BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY: Zadoc White Brown, Jr.

Zadoc White Brown, Jr., the oldest son of Zadoc White Brown and Helen Virginia Lowrey Brown, was born July 23, 1943 in Honolulu. He grew up along with his siblings, Alan, Cynthia, Lawrence and David "Desoto," in the Diamond Head area. He is the great-great-grandson of John Papa I'i and the great-grandson of Irene I'i Brown Holloway.

He was educated at Punahou School, Choate School, and Princeton University where he majored in English. After graduating in 1965 he returned to Hawai‘i and began working at his father’s investment firm, the Brown Fund of Hawai‘i. In 1971, he became a stockbroker with Dean Witter & Company, and in 1974 he continued with the company on Maui. In 1980, he joined E.F. Hutton—currently Smith Barney, Inc., where he continues to work today.

Throughout his childhood and early adulthood, he spent time at the thirteen-acre property on Waipi‘o Peninsula, owned by his uncle, George I‘i Brown, Jr. Here he engaged in activities such as hunting, swimming, and exploring the nearby Waipahu neighborhood.

He has been living on Maui since 1974, and is married to Hilary E. Brown. He has two children, Zadoc and Emalia.
HY: This is an interview with Zadoc Brown, Jr. It’s August 3, 1998, we’re in his office in Kahului, Maui and the interviewer is Holly Yamada.

Okay, Let’s start with your birth date. When were you born?

ZB: July 23, 1943.

HY: And where did you grow up?

ZB: Honolulu, Hawai‘i.

HY: Maybe you can talk a little bit about your home where you grew up in. Maybe you can describe that for me.

ZB: Our first home was on Keala‘olu Avenue, right next to the Wai‘alae Golf Course on the banks of Kapakahí Stream. We were there from my birth to about 1951. We moved from Keala‘olu Avenue to Noela Drive in 1951 to a home that my parents live in today. The home on Noela Drive was built [for] a fellow by the name of Ed [Edward J.] Greaney who died. So essentially it was a new home, almost unlived in. It was a very nice place to grow up.

HY: Maybe you can describe a little bit about the grounds and the house itself.

ZB: One of the things that made that house unique was the fact that it was on almost an acre of property. So rather than being a small lot, we were very fortunate to live on a lot that was an acre in size in itself. And also which bordered on the slopes of Diamond Head so we had nobody above us. So there was ample opportunity to be outside and be involved in outside activities. We were close to the beach so getting to the beach was no problem. It’s an absolutely lovely spot. It was a lovely spot then; it’s a lovely spot today. We added a pool and a paddle tennis court which were used extensively when we were young. Extensively. You know, a lot of activities there. So were able to have lot of friends. Had a lot of, I mean, as we got older, into our teenage years and twenties, we had a lot of social activities there. Played a lot of paddle tennis, had tournaments. And so it was kind of a nice gathering place.

HY: And tell me about what your folks were doing while you were growing up.
ZB: My dad [Zadoc White Brown], for a while, was involved in the activities of the [John] I'i Estate. When the I'i Estate was sold in 1951, he took a portion of his share, we went back to Boston for a year where he was in the advance management class at Harvard Business School [in 1961]. He then came back to Hawai'i and opened a mutual fund called the Brown Fund of Hawai'i, which he ran from roughly 1952 to 1972, an investment company that he ran pretty much on his own for the first, oh, ten or twelve years. And then when I got out of college I came back and joined him for a couple years, and by that time he had several people working for him. He sold the fund to a San Francisco firm which in turn sold it to the Franklin Mutual Fund Group which still owns it. It still exists today.

My mother [Helen Virginia Lowrey Brown] did a lot of volunteer work and was involved in Junior League and that kind of thing.

HY: And your mother is originally from . . .

ZB: San Francisco, [California].

HY: San Francisco?

ZB: Right, correct. Although her family, while she was from San Francisco, her father was born in Hawai'i and lived in Hawai'i until he moved away. So her family also has extensive ties in Hawai'i that predate her birth.

HY: Do you know what your grandfather was doing in Hawai'i? Do you have any knowledge of that? This is your maternal side.

ZB: Actually, he left, my maternal grandfather left and worked for Union Oil [Company] in San Francisco for years. Retired from Union Oil, so he spent his entire adult life in San Francisco. And worked, I think, he was in the navy during the Second World War but was, I think, for his entire business life, an employee of the Union Oil Company. I'm not sure when he left Hawai'i. But because he still had a number of relatives in Hawai'i, my mother and her family came to Hawai'i to visit.

HY: And you're the oldest son, right? Or the oldest child?

ZB: Yeah, in my family, I am. Well, there were five, my younger brother, the fourth member of my family, Lawrence [Brown], died in 1980. So there are four surviving children. I'm the oldest, my brother Alan [Brown], is second, my sister, Cynthia [Brown Quisenberry], is third, and my brother, David [DeSoto Brown], is now fourth, would have been fifth, but now fourth. David lives in Honolulu, Cynthia lives on Maui, and my brother, Alan, lives in Waikī'i on the Big Island.

HY: Being the oldest, did you have any special responsibilities at all?

ZB: No, not that I could really point to. I think that the one, somewhat pivotal, event in our lives was that my dad had been sent away to school when he was young and he and my mother felt that that was what was appropriate for all of us. So at age thirteen, we all, one by one, went off to school on the Mainland. We went to Punahou [School] first and then spent four high school years in a boarding school situation. So I guess that I was a leadoff in that scheme of
things. We all did relatively well under that format. Not something that I repeated myself [with my own children] but am happy for the education I got. I guess I would say that since I did it first and got through it all right, everybody else went along.

HY: But you say that was an expectation?

ZB: Yup, that was a given. That was part of my dad’s upbringing. I think he felt it was very important for us to do that kind of thing. And all of us went to school on the East Coast. I stayed on, after I graduated from high school there, I stayed on and spent four more years in college on the East Coast. So I have eight total years there. That was enough.

HY: Maybe you can talk a little bit about your time at Punahou, did you have favorite subjects? Were there particular influences?

ZB: Well, I enjoyed Punahou very, very much. It was a good school then as it’s a good school now. Despite the fact that I went to school on the Mainland, and probably because I live here, but my major contacts today are still with Punahou friends and associates that I made when I was in grade school. Yeah, I recall Punahou with a great deal of enthusiasm.

HY: Who were your close friends and continue to be today?

ZB: Actually, several of them live on Maui now. One of my very good friends in school at Punahou was a fellow by the name of Barclay Johnson who is still a very good friend today who lives on Maui. Formerly a dentist, now working at Seabury Hall. My good friend, Eric Romanchak, who is now a judge here on Maui in the family court. My friend, Jimmy Haines, who I didn’t know as well at Punahou, but we have a commonality of having gone to school there. He lives here on Maui. Several other older fellows who originally were at Punahou, but it’s interesting how school ties do create a commonality of experience which you kind of come back to as you get older. But there are a lot of Punahou graduates on Maui with whom I am very close today. So it’s interesting how schools have that way about them.

The other thing is that Hawai‘i obviously has grown really substantially in our lifetime. When I think back about how big Hawai‘i was when I was younger, I realize that it really wasn’t as big a place as I thought it was. So there’s a bit of commonality of experience when you live in a community that isn’t as big as you think it is, particularly when you’re young. You know, I don’t know what the population of the territory was when I was in school at Punahou in the mid-[19]50s, [Historical Statistics of Hawai‘i] estimates the population in 1955 was 539,292 but it was probably only [half] the size of what the state is now. So when you’re young, you think things are big and in fact maybe they’re not as big as you think they are. But it does suggest, very strongly, that those associations you have when you’re young, particularly in a small community, carry over.

And the other thing is that what happens as time goes along, the difference in age is not nearly as important as you get to be an adult as it is when you’re young. So you get to know people, you have common experiences and those common experiences are more important than the ages once you get to be in your forties or so. The difference of ten years in age, when you get to be forty, isn’t nearly what it is when you’re five versus fifteen, so that’s an important element. And again, having gone to Punahou is, I don’t think it’s unique, I think people that went to 'Iolani [School,] or certainly people that go to Kamehameha [Schools,] can say the
same thing.

HY: Now, did you folks have domestic servants when you were growing up?

ZB: Interestingly, the answer is yes.

HY: And were they people that lived on the property?

ZB: Yup.

HY: Do you remember some of them?

ZB: Yup. Some of them, as was the custom then, some were from Hawai‘i and some were not. They stayed for various lengths of time. Some we still know. One of the gals that was originally from Kaua‘i stayed on, started with us as somebody that helped in the house. And then went on to become my dad’s secretary at the Brown Fund and was eventually the secretary of the firm and worked for my dad until she died of cancer.

HY: Do you know her name?

ZB: We called her, “Chummy,” but her Japanese name was “Chiyomi.” And the reason we call her Chummy is because when we were young, we couldn’t pronounce her Japanese name properly so that’s what it turned into. Her sister also worked for us. Her name is Katsuko and she lives on Kaua‘i.

HY: What’s their last name?

ZB: Don’t recall.

HY: That’s all right.

ZB: I don’t know her married name, I’d have to look it up. Sorry.

HY: And what about the other people besides family members that were living on your property?

ZB: No others. Because in our family of father, mother, and five children and two others, we had a house of nine people. So there wasn’t anybody else, there wasn’t room for anybody else.

HY: Did she have children or a family while she was living with you folks, or was it just her and her sister?

ZB: No, she and her sister were with us when they were quite young. And then went off and had families of their own. But Chummy stayed on and assisted my dad when she married and had a family. We had another Japanese couple that were with us prior to moving from Keala‘olu Avenue to Noela Drive. George and Ie Ikeda were with us when I was very young. One of the things I remember about Ie was that she would lie down and ask me to jump on her back because she had back pain. So I would have to jump up and down on her back.

(Laughter)
ZB: But I always regarded that setup as one of friends almost more than people that you would call servants. I never viewed any of those folks as other than being friends.

HY: Did you have a cook?

ZB: No, these gals doubled up on cooking, cleaning, helping around the house and sort of taking care of us.

HY: What kind of foods did you grow up with?

ZB: Mostly Haole food. My dad, for reasons of his own health, he was very allergic to a lot of things, never ate fish of any kind. So subsequently, we didn’t eat fish. So we had mostly Haole food. Just because that was his choice. My mother was obviously from the Mainland, she’d grown up on the Mainland, so we didn’t eat a lot of the foods that are popular in Hawai’i. Hawaiian food sometimes, but not often. I would say that, on the other hand, growing up in Hawai’i, even though you may not eat ethnic foods in your home, you still have a tremendous exposure to them. So you end up eating other kinds of foods although you may not have eaten those foods in your own house.

HY: Who was the disciplinarian in your family?

ZB: Well, I think that my parents were equal. I think we were asked to live to a pretty high standard. My mother was raised in a very “polite” household and required the same of us. But those are skills that are not unuseful later in your life, so it’s a little bit grinding when you’re young, but once you learn them they’re useful in behaving in a civilized [manner] all the way down the road. I think that I would say that, for instance, where the [boarding] school issue is concerned, that is not an issue that was ever a matter of discussion. So I guess if you were to look at that, not in a disciplinarian way, but looking at life at that time, did I or any of my brothers or sister have a choice to whether or not we wanted to go off to boarding school, that was not an option. That was what was going to be done and so I guess that you might say that that was somewhat of an authoritarian situation where, “This is what we want you to do,” and off you go.

HY: Were there expectations about career choices or just . . .

ZB: No, it was just getting the education, just that the education in that part of the world under those kinds of school systems was superior to that which was available to us in Hawai’i at the time. I’m not sure, having not gone to high school in Hawai’i that that was true then. I’m just not sure of that. I do know that the education I got was excellent, was very good. And so I cannot belittle that, you know, I wouldn’t belittle that. And for that, I am exceedingly lucky. I did not, as I said a moment ago, did not repeat that exercise with my children because I really wanted to be around them in their teenage years. I mean, that was something I enjoyed very much without—hoping to not meddle too deeply in their lives. But I enjoyed having them around during their high school years. Watching them mature as students, watching them mature as athletes and going to see them perform. That was exciting. And that’s something that going away to boarding school doesn’t allow.

Matter of fact, I listened to [radio show host] Dr. Laura the other day, who said that she thought that the only people who should go away to boarding school are people whose
children are totally incapable of getting along with their parents. She feels so strongly about
the family commitment that she thinks that children ought to be in a family situation through
high school, which I found interesting. But I think that if I were to look at an event in my life
which was relatively defining early on, it was leaving Hawai‘i at age thirteen and going off to
Wallingford, Connecticut for four years. That was a . . .

HY: And you attended which school?

ZB: I attended the Choate School in Wallingford, Connecticut. I think that the other part of the
boarding school experience then, which I don’t think exists now, is that boarding school, in the
late 1950s through the 1960s, was a very confining situation. It was a situation where your
every move was calculated beforehand and where your free time was spelled out in dribs and
drabs, and where you were on campus 90 percent of the school year. That’s a exercise that I
didn’t want to replicate for my kids. Good education, but a little bit confining.

HY: Maybe you could talk about your paternal grandparents a little bit.

ZB: Well, my paternal grandfather [George I‘i Brown] died [in 1946] when I was only three.

HY: Do you have memories of him at all?

ZB: No, none. I mean, I cannot picture him in my mind’s eye except in photos. So essentially, I
just don’t know him at all. My grandmother [Julia White Brown] on my father’s side was,
however, somebody that we had a lot of contact with, lot of interaction with. And my
grandfather owned a piece of property on Diamond Head Road which was named ‘Ainamalu.
And it was a four-acre piece which she and my grandfather bought early in this century. We
spent an incredible amount of time there. Because it was right on the beach, we were able to
go surfing and fishing. So she was there and she was an integral part of our lives, both when
we were children and after I got back from college. I saw her a lot, probably more than my
maternal grandparents [Alan and Mary Louise Lowrey] because they lived in San Francisco.
But both grandparents, my mother’s mother and my father’s mother—I was very lucky—they
had big roles in our growing up. Spent a lot of time with them. My grandmother on the
Mainland, I visited in the summers often. And she taught me to drive, for instance. Not a skill
that you forget quickly, so I credit her with that.

And my father’s mother, my grandmother on my dad’s side, a totally unique woman,
somebody who rode a motorcycle during the Second World War and well into her sixties. She
rode a bike all over the place. She was probably one of the most idiosyncratic people that have
ever existed.

HY: Now, did you think of her like that at the time?

ZB: Oh yeah, yeah. Her behavior was such that you couldn’t help but . . . .

HY: Was that something that was endearing or was it disturbing . . .

ZB: Oh no, very endearing. I always thought that she was a person who spoke her mind well
before—particularly now that we all know about how important women’s views are—she
spoke her mind well before that was kind of acceptable behavior on the part of a woman. No,
I was always very happy that she was my grandmother, you know.

HY: So you said the kind of activities you did there [at 'Āinamalu] were . . .

ZB: Well, we had ocean activities right on the beach, obviously. We normally got together as an extended family, my dad, his two brothers, their children, for Thanksgiving and Christmas, where we had a big dinner, or lunch, actually. Thanksgiving lunch. A great deal of fun there with cousins and aunts and uncles. And we usually played touch football after lunch. And it was a nice family affair. After her death [in 1974], her place was sold. And in a way, it still exists because there are probably eight- or nine-unit upscale condominium properties now. But it's all single family condos and the place wasn't turned into a scattering of smaller lots. I think the, I don't know if it's still called that, but . . .

(Microphone muffled. Taping interrupted, then resumes.)

ZB: Sorry. There's a break outside her home that's called Brown's [Reef] after the fact that it breaks right off of her piece of property. I don't know whether it's still called Brown's but when I was young it was called Brown's. And I think it was probably called Brown's because people who were paddling in and out engaged my grandmother in conversation from time to time. "What are you doing here!" So it's, again, very fortunate to have access to a four-acre piece of property right on the beach. Almost nothing like it.

HY: Now you mention your cousins. You also spent time on the Waipi'o property of your uncle's.

ZB: Yup.

HY: Maybe you can talk about what kinds of activities you did there.

ZB: Well again, we were very fortunate. My [paternal] great-grandmother Irene [Haalou Kahalelaukoa] I'i [Brown Holloway] had a place near Pearl Harbor called Waipi'o. One of the very fine old Hawaiian songs is about her place there. My Uncle George [I'i Brown, Jr.] lived there and his kids. And when we were young we used to drive out there which was a bit more of a—you know, it takes, on a good day, it takes twenty minutes to drive to Waipahu now, and in the mid-[1950s] it probably took an hour and a half. At least it seemed that way. I don't remember exactly how big Waipi'o is but it's probably [thirteen] acres.

There was an old house that was kind of gone by the time I was around but my uncle had built another home there and he lived there. So when we went out to visit we did all kinds of things. You know, the things that you do at a rural place. We used to shoot a lot out there and generally have a great deal of fun just running around outside. Later on, when we got to be teenagers, we rode motorcycles around and raced around the property. Generally (chuckles) ill behaved. And when I was young, the property was pretty much completely surrounded by cane. So that was the only home in the whole area. Even though the property itself was only [thirteen] acres, there was nothing else really nearby to speak of. We used to sort of trek out to Pearl Harbor and fuss around in the old—you know, in the early [1950s] there was a lot of stuff that was left over from the Second World War. There was a lot of stuff that hadn't been cleaned up from Pearl Harbor. So we used to go fool around on some of the old military stuff that was lying around in the ditches. I remember recovering one day, going on an old—I think it was a sort of a landing craft-type of operation. We took a couple of machine guns off of it.
and some other paraphernalia. There was a whole bunch of live ammunition. So we used to fool around, do that kind of stuff.

(Laughter)

HY: And who were you close to of your cousins there? When you say we, you mean...

ZB: Oh, my brother Alan and my cousin George [I'i Brown, III] are the same age. They were born in the same time. So the three of us are all about the same age and we were all boys so we had common interests that way. And then George's younger sister is a little bit younger than he is, so she used to sort of tag along, too.

HY: Irene [Brown]?

ZB: Yeah, this is Irene. Then George had a sister that died [in 1969], Julia [Brown]. She was a little bit younger. She was the same age as my brother Lawrence, [who died in 1980] so she and Lawrence are both dead, but Debbie [Brown] and my brother David are about the same. They were a little younger. Well, for a while they weren't even around and then when they were, they were little kids, they were tiny. So for the most part, it was George and Alan and me, and then later on, Irene. So it was really only the three of us and then maybe four of us. But it was a great place to go because it was in the country and we could shoot. We always used to shoot .22s and shotguns and stuff like that. So got our outdoor activities going early.

HY: Did you do hunting or just targets?

ZB: Yeah, my Uncle George liked to hunt. My dad hunted a little bit when he was small. I hunted with my Uncle George, well, once I was able to go hunting, bird shooting and the like. And my late teens and early twenties, I went with my Uncle George a lot. We went to the Big Island, hunted on the Parker Ranch. And I think I would say that he was most instrumental in kind of introducing me to that kind of hunting which I pursue avidly to this day.

We also used to go to my [great-]uncle Francis [I'i Brown's] place on the Big Island, place called Kalähuiupu‘a‘a, which is where the Mauna Lani Resort is today. And we hunted goats and fished and shot doves. We were very lucky, we had ample opportunities for that kind of thing. My Uncle George also had a fishing boat. And once I got a little older he used to invite me go fishing and I fished with him a lot out on O'ahu.

HY: Where did you go?

ZB: Well, the boat was docked, or berthed in the Ala Wai Yacht Harbor. So we used to go to Penguin Bank or we used to go up to Barber's Point, fishing off of O'ahu. So I had my earliest introduction to sport fishing in Hawai'i through George Brown. And I don't fish quite as much today as I hunt, but I still enjoy it very very much. So I'd also credit him with having introduced me to fishing. My dad didn't fish himself because he didn't eat fish, but he always had boats, too. So even when we lived at Keala'olu we had a small early fiberglass boat called a wizard. We put a little marine railway in to Kapakahi Stream and we would launch the boat off of our property on Keala'olu, take it down the stream, out the channel at Kāhala—the stream still exists. And then we'd go up and down the coastline, the Kāhala coastline. Go over to my grandmother's house on Diamond Head and that kind of thing. So I'm lucky to have
been around boats all my life, too.

HY: Now did your Uncle George have other influences on you besides teaching you, you know, hunting?

ZB: Well, I always loved his sense of humor. I thought he had a wonderful sense of humor. And yeah, I would say that he, in that regard, had a very big influence. He's a good storyteller and he had, as I said, a great sense of humor, which I loved.

When we were very young before the I'i Estate was sold [to the Hawaiian Pineapple Company], the other place that we had access to, which was a unique place, was a house that had been built, I'm not sure when, but it was in the Ko’olaus, above Mililani. So when we were very young, we had access to that home that had been built for my great-grandmother originally. And so that gave us access to some kind of mountain activities. And we used to go up there, swim in the streams and have guava fights and shampoo ginger and that same kind of stuff that was looked on as recreational activity. Once the I'i Estate was sold though, that house went with them, that property went with the sale, so we didn’t have access to it quite the same way. But again, it was a matter of, I think, wonderful fortune that we had access to these places.

In fact, the piece of property that we own on the Big Island today, Keawaiki, was the second of the two properties my great-uncle Francis owned, and we first went to Kalāhuipua’a in 1949. Uncle Francis said, “Go on up.” So my dad and my Uncle George and George and Alan and I went up to Kalāhuipua’a where we fished and kind of lived off the land a little bit. And Uncle Francis’ other place was down the coast, was not accessible by road. So we enjoyed Kalāhuipua’a so much that we went back often and were able to use Uncle Francis’ skiffs and we soon began visiting Keawaiki. And my dad offered to buy the place from my uncle in 1956, which we did. We still own it today. And it’s again, probably one of the more unique spots in the islands. It’s a fifteen-acre piece on the beach. It has a home that was built in 1925 which is now on the historic homes register because it is a unique home. And if I have my way, we won’t sell the property at all because it is still very unique.

HY: What would you do when you’d go there?

ZB: Well initially, or actually until the mid-[19]70s, there was no road there at all so the logistical issues of getting in and out of Keawaiki were very complicated. We kept a couple of outboard boats in Kawaihae. We had a wonderful friend, now deceased, named Tatsuo Nagasawa who lived there, who kept the boats for us and helped keep the place. We would go up, fly up to Kamuela, provision ourselves, drive down to Kawaihae, load the boats up and take the boats down to Keawaiki where we would spend, oh, ten days to two weeks. Pretty much self-supporting once you got there. We set it up initially with some propane, refrigerator propane stove. Later we added some propane lights. But it was a pretty unique place. And it was a wonderful place to grow up. Again, all activities that I still love. All the outdoor activities, diving and hunting and just being outside. I developed a strong interest in archeological stuff through exposure to all of those sights in that part of the world.

My mother, early in the game, became interested in archeology herself and was very close to Elspeth Sterling who’s done an enormous amount of archeological work on Maui. My mother took an archeology course at the University of Hawai‘i, became very close to Kenneth Emory.
We got to know him very well, so have had a very long and continuing interest in archeological things and an interest that is pretty much as strong today as when I was young. We had a chance, when I was young, on that coast of the Big Island, to look at sites, caves, burial caves, living caves, huge field of petroglyphs. Stuff that at the time had probably not been seen by very many people at all.

HY: Did you have an awareness of that significance at the time?

ZB: Absolutely. I think that there’s no question that both because of my own heritage and because of the exposure my mother had through Kenneth Emory and Dr. [Yosihiko] Sinoto. Yeah, very much, way back. Matter of fact, in a cave out past Niu, just before you get to Hawai‘i Kai, called Makani‘olu, at a dig that the university was sponsoring, probably in the early [19]50s, my brother Alan found some bone tattooing needles that were the first ones found in Hawai‘i. There were specimens of tattooing needles in the British museums where many Hawaiian artifacts still reside, but we had no tattooing needles in Hawai‘i. And Alan found three in this fabulous cave. This was on a dig sponsored by the University of Hawai‘i. So it was not a robbing exposition but rather a controlled situation. But it was a very, very memorable event for me. Something that I can picture in my mind’s eye, being there, even now.

HY: Now, when you were growing up, were you told your history?

ZB: You know, it was just at the end of being part-Hawaiian that wasn’t highly talked about. So the answer is not as much as I would have expected. You know, while I had a real sense of the fact that we had some very fine Hawaiian ancestors, it wasn’t an item that was talked about in great detail. Sort of surprising, kind of an interesting contradiction. A very nice thing and a very proud thing, but not an issue that was examined in as much detail as one would have liked.

HY: You were aware of some of the history of your family?

ZB: Well, yeah. Actually one of the things that happened that probably wouldn’t be bad to review, even at this moment is that my dad helped publish, through the Bishop Museum, a work called Fragments of Hawaiian History, which was basically a compilation of some of John [Papa] I‘i’s writings, who was my great-great-grandfather. And John I‘i was a somewhat pivotal person in the transition of the true Hawaiian-only culture to a more varied culture. And my dad helped put that book together when it was done.

But it’s a great piece because it discusses the activities of a Hawaiian man who was involved deeply in the transition of the Hawaiian Islands. And of course, I’ve read Fragments of Hawaiian History and I’ve learned more from that about ourselves than I did through my own conversations. So it’s a funny thing, that whole issue of not talking about the fact you’re Hawaiian. I mean, that’s part of why the language disappeared for so long, was that it was like a lot of native languages, or languages that people bring with them, they’re sort of put in the closet. I don’t know if that’s unique to Hawai‘i. I think you could talk to other people in Hawai‘i who are not Hawaiians who have had the same experience, who don’t know their own heritage as much as they’d like. But I didn’t learn as much about that in my early years as I might have expected.

HY: Was that something you thought about while you were growing up?
ZB: No, I don’t think I could honestly say, maybe in retrospect you could envision yourself thinking about it, but I don’t think that you know, fairly, I don’t think so. I mean, what you don’t know, maybe you don’t question. But by the same token, I said a minute ago how interested I was in archeological things. And I mean, all physical aspects of Hawai‘i have always interested me. So I learned a lot about Hawaiian fishes, I’ve read Mary Kawena Pukui, [who collaborated with author Margaret Titcomb on] Native Use of Fish in Hawai‘i and Spencer Tinker’s book on fish [Fishes of Hawai‘i], and so those issues were very, very important. I love the geography and geology and all of the migration issues. And spent a lot of time when I was young learning about that. So those issues were terrifically important to me then and they are now. They still are, I’m still fascinated by those kinds of things. But I don’t think I ever wondered about why I wasn’t learning more about my own family background at the time. I was spending a lot of time learning about a lot of other things, so it wasn’t as though I was just in a vacuum.

END OF SIDE ONE

SIDE TWO

HY: Okay, so you talked about, you know, going out in the early days, when you went out to your uncle’s property . . .

ZB: At Waipi‘o.

HY: . . . at Waipi‘o. It was all surrounded by cane. Now over the years you continued to go there. Now what kind of changes did you notice?

ZB: Well, things changed fairly dramatically as time went along because cane no longer really exists on O‘ahu, so the winding down of sugar activities began, you know, thirty-five years ago and they converted a lot of the land that was in cane, right next to Waipi‘o, into housing. And you had a kind of a little island of [thirteen] acres surrounded by subdivision activity. And it obviously changed the nature of the property dramatically. I’m thrilled in the long run that Waipi‘o is going to end up in the use that it’s going to end up in [as the location for a senior-care village], which is not another subdivision. It’s going to avoid that fate—my grandmother’s place on Diamond Head didn’t quite avoid the fate of being a residential property, but it did avoid the fate of being chopped up into ten-thousand square-foot lots. I guess we’re lucky about that. My great-uncle’s place at Kalāhuipua‘a avoided the fate of being turned into a dumpy resort. The resort that was built there is a lovely thing. Fish ponds at Kalāhuipua‘a which was, which are, which was and are, one of the most prominent features about the property, have been retained in their original form. So . . .

HY: Did you actually make use of the fish ponds there?

ZB: Oh yes, extensively. Yeah, we fished in them.

HY: What kinds of things—what were the fish . . .

ZB: Well, amongst other things, we learned first-hand about how working fish ponds are. I mean,
one of the great achievements of the Hawaiian culture was their knowledge of aquaculture. And sadly, on most of the islands, that disappeared. On Moloka‘i, with all the exposed fish ponds, the maintenance requirement was so huge that they were unable to maintain them. These fish ponds at Kalāhuipua‘a are natural inland ponds in the lava. So they’re long-term maintenance was not a requirement of any significance. It was only the walls to the ocean that needed to be kept up. And that was relatively more easy to do.

But they were then, and are, working fish ponds. And you can see exactly how the Hawaiians made use of that activity. These ponds had a mākāhā opening to the sea with stakes and rocks in the middle so a lot of the small fish could enter, and then once they got in the pond they couldn’t leave because they grew too big to get out. We watched the catching of the pua, the small mullet, which were used to reseed the ponds. You could see how all of that whole thing interrelated. So it was an absolutely wonderful living example of Hawaiian aquaculture. My great-uncle made sure that the ponds weren’t changed, he made sure they were kept up, made sure they continued to produce the very fine ‘ānae mullet that came out of them. They still have that today. And [the president of Tokyu Corporation] Mr. [Noboru] Gotoh from Japan agreed not to destroy the ponds and he lived up to that agreement. So they are a fine example that aquaculture today.

HY: You know, back on the Waipi‘o property, after there was more development in that surrounding area, did that affect the kind of activities you did?

ZB: Oh yeah, obviously you can’t shoot when there are people living right next door to you, so that all . . .

HY: That was curtailed?

ZB: That was curtailed. But we still got to ride around, we had a bunch of motorcycles and small get-around, go-cart type vehicles. So we did a lot of that and we still were able to have a lot of fun. Because the place was on the edge of the Pearl Harbor area, we still had access to a lot of land down below. But then, the other thing that happened is once we all went away to school, we weren’t able to use the property quite as much because we weren’t around. So for eight years, other than going out there in the summertime, we didn’t have that much access to it because we weren’t on island. George Brown went to school, you know, number of different places but he eventually got to the East Coast, too. So part of it was the fact that, at age thirteen, I left to go to school and I didn’t really get back to live in Hawai‘i until I was age twenty-one. I was home in the summertime, but most summers I had a summer job and wasn’t quite as free to go out and just carouse around.

HY: When you first mentioned it, you said it was fairly rural . . .

ZB: Very rural.

HY: When you went there, did you feel like, “Oh, I’m going to the country?”

ZB: To the country. Absolutely, yeah.

HY: And did you notice, was there kind of a life-style difference in your uncle’s home and in your own home?
ZB: No, it was a very similar, very similar, no. It was—obviously living on [thirteen] acres near Waipahu, but really not right in Waipahu—was physically different, physically it gave you a much different feeling than being right outside of Waikiki. But no, not a lot of difference in the way we lived, very similar. But again, it was because we all liked the outdoors so I spent a lot of time, I mean, I wasn't an inside person when I was young and living in Diamond Head and then suddenly found myself out of doors when I went down to Waipi'o. I liked the out of doors and my dad like the out of doors so we were oriented to that kind of activity wherever we lived and it was just a matter of where we were.

My great-uncle was a very fine golfer. My dad took up the game although my Uncle George didn’t. But my dad played golf a lot. And we, as I say, we went boating in town so that part was not a lot different, at least in my memory.

HY: Do you have any memories of your family getting involved in politics, either your Uncle Francis or your Uncle Kenny [Kenneth Francis Brown]?

ZB: Well, my Uncle Francis was in politics, for the most part, before I was alive. He was in politics from the [19]20s and [19]30s, so I knew that he’d done that. [Francis Brown served in the territorial house, 1925-26, 1927-34; and in the territorial senate, 1937-48.] My dad ran for office, without success, I don’t even remember what office it was. [Zadoc White Brown ran for delegate to con-con in 1950.] He served on the Hawaiian Homes Commission for a while.

So that, and then of course, my Uncle Kenny got involved in politics in a very big way, became a very, very close confidant of John Burns. Was involved with John Burns, actually, in identifying what they now call the Gold Coast of Hawai‘i as a place where new development might take place. I remember specifically in 1965, going with my Uncle Kenny and Aunt Joan and Laurance and Mary Rockefeller to look at Kauna‘oa Beach. When Laurance Rockefeller was considering buying the property and putting up the Mauna Kea Beach Hotel, we all went out on Uncle Kenny’s boat in Kawaihae, and I remember that incident very clearly. So that was a wonderful---Laurance Rockefeller took the first step at developing that area. And of course he built what then was considered to be an absolutely world-class development which took all of the good things into account. Beautiful setting, which he didn’t destroy, which he added to rather than subtracted from. And that was sort of the kick off to a development scenario which is still going on on that part of the island of Hawai‘i. For the most part, I think almost entirely, the development that has happened on that coast follows what Laurance Rockefeller set out to do.

But Uncle Kenny was very much involved with John Burns at the time and that was one of his things that he wanted to get done. But my dad’s involvement with politics was only very brief and not successful. Uncle Kenny, as I said, has been, of my uncles, the one that was most involved and I think is still kind of an elder statesman, if you will, in Hawai‘i where some political issues are concerned. I think he’s still very much involved, on an consulting basis anyway, and those kinds of issues.

HY: Did you campaign? Do you remember campaigning or any of that sort of thing?

ZB: Unfortunately, I can’t remember what my old man ran for, but I can remember helping him in that campaign. I didn’t campaign for my Uncle Kenny because I was—most of his political career occurred when I was in college so I wasn’t on island to help him. So no, not any really
one of the great achievements of the Hawaiian culture was their knowledge of aquaculture. And sadly, on most of the islands, that disappeared. On Moloka‘i, with all the exposed fish ponds, the maintenance requirement was so huge that they were unable to maintain them. These fish ponds at Kalahuipua’a are natural inland ponds in the lava. So they’re long-term maintenance was not a requirement of any significance. It was only the walls to the ocean that needed to be kept up. And that was relatively more easy to do.

But they were then, and are, working fish ponds. And you can see exactly how the Hawaiians made use of that activity. These ponds had a mākāhā opening to the sea with stakes and rocks in the middle so a lot of the small fish could enter, and then once they got in the pond they couldn’t leave because they grew too big to get out. We watched the catching of the pua, the small mullet, which were used to reseed the ponds. You could see how all of that whole thing interrelated. So it was an absolutely wonderful living example of Hawaiian aquaculture. My great-uncle made sure that the ponds weren’t changed, he made sure they were kept up, made sure they continued to produce the very fine ‘anae mullet that came out of them. They still have that today. And [the president of Tokyu Corporation] Mr. [Noboru] Gotoh from Japan agreed not to destroy the ponds and he lived up to that agreement. So they are a fine example that aquaculture today.

HY: You know, back on the Waipi‘o property, after there was more development in that surrounding area, did that affect the kind of activities you did?

ZB: Oh yeah, obviously you can’t shoot when there are people living right next door to you, so that all . . .

HY: That was curtailed?

ZB: That was curtailed. But we still got to ride around, we had a bunch of motorcycles and small get-around, go-cart type vehicles. So we did a lot of that and we still were able to have a lot of fun. Because the place was on the edge of the Pearl Harbor area, we still had access to a lot of land down below. But then, the other thing that happened is once we all went away to school, we weren’t able to use the property quite as much because we weren’t around. So for eight years, other than going out there in the summertime, we didn’t have that much access to it because we weren’t on island. George Brown went to school, you know, number of different places but he eventually got to the East Coast, too. So part of it was the fact that, at age thirteen, I left to go to school and I didn’t really get back to live in Hawai‘i until I was age twenty-one. I was home in the summertime, but most summers I had a summer job and wasn’t quite as free to go out and just carouse around.

HY: When you first mentioned it, you said it was fairly rural . . .

ZB: Very rural.

HY: When you went there, did you feel like, “Oh, I’m going to the country?”

ZB: To the country. Absolutely, yeah.

HY: And did you notice, was there kind of a life-style difference in your uncle’s home and in your own home?
ZB: No, it was a very similar, very similar, no. It was—obviously living on [thirteen] acres near Waipahu, but really not right in Waipahu—was physically different, physically it gave you a much different feeling than being right outside of Waikiki. But no, not a lot of difference in the way we lived, very similar. But again, it was because we all liked the outdoors so I spent a lot of time, I mean, I wasn’t an inside person when I was young and living in Diamond Head and then suddenly found myself out of doors when I went down to Waipi'o. I liked the out of doors and my dad like the out of doors so we were oriented to that kind of activity wherever we lived and it was just a matter of where we were.

My great-uncle was a very fine golfer. My dad took up the game although my Uncle George didn’t. But my dad played golf a lot. And we, as I say, we went boating in town so that part was not a lot different, at least in my memory.

HY: Do you have any memories of your family getting involved in politics, either your Uncle Francis or your Uncle Kenny [Kenneth Francis Brown]?

ZB: Well, my Uncle Francis was in politics, for the most part, before I was alive. He was in politics from the [19]20s and [19]30s, so I knew that he’d done that. [Francis Brown served in the territorial house, 1925-26, 1927-34; and in the territorial senate, 1937-48.] My dad ran for office, without success, I don’t even remember what office it was. [Zadoc White Brown ran for delegate to con-con in 1950.] He served on the Hawaiian Homes Commission for a while. So that, and then of course, my Uncle Kenny got involved in politics in a very big way, became a very, very close confidant of John Burns. Was involved with John Burns, actually, in identifying what they now call the Gold Coast of Hawai’i as a place where new development might take place. I remember specifically in 1965, going with my Uncle Kenny and Aunt Joan and Laurance and Mary Rockefeller to look at Kauna’oa Beach. When Laurance Rockefeller was considering buying the property and putting up the Mauna Kea Beach Hotel, we all went out on Uncle Kenny’s boat in Kawaihae, and I remember that incident very clearly. So that was a wonderful—Laurance Rockefeller took the first step at developing that area. And of course he built what then was considered to be an absolutely world-class development which took all of the good things into account. Beautiful setting, which he didn’t destroy, which he added to rather than subtracted from. And that was sort of the kick off to a development scenario which is still going on on that part of the island of Hawai’i. For the most part, I think almost entirely, the development that has happened on that coast follows what Laurance Rockefeller set out to do.

But Uncle Kenny was very much involved with John Burns at the time and that was one of his things that he wanted to get done. But my dad’s involvement with politics was only very brief and not successful. Uncle Kenny, as I said, has been, of my uncles, the one that was most involved and I think is still kind of an elder statesman, if you will, in Hawai’i where some political issues are concerned. I think he’s still very much involved, on a consulting basis anyway, and those kinds of issues.

HY: Did you campaign? Do you remember campaigning or any of that sort of thing?

ZB: Unfortunately, I can’t remember what my old man ran for, but I can remember helping him in that campaign. I didn’t campaign for my Uncle Kenny because I was—most of his political career occurred when I was in college so I wasn’t on island to help him. So no, not any really
personal political involvement when I was young.

HY: Do you remember if politics was something that was discussed with your uncle?

ZB: Well, I think clearly, I think that my family, for the most part, had been involved in the Republican camp and I think the only issue that ever came up was when Uncle Kenny decided he was going to be a part of the Democrat party. I think that that was an issue that caused some basis for discussion. But no, not really, we didn’t really talk.

HY: Was there friction or was it just, I mean, what . . .

ZB: I don’t recall anything overt personally, so no. I always thought, it never troubled me that much, that he chose to take the direction he chose. Primarily because his motives have always been much more, in my opinion, much more oriented toward doing what was good and right for Hawai‘i rather than what was necessarily appropriate for some political party. So, no, it has never troubled me.

HY: When you went away to boarding school, you were in the ninth grade, I guess.

ZB: Right.

HY: Did you go through any kind of, something akin to culture shock? If you could describe your transition from living in Hawai‘i.

ZB: I didn’t have as much trouble acclimating, at least in retrospect, as I perhaps thought. It was something that occurred naturally. I was somewhat prepared for it in the sense that I was told that that’s what was going to happen. So rather than fight it I just said, okay, that’s what we’re going to do. And so it made acclimating myself not nearly as difficult.

HY: How was it different for you?

ZB: Oh, it was a lot different. I think people still ask the question—I can remember being asked all the time whether we lived in grass huts. And you know, people on the East Coast knew little or nothing about the West Coast at all. I don’t think they know much about the West Coast today, sort of. Yeah, it’s different. Interestingly enough, as I’ve gotten older, I look back on my experience on the East Coast with less and less enthusiasm. I somehow remember that part of the world as being even more provincial than we might be thought to be in Hawai‘i (chuckles) today. But that’s, I don’t know why that’s come to be. I don’t know why I’ve come to think that way, but I sometimes do. No, it wasn’t too big a, I didn’t have too much of a problem. It was an all-male school, so there were guys from all over the country. And I didn’t have too much trouble. I was lucky, some of my brothers didn’t do well under the circumstances at all. My youngest brother, I don’t think he ever really finished his boarding school stint, came home. So I don’t think we all did as well. But for some reason it didn’t make a big difference to me.

HY: Did it change the way you thought about Hawai‘i, do you think?

ZB: Only to the degree that it made me realize how much I really loved Hawai‘i. And so when I got out of college, there was absolutely no question in my mind as to where I was going to
live. My feeling about that subject has not changed one iota in forty years. There's no [other] place that I would live, ever.

HY: What was it about it that made you realize that?

ZB: Again, it all has to do with the love of the out of doors. All of the things that I like to do most are right outside my doorstep. And now that I've been able to have a business career here, I haven't ever been able to quite combine my vocation with my avocations, but the difference in terms of effort to switch from vocation [to] avocation, are almost non-existent. I mean, all the things I like to do are within, almost within, fifteen minutes of my doorstep. And I don't think there are many folks that can say that. So there's nothing like living in Hawai'i. Nothing.

HY: Now when you would come back in the summers after boarding, would you spend time at all these various properties?

ZB: No, one of the things that I credit my dad most about is that he told me when I first decided it would be a good idea to have a summer job to make a little money, that while a job in construction would be a terrific thing from a money point of view, he thought it would be advantageous, maybe, to take a job that didn't pay as much in the financial area to make one more aware of what's going on in the business world. And I think that that was a wonderfully wise thing to do. Because interestingly enough, my first job was at Dean Witter [& Company] as a mail boy. And while I had no intention of ending up being a stockbroker at the time, I ended up being a stockbroker.

HY: How old were you at this time?

ZB: My first job at Dean Witter was either thirteen or fourteen. I got a job there between my freshman and sophomore year. And then I worked there every summer thereafter. I enjoyed it and they allowed me to return. So I worked for four years there. In my college years I had a few other things but I worked for Dean Witter for four years in the summer, every summer. For six to eight weeks, eight weeks maybe.

HY: Were there people that you considered as sort of mentors there?

ZB: Oh yes, some of the people that I met there are still friends today. Yeah, still friends today.

HY: Like, for example, who . . .

ZB: Well, most of them are now retired. Most of the fellows I met at Dean Witter in the late-[19]50s are either dead or retired. But Paul [C.T.] Loo, who runs the Dean Witter office in Honolulu was a man that I met early on. And there are a number of other guys, they're all guys from Honolulu, but they're guys I knew who are still in the business when I got in the business. After I worked for my dad for five years at the Brown Fund [of Hawai'i], I joined Dean Witter. So a number of the guys that I had known when I was a teenager were still there. Peter [M.] Chang, Shige [Shigeru] Inouye, some old-timers, guys that had been in the business starting in the [19]30s. Very fine, real gentlemen, all gentlemen. Shige Inouye was a World War II vet[eran] who had been injured and was a fine, fine man. Really neat. So I had very fond memories of the people I met at my summer jobs.
HY: Now did that curtail some of these activities that . . .

ZB: Yup, sure. Can’t go running around when you’re working five days a week. But that’s all right.

HY: So did you live at home then, or did you . . .

ZB: Yup, lived at Noela Drive. All the way through college. But I got married right after I got out of college, so pretty quick after 1965 I was able to buy a house. And so my wife and I lived in Kahala. We lived in Kahala from 1965 to 1974 and then we moved to Maui. So I’ve lived on Maui since 1974.

HY: Now did you ever spend, say a whole weekend where you’re staying overnight in Waipi’o?

ZB: Not once I got into high school. The answer is yes, before that, from time to time, stayed out there for the night. But once I got into high school, I was off at boarding school and home for summer jobs. So no, not really. Maybe once in a while but with no regularity really.

HY: You went to college at Princeton [University]?

ZB: I went to Princeton, yeah.

HY: What did you study there?

ZB: I was an English major. So I have a B.A. in English.

HY: So were you still thinking at that time you wouldn’t go into finance as a career?

ZB: When I got out of college I had no idea what I was going to do. My dad was running his own little business and he asked me if I’d be interested in joining him and I said sure. So I went to work for him for $250 a month in 1965. And worked for him through 1971. The middle of that though, I wasn’t able to be there all the time because I was in call-up, the National Guard call-up that occurred in 1967. So I was on active duty for a good bit of that time that I worked for my dad. I was in the 29th Infantry Brigade. I was in the First Battalion, 47th Artillery for six years.

HY: You were in Honolulu though?

ZB: Yeah, our unit was eventually levied on an individual name basis to Vietnam. And a lot of the guys in the brigade went, I didn’t happen to have my name drawn so I did not go. But we were on active duty from ’67 to ’69, roughly, that period.

HY: So then in ’71 you . . .

ZB: Then in ’71 I moved from my dad’s operation to Dean Witter, only because it looked like there was more opportunity as a stockbroker. When I was working for my dad, I was able to sell shares of the Brown Fund only. By joining Dean Witter, I was able to sell shares of the Brown Fund, stocks, other mutual funds, the whole spectrum of other products that weren’t available just working for my dad. And I had a couple of friends at Dean Witter, Sam [Samuel
A.] Cooke, Jim Higgins, at the time was with [E.F. Hutton, which has become] Smith Barney [Inc.] in Kona. Fellow by the name of Charlie [Charles] Kamemori who died of cancer. But they all encouraged me to join the brokerage business, get into the brokerage business, which I did on their urging. So basically I’ve been in the financial services business since 1965.

HY: So what was it that made you and your wife come to Maui then?

ZB: Well, same things that I loved. I was not able to do the things out of doors on O‘ahu as easily by the mid-[1960s] as I had been able to do when I was young. The opportunity of fishing and hunting and having an outdoor life right at my doorstep on Maui was just unparalleled. And I found that I was, from a recreational point of view when I was living on O‘ahu, after I got out of college, most of the time when I was trying to do things, I was trying to go to the island of Hawai‘i or Maui to go do them. So I thought to myself, well, wouldn’t it be fun to live there and then I don’t have to get on a plane on the weekends. And so when an opportunity to come to Maui with Dean Witter came up in 1974, I jumped at it. And again, it was a wonderful decision. I mean, I feel very, very comfortable with it.

Maui in 1974 was a lot smaller island than it is today. I was fortunate because I was asked to join a very good Rotary club. I met a lot of the very very fine old-timers that lived on Maui and it was a terrific opportunity. And I worked at Dean Witter until 1980 and then I joined E. F. Hutton. I moved across the street, if you will. And have been with E. F. Hutton and it’s successors ever since. So not too much in the way of career change. [I] changed firms once, but no career change. And been able to make a living doing this.

HY: As an adult then, did you continue to visit your uncle’s family and hang out there at all?

ZB: The answer is, once we moved to Maui, particularly the first couple of years we lived here, we had two children who were very small. My son was born in 1969 and my daughter in 1971 when I was training to become a stockbroker. She was born in San Francisco while I was at the training program for Dean Witter. But once we got here, the answer to the question you just asked is no, not really, because we relocated, we had two young children, my focus was almost entirely on getting established in the business in a brand new location where I essentially knew no one. Because when I was young, in my very young days, we spent all of our time off of O‘ahu on the island of Hawai‘i. And so I had almost no contact with anybody on Maui at all. So I came to Maui pretty much cold. And so the answer is we went to O‘ahu almost not at all when we first moved here. Very infrequently. Just because we had to concentrate on the bouncing ball which was in our own backyard.

Furthermore, I didn’t have any money. Two kids and we sold our house on O‘ahu and were able to build a small house here in Kihei. So we had a place to live but we had to pay attention to our knitting. So actually, I didn’t get back to O‘ahu to really go to Waipi‘o or even really visit my own parents that often. I also liked the avocational opportunities on Maui which were so much to my liking that I—by that time, Waipi‘o was not the place that it had been when I was young. And so the things that I really liked to do down there weren’t available that much.

HY: Is that because the surrounding areas were more developed?

ZB: It changed. We still had a lot of fun out there when I lived on O‘ahu for the eight years I
lived on O‘ahu. We did a lot of partying in Waipi‘o, go out and have barbecues and stuff like that. But at that point, we were all relatively young and we had just married, most of us had just married. So the period from '65 to '74, we used Waipi‘o not the way we used it when we were young, but we used it because it was a nice, there were some nice facilities. They had a nice pool and a barbecue and what have you. So we’d have parties out there as young people are wont to do. But then once I moved to Maui, I almost never went back.

HY: Were there other people that used the facilities there or was it mostly your families that would spend time there?

ZB: Well, when we were young it was mostly family. But then as we got to be young adults, all of our friends came out there too. So we had big parties with, again, they were all mostly childhood friends but they were all friends of George and Irene’s and mine. Not too huge a gang but . . .

HY: But mostly family and friends at parties?

ZB: Yup, yup. And tennis and go out and swim and barbecue and that kind of stuff. Just sit around. And then once we had children we had them too. But once I moved to Maui, couldn’t go to Waipi‘o because we lived here and not on O‘ahu. So that stopped in '74. I’m trying to remember when the property actually got, when George and Irene finally sold it. I think they probably sold it ten years later maybe, no, maybe more. [Nineteen]-ninety.

My aunt [Julia "Judy" Brown] died [in 1987] and my uncle, his health went to pot so he ended up living in sort of an old folks home in Kāne‘ohe. And so at that point there was almost nobody in Waipi‘o. So the place just sort of went, plus that there were so many people living next door and with nobody there people broke in and just wrecked the place. So again, that’s why I’m happy that it’s going to be converted into something useful.

But it was a place we used, that I went to, for the most part, when I was really young and then once I got back from school, we went to for social events after I was married, after I was out of college. And the use didn’t change that much but the kind of things we were doing changed. But it was a magnificent property all the way through. Beautifully taken care of. Beautiful, beautiful coconut grove. My uncle had some folks that were able to work on the property so it was well taken care of when I was young. And it was a very lovely old spot. Really lovely spot. I remember the property with a great fondness. Yeah, great fondness. And as I say, we’re just ever so fortunate to have had access to those kind of things.

My grandmother’s piece of property on Diamond Head Road, I remember fondly after she died and we sold the property [in 1976]. I’ve never been back. I never have gone down to the property to look at it to see what they’ve built. I guess I’d much rather remember it the way it was. I’ve been to the Mauna Lani [Resort] a lot. But I still love to go there because they didn’t destroy it. They kept so many of the old features that I remember when I was young that were very important features. When the Japanese built the hotel there and what have you, they were very thoughtful to retain the most attractive of the physical elements which were the ponds and all of the lava fields around the ponds. They did a magnificent job doing that. So it’s fun to go to the Mauna Lani because you can see so much of what was originally there, intact.
Unlike say, Chris Hemmeter’s great escapade at Waikoloa [Hyatt Regency Waikoloa] when he absolutely destroyed some absolutely beautiful ponds in order to build this thing that he thought was ever so much more attractive. I mean, those two properties juxtaposed against each other are what’s best about Hawai’i and what’s worst about Hawai’i and they’re within two miles of each other. But it’s this, I feel so fortunate to have had access to these lovely places and I think that’s in a large part colored, you know, I’ve been involved in nature conservancy for a long time and have been able to be involved with an organization that’s attempting to keep intact some of the really important places in Hawai’i.

HY: Do you attribute those values to anybody in particular or is it just the way you grew up?

ZB: No, I think it’s just the way I grew up. I wouldn’t say it was anybody in particular. I’d say it’s just a general feeling that I got when I was growing up about A, how fortunate we were, and B, how really important maintaining that kind of thing was. But nobody grandstanding about it. It was just part of the deal. No discussions about, “Now you gotta preserve, preserve.”

HY: Is there anything else you want to talk about? Anything we didn’t cover?

ZB: Not that I can think of. If I do think of something though, I’ll make sure I call you. But no, nothing specific. As I say, it’s more the great good fortune to be exposed to, at a very early age, some really lovely, natural settings. And settings where people lived that were beautiful. But that were worth saving in one way or another. Not necessarily in the original form but—and that’s something that’s lingered with me forever. But I still enjoy the out of doors, I still enjoy being involved in activities that help save the out of doors. And of course, on Maui, the opportunity through Peter Baldwin and his father, Manduke [Baldwin], to have access to Haleakalā Ranch and my great friend, Betsy and Pardee Erdman who have given me access to ‘Ulupalakua Ranch and friends. My great friend, [William] “Aka” Hodgins on Moloka’i who was a manager of Moloka’i Ranch for years. Sam Cooke, who one of the offspring of the owners of Moloka’i Ranch, we had access to all of those places. Parker Ranch through my Uncle George, where we went and hunted. So those things are all part of my background.

HY: Now, you had just said that at first you were grateful that you had, I guess, the opportunity to be exposed to this type of lifestyle where you, natural settings and whatnot. Did you know that that was, I wouldn’t say unique, but you know, that’s not something everybody had the opportunity to . . .

ZB: Oh yeah, absolutely. I mean, that wasn’t something that was pointed out either. That’s an interesting question because that’s right. I mean, that’s maybe not something that you have to have told to you. But that’s something that was very important to me and something that I realized how fortunate I was. In fact, one of the reasons why I wanted to come back from school so much is because the East Coast is a lot more crowded than it is here and I just thought to myself, my goodness—even when I was there in the [19]50s—there was just no comparison. I just thought to myself, man! You know, Hawai’i has got all of these incredible things. So yeah, without having been told, I’ve always been really, really aware of how important and lucky, how important the surroundings are and how lucky I have been to have access. And as I say, I still spend most of my time away from the office doing something in the out of doors. More than ever. More than ever. So, but if I think of anything more, I’ll let you know.
HY: Okay, thank you very much.

ZB: Thank you, thank you. Good fun.

END OF INTERVIEW
Iʻi/Brown Family: Oral Histories

Center for Oral History
Social Science Research Institute
University of Hawaiʻi at Mānoa

March 1999