

CC: We are located ah, this morning, ah, January 10th, 2017, at the home of William, Mr. Bill Kaltrider, and his wife, Pat, we are at their home at 306 Maple Street, here in Alpena, Michigan. And we are going to be interviewing Bill and ah, good morning Bill and Pat...

BK: Good morning, good morning.

CC: And we are very excited to interview you, sir.

CK: And who are *we*, Carole?

CC: Well we are Cindy Kus and I'm Carole Cadarette. Let's start right from the beginning Bill. Ah, what was, what got your interest...we know right now that you, at this point in time, you are the organist at Trinity Episcopal Church here in Alpena. You've been that for, for several years. But, there had to be a beginning. And did it begin when you were a child, ah, piano, organ...anything with keys on it? Let's start from the beginning.

BK: Well my earliest recollection is being in church and seeing those long tubes up there and I finally found out those were organ pipes and the sound came out of them...um, curiosity, ah initially. Ah, and then of course I had to find out what it was all about. Well my aunt was the organist at the church and, ah, was not too anxious to share her knowledge with a youngster like me. Ah, that was for well-educated, older people. And ah, so I had to go elsewhere to take care of my interest in the organ. And ah, so I, I think that was my earliest recollection. Um, then I, I, was just interested in organ, and not piano. And my aunt was the local piano teacher. And of course, I wanted organ lessons and she said, "You've got to have more piano" And, I didn't want more piano.

Um, I remember one Christmas, that, "what do you want for Christmas this year?"

And I said, "I want organ lessons."

And, ah, the answer was, "No, you aren't old enough, you haven't had enough piano, so I had to leave it at that. She was the organ teacher in town, and...

CK: Your aunt was the organ *and* piano teacher.

BK: Yeah. Right.

CC: And which town, Bill?

BK: Owosso.

CC: Ok.

BK: And, so, to earn money, like any kid, I would mow lawns and so forth. And I heard that there was this lady in the north end of town that played at a Christian Science Church, and she had an organ in her home. So, I went to her and offered to mow her lawn in exchange for organ lessons. Ah, so, that's how things started. She was not a trained organist, ah, so I'm sure that I had a lot of false information on how to be a good organist. But it satisfied me, and I was having a great time.

CK: Did she teach you to read music?

BK: No, I, I, had that in the early days of piano. Ah, this was more just the mechanics of the organ and how to use it and so forth.

CK: Ok.

BK: Um.

CC: How did your aunt take to that? Or did she not know?

BK: Can you believe in a small town of probably 17,000, I kept it a secret?

CC: Okay.

BK: It was a year or two before she found out. Ah, she wasn't too happy.

CC: But your parents were okay with it?

BK: Well, they didn't know I was doing it.

CC: Okay.

BK: I mean, my parents were my aunt's brother, and so it all in the family, and, you know, I think they would have stuck up for her instead of for me. (Chuckles.) So, that's sort of where I started.

PK: He has been known when he was young, to break into churches so he could play the organ- also.

BK: Oh yah, an interesting little story, ah, I loved to get around and play these organs in churches and take care of my curiosity, and sometimes there was no way to get in, legally, and I remember the Methodist Church had a coal chute. And a man, who was, later, the mayor of Owosso, he and I would break into the Methodist Church on Sunday afternoon and play the organ. Ah, we also did the same thing at the Christian Science Church, um, they always left that door unlocked on Sunday, so that someone could come in later to do something; but we could depend on that door being unlocked.

CK: Did you ever get caught?

BK: No. I guess people thought we were supposed to be there playing the organ. I don't know; but ah, we never got caught. So that was probably the first.

CC: Okay.

BK: Question number two?

CC: It's your story to tell, Bill. It's already, so far, it's been quite fascinating.

CK: When did you start playing for people? When did you take the jump from taking lessons and playing by yourself to-

BK: I was a freshman in high school, and, at that time, um, there was a factory in Owosso, um, they made sandpaper, and um, ah, grinding wheels, that sort of abrasive material. And um, the union had a strike and it was a lock-in. The employees could not leave the building. And, one of their employees was the organist at a church in Owosso, and she was allowed to call me to see if I would play. Well, I had never played at that church, I never played, if I remember right, I don't think I'd ever played at any church. And she knew that I was taking these lessons, and ah, so I played at that church, ah, for two or three weeks while she was in lock-up in the factory.

Um I can't remember which... oh I think that um, Boy's State I guess is still functioning as was Girl's State- at the College. And um, so I was asked if I wanted to go to Boy's State in the summer. And sure, so when I got there, that was on the campus of Michigan State, um, I can't remember what this man's title was, but he, he was one of the officials of the local Boy's State, and um, wanted to know if anybody played the organ for church. Well, of course I had to raise my hand. Ah, so they drafted me to play for the Sunday service with the Boy's, Boy's State. And apparently, this...oh, his name was McIntyre, McIntyre, I don't remember what his official capacity was; but somehow or another, Mr. McIntyre heard me, and thought that I should take advantage of a new thing at Michigan State, where they were allowing high school students to come into the College, take college courses for three weeks in the summertime, and um, so I was granted permission to go there, and, that was my very first official organ lessons- was the professor at Michigan State who taught organ. And, I had the lessons with her. She was a very fine musician, and I kept on studying with her after Boy's State was over. And then I went to Boy's, to um, the three week summer course the next year again. And she was a very fine teacher. So that was really my very first, formal lessons, ah, was at Michigan State.

CK: What year would that have been?

BK: About nineteen forty... seven, eight or nine. I don't know- one of those, right in that area.

PK: You were eighteen when you joined the Navy- do you remember what year that was?

BK: No, I wasn't eighteen, was I?

PK: Well, I think-

BK: I thought I was a little older.

PK: Well, I don't know, I assumed you were eighteen.

BK: No, I don't think so. I think I was closer, I was closer to twenty.

PK: Well what happened when you joined the Navy- with your music? What happened with your music then?

BK: Um, so it was again the same thing, you fill out something, you know, what your hobbies are and what work you've done and so forth. So I put down that I was a church organist and ah, so, immediately they called me in and ah, "would I play this next Sunday?" Well, the Sunday before we'd gone to church

on base at Great Lakes, and ah, this young black boy was playing the hymns and so forth and doing a very credible job. It was obvious he hadn't had much training; but he was able to accompany a thousand kids ah, in the drill hall, ah, and I thought did a very good job. Well they called me in during the week and said, "We want you to be the regular organist, we're getting rid of him." And um, that made me mad; ah, because he was a good nice person, and um, obviously the only reason they got rid of him was because he was black. And, in the Korean Era, blacks still weren't as accepted as they are today- that's for sure.

CC: Mmhuh.

BK: And um, ah, Sparky, I didn't see much of him for a while, and then they asked me to be the accompanist for the Blue Jacket Choir. And so, I said yes. Well, the Blue Jacket Choir would travel all around the Chicago area giving concerts. We were on television, um, radio, so forth, and, ah, once you're on television or radio, everything has to go in order. And you don't have much time between songs. And I just could not turn pages fast enough, set up the next song, with all that was going on. So I told them, "I need an assistant. I need somebody that's gonna travel with me and help me turn pages and so forth. So I said, "I think we need Sparky."

So, we called Sparky and ah, he officially became my assistant. And he travelled, we had concerts at the University of Chicago Rockefeller Chapel, WGN, WMAQ, ah, First Congregational, many, many, many churches and so forth in the Chicago area. (Coughs)

PK: How many members were in the Choir? It was a pretty big one wasn't it?

BK: (coughing) Yeah. I got a picture in here of the choir somewhere. But um, I would say there were probably, close to a hundred in the choir.

CC: So what was happening at that point then, Bill? Is the, the, the radio or TV was coming to the church you were playing in and you were performing in the church-

BK: Yah.

CC: - with the Choir. And they would come to you-

BK: Ah, they, they would have us come to the church or WGN would have us come to the studio and so forth and we would do a program-

CC: Because I was gonna say, if you're playing organ, you sure can't bring that to a studio. So they got to come to you.

BK: Yeah. But we would, the Choir would go to these various places, ah, and do concerts. Um, I have no idea how many we might have done, but a lot- ah, travelled all over the Chicago area.

CC: And this is while you were still in the Navy.

BK: Oh yeah, oh yeah.

CK: And it was called the Blue Jacket?

BK: Blue Jacket, yep. It was an audition choir; you had to audition to get in it.

CK: And all the members were from the Navy?

BK: Oh yeah. Totally, totally military, and this, Great Lakes was a recruit training command, so you didn't have the stability that you would have otherwise. And so, for maybe two or three weeks, you would have this group of guys, and then they would ship out, (coughs) and ah, then another group would come in. So it was not a constant thing where you could, ah, teach, and reap the benefits of your teaching, because they were gone. Somebody else got the benefit of your teaching. But it was a great experience, and gave me a lot of experience and that sort of thing.

CK: So you finished your naval experience, and what did you do after that?

BK: Ah, immediately after that, ah, I really didn't know what I wanted to do. And ah, I'd never been to California, so, ah, you get a little money when you're discharged, so I bought a car, and I went to California.

CK: By yourself?

BK: Yeah, uhuh. Ah, I didn't know anybody or anything; but I thought, "Well, I'll find out what it's about." And my interest in, in organs had remained, but I had very little opportunity to work doing anything with organs mechanically. (Coughs.) I had, while I was in high school, an opportunity to buy an organ out of a theater in Lansing. And ah, did pick that up and um, put that in my parent's home. So, I had this organ in their home.

Um, thank you, these coughs hang on and on and on.

Um, so, anyway, I went, I went to California and tried to find a job...I mean I went without any references or anything. And, so I ah, looked up organs in the phone book, (coffee pouring) and called a couple of organ repair people and so forth and ah, one of them said, "Well, come out and talk to us." So I did. And so, I, I worked for this company for a while and also, ah, because I'd had the experience, ah, in California, they had an organist association where they would get together and talk about jobs and so on. And I heard about that and contacted them, and then I was contacted by the, uh, Eagle Rock Baptist Church- and, if I would be the organist? So, I took a job.

CK: Is this Southern California?

BK: Mmhuh.

CK: Eagle Rock- that's near Pasadena?

BK: Yeah, unhuh. And ah, Dr. Dryden was the pastor's name. Why do I remember that? (Laughs) Um, so I, I, I started playing there, and I kept that up as long as I was in California. (Coughs) And I decided that with the GI Bill, I could go to school, and Music ah, Therapy interested me. And the two best schools for

Music Therapy- one was Michigan State and the other was the University of Kansas. Well, obviously I didn't want to go to Michigan State; that was too close to home. So, I went to the University of Kansas, and I was there a year, and that was enough that I found out that's not what I wanted because they had changed it to a double major, that you had to have Music Ed degree and teach school. Ah, and I was not interested in teaching a bunch of little kids. So, I left there and came back to Owosso. (Coughs.)

And ah, "What was I going to do?" I really didn't have many goals. Ah, but the local piano tuner was wanting to retire and he said, "Why don't you go to school and learn piano tuning?" He said, "I went to this school in Pennsylvania. Well, so, I decided well, we'll give it a try. So, I went to Pennsylvania, to piano tuning school, Rockwell School of Music in Clearfield, Pennsylvania, and ah, came back to Owosso, and had fairly ah, good clientele, customers for tuning pianos and made fair money. (Coughs)

CK: And that seems like it would have been interesting to you because you are interested in the mechanics of music, so-

BK: Right. It all fitted in, even though it wasn't organ. Um, so I decided that Owosso needed a music store- ah, pianos and organs and so forth. So, I started, well I did have no idea what, how the process worked, um, but I looked around and as far as I was concerned, Wurlitzer had the best medium-priced pianos that you could buy. And so I thought, "Well, I've had this experience with piano tuning." So I contacted Wurlitzer, and after their investigation, ah, they, ah, gave me the franchise for pianos and organs. Yeah, in the Owosso area- and then we drew out on a map what my area was, it was clear over to Flint.

Well with the new enterprise, there was nothing to look at and say we ought to do it this way or that way and of course, I didn't want to go too far. Ah, but I went to the bank and I borrowed three thousand dollars and ah, bought pianos to be put in my store, which at that time was the bedroom of my home. And ah, that's a picture of it there, the lower one. And, I put, I don't remember how many pianos, I think five pianos and one organ in there and converted that bedroom into a studio, um...

CK: Your store was in your home?

BK: Mmhuh.

CK: It was all- kind of converted?

BK: No. It was just one room that ah, it was a bedroom, and we hung some drapes on the wall, and made it – (coughs)

PK: You were married by this time I believe.

BK: (Coughs) We had two children, yeah.

CK: And so, roughly, what year or time period are we talking about?

PK: 1957.

CC: Yep.

CK: Okay.

BK: Yeah, about that, yeah.

CC: A married man with two children.

BK: Yeah.

CC: And a, and a, Wurlitzer, a Wurlitzer business in your bedroom, one of the bedrooms of your home.

BK: Right. And this lasted, perhaps, six months. And one evening there was, no, my wife and I had gone to the movie, and we stopped at a restaurant to get ice cream or something afterwards, and the policeman came up and tapped me on the shoulder, "You're under arrest."

And I said, "For heaven's sakes, what did I do?"

"You violated the building code. You can't have a business in your home."

And ah, so, we went back to the house so he could show me everything, and he said, um, "We won't put you in jail tonight; but you have to appear for a hearing..." and so on and so forth.

So, as a result, um, I knew I had to get out of there. And, um, I think the only fine was was perhaps twenty-five dollars or so. And, there's a department store in Owosso called the D.M. Christian Company and, a three-story building and so on, and their top floor ah, was pretty much without any retail, like no, no furniture or anything up there. And, so I contacted them, to see if they would lease out, if they would lease out some area to me to put in a piano and organ studio. So, yes, it worked out and I did that. Ah, that lasted for a couple of years, and we grew bigger and bigger and the bus company which owned several buildings in Owosso contacted me and they wanted to develop one of their buildings for me- to have a studio and have a music store.

It turned out to be a little larger than what we had originally intended. Actually, it was three store fronts, ah, we knocked out the walls in between, so that it was three different stores. So, ah, I thought, well, we got all this space, we might as well do it right. Um, (coughs) there was a young man in town that had started a little record business, and I asked him if he would be interested in leasing some space, and putting in a record department. Well, yeah, he would. And then another fellow, ah, had electronics, he had some televisions, and I asked him if he'd be interested in coming in and doing the electronic end, and there was room in the back for him to do service work. Well that was attractive to him. So, we operated that way.

(Opens newspaper) This would be that time when newspaper ads, where I played the organ at the, at the theater. For *Gone with the Wind* and so on. And ah-

CK: This is in Owosso?

BK: Yes. Let's see- which is this one? The County Fair? Yeah, that's the County Fair.

PK: Now, was this the store where Clint –

BK: No.

PK: And Bill, ah what's his name?

BK: No, not yet.

PK: Oh, okay. Three people in Alpena worked for him in his music store at one point, including my son-in-law. And we didn't know it. And when we were first going out, they invited us over, and they kept looking at each other and going, "I know you." My son-in-law was eighteen and used to deliver pianos for him. (Laughs)

CC: Wow, wow.

PK: And then, who is it, Bill Reed that played the guitar and what have you?

BK: No, um.

PK: What's –

BK: Not Bill- Reed, um,

CC: Dick Reed.

PK: Dick Reed, Dick Reed.

BK: Yeah.

CC: In *Music for You*.

BK: He worked for me.

PK: And, and then Ted Rockwell from church also worked for him. And none of them had seen each other over all the years until just recently...and figured out that they had this relationship from long ago.

CC: Small world.

PK: It is. Scary. So you always have to behave when you go out of town because you're going to run into somebody you know...from Alpena...or knows somebody you know.

BK: Well, like when we were in Detroit, waiting for the plane to fly to Alpena, um, a lady, Cynthia um...

PK: Oh, I almost always see somebody waiting for the plane for Alpena. And this last time when I was on my way home from California, it was Cynthia Taylor. She was on the same flight. We had a five hour delay for mechanical, so it was good to have someone to chat with.

BK: Well anyway, I started this store, and I was doing pipe organ work also, because there wasn't anybody around-

CK: What is pipe organ work?

BK: Well, I would build church organs, tune them, take care of them and so forth. Um, and I would have to go to Erie, Pennsylvania, to the factory, to get organ parts that I would need to build the church organ. And, so, I was headed to Erie, and I stopped in Cleveland to stay overnight at the Y, and it had snowed lightly, and they had chains in the parking lot, um, and had no sign, nothing, and I tripped and broke my ankle in four places. And um, they had not been keeping up their parking lot and so forth, and so I filed suit. It cost me ten thousand (coughs) as a result of the injury, having other people do my work and so on. So, I sued for ten thousand. It was four years later- between the time that I filed suit til it went to court. And I can't remember how long we were in court; but it was weeks. And um, the YMCA were real scoundrels, ah, they lied about precautions that they'd taken, lights that they'd installed, to the extent one man came and testified that he had put the wire up on the top of the line and attached a light to it and he'd done that weeks or months ahead.

Um, and then our side got up there and said, "These pictures were taken the day of the accident, where are those lights?"

They just plain lied. And that didn't help the case. And so, when they were through, instead of the ten thousand that I wanted, they awarded me a hundred thousand. So-

CK: This was 1960, sometime in the 1960's?

BK: 1970. Isn't that right? Seventy, seven zero.

CC: 1970, yes.

BK: (Opens newspaper) The newspaper ads, oh this is when Steve was born. (Chuckles)

PK: His youngest son.

CC: Okay. We're looking at an ad- at 1962-and it's a Christmas ad. It says, "For a Merry Christmas" and it's Bill's ad for the music center. And we're still in Owosso.

BK: Yeah. Mmhuh.

CC: Okay.

BK: I was building pipe organs at that time, and ah, this is one of the organs that I did, this is in a Lutheran Church, in Owosso.

CK: Can you briefly talk about what it takes to build a pipe organ? You, you have an organ...

BK: How can I briefly do this?

CK: (Laughs) Maybe not.

CC: You said you were going to Erie, Erie, you got a lot of your supplies and parts from Erie-

BK: Things that I would need, um, like some of the pipes, some of the electrical work, some of those things would be from the, the uh, the factory that supplied you with these parts.

PK: Is that the Allen Organ Company?

BK: No, not yet.

CC: We're still with Wurlitzer?

BK: Yep. Well no, we're, I'm on my own now-

CC: Okay.

BK: -with the pipe organs.

CC: So these are actually Kaltrider Organs.

BK: Right.

PK: That he's built- all over the place.

CC: All over. Okay. And all over would mean- all over Michigan? All over the country?

BK: No, Michigan.

CC: You had a lot of help, you must have had a lot of folks helping you?

BK: Oh, yeah. Like I had, these were installation people that worked for me.

CC: Okay.

BK: There's – this is a huge Catholic Church in Flint. St. John Vianney if you are familiar with him.

CC: I guess my question would be at this point, Bill, once you had the organ installed, in these beautiful churches all around Michigan, would you go in and, and maybe do a concert to prove what it was you, you just did, all this installation?

BK: Let's see. This guy, concert organist, here, ah, did many, many, many, ah, dedication concerts- after the organ was in.

CC: Okay.

BK: I hired him, um, we almost always do a dedication concert and bring in artists that ah, ah, I don't know if the name Harold de Koo (sp?) means anything to you? But ah, Harold did several for me in the southern part of Michigan. He played in a church in Ohio, I think, so he could come up to Jackson and that area and do concerts. But I didn't do the concerts. I hired that.

CK: During this time did you continue to play the organ?

BK: Yah. Well, let's see. During this time, let's see. I would have been at Oak Park Methodist in Flint when I went to Marshall's. And I lived in Owosso, which was between Flint and Lansing. So for choir rehearsal, I would go to work in Lansing, come back to Owosso and then go to Flint for rehearsal. And it just got to be too much for that distance. So I quit the job in Flint, at Hope, or Oak Park Methodist, and took a job in Lansing at Hope Meth- United Methodist. Or is it Mount, Mount Hope United Methodist. And yeah, I was playing all the time. I guess I always have.

And then when I got here, (looking at photos) this is my bell choir at St. Mary's and my adult choir when I was there.

CC: Wow. So, not only were you playing the organ, you were also a choirmaster.

BK: Oh yeah, yeah.

CC: You were not, okay, so did you take already works that was written, written for a choir and the organ, and, and do it their way, or did you rework it for you?

BK: I guess you have to say you rework it don't you? Yeah.

CC: Okay, okay.

BK: Yeah.

CC: There's probably a better word for it.

BK: No, that's pretty descriptive.

CC: Okay, okay.

PK: What was that big installation you did at one of the colleges? In that huge-

BK: Oh, that was at Michigan State. Ah, I think it's in here, isn't it?

PK: I don't know.

BK: I think so, let me get it.

PK: It's a beautiful picture, he installed a huge, huge, huge organ there.

CC: Alpena's got you now.

CK: So when did you come to Alpena?

PK: You came to retire up here, didn't you, so you built a house-

BK: Right.

CC: Okay. And we'll put a year on that? Well, maybe it's helpful if you go to your first in church in Alpena to play organ.

BK: Well that was St. Mary's.

CC: Okay.

BK: Yah. I moved, I was moving to Alpena and ah, Father Walt had an ad in the local paper for an organist. They didn't have anybody. Um, Christmas was coming, and I thought, "Gee, no organist for Christmas?" So I went and called on him, and I said, "If you want this Protestant to play for you through Christmas, I'll do it."

He says, "Oh, I can use you," and he says, "can you do the choir too?"

I said, "Sure."

He said, "Well if you just stay until Christmas, that would be, until after Christmas, so, we're before Christmas and he came up to the balcony, and he said "Bill, would you stay for a while after Christmas?"

I said, "Okay."

Well, I think I ended up being there eleven or twelve years total, something like that. And the last three or four, ah, Bruce contacted me, and I was playing mainly Saturdays at St. Mary's, so that left Sunday open, so I could take both jobs that way. So I started in at Trinity and stayed at St. Mary's for those many years, I don't remember how many it was now. So-

CC: That would have been, I believe in the 1990's. That's for sure.

BK: Could be.

CC: Ah, when Bruce Michaud came to Trinity Episcopal, he, he contacted you and you were at St. Mary's, so you did, both, both churches.

BK: Bruce was already a priest here, at Trinity, but I don't know how long he'd been the priest before I came on the scene.

CC: I believe he was mid-nineties, ah, two thousands, that Father Bruce came to Trinity.

BK: Yah, I have, I have no recollection.

CC: Okay.

CK: And is he there now?

CC: No, he has retired and ah, ah, the very Reverend Bill McClure is there, William McClure. And, ah, we still have Mr. Kalt, Kaltrider, doing the organ, and not only the organist; but he is also the choirmaster. So-

BK: Still there.

CC: So we started, I'm sure Bill, you're looking at late maybe 2008, 9, somewhere in there.

BK: I would say so, maybe a little earlier.

CC: Okay.

BK: Yah, I don't know.

CC: And you started with, with, with ah, Bruce Michaud and he's still there.

BK: And then Bill came along, and we're still going.

CC: Okay, so in between though, while you at, while you were at Trinity, or just before you went to Trinity, I do believe, that the organ at Trinity, you need to talk a little bit about that organ that you were playing, that it's got history and it's been revamped...

BK: Mmhuh.

CC: And it's the best what, sounding organ or pipe organ from-

BK: We have far more resources than any other instrument in the area.

CC: Okay.

BK: Um, what it is, back the Fletcher's gave the organ in 1948 and um, it was the finest quality organ that you could buy; but, it was rather small and limited in, ah in scope. Ah, in a way, rather difficult to play because you didn't have the variety of, for instance, accompanying stops. They were either too loud or too soft. Um, it just didn't, it was a small organ. Um, and as all organs go, the part of the instrument that takes the most abuse, has the most wear, is the console- where the keyboards are. And this was wearing out, starting to give trouble, and to look at replacing those worn parts, ah, doing that sort of thing would run thousands of dollars. And you could look at an additional organ that would already have these things, you wouldn't have these problems, and it would be new, with a warranty. It made sense to buy an additional organ and combine it with the pipe organ that is at the church. Ah, so it gave you far greater resources tonally, ah, and we've got, for instance on the, the original organ, you would probably have three different stops that would be for accompaniment. Now, we probably have thirty. Ah, you can do so much more musically with this instrument than we could have before. And, um, it has several ah, interesting things, ah, you can record the instrument, ah, you can add instruments to it, for instance, if you wanted to, ah, ah, you could take a piece- a solo from the Messiah for instance, and play the accompaniment all the way through, and then start it over again, and a soloist could sing the parts, and the accompaniment would keep right on. Ah, it'll do so many things that ah, we couldn't do before.

CC: So, shall we then say, Bill, when you took over ah, and you're playing now, exclusively, I do think at Trinity Episcopal, that you had to really, kind of, from what you knew about the organ, this is kind of a whole new way of looking at it, and you had to learn a whole lot of things about this organ.

BK: Oh, I'm still learning and do and will do. Um, yah, there's so much more. You can't just plop in and, and play; but you can play it as you would any other organ, just because it has all of these abilities, you don't have to use them. So, any organist is going to be comfortable, ah, playing it.

CC: No, not any.

BK: Oh, sure. (Laughs)

CK: Okay, I've got a question and I'm hoping somebody else listening out there is thinking this too, because, I've never thought that much about pipe organs, okay. How is the organ connected to the pipes?

BK: Okay, if you can envision a box that would be airtight and you have a blower that generates air pressure and that is tubed to this box and then there's a hole drilled in the box, the pipe can set over that hole, and as soon as you turn on the blower and get air in there, that pipe's gonna play- because it's a direct opening. So then, you, you have, a mechanical, ah, how should we call it? Almost a switch, that's going to allow air to go into that hole and it'll close and stop the air. So, you can have that wired to a key on the keyboard. When you press the key down, this is going to open up, and let the air in and play this note. And when you let it up, and it's gonna stop it. And that's why we call it, they are called stops- because that's what you do, you stop the sound.

CC: Do you recall how many pipes are in Trinity Episcopal? Hooked to that, ah, ah, console? One whole wall.

BK: Roughly, let's see, twenty-three times. Let's say twenty-three times seventy-three is what?

CK: A lot.

CC: A lot. (Laughs)

BK: I don't know. That would be how many there are. Ah, one question you didn't ask and I'll get the answer now- (gets up and leaves)

CK: So is each key, connected with a pipe, or is all the sound connected to the pipe?

CC: I'm not sure.

PK: Good question.

CC: So we ask, we have to ask the master here. That's very interesting.

CK: It's fascinating.

CC: It is.

PK: Well, he's built so many organs.

CC: Yeah. He has to separate it out in his mind, you know.

PK: I'm glad you're doing this, thank you. It'll be good to get this down.

CC: (whispers) That's what we felt, that's what we felt.

CK: It's a fascinating history.

PK: Can I get anyone anything- water, tea, coffee?

CK: I'm perfect, thanks.

PK: Oh good.

CC: There you go.

PK: You never know what he has in the closet, in the office.

BK: Okay, these are two different kinds of pipes. Ah, the material is lead and zinc. That is why, rather lead and tin. That's why this mottled effect on this. And this does not have that, this is pure tin; but when you mix something with tin, the result looks like this.

CC: Okay.

PK: And why would you do that?

BK: It changes the tone quality.

CC: Now are, is the pipes at Trinity tin?

BK: Both.

CC: Both.

BK: Yeah, you have, and also wood.

CC: Okay.

BK: You have wooden pipes, pipes that are made of lead, I don't know why I keep saying – but this is all tin-

CC: Okay.

BK: And it's very soft, you can see it got bent down here. And um, the way you tune it, is these things slide up and down. This lengthens the pitch and this shortens it. And that's what you have to do. Um, this one over here slides, this part slides...

CK: Okay-

BK: ...to tune it.

CC: Now, does it take, does it take a, a pro-, someone come in to do that?

BK: Mmhuh. Yeah.

CC: Okay. How often do, do the pipes have to be tuned?

BK: It depends on how fussy you are.

CC: Does it depend on, on how soft or how loud you play the? No, that doesn't bother it.

BK: This doesn't change the volume.

CC: Okay.

BK: Um, how often you have to have it tuned is determined by outside factors. Um, right now, the organ should be tuned. But I have not called for it because it's an expensive process and in this weather, with heat and cold, ah, it's going to affect the metal, metal changes shape in heat and cold, ah, wood pipes expand and contract, ah, this is not the time to spend the money on tuning; because it is not going to be stable.

CC: Okay.

BK: You've got to have a stable temperature and humidity in order for an organ to stay in tune. So, generally speaking, ah, any place that has a good music program, they're going to tune the organ three or four times a year, in order to keep up with the weather.

CK: So while you were away, I asked this question, because I'm trying to picture what you were talking about with the key sending sound into the pipe.

BK: The wind does.

CK: The wind. Okay. So, does, is each key in the organ, associated with a pipe?

BK: Yes.

CK: Okay.

BK: Oh, it could be multiple pipes. Ah, from one key you can have innumerable number of, of things that it does. Because, like just plain middle C, if you had several stops on, several pipes the same, and that would play all of these-

CK: Okay.

BK: - or according to the selection that you have made, it might only play one. But yah, it has lots.

CK: It seems like there is an infinite amount of sounds that you could create-

BK: Right.

CK:- by whatever stops you set up.

BK: I try to spend time each week working on the hymns and the choir accompaniment and so forth because the possibilities of sound are there- I have to get them out. Um, and the only way that you can get that sound out, is to try it. If you don't like it, change it.

CC: Mmhuh.

BK: Um, there's just so many possibilities.

PK: It's amazing anyone can play the organ.

CC: Absolutely.

PK: It would just boggle your mind when you sat down there- like where do you start?

CC: Well, Bill is telling that organ that is sitting in front of him, he is telling it what to do.

BK: Yeah.

CC: If he doesn't, like he said, if he doesn't like the sound, he'll change it. But he is actually telling it what to do. And he has to have that ear to, to, for, for the hymn that he is playing, whether he wants to do it soft and let the choir soar, if he wants, whatever he wants to do with it- he's, he's in charge. The organist is in charge.

BK: I always tell a student, when you sit down to an organ, before you start playing, ah, pull out one stop and play something like *America*...something you're familiar with. Listen to that sound, using that one stop. Push that one in, draw out another one, do exactly the same thing, so that you know what it is going to sound like before you turn that stop on. And then, put two or three together. See what that resultant tone is. Ah, it's the only way that I know of to learn how to be in charge of that organ- you know what it is going to sound like before you do it. It takes a lot of time.

CC: Mmhuh.

BK: I'm still learning. I haven't ever gotten all of the combinations in there- there's far too many; but it makes it more interesting, you can do more.

CC: Well Bill, I'm going to be very gentle and just say to you, that you have been playing keys, especially the organ, a very long time. It was a secret, how you learned as a young, as a young child, really- you know- you weren't even a teenager yet. And now, you're still here with us, making beautiful sounds that I can attest to on that wonderful organ at Trinity Episcopal Church in Alpena, Michigan. Ah, I won't ask your age, but I know it's a bit past eighty, and-

BK: Seven past.

CC: Seven past. Bill's eighty-seven and ah, and ah Pat shares with us as often as you are needed and we appreciate that. Is there anything else you'd like to tell us before we, we close this interview?

BK: I suppose we've only scratched the surface.

CC: I suspect.

BK: But, um, Every now and then I think, "Why didn't I show you this or tell you this?" Um, but it's a very interesting subject.

CC: It is a very interesting subject and I think you've taken all of us that's at the table- your wife, Cindy and myself to a different, a different place, when it comes to music and musicians. You've taken us there and you've given us a whole new attitude about going into a church and listening to an organ be played and if we were downstate, wondering if Mr. Bill Kaltrider put that organ in that church-

BK:- It could be.

CC: We thank you very much for sharing your home and your time with us... and ah, we know the reader will appreciate it also. Thank you Bill and Pat.

BK: Thank you for the opportunity.

PK: You're most welcome.