EB: So it is quite frustrating sometimes.

KL: It is. But there are lots of tricks. In Borneo you set snares and things to catch pheasants and such. In the Philippines, you set snares to catch the beautiful peacock pheasants as they go along. There are many, many little tricks. But it was fun. I had many good years.

Sir Edward Hallstrom of Australia was a tycoon who invented the Silent Night Refrigerator and had made millions of dollars on it. Anyway, he started the Taronga Park Zoo in Sydney and put millions of dollars of his own money into the zoo and kept it going for years. Well, he was a very dear friend of mine, and every time I went over there, of course, I would visit him. He gave the San Diego Zoo many things: cockatoos, kangaroos, wallabies, wallaroos. He was very generous and he helped the San Diego Zoo to a great extent in the early years.

EB: Were there any other important people who contributed to the Zoo from abroad?

KL: Well, I had another dear friend, Edward Marshall Boehm who was probably the greatest porcelain sculptor on the world. He lived in Trenton, New Jersey. He sculpted all of his porcelain work from live specimens from his own aviaries. He had birds of paradise and really rare, exotic birds. He happened to see one of the ZOORAMA programs on the Zoo's Rain Forest. So he called me the next day and he said, "K.C, I'd like to help the San Diego Zoo a little bit. Can you come back here?" So, I went back to New Jersey and brought back Boehm's gift of twenty-five thousand dollars worth of birds from his collection. The next year Jim Dolan went back and got another twenty-five thousand dollars worth of birds. This was in the early sixties. So, I mean, we made friends. All the curators made good friends all over the world and it really paid off, whether it was in the United States or in Australia or New Guinea. Belle Benchley, when she made her round the world trip was a wonderful ambassador, and she had friends all over the world. And Charles Shaw and I and George Pournelle all tried to do the same thing. We made friends and I still get Christmas cards from those different countries, after thirty years, because they're real dear friends.

EB: Can you name any other friends of yours that you made?

KL: Oh yes. An interesting person we met in Indonesia was Helmi Osman. He was a native Indonesian, a very dear friend. He accompanied me when I went to get the proboscis monkeys, but he also helped me to arrange to get our Komodo dragons for us. He made several trips to collect them for us, in fact, I went out with him one time. We went to the
Ramada Islands there but we couldn't land because the wind was so bad and the water was so rough, so we had to come back to Surbaja in Java. But later he went and set traps to get those Ramodo dragons, and then shipped them on to the San Diego Zoo. He worked for the city of Surbaja, he was a very good naturalist and had five hundred people working for him. He did a lot for our zoo. When I went over there he took a little vacation and took me all over Indonesia.

I just want to mention ZOONOOZ. 1926 was the first issue of ZOONOOZ. We had many editors, but again we must remember some of the early editors like Ken Stott. It was just a small, little publication. We didn't have any money and we didn't have color until about 1965. The curators and the staff wrote articles for it. Edalee Harwell was one of the early editors of ZOONOOZ, and then, of course, Edna Heublein came and was there about twenty years. Now Marjorie Shaw is doing a splendid job as editor, and I think that today ZOONOOZ is a wonderful publication.

Some of the old-timers need a little pat on the back once in a while. You never knew these people, but I did, and they were a part of my life and a part of the Zoo's life in terms of its history. Many people have no idea who they were or what they did, but they were all a real part of the Zoo's development.

EB: Can you tell me something about some of these people—Ken Stott for example.

KL: He grew up here in San Diego and is a very good zoologist. He's an emeritus, still on the staff, and writes wonderful articles. Very well trained, he graduated from San Diego State.

Edalee Harwell... when Martin and Osa Johnson brought us the two big mountain gorillas in the '30s, Edalee took care of them. That's a long time ago, but she was a very important person in those days, and those gorillas would not have survived if it had not been for her.

EB: Can you tell me about any other important contributors from the early times?

KL: Well, we have many people that make small donations. Henry Cramer used to have Cramer Bakery here in San Diego, and he made several contributions to the San Diego Zoo. He was interested in game birds—pheasants, partridge and quail. He made many contributions to the Zoo.

You know, as we belong to different organizations we come into contact with many people, and all of this helps. I was a charter member of The American Pheasant and Waterfowl Society and I was president several times. Now it is a very large organization. I belong to the International Waterfowl Association and I was elected to the Explorer's
Clu? American Ornithologists Union, Cooper Ornithological Society. But as you belong to all these different organizations—each has their own group of some two thousand members here and there—you come in contact with many people. That is how we got many of our fine specimens, and this is what made the San Diego Zoo great. For example, Jean Delacour, a nobleman in France has a beautiful thirteenth-century castle in Normandy. Joan of Arc was incarcerated in this castle before they killed her. I used to ship him emus and rheas and he would send me cranes and flamingos and other things that he was raising. This was in trade. It was a very good system of contacts.

EB: What major changes happened while you were with the Zoo?

KL: Oh, I think the escalator and the Skyfari and the Children's Zoo, and in 1972 the Wild Animal Park. Of course, that was Dr. Schroeder's dream. What most people don't know is that all the staff and everybody else worked on the Park ten years before it ever opened. From 1962 to 1972 we had meetings, discussions, planning, it was quite a project. I'm happy it turned out so well.

Dr. James Dolan, who is in charge of the Wild Animal Park is a very important person. By education he is a mammalogist, a taxonomist is really what he is by profession. When he was a young man he was educated in Germany and then went to the Catskill Game Farm in New York and got more experience. Then he came to San Diego and I trained him for ten years in the bird department. This was before the Wild Animal Park opened. He has put that Wild Animal Park on the map and he is probably the only person in the world who could have done it. Excellent man, Dr. Dolan.

EB: You mentioned that there were only twelve employees at the Zoo when you first started in 1936. Can you tell me about the employees as the years went by. Was there an increase in manpower and how did this come about?

KL: Actually, the employees did not increase until after World War II. As the attendance increased they needed more employees. They built food stands and things like this whereas before that we didn't have them and so therefore didn't need the employees. And now there is the large administration and the hospital has grown. At one time the administration and the hospital had three people, and now they must have forty. It is the same way all over. But it wasn't until after World War II that it really started growing, and then it started increasing every year. Then the union came in. When we were small the union wasn't interested in the San Diego Zoo at all, but the minute it started making money they came and wanted a part of it.
EB: What types of changes did the union bring to the Zoo?

KL: Oh, many things. Now it is much easier to work there. They don't work such long hours; they have three people for every job. It is quite different.

EB: Were you happy with the union?

KL: Well, the staff never had to join the union. Now, personally, I don't like unions because they make too many demands.

EB: Were there any conflicts that you had with the union?

KL: Not really. They used to object when I worked twelve hours a day. I had birds to take care of and I did it. I didn't care if they liked it or not. I didn't have to work just so many hours, I would work forty hours or as many hours as I wanted to work.

EB: Did the union cause any conflicts with your employees?

KL: No, not really. It's probably a good thing. We didn't make much money when we started there. I think I started out at one hundred dollars a month, which wasn't too much. I had just come out of college. Graduates today probably start at twenty-five thousand a year. That is a little bit of a difference. [Laughter]

Of course we had that strike in the '60s. That was really a funny thing. The union was centered up in San Francisco at that time, and they sent their men down to call a strike. They wanted us to close but we wouldn't close. They thought we would have to close, but what they didn't realize was that the staff members like myself and Chuck Shaw and George Pournelle, we were all trained to take care of animals. It was not like it is now where administration couldn't possibly take care of the birds. Anyway, the staff went out, and we organized with our own staff members. I went out, and we organized with our own staff members. I had girls from the restaurant come down and cut up my food and then I would take it out. We had five thousand birds and then I would take it out. We had five thousand birds which is a lot of birds to feed, but we could do it because we knew what we were doing, you see. I grew up in the Zoo and I knew how to feed every bird we had in the collection, and I knew how to feed every bird we had in the collection. I knew how to feed every bird we had in the collection, and I knew how to feed every bird we had in the collection.

EB: You received many awards for your accomplishments in breeding, such as from the American Game Bird Breeders' Cooperative Federation, the Edward H. Beam Award of the American Association of Zoological Parks and Aquariums. Can
KL: Yes. I have been very fortunate. Probably the most prestigious award I have is belonging to the Explorers Club of New York. I have been elected to the Avicultural Hall of Fame for breeding oscellated turkeys and Galinaceous birds way back in the '50s. I am an honorary member of Agapornis, the Lovebird Society of Africa, the California Game Breeders Association, the International Wild Waterfowl Association. And as I mentioned before, I was a charter member of the American Pheasant and Waterfowl Society established in 1936. I have received many other awards through the years.

EB: Are you still active in these organizations?

KL: Yes, I am still active in most of these organizations. Just recently we have been establishing finch societies. We established the Finch Society of San Diego County which meets out in La Mesa. Even more recent than that is the North County Avicultural Society which my wife and I established. We wrote the bylaws. We started out with six people and now we have 115 members in this small organization. So I am still active.

EB: How were your accomplishments recognized at the Zoo?

KL: Well you know, this is real interesting because way back we raised the first Andean condors in captivity from 1942 to 1952. We raised nine of them. I kept very detailed notes on feeding and diets. So, when Bill Toone hatched their first California condor, I took all my notes over to him and he used the same information, which is very interesting because that was a long time ago, forty-two years ago when I pioneered the condor raising business. This is a form of recognition.

EB: So you set the standard. How do you feel about the California condors at the Park?

KL: Well, they are doing very well. They have hatched six now and I think they have five more eggs. This is all within a year or two which is more than I did in forty years. [Laughter] Of course, this is a great thing and I am sure it is the only way they can save the California condor. You know, Mrs. Benchley and I tried to do this over forty years ago when there were a few more wild condors around. It would have been much easier then, but National Audubon opposed the idea and we were shot down.

EB: Why did they oppose it?
KL: A man by the name of Baker, who was President of the Society said he would rather see all the California condors die before he would want to see one in captivity. This was his philosophy.

You know, this endangered species business, you can't save all the endangered species in the world. This is impossible. We will soon have twelve California condors and I think they have five or six in Los Angeles. The wildlife preserve up by Ventura there is sixty-three thousand acres and there are only about seventeen or eighteen wild birds now, alive. Even if we released these seventeen birds that we're raising, it won't make any great population explosion for sixty-three thousand acres. This is the problem about releasing anything back into the wild because their habitats are being destroyed. If they ever strike an oil well up there in that preserve, do you think they are going to care about seventeen birds? And this is true around the world with all endangered species. In South America they are destroying the Amazon Rain Forest, and the rain forests in Guatemala, and in Madagascar. They are destroying all the trees and all the nesting facilities for many species. I don't care if you raised a hundred lemurs in any zoo or all zoos, you can't take them back and release them in Madagascar because the trees are not there so they could not survive. This is a big problem now. There are about two hundred and twenty zoos in the American Association of Zoological Parks and Aquariums, so maybe they can keep a captive population nucleus within all these zoos, keep up a captive population. At Sea World where they are hatching all those wonderful penguins, they are using the same temperatures in the incubators that I established over forty years ago—ninety-nine and one-half degrees Fahrenheit with eighty and eighty-five percent humidity. We did this forty-some years ago, but they are using the same standards. We had very good success in incubating many species of birds.

KL: Can you recall any amusing anecdotes at the Zoo, involving birds, other animals or fellow workers?

KL: Well, you know, in the early days some of the grottos and some of the cages were not too secure. During the first two years I was at the Zoo working with the bears and the cats, we had a Malayan tapir get loose. There was a bar up on Park Boulevard, and this Malayan tapir walked into this bar. There was a man sitting there—early in the morning. This was—and he was drinking and he turned around and saw this man drinking and he turned around and saw this man drinking. I don't know if you know Malayan this Malayan tapir. I don't know if you know Malayan white animal. It probably cured him of drinking. [Laughter]
Another time WPA was doing repair work on one of the bear grottos, a grizzly bear grotto. The workers had left planks in there, and a bear just walked out on these planks and walked out on the pathway. Well, in those days we used to think four thousand people was a lot of people for attendance, which it was in those days, and this grizzly bear was out there loose. We sounded the alert to everybody in the Zoo and we all went down to where the bear was, and Frank Bonnet who was chief of our security guard went down there with his .45. He had to shoot the grizzly because it was a dangerous thing with the crowd we had in there. That was a very exciting time.

EB: Can you remember any others?

KL: Well, when Dr. Schroeder came to the Zoo as a young veterinarian he pinioned all my storks and cranes down in the canyon where the bongos and the antelope are. That all used to be a crane and stork canyon. In those days they used to cut out part of the tendon to keep them from flying; this is a form of pinioning. Anyway, the job wasn't too well done. Anyway, in a matter of time, these little tendons that Dr. Schroeder had cut out grew back together so the storks had their flight again. Dr. Harry Wegeforth used to live up on Cypress, up above the Zoo there. Well, Dr. Harry used to have some very valuable goldfish up in his home on Cypress, and my storks used to fly up there. It'd home on Cypress, and my storks used to fly up there and catch the stork. He didn't like this. [Laughter] You know, Dr. Harry used to ride around the Zoo on a horse, and he had a beautiful black horse, which I guess was an Arabian. He rode around by the flight cages and down by the cats and all over the Zoo every morning, early, and of course we were in there working. If anything was wrong, he would certainly tell you about it. It made life interesting.

EB: Can you tell me, in a few words, what was your opinion of Dr. Harry?

KL: Oh, he was a fine man, an M.D. Everywhere he traveled around the world he always collected seeds. He would stick the seeds in his pocket and bring them back to the Zoo and plant them. And we still have some plants from seeds that he planted. He was like Johnny Appleseed. He loved animals and birds; he was really a remarkable man. In the early days when I first came, things were very tight...you know, those were still Depression days. I was working for eighty--a hundred dollars a month, just out of college. It wasn't much money, but sometimes the attendance wouldn't
even pay our salaries. So Dr. Harry would take money out of his own pocket, and pay our salaries, and that is how we survived. So it's pretty wonderful for a person to do this. He didn't want the Zoo to close.

EB: Can you tell me anything about Belle Benchley?

KL: Belle Benchley, as you know, was really the ambassador of the San Diego Zoo. During her tenure there she made the Zoo world-famous. She gave many talks and speeches and she really created good will all over the world. This really put the Zoo on the map.

During World War II, I was the last one to be drafted from the Zoo. I was three years in the Philippine Islands and I had a military leave of absence, but I was the last one; all the other keepers had been drafted before me. All that while Mrs. Benchley came down to the bird yard to feed the birds.

I used to raise lots of emus and we shipped them all over the world—Belgium, Germany, to England, in trade. We had a special carpenter that made shipping crates for the emus, and Mrs. Benchley would go over to the warehouse where they made them and inspect them to make sure there weren't any little nails, little points showing which would injure the bird. There aren't very many people who would do that today.

The last ten years of Mrs. Benchley's life she was in a rest home. And I went to her funeral. I am sorry to say that she was completely forgotten after ten years away from the Zoo. She had made thousands of talks to all types of organizations, and there were only six people there at that funeral—six! Out of the City of San Diego, where she spent so many years giving talks—I think she visited probably every school in San Diego, she belonged to many women's organizations—they didn't even have the respect to send a representative to her funeral. She was completely forgotten, and this really hurt me. Ken Stott would have come but he was ill at that time and couldn't.

She was a most remarkable person. She was the first woman director of any zoo in the world, and she was a good one, a very good one. When I first came to San Diego, I walked into her office and she didn't know me from Adam. I said, "Mrs. Benchley, I want to work at the San Diego Zoo," and she said, "We have no openings. We have no money." But she let me start at a very low salary. So anyway, I had a job, and there were no jobs in those days. So I am doubly appreciative of the interest she took in me.

EB: And what about Dr. Schroeder?

KL: Well you know, Dr. Schroeder is a remarkable man. He was at the Zoo several times but had gone back to Lederle
where he had a big job and probably more money. But he came back to become our best Director. The Zoo grew and prospered under him, in those growing years.

EB: When you retired from the Zoo in 1976, was the Ornithology Department in good shape?

KL: It was in beautiful shape. You know, at that time I had the largest collection of birds in the world! I had 1226 species of birds. There has never been a collection like that, anywhere in the world. My bird collection was the tops. And I got to work with all those species of birds, which was very fortunate. That's why we had so many breeding records. My philosophy is that the more species you have, the more you have to work with. Each year I tried to concentrate on a different family of birds, you see. Because I had a large collection I could do this and I was able to establish a lot of breeding records with that collection.

EB: Was the department left in good hands?

KL: Oh yes, Dr. Risser is a fine young man. He has a wonderful background and academically he is very good. Of course I think administration is a little difficult now because of so many meetings and things that he is not able to get out and do what I used to do. I used to get out and feed certain birds certain things which would stimulate their breeding. He doesn't have time to do these things anymore.

EB: In looking back, do you see any ways in which you could have run your department differently than you did?

KL: No, I would do the same things. I think that today we have probably a better group of keepers. I mean, they are more educated than the ones I had in my days. But the keepers I had were very dedicated. There are still some on, like Augie Campos. Some of them have been there twenty-five years. They were dedicated people who did their job, but now we have people who have college educations, along with the new technology and research. You know, I never had that all the time I was there, we did with what we had, and I think we did a pretty good job. Really, not bragging. We had over 5,000 birds to feed and water every day, which is a lot of work!

EB: What do you think of the Zoo today?

KL: It is very nice, but I told the Development Director, Charles Bieler once, "You're administration is top-heavy," and it is. They have too many people working there. When I
think of the work we did... nine or twelve people used to run the whole Zoo, and we had the same one-hundred-some acres. Now they have fourteen or sixteen hundred people. There are three people for every job. Of course, the union has the last word to do with this. I saw a report on the budget, and the big thing in the budget is salaries.

I've grown orchids here since I retired, and just joined a little orchid club. They voted to give fifteen thousand dollars to the San Diego Zoo to build a new arboretum for their orchid collection. There were about two hundred people there at that meeting, and I felt a lot of animosity there among the people, first about the charge for the parking and then about the cost of the whole family membership and everything else. If you are married and have a four or five kids and you go to the Zoo, it costs a lot of money. I realize that people are making more money but it is still a big expense.

EB: One last question. What do you see in the future of the Zoo?

KL: The great technological things they are doing, like the semen banks which Dr. Benirschke in Research has developed. I think that has great prospects. They freeze the semen and it can be used ten or fifteen years later. They are doing such wonderful things with this new technology, it just boggles the mind.

I would like to summarize these interviews. In the forty years that I was at the Zoo we tried to establish new breeding records every year or every ten years. For instance, from 1930 to 1940 we specialized in the breeding records of pigeons and doves. We had forty-eight species reproduce, some very rare.

From 1940 to 1950 we specialized in waterfowl. We had many first breedings of waterfowl and hatched and raised fifty-eight species. We were also working with cranes in the '40s and '50s. We raised about seven or eight species of cranes and reproduced the first Florida sandhill crane in the world at the San Diego Zoo. We were also working with birds of prey then, and hatched and raised in captivity the first Andean condors, from 1942 to 1952. We raised nine Andean condors. We were also working with finches in those years and we raised forty-eight species of finches. Between 1950 and 1960 we worked with gallinaceous birds; these are the junglefowl, pheasants, guinea fowl, francolins. We introduced some francolins for the first time to the United States. And we hatched and raised them and distributed them to all the game bridges [not: not confirmed; may be "birders"], in the United States. We were also working with the junglefowl—the red, which is the one you see running around the Zoo now, we brought back from Burma and India in 1942. We raised the green
junglefowl from Java, the Sonnerat’s gray junglefowl from India, and the Ceylon junglefowl.

In 1960 to 1970 we specialized in rails. There is a big Weka rail from New Zealand which was quite a group to hatch in captivity. I mentioned before the Bali mynahs or Rothschild’s grackles, of which we imported four birds from the island of Bali and raised over a hundred chicks from those two pair. Also between 1960 and 1970 we specialized in lories and cockatoos and all the Psittacine family. We raised a hundred and thirty species of Psittacines; eleven species of cockatoos—a hundred and sixty-nine cockatoos. I live in North Park, only about ten minutes from the Zoo, and when I was hand-raising all these baby cockatoos I used to feed them on a three-hour schedule, so I would go over to the Zoo every three hours and hand feed them.

In 1964, my wife and I and our son went down to Brazil and brought back a hundred and five hummingbirds, and we hatched six or seven species in that many generations in the hummingbird exhibit. We also specialized in tanagers of which we hatched about twenty species.

Of course in 1972 I got the nine Darwin’s rheas from the Brookfield Zoo and the Bronx Zoo, and with the help of Dr. Benirschke up at the Zoo Hospital we finally got those birds breeding. Over a thirteen-year conservation effort we hatched a hundred and two Darwin’s rheas. So some of these conservation programs take some time.

EB: To wrap up here, Mr. Lint, what do you see as the real purpose of the Zoo?

KL: Education and research, and conservation. If they can achieve all these goals, this is fine, but it is not easy. It is such a long-range thing. For example, the Whooping Crane Association which I have been working with for over twenty years now started out with only ten birds, which were all that were left in the world. And now there are two hundred, which is good. It has taken a lot of years. This would be true of many other species, like gorillas. But if all the zoos raised five hundred or a thousand gorillas, they couldn’t send them back to the Congo because they can’t survive over there. The African wild habitat has been destroyed. As I say, it takes time.

But the San Diego Zoo is still one of the great zoos in the world, it’s a beautiful zoo which has changed an awful lot since I arrived there in 1936. It’s been a fulfilling forty years.

EB: Thank you, Mr. Lint, for giving so generously of your time for these enjoyable and informative interviews.