BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY: Kenneth Francis Brown

Kenneth Francis Brown, the youngest son of George I'i Brown and Julia White Brown, was born October 28, 1919 in Honolulu. He grew up in the family home at Diamond Head along with his two older brothers, George and Zadoc. He is the great-grandson of John Papa I'i and the grandson of Irene I'i Brown Holloway.

He attended Lanai School, Punahou School, Fessenden School, Hotchkiss School and Princeton University where he studied architecture.

After graduating in 1941, he returned to Hawai'i and worked as an architect for a short time at C.W. Dickey. He became a U.S. Army Engineer during World War II, and subsequently worked for the John I'i Estate, the family landholdings business, and started his own architect firm.

He ran unsuccessfully for lieutenant governor in 1966, but worked with Governor John A. Burns as his administrative assistant for two years. He served in the state senate from 1968 to 1974. Throughout his career he has been involved in various business ventures and has served as a board member for numerous institutions and businesses. He has been a longtime member of the Queen's Medical Center board and is the chairman of the board of The Queen's Health Systems.

He is married to Joan Schaefer and has three daughters, Laura, Frances, and Bernice, and nine grandchildren.
HY: This is an interview with Kenneth Brown. It’s June 10, 1998, and we’re at his office in downtown Honolulu at Ali‘i Place. And the interviewer is Holly Yamada.

Okay, let’s start with your birth date.

KB: October 28, 1919.

HY: And where were you born?

KB: Born in Honolulu.

HY: And you have two other siblings.

KB: Mm hmm [yes].

HY: And where in the birth order are you?

KB: I’m the third.

HY: You’re the baby?

KB: The last. The baby.

HY: And where in Honolulu did you grow up?

KB: Diamond Head.

HY: Diamond Head. And can you tell me a little bit about the house that you lived in?

KB: Yeah. The house had about three acres of land. It was on the beach. There was a large living room/dining room, all in one big room. And connected to that was two bedrooms, for Father [George I‘i Brown] and Mother [Julia Davis Long White Brown], and a guest room. And separate from that, in another house, was where the three kids stayed, called a cottage. And the large house, the big living room/dining room area, had no screens. It had big windows that slid
up and opened up to the outdoors. It was very open. A wonderful house, it was built way ahead of its time by a doctor who had built it way back in the early 1900s for a weekend place, and my folks bought it much later.

But the doctor who built it was so smart that he left it all wide open. We lived in a house that was completely open. All glass, unscreened.

HY: And so you said you and your siblings were in a separate . . .

KB: We called it a cottage.

HY: . . . cottage.

KB: Mm hmm, where we had three bedrooms. And that was a very nice, quiet, unassuming building. And way up in the mauka corner of the lot, there was a place where the yardman lived. We had a family that lived right with us on our property.

HY: Who was the family?

KB: Name was Fujinaga. And his little [grand]son grew up with us. Yoshio, his name was.

HY: He was a playmate?

KB: Yeah, totally. He lived right there. He was a grandson of the so-called yardman. We had two or three people working for us all the time and they all lived up there. We had a chauffeur, yardmen, everything.

HY: And you grew up in an old kamaʻaina family.

KB: Yeah.

HY: And what was your father doing?

KB: He worked for the family company, John Iʻi Estate [managing the family land holdings].

HY: And your mother?

KB: My mother didn’t work. She was an organist. She played the organ. We had an organ in the house, an electric organ. She played it all the time. She used to play at Central Union Church sometimes for the services.

HY: Was church an important part of your life?

KB: Not really.

HY: And did you play with other neighborhood kids besides the people that were living on your property?

KB: Yeah, a lot of other kids.
HY: What kind of stuff would you do?

KB: We'd run around and go play a lot on the water. Surfing.

HY: Surfing.

KB: And on old-fashioned surfboards, we really couldn't go way out on the big waves. We had these old-fashioned redwood surfboards.

HY: Was it the real long [boards]?

KB: Yeah, heavy, long ones. But now days, there's people surfing out on the waves in front of our house, which, in our day, we didn't have the equipment. We couldn't possibly have handled that wonderful surf out there. But we had rowboats and little outboards and we used to spend a lot of time on the beach and in the water.

HY: Did you play with your siblings, too?

KB: We all played together.

HY: What was your relationship to them?

KB: It was really good. It was all like a little gang.

(Laughter)

HY: Our Gang.

KB: Our Gang. We had dogs and we had two parrots that my grandmother had left to us that hung out in the porch.

HY: Is this Irene [I'i Brown Holloway], this [paternal] grandmother?

KB: Yeah. In the porch of our little kids' cottage were two parrots. They spoke Hawaiian.

HY: The parrots?

KB: They were parrots and they used to take toast and coffee every morning, so we'd bring it up for them for breakfast and put it in their little cage. And they would take the toast and dip it in the coffee and eat it.

(Laughter)

KB: Standing on one foot, dipping toast. I guess Grandma taught 'em that. They were cute.

HY: So did you have much interaction with your grandmother?

KB: No. She died [in 1922] when I was only three years old.
HY: What are your memories of her? What do you remember?

KB: I remember her as a very gracious, sort of a kind, gracious, lovely lady. I can remember her lying in bed as she was ill the last couple years of her life. And she lived right near us on the ocean. But, as I say, she was kind and gracious. She wasn’t very old either when she died. Fifty-five [years old] or something. But in those days, Hawaiian people used to die real early.

HY: Were you expected to do any chores or anything like that?

KB: No.

HY: Did you have other responsibilities as a child?

KB: Not really. Just studying, going to school.

HY: Was that something that was emphasized? Your school studies?

KB: Yeah, my mother used to read to us every night, which, luckily she did, because it’s all imbued in the reading and books.

HY: You mentioned that your grandmother taught the parrots Hawaiian. Was Hawaiian spoken in your family?

KB: Never once. I didn’t even know my father could speak Hawaiian. He never spoke it in front of us.

HY: [He only spoke] English [in front of you]?

KB: Yeah, because in the old days, I guess Hawaiian was considered derogatory. One time I heard him speak Hawaiian. We were crossing Kealakekua Bay in a canoe with a Hawaiian man that we’d rented from on the Big Island, and it got rough. And my mother couldn’t swim so she was worried. She started panicking. And my father came out with a string of Hawaiian to the canoe man. We said, “What the hell? I didn’t know you could speak Hawaiian.” (HY laughs.)

He said, “Of course I can.”

But he—-amazing. He never spoke it at home.

HY: That was the only time you heard him speak [Hawaiian]?

KB: Yup.

HY: Who was the disciplinarian in your family?

KB: Mother.

HY: How would she discipline you?

KB: Verbally. We always had nurses, too. They were—both [my] parents were lucky. We used to
sometimes bring in nurses from the Mainland.

HY: Were you close to any of them?

KB: Yeah. There's one or two of them; we're very close.

HY: Did they live on the property then?

KB: Yeah.

HY: Do you remember any of their names?

KB: Ah, Nursie (laughs). There was, what was her name? There was one called Miss Slip, which I can remember.

We used to spend time, also, back in Massachusetts. And mother would take us out of school to go back there. She had tutors for us there, and we all had our little classroom in our house up there in Massachusetts, wherein Miss Slip was one of our tutors, and then she came back with us as a nursemaid.

HY: Oh, I see. You considered Hawai'i your home, though?

KB: Mmhmm.

HY: And I know later in life, you had a closeness to your uncle.

KB: Yes.

HY: Francis [I'i Brown].

KB: Francis.

HY: Do you have memories of him [when you were] a child?

KB: Yes. We used to see him, but not too much. But for some reason, he sort of adopted me. And when I married Joan [Schaefer], he adopted both of us and decided that he was gonna show us how to comport ourselves and how to live. He had no children of his own, see. So he just adopted us in a sense.

HY: Did he do that to your other [siblings]?

KB: No. Just me. Strange. Well I was named [after him]. My name is Kenneth Francis Brown, so I have no idea.

HY: But he felt some connection with you.

KB: He felt very close to me.

HY: What do you remember, from when you were younger, about him?
KB: We used to see him not very often because he was sort of a celebrity. And he would be in the golf tournaments and he'd be in the paper: "Francis Brown Wins at Mānoa Again!" All that kind of stuff. And at one time, he was in a dreadfully serious accident, and he almost died, and that was all in the paper. He recovered out in our family land in Waipi'o [Peninsula]. Strangely enough, the Hawaiian community regarded him as a very important person. I shouldn't say "strangely enough."

HY: Why do you say, "strangely enough"?

KB: (Chuckles) Well, I never figured ourselves as being in that, shall we say, league. But apparently, when he was ill—when he was almost dead, a lot of people came down and worshipped and chanted at the hospital. So I realize, in retrospect, that he represented something very important as an ali'i to the older Hawaiian [people]. And he sort of comported himself as, I think, as a way an ali'i is supposed to comport.

HY: Maybe you can talk a little bit about family dynamics—like, say, did you all eat together at supper?

KB: We all ate together, always ate together, breakfast, lunch, and dinner. It was wonderful.

HY: And did you have somebody prepare food for you?

KB: Yeah. Mother had a cook, had a cook and two maids. Boy, talk about life of luxury. I thought everybody lived that way.

HY: At what point did you realize that that was somewhat unusual?

KB: I realized that not until I was exposed—when I went away to boarding school, there was a lot of wealthy people there, too. But I didn't realize this was all strange until about—till I was in college. Not strange, but uncharacteristic. And also, I didn't realize that I was brought up in—we grew up in a segregated community. The Orientals were—we loved them and everything, but they were supposed to take their hat off. They weren't supposed to [but] they did, they were very subservient. And we thought that's the way the world is. Strange. It was. Nobody ever says that, but Hawai'i was a segregated community in those days.

HY: So this family that did your grounds keeping, and you grew up with the grandson [Yoshio Fujinaga], was your perception of that—I assume that's a Japanese family.

KB: Yep.

HY: Was your perception of that different?

KB: No. I had no problem with that. And the young fellow was just like a brother almost. But the funny thing, after he got older and got married, he stopped—he began to—he himself, just felt distant. Because we had grown up in that little place where we palled around together, but after he went to school and grew up, something happened to him, and it's very sad. There was a barrier. A wonderful guy. But, you know, the custom. I didn't feel that, but I think he, himself, felt [it]. Sad.
HY: So it's his . . .

KB: I guess his—when he was growing up, he thought, "Hell, these are all my pals" and everything. Then when he went to school, [he was] probably [told], you know, "You're Japanese," (KB speaks in a negative tone of voice). People forget there was a lot of that discrimination here. And even Hawaiians discriminated.

HY: So you were talking about your family meals. What kind of food did the cook make for you?

KB: Good old New England food. We had some great cooks. In the latter years, after we moved out and Mom was an old, ancient lady living all by herself, her cook took care of her totally, the loving cook.

HY: Was this someone that she had brought from [Massachusetts]?

KB: No. This was, as a matter of fact, it was Wally [Wallace S.] Fujiyama's mother.

HY: Oh.

KB: She devoted her life to taking care of my mom in her latter year—Helen [Fujiyama].

HY: Now did she live on the property as well during that time?

KB: Yeah. But later on, I think she moved out. She lived there, and she took care of this old lady, my mom, lovingly and willingly.

HY: So, with all these other people around, did you feel like you had many parents?

KB: No. It was a formal—see, in those days, it was kind of hierarchical. You knew who your father and mother was, and it was sort of ordered. I think that's the thing that the book I've just been reading called *Five Hundred Year Delta* says. One thing that's breaking up in our whole society is the patriarchal—the family was a unit accepted all over. First of all, the family—father, mother, grandfather, children, servants—and then the companies were all done that way, and the cities were done that way, the states were done that way, and our whole nation, based on that hierarchy. And it's all breaking up, so a person who's a lower member who's supposed to be looking [toward] the dad or something, "To hell with that. I got all my news on CNN [Cable News Network]. I read all these philosophical books. So I don't have to listen to him." So one of his [the author's] theses is that that whole thing is an ancient paradigm which is not in place anymore. We rail about family values, but it's gone. People getting their values out of the internet, and we get so angry about it because it's all different. You know, you wake up in the morning, you don't say, "What would my grandparents want me to do today?" But in the old days, you would. So in those days, you would. So in those days, we assumed a hierarchy, and there was a hierarchy in society, too. We used to go around with the missionary people [such as] the Cookes, and they all accepted us even though we were part-Hawaiian, which was kind of a push for them. But they accepted us and loved us.

HY: Were you conscious of that at the time?

KB: Never. I didn't have a clue. (Chuckles)
HY: You say that more in retrospect?

KB: Yeah. But I can remember now, looking back, seeing my father at parties. And every time we had a party, there would be a Hawaiian orchestra singing and playing. And they sing so happy and gay, and then sometimes, I’d see my father standing with them and looking at them. There was a huge poignant feeling of pathos there because these people said, “You know, I just get paid to play music and laugh and I do that all the time, but inside me—” (puts his hands on his heart). . . . I suddenly realized that there was another whole area of communication that the Hawaiians were saying, “Yeah, that’s right, I gotta dance and make funny.” And everybody laughs and (KB claps), but inside me (points to his chest)—and my dad can understand that. I can see, now, in retrospect, I can see them sharing that and then smiling.

HY: Let me just see if I’m understanding what you’re saying. There’s kind of a patronizing attitude . . .

KB: Ah . . .

HY: . . . not from your father.

KB: No. I just . . .

HY: He empathized more with them.

KB: Yeah. Not patronizing. It’s sort of unconsciously saying, “Hawaiians, God, they’re fun. They dance. But they play music.” Nobody ever said that. I don’t think they even thought through it that much, but the Hawaiians felt: I’m only here for all these big shots ’cause I play music, but there’s a whole lot more to me, to my culture, and everything. But as I say my dad and them would exchange.

HY: Did your father ever discuss these things with you?

KB: Never.

HY: Did your mother ever discuss these feelings?

KB: Never. I’m just assuming them. Extrapolating them.

HY: In retrospect.

KB: Yeah. Because the fact that he [KB’s father] never spoke Hawaiian said something.

HY: Yeah. Well, that was the time.

KB: Yeah. He wanted us to grow up like Haoles. Pass for Haole.

HY: Was that the unspoken intent?

KB: I think so. But I don’t think that anybody in those days was that introspective. People just did it. Then people like me come around and start attributing philosophical and psychological
things. Subconscious, I guess, you call it.

HY: So you said that school was something that was emphasized. You were expected to do your studies.

KB: Do well in school.

HY: And you went to Punahou [School], right?

KB: Punahou.

HY: Did you go there from elementary [school]?

KB: I went there. Before that was a school called Lanai School, which took people from kindergarten up to about third or fourth grade. It was a very nice little school. And then I went to Punahou.

HY: Was Lanai School a private school?

KB: Yeah. It was a tiny little school.

HY: And was it children from that community, in Diamond Head?

KB: No, from all over. There were two major kindergartens. The other one was—what's the name of the other one? Can't think of it. There was a major one, and Lanai was a more private little one.

HY: Was it a kind of an elite private school?

KB: In a sense. But it didn't feel that way. There was a lady called Miss [Lucy] Maxwell who ran it, who had been . . .

HY: You remember the name.

KB: Miss Maxwell. And she had been recruited by one or two families, and so they started this little school. The other school was Hanahau'oli, which was a bigger school, which most of the missionary families went through. I guess that was it then. The non-missionaries, small group, had Lanai School.

HY: And then after that, you went to Punahou?

KB: Went to Punahou.

HY: Do you remember some of your classmates? Who were you close to of your classmates at Punahou?

KB: Let's see. Seymour Shingle. He was one of the Campbell family. A fellow named Billy Thompson, Henry Sutton, there's a bunch of them. John Bustard. All kinds of people. He just passed away not long ago. He was a big Punahou alumni arranger. He arranged all the
reunions and things like that.

HY: Did you have favorite subjects?

KB: I liked them all.

HY: You enjoyed school? The academic part of it?

KB: Mm hmm. I was lucky, I got good grades so I didn’t have to work very hard. And the people—I wasn’t very athletic, so they used to tease me. They elected me secretary of the class, which is usually a girl. (Chuckles) They were teasing. They nominated me and I got elected, so I was on the student council and all that kind of stuff. And I can remember one time, when I just got into Punahou, some of the bigger boys started teasing me. And so I told my dad, and he called up Leon Sterling Sr., who was a friend of his—part-Hawaiian. And my dad had sent his [Leon Sterling’s] two children to Punahou, and they were big husky people. And my dad called Leon Sr., said, “Please tell your son to take care of little Kenny.” (HY laughs.)

So next time, the same people were hassling me, these two big guys came, said, “Listen, don’t you touch him or we’ll just beat the corn out of you.” (Chuckles) So it was funny. It was cute.

HY: You had your elementary school bodyguards.

KB: Exactly. They were both giant.

HY: Were they in upper grades?

KB: One was one grade above me and the other, about four grades (chuckles).

HY: Well, why were you picked on, you think?

KB: I used to be driven to school by a chauffeur. Picked up by a chauffeur. I don’t think they really picked on me. I think I exaggerated it. They were teasing. I guess you tease everybody, don’t you? You’re supposed to tease people, but when a kid comes to school with a chauffeur.

HY: Now, was that unusual for Punahou?

KB: I think it was. (Chuckles) He [the chauffeur] had leggings, leather leggings, and a little cap.

HY: Did you feel embarrassed by that?

KB: Not a bit.

HY: No. (Laughs)

KB: He was a great friend of ours. Name was Koba, Koba-san, Kobayashi. He used to talk to us all the way to school and back, and he lived at the house, and gave us a lot of BS about everything. He was a great guy.
HY: Sounds like you were close to a lot of people that served your family.

KB: Yeah. They were very close and wonderful.

HY: And did they—aside from the grounds keeper—did they raise their families there as well?

KB: They didn't have families.

HY: That was the only one, then?

KB: Then when they would marry, they would move away, the young ones.

HY: I just want to backtrack a little bit. I know that your grandmother passed away—this is your paternal grandmother—had passed away when you were about three, but do you have any memories of going there [to her Waipi'o property]?

KB: We used to go to the property at Waipi'o. See, she had houses all over. Had one in the mountains, one in Waipi'o, one in Nu'uanu, one on Kaua'i, one on Hawai'i. In the old days, they used to travel around, so down in Waipi'o, on the fish pond, [which by that time was filled in, but originally rich with mullet] there was a wonderful house that we kept using for years and years after her demise, and Uncle Francis lived there for a while after he had his accident, and my brother, George, built his house just above the old family place when he got married. That was back in the [19]40s—'41. So we stayed on long after my grandma died. The house down there was a big part of the family. They would have parties there. And my uncle Francis, when he was running for the legislature, he would have lū'aus down there and it was a very celebrated, special place for the family. [Francis I'i Brown served in the territorial house, 1925-26; and in the territorial senate, 1927-34 and 1937-48.]

HY: So it was a place that you would have family parties as well for official related...

KB: Yeah, family get-togethers. And when my brother moved down there—'cause it was very handy for him too, so it was a great place.

HY: Did he have a close relationship to your uncle Francis as well?

KB: Not too [close]. I think he knew my grandma longer 'cause he was four years older. So she gave him all of the family names, 'cause he was the eldest. And in the Hawaiian tradition, the eldest—sort of like in England, the eldest carries on the mana of the ancestors. So she was very careful about all of his names and all kinds of things. She was Hawaiian, brought up as a Hawaiian, ali'i.

HY: I guess, let me go back to your Punahou days. You liked all your subjects, and school came fairly easily for you.

KB: Yeah.

HY: Did you think about what career you wanted to do?

KB: No. Not at that age.
HY: People didn't talk to you about what you [were expected to do]?

KB: No. The idea was, I think, at that age, you were able to concentrate on school as a progressive set of goals to reach every year. Exams were common. And you were graded, which was fascinating. We got numbers. Nowadays, what I keep bemoaning is that everything in the world now is numbered. You know, you see very few people who go into the humanities and graduate school. But they go into things like science and all the stuff where you can grade and measure. And in the humanities it's pretty hard to measure your achievements, like when you write a novel or write a critique of poetry or something. In those days it was very comforting. When you get through, they give you a report card. That's pretty comforting, but you missed some of the other stuff. Then you could also be the captain of the football team or the swimming team. In other words, it was easy to grow up because they kept on measuring you, and of course, if you were failing, it would be pretty tough. But I was lucky in school, I didn't ever fail. In athletics—if you weren't too good in school and you could be a super athlete, again you were accepted. Nobody judged you on your soul or your morals or anything like that. And that's the way it is today, too.

HY: Yeah. Quantified.

KB: Everything is quantified. And we have that trouble at [The] Queen's [Health Systems]. When we try to do things to raise the spiritual self-esteem of the Hawaiian by embracing the Hōkūle'a and all that, a number of people say, "What the hell is that? That's an expense." So the hearts and the dollars are competing, but the heart's the thing that, in the end, you gotta do. But again, in our society, we're so good at numbering things. How would you put down Father Damien in an expense account? Huh? You'd be wasting money over there. And that's the problem we have.

HY: This is something you've arrived at much later in your life.

KB: Mmhmm.

HY: Certainly not in your younger days.

KB: No. It was very comforting in those days. Old fun. Just measure.

HY: What other kind of activities did you do there? Or was it mostly academic and your student government?

KB: Yeah. I was never much of an athlete. I loved to swim. That was fun. But as far as the other athletic stuff, I wasn't very good at it. Twice a week, we went out and did things like manual training and then we had physical exercise. Manual training, you learn how to cut wood with a saw.

HY: Shop.

KB: Shop, they called it. Then they had sports. Like my poor daughter, when she was a teenager going to Punahou—teenagers, so careful of their appearance. They had to go out and play soccer first period, in the morning. So she stopped going. I said, "Now why should they make a poor little teenage girl at that age run out and get all sweaty?"
(Laughter)

HY: But did you make her do this?

KB: But she finally left. She got thrown out of Punahou.

HY: This is your older daughter?

KB: My younger daughter. Youngest daughter, Bernice [Brown Johnston]. But she had her values. But in my day, you just went out and did all those things. So I did the physical ed[ucation]—that’s what they called it, physical ed. Manual training and physical ed. Everything was all programmed.

HY: Did you swim for the Punahou team?

KB: I swam on the team and had lot of fun.

HY: Punahou, later—I don’t know if at that time, they had quite a reputation for putting out good swimmers.

KB: I think they did, yeah. They were excellent.

HY: Were there other community activities that you were involved in?

KB: Very little. School was all encompassing.

HY: And then you were in boarding school?

KB: Yeah. I went to two different boarding schools. I went to one, which was a pre-high school boarding school for a year. And then came back and spent one more year at Punahou and then I went away again to another high school boarding school.

HY: Was that something that you were expected to do, go to boarding school? What was the thinking behind that?

KB: Hawai‘i, in those days, had large connection with New England. I guess it was the—not only the missionaries, but the traders all came from there. The whalers and everybody. So there were cousin connections over there.

HY: Cousins?

KB: I think the business people and the missionary offspring still had cousins, and they all went to Yale [University] or Harvard [University] or something like that. So there was a much closer connection to the East [Coast] than with San Francisco, [California,] which was considered an upstart of a place. So it was considered—the east was the mecca. So we would go to boarding school over there, and learn all the ways of the preppies.

HY: What was your first boarding school?
KB: The first one was called Fessenden [School], which is a place outside of Boston. But I was—they didn’t board there. My mother went and rented a house there and stayed with me. (Chuckles)

HY: Oh, is that right? (Chuckles)

KB: So I went to Fessenden for a year. And then when I went away to Hotchkiss [School], it was boarding school.

HY: And what was that like?

KB: Boarding school was dreadful. The transition was dreadful to me. I hated it. But I got used to it after one year.

HY: Why did you hate it?

KB: It was so different. I had to live in a room with two other kids, and they were Easterners and they had funny different ideas about everything, and they thought Hawai‘i was somewhere out by the Philippines. I guess they considered me as sort of an exotic stranger out of Hawai‘i. It was so far away from them. They had no idea where it was. They said, “You get to Manila very often?” They have no clue. And even though there had been other students from Hawai‘i over the decades there, they looked at us as sort of exotic.

HY: Were some of your classmates there from Hawai‘i?

KB: I had one there. But I didn’t get along with my first two roommates. I wasn’t used to living with two other jackasses in the room (HY laughs), and taking showers with everybody and all that. After the first year, I got over it. I enjoyed it. I made a lot of good friends. I learned the preppe ethos. Thank God. Now I can understand people like [former U.S. president] George Bush and all those people. The preppe world is entirely different.

HY: You’re saying, you’re glad you learned that so you can understand those people?

KB: Totally.

HY: Or because you feel like it’s valuable in and of itself?

KB: No. It’s good to know. It’s like knowing another culture. Because you see, we all assume we have the same culture, but those people over there, even today, they tell me in the State Department, they’re still dominated by the preppe ethos, which is the east is the place and London is the real spiritual mecca of all the world.

When I was going to prep school, they used to try to copy their suits from Harris Tweeds and all that. And the prep schools were modelled right after English boarding schools. So subliminally, they all bowed to England. But then, you see, the way you measure your success in the preppe world is your station rather than your achievement. And they’d say, “My dad is the president of the bank.” And so in that world, it’s your station in life. In fact, if you came from the wrong side of the tracks and got to be chairman of a big bank, they’d say, “Ah, he’s a good guy, but he doesn’t have any—no family,” and so that whole world is still dominated
by a whole bunch in Washington [D.C.], I think.

HY: Did you think that at the time?

KB: No, I didn’t. I just sort of assumed that these guys knew what they hell they were talking about, and you had to talk their dialect. So I got to be very good at being a preppie. You have to be.

HY: Did you feel like you fit in well after that first year?

KB: Yeah, I think I was well accepted because I learned the dialect and the values, and really adhered to them when I was going there because that was a big superculture—intellectual, spiritual. I went to school with people like Fords, and later on, in retrospect, I realized how human and fallible they all were. (Chuckles) So in those days, you know—this is Bill Ford [of the Henry Ford family] over here.

HY: Were you intimidated at all?

KB: Not a bit.

HY: Or did you feel like this was where you belonged?

KB: I figured I was just as good as them.

HY: Did that change your perception of your home then? Of Hawai‘i?

KB: I was able to capitalize on Hawai‘i as an exotic fascinating place to them. I used to take my steel guitar with me and play music and sing Hawaiian songs. They started saying, “Well, that’s pretty glamorous out there, pretty exotic.” And I went back to my fiftieth reunion about five years ago at Princeton [University]. And they had an evening where all the classmates and their wives come into a big tent and they put on a big show, and first thing was one classmate and his wife danced a solo, waltzing and fox-trot dance to some terrible old music. They were supposed to be the best dancers fifty years ago. So they danced to that funny old Fred Astaire music and everything. Then they said, “Now for the final, we’re going to our favorite song.” Then two of them went out and danced and sang [Harry Owens’ hapa-Haole song] the “Princess Pupule Has Plenty Papaya,” [originally rendered “Princess Poopoo Has Plenty Papaya,” which is cited in Hawaiian Music and Musicians] which I had taught them fifty years ago. And they still thought it was the funniest. They were all laughing. They said, “Oh God, they’re doing ‘Princess Pupule.’ Isn’t that great?” Do you believe that? Joan [KB’s wife] and I looked at each other and said, “That’s as far as they’ve gotten?” But you see, I sang that once in a coming out party in New York, and people just loved it. And they’re still there. One of the disturbing things about those people is that they never get beyond that. Most of them, they go back every year to their reunion, and that’s their whole life: “Remember the time we used to do this?” Or they’re thinking about what they did when they were in college. And for them, maybe it was their. . . .

HY: Well, now, some of your classmates at Princeton were people that began running the country.

KB: Yeah. Indeed. And a lot of them went to war right after that. I graduated in [19]41, and the
[Second World] War started. And lot of them went to war were major war heroes, and a lot of them died, too. Some of the finest ones died.

HY: Who were some of your classmates at Princeton?

KB: One of them was [Malcom S.] Forbes, who just died. We had some Fords. We had some wealthy people from Chicago. We had—some of those old names are not too well known, but they’re old wealthy families. But in those days, you wouldn’t be in awe of somebody. There’s old Bill Ford or old Malcolm Forbes. We had a fellow named Jack [John T.] Dorrance, who was the heir to the Campbell Soup [Company] millions, billions, and in Princeton, you’re not allowed to have a car, but he kept a car and a chauffeur just outside of town. And he was totally wealthy. But he didn’t strut it or anything.

HY: Did you come back to Hawai‘i after boarding school? Or did you go right into Princeton?

KB: We had to come back every year. Every summer, that’s all. Right to the very next year into Princeton. But summer [we spent] at home.

HY: What did you do in the summer?

KB: We had more fun.

HY: Surf?

KB: Surf and had parties and dates and all kinds of things. It was fun.

HY: What was your social circle like?

KB: Same people. The big—what you call, the elite.

HY: Were these mostly the Big Five? The Haole elite?

KB: Yeah. The Cookes, Castles. Yeah. And a few “acceptable” Hawaiians like the Dowsetts and Browns. Not very many. My father and mother, we used to have a tennis court at our house. As I was growing up, they used to have tennis matches, they did a lot of tennis up there. It was all the elite. As I say, it was marvelously segregated life. And then coming back and forth on the ship, was four or five days with nothing to do but booze up and have fun and have parties. God, it was one giant house party. In fact, the captain of one ship got mad at some of our people. They were throwing steamer chairs over the. . . . One of our friends got drunk and climbed up in the rigging with his guitar and tried to serenade the moon. The captain put him on the dry list. But they used to raise hell. Fun. Was a great big party with no chaperone. Boys and girls.

HY: Let me flip the tape over.
SIDE TWO

HY: Okay.

KB: We're off.

HY: We're talking about your wild parties.

KB: Oh, it was fun. Yeah, and again, we didn't realize how blessed we were. We thought everybody did that.

HY: Now, coming back in the summers, or whenever you were in Hawai‘i, were you involved at all in the family business? Did you spend time with your father?

KB: No. He went to the office every day and he worked. He said, “I work to support your uncle,” because Uncle Francis never worked, and he spent money like mad.

HY: Now, what was their relationship like?

KB: Theirs was a very interesting relationship. My father kept inferring that he was a guardian: “I'm paying for all this fun your uncle is having.” 'Cause he had to work in the family business. But they had a good relationship. My father considered him as a young fellow who needed care, needed advice and help. In fact, my father also used to take care of the beach boys at Waikiki. He was the treasurer of the Hui Nalu [Canoe Club], which is a beach boys club. And he used to save all their money for them, and do all kinds of things like that for them, and take care of their canoes and everything. So he was a kind of guardian type.

HY: It's just the two of them, right?

KB: Yeah.

HY: What's the age difference between them?

KB: Oh, about five years.

HY: So he felt like he had to . . .

KB: Be responsible, 'cause [their] mom [Irene I'i] had died and their father [Charles Augustus Brown] went off and lived back in Massachusetts. And their mom and dad got separated years ago, and I've heard recently that the reason they separated was over sovereignty.

HY: Is that right?

KB: I wonder if that's true. She was a great supporter of [Queen] Lili'uokalani. And he was a businessman, was all for development and all. I wonder if that might be true. One of my nephews is researching that. There's a whole pile of papers in Bishop Museum, which had been segregated and locked up, and pretty soon to be made available for study. Got letters and all kinds of things.
HY: DeSoto [Brown] is working on it?

KB: Yeah. DeSoto.

HY: Interesting.

KB: Yeah. He's the guy that advanced that thesis. Probably true.

HY: So they were separated when . . .

KB: Very early.

HY: Was he not raised by his father, then?

KB: By mom and kāpuna up in Nu'uanu. And the parrots used to say in Hawaiian, "Hele mai ka'a uli'a?" Did you come in the streetcar? They had all these little talks. 'Cause they used to ride the streetcar up there to visit with Aunty Irene. So the parrots would laugh and yell and scream in Hawaiian. So they were brought up in a Hawaiian house full of elders.

HY: When your uncle entered politics, were there any family campaigning? Or were your folks involved at all?

KB: Very little. No, he did it all.

HY: It was just something he did.

KB: He said that he had the secret. "You give one party for the Pākēs, one party for the Japanese, one party for the Filipinos." And he never made a speech. He always had a Hawaiian orchestra with him so they'd have this big party, and he would just be there and have the music and everything, and they would remember him and vote for him. He didn't have to go out and hold signs or do anything.

HY: So you came home in the summers, then you went back to Princeton.

KB: Back to Princeton.

HY: And did you know then you wanted to go into architecture?

KB: Yeah, right about the Princeton time, I decided to go for architecture.

HY: What were the influences that headed you in that direction?

KB: I think it was a combination of logic and engineering as well as creativity, the challenge.

HY: That appealed to you?

KB: Yeah.

HY: Was there anybody that influenced you?
KB: Not a soul.

HY: Just something that you came up with.

KB: Yeah. And it also gives you a good insight into—in those days, of course, our whole architectural education was based on western architecture. But when you study architecture of a country, you have to learn the whole culture. So by the buildings, you really are studying the entire (culture)—so gives you a wonderful way of understanding the values of all those ancient mother cultures. Except they never told us anything about Asia. So I had to learn all that myself later. But architecture is a wonderful key. I’d say that a building or a city expresses the values of a society, no matter what you say. And I was talking to my son-in-law last night, who’s an architect. He said, “This goddamn zoning is so terrible, I can’t get any building permits or anything.” I said well it’s your society. It’s not the poor clerk that’s doing it, it’s the people who wrote the laws and all that. It’s just an expression of the land you live in. See, a lot of people, now, get mad at the politician, but they’re just creatures of ourselves. And we’re wonderfully able to divorce ourselves: “Those goddamn politicians.” Who the hell elected them? So they’re an expression of our culture and values, so if you really don’t like it, go run.

HY: (Chuckles) And you did.

KB: I did.

(Laughter)

HY: And so what is your feeling about [the architecture of] Honolulu, then?

KB: My feeling is that Honolulu expresses our values, and the tragedy of it is that the value is currency. You can’t make moral judgement, because I’ve learned over the years that profit drives all construction. You can want to build—one in a while you’ll build a Mormon church, and even then you make money off it. You see, what we do is we’re sort of schizophrenic. We say we’re doing all this marvelous planning. So we have these planners, we make zoning and all this kind of stuff. But then, somebody comes along, says, “I have a super idea. I’m gonna build a $200 million tower here, and I need some variances.” So they build it. And nobody says, “Now, wait a minute.” He says, “No, I’ve gotta do that. I’m creating jobs, I’m doing this.” This expresses our values. And if I complain about that, then I’m complaining about my tribe. But it’s so easy to complain about them because they do it. But it’s not they, it’s us. But it’s hard to express that to people. It’s much better to say, “Well those goddamn—the government. The government’s too big.” Well, who the hell made the government?

When I was going to school, the depression came, and Franklin D. Roosevelt got elected. And my classmates in the east thought he was worse than [Adolf] Hitler. They cursed him and they cursed Eleanor [Roosevelt], and they cursed everybody. Worse than they’re cursing poor old [President] Bill [Clinton].

HY: They didn’t like the New Deal?

KB: But he changed—What he did was take care of all the poor people who would fall through the cracks [during] the depression. So he made all those new deals. They hated that.
HY: And does your family . . .

KB: They were probably against it. My mother was for Roosevelt.

HY: Oh, that's interesting.

(Laughter)

KB: She was kind of a rebel.

HY: Was she kind of outside the norm of your circle of friends?

KB: Yes. Everybody said, "Oh, that's Julia." She used to ride her bicycle around Diamond Head and Waikiki. A little motorcycle. She had a little motorcycle. She was a nice little rebel. Totally outspoken.

HY: You think she had a influence on you politically?

KB: I think so, yeah. Her theory was, it doesn't have to be because everybody says it's right. What's right? Figure out what's right and then go for it. She had that wonderful egotism of trusting her own judgement. See, most of us try to find out what everyone else is thinking, so we're governed by a whole bunch of eyes looking at us. But in her case, she didn't give a—"No, what's right is right." Probably she was insensitive, which is lucky. She didn't care if somebody said Julia Brown's crazy. That's an extraordinary kind of spirit. People would say kinda goofy.

HY: Do you ever remember any political discussions or arguments in your family?

KB: Very little. They weren't that deep into politics.

HY: What about her relationship with her brother-in-law [Francis I'i Brown]?

KB: They loved each other. But they had a sort of off and on prickly relationship. He'd say she's crazy, but they loved each other. But they would argue all the time. They were very kindred spirits.

HY: Now, did you stay close to your siblings, then, when you were away? Oh, I guess they boarded as well.

KB: They were at different schools. All different, although my brother, Zadoc [White Brown], came to Princeton with me. We lived together the first couple of years, and then separated out after two more years.

HY: Is George [I'i Brown II] older than Zadoc?

KB: George is the oldest. He went to Princeton, too.

HY: Did you feel closer to Zadoc, being closer in age?
KB: Yeah. I think so. George was sort of a prickly guy, too, like his mom. I can remember, you know, I've used most of the arguments between my mother and her eldest son. They were both sort of prickly.

HY: About anything or were there areas of . . .

KB: No. Just behavior. Disagreements. They loved it. Some people like to argue. I guess it's fun. Gets your adrenaline going, and makes you think better.

HY: Yeah, some people do like to argue.

KB: They do.

HY: Okay, so you're at Princeton, and you decided to go into architecture, and you're surrounded by people that will run the country, for the most part, and then, you graduated in '41. The war had just broken out.

KB: The war broke out after graduation. Graduation in June, and then December 7.

HY: So you came back?

KB: Came back and worked here. And when the war came, I was taken into the civil defense for a while, and then I ended up as a U.S. Army Engineer. So I never got drafted or anything. I tried one time to volunteer and they wouldn't let me. I was working for the engineers designing stuff. So I was totally escaped from all the problems of the war.

HY: You [must] have classmates [who went].

KB: Yeah. Some very good ones died. Guadalcanal and places like that, 'cause in those days, we thought it was noble. But in looking back, "Why the hell did my poor buddy, at the age of twenty-two, have to die on a beach out in the middle of nowhere?"

HY: But you felt this calling to . . .

KB: In those days, you had to. You were defending something. I guess we humans, our genes help us to do that, don't they? My brother-in-law, Freddy [Frederick] Schaefer [III], went down to Guadalcanal and saved somebody's life and got desperately wounded for standing up and killing a Japanese sniper. Got a huge decoration, he went back and recovered, and then he went over to Europe and fought again. Then when the Vietnam [War] came, he was a general in the National Guard here in Hawai'i, and he was picked to take the 25th Division over to Vietnam. And he trained them in Schofield [Barracks], and they were all furious at him for working them so hard. When they got to Vietnam, they said, "Oh, thank God, General. You beat our asses up over there at Schofield, 'cause you showed us what this is all about." But there's a guy, he's an absolutely wonderful moral person. I don't think he has any regrets about what he did. . . . How do you do it?

HY: When you were working for the Army Engineers, what projects were you working on?

KB: We started off by trying to camouflage Honolulu. We designed nets and covers, so that if they
were being attacked by sea or land we would have our arms on top of one of the buildings in Iwilei. They were gonna place machine gunners and everything. They put nets over them, they couldn’t see them. And we hid the guns in Diamond Head. Then we got into designing camps and towns and bridges.

HY: Designing camps.

KB: All kinds of stuff. The Army Engineers did all the building.

HY: Did you come back home then, to your family place?

KB: Lived in Mama’s place.

HY: And then you got married after the war?

KB: After the war.

HY: And were your brothers living there, too, then?

KB: Both were living here. One was in the navy. The other was drafted in the army. But they all stayed here.

HY: What happened, then, after the war?

KB: After the war, I went to work for the family company [John I'i Estate]. Then I started my own planning, construction, and architect firm, and then eventually got my own architectural office.

HY: What sort of projects did you want to do?

KB: Mostly residential. It was fun. My uncle hired me to design a huge mansion up in Pebble Beach, which I did.

HY: Was that for him?

KB: Yeah (chuckles), and I had lot of fun doing houses and residences. But I found out it wasn’t that stimulating, architecture. It was fun, but there was a lot of grinding involved (chuckles).

HY: Wasn’t that stimulating?

KB: It was, but then I found out that it’s more fun being in the area of developing, using the architectural discipline. So I ended up working for the Mauna Lani Resort people [Tokyu Corp.]. When I was the director of Amfac, I got involved in the first layout of Kā‘anapali. Had lot of fun. I was still architecting, but I was sort of being a what do you call? Overlooking (chuckles).

HY: Overseer.

KB: Criticizing. (HY laughs.) Much better to be a critic than to be the actual designer.
I'm getting tired.

HY: You getting pooped? Okay, let's stop this for now.

END OF INTERVIEW
 HY: This is the second session with Mr. Kenny Brown. It’s June 19, 1998 and we’re at his office, downtown Honolulu.

Okay, I think last time we left off we were starting to go into [your] development [work]. But if you don’t mind, if we can just backtrack a little bit. You didn’t talk too much about your mom’s background, and she’s from Massachusetts?

KB: She’s from Massachusetts. Her family were—they owned textile mills. And in the days of her great-grandfather and grandfather they learned in New England, because of the energy from a stream, they put water wheels and made them work, great big textile weaving factories. And so they made—Massachusetts was a big industrial area about the time of the Civil War and they were a family that manufactured that. And during the Civil War, they made uniforms for the Northerner. They got the dye from the south, who shipped it to France, and then shipped it north. So in spite of the war, there was blue dye.

So she [KB’s mother] had a cousin who lived out here, a lady who had married one of the Castles, the Castle missionary family. And she came out while she was in her early twenties, I guess, to visit her Aunt Julia Castle. They had a big home out in Waikiki which used to be the Elk’s Club. And there she met George I’i Brown, my father, and they fell in love and got married. Married in Boston.

And when she was married in Boston, I’m sure in those days it was really something, kind of interesting to have a local [Mainland] girl marry a Hawaiian. Nobody ever said much about it but it was pretty exotic. And when my grandmother from Hawai’i came to the Ritz Hotel in Boston for the wedding, she walked into the hotel lobby in her holokū and smoking a roll-your-own cigarette followed by a Japanese maid in a kimono carrying a parrot.

So the Bostonians had to make something out of it so they said local girl marrying Hawaiian royalty. So that’s how they—so it must have been a big leap for Mom from that part of the world, so I give her a lot of credit. Cross-racial marriage because I think in those days it was really pretty weird. But all of her cousins were delighted and we had a lot of fun because we spent about half of our growing-up period back in Massachusetts.

HY: In the Boston area?
KB: Oh, it was outside, in the rural area actually, little town. So we grew up half time in Hawai‘i and half time in Boston or near Boston. Little country town, it was great. So we were sort of bicultural. And both cultures were so accommodating and loving to us.

HY: Both sides of the family?

KB: Both sides, yeah.

HY: Was she named after this aunty that married into the Castles?


HY: And so then they just had the wedding there and then they moved?

KB: Yeah, they moved right back to Hawai‘i, to Honolulu. And Mother, in those days, you had to live on Nu‘uanu, nobody lived on the beach. She stayed there about a year and said, “It’s much too damp up here, I want to move out to the beach.” People said, “No, no, you don’t live on the beach except in the summer.” She said, “I want to live there all the time.” So she got a place off Diamond Head and lived there, and that’s where I was born. So again, she was sort of a, what’s the word? She wasn’t burdened by convention.

HY: You had mentioned that, you know, during the war you had a lot of help that was Japanese.

KB: Yeah.

HY: And I’m wondering how this affected those people, [who] were so much a part of your family, during wartime?

KB: They, the ones who were aliens by that time, most of them had gone back [to Japan] but the local ones suffered a big burden. But they suffered as usual, the way they do, without making a big noise about it. It must have been dreadfully difficult for them but I never heard any of them talking about the agony or anything.

HY: Were most of the people that were employed prior to the war, they continued with your family?

KB: A lot of them stayed on, yeah. Some of the ones who were aliens had left before the war, had gone back to Japan. But all the locals, they were part of the family.

HY: And this family that you were especially close to that did the groundskeeping and whatnot?

KB: Yeah, he stayed there until his demise. They—but I’m sure, as I say, to repeat myself, there was some agony there. But again, they didn’t do any handwringing. I guess that’s—is it Western? Is that a Western phrase, “handwringing”?

HY: I think so, handwringing.

KB: Yeah. (Chuckles) The other cultures don’t handwring.
HY: I never thought about that.

KB: Yeah, I just thought of it.

HY: So you were, you knew there was some anguish there but . . .

KB: Yeah, and one of the great things that Jack [John] Burns did—he was a policeman when the war started—he vouched for a whole lot of Japanese that lived in Hawai‘i. And he said to the military police to just leave them alone, they are just totally, totally reliable. Very few were taken, stuck in [interned at] Sand Island. But he stood up and said, “Wait a minute.”

HY: I assume that because they were domestic help and whatnot, they were less likely to have been taken.

KB: Yeah, that’s right, they were not prominent. There was a whole lot of paranoia. Not amongst us local folk really, I think it was amongst the military government and the military folk. Don’t blame them.

HY: Did you, did your family talk about this sort of thing at all while it was happening?

KB: It didn’t seem to be a problem with us. We accepted all of our Japanese cohorts as being totally part of Hawai‘i. That was proved because all those guys in the 442nd [Regimental Combat Team] immediately volunteered. I mean, goodness gracious, that whole thing is a marvelous testimony. Then they went on, became heroes of the war. Then they came back and helped revolutionize Hawai‘i.

HY: Jack Burns administration.

KB: Yeah.

HY: You had some land that was sold . . .

KB: We had 10,000 acres starting at Pearl Harbor going up to Schofield which was used for sugar. And it was very—it helped us, it was very profitable. But in 1947, my uncle and my two brothers—my father was dead [1946] by that time—we decided to sell it to Castle & Cooke for a sizeable—it seemed like a lot of money in those days. So we don’t own it anymore.

HY: What was the—can you talk about the prior usage?

KB: It was sugar. See, what happened was my grandfather, Charles A. Brown, who came from Lowell, Massachusetts was here during a time when the Dillinghams and all kinds of people were out with great ideas because the middle area of O‘ahu was sort of a waste scrub land. There was no water there. But old man Dillingham [Benjamin Franklin Dillingham], Walter Dillingham’s father, decided to build a railroad. There were a whole lot of entrepreneurs. And my grandfather talked to Dillingham. In fact, we have a letter somewhere that says, “Dear Charles, I want to complain to you because you took me up to a hill in the middle of the great plain of O‘ahu and you said, ‘I control all this land and you and I together can do this and that,’ and I find out you only control about one quarter of it.” (Chuckles) But, see, they were both entrepreneurs, they were starting from nothing.
So he was going to build a railroad, and then my grandfather got together with people who were going to make sugar plantation. But then they said, "You know, the water is over there at Wailhole." Without the Wailhole water, that whole central plain never would have been as great a source of sugar. So during the time of the sugar years, that land was extremely fertile. But [Charles Augustus] "Cabby" Brown, my grandfather, one of those early guys [who] just had a dream. They were great salesmen to each other. They were all a bunch of entrepreneurs just dreaming because there was nothing there.

But along with the requirement, it all got mixed up with sovereignty because then they could sell sugar, if you can sell on the Mainland, you could support this whole infrastructure, help make all these people rich. And so sugar became sort of a wonderful magic carpet for everybody but they had to be able to sell it tariff-free on the Mainland. So they were a bunch of wonderful entrepreneurs, mostly BS, who made it. (Chuckles) 'Cause that's what it takes, I guess.

HY: So why did you decide to sell this pretty valuable piece of property then?

KB: Yeah, we decided because it was all undivided interests. My uncle owned some and my two brothers and I owned some, it was all undivided and we were afraid about governance. When my uncle passed away, we just worried about taxes from his estate and how we run it and you know, so we just decided, took the easy way out and sold it. So, probably shouldn't have, but in retrospect, I think we would still have had a big problem with governance. The Campbell Estate was a trust, you see, the beneficiaries couldn't squabble, but in our case, we took the conservative way out and cashed in.

HY: Your uncle was a great golfer . . .

KB: Golfer, sportsman . . .

HY: And I know that later on you had a golfing relationship, I guess your early relationship with John Burns was through golf. Was your uncle—did you learn golfing with him or was . . .

KB: No, it was part of, we all, in our family, we all learned how to play golf. Little kid, I took lessons at eight. My dad played golf and so, just part of the family ethos. I don't know where it came from.

HY: Now was that something, that seems more like something more elite families were involved in.

KB: Yeah, I think so, yeah, that's right.

HY: Okay, so that was just something you folks did.

KB: It's something, play golf. I guess it was sort of an elitist, wasn't it? The old relationship between Hawai'i, New England, England, Scotland still prevails, so if you played golf, we all aped our—some of us without even knowing it—the British. They were supposed to be the best. And some countries it'll be the French or something like that while Hawai'i, it was the Brits. And the same way in New England. New England. (Chuckles)

HY: Right.
KB: So that was part of it, golf was I guess, part of what you did.

HY: Was that also considered a place where you make political and business connections?

KB: Not in those days, but it has been lately, in the last fifty years. And if you’re a good insurance salesman, you play golf every day.

HY: Your uncle had kind of a famous romance . . .

KB: He did.

HY: You know, with Winona Love.

KB: Winona Love.

HY: What was the family relationship with her?

KB: Mother had little tiny bits of difficulty with Winona not being married. And I can remember, when we came back to Hawai‘i for the summer, we’d often bring cousins and school friends over to visit us.

HY: You mean from the Big Island?

KB: No, from Mainland, New England.

HY: Oh, I see, okay.

KB: They’d come over, our cousins back in New England. And we’d, every summer we’d go up and visit Uncle Francis on his place on Hawai‘i, Keawaiki. I can remember my mother saying, “Now listen George and you boys, when your cousins come, I want you to explain to them that you are going to a place where there’s a man living with an unmarried woman. And just explain so they don’t think it’s common practice around here.” But the funny thing is that whenever they went there, they just fell totally in love with Uncle Francis and Winona. They were such a romantic couple. They were sort of seduced by the beauty of romance. My mother used to say, “Don’t forget now!” But it’s strange in those days, William Randolph Hearst and a few others didn’t get married. But he was—he just decided that was it. I think what he had still left in him, some of the old ali‘i—what’s the word?—feeling of “I can do whatever I want. I’m a Hawaiian ali‘i.”

So he was able to invoke that part while living in the Western world. Then he would invoke his Western self by playing golf. So he was able to balance both of his heritages to advantage. So he was able to really, I wouldn’t say exploit, but he invoked his two heritages extremely well.

HY: What about other members of your family? Were they accepting?

KB: Yeah, no problem. Totally. I think there was more difficulty with the Love family in their relationship to us. Winona’s family.
HY: How so?

KB: They all felt sort of inferior because Uncle Francis hadn’t married sister Winona. They all felt sort of humble when they talked to us about things. In fact, I know when my poor Uncle Francis passed away [in 1976], Winona was still alive and the Love family took care of his interment and everything. And they put him in a little plot in the Diamond Head Cemetery, where we were planning to put him up in Nu’uanu with the rest of the family. And then when she died, they put the both of them together in a little tiny place in Diamond Head Cemetery, sort of a testament. So fascinating. And up there in Nu’uanu where he’s supposed to be, where John I’i is and all that, there’s a big marble thing that says Francis I’i Brown that infers he’s there, but he ain’t. My brothers decided to do that. So again, it was sort of a tension, you know?

The Loves were very nice people. Uncle Francis hired two of them and supported them in many many ways, but he liked them. They were good, but funny. He just wouldn’t get married. He got married once and he had a very spectacular divorce apparently. There were allegations in the newspapers. He said, “I’ll never get married again.” And that was it, when he made his mind up, pop! He was blessed with a lack of self-consciousness. He was unable to stand aside and look at himself and say, “What the hell is he doing?” He just did whatever, you know, it was a wonderful blessing. Just like I used to say about Duke Kahanamoku, he was the same way. Duke Kahanamoku never saw Duke as anything but he was inside of Duke. You’d say, “Duke, how are you?” He’d say, “I’m pretty good, little constipated.” (HY laughs.) “You asked me,” you know? And those people are really lucky. No more handwringing. Isn’t that fascinating? Uncle Francis was that way. Lot of people used to get really mad at him. He just, “I’m Francis Brown.” And when he got old and had a small stroke, he was in the hospital up in Monterey, [California]. He decided it was time to go so he stopped eating and drinking water. We were there and the doctor said, “You want him, forced life?”

We said, “No, he made up his mind.” We’d say, “Did you want some food, Francis?”

“No, thank you.”

“Want some water?”

“No, thank you.” Time to go. No handwringing. He was lucky.

HY: Well, maybe we should talk about, I know you’ve been interviewed a lot about your relationship with John Burns but maybe you could talk about that a little bit. You met him through golf.

KB: I think so, yeah. First time I ever met him was on the golf course. Some of my friends were promoting the fact that we should get together, get to know each other.

HY: And why was that?

KB: I have no idea.

HY: Friends through...
KB: My friends through Sam [Samuel G.] Wight who was a business partner of mine. He said, "You've got to get to know Jack Burns." So we arranged a golf game. That's how we met and we immediately became, well, we understood each other. (Soon after,) I went away on a trip somewhere and I came back and I found out that the Canada Cup, which is a big golfing event, was coming to Hawai'i to play on Maui. World famous players coming and everything. And I found out he had, John Burns had appointed me chairman of the whole goddamn thing. So I got all my friends together and drafted them and put them all to work and we put on a damn good—it was very successful. It was at the time the Kā'anapali Golf Course was just opening and golf on Maui and all that were brand new. So it was a wonderful promotion. And it worked out well so the governor got an inflated idea, I think, of my capabilities. (Laughs) So it started from there. And then after that one, we were able to get the PGA, Professional Golfer's Association, to do a tournament at Wai'alae so the Hawaiian Open got started from there. It was one of those signal events that started a whole lot of stuff going. They made me chair of the first Hawaiian Open. And Governor Burns, I think he enjoyed himself relaxing with me. I don't know why, but playing golf, and later on after I started working with him in the governorship, assistant to the governor, we used to go all by ourselves to the Big Island, up to my little home we have up there, and he and I would just sit around for a couple of days and sometimes we wouldn't say a word for a whole day. But he was apparently able to relax.

HY: Is this on the property that was your uncle's?

KB: No, this is up on the mountain, at Waimea. Then a couple of times we went to Cypress Point (in California) together, played golf. And so for some reason or other, I think he was comfortable around me.

HY: Did you do---I know you became a Democrat. Was there a moment—what was the shift in thinking?

KB: Some of my friends I think proposed to both Jack Burns and me, separately, that I should run with him for lieutenant governor [in 1966] and he fell for the idea.

HY: Like Sam Wight?

KB: Yeah, and some of the other friends. And at that time I was convinced that the Republicans were not getting it. I'd been a traditional Republican but never active or anything. My Uncle Francis was a Republican senator. So I decided to run, become a Democrat.

HY: It came mostly from friends of yours?

KB: Who were saying to the gov, "Why don't you run Kenny Brown?" God knows they had an inflated opinion of me. It's good to have friends who have inflated ideas of you. (Chuckles) And I still remember, I went up—I'm a member of Cypress Point which is a blue blood club up in Pebble Beach—and I went there soon after I announced I was going to run, and I sat down next to one of my uncle's old friends, Mrs. Winslow. And then when I sat down next to her at dinner and she looked at me and said, "Kenny, how could you?" I knew exactly what she was thinking about. (Laughs)

HY: And your response to her was?
KB: My response was I do exactly what I think is right. Later on she said that’s all right. After. But that’s what happened. I was lucky to be enlisted in that great movement which was fueled by the AJA [Americans of Japanese Ancestry] and the 442nd and John A. Burns and all that stuff. And the labor union. I was lucky to have been brought into that. So I participated as a very minor participant. I saw that they had a vision, sort of an idealistic vision which they were able to put in play.

HY: Did you know that this was sort of an historical time while it was happening?

KB: I knew that there was a big change in Hawai‘i and I figured we were so fortunate to have a whole bunch of idealists doing it. Well, the missionaries were idealists, but after the missionaries first came, then commerce got to be the dominant thing. So commerce was really running this whole place before the time of Jack Burns. There’s nothing wrong, I’m not saying it’s immoral, it was dollars. And the Burns people, whatever you want to call, they were for hearts. So hearts and dollars. So I have a question I usually ask people, “Which weighs more, gold or aloha?”

And one of my Chinese friends says, “Typical, you Westerners, you’re dualists.”

I said, “Huh?”

He says, “Yeah, they’re both together—yin, yang.”

So I said, “Okay, then how [do] you tell [whether] I weigh gold or aloha?”

He said, “In your soul. And by the way Kenny, I can see your soul by how you judge that.”

So that made me kind of think, “Oh my gosh.” Isn’t that a fascinating concept? So we do that all the time. We do that at Queen’s [Hospital, currently named The Queen’s Medical Center]. We’re supposed to be doing good but we need money to do it. So somewhere you’ve got to find a way of accommodating. You want to build a whole new X-ray machine in O‘ahu and there’s no doctor over in Ka‘ū on the Big Island, and the X-ray machine costs $12 million and putting a doctor in Ka‘ū will cost you $200,000 a year because there’s no treatment over there in Ka‘ū, the dollar. I mean the dollar’s over here and the gold over here. But you can’t put—-you put that on your balance, on your profit and loss, and we’ll show you lost $200,000 over in Ka‘ū, and when you build the X-ray machine, you made $200,000 on X-ray. Huh? And that’s what’s so wonderful about the Democratic revolution is that it was hearts, justice, moral, which is wonderful. And I think just to ramble on a little more of what we’ve lost now is that urgency. Then had something to achieve and put in place, and now it’s all here and everybody’s gone back to thinking about their own personal dollar. How do you get. . . . How you get it back?

HY: So this is your sense of what was happening even at the time it was happening?

KB: I considered myself, “My God, aren’t I lucky to be involved, to be accepted by those people as a conscientious participant?”

HY: Well, how was the—-you know, you had all this idealism and yet when you first were entered into this arena, you know, you lost to [Thomas P.] Gill.
KB: Lost. Totally.

HY: How did that settle in your mind?

KB: It didn’t bother me a whole lot, but it bothered the hell out of poor old Jack Burns.

HY: He really thought it was going to happen?

KB: And sadly enough, he was called by [then U.S. president] Lyndon Johnson to go over to the antipode of Hawai‘i in—what is it?

HY: Botswana or something.

KB: Botswana, right in the end of the primaries, so he wasn’t in town. And I heard that he was deeply disturbed and he wasn’t maybe even going to come back. So I got on a plane and met him when he came into New York airport. And then Jack, he said, “My God, I didn’t think you’d ever want to see me again.” So we went together, and Joan was with me, to Washington [D.C.] and talked to Dan Inouye. He still didn’t want to go home. So then I called some of my friends in Burlingame, California, and there’s a club, golf course club that has a little residence right on the golf course, very private. And I got them to put us into that little place and we played golf there for about two of three days while he...

HY: Chilled.

KB: Chilled. Then one day, Matsuo Takabuki came over and persuaded him to go back. So we all went back together and he was just totally peed off.

HY: Sounds like he felt guilty for bringing you there.

KB: I guess so, yeah, he never said that. Yeah, I think he did. And he also felt everybody let him down. And so we get off the plane and the photographers were there and everybody says, “Oh my God, he’s going to say something terrible to Tom Gill.” But he said, “Let’s get a picture taken.” So he stood there, him and Tom Gill and me. And Tom Gill said, “Kenny, put your arm on my shoulder, otherwise they’ll cut you right out of the picture.”

(Laughter)

KB: He said, “I learned that before.” So it was cute of him. But it was tough. So what I said to the governor, I said, “Okay, what I’ll do is I’ll volunteer to be your lieutenant governor without portfolio and I’ll work full time for you.” So I did that for a year and a half.

HY: Was this when you were considered the dollar-a-year man?

KB: Yeah, yeah, yeah, ’67. I stayed there a whole year. And really had a lot of fun, learned a lot.

HY: How did that work with Tom Gill as...

KB: Tom Gill [had] nothing to do.
HY: So essentially you sort of like . . .

KB: I would try to—I was more than the lieutenant governor, I just sort of tried to be his alter ego to the extent that it was possible with a guy like Jack Burns. I learned something, that Jack Burns is probably the most intelligent man I ever met. So I’d sit in a meeting with him and somebody would come in, supplicant of some kind, and goddamn governor knew exactly what they were going to say before they said it. He could watch them, watch their mind working and move them back and forth. So he was a marvelous individual, he could think ahead of the people who were trying to fool him. He was the most intelligent man I have ever run into.

HY: Did that cause resentment then, was there resentment?

KB: They didn’t know.

HY: But I mean . . .

KB: Oh, me?

HY: Yeah, you . . .

KB: Not really, because a lot of people said, “Oh well, it’s poor Kenny Brown, he’s not a threat. He’s not going to be anything.” (Chuckles) No, it didn’t. And Tom was cut out of everything and he never managed to get elected to anything after that.

HY: So was there—do you think there was resentment there?

KB: I think a lot of it, yeah.

HY: What was the basis for your fairly profound relationship with John Burns then? You said he felt comfortable around you.

KB: One thing I found out about him, he’s deeply religious. He went to mass every single morning. And what he had done when Beatrice Burns [John Burns’ wife] got polio, he went to the church and said, “If you make her better, I will come to mass every day the rest of my life.” And she made her better, she survived. We never had, you know, we never talked deep philosophy of things but with him you could kind of read it. He was sort of like an oracle, he would say things and all kinds of—you could interpret it in many ways, it had resonance. I think what he thought about me was he thought I was highly educated for some reason, more educated than him.

HY: Well, you were.

KB: Yeah, I was. And he enjoyed that part. I think for him I was just kind of a minor alter ego or something. He was, as I say, he was, if you ever measured his IQ, it must have been off the [scale]. And he was mostly self-educated, he didn’t know many of the classics, he hadn’t been forced to read *Ulysses* and all that kind of stuff. So maybe one of the things I could do for him was to invoke more of the exotic classic knowledge of the world. Sometimes it’s very helpful to be able to invoke that. I have talked with some of our Hawaiian rebels and they keep thinking they’re all alone. And they don’t know about all the heroes and the torture and
trial of humanity that's been going on forever. And if they knew about that, they would feel like sort of—but for them, because they don’t have that, they think they’re all by themselves. That’s the most lonely, dreadful thing in the world. So that’s one of the good things about our classical education, and even mythology and all that kind of stuff. Because Burns was a deeply religious man, I think he invoked that. That was a wonderful mythos for him, the whole Christian. But with a guy like me, I could probably invoke other more exotic ones.

And he had a great understanding of and sympathy for the Japanese culture. Again, mostly through his experience with individuals, but he had a great mind.

HY: What were some of the issues that you remember that were important during that time?

KB: Let me see... There weren’t many dreadfully divisive issues in those days, very little. It was sort of a matter of the legislature under the Gill people there was sort of a little revolt, revolutionary group, so part of the Governor Burns’ mission was to try and bring unity back into the Democratic party. One of his issues was, how do we reunify the Democratic party to keep on with the mission? And another thing was that he had several marvelous dreams, he said the University of Hawai’i should be the best of the world. We should have a medical school, should have a law school. So when I was there, he was trying to implant his idealistic view of Hawai’i and put it on a railroad so it wouldn’t be diverted. He had some great vision, East-West Center, all that kind of stuff. So mostly the fun part of it was instituting, looking to the future. He had great imagination. And he also had a close connection with Lyndon Johnson [Johnson], LBJ, so he could do stuff in Washington, and Dan Inouye. So it was a nice, it was a good time. In other words, there was a vision, that vision thing. And what he was trying to do was make Hawai’i a place where any person would be cultivated and watered and irrigated and fed and nurtured, no matter where you came from, to reach the top. Because when he was growing up, it was only those selected few. And I think that he, and not only him but a whole bunch of others, they succeeded in doing it. Look at our leadership today—marvelous. That was a dream that I had a small part in helping to effectuate.

HY: So working with him then, you had a taste for politics and is that when you decided to run for the senate?

KB: Yeah, if you’re going to start talking about what’s good for Hawai’i, get somewhere where you can do something about it. Put your music where your mouth is or something. (Chuckles) So that’s what I did.

HY: And how did your family respond to you now being a very public figure?

KB: I must say they were wonderful. When I was working for the governor, I spent so much time down there. I’m sure my poor wife and kids, “Where the hell is he? Work until eight o’clock at night every night.” They were wonderful. Wonderful, supportive.

HY: Were they involved in your campaigns?

KB: Yeah, they worked and walked and did all kinds of things, house-to-house, door-to-door campaigning. It was fun, too.

HY: And you were ’68, is that right? When you were in the senate? [KB served in the state senate
KB: I think so, yeah, '68, got elected.

HY: And what were—maybe you can talk about some of the things that were important to you at that time as far as what you wanted to get done in the senate.

KB: Oh, they put me in the environmental committee. They never put me on the ways and means or the judiciary committee because I was too close to the governor. I think they—I suddenly finally realized, they thought I was a channel to the governor, so they gave me a very difficult committee—environment. So that was the time when we were going through this whole agony of seeing how our native industry like sugar, how they impacted the environment. And burning sugar and dumping waste was a conflict. And I got—they threw me into that committee I think on purpose. (Chuckles)

But one of the first things I remember was after about a month in the legislature, one of the senators took me aside and says, “Kenny, I want to tell you something. You keep going into these caucuses and saying, ‘Let’s make up our mind, let’s decide, get this done,’ on these controversial issues.” He said, “Got to tell you, we can only do about one or two a year or we won’t get elected again.” He says, “You don’t have this problem, but I’m a vice-president of a savings and loan, if I weren’t a senator, I wouldn’t be.” So he said, “You got to know, the reality is we are devoted to getting these things done but if we took on a whole bunch of controversial ones, none of us would ever get back elected again so shut up and stop talking about it.” He said it much nicer than that. But . . .

HY: You got the message. I need to flip over the tape.

KB: Okay.

END OF SIDE ONE

SIDE TWO

HY: Okay, so what senator was this?

KB: I don’t want to say.

HY: No problem.

KB: So one of the things I did achieve after a couple of years was the passage of the environmental impact bill, and at that time, it seemed like a great achievement. But again, as I learned after spending enough time in there, nothing that happens over there is tremendously impactful. In fact, they should have an environmental impact statement for the legislature.

(Laughter)

KB: What I did learn was that for those that are involved in it, it’s a huge spiritually and
psychically demanding, dedicated role. And so I now know that when those people are around there doing their legislating, to them it's the biggest thing in their whole life. And to get to them and to try and influence them, you got to know all that. And don't get worried if some of the things that they do appear to be illogical, because there's so much intensity there. It's like going into a bull ring and trying to tell the bullfighter, "Do you read Kafka?" or something like that. You know, it's hard, so I understand that now and appreciate them.

HY: Was that sort of an eye-opening, startling thing for you to realize?

KB: It was. In other words, there's much more emotional currency than we realize. And one of the things they pointed out to me, they said, "You know, again, if I weren't here, I'd be nobody." It's a good thing to know when you try to influence those people. One of the things that's helped me to at least understand the psyche of it. And in those days, it wasn't bad because the Democrats were so strong and mostly united, but today I can see chaos over there. And when you are today emotionally involved and there's no guiding Hōkūle'a star, what do you do then? Yell at somebody, pass a whole bunch of bills. I guess what I learned is there's a much more human thing than one of these great, wonderful legislative mechanisms.

HY: Were you frustrated by this?

KB: Not really, I loved it until I suddenly woke up and said, "Look, I'm spending four months of the year just totally involved in this thing and the output is 'pfft' [makes raspberry sound]." I said, "There's a better way, you can do more by observing and trying to influence."

HY: The outcome of this environmental impact bill was somewhat controversial.

KB: It was. I was the director of Amfac Inc., but I received their complete support. I remember there was a—I got really steamed up, there was an editorial in the [Honolulu] Star-Bulletin, it said that Kenny Brown is a turncoat. He appears to be passing this environmental impact thing but he's really in the back pocket of Amfac! So for about three days I got really furious then I woke up, said, "Wait a minute, that's just part of the whole dance. (Chuckles) So don't take it so serious." And that's what happens to the poor legislature, they read something about themselves, they say, "Oh, shit." You got to realize it's a great big dance. Whoever wrote the editorial was thinking about his advertising rates. And I also remember, when I was on the board of Amfac, Liberty House was the biggest advertiser in the paper and I never saw one terrible article about Liberty House in the newspaper. There's another reality, it's not cynical. You've got to remember the poor guys that are writing editorials have got to make the paper work. So they must have difficulty between gold and aloha, too. And you can see their soul once in a while by a certain editorial. It's tough. How can you be an editor of a newspaper that's broke?

HY: So you had some empathy I guess, for that . . .

KB: I finally figured it out, yeah. After I got so pissed off. Soon after that I just said, "Forget it, this doesn't mean that much, don't take it so seriously." But then eventually I came to realize that it's part of the machinery.

HY: What were some of the other things that you were involved in during your time as a senator?
KB: Trying to remember, nothing very exciting really. Oh, we put together with the help of—we did a study of Hawai‘i’s future which we thought was very good and which we thought was really wonderful but nobody paid any attention to it. We did a great planning exercise—where’s Hawai‘i going and what’s important?

HY: Was this when you were working with Burns?

KB: No, when I was in the legislature. We had conferences, we called together people of the university.

HY: It was like a . . .

KB: It was a big forum. It was very good, too, we borrowed a whole lot of—I’d better go back and look at that again, because a lot of the things we brought up are today bothering us. We talked about carrying capacity and how many tourists can you take in? We said, “We ought to plan right now how many tourists you can take.” But we haven’t, we got now 7 million. We’re destroying—like you put too many cattle on a range, the carrying capacity exceeded and the range is destroyed, so. I learned also that all these wonderful reports, unless they are aimed at the heart of somebody in the bank, don’t mean nothing.

HY: So who was involved in this forum with you?

KB: Oh, a whole lot of legislators and people in the university, all kind of people. A good group. But again, there wasn’t anything in there that made people, the true people that run the place, wake up.

HY: What were some of the other things?

KB: Well, let’s see. Part of it was talking about celebrating the Hawaiian culture, of some of the magic of Hawai‘i as invoked or evoked by the Hawaiian dance. And so we were talking about not institutionalizing, but celebrating that part of it. Without being self-conscious or glitterati or anything like that. We talked about development on other islands. We talked a whole lot of pretty good stuff, now that you mention it.

HY: Who were some of the people that you were close to, that you considered your close colleagues in the senate?

KB: Not too many actually, they were all about equal. I didn’t get too intimate with any of them. My fellow senator from Hawai‘i Kai, Don [Donald S.] Nishimura was a good, close friend of mine. There were some very good people there. Dave [David] McClung was a good friend of mine, in fact, he’s the guy that got me to run, the bugger.

He was the president of the senate and he was an excellent guy but he had—something happened to him on the way to fame. I think he fell for the booze or something. He was a great guy, very talented, well-spoken, imaginative and everything, but I think there was something, some kind of a knothole or something somewhere. I had great respect for him. He could talk about philosophy and everything but somewhere along the line . . .

HY: How did he talk you into running? Do you remember?
KB: He said, "There's a vacancy over there. I've already put you in, so you got to run." I said, "Okay."

HY: Just like that?

KB: For help the party. See, he was the head of the Democratic party in those days so he invoked that part, "You got to run." So that's how I did it.

HY: Were you thinking along those lines anyway?

KB: Not really, but it sort of opened up an interesting avenue. He was very persuasive and you could help the party. "We're going to lose the senate seat." So I ran, got elected. Funny.

HY: Maybe this would be a good time to—you've got your other meeting.

KB: Okay, take a break.

END OF INTERVIEW
HY: It's June 30, 1998 and we're in Kenneth Brown's office. This is a continuing session. I think last time we left off with your time in the senate. But maybe we can go back, I want to ask you about—maybe you can fill us in on your acquirement of the family property. Maybe you can talk a little bit about that, the [John] I'i Estate.

KB: My great-grandfather John [Papa] I'i, his uncle was named Papa [I'i]. He was one of Kamehameha the Great's generals. And when they conquered O'ahu, Kamehameha split up the island and gave a section from Waipi'o to Papa [I'i], who's John [Papa] I'i's uncle. And when he died he left it to John I'i. And John I'i left it to my grandma who married Charles A. Brown. And then it became a property and became incorporated and was owned by our family, the Brown family, and partially owned by the Davis family who were sort of calabash related to my grandfather Charles. So that's how it was owned, the corporation. It was part of the spoils of war from Kamehameha the Great, isn't that wonderful. (Chuckles)

HY: Yeah. It's your grandmother Irene... And she was married to Charles Augustus Brown. And then that marriage did not last.

KB: That didn't last.

HY: The land holdings were in...

KB: In her name. And she left it to her two sons [Francis I'i Brown and George I'i Brown], her share of it.

HY: And that's that whole Waipi'o [ahupua'a].

KB: That's the land from Waipi'o Peninsula up till Schofield.

HY: Okay, then going back to your senate days. I think we left off where you had decided you were going to leave the senate, and maybe we can talk about some of the other things you did there, some of the other issues. We talked about the environmental impact bill and some of the forums.

KB: In those days there was a feeling of responsibility amongst the senators and the members of
the house, and we were all interested in trying to manage or do something good for the future of Hawai‘i. So we did a lot work on “what if” and how we want it to be and everything. Because it was still a group of fairly young people who had only within their own maybe twenty-year memory had suddenly become in charge of the whole state of Hawai‘i. And it was a very interesting time. And it was based on a very, what they call nowadays, liberal, which everybody curses which I don’t. But it was the idea of all kinds of social benefits, as well as a tremendous amount of freedom of expression and freedom of belief. There was no condemnation of anybody. In fact, some cases, they always said they even accepted help from the Communists. It was a very fascinating time. The idealism was still there and there was recognition of the fact that tourism was a major element of it. But the other thing we all assumed naively was that sugar would last forever. And one of the things that I have learned over the years that all the givens of the world, none of them are reliable except the given that this too will change. And so we were sort planning the future, ideal future, for Hawai‘i. It was fun.

HY: And when you left it was just more for personal reasons.

KB: Yeah, I figured I was spending so much time on it and getting so little result. It’s like getting into a very, very difficult chess game and spending maybe eight months out of the year playing a chess game with four or five people. And when you’re through what have you accomplished?

HY: Two moves.

KB: That’s right. (Chuckles) Well that’s the problem. But the other thing is, what I figured is, I’d learned enough about the whole system that I’d be more effective outside. And I learned while I was in the system the effective people who really made things happen were often not in the actual body. But they were people who were respected and who were influential.

HY: So what things did you get involved with then, when you left? You were involved in your own company . . .

KB: I got in and I started an architectural practice and some development. And I was asked to work for the Tokyu [Corp.] people in setting up their investment over on the Big Island. They bought my Uncle Francis’ property up there.

HY: This is the . . .

KB: The Mauna Lani Resort.

HY: Mauna Lani.

KB: Yeah, I spent a lot of time on that. I spent time working---I was the director of Amfac and I spent time working in consultation with Amfac on the planning of Kā‘anapali.

Also helped [develop Keauhou Beach Hotel for Island Holidays] with Mr. Troy Post who came out here from Texas and bought the land.

Started an armored car company with my friend Sam Wight and we started an alarm business
and we started a muzak business. And later on I started a—got involved in Cablevision, [Inc.] one of the early cable companies out on the Leeward side called Leeward Cablevision. Then I got involved with the Oceanic Cablevision, which was a property of Castle & Cooke, which they founded. And that's where the name Oceanic came from. But they sold it to a bunch of people including myself and a few others. And eventually it was taken over by Time Warner after quite a few years. So, I've been involved with a whole lot of stuff.

HY: This is in the, probably late [19]70s?

KB: [Nineteen] seventies going up into mid—yeah, late [19]70s.

HY: And you were interested in developing the Diamond Head area? Is that right?

KB: Yeah, we had a plan, it didn't work. We were going to make Diamond Head into a—the coast line of Diamond Head, which is visible from Waikīkī, we were going to develop that into a very carefully crafted neighborhood. But the people lived above it didn't want to do anything so they killed it. So then we decided they didn't want any high rises so we said, "Why don't we make a low rise and turn it into a cemetery." (Chuckles) But it didn't—we never got serious about that. It might have been a great place for a cemetery. Take all those houses and turn 'em into a lovely memorial park.

See, we—me and my friends didn't have vast amounts of capital so we had to be imaginative and do things like that. If someone like Hilton or Sheraton or Bishop Estate had become involved, because they had the staying power. But we were sort of coming up with ideas and having fun.

HY: And in the [19]80s then, what were you primarily involved in? Was it a continuation of various . . .

KB: Yeah, all those same things. My friend Sam Wight passed away around the mid-[19]80s so we sold the armored car service and the alarm system. And then later on I sold my Oceanic Cable[vision] to Time Warner. Oh, I started to spend more and more time on the island of Hawai'i working for the Mauna Lani folks as well as doing all kinds of non-remunerative things like The Queen's Medical Center, The Queen's Health Systems.

HY: How is it that you got involved in that?

KB: Many years ago my father and mother's good friend, a Mrs. ("Pinkie") Cooke, was on the board at Queen's and she saw me somewhere, at a party or something. She said, "You know Kenny, Joan's grandfather, your grandmother, your father, have always been on the board, had connection with Queen's. Now your generation there is nobody, so I'm going to propose you to be a member of the board." I said okay and that's how it started, long time ago. She drafted me.

(Laughter)

KB: And so somehow or other, being there so long, I eventually got into a position of respect and leadership. And lately it's been a very absorbing and fascinating business because the whole health care business is being revolutionized by all kinds of things. And so I've had the
pleasure of working with Queen’s as it evolves into an institution which can cope and be effective in today’s very, very difficult world.

HY: Do you know how it is that your family and your wife’s family was involved in it initially?

KB: I think one of the founders was F.A. Schaefer, who was my wife’s grandpa. He was an immigrant from Germany who came over as a young man and eventually ended up by starting and owning the [Honoka'a Sugar Company, which eventually became the] Hāmākua Sugar Company. And he became a very distinguished citizen. And he was on the original board when Queen [Emma] founded it. And so there was that connection. And my grandma, I think I read somewhere that she was on the visitation group that used to organize people to come and visit with the patients. And my dad was on the board for a long time so it’s just one of those connections. My grandmother Irene was a close friend of Lili’uokalani, the queen. And I think for some reason, though, Lili’u and Emma, who founded Queen’s Hospital, had political differences. I think they all felt it was very important to kōkua the Queen’s Hospital. ’Cause Queen’s was founded in 1859 when the population of Hawaiians had gone from 600,000 to 60,000. [Hawaiian population estimates have been a source of disagreement amongst scholars and demographers. They are in general agreement, however, as to its profound decline.] So the Queen and King Kamehameha IV—the legislature passed a bill to found it but no funding so they went around town and raised money to start it. The idea of staying the wasting hand, or bringing Western medicine to keep the Hawaiian from vanishing. Because my great-grandfather [John Papa I'i]—during his lifetime nine out of ten of his people died. Worse than the plague in Europe. So Queen’s was founded for that. But we have recently revisited our mission and had imaginary discussions with Queen Emma. And she asked us how we’re doing and we said, “Well, we do $450 million a year business, we’re the biggest employer in the state of Hawai’i, and we also have the eighteen acres you gave us in Waikīkī and very soon [we will] be generating a lot [of] money.”

She said, “Yeah and what about the Hawaiians?”

We said, “Well, there’s now 6,000 of them.” But we said, “But wait a minute there’s a lot of part-Hawaiians, 150,000-200,000.”

She said, “Yeah, and how’re they doing?”

And we said, “They’re doing worse than any other group.”

So she said, “Are you thinking that you really are following a mission, which was to stay the wasting hand?”

We said no. So as of that time we decided to devote our whole organization to the betterment of the Hawaiian people. But we also decided that if you categorize people and stigmatize ‘em saying you’re all sick, it’s self-fulfilling. So what we’re dedicated to now is the betterment of the well-being of all the people of Hawai’i, healthy community. So that’s been so fascinating for me, the ability to participate in something like that. I got a book on that. (Chuckles)

But anyway, so I have been able to, with the help of people like Bob [Robert C.] Oshiro [chairman of Queen Emma Foundation]—not I have been able, we have been able to—redirect Queen’s to be a strong institution for the well-being of the people of Hawai’i. And if that
happens, then the Hawaiian people will . . .

And we also do triage at some Hawaiian areas that are really tough and difficult. So we now have a new way of gauging our success, and instead of being just a hospital in the middle of a beautiful campus with all the best equipment in the world we are now reaching out to all the communities. And what we are trying to do is define what is well-being. And you know what happened? It goes with the new emphasis on body, mind and spirit. We find that if people are sick in spirit, a body may be [sick]. And so way beneath it all we're trying to make the part-Hawaiian people have a huge amount of pride in their accomplishments and their ethos and everything. That's why we're helping things like the Hōkūleʻa, which is a matter of pride not only for Hawaiians but everybody. So we're finding strangely enough we are venturing into the area where you work on people's soul. And it's fascinating because there aren't very many institutions, now that the poor old churches are starting to lose power. All the people, the ones that developed this wonderful economic revitalization for Hawai'i, never said anything about well-being did they? All measured with dollars. And then what we're trying to do is somehow or other, like a benign virus, get into that system and say, "Well, okay what about the well-being and the soul, huh?"

HY: Well, things like this [proposed] senior center [at Waipi'o] that will be on the property . . .

KB: Exactly . . .

HY: . . . your brother [George I'i Brown] owned, is that part of this . . .

KB: That's an effort to do that very thing. So what we're doing now is we're judging everything we do as to its impact on the well-being of a community. And we're finding that there's a huge lack of concern about the soul and the mind. But then, some of the new body-mind medicine, in fact even some of the new theories of organization of corporations are starting to use organic metaphors. Well in the old days, under Isaac Newton we had a clockwork universe and most of our institutions are still made that way. Everything is ratcheted together and Queen's does this [too] but you get in there and say, "Wait a minute, where's the soul, where's the enchantment?" And it's awful hard to do. So that's one of our secret agendas, to bring enchantment.

HY: Can you talk about how this new sort of mission will be integrated into this senior center specifically?

KB: One of the things—the reason for that senior center is there's a shortage of places [for seniors,] who need care, to go. A lot of them are staying back home and having a hell of a time or they're going into some of these sort of very extemporaneous places that take care of them. So we're going to construct that thing. And the other thing is that a senior center is not a good investment, so the dollar is saying you can't take care of the heart because it's not going to be a profit. So we're constructing with an idea that somehow or other it will be self-sustaining. And then we'll work out ways of studying—that's a bad word—of knowing the attitude and the soul of those people, what it is they crave—aside from just material stuff. So we're gonna bring various people of the other disciplines, like a Hawaiian healer and all kinds of people. Without forcing them, you see, but just sort of wander around and see. Because there's a great lack for an ill senior. What they really want is somebody to come hold their hand, aside from just taking care of all their physical needs, many of them don't even have
that, but they're looking for something. And what we're trying to do is just figure out how you get that into a formal organization. Because in the old days the churches always did that, didn't they? Throughout history there was spiritual side. In fact hospitals all started out with nuns and people, at least in Europe. We're rediscovering something we've always known.

And one of the things that the Hawaiian healers say, and there's a fella named Papa Henry Auwae we've been working with for a long time, he says, "The first thing I do is I sit down, talk to people and just find out what's on their mind." Because he understands that and he says, "I want them to pray, and then after I really get to know them and I find I think of herbs they may need or I can say, 'Go back to your doctor.'" Because what we're finding out is that people are much more complex than just the body. And you can fix the body all you want but if you don't fix something else the body doesn't get better. But these things are awful hard to say to the bonding agency. (Chuckles)

So we have a thing we call—I have a question I ask people, "Which weighs more gold or love? Gold or aloha?" Well you can't weigh aloha. But in our counting system in the whole Western world we just account for those things that we can measure and weigh. So we're trying to figure out a way at Queen's, and we're using some of the brightest people, how can we get our things we're doing to help the soul and well-being of the people? How can we put it in a language that the bonding company will accept? And I notice in some magazines I've read and many of the not-for-profit hospitals are beginning to realize that's a big problem and (there are no "instruction manuals" for solving it). Doing good is pretty hard to put into the balance sheet or a profit and loss. So you got to make money in the market in order to help the marketeer.

So we figure Queen's, with the benefit of the Hawaiian ethos and all the multicultural elements we have in Hawai'i, may well be rediscovering a way to make a community healthy. Very challenging. But the Queen would say, "Go. It's about time you guys figured that out." Because she brought the Anglican Church in and she started St. Andrew's Priory and she started the hospital. You see at a time she lost her husband and her son at an early age and she didn't despair. She said, "Okay, let's do something." So that's been one of my obsessions for quite a while. I'm lucky to be involved.

HY: I had read somewhere that at some point you were calling yourself a born-again Hawaiian.

KB: Yeah, right.

HY: And it made me think about what kind of transitions you—you know, you went from being from a Republican family to . . .

KB: Yeah, I was a born-again Hawaiian.

HY: . . . someone who [became a Democrat,] and then this sort of change of thinking [about ethnic identity]. What happened?

KB: My Hawaiian-ness came at a different time. I went down to New Zealand with a group of people from Hawai'i, mostly Hawaiian, that were going to go down there and show the New Zealand Maoris how to get into the tourist business. And our business people were going to show them all this. Because we're good at that and they're no good. So we went down there.
And the first thing they did, they took us to a *marae* and at a *marae*, which is their sacred place, you wait outside—it's all walled in—you wait outside to be called in and you chant and they chant back. And one of our people was able to chant, and as we were—because they want to know whether you're coming in anger or for peaceful business. So you open the gate, and you walk in and they send out someone who looks like a warrior, who makes the gestures of a warrior, and one of our people comes out and says something. And then the warrior drops a little flower and then he goes away. And our people see the flower, and if they pick it up we're here in peace and if not we'll fight. Well as we're going through all that—it was a cloudy, terrible day—as we picked up the flower the sun came out and a beautiful rainbow came. And I said to myself, "My God." There was an omen.

And then after that, when you're accepted, you come in and you stand in the sacred ground in front of the temple and you are—visitors line up and they chant and sing and we chant and sing back. And as I heard all that I said, "You know something, I've heard all this before, I've done all this before." And I suddenly had an epiphany, I said, "This is me. I've been here."

And what I was doing, I guess, was responding to the genes and the DNA to put it scientifically. Part of me had been there. And I had a complete revelation, I said, "This is what it is all about."

So then after we'd gone through that—and then they had very cleverly exposed us to all that wanting to know whether we had that same spirituality. And we really were lacking in it. So what we decided was we're going to try and help the Maoris but we're going to take that Hawaiian spirituality—Maori spirituality, Hawaiian spirituality—and rekindle it in Hawai'i. Because we were lacking the heart part. We were dollar—we're making hotels and doing all that kind of stuff. So what they did—and we've helped them a lot, the daily working in the market and strident hawkers and all that. But the real gift was for them giving back—rediscovering amongst ourselves real spirituality of Polynesian and Hawaiian.

Now we have a thing called a Polynesian Union with the Maoris and the Hawaiians. We meet regularly and we're going to eventually bring all the Polynesians into it. And what we will talk about is the shared spirituality of all of Polynesia. And my daughter [Bernice Johnson] who was a professor at Cornell [University] tells me that there's whole intellectual ferment coming out of the islands, the little islands of Polynesia and the rest of the Pacific Islands. And there's a whole bunch of marvelous, new, spiritual intellectuals who are starting to write and create concepts and ideas which are really going to be very influential with the world. So part of that and the Polynesian Union, we're having a meeting here in the year 2000. Bring all the young, spiritual, intellectual people to share that. So it's very exciting. There's life and spirituality in Polynesia.

**HY:** This revelation that you had when you were in New Zealand then, it that part of why you have this sort of, maybe, new mission statement?

**KB:** Yeah, that's part of it. All fits together. And it gave me a chance to sort of re-experience what Queen Emma experienced. Because she was *hapa*, part Haole and part Hawaiian. Her adopted father was a physician and her adopted mother was Hawaiian. So she saw those two civilizations. At that time they seemed to be warring. And she said, "No, we're going to use fusion to bring 'em together."

So what we're trying to do is fuse the—a lot [of] people still today say, "Hawaiians can't get
along with other people." Well, that’s all wrong. They get along and they should be leading. Well, that’s part of my obsession.

And the other obsession is the thing called Darwinian psychology [which] says that the hardware and software of the human race, human species, developed over 2 million years to live in a tribal [society]—just beyond hunter gatherer but [with] early domestication of plants. And we’re all hard wired for that just like your DOS or your operating system in your computer. And if someone comes in with an entirely new computer system you got to work like hell to conform yours to interact with it. And so it’s only 10,000 years ago, which is just a tick of a second, that we developed learning, reading and writing, warfare, exploitation, hierarchical classes, all kinds of things, steel and all that. That was part of our—ancient brain was very good at logic and figuring things out so we figured out all kinds of things but we created a atmosphere that forces us to be like Free Willy and live in a tank. Because inside of us is that 2 million year old thing.

And what I tell the Hawaiian people, “You’re only 200 years from living in the ocean like Willy.” Because we were the last place the earth was populated by humans and we brought that ancient way with us. And then we had the amazing accident of being isolated for about 1000 years so we sort of cultivated and refined the way of living, like the ahupua’a. So Hawaiians are closer to that ancient—they can portray and illuminate those ancient values. And so the real purpose of the Hawaiian is to take the world today and try to bring back those ancient chords and try to make the world vibrate in harmony.

See I was brought up and my father brought up [thinking] that Hawaiians were inferior but this new Darwinian psychology says no, they were closer to the DOS system of your.... And then genetics and DNA all say that. You can’t evolve in 10,000 years. We started standing on our feet, on two legs, 2 million years ago. One hundred thousand years ago we were just about where we are now. But in that last 10,000 we’ve done marvelous things, but as I say the DOS system is like when I plug my IBM computer into a Macintosh but somehow or other what we want to do is take—there is an essential there about electronics though, in all of them. Binary language, transistors. So, in there there’s some essential stuff. So the Hawaiians are closer to that. But we got to let ’em know that.

The Lippizaner horses have to walk on their back legs to get fed. But you know darn well they’d much rather be running out in the meadow. So you get them on their back legs and you whack ’em and give ’em food. But inside of us is all that. But how do you tell people that? And what you do is you realize that the people that sell Camel cigarettes and all that stuff are resonating some of those ancient chords. There are people in our world that know how to evoke ’em but they are evoking ’em for dollar.

So that’s our challenge, we got to be sophisticated enough but not cynical. That’s why we at Queen’s are supporting the Hōkūle‘a and lots of things that don’t seem to be involved in health but they’re a chime. People listen and are attracted. Then you can start talking about ways of life. So you can’t go voyaging unless you interface with the rest of the travellers and you’re healthy. And as Nainoa Thompson says, “When we arrive at where we’re going to go we arrive with the permission of the elements. We do not overwhelm ’em.” So we humans have a tendency now where (KB makes a slap sound) we’re going to overwhelm ’em. We’re going to fill up the Yangtze River. Inside of us is some ancient thing saying no, no, no. So this is the kind of stuff—silly stuff—but it’s essential. So these are my obsessions.
HY: This is a sort of more of a literal transition but you talked about chords and they made me remember your love for music. Is that something that you grew up with?

KB: Yeah, my father had music all the time. He always had the radio going or a record playing. And my mother played the organ. We had an electric organ in our house. And she was a very good piano player and an organ player. So we had music all the time, thank goodness. And in the old days, whenever you had a party there would always be some Hawaiian music and every one of us had to perform during dinner. Everybody had to get up and the girls danced hula, the boys sing or do something.

HY: Was this just at parties?

KB: Mostly at parties, yeah. It's was just part of the tradition. It was fun. But at our—our family had the song "Waipi'o," which was written for my grandmother. My father always insisted whenever anybody played that we would stand up so we have that tradition. And my father and uncle always wore black neckties after she died for the rest of their lives. And my father even had a black band sewed on his coat because they were mourning her all their lives. So whenever "Waipi'o" came—stand up. So it was sort of a real anthem reminding them of their mom. He made me sing it several times, Uncle Francis did. We'd be over in Scotland in a big fancy hotel and they'd have an orchestra and they'd come around and play music. And Uncle Francis says, "My nephew is going to sing 'Waipi'o.'" So I'd have to stand up in this dining room of a great hotel and sing a cappella. But he loved it. And so I had sort of an interesting—it's a family anthem and my father had a song written for him and Uncle Francis had a song. So "Keawaiki" is Uncle Francis' song. And "Ainamalu" is my dad's song. So we have a tradition of song. That's an old Hawaiian tradition I guess, isn't it.

And I find that after I sing at a party or something people have a different attitude. You know when you sing to someone it somehow opens another channel of communication, it's one of those ancient ones, see. We were made that way, for chants, dance. It's a very wonderful way of breaking through all that. Getting Willy back out in the sea.

And the other thing I keep thinking is that we miss that ancient enchantment and all that kind of magic. Andy Cummings wrote, when he wrote about Waikiki, he said, "Waikiki, my whole life is empty without you. I miss that magic about you." So again, tourists—magic, dancing, hula, moon. That's the primal stuff. Of course that's not to deny the fact that some of the primal is very bad and killing and fighting and war and all that is part of us, but the Hawaiians happen to have been able to kind of crystalize the benign part.

We were talking the other day and somebody said, "Well, this Hawaiian culture is great stuff. I'm in the tourist business. But only 20 percent of them come for it."

And I said, "Wait a minute, what do the other 80 percent come for?"

"Oh," he said, "because Hawai'i is a wonderful place."

I said, "How did it get wonderful?"

"Uh, the land and the sea. . . . And the people." He finally figured it out.
We have an exercise we used to do—ask people, “If before you went to sleep tonight a wizard would come to you and during your sleep [said that] I want to take you to five tropical places and I won’t tell you which any of them are. One of ‘em is going to be Hawai‘i. And when you wake up the next morning tell me which one was Hawai‘i and how did you know.” And we’ve used that exercise and we were trying to Hawaiianize the airport so we asked a lot of people.

And the old kupuna said, “It wasn’t I saw leis on anybody.” He said, “Because I saw the faces of the people and they were all different kind of faces. And mostly smiling.” Which is fascinating because you try to think about it, how would you know you’re in Hawai‘i? But it’s the only place you go where you get all these different faces and they’re mostly smiling. So again—and it’s different races but they’re all coming together now, but each one has some kind of—there’s an umbrella about Hawai‘i, Hawaiian-ness. If you’re hapa this hapa that, hapa everything you still can dance hula. So it’s a nice new race.

Joan and I, my wife, went down to Rarotonga. It’s a beautiful place, looks like ancient Kona, very underdeveloped. And after about four days she and I both said, “You know it’s boring around here.” Because they’re all Polynesian.

You know suddenly woke up and we said, “Goddamn it, you’re right.” In Hawai‘i, you see, you’re still a beautiful place but you have all these different people. And when we go to visit our daughter in Montana there’s all these damn Haoles with guns.

(Laughter)

KB: So the variety. And I think some people want to come here and are put off by it. They can’t have a stereotype. So I’m sorry to be wandering like this.

HY: Wander, wandering is good. It’s the Free Willy part, right?

KB: Yup, Free Willy. Yeah, that’s what it’s all about. And Hawai‘i is a place where Willy can go free. We asked in our committee to [examine how] to Hawaiianize the international airport. And we asked some of our kupunas, “What is the most Hawaiian place you know of and what is the most un-Hawaiian?”

And everybody says the most un-Hawaiian is the baggage claim at the international airport. And some of ’em says, “The most Hawaiian place I know is the Pali lookout. Because I can see from the sky, mountain, down all the way out to the sea.” And he said, “That’s Hawai‘i.”

Other one said, “The east coast of Moloka‘i is very similar.” But you can see sort of the entity, you can see the mountains down to the sea, which is something. If you go out in the prairie all you see is prairie.

HY: I want to mention a couple of names, I know you had an association with Walter Ritte [Jr.]. How did that come about?

KB: He called me. Our family used to own a chunk of land on the windward side of Moloka‘i, Pelekunu Valley, which my grandfather bought for water purposes. And nobody ever lived there, it was impossible to get to except by sea or walking over a difficult trail. Walter Ritte
called me one day and he said, “Mr. Brown, you don’t know me but I want to go over there and take my wife and kids and live at Pelekunu the ancient way.”

And I’m sure he thought I was going to tell him, “Go to hell you can’t do it.” I said, “Go. Go already.” So he was shocked and pleased and he went over there and lived for about a year and a half. And what he did, he found out that there were hunters coming in on boats from O’ahu going up and shooting all the goats and leaving ‘em dead. There were all kinds of things happening over there that the so-called Westerners, the Western people were ripping off the place. They were going in and camping and leaving trash and everything.

So he and his little interesting way of (chuckles) justice started firing guns across the bows of some of the boats, I think. I’ve heard that from others. And he sort of strutted around and told the people killing all the goats, “Get the hell out of here.” But what he really did is he sort of went back to the primitive old way of trying to guard the place. And of course he over did it. But he lived there for a while and we’ve been friends ever since.

HY: So he just called you out of the blue.

KB: Out of the blue. But he appreciated it so much. I went over there one time in a helicopter to visit him. And we were over there looking at all the property and found him. He had a nice place to live, he was living and started cultivating taro and doing all kinds of things. But I think he found out that with kids and everything—no school, nothing. So he moved back. But for him it was sort of—I think [he] experimented. “I want to live like my Hawaiian ancestors.” Because he’s Ritte, he’s not all Hawaiian. But he was good. And since then he’s done some very constructive things. He’s done some . . .

HY: I think that we’re going to run out right here.

KB: Ah, oh dear.

END OF SIDE ONE

SIDE TWO

HY: Okay.

KB: He has been helping to restore some of the fish ponds on the other side of Moloka‘i and he’s teaching young kids how to work the fish ponds and things like that. I think that Governor [John] Waihee appointed him to some kind of a job, one of those re-acculturation programs that the state was doing. [Ritte became the state economic development coordinator on Moloka‘i and launched the ‘Ualapu‘e Fishpond project.] So he’s been doing that. But I know there’s another side to him, ’cause people tell me he’s the guy that burned down the guest house over in west end and broke up pipe and all that. He’s two guys. But there’s a very good piece to him.

HY: So what happened to that property then?
KB: We sold—we gave to The Nature Conservancy actually. 'Cause it was of no value to us.

HY: Are people still going over there hunting?

KB: I think Nature Conservancy has helped to make it much more. . . . They're good stewards. They've also got the Mo'omomi land on Moloka'i. Which is a dune place for some totally unique flora species. So Nature Conservancy's done a good job.

HY: So it was—you gifted it to them?

KB: Mm hmm [yes.]

HY: The other person I wanted to ask you about is Richard Smart.

KB: I knew him when we were both little kids. We used to spend a lot of time up on the Big Island. My grandma had a house up there at Waimea. Our family and Richard Smart's family were good friends so when he was a little kid we used to know each other. He had a place called Pu'u'opelu, which is his family house. And after we grew up he got married to a lady named Pat. And when World War II came along I got into the camouflage business and he and I worked together in a camouflage factory down in Waikiki, right where the . . . which hotel? One of the big hotels right there on the beach. Can't think of the name of it. But anyway, we worked there we had a . . .

HY: Royal Hawaiian?

KB: No, it wasn't there. Excuse me, it was not on the beach in was in back where now part of Fort DeRussy is. He and I worked together in a camouflage factory and I knew him well. And then he got divorced and he, quite a few years later, asked me to design a house for him, which I've done. I did two houses for him. And then when he was going to redecorate and renovate some of his old family mansion on the Big Island he asked me to help. And then when I got involved with Mauna Lani Resort he asked me and others to prepare a Waimea 2020 plan, which we sat down and got the best planners we could and developed a plan for the development of Waimea all the way down to the sea. Because at that time there was a temptation to sell little pieces to get capital to do this. And so we got 'em to freeze all that and develop a really a wonderful plan for the whole town of Waimea. But after he died that whole thing was thrown away. And since then they've been selling chunks so that whole plan, sadly enough, wasn't. . . . Oh, and in exchange for all that, excuse me, as part of the payment for the Waimea plan he gave us the right to drill for artesian water for the Mauna Lani Resort place. So it was a good trade off. We had a very good association with him. But after he died, again, the urgency of quick money—I think they're doing a much better job now. They're back again into the long-term view. But at that time, there was a need for quick cash so they abandoned that whole nice—what I thought was nice. Richard was an interesting guy. He was very artistic. Theater was his life. He was gay and admitted it. He was a super guy. We got on well together because our family connections go back about three generations. So yeah, we had a nice association and he helped us at Mauna Lani, too.

HY: Is there anything else you want to talk about?

KB: Nothing. No. I'm drained.
HY: You’re drained?
KB: Thank you friend.
HY: Thank you so much.
KB: Thank you dear.

END OF INTERVIEW
I‘i/Brown Family: Oral Histories

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