Port of Los Angeles Centennial Oral History Project
Stancil Jones Oral History
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Stancil Jones: My name is Stancil G. Jones. G is for George. That's S-T-A-N-C-I-L, George, J-O-N-E-S, Jones.

Male Speaker: You did great. What was the year you were born and where were you born?

SJ: I was born in Los Angeles, California, at 1272 East 38th Place – that's immediately across the street from Jefferson High School – on August the 3rd, 1926. I was born at home because my brother was born in a hospital, and he was injured. Spine was broken and he had paralysis, couldn't walk or talk for the rest of his life. So, my mother had an aversion to hospitals.

MS: I can understand that. What did you know about the harbor growing up? Anything?

SJ: Only that it was a nice place to visit.

MS: When I was growing up –

SJ: Oh, okay. When I was growing up, the harbor was 26 miles away. But I had an affinity for water and the harbor. Our family associated with this harbor. We went to Tumon Bay in Terminal Island next to where the Navy shore boats would come in and let the sailors out. They also landed the Ford Tri-Motor aircraft on the beach where we would go swimming. That also was on Terminal Island. I came down to the harbor when I was in high school. As soon as we got the keys to the family car, we started expanding our explorations, and this had a magnet. So, we came down to the harbor. We'd go to Cabrillo Beach and skip rocks, throw rocks in the water. It was an intriguing place because of the cliffs and hiking in the hills that still had gun emplacements that were put there in World War One and for World War Two. Also, in those hills in San Pedro, on the water side, on the channel side, you could see where there had been a fire that many of the old timers in San Pedro have told me about. It occurred in the very early [19]30s. That fire was a tank that had spilled over, and it expelled tar and oil products. It had rolled down the hill right to the water's edge. You could follow that. This was Chief Harold Enloe, who was a born and raised San Pedro resident that told me about the fire. I told Harold that I'd seen the results of it in the [19]40s and the [19]50s when I first came down here.

MS: You mentioned the Ford Tri-Motor. People don't know what that is. You said you saw that. Explain what that is and what you saw.

SJ: I saw a Ford Tri-Motor plane take off and land. They were taking passengers for rides on Terminal Island. A Ford Tri-Motor is an all-aluminum plane much like a DC-2 which is only two motors. But this had three motors. It was built for transport in the late [19]20s and the very early [19]30s. It was an intriguing aircraft. It's famous in the aircraft annals.

MS: They land and take off on water?

SJ: It landed and took off on the sandy beach, the hardpack sand on Terminal Island.

MS: Tell us what was Terminal Island? What was going on there when you visited?

SJ: I first came to Terminal Island with some neighbors that lived next door to us on 38th Place, where I was born. Their name was (Tanaka?). They had a son that was my age and two daughters. They had an open-air Stutz car, a four-door. We'd get in the car and come down with these Oriental family, the Japanese. They had friends down here that lived in the Japanese community. Bring lunch. We socialized. We had a lot of fun with those people. Looking back, it was eye opening and widening to my experience. Sorry to say that their son, my age, was killed in our neighborhood by a car when he went out in the street with a scooter. That Japanese family was so devastated by that death. Because the boys in an Oriental family are the crown jewel. They picked up. They sold their store next to our icehouse, and they moved back to Japan. This had to be when I was about six or seven years old, which would have been in 1933.

MS: What was Terminal Island like when you visited there?

SJ: When I visited Terminal Island at that age, I don't remember a great deal of it because I was more enthralled with the aircraft, the water, and the hardpack sand where the aircraft was taking off. You had to park your car some distance from the plane. Then you could walk over to within about 100 feet. There was a small group of houses, as I recall, on Terminal Island, a community of Orientals on Terminal Island. At the time, it was referred to as East San Pedro. That came into the city in [19]07, I believe, [19]07. San Pedro and East San Pedro, which is Wilmington today, voted to be annexed by the City of Los Angeles. When they did, a lot of things changed.

MS: When did you first come here to live?

SJ: I came here in 1954. I got married in 1950, and I told my wife I'd build her house anywhere she wanted to. So, she traveled around. She went to Playa del Rey. She went to the San Fernando Valley. She came down to San Pedro. She fell in love with a development that Marlow-Burns had completed. He bought the land from this (Louie Sepulveda?), who was one of the eight heirs of the Sepulveda estate. I believe there were seven sisters and one brother, and Louie was in charge of the estate. Marlow bought the land from him for $3,000 an acre, and that is what today is known as South Shores in San Pedro. I came down and purchased one of the lots from Marlow Company. The lot was for sale. He had several hundred lots down there that were divided into groups. It was the cliffs. It was South Shores and Upper South Shores. My wife wanted to live in Upper South Shores.

MS: What attracted her to San Pedro? Why did she choose out of all the options to come here?

SJ: Because of the climate.

MS: My wife –

SJ: My wife chose to come to San Pedro because of the climate, because of the view, because it was a new community. We were planning a family, and she thought that this would be a wonderful place to start and raise our family, which we eventually did. We purchased a lot that was her choosing. Dr. Petrich – who is one of the physicians that took care most of San Pedro at the time – and I both wanted to buy the same lot. Dr. Petrich wanted the lot on Moray Street, and so did I. My wife didn't want to look toward Long Beach and the mountains. She wanted to

look towards Catalina. So, the view and the weather, the climate, the community, the religiosity that existed here, and the ethnicity were just wonderful. So, all of those factors played in our selection of San Pedro.

MS: How did you become a fireman? How did you start your career?

SJ: Well, I used to drive race cars, and I had one. All the fellows would collect at my house – and this was right after World War Two. We were all going to college, to school, and my friends would collect at my house. One day, one of my friends came over and he – this was a weekday like a Wednesday, and it was like 10:30 a.m. We were working on my car, and (Jim Hurst?) drove up, this was the fireman. I had gone to high school with him, all through high school. This was after we got out of the service, and here it was. We were going to college. We didn't have a lot of money. We were getting $65 a month to go to school. Jim Hurst drove up in a brand new 1948 Plymouth. He had new clothes on, new Levi's. We said, "Where did you get the new car, Jim?" He said, "I'm working for the Fire Department." I said, "Well, if you're working for the Fire Department, why aren't you at work today?" He said, "We only work every other day." I said, "You only work every other day. Well, how do you have any money?" He pulled out his wallet. It happened to be payday. He said, "Look it here." He had money in his wallet. He had new clothes. He had a new car. He was getting paid. He was on every other day off. So, we said, "Jim, where did you sign up?" He said, "Go down to the city hall and give them your name." So, later that afternoon, we all piled in my car. We went down to the city hall and signed up. After World War Two, the Los Angeles City Fire Department only had 1324 men. They were six hundred short. They had to hire six hundred men. So, that's how we got in. I took that examination. I was number 16 on the list out of about twelve thousand.

MS: How did you get involved with the Fire Department down here?

SJ: I got involved with the Fire Department down here when I worked in Los Angeles. My wife picked out the lot down in South Shores, which is at 25th and Western. I made that trip every day, back and forth, because we lived up in Los Angeles. So, I thought if I transferred down to San Pedro or Wilmington, then I'll only have 5 miles to drive to work on the house. I actually had a pair of engineer boots on and a Levi's and a t-shirt. I had the pick and the shovel and the hammer and whatever it took, and I actually built the house. So, when we moved down here, my wife loved it. I transferred down into San Pedro. You don't automatically transfer where you want to go. You can either get it through waiting on a list, or else you can make a mutual transfer with another fireman. I made a mutual transfer with another fireman named (Calvin Morrow?), who worked at Fire Station 38 in Wilmington. He went to my station in Florence and Western in Los Angeles. So, then I was stationed down here. I was working on my house down here. Eventually, my family and all moved into that house.

MS: What was San Pedro like when you moved down here as a place?

SJ: When I moved down here to San Pedro as a take up residence, there were three main factors in our life. It was my work. It was my home. Then it was our social and religious life. The social and religious life in San Pedro was very similar because it was a religious community. There were a lot of Catholics here. Of course, my work was here. We just loved San Pedro

because of the religiosity that existed, the ethnicity that existed, and the atmosphere and the view and the variety of foods that were available, Italian and Yugoslavian and American. Of course, eventually, the other fast foods came in.

MS: How did you get involved with the fireboats from that?

SJ: I got involved with the fireboats because I was a swimmer and a scuba diver. In 1961, I began to get interested in scuba diving. I was working in the Watts Station at 1525 East 103rd Street, which is the center of Watts. The Fire Department had a dive team. Because of my firefighting and my diving ability, they said, "We need extra divers." So, I took an advanced diving course and an instructing course, and I became the diving coordinator in Battalion 13, which is 20 miles from the harbor. But my divers could relieve the divers in the harbor area. They're scuba divers when they have a wharf fire. So, with that ability and with that closeness and association with diving and my swimming and firefighting, I was transferred down here to *Fireboat 1*, which was on Terminal Island.

MS: What was *Fireboat 1*? Tell me about that.

SJ: *Fireboat 1*, where I was assigned, was the first fireboat of any size that the Fire Department acquired. It was a tugboat that was made over into a fireboat. It was stationed in Fish Harbor. It was to protect the fishing fleet and the canneries. It was 65 feet long. It had four pumps that could pump approximately 10,000 gallons a minute. We used that boat for all the emergencies that occurred in the harbor area. It would respond with the other fireboats. There was *Fireboat 1*, which was 65-foot. There was *Fireboat 2*, which was 99 feet. There was *Fireboat 3*, which was a 36-foot wooden boat for supervisory jobs on the waterfront.

MS: What was the most memorable early fire you can remember when you first came down here and started working in the fireboats?

SJ: Well, the greatest fire in the last thirty years was the – one of the greatest fires was the *Sansinena* fire. We were the second in company from Wilmington on that fire, but that was a total disaster. There were, I believe, eight fatalities, and –

MS: Take me back where you are. Describe what happened that day.

SJ: Well, I can describe what happened immediately preceding the fire. I was a captain at Fire Station 38 in Wilmington at 124 East I Street. Every night, we had to give the manpower of the station to the battalion commander or his assistant. I was on the phone at 7:30 p.m. with the chief's assistant giving him the manpower, and he was closer to the harbor area. I was out in Wilmington, which was about maybe 8 or 10 miles farther away from the harbor. All of a sudden, on the phone, during this conversation of the manpower – the staff assistant says, "Oh, my God, what was that?" I said, "Don't worry, Charlie." I said, "That was just another gas tank at the Hugo Neu-Proler Car Disintegrating and Wrecking Shop." I said, "They forgot to take a gas tank out, and it just exploded." I had no sooner said that when the shockwave that Charlie heard hit our station. It rattled the windows. I could hear the glass up and down Avalon Boulevard breaking out of their store windows. It broke the glass in the fire station. I said, "No,

Charlie, we've got something going on. I have this hang up. I'll see you later." So, it was only seconds later that we received our alarm at 7:30 p.m. to go to the deepwater terminal in San Pedro, which was a Union Oil terminal.

MS: What did you see when you got there?

SJ: On the way to the fire in San Pedro, which was the *Sansinena* fire, we couldn't see a great deal because it was in December, I believe, December the 17th. There was a little light haze existed. But as we got closer, you could tell with all the broken glass on all the storefronts that there was something serious had gone on. They told us that this was a tankship explosion. When we rolled in, you could see the flames were 200 feet high. We came in from 22nd Street, and we rolled down into the area. When we got into the yard where the tankship was tied up, it looked like a wrecking yard full of pipes and steel plates. Because the superstructure of the tankship had been blown completely off. It went up in the air about 100 feet. It turned 180 degrees, faced the opposite direction, and it went upside down. That superstructure landed on the pumphouse crew that were in a little twenty-by-twenty building, and they were never seen again. Because that superstructure went into the ground about 30 or 40 feet and going into the ground 30 or 40 feet, it severed, unbeknownst to us, underground pipelines that were 12 to 18 inches in diameter that were pumping fuel up on the hill adjacent to the berth. Now, all that fuel that had been pumped into those 80,000-barrel tanks, now had a line connected to them that was formerly pumping oil in. Now, it had no shut-off valve, and the oil was coming out feeding this gigantic fire. That lasted for days until we discovered actually what was happening. That's where the fire was being fed from. After the tankship was extinguished, we still had an unquenchable fire.

MS: So, how did you fight a fire like this 200-foot-high flames?

SJ: Our first thought was for life safety and protect the exposures. When we rolled into this yard full of pipes and junk, we did come across one deceased person, a body on the ground. This oil that was in the tank and that was flowing back from the tanks on the hill was on fire, and it was rolling like a wave coming in. It was on fire, and it was heading for San Pedro Boatworks. We were between the fire and San Pedro Boatworks. So, life safety, we saw no life to protect. There were dead bodies. But what we did was we laid protective lines in large numbers. We laid two lines, and we drove back this rolling sea of oil that was on fire that was going to the San Pedro Boatworks. Now, San Pedro Boatworks had many yachts that were worth thousands and thousands of dollars, and the structure itself was worth saving. So, that's what we did. We protected the structures, and we addressed the life safety issue. We stayed there all night protecting that building from this sea of fire that wanted to come and engulf it. We eventually got the fire put back to an area where it was not endangering San Pedro Boatworks and held it in check there with very large streams.

MS: So, then what happened? What's the next steps?

SJ: Well, we fought the fire all night. The oncoming platoon reported to their fire station, and they were transported to the fire location. We were relieved a little after 7:30 a.m. So, the fire started at about 7:30 p.m. the previous night. We stayed there all night. We were relieved

twelve hours later at 7:00 a.m.

MS: The sound and the heat from that must have been amazing. What did it feel and sound like?

SJ: Well, actually, the sound from that fire, it was loud. But being trained to handle these fires, you're oblivious to the sound and somewhat oblivious to the heat because we have protective gear. It was not overwhelming like you're getting that close to the fire. Maybe once we got the fire pushed back with our heavy streams and got it under control as much as we could, we weren't impinged on by a lot of heat. Of course, the sound was always there, but that goes that you're getting used to that.

MS: What did you learn as a firefighter from this fire?

SJ: What I learned from this fire was that – what I'd been taught, to protect life, first of all, and protect the exposures and then fire safety. Fire prevention is the main element that firemen are taught and lived by. When a fire this magnitude or an emergency of this magnitude is thrust right into your lap, you really fall back to reflex action. There were some at the scene that didn't fall back to reflex action, but that's what I learned from it.

MS: Were any fire crew members hurt in fighting this fire?

SJ: The firemen that were hurt at this fire were held to a minimum. There were just superficial strains. Of course, because firefighters have the highest incident of cancer – second only to liver transplant patients – indicates that when we're breathing this smoke and the heat and the fumes that is what destroys our body. But the Fire Department takes really very good care of us.

MS: I mean, harbor is unique kind of environment –

SJ: Yes.

MS: – for fighting fires. Talk about that and talk about some of the other fires and other situations you got yourself in that are really unique to harbor's rather atypical firefighting.

SJ: The fires that have been or the – let's call them incidents. The incidents that I've attended in the harbor, some stick in my mind more than others. The large fires are spectacular, and you read about them in the paper. But the incidents that you carry with you are the small ones. I remember when I was a fireman out of the fire station in Wilmington, Fire Station 38, at 124 West I Street. It was a Sunday morning. I had reported for duty. It was about 9:30 or 10:00 a.m. We were called to Wilmington Boulevard and C Street. There was an accident. When we arrived, there were a few children and some civilians standing around the area. We asked them what's the problem? They said, "There's a boy that's been injured." What we found out was that – yes, we went over to where they had indicated. It was an oil well. These young boys, eight or ten or twelve years old, daring young kids, would like to ride the oil derrick booms that go up and down, and one of them had done this. To help those oil derrick booms go up and down, they have a counterbalance on them, and that counterbalance swings. Well, these boys had been

riding this boom. One of them fell off and was injured. This counterbalance destroyed his body like a group of lions that attacked him. Because I had children of that age, that always stuck in my mind. I had a confrontation with the press. I wasn't a fireman at that time. I told one of the press photographers, "You don't want to take pictures of this. You just leave. Go away." My boss came over, and he said, "We better let happen what happens. Come on with us." So, they did. But that was my first confrontation with the press. You don't win with that [laughter]. But anyway, that was very disastrous and –

MS: A sad story. You're good at this. The [inaudible] fire, tell me about that.

SJ: The StarKist fire on Terminal Island was one of the biggest fires that harbor had experienced up to that time, if not for all times. It was a very large fire. That came in –

MS: Start again, give me a date. The StarKist fire roughly in the 1960s, 1950s –

SJ: [19]70s.

MS: [19]70s.

SJ: Okay. The StarKist fire on Terminal Island in the 1970s was one of the biggest fires that ever occurred on Terminal Island. It also occurred at about 7:30 to 8:00 p.m. The company that was first in was 53s and 40s, and they could not hold the fire. It got away from them. At that point in time, all companies in the harbor area were dispatched to that location. The first company that laid a line in there was 53s. They went in and were driven out of the building. StarKist Tuna Company had two buildings over there, very large. One was the production plant, and across the street was the storage plant that was connected to the production plant by a tunnel that was probably 12 feet wide, 12 feet high. It went from one block to the other. It was probably 50 feet long. Well, the fire eventually consumed all of the production plant, and it was beyond what we could save. We couldn't save it. Chief Douglas, who was in charge of battalion at the time, told me that we've got to save the storage plant. He said, "You take your company and do what you have to, to keep the fire going from the production plant to the storage plant that would cross – that tunnel crossed terminal way. So, I enlisted Engine and Truck 33, and it was Engine and Truck 38 where I worked. We took those four crews, and I said, "We've got to lay a line in here." When Chief Douglas gave me that assignment, he said, "Keep that fire from going into the storage plant, or you're going to be working in the San Fernando Valley tomorrow morning [laughter]." That was just his way of saying you've got to do it. So, we did. We laid heavy lines. We took two 2-1/2-inch lines, and Task Force 33 took 2-1/2-inch line into that tunnel. You could see the fire approaching. It was coming through the tunnel. It was consuming the tunnel, and it was going to the storage plant.

MS: Are you inside the tunnel?

SJ: We were inside the tunnel to keep the fire. But it drove us out of the tunnel. But we did not let the fire impinge or get into the storage plant. The tunnel collapsed in the street. But it didn't get into the storage facility. They had millions and millions of dollars' worth of product in there. So, we did save part of the StarKist facility.

MS: What was fueling it? Just structures? Or was there oil or something?

SJ: Well, the production plant was built years ago, probably [19]07 or [19]04, and they just kept adding on. The construction of the production plant was what they called heavy mill construction. Instead of a 2-by-4 holding up the wall, they have 12-by-12 holding up the walls and the heavy beams. All these present a hazard to the firemen when they get in there. When those are burnt partially through on one end, and a 12-by-12, 24 feet long comes down, it's going to do some damage, and you better not be in the way. So, that was the dilemma. But yes, the plant was old. It was fueled by oils that they use in the plant, and they have a total amount of machinery that runs conveyor belts and all these things added to the combustibles.

MS: Now, you've had more than fifty years in the department. [19]48, you started –

SJ: Yes.

MS: – almost sixty years now.

SJ: Yes, 1948. I retired in May of 2004. They tell me – and I believe them – it's fifty-five and a half years.

MS: How have things changed in the department in how you fight fires in 1948 versus today?

SJ: The way firefighting has changed from 1948 to the present time has been in the – one of the main areas is the protection of the men fighting the fire. They now wear breathing apparatus. They now have hoods. They are required to wear this equipment. They glove up. The equipment is better that we use for breathing, we use for protection. We have a greater selection of nozzles. The men are trained, I would say, better than they were in the days when I came through. But when I came through, the training was sufficient to get you through the day, but it wasn't sufficient to get you into the fire and get you out. At one time, firefighting was the most hazardous occupation in the United States. Over the years, although it's still dangerous, firefighting has dropped to three. Mining and farming, firefighting, and police work, those are the big four occupations that draw the most fatalities. So, firefighting has improved in the protection of the men, and it's improved in the protection and the application of the fire suppressants that we have.

MS: Communications must be better.

SJ: The communications are tremendously good. With our communication systems, we can communicate with any department in the city or the state or the county on those radios. This is an outgrowth of the 9/11 disasters. Because those different departments could not communicate with one another. But because of President Bush's insistence and his investigation into this that he caused, now, we do have these radios. They're very expensive.

MS: Aside from fighting fires, you do other things. There's rescues. There's all kinds of other things that you're involved. Any other experiences that you've had in the harbor aside from

fighting fires that are memorable?

SJ: The experiences in the harbor that I can remember that are memorable are – a lot of those are related to medical emergencies. Because, as you know, all firemen in the City of Los Angeles have to be medical technicians, and 85 percent or thereabouts of our incidents are medical emergencies. It's grown to that proportion. When I came on, we may have one or two a week because that was not our job in 1948. But now, because we've assumed that position in the mind of the citizens, we are happy to do that work. 85 percent seems like a lot, but now we're running anywhere from twelve to twenty incidents a day, all during the day and night. Some of the companies in downtown Los Angeles make more incidents than that, but that's probably an average throughout the department.

MS: What about specific things you run into in a harbor situation you wouldn't run into, say, downtown or, dare I say, the San Fernando Valley?

SJ: Some of the unusual things that you run into in the harbor are with the fishing industry. When they unload the sardines and the tuna and these other fish, they go into a large hopper. The way they're taken out of that hopper is with the (worm gear?) at the very bottom of the hopper. The hopper could be 24 feet in diameter, and it could be 20 feet high. That could be filled with sardines. At the bottom, there's a worm gear – similar to a meat grinder – that carries them out on a conveyor belt. We had an incident where there was a man that was working in the hopper, shoveling the sardines toward the worm gear, and he fell in the sardines. They were only 2 or 3 inches long, but there's millions of them in there. His legs were caught in the worm gear at the bottom of that hopper. He was trapped there, seriously injured in the legs. When we responded to this incident, the firemen had to get into the hopper and shovel the sardines out in order that we could get to this injured man. That was very unusual. We had one man in a hopper that was a lot larger than that one that was fish meal. He had a tractor in there – inside this hopper. The tractor fell into a big void, and it buried him and the tractor. We had to jump into this fish meal, which they use for fertilizer and various byproducts, and we had to rescue that man. This is another one involving the [laughter] fishing industry.

MS: You didn't volunteer for that one, isn't that right?

SJ: When you're on emergency duty, you don't volunteer, you are it. If you don't do it, nobody in the world can do it. We recognize that fact. We're better trained. If anybody can fix them or take care of them, we can do it.

MS: The harbor is a dangerous area. There's always big machinery and cranes and stuff like that. Is it also that runs into your purview too, accidents connected to that?

SJ: One of the most regrettable incidents I have ever attended in the harbor was one of my comrades, a captain, was a fatality. It's a little involved. But that story's been retold. But the story that was told is not in detail like I remember it.

MS: You tell me.

SJ: I worked at the fire station in Wilmington, 124 East I Street. I was transferred from there to go over and work in the battalion commander's station at Yacht Street, Fire Station 49. I pride myself in getting to the emergency as soon as possible. We have to get there within three minutes, or we're considered laggards. So, I told my engineer, my driver, when I sit down in this front seat of this rig, I want it rolling out the door. This was at Fire Station 49, who had a reputation for getting out slowly. That's probably one reason why I was sent there. I went to Fire Station 49. It was a rainy morning. I had just left all my buddies a couple of months before at Fire Station 38, and 38 prided themselves in beating 49s to the incidents in your own backyard. I told them it's not going to happen. "When I sit down, this thing is going out the door. If you guys aren't on the tailboard, you're going to get left and then suffer the consequences." So, they knew. We got out of the station really fast. This morning it was rainy. It had been cold. We got an emergency that there was a crane on fire in the wrecking yard at Alameda and Pacific Coast Highway. Indeed there was. When we got out of the station, we beat Fire Station 38 to the intersection of Anaheim and Alameda Street. We went first. They should have beat us, but we're faster now because I'm kicking those guys in the butt. We got there first to the intersection. We went up into 38's district. They were following us. They had a truck and an engine, and we had an engine only. We were in front of them. We pulled into the wrecking yard at Alameda and Pacific Coast Highway. They had mountains of engine blocks. They had acres of engine blocks. Between these engine blocks were little narrow aisleways just wide enough for a truck to go down and almost wide enough for a fire truck. We went in first. It was a muddy alley. It was full of mud. We could see the crane burning in the distance. We went as far as we could. We were still about 50 feet to 100 feet away from the crane that was on fire. When we stopped, Fire Station 38 and their crew were right behind us. I told our crew to lay a line and get it around the corner to the crane. Fire Station 38 and their crew came up behind us, and they took our lines. I stood on top of the engine feeding the lines out of the engine. They took the line around the corner to the crane that was on fire. A crane has three cables that hold the boom up. One cable pulls the boom right, one cable pulls the boom left, and one cable goes over the top of the boom and lifts the hook up and down. This fire was impinging on the cable on the right side that kept the boom stable. So, when we went in to put out the fire, the crew from 38's was first. The captain that replaced me at 38's was at the head of the line leading his men in. One of the men hollered, "Look out, the boom is going to fall." Everyone turned around and ran. The captain from 38's assumed it was going to fall straight down in the alley. The boom didn't fall straight. Kinnaman, instead of running with the rest of the firemen, he walked up on the side of the engine blocks. When the boom didn't fall straight down into the alley, it fell to the side. It cut him down like a scythe. That was my captain that relieved me at that station.

MS: I'm sure there are hundreds of more stories to tell. I mean, there's so much I want to ask you. How would you place the Fire Department services in San Pedro with other port services? I mean, are we among the best? Are we just a good service here? I know you're a little prejudiced about it, but how would you place the fire services here in this port versus any ports around the world?

SJ: The Port of Los Angeles, in my estimation, and the departments that provide services in the port are second to none in the world. I've been in some world ports. There are bigger ports in Sweden. In South America, there's one. But the services that we provide are superior to those that I've seen. I've been up in the Seattle and the Portland area. I've seen what they provide.

They are very good. But the men that work in this port and the department that services the port, the Harbor Department, and what they provide are superior in many ways.

MS: What about specifically fire services?

SJ: Well, the fire service here has a new fireboat that costs $8.5 million, and the harbor department paid for that protection. The total contract was $10.5 million, and that extra 2 million provided 3 more fireboats, 42 footers. We have the 105-footer that is the best fireboat in the world. It'll put out 38,000 gallons of water a minute. The support team for that is *Fireboat 4*. That's been in service for almost thirty years. It's a superior boat. It's the first fireboat that has subsurface nozzles that counteract the reaction from the nozzles that are being played on the fire. That's *Fireboat 4*. That's a Bethel F. Gifford at Fire Station 49 in Wilmington. The best fireboat in the world is the fireboat that the Harbor Department purchased for $8.5 million. It's right down here at Fire Station 112. That'll pump 38,000 gallons a minute. It has a paramedic aboard. It has all the firefighting equipment. It has aerial booms. It has a unique cycloidal drive that the boat can go in reverse as fast as it can go forward. It can turn in its own distance. That alone is superior to anything that the world has seen. Because it's an innovation in firefighting. I understand New York City is building one very similar to it.

MS: What about your old *Fireboat 1*?

SJ: Old *Fireboat 1* was originally a tug. It was all wood. It would put out about a little less than 10,000 gallons a minute. It had a crew of five men. It had a captain. It had a pilot, an engineer, and it had two firemen. For its time and its era, in the [19]50s and the [19]60s when I was on it, it was very good. It would get the job done. But it can't compare with the equipment that the men have today, the breathing apparatus, the booms, the aerial booms, the gallons that it can pump, the hose lines and the crew. The medical facilities are aboard it. It's a twentieth century fireboat that we have. Thanks to the Harbor Department.

MS: I'm afraid we've run out of time. Is there anything you wanted to tell me you didn't get a chance to tell me?

SJ: Well, I think you've covered it pretty well. I think that's it.

[end of transcript]