

Interviewer: Okay, hard question first. Please say your name and spell it.

Tom Warren: Tom Warren, T-O-M W-A-R-R-E-N.

Interviewer: Tom, what was your date of birth and where were you born?

TW: I was born June 15, 1944, here in San Pedro.

Interviewer: Going back as a kid. What are your earliest memories of San Pedro?

Anything [that] comes to [your] mind when you think about the place and growing up here?

TW: One of my earliest memories probably was the one and only snow that we've had here in the last hundred years. In 1940—I think it was January 1949, and I was about four years old at the time. I can remember this cold wet, white stuff coming down and everybody making a big deal of it and getting up the next morning making--to playing in the snow, making a snowman. Looking up at the place for a shell and seeing them all white.

Interviewer: I remember that too. I grew up here. We had a lawn. We made one snowball.
[background laughter]

TW: Where we lived in the north end of towns, by Gaffey Cannon, we got enough to pretty much make a little snowman. I think we have pictures at home.

Interviewer: What was the kind of place, when you were a youngster? What was San Pedro like?

TW: When I was a youngster, San Pedro was a small, a small close-knit community. Made up of—I'm Scandinavian decent, of Norwegian, and a lot of Scandinavians lived here in San Pedro at the time. There were some Italians, some Slavonian, and some Hispanic but probably back then it was about equal on all of them. You kinda of like knew everybody because the town wasn't that big and I would imagine in the late forties or early fifties there might have been ten thousand people here in San Pedro. Either you worked fishing, in the Canneries, or down in the Waterfront. Pretty much those were the main industries of this community.

Interviewer: What about your family, what was your father and mother's background? What do they do?

TW: My father was born here in San Pedro also in 1914. He worked on the Waterfront from the time he was seventeen years old till he retired in 1977. He put forty-four years down here. My mother was born in Iowa and came to Long Beach—Iowa by the sea basically, in the late twenties. [She] graduated from high school probably in Long Beach. [She] met my dad at the

Pike. In the old Pike in Cinderella Ballroom down there in 1934 or so and they got married in 1936. They lived here all their lives.

Interviewer: Your grandfather was the first to come here?

TW: Yes, my grandfather came to San Pedro around 1909 or 08, I'm not sure exactly. He was a Norwegian Seaman who landed in Galveston, Texas. Stayed at a boarding house where my grandmother was pretty young there. [He] married my grandmother, brought her sister, and my grandmother's mother out here to San Pedro. A lot of my relatives, their relatives were killed in the Galveston Tsunami, basically. Probably the only Tsunami, I think, ever in the United States about 1900. So they were pretty much without family, so he brought them out to San Pedro. My grandfather decided to go to work as a long shore man on the docks about, say, 1909.

Interviewer: Tell me the story of the Galveston Tsunami? I don't know about that.

TW: Aw, there was a major—Galveston is basically an island off of Huston. There was a major tidal wave there around 1900. At that time, there wasn't enough warning, there was very little warning given; and it is pretty flat. I think over a foot of tide would actually start flooding the town. Some people were able to get to the second stories and not survive it. There were several thousands of people killed in that Galveston tidal wave back in--it was 1900 for sure. There have been several things on the History Channel I learned about it.

Interviewer: What effect did it have on your family?

TW: Mainly, I think my grandfather was not, my great grandfather was not living then. I think he was killed during that time and my grandmother started a boarding house. That is basically how my grandfather got there, my great grandmother's boarding house, my grandmother and her sister. [They] decided go west young man, and there was quite a bit of age difference about twenty years age difference between my grandfather and my grandmother. My grandfather was thirty-five and my grandmother was fifteen. They got married, seemed like the more—he would have married my great grandmother instead of my grandmother, but he didn't. He said, "Okay, we are going to San Pedro. I've been there on several trips," from when he was a seaman. Everybody seemed to like San Pedro. It kind of reminded him of home whether it was Scandinavia or it whether it was Italy or in Croatia wherever. They all seemed to think of this area as home.

Interviewer: Do you remember your great grandfather enough to remember any stories?

TW: No my grandfather, three of my grandparents passed away the year I was born. Just prior to me—within six months of my birth and so I knew my maternal grandmother. She lived in Taft up by Bakersfield. I only had one grandparent growing up.

Interviewer: Did your father have any stories about his experience here?

TW: I can remember stories about my dad when they first moved here. They lived on Beacon Street, around the twelve-thirteen hundred block of Beacon Street. Then my grandfather built a house here in San Pedro over on Third and Gaffey. We are behind the McDonald's restaurant now. My dad taking—back in those days before the Union contracts back before 1934, you would go work a ship. You would just work until that ship was done. He would carry my grandfather's lunch, his dinner, and his breakfast down to him. They would just—with very hard work, my grandfather was what they call a Lumberman, which is a guy that--they had a lot of lumber back then in the Port of Los Angeles back in those days. They would stack lumber piece-by-piece. They would work those lumber ships until they were finished. Then they would go home. Those are the early days. There was a lot of iron men and wooden ships back in those days.

Interviewer: Going back to your experience, growing up here. As a young kid, how did you relate to the Port at all? Did you go down there and play or what?

TW: I went some, there was an area right down here where the cruise tour was now. It used to be called, "BAD." You probably heard that expression during your time and it was a swimming—kind of a swimming place, a beach where young kids would go swimming in the nude. Kind of, and it was just kind of a fun place to go when you were small—you would go down there. It was kind of being closed up about the time. I was old enough to go down there, but along—especially along Harbor Boulevard here with a lot of lower tenant type homes along there. Beacon Street, especially Beacon Street was known as like the two tough, toughest blocks in the world back in those days during World War Two and right after. If you--I know when I was in the Coast Guard I was in the Coast Guard in the early 60s and went to the boot camp. Somebody asked me where I was traveling. I said San Pedro. They said Beacon Street the two toughest blocks of the world. I mean, I didn't go down there, yet my dad sold newspapers down and I remember going down there to go on the ferry to go across to terminal Island and I catch a bus to go into Long Beach. Before, way before the St. Thomas Bridge was built. I can remember there wasn't a whole lot of industry here in San Pedro along the waterfront. That was outer harbor, which is the south end of town a result appears for Fifty Seven to Sixty old warehouse one and that out there. Then along Harbor Boulevard, here there was some smaller still lumber facilities there. As I grew older, probably around 1960 the belt consolidate Marine Terminal there the CMI, which housed the Americans life flags, American Airlines, which is no longer in business. PFEL was Pacific Far East Line no longer in business and American President Lines. It was all loose cargos going on at the time; also, there was part of the one and only pasture facility here in One Berth, Berth 93. As the years have continued the cargos left, went in containers, and they rebuilt that whole area there to make it or main pastor term.

Interviewer: Unknown speaking

TW: Am I speaking too fast?

Interviewer: No, no, no. It is terrific. I just have to get a pause and maybe [indistinguishable words]

TW: Yeah, I'm getting the glare now.

Interviewer: Yeah. San Pedro was a little self-contained town. I mean places to shop, places for entertainment, places for--describing the places when you were growing up. What kind of town was it? What was here, and what did people do?

TW: San, San Pedro had its own shopping community here in San Pedro. In fact, my dad's sister, my aunt, Thelma Granis. The Granis brothers, three of them here had shops in San Pedro right on Sixth Street between Pacific and Mesa. My aunt and uncle owned a children's store called, "Lad and Lacey" and there was—my uncle's brother owned a German shoes and when the other brothers owned a mattress store here in San Pedro. You can buy anything in San Pedro just about. They had appliance stores here, television—fairly, quite a few television shops. I remember when we got our first TV it was right here at Harry and Frank's TV here in San Pedro on Pacific Avenue. There weren't--there were three theaters in town that were active. The Warner Grant or we call the Warner Brothers theater back then. The Cabrello, which had like--what we call Cabrello instead of Cabrill in the old San Pedro--esk, which is why you call it San Peedro [long e sound] instead of San Pedro [Spanish annunciation]. That was down on Seventh Street or just above Harbor Boulevard. That was where they showed the first cinema scope theater where the rope was for showing. The there was another theatre on Pacific called, The Strand, at around Eleventh and Pacific which showed--kind of like movies as he came around the second time--was kind of a discount place. There was the Drive-In Theater also San Pedro Drive-In Theater, which was on the north end of town next to you Carlo's Bakery. It's kind of funny because you remember smells going. The bakery was spotless, nice fresh bread; and also, if the canneries were open and you could smell the fish, so you kind of got that double thing. How about fish--as a kid coming up that awe—off of Ninth Street at Western Avenue and we would take the bus around. It came up Ninth Street and a lot of the—what we call fish nurses, which were ladies that worked cutting fish at the canneries on Terminal Island. [They] would get on the bus and they'd have their fish oil, blood, and everything on their aprons and their uniforms. You could really tell when they got on the bus. Let's say it was quite a, quite a smell that you had to kind of get used to living here in town. That was the main industry. I mean, the fishing industry carried a lot to San Pedro before the ports grew. There was probably a lot more industry in fishing, the canneries, and also the shipyard here. The main shipyard Todd's and then the one on Terminal Island, the Southwest Marine that were—you know, a lot more people employed in that industry than they were actually moving cargo.

Interviewer: And awe [clears throat] we are going to change tapes, good. This is great, to collect stories like this.

TW: My dad should have did this, when he was alive.

Interviewer: He enjoyed this?

TW: He tweets stories back in 1920.

Interviewer: Okay, ready to go? I asked you again, when you were growing up here, what were the places you went locally for fun? What did you do?

TW: Well, when I was first growing up, I lived right across the Gaffey Canyon from Peck Park. Peck Park is a major, main park in San Pedro. There are several. Mr. George Peck left a lot of money into the City of Los Angeles for parks. He named a lot of the parks after his children. Leland and Avril we also have Point Fermin out at the south end of town. Peck Park had the recreational facilities for children. It had the first Little League before Major Little League started about 1954. I was in the first Little League in San Pedro. We had twenty-six teams and we had fifteen kids on each team. It was from every Grammar School in San Pedro. There were twenty-six Grammar Schools in San Pedro, and it's only fifteen kids from each Grammar School could play baseball. There was one diamond, so you played, not too often maybe every couple of weeks you got to play a game or so. Then the next year they added Daniel's Field, which is in the middle of town. Then they add a couple more fields there. This is all through the LA City Parks and Recreation. So I spent a lot of time at Peck Park playing baseball, umpiring, [and] coaching through the years. Other things to do in town, we had our Pacific Bowling Alley which had like eight lanes. Then they opened the old—when Carlo's Bakery moved to the north end of town they took that and make it into a bowling alley. Eddie [Marchetes] was a Pro bowler at the time bought it, San Pedro Bowl.

Interviewer: Sneezes. Excuse me. Start again with Eddie Marchetes.

TW: Eddie Marchetes was a Pro Bowler, who had a lot of family here in San Pedro. He started San Pedro Bowl and we chat about, I think, trying sixteen or twenty lanes. You could bowl there in a lot of youth leagues. They had the Boys and Girls Club in San Pedro also to play basketball. The YMCA down here, which is in San Pedro here. It had an indoor pool and basketball courts and things. There were a lot of sports and recreational facilities at the time. Then as I got older and as a teenager we used to hang out in the Tony's Pizza there on Pacific Avenue. It was a very—and cruise Pacific with you know, when there was you—the Lucas generation of American Graffiti type thing.

Interviewer: Describe that. People are not going to know about this. First of all, what was Tony's Pizza. Describe that scene.

TW: Tony's Pizza was not the first pizza place in San Pedro, but it was the first one to kind of cater to the youth, the older teens and the early twenties people. You can go in there and get a submarine sandwich or a pizza and a coke. Kind of that was—when you cruise Pacific Avenue you went down to about Twenty-Second Avenue and U-turn. They were right around Twentieth Street. You would swing in there and have something to eat and meet all the kids from my local high school here in San Pedro at San Pedro High. You kind of knew everybody around in town and everybody would check out each other's car and eventually had the first A&W Drive-In Root Beer place. There used to be a San Pedro Drive-In on—restaurant on Sixth and Gaffey, but

it was kind of out of the cruise zone so it didn't really fit in. That was say back in the, you know, playing your—playing with wrapping your pipes and playing your Rock-n-Roll music. Lowering your cars and, you know, kind of yelling out the window at people going by you. If people have seen American Graffiti as well, a lot like that.

Interviewer: Tell me more about cruising. Did you have a car or did you have friends?

TW: Uh, some of my friends had cars and I also got to use my dad's car in 1950. 1960 I was able to get my driver's license so the day I turned sixteen, I got my driver's license. We had a Fifty-eight Chevy Del Rey. There was the Impala and the Bel Air, the Biscayne, and the Del Rey. The Del Rey was the bottom of the line one. It was a two-door coupe without a backseat originally. My uncle, who was a used car dealer in Long Beach, we got it from him. [We] put a backseat in it. It didn't have a heater. Didn't have a radio, put a radio first thing; first thing goes and put a radio in it. Then a Viber Sonic and split the pipes. Put twenty-two inch glass back mufflers on it, so it makes a lot of noise. It was a little six cylinder engine with a three speed on the column and—but it looked good. Painted the rims black and put a little "Baby moves" on it. Kind of made it look like the upgraded cars, but a lot of my friends had older cars. We kind of fixed them up and took turns cruising. Everybody collected a quarter for gas because gas was about a quarter a gallon and you could collect three-four guys in the car and drive all night on a dollar. So...

Interviewer: Describe the cruising route. What would you see? What events would take place?

TW: Well, normally they were Friday and Saturday nights and you can cruise down from the south end about Twenty-Second Street down Pacific Avenue all the way north to about Sixth Street. Hang a right, go east to Massa, come back up to Seventh, come up Seventh one block, and then back down Pacific again and head south. That was pretty much the cruise route. Somebody bot something new or hadn't seen before, we would pull over to the parking lots and check it out. Turn the radios up and that was pretty much before there was no tape players. One of my friends had a Fifty-Eight Ford that put a record player, a little Forty-Five record player on it. That was prior to cassette tapes, four tracks, or eight tracks or anything like that.

Interviewer: So was it bumper to bumper or was the music being played loud enough to be heard? What was it like?

TW: Yeah, there was a major KFWB was the big Rock and Roll station back in those days, and KRLA and the Mighty Six-Ninety. Those are the three main Rock and Roll channels. If somebody were to hear a good song, everybody would switched over and you could pretty much hear it on going. Yeah, it was almost bumper-to-bumper. It was a pretty good thing to do on Saturday, especially Friday-Saturday nights and never had any problems. Never, the police were there but they were just kind of watching. Once in a great while, maybe they would pull somebody over for not having any kind of muffler or something; but they were pretty cool with us. They didn't bother us.

Interviewer: And when did you [Coughs] when did you first go on the docks? How did you get involved in that?

TW: When I first got out of high school, there was basically three main jobs or three main industries here in San Pedro. There was the shipyards; fishing industry—either fishing going out with somebody you had an awesome buddy to go on a fishing boat to go out and catch fish; or go to work for the canneries at the waterfront. My family is from the waterfront and originally my dad said that is not the place to go. The waterfront is going to dry up, he thought. Probably one of the few pieces of bad advice he ever gave me, so I went to work for the gas company here in San Pedro. It is called Southern Counties Gas Company back then. For about four and a half years, I carried pipes, dug holes, and everything else. I decided I didn't want to do this all my life. I had a Casual Card, what we call a "K card" back then for clerking. I went down there and I started working a little bit to take time off from the gas company. Then eventually they were gonna—I decided, I was married and my wife was working for this aircraft. We do not have any children and she had medical benefits. I thought, if I'm going to leave this gas company job, I better leave now. In 1967, I went down there. It was casual and I got into the Union in 1968, as a Class B clerk. I worked my way up the line and the rest is history. I did a lot of different things for the Union, from—but the Waterfront was a whole lot different when I first went there in Sixty-Seven. The Finger Piers on Terminal Island here where now Evergreen Lines are. Eddie's Terminal around the bend where NYK is, there was no Matson down there where the Matson doc is now. These were all basically break ball, what we call break ball facilities, which is we handle a box at a time. You take a box, a cardboard box, or wooden box and put it on a pallet board. You fill up the pallet board and lift it off the ship and put it on the dock. Then you store it in the warehouse and take it off the palette and store it in the warehouse. Then see some guy come by with a two wheel hand truck and pick it up and put it in a truck. That is how cargo was pretty much moved. There was only three container facilities in the ports of LA, Long Beach when I first came down here. That was Sea Land and Long Beach with the innovators of containers: Mattson and Wilmington. Then LA container terminal in Long Beach, I mean here in San Pedro at Berth One-Twenty-Seven. That was made up of four Japanese lines. I think [they] were Japan Line, Key Line, Mitsui, and OKS Lines for the four. Anyway, so they were the innovators and mostly everything was twenty foot containers back then, but there were still a lot, a lot of break in cargos.

Interviewer: I think we are getting ahead.

TW: Okay.

Interviewer: What was Mormon Island and Wilmington. Tell me about that.

TW: Mormon Island was kind of like a filled-in probably where the Port of Los Angeles started. Where Manning started the port down there. It was kind of mudflats way, way back. They built these old warehouses down there. Most—there are still one down there at Berth one—one-seventy-six. Those warehouses were building tin in the early twenties. There were cargos—several different lines came in there. We bought a few automobiles and when Key Line came in there and Mitsui came in there before containerization. There was a passenger terminal at Berth one-fifty-four that eventually was taken over. It was American President Line went there. Eventually it was taken over by Delta and Prudential Grace Delta. I worked there later on in my career. So those were all finger piers, loose cargoes, and validate the time box at a time type thing. A lot of

oil facilities were there also. Wilmington had a log of oil there, and there were storage tanks a lot of storage tanks there. There were two explosions here on the port that I remember. One of them was way back in the early fifties, a ship Blue One-Fifty-Three there. I can't remember the name of it, but it took part of that warehouse down and they rebuilt it. Then the other one was the Sansinena in 1976, here in the outer harbor of San Pedro.

Interviewer: Tell me those stories with more detail.

TW: I don't know a whole lot of detail on the one area.

Interviewer: Tell me about the one you remember.

TW: Okay the Sansinena, the explosion on Sansinena in December of 1976, was probably one of the biggest events that happened here in San Pedro because it effected a lot of people. It was a ship that was just about done unloading at one of the—Berth One-Forty-Nine and the Unocal dock. Somewhere or another there was a spark, it ignited a lot of the fumes. It blew the ship in half. It blew the ship completely out of the water and it landed with the bow sticking partway out and the stern facing down. It blew out windows all the way up—all the people on the foothills here going up towards Palisades Shell shore which faces the harbor. It blew the windows out because it created such a suction when they drew the air in to make the explosion, that it pulled the windows out of the—out of the houses and then instead of blowing them in. That is why a lot of people were not hurt. I think there were two or three deaths there at the facility. It blew the doors off the warehouses. Things like that here in Ana Harbor and also here where the crew [inaudible word] now at CMI. It created that much power. And all the stores in San Pedro on Pacific Avenue and Sixth Street all had their windows blown out. So there was major, major damage done; but very little death and very little major injuries.

Interviewer: Personally would you—were you around? Do you remember?

TW: Well, I was—that night I was at the other side of the hill. I was at the Los Berg Country Club at a Christmas dinner, dance. The hill blocked that concussion. I didn't even hear it. The next morning—my children were staying at Seventh Street there, just about Seventh Street school; so the next morning when I went to hiring hall to get a job everybody was talking about the explosion. I said, "What explosion." They said, "Where were you?" I said I was on the other side of the hill. Everybody that was in, probably a good five mile radius where the ship blew up knew about it instantly. There have been several other explosions here in town, I remember as a child. I was about ten years old at the wrong Wilmington San Pedro road, which is now John Gibson Boulevard, there was Associated Oil had storage tanks there and they caught fire. I remember playing ball at Peck Park. Walking out by the trees to get a ball and I looked and I saw the top of a storage oil tank blow in the air. I see the concussion and the fireball, then felt the concussion afterwards from the sound. There were two fireman. L.A. City firemen on top of that tank when it went off. Unical, Union 76, in Wilmington had several oil fires. As a child where our house was, we would look into their storage tank facility and they would have a fire, ghee probably in the late forties and fifties, almost one a year. They would go for days. Eventually, they finally figured out what was causing them and were able to contain them and they stopped. There's a lot of um—back in those days there was a lot more of, probably, that kind of thing

happening then there has been in the last thirty-forty years. They finally figured out a way, but it was a dangerous place to be.

Interviewer: Talk about the Union. The importance of the Union in the history of this place.

TW: Okay, um well, I've been very deeply involved in the Union since I became on the waterfront. My dad was a member of the Union and my grandfather. They were both Charter Members of the International Longshore Warehouse Union. It was started in 1934. It was basically—they belonged to the International Insurance Association from the East Coast, part of that. In 1934, the west coast longshoremen decided it was time from them to have their own autonomy from the east coast. They had a strike, they call the strike and the east coast—I really didn't want them to, but they did anyway. A man named Harry Bridges was the strike Chairman. Harry Bridges is probably a founder of our Union. If not, a person of his caliber or probably himself. We never would be where we are today. So in 1934, they called a strike here in San Pedro. In May of that year, they had brought scabs in, non-union workers, to come in. The Union workers were out picketing outside the gates here at Wilmington at Berth 146. They had the police show up. There were some L.A. City police, but there were some private police there too. Anyway, two of our workers were killed during a confrontation there in Wilmington. We have right down the street in Harbor Boulevard and Fifth Street, we have a memorial for them. I was able to, as a Harbor Commissioner, get that memorial put there. It used to be in Wilmington, we use to move it for expansion. We were able to put it there and have a permanent place there alongside the Fishermen's Memorial and the Merchant Marine Memorial. Along between Fifth and Sixth Street, on Harbor Boulevard is our Memorial block, basically. It is something very interesting, that people should—when they are down that way on the promenade, should take a look. It is worthwhile. Also in Seattle, there was two longshoremen killed, but then in July 5th 1934, in San Francisco, at the Union Organization Headquarters, there was a drive by, by some private police. They killed two longshoremen out in front there. It was on a Thursday and we called that Bloody Thursday. From that day on, we continue to honor the people that were killed on the Thirty-First strike on July 5th. We only don't work five day a year on the waterfront. That is one of the five we don't work besides Christmas, Thanksgiving, New Year's, and Labor Day. Any other day we are open.

Interviewer: What was your dad passing on that tradition to you? What did he tell you? How did he get you engaged in all that?

TW: He got me engaged, you know at the dinner table talk. A lot of it was, you know, what he did and he was involved in the Executive Committee of the Clerk. He was a longshoreman first. My grandfather was a longshoreman, stayed a longshoreman until he passes away. My dad was a longshoreman, transferred and became a clerk. And then—so I had learned the waterfront basically at the dinner table, at least the Union part. When I worked for the gas company, I was active in their Union. Then when I went on the waterfront I got in. I had decided that I had the best job in the world, and it was because of the Union and I had to get back. I started serving on various committees and learning more about. I asked my dad a lot of questions and get the history. I started building my verbal history basically, following the waterfront. And I started doing a lot of reading also. Then when I came-when my time came where I was eligible to run

for office, I started running for other committees. Our Executive Committee, became a Dispatcher eventually was President of our Local five times, and a Business Agent. I stayed active almost my whole career. It is something that I felt that more people needed to do to give back. The thing in an organization is if nobody participates, the organization can fall apart. We had—for a person without a college degree or any real special skills, we had the best job going. Not only our wages, but our working conditions, our benefits or medical benefits, our retirement program, and everything like that. It was—If it wasn't for people prior to me, they set the table for me and I want to set the table and have (inaudible word) as people came after I did. They would have the same benefits as I had or better.

Interviewer: What do you think the Union's contribution is to San Pedro to the Harbor? Was has it given there.

TW: It's given.

Interviewer: The Union has...

TW: The Union, the Union has given a lot to San Pedro besides good jobs. We've participated a lot in the community. We give to the new San Pedro High School, not San Pedro High School but it's the Port of LA High School that is now training people to go through their programs. Also in Banning, the high school has another of the ITAP Program. We give money and we give our time and service. We get a lot—probably when I was playing Little League and after, when I was coaching. If it wasn't for the longshoremen, the clerks, and the bosses down here we wouldn't have a Little League Program. Because almost everyone down there coaching were guys from the waterfront. Because they would take their time off. We work in an industry which some considered a casual industry; and we work when we want and take off when we want. So people would donate their time to coming down, help their kids, and kids around them coach. [They] not only in little league but in various other sports activities. If you go into any of these organizations, the people, the people are actually doing the work for the kids. A lot, a lot of them are from the waterfront.

Interviewer: Did you ever meet or see Bridges?

TW: Yes.

Interviewer: Tell me about that?

TW: I was very fortunate to meet Harry Bridges in 1985, when I became president of Local, your Local Sixty-Three. [I] went to his meetings in San Francisco. Harry, even though he was retired, having been retired seven or eight years by then, would come to the meetings and he was an honored guest. During the breaks, we would sit around and talk. [I was] very fortunate to sit around and be able to listen to the stories he had to tell in his days. [He was] a very brilliant man and he was very, he walks off and carries a big stick. He didn't like strikes. There was a strike in 1934, in 1948, then in 1971. I was in the Seventy-One strike. My dad was in all three. My grandfather was in the Thirty-Four strike. But he didn't believe in strikes. He believed in working with the employer and kept on so it was a win, win situation. That is the way he fought. He even told us in 1971, "Guys, I don't think it's time to go on strike." This is when President

Nixon was in office. We went on strike and we out because, not so much the money or anything else, but who was going to load and unload the cargo inside the containers? We wanted that jurisdiction to do that work. The employers wanted somebody else to do it. Cheaper labor force. We were on strike for over six months. We wound up getting put back to work. Taft Hartley Law for Eighty days, cooling off. We went back out again. Eventually when we finally got our contract settled, we got less money than they offered originally because Nixon had the wage price freeze at the time. But he would walk into a meeting where everybody would be upset with him and booing. By the time we walked out, there was a standing ovation. That is the kind of man he was. He was just a very charismatic person, and the right person at the right time for the working people.

Interviewer: How did the Union evolve here in San Pedro, going back to the thirties?

TW: Well back, the Union evolved back here probably before the thirties because my grandfather was a Wobbly. These go way, way back. They used to call the Wobblies, the three W's, www or World Workers. Whatever it was—right, World International. A lot of guys called them, “I won't work.” But anyway, my grandfather was in several pickets and demonstrations her in San Pedro. In fact, one of the co-workers of mine, Mark Sunset, his aunt was killed in one of those demonstrations here in San Pedro. So we go back a long ways. The Wobblies turned into the International Longshoreman Association of the East Coast. They came out and organized the guys here and eventually ended the [ILUU]. San Pedro has always been a very strong labor town. In fact, if you had to have a store here, everybody belonged to the Retail Clerks, even though you had two employees they were still members of the Retail Clerks. Dunlops Department Store on Sixth and Pacific was a Union shop. A few union shops tried to come in town and pretty much didn't last. Everybody pretty much boycotted them and they saw that they couldn't really do business in San Pedro. Besides the water-- the longshoremen, there were the cannery workers, the fishermen, and you know there were shipyard workers. They were all part of the AFLCIO. In fact, we were not part of the --ILWU was not part of the SEIU for years. Harry Bridges was trying to—they were trying to kick him out of the country as being a communist never were ever successful. The government wasn't and for a while the AFLCIO kicked us out of that. Eventually, we joined back and so we stayed together. It's been a good moment.

Interviewer: What was your proudest moment, you think as a member and a leader in the Union? Were there any particular moments that stick with you that you feel most satisfaction?

TW: Well, what am I proud of the most probably, I've done a lot of different thing through the years through here. Just a lot of thinking of ways to make it better for the people coming after us. Back in 1984, we had our casual system with clerking where they would call to get a job at K Carson. Eventually, we were running out of those people. So I decided to use--that we needed a casual system. I went to our Executive Board [to get it approved] went to Longshoremen at first they didn't want it and then they saw a need for it. We went to the employers, they eventually saw a need for it and we started a casual system community four. At the time, it wasn't the only exclusive way in the industry, but it helps you get points towards your application and your interviews and things. Then in 1987, the International Union decided this was a good program

we take anybody in the future would come into the longshoremen industry would have to come in from casual hours worked. That is how it got started. Well about three years ago, right here in this building, we had a casual draw. The industry people were given a postcard to give out to somebody that they could recommend. I gave one to my nephew, other people gave it to friends or whatever. We had nine thousand, of those cards. Then we had another—we had to take an equal number for labor laws, to be able to hire equally. Took another nine thousand, well the other nine thousand came from another post office box that was given to the general public and out of that we had four-hundred-thousand post cards come in from people who wanted to get a job like I had; or just become a casual. There was no benefits, there was no guarantee of anything but it is the way you have to get started in this industry. So we drew nine thousand of those out of the four-hundred-thousand, plus the other nine thousand. Put eighteen thousand in a barrel, spun the barrel and started drawing cards out. Then we started hiring by the number as your card got pulled out. My nephews was about twelve thousand five hundred, about six months ago he got—he finally got his casual card to get some work here. Like I say, there is no guarantee but when they need more people they take them from the people that work the most. I am proud of that, being able to be able to get that system started. It has generated a good work force for the employers and they now say they were trained. We are the ones who say we want to hire you. We are not going to look for any other labor force out there.

Interviewer: Talk about the longshore union dispatch on Wilmington. What is that and how does it work?

TW: Um, dispatch calls and all three locals or all three parts of the ARW, the Waterfront, and the Longshore Division has the longshoreman, the clerks, and the foreman. They each have their own Dispatch halls. The Local thirteen, which is the largest local on the West Coast has now about sixty-five hundred to seven thousand members there in Wilmington, on Freeze, and on C Street. They have a dispatch system in house, pretty much computerized; but they—you go there and you plug in your hours and check in how many hours you have. Whatever categories that you are qualified to do, being the basic longshoreman or a skilled operator, forklift driver, top hatter driver, crane driver, whatever. Then as those jobs come up the lowest man goes up and selects where he wants to go to work and goes out for the day. They have gangs. They have the longshore gangs which are made up mainly of unbreakable cargos: the steel products and things like that. They dispatch those gangs out over the phone the night before to the gang leader and he calls his men, his gang members and says, gang and a good quote. Way before the other kind of gangs, but they go out and show up at work the next day where they are dispatched to the clerks. We have our dispatch all proud of that also, just right up the street here. I bought that hall building for us in 2000, when I was president of the Union. I am the president of the committee that runs the building. We have a very nice facility, probably the best facility on the West Coast. Our people show up there about five-thirty in the morning, check-in, and get a job, have a cup of coffee, go to work by seven. Normally our jobs start at seven. On the night side, they show up there about three-thirty in the afternoon to get a job. It is all dispatched by hours and it's one of the main things in the strike that we wanted. [We wanted to] Get control of—before that it was how many match sticks did you put in your hat brim? How much were you gonna kick back to the guy hiring you? This made it very – the employers pay into the, more than equally to the cost

of the dispatch call. But it's all—the dispatcher were all Union members, and they're all done fairly. You know when you walk into the job, you're going to get a fair shot at the job. You should have.

Interviewer: So on the Waterfront, the movie was accurate?

TW: Yes, on the Waterfront the movie was accurate. On the East Coast, it was still going on in the fifties. We stopped that practice, here on the West Coast after the thirty-fourth strike.

Interviewer: What is the impact of containerization on both San Pedro and from your experience?

TW: The impact of containerization, originally we thought we were going to lose a lot of work. In fact, when they first brought the first container ship to L.A. harbor, I think it was it was a Maddison ship. The guys all refused to work it. They said, "No, we can't do this because it cut back on all the total manning." Instead of putting boxes of pineapple on a pallet and lifted off, they could take ten tons of pineapple on a container and lift it all in one time. Well, longshore gang men do about ten tons an hour; so this container can do an hours' worth of work in few minutes. But once they got through that, we saw here in L.A., the great thing—I'm going to give a lot of credit to the porch of L.A. and Long Beach through the years because they saw the future of containerization coming here. They were able to get the Bond issues passed, spend the money, and build the facilities. Where L.A. and Long Beach is by far the number one container port in the United States. It did have an effect, for a while, on longshoreman. When I came on the docks, the longshoremen on local thirteen, there was probably twenty-five hundred. Whereas now, there's sixty-five to seven thousand. Clerking wise, the local I belong to, sixty-three of the clerks, we had three hundred and fifty. Now we have almost fifteen hundred. Foreman have gained a lot of people. So by the porch filling facilities, the cargo come here. We are the, basically the gate way to the Pacific Rim formation. Forty-two percent of all containerized cargo are here in the United States are in the ports of L.A. and Long Beach. We are the ones who can say, come here because we can handle it efficiently. We have the facilities, we have the railroads, the Alameda Quarter, which I was a part of and worked for years. Things like that. The porch that put the money in and [inaudible] decided that this is where we want to be. The [inaudible] seems to have all built bigger ships. When I first came down here the container ships were eight hundred, maybe seven or eight hundred containers on a ship, twenty-foot equipment units called CEU's. Today, we have ships immersed that have over eight thousand containers so we are ten times bigger than we were then. How much bigger are we going to grow in the future, I don't know. There will be several factors that will probably stop us from growing, give me a break and I'll.

Interviewer: Go ahead.

Long pause.

Interviewer: My next question, you can think about it while you are taking a swig there. It's about the Harbor Commission. What is that? What is your involvement? What role does that play in all this?

Unknown person: We are going to change tapes.

TW: Okay.

Interviewer: Start again, what is the Harbor Commission?

TW: The Harbor Commission is a—ah, made up of five people who are part of the city of Los Angeles. The city of Los Angeles basically runs the Port of Los Angeles. The mayor of Los Angeles appoints five members for a four-to-five year term. Each term comes up every year, so there are actually five year terms and I was appointed by Mayor James Hahn in 2001, right before 911 actually in August. I served until August of 2005. During that time, I was actually the first person from Labor actually put on the Commission, in quite a while. The first person from the [ILWU] in several, several years. We are the ones that handle the major decision making of what happens. We are the ones that can—we don't appoint the Executive Director, but we have the power to approve or disapprove. We do have a lot of say in the different promotions that happen inside the port. We also handle about a seven hundred million dollar a year budget. One of our members of the board sits on the Alameda Corridor, which was the job I was recommended to take, and work with the Port of—City of Long Beach, Port of Long Beach, the County. Don [Konabe] was a member, Janice Hahn and myself were on the active board, which was the railroad basically a freeway that was built...

Interviewer: Let's talk about that separately

TW: Anyway, back to the—the job of the Harbor Commissioner is a lot more than what they tell you it is going to be. You meet twice a month, in meetings and our meeting should be a couple of hours but they turn to be four to eight hour meetings. Then there are a lot of other meetings, subcommittee meetings that you do working with several projects that are going on in the port. We are the Board of Directors and we are the ones that make the final decisions on what happens here in the Port of L.A. It is a very important job. There are only three departments in City of L.A. that make any money that is the Department of Water and Power, the airports, and the port. So we are the ones that makes money for the other departments to spend. It is up to us to do the right thing so we all have money to spend and make the port bigger, better, and more efficient.

Interviewer: What is the Alameda Corridor? What was your involvement with that, and what is the importance to the port?

TW: The Alameda Corridor was started in about—the idea probably came in around 1997-98. It was a freeway basically from the Ports of L.A./Long Beach up through downtown L.A. to handle the containerized trains. Before that there was a—every stop it would stop traffic, and there were probably forty or fifty different crossings that they had to go on that twenty some odd journey. By building the Alameda Corridor, they built over passes on the south end and a tunnel on the north end to make it a train that can travels about forty-five, fifty miles per hour straight through. It can get to L.A in less than—about thirty-five to forty minutes. It also helped increase the amount of containers that were able to come to L.A./Long Beach. Because now we can handle over fifty percent of all cargos that we handle—containers/cargos leaves the state to go to other places. It was a major accomplishment. It was a 2.6 Billion dollar project that came in one time

and on budget. I was fortunate to be a member of the Alameda Corridor Board when we opened the Alameda Quarter. A lot of the work was done prior to me coming on there, but it was a very good group to be involved with. To be involved with the DNSF railroad and the Union Pacific were our major clients. We were the ones that kept it going and made it better. It's still going on today and without the Alameda Quarter we would not have been able to move the amount of containers up to the ICTF National Container Transfer Facility.

Interviewer: Inter-mobile transfer facility.

TW: Inter-mobile transfer facility in Carson and could no longer handle all the truck traffic. We are taking thousands and thousands of truck traffic trips a day off the roads, by putting these containers on trains down here in the port.

Interviewer: Banning's Landing, what is that? What was your role in that?

TW: Banning's Landing was pretty much done when I came on the board. That was a—Wilmington had asked for a facility where they can have the community be there. Gertrude Swab, who was a prior Harbor Commissioner had a lot to do with Banning's Landing. That was built at the end of Avalon Boulevard close to where the old Catalina Terminal used to be. So I didn't have a whole lot to do with it.

Interviewer: The environmental era that has come in the last twenty-five, thirty years—what impact has that had on the harbor and what do you think about that?

TW: The environmental era that is coming—that started probably seven or eight years ago and is going to continue to be here for several, several more years. Probably impotunity, we'll have a great effect on how we do business in the Ports of L.A and Long Beach. We are unique in the fact that the port is right on top—the community is built right on top of the port. The port was here and the community was built off the port and started growing backwards. I have to remind people sometimes that the port was here first, and you don't have a facility where a lot of ports you go to in the United States and in parts of the world where you have an industrial area, then a retail area, and then the community back. This is where a lot of people live close to the community and are affected by the environment that the port adheres to. When I was on the commission, Mayor Hahn asked us to do an environmental study and note any increase to anymore pollutants in the port in the whole San Pedro Bay area basically, which includes Long Beach. I was a co-chairman along with Camila Townson on that bell costal. That took about a year and a half and we finally got it done just prior to us leaving the commission. Prior to Mayor Hahn leaving office. That was—we had probably fifty or sixty of the brightest minds ever in this transportation industry. We had people from the waterfront. We had people from railroads, from trucking, from the UCLA, and from USC, the [AUMB], the state, and everyone involved. It was a very well run group of people. They did their job, and we came out with a program that if—with a lot of these things--the recommendations we made are being followed. The environment will get better. There is no doubt. If we a factory, we would be shut down. Ports would be closed. We are not a factory. We are a big, big contributor to the economy of Southern California. Do you want me to go off of that?

Interviewer: No, let's talk about it. That is my next question. For you, what is the importance of port and how would describe its significance and what it is?

TW: The importance of the ports of LA and Long Beach are—just go out all across this nation. We are the number one industry in Southern California. We employ more people on the facilities and in the near facility. The number of jobs that we created—it probably goes back twenty times more than individuals working here. Billions and billions of dollars. A good example was when the lock out came in 2001-2002, we were locked out. We were cost—by not having industry move through the Pacific Rim, into the West Coast Ports was equal to two billion dollars a day for lost revenue. We are a major, major contributor to economy here. Almost anything that you have on you, in your house, which you own came from someplace else. It probably came in via a ship. If you lived here in Southern California, it came through LA/Long Beach harbors. Look at your tables. Look at yours, a majority of cars driven now are from Asia. Your clothing, anything you can talk about. Even going in the food markets, many things are imported in the year. If that industry was to stop, we would be in major problems. We have the distant, time concept of how warehousing works now. The manufactures don't order a huge amount of cargo to keep and parts to on site. They order them and plan them as they come in here. The auto industry like Toyota and Nissans that are built here, the parts come over from Asian. They may have maybe a three day supply. Well if something haves for three or four days, all of sudden their plants are down. They can't work. They are laying off thousands of people. So we have a huge impact to what happen, not just in Southern California but across the nation.

Interviewer: Put into world context, San Pedro/the Port of Los Angeles.

TW: In a world context, LA/Long Beach harbor, the San Pedro bay is probably the fifth largest port in the world; I think it is next to Singapore and Hong Kong and a couple of ports in China. China is our main trading partner today by far. By far over Japan, Korea, Australia, New Zealand, and places like that. By far China is our number one trade partner. World context, we have to have—ports have to hit here. We continue to grow at a rate that would equal to the size of port the size of Oakland, on a yearly basis. Where do we go from here? How do we continue to handle the amounts of cargo environmentally? Safety wise, how can we turn these cargo in and out? We are supposed to be called, "transports." We are supposed to be ports that the cargo lands on these waterfronts that should be moving out within twenty-four to forty-eight hours after it is here. It shouldn't be stored. We don't have room to store cargo anymore. It is just a shuttle place. Land it here, move it out. Bring it in from someplace other than here. Up in the Apple Valley area, now they are building huge spaces—places for warehousing and also container storage. To be able to move cargo into, by train and then into the LA base and then into the Ports of L.A/Long Beach. We can turn it over quicker. We can only stack it up so high. After you get up about six containers high it doesn't really—it economically feasible to keep digging that bottom one out when someone wants it. Logistics factors is huge in today's world; how you can move cargo more efficiently. The ports are working very hard with our clients, with our esteemed clients, with our terminal operators, [inaudible words] companies, of how they can become more efficient. We went to this program where we have gates open now four days a week, four nights a week. They have to mandatory open from five at night to three in the

morning. They use to close up at five at night. Weekends they were closed. Now they are operating on Saturdays and some on Sundays. This is twenty-four, seven-day a week industry. We don't close. We close five days a year. Other than that, we are open.

Interviewer: This is the last question. From a personal point of view, the town of San Pedro, this community here. What does it mean to you? What has it meant to you? What do you think about this place personally?

TW: Well the community of San Pedro was a very good place to be raised. I was very fortunate to be born here and raised here; have this Waterfront to have my—make my living over the last forty years. It's still a very good community to raise children in. It is still a better community. We don't have industry down here anymore. The shipyards are gone. The canneries are gone. Most of the fishing industry is gone. It is the Waterfront. We need to keep that as—the Waterfront controls the prices of homes here in San Pedro. People don't realize that. When we had that little lock out, I don't know forty or fifty escrows stopped immediately. Even though it was a ten day deal. People—even though they don't work here they are impacted by the docks. We have to be able to get along with the community. There is no doubt about it. Port has to and the industry has to. If not, someday there will be lost paths where we won't be able to operate. We don't want to see that. We would rather go along and figure it out the best way we can now and what is better in the future; and get all the technology that is available here and spend the money. Because the port makes a great amount of money, not for itself, which they fall back in. We don't keep any money at all. But for everybody else that is connected to it, whether it be directly involved or indirectly involved, everybody who lives here in the San Pedro community is affected by the port.

Interviewer: That is it. Terrific.