

BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY: Harold P. Luscomb

"Later in the day, we were called in to a meeting in Hilo. The cleanup was going to be a pretty large operation and there was concern that the state and county just didn't have the manpower or the equipment to do it as quickly as it should have been done. There were dead animals, dead people, all sorts of reasons for getting Hilo cleaned up as quickly as possible. So the plantations were asked to help. . . . It's interesting that . . . our plantation equipment was better suited for that type of cleanup than the ordinary contractors' equipment or construction equipment of the county and the state. They had big steam shovels, we had cane grabs. . . . We found that they [cane grabs] were ideal for harvesting that mess that was down there. These buildings were all sitting there like jumbled matchsticks. A regular steam shovel had trouble picking that up. That's almost like a pile of sugarcane. Heck, we could just put a grab down there and pick that stuff up. They were also big enough that we could pick up automobiles. . . . We could harvest those cars that were destroyed in that tsunami."

Harold P. Luscomb was born April 27, 1926 in Turtle Creek, Pennsylvania, a suburb of Pittsburgh. His Hilo-born father, Harold P. Luscomb, Sr., had moved to Pennsylvania to work for Westinghouse Electric Company and to work toward a degree in electrical engineering. There he met his wife, Helen Jones Luscomb. Harold Jr., the couple's only child, was raised at the home of his maternal grandparents in Pittsburgh.

At the age of ten, Harold, his father, and mother moved to Hilo, where his father was employed by Hilo Electric Light Company. They rented a house in the Pu'u'eo district.

Luscomb attended Hilo Standard, Hilo Intermediate, and Hilo High schools, graduating in 1944. He briefly attended the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa before returning to Hilo and working on the waterfront as a part-time freight clerk for Hilo Transportation and Terminal Company.

In 1950, Luscomb was hired by C. Brewer & Company, Ltd. and assigned to Onomea Sugar Company, working first as a statistical clerk, then bookkeeper. At the time of the 1960 tsunami, he was the sugar plantation's office manager.

On May 23, 1960, Luscomb was called upon to assist the county and state in securing heavy equipment from Big Island sugar plantations in the effort to clean up Hilo after the tsunami. Luscomb's primary responsibility was to coordinate logistics with the Hawai'i Island Planters Association and individual plantation managers in obtaining equipment and work crews for the massive job.

Luscomb retired in 1983 as vice-president of property planning and control for Hawaiiana Investment, Inc., a subsidiary of C. Brewer & Company, Ltd.

He lives in Hilo with his wife of fifty years, Signe Carlson Luscomb. The couple raised three children and have three grandchildren.

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ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

Harold P. Luscomb, Jr. (HL)

Hilo, Hawai'i

April 21, 1999

BY: Warren Nishimoto (WN)

WN: Okay, let's begin. This is an interview with Harold P. Luscomb, III on April 21, 1999. We're at his home in Hilo, Hawai'i. The interviewer is Warren Nishimoto.

HL: Warren, may I correct one thing?

WN: Yes.

HL: I am Harold Luscomb, Jr.

WN: Junior, oh shoot.

HL: My . . .

WN: We'll start again.

HL: Okay. Anytime. (WN laughs.) Yeah, my dad was Harold [Phillip] Luscomb, I'm Junior, my son is III, he's the one that's up in Waimea.

WN: I'm sorry. Okay. I'm glad you corrected me on that. Okay, this is Harold P. Luscomb, Jr.

Okay, why don't we start by having you tell me when and where you were born.

HL: When? I was born on April 27, 1926 in a little town in Pennsylvania called Turtle Creek, an Indian name which referred to the very slow moving stream in our community. It's a suburb of Pittsburgh. It was located in one of the many valleys that surround the greater Pittsburgh area. And it was the home of the Westinghouse Electric Company. There were many other manufacturing companies in the general area: steel mills, manufacturing plants, and so forth. It was an industrial community.

WN: And what were your parents doing in that area?

HL: My father had been born here in Hawai'i in 1898. Here in Hilo, in fact. And he came from a relatively poor family but he wanted to obtain an education and it was going to be very difficult in Hawai'i. But through a cousin, who worked for the Hawaiian Electric Company in

Honolulu, he found out that the Westinghouse Electric Company back in Pittsburgh had a deal where you could work in the factory during the daytime and then go to their technical night school. After a period of years you could earn a degree in electrical engineering. The school was connected with Carnegie Institute in Pittsburgh. So Dad figured, gee, that's the way to go. So he left Hawai'i and he worked his way through the Panama Canal to New York City on a tramp steamer. Then found his way to Pittsburgh and got a job with the Westinghouse Electric and while it took him eight years, he did finally get a degree in electrical engineering. While he was there, he met my mother [Helen Jones Luscomb] and they became married and I was a result of it.

WN: You were born in 1926.

HL: Yes.

WN: How old was your father when he came over, back from Hilo to Pittsburgh?

HL: When he left Hawai'i to go back, he had served here through the First World War in Schofield Barracks, and it was after that so it was some time around 1919, I think, that Dad left Hawai'i to go back to Pittsburgh.

WN: So he spent his really formative childhood and young adult years in Hawai'i, then.

HL: My dad? Yes. He was born here in Hilo and attended local schools. Joined the National Guard and was called up during the First World War and served with a Hawaiian group in Schofield Barracks.

So when we finally came back in—I think it was 1936. By that time I was in existence and Dad wanted to come home and visit his sisters. He had several sisters living here in Hawai'i. When we came back, it was old home week for Dad, being with his family. But also, when we visited this island, he went and called on people at the Hilo Electric and Light Company [Ltd.] that he had known when he was a kid. When the management found out that Dad was home and had a degree in electrical engineering, they just happened to be looking for management-type people. So Dad was hired. The Hilo Electric Light in those days was in the process of expanding. At that time Hilo, or this island, had several small, independent power companies. Hilo Electric just served the area around Hilo. But for example, Honoka'a, Waimea, Kailua-Kona, all of that—Kailua, for example, had their own little power company. Pāhala, and that side of Ka'ū, they were off the [sugar] mills. The mills supplied the power. But the Hilo Electric Light was gradually in the process of expanding and extending their lines. That was one of my dad's jobs.

WN: But when he came here and when you were ten years old, you had come here with the express purpose of looking for work here?

HL: No, he didn't. Dad was just here to pay a visit to his sisters. It wasn't until the local people knew that Dad was here and had a degree that they even offered him a job. But of course, when they did, the opportunity to come home to Hawai'i was just overpowering. (Chuckles) We went back to Pittsburgh, packed up and headed back to Hawai'i.

WN: How did you feel about that. Here, you're ten years old, you had some friends in Pittsburgh, I

assume.

HL: I, frankly, was not too happy because we lived in an old-fashioned family unit. We lived in the same house with my grandparents, a maiden aunt, and a single uncle.

WN: This is your paternal grandparents?

HL: My maternal.

WN: Maternal grandparents.

HL: Yeah. My paternal grandparents, of course, would have been here, my father's parents. But my mother's parents, we lived in a big old house back in Pittsburgh with my grandmother and grandfather and an aunt and an uncle. We were just one—you know, it was a family and it . . .

WN: How many siblings were there?

HL: I was an only child.

WN: Oh, okay. (Chuckles) I believe you.

HL: I don't know how to explain it. They were damned upset with what they got they quit or they were so happy. I don't know which but someday I'll find out.

But it was a shock. And my dad, when he came back to Hawai'i, was in his element. He was raised here so all sorts of neat things like *pepeiaos* and (chuckles) lychee and everything here, mangos, that was—oh, that was just Dad's—he was back in his element. I had never been exposed to that so it took me a while to get over the culture shock of moving out of a blue-collar neighborhood in Pennsylvania back here to Hawai'i.

WN: Where in Hilo did you live?

HL: When we first came back from the Mainland, we initially lived with a cousin, who was gracious enough to keep us until our furniture arrived. In the meantime, we rented a house from the W.H. Shipman Company. They had a home over in Pu'u'eo, on a little street called Pukihae Street.

WN: Is that house still there?

HL: No.

WN: The Shipman house still there?

HL: The Shipman house is still up on Reed's Island but the house we lived in, no, that was taken down many years ago. Anybody familiar with Hilo would know that our property was right next to what is now the Hilo Bay Shore Tower. It's a great big, I don't know, fifteen-story condominium over there. That was right next to our property.

WN: So you were ten years old . . .

HL: Uh huh [yes].

WN: What was it like growing up over there?

HL: Pu'u'eo was a neat district in those days. I don't know how to describe it. It wasn't high society, but they were doctors and lawyers and business people from Hilo. It was a good neighborhood; there were a lot of kids my age. I got in with them and it was kind of a normal childhood after that. They were very good to me. I learned a lot. I learned how to go fishing for 'o'opus and (chuckles) friend of my dad's taught me how to throw net. It was a good education. I enjoyed it.

WN: Were there tough moments being a *Haole* from Pittsburgh moving into a neighborhood?

HL: Yes. Yup. There were tough moments when—pidgin English, for example. Coming from Pennsylvania, I wasn't used to pidgin English and people would speak pidgin here. I didn't know what the devil they were talking about. Yeah, there were tough moments but nothing really bitter or long-lasting. It was all part of growing up.

WN: So you went fishing for 'o'opu, and what else did you do to have fun as a child?

HL: Well, there was a stream in back of our house, freshwater stream, and it was loaded with 'o'opu and we used to have a lot of fun doing that. Then this Hawaiian gentleman, Mike Ulii, he was a wonderful old guy. He was a good friend of my dad's and he thought I should learn how to throw net. So he would come over and we'd go down to Pukihāe and we'd throw out into the ocean for *moi*. That was always good fun.

WN: Could you still do that now?

HL: (Sigh) Probably not.

(Laughter)

HL: I think I know how to drape the net over my elbow and all of that but I think I'd rather go down to the fish market for my fish. (Chuckles) Don't depend on throwing net for them.

WN: And what was school like for you?

HL: Looking back on it, school was interesting. It took me a long time to realize what was different about it. I came here and I attended the Hilo Standard School. Didn't mean anything to me at the time. I was in with a group of kids, who their parents were very much in the same situation as my mom and dad. They were business people, the man who owned the drugstore, and the man who worked at Amfac, and I just seemed to fit in. That was a nice group of children. I often wondered why there was another elementary school directly across Waiānue Avenue, Hilo Union School. They had one, two, three, fifth, sixth graders over there, too. At the time, I was so naive, I didn't realize why we had two elementary schools. It took me a long time to find out, oh, I went to the standard school and the quote, "other kids," unquote, went across the street. I didn't know why for a long time. There were yelling

matches back and forth across the street. "You damned *Haoles*," and all of this. I didn't fully understand what was going on. I didn't understand the dynamics of the situation for a long time.

But then, when we went on to intermediate school, we were all thrown together in the same environment. It was amazing, I don't really remember any problems in Hilo Intermediate School. I became a JPO [junior police officer] and I got in with that bunch. I belonged to the band, I got in with that bunch. I was on the track team, I was on the tumbling team. From that point on, I was just one of the guys, one of the people in the school.

WN: You went all the way up to Hilo High School?

HL: Oh, I went all the way up to Hilo High School, yup. Three years in Hilo Intermediate School, and then we crossed the street. Of course, the year I crossed the street was 1941 and we all know what exciting things happened in the middle of that school year [i.e., World War II].

WN: What was war like in Hilo?

HL: Very different. I think my experiences might have been a little bit different. First of all, my dad, having served in the First World War, continued his association with the military by staying in the reserve. December 7, 1941, just about five minutes of eight in the morning, my dad was gone. When we turned on the radio in our kitchen, we were sitting there having breakfast listening to Webley Edwards, on KGU in Honolulu, he broke in and he said this is the real thing. I'm sure you've heard that speech before. My dad was in uniform and gone, because there were some plans that had already been made for an emergency of this type. So that scared the dickens out of me. Here I was fifteen, and my dad gone. We didn't know what was coming. Next thing I know, my mother is gone. There had been contingency plans for an office of civil defense here and my mother was among those who was going to work for civil defense so she went.

In the middle of that morning, I got a phone call from the police. Part of the contingency planning that had been done was to have a small cadre of what they called Senior Boy Scouts that were over fifteen, had driver's licenses and that they felt they could trust. Our jobs were going to be run messages around town, if necessary in a car. So we were called to work down at the police station. We were sworn in (chuckles) to be messengers. One of my very first assignments that day, I was put in the car with a policeman and they had printed up notices of closing, "Closed until further notice." This policeman and I were assigned to go around Hilo and nail these on the front door of all the bars, liquor stores, and gasoline stations. So we were scurrying all over Hilo closing up all the liquor stores, bars, and the gasoline stations that day.

WN: What was downtown Hilo like, growing up?

HL: I don't know how to describe it. It was a neat little town. Very laid back. Parking was entirely different than it is now. Parking was perpendicular to the curb on both sides of Kamehameha Avenue for example. So you pulled in, you had to back out. When I was a kid, there were absolutely no traffic lights at any intersection in Hilo.

(Laughter)

HL: It was such a small town and there were—oh, there were some cars but it was very relaxed atmosphere. Nobody seemed to get too uptight, they'd get to an intersection and they'd wave at each other. (Chuckles) It all worked out very well. The merchants downtown were a neat group. As kids, we knew many of them. We could call them by name. Let's see, Mr. [Harry A.] Wessel ran Hilo Drug [Co., Ltd.] store, Mr. [E.H.] Moses ran the music and stationary store [The Moses Company, Ltd.], Mr. [P.C.] Beamer ran the [P.C. Beamer] hardware store, Richard Segawa, Dick Segawa and his wife Kay, ran Hilo Men's (Store, Inc.). It was a neat little community. And they knew the kids for the most part.

WN: Did the war change that community at all?

HL: Yeah, it did. I was just reading this morning, my neighbor's daughter is a student at the University of Hawai'i, Nanea Armstrong. And I think she's a junior up there now. She was given a class assignment one time to talk to older people (chuckles) like me and ask that very question, "What changes did I see in Hawai'i as a result of the war?" I just went back and read it this morning, I was just going through some old papers. It was interesting what I said. I stand by what I said, but for example, prior to the war, the major companies were very much *Haole* oriented. The plantation managers, that's my frame of reference. When I went to work for the plantation, I went out to Onomea in 1950. Even in those days, it was very, very much *Haolefied*. The managers were *Haole*, the factory superintendents, the field superintendents, the office superintendents, that was the upper-echelon *Haoles*. Yet, in my lifetime, I lived to see a complete change, where every major position at the plantation was taken over by other ethnic groups. Puna Sugar had a Japanese manager. Pepe'ekeo Sugar Company had a Spanish or Puerto Rican man in charge. Offices, every ethnic group in the world were represented as office managers at another time. So my career in [C.] Brewer and in the sugar industry in a whole, I saw a tremendous change from very much a *Haole*-oriented society to a much more open one. I think the war had great deal to do with that.

Another thing that I noticed was socially, I don't have any clear memory of any dissention between national groups or ethnic groups but I do know that there were certain clubs that were very much *Haolefied*. I don't mean to sound like I'm beating on the *Haoles*, I think it's more of a statement of fact. This is what I observed. An example of that was the Hilo Yacht Club. Now, my memory of it, Steve Todd talked to me a little about it the other day. The [Hilo] Yacht Club was originally started back in the 1800s for yacht racing. Well, that fell by the way after a matter of a couple of years. The club laid idle for a while, then there was a renewed interest in it. The story I had picked up from old-timers here was that the leading Whites behind the resurrection of the Hilo Yacht Club were the wives of some of the major businessmen in town at that time. I'm thinking of Annie Carrie Patten, she's part-Hawaiian. Harry Patten was at one time the head of the First Bank of Hilo. Then there was Mr. [Gwynn J.] Matthias. He was the head of the First Trust Company [of] Hilo [Ltd.], major insurance agency and a trust company. George Lowson was the vice-president of the Bank of Hawai'i, responsible for this island's operations, and his wife was part-Hawaiian. Jim [James] Henderson, who was a principal owner and the president of Hilo Electric Light Company and the Hilo Gas Company at that time, his wife was also part-Hawaiian.

There was a group of part-Hawaiian women in Hilo, whose husbands occupied some of the top business positions throughout the town. And they started a social club. It was originally down where the [Hawai'i] Naniloa [Resort] is today. That was, if not the original, it was one back prior to the war. Yet, that changed over time till it became more and more *Haolefied*.

WN: You mean from part-Hawaiian to . . .

HL: Yeah. As it grew became much more *Haolefied*, in my memory. I'm not sure if my memory is perfect in any means, but my memory says that there were one or two Japanese doctors, one or two Chinese doctors and dentists and so forth but it didn't reflect the demographics of Hilo at the time.

After the war, that began to change. I would guess today that if you were to examine the makeup of the [Hilo] Yacht Club membership, it represents the community much better than it did back in the 1940s. Those were some of the changes I have seen.

Another one that—I haven't seen it change but I've read about it—was at one time the county government, there were many of the major business leaders that took a very direct role in politics. John T. Moir was a manager of Onomea Sugar [Company]. He was the chairman of the county council here at one time, or mayor of Hilo many years ago. Here, again, I think politics has been opened up much more to all of the ethnic groups that are in Hawai'i. So those are some of the changes that stick in my mind, anyway, Warren.

WN: What about some immediate changes? For example, the soldiers that were occupying Hilo, well not occupying but, you know . . .

HL: Stationed here. Well, this is terrible Warren, I have some direct knowledge of that because late in December 1941, the regular army moved a portion of the 55th Coast Artillery from Fort Kamehameha in Honolulu over to this island and they brought with them two 155 [mm howitzer] rifles. Now, those are pretty big pieces of weaponry. One of them, the cannons, was in our front yard (chuckles) at 94 Pukihae Street, and the other was down in the front yard of Allen S. Wall's property at 74 Pukihae Street. So there, at the entrance to Hilo Harbor, were these two very large, long-range cannons. Most of the people had been evacuated from that and they took over the houses and housed the soldiers. The Wall house, one of the Shipman houses, well, two of the Shipman houses. The only reason that my mother, dad, and I were allowed to stay there was the fact that my dad was a major in the army. So the army said, "Okay, you can stay there." So here we were inside a barbed wire compound that was protecting these weapons and so forth. (Chuckles) It was a terribly interesting experience.

On Easter, 1942, my mother felt so sorry for the [military] boys away from home that we had them in our house for an Easter party. She cooked up a typical Easter luncheon and they took shifts. Some of them stayed on the guns and on the range finder and the weaponry and so forth. But they rotated and we got them all through the house in the course of the day. It was real fun. When we went out on a date, you had to go through the barbed wire fence to get out.

(Laughter)

WN: Did you have experience with blackouts, too, over there?

HL: Yeah. My mother and dad and I probably didn't see each other for several weeks after the war started. We did find a time fairly late in December when we were all at home at the same time and somewhere along the line Mother had acquired some heavy blue denim and we went around and closed up the house and blacked it out.

But one of my favorite blackout stories was a result of my work at the police department. In April of 1942, prior to [the battle of] Midway, things were very, very tense out here in Hawai'i and Mauna Loa erupted on the summit in Moku'āweoweo. I was on duty at the police station to run messages one night during this eruption. The building had been blacked out but it was terribly hot. They just didn't have a good ventilation system and it became stifling at times. So, at one point I went outside to get a breath of fresh air and walked across the street into Kalākaua Park. I couldn't believe my eyes, it was so bright from the reflection of the volcano. But being a smart-alecky teenaged kid, I went back in the police station, I grabbed a local newspaper, and I walked across into Kalākaua Park and I stood there and read the paper by the light of the volcano. I've often thought how funny, here it was early in the war, things were really quite nervous and dumb, block wardens running around yelling at people to turn off the lights, and somebody forgot to tell Madame Pele that she was visible. (WN chuckles.)

Later I was fortunate enough to meet some pilots who had worked ferrying planes from the Mainland to Hawai'i and brought the subject up. Some of them said it was so funny because here we were in blackout and they could see the island of Hawai'i several hundred miles at sea. That thing sitting up there 13,679 feet up there in the air. What a beacon.

I had a few other little experiences. I think it was late in 1941—now, I'm repeating a story that I was part of it and I heard part of it. The part I heard was that the Japanese finally realized that one of the horrible mistakes they made on December 7 was being so concentrated on Pearl Harbor that they overlooked that the outside islands' fuel supplies were intact. And that with our fuel supply here, our industry and so forth, could continue plantations and that the outside islands could feed themselves. If they had taken out those oil supplies, they would have created a much larger problem for the government to somehow get fuel to the various islands so that the people would have electricity and they would have fuel for their vehicles and fuel for their tractors and whatever. So then in late 1941, I think it was, that the Japanese had a coordinated attack on Hawai'i by submarines. They surfaced off Kahului, off of Līhu'e, Kaua'i or Nāwiliwili, and here in Hilo. The one here in Hilo came up around Pepe'ekeo Point and was firing from behind the point at the fuel-supply station around the Hilo Harbor. Well, they were pretty poor marksmen because they didn't hit it, thank god.

WN: This is prior to Pearl Harbor?

HL: No, no, this is after Pearl Harbor. This is late in December of 1941.

WN: Late December '41, okay.

HL: I'm not sure how many rounds were fired in total but they hit the apron of Pier 1, they also fired a couple over the tanks, into an area behind the current Hilo Airport, pretty close to an old prison camp down there. But they did not hit the fuel supply, thank heavens. Later, my dad was able to acquire a piece of shrapnel from one of the rounds that hit down at the pier. For years, I had this big jagged piece of shrapnel with Japanese characters around it that was fired by that submarine. That was about one of the more exciting things that happened.

WN: Right, right. Well, okay, so then, you graduated from Hilo High School in '44. Then you went over to UH Mānoa.

HL: Yes.

WN: For a while. (Chuckles)

HL: For a while.

WN: You want to tell me that story?

HL: Well, I'm not very proud of it but I'll be honest and say, yes, I went to the University of Hawai'i. As somebody later said, "Yes, you did, you went through. You went in the front door and they threw you out the back."

When I graduated from Hilo High, I was absolutely convinced that I was going to be drafted any day. So, when I went to the University of Hawai'i in Honolulu, I went up there expecting to be drafted so I really didn't pay much attention and I goofed. I really goofed up seriously. Finally they didn't send me my notice until May of 1945. (Chuckles) By that time, there just was no making up for lost time. I just could not salvage my year. So I literally walked off the campus and came home to get drafted and I ended up with a bunch of incompletes. So . . .

WN: What were you majoring in?

HL: Engineering. I had done very well on my college entrance exam and strangely, they allowed me to carry twenty-one credit hours as a freshman. Looking back on it, that was another horrible mistake, that was just way too much. But when I finished my service in the military and went back to the university, (chuckles) I knew I was in trouble. But I went up to the school of engineering and I met with Dean [Arthur R.] Keller and had a talk with him. He said, "Based on your college entrance exam, we'll let you back in. But," he says, "you're going to have to work very hard to bring your grade point average up." Well, when you have zero the first year, you're going to have to get some fantastic scores the second to average and I didn't do it, I couldn't do it. So the university wrote me a very nice letter and suggested that maybe I would benefit from a temporary leave of absence. (WN chuckles.) That is my college career.

WN: What kind of a student were you in high school?

HL: Good. I wasn't---academically, I was okay, I had no problem with it. But I was involved in a lot of extracurricular activity, student government, music, theater. In fact, I hope this doesn't sound like bragging, but when I graduated I was given the American Legion Award as the outstanding boy in my class for all those things. It was just a whole variety of things.

And I guess, the thing that I'm most proud of from my time in high school—Hilo High School was the first school in the United States to develop a war-bond drive. We have certificates that were given to the school. We started out very small, we had no idea how successful we would ultimately be, but we organized a drive in high school to sell stamps, war stamps. Those then could be converted into bonds and so forth. Golly, it started out, it just took off. So then the people involved in it from the government came over and talked to us and said, "Gee, you know, what we can do is we'll allow you to set a goal and you'll buy a jeep. Now a jeep cost the government so many dollars. If you raise that much money, we'll let you put a name on a jeep." We ended up buying airplanes. The drive was so successful at Hilo High School, the kids and their parents really supported the program and Hilo High got noticed for being the first one in the country to have a program that successful. So high school

life was, in spite of the war, pretty good.

WN: Okay, so then you came back to Hilo after---oh, I forgot to ask you, you said that you were going to go into engineering. Did you have any idea what you were going to be doing? Why did you major in engineering?

HL: I guess I was following in my dad's footsteps. My dad was an engineer and I thought that was kind of a neat profession. So I was just going into that. I thought, well, there's so many people, there's so many operations here in Hawai'i that use engineers of all types that I thought it would be a good profession to get into.

WN: Was there any thought to going to the Mainland for college?

HL: Not initially. No. My goal was to get through the University of Hawai'i.

WN: Okay, so what happened next? You came back to Hilo, then what?

HL: Well, after I was---how to put it? After I had left (chuckles) the University of Hawai'i and came back to Hilo, I wanted to work that summer. So I started to look around for a job and one of my neighbors worked for the steamship department at HT&T [Hilo Transportation and Terminal, Co.]. The president of the company at that time was a fellow by the name of Charles Hunnewell. Mr. Hunnewell's step-son, Nathaniel Saltenstall, was home from college. Nate and I were the same age and we buddied around for a while. Anyway, Nate had gotten a job through his dad at HT&T and then was supposed to start work but had an attack of appendicitis so had to go up and have an operation. So they had this part-time position open. So my neighbor called, said, "Eh, you interested in earning a few bucks for a few weeks?"

"Yeah, it's good work, I'll take it." So I went to work on the waterfront as a part-time freight clerk for HT&T in 1948, I think it was. I had a ball. I really did. They were the neatest guys down there. That was a life experience because I worked on the pier checking freight. Most of it---customers coming down to pick freight up that had come in by ship. Then they finally trained me and I worked aboard ship checking out bagged sugar as it was being shipped to the Mainland.

One of my greatest experiences on the waterfront, though, we got a cargo of dynamite in. When those ships come in, no other ship is around. (Chuckles) The port is pretty well closed off at that point. Once you start unloading, it was my understanding that you had to work straight through and get that ship out of the harbor. You could not allow the cases of dynamite to go into the pier shed. We had to rig up using skips of platform out on the pier apron. As the slingloads of cargo would come up, boxes of dynamite, they'd be put on this platform and one of the clerks had to look at the box, identify the mark, and there were trucks there from the various consignees: Glover, the state, the county, and various users of dynamite. We had to identify the mark and hand it to the stevedore to get it onto the right trucks. I spent a very interesting day out there (chuckles) helping to unload this big ship full of dynamite.

Many of our stevedores in those days had difficulty reading. They just couldn't trust them to go up and take it off of the skip that came out of the ship so that there were a number of our clerks that had to go up and positively identify the mark to make sure that there was no mixup in the dynamite that was being shipped out.

WN: How long did you do this for?

HL: Oh, I did this for over a year.

WN: From '48 to '49?

HL: Then in---I'm not sure of the date, Warren, but in that time frame, late '48, '49, the Hilo bulk sugar plant was just about finished, the construction of it. They were going to put it in to service. So my boss came to me, Mr. Jimmy [James L.] Reid, and asked if I would be interested in going to work up at the bulk sugar plant. My job would be scale boy. It would be a more . . .

WN: Where was the plant?

HL: It's right next to the pier. It's still down in the area of the pier. You look up and you'll see this huge structure with a checkerboard orange and white roof.

WN: It's still there?

HL: It's still there. It's out of use now. The plant was built to hold a total of 40,000 tons of bulk sugar. And it was put into service, I think, in 1949. I was one of the scale boys. The trucks would come in from the plantation. We would identify the company where it was coming from. We would weigh the trucks, unload it. Then the sugar was all commingled in the plant. Then there were other men in the crew that when a ship came in they would take the sugar out of these huge tanks and load it aboard the ships. We no longer used burlap bags to transport sugar. But we were fortunate in one way, Warren, I was still working on the waterfront when the last bag sugar left Hawai'i. They were working both simultaneously, we were taking in bulk sugar but we were shipping out the last of the bag sugar. So when this last Matson ship came in, because I had had experience on checking sugar out—bags out, I was transferred back to help load the last sugar—bag sugar that ever left Hawai'i on this island. So I had that experience. So seeing the last of the bag sugar leave here about '49.

WN: [Nineteen] forty-eight, '49. This is like two years after the '46 tsunami . . .

HL: Yes.

WN: . . . sort of wiped out the railway.

HL: Mm hmm [yes].

WN: So was this whole new bulk sugar system related to the fact that there's no more railroad and more a reliance on trucking for example?

HL: Yeah, but several companies on this island had designed trucks to specifically haul bulk sugar. Now, if the railroad had still been in existence, it's an easy matter to unload bulk railroad cars. But the railroad was not in existence so the Kawai brothers were handling the sugar from Theo H. Davies. Yamada was handling the sugar from, I think, Puna and Honoka'a [Sugar Company]. I don't know if they had anything to do with Kohala. But until the Kawaihae bulk sugar plant was put in, even Kohala [Sugar Company] sent their bulk sugar into Hilo. Then the

[C.] Brewer plantations were all handled by another subsidiary of Brewer, Hilo Transportation and Terminal Company, HT&T for short.

WN: This is where you worked?

HL: Yeah. And they were the operators of the bulk sugar plant.

WN: When you say bulk sugar, what do you mean? In comparison to, like . . .

HL: Well, it's a form—well, the difference is the bag. In the old days, you would fill up a jute or a burlap bag. It depended on what area of the world you were in. Some of the jute bags would hold 125 pounds. Some of them in South America, they tell me, were up to 200 pounds in a bag. Here in Hawai'i our bags were all 100 pound. The bags were imprinted with a symbol representing each one of the sugar companies. Every company had its own—what they call in the industry—a mark.

WN: On their bag?

HL: On the bag. Honoka'a for example was diamond H. It was an H within a diamond. Ka'ū Sugar Company was thirty-one. That was their number on this. Every company had its mark and you quickly learned to identify the fifteen or sixteen different marks for the sugar.

WN: Your job was to record X number of bags from Honoka'a, X bags from Ka'ū . . .

HL: Mm hmm [yes]. They were stored in a warehouse and then when they went aboard the ships, some of them came on by slings. We'd have to very quickly count how many bags are in that sling and it was put onto shore. Another way was that they'd bring the bags on by conveyor belt and we had to count the bags as they were put onto the ship. Then there would be a check of that. When they got to the refinery, they would unload it and make sure that we verified the count.

WN: So in the day of the railroad, they would just come in the . . .

HL: Boxcars.

WN: . . . boxcars. The railroad would stop right in front of the terminals there?

HL: It would go into the building.

WN: Into the building?

HL: Would go right into the building and they would off-load it. They'd put up conveyors, not motorized, with the rollers and they could roll them out. They'd roll them down in front of the stack and then the men would hand stack those bags.

WN: So this is how it was done in the railroad era.

HL: Mm hmm [yes].

WN: Then the tsunami wiped out the whole railroad system and they . . .

HL: Right.

WN: . . . started bringing it in with trucks?

HL: Yes. And . . .

WN: So how did the bulk sugar system work? I mean, was it still—did it come in—would it come in . . .

HL: No, it was just what it says, in bulk. The trucks themselves were containers. They would open the top of the truck, for example, and they would literally pour the sugar in until it was filled. They carried upwards to twenty tons of sugar in a single truckload. Then when they arrived here in Hilo, we would first spot them on a huge scale big enough to weigh the entire truck and load at one time. What we would then do is identify the mark. We'd find out where the sugar came from. We'd weigh the truck with its load. Then we would open the doors on the truck, the bottom, most of 'em were bottom dumping trucks at that time. We'd open the doors and the sugar would literally just fall out into a huge hopper. From the hopper it was fed in a continuous stream onto great big rubber belts that conveyed it up through the tanks and placed it in one of the four storage tanks we had up there. It was a fairly efficient system. We could really put a lot of sugar through that plant on the incoming side.

WN: Okay, we'll just turn the tape.

END OF SIDE ONE

SIDE TWO

WN: This is very interesting because we don't have too much information on the turnover—the changeover from bag sugar to bulk sugar. I'm just wondering, I guess this is a hypothetical question for you but, had the tsunami not destroyed the railroad—I'm assuming that this was pretty much a universal thing that was a trend that was happening . . .

HL: Yes.

WN: . . . statewide.

HL: Honolulu had gone to bulk sugar. After the tsunami wiped out the bridges along the Hilo coast, we had to go to trucking. It was just a matter of time where bulk sugar came in. It was more efficient.

WN: So it was the tsunami that really changed . . .

HL: No, the tsunami was not the triggering mechanism to convert to bulk sugar. They had used bulk sugar in many other areas of the world. I'm familiar with Puerto Rico because I worked in Puerto Rico for five years with [C.] Brewer. We had a small company there, sugar service

company, where we received sugar from a number of different plantations, pooled it, and then we shipped it. So they had been using bulk sugar even in the Caribbean.

Now, the bags themselves started to get rather expensive because the jute bags were coming out of India and other parts of world and they were expensive. It was much cheaper to deal with bulk. Now, when the bulk sugar plant here was first put up, the gentleman who designed it was a Mr. Rosen. The reason he was selected to design this one, he has successfully designed and built the one at Crockett, [California]. That is where the refinery is.

WN: Right. California, right?

HL: In California. So he designed this one. After we had been in operation for several months, Mr. Rosen came down to see how things were going. The manager of the plant, Mr. Vasconcellos, was that his name? The manager of the Hilo bulk sugar plant assigned me to work with—no, his name was Val Marcallino. He assigned me to work with Mr. Rosen as a gopher. My job was to walk around with a big pad and paper, a pencil and Mr. Rosen would inspect this hopper and say, "Okay, increase the arc so much." Then we would go to another place, "No, we got to change this. We got to change the pitch of the. . . ." My job was to write all these things down, translate them for the mechanics and the electricians and whatever and make modifications in the plant. To show you what skill Mr. Rosen had, the plant was originally rated at about 450 tons an hour. That's a lot of bulk sugar to pour into a ship. After Mr. Rosen made his modifications, that was up to close to 800 tons of sugar.

It was terribly interesting, Warren, when you worked on the waterfront, a ship would come in and be opened up by the stevedores and presented as ready to load bulk sugar. We'd get on there with our two great big gantry cranes and start pouring in at the rate of close to 800 or more tons of sugar an hour. You could almost stand there and watch that ship settle. Because they would take upwards of 6,000–7,000 tons of sugar out of here. So in a day you could just stand here and watch that ship gradually be loaded. Then they would go from Hilo back to Honolulu and usually they would top off there. I think because the Honolulu Harbor had a greater depth at that time than we did and it was safer to get in and out of.

WN: How did you keep track of which sugar company gets credit for what sugar?

HL: That is a very, very good question, Warren. What happened was that the sugar, as it was received, was weighed and sampled. We had our own lab at the pier and we would take what they call a polarization check and a moisture check so that every truckload that came in we sampled. We would set the samples away for this sugar separate from this plantation. Every plantation was accounted for the weight and the quality of their sugar separately. Then there were calculations made to distribute the sugar in the tank back to them on the basis of their weight and quality, being polarization, moisture, and so forth. Because it was all mixed when it was loaded aboard the ship. So then, after the ship was received in California and it was unloaded we would get back in the form of reports, how much sugar came off the ship, what was the polarization, what was the moisture, and so forth, so that we could then redistribute the sugar from that load to individual plantations so that they could get paid by the refinery.

WN: So, the plantations would get paid according to not only the amount but also the quality of sugar that they produced.

HL: Yeah, that was critical.

WN: I see. And you could only assess the quality by these—you're talking about the polarization . . .

HL: Well, there were many other factors, Warren, it was much more complicated. I was simplifying it, maybe I shouldn't.

WN: Well. . . .

HL: When the sugar was received here, we did weight, polarization, and moisture. Samples were sent to the HSPA [Hawaiian Sugar Planters' Association] in Honolulu and there were other tests that were run. The industry had agreed on various controls of color, ash, a whole series—filterability, all of these things that affect the refining of the sugar. So every company's sugar was analyzed for that. Now, if you fell below a given standard—say that your sugar had too high an ash content, you were penalized by formula. Now, if you went over and you had a better quality, you had a lower moisture or a higher polarization, you got a bonus. So you were paid not only for the quantity of sugar but in effect, by agreement, you would receive penalties or bonuses for the quality of the sugar, too. The sugar industry lived with that for a long time. There was never any serious arguments that I know of between sugar companies. But there was serious differences in the quality of sugar. Some companies because of their conditions had a difficult time getting a low ash content. That's more difficult to refine out, is the ash. Others, just in the processing, their sugar would be moist. Well, the moisture adds weight to it. So they had trouble getting their moisture down. Others, because of the conditions at the plantation, had high color. Well, it's amazing how easily the housewife can discern off-color sugar. The way they can do it is in the cooking—in the product. There can be very, very minute differences in the color of the sugar but when you put it into bread, for example, it sort of magnifies the differences and you'll come out with bread—I don't know how the American housewife can do it but she can look at a slice of white bread and she'll know the difference, that there's a discernable difference in the color.

WN: In your recollections, could you tell me some of the companies that had good sugar and not good sugar consistently? Could you do that? You know, like, oh, this is Honoka'a so this must be good. Anything like that?

HL: Yeah. Boy, the old managers will kill me if they catch me now. (WN laughs.) Yeah, Pāhala, for example, Hawaiian Agricultural Co., [Ltd.] they were very, very consistent and their sugar was usually of very good quality. The polarization was high, the moisture content was low, the color was good, the grain size of the crystals themselves were good. If you get too many small crystals this does affect the processing, too, the refining of it. Some that left a little something to be desired were Hakalau [Plantation Company], for example. Hakalau very often, even when we'd open up a truck, we wouldn't have to see the paperwork, we could see by the color of the sugar that it was dark and it would have very large crystals. We can spot it and say, "Oop, that's Hakalau's sugar."

WN: Now, is this equipment—do you attribute this to equipment or other factors?

HL: Other factors. The equipment is all manufactured by one or two major companies, three manufacturers or so. It's in how they employ that equipment. Now, it could be also the

conditions at the plantation, the soil conditions, the fertilizer practices, all sorts of conditions there. But a great deal of it, for example, grain size, the sugar boiler at the plantation, he examines the, it's a word called massecuite. It's a French word and what it is is the sugar juice boiled to express excess moisture. What you end up with is a mixture of molasses and crystalline sugar. It looks like tar and it feels (chuckles) like tar, too. But (boil it) under a vacuum. You can boil anything at a lower temperature by reducing the pressure on it. So you create a vacuum and you can boil off that excess moisture. Now, where you're running a vacuum pan—that's what they're called—you're running a vacuum pan, the sugar boiler is checking that massecuite to see those crystals grow and see how they're growing. Then he makes the decision, okay we're going to strike the vacuum pan. That's a term that they then break the vacuum and they dump that massecuite into big containers, where it is stirred very, very slowly before it is put into the centrifuges or centrifugals, to separate the molasses from the crystalline sugar. And what has this got to do with tsunamis?

WN: (Laughs) I don't know.

(Laughter)

WN: It's called serendipity.

HL: Yeah, I'm. . . .

WN: Changing the subject a little bit, well, not really. You were there in '49 doing what you were doing on the job. Now, '49 was the time of the longshore strike.

HL: Absolutely.

WN: How were you affected by that?

HL: I almost got my brains beat out, if I had any. I was working at the Hilo bulk sugar plant and that was a non-union shop. The union had not really had time to get in there and unionize. Now, most of the fellows that worked there—I wouldn't say most, there were some of the fellows that had worked there had been stevedores and belonged to the ILWU [International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union]. The others like me that had come from this temporary clerk's job, I had never belonged to the union. There were still others who had worked for the contractor, E.E. Black, [Ltd.] that built that plant. They were the steel riggers and the mechanics and so forth that knew that equipment like nobody else did. We hired them. So you had these different cases where we had nobody with an ILWU background, and we had stevedores. But the plant had not been organized by the ILWU at that time.

So the night before the waterfront strike in 1949, I had a visit from a group of stevedores. They were unionized and they were concerned about what would happen if they went on strike and the plantations were able to continue to ship sugar into Hilo. What they wanted to do was increase the pressure on the plantations to then put pressure on the stevedoring company to settle by making it impossible to get sugar to the pier. The plantations had no serious storage for bulk sugar. They might have enough for two days but these trucks were running all the time to keep those empty. So the stevedores, the ILWU stevedores visited many homes that night including mine and they urged me to what they called "hit the bricks" for the boys.

Being a brash young man I said, "Well, Jimmy Reid hired me and," I said, "Jimmy is the guy that can fire me." I said, "I don't belong to your union." So the next morning and I was scared. I'll be very frank with you, I would not take my car. What I did was I walked downtown and I caught a sampan [bus]. Here I was in my working clothes. So the sampan guy, I told him take me down to the pier, I probably looked just like any other stevedore. When I got down there, he stopped in front of the ILWU strike headquarters, thinking I was a stevedore. I had to get out in front of these guys. Then I walked from Silva Street down to the pier. The ILWU had put together a little orchestra, guitar, 'ukulele, bass fiddle, and so forth, and they were standing on the property in front of the old Pacific Guano and [Fertilizer] Company playing music while the strikers walked around with their placards. I had to walk right through that line and go down to the pier. Very interesting experience and I've been called a lot of things. (Chuckles) I heard most of them on that day.

But of the entire crew in the bulk sugar plant, there were about six or seven of us that worked. My feeling was I had never belonged to the union, I was paid a monthly salary, and I (worked). . . .

So the six of us worked that plant. We could not ship sugar out, we just didn't have the crew to do it. But we could store sugar to keep the plantations operating. So we worked and we received sugar from the plantations and put it into storage.

WN: Six of you did that?

HL: Yup, all throughout that strike. It was interesting, the tanks themselves, [there] were four of them. Each was designed to hold 10,000 tons of bulk sugar. Well, when you get those rascals full, it's a tremendous amount of pressure on the sugar down below. Plus the fact that it's sitting there in those tanks, they give off a lot of heat. So you evaporate the moisture in them. So what happened over a period of time, the sugar would gradually settle. When we finally got through, we had over 11,000 tons in each one of those tanks because we'd cap them off as they would settle down. The only problem was, when we came to take that sugar out at the end of the strike, the very bottom two or three feet was like concrete and we had to get in there with jackhammers.

(Laughter)

HL: Break that stuff out to clean the plant up. They never did that again.

WN: Was that usable sugar?

HL: Oh, yes. Yeah. All you had to do was pour water on it and you get it back in a liquid form. That's what they do at the refinery anyway. Sugar out of Hawai'i is always shipped in bulk form, raw. It has a purity, a polarization of something over ninety-six degrees. When it's received at the refinery it's melted back into a liquid form and then reprocessed. Plus, we utilized some of the old—not old, but some of the bag sugar that was in storage and we built a bulkhead down most of the pier. Our mechanics rigged up the belts for shipping sugar to the ship and turned it so we could pour it into the pier. So in addition to the 45,000 or 44,000 tons in the four tanks, we also poured, I think it was in the range of 50,000 tons more right on the deck at the pier. So we kept the plantations going throughout that whole period. [The territorywide ILWU longshoremen's strike lasted 177 days, from May 1 to October 23, 1949.]

When the strike was over, ships came in and we were able to load them with the bulk sugar out of the tanks and we gradually brought the sugar back from the pier. We had a big payloader down there and we'd load dump trucks and just shuttle it back.

WN: You said a lot of the stevedores working there were not part of the union. Did they go on strike?

HL: No, no, I'm sorry Warren, I miss—no, the bulk sugar people, because it was a new operation. When the stevedores were transferred over, they were technically still members of the ILWU but our unit had never been recognized.

WN: But they did go out?

HL: Oh yeah. Yeah. In my job as scale boy down there I had a helper. The day before the strike I was on duty and I was working. My helper, I won't even name him, I think he's still alive somewhere. Oh, he gave me a big song and dance. He had to work because he had a big family and he had needed to support 'em and damn he wasn't going to go out on strike. The next morning, when I got down to the pier and I'm walking down, I hear the ILWU orchestra. I look over and there he is playing the bow fiddle in the ILWU orchestra. Oh yeah. (Laughs)

WN: That was a long strike, six months.

HL: Yeah.

WN: So you were able to keep the plantation storage areas clear by accepting all this sugar during the strike.

HL: Mm hmm [yes].

WN: When the strike ended was there any kind of—well, first of all, after that first day when you walked through the pickets were there any problems after that?

HL: Yeah. I'd get catcalls every time I'd walk through the picket line. Most of them, no. There were two or three that were very, very strong union men. They'd see me walking down, they'll yell, "Scab! Scab!"

I really didn't feel I was a scab because I had never belonged to the union and the plant was not unionized at that time. We had men in there, electricians, they never belonged to the ILWU. Mechanics, a guy worked in the office, chemical analysis. So I really didn't feel bad about it. I just felt that I was hired to do a job and. . . . Yup.

Oh, they weren't bad. There were one or two that would yell at you once in a while but never any trouble. It was, I guess, well, it was in 1949, too, after the strike was over that [C.] Brewer was starting to form an industrial engineering department. They had hired a gentleman who first came to Hawai'i in 1946 to work for the Hawai'i Sugar Planters Association to set up a wage and salary classification plan. When the industry became unionized they had to get somebody in there that understood salary administration and this guy was from the United States Steel up in Pittsburg, California. He came out here and he helped to develop the wage classification plan for the industry.

WN: How were things after the strike ended, in terms of relationships?

After a time, that was pretty well established, [and then] Brewer hired him to start developing an industrial engineering section in the company. They recognized that hard times were coming with the industry and they wanted to become much more efficient. They thought that hiring an industrial engineer to come in and set up cost-control systems, and standards, incentives, and so forth, was the way to go.

But they were a little hesitant to go full bore. So they wouldn't give Mr. [Daniel J.] Cauty approval to go out and hire a bunch of industrial engineers. But they did give a little leeway to hire some people. He looked around in the company for young fellows that he thought he could train. I just happened to be one of the two. Leonard Costa of Hilo and I both were selected and we became industrial engineering trainees. We spent the better part of a year just getting the very basics of (chuckles) what we were to do. Then we were assigned to plantations. Leonard went out to Hilo Sugar [Company] and I went out to Onomea Sugar Company in 1950.

WN: So that's where you were in 1960, when the tsunami hit?

HL: Yes. I was very lucky, Warren. I went to Onomea as, in effect, a statistical clerk. That was my job title. Then the bookkeeper job opened up and I was lucky to get that. Then ultimately, the office manager job opened up and I got to be office manager at Onomea Sugar Company. So in May of 1960 I was the office manager at the plantation. Of course, we had heard the warnings that there had been an earthquake and a tidal wave or tsunami had generated out of Chile. We were on the alert for it but the reports were really kind of confusing. The one that came out of Christmas Island, my understanding was, oh, it was a very little wave. So we went to bed. Signe [Carlson Luscomb, HL's wife] was more attentive than I was, I fell asleep.

WN: Where were you living at the time?

HL: We were living in Pāpa'ikou, where the Onomea Sugar Company office was located. Finally, she woke me up and said, "Eh, we've been hit by the tidal wave or tsunami and it sounds quite serious."

So, for the life of me I don't know what made me do it but I got up and I got dressed and I jumped in my company car and I went down to the factory. Well, I was the office manager, I had nothing to do with that damn factory. But I thought, well, if there has been damage, as office manager I have a responsibility to handle the insurance. So I wanted to go down and just see if anything had happened.

So I got down to the factory and the lights were on because we generated our own power. We weren't dependent on Hilo. I took the elevator. We had a very unique elevator at Onomea Sugar, one of the very few on this island, it was hydraulic, run by water pressure. So I went down into the factory and I kept yelling for the night watchman because we'd always had a watchman on duty. I couldn't find the guy. Then I picked up the smell of an electrical fire. That's a very distinct—when the insulation on wiring burns, you can tell. We've had an electrical fire so I kept scouting around the factory yelling for the night watchman. Finally, I located the night watchman. He says, "Oh, Mr. Luscomb, we had fire."

What it was was the factory was built at the lowest point on the plantation. We weren't too far above sea level. We were also on the banks of the Kapue Stream that comes down through Pāpa'ikou. There's a big bridge there just before you get into the community of Pāpa'ikou. At times, if there was high seas or if there was a lot of water coming down the river, it would get into the lower part of the mill. Then we had a sump to collect this water and pump it out. Well, when the tsunami hit, the water rose up and inundated that pump and it caught fire and burned. But the watchman was able to isolate it and it was no big problem. But not knowing what else might happen during the night, I went up to the manager's house and roused him out of bed somewhere around two o'clock in the morning. I wanted him to know we'd had a fire down in the mill but there's no present danger and . . .

WN: How close was the mill to the ocean?

HL: The mill was right on the ocean.

WN: Right on the ocean?

HL: Yeah.

WN: The manager's house and your house was more or less up?

HL: Yes. Typical plantation. Well, typical for the factories. In the old days, the factories on this island at least were located at the lowest point because they used gravity feed for the water to come down to flume cane. Then the manager's house, kiddingly was usually on the highest point on the plantation so he could sit up there and keep an eye on everybody. But in this case . . .

(Taping interrupted, then resumes.)

HL: Okay. So the manager thanked me and said, "Why don't you go get the factory superintendent out of bed."

I said, "I think it'd be a good idea. It's his building down there. The *bugga* should get down there and check it out."

So I did. I went over to his home and got him out of bed. He wasn't at all thrilled with me. First of all, an office man sticking his nose in the factory didn't sit well. But I told him what had happened. He said, "Well, is the fire out?"

"Yeah."

"Is the night watchman there?"

"Yeah."

"Fine, I'll go down in the morning and check it." And went back to bed.

I was absolutely astounded at his attitude. He's dead now so he can't come back and haunt me about it, poor guy. But the very next morning, the manager and I met down at the office. We

usually got down there pretty darned early in the morning. That was a normal function of the plantation. You have what we call "morning stand" where the field men all get together and they talk over the plans for the day. Even as office manager I used to go down there just to know what the heck was going on within the plantation.

The manager was there and he said we're going to take a ride in town. We had a rather large tractor, a Chalmers HD-10 that was in the Hilo Iron Works building down there on the banks of the Wailoa River for modifications. Horrible story, the modifications had been finished days before the tsunami. The tractor was put on a truck and was headed out the coast. The driver forgot to check the height of his load. So when he went through that overpass at Wainaku, the top of the mast on the tractor hit and was damaged. We sure as heck couldn't use it in that condition so he had to turn around and go right back down to the Hilo Iron Works and have them start repairing it. So the tractor was there and in fact, we had checked—when we got word that the tsunami was on its way—checked with the Hilo Iron Works. They assured us that, "Not to worry, we have parked it up against the huge beam inside there and we chained it up so it's safe." The next day, the manager and I go down and we couldn't get right down to the Hilo Iron Works building because of all the rubble and so forth. We walked down and there was no tractor. That big old HD-10 had been ripped away from that column and moved about a quarter of a mile up the Wailoa River. That's what got us into this.

Later in the day, we were called in to a meeting in Hilo. The cleanup was going to be a pretty large operation and there was concern that the state and the county just didn't have the manpower or the equipment to do it as quickly as it should have been done. There were dead animals, dead people, all sorts of reasons for getting Hilo cleaned up as quickly as possible. So the plantations were asked to help. The guy that was put in charge of that was a fellow by the name of William McKinnon Whitman. He was field superintendent at Onomea Sugar Company in those days. Well, Mac and I had worked together for probably ten years so he asked me to come in as his assistant and to do the administrative work, to make the phone calls, to get the crews lined up, and to keep track—help him with the logistics of the whole thing. So that's how I got involved.

It's interesting that the plantation equipment—now, I may have ideas about how good we were but I really think that our plantation equipment was better suited for that type of cleanup than the ordinary contractors' equipment or construction equipment of the county and the state. They had big steam shovels, we had cane grabs. The Hilo Iron Works within a year or so before this had developed what they called the nine-foot-six cane grab. It was a very efficient cable-operated grab for picking up cane and you could pick up as much as 2½ tons of cane out of the field in one grab. They were a neat piece of equipment. We found that they were ideal for harvesting that mess that was down there. These buildings were all sitting there like jumbled matchsticks. A regular steam shovel had trouble picking that up. That's almost like a pile of sugarcane. Heck, we could just put a grab down there and pick that stuff up. They were also big enough that we could pick up automobiles. With a clam shell you can't, the clam shell is just not that big. But our Hilo Iron Works cane grabbers were big enough. We could just set them down over the roof of a car. We were accustomed to picking up loads 2½ tons or so, so it presented no problem. We could harvest those cars that were destroyed in that tsunami. Our push rakes were, if anything, better for rolling up that mess, because we were accustomed to going into cane fields and pushing this cane into windrows. And that's what we literally did here.

WN: Better than the bulldozers?

HL: Yeah. We felt that it was better than the bulldozers.

WN: What about the fact that you were working on concrete as opposed to dirt?

HL: Well, we weren't working on a lot of concrete. Many of the places that we were—you know, the foundations that were there, it didn't present that much of a problem to us, either. There were some very unique plantation equipment that I seriously doubt that many contractors duplicated. At the plantations we were very sensitive to nails on the roads, and we all had magnets. They were little devices that were pulled behind the rubber-tired tractor. And we'd run 'em up and down the road of the plantation to pick up tramp iron, nails, and so forth, to preserve tires. We had others at the plantation because we did haul on some government roads, you know, the county or the state roads. We had to be very, very careful not to get them dirty. If we did, we sure heard about it from the public. So most of the plantations had road brooms. These were big brooms that were mounted in front of the rubber-tired tractor. And if we did spill mud or cane on the road, we'd send up the road sweepers and they'd sweep this all off to the side of the road.

They proved very, very useful here during that [cleanup]. When we first got our trucks into Hilo, we were having a lot of flat tires. There was so much tramp metal laying around—nails, iron, all sorts of stuff—that we called the plantations and we did get the magnets in and the road sweepers. They were really a help. The problem was so serious, all of the plantations that I knew of had in the garage, crews trained to change tires. All of our rubber-tire tractors, we had our own crew. We had our own tire shop. What we did was we brought our technicians, our workmen into Hilo. And the various recap plants around town allowed us to put our workers into their facilities. We worked day and night in Hilo here repairing tires. Not only for the plantation equipment but for any other contractor, the state or the county.

WN: Which plantations participated?

HL: Just about every one on this island contributed in some way.

WN: What about Honoka'a [Sugar Company], for example, which was far?

HL: Yeah. We had some equipment from Honoka'a—I was trying to think of it last night—I'm not sure but we might have even had a piece of equipment from Kohala [Sugar Company]. I know we had them from Pāhala [Hawaiian Agricultural Company]: road sweepers, road magnets. Most of them came from along the Hilo coast: the big cranes and push rakes. But there again, we had to spread the load out because we didn't want to close the plantations down. They had to keep trying to harvest [sugarcane]. But the managers were very, very good. And fortunately I had been around the plantations long enough, I knew all of the managers by name. I could call them up and say, "Hey, we have a problem. Here's the situation. Do you have a piece of equipment that will help?" And I can't remember ever being turned down.

Usually they'd say, "Ey, it's not working. Well, we'll get a mechanic on it. We'll ship it in as soon as we can." They were all very, very cooperative.

WN: Did any of the plantations have the problem of dealing with their own tsunami damage?

HL: Hakalau [Plantation Company]. But that was the '46 tsunami.

WN: [Nineteen] forty-six, right, they lost the entire . . .

HL: Onomea [Sugar Company] had very, very minor [damage], but I don't remember—Pepe'ekeo [Sugar Company] mill sits up quite high, and the [Theo H.] Davies plantations also are up higher. The ones located lower, closest to the ocean were Onomea. Pepe'ekeo was up, Hakalau was out by that time, Wainaku [i.e., Hilo Sugar Company] sits up on that 'Āle'ale'a Point some forty feet above sea level.

WN: So the '60 tsunami really didn't affect the sugar operations much?

HL: Nope.

WN: Was probably a good thing because if it did you probably wouldn't be able to get all that equipment into Hilo.

HL: Yup. And fortunately it didn't damage the bridges. We had to bring them in on the highway. And if any damage had been done to other bridges it would have been very difficult to get those big pieces of equipment in here.

Now, these are my memories. That thing happened thirty-nine years ago. I may have built it up in my own mind, but those are the memories I have of it. Even to the detail of some of the trucks. The plantations later went to trucks that had to be unloaded using great big side unloaders. But in this time frame we still had trucks, dump trucks. There was a model made by Kenworth called the Kenworth 532 and they were self-dumping. They were a big help because they could carry a pretty good-size load. And they would dump themselves. They could be dumped down at the landfill.

WN: How long did it take, do you remember, to clean up?

HL: (Sighs) I was trying to think of that, Warren, and to the best of my memory, maybe ten days or so. Then it tapered off to where the county and the state could handle it. We did the bulk of it. And then we could finish it, we could go back to our routines at the plantations. I was trying to plane an answer to that myself.

WN: Well, that's a tough question, really, because there probably never really was a time when everything just stopped. I mean, it's an ongoing thing.

HL: Yeah. But the Hawai'i Island Planters Association, they were the ones that coordinated it. They're the ones that got Mac Whitman and I in here to work on it. Then when our part of it was over, Andrew Spalding who was the secretary-treasurer of the Hawai'i Island Planters Association wrote me a letter, and it's dated June 16, 1960. So they were to the point of we had pretty well finished up and they wrote me a thank-you letter.

(HL shows WN the letter.)

WN: Oh, okay. (WN reads:) A.T. Spalding, Hawai'i Island Planters Association.

HL: He was the retired manager of Hilo Sugar Company.

WN: Was it, for example---I guess it was up to each individual manager to recruit the workers who would be the ones to come into Hilo for the cleanup. Were there any problems there in getting people?

HL: Not so much getting the people from the plantations. Here again, I have no clear memory of any problems. There may have been, but I just don't remember it. It wasn't of a magnitude that got me upset or Mac upset. People were mostly very, very cooperative. Problems came later. I would love to be able to sit down with somebody else, because my memory says one thing, and I want to make sure—that I hate to perpetuate a lie on this thing. But the cleanup of Hilo was authorized under a federal aid project. And there were certain laws, rules, regulations involved in those where you have to pay certain minimum wages. This created a real problem for us. Our people were all coming in from the plantations, they were all covered by a [union] contract. They were to get certain minimum wage—or certain wages, certain benefits and so forth. This changed none of that. We brought 'em in, we paid 'em exactly what they would have been paid at the plantation. Then comes the federal government, and they say, "No, no, no. You must pay them according to the federal pay scale. Because we have hired contractors and we gotta pay them. So you can't pay your boys less than what we're paying the contractors' people."

And we argued, "Look, (chuckles) these contractors do not have year-round employment, they do not have pension benefits, they do not have medical benefits, they don't have a whole array of benefits that our people do. And if we were to bring our people from the plantation in here and be forced to pay them under a different scale, what about the guy that's sitting out at the plantation driving the same damn truck, operating the same crane, doing the same work in the tire shop, getting union scale, what we bargained with the ILWU?" We said, "We just can't go that way." And we had a big to-do about it.

Well, finally—here again, I would love to sit down with George Martin of the ILWU and talk to him and get his side of it. Because my memory was that the ILWU agreed with us, that we would have created some real problems if we were paying on two different scales, that this would create pressure on the guys at the plantation. "Ey, I want to go into Hilo and earn the big bucks," you know.

WN: But it would have come out of the plantations' pocket? The federal scale? To pay the crew the federal scale?

HL: No, the government would have reimbursed us, you know, the federal government would have reimbursed us for that . . .

WN: So it wasn't a monetary factor, it was more . . .

HL: Equity.

WN: . . . a fairness kind of a thing. Oh, I see.

HL: Yeah. That we're not going to take the guy's pension benefits away from him, his medical benefits away from him because he's in here [Hilo] earning, say, fifteen bucks [\$15.00] an

hour while his fellow union members working at the plantation for \$7.50 an hour, and getting all of the other benefits. We thought it would really create a very, very sticky problem. We did not change. We paid them according to the union contract.

WN: And what became of that in the eyes of the federal government?

HL: Well, I think—and this is where my memory is a little fuzzy—but I think what we finally did was, we billed the federal government on the basis of their wage rates. Then we calculated, “we” being primarily the [Theo H.] Davies plantations and the [C.] Brewer plantations. We were the only two that had men in here, [although] we had others with equipment.

And a fellow by the name of E. N. Ryan, he was their representative. He was a very, very good accountant for them. And he’s still very much alive here. Ed and I worked very closely on this, and my memory is we had no disagreements on the principles involved. What we did was, we calculated the bill to the federal government on the basis of their rates, but then we recalculated it on the basis of what it actually cost us using union scale, and the overhead that the federal government allowed us to charge small farmers under the sugar act. That was a well-established practice, and we felt, hey, there’s a lot of history on this thing. So we recalculated it as if we were working for a small independent farmer. And that included our direct cost, our overhead, and so forth. But we set down a principle that the sugar plantations would not profit over the disaster that hit Hilo. That was our guiding principle, that we would go along with the government and we’ll charge you whatever you want us to. But then we’re going to recalculate this thing on our basis, and the difference we will donate to charity. Now, that’s what my memory says we did. When we got through, there was a difference because of these crazy rates that the feds wanted us—we did donate that money to the Red Cross, I think, here in Hilo.

WN: Hmm, is there any way to check that?

HL: Well, I would like to check it—one that we might be [able] to check it with [is] Ed Ryan. He’s somewhat older than I am, but the last time I saw him he was still pretty much. . . . (Chuckles)

WN: He lives here in Hilo?

HL: Yeah. Ed Ryan. I’d like to check---I think we can check with George Martin to see what his memory says. Now, we’d have to go back into the federal. The state highway department had a lot to do with this, and I think the guy’s name was Ed Morrison.

WN: Morrissey?

HL: Morrison.

WN: Morrison.

HL: Yup.

WN: Well, you see what you can come up with and I’ll see what I can come up with. And maybe we can. . . . (Chuckles)

HL: Well, I've never taken the time because it's my memory, it's what I remember of it, and. . . .

END OF SIDE TWO

TAPE NO. 29-40-1-99; SIDE ONE

WN: Okay, I was just saying before we ran out of tape, that the guiding principle that you stated about the plantations not wanting to benefit from the tsunami disaster is probably, you know, it's guiding your answer and I think it probably was pretty much accurate because sugar plantations had a lot of stake in the community. And (chuckles) that was a good guiding principle, I think.

HL: Mm hmm [yes].

WN: It probably was a reality.

HL: Well, I know we worked very closely with the Big Island sugar growers, the Hawai'i Island Planters Association. That was an association of all of the plantations on this island. And I can remember a number of meetings with the feds. Now, they had representing them here, I think it was just Ed Morrison for the state. Down at the old Hilo airport there used to be an officers club down there. And I can remember meeting in the buildings down there on this subject. It was all very friendly but the federal government, (chuckles) you know, "We've got our rules and regulations." And sorry . . .

(Laughter)

HL: . . . we're just not going to do that to the people of Hilo. That's just not the way to go.

WN: Do you remember any worker pressing the plantations or you to get the federal rates of pay?

HL: No.

WN: No?

HL: There again, my memory says that the union did one heck of a good job of explaining to the people what was going on, that "Ey, you're doing something good, number one. Number two, you're not getting anything less than you would if you were at the plantation. And like the guy working for contractor X, Y, Z over here, you're still getting your pension benefit, you're still getting your medical benefit, you're still getting your vacation and all the sick leave and everything else. Now, that [contractor] guy's not going to get it." So my memory was, the union leaders did a good job of explaining this to the people.

WN: Okay, well, we're just about done. You retired in 1983. What was your title—oh, we already went through this. What was your title in 1983?

HL: Oh, boy. My title at that time, I was working for a subsidiary of C. Brewer and Company known as Hawaiiiana Investment, Inc. That was the development wing of Brewer. It

incorporated the old Brewer land department, and we were the ones that were developing Brewer's properties throughout the state. I was vice-president of property planning and control. And that's almost as fancy as your title here.

WN: Mine is just center director.

HL: Oh, you're a center director.

WN: (Laughs) I don't have a long title.

HL: But oh, man, you've got "Center for Oral History, Social Science Research Institute." The corporate names are bigger here.

WN: (Chuckles) Right.

Well, you've been "retired" since '83—I say that in quotes. What have you been active in?

HL: Well, before I finished my terminal leave with Brewer, I accepted a job and went down to Indonesia. Friend of mine, Wayne Richardson, had an overseas consulting firm, and they had a contract with the Indonesian government to help them establish six new sugar operations in the country. A wonderful experience.

Indonesia is so little known, it's amazing. The country consists of 16,000 islands, 13,000 of which are inhabited. They have something like 300 different dialects that they use within that country. Physically it is bigger than the United States from point to point. If you were to go to Banda Achen on the island of Sumatra, stick that up in Port Angeles in Washington—the other end of Indonesia which is out on the island of New Guinea, would stick out into the Caribbean. Point to point it is huge. And very few people realize that it has either the fourth or fifth biggest population in the world. Until the Soviet Union broke up it was fifth. When the Soviet Union broke up and into all of its little increments, Indonesia now is standing somewhere close to 200 million people in that country. It's a monster.

And we sent a team—I think there was seven or eight of us—from Hawai'i down there. My job was chief of services in charge of the project, and I was also the one taking care of the accounting or setting up the accounting procedures and the administrative procedures. We had specialists in factory, field, harvesting, weed control, all sorts of specialists went in there. And what we would do is oversee the construction of the mills. They were all under contract for different firms to build. We would supervise the clearing of the jungle, the establishment of the plantation layouts, the whole bit. We had a garage man with us that helped to design and lay out the garages and establish procedures for repair and maintenance of equipment. Our jobs were to get these up and running.

Indonesia at that time was still critically short of sugar. Now, at one time before World War II they were a major producer of sugar. But that was due in part to the discipline of the Dutch who owned and controlled those islands at that time. After the war the Dutch and the English both were thrown out of Indonesia and they became a sovereign nation. And their production went down. They just lacked the discipline to keep those factories running. It was very difficult for them. So what they do, using the oil money that they generate, (chuckles) they buy new mills. They just kept buying new mills rather than refurbishing and forcing

efficiencies out of the old mills. So we were down there for two years to assist the Indonesian government in that.

WN: Yeah, you've been a sugar man for many, many years. (HL chuckles.) I want to get your feelings as to the end of sugar here on this island and eventually the state of Hawai'i. What are your feelings about that?

HL: Mixed feelings. Really, very mixed. Sadness, disappointment, anger a little bit. I don't know of any one reason.

I teach a course at Lyman [House] Museum, what I kiddingly call the "Late, Great Hawaiian Sugar Industry," with emphasis on this island. So I got a whole bag of emotions about this. Sugar in Hawai'i goes back to—well, it's interesting. Very few people realize that when [Captain James] Cook arrived here in 1778 his log, when he was anchored off Waimea, (Kaua'i) saw sugar plantations. So sugar was in Hawai'i before Cook arrived. Sugar was one of the crops that the Polynesians thought was important enough to bring on those canoes. And it was growing here when Cook arrived. Now, his terminology of sugar plantations is not the same as ours. Today, a sugar plantation is a mill and the surrounding fields. But it was here. And the first serious attempt to grow sugar on this island over in Moloka'i. No, I'm sorry, Lāna'i, where two Chinese gentlemen tried it. And by golly, they did produce a couple of tons of sugar. But the first serious attempt was on Kaua'i. In 1835 there were two experiments: one by another group of Chinese, and the second one is by a company by the name of Ladd, L-A-D-D and Company. And Ladd and Co., were successful in their sugar operations on Kaua'i. And many people say that was really the birth of sugar in Hawai'i

I have a chart that I use in my course, that one of the critical dates in sugar was 1875. Sugar had been progressing. The expansion of fields had been going along at a modest rate. But when David Kalākaua elected king [in 1874]—our second elected king, by the way—he recognized that the economy of his new kingdom was in serious trouble. So he took it upon himself to go to Washington, D.C. and call on the president of the United States.

He was the first monarch of any country in the world to visit the president of the United States. If that had come up on a trivia, you know, or another program of some kind, I would have sworn it would have been somebody from England or France or somewhere, but it was a Hawaiian. It was David Kalākaua, went back and met with Ulysses S. Grant [U.S. president 1868–76]. Grant appreciated what Kalākaua was trying to do, and said, "Yes, we will use our best efforts to negotiate a reciprocity agreement with Hawai'i, your kingdom."

And one thing I've always admired about Kalākaua at that period in time, I feel that the man knew what he didn't know. There's so many people in this world who have no idea what they don't know. They think they know so much about so many things. But Kalākaua realized that there were probably better people to negotiate that reciprocity agreement. So he came back to Hawai'i, and he contacted a young gentleman by the name of Henry A.P. Carter. Born in Honolulu, and he was the first locally born president of C. Brewer and Company, Ltd. He left his job as the president of C. Brewer and Company and became a special emissary from Hawai'i to the United States. And it was Henry Carter that went back to Washington and in 1875 [or] [18]76 and negotiated the reciprocity agreement [i.e., the reciprocity treaty]. [According to *Shoal of Time* by Gavan Daws, Elisha H. Allen was also commissioned as a special agent to negotiate the treaty.]

And one of the little sticking points in that agreement was that Hawai'i had a population in 1875 of about 57,000 people. That's a very small market for American products. The United States, on the other hand, had gone through the gold rush out in California. And everybody was taking old Horace Greeley's advice and, "[Go] West, young man, go West." And it was booming out there. So there was a tremendous market. How do you balance the scales? Well, the United States was already starting to look toward the Pacific. They realized what the French, the Germans and the English had done in the South Pacific with Samoa, Tahiti and the other islands down there. And the United States started to look west, and decided that they needed somewhere out here in the Pacific, like Hawai'i, as a refueling station for commercial vessels. So they threw into the pot, a request for a coaling station, C-O-A-L-I-N-G, to refuel merchant vessels. And Hawai'i agreed. They gave them the right to use the place out in Pearl River. And that's how the United States first got their hands on Pearl Harbor.

Now, that agreement underwent changes, 1891 when the McKinley Tax Act came into effect, it seriously eroded any benefits we had from the reciprocity agreement. But that was straightened out, and the United States gained a little more control over Pearl Harbor.

WN: And because of the reciprocity treaty, the sugar industry here took off.

HL: Yes. It's amazing how that line goes up to 1875, and that it just turns and goes right up. And from there it's an almost continual rapid growth until 1932 when the industry reached a peak of some 254,000 acres of land in cane. Now, following that, there is a dip, but I attribute that to the improvement in varieties, the work that the HSPA [Hawaiian Sugar Planters Association] did. They produced more sugar on less land, so they got rid of marginal field areas, and continued to produce more sugar.

But the big turning point—what I think started Hawaiian sugar on the slippery down slide—was in 1974. In 1948, the United States enacted the sugar act. And that had a number of provisions: there was a tax imposed on refined sugar. And that tax went into a special fund. It did not go into the general fund of the United States until some time later. But the funds were used then to pay what they called conditional payments back to farmers. If you would agree to abide by these conditions—you would agree if you had to—to reduce your acreage, to subject yourself to crop control, you'd agree to pay certain minimum wages under federal law, and you did this, this, this. If you agreed to all these conditions then the federal government would give you a conditional payment. For a small farmer producing up to 350 tons of sugar, that was sixteen dollars a ton for every ton of sugar you produced. It was a graduated scale. When you got up into the thousands of tons like our sugar plantations, that rate dropped down to six-fifty [\$6.50] a ton. But it's still a sum of money to go back to the plantations. That served us well for years.

Now, what a lot of people in the American public don't know is, as a part of that conditional payment and the agreement was that the American farmer would only produce 60 percent of the estimated total annual consumption of sugar in the United States. The other 40 percent was set aside and became a diplomatic tool with the American government, that the farmer—if we started to produce more sugar, the government will come along and say, "Tsk, tsk, tsk, no. You got to take out acreage." Now, we were under that control.

I remember making out the reports to the government. And there were some areas in the United States where that was enforced. The other 40 percent became a diplomatic crop, really.

That little countries around the world would get into trouble, and sugar could be grown in even temperate climates; it doesn't have to be tropical. Well, what would happen is, that oh, a little country would get in trouble. Let's use the Dominican Republic. Do remember when the Dominican Republic went through a very trying period back in the 1960s, and they formed a troika. They threw out the old dictator, and they had a troika in there with a head man named [Donald Joseph] Reid Cabral [president 1963-65]. They had no economy. But they could produce sugar. So the United States all of a sudden found this quota for Dominican sugar. That allowed the Dominican Republic to earn hard currencies which they put back—fed into their government, into their economy. And we've used that for years.

Now, that law expired. Under that, the farmer did have a certain level of protection. But that whole law expired in 1974. And with it, that level of protection disappeared. Foreign countries, then, could ship sugar into the United States. They paid a duty on it, but there's no way that the American farmer paying minimum wages or union wages here could begin to compete with foreign sugar. Now, I've worked for five years in Puerto Rico. Puerto Rico is under the United States, but they don't pay federal minimum wages. Their wage scale is set within the Puerto Rican commonwealth, by their own governmental agencies, and is lower. I was working in Indonesia for two years. Their wage levels are much, much lower. And yet their cost of production is quite high. But they would deprive their own people of sugar so that they could sell sugar in the world market, or sell it to the United States to earn hard currencies. But [with] that 1974 expiration of the sugar act, the American sugar market was fair game.

WN: Yeah, there's a lot mergers from that time on. I mean, there were mergers prior to that, but. . . .

HL: Now, the beet farmers on the Mainland have a tremendous advantage. Whereas Hawaiian sugar takes two years [to mature], the beet farmers take six months. So they can get in and out of the market a lot better than we can. But there are a tremendous number of farmers got out. Now, when the United States government realized what was happening, they tried to correct it by putting sugar under the omnibus farm bill. And they did not come up with any more conditional payments, but they came up with a minimum price. That there was a loan program set up. The government would decide that, well we're going to establish eighteen cents, that's \$360 a ton. Minimum price for sugar. If the price of sugar in the U.S. market falls below that, the United States government will buy your sugar at that minimum price, and they would actually be the custodian of it. Now, if the price goes back up, you can redeem your loan by paying it off and redeeming your sugar and selling it at the higher price.

It's interesting, the gentleman who just won a senate seat in Washington was one of the major opponents of the old sugar act, Chuck [Charles] Schumer. He billed himself as really a consumer's person, that he thought it was terrible for the sugar companies to get these conditional payments. But one of the things that the now Senator Schumer never told the American public was that all from the sugar act, from 1948 through 1975 this tax that was charged to the American public in the form of two cents a pound for refined sugar not only paid for the operation of the sugar department, not only paid for the conditional payments to small farmers, and on, and on, and on, it returned \$600 million to the American treasury. They took in \$600 million more.

WN: And he's a senator now.

HL: Oh yes. (Chuckles) You know, I have fun when I teach this course because every once in a while I have somebody from New York in there. (Chuckles) I can't help it.

(Laughter)

WN: Well, that's probably another chapter.

HL: Oh, gosh.

WN: So what I'm going to do is, I'm going to stop the tape right here. Thank you very much for your time.

HL: I'm sorry I wore out your machines. (Chuckles)

WN: Oh, that's okay. Still working.

END OF INTERVIEW

**TSUNAMIS REMEMBERED:
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Volume I

**Center for Oral History
Social Science Research Institute
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