**Kelly Goodpasture** [00:00:00] And we do have to sign a release form.

**Susan Klein** [00:00:02] OK.

**Kelly Goodpasture** [00:00:03] And that's just so that people can listen to the interview.

**Susan Klein** [00:00:06] OK.

**Kelly Goodpasture** [00:00:06] Point in time. OK, ready to begin?

**Susan Klein** [00:00:10] Yes.

**Kelly Goodpasture** [00:00:11] OK, um, this is Sue Klein. She's a volunteer at the Cuyahoga Valley National Parkway. And it is June 23rd, 19...

**Susan Klein** [00:00:23] Cuyahoga Valley National Park.

**Kelly Goodpasture** [00:00:25] Yes, I was out and. Oh I say it wrong?

**Susan Klein** [00:00:28] You said Parkway.

**Kelly Goodpasture** [00:00:29] Oh.

**Susan Klein** [00:00:30] Yeah. That's OK.

**Kelly Goodpasture** [00:00:33] Sorry about that. And it's 2008. OK, what. Can you tell us who you are?

**Susan Klein** [00:00:36] Yes, I'm Susan Klein.

**Kelly Goodpasture** [00:00:41] OK, and were you born in this area?

**Susan Klein** [00:00:44] No, I was born in Seattle, Washington.

**Kelly Goodpasture** [00:00:46] OK, and what brought you to this area?

**Susan Klein** [00:00:48] I met my husband in Colorado and he was from this area. He's from, he was actually from Cleveland.

**Kelly Goodpasture** [00:00:55] Oh, OK.

**Susan Klein** [00:00:55] Yeah.

**Kelly Goodpasture** [00:00:56] And you live in the Cleveland area or the Akron area?

**Susan Klein** [00:00:58] Akron area, we live in Bath.

**Kelly Goodpasture** [00:00:59] OK. When did you first start going down to the valley, to the park?

**Susan Klein** [00:01:06] Probably in... Let's see, I moved about '68t. 1968. That's when I moved to Akron.

**Kelly Goodpasture** [00:01:17] OK, and how long have you been involved with the park?

**Susan Klein** [00:01:21] Probably since about the early '70s.

**Kelly Goodpasture** [00:01:27] OK, and what, what was made you want to become involved as a volunteer?

**Susan Klein** [00:01:31] Well, I was a member of the Junior League and we had a legislative committee and I was on that in the the Cuyahoga Valley National Park Federation, which was an arm of the Cuyahoga Valley Association, uh, which was just a historic society, kind of, was kind of leading the charge to make this into a national park.

**Kelly Goodpasture** [00:02:01] So at the time, it wasn't a national park?

**Susan Klein** [00:02:02] It was not a national park. No, it was just a beautiful area that was being threatened by some really bad development.

**Kelly Goodpasture** [00:02:14] And what so you've been involved since the 1970s. When did it become a park that officially a national park?

**Susan Klein** [00:02:21] I believe it was 1976 was when it was actually signed into law.

**Kelly Goodpasture** [00:02:28] OK, so that was the first project you worked on? Was it making it becoming having it become a park?

**Susan Klein** [00:02:33] Yes.

**Kelly Goodpasture** [00:02:33] What have you been involved with since then?

**Susan Klein** [00:02:36] Well, actually it was sort of... Being involved in making it a park was pretty interesting because as a board member for that group that was supporting the park, we... I did a slide show and I took pictures and made up a slide show and then took it on the road, so to speak, and went to a lot of different meetings as a speaker on the park. And then we also what was the other thing? Oh, we gave tours of the park. The schools would come down and, in their busses, and pick a guide up and we would tour them through the park and make a few stops. That was sort of all part of making people realize what valuable resources we had down there.

**Kelly Goodpasture** [00:03:32] And how long was that process that it takes? Was this...

**Susan Klein** [00:03:39] What until it became a law right

**Kelly Goodpasture** [00:03:42] People to actually make it a law

**Susan Klein** [00:03:43] It must I don't know. Officially, I think I was probably involved for about five years.

**Kelly Goodpasture** [00:03:49] Yes, I drawn out process.

**Susan Klein** [00:03:50] Yes. And I might be wrong on that date, but I think I'm close to right on seventy six.

**Kelly Goodpasture** [00:03:57] So. So you took on a leadership role, as you said you were on the board.

**Susan Klein** [00:04:02] Yes. Yeah.

**Kelly Goodpasture** [00:04:05] The park becoming.

**Susan Klein** [00:04:06] Right.

**Kelly Goodpasture** [00:04:06] What have you worked on since that time? I mean as far as...

**Susan Klein** [00:04:09] In the park?

**Kelly Goodpasture** [00:04:11] Mhmm.

**Susan Klein** [00:04:12] Actually after it became a park legislate on the books, it took a while for it to, for them actually to appoint a superintendent and they had been paying somebody for this National Park Federation. But once it became a park, they decided that they needed a volunteer director. So I was the volunteer director for a while and that involved having an annual meeting and writing letters in support of the park. And then once the superintendent came, there was a lot of unrest because people felt very threatened with their, property, the park was going to come in and take over, and so there was a lot of things to do for that kind of writing letters and talking to people, that sort of thing.

**Kelly Goodpasture** [00:05:10] So you were sort of a liaison?

**Susan Klein** [00:05:11] That's sort of one that's sort of over. I was one of the people one of the wasn't involved in that. And then eventually we just kind of went, I don't know if defunct would be the right word, but we, we just kind of weren't needed at that point. And then a few years later, one of the superintendents and I can't remember which one it was, came to me and asked me if I'd start up the volunteer organization again. And so that I think that was on the tenth anniversary of the park. So that probably was '86, '87. And so I got a group together and we kind of brainstormed about what we wanted to do. And my husband actually, excuse me, led that. And then he became president of the Cuyahoga Valley Association, which so that would have been, like I said, late '80s. Is that right? Yeah. And then... That is what eventually became the Cuyahoga Valley National Park Association, which is the volunteer arm of the park today, and also started that Cuyahoga Valley Environmental Aid Center. And I'm back on the board again for the the volunteer group, which is called the Cuyahoga Valley National Park Association.

**Kelly Goodpasture** [00:06:51] That's a tounge twister. Mm hmm. So have you. Have there been any surprises along the way when we're dealing with other volunteers from the parks?

**Susan Klein** [00:07:02] I can't think of any off the top of my head. I think I didn't expect at the very beginning that there would be people that would be so upset. But in retrospect, you can sort of understand if people felt threatened with their property, because that's something that we in the United States hold very near and dear. But I think most, if not all of those feelings are long gone now. And I think people are very glad to have the park here.

**Kelly Goodpasture** [00:07:33] And I didn't realize it was as young as it was.

**Susan Klein** [00:07:35] Yeah.

**Kelly Goodpasture** [00:07:38] So, how is it rewarding to you? I mean, as far as being involved in the park?

**Susan Klein** [00:07:45] Well, I've always been a National Park junkie anyway, and I grew up in I actually grew up in California and I learned to ski at Yosemite. And so I have a long term love relationship with the national parks. And so I suppose I mean, just the idea of me in Ohio, having a national park ten minutes away from where I live was just like a dream come true. I never thought that would happen, but it's just very rewarding to see the land that was so threatened to be saved. And really, they've not just saved it as it was, but they've really enhanced it. They've gotten rid of, oh, like junkyards that were down in the valley where the beaver pond is. And a lot of it just kind of junky areas have been cleaned up. And then some of the historic buildings that were just falling apart. The park is restored in one way or another. So that's that's really been rewarding. And just the the hiking and the biking that can happen down in the valley so close by, it's really, really nice. And I think probably for me, one of the things that I just really love to see is the towpath, because it's just so much fun to see all kinds of people down there. I've even seen wheelchairs down there. I've seen people who are handicapped, mentally handicapped, people who have been driven on who've been on the back of a bicycle built for two. So it's I just think that that part of it has been a wonderful, wonderful feature.

**Kelly Goodpasture** [00:09:34] Were there any drawbacks about being involved with the park?

**Susan Klein** [00:09:38] Drawbacks? Hmm. I can't think of any

**Kelly Goodpasture** [00:09:44] What would if someone else was thinking of being a volunteer in a huge capacity. But what would you tell them about being a volunteer in the park?

**Susan Klein** [00:09:55] Well, I suppose one of the most lasting things is just the wonderful people that I've met through my association with the park, from the superintendent to all the various staff members. The the Rangers are just a wonderful group. And then the people that it attracts, the other volunteers are just really good people, people that you kind of want to hang out with.

**Kelly Goodpasture** [00:10:27] In the time that you've been working and you touched on some of this. But what changes have you seen anything other than,

**Susan Klein** [00:10:38] I guess, the major changes? Well, the physical changes, we already mentioned that they just have kind of enhanced the wonderful things and gotten rid of the bad things. But I think the other thing that's just been wonderful is just the attitude of people towards that whole area that they I don't think people realized that we had something down there. It was something that we drove over or through and in all of us, not all of a sudden, but through the years, I think people have realized what what a valuable asset it is. And I think it's really helped quality of life in certainly in the Akron area. I'm sure the Cleveland area, too. But I, I speak more for the Akron area.

**Kelly Goodpasture** [00:11:29] So what are some of your favorite memories that you could share a few of your memories over the past thirty or forty years?

**Susan Klein** [00:11:35] Oh, gosh, favorite memories. Well, just specific things, I sort of filled out this form and I didn't really fill it out, I just made little notes and it wasn't put quite that way like that. But I guess I was sort of thinking at one point of the watershed things that kind of what you're talking about.

**Kelly Goodpasture** [00:12:12] Yeah.

**Susan Klein** [00:12:12] And I guess one of the first things that I just that really sticks in my mind is when the park was being considered as a national park, we actually had a congressional hearing in the in the national well, it wasn't in the national park. It was at Blossom. It was certainly within the boundaries. And that was a huge thing. And I and a friend actually testified. So that was that was just amazing. We had congressional people sitting up on the stage at Blossom, and they carried on a congressional hearing right here in the park. So that was really neat. And then when we heard that President Ford had signed the bill, that was that was a big excitement. And he signed it like right before New Year's. And if he had not signed it, then it wouldn't have become a park. So that was that was very exciting. And let's see what else I think. I think the first time I saw the Jaite headquarters, once they had moved the headquarters there and I said what a wonderful job they had done with that historical village. That was... That was to me a big deal. And then, of course, the completion of the towpath was just really special to see that that done and let's see, what else? I think one of the things that I really, I was always... When they took the Coliseum down, I was torn because I loved having the Coliseum close by. So I didn't have to go too far to a fence. But of course, it moved their business north and there just wasn't anything going on there. And so it was nice to see the Coliseum come down. And now I drive by there and it's a beautiful field and it's been restored. So that's that was a good memory for me. And... Well, the other the other memory I have that was just really sort of awesome was when we had the floods, we had the 500-year floods and how they undermined and ripped out railroad tracks and roads. And, oh, it's just amazing to see what was the power of water down there. So not necessarily a good memory, but an interesting memory. Excuse me.

**Kelly Goodpasture** [00:14:56] I'm going back to you were talking about President Ford signing the bill.

**Susan Klein** [00:15:00] Mm hmm.

**Kelly Goodpasture** [00:15:00] Could you say why wouldn't it become a bill? He was signed by January 1st?

**Susan Klein** [00:15:05] Because the president has to sign a bill in and he can do what I think they call it a pocket veto, but he doesn't officially veto it. But if he didn't sign it, it's just like vetoing it. And and I think he did it on December 31st. So we were elated. And I can't remember what the politics of that was. But some somebody got to him and it was it was signed.

**Kelly Goodpasture** [00:15:35] It's good for all of us.

**Susan Klein** [00:15:36] Yeah.

**Kelly Goodpasture** [00:15:37] And I'm sure you have many, but if you could pick out a couple of your favorite places, too.

**Susan Klein** [00:15:42] Oh, my favorite places. Hmm. Well, I love walking anywhere along the towpath, I love the carriage trail up up in the Brecksville area, which is connected to the two that I love, the covered bridge area. That's always been a special area for me on the ledges. I love the ledges. And I think one of my favorite things to do is to sit in Virginia Kendall Park, sit on the ledges on a fall evening and watch the sun go down and have a picnic and look over the valley. Yeah, yeah, yeah. We try and do it every year. We don't do it but...

**Kelly Goodpasture** [00:16:37] It sounds great.

**Susan Klein** [00:16:40] Yeah.

**Kelly Goodpasture** [00:16:41] Anything that you would like to ask?

**Tony Nigro** [00:16:44] What were some of the development proposals for the land before the National Park? What were some of the things that people wanted to put in?

**Susan Klein** [00:16:52] You know, I can't I can't remember exactly where they were, but I know there was a housing development proposed for the eastern edge of the park. Right. Kind of in the middle area. And not that they ended up I can't remember how they ended it with nixed it, though. In the end there there was just creeping development that was going to happen, like the Coliseum as an example, it became a white elephant and they were thinking of making that into a course, this was after the park was established. But they were thinking of making that into a kind of a mall area or something which would have developed all the land around it. So that would have been would have been horrible. And and there was kind of creeping little little businesses down in the valley that weren't really appropriate for park kind of settings. And that would have just increased even more that down at the south end of the Valley, there's in the Mirman Road area, there's a huge, huge building down there, restaurants and that sort of stuff. And that would have just crept right up the valley going north.

**Tony Nigro** [00:18:12] What are some of the services offered at the career center or you mentioned about the education center?

**Susan Klein** [00:18:21] Oh, the Cuyahoga Valley Environmental ED Center. That is actually a... It's not a career ed center. It is a it's an overnight. The main thing they do there is it's a campus and they have two dormitories and they do a program all during the school year where they have children come in for four nights and four days. That's three nights and four days. And it's just an environmental experience. And they have professional teachers there. And then they have interns who and something like 30 percent of the kids, 25 or 30 percent of the kids have to come from not necessarily or urban, but poor areas. And they are provided with scholarships so they can can come.

**Tony Nigro** [00:19:25] Were there any hurdles trying to get some of the places on board, like I know Peninsula?

**Susan Klein** [00:19:33] Well, Peninsula, that was the... Some of the people, not all of them, but there were some people in Peninsula who fought it long and hard. And and it's, it's been a continual struggle for them just because so much of their land was taken that they've lost their financial base and the park has stepped in and help them with their roads and a lot of other things. So that's that's been difficult for the town of a Peninsula.

**Tony Nigro** [00:20:04] Were there any other hurdles to get the designation of the national park?

**Susan Klein** [00:20:09] Well, that's an interesting comment, because it originally was called the Cuyahoga Valley National Recreation Area, which is the same thing as a national park. It just doesn't have the same prestige. It's run exactly the same way. It has Rangers. It's run by the National Park Service, which is part of the Department of the Interior. And somebody politically got to Congress and had it changed to to National Park. So I can't read what your original question was about that.

**Tony Nigro** [00:20:41] Oh, just like were there any other hurdles, like, troubles or people some way?

**Susan Klein** [00:20:46] Oh, I'm sure if you ask some of the superintendents, they would tell you. And I can't think of what they were, but most of the hurdles really were financial and one a major hurdle up in Brecksville was there was a it's it's they're mining something up there. And I can't remember what it is now. And that caused a lot of problems because it was it was causing a lot of pollution to go down into the creek. And that took a lot of work. And our current superintendent has been here for he just has 20th anniversary, John Debo, and he's been excellent at kind of working behind the scenes to make things work in preventing a lot of problems from boiling over in the press. I mean, the press covers them, but they're covered in a very logical, fair way to everybody. So things in the last 20 years have just knock on wood, have not come to any horror stories or horrible press or that sort of thing.

**Kelly Goodpasture** [00:21:59] But if someone wanted to become a volunteer, become involved with your organization, how would they go about doing that?

**Susan Klein** [00:22:06] They would just call Cuyahoga Valley National Park Association. And I think that number is 657-2909. And actually, we are in the process now of combining the volunteers from the National Park and from the National Park Association. So it'll be all run as one group in the future.

**Kelly Goodpasture** [00:22:32] And your organization involved in fundraising still?

**Susan Klein** [00:22:35] Yes. Yeah.

**Kelly Goodpasture** [00:22:36] Raising funds for the park?

**Susan Klein** [00:22:39] It's actually a major portion of of what we do is fundraise and not the not that there aren't other major efforts that we do, but we go to foundations. We go to people who are interested. We try and get government funds just like everybody else does. We have several fundraisers throughout the year. We have a clambake in the fall and we have a I'm going to probably leave something out at Christmas time. We have a bids for kids, which is an online auction and which is fun. It lasts for two weeks and the whole thing is done on the Internet. So there's no party involved, so to speak. And it's the end of November to the beginning. It's like the last week in November, first week in December. And it's a great time because it's it's right at Christmas time. So it's a way to get some nice, interesting Christmas presents and at the same time support scholarships for the kids at the Cuyahoga Ohio Valley Environmental ED Center, which is where the money goes to scholarships and the and the actual educational program there.

**Kelly Goodpasture** [00:23:59] That's nice. But I know our students go every year and most of our students are able to go. Right, because it's so so just their prices are just kind of because of the scholarships that are out there right now. The students from I don't think right now.

**Susan Klein** [00:24:12] What school is that?

**Kelly Goodpasture** [00:24:15] Barrett, Barrett elementary. It's in Akron.

**Susan Klein** [00:24:16] It's an oh, it's school. And I was thinking, you're from Cleveland. OK, OK, OK.

**Kelly Goodpasture** [00:24:20] And they all go on scholarship. Right. It's the price drastically, right.

**Susan Klein** [00:24:26] Yeah. It's been everybody that does it just loves it. It's just a really good program for the kids nowadays.

**Kelly Goodpasture** [00:24:34] It's and I go out every year.

**Susan Klein** [00:24:35] Yeah. And sometimes the urban kids have really never been out there. And I'm told that just the experience of being in a grassy area is just something really unique for the kids that are out there, so...

**Kelly Goodpasture** [00:24:49] That's fortunate.

**Susan Klein** [00:24:52] It works well.

**Kelly Goodpasture** [00:24:53] Yes. Was there anything else you'd like to add that you have to cover?

**Susan Klein** [00:24:56] I don't think so. Well, I think that's that's about it. I just, you know, one of the... You asked me and I gave you the quality of life thing, but I just think that the whole national park has just added so much to the quality of life to the whole area surrounding the park, because it's just been a haven for people to to go to. You know, in a way, this is an odd way of describing it. But new, you're in New York City, Central Park makes New York City livable. And I think almost for me that the national park makes our area more than livable. Just a really good place to live.

**Kelly Goodpasture** [00:25:52] All right. Thank you very much.

**Susan Klein** [00:25:56] OK, so what who else how many other people you interviewed?

**Kelly Goodpasture** [00:26:00] We have six total interviews we're doing with Mr. Gene[?] This afternoon. He'll be interviewing Tom and Bertha Jones. They're a couple whose property was taken over by the park, but who are still involved. Yeah, family. They're in their 80s, I believe, and still live in the park that I rent the house. Yeah.

**Tony Nigro** [00:26:24] And Perry, which was the trailer supervisor, recently retired. And then we get to hear their interviews going on. Seventy-five of them going on. Oh, wow. Through tomorrow.

**Susan Klein** [00:26:37] Wow. Wow. And this is done through Cleveland State.

**Kelly Goodpasture** [00:26:41] And Cleveland State. And it's actually a federal grant.

**Susan Klein** [00:26:43] Oh, OK.

**Kelly Goodpasture** [00:26:46] For Rivers, Roads, and Rails.

**Tony Nigro** [00:26:47] And we focused on...

**Susan Klein** [00:26:48] OK.

**Tony Nigro** [00:26:49] Just do the Canalway area.

**Susan Klein** [00:26:51] OK.

**Tony Nigro** [00:26:52] And how it's impacted and changed lives throughout northeast Ohio.

**Susan Klein** [00:26:56] Oh, OK.

**Kelly Goodpasture** [00:26:57] And how we've gotten back, you know, we just like last week, we interviewed two people. We're at Case Western all week. The West Creek project. It's a project up in Parma where they actually reclaimed, and they're tearing down business of business and old business and reclaiming that area and putting the West Creek back to work. And so it was just a good...

**Susan Klein** [00:27:20] Yeah.

**Kelly Goodpasture** [00:27:21] Project and we're sort of moving on down, all the way down into Zoar, you know, along the towpath.

**Susan Klein** [00:27:24] OK.

**Kelly Goodpasture** [00:27:25] We're interviewing people all the way down.

**Susan Klein** [00:27:26] OK.

**Kelly Goodpasture** [00:27:27] Because we've got interviews going on in Cleveland and some going on in Zoar.

**Susan Klein** [00:27:31] Because that, you know, that's I think another thing that I think is wonderful about the park that it has... Once our towpath was finished, then the whole Canalway became recognized as important and took hold.

**Kelly Goodpasture** [00:27:45] Exactly.

**Susan Klein** [00:27:46] So that was, was really neat. How did you all get... Are you involved through Cleveland State or through...

**Kelly Goodpasture** [00:27:51] We're both teachers, and it was a project... It was. Tony told me about me about it.

**Susan Klein** [00:27:56] OK.

**Kelly Goodpasture** [00:27:57] And that's how I became involved. But it was one, it was for professional development.

**Susan Klein** [00:28:02] Oh, OK.

**Kelly Goodpasture** [00:28:03] We're teaching our own students.

**Susan Klein** [00:28:06] Sure.

**Kelly Goodpasture** [00:28:07] Like, I guess, I probably knew the park wasn't as old as I thought, but that refreshes, so it's interesting.

**Susan Klein** [00:28:12] Yeah.

**Kelly Goodpasture** [00:28:13] You know, just the canals because the children see the canal all the time and have no idea what that is, which is...

**Susan Klein** [00:28:18] Yeah.

**Kelly Goodpasture** [00:28:20] Yeah. This is a very cool thing.

**Susan Klein** [00:28:22] Right.

**Kelly Goodpasture** [00:28:22] People are doing to make sure people know that.

**Susan Klein** [00:28:23] Right. Yeah. Yeah. OK.