ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

An interview with
Frances L. Zeluff, 1922-2012
(Mrs. George N. Zeluff)

August 13, 1993

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PREFACE

This is an interview about the tuna-fishing industry and its demise. But this is a different story because it presents the problem from a woman's point of view.

Mrs. Frances Zeluff is the wife of a tuna fisherman and she had first-hand experience with the problem. As a very capable leader, she organized the wives of fishermen and the group worked for solutions to the problem of their vanishing way of life. Under Mrs. Zeluff's leadership they took the problem to local, state and national leaders. This led to local, national and international conferences regarding tuna fishing.

Any student or researcher who is seeking an answer to the problem of a vanishing local industry must be aware of the steps taken and contributions made by these community leaders.

Thomas E. Walt, Editor
November 14, 1995

INTERVIEWER'S NOTE

This is an oral history interview with Mrs. Zeluff, who was deeply involved with the tuna fishing industry. The date of the interview is August 13, 1993. My name is Robert G. Wright.

ROBERT G. WRIGHT: Your full name?

FRANCES L. ZELUFF: My name is Frances Louise Zeluff.

RGW: Spelling is important.

FLZ: My maiden name is spelled Fohey. I live at 3238 Goldsmith Street, San Diego. I was born in San Diego on February 22, 1922. I have always lived in San Diego. I was raised mostly in the Hillcrest/Mission Hills area. When George and I were married we moved to a place on West University, a little court, where the grocery store is now. It was a Safeway and now it's a Von's. We lived there for just about three years and then we bought a house in Mission Hills on Neale Street and then a few years after that we bought this house in 1954 on Goldsmith Street and we have lived here ever since. We have two children

RGW: Before you jump ahead--your father's name?

FLZ: My father's name was Frances Marion Fohey. He was born in Ann Arbor, Michigan, actually Whitmore Lake, out of Ann Arbor. My mother's maiden name was Maxwell. She was Louise Maxwell and she was born in Nashville, Tennessee. I have one sister.

RGW: What's her name?

FLZ: Her name is Lillian Margaret Fohey Bartman. She was also born in San Diego--on January 3, 1924.

RGW: She's still living?

FLZ: Yes she is.

RGW: Good. Probably you went to Roosevelt?

FLZ: No. I went to Horace Mann Junior High School, the old Horace Mann Junior High School which was on the site [where the Ed Center was built].

RGW: Yeah, Park Boulevard

FLZ: Where the Ed Center is now. It was originally San Diego State College - Teacher's Training School - and when they moved out to where the college (university) is now, the school district took it over and there was a beautiful big Grecian style building,and that's where the junior high school was, but before that I went to Alice Birney Elementary School, which was on the same site and it was where the old training school had been, and the building is still there. So Alice Birney and Horace Mann and then San Diego High School. I graduated from there in 1939, and I started to San Diego State College, and when the war started I went to work for the United States Navy, Public Works Department, and worked there for awhile. Then went back to school at Berkeley and then came back to San Diego after a few months and went to work for Star & Crescent Companies and that's where I was working when my husband and I met. We were married on June 29, 1947.

My son George, Jr. was born on August 7, 1948, and our daughter Shannon Louise was born on April 30, 1951. Her name is now Greenley. She's married to William Wright Greenley and they have two daughters. Our son has one daughter. He is a sea captain; he graduated from California Maritime Academy, as did my husband, and so our family has been much involved with maritime affairs for many years and I am a descendent of people who built ships in Ireland.

RGW: Where?

FLZ: County Cork.

RGW: County Cork, yeah. In the town of Cork probably. You know, jumping back, Star & Crescent. Did you know Oakley Hall?

FLZ: Yes, I did.

RGW: What kind of a guy was he?

FLZ: Very dignified, very remote, tall, handsome man who carried himself very well, but just a very remote sort of a person, as far as I knew him.

RGW: Was he - do you think he was a shrewd businessman?

FLZ: Oh I think he was.

RGW: Do you think he was fair?

FLZ: I really only worked for him and I had no business dealings with him, and I have no knowledge of his being unfair. The company itself - the companies were not generous with their employees. If you wanted to go on an excursion boat that they owned, you had to buy a ticket. Oakley Hall, Jr.

RGW: I met Bud a number of years....

FLZ: He's a very gregarious person.

RGW: And handsome.

FLZ: Yes, yes. A very different personality from that of his father.

RGW: I hear he lives in Las Vegas.

FLZ: I don't know. They lived in Rancho Santa Fe for many years. Then he had another son whose name was Edward, a much younger son and by a different mother, and he also worked for the company, a real nice fellow. Bud was older than I; Ed was just about my age, and he had known my husband during school days or something. So, nice fellow, nice fellow, but Bud was the one primarily responsible for taking over after his father.

RGW: Ed didn't get involved then apparently?

FLZ: Not to that extent, and I don't know, there may have been reasons why maybe the business was left to Bud, who knows? I don't know.

RGW: You know, one of the fellows I wish I had been able to interview if he had been willing to is Oakley cause he sounds like quite a guy and a fellow that is willing to take risks.

FLZ: He's been gone for many years.

RGW: I know. That's why it's interesting to run into somebody that knew him or met him, or had anything to do with him at all.

FLZ: During the time that I knew him he was in the office almost every day but I think he was leaving much of it up to his son Bud.

RGW: By that time, yeah. Cause he started, gosh, way back in 1910 or somewhere.

FLZ: Yes. He'd been around the waterfront for many years.

RGW: Yeah, he sounded like one of the fellows that saw an opporunity and [had] the guts to do it.

FLZ: I think that that very well describes him.

RGW: Too bad he's gone.

FLZ: Now, let's see, anything else you want to know in that respect? Oh, I didn't finish telling you about my schooling.

RGW: Oh, yeah. What were you going - you were going to State for teaching or what? Going to be a teacher?

FLZ: No, no, I never wanted to be a teacher, although I've done some of it in my life, but that was not my prime interest. No, I was interested in sociology and I had about two years of work there before the war started and then I went to work for the Navy, always intending to go back, and the year that our son started to high school and our daughter started to junior high school, I did go back and finished the work and graduated with a degree in sociology and a minor in psychology in 1967.

RGW: Wow, good for you.

FLZ: Most fun I've ever had. It was really - it meant so much more to me because I had had a lot of experience in the meantime, including in Washington, D.C., and other things so then when I studied it made a lot more sense to me and was much more interesting than it was the first time around.

RGW: And being around those kids....

FLZ: I thought it was giving me some insight as to what it was going to be like with my own children as they got to be that age, and I think it did.

RGW: Sure.

FLZ: Well, so much for schooling. Now, you would like to know about the tuna fishermen's emergency committee?

RGW: Well, you married into the tuna industry.

FLZ: Yes I did. My husband, after he got out of high school, had a small boat with his friend John Wansley, and then when the war started, he decided that he would do something about going to school and getting a commission, and he took the exams for California Maritime Academy and did go there and graduated in 1944 from California Maritime Academy and then sailed for American President Lines until the war was over. Then he came back to San Diego and his brother, who had been a naval officer, also came back to San Diego and he had been interested in fishing, not only tuna but a lot of other things as well with small boats. They bought a vessel that had had a fire and they restored the vessel and they were fishing with that when I met my husband at a party at the San Diego Club.

RGW: San Diego Yacht Club?

FLZ: No, no, the San Diego Club where Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich is now, on Sixth Avenue.

RGW: I just want to add here that we did an interview with your husband a few years ago and it should be on file at the Historical Society. I'm sure it is, so we don't have to go into your husband too far.

FLZ: No, all right, yeah, but then so he and his brother were fishing for tuna at the time that I married him. And he went from the small boats into bigger boats, bigger vessels. I was always interested in what was going on and I knew some people in the business but not too many to start with, just people that my husband had been associated with, and friends of the family. My husband was raised in Point Loma so he knew many of these people from childhood on.

RGW: Yeah, the Portuguese.

FLZ: Yes, primarily the Portuguese.

RGW: Did you start taking an interest in the business in the - the people, the mechanics, the money and dynamics of the whole thing?

FLZ: Yes, I always was interested in it and I used to do a lot of paperwork for my husband and a lot of typing for him in various projects that he had. In fact, I was married to him for 17 years before I found out that he knew how to type, so I was interested and I learned everything that I could about

it. Then after we moved to this house in 1954, things began to get really bad in the industry, and by 1955, the early part of 1955, tuna fishermen couldn't sell their catch to the canners because there was - they were full - working on Japanese tuna that they had bought.

RGW: Oh, I didn't know it was that early.

FLZ: Oh, yes, and there had been problems before that, but it really came to a head in 1955, the latter part of 1954 even. Vessels had been tied up at the dock for six to eight months, families hadn't had any paychecks because the men are not paid until the fish is unloaded and processed. People were getting pretty desperate and a lot of families were getting very close to the end of the line financially. People were borrowing money on their insurance policies and taking out second mortgages and selling their cars, so one day an Italian lady named Laura Tocco and some other Italian ladies that lived close together around India Street, in that colony there, decided along with some other people that they would get a bunch of women together and see what we could do about it because it was so seriously affecting our families.

RGW: Excuse me. One thing I want to insert right in here - it seems to me I remember that all of a sudden there were a lot of boats lost, fires, sinkings way out to sea, and I mentioned this to a fisherman - I said it seems like you guys were dumping your boats to collect insurance. He says "No way". He said, "When you have your boat and you live on it, it's your home. You don't want anything to happen to it." I said, "Well,I don't know, it just seemed like there was a rash of boats disappearing". How do you feel?

FLZ: Well, you have to realize that if you don't have much money coming in, you can't spend the money to keep up the vessels.

RGW: Yeah, I know. So you think the reason for the rash of loss was from lack of maintenance then?

FLZ: I think that played a very great part in it. I have never known anyone who would willingly go out and dump their vessel. In the first place, as this man said to you, vessels were owned by families mostly in those days. Their heart and soul was in it. Another thing, if you went out and dumped a vessel, how would you know that you weren't going to go down with it. I do know that there were serious maintenance problems in those days, I know that from our own experience. It was just not something that anyone that I knew of would have willingly done. What period of time were you talking about?

RGW: About that period.

FLZ: Offhand I can't think of any that went down, but that doesn't mean there weren't any. But I wouldn't say that it was dumping them for insurance.

RGW: I just thought I would ask.

FLZ: But there were a lot of people in town who resented the fact that the tuna fishermen made good money. They were always willing to think the worst of them, and it was just grossly unfair because men sacrificed and families sacrificed in order for them to do this, and they were entitled to enjoy the fruits of their labor.

RGW: They would go out on long, long trips, for six months - weeks and months.

FLZ: My husband retired at the end of 1976 and we had been married - well we were married in 1947 - we had never spent six consecutive months together so I know something about what it means to the family and what the sacrifices are that the men and the families put up with.

RGW: The ladies on India Street - how about over here in Point Loma?

FLZ: Oh, well, they were joined by women from over here and women from all over town who were connected with the fishing business, and in May of 1955 there was a meeting held, and as I recall, it was at the union headquarters down on State Street because that was about the biggest place and we didn't have to pay for it. We had some of the people from the industry giving us some facts and figures and then there was a concensus of opinion that we should form an organization and try to do something about it. Later on we were joined by women in San Pedro. I'm talking about 1200 women that were involved in this.

RGW: Did you have to come up with a title?

FLZ: Oh, yes, Tuna Fishermen's Wives Emergency Committee.

RGW: That tells it like it is.

FLZ: That tells it like it is. The first thing we had to do was raise some money to do the things that we wanted to do. So we engaged in that, it was frantic, it was really frantic because most of us were young mothers - I was only 33 years old - young mothers who had young children that we dragged around with us, the preschoolers. We - the boats started to contribute money to us, the different vessels, and businesses in San Diego and individuals and the canners even kicked in some money.

RGW: The canneries were causing part of the problem.

FLZ: That's true, but you know, if you have a delegation of women call upon you....

RGW: You haven't got a chance.

FLZ: They gave and they gave willingly. We also started a letter writing campaign.

RGW: To whom?

FLZ: To our senators and congressmen and to the President.

RGW: What were you writing about? What was the goal?

FLZ: We were asking for a quota on imports of raw and frozen tuna coming into the United States.

RGW: From other...

FLZ: They came in from other countries and tuna came in unrestricted. There were no tariffs, there were no duties, no tariffs. There were no quotas, quantity, that could come into the United States from foreign sources, and it was coming in much cheaper than the United States fishermen could produce it. For several reasons. They were deliberately trying to get the market, mostly the Japanese, and their people were pretty well subsidized, and there was just no way that we could, at that time, that we could compete against them.

RGW: Were the purse seiners [involved]?

FLZ: No, they were not at that time. That came along later, but they were still fishing with hook and line.

RGW: Pole fishing?

FLZ: Yes, pole fishing. Later on there were two things that changed that picture, two technological advances. one was the development of the nylon net which was much stronger, and the other was the development of the Puretic power block, which meant that they could pull in huge quantities of fish in the nets.

RGW: What was the name of the power block?

FLZ: Puretic - PURETIC - and I think that that's the name of the man who invented it.

RGW: Up in ?

FLZ: San Pedro.

RGW: San Pedro.

FLZ: Up in that area.

RGW: Anyway, I think that was a tremendous innovation which helped the tuna industry here, but it's awfully hard to beat a lower price on tuna.

FLZ: once that development had been made, and this was - these were things that came about through the efforts of the industry itself, no government help or subsidies or grants or studies. The tuna fishing people have always been so self reliant. They didn't want handouts from Washington, but they also expected a fair shake from their own government, which they certainly didn't get. At any rate, getting back to the meeting, it was very exciting because the room was just full of women, absolutely packed with women, and it was full of energy and it was full of enthusiasm for doing something about it and a determination that we weren't going to just sit down and cry about things. That spawned a series of meetings choosing a leader, at first Laura Tocco was the chairman and later on I became the chairman, and almost daily there was some sort of a meeting or some sort of an appointment that had to be kept.

RGW: She sort of led the way then?

FLZ: She was the one that presided at the first meeting, and by virtue of that she became the chairman. We had to set up an organization, we had to find a place where we could have an office, we had to raise the money to do these things, and we also had to try to get as much publicity in San Diego and across the country as we could for what was happening to an American industry. There were thousands of letters. Somehow the people of San Diego latched onto this. There were thousands of letters that went from here to Washington, to senators and congressmen and to the President and to the State Department because they were deeply involved in this too. Really frantic times. Fortunately my father and mother were living with us at that time and my husband's parents lived just three miles away. I had young children, one not in school and one in school. I couldn't have done the things that I did had it not been for the fact that they were there -

RGW: To babysit?

FLZ: Well, yes, they did and I never had to worry that the children weren't being properly cared for. My daughter went with me almost daily. I had a basket with her crayons and her little dolls and her color books in them, and her great ambition when she started to school was to go to a meeting of her own, and when she finally went to her first Brownie meeting, she thought she really had reached the pinnacle. We did have an office on North Harbor Drive, we had another one some place down town to start with, but it was not convenient.

RGW: Was that down at the foot of Broadway? The old Port office was down there.

FLZ: It was not there. It was somewhere on Market Street, but at any rate, that didn't last very long because we weren't comfortable with the location and it was not convenient for most of us to get down there, and the parking wasn't there. So we had an office on North Harbor Drive at the site where there is a shipyard. I can't think of what the name of that shipyard used to be.

RGW: Not Campbell's?

FLZ: No, no.

RGW: Not that far down?

FLZ: It's where Sun Harbor Marina is now, along in that area. But many, many meetings of the Board were held in people's homes. We had to have a mailing address and some place where we could go for financial dealings and for our business.

RGW: I assume you formed sort of a steering committee so that few could do the work of the many and let the many know what's going on?

FLZ: Exactly. That's exactly what it was. And so we would meet and we would plan our strategy for our next move.

RGW: Who were the ladies on the steering committee? You have any idea?

RGW: Well, I came across some records the other day. There was Laura Tocco, there was Nila Collini, who became a very wellknown artist and she was the treasurer.

RGW: Collini? And who else?

FLZ: Oh, there was a girl named Betty Gonzales. There was Betty Hamblin, whose husband was in the marine insurance business. I can't remember the names of all of them. There was a lady named Flora Brown, one named Betsy Diamond, who is now Betsy Kenworthy. There was a young girl from Mission Hills whose name was Angie Giacalone.

RGW: I don't know how you can do it after 40 years.

FLZ: At any rate, we were also meeting with people in the city. We were meeting with people in the State of California and we were putting a lot of pressure there, and eventually in June of that year there was a meeting arranged in Washington, D.C. with the State Department.

RGW: The meeting was in June 1955?

FLZ: Yes. As a result of conferences between representatives of all segments of the Southern California Tuna Industry and the Governor of the State of California, who was Knight, Governor Goodwin Knight at that time. A meeting with the State Department in Washington, D.C. was arranged for June 20th of 1955, and there were a number of us from different segments within the industry who attended this meeting and were named Advisors to the California Commission on Interstate Cooperation. It was decided that when we heard that this meeting was going to take place, that the tuna fishermen's wives should send a delegation. I was named chairman of the delegation; Flora Brown, Betsy Diamond and Angie Giacialone went with me.

The first thing we did was call on Congressman Bob Wilson, actually the meeting had been prearranged before we left San Diego. There was a lot of publicity about this and I heard from people and friends all over the United States that they were hearing on their radio that there was a delegation of angry fishermen's wives going to Washington to help settle this tuna problem. That isn't the way we saw ourselves. We saw ourselves as being very determined, but we did meet with Congressman Wilson who was very sympathetic to our cause and he set up a lot of other meetings for us while we were there. I attended this meeting with the State Department; Herbert Hoover, Jr. was presiding. There were people from San Pedro, there were people from the canners, there were people from Monterey (the albacore fishing group farther up the coast) and people from San Diego. Dr. Wilbert Chapman I don't believe was there at that time, but Mr. Harold Cary, General Manager of the American Tunaboat Association, was there. At the time I was doing that, the other three ladies met with Vice President Nixon.

RGW: A California boy.

FLZ: A California boy. They were very impressed by Mr. Nixon and his sympathetic attitude toward the problem, and we felt that we were beginning to reach the highest levels of government, which we were. But we were asking for a quota on tuna and we never got the quota on the frozen tuna. However, a lot of other things happened as a result of this.

RGW: Wait a minute. An obvious question which I will kick myself if I don't ask. Why didn't you get the quota? What was their reasoning?

FLZ: We were dealing in a period of free trade. That was the major thrust of our foreign policy - free trade. And, also, there was much concern that unless we helped Japan, Japan might go communist.

RGW: That was a big threat in those days.

FLZ: We perceived it as being a threat.

RGW: It may not have been real.

FLZ: ...and this was after the McCarthy hearings so that big bear was always standing there looking over our shoulders, we thought, and people in Washington thought that way about it. The times were not with us and as my husband mentioned earlier, we tried to enlist the aid of other industries and a lot of our correspondence and a lot of other meetings were with people from other industries.

RGW: Like the automotive?

FLZ: Like the auto people and men from San Pedro, one of the union men from San Pedro, John Royal, went to a meeting oa automotive people in Michigan on Mackinaw Island. They simply couldn't have cared less because they were fat and happy in those days. Everybody wanted to buy a car in the early 50's and business was booming with many other industries as they got into post-WWII production and things became available.

It was just mostly the times. Plus the fact that the tuna fishing industry was a small cog in the wheel of the nation's produce. It sent waves all over, but it did not affect people's daily lives such as automobiles and things of that sort.

RGW: If you can't afford tuna, or you want to boycott tuna, that's OK, you eat something else. You don't have to eat tuna.

FLZ: No, you don't have to eat tuna, that's true, but that isn't what I meant. I meant that we didn't have - we were a small enough group of people and localized in a certain area, we didn't have the political clout.

RGW: Well, you weren't nationwide - that's a big difference.

FLZ: That's right.

RGW: Was this George Dew involved at all with this?

FLZ: Yes, I remember him. No, he wasn't too much involved in this.

RGW: Just out of curiosity.

FLZ: Only from a canner's point of view in those days.

RGW: This is a Neil Morgan column - mentioned August 3, 1993.

FLZ: Yes, I read that. Well, at any rate, it was explained to us, people were very sympathetic, but it was explained to us that our problem, and they admitted that there was a problem, was a complex one involving six different agencies of the Federal Government. Well, that would have been Department of Defense, Department of the Interior, Department of Commerce, the Tariff Commission, the Department of State, etc. All of these had a finger in the pie so far as - what really got to us I think was that their interference in all these things was helping to cause the problem, but they didn't want to then take any action to help solve the problem and we didn't think that it was fair, and it really wasn't fair.

RGW: They didn't want to back off?

FLZ: No. A lot of crocodile tears, you know, but at any rate we were assured that there was a task force, an interagency task force, working toward a solution which would be forthcoming within the next few weeks. And meetings with these various agencies were arranged for us for the balance of the week, and we did expend a lot of energy and a lot of shoe leather. We went to the Pentagon, we went to Interior, Commerce, any place, things that we arranged - we arranged a lot of meetings ourselves besides the ones that our congressmen and other people set up for us. We were patted on the head and told to go home and that our government would take care of us. Well, on July 28th, just a little over a month later, the Presidential Assistant, I. Jack Martin, wrote a letter to California Congressman Bob Wilson and our plea for a quota was denied because this would have come through the Executive Branch, you see, but there were set forth some - what he called "positive steps" - which the White House advanced as avenues of relief. (1) was the joint advertising campaign by the Japanese and American industries; (2) was a credit relief program by the Small Business Administration;

(3) a positive program of activity by the Department of Interior (I don't know what that meant); and a request by our government to the Japanese government to increase the wage standards and practices in their tuna fishing industry, which incidentally was one of their most prosperous.

Well, our associations and individuals within the industry pursued each of these avenues of relief proposed by the White House and they were just blind alleys, not only blind alleys but so inconsequential that we wondered how they could seriously have proposed them in the first place.

RGW: An obvious question is: If the same amount of people got together here in San Diego and went to Washington and were all men, would that have made a difference?

FLZ: Oh, I don't think so. I'll tell you why. We were so well received in Washington, not only at that time, but our subsequent visits to Washington, D.C., I think, it struck the fancy of people and they became very sympathetic to us because here we were obviously just young wives and mothers and we were out trying to defend our husbands' right to an occupation. Not only that, but we were appealing to the Federal Government to be fair to its citizens.

RGW: It not always happens.

FLZ: No, it doesn't always happen, but we found that we had entry any place we wanted to go.

RGW: The obvious question is, did you feel patronized?

FLZ: Not always. There were some people but not always. No. People listened to what we had to say, but, of course, you must undersand that we were preceded by and followed by tons of letters and they all, when they met us, protested, please, please, we can't deal with all these letters. So, and they knew we were representing 1200 people, and I think they realized that we were intelligent enough that we would have recognized when we were being patronized as well. Well, at any rate, that was the beginning of our activities and it was followed later on that year by testifying at some hearings before the Senate Interstate and Foreign Commerce Committee with Senator Magnason presiding in San Pedro, and I made a statement before the Committee at that time.

In 1956 I appeared before the Senate Interstate and Foreign Commerce Committee, some hearings they were holding. 1957, I believe, was the year that we had a hearing before the Tariff Commission. 1958 we had a really, really big push for a piece of legislation called the Tuna Import Act of 1958, and we sent a delegation of people from the local industry, the Southern California industry, to appear at a hearing before the Ways and Means Committee, and in San Diego we persuaded Mayor Charles Dail to go with us. Not only did we appear before the Ways and Means Committee, but we again made the rounds of all the different agencies and all the different departments.

I made other trips that I don't have a record of right here and I would go and and call on the different congressmen, senators, different departments, just keeping the push on, keeping the push on, and we coordinated our activities with those of the American Tunaboat Association and other groups in San Pedro, so that we were all working for the same thing at the same time. There was just tremendous unity in the tuna fishing part of the industry at that time, to get something happening that would give us a chance to stabilize our industry.

RGW: How about Sacramento? Did they - it's a statewide problem - didn't they help you at all?

FLZ: They did what they could. I remember another time - it might have been 1956 - that Governor Knight came down here and he was going to make a television appearance and some of us had an appointment to meet with him after he did that. We kept the people in the state legislature aware

of what was happening too, and they passed resolutions and sent those to Washington and did what they could to put the weight of the State of California behind the efforts of the industry.

RGW: I wondered about that.

FLZ: There was no action really that they could take though other than just support us in those ways. While the Tuna Import Act of 1958 did not get passed, we gave it a good try and as I recall it passed - well, I shouldn't say that - I don't remember whether it passed the House or not and died in the Senate, that could have been the way that it happened, but as I say, we were working against the times.

RGW: World times.

FLZ: Yes, but in all these years the Tuna Fishermen's Wives' committee continued to meet, continued to push for a voter writing campaign, continued to meet with appropriate officials when they would come to San Diego or maybe in San Pedro. We continued to raise money to keep our activities going. We continued to send letters and telegrams, as the need arose, to Washington. We had to learn, we were quick studies, and we did learn, I think, very rapidly the realties of the political process.

RGW: In other words, in Washington they didn't say "Get lost" but let you stumble on till reality overcame you and said this is a game we have to play - we have to play their game and only try to get what we want.

FLZ: I've never looked at it in those - - because we had some advisors and we met with a lot of people, for instance, there was a man named O. R. Strackbein, who was Chairman of the Nationwide Committee of Industry, Agriculture and Labor on Import/Export Policy. They were on 15th Street N.W. in Washington, D. C. We found that there were a lot of people that were willing to give us a hand, tell us who the influential people were that we should see, people who really did't have to do this for us. We also found out early on that it was important to work with the staff people in the Executive Branch, as well as in the Legislative Branch, particularly in the Executive Branch. Those people went on administration after administration and they were the ones that helped to formulate policy. They were the ones who could steer a secretary of whatever department in one way or another by virtue of the things that they -- fell onto their desk. We had very, very good coverage from the newspapers, from Copley Press; we had excellent cooperation from Congressman Bob Wilson, from Congressman James Utt of Santa Ana, from Senator Kuchel. Senator Knowland's office too, while he was still there. We met with people in the State Department; one day Bob Wilson and I - this must have been 1956 or 1957, when I was back on one of my period trips. Bob Wilson set up a meeting with some State Department people, staff people, and they were rampant free traders. Bob Wilson and I went to this meeting at the State Department and we sat in a conference room around a table and hashed over the economic free policies of the United States and why this wasn't fair to certain segments of the national economy and the tuna industry in particular. I simply - I didn't back down - I didn't ever back down, and I had enough homework because all this involved a lot of studying and a lot of learning and a lot of time spent in that direction.

RGW: You weren't intimidated?

FLZ: I was not intimidated. I couldn't be shaken and by the end of the meeting there was one man who kept playing with his pencil and before the end of the meeting his hands were shaking, and Bob Wilson told me later on that that was one of the most effective meetings that had ever been held because I was rational and I was well-versed in what they were talking about, and I could counteract the things that they had to say.

RGW: Well, this man whose hands were shaking - was he mad?

FLZ: No, I don't think he was mad. I think he was frustrated because whatever he set forth I had an answer for, a good solid responsible answer, and it was not anger - I think it was just frustration because they really expected to just overwhelm.

RGW: Yeah - we'll listen to this lady and get her out of our hair.

FLZ: Well, I had met some of them before, they knew me, but they just didn't think I was in the same league. At any rate, those were some of the minor triumphs that came along and some of the things that kept us going. It kept us coming back and coming back and working on the problem. I learned a lot about the industry, about the people in the industry and I made some fast friends among the women here in San Diego and it was an experience, too, because we were working with a lot of different kinds of people, a lot of different personalities and a lot of different ideas, and I think that it said a great deal for all of us who were working together that we managed to keep the unity and managed to keep the momentum going, and there was some really terrific people - some terrific women who had never stepped out of their homes before, who got involved in this and who worked very hard at it.

RGW: You know, along that same line on the male side, I have done a lot of interviews with tuna fishermen of all nationalities, Portuguese, Italian and others. The feeling I get is these guys are not--they seem to sort of take it as it comes--they're not fighters as such. Some of them felt they were being shortchanged when they weighed out the fish at the cannery or the tuna cannery [buyers] would say, "Well the fish is spoiled" when it really wasn't. They seemed to just roll over.

FLZ: What do you mean "they rolled over"?

RGW: Well, they didn't--they sort of accepted their fate. I know one guy in particular. He said, "Well, that's the way it is", and sort of accepted it, accepted their fate or their condition.

FLZ: Well, at the scale, ...when they were offloading fish at the the scale there was always a representative of the cannery and a representative from the boat, and they kept track, they marked down the weight on the scale. Sure the canneries shortchanged them, you bet they did, and you had to do everything you could to try to see that it wouldn't happen, and yes, they did say that fish was undersize or underweight or it was spoiled or a lot of things, and we know a lot of that went into cans just like the rest of it, a lot of it went into pet food, but they didn't get paid for it, but you have to remember that - let me tell you about rolling over--there were a lot of arguments and a lot of disagreements between the fishermen and the canners as these boats were being unloaded, but you have to remember that the canners were the only ones - that was the only market, they were the only ones who were going to buy the fish - and you really didn't have much recourse, and so you tried to reach a happy medium and keep things as much in balance as you could. That was something, of course, I--that part of the business I wasn't involved in, but I observed a lot of it and I heard a lot of talk about it. The canners were known as being not always honest about it.

RGW: Say that again. What's the Tuna Association ....

FLZ: All right, there was American Tuna Boat Association which was and is an association of tuna boat owners; each vessel owned by those owners paid dues into the Association. There was also a union, Cannery Workers and Fishermen's Union AFL-CIO, and the head of that in the days that I'm talking about - 1955 up through 1961 - was Lester Balinger. He is no longer living. Mr. Harold Cary was the General Manager for the American Tuna Boat Association, and Dr. Wilbert Chapman was the Director of Research for the American Tuna Boat Association. They spearheaded this effort to get some sort of relief from the government, from the imports of raw tuna, and they did much more work than the tuna fishermen's wives ever did and they had people going to Washington and to international meetings. The tuna industry is no longer as of this date - no longer a viable entity in the United States. There is only one small tuna cannery in the United States and that is in San Pedro, and I think that they can mostly locally caught

albacore. The tuna boats owned by Americans fish offshore; they almost don't ever come into the port of San Diego any more. It's a very sad thing, a very sad thing. The reasons for its demise are complex; part of it is government action -

RGW: Or inaction.

FLZ: Or inaction. Part of it is the trend of this time now to go offshore, have your goods produced offshore or have your goods fabricated or canned offshore. That is part of the problem. Part of the problem in San Diego was the Port District, a great part of the problem was the environmentalists. Now, where were we? We were talking ....

RGW: We jumped a little bit ahead. I didn't mean to do that but it's fine. I'm glad you said what you did. I wanted to continue on chronologically so we'll just back up a bit. I was rather interested in the personality of the men and the fishermen in contrast to what the women were doing for them.

FLZ: Well, you have to remember that the men were at sea fishing. They didn't have the time to do this. It just - there wasn't anything else to do but have the women take part in this. The men of the fishing fleet were very adventuous, very willing to sacrifice to go out and make a living. The owners were very willing to take chances. For instance, when the power block and the nylon net came along, the industry was in very, very bad shape, very bad shape. There were vessels tied up with marshals aboard and all the things that happen when an industry is going downhill, but they were willing to spend the money to convert their vessels to ...

RGW: Get a loan on it--the boat owners.

FLZ: The boat owners were willing to spend their money and gamble that this was going to be a successful venture and they spent thousands, hundreds of thousands of dollars converting their vessels from hook and line fishing to seining.

RGW: It seems to me that they were forced into doing it for economic reasons. Pole fishing was obsolete.

FLZ: Well, yes, they - in a sense they were, but I don't look at it as being forced. They were out there looking for opportunities to advance themselves and they were willing to seize the opportunity when it came along and to buy these nets cost a lot of money and power blocks cost a lot of money, and structural changes had to be made to the vessels. They could have sold their vessels to Mexico or some other country and taken their money and run, but they weren't willing to do that. They were going to do everything to keep this industry going.

Now these were things that I observed that I really had no direct part in. My husband did have his business and took part in all these changes that were going on, but any way.. and he had believed for a long time that seining was the way to go, but until these technological advances came along there was no incentive to do it. But my work mostly was with the women's committee and making trips to Washington to testify before government entities, lobbying if you will, and I want to say that all the women that worked on these different things did this as volunteers. We were never paid anything.

RGW: But you were funded enough to go to Washington?

FLZ: Yes, but we had to get out and raise the money, which we always managed to do. We worked very closely with Dr. Chapman and Harold Cary, Lester Balinger from the fishermen's union, with John Royal from the fishermen's union in San Pedro, ILWU(?) Fishermen's Union, with other people in the industry, and we were all working on the same thing and we kept each other apprised of what was happening, what was going on. There was a concerted effort; it was a most liberal education for all of us and certainly was for me.

RGW: You're talking about 1955, 1956, 1957. What happened in the late 1950s into the 1960s?

FLZ: Well, in 1957, I believe, we had a hearing, finally were able to get a hearing before the Tariff Commission. At any rate, in 1958 there was this big push for the Tuna Import Act of 1958 and that meant trips to Washington and it meant letters and telegrams as the bill went through the political process. In 1959 there was a hearing in Los Angeles in June by the Merchant Marine and Fisheries subcommittee on Senate Interstate and Foreign Commerce Committee. We appeared at that. Then this is what happened, and this is why I feel that we had some impact working in concert with the other facits of the industry. Every time that there would get ... because there are many tieups during this period of time the boats would be all tied up again. The canners wouldn't buy their fish. They had to tie up at the dock, they had to keep all the machinery and refrigeration going, the men had to stand watches, that has to be supervised around the clock, the men couldn't go out and get other jobs because they had these watches that they had to stand. In the meantime, the vendors, the grocers, the ship chandlers, all these people weren't getting paid because you settle up at the end of the trip and pay for things.

Well, at any rate, what would happen. It would build up again and the canners would start buying more and more tuna, frozen tuna coming from Japan, and then the vessels would begin to tie up and then we would start another round in Washington. The Japanese are very sensitive to what goes on in this country, in the government...

RGW: And I'm sure they had a powerful lobby too.

FLZ: Yes they did, yes they did. American educated Japanese, very powerful lobby. They would wave the flag of Japan and say you can't let us go communist and ... we have to trade to eat. But what would happen is, this buildup of Japanese tuna would come and then there would be a big push in Washington for some sort of limitation on the amount for legislation or for some sort of executive action and then they would put voluntary controls upon themselves and they would back off, and the cycle kept repeating itself.

RGW: Smokescreen?

FLZ: Anything you want to call it. So we did keep, and when I say "we", I mean not just the tuna fishermen's wives but the people in the industry who were working on this, the organizations and the associations kept the wolf from the door. We kept managing to put enough pressure on Washington by virtue of that on the Japanese, so that they would back away and the industry to fish enough to make some money to keep going to awhile. We kept that going until the vessels then began to convert to purse seining until technological advances came along and the people were willing to take a chance on them and to spend the money and get out of the cycle, and then we could compete on a much more level playing field, as the term goes today, with the Japanese.

RGW: I wonder what type of fishing the Japanese did. Did they--they used nets didn't they?

FLZ: Well, they did a lot of long line fishing. They would roll out hundreds of miles of lines and there were lines going down, long lines going down from those lines with the corks and the floats and hooks on them. That was - in those days that was the major way that they fished.

RGW: I see.

FLZ: In 1959, in the early part of June of 1959, there was a lot of talk in the industry about putting the pressure on the government to set up a government-to-government conference with the Japanese. Private individuals really can't set up meetings of this sort; people can't make treaties with other countries; it has to be on a governmental level, and if people went over there, private people in the industry went over there to try to make some

sort of an arrangement with the Japanese so that everybody could have a share of the pie, then the antitrust laws would come into play. So we had to rely on the government and we were not asking for subsidies or a lot of other things that could have been asked for; we were just asking for fairness, for our government to be as fair to us as they were being to the Japanese. So the tuna fishermen's wives decided that they should send a delegation of women to Washington to see the President of the United States, Dwight Eisenhower.

We sent Betsy Diamond and me. our first contact was through Bob Wilson and he tried to set up an appointment for us with the President. That was in Sherman Adams' heyday, and there was a very protective cloak around the President and Chairman Adams was the key to it, and they just couldn't get past Sherman Adams and so the request was denied. We were in Bob Wilsons's office when this news came back, and so we left. We got outside the House Office Building that he occupied and I stopped and said to Betsy Diamond, "I am not going to give up, I'm just not going to do this." I think we were both sort of in tears by that time; it was very warm, very humid; we had been doing a lot of hard work; we walked miles on those marble floors, and we were tired and discouraged. I said, "Come on, let's go back Betsy." Jimmy Utt was still in Bob Wilson's office at that time because we had only been gone about five minutes, and they were feeling just about as badly as we were. I said to them, "If I wrote a letter to the President" because Sherman Adams had said that Congressmen Utt and Wilson could have an appointment with the President. I said, "If I wrote a letter to the President...

RGW: You wrote a letter to President Eisenhower? What were you going to say?

FLZ: Well, I wanted to know, if I wrote a letter to the President, if they would take that letter to President Eisenhower and they said yes, they certainly would. I bought stationery; I had no personal stationery with me. I bought stationery and I drafted a letter and wrote it in our hotel room, the hotel room Betsy and I were sharing at the Dupont Plaza...

RGW: In longhand?

FLZ: In longhand, told him of the problem, told him what it was we were asking for, which at that time was a governmentto-government conference with the Japanese and asked him if he would institute this. The theory behind this asking for government-to-government meeting was that we felt if the United States government went on record supporting the tuna industry and evidencing an interest in the tuna industry, and an interest in what was happening in the trade in tuna between the two nations, that this would reinforce our position with the Japanese, and as a matter of fact it did. But at the same time that--the very same day--Congressmen Utt and Wilson were taking this letter to the President, there was a meeting scheduled with State Department people and Interior Department people--excuse me, I want to refer to my notes here.

Well, we had that process underway when we, Betsy Diamond and I, were joined by Dr. Chapman from the Tuna Boat Association, Charles Carey from the Canners Association and John Royal from the Fishermen's Union in San Pedro, and we joined our forces, conferred and we had decided that the whole industry was in favor of this government-to-government meeting.

RGW: You had a government-to-government meeting?

FLZ: Yeah, well.. the whole industry was united in wanting this government-to-government meeting. We hadn't decided on tuna. We hadn't really decided what all that they were going to talk about, but that it was essential that we get this going. We set up a dinner meeting with our senators and congressmen on a Tuesday night, July 7th, but during the day we met with Senator Keikel, Senator Clare Engle, Congressmen Wilson, Utt and King, who was in the San Pedro district I believe, and also Congressman Hawsmer who was out of town, but we had invited him also.

The last person we met with during the day was Senator Engle and he had met the day before with Assistant Secretary of State Beale and had pretty well sized up what a tough situation we were up against, and he had devised a tactical plan of action that he proposed to the five of us, Charlie Carey,

John Royal, Dr. Chapman, Betsy Diamond and me. The essence of it was this: everything depended on industry unity and that was achievable, so that was no problem. He suggested that in the long range, the long range objectives might be having the Department of the Interior prepared on July 8th because there was a meeting already set up to report on what it was going to do on the long range program of work that the industry had submitted to it when they'd had some meetings in La Jolla on May 21st, also a differential construction subsidy bill which was in the hopper, which applied to other fisheries beside the tuna fishery, and his short-term objectives he proposed were a government-to-government meeting with the Japanese, which had originated with us, and some immediate credit reliefs such as the government could give that would aid the boats in once more getting back out to sea, and he felt that we had to give the State Department a rationale so that they could convince themselves that the situation of the tuna industry was unique and wouldn't be a precedent for similar requests by other industries were were having... some sixty-odd other industries that were having problems with the Japanese imports and that our objectives with respect to the Japanese were temporary and we didn't intend to saddle the department with a series of controls that they would have to live with for a generation. This sounded like a pretty good plan of action to us and we had our meeting with the ... all of our senators and congressmen and they agreed to join in this program. Senator Engle set up with Senator Magnusson a hearing on 10:00 A.M. Thursday, July 9th, for the subcommittee on fishing of the Senate Committee on Interstate and Foreign Commerce, and also he recommended that we go directly to Mr. Leffler, who was the Assistant Secretary for Interior, which we did.

RGW: You wrote the letter, you did write the letter to Eisenhower?

FLZ: Yes, I did.

RGW: And it was delivered by Wilson?

FLZ: Yes, eventually. But in the meantime these other things were going on.

RGW: Oh, I thought ... here's the letter, run over there and say, "Ike, here's something we think you ought to read" that same day.

FLZ: No, there was a few days interval, a few days interval. So they had an appointment set up-the congressmen had an appointment set up with the President, but in the meantime there were other things going on. We were meeting with these other people in government and so then it came to where we had to put our proposal to the government in written form, and so the three men from San Pedro and San Diego were writing on that and this came over a weekend, and as I recall it was over the 4th of July because I remember watching the fireworks at the Washington Monument from the roof of the Dupont Plaza Hotel. It was the most thrilling thing in the world to me to be in the nation's capital on the 4th of July and see this celebration. But on Sunday afternoon we got the use of the National Canners Association (offices?) and as Charlie Carey, Dr. Chapman and Don Royal wrote out these things, Betsy Diamond and I turned to and typed, and they would shuffle the stuff to us and we would type it up as fast as we could. So, finally, by about 5 PM we had all this work finished and there were about 11 copies of it, and then by that time, that evening, other people from San Diego and San Pedro had joined us, Nick Trutanic (sp?), Gilbert VanCamp, Max Gorby, Anthony Nisotitch, M. B. Steward,who was a San Diego man with the small boat albacore people, and Harold Cary from the Tuna Boat Association, and so we had a meeting that night and gave them copies of the document to read and study and we set a meeting for the next morning at 9:30.

We planned our strategy the next morning and came to an agreement on all of these 20-odd questions that we had decided that probably the Department of State would ask us on July 8th in order to divide us and to head off the conference with Japan, so we came to our agreements on all of these things, decided we should have a joint spokesman, agreed that all of the.... we agreed on answers to all of these questions they figure that we would be asked, and concluded that we would hang together on this. The next day Harold Cary chaired a meeting at the National Canners

Association, they made their meeting rooms available to us, for another industry meeting to [discuss] all the things that needed to be talked about. There were another group of people that came from San Diego and from San Pedro to join us for that meeting.

RGW: This was July 1959?

FLZ: July of 1959. So the morning was spent in background discussion, acquainting the newcomers with developments to date, including a review of discussions on the differences that had arisen the day and evening before, and to make a long story short we came to agreement on the things that needed to be discussed. While all this intensive coordination had been going on, different work parties were working in different areas, Betsy and me with Congressmen Wilson and Utt and some of the other people working in some other directions to try to get the President briefed before the congressmen arrived and other people working with the Department of Defense to get some Navy people cutting in on this, and other people working with Pacific Northwest people. It was truly remarkable because there was this large segment of the labor and the boat owner and the cannery leadership there in Washington all working together. one of the devices that people in government had used for years was to try to divide the different segments and get them taking different positions on any one question, and then they would say "Well, you people can't make up your minds about these things, and you people can't agree on these things so how do you expect us to do anything about it?"

RGW: That sounds like a ploy.

FLZ: This time they could not because we were in unanimous agreement.

RGW: It seems like the cannery was creating the problem on one hand, on the other hand they were trying to get the best buy on the fish.

FLZ: Well, I think they realized that as the way things stood then, that if the Japanese ever succeeded in putting the American tuna fishermen out of the picture and out of business, then the canners would be totally dependent on imports of tuna and then they would have to pay the piper.

RGW: All the Japanese had to do was start raising their rates.

FLZ: They never wanted to admit that but they understood that, and of course..... you know, the questions of.... for instance, the question of tuna is very complex because you do have the fishermen, you do have the boat owners and you do have the canners, and one can not exist without the other. So finally it became so evident that the different segments were willing to work with each other on this. It was really remarkable.

RGW: Well, the thing, going back to the automotive people that wouldn't support you, look what happened to them and they ran into the same buzzsaw, the same problem.

FLZ: That's right. Do you want the names of these people from the government that were involved?

RGW: If you can keep it short. A lot of them there don't you?

FLZ: Well .... but it gives you some idea of the level on which this was ... Yes, we all agreed that Harold Cary would be the spokesman for the industry and that any questions any of us asked would be fielded to Harold to answer them. He was a good man, always could keep his head. On the ... around the table ... at the head of the table for the government were the Chief of the Japan/Korea section, Far Eastern Division, Bureau of Commercial Fisheries, Department of Commerce, the Chief of the Bureau of Commercial Fisheries, which then was under the Department of the Interior, Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife, Department of the Interior...

RGW: Do you have a name?

FLZ: The Honorable...Donald McKernan was Chief for the Bureau of Commercial Fisheries, Ross Leffler, Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife Department.

RGW: You got a name ... can you spell those last two names?

FLZ: Donald McKernan; Ross Leffler, the Honorable W.T.M. Beale, Jr., Deputy Assistant Secretary for Economic Affairs, Department of State, Daniel M. Lyon, Special Problems Branch, Trade Agreements Division, Department of State, and William C. Herrington, Special Assistant for Fisheries and Wildlife to the Undersecretary, Department of State. There was also a Department of Defense man there, Comdr. Burdick Brittin who was in the National Policy Section, Strategic Plans Division, Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, Dept. of the Navy. There were about 25 people sitting around the edge of the room. Betsy Diamond and John McGowan, who was from the Columbia River Packers Association, but otherwise lesser government personnel from the Departments of State, Commerce and Interior, and representatives from the offices of Senators Engle and Kuchel, and most of these people we knew and had met with and had called on and had had dealings with through the years.

RGW: This meeting was taking place, so you were kind of wading through all this bureacracy. What was really happening behind the scene?

FLZ: Well, behind the scenes ... while we were meeting that morning Congressmen Wilson and Utt went to President Eisenhower with this letter...

RGW: That you had written?

FLZ: That I had written. President Eisenhower was very sympathetic, asked some questions about the industry and declared that he saw no reason why there should not be a government-togovernment meeting. He thought that was a very reasonable approach to the problem and he called in someone and directed that the meeting be set up. In the meantime, we were sitting in this conference room at a long table, industry people on each side of the table, some congressmen sitting and representatives from the senator's office sitting at the end of the table. At the head of the table were all these different Department of Interior and Commerce and State Department people sitting, and they were doing everything they could to sidetrack the thing. They had no intention of ever setting up a meeting, government-to-government meeting, and I got word at noontime to call Bob Wilson's office and he told me what the President said, but I didn't impart this, We just let the meeting go on and I did not tell any of the industry people about it until the meeting was over and then nobody could believe that it really was happening. I have never in my life spent two such delicious hours as that, knowing that these people were looking us in the eye and patting us on the head and that a higher power had said, "There shall be a conference." And a conference did take place in Japan in the fall of 1959. A lot was accomplished.

As it turned out, a lot of the stuff that was discussed in the agenda was on biology, canning processes and things of that sort, fishing methods, but for the very first time the government in the person of Donald McKernan, Chief of the Bureau of Commercial Fisheries...

RGW: Donald Mc...

FLZ: McKernan. Yes, Donald McKernan. I spelled it earlier. In his presentation at the conference, the government of the United States through him went on record as supporting the American tuna industry and delineating the problems ... and this is the first time really that this had ever happened, and so it had a great psychological affect on the Japanese, even though no issues of quotas or tariffs were discussed. Then some of the industry people spread out over Japan, meeting with different people in the industries there, and this all had the affect of letting the Japanese know that we were determined not to be put out of business and the government of the United States was determined that we not be put out of business, and essentially

that was the benefit of the meeting. Let me say this, that in all the times that I represented the tuna fishermen's wives and San Diego in meetings with government people here in the State of California and in Washington, D.C., I was always very much aware that I wasn't just talking for myself or representing myself, that I was representing a group of people, and I tried to conduct myself in a way that would bring credit upon them, as well as on myself, but mostly I was just always aware of what I was saying and doing so that there would never be any derogatory feedback and it was very, very hard work, it was very hard work, when we would go back there.

One time Laura Tocco went with me; one time Mary Barrett, representing the albacore fishermen, went with me, and then Betsy went several times with me, Betsy Diamond. I don't ever remember being there by myself, but I think I was at one time. It was a lot of responsibility and I took it very seriously and I worked very hard at it, and when I was back home in San Diego I was always studying and reading everything that I could get my hands on because we got into a lot of issues about import/export policy and tariff and reciprocal trade agreements. It was really the equivalent of a master's degree in a lot of things, very, very interesting, but I found out that individual groups of people could have an impact in Washington, D.C., and I don't mean to sound naive at all because ... and I'm not naive about it. I think that you need a lot of political clout and a lot of political allies to get anything accomplished in Washington, but that you can make changes, and you can have an affect if you're persistent and if you keep at it, and if you have the support of a lot of other people. There have been a lot of "I's" in this conference here today and it shouldn't be "I" because I was only representing a lot of other people and I don't take any... I really gave it everything I had but I can't take any credit, personal credit for it because there were a lot of people behind me and also there were a lot of other people such as the union, the Tuna Boat Association and sometimes the canners, working very closedly with me, and it was a compliment to our ardor and to our persistence and to our intelligent approach to things that these other paid people in the industry who had tremendous backgrounds in all this, accepted us as full working partners and we were accepted as full working partners in this whole series of efforts to better the tuna industry.

RGW: A sidelight to this is - environmentalists were not even considered at this period of time.

FLZ: No, that was not an issue. That came later and Flipper and all those things came later, and those people, those environmentalists have created their own industry.

RGW: Oh, sure.

FLZ: Their own industry. They're not all bleeding hearts.

RGW: They're out to make a buck too.

FLZ: They make a lot of money, a lot of money. The last time there was a demonstration here about porpoise in San Diego, there were some tuna vessels tied up at the dock, waiting to offload or to take on fuel or whatever. There was a big demonstration of environmentalists, this must have been in the early 1980s.

RGW: The early 1980s?

FLZ: Early 80's, and some of them climbed the rigging on the Star of India at one point in time, but there was a demonstration along the docks, but there had been in the newspaper, advertisements offering to pay people to come down and demonstrate. I knew some students from San Diego State College who picked up a little extra money, but that's how they had this throng of people.

RGW: What else happened during those periods in Washington?

FLZ: Well, because there was a lot of publicity about this troubled industry and about the women's attempts to do something about it, we were approached by a lot of different groups who had axes to grind who wanted to join up with us, and we felt it would dilute our efforts and some of them we'd never heard of and we suspected their motives. People were very much aware of the communist threat in those days, and I think it was real. We were approached by someone who was a known communist in San Diego, who wanted to meet with us, who wanted to join our group, who wanted to steer us in our dealings with the government.

RGW: You want to name names?

FLZ: No, but it was a well-known fact, and the name had appeared publicly and I can't remember all of it and that's the main reason I'm not willing to give it right now, but it's beside the point, but we were aware enough of the fact that we had to protect ourselves from such influences that we just ... we kept turning down people. Oh, there must have been six or eight different people from some organizations we'd heard of and some we'd never heard of, that wanted to get into the act so to speak, but it was very important that we keep our impact because we were volunteers, we were citizens coming to Washington and we did have an impact. It did help in ... what we did helped in keeping the industry going until other things happened.

RGW: For instance?

FLZ: I've mentioned it before, the new advances which enabled the American tuna industry to compete on a...

RGW: Oh, you're talking about purse seining?

FLZ: Right, but I think our main contribution was giving emphasis and depth and (How shall I say this?) urgency to the problem and relating this to the people in Washington, and obviously we could never have done all of this by ourselves, but I don't think that the paid professionals would have accomplished quite as much without our efforts.

RGW: In other words, what you're implying is that if you had hired a lobbyist in Washington, which is a big business over there, might not have accomplished as much as you had, your group had?

FLZ: No, no.

RGW: The lobbyist seems to be the way to go.

FLZ: Absolutely. Well, the validity of all these presentations to the government was coming from the people themselves and from the business people themselves and from the people that were affected by it, and it was a very personal matter for all of us, and that's what gave it the strength and the validity. You can hire professional help, but you can't hire heart.

RGW: Yeah, and motivation.

FLZ: Right. At any rate, it was a tremendously exciting four, five or six years because we did other things in the next couple of years, 1960, 1961. It was, I believe, worthwhile. I think that we played an important part in adding our voices to those of the rest of the people in the industry. It was a wonderful opportunity for me. I learned much about government and I learned much about people, and I loved every bit of it.

RGW: Yes, I think a lot of people..I hope they realize this-I'm not sure they do-what you girls went through to get this..push all this through. I shouldn't use the word "girls" now. Everything has changed.

FLZ: Well, why not?

RGW: I don't know. Terminology's ... today's world. Did you sort of ... through with all that in the early 1960s and then the rest just went on? You got what you wanted done. I'm thinking what happened. You withdrew from doing anything more through the '70s?

FLZ: That's right. There wasn't the same urgency because the industry had pulled itself out.

RGW: Technology..

FLZ: Technological. I stumble with it too. That's right. The people ... the business ... the people in the business themselves had not in addition what the government could do but in spite of the government of the United States. Other things came along in later years which finished off the industry.

RGW: What? I'm curious. What as you see it? FLA: I see it as problems with government; I see the same thing happening right with the shipping industry. There was an article in this morning's Union talking about Vice President Gore's study on economic things and there are the equivalent of the free traders advising him that there... in essence to do away with the American Merchant Marine, to do away with the laws that have governed our shipping and to allow the foreign vessels to come in here and deliver from U.S. port to another and to deliver in the inland waterways and the rivers. All part and parcel of that same trend, that same thinking which has carried over all these years. So I blame government, I blame the environmentalists; those two factors are the ones that I think have played the greatest part in the downfall of the America tuna industry.

RGW: Well, some of the most simplistic explanations I have heard is that, well you gotta pay a woman $5.00-$6.00 an hour to clean tuna when it comes off the boat when it's cheaper to pay somebody in Samoa $2.00, and they're rich at $2.00.

FLZ: You're asking me a question or..?

RGW: Yeah, I'm asking you the economics of canning tuna over and above catching the things...

FLZ: That's one of the reasons that the canners...

RGW: It has nothing to do with environmental; it has to do with the dollar.

FLZ: That's one of the reasons that the canners have moved offshore and have established their canneries in different places.

RGW: 'Cause they can't afford the cost of canning here in the States.

FLZ: You know, the Japanese standard of living has risen greatly and the Japanese can afford to pay their people to can tuna and...

RGW: I'm talking about the South Sea Islands now and in the Caribbean...

FLZ: I know that; I know what you're saying, but the point that I'm making is that I think that the American canner could still compete against the Japanese canner by having their businesses here in the United States.

RGW: I understand those canneries are really American canneries; they just-less paid help.

FLZ: They're not employing United States citizens are they?

RGW: No, oh no. I know that.

FLZ: Do you think that situation is going to be.... is going to exist in the present form forever? I don't think so. I think the wheel comes full circle. I'm not... I don't believe that there ever will be a tuna fishing and canning industry in the continental United States again. When it's gone, it's gone, but there are lots of reasons and surely the canners'interest in making a greater margin of profit plays a big part in it, but there were reasons over and above that that contributed to the downfall. It seems to me that it is directly related to the policy of the United States government, viz, the tuna industry, the clothing industry, any other industry that you want to mention because what happens, we build cars, American companies build cars in foreign countries, American companies have clothing made and fabricated in foreign countries, American industries do a lot of things offshore - that's the big word these days - offshore. Yes, they're owned by United State companies; who knows who owns all their stock.

RGW: You mean the canneries for instance?

FLZ: The canners or the automotive industry or the clothing people or the shoes, the people that make the shoes, but what is left for the United States citizen to do? The United States citizen ... We go around washing each other's dirty laundry. We're a service industry. Our industries, our big industries have all gone downhill because they're all going offshore and producing things offshore, but this does not contribute to the economic health and wealth of the United States. Do you understand what I'm saying?

RGW: Yes, what you're saying is it can't ... the tuna industry as we used to know it is just one example of what's happening overall. In fact, it seemed like the tuna was the first, one of the first to go.

FLZ: I think you're right. Very sad, but you see this all relates to governmental policy. We shouldn't be willing to let this happen with one industry after another because that ... now look what ... we're reaping some of the rewards of that right now, the economic condition of this country and we're not going to help Vice President Gore by letting foreigners take over everything.

RGW: What can I say? I'm overwhelmed. Thank you from the San Diego Historical Society.

FLZ: Well, we delved into some things that don't really pertain...

RGW: It does.

FLZ: ... to my work. See, this is 30 years later and we can see what some of the results area

RGW: See, when I do these interviews I like a beginning, a middle and an end. I wanted to know the end in what...

FLZ: I can't think of anything else that I really need to tell you about this. I have a lot of funny stories about things that happened along the way, but as someone named Ellis said, "It's not achieving the goal that's most worthwhile, it's the things you encounter along the way", and there isn't time to go into all of those, but it had personal benefits for me because of the people I came to know and the feeling that I was going my duty as a citizen.

RGW: Well, I think...I think you also must have a feeling of satisfaction that something did happen and I'm sure you would have been frustrated if it hadn't.

FLZ: I do have that, but most of all I feel satisfied that I did what I could do.

RGW: You didn't sit back and let....

FLZ: ...and that's the way I feel about my work with the Women's Propeller Club. I feel that .... I can go to sleep at night because I know I'm doing what I can do. Everybody else in the United States ... if we all did whatever we could do for the betterment of this country, we would be a lot stronger.

RGW: I know.

FLZ: I don't mean that I had any halo because there were a lot of other people that worked just as well, but I take my obligations very seriously.

RGW: Well, OK then, thank you for the San Diego Historical Society.

FLZ: It was my pleasure. Thank you Bob.

END OF INTERVIEW
