Q. This is Raimund Goerler. I’m interviewing Charles Passel as part of the oral history program for the Byrd Polar Research Center Archival Program, this program being funded by the National Science Foundation. Mr. Passel, can you tell us how you developed your interest in geology, your major influences upon your career and so forth?

A. Well I went to Miami University, I registered as a business major, but I took as my science historical geology. And I got so interested in that course that I switched to a geology major rather than a business major. And it was so interesting, a historical geology book we used then. So that’s how I became interested in geology.

Q. And this was at Miami University?


Q. Okay. We want to talk about why you were interested in going to Antarctica as a member of the third Antarctic Byrd expedition. Before we get started on that, can you give me a little bit, if you have any impressions of Admiral Byrd before you met him and was he kind of a hero to you?

A. He was a hero from the very start. My professor at Miami University was F. Alton Wade. He was a senior scientist of the 1935 expedition. So I had missed an
English course, so I had the stay at Miami the fifth year to take that course. And Al Wade came into the lab where I was working and says “You want to go the Antarctic C?” He called me “C.” I said “Sure.” So he said “I’ll get you an interview with the Admiral.” So the next morning I was on the train to Boston to meet the Admiral and I stayed two weeks at his house. And a wonderful, wonderful person. And he put me in charge of all the supplies coming into Boston that would go on the expedition. So I never did come back home. I just stayed there and worked as a supply man.

Q. What kind of interactions did you have with Admiral Byrd when you were staying at his home for two weeks?

A. He just treated me, he was just a true gentleman. And he was wonderful and I had never had any criticism of his activities.

Q. Okay. Mr. Passel, if you could, would you talk a little more about why you were interested in going in the first place.

A. Well to start with, when Al Wade said, “You want to go to the Antarctic?” I said, “Sure.” I went to a map to see where it was. So I didn’t have any thoughts of the Antarctic at all. But it was just the idea that after meeting the Admiral and knowing Al Wade, I just wanted to go, be a part of it.

Q. You said you had read Paul Siple’s book?

A. Yes. A Boy Scout With Byrd. And of course he was the leader of our base. And he had been on several expeditions.

Q. Okay. Had you given any thought to how you were selected? Was it principally upon the recommendation of F. Alton Wade?
A. Well I’m sure that had a lot to do with it. But staying with the Admiral, I must have presented myself pretty well for him to make those decisions to have me be in charge of all the supplies. As they came in and then they had to be divided between the East base and the West base and then we had to have a cache away from our camp so if anything would happen, fire or anything, we would have enough food to survive.

Q. Where was this extra cache located? You said it was East base and West base and then this protected supply.

A. Well the protected supplies, they had theirs, we had ours. It was just away from our building in case if he had a fire.

Q. Can you give some descriptive detail about dividing the supplies? What was the basis, so many people were at East base and so many people were at West base. How did you know how to divide it evenly?

A. Well of course I knew the number of men at each base and I divided the supplies as to what they might need, so much clothing, food and so on. And of course I had something to go by from previous expeditions. That I would know how to divide it.

Q. You said from previous expeditions. Can you elaborate a little more? Cause you had never been on … what was giving you the track record?

A. Well of course the Admiral directed me as to what supplies went where and so forth.

Q. So Byrd himself involved himself with the logistics?

A. Oh yes, very much a part of it. His experience, I just followed his direction.
Q. Good. Did you develop any impressions about Admiral Byrd? What were they? How did he interact with his men?

A. He was very well thought of and he was popular with the men. He just had a knack for being a person whom you liked. He was very fair and very down to earth. He didn’t set himself above us. He was just part of that expedition. We had signed up for four years and when England entered the war, they cut off two years and so we stayed two instead of four.

Q. I’m curious about your reactions with Byrd because other people have written that Byrd was a difficult person to get along with, that he was secretive. But that wasn’t your impression?

A. How close were they to him?

Q. That’s a good question.

A. Well maybe they didn’t have the opportunity to live in his home for two weeks and to know him as well as I did. I thought he was a straight, honest, fair person, and I’m sure, I spent the time with him.

Q. Okay. The reason I bring this up is because other people have written about Byrd not favorably, but we also have other people whose experiences are very similar to yours in terms of …

A. But the thing about it is, when Ohio State had a meeting honoring Byrd and criticizing that he didn’t do this and didn’t do that.

Q. Paul Siple was a major figure as leader of West base. And of course also in your work with him in the wind chill formula. How did you come to work with Paul
Siple? Can you talk a little bit about your working relationship, your relationship between the two of you?

A. As a leader, Paul was great, very fair. He ran a good camp. How I got involved with him in the wind chill – we would always tip-toe by his office because he’d call you in and put you on some special project. So I was tip-toeing by his office and he called me in and said, “Charles, we’re going to work on the wind chill. And I want you to run it for me. And we’ll work together.” And so at that point, I learned what I had to do to, in effect create a wind chill factor. And we did that by [using] a pyrene container which had a thermometer in it to measure the temperature. We’d hang that out on a cross right outside the building and then we also had a wind indicator. And I would take that out every day and then measure how long it would take the water to freeze under certain conditions. Like if it were 40 below and no wind, it might not freeze for an hour or two even. Because the wind removes the heat from like exposed flesh. And one of the experiments I worked on, I’d go out with a stopwatch under different conditions to see how long it would take to freeze my face. Well the fastest that it froze was 35 seconds. And it was a tremendous wind. And of course the whole idea of wind chill is moving heat from exposed flesh. So there were days where the crews couldn’t work outdoors. It would be, like we dug out the planes after the winter, we could only work 30 minutes. We’d watch each other’s face to see if it was frozen. Well as long as you’re cold you’re not in danger. But if some of your extremities feel warm, you’re frozen. So we watched each other’s faces and whether we were all in the dog trails or going back to the mountains a storm would come up, we'd just
get by the sleds for protection. Cause sometimes we’d have to put the tents up it would be so cold. And we were always conscious of the cold. And there just were some days we couldn’t even go out, it was just not worth it.

Q. I’m curious about the wind chill experiment. You said it was Siple’s idea to start the project. Is that correct?
A. Right.

Q. Was this part of a research agenda going into Antarctica or was it something thought about while in Antarctica?
A. I’m not really sure. But one thing he said was it hadn’t been worked on since way back. But he said “I think it’s time for us to work on it and try to get some idea of what we can come up with.” And he may have had that on his inventory.

Q. From what you said it appears that the wind chill, studying the wind chill effect, was more than simply a matter of theory. It was a matter [that was] put to very practical use.
A. We published that in 1945 and the Air Force in Alaska started using it immediately and Canada and all those northern countries. Cause what it did, it told the men what to wear, and the secret is to wear heavy clothing close to your body. And then have an air space and then put on, we wore blue jeans, and then we had a windbreaker that would cut the wind off but there was a space between the windbreaker and our next layer of clothes. And so Paul did a lot of research on that and later worked for the government.
Q. When you were in Antarctica and working on this wind chill formula, were the people in Antarctica conscious not only of temperature but also the impact of the wind with reference to your work assignments?

A. Oh yes, definitely. You take a cold day, that didn’t bother us. But you add some wind and then you really had a problem. And that’s why we wore heavy gloves, to keep our exposed flesh away from the wind. But of course our face was something we couldn’t. We tried face masks but they’d ice up and wouldn’t work very well.

Q. Okay. Can you give us a little more detail about gathering statistics? Gathering data if you will for your wind chill experiments.

A. Well we would sit at a, not a computer, but a thing to measure the temperature inside. But it was being tested on the outside on the pyrene container of water. And we got our figures by knowing it was zero, the water temperature was just warm water when it was out there. So then we would see how long the wind and the temperature would freeze it. And that was our basis for arriving at the formulas which we had a mathematician work when we got back.

Q. Okay. One of your activities, one of your responsibilities in Little America, as you note in your diary, was to be a dog team driver. How did that come about and why is it that you were to be responsible for dogs? Was this sort of a “jack of all trades” scenario as men on the expedition had to do multiple tasks?

A. Well the geological group, Larry Warner and myself, went on the geology and to the mountains. And he was a dog driver but I was a dog driver. And we had another person with us, there always had to be two people with the team. And
they were not on the technical staff, they were people that had been before, and they were just good hands to have along. So we drove our teams and sometimes we’d hit a blizzard and have to stop. And if it didn’t look like it was going to last too long, we’d just curl up beside the sled and the dogs would be covered with snow and when the thing had passed through, all you could see would be their nose. So dog driving was fun. You don’t do like they do in Alaska and ride on the sled. You ski beside the dogs. And there are two sleds. One of them has 600 pounds on it, the other sled has 400. And you have a lead dog and their instructions are “Yake – go head” and “Whoa, G and Hall.” They obey those commands. And I had my dog team. We hit a crevasse and it was covered and I didn’t know it was there. The dog team went down in the crevasse and hit a shoulder and stopped. So I had to go down and get the dogs. And patch them up. But of course that’s why we always wore skis. We never, because these crevasses, you don’t worry about the ones that are sunk. It’s the little thin ones that could just take you down in a hurry. And the dogs would fight each other if you’d leave them alone. And I changed lead dog one time and the other dogs just hated the first dog that I changed for him. And he’d fight that dog. So I had to watch them all the time.

Q. You had no background in driving dogs, did you?

A. No, I did not. But we were sent, the dog drivers were sent to special training in New Hampshire. And that’s where most of the dogs came from. And so we had to go up there and they had a jeep which was four wheels and a place to drive. And we would give the dogs commands to learn how to drive them. And you get
to know the dogs and you get to really feel you’re dependent on them because
that’s the way you travel. And we went outdoors on winter night to lay a cache of
dog food. We went 150 miles and the way we navigated was putting candles in a
row and lighting those up and then we’d get to the end of that. And when we
surveyed the next day we were accurate, we were right on the money by lighting
up those candles.
Q. So it was a way of practicing how to run the team?
A. Yes.
Q. Okay. Very good. In addition to driving dogs, what other responsibilities did you
have in the camp?
A. Well I had the responsibility of issuing clothing and supplies to the men. And
overseeing our food cache where we kept food to be used in the kitchen. And I
also, we worked on projects that we were going to do in the summer. And I had to
take a radio course. I was a radio operator for our group and we used dot and
dash. Although the camp would talk back to us by voice, but you had the key
strapped to your knee and then you would crank the generator and dot and dash to
get back. That was our only way we could get back to the camp.
Q. Cause you didn’t have enough power from the machinery to …
A. No, we didn’t have power to run voice, right. And so we also had to take surveys
to know where we were going and so on. And there were just a lot of things we
had to stay to prepare ourselves to go out on the trail. All of it was interesting to
me.
Q. I have a question. It was in I think Siple’s book, about the third expedition. He talked about that there was some, how shall I put it, on the way over to Antarctica there were some problems in that this was a government expedition and therefore, there was some concern about the scientists having, that they should pay for their meals on board. Do you recall anything like that?

A. No, the only problem we had going over was that everything we did was the government’s, like our personal diary and everything else. So we got that straightened out.

Q. Yes, that was the context because the government was funding this, even though Admiral Byrd had raised some money, that this was a government expedition and therefore everything belonged. But that was all straightened out.

Q. Oh okay. I was curious about the wind chill project. And I’m puzzled because the West base staff had a physiologist, Earnest Lockhart, and a biologist, Jack Perkins. But Siple assigned the wind chill factor to you. Can you give me some idea as to what was going on with Perkins and Lockhart? Did they have too many assignments?

A. They had their own research to do. Lockhart went out into the closest mountain and spent time there. And Perkins was busy with his biology. And I was not going out until the summer. And so I had all winter to work on this wind chill. That’s how it worked out. And I was just available and he had me to do the basic work. Of course he was in there all the time. We went over everything together.
Q. Mr. Passel, from time to time there has been criticism, especially recently, about the accuracy of the wind chill index developed at Antarctica. Would you care to comment about the criticisms?

A. Well I’m sure that our mathematician did the best he could. So they’re taking the same information and using a computer. They didn’t freeze their face in 35 seconds like I did to come up with this material. And he was at Indiana University and he is using my work. I don’t think when we finished this and published it, the Alaskan people, the Air Force, used it and were very satisfied with it. And it’s possible, well anything done 60 years ago with our present equipment, can be re-worked to come up with possibly a slightly different reading. But what we did was true and done by people exposing themselves to wind and temperature and getting it that way. And I would think they’d have something better to do. It’s ridiculous because I talked to our school superintendent and we never closed any schools because of the wind chill. Possibly up in Canada you did.

Q. For the record the criticism is that the wind chill indexes are too severe and therefore schools have been closed and businesses have been closed unnecessarily, but you say that’s not the case.

A. I’ll tell you what. If in those northern states they would have closed our business without the wind chill anyway, if people couldn’t get to it.

Q. Okay. Mr. Passel, there has been quite a bit of interest and concern about the relations between military personnel and civilian scientists in Antarctica. Your expedition was mixed too between scientists and military personnel providing logistical support. Do you have anything to comment in terms of their relations?
A. I don’t recollect there being any tension between the various members. One of my best friends there was Sergeant Asman, he came and brought a tank. He was a sergeant in the Army. And he drove the tractor and he was very close to me and helped. Cause when we went out to take the dog food and supplies out 150 miles, he drove the tractor out. And I was an observer. And everybody just did what they were supposed to do and I believe that there was no tension at all. Our medical officer, Russell Frazier, was a wonderful person. If you went to him if you were sick, he’d have your tonsils out before you know it. So we had to be careful with him.

Q. In the more modern period, some people that we’ve interviewed have pointed to kind of a clannishness between the military culture if you will, between the military and the scientists and they simply didn’t mix. But that was not your experience, correct?

A. Of course our scientists, several of them were out away in the mountains doing research.

Q. Okay.

A. So they were out of the question. Arnold Court was our weather man and everybody wondered why he wasn’t picked to do the work I was doing. And of course he had so many duties – he had to check the weather for the airplane flights and you know, he had a lot of responsibility. He’s run balloons up and that type of thing. So he was pretty busy and couldn’t take on this other business.

Q. Okay.

A. And wind chill was just a research program going on that Paul Siple wanted to do.
Q. Good. This expedition takes place when there is great fear of war in Europe. There was also considerable concern in the United States amongst governmental leaders about German presence and interest in Antarctica. Was there talk about this amongst the men or concerns expressed?

A. Well mainly the problem was we were disappointed because our expedition was cut two years short. And we had no problems. There were a couple of Japanese ships that came into the Bay of Whales. But they did not stop and just kept on going. So that’s the closest we came to seeing any evidence of the tension that was going on. And we did not hear anymore about it once they said England entered the war.

Q. Okay. Mr. Passel, I wanted to ask you about your experience with crevasses. Would you comment please?

A. Well the crevasses were certainly a thing to consider because some of them do not show on the surface. And so if you don’t have your skis on, you can break through. Some of them are slumped so that you can see the outline of a crevasse and of course you can escape it. During our trip to the mountains, my dog team fell in a crevasse. And the only thing that saved them was the lead dog hit a narrowing of the crevasse and got stuck there. So the team was in the crevasse about 30 feet down. So I had to rig up a way to go down and get them out of there. And our members of our group lowered me down and I had a rope tied to each foot. So that way I could climb back up. And so I passed the dogs up individually to the fellows on the surface. And we rescued all the dogs. And that was a very laborious experience.
Q. I bet you took a break after that.

A. Yea. Of course the dogs, the lead dog was hurt a little. But we rubbed him down real good and it made me respect crevasses, and also our tractor broke through a crevasse and it slumped back and the only thing that saved it was the rearend dug into the other bank. It was wedged there until we were able to get it out. And one thing about the Antarctic that I was impressed with. It’s a cruel and dangerous continent. There’s so many things that can happen that we don’t have any control over. And it’s very, very, very isolated. And we left our plane there because it quit. I don’t know whether it ran out of fuel, but the pilot was able to land it and I don’t know whether they ever got it out later on or not.

Q. This was on your trip to the mountains?

A. That was Paul Siple, who would make excursions to various areas to take aerial photographs. They would fly in supplies to us and drop them by parachute.

Q. Mr. Passel, could you tell me what happened to the dogs on the expedition after the expedition was over?

A. Well when the expedition was over, there was discussion of, like you said getting rid of the dogs and leaving them there. But the man who drove the dogs would not hear that. So we brought back the dogs and they went back up to New Hampshire. But I brought my dog home with me. And when I got on the plane in Boston to go to Indianapolis, why I put him in the luggage compartment. And the head pilot said to me “You’ll have to go back and be with your dog because he’s just making all kinds of noise.” So I sat back there with the dog until we got to Indianapolis. And Indianapolis is, the airport is above, you have to go downstairs
to go to the street. Well my dog wouldn’t go down those stairs. He had never seen stairs before, so I had to carry him down. And then when he got on the grass, he took a step and looked at his foot and then took another step. Of course, he had never seen grass and I so I finally got him home and we enjoyed it. He was a wonderful dog. Weighed 90 pounds. His name was Tongas. All the dogs were named with two syllables. Tongos, Meera, and you wouldn’t call one Joe or Smith because that didn’t get their attention. “Mee-ra” She knew that you were talking to her and so with 150 dogs going overseas on the ship, there were dogs everyplace.

Q. Okay. So all the dogs were brought back. None were destroyed?
A. No, we just couldn’t see to killing them. They wouldn’t last ten minutes if they were just turned loose.

Q. Okay. But that was initially under discussion to destroy the dogs?
A. Yes. Well it came from Washington as to what we wanted to do with the dogs.

Q. Okay. What was your impressions and reactions to the Ross Ice Shelf?
A. Well when we got to the Ross Shelf Ice, it was very impressive. And it’s 150 feet plus or minus above the water. So we had to go along the Ross Shelf Ice until we found the Bay of Whales. It was where the ice was seven feet thick and then you come to the Ross Shelf Ice back of that. So that’s the only place the ships could land and unload their cargo. But we had to take the supplies back up on the Ross Shelf Ice because that broke periodically. The killer whales would come up under the edge of the ice and break it. The penguins would fall in that were there and they’d get the penguins. And I was standing at the edge of the ice watching that
and then I suddenly thought maybe that killer whale doesn’t know I’m not a penguin. So I got away from it. But several times we’d get a blizzard and a storm while we were unloading. And the ship would have to pull away and go out to sea and be gone two or three days. So we had tents up on top of the Ross Shelf Ice where the men that were left ashore would have a place to stay. And it was very impressive and every once in a while it would calve off and float out to sea and it moves at about ten miles a day. And so that was what the ships had to watch out for. That floating piece of ice.

Q. Mr. Passel, please discuss your observations and reactions, impressions of the Emperor Penguins, which you said earlier seemed to be everywhere?

A. Well prior to seeing these Emperor Penguins, there were Adelie penguins or ringneck was the smaller penguin. And we woke up one morning and there were 400-500 Emperor Penguins, the biggest flock or herd that people had ever seen. And they were quite interesting. They stand about three feet tall and come almost up to your waist and if you would go towards them, they’d back up. But if you’d back up, they’d come towards you. And they can knock you down with their flipper. And there were, as I said, 400 in this group. The most anybody had ever remembered seeing. And we were quite impressed with that and had fun just watching them. They were very stately. And if you pressed them too closely, they’d fall down and use their flippers to scoot along and you couldn’t catch them. But that was a memorial observation and I’ve thought about it many times.

Q. Does anybody have any idea why there was such a large group assembled at one place?
Q. Your diary of your experiences on this expedition, Charles, are really extraordinary in detail and valuable publication. But I understand you hadn’t intended for it to be published and this accounts for the delay in publication. Can you talk a little bit about why you kept the journal and what eventually led you to publication?

A. Well the reason I kept the diary or journal was so I could recall everything that was happening during the expedition on a day by day basis. And the first book I published was called “An Antarctic Journal.” I had 200 of these books published but not to sell. We gave them to friends and family and that was the end of it as far as I was concerned. And then the other books came and people heard about what I did. And then it went commercial from then on. But the first book was just to show and to have in writing what happened and what I did.

Q. Did you write out, were other people watching you as you wrote? Or did you basically try to keep this to yourself? Because there must have been some curiosity with people observing you writing.

A. Well basically I was in the tent by myself. And in our dwellings at the base I would be up in my bunk after the day’s activities. And incidentally, when I first slept in our base up in the bunk, I threw my boots out on the floor and of course they turned off all the heat at night, so it’s as cold inside as it is outside, and my boots froze to the floor. So from then on I slept with everything in my bunk.

Q. Were you aware of other people keeping diaries on the expedition?
A. No. And I did not do that for personal gain. I just did it to satisfy myself that I had been there and that these things happened.

Q. Very good. What in your opinion was the most memorable event of your participation in the expedition?

A. Well I mostly thought it was the vastness of the Antarctic. And of the cruelty of the Antarctic. That man did not stand a chance there without support from the base. There’s no animals, there’s nothing but penguins, seals and whales. And so it’s a quiet continent. There’s no noticeable noise unless a blizzard comes up. And when you think of a blizzard, you think of snow falling. But that’s true, it’s just snow that’s already been. Actually the Antarctic is a desert. There’s no rain, no snow, just blowing the snow that’s already been laying thousands of years ago.

Q. Okay. Previously Charles, you said that you had very good impressions of Admiral Byrd and he must have heard of you to select you for those positions of responsibility. Did your relationship with Byrd continue after the expedition? Did you continue to have contact? What happened please?

A. Well of course unfortunately I ended up in the Marine Corp. in the South Pacific. Contact with Byrd and others was interrupted because of the war and because of the careers pursued after that. I had contact with several people on the expedition but we had planned on a reunion but it never did come about. The men were so scattered that we couldn’t get them all together.

Q. Charles, mush has been written in recent years about Byrd’s leadership style. And for example, one of the ways that Byrd influenced people was to have these one on one conversations, sometimes walks, with individuals in which Byrd took
a direct interest in how the individual was performing and what the individual felt. Can you talk about any experiences you had with Byrd in one of these so-called walks?

A. Well the Admiral never criticized anybody in front of anybody else. He did not belittle the men and if he had something to say, he’d say like “Charles, let’s go for a walk.” So I’d get up and we’d just start walking. And he would tell me that I am pleased with what you are doing on the expedition and I am happy that you are successful. Of course I don’t know what he told other people, but my association with him that he was a good leader and an excellent person to have as an expedition leader or a person in charge of the overall operation of the expedition. I cannot fault him at all. He was very understanding and you could go to him with a trouble and he would talk to you about it and he would come up with some solution that would make sense and help the success of the expedition.

Q. Charles one of the big experiments if you will, on that third expedition, involved a gigantic piece of machinery known as the snow cruiser. Would you comment on the snow cruiser? The idea, the machinery and what went wrong?

A. Well the most that the snow cruiser did was to cause a sensation as it came through the states getting to Boston. It was a fabulous idea, Dr. Poulter, and the idea was to travel to the South Pole and set the snow cruiser up there and also had a small plane that it carried, and therefore they were going to cover more research and photograph more of the Antarctic continent. But unfortunately each wheel had a motor and they just were not strong enough to move the snow cruiser over the snow and move in a forward direction. So it stayed pretty close to our main
base and the snow cruiser crew lived aboard. And it was a real disappointment that that was not a successful venture. But the idea was excellent because with the plane and at the South Pole base, it could fly and take aerial photographs of a lot of new Antarctic that had not been seen before. It was a real disappointment to everybody.

Q. Did Admiral Byrd express any disappointment about this?

A. Oh yes. He was disappointed too. Yes.

Q. You’ve referred to your expedition as one of the last romantic expeditions in Antarctica. Can you comment on what you meant by that?

A. Well I always felt it was man and dog teams and the elements. And there was no help from the outside. Everybody had to experience freezing their face. It’s like an initial ping. When your face starts to freeze, it’s like somebody slaps your face. And once that initial ping is felt, it’s a good idea to get inside because the temperature is 26 degrees below zero and the wind blowing 16 miles per hour, then that would be 80 degrees below zero. It took only very few seconds for your face to freeze. And we always watched each other’s face to be sure their face hadn’t frozen. And it is an experience, cold weather experience, and it’s not a question of being warm; it’s a question of how cold you are.

Q. Charles, I understand that when you left Antarctica you didn’t come back to Antarctica. Other things, the Marine Corp. World War II, jobs, career, raising a family, etc., but nevertheless you have continued to keep your experiences of Antarctica alive by lecturing to groups, especially to school children. Can you comment on that please?
A. Well, when I got back from the Antarctic, I had to report to the draft board. My number was five, so when I got to the draft board they said “Fellow, where have you been?” And I said “I’ve been in the Antarctic.” And he shook his head and said “Boy, I’ve heard everything.” So from that point on they gave me an extension on my draft. Every month I had to report, so that I finally joined the Marine Corp. and went to the Pacific. And there was I think the next expedition trip was probably ’57 or somewhere along in there. Of course I was already into something else, being a geologist. But I always kept my interest alive in the Antarctic by giving many lectures on the expedition and I gave it to organizations, but what I loved to do was give it to the school children. They seemed to just really think that was wonderful. And I gave a talk to a first grade. A friend of mine was the teacher of this first grade. So I went to give the talk and there were computers, each child had a computer, and I though “Oh my gosh. I don’t even know how to use a computer.” But I gave the talk and they were really attentive and listened to it. And one little girl had her head over her face and when it came question time, and I couldn’t quite hear her, but she asked, “How did you go to the bathroom?” And I said “Quickly.” They rolled in the aisle. So she went home and told her mother I was a smartest man she ever met. So that’s what I did.

Q. One of the enduring things about your trip to Antarctica is that you have a mountain named after yourself. Mount Passel. Can you talk about where the mountain is on the maps, but can you talk about why that particular mountain was named and the circumstances. Would you talk about it?
A. Well the reason was that the igneous intrusive came in and made all of the other mountains metamorphic. In other words, I could find no fossils because they were all destroyed when the igneous intrusion came up. So this was a sedimentary mountain that was sitting off by itself and so that was why it became Mount Passel. And the main thing mountain was called Billboard. Because when you came up to it, it was a solid granite and then metamorphic rocks on the other side of it.

Q. Who decided to name the mountain Mount Passel? Who had the hand in that?

A. I think our party named it and they accepted it. It’s not a speculator mountain, it’s just one that deals with sedimentary rock.

Q. But because it was sedimentary it was of particular interest to you.

A. Well because I was a paleontologist.

Q. Okay, because of your paleontology background. Okay good.

A. I went down there mainly to find fossils. But unfortunately we didn’t know it was igneous intrusive. Of course we only went to a 700 mile area of mountain. And that’s just one portion of it. You know there are mountains all over the place. Cause you can’t just say that’s what’s happening all over. It was just that one area.

Q. Well that does bring us to the end of our interview. This is Raimund Goerler concluding the interview with Charles Passel and I thank him for his contribution for what will be a document of continuing value and one that is particularly insightful and useful. Thank you.