



## ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

An interview with  
Harold F. Cary, 1913-2002

November 19, 1988

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 Tape 2 [MP3 Audio File](#) [Length: 1:00:03] (27.4 MB)

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The transcript was edited in October 1992 by Harold Cary. Corrections were made and ambiguous sentences clarified. Additions were made to some sections so that the reader could better understand the context of the subject discussed.

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### PREFACE

Harold Cary was born in Brooklyn, New York but became a San Diegan when his family moved here in 1928. He attended San Diego High School and on graduation was offered a USC scholarship. This he turned down because of financial reasons and stayed with his job as bookkeeper in a boiler works that built tanks for tuna boats. This was the beginning of a lifetime career in the fishing industry.

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## **INTERVIEWER'S NOTE**

This is an oral interview with Mr. Harold Cary. The date is November 19, 1988. My name is Robert G. Wright.

**ROBERT G. WRIGHT:** Please give me your full name.

**HAROLD F. CARY:** It's Harold F. Cary.

**RW:** And where were you born?

**HC:** I was born in Brooklyn, New York, February 23, 1913.

**RW:** I see. When did you come to San Diego?

**HC:** We came to California in 1926 and San Diego in February, 1928 when I entered San Diego High School.

**RW:** Why did you come out? Your folks brought you out here?

**HC:** Well, nobody. Unemployment was rampant all around the country. My father thought he could do better in California than he could (any place else).

**RW:** What kind of work did he do?

**HC:** He was a jewelry salesman, with Macy's and Wanamaker's in the east.

**RW:** So you started San Diego High back in 1928?

**HC:** In 1928, right, 60 years ago.

**RW:** You know a lot of people then.

**HC:** Oh, yeah.

**RW:** In that period there were a lot of outstanding San Diegans.

**HC:** Yes, there were.

**RW:** Can you name a few?

**HC:** At San Diego High School I knew a number who were or became outstanding, such as Art Jacobs, an athlete and later a major magazine distributor; Tom Greer, Student Body President who spent many years as a Professor of History at Michigan State and a successful author; Irvine Warburton, an all-American football player and later in the movie industry; Sol Price, who became an attorney and founder of the Price Club--to name a few.

**RW:** You graduated from San Diego?

**HC:** Yeah, that's right. And then I had a scholarship to USC offered me, but nobody was working in the family so I couldn't go. I had secured a job while I was a sophomore in San Diego High School as a bookkeeper in the boiler works that built tanks for tuna boats and other fishing craft, that kind of work, this was in 1929, my first knowledge of the tuna business.

**RW:** Did you know some of the fellows in school who were fishermen?

**HC:** No. I don't recall any at all. Most of them were at Point Loma High because it was heavily Portuguese.

**RW:** Well, how about down here on India Street?

**HC:** Yeah, there were a lot of them, but I didn't have much personal connection with them.

**RW:** What part of town did you live in?

**HC:** I lived in Brooklyn Heights which is at 30th and Juniper, around that area, near Balboa Park and Balboa Park Golf Course.

**RW:** Oh, yeah. I know, it's lovely up there. Did you start working in the yard?

**HC:** First, I worked as a gardener, then I got a job after school. I had started to study bookkeeping and by accident in 1929 got a job as the bookkeeper. I was able to change the system as I learned more. This was a boiler works at First and Market.

**RW:** What's the name of it?

**HC:** Shockey Boiler Works.

**RW:** Still in existence?

**HC:** No, no. Let me think. Jobs were extremely scarce then, as I say, no one in our family was working, so we all had to get out and try to get work.

**RW:** That was about the beginning of the Depression years, wasn't it?

**HC:** Yeah, right. I graduated in 1931. So this was the depth of it really. So I worked there and I had various other jobs, one of them on State Street, which later became the Union Hall for the fishermen's union, 640 State Street, just torn down here this summer to make room for some apartments at State and Market. Then I got an offer from Campbell Machine Company where the first tuna clippers were developed. This was in 1934 when Campbell's received a contract to build the first Conte Bianco for Andrea Castagnola. I became the company's cost accountant. The building of the

Conte Bianco started a building boom which ended only with the outbreak of World War II. I was with Campbell's for five years and then in 1939, as I had no college degree, decided to take a Civil Service exam for accountant. The County of San Diego had never employed anyone with that title. There were three openings. I passed the exam and got one of the openings. I was there three years, during which time I installed a new accounting system for the Road Department and was elected President of the County Employees Association. I took a six-month leave of absence to work for the War Department, but found it frustrating. Then I received a call from a man at our church, asking me to take over office management at Lynch Shipbuilding Company at the 28th Street Pier, which National Steel now occupies as part of its plant. So I accepted and, after three months examination, told the owners, Benson Lumber Company, they were going broke so they made me General Manager and we kept it from going broke while building vessels for the Navy and for tuna vessel owners. In the war period, a permit to build a tuna boat had the same priority as government work.

**RW:** Was that so they could go out and catch tuna or so they could use them for patrol boats?

**HC:** No, it was so they could catch tuna. Most of the fleet had been conscripted along with most of the men in 1941, and these boats were built in 1943, 1944, toward the end of the war. We were building tugs for the invasion of Normandy, and I saw what the priorities were, and they were quite high. Unexpectedly our yard had received the first permits to build tuna boats and we built four at that time.

**RW:** These were steel boats?

**HC:** No, everything was wood in those days, including the Navy vessels.

**RW:** Why were they wood even at that late date?

**HC:** There had been one or two converted hulls used for tuna fishing. I can't tell you why, except that was the way they were built. That's what everybody was used to. The advent of steel began when, next to us, National Steel opened their yard. It used to be National Iron Works at the foot of Eighth Avenue next to Campbell's. The Smith interests picked that up, and opened the 28th Street yard and they built some small steel boats, I would judge late 1940's, early 1950's. That was the beginning of the steel vessels.

**RW:** Let's back up a little bit because I am kind of getting lost. You started working at this yard at the foot of 28th Street. What was the name of it again?

**HC:** Lynch Shipbuilding Company.

**RW:** Was that a man by the name of Lynch?

**HC:** Well, in those days you will find lots of material in the historical files. The biggest thing on the waterfront was the Benson Lumber Company, headed by a man named Lynch. They brought in, prior to World War II, log rafts, sometimes a mile long, for their saw mill.

**RW:** That long. I've seen pictures of them.

**HC:** Tremendous things. The saw mill was the same as they had in the northwest. Benson was the largest lumber company in town.

**RW:** What happened to the Bensons?

**HC:** Well, post-war, they went out of business at the beginning of a tremendous building boom, is all I can tell you. I think it had to do with leadership.

**RW:** Mismanagement of some kind?

**HC:** A man named Lynch had been one of the prime movers. He died, his widow took over, and brought in a nephew as President, who had no business experience at all.

**RW:** You're still talking about Benson?

**HC:** I'm talking about Benson. I'm also talking about the nephew named Lynch. Benson had a good staff and everything else but they just quietly phased out and sold their business. They didn't go broke, they just went out of business.

**RW:** Because of the nephew?

**HC:** Well, I couldn't name anyone specifically, but it was an apparent lack of program, a lack of foresight in my judgment. Of course, they could have been influenced by their inability to bring in the log rafts during the war as they could not insure them and they did not or decided it was not profitable to do so after the war. As to the Lynch shipbuilding operation, this was an acquisition by Benson Lumber of a business begun by Anthony Martinolich (Martinolich Shipbuilding Company) at the 28th Street Pier. Martinolich had a shipyard in San Francisco. In later years he operated yards in Kodiak, Tacoma and San Diego (along Harbor Drive).

**RW:** The Lynch yard?

**HC:** Yeah. Which became the Lynch yard. Then because he was unable to pay his bills to Benson Lumber Company, they took the yard over and some short time after that was when I got a call to go down and look over the office. They had picked up some large Navy contracts, and my estimate of what was happening was they were going broke.

**RW:** They were going broke because of...?

**HC:** Fixed price contracts to begin with. They had some of the very best skilled trades people in the business, but with respect to vessel management, general management didn't have anybody. They thought I would have some experience. Well, my management training was empirical, just by watching other people, and I had to take it over after three months there. So we were able to survive. My first trip to Washington convinced the Navy that we should get more money for the big contracts.

**RW:** More dollars per boat?

**HC:** Yes, otherwise we were going under. We had a very cogent argument that the reason for this was the massive changes which the Navy kept ordering with respect to these vessels.

**RW:** You know there is nothing different today than then.

**HC:** We used to say when the weight of the paper equals the weight of a government vessel, it ought to be done. So, anyway, and subsequent to that, we built our ships. Then we lost money on the tuna boats, heavily, these were contracted before the management change.

**RW:** These were Navy-funded boats, were those tuna boats Navy funded, or were they privately funded?

**HC:** No. The Navy conscripted nearly every large tuna vessel, so there were few left. Those we built were for private owners such as Manuel Rosa, John Cardosa, the People's Fish group and Serafino Parmigiani with Jay Mellusi. This first four received government priority for materials Not only did the Navy take over the tuna fleet for use in the Pacific, mostly as refrigerated carriers or patrol boats, but it built 30 of the famous YP class. There were few refrigerated vessels in those days and those were valuable in island campaigns. I left Lynch in 1948 to take over as General Manager of the American Tunaboat Association at the invitation of Anthony (Hank) Madruga and Louis de Falco, its principal officers. My first job was to reorganize it. I remained with the ATA until 1959, when I became Assistant to the President of Van Camp Seafood Company, the largest of the tuna processing companies. When Ralston Purina acquired the company in 1962 or 1963, I became Vice President for Planning and Project Development. This was early in the biggest period of the industry's international expansion. We acquired bases in Africa (Sierra Leone and Ivory Coast) and made studies of many world areas. Palau, in the Caroline Islands, was one of my babies. This was famous because of the U.S. Marines in World War II.

**RW:** Palau, I think was another one.

**HC:** Yeah. One of many in the area such as Indonesia, Guam and the Philippines. I was traveling a good part of my eight years with Van Camp and Van Camp-Purina. In West Africa we looked at Senegal and Nigeria, and on the other side, Aden. We made many trips to India and even one to Iran. As I kept my home in San Diego all this time, I had to eliminate this continuous traveling, so I left in 1967 to go to work with Jack Gorby, the best production man in the industry, who was President of Westgate in San Diego. Westgate California was one of the Arnholt Smith organizations. I was appointed Vice President-Planning, and immediately asked to review and reorganize subsidiary activities in Oregon and Alaska as a starter.

**RW:** C. Arnholt Smith?

**HC:** I joined the organization because of Gorby. It wasn't Smith's idea. I remained for 3 1/2 or 4 years. At the urging of Gordon Broadhead, President of Living Marine Resources, the leading fisheries consulting firm in the U.S., headquartered in San Diego, I set up business for myself by buying an accounting practice. I already was a licensed Public Accountant. I performed accounting and some tax services for tuna fishing vessels at the outset. For the first six months, I also served as Vice President of LMR on a part-time basis. Over time I also helped processing companies negotiate labor agreements, as well as other minor consultative work. About two years later a group of tuna vessel owners, led by Lou Brito, together with shipbuilder Joseph Martinac, formed the first publicly owned fishing vessel corporation. Brito was the heart and soul of the business. He was one of the most successful boat owner-skippers in the business and the first in San Diego to convert a bait boat into a purse-seiner, as well as the first man to build a modern purse-seiner (Royal Pacific) from the keel up.

**RW:** The purpose of this business was to...?

**HC:** To catch tuna and sell it, that's all.

**RW:** Worldwide?

**HC:** No. Didn't need to in those days. We had no problem getting rid of tuna in those days. Let's see, that would be 1970. It was exciting because we had a public company, publicly owned stock. I had to talk to all the security analysts, that kind of thing. I ran the administration. Lou ran the fishing

operation; we had a third man running the repairs of the vessels. We had our own engineers, etc. I stayed from probably 1972 when they started it, I believe, to 1977, then all hell broke loose in the industry on the porpoise problem. This meant that the fleet lost a good part of the first half of 1977, in part because of government rules and environmentalists' lawsuits. To respond to this condition, the vessel owners, processors and unions formed a new organization, the United States Tuna Foundation, which began business in summer 1977. I became its first Executive Director, working with a San Diego attorney, David G. Burney who headed the USTF office in Washington, D.C. A companion organization, the Porpoise Rescue Foundation, was taken over by USTF. I served as its President for some years. PRF was set aside with no political, lobbying or similar work--only the generation of data and analyses thereof, to keep the industry and government informed as to progress in reducing porpoise mortalities. PRF also financed specific porpoise-reducing projects which were successful. USTF also financed a one-year charter of the purse-seiner Queen Mary to fish tuna in association with porpoise, with 37 scientists from many disciplines taking part.

**RW:** Well, what really happened, is what I would like to know. After talking to these fishermen, I get their idea.

**HC:** What happened to what?

**RW:** Between the porpoise and the fishermen and the environmentalists and...

**HC:** Well, of course, it's a long story. The first action taken by environmentalists in late 1976 resulted in an early 1977 Federal Court decision denying the master permit to the American Tunaboat Association. From January 1 to April 15, 1977, 105 days elapsed before the permit was granted.

**RW:** They said you could not fish.

**HC:** You could not fish tuna in association with porpoise. You could go out and fish, and of course fish is caught different ways. We have fish on logs, or on what we call schools, where you find smaller fish.

**RW:** Under the logs, yeah.

**HC:** Yeah. You can fish on skipjack, which is one of the most abundant species in the world; however, it is not the most abundant or the most available in the eastern Pacific. You can also catch small yellowfin, or fish on porpoise where large yellowfin are associated.

**RW:** You say you fish on porpoise? You mean...

**HC:** Well, fishermen look for various signs of the presence of tuna, one of which is the presence of porpoise (also called dolphins). After determining that the porpoise schools are carrying large yellowfin tuna with them, the vessel encircles both. There is a strong bond between the yellowfin and porpoise--the precise reasons are not clear, but certainly food is paramount. once encircled, porpoise are released but mortalities result even though data show the majority of sets produce no mortality. So the whole argument was that fishermen should not catch tuna associated with porpoise where mortalities occur. That's the idea. Well the industry finally got things turned around. The permit was issued and a porpoise mortality quota was set by the government. Then at that time they decided we've got to get a common front in the industry for this problem.

**RW:** Wait a minute. Before we get too far, I would like - how was it resolved? You still had the tuna, you still had the porpoise.

**HC:** Well, the boats went out and produced probably something in the neighborhood of 40 percent loads. They tried to catch tuna without using porpoise in early 1977. The results were so bad that the boats came in and (the skipper) said, "To hell with it!" You can't make money, you can't come

in with a 40 percent load on the average and meet expenses. It's a losing proposition. Anyway, appeals were made to the Secretary of Commerce, to the Congress, etc. etc., and finally they made a ruling, and got some quota on how much mortality of porpoise could be allowed, and that permitted the fleet to resume.

**RW:** Did you ever make a trip on a fishing ship?

**HC:** No, I never did. When we built them I'd make a trial trip out around the bay. No, I'm not a seaman. It was such a relief to get the boats out I didn't want to go on them anyway.

**RW:** I can imagine. I get seasick on one of those things. Was that also part of the deal that they had to put observers on one of the boats?

**HC:** Yes. That was part of the arrangement. We got into the observer business. I don't know precisely when, but we worked very closely with that program. The USTF was formed by hiring a local attorney, David Burney, who is now the Executive Director.

**RW:** What is the USTF?

**HC:** As I noted earlier, United States Tuna Foundation was formed; the Porpoise Rescue Foundation had been formed, but I don't know what they were doing during formation. I wasn't involved until I became the first Executive Director.

**RW:** Well, in talking to the fishermen themselves, some of them, a lot of them did really risk their lives to save those porpoises, jumped into the water with the nets.

**HC:** That's been duly recorded in Washington and made known. The environmentalists view is, "and who asked you to go chase them anyway?" I mean, it's a very confrontational issue.

**RW:** Well, you know one of the sure ways of not having a porpoise problem is to go back to the old bait boats, which is uneconomical.

**HC:** Well, we just finished a--what, three/four weeks ago--the Third Conference on Alternative Methods of Fishing Tuna, and the closing statement by the chairman who was impartial, and while we all know him, he is certainly not a guy who is going to knock himself out for the fleet, was that our finding is there is no viable alternative, and that's in writing in the final report. But we want to look into the tuna-porpoise bond and certain scientific studies and they are going to get the National Science Foundation to do this. Since the United States began purse-seining with its technology and equipment developments, the whole tuna world followed. To measure the difference between catch rates, before conversion to purse-seining, bait boats averaged from four to six tons per day's absence. After conversion to purse-seining, the average was from 12 to 18 tons per day. This enabled the U.S. fleet to survive, but to compete with the Japanese.

**RW:** What is the purpose that is behind this? Is it to be able to catch fish without killing too much?

**HC:** Exactly.

**RW:** And do you have any idea how that could be done?

**HC:** No, it can't be done. The yellowfin you see, after all, you are changing nature out there. If you concentrate as they suggest, on small yellowfin and skipjack, then you affect the yellowfin population adversely because if you knock off all the young ones, they don't grow up, very obviously, and therefore, they don't spawn, and you affect the future of the yellowfin population. The Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission is the source for and can document this fully.

**RW:** Well, you know this is all pretty interesting in that you were forced into doing something here. What about the Japanese?

**HC:** Well, you don't have this phenomena in other parts of the world. That's the strange thing. For instance, half the United States fleet now fishes the western Pacific. There are lots of porpoise out there but they don't hang out with large yellowfin tuna. There is no bond; it's a very different world. You can circle a school of yellowfin and you don't pick up any porpoise. Here they bond together in the eastern tropical Pacific which is from here, from San Diego, California to Santiago, Chile. So you have this peculiar condition here. Furthermore, this is the largest area of the world for yellowfin, where it is predominant. Skipjack are far ranging, and they are all over the place. Some years we have a lot of skipjack here, some years we do not. But we have, except for the occasional El Niño, we do have a large population of yellowfin that are resident and yet highly migratory. In other words, they don't stay off one point; they are constantly running the range. There is a higher concentration of yellowfin on this side.

**RW:** All right, if that's the case, you are saying that American boats can't, by law, fish off these porpoises what the foreign fishing boats can't, will do.

**HC:** I don't know what you mean. You mean in this area the foreign boats can do what they want to do?

**RW:** Apparently they do.

**HC:** They just passed. Well, there is evidence of that. Their mortality rates exceed ours.

**RW:** And nobody says, "Can't do?"

**HC:** Yes, they do. We have very, very superficial moves. The first one, each nation has to say that it had adopted certain methods, such as the backdown.

**RW:** The back of the net down?

**HC:** Backdown is a procedure developed years ago by the U.S. fleet and steadily improved as a porpoise-release procedure. This and the use of rafts, small mesh panels and other developments by the United States fishermen became standard requirements under U.S. regulation for U.S. flag vessels. Other nations have slowly followed. We had a peculiar situation here the last couple of months where Ecuador, Vanuatu and Venezuela were advised they could not send any fish into the United States.

**RW:** Excuse me, we are running out of tape on that. What were the names of those countries again?

**HC:** Well, there is Ecuador, Vanuatu and Venezuela. They have filed papers stating that they are using porpoise-saving methods. The Marine Mammal Protection Act has just been re-enacted; signed on the day Congress adjourned. The President signed it. I have no copy here but an essential provision is that Mexico or any other nation fishing tuna in association with porpoise in the eastern Pacific must meet certain standards with respect to porpoise mortality rates. They cannot exceed the U.S. mortality rate by more than two and a half times for year one and one and one quarter times in year two

and thereafter. In other words, if we kill 3 porpoise per ton of yellowfin caught, their rate would be 7.5 per ton. The next year their quota would be 3.75 per ton. They are given an advantage but the idea is to gradually tighten the screws to where they have to meet United States standards.

**RW:** And who is to police them?

**HC:** The United States Customs on imports will be advised, the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission will provide observers.

**RW:** On the boats?

**HC:** Yes. And the governments are required to file reports.

**RW:** I can see holes in that.

**HC:** Of course there are many holes, but after all, remember there is a reasonably good intelligence system out there. Our boats know what the others are doing, and our boats know what the foreign boats are doing.

**RW:** In talking to the other fishermen, they said that they would be fishing and trying to comply on the porpoise business, and they would look there a quarter of a mile away and a foreign boat would be...

**HC:** And, therefore, what they have to do has not been discussed while I'm around. What they are going to have to do if I were running a boat and saw it, I would blow the whistle on them. Of course, they are in almost daily communication with shore and when the Mexican boat arrives I would have someone on board to do some investigating about it or I would send someone out. It's a gradual tightening of the thing. The State Department is always very fussy about leaning on foreign governments, as you probably know.

**RW:** You mean they pussy-foot around with them?

**HC:** Well, they're not anxious to engage in a fight with them.

**RW:** Let me put it on tape and you can maybe correct me in the fact that when a purse-seiner finds a school of fish, there'd be yellowtails, they would find...

**HC:** Yellowfin.

**RW:** Yellowfin, that the porpoises would be on the surface and they would set the net right on the school...

**HC:** They circle.

**RW:** Circle. And then they pull in the net, but the porpoise, being a mammal, have a tendency to panic and drown and they can't always get over the net or they...

**HC:** They swim very peacefully in these huge net areas but you've got to watch it. They have what is called a sleeping behavior. Porpoise will go to the bottom of the net for no apparent reason other than they just stay down there. They don't do anything; they are perfectly calm, they are not

panicked at all, and if you close the net when they are down there, they just die. They have to come up, but if you start moving the net they can't come up.

**RW:** That's right because the school is on top of them.

**HC:** So we have printed some publications which might be useful for you to have, which show the backdown that you do, the instructions to the men, how to proceed and...

**RW:** Yes, we would certainly love to have something.

**HC:** This backs it up because I know nothing personally as I never caught a tuna; I am not that close. On Tuesday we are having a meeting with Harold Medina, who is one of the absolute leaders--in the Medina family there were five brothers and Harold, a son of one of them, is one of the most innovative people in the fleet. He is now a member of the board of the Porpoise Rescue Foundation. We have worked with him on a study and we are meeting Tuesday morning to move it along. In other words, we have the records, we have the life history and everything of every skipper in the fleet, every set he ever made for the last ten years, and so we have pulled out (one of) the top skippers and he, along with one of the scientists, is going to interview each of the top skippers. Why can you do it and others can't?

**RW:** Because he's top for the ones that...

**HC:** Oh, they have fantastic records of low mortality. Why? Those are the kinds of things that we're doing. We also carry this educational work. For instance, under the new mammal act there is a restriction on what are termed "sundown sets." The highest mortality for porpoise occurs at sundown because nobody sees what is going on. The boats have lights, the Porpoise Rescue Foundation has provided double lighting systems for them. We just did this for four boats, reflector jackets for the men to pick them up, but there will be a new rule, you cannot start a set, the government says, 90 minutes before sundown. Let's say sundown is 5:30, you cannot make a set after 4:00. The industry is fighting to make it one hour, but that's going to be worked out with the National Marine Fisheries Service. But what we are doing is interrogating, as you are doing here, each of the top skippers, to find out what they do, how do they hang the nets. Harold Medina is responsible for the development of what is called the "Medina Panel." The Medina Panel was taking certain crucial sections of the net where you have large mesh where the snouts get caught. Now they are making small nets and that cannot occur. Then we have the Medina corkline that he is working on and we are working with the net people on that.

**RW:** Backdown isn't enough, is it, where they back the net down?

**HC:** Well, this is a process where they get the configuration of the net, we have pictures of it in our book and we incidentally distribute... we just made a batch, we're making a new tape.

**RW:** You mean videotape?

**HC:** The government made the first one, working with the fleet, and we buy them, we have them prepared or made and distribute them to every new skipper. There are certain rules. They've got to watch that film. We are now making a new one because in the last eight or nine years since the first one, methods have changed. These are very innovative people and there are new ideas coming in, so we have cleared it with the Tuna Commission people, gotten their ideas, and now we are going to take it to the government to get the film made, probably the first of the year.

**RW:** One of the real obvious questions is, so what, on a porpoise. You're bringing in tons of fish for feeding people and if, you know this is a callous attitude as well, so what if these porpoise die?

**HC:** Well, there is concern. I am a life member of the zoo, etc., and to destroy life in any form just doesn't make sense and even if you don't care about it, this is one of the big developments of the last 10, 20 years; the interest in the total environment that we live in. We share the world with the animals, that's the idea, extremes, certainly. We probably have skippers that don't give a damn. I don't think we have any, any more, but we have had some. It's like any group of people. There is a small percentage whom you have to keep an eye on, and there is a small percentage that you don't have to watch at all, and the general middle are just good people. The original mortality figures are clearly erroneous but the government supports them. They made just a few sets and came out we were killing 300,000 animals kind of thing. There is no statistical support for that. But we have been through hearing after hearing, and the environmentalists will object until there is no mortality--zero. You're not to kill one. So it gets into a very complicated thing. If you are changing the environment out there by taking tuna out, you are changing the balance of nature, you see, so I don't think there are very many skippers that take a cavalier attitude as to whether to kill; for instance, at our meeting today when we discussed the "sundown set" prohibition, one of the absolute top skippers, Cristiano da Rosa, was there. Well, Felando, who runs the American Tunaboat Association, took the approach they are trying to limit how long you can be in the set once you've begun it, and someone pointed out to forget that, there is no limit on how long you take. Well, this greatly disturbed da Rosa because he said "I am going to stay there till I get every last one of those things out of the net;" he is just that kind of a man. He speaks broken English, so he spoke to me later. He said, "Harold, I've got to finish that set and get those last few porpoises out, that's how I come up with zero." Let me repeat that they don't care how long you take to finish it, you are not going to be allowed to start one after a certain time of day, depending on sundown. And so I said, "You're okay. In fact, you will get medals for what you are doing." No observer is going to criticize you for spending an extra 30 minutes to be sure you have all the porpoise out of the net.

**RW:** That brings up another thing that, why do these women want to go out on these as observers, that's a very ticklish...

**HC:** The same way women want to be firemen. The odd point is you have very few applicants that I know about, very few.

**RW:** That's very explosive.

**HC:** Of course. The fishermen's wives think it's the worst thing they ever heard of, because after all, depending on the boat, there is anywhere from 16 to 20 men on board and you work long hours and you don't dress for dinner.

**RW:** That's right.

**HC:** The kind of thing, the whole style, and you have limited space. Where do you put this woman--there are no private staterooms? Well, anyway, it's all right; that's been battled in the courts. The rulings, I think, so far are adverse, but I am not sure. There is some action still going on, but I haven't followed it. It's very difficult.

**RW:** I think common sense...

**HC:** But with the NOW movement, how in the world are you going to combat this thing?

**RW:** What is this NOW movement?

**HC:** National Organization of Women. You know they have the ERA amendments, and it is a very militant activist group and I should judge a judge would find it difficult to rule against them. They've got women firemen now, which caused a big flap, as you know. We have had women police in the city for some time. The other day a friend of mine was having trouble with his gas lines in a house and a girl came over and the girl fixed them. I was downtown here last month, and I saw a gal pop out of a manhole; she had been doing something down there. You know, it is a different world. I may be wrong saying you're not going to get a lot of women involved, but it is very serious with the men on the boats and it appears to be resolving itself in favor of the women. I haven't followed these things closely, but as I understand from others, it still isn't over. But you are fighting an uphill battle. You see we are in an area where you have federal judges who know something about fishing and the conditions. The rulings run one way. By the time you get to Appellate Court back in Washington, D.C., the tuna business doesn't mean much to them. And there are women everywhere. Most of Washington is women.

**RW:** Anyway, that was an interesting sidelight on this whole thing.

**HC:** Anyway, as I said, we got into the porpoise fight in 1977 and by July 1, had formed the United States Tuna Foundation. They got hold of Dave Burney who got hold of me and I came in during August 1977.

**RW:** As you know, living here as long as you have and I have, we had tuna boats along the Embarcadero, in and out, and working the nets and so forth. Now they have gone, gone. In talking to the fishermen, they say different things. One is, the main thing is really that the canneries do not want to pay what the workers really needed to live in our inflated industry here.

**HC:** You mean the price of fish, you're talking about?

**RW:** Well, the canneries really ruled the conditions of what the fishermen did and what the cannery workers did, so it was cheaper for the cannery workers to move offshore, Samoa or something like that, in order to have the fish processed.

**HC:** It would be cheaper for the canners to move offshore, not the cannery workers, because they were unemployed.

**RW:** Yes, the cannery, and so consequently the tuna fishing industry in San Diego is dead because of economics.

**HC:** Yes, the labor rates in California, on the average, were double those of Puerto Rico, and labor is a fair part of production costs. Also, fish coming from the south part of the eastern tropical Pacific is closer to Puerto Rico than it is to here. Then, of course, they draw on the French and Spanish fleets, the French particularly, and the enormous albacore production of the South Atlantic can flow into Puerto Rico, so they have some logistic things that are not any worse than California, and in certain regards, better. They have a better labor rate which is no more than half what it is here. Samoa on the other hand, has a disadvantage of having to ship everything from Samoa, but Samoa's rate is half of Puerto Rico's, and then you can lay on top of that the fact that the Japanese, who were the largest canners of tuna outside the Americans, are no longer that. The Thais are the principal producers now of canned tuna. The Japanese send their raw tuna to Thailand to be packed, because when I did a study with some other people the summer of 1987, because of the wage and hour hearings in Samoa, all these records came out. The minimum wage in Samoa remained at \$2.72; the wage in Thailand ranges from 37 to 40 cents. There are freight disadvantages and that kind of thing, but at the same time, that's an enormous edge you see, so California just couldn't compete. The labor unions are not going to keep the canneries in California. They did make a reduction in wages, as I understood it, in Terminal Island, but not of sufficient size to permit these guys to compete. That is what drove them out.

**RW:** You know, going back to how this all happened, it seemed rather quick to me. First there was the porpoise, there was a big to-do about it in the papers and so forth, and the next thing I knew the boats were gone, and I thought it was because of the porpoise. In doing these interviews, I find out

the other reason was wages in the canneries, the cannery workers, so it all combined to sort of...

**HC:** What was the first one, did you say? RW. The porpoise.

**HC:** Well, yes, the porpoise problem created many oppressive conditions for the U.S. vessels. Also, all the canneries except one small one built up their Puerto Rico operations to take advantage of lower wage rates and some tax concessions in order to meet the import competition from Thailand (over 70 percent of imports). The two companies in Samoa increased their facilities to handle the move of boats to the western Pacific. U.S. vessels had prospected the western Pacific from time to time over the years. When the El Niño hit the eastern Pacific in the fall of 1982, many vessels moved to the western Pacific. The El Niño lasted into the first half of 1984. The temperature warming El Niño changes the thermocline and greatly limits catches of tuna.

**RW:** Well, for the record, El Nino was the weather change, wasn't it?

**HC:** El Nino, yes, it gets the name down in South America, in Peru, the Christ Child is El Niño, and the warming of the water seems to occur around Christmas time. The Scripps Institution said this is the most serious HI Niño they had recorded.

**RW:** That was back in 1984.

**HC:** It started in the fall of 1982, continued through all of 1983, and the spring of 1984. As early as the mid-70's, one boat had gone to New Zealand to fish, and then another followed. I was with Ocean Fisheries. We sent a boat down there and began to get an acquaintance with that area. Fishing was very good, and so when the El Nino came, you had a general exodus from the eastern Pacific to the western and southern Pacific, and the catches were quite good. We had at that time a descending price line. You had a very rapid increase because of all the difficulties in 1977 when the fishermen lost this 105 days to all intents and purposes, then you had a rising price which reached an all-time high to open 1980. And it ran all the way down until spring of 1987, it started up again.

**RW:** What kind of money are you talking about, \$500 a ton or something?

**HC:** Yellowfin reached \$1,200 for the large yellowfin, which is 60 cents a pound. Skipjack reached \$1,100.

**RW:** That is what the cannery would pay the boat?

**HC:** That's right, that's the negotiated price.

**RW:** I understand another thing, that the canneries would kind of take advantage of the skippers because they would say, "Well, one fish is rotten, so we have to discount..."

**HC:** Well it is a common thing to have rejects for quality needs. When I ran the Tunaboat Association, we hired two inspectors of our own and they checked the accuracy of all rejects. They do not do that now. They have thought about it and thought they ought to reinstitute a system. However, they do keep crew members watching the fish.

**RW:** As they come off the boat?

**HC:** Sure. The reject rates are not very high. I just don't know how they have been running. You know, we live in a competitive society, and the fish business is no exception. It is exceedingly competitive, and people think someone is taking advantage of them all the time. I have been on both sides. In other words, the fisherman has to protect his interests by having his own inspection and so forth. The union, which has now virtually disappeared, was also quite active in this. They kept inspectors there.

**RW:** This is something else I was going to bring-up. In talking to these fellows, there was a union started where they had to pay dues and so forth, but there were just a few and there was no support.

**HC:** When was this?

**RW:** Of the fishermen's union.

**HC:** Of course, it was extremely strong post-war, extremely strong. I negotiated all the contracts for 11 years. We had only one strike and there was no reason for having that. We then had an engineers' union who had a new man out of the Navy who read a book on labor relations when he came out and they went on a short strike. We couldn't run the boat with just fishermen you see. The unions were very strong but, as you move to delivering to Puerto Rico, Samoa, and so forth, move out of California, they pick up foreign crew members, that is, they augment. They get the key people and they augment their crews with foreign fishermen. The unions and some owners have been trying to negotiate an agreement accommodating this for the last several years with some success, but the whole drive has gone out of the union. The top leaders of the union have both died in the last few years.

**RW:** Well, they were saying that they felt that if the union had been supported, this is the story they told me, they would have been a stronger union; for instance, they would have more benefits now than they do get. I think they only get \$100 a month or something like that.

**HC:** That refers to their pension fund only. They called me in to look it over. The pension agreement was negotiated some years after I left the American Tunaboat Association, so whatever it provided was the result of agreement.

**RW:** You don't feel that's true then?

**HC:** It's a very strong, small and well financed fund. What it pays I don't know. I know that they couldn't have invested any better than they did. In terms of history or impact, it is unimportant.

**RW:** Well, they were saying that not everybody was involved with it; they were all individualists.

**HC:** Well, no. You've got to remember most fishermen want to be boat owners. They are highly individualistic people. For many, we had one big battle with the union, which was determined on the basis that the union had agreed to something, but the members were very upset, but the point was nobody went to the meetings. They are not like the Merchant Marine Seamen's Union, let's say, with which they are affiliated in the AFL-CIO. They have never been real strong union people. Fishermen are highly individualistic.

**RW:** They almost have to be in that type of living.

**HC:** Well, you see, their method of compensation had something to do with it. They got paid on a share basis. Now they don't, by and large. Very few boats are on a share basis. They are on a production basis, a unit basis, "X" dollars per ton. That's the way they operate now.

**RW:** How is that different from the share basis?

**HC:** Well, if you have a great trip under the share basis they really do well. If you have a poor trip, they could lose money. There have been some advocates for the tonnage basis. We want so much money per ton. Now the share basis adjusts itself with price changes, and per-ton basis doesn't. If I say everybody gets \$5.00 a ton, to take a figure out of the air, then if the price of fish falls by half I have to sit down and try to get that per-ton thing cut in half to maintain the balance. Share basis, if the crew gets 41 percent, then it's 41 percent of \$1,200 a ton or \$800 a ton; no matter if you have a good trip or a bad trip, the percentage is constant. With the tonnage basis, the price per ton is a constant.

**RW:** This is only after the expenses of the boat...

**HC:** Not in the per-ton basis, no, it has nothing to do with expenses. The owner pays them all. On the share basis there is a very clear list of expenses; the fuel, the licenses, this and that and the other thing.

**RW:** Well, these boats are still individually owned or are they corporately owned in today's...?

**HC:** Well, it's corporate simply because of liability insurance. If you were a partnership, say I was a partner in a boat and it ran into financial difficulties, they could proceed against any partner for any and all of the assets he's got, just like any partnership. You and I go into a partnership in a grocery store up at the corner and it goes broke, and you own a house and I don't, they can take your house. Whatever you have put aside over the years is at risk. But there are forces around us, as you say, why in California no canneries. That you don't control, I don't care who you are.

**RW:** On this tuna industry and every other industry nowadays.

**HC:** Yeah. The tuna, you're working on a natural resource which is very abundant and fortunately, renewable. You could not fish tuna out of the ocean; it is impossible. It's impossible because if you kept reducing the amount, say you had "X" number of vessels and you caught, let's say today you had 100 vessels and you caught 300,000 tons, if you don't have protective means, the Tuna Commission type of thing, let's say those 100 boats fish down to 200,000 tons, how do they make a living? They have to raise the price. If they raise the price the housewife objects, sales decline, so the economics protects the fish. I mean if I fish and I am only catching one-half of what I caught, I presume I have to get twice as much money. If the market won't stand the price, that is the final arbiter. If the market can't stand it, then you lay up your boat. When you lay up your boat, the pressure on the fishery stock declines and they rebuild. You can't get rid of them. Tuna are a pelagic species.

**RW:** There was an argument too, at one time, there's too many foreign boats and fishing out the fishing grounds that were well known.

**HC:** Well, the Tuna Commission considered that and put its first catch limit on yellowfin tuna in 1966. That was the bait boat days. They said if you fished, caught over 83,000 tons of fish, the United States fleet (and we were the dominant one), then the stocks will decline. Well, what are we doing now? Catching 240,000 tons among all the countries. I was the first Chairman of the Advisory Committee, well you saw that picture in 1950 which I showed you. I am still on the Advisory Committee, and the reports are extremely favorable. The health of the stocks is good. We could take, presumably, this year, 240,000 tons. But, you see, when you mentioned bait fishing you asked a question about returning to bait fishing. You have to catch the bait practically on the beach. It is very close to the shore which puts you, I don't care whether you are a 200-mile man or three-mile advocate, whatever you are, you have to fish right up to the beach so you come under the control of every country. Second, when you catch bait, you keep it alive. If it dies, you are out of luck. That means you can't fish seaward. You take a chance. If I am 400, 500, 600 miles from shore and my bait dies, I am out of business. I have to go all the way back. Purse-seining doesn't need bait, so purse-seining opened up the range of the fishery. It was the synthetics and the hydraulics that made it possible.

**RW:** Synthetic on the net and hydraulics to haul...

**HC:** Yeah, the power block, the Puretic power block and nylon nets, these were the big breakthroughs in the late 1950's. You can get some measure of efficiency, why we were able to compete for many years after that without anybody bothering us. As I recall it, at the end of the 1960's we had about 240 boats, or I should say we didn't have that many boats, the average boat was 240 tons capacity, they carried 12, 13 men. Now the average boat is nearly 1,200 tons, five times as much, and carry about 18 to 20 men. The only reason we get to 20 is if they have a helicopter, so in terms of fishermen aboard you increase the fishermen less than 50 percent and you increase the capacity by five times. That's efficiency, you see. With those two factors, the catch rates were highly accelerated. I made studies for Westgate when they were wondering whether to build some purse-seiners. I pointed out at that time the new seiners were averaging 18 tons per day's absence, and the bait boats were averaging 7, so it is a very important thing. The idea of advancing, going back to bait fishing, doesn't work.

**RW:** Yeah, that would mean the price of tuna would get out of sight?

**HC:** Yes, it would add to the cost and other people will build seiners anyway. The United States says you can't have them, which I don't think they could accomplish, but if they did, or said you can't fish on tuna, then we would embargo the foreign countries. This would be a big fight then with the environmentalists and the government, and it would resolve in favor of the government. The government would not want to say to Mexico, "We will not deal with you," or to Costa Rica or to Panama, Ecuador, Peru, Chile. They don't do that.

**RW:** Is there any reason for this 200-mile limit business?

**HC:** Well, it followed the Truman proclamation in 1946. President Truman wanted to protect our oil reserves, so the Truman Doctrine was drawn up. They forgot about fish, then they said it only applies with respect to oil, the assets of the subsurface, so to speak, and it doesn't affect what, they used the term "superjacent waters." In other words, we are not claiming the water. Well, the Latins said, "We don't care what you want to claim, we don't have a continental shelf, but we think yours is about 200 miles and we are going to take 200 miles," as arbitrary as that. In other words they are saying, "You want to protect your oil, we want to protect the fish, so to hell with you." And that is how it all came.

**RW:** Now, this 200 miles, is it worldwide?

**HC:** Oh, there are a lot of nations that have done it, yes. It became very popular. It was almost defeated by the World Court, but lost by one vote by people that had nothing whatever, no interest in fish at all. The Arabs, because in the southern part of Israel there is the Gulf of Elaih. The Arabs wanted a big limit, 12 miles at least, because if you've got a 12-mile limit and you went from headland to headland and they could close off this gulf, from the Israelis. That's what happened when Dr. Chapman was back at the World Court.

**RW:** Now you have mentioned a Dr. Chapman before we got on this interview. He was a...

**HC:** He was a fisheries biologist who became the Dean of the College of Fisheries at the University of Washington which has always been...

**RW:** William Chapman?

**HC:** Wilbert, Wilbert McLeod Chapman. The University of Washington has been long recognized as the leading college of fisheries in the United States. He became the dean of the college. He was born on the Columbia River, his father worked in the salmon business and so forth. Then the fishing industries on the west coast decided they needed a fish guy in the State Department. You can't leave fishery treaties up to economists, and so

he was appointed Special Assistant to the Undersecretary of State in 1948 and he remained for three full years. He was on leave of absence from the University. I contacted him in the spring of 1951, asked him, I said, "I can't figure out what in the world you want to do, you won't tell me, so I have an idea. Why don't you come to San Diego for six months and work with me and then you will make up your mind what you want to do." I got a letter back. He said, "If I come, I'm going to come to stay. That is what I have been waiting for." He said, "I want to work with people who are producing fish, not investigating it, not talking about it, not selling it, but catching it." He came and we appointed him Director of Research for the American Tunaboat Association. That was in July 1951; he stayed there until 1960 I guess, 1961. I left in 1959 to go to Van Camp's, and he wasn't happy with conditions here so I said, "Well, I'll tell you, when you decide you want to move, let me know. I'll arrange it at Van Camp's." And I forgot to tell the President. One day he (the President) came in and he said, "I am hearing things that Chapman isn't too happy. We ought to start thinking about it." And I said "I already told him he is hired if he wants to come here." They were delighted. We hired him and kept him out of his house on Point Loma. We didn't bring him up there because you see, San Diego was the fishery center; you have Scripps here, you have the National Marine Fisheries Service Southwest Lab here, you have what they call CalCOFI which doesn't do much these days, but there was quite a lot of fishery talent, scientific talent in San Diego, more than any other place in California.

**RW:** Van Camp was out of town.

**HC:** Van Camp, I forget, well, I was in Japan the fall of 1959 working for Van Camp on my first trip. We had a big government-sponsored conference with the Japanese.

**RW:** Did you find the Japanese reasonable to work with? **HC:** Yes, at the conference. Chapman was there representing the American Tunaboat Association. I was there representing Van Camp and it was at that time Van Camp wired their Executive Vice President (who) was there with me and the question was, "Well shall we sell the San Diego plant down here?" His answer was "yes." Mine was "no." They sold it to Westgate.

**RW:** They wanted to sell it for economic reasons?

**HC:** Well, for whatever they decided, they were going to concentrate all their activity in Terminal Island. After all, they had a couple of plants there.

**RW:** You wanted to keep it here for emotional reasons?

**HC:** Yeah, I didn't have any influence. I hadn't even reported there to work yet. I went to Japan my first day for the company, and they sold the plant.

**RW:** Did you work for C. Arnholt Smith then?

**HC:** I worked for Westgate, yes, before I picked up the Tuna Foundation.

**RW:** What kind of fellow was he?

**HC:** I didn't work for him. I worked for his President. One of the real smart moves he made when he bought a cannery at Terminal Island; along with it came a man named Jack Gorby who was the greatest production guy in the business and a good friend of mine. I went to work for him. I didn't deal with Smith very much. He owned the business and that's about it. And I did much the same for them as I did with Van Camp. My first major assignment for Van Camp was to go down to Manta, Ecuador and find out why the plant they owned never made any money. So we got it making money.

**RW:** Was this in Mexico?

**HC:** Manta, in Ecuador. One of the first jobs for Westgate was to go up to Oregon and look at a small plant on the Columbia River that packed albacore and salmon and find out why it wasn't making money.

**RW:** Why weren't they making any money?

**HC:** Well, it's a long, long story. Largely, sometimes, when something in a company is not going well, people ignore it, you know, don't want to be associated with that. That was the story of Van Camp in Ecuador. Well, I made 138 recommendations and we carried out every one of them and we turned it around, we made money with the place.

**RW:** Is that because of how the man-hours were being utilized or...?

**HC:** Well, it's everything, from how they kept the books to how you got along with the native people, how you helped the boat owners with their boats at times. I sent a naval architect down there to help check out their boats, a good friend of mine, and he gave them some good suggestions. The plant was scattered over several different lots. We put it together, that kind of thing. You see, when you are running a successful, thriving business, if you have part that isn't thriving and it isn't near the home office, it doesn't get the attention it should. Much the same thing happened with the plant up at Point Adams on the Columbia River. Once we got the attention to the thing and checked out what they were doing, and introduced some efficiencies, because we had people that knew how to can fish here, then we got that making money. So, as I say, I did not work for Arnholt Smith directly. I worked with Gorby.

**RW:** There is no way of really taking a fish and processing it without a lot of hand labor, is there?

**HC:** No, because they are not uniform in size, and you treat them differently, for instance, as you do salmon. Salmon, they jam them into a can and that's about it, but tuna, after they clean them, tuna has a long cooking process and all this kind of thing. There is a great deal of mechanization taking place. I have not seen the new Van Camp plant in Samoa which is supposed to introduce a lot of devices, but you see, these are not proprietary. There is no reason why the people in Thailand can't do it too. That is the big point. You can't have a process that is so unique of how to get fish in a can that nobody else thought of it or could copy it. Jack Gorby who ran that plant holds a patent on packing machines. All the canneries use them, and I assume he gets a royalty on all these, because he was the top production man in this industry. I have been lucky in working with people like Chapman, like Gorby, people like that who are at the top of their field. No, it is an interesting business you see. Nearly every decade we change and I think the biggest, most dramatic change in retrospect took place in the early days when M.O. Medina built the first tuna boat to carry 100 tons. This was a local fishery pretty much, the top of Mexico and all southern California. It was heavily an albacore fishery, so when in 1926 it just so happened the albacore didn't appear; it was a very bad year. M.O. Medina had been looking ahead along with others, decided to build a big tuna boat and head south, so your next 15 years from 1926 up to World War II was primarily the southward movement and the continual building of larger vessels. That's how I got with Campbell's in 1934. They were building for the Castagnolas, they had not had a boat contract for a couple of years, and they needed somebody in the of f ice to help out on those sorts of things. So M.O.'s boat and the decline of the albacore fishery were very significant. By the late 1920's and early 1930's the U.S. vessels were fishing the Galapagos and the equatorial area.

**RW:** That still was bait boat?

**HC:** Oh, it was bait boat fishing heavily until the end of the 1950's. During the war, the government came to our company to design the tuna boat, the "YPs" that they built. They built 30 of them. We did not provide the design work. I don't know how many came back, maybe 18 or 20. But they seized

the rest of the fleet and those that didn't get put away came back, so you had not only that program, but a great building boom right through 1951. The last boat finished in 1952 was the last fisherman-owned vessel for a few years.

**RW:** You have done a good job of summary. This is 1988. What is it going to be like in 1998?

**HC:** Well, there's very divided opinions. I have talked to several people recently. My own theory is that so long as the canners remain here and have a fish supply, they are likely to remain. I say "here," I'm talking about Puerto Rico and Samoa. I think when the price of fish is largely determined or almost entirely determined by foreign sources, then you will find it is a lot more difficult than dealing with the United States fleet, because you have a commonality between canners and fishermen despite the fact that they disagree. People who buy and people who sell always disagree. It doesn't have to be warfare. That is just the way our competitive system works, and with that I am sitting down to write a friend of mine who is heavily involved in all this. He is very gloomy and I am telling him I think that those who are able to build boats and get their mortgage paid off pretty well, keep modern craft, will do fairly well in this business. I can't envision an explosion of vessels. We are down now to the upper 60's, in round numbers. We started counting small boats of 150 to 200 tons up to the largest at 2,100 tons carrying capacity. We had probably at the end of the 1970's early 1980's, 125. Now we are down to 70, in round numbers, although the capacity isn't down that much because all the boats that have come in are large boats.

**RW:** Well, see, what I was thinking was that the consumers are more health conscious and wanting to go with fish.

**HC:** The demand for tuna is growing. In fact, a scientist friend of mine I used to work with just wrote a paper for us. He just sent me a copy, and pointing out the growth; it has been steady. This is a big market. We use almost as much tuna now as Japan does. The majority of it is imported but there are sufficient domestic fish for it to be a factor in the price of fish. Albacore, we are not in that business very much any more. We import most of the albacore, but on what is termed the light meat, the yellowfin, skipjack, bigeye tunas, about half of it is foreign and half of it is domestic. I can give you a book on this. I still have the belief that those who stay in it and do invest will make out all right because there has to be more than one or two of them. There has to be several of them. I just went on board Ed Gann's new boat the other night, down on Broadway Pier when they dedicated that boat.

**RW:** It would still be you boding the purse-seining way of fishing for the next ten years?

**HC:** Yes. The only way to measure purse-seining is when we broke the ice; Lou Brito built the first purse-seiner which was a wooden boat in 1961, then there followed through 1962 to 1967, six more boats, one a year, all steel. No more wooden boats, and progressively larger; by the end of the 1970's the boats got up to 1,100 tons, and we got into the 1980's, nobody was building anything less than 1,200; the last two that have been built are 1,500. We had a 2,100 tonner; it was a government vessel, and we have a couple of 1,800 tonners. Now rebuilt capacity is gravitating toward 1,500 tons.

**RW:** See, the only thing really left technically is the porpoise problem.

**HC:** Well, there are other problems, as I say, sticking with the boats. I was a Commissioner in the Atlantic, an Atlantic Tuna Commission, which meets in Spain every year. I resigned from that. I was an advisor also. But France and Spain were all bait boats, or trawlers and variations, for tuna. Now their almost total production is purse-seiners, patterned after our boats. The Japanese have a great skipjack fishery with bait and then they had a lot of longline boats. The Japanese producers now are purse-seiners. Australia has built purse-seiners. This is the way to go. They would not follow the United States' example if it didn't work, and they fish in areas where there are fewer porpoise. The inhibiting factors, I think, are again, competitiveness, imports, I didn't mention imports. In the 1950's we battled for duty on frozen tuna and canned tuna, failed on both. The Japanese backed off and put in quotas so they didn't foul things up completely. In 1984 I was in the same room as I was in 1952, 32 years later, on the same

argument, tuna in water, which has an unrealistic duty rate. What I used to do for the Tuna Foundation was list the critical issues each year. We still have the critical issue of the law of the sea, the 200 miles, or whatever you wish to call it. This year, Dave Burney and the United States Tuna Foundation, with the U.S. Government, consummated a 16-nation treaty out in the western Pacific with all the islands involved. The government has never had a treaty like that, and that has been signed. The industry is contributing \$250,000 a year to their management group for research. The United States Government is contributing \$10 million, to be divided among the islands, depending on how much tuna is caught where, for fisheries development, and that is a major breakthrough. We have yet to arrive at an agreement in the eastern Pacific. Mexico has stubbornly opposed everything we do, and that still hangs in the balance. Mexico's fleet now is larger than ours in the eastern Pacific, so you still have a critical issue of the territorial sea and people's claims to it. You still have imports which have grown very rapidly, so you still have that. Current thinking and current experience tells us you are not going to get much done about that. For example, Bumble Bee imports most of its fish from Thailand.

**RW:** In cans?

**HC:** In cans, canned tuna. They also can in Puerto Rico, and in Ecuador. The Van Camp people, they sold many of the bases; I worked in the one in Freetown, Sierra Leone, in Dakar, Ivory Coast, Palau, they sold them all, now they have sold the company to the Indonesians. So you still have the Marine Mammal Act. If we can perform, I am leaving the Porpoise Rescue Foundation and all the rest of it the end of December; but if we can continue what we are doing, our research work, our data processing, if we can keep a record of everybody, get the message across, I think we will be able to continue to operate. It's hard to build a case for large expansion of the fleet. Our best hope is to keep it the same. The boats are very efficient vessels, but are approaching 20 years old.

**RW:** Are you talking about worldwide fleet?

**HC:** I am talking about United States only. You asked me about the United States industry. As far as the world tuna business, it is going nowhere but up. It's only a question of whether we are going to be a major participant or not. My view is those who have efficient vessels in terms of age and condition and equipment, I'm not worried about the equipment; they're all well equipped, these people will survive, but there has to be a time when you have to replace these craft. Now we are getting our first building. There have been one, two, example, Campbell's built three tuna boats in about 1982 or 1983 which they finally sold after three or four years, but they didn't sell them to fishing people. They went off for research boats and so forth. Martinac built two that sat there for over three or four years and were finally purchased by fishermen. Martinac built two more that have been delivered locally, and he is building, I think three more right now, so there's signs of life there.

**RW:** Yeah, sounds like a little flicker of life.

**HC:** So you can't build a very strong case. There's a fair amount of gloom, but yet I find some of the gloomy people also want to build boats, because fishermen won't tell you what they are going to do. Talk about food, technology and diet, and tuna is in a marvelous position. 1987 was probably the biggest production worldwide of tuna, raw tuna out of the ocean. The European market is rising; they have different tastes than we do. We get a lot of the skipjack from the French now, who only want yellowfin and albacore, so these, in other words, there is a big business here; it is just a question of whether we keep a slice of it of suitable size or not, and there's a variety of opinion. But there are enough young guys around in the fleet. There was a time here all the young guys went into real estate or something.

**RW:** You mean after they got out of fishing?

**HC:** No, before they got into fishing. The young ones. They were going to do better than the old man, and surprisingly, a number of them took over the boats and did better than the old man. So it's a venture deal; there's an uncertainty in the fishing business. It begins when you go out, you don't

know what you are going to catch. For the good ones it isn't that uncertain, they are going to get a load of fish, a reasonable load of fish, but they don't know how long it is going to take, and that uncertainty pervades the business. It used to be that our main problem was catching fish; now it is what foreign laws say, what United States treaties say, what the environmentalists say, this is what you could foresee; that's why we worked as early as 1954 on the Fishermen's Protective Act which the recreationalists and others are trying to destroy. They do it every year. We have won every year, and the recreationalists are particularly strong in the tuna business emerging in the Gulf; it is small, they don't have a large amount of fish there, but small boats can do fairly well.

**RW:** Which gulf are you talking about?

**HC:** Mexico. Off Texas, Florida, but the recreationalists want them out of there, and they are taking over a lot of the fishery political committees. In fact, I was on the phone this week and last week telling people in the industry they have got to maintain their interest in these committees, because our policy used to be when Chapman and I were there, wherever people in the world meet on tuna, I don't care if it is in Thailand or Russia, we're going to go. We're going to be there when they're talking about our subject, and you do have, with all the distress in the industry, the bankruptcies of a lot of the boats and forced sale of them foreign and so forth. You know people look at things closer to home than going to meetings, but you've got to maintain your presence and your policies.

**RW:** You know, in talking to the fishermen themselves, this was a sore point with them too, because they felt the Fish and Game Commissions were on top of them unnecessarily.

**HC:** Well, we don't deal with Fish and Game much in tuna. If it's a local fisherman, that's something else.

**RW:** That is what I am talking about.

**HC:** That is an entirely different world.

**RW:** Well, they were saying that they were being hamstrung, they felt, by the recreation fishing.

**HC:** Oh sure. Constant gear fights.

**RW:** And they weren't allowed...

**HC:** They want to get rid of monofilament nets. They don't want you to take certain things in this bay or that bay. I used to be Commissioner for the, what in heck were we, the Pacific Marine Fisheries Commission. It was a five-state group, Alaska, Washington, Oregon, Idaho, because the Columbia runs up there, and California, and all we did was fight each other, mainly the recreationalists. Their idea is to get everybody the hell off the ocean and lakes and they bring up, "Look at all the money we spend on gear," and our reply was, "We feed people." No, that's as old as the fishery, and it will never go away. Fishermen are not great joiners of anything. I mentioned the union. The American Tunaboat Association doesn't have a big membership. Not all people belong to the Porpoise Rescue Foundation. Those that do are very loyal and contribute their money. We don't have a big budget, \$150,000 a year, but it's money and this is buying insurance, assuming that the people, like myself at the Association, Felando today or Burney in Washington or whoever, are capable of some kind of leadership. We buy insurance so that the recreationalists won't have the field to themselves and you buy insurance that the environmentalists like Senator Kerry who came out here from Massachusetts. Now he was the head of the Senate Committee. We have one new Senator, John Breaux, who is a firm friend from the House of Representatives. John is from Louisiana. He is the best defender tuna's-got. So Kerry came out here very much convinced by the environmentalists. He met with some of our people, went out to Ed

Gann's house and so forth, and got a different slant on this thing, and we did fairly well with Kerry. You've got to keep that up all the time. We are not politically powerful. This lawyer, who wrote this piece which said in 1951 that the American Tunaboat Association, which I was then running, and Chapman had just come to work, had \$500,000 for lobbying. Our total budget was \$105,000 for everybody, including four employees and travel. We never had money for lobbying, whatever. I am going to write him on a few things that he put in there. If we ever had \$500,000; there were times we didn't get paid for two months, but we decided, oh, the money will come in.

**RW:** Yeah. This is The Ecology Law Quarterly.

**HC:** This is the law school at Berkeley, and they put out, what I wanted, they put out a separate 155 pages, I think it is. I just got a letter from them; I wanted six of these and they wrote the only things they have are the full issue which has other things about Klamath Indians and other cases. I wanted to get some of these. The people in the industry forget how these things are done.

**RW:** It seems like you have the historical background while some of these new people coming in, they don't have and don't want to have a historical background.

**HC:** No, they get it through their families, and the historical background is fishing lore, where fish are, which is extremely important. No, I just went through the areas, as I said, the period from the beginning of the century through 1926, I explained to you, was largely a local fishery. The next 15 years up to 1941 was intensive building, culminating in the start of the war with the development to the south and the beginning of, well the Icelandic tariff was put in which is something else. Yellowfin, skipjack, in other words, the light meat tuna became dominant. In 1941 to 1950 was the construction of vessels, the building of Navy YPs, the return of all those that survived the war. It brought an intensive building program right up through 1952 (the Constitution), the last wooden boat built of any size, and the last boat built by fishermen until about 1960, when Arnholt Smith started building the steel boats for his corporation. Post-war, a trade agreement with Mexico ended and the tariff on canned tuna in oil doubled to 45 percent. The Japanese found a tariff loophole because of an earlier U.S.-Iceland trade agreement which permitted fish (not specifically tuna) canned in brine to enter at a 15 percent duty. For the next ten years, the industry unsuccessfully fought to change this. And then that period was the beginning of vessel seizures by Ecuador, principally.

**RW:** Was that more a harassment than...?

**HC:** No. They took them and fined them.

**RW:** I know, but was it just more of a...?

**HC:** Well, it was a money scheme. In 1948 Ecuador proposed a law setting a line from the coast to around the Galapagos Islands which said, in effect, "If you go through it you have to pay." The first day on the job at ATA, I received a call from an Ecuadorian saying that if we came up with \$50,000, the law would not be passed. I said that I would call. That drove me crazy for a week, but the answer was not difficult as there was no way in God's world anybody could come up with \$50,000 even if we believed it was right. Accordingly, nothing was done and nothing happened. Soon after, the industry opened the first cannery in Puerto Rico and, later, in American Samoa. In the 1960's and 1970's San Diego-based vessels fished off the west coast of Africa. This resulted from the imposition of the first quota on the yellowfin catch by the Tuna Commission in 1966. This opened the eyes of the Spanish and French albacore fishermen who moved into the area with their bait boats. This is now the major fishing ground for their large fleets of purse-seiners, developed as a result of the initiation of the new technology by California vessel owners. Earlier I noted the building of the first of the new purse-seiners by a San Diego fisherman. This was a wooden vessel. By 1977, six of the first modern steel vessels had been added. A wave of building larger vessels ensued. The porpoise permit battle of 1977 caused some economic repercussions which the USTF was able to offset. There

was some problem at this time with seizures of vessels by the Mexican Navy--which settled down. In the early 1980's there were sharp downward revisions in ex-vessel prices as canned tuna imports increased, as did landings by the enlarged fleet with resulting increased production.

**RW:** The price went down because there was a glut of tuna?

**HC:** Yes. It is always, regardless of how you describe it, it's always supply and demand. The canners were forced to meet import competition and reduce the price to the boats. The government would not give any tariff assistance. We had hearings after hearings, but no relief in sight and so the canners started doing things in the 1980's like "Let's shut down Terminal Island," and move to Puerto Rico entirely, and to Samoa to cut costs.

**RW:** There were never any subsidies at all in this business ever?

**HC:** No. There are none whatever. Yes, I beg your pardon. There was a vessel-building subsidy program. Four vessels were built under a subsidy but then that ended quickly.

**RW:** That was back in the 1950's?

**HC:** No. That was in the late 1960's.

**RW:** Now, I understand during the 1930's, 1940's, if a fisherman or a fishing captain, he could go to a cannery.

**HC:** When was this?

**RW:** 1930's and 1940's, maybe the 1950's, and the cannery would build a boat, would go in partnership.

**HC:** Oh yeah. That happened through the years. There is little such activity now. For example, Van Camp has been selling off its vessel interests. Others with such interest are or will follow. I remember when I was with Van Camp's, our policy was we don't want an interest in your boat. We will help build it. If that requires our being a part owner, we will be a part owner, but we do not insist on this. If you want ownership all for yourself, go ahead, just bring in the tuna.

**RW:** The fish would be paying off--they would share it.

**HC:** Yes. Well, you might guarantee the bank loan for example.

**RW:** Oh, I see. Who was the most, there were a number of canneries in town?

**HC:** Well, let's see. Where Rohr now is, there was Westgate. Point Loma became High Seas, there used to be several names out there. Le Rondolet. That was Star Kist. It became High Seas which belonged to Star Kist, which belongs now to H.J. Heinz. And there was Sun Harbor, started before the war and was the biggest canned tuna operation in sight during the war. Van Camp was next door in San Diego. They had been there before. When I had the shipyard I made arrangements to keep National Steel out of our side yard, to transfer the other part of our lease to West Coast Packing Company, then San Diego Packing Company moved in. San Diego was the center of everything; boats and canning. Star Kist had a huge lease which is now a corner of National Steel. I remember going to see the Mayor of San Diego when the boiler blew up in the High Seas' plant in Point Loma, as

the Chamber of Commerce, at the instigation of Point Loma residents, got them to deny a permit. High Seas had to build a new boiler room. They could not get a permit.

**RW:** Do you remember what year that was approximately?

**HC:** Well, I was at the shipyard, so it would be before I left in 1948. So I went to see Mayor Knox. Anyway, they finally got their permit, but then the City of Los Angeles filled a huge area at Terminal Island, gave it to Star Kist, so they gave up their lease, or we would have had everybody here.

**RW:** Was there any one cannery better than the other?

**HC:** Better in what way? You mean size? Well, the only way you can look at them, they all packed the same product. The leader was Van Camp in volume of fish up through the time I left the company anyway, in 1967. The leader now by far is Star Kist. The leader in brand sales for years and years and after I left Van Camp's was Chicken of the Sea, now it is Star Kist.

**RW:** How does Bumble Bee stack up?

**HC:** Well, according to the paper, they've got an article in there on the sale of Van Camp's plant; it adds that Bumble Bee is number three. A lot of their volume comes from other fish. They took over salmon because the original Bumble Bee, which was in Astoria, Oregon, with plants in Alaska, was the top salmon cannery. Then Castle and Cooke bought them in Hawaii. Then they got into tuna vessels. Castle and Cooke bought the Westgate plant here, which became Bumble Bee. See, you have had this constant change. Now all you've got left here is that huge Van Camp cannery which just sits there and why they didn't make it work, I will never know. They had a lot of conflicts in management, etc., and a lot of policy decisions that didn't work.

**RW:** How does Mexico stack up? You said earlier, very dogmatic about what they are doing down there. They bought the American boats.

**HC:** Then they had to build a great number of their own in the United States, Norway and their own shipyard.

**RW:** What do they do with their fish, ship it up here?

**HC:** They export a great deal of it to Europe, the yellowfin. They pack some of it and they send some to this country. We have a quota with them, a quota agreement which is now about to end. They say they are going to send 60,000 tons up here; we don't know whether they will or whether they won't, but it puts a requirement on them. They had better do very well on their porpoise mortality, or the United States will not allow any fish to come in. See that is why it is said they don't control the foreigners. Well, the ultimate control is if they don't have what the United States sets as a standard performance; the U.S. will not take their fish. So they've had a tough problem, but theirs is largely a government-owned fleet, government-financed. So our big thing here I was reciting in 1974 to 1980 was the Marine Mammal Protection Act and the porpoise problems in 1977 that followed that, and then the price increases, for tuna was overpriced. Sales declined, then we kept building larger vessels and we got into the 1980's, prices started down, bankruptcies occurred. We had tariff hearings in 1984 which didn't settle anything. Canneries moved out of California in the 1980's. I would say the 1950's and the 1980's are the two most active periods. They were mixed bags, the 1950's were full of problems. We got through. The 1980's have been full of problems but different from the old days. Then you talked about canneries and fishermen getting together, the boat owner talks to the canner. Well in those days there were family canneries and family boats. Now there are still family boats even though they are incorporated, but the canneries are largely absentee ownership. H.J. Heinz owns Star Kist; Ralston Purina up to this week owned Van Camp. Now it is the Indonesians.

And in California, Pan Pacific is for sale. They pack some fish; they are not very active. Bumble Bee has a plant in Puerto Rico but import most of their canned goods from Thailand. So this is about it. I said I've wandered all over the map, but tried to put it in some perspective.

**RW:** You did an outstanding job. I really appreciate what you have done.

**HC:** Well, it's an extremely active business.

**RW:** When are you getting out of the porpoise?

**HC:** Well, I will be 76 years old next year.

**RW:** Had enough fight?

**HC:** Well, I have things I want to do. I have some volunteer work that I want to work on, and this is a business that is fast moving. You have to keep up with it. It isn't how many hours I put in on porpoise, but I've got to find out what else is going on, because it all ties together.

**RW:** Sure.

**HC:** In fact, I left last March, but they asked me to stay on until the Tuna Foundation opened an office in San Diego which they expect to do the first of January. Well, there may be things they want me to do, I don't know. But there are a few other interests I have in volunteer work that I might help some people which I thought might be kind of fun. I am not discouraged with the tuna business or mad at anybody. It's just a point. Every once in a while the old man has got to get out of the way. I retired in the fall of 1983, but I didn't really get out of there until the summer of 1984. It was very difficult to get a good replacement. I didn't. So then they moved the Tuna Foundation to Washington. Originally we had two offices, San Diego and Washington. So now it is all centered back there and as I said earlier, you have to do things like that. The forces that control your business are not how much fish you catch or how good fishing is, it's who is passing rules. There is a real difficult hearing this time on the Mammal Act extension. You have probably seen the TV film where an environmentalist is showing how a Panama-flag vessel is killing porpoises--it is a bloody thing. It is a phony, as it does not represent what experienced operators do. The film maker got a job on the vessel in Ensenada. In Panama, the vessel changed skippers. The new skipper was Spanish, never fished on tuna in the eastern Pacific before and never fished tuna with porpoise. He made a set on Costa Rica spinners. Nobody in our fleets would set on Costa Rica spinners because they don't carry tuna with them--and it is prohibited by U.S. regulations in any event.

**RW:** A Costa Rica spinner, what is that?

**HC:** It is a subspecies of porpoise. You've got 12 or 15 different subspecies. We have a quota on all but one, Costa Rica spinners. There is no quota. Nobody fishes them. So this guy who had never fished in the Pacific before goes on board, ploughs into these, catches four tons of tuna in 30 days, whereas our average boat would have caught 400 tons, and kills hundreds of Costa Rica spinners. They put it on the air (ABC) as though this was a United States boat. They never said it was a Panama-flag boat. At the hearings this was all brought out. They film one guy throwing a cherry bomb the boats use to keep seals away from fish and all these things. The way the guy, he's waiting, he's got this thing and he is looking over at the camera, "Tell me when to throw it." That was a staged thing. They got tremendous mileage out of it.

**RW:** Yeah, the environmentalists are...

**HC:** Well, who wants to see it? I don't think anybody could see anything like that, or the slaughtering of seal pups in Newfoundland and so forth, and not be bothered by it. You just don't do that. My thesis is that the men with the highest mortality produce the least tuna. It takes you a long time to get the porpoise out of the net. You lose time, you lose hours and hours, and hence I think it is a valid argument to say that the ones that catch the most tuna kill the fewest porpoise. You haven't got time to fool around. Some people think if you killed a lot of porpoise you caught more tuna, that's what they would do. Make no bones about it. It doesn't work that way.

**RW:** Well listen, I am running out of tape. All I want to do is thank you very much.

**HC:** Yeah, it's kind of a rambling account, but I have answered your questions and the chronology is interesting as we go from decade to decade. I hope to write a book some day.

**RW:** Well, this is for the San Diego Historical Society and the Maritime Museum, and all we need to do is sign for the ... you can read here what it says.

**RW:** Yeah, you need to sign it here, and I sign it, and this one here for the Maritime Museum.

***END OF INTERVIEW***

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