

BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY: Herman G.P. Lemke

Herman G.P. Lemke was born in Honolulu in 1917. He was educated at Saint Louis College (currently called Saint Louis High School) and Santa Clara University, where he received his Ph.B. in 1939.

Lemke was the deputy for the Internal Revenue Service from 1940 to 1943. He then worked as a self-employed accountant. In 1973, he joined Lemke, Chinen and Tanaka as a certified public accountant.

In 1955, he was elected to the City and County of Honolulu Board of Supervisors. In 1960 he was elected to the county council (formerly board of supervisors) and served until 1968. He was council chairman from 1964-68.

He has been a trustee of Mark Robinson Trusts since 1961.

Tape Nos. 17-12-1-88 and 17-13-1-88

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

Herman G. P. Lemke (HL)

April 27, 1988

Honolulu, O'ahu

BY: Chris Conybeare (CC) and Daniel W. Tuttle, Jr. (DT)

Joy Chong: The following is an interview with Herman Lemke, L-E-M-K-E, and it took place at the KHET studios on April 27, 1988. The interviewers were Chris Conybeare and Dan Tuttle.

CC: It's April 27, 1988 and we're proceeding with another in our series of oral history interviews with people who've been involved with Hawai'i politics. Today we're talking to Mr. Herman Lemke. We're going to start the same way we have with everyone we've talked to, and maybe you could give us a little bit about your own early background. Where and when were you born, and what were your parents' circumstances at that time?

HL: I was born in a place called Punchbowl. It was near town. In fact, my dad [Herman G. Lemke] walked to work most of the time. And they had a little streetcar that ran up and down the hill there and if he got out in time, he'd catch the streetcar. I think it cost a dime then to go to work. And it was an area that was largely populated by Portuguese that had left and fled the plantations (chuckles). And my folks lived there until I was about nineteen years old, and they moved up to Mānoa Valley. By then, I had already gone to college. But I was raised in this Punchbowl area and went to school down on River Street. Down, it was a red light district of the town. And it was the old St. Louis College. And of course, the brothers were being harassed by the parents to get the dear little darlings out of this infamous place which was known as the "Hell's Half Acre" or something.

CC: You get a better education than you bargained for down there.

(Laughter)

HL: I saw a lot of interesting things.

CC: Let me ask you this before you go on, though, what were your---you said your father would catch the streetcar to work, what was your father doing? What kind of a job . . .

HL: My dad was a purchasing manager for American Factors, [Ltd.]. Those days they had no computers, so he kept the whole warehouse in his mind. He was one of those kind of (persons). He was a travelling salesman at first, when I was first born, but then he ended up in the office and he did all the purchasing for Amfac for the groceries. And in those days, Amfac had a lot of their own stores that were maintained at the various plantations where people that worked at the plantations just charged. I mean, nobody paid cash (chuckles) until

the unions came along, and then they became more independent and the plantation store is no longer a part of the father-type [paternal] viewpoint that the plantations had at the time.

CC: And how about your mom? Did she work, was she a housewife?

HL: My mother [Adele K. (Robinson) Lemke] was a nurse for a German doctor that lived here during, prior to World War I. And, of course, when World War I came along, they threw him out with all the other Germans that were in town, including [Captain Henry] Hackfeld, etcetera. [H. Hackfeld and Company, begun by Captain Henry Hackfeld, had its assets liquidated during World War I because it was German-owned. The firm became American Factors, Ltd. and later named Amfac.] And, well, she was a young nurse. She was married to my dad, I guess, by the time she was twenty. My dad was already thirty when he married her. And he worked at this American Factors, formerly [H.] Hackfeld and Company. He was part---he was German, too.

His parents came from Germany, settled around Nu'uuanu Avenue. They actually ran a little rooming house there called the White House. Right where the present Kukui Plaza is. And he had an interesting background. My German grandfather coming from Germany was a tailor. He came here in the '70s [1870s]. And his father was one of the great tailors of Europe. Served for all the big German Kaisers and the Prussians and all that. So when he came to Hawai'i, he had a lot to do with the type of uniforms the Royal Guard now has. It's very Germanic if you look at it. And all he did was sew coats. He never sewed a pants, you know. That, you buy elsewhere. But, he would sew just coats.

CC: Those fancy tunics?

HL: Yes.

CC: How about brothers and sisters? Do you . . .

HL: I have two brothers and two sisters. I was the oldest. And they're all still here in the islands.

DT: Oh, wonderful. But you also had an interesting family tree. In addition to talking about your parents, I think . . .

HL: Yes.

DT: On your mother's side, I guess, you went back to Maui . . .

HL: On my mother's side, her mother actually had a claim on the Bishop Estate. And, of course, when she went to court, when she was a young person with my grandfather, they got nowhere because I guess they didn't impress the judges at the time, and so nothing happened to that.

DT: But didn't you go back to Maui? Didn't some of your forebearers live on Maui, settling there very early?

HL: Oh, yes. Now, on my Hawaiian [i.e., mother's] side, my grandfather was one-quarter Hawaiian and the rest was English and French. Now, he gets the French from a Mr. Prever who settled in Lahaina prior to 1800. This is right after Captain [James] Cook hit the [Hawaiian] Islands and this (fellow) ends up in Lahaina. As you know, reading history, the

French were coming through there. In fact, part of Lahaina has a lot of French names there, at least down by Kīhei side. And he married a Hawaiian woman there who had substantial properties. In fact, I think they owned practically all of Lahaina and the Kā'anapali Coast. But, of course, that's all been sold off. And his daughter [Rebecca Prever] married a James Robinson, who was a person who came to Hawai'i prior to 1840 [in 1820]. And although he didn't stay in Hawai'i at that time, he went up to Midway to get whales. He was a whaler. And both their ships crashed on the reefs up there [leeward Hawaiian archipelago], completely demolished. And the names of those reefs are still on the maps—Pearl [and] Hermes [Reef] come from those two ships. The (fellow) was smart enough to put together a little schooner from the debris, sail it back to Honolulu, sold it (chuckles) to the king, and that gave him enough money ultimately to go into [shipbuilding] business here. He became the wealthiest man in town. James Robinson [& Company]. If you go down to the judiciary building, they (have) a little building that they show there, right next to where Aloha Tower later on was placed. And it says “Robinson” on top of that. My grandfather was born in that loft.

DT: These weren't related to the Kaua'i Robinsons?

HL: No, no relation to the Kaua'i.

DT: I think we should clear that up.

HL: This [James Robinson] was the English Robinson that married into the Hawaiians that were here. The Robinsons on Ni'ihau [Aubrey Robinson] never married Hawaiian.

CC: What about getting back into more recent history when you said you lived in the Punchbowl area and you ended up going to St. Louis College. But what about your grade school and other schooling?

HL: Well, the brothers finally moved out when I was in sixth grade, that's about 1923. The sixth grade, let's see, that would take us up till about 19—oh, when did I start school, '23. So, about '29 [1928] we [the school] moved up to Kalaepōhaku in Kaimukī. They were able to get a deal out of Bishop Estate, which was quite hard in those days, to buy any (square) feet of property, but Bishop Estate gave them these horrible *pōhaku* rocks that existed up there on St. Louis Heights. But, as time went by, those rocks turned into gold. They couldn't afford to keep all the property they (bought) from Bishop Estate, so they had to sell off what was known [as] St. Louis Heights. And just to show you how times changed, this would be, let's see, about 1930 or so. The developer of St. Louis Heights went broke. And they had to sell the lots off for the improvement district cost too, you know. . . . The developer went under but the city at least got its money back out of the improvement district that was set up there. Today, of course, you can't buy that property. But my schooling was at Kalaepōhaku, St. Louis, grade school and high school.

CC: So you stayed in that system throughout the . . .

HL: That's right.

CC: Okay. And you ended up going to, what, California, for college?

HL: California. I, in 1935, graduated [from St. Louis] and went to Santa Clara University [graduated in 1939]. And the only reason I think (chuckles) I went there was that I became

friendly with the trainer of the football team that they had sent down in 1933. And he seemed like to be the only person interested in me as far as anybody in college, so I went there. But I took with me about three, four other part-Hawaiian boys. So we had a nice little group there at Santa Clara.

CC: Did you—in any of this time, had you had any involvement with school politics or any of that kind of thing?

HL: Oh, yes. I was class president at St. Louis High School in my senior year and I was always a president of a class or something like that, so, I guess when you're growing up you kind of get that way of getting involved with elective office. So when you finally run (chuckles) for elective office it's not too strange.

DT: So you had some of the thrills of victory and defeat, I suppose.

HL: Oh, yes. And I enjoyed high school politics. It's not much different than regular politics.

DT: Did this continue in college then?

HL: Not so much. When I got to college, I was in a strange atmosphere, you know, all California boys and I'm a poor little Hawaiian up there. It's kind of difficult to project yourself unless you're a good singer or guitar player or something like that. But it's difficult to try to get other people to have confidence in you to vote you into any kind of office. Seems like the only ones that got elected in college to these positions of president, whatever, are the local boys that were known by everybody else.

DT: You majored in accounting?

HL: When I was in Santa Clara, I wanted to major in accounting, but the professor there, the advisor who was a priest—I think they were kind of short on their philosophy [majors]—he steered me into majoring in philosophy for four years, which I didn't want to do. But he said, "You're going to be a lawyer, take philosophy." That was the worst thing I ever did because all the kids that took business background at Santa Clara also went into law school and did well. And I think a business background would have been better for me. I did not learn my CPA [certified public accountant] accounting work until I came back from the Mainland and ultimately ended up with the Internal Revenue [Service]. I worked there from '40 to '43, right at the break of the war [World War II]. In fact, when the war broke, I didn't even see the big battle down here at Pearl Harbor because I was on Kaua'i. Didn't see anything.

CC: During that time, were you involved at all—after you got back from college—were you involved at all in local politics in the early days when you were starting out . . .

HL: No, I was just struggling to make a living. I worked with the Internal Revenue [Service] from 1940 to '43, got disgusted with the politics that they had at the federal level, went out on my own because there was a great need for anyone that knew something about taxes and bookkeeping. And in the meantime, I was going to the University of Hawai'i at night taking up CPA courses and things like that. So, I was in business during the latter part of the war, from '43 on.

CC: Did you have any awareness of the Democratic party right after the war or any of that kind of

stuff?

HL: Oh yes, there wasn't much of a Democratic party [in] those days because it was all Republican. Anybody who ran as a Democrat was sure to get defeated outside of maybe Johnny [John H.] Wilson, who ran for mayor [of Honolulu], and a couple of others. But it was strictly a Republican town. So I didn't get involved until I got into my own business, which started in '43; and about 1947, '48 I picked up a client by the name of [Charles] Ernest Kauhane, who was the national committeeman for the Democrat party. He was a barkeeper. And he finally got a hold of me to do his books, and being on Hotel Street [Kauhane's bar was at 159 N. Hotel Street] it was closely scrutinized by the IRS [Internal Revenue Service]. But anyway, I think I served my purpose for him. And being national committeeman, it was his job to see that all the positions that they had open here in the islands would at least be filled, not just have blanks when the election came along. So he finally talked me into running for city treasurer, being a—then I was just a public accountant, I wasn't even a CPA then. City [and county] treasurer in 1950 and '52. The first time against Mr. [William] Chung-Hoon, [Jr.] . . .

DT: Ah, yes.

HL: . . . who had been in (office) about twenty, thirty years. (Chuckles) They put me up like a sacrificial lamb just to fill a spot, you know. But I think I did such a great job even though I lost 'cause the poor fellow died the next year [Chung-Hoon died in office in 1952]. See, maybe I had [caused] too much strain or something. But anyway, he was quite old. So, I thought for sure I'd be appointed the city treasurer because I ran as a Democrat and the person who was the mayor there [John H. Wilson] was a Democrat, even though they had a Republican board [of supervisors].

DT: Supervisors, uh huh.

HL: I figured I'd get appointed by the mayor. Big Democrat. Father of the party. And then I found out brutally that there was no such thing as party. It was who knew who. And the assistant in that department, a Mr. [Lawrence S.] Goto, got the appointment [in 1952], and he was a Republican. I couldn't figure out how a Democrat would appoint a Republican, but it happened. Then I found out later everybody was palsy-walsy. They were all backing one another up anyway, so it didn't make any difference.

DT: Your Kauhane connection didn't help too much?

HL: Nothing at all.

DT: Nothing at all. Incidentally, was [Charles] Ernest [Kauhane] a brother of Charlie [Charles] Kauhane?

HL: No relation.

DT: No relation.

HL: That's right.

DT: I think we should clear that up. [Charles Kauhane was first elected to the territorial house of

representatives in 1944. He was speaker in 1955.]

HL: Yes, no relation.

DT: But after he'd [Charles Ernest Kauhane] been national committeeman, Johnny Wilson became national committeeman, I believe, right?

HL: That's right, for a short period.

DT: In the early '50s.

CC: But at this time, 1952 and thereabouts, the Democratic party was starting to undergo some changes.

HL: Yes, we were getting a little bit more lively. (Chuckles) So in '52, they dragged me down to city hall again to again run for treasurer to fill the spot again. And I ran against Mr. [Lawrence S.] Goto and unfortunately I got into trouble with the ILWU [International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union] and they were kind of upset with me. So when the election was over, I only lost to Goto by 100 [107] votes.

DT: But were you involved in this factionalism? It's about this time the ILWU was trying openly to take over the Democratic party, right?

HL: That's right. And I was sort of in a doghouse with them.

DT: I see.

HL: Because there was a group of people who were known as Imua. And they got me on their board [of directors] without asking me [1952-53]. And being on that board I fell into disrepute with the ILWU for that period of time.

DT: This is an anti-communist [and anti-ILWU] organization of the day [established in 1949]?

HL: That's right. But when 1954 finally rolled along, again I was asked to take it because even in '54 we were having a real problem having a full ticket. So they got me to run for the [Honolulu City and County] Board of Supervisors. We could barely get seven guys to run. And, in fact, Ernie [Ernest] Heen, [Sr.] was supposed to run for delegate [to Congress] and then, if he had pulled out that race, then I could get out of the supervisor's race and he could run for supervisor. Well, he pulled out and didn't run for either race in '54. But that was the year when we got a whole new flock of politicians, so to speak, young people, like Dan [Daniel K.] Inouye and Sparky [Spark M.] Matsunaga, and quite a few younger people, Japanese ancestry, just out of college. Plus, Anna Kahanamoku ran [for the house], who helped give us a good image, I think. And when that election was over, we were all surprised, we all got elected.

(Laughter)

DT: Now for the first time in a long time you had a majority on the board, didn't you?

HL: Oh, we had six of seven persons.

- DT: Plus the legislature, which for the first time went Democratic.
- HL: Completely Democrat. [Six Democrats: Noble K. Kauhane, Mitsuyuki Kido, Herman G. P. Lemke, Matsuo Takabuki, Mitsuo Fujishige, and Richard Kageyama. The lone Republican on the board was Dr. Sam K. Apoliona.]
- DT: It's a good year.
- HL: Yes. And we just couldn't believe it. Because for the entire history prior in Hawai'i, it was all Republican.
- DT: Well, the Democratic party had become more united because they were brought together in the '52 convention. Were you a member of the '52 convention when, in their so-called compromise between [John A.] Burns becoming the [territorial] chairman out of that and in charge of the central committee, Frank [F.] Fasi . . .
- HL: You might know a little more about that than I do . . .
- DT: . . . Frank Fasi became the national committeeman replacing Johnny Wilson.
- HL: Yes, some.
- DT: So that sort of led the way to the big '54 election . . .
- HL: That's right.
- DT: . . . which was successful. You were successful and so were most other Democrats.
- HL: Everybody was successful. And I remember Jack Burns had a lot to do with our success. He worked in the background. He ran for delegate [to Congress], I believe.
- DT: Yes, he ran . . .
- HL: He lost [to Elizabeth Farrington].
- DT: He lost [in 1954].
- HL: But he had a lot to do with helping fill the ticket.
- DT: All righty, we'll pick it up from here right after we change tape.
- HL: Okay.
- JC: The following is tape number two of the Herman Lemke interview.
- DT: Ready to go?
- CC: Yeah.
- DT: I think you'd largely escaped all the factionalism fights in the late '40s and early '50s,

apparently, but you did enjoy success in '54 with the Democratic party. That started, set in motion, a whole series in years on the board of supervisors and later on at city council, didn't it?

HL: Yes, and again, mentioning the ILWU, apparently in 1954, I had no problems. Whatever sins I had were forgiven and [the] ILWU and all the unions were naturally very responsible in putting the Democrats in. They were our main source of success. And we went down the line for them, both in the legislature and city council.

DT: And you had probably resigned from Imua in the meantime?

HL: Oh, yes.

(Laughter)

HL: We'd completely forgotten about Imua.

DT: Because they were still going at one another, I know, even after '54 . . .

HL: I think even in '54 and '56 they were still around. They were still picking on poor Jack Hall [regional director of the ILWU] and anybody that might have been involved with the so-called communist movement which they [Hall and the others] maintain wasn't the case, but, you know . . .

DT: And they [ILWU] had radio programs [beginning in 1939] with [Robert] McElrath for the ILWU . . .

HL: That's right.

DT: . . . and I've forgotten the gentleman's name for Imua [John T. Jenkins]. A weekly occurrence when they would be sparring around.

HL: That's right.

DT: Well, you settled into the board of supervisors then, do you recall some early issues . . .

HL: Well, I often wondered how I ever got elected, or any of us got elected. Of course, there naturally was this change of mood. Everybody went Democrat. But, the city, they called us board of supervisors then, not city council. Then they would very often call us "board of stupidvisors," but (DT chuckles), that's to be expected. I think one other reason we got in was, if you remember, the [Wilson Tunnel] had caved in the year before [August 1954], while they were building the Kalihi [Wilson] Tunnel, complete shutdown. And I think people [were] just looking for a new blood to come in and get this thing moving because nothing was being done. And I think that hurt [Mayor] Johnny Wilson, too, because it was his engineer [Karl Sinclair] that they blamed for the collapse [which killed five workers].

DT: And it undoubtedly cost him the primary . . .

HL: That's right.

DT: . . . and that led ultimately to the election of Neal [S.] Blaisdell [in 1954] over the . . .

HL: Over Frank.

DT: . . . upstart, Frank Fasi, mm hmm.

HL: Right. [Blaisdell defeated Fasi by 1,460 votes.]

DT: But there was one other big issue of that time, which you probably [were] interested in as part of the Democratic platform in '54, was home rule.

HL: Yes. Democrats went all out on home rule. In other words, ultimately, they gave the counties, for example, the right to set their own real property tax rates. And that did not get accomplished until about 1959. I remember the Republican governor they had, I think it was [Samuel Wilder] King when I was there in '55, '56. The Republican still had a little strength left in the legislature and they prevailed to stop the counties from taking over the real property tax rate. But, we finally got it through, I believe, in '59. And it helped the counties a lot to set their own rates because what was happening was, [if] the counties were broke, they'd have to go up and ask permission from the legislature to have a rate change. And why should the legislature approve a rate change when it was really not their tax? So, we finally were able to get rid of that, and they gave us that home rule measure of being able to set our own rates and ultimately to even set the—oh, yeah, we got rid of the ceiling. We had a ceiling on the amount of real property taxes that could be collected, and to get that ceiling changed we had to go to the legislature. And they never approved it.

DT: It was also a development of the Honolulu [city] charter, too, for the first time . . .

HL: Yes, the charter came into the picture around '58, '59 [effective July 1, 1959]. And the other reason, I think, they really pushed for the new charter was, the Democrat control of the board of supervisors was so tough on poor Republican Neal Blaisdell [mayor of Honolulu] (chuckles) that they figured the only way they can break this strength that the board of supervisors had over the elected mayor was to bring in a charter to give the mayor certain rights which he was not experiencing (chuckles) with his strong Democrat board. Everybody thought we were great pals with Neal, but, actually, we gave him a terrible time.

(Laughter)

HL: For six months, the first six months [after] Neal's election, I think he had one or two department heads and that was all. The rest, he had no department heads. We wouldn't confirm them. See, in those days we confirm the department heads. (Chuckles)

DT: Yeah, lot of times I figure Frank Fasi is the only one that had a lot of trouble with the supervisors, but Neal had his share . . .

HL: Oh.

DT: . . . in that first six months.

HL: He had [a] terrible time.

DT: But the Honolulu charter changed, among other things, too, the board of supervisors into a city council.

HL: Yes, they gave us a better name.

DT: And everybody adjusted.

HL: You know "council" sounds much better than "supervisors."

DT: But people did adjust. I think even Neal adjusted after that because . . .

HL: Well, he got certain rights. They brought in this so-called split of powers where he had certain rights [such] as preparing a budget and once the budget was approved, we couldn't hassle that anymore. He had charge of it. He had certain rights as a operation manager, which he didn't have under the old system.

CC: Well, 1960, you originally agreed to run for mayor, didn't you?

HL: Yes, they---I remember Tom Gill coming to me once. And he says, "Chee, we got to get someone to run against Neal Blaisdell."

This was in the '60s [1960]. And, well, I was quite pleased that they would even consider me. I knew I would have all kinds of problems with Neal because he was the toughest candidate we ever had. He's probably the most outstanding candidate, despite the fact that he was Republican. But, [I'll] never forget coming to a meeting once and I ran into old Noble Kauhane, who was still living then. And he was quite ill, but he was still a member of the city council [i.e. board of supervisors] or whatever it was. [Kauhane died in 1960.] And he pulled me on the side and he said, "Herman, don't run against Neal." And that was it.

(Laughter)

HL: I didn't run against Neal.

(Laughter)

DT: So the Democrat candidate ended up being---was it [William C.] Vannatta or was it somebody else in the '60s [Vannatta ran in '56 and '58. Fasi ran in 1960]?

HL: That's right, I believe you're right. They got Bill Vannatta, who was a very strong candidate. He was Neal Blaisdell's own right hand, his city engineer. So that was a pretty bloody battle.

DT: I've forgotten which one it was. See, the mayor was elected every two years, right . . .

HL: Right.

DT: . . . in those days.

HL: That's right.

DT: So I don't know whether Vannatta had lasted that long or not. I think you might recall. You

think it was Vannatta, though?

HL: I think it was around '60. Now, I don't know who Neal ran against in '52. I can't remember.

DT: Well, in '52 . . .

HL: I mean '58.

DT: Yeah, '58 I can't either. Just offhand [Vannatta].

HL: Mm hmm. Maybe it was Vannatta.

DT: It struck me that Vannatta---it would have been Vannatta little bit earlier. [Vannatta was defeated by Blaisdell in both the 1956 and 1958 mayoral elections.] In any event, none of the Democratic candidates prevailed, whether it was Frank Fasi or somebody else. [Fasi was defeated by Blaisdell in the 1960 mayoral election.] Actually, Frank sort of eased off after '54, didn't he?

HL: Yes, he was kind of in the doghouse there for a while.

DT: And moved into the council, gradually, I think.

HL: Oh, that was much later.

DT: That was in the '60s, I remember.

HL: He got on the council in '64 [1964-68].

DT: So you were still in the council, though, weren't you?

HL: That's right.

DT: Matter of fact, you were chairman of the council at that time.

HL: I was council chairman in '64 [1964-68] when Frank was on.

DT: Before that you'd been finance chairman?

HL: I had been finance chairman since '56, largely because I was a so-called accountant and that was my prestigious appointment. But, I think I did a lot for the city as chairman of the [board of supervisors'] finance committee. I was the one that really carried the ball going into the legislature to get rid of this ceiling on real property tax and setting rates, to have it all moved from the legislature down to the [board of supervisors'] level. And I hired John [J.] Hulten to make a report on the abuses of our real property tax system, because all the big landlords were getting away with murder. I remember we gave him like \$5,000 to put this report together. And, you know, reports don't cost \$5,000. They're just like \$50 or \$150. John put this out for \$5,000. He did a marvelous job. The governor at that time was Bill [William F.] Quinn who was so upset with the report, he called John Hulten "a prostitute of his profession."

(Laughter)

HL: But, the newspapers loved it because they had all these crazy figures in there. All the---'Ewa Plantation was paying maybe five cents a year for real property taxes on an acre of land. That kind of stuff. But, it had a lot to do with getting the legislature to help us to bring all these problems down to the county level where we straightened them up.

DT: Well, during the same period of the '50s and '60s. . . . I guess it wasn't while you were on the council, probably before you were on the council, I think you also served on boards and commissions. I know you were civil service commissioner at that time, were you not?

HL: For some reason I ended up on the civil service commission under Governor [Ingram] Stainback. That was back around 1947.

DT: Forty-seven and continued on until '52 or something like that.

HL: Until I got elected to the city council [in 1954]. I was on the civil service commission, and old Governor Stainback was a good governor to work for. He was kind of haughty, not being elected. He was quite officious, but he ran his whole town with practically no staff and did a good job.

DT: Yeah, he didn't even have an administrative assistant, as I recall.

(Laughter)

HL: He had nothing. But the territory heads ran fine under Stainback. He gave his department heads complete say; he never butted in. If he didn't think the guy was doing a good job, he'd maybe make a change. But I remember once we had a real hot potato at the civil service commission level. And we were afraid (chuckles), politically, we might come up with a decision that he wouldn't back us up on. So we went to see him about this. And he said, "Look, whatever you guys say, I'll back you up."

He was one of those kind of guys, so, it was easy being a civil service commissioner under that kind of a setup where you know you're not going to get chopped by somebody else (chuckles).

And we had a good board: [Peter E.] Chu was on there and Jack [John H.] Magoon, [Jr.], myself. I remember once when we wanted to go to the island of Hawai'i. Only way we could get up there was to go and investigate the positions of these [prison] guards up there, whether they should go off from H-4 to H-5 or whatever it is. (Chuckles) We managed to get this trip paid for by the territory to go up to Kūlani prison. This is in the '40s and that was a great trip because you're in a big forest. I don't know what Kūlani prison is like now, but those days it was terrific. They just had army shacks around where the guys living in. There were no fences. (Chuckles) You can start running if you want. About fifteen miles away from the main road. And I remember the guards there. They were all Portuguese guards. Seemed like they were all Portuguese guards. All tough guys. And so [we] were going to---they want to take us pig hunting. That's why we really wanted to go up to Kūlani, was to go pig hunting. So I remember Jack Magoon and myself and [Peter] Chu. We went up into the mountains and they ran a big boar down with these dogs. No guns. These guys just use a knife and that was it. Then we had to haul the carcass back. And we got back to the camp and I said, "Where

did we go?"

He [the guard] said, "Well, you just went on the next ridge." Seemed like we had hiked miles and we hadn't gone anywheres. (Chuckles)

DT: Your service in the territorial civil service commission was really quite important because this was a time when the HGEA [Hawai'i Government Employees' Association] was gaining new power so there were a lot of controversial things about . . .

HL: Charlie [Charles R.] Kendall [executive director of HGEA], God bless his soul.

DT: Charlie Kendall, right.

HL: He was a tough guy. He was a football coach at St. Louis [School] at one time [1929-32]. That's how he came to the Islands. And he finally ends up in government. He started that HGEA movement; and we were the ones that were constantly confronting him because he had to clear through Arthur Akina [civil service director]. He didn't like Arthur Akina. And Arthur Akina, with his cohort, [Ellwood] Van Gieson, were forever turning down all these requests for, you know, higher positions. And they insisted that they were doing the right thing trying to keep everything in line. And the thing that impressed me (chuckles) in those days was, just to show you about inflation, the whole time I was there, from '47 till about '54, we used a large schedule and the jobs were classified in this schedule six ways across one way and about thirteen steps up on the other side. And the amount of pay per position was put right into the slot there. And you know that whole period of time, I don't think it changed once.

DT: Mm.

HL: There was no inflation. Amazing.

DT: Don't you think Charlie Kendall really wanted to, some of the *pilikia* that he promoted and so forth, [was] because he really wanted to be civil service director rather than Arthur Akina?

HL: Oh, yes. It's no question. Charlie would have loved to have been the civil service director. But, you see, again, at the time, although we had a Democrat president who appointed a Democrat governor, you still had a Republican legislature. And I think Arthur Akina was more on the Republican side so he was kind of a fair-haired boy. Arthur was on the younger side, just back from U.S.C. [University of Southern California] on the West Coast. Very articulate type person out of college, local boy. So he had the favor, I think, of the Republican side. Although they were not the appointing force, like I said, we did have Democrat presidents that appointed our Democratic governor like Stainback.

DT: Arthur Akina survived into statehood days even, I believe.

HL: Yes, that's right. He managed to survive through that, but, finally, was put out by the Democrats and went off to Saudi Arabia where he made a living for a while.

DT: Saudi Arabia. Well, back to the council, I guess. Enough for this sort of footnote in your career with this territorial civil service commission. You didn't serve on any other commissions, did you? You immediately went into . . .

HL: I think that was about it. Main position.

DT: You mentioned back sometime ago one of the big issues, as I remember, I don't know if you recall anything about it or not, was a big cesspool investigation (chuckles).

HL: Oh, yes. I remember that distinctly. At city hall, the Republican mayor [Neal Blaisdell], of course, had his city engineer, Mr. [Yoshio] Kunimoto, who really believed that this chemical [Chemi-cure] that was being sold to us [on contract by AAA Chemical], helped with the drainage of the cesspools that we had to pump all through Kailua. So this has to be in the late '50s or early '60s [1963]. This town (chuckles) had many places without sewers. And the city was required to go and pump these cesspools out and this thing [Chemi-cure] seemed to help, so that our city cesspool department didn't have to go and pump these out every week or every month. At least between pumpings it was a lot less. And, of course, the formula was being prepared by some person that we never heard about. But still he was able to sell the city council and the city engineer that this was the thing to use. And we used it for years until we sewerred the area. All these areas finally became sewerred.

DT: And the investigation sort of faded away like all investigations? [The contract with AAA Chemical was criticized by city managing director Bartley M. Harloe, leading to Harloe's resignation in 1963.]

HL: Well, once the cesspools were gone, you had sewers, a regular sewer system, there was no problem.

DT: The issue went away, but it was one of those colorful periods of city and county history (HL chuckles), wasn't it? We'll continue after we change tapes.

JC: The following is videotape number three of the Herman Lemke interview.

CC: Herman, didn't you end up co-chairing one of Governor [John] Burns's—actually his job for the governorship. Weren't you co-chair . . .

HL: Right. Myself and Masato Doi were the co-chairmen.

CC: And that was . . .

HL: That was the year he lost.

CC: The year he lost?

HL: Yeah (chuckles). Bill [William F.] Quinn beat him. Unbelievable.

CC: Is that '59 you were co-chairman?

HL: I believe that was '59 and Bill Quinn got---he was the first elected governor . . .

CC: Right.

HL: . . . so it would be '59 election.

DT: Yeah, '62 he [Burns] won. You were co-chairman again, were you?

HL: Ah, Bill Quinn won again?

CC: No.

DT: No, no.

CC: You were co-chairman . . .

HL: No, the second time around [in 1962], he [Burns] did it himself. I don't know who was the chairman. He just went out and worked like a dog. Just covering the field and he came through the second time [1962]. But the first time [1959], we thought, well, we'd win, you know. But, Bill Quinn came through and knocked him off.

DT: Herman Lum [later state supreme court chief justice], I think, worked with you on that campaign, didn't he?

HL: Right, right.

DT: As sort of campaign chairman, working chairman, at any rate.

HL: Yes.

CC: Just a point about Jack Burns. Do you have any remembrance back in that immediate post-war era of his involvement in the early days?

HL: Oh, yes. Very much so.

CC: What was his role after World War II with the Democratic party? Some credit him with really helping to, the whole effort of rebuilding the party, and we're curious as to . . .

HL: Yes, I would say that he was most probably the most important person in rebuilding. It was not just him, you know. I think having Dan [Daniel] Inouye coming into the picture and people like that had a lot to do with the stature of the party. Prior to 1954, Jack was pretty much by himself with people like [Charles] Kauhane. And it was a struggle. They just did not have the charisma to carry the party. And the Republicans seemed to be doing fine. The thing that really knocked the Republicans out, I think, in this whole area is when '54 came along, people were just sick and tired of having a public school system with a double-shift system. Kids used to go to school here in the morning and another group of kids come in in the afternoon. Well, the Democrats (chuckles) came on strong saying, "We're going to do away with this. We're going to have just one school system." None of this morning stuff and evening stuff, and we did it.

We promised to raise taxes and the people (chuckles) still elected us. Unbelievable, but we did. We were honest. We came right out and said, "We got to raise the taxes to pay for this." And Jack Burns came in all through that. He was naturally the leader in this whole thing. But Jack Burns, during the latter part of the war and let's say from '47 to '54, ran a liquor store down in Kailua. That was his livelihood. And he spent a lot of time in my office. I had a little office in the Hawaiian Trust Building on King Street and Fort Street, third floor, and he spent

an awful lot of time [there]. He was a client of mine. And we argued politics and everything else there, but he did spend a lot of time in my office because it was close to everything, and he and I were good friends. Well, once he got elected governor, I never saw him (chuckles).

CC: You seemed to have gotten along with--there seemed to be some factions that had developed and were going to continue to be part of—important part of Hawai'i politics. You mentioned that Tom [Thomas P.] Gill actually came to you, looking for you to run for office at one point, and you're also pretty close to Jack Burns. What was the view of the kind of splits that . . .

HL: Well, Jack Burns was strictly ILWU. Tom Gill seemed to be tied in with the other labor groups.

DT: Teamsters and . . .

HL: Teamsters . . .

DT: . . . hotel workers.

HL: . . . and hotel workers. And, for some reason, they were always apart from one another, I think largely because of these unions always being at odds with one another. They represented their constituents, so to speak.

DT: But you never got labeled as being tied in with either faction. Or were you? More so with the ILWU, perhaps than not, but . . .

HL: No, I was pretty much in the middle. I tried to stay out of being involved too much. I was always friendly with Tom and at the same time with Jack Burns.

DT: So you really, once again, were able to avoid all the . . .

HL: Yes, I was lucky there. I didn't get too much tied down with any particular group.

DT: Factionalism.

CC: You almost got into it in '66, though, when you took a shot at the lieutenant governor's race, and Jack Burns was interested in Kenny [Kenneth F.] Brown and Tom Gill was involved too, right?

HL: That's right.

CC: So, what happened there?

HL: Well, again, Jack Burns called us all in to the White House, whatever you call it. It's not the White House, but the . . .

CC: Washington Place.

HL: . . . Washington Place [the state governor's residence] for breakfast. He sat us all down (chuckles) and he just let us know that he wanted to have Brown as his choice. So . . .

- CC: So who was there? You were there . . .
- HL: Yes, I was there. I think Gill was there and there was another person.
- DT: Somebody else perhaps? [Perhaps Bert Kobayashi, former attorney general.]
- HL: There was three of us. Well, I walked out and I---well, if that's what the Governor wants, I dropped out. I think Tom, I don't know if Gill continued to run anyway.
- DT: Yes, he did.
- HL: Oh, he did?
- DT: Yeah, he defeated Kenny Brown, right?
- HL: That's right.
- DT: Yeah.
- HL: That's right, yeah. So, that meant that, oh, Tom became lieutenant governor.
- DT: Right, right.
- HL: That's right.
- DT: But you bowed out, apparently.
- HL: I bowed out. I didn't want to get in a battle.
- DT: Was this out of deference to . . .
- HL: To Jack Burns.
- DT: . . . to Jack Burns or was it because you felt you'd lose, or what?
- HL: (Chuckles) Well, I feel I was going to lose if Jack Burns wasn't going to support me.
- (Laughter)
- HL: But, Tom Gill stayed in there, and being more experienced than Kenny Brown, knowing people more intimately, was elected.
- CC: Brown was somewhat of an unknown in terms of the Democratic party. He was not really strongly identified, was he?
- HL: That's right. In fact, everyone thought for a while that he was a Republican by background. But he turned out to be a very good friend of Jack Burns. Great supporter, right up to the time of the death of Jack Burns.
- CC: And in '66, speaking of famous disputes and things, you got into a bit of a feud with Frank

Fasi, I believe, over his entering, perhaps entering the—interest in the congressional race. Seems to be some mention of you and Frank getting into it back in those days. Do you remember some dispute over that?

HL: Well, Frank was always a maverick. I mean, on the city council, you never know what he's going to do. You know, surprise, surprise. (Chuckles) So we never [got] along too well, although I have to say we never got into any real serious problem. But Frank was really not part of the Democrat group, even though he was a Democrat. We'd go out and play golf, for example, by some contractors that have a golf tournament. Well, all the guys in the council would show up except Frank. It's just one of those things where he preferred to stay away from the rest of us and I guess it did help him because in the end when he [first] ran for mayor [in 1968], he got elected (chuckles).

DT: Was it because he didn't play golf or he didn't play as much as everybody or . . .

HL: Well, it seemed like he never took trips. He refused to take a trip, for example, and the rest of us were going to the Mainland for county, official-type trips. Frank would never go. And, he made a point of being different. And so when the election came in '68, I guess it paid off because he defeated me [in the Democratic primary race for mayor] . . .

DT: Right . . .

HL: . . . without any problems. (Chuckles) [Fasi defeated Lemke by 8,000 votes.]

DT: Now, you and him, was that a two-man race in '68 when you were . . .

HL: No, that was a three-man race. Unfortunately, [Kekoa] Kaapu ran in the primary.

DT: Oh, yes.

HL: And I ran and Frank ran. So there was a three-way split in the Democrat party and Frank won. [Unofficial election results: Fasi, 28,183; Lemke, 20,117; Kaapu, 7,509.]

CC: Think things might have been a little different for you . . .

HL: And he [Fasi] turned around and beat [D.G.] Andy Anderson in the general [by 16,000 votes].

CC: Go ahead, Dan. You might want to . . .

DT: Frank Fasi did run for [U.S.] Congress on one occasion [in 1966].

HL: That's right.

DT: Did you consider running for that job, too?

HL: No, I wasn't concerned. I can't recall why I criticized him but my daughter has a cartoon at home where Harry Lyons showed the difference of opinion between Frank and myself (chuckles) when he ran for the Congress, or was going to run for the Congress.

DT: Well, he ran, I think, and got defeated. I believe that's another one of his losing races.

CC: You said he didn't think he was a Democrat. You said something to the effect of, "I don't think Frank Fasi is a Democrat. I've been on [the city] council with him and he really doesn't vote. He doesn't get involved with the Democratic party." And he turned around and called you "gutless," or something like that, some namecalling. [According to a story in the August 5, 1966 *Honolulu Advertiser*, Lemke called Fasi's challenge for a U.S. House of Representatives seat "a mistake," that he didn't think Fasi was a Democrat, that Fasi made "no contribution to the party," and that Fasi would make a "poor congressman" because he "couldn't work with people." Fasi called Lemke "gutless."]

HL: He's a maverick. And I think that's been a success that people seem to like, especially in a key spot like that, a person who doesn't go along with the power group, which happened to be the city council at that time. I mean, Frank made no bones of challenging the city council from time to time. He still doesn't. But, I think that's part of his problem. He runs up to the legislature and tries to get something at the legislature, they won't even listen to them. If Frank's got his name on it, they're not going to give it to him. I don't care how good it is. Which is unfortunate, because then it means other people suffer because of this difference of opinion.

CC: So you ended up facing [him], as we said, in '68, in the mayoral primary.

HL: Right.

CC: And, as we know, he ended up winning the day.

HL: Right. When we started off, we had polls taken and it seemed like I was going to win. No problem. But, Frank is a clever politician. He knows what issues to bring up. And the thing he accused me of was trying to set a \$100 tax on automobiles here in Hawai'i. And this came about because one day, my news reporter friend came in, he had nothing to write about so he sat down with me and we went over all the problems with city hall, and there were many problems. And one was about transportation. He asked me, he said, "Well, how do you get rid of cars?"

I said, "Well, you could charge a \$100 tax, you know, and use that money to get buses and then we could have a free bus system and everybody could ride for free." And the guys who want to drive a car, they paid a \$100 tax and it's a good compromise. I don't think anybody would sell his car, you know, get rid of his car for a hundred bucks and then the other people could get a free ride on the bus. And [the tax] would have paid for it, \$50 million fund. Well, Frank used that against me throughout his entire campaign. Even after I was defeated by him, he used the same news clip on TV against Anderson.

DT: Now, wasn't your proposal about cars that you would have a graduated tax on cars based upon size?

HL: No. Mine was---my suggestion was you just charge a hundred bucks per car. Whether you got a small car, a big car, it's still creating a problem, using up the streets. And, with (500,000) cars in the Islands then times a hundred bucks, you talking about \$50 million. That would create enough money to take care of a bus system.

DT: Now, you'd also been somewhat interested in mass transportation, like mass transit. You were talking about buses, not fixed rail?

HL: Well, my idea was to get this bus thing going first. And the rail, to me, it's something that, I don't know, it's still a question in my mind because you go to all the cities that have rails and they don't seem to have their problems licked, so to speak. And here in Hawai'i, I think there's a lot of things we can do first before we get to the rail.

CC: Well, I think in that campaign you also indicated that it might be necessary just to have a tax increase in order to get the kind of transportation system we needed, and I don't know if . . .

HL: Yes, but I didn't say a \$100 tax, you know. This is just something you'd have to clear the city council, something to talk about. But Frank used this as a—the only issue that there was [in] a campaign, and [it] paid off. (Chuckles)

DT: Mm hmm.

CC: But you had the ILWU [International Longshoremen's & Warehousemen's Union] support in this one, right?

HL: I should have never lost. I had ILWU support. I think I had almost every union back of me. But, I would lose their support in this way. Every time I was asked [to] a gathering, a union gathering, and I was recommended as being the person for mayor, some little guy would stand up in the back of the room and say, "Yeah, but Lemke, what about that \$100 tax." I figure I lost everybody in that room. That issue killed me.

CC: Well, it was also true that you and [Kekoa] Kaapu sort of split your vote, too. For example . . .

HL: Well, Kaapu didn't help, because when you have a three-way go, it's tough. If it's just man against man, you got a chance to, for some dialogue.

DT: Yeah, I always had the impression that you and Kaapu sort of knocked one another out in that situation.

HL: I think we did (chuckles).

DT: But you still weren't done with running for public office, were you?

HL: No, I did run for lieutenant governor couple years later.

DT: In '70, did you run? You were considering running but did you actually run in '70?

HL: Or was it '72?

DT: Well, you lost in '74, I believe.

HL: Oh, well, then it was '74.

CC: But, in '70, I think that you announced that you would run, but then decided against it.

- HL: Yes. I ran in '74. I was amazed that [Daniel K.] Akaka did as well as he did [77,475 votes]. But [Nelson] Doi finally won [92,841 votes]. But, I came in third [19,547 votes]. I couldn't believe it. Akaka, who had never run before, did quite well as second, and the next time around, couple years later, he got elected as Congressman [in 1976].
- CC: By this time, it seemed that he was getting more of the [John] Burns-[George] Ariyoshi support than you were getting.
- HL: He did. I found out brutally about that.
- DT: And this was little bit of surprise to you. You'd been a . . .
- HL: That's right.
- CC: . . . you'd been friendly to Burns and he'd been in your office in your early years of sharing, swapping stories, talking story.
- HL: It was the HGEA [Hawai'i Government Employees' Association], actually, that went for Akaka, rather than Democrats. It was the HGEA support.
- DT: HGEA and the ILWU, I guess.
- HL: Yes, that was the support Akaka got that I did not get. I was asked to drop out. Because of that, they wanted to push for Akaka rather than me. . . . Who else was involved?
- CC: Doi.
- HL: Yes, [Nelson] Doi.
- DT: Well, actually, you and Akaka sort of split your vote, . . .
- HL: That's right.
- DT: . . . the ILWU, the establishment vote, shall we say, the Hawaiian vote if there is such a thing, and this opened the door to Nelson Doi, who was pretty much of a, well, he's not exactly a pro-Burns person by this time.
- HL: No, he was an independent-type candidate.
- DT: He was pretty independent.
- CC: But, [George] Ariyoshi would have preferred Akaka, in other words.
- HL: That's right. I found out later (chuckles) that was the case. So I lost. But because of that experience that Akaka had in that race even though he lost, it helped him two years later. It kind of cleared the air, so to speak. I wasn't around, nobody was around, and he got the nomination and became Congressman.
- DT: Yes, I think you're right. As I recall that election, the size of his vote was sort of the surprise of the election [Akaka won by over 100,000 votes in 1976].

HL: It was.

DT: He came in so well. And now, I guess, he's in a position where he'll have a lifetime job, if he wants to.

HL: Oh, yes. Nobody will touch Akaka. And, of course, he picks up the *aloha* that he gets from his brother [Rev. Abraham Akaka]. His brother's been a rather—he's not a political person, but as a religious [leader] (chuckles), he's been rather prominent.

DT: Well, there were times when they tried to get Abraham, or Reverend Abe, to run, wasn't there?

HL: I can't recall.

DT: They wanted him to consider running for lieutenant governor [in 1962]. This was sort of the Burns forces, I guess. It had all sorts of trial balloons out for lieutenant governor.

HL: Oh, he'd get elected into anything.

(Laughter)

CC: He still might.

HL: Yes (chuckles).

DT: Well, after '74, you pretty much sort of decided you were going to concentrate on the accounting business, is that right? You haven't gone through a lot of political settings very much since that time.

HL: That's right. And at '74, let's say, I'm getting older, now (chuckles). And, you're kind of tired because politics is tough. It's really a job. It's a kind of thing only young people get involved in. Any old person running for office really is taking a licking because the time demands are brutal.

DT: And the monetary demands were suddenly increased because in '62 Jack Burns really went out and spent a lot of money to get reelected.

HL: That's right.

DT: And, by the time you got up to '74, why, things were really costing a lot of money to run for top-level offices.

HL: Correct.

DT: We'd like to get a few reactions from you to some of the things which have happened in Hawaiian politics since you bowed out. But once again we're going to have to change tapes.

HL: Right.

(Taping stops, then resumes.)

- JC: The following is tape number four of the Herman Lemke interview and this is the last tape of the interview.
- DT: Well, actually, one thing before we go into the post-'74 period when you lost the lieutenant governor's race, you actually lost before that on the council level [special election for fourth district council seat] in '72, didn't you?
- HL: That's right.
- DT: To a very unlikely person. You want to reflect upon that a little bit?
- HL: Yes, another great surprise. It was a one-shot kind of race, as I recall. There was no Republican and Democrat primary. It was just a one-shot deal. And I was amazed that Danny [Dan Clement, Jr.] did as well as he did. And, one person that really helped him was a good friend of mine, Mary George [then councilwoman] from Kailua. She worked hard for him. [Election results: Clement, 3,800 votes; Lemke, 3,019 votes; Norma Carr, 2,601 votes.]
- DT: Yeah, well Danny was running as a Republican . . .
- HL: As a Republican.
- DT: Later he became a Democrat, didn't he?
- HL: That's right.
- DT: But when he defeated you, he defeated you as a Republican.
- HL: As a Republican. I was a Democrat, and I thought I had good support from the usual places in the Democratic party, but Danny came [in] strong. I couldn't believe it.
- DT: Yeah, he and his father, their whole career had been designed around the Republican party.
- HL: Right, the father was a big help.
- DT: Mm hmm. His father was a sort of a tireless campaigner for him.
- HL: Right, big supporter of Neal Blaisdell.
- DT: And you probably had the feeling that by this time, you didn't have to campaign as vigorously.
- HL: That's right. I thought possibly as a former chairman of the city council I wouldn't have too much trouble, but I did. Danny went door to door and I didn't. And it's a different kind of race, you see, it was just by district. I was more successful in the at-large races, when we formerly ran at large. I still think that's a better type council to get, to have more people at large, because then they have to look at problems from an overall point of view, rather than the present setup of where everybody's by district.
- DT: I'm interested in your saying that because it sort of squares around with some of my thinking that I've been doing, and certainly things have changed radically now that we have single-

member districts for members of the state legislature, and I see that we've lost a statewide perspective in that legislature. Would that be your feeling, or not?

HL: That's right. The only people you have running at a broader level are the mayors, at least they're running county-wide, and those for the governor. Now, that's only about five, six people. The seventy-five that are in the legislature and the thirty or forty that constitute the various councils are all by districts, except Hawai'i [county] has a little bit broader concept for councilman. So you have a government that's controlled, actually, by very *manini*-type thinking. There's nobody looking at the whole picture as to what's going to happen. Like for example, let's say, you had to have a prison put somewhere. Under the present system, it's very difficult. If you had more guys running at large, you know, they look at it as a community problem because you got to put the prison somewhere.

CC: This other way you fall much into the not-in-my-backyard problem, right?

HL: That's right. And if that person is a strong person in that particular body there, they can stop it.

DT: You think there's anything we can do about that?

HL: I don't know. I blame the newspapers for this, really. They're the ones that fought for single[-member] districts through the editorial sections. And I think it's a big, big mistake.

DT: Well, Jack Burns was a single-member district [proponent] . . .

HL: He was. I think it was a mistake.

DT: I used to try to disabuse him of that, but, he held fast and firm, so . . .

HL: I like the Maui. . . . Maui has a fairly good system. They're nominated by district but they have to run at large on the [county] council, so they're one of the exceptions. But here in Honolulu, it's quite difficult to get any overall thinking now, I think, when you have all the councilmen elected by district.

DT: Very interesting. I'm going to give you a few names, here, just for fun, and let you reflect upon them. Since your career spanned a number of years, let's start off with Johnny [John] Wilson.

JC: You'll find the remaining five minutes of the Herman Lemke interview on another audio cassette.

END OF SIDE TWO

TAPE NO. 17-13-1-88; SIDE ONE

JC: The following is the conclusion of the Herman Lemke interview found on videotape number four.

- DT: Since your career spanned a goodly number of years, let's start off with Johnny Wilson. Do you have any recollections of Johnny Wilson and his wife?
- HL: Yes.
- DT: I think you said you were related to them . . .
- HL: Yes, I told you that Aunt Jennie [Jenny K. Wilson] was a cousin of my grandmother, my Hawaiian grandmother. She was a fantastic person. They lived up in 'Ō'ili Loop, that's before Wai'alaie-Kāhala was developed. My job in the '50s was to go get Aunt Jennie from her home with all her peacocks and take her to the little Star of the [Sea] Church which was in a old wooden fire station in a Japanese school down by Wai'alaie Avenue. That was my job . . .
- DT: Before they built the new school up. Mm hmm.
- HL: And, of course, Uncle Johnny, as he was known, was a fantastic person. He was not only a politician, he was a good engineer and he put together the Pali [Road], which was quite a feat in those days.
- DT: The Old Pali Road, right.
- HL: And, he was unusual as far as politicians were concerned because [of] being an engineer.
- DT: But he's also something of a lone wolf, wasn't he? He wasn't . . .
- HL: Oh, yes.
- DT: . . . the greatest party person, shall we say. He belonged to the older school of personality politics.
- HL: Well, they work with everybody. They work with Republicans sometimes and they work with the Democrats. Every man's for himself.
- DT: Yeah, your relationship didn't help you initially to become county treasurer, did it?
- HL: That's right. Uncle Johnny forgot about that.
- DT: (Chuckles) Well, what about, I think you've already commented about Burns. Would you like to add anything about Jack?
- HL: Well, looking back at him before he got elected, I mean you wonder how a person like him would have the enthusiasm to carry on and finally get elected. I remember he couldn't even get elected to the old board of supervisors [in 1946], you know. And he had a very difficult time becoming delegate [to Congress]. But still he had the, I guess the hope that he would become governor. He was always going to run for governor as long as I knew him. Couldn't believe it, but he had the strength to just persevere and became governor.
- DT: So you would sort of label persistence as being one of his outstanding traits, I guess.
- HL: No question, yeah.

DT: What about Ariyoshi?

HL: Well, I think George was a person who came around at the right time. (DT chuckles.) He was, you know, an attorney. He was a state senator. Very quiet, unassuming, he wasn't a person that looked for headlines or anything like that. He was on the modest side, but he helped Jack a lot when he became lieutenant governor. There's no question. And, he was able to put together whatever was left of the Burns machine under his group of friends and has done well. In fact, I think he had a lot to do with the election of the present governor [John Waihee 1986-94].

DT: Yeah, you, actually, had hoped to become his running mate, hadn't you, Ariyoshi.

HL: I was thinking about it.

DT: In '74.

HL: Yes.

DT: But I guess his informal endorsement, as I've mentioned earlier, went to [Daniel] Akaka, rather than you, . . .

HL: That's right.

DT: Well, what about that current governor [Waihee]? Do you have any background contact with him or . . .

HL: Very little. I've been enthused about what he's done as a young attorney and he's another person that came from nowhere. Just seemed to come at the right time. And, he did a marvelous job for the Hawaiians in the last constitutional convention [in 1978]. Now the Hawaiians seem to be angry at him for withholding complete support, but, I mean he's the guy that really pulled out things from the constitutional convention with the help of [William] Paty that could mean a lot of dollars to the Hawaiians in the future.

DT: Do you think this OHA [Office of Hawaiian Affairs], which was established by the con-con in '78, do you think it really was good for the Hawaiians or not?

HL: Oh, anything like that is a plus because it's just another agency to push for whatever they want and it's a legal agency.

DT: But you haven't been active in that drive.

HL: No, first of all you have to get elected to it. I've always been so busy lately that I just couldn't feel getting involved in something like OHA. Besides, OHA people don't get paid, you know. (DT chuckles.) It's all for free.

DT: You had an accounting office to run still.

HL: Oh, yes.

DT: Well, do you have any other reactions you'd like to add there?

CC: No, we've covered a lot of territory. I'm pleased you could join us today. We've done that. Thank you very much. Appreciate it.

HL: You're welcome. It's kind of nice talking about old times, especially you, Dan, . . .

DT: It's nice to see you again.

HL: . . . come all the way from year one.

(Laughter)

CC: Okay. Thank you.

HL: You're welcome.

END OF INTERVIEW

**HAWAI'I
POLITICAL HISTORY
DOCUMENTATION PROJECT**

Volume I

**Center for Oral History
Social Science Research Institute
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa**

June 1996