay, I'll take it on." So, I started and since I was living in Los Angeles and there were a lot of companies and everything else, so I put out a query and a company called me up, health company, and said, "Hey, we're interested."

Fred Koegler: I said, "Well we could" – I was really thinking high, said, "God, we could have all the seasonals, seven thousand across the United States become."

Fred Koegler: And the company said, “Wow, we could really do something.” And I said, “Okay, let’s go.”

Fred Koegler: So, one company gave us an offer and took it back and forth at the meetings and so we finally got one company that said we’d take it on. It was pretty reasonable and so we finally got it in in 2006 because there was no health. Now I don’t think we even do that anymore because now we have the new health insurance from the government that seasonals can have and so that’s why I got going with the organization and started doing that. Since that time, I’ve been doing most of the Rendezvous, just about to come—

Lu Ann Jones: For you being a seasonal fit in perfectly with full-time work and then—

Fred Koegler: Yeah

Lu Ann Jones: —schoolwork. What do you tell seasonals? I mean, from the short time I’ve been coming to Rendezvous of hearing many seasonals who work many seasons and they’re still searching for that full-time job. So do you—

Fred Koegler: Oh yeah, I counsel [speaking at same time]. Oh yeah, there is a lot of, we got, luckily, in Tuolumne for the last couple years we had a lot of seasonals coming back, but now, they’re all there for full-time jobs. Some of the majors they have they can’t go into teaching and some of them don’t want to do that because they’re not really made for teachers and so they’re are looking. I have one kid up there he’s been there three years now and he says, “I’ve got to get a job.” I said, “Well you’ve got to go out and start circulating around, come to Ranger Rendezvous but some of these—” That’s the problem, they stop work, like most of our guys up in Tuolumne go until almost to the end of October and they can’t take a week off to come to a Rendezvous unless there is one really close to Yosemite and so they go out and they work almost until November and what do they do? They leave and I don’t know what they do during the summer, I mean winter, nothing really. Some of them try to get a winter job in a park but those are very rare right now. They used to be open, not anymore so much as there were back when I was – because I said, I’ll just go to Death Valley or some winter park. It was hard to even get in there, okay, all this stuff led me to teaching I said, “Well, some of you guys have degrees that you could go teach and then one guy missed the thirty-seven cutoff for law enforcement and he is now a seasonal and now he has a baby and he’s got everything else and I said, “What are you going to do? You can’t be a seasonal ranger for all your life because you’re going to have commitments with the baby and your wife and everything else and she’s not working.

Fred Koegler: And he says, "Yeah."

Fred Koegler: "Well, you've got an English degree. Why don't you go back and go substitute teach, at least do that. You can't get a permanent job because you are over the age." But the other kid, I tried to tell him, go out and start networking. Try to do what he can. Get to know somebody and get hired. Some of them did, some of them have.

Fred Koegler: I know a lot of guys that were up there, and I would hand out brochures [about ANPR] to them all up there to the park, and here I am, I'm the only person from Yosemite out of all those people working and not very many people come. In the old days, yeah, they did because they were all Yosemite people; you've still got Butch Farabee coming back and Rick Smith usually comes and a few other people but now they're all really retired, they don't come anymore. I try as much as I can to get some people, I think this is a great organization, I just, you can only do so much. I'm still wondering why we only have a hundred people here. We should be about five hundred people here. And the young people are just not coming in as much. You're one of the younger ones [to Thea Garrett], it's just hard I think. I don't know what's going to happen (laughter). It's just people, the expense some as a seasonal, you just don't make much money.

Lu Ann Jones: Exactly.

Fred Koegler: The guys at Yosemite, they made some good money this summer, you know, because a lot of guys went on fires for two weeks and made money as a security and they also worked a lot of rescues and a lot of overtime. They made more than the norm of people do because if you are an interpreter you sure don't get on fires unless you have a special background to go to fire training and they won't let you get away because they don't have that many interpreters and they need the people for scheduling; you're stuck, and then you're working resources and all that stuff and you're in the backcountry and you just can't get out of the backcountry to do that. It is just tough. I don't know the answer. I really want to see people here, but it is just not going to happen I don't think the way the Park Service is set up. I don't think they get much reinforcement from any of the permanents there either because a lot of them don't even come to this thing either. I'd ask them why. "Oh, I don't want to belong to the boy's club."

Fred Koegler: "That's what it used to be."

Fred Koegler: "Oh, that's just for guys, it's not for women." That's all changed but that was the interpretation back in the seventies and eighties until women started coming in. You know, when I first started it was all quote,

[un]quote boy's club because it was all men. That was it, that was it; there was no women.

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Fred Koegler: Laurel was probably one of the first seasonal gals that came in. In the entrance station work, we didn't have any females working in the entrance station until almost the mid-seventies and anything else. Law enforcement, first law enforcement ranger we had in Tuolumne, a female, was not until the nineties.

Lu Ann Jones: Wow.

Fred Koegler: It was a hard world for women to break into. And, as I said, if you went to the Rendezvous early on there were hardly any, just wives maybe? I don't know what the answer to that is but it's great. You get to learn – networking I tell them, you've got to go to these things and maybe meet a district ranger or a sub-district ranger or somebody and you get all the information on how they do come into hire people, you know, they bring in how to do you application and all that stuff. And that's all changed. When I started the application was just a one-page application to get in and so it's really tough. It is just fortunate that I had a career of fifty years (laughter).

Lu Ann Jones: Well, I think that this is all the questions that I have. Do you have any questions?

Thea Garrett: I think one of the questions, no, no I don't think so. I think a lot of it has passed. One of the things that I was wondering was just about when you started visiting the other national parks and when you were able to find the time to start doing that.

Fred Koegler: That's an interesting story too, why I did that. My wife and I were down in the office, the ranger station one time, and we saw this message come through of somebody that said, "I just visited x number of parks and I am up in Alaska right now and I've visited all the national parks." And the passport books didn't come in until 1985, you never thought about all that stuff way back, well you couldn't do it because you were teaching, you didn't have the money to go and I didn't have the summers off to do all this stuff. I didn't get into this passport book stamping thing until later on and this was, like, in the late nineties that we even thought about this stuff, well we didn't have time. We did go to some parks when we could on our vacation so when we saw this thing we said, Wow, we could do this too.

Fred Koegler: So, starting in the nineties, probably in '95, I think, we saw this thing in the early nineties.

Fred Koegler: [We] said, Well let's start doing some parks. We can do it on our Christmas vacation, Easter vacation. We'll take the kids, they're old enough now that they can go to see a new national park. You've been in Yosemite you're whole life, let's go to see something else. So, on some of our vacation we start doing that and we couldn't do it that much because I was still teaching and Debbie was teaching. She became a home ec teacher and she taught also. So finally, we got – there's a club that came out around 2000, I guess, the Traveler's Club, the National Park Travelers Club and they have a webpage and they have all these people that talk about going to national parks, it has really exploded now and they go to all these parks and we said, Well, let's start going stamping.

Fred Koegler: So, starting in 2000 we started taking trips and getting to the nearest parks that we hadn't been to, start doing it and then finally when we retired we had the offseason so we just started going to all the parks. We just said, Okay, we're going to fly in places, rent a car, stay in a hotel and get to them. In 2005, we went back and took two weeks to go up and down the east coast, to the DC area mainly. And then, let's go to the Rendezvous, because the Rendezvous were always someplace near a national park. Oh, we'll fly there and do the Rendezvous; while we're there we'll spread out and hit some of the National Parks or whatever units are around it so then we got hooked and said, "We've got to do it."

Fred Koegler: And we got into this club and all these people were, God, they were [unclear]. We started adding all our stuff and got all our stuff added up and, you know, we were up over two hundred parks. We could start doing it – well there were not four hundred like there are now, they were down in the three hundreds. We're feasible, we could catch up. So, we start traveling and there's our offseason, that's where our traveling was. We went down in America Samoa, we went out to Guam and went down to the Caribbean, we went down to the Virgin Islands, we went to Hawaii and did all the parks there, island hopped to do everything.

Fred Koegler: Then we started going to Alaska; that was our tough one, we went up there a couple of trips and said, God, this is going to be tough. Finally in 2011 we had a heavy winter in Tuolumne and we knew we weren't going to get hired until almost July first. So, I said, God, this is going to be expensive, but let's do it. So, we took off for Alaska, we got an outfitter and flew us into every place in Alaska we needed to go to and we did it before we came back, it cost us a little money (laughter) but we said, Wow, this is great, great, great that we did it. We went into Anchorage, we went into all the, we hit, one day – airplane trip cost me a little money – we hit seven

wilderness parks in Alaska, we flew into, landed, go out and took off again. So, we set foot in the park (laughter).

Lu Ann Jones: Once you had begun to do that, to travel, what surprised you about the Park Service? Were you surprised at certain places that you went?

Fred Koegler: Yeah, we were surprised that some of these places. Wow, they're really beautiful and some of these other places, why are these places in the Park Service? We're adding all these places and, God, they're not getting funded and we want some of these places – we've got one person there, a superintendent said, "I've got no help. You want to come and volunteer?"

Fred Koegler: I said, "God, how are you going to make it?" I'm surprised adding and adding and adding and there's not any funding and I don't know how that's going to work until maybe they have to take away the Antiquities Act so they can't make anymore. Yeah, we're wondering, some places we think that – I'm not going to mention the names – but they shouldn't even be in the Park Service, they should maybe be in the state parks, or maybe something else, I don't know how the Park Service is going to survive funding all these places, they're going up to five hundred National Parks maybe, way down the line it could be that way, because we're going right now, on our way home right now, we're going to Waco, Texas, we're stopping off there to get our – we're at four hundred and six right now, we'll have 407 of 408 right now, but they just added a couple (laughter). We're going to Waco, Texas to go to Waco Mammoth National Historic Park, that will give us 407 and then 408 which is the official count right now, but it's going to change next month [which] would be in Hawaii but that park is not open yet because you can't get in on the land, it is Honouliuli National Monument which is a relocation camp, which is unique. They had a river going down the middle of the camp, one side was war prisoners, and the other side were relocation people and they all existed in one place. And the place has grown over and it's in a canyon near the *Arizona*, maybe ten miles away from there. It's all overgrown and it's not safe to have people go there, so we don't know when it's going to open, so we can't get there. That will be 408, but a new park called Manhattan Project is coming in, one in Washington state, one down in Tennessee, I think—

Lu Ann Jones: Oak Ridge.

Fred Koegler: Oakridge and then one in [Los] Alamos. We think we're getting caught up but we keep adding. (laughter) We got to do it because we belong to the club. We don't do much, I read all the messages that are on there and we knew the president before and some new people coming in and we met a couple of people here and there but we're not fanatics like some of these people who have to get every little stamp of every little section. If I get

one stamp from the main part of the park, I'm happy and if I get to the other places, I'll go get them. So, I got six passport books full and now I have to get a seventh for next year (laughter). So, we go repeat them; when we were in Washington DC we took the metro, went downtown, we cruised around the – well, there's a new one, World War I at Pershing Square, which nothing is happening with it. We're there, we're counted, it's counted. First time we were back to the Lincoln Memorial, we hiked down there and walked and we enjoyed last week – the week before last, it was really nice week, it was nice and warm. We repeat a lot of parks we're going to, like here, we went to Blue Ridge Parkway yesterday to look at some stuff and look at the colors and so we're getting around but we're trying to keep up with it, but for a young person it is expensive.

Lu Ann Jones: Yeah.

Fred Koegler: Nowadays it is.

Lu Ann Jones: Any other questions?

Fred Koegler: So that's one of the things, since we're in Yosemite and we're partial to Yosemite because we've worked there, and we think it is the best place in the world. But we had to go out and see these other places, and there are some real nice, beautiful places; I could work in some other places. That's another good story, why didn't I go to some other park? Because of my teaching and I applied to other places, other parks, I said, I'll try. And they called me up and said, Okay, yeah, we want to hire you. But they wanted me in May, and I just couldn't do it because I couldn't take time off from school as luck played out, as I said, Tuolumne was the fit for me. I did work in Yosemite Valley for two summers. Back in 1978 and '79 I was road patrolman in a dayshift down in there in the valley and got a great experience. My family lived at Camp 6, it was right along the Merced River, we lived there, and my wife could take the kids out to the river every day and do all kinds of stuff with them. It was a good experience, it was called cross training, so that's when we went down there for cross-training, being a bigger area to learn more law enforcement stuff and that stuff and I returned to Tuolumne in 1980.

Lu Ann Jones: Well, it has been fascinating to listen to you. Thank you so much for being part of this project. I think it is a very important perspective to add to the project.

Fred Koegler: Yes, thanks.

[END OF TRACK 5]

[END OF INTERVIEW]