



## **ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM**

**An interview with  
David E. Porter, 1922-2003**

**December 13, 1995, January 31, 1996 & March 6, 1996**

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### **PREFACE**

David E. Porter's great-grandfather, Stephen Porter and his son, came to San Diego in the 1880's. His parents, Mr. and Mrs. Roscoe Stephen Porter, were longtime residents of San Diego. The Porters have a long history of involvement in the commercial and civic life of the city.

David's many careers have led to a wealth of knowledge of deep interest to any scholar of San Diego History. He has agreed to share some of this with us as a devoted and active member, along with his wife, Kay, of the San Diego Historical Society.

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### **INTERVIEWER'S NOTE**

This is Sally West. It's December 13, 1995 in the Reading Room of the Archives of the San Diego Historical Society. We are going to be interviewing David Porter.

**SW:** Where were you born? And when?

**DP:** I was born in San Diego, August 9, 1922, in the old St. Joseph's Hospital which later became Mercy Hospital. I am one of the St. Joseph's boys. I guess there are still a few of us around.

**SW:** Tell me a little about your family. You've been in San Diego for a very long time.

**DP:** Well, my great grandparents came to San Diego with my grandparents in about 1892 or 93. My great grandfather, Steve Porter. and my grandfather, John Moses Porter, had come to San Diego in about 1886 when the rate wars were in effect. They got a pretty cheap round-trip ticket from Omaha, Nebraska and came to San Diego, California in 1886. They got a job at the Coronado Hotel, then under construction, as shinglers, and I think they trained the Chinese workers. The way the tale goes they started at the west end building. I guess the lodging rooms and as they moved east got more proficient and began to get into the public rooms and the big hallways and so forth, where a lot of expert carpentry was needed.

**SW:** The big Crown Room?

**DP:** Yes, which is notably well crafted. My great grandfather, Steve, was a stonemason and a contractor. He did a lot of work in Indiana in his youth and later on, when the family moved to Omaha, he evidently did pretty well in his craft. John Porter was a salesman. He had been in the grocery business (that's my Grandfather) as a traveling salesman. He was good with people, a good salesman. He developed 'tricks of the trade', and was in the flour and wheat distribution business in the Midwest.

At the Hotel Del, I don't have records to say how long Steve and John stayed here that first visit. It was probably not more than 2 or 3 months, but they did have time to hone their skills on the carpentry of the hotel. I bet they were sorely missed when they had to go back -- probably due to the expiration of their return train ticket.

**SW:** Actually, I thought it was so strange that they had gone back after such a short time. They came back?

**DP:** They each had wives waiting for them, so this was an experimental trip, probably in the winter months when they could leave the construction business in Omaha until summertime. When they did come back, I think it was another 3 or 3-1/2 years, there was another rate war as they called them, so they could rent a boxcar. They could put Daisy and the buggy and all their belongings in the boxcar and still get cheap passenger tickets one-way to San Diego because they knew they were going to stay this time.

**SW:** You mean they actually loaded all of their possessions into a boxcar, rented the whole boxcar?

**DP:** Well, probably at least 1/2 of it because there were two families.

**SW:** Did they ride in the boxcar or did they ride in the passenger section?

**DP:** No, they had seats.

**SW:** That's a wonderful story.

**DP:** And berths I hope, because it was at least a four day trip from Omaha. But they came and I think, early on acquired some vacant property in the National City area -- between National City and San Diego and started housing construction.

**SW:** Had they ever worked with redwood? I suppose that was what was used in those days.

**DP:** Well, redwood was pretty expensive to get in the Midwest because it was all harvested in Northern California, Oregon and Washington.

**SW:** Did they have to change any of the techniques they knew to tailor...

**DP:** I would suppose that there was a lot more oak, maple and hardwoods used in the Midwest than out here, but of course, redwood was wonderful for the termites. It inhibited them and was a natural for this part of the world. Certainly, they got into the redwood.

I remember a compatriot of mine, an architect and structural engineer; in the last 15 or 20 years he had cause to get up into the attic of the Coronado Hotel. He would look up and see these log joists and joiners that were 24 feet long, clear grain redwood and he felt that we had been shortchanged in later generations.

**SW:** I think so too.

**DP:** Beautiful, beautiful construction material and still there.

**SW:** Did they have their own business centered in the National City area?

**DP:** I think they probably worked out of their homes and I think they still lived together for the first few years. My great grandparents and grandparents seemed to get along very well. My grandmother, Lydia, whose name was Kessler, was redheaded and had a lot of spark. I guess she wasn't the easiest person to get along with, but Mary Ann Rogers Porter, her mother-in-law, seemed to tolerate her pretty well. I think she trained her in a lot of household skills that she didn't have before. They were both good cooks and housekeepers and they were all socially-minded. They joined various fraternal organizations in San Diego.

**SW:** So, this is genetic in your family. You and Kay have certainly shown support for everything that has been going on in San Diego for more than the last few years. Your father grew up then in San Diego?

**DP:** Yes, he went to Sherman School which I think was on Broadway in the beginning and from Sherman School; I think there were two Sherman Schools that he attended as the town was growing. Then he went to San Diego High School. He was quite an athlete and a thespian. He did amateur shows and theatricals. As I remember, he was in a couple of Shakespeareans and graduated with a letter in basketball. He was on a state champion basketball team. I think that was in 1908.

**SW:** San Diego had state champions?

**DP:** In basketball. I don't know if they did in football, but later they did very well in football. Dad graduated in the class of 1908 and I think one of the first jobs he had when he got out of school was with Wells Fargo. (Going on to college was not all that common). Dad thought about it but his father,

John, had been sent to a private school as a youth in Indiana. He didn't care much for it -- thought they were a bunch of "swells".

**SW:** I think that was the word that was used back then.

**DP:** He discouraged Roscoe, if Roscoe, my Dad had any early ideas of going on to finish his education. He got on with Wells Fargo.

**SW:** He did? Tell me about that.

**DP:** There was a sort of a union of trucking express teamsters operating with the railroad line. The Santa Fe railroad line came into San Diego. The story goes that the law required a dead body be accompanied, so he would get extra overtime by going to Los Angeles in the freight car with the body. Of course, the only place you could lay down in a freight car was on the coffin, so he did that a few times. He bragged about that -- that he wasn't scared.

**SW:** I would guess this was before Wells Fargo became a banking and financial institution. It was still involved in express.

**DP:** An outshoot of the old stage coach.

**SW:** How long did he stay with them?

**DP:** A maximum of two years, I think, because he was crazy about automobiles. In those days the two-cylinder Rio that he acquired somehow was amenable to racing. They were open cars, high seats, where you could really let the wind blow in your face. He got in with that racing crowd. He was lucky enough to own an automobile and they would race from San Diego to El Centro in the Imperial Valley.

**SW:** Over the plank road?

**DP:** No, that was west of the plank road. The plank road was between El Centro and Yuma, so they stayed west of that. I think the plank road was built, if I'm right, around about '14 or '15 and this was a couple of years ahead of that.

**SW:** Did he race at the Expo? Remember, the famous race that they had?

**DP:** No, that was Barney Oldfield. He met him and was delighted that he was in town and got a chance to shake his hand. Dad held the speed record, I think, for two weeks with his old 2-cylinder Rio between a starting point in downtown San Diego and the main street of El Centro. Then somebody with a little more power than his 2-cylinder Rio came along.

**SW:** It wouldn't take much would it?

**DP:** No, I wish I knew what the hours were, but it was something like 14 or 15 hours. The roads and the grades between San Diego and the desert were pretty rough.

**SW:** I am just thinking of going through the Inca-Pay mountains in those little cars. I'm amazed that they ever made it.

**DP:** Well, they scraped along the gorge there. They would scrape roadsides and get through, but if any rocks slid down they would be in trouble.

**SW:** Was he eventually in another line of business?

**DP:** After a couple of years at Wells Fargo, he went with the Auto Tire and Supply Co.

**SW:** Was this Savage Tires Co.?

**DP:** They represented Savage Tire Co. Savage was the manufacturer and they would wholesale to the auto tire company who would distribute them. Incidentally, when my Dad was courting Mom, they had a party to attend almost at the border -- Bonita, South Bay, somewhere. They were going a little fast on the way home I understand and the Sheriff in Chula Vista was out there with his red lantern and was going to give my Father a ticket for speeding but my Father sold him a set of tires.

**SW:** Oh, that's wonderful.

**DP:** That's the kind of salesman he was. He got that from his father, John, who was a good salesman. Roscoe was a dynamite salesman, always had been glib.

**SW:** He was married by then? Who did he marry and when?

**DP:** He was married to Nana Louise McMillen in February of 1914. They had done plays together at San Diego High School. She was fairly newly-arrived. I think she came to San Diego in about 1912, so she had only been around for two years. She was an extremely attractive young lady.

**SW:** She was the new girl on the block?

**DP:** Yes, and Roscoe edged some of the better looking guys out. I guess it was his glib tongue that won fair lady, but it was kind of whirlwind. I think he only courted her for a year and a half. He was a little ahead of her because he graduated in 1908. She graduated, I think, in 1912. I'm not sure what she did in the interim between 1912 and February 1914. I can't remember what work she did or if she did any. She had two little sisters to take care of. Oh yes, she went to Kelsey Jenny to take courses in shorthand and that sort of thing. I think Roscoe Porter took all those ideas of a career away from her. They were married in 1914, Spent their honeymoon at Warner's Spring and that was really rough camping out.

**SW:** It was at that time. They had just recently removed most of the native Americans from that area and it was still considered real backcountry.

**DP:** Dad had some wonderful old pictures of some of those Indians. There was the Chief, I don't remember his name, of the Conejo tribe which was part of the Warner Springs tribe. They went out there, I guess, around 1913. In 1912 there were some bad years and they didn't get enough acorns. Their cows died and so forth and my Dad made a couple of trips carrying goods up to them, They even had a ceremony and named him White Chief of the Conejo Tribe. He was always very proud of that, and I'm sure he visited that old gentleman. I can't remember being with him in later years, but we did have the pictures of him.

**SW:** Do you still have the pictures?

**DP:** I think they are somewhere.

**SW:** You were not the youngest child?

**DP:** No, I had an older brother, Steve; Steven McMillen Porter. He was born August 7, 1919 and I was born three years later on August 9, 1922. We would celebrate our birthdays together, which were always great occasions.

**SW:** Just the two of you boys?

**DP:** Yes, that's all. I think we both felt we had the best mother in the world. She was an extremely even-tempered, harmonious lady. She was a good lady.

Steve always had a track that he would tend to go with the downtrodden; the kids who weren't making it scholastically or didn't come from the right families, that sort of thing. He wasn't a social person. In the depth of the Depression Grandmother Porter saw to it that Steve went to the Army and Navy Academy when it was in Pacific Beach. We had moved, in the depths of the Depression, to a great big old Victorian house two or three blocks north of the Academy on the corner of Lamont and Law Streets. That big old house is still here in 1995. It has gotten a lot of tender loving care. We had eight acres of fields and orchards, and it was wonderful in the Depression years. We had strawberry patches, tangerines, orange and grapefruit trees, lemons, pears and apricots. All of our impoverished friends would come out on Sunday and have a picnic. They would just load up their basket when they went home.

**SW:** I've heard descriptions about Pacific Beach before it became the Pacific Beach we know today, but that's the first time I've heard that tangerines were grown there. So many people had said oranges and lemons. I wonder if you remember what the coast looked like right down at the water's edge. Were there dunes there?

**DP:** There were in South Mission Beach -- about where the roller coaster is today. That's where the dunes started and they were covered with those little yellow flowers -- a vine that would climb all over the sand. I always remember the smell of those.

**SW:** We are trying very hard to identify some of the wildflowers that were here. So many remember them. It is hard to believe that there were so many, the Matilija poppies and all of them. I am trying to get a little more information on that flower to see if we could identify which one it was. It just ran rampant over the dunes? It must have been beautiful.

**DP:** It was and as I remember there were yellow flowers on the dunes. Of course, you have those cactus-like red plants. They look like an artichoke.

**SW:** Yes, I know the ones you are talking about.

**DP:** There were some of those around, but gosh, in the spring it was terrific. We must have had -- what is the endangered thing -- the vernal pools.

**SW:** Oh, the vernal pools. Were there vernal pools in those days in Pacific Beach?

**SW:** I'm sure as boys you would have found them. A mud puddle to a boy...

**DP:** Absolutely! I used to bring home tadpoles and had them in glass baking dish up by my bedside to watch them grow. When I got sent to bed without my dinner, I kept a bunch of dry loaves of bread up there so that I could eat them when I was being punished.

**SW:** You shared your dinner with the tadpoles?

**DP:** Yes. The tadpoles would jump out once in awhile. I don't remember how many Mom found. I tried to take them back to the pool but often time the pool wasn't there.

**SW:** That's true, they do disappear. Now this was back from the beach?

**DP:** This was two miles east of the water. I've always remembered that I could take a.22 and from my front porch and I could shoot out to the beach that mile and a half or two miles and not hit anything.

**SW:** Of course, to the kids it would have been a fast trip anyway! Do you remember the area that is now called Kate Sessions Park. Do you remember that as being woodsy or just dry.

**DP:** Absolutely berefit of trees, only sagebrush and scrub and sumac. We would go rattlesnake hunting there every Saturday and we would get a lot of rattlesnakes.

**SW:** That must have pleased your Mother.

**DP:** Yes. When I brought them home she'd have a fit, so we quit trying to bring them home.

**SW:** Where did you got to school?

**DP:** At Pacific Beach Elementary. I was there while Steve was at the Army and Navy Academy and we stayed at Pacific Beach. I started kindergarten at Loma Portal. My father had just finished a beautiful big house in 1927 on Point Loma.

**SW:** Is it still standing? Do you have the address?

**DP:** Yes, I could find it. It's on Russell Street. It was the Driscoll House for many years after we sold it.

**SW:** Now, excuse me just a minute. I want a little more information here. Did he design and actually build the house or was it an architect designed residence?

**DP:** Yes, it was an architect named Harold Depew. I think maybe Harold was the son I went to school with. His name was Depew. His designs were very "Spanishy" He was worthy of the other guys. Maybe not Cliff May, but Depew was well known. I think he even did the contracting himself. He designed it and built it and finished it, but unfortunately, the real estate in which my Dad was so involved went to hell in a hand basket.

**SW:** This was in the 20s.

**DP:** Yes, early 27.

**SW:** That was just at the beginning of the Depression.

**DP:** Yes. He couldn't make the payments. He had to hand it back to the bank and he had a note that he carried until 1940. He refused to go bankrupt and finally paid the debt off on that house. It was in 1940. I remember the day that Dad came home to our house in Loma Portal and said "Well, it's

free and clear". He bought a new Ford automobile, but that had forced us to move, first to a small beach cottage he had in Mission Beach on San Jose Place. Soon after that a friend of his said "Roscoe, move into the big house", which was a wonderful gesture from his business partner. We moved into it. There was a chicken house over there and we soon built a stable for our horse, Bill.

**SW:** This was Loma Portal?

**DP:** No, this was Pacific Beach. We moved very briefly to Mission Beach to the beach cottage and then over to Law Street.

**SW:** Is the Mission Beach home you own now close to the little house that you lived in?

**DP:** No

**SW:** You have a home now in Mission Beach?

**DP:** In Mission Beach. The house that we built in Mission Beach in 1960 is on a lot that the M. Hall Co., my father-in-law, gave to my wife, Kay, upon the distribution of the M. Hall Co. We took that and built a house on it. Then we acquired a house one lot away and bought an existing house that is still there. We have extensively remodeled, but it stays in the family and is a wonderful summer place.

**SW:** It's a wonderful place for the family to come -particularly the grandchildren. Now, we've got you to Pacific Beach Elementary. Then what happened?

**DP:** That was kindergarten and first grade. My Dad was forced to leave our Loma Portal house and we went to Pacific Beach. Over the summer we stayed at Mission Beach at the cottage on San Jose Place. Then in the fall we moved to Pacific Beach and stayed there. I went to Pacific Beach Elementary until the 6th grade. I skipped the 5th grade and they put me in the 6th grade. We moved again to Loma Portal and I finished my elementary school at Loma Portal once more. Same principal and many of the same teachers.

**SW:** Did you go on from Loma Portal to Point Loma High School?

**DP:** Yes, and I went for six years because there was no junior high school. In those days Point Loma High started in the 7th grade and went on through the 12th grade. So I had six years at Point Loma High School.

**SW:** You've never been too far from the water, have you?

**DP:** No, I really haven't. I have a low number now at the San Diego Yacht Club because I've been there so long.

**SW:** After you completed high school did you work in San Diego or did you go on to college?

**DP:** I graduated in the class of 1939 at Point Loma High School. I was working in a parking lot downtown at 4th and B. Matter of fact, that summer, my last summer in high school I worked on a tuna boat.

**SW:** Tell me about that.



**DP:** My father was really involved with the fishing fleet because he insured their boats. A lot of the Portuguese were his clients.

**SW:** So your father was now with insurance?

**DP:** Yes he was the insurance manager for Hotchkiss and Anewalt Company which did real estate and insurance. Dad was head of the insurance department.

**SW:** Were they local?

**DP:** Hotchkiss and Anewalt were two local men. Anewalt's father had been a high vice president of the Southern Pacific Railroad and they moved to San Diego early on. Hotchkiss came up from Tulsa, Oklahoma. They were both high-powered real estate developers -- free swingers -- and they created Hotchkiss and Anewalt, one of the larger real estate firms in San Diego.

**SW:** Did they develop any areas on their own? For instance, like O. W. Cotton did in Pacific Beach?

**DP:** Yes, they were involved with the guy who developed Kensington, some stuff along the south edge of Mission Valley in Hillcrest and that area.

Then, after the war, they developed right off Mission Bay at Clairemont. They had some property in Clairemont with Dave Garfield and they worked together. They developed the shipyard property where they were going to build concrete ships. My Father helped put that deal together and sold it to a man named Tavares who was the leader in the development. That was a very sad chapter in my father's political career. He had worked hard and Tavares had promised him that he would get all the insurance on the shipyard. The day before they were to open the shipyard, my father got a telephone call from Mr. Tavares who said he had just spoken with the son of President Roosevelt. He was going to take care of all the real estate. Sorry.

**SW:** That must have been quite a disappointment. Did he hold most of the insurance on the tuna fleet here?

**DP:** Oh, no, no. He had his share of it. If he had a quarter of it that was pretty good because it was a pretty big fleet.

**SW:** It was an outstanding industry here at that time.

**DP:** Yes, it was and a lot of insurance guys jumped on it. Dad persisted and he persuaded one of the captains to take me out. I was 15. I told him I was 16.

**SW:** Do you remember which captain?

**DP:** His name was Frank Perry. He was very well known, the skipper of the Olympia. He was partners with some other guys and a very good fisherman.

**SW:** Did he have connections with the Portuguese or the Italians?

**DP:** He was Portuguese. Came from Gloucester, Mass. as all of them did. I made two trips with Frank Perry and I didn't get a share, but on the second trip he gave me a quarter share or something. The first trip was 18 to 20 days and the second trip was a month, so it was very exciting. It wasn't one of

the biggest boats, but we went as far as almost to Cabo San Lucas on the tip of Baja.

**SW:** That was pole fishing? DP Yes, absolutely.

**SW:** Did you stand up there with those poles?

**DP:** I sure did and I was pretty small. He had me chumming bait upon the bait tank a lot of the time or he gave me a .22 to keep the birds and the seals away.

I remember once, on the second trip we went pretty far down to the Socorro Islands, southwest of Cabo San Lucas, about 150 miles off. We started with two pole fishing and soon the big ones started coming so we changed to three poles. Then the end guys got about four sets of four poles. Three teams of four-poles fishing on the end. The very corner is the hot spot.

**SW:** That's the corner you don't want to be in I guess.

**DP:** Well, you have to be a very good fisherman. You tire out quicker and it's a busier place.

**SW:** It was unusual to have four poles out, wasn't it?

**DP:** Yes, except that at Socorro Island they always are there and they are still there -- big ones -- big lunkers. So we had these three guys -- 12 guys on four-pole rigs and all of a sudden the littlest guys on one of the teams went over the side. He just went out. Then the next guy, he went out. The third guy fought and he went out because they were on one fish and this fish was traveling away. They were all four in the water just like that and one of them couldn't swim. You know you float up to here (indicating his neck) because you have your boots and your yellow oilskins. We had to work fast to get those guys back in.

**SW:** Did you get them all back in?

**DP:** Oh yes, we got them in.

**SW:** That must have scared you, 16 at that time. It made quite an experience.

**DP:** That's right. It was exciting. We got them all back in, but the terrible part is when you lose someone like that over the side or even a pole, the school breaks up, so we had to go find them again.

Those fish were probably 140-150 lb. and four poles. Now you can get up to a 120 pounder on three poles and then you can fish as I did. I fished two poles a couple of times, which is tough.

**SW:** It's a fascinating industry and it was so important to the economy in San Diego. Could you tell me about a few of the men were involved in the industry and who were actually developing it here in San Diego? Who were some of the leaders?

**DP:** Well, Mr. Oliver, Lawrence Oliver, was the business man, and he set up the canneries. He made the deals with the outside guys. He had the ice concession from Union Ice Company. They would set up rigs right on the wharf and fill those boats with ice. They were half or 3/4 full of ice when

they left here. Those were days when you had to go down and put the fish into the hold, like laying brick; a layer of ice, a layer of fish, a layer of ice. You were upside down or backward in the hold and freezing to death. They finally got oil skin gloves and eventually rubberized gloves. This was in the late 30s. That helped a lot. But you would go down there and you would work for hours.

**SW:** Think of the tuna industry -- the fish and the canneries, but here we have another aspect, the supplying of the boats. You couldn't do a thing without that. How about ship chandlers at that time; Were there many here?

**DP:** Yes, I was one of them.

**SW:** You were there. Tell me about that.

**DP:** This is jumping after the war. I came home and my Dad wanted me to get into the insurance business. I played golf with my returning war buddies for six months and my Dad said, "Hey, I'm running out of green fees, so you've got to work". I had been in the steamship business in San Francisco. It was my intention when I went away to Berkeley (the first two years I went to college here). Incidentally, we started classes in September of '39 and they closed the school for 10 days because it was so hot. That was a terrible heat spell and so we went back to the beach for 10 days then back to school to start our college careers.

**SW:** So you were at State.

**DP:** San Diego State from 39 to 41.

**SW:** You were there when the war started.

**DP:** No, I was in my fraternity house at Berkeley on December 7, 1941. Yes, the war had started.

**SW:** You were already at Berkeley?

**DP:** Yes, I had a dose of polio when I was two years old and it affected my right leg, so I wasn't eligible for the service. I was in the marine hardware business.

**SW:** You finished at Berkeley, then you came back and got into the ship chandlers business?

**DP:** No, I went to W. R. Grace and Co. in San Francisco, which was the Grace Line Steamship Co. I was put through training that was normally about a six-year track to be a manager for Grace. I went through that in about 11 months. I went through the whole course. I was one of the few guys in the office who had served on boats, so when someone had to go down and talk to the longshoremen or do something on the piers, it was always me. I learned an awful lot in that short year. I stayed about a year and a half with them and got mad because they wouldn't send me down to Costa Rica or Nicaragua to be a station manager. They said "How can we do without you, we have a war on and you're the only guy that we have", so with the impatience of youth, I jumped over to the War Shipping Administration and was a government worker.

**SW:** Tell me about that. What department was that?

**DP:** It was the War Shipping Administration. Our office in San Francisco was in charge of arranging civilian steamers to thread their way across the Pacific with trade goods or with necessary goods (a lot of Kotex and a lot of toilet paper), that sort of thing to all of those islands that were being subdued. They carried medical supplies and health foods and everything else.

**SW:** They were not considered military?

**DP:** No, they were para-military, but they were totally under control of the government. It was my job to coordinate the movement of the freight from the factory, get it on the train with a subpriority, get it down to the docks at San Francisco or Oakland, fill the ships and send them off. I was kind of a supercargo for the stuff that was coming in -- garter belts, medicine, insulin and that sort of thing. Strictly civilian stuff, but very important. My job was to keep those boats going when I was with Grace and Grace had the same problem for Central and South America. Of course, it wasn't a war priority that those people were totally dependent on the United States for civilized goods.

**SW:** That would be all of the fertilizer, fish and mining products down along the coast.

**DP:** And coffee.

**SW:** And the coffee, of course.

**DP:** Yes, the sulfur. Sending supplies down there kept those boys going, keeping those copper mines open and coffee for sure for us. But the first two vessels that I had the most to do with were both coal burners they had rescued.

**SW:** Coal burners - in the 40's? That's unusual. Where did they find these things?

**DP:** They were in the bone yards down in Galveston or somewhere. These things had still survived up and down the Pacific Coast of South America, but there they were. I could dredge up their names if I had to, but they were stacked coal burners. You know I had never seen a coal burner. They brought them out of mothballs.

**SW:** And they were able to survive those long hauls across the Pacific?

**DP:** No, these were the ones that went to Central or South America.

**SW:** Still, that's a long haul.

**DP:** Yes, Chile is a long way down there. It was exciting. All my college buddies were coming home all shot up, and I would have to carry them around town, entertain them and wine them and dine them and gather all their old girlfriends. I was a social director and I was a bachelor in a boarding house in downtown San Francisco where there were about seventy-two ladies and four of us guys.

**SW:** That was a tough war.

**DP:** Yes, I don't know how I got through it.

**SW:** Well, now, did you stay in San Francisco for the duration of the war?

**DP:** Yes, I came home later. I had been working at it. I almost got transferred to Tacoma for awhile but I didn't.

**SW:** So you were not involved in San Diego at war?

**DP:** No. One of the most interesting things was when I came home the summer of '42. I had been a year in San Francisco. I forget how I got a ride home, but I got on the train and I came home.

**SW:** That was extremely difficult at that time?

**DP:** Oh, yes. It was almost impossible. I stayed with my parents who were living up in Mission Hills at that time and the mosquitoes were incredible up there. The mosquitoes were growing somewhere along Mission Valley. I guess they had backed up some water. It was the worst infestation of mosquitoes I think in the history of San Diego.

**SW:** Well, that is unusual. I've lived in San Diego for six years now and I don't think I've seen a mosquito. I have not heard people mention mosquitoes.

**DP:** With our lifestyle now and paved everything over and conduits.

**SW:** That's true. Mission Valley was still very much a river valley at that time.

**DP:** It sure was. All those little tide pools and estuaries. I will never forget how terrible it was when I got home during the whole war.

**SW:** What did it seem like when you were here?

**DP:** Extremely busy back then; it was terrible. When I first went away to Berkeley, my Dad was telling me he drove down to Five Points, which is at the foot of Washington Street, coming to work (they had moved to Mission Hills) and on his way to work he came down to Pacific Hwy, right in front of Convair. He saw, across the street, a manhole cover just come up and get pushed up about 10 feet in the air because of the backup of the sewage. It was before the sewage system was in. We were still trying to live off what we had, some outfall off Point Loma and some outfall over Coronado. There were 180,000 people in San Diego when I was born in 1922 and in 1940 there were about 250,000, which was just the beginning!

**SW:** So, actually San Diego was totally unprepared to take on all of these people at that time.

**DP:** Yes, Kay, my wife, tells a story when she went to San Diego High School in those years - '40, '41, '42. She had to walk downtown to the plaza to catch her bus up First Avenue and she learned how to keep her eyes cast down all the way down because the sailors were whistling and yelling. It was a tough environment for a young girl.

**SW:** But in many ways, it was very interesting. I wanted to get back to the tuna industry a little bit. I was asking about some of the men that were so influential in the tuna industry and you mentioned Mr. Oliver. Now, tell me a little about Mr. Smith.

**DP:** C. Arnoldt Smith was a fascinating character. He is worthy of history. He grew up in the US National Bank. He went to work for Bank of America out of high school. All the young men knew the strength of politics and had the ability to wheel and deal.

**SW:** I know banking has always been a political training ground.

**DP:** Yes, fortunately for Bill Kettner, who was a Democrat. Nobody understands that, but the rest of the guys were all Republicans and Arnoldt Smith was a real Republican. He supposedly gave Nixon a lot of boost - got him started in national politics.

**SW:** We've done interviews with some of the tuna fisherman. Some of them speak so highly of him.

**DP:** Well, I think he started with a company, Crosby, on Pacific Hwy. There was a steel structural outfit that soon got into the tuna boat business and I think Arnoldt Smith was part of that. He parlayed it into National Steel Yards and National Steel and Shipbuilding.

**SW:** That's what I was wondering. There was a definite connection there?

**DP:** Yes, he just got bigger and bigger. I don't know who he bought National Steel from, but anyway when he got hold of it, it just blossomed during the war. It was doing more work by then, but this was even before the war. Even before the war he was becoming successful. Oakley Hall was the big guy on the waterfront before Arnoldt, but then when Smith came in he took over. Hall was getting old. There was Campbell, of course too. He had that old gentleman, I think it was Medina, Joe Medina, not Capt., but Medina, the designer, that developed the technique. He was the Father confessor, the beginning of that dynasty. They took chances and I think Arnoldt -- between First National Bank and U.S. Bank - - backed them.

**SW:** Most of the financial banking came basically through the local offices of the banks. All right here.

**DP:** Yes, but they also came down from LA. They just moved down the coast. Van Camp and Cal Pak moved their LA canneries. Before we used to always have to go to LA to unload our fish. SW Really?

**DP:** Yes, out of my four trips I think only one of them unloaded in San Diego.

**SW:** Even though the canneries were here?

**DP:** Yes, to some extent, but they didn't have the capacity so we had to go to LA and unload at VanKamp or CalPak.

**SW:** After Grace you went into another business?

**DP:** I left Grace and went to the War Shipping Administration. After Mr. Roosevelt died it was getting up to December and a guy wanted me to come back and do some research in Washington in the Dept. of Commerce. This guy was out of the Navy Dept. and it was going to be a transition.

**SW:** You had met your future wife by then? That was one of the reasons you wanted to get back to San Diego?

**DP:** No, it really wasn't because we took naps in the same cribs. Our Mothers belonged to the same bridge club and would have a lunch and bridge and we kids would drift in and out of whoever's house was having the bridge. She was just a little squirt and I didn't pay any attention to her. We grew up together and I remember that one Christmas -- it was when I was still out at State College -- there was a party at the Thursday Club and Kay was there. I was the big guy with all these high school kids. I said "Hi, Kay, how are you. Haven't seen you for a long time", and she said she was devastated that I remembered who she was because I was one of the big guys. I remembered that and chatted with her. Our Mothers had this rigged for a lot of years.

**SW:** Mrs. Edward Hall and your Mother?

**DP:** Yes, May Hall and Nana Porter. They had this pretty well rigged up. When I did come home in December of '45 we did see her somewhere and May and Mom said "You've got to get serious. So, I did. I got her a blind date with a buddy of mine. It was a double date. I had one of my regular gals and this friend took Kathleen along. We spent that evening together as a foursome and I thought "I'm not doing this right". I really became fascinated because she's so bright, you can't miss her. She was all together, but she was young and she had gone around the bend with all the California Maritime kids from the school, the Stanford guys and the Cal guys, so she stayed busy during the war socially. We got together and I took her to whatever was available at the time -fraternity dances.

**SW:** Now, these were social fraternities; were they connected with the high school? There were some here in San Diego, weren't there?

**DP:** Well, the Hi-Y and some of those.

**SW:** But the social fraternities were you older boys?

**DP:** Yes, State College campus, college fraternity.

**SW:** Because we did have one or two that had houses that were not connected with campus and I was wondering if that was earlier. It may have been in the twenties. I was just trying to establish that.

**DP:** They must have been gone by then. My Dad was in a couple that sounded like that. He didn't go to college.

**SW:** It may have been in his time and they were basically social, not college.

**DP:** Well, then there was always the Bachelor Club. It was the early twenties when that got going and. of course, I had to join that when I got home.

**SW:** You didn't stay a bachelor very long.

**DP:** Nope, that's right. I made it through one term as President and then I got married.

**SW:** Tell me a little bit about that? **DP:** Well, there was this complication. There was this great big guy who had latched on to her (Kay Porter) in high school. They had a pretty torrid romance going I guess, but he was unprincipled. Kay could tell that he was going to run into trouble. Sure enough, he went to jail for awhile, but he was that cocksure of himself. God, he was a big bruiser. I had screwed up my hand (the first time). That's when I got thrown off the horse and my hand was all wrapped up. I took her out somewhere and this guy was parked behind when I took her home. She lived on First Ave. He trailed me. I lived a couple of miles away in Mission Hills. Sure enough, after the first stop sign, I said, "I think I know who this guy is". So I pulled over and sure enough he pulled up in front of me, got out and he had a buddy with him.

**SW:** Now, you were there and you were by yourself and this other guy...

**DP:** I had the big cast on my arm - not that I was going to tangle with that guy. Anyway, he came up and said, "You cut us off back there". You know, he came up with something because he didn't have the guts to tell me why he was stopping me. He was very impetuous to say the least -- a big Irishman. So, I sweet talked him and did a quick step or two and he said, "You studied psychology, didn't you". I said, "Yes, I did and I'm using it as

best I can right now". He said. "Well, we'll let you go this time but dammit you'd better never do that again". I said o.k. He called me on the phone at home a couple of days later and said, "I'll come by and we'll talk this out". I said "Whatever you want to do, I'll be here". My father got steamed up. He had a baseball bat in the breakfast room ready for this guy to come and, sure enough, a little while after he said he would come, he drove by, but he never stopped. We were never at ease when we saw each other again -- socially or anytime.

**SW:** But he left the field to you?

**DP:** Yes, he did. He really rendered up the ghost.

**SW:** Now, what were you doing at that time?

**DP:** I was already started at Nuttall-Styris Co., which was the ship chandler. When I came back from the war, as I said, I played golf with my buddies for about six months until my father said, "You're either going to come into my office or you'd better get a job".

I just loved the waterfront and I think I kind of walked in cold to Nuttall. It was 1946 and the war was over. They were trying to fill out their complement and the tuna boats were starting to really go again after the war. They were back to private use and there was an awful lot of activity. Nuttall-Styris Co, during the war years, had represented some big firms in fire extinguishers. They were the CO2 licensee in San Diego, a tremendous operation. All the ships were equipped with CO2 fire control systems. So, they were really looking for help and it was easy. I had one interview and they said, "When can you come"?

**SW:** What were your qualifications for that?

**DP:** Well, I was an ex-tunaboat fisherman and I knew about the equipment and knew what they were using in the tuna fleet.

**SW:** Did we mention your serving aboard the tuna fleet?

**DP:** Yes, I think so -- a couple of summers. I think I made a total of about 5 trips. They could use me, and I was a pretty good salesman -had a gift of gab and didn't think I was going to be refused. Jack Nuttall, I don't think I knew socially but he was a socialite and ex-commodore of the Yacht Club. He was a wealthy guy. His family had Lifesavers, of all things.

**SW:** You mean the candy?

**DP:** Yes, that was one of his holdings. I remember because I always got a bunch of Lifesavers at Christmas time from the company. He was quite well off. He had never worked. I think he came from West Virginia or somewhere back east and they had coal interests. There is a Nuttall, West Virginia, as a matter of fact. He was an avid yachtsman. As I said, he had been Commodore of the Yacht Club and everybody liked him. He did have a drinking problem, but he tied in with a young auditor from the San Diego Electric Street Car Co. whose name was Herb Styris. Styris was a graduate of San Diego High School and was sharp as a tack.

I guess he got mad at the streetcar company and Jack grabbed him. I think they were drinking buddies and got together, I think, at the beginning of the war. I don't think either of them were eligible for military service. They built this thing up by supplying the Naval Supply Depot with marine equipment Jack had bought, I think, from Clem Stose. Clem Stose was the skipper of the "Lurline" when it did the 1913 race to Hawaii. In 1927 he sailed another successful Hawaii race.



**SW:** Was he sailing for Spreckels?

**DP:** No, he was a loner.

**SW:** Well, did he buy the "Lurline" from Spreckels?

**DP:** No, it was a different Lurline. He was a past-Commodore of the Yacht Club and was probably the foremost sailor along with -- who's our museum guy with pictures of all early sailing days on San Diego Bay? It was the guy who later ran the Historical Society. He was a reporter on the waterfront as well.

**SW:** Oh, Jerry MacMullen.

**DP:** Yes, Jerry MacMullan. Well, they were partners and Clem Stose bought a store, I think from the McCaffrey Co, which was an early ship chandler in San Diego. Clem opened it, on the corner of Pacific Hwy and Laurel St. It's now a girlie show place. I think he worked with McCaffrey and then McCaffrey retired. Clem ran that and he didn't like it because he didn't want to be confined in a store. He had a few people come in, but Herb Styris and Jack Nuttall jumped on it. They also picked up the old Garibaldi Hall.

**SW:** Yes, Garibaldi Hall in Little Italy.

**DP:** Yes, it's gone now. It was at the corner of Columbia and F Street.

**SW:** That was quite some distance.

**DP:** It was a beautiful building, an old hall. They shelved it and binned it and made a ship chandlery out of it. It had surrounding property where they could make sheds for the cables and the heavy stuff. It worked out pretty well for them.

**SW:** What's down in that area now?

**DP:** Apartment buildings. Some of the first new ones that came in after WW II. I think the building was taken down about 1965 or 70 and the area developed the first low rise condominiums. That's where the building was located, the building and the yard. They had the Evinrude Outboard Motor contract for San Diego County and as the war wound down more fisherman got out to Lake Henshaw and the recreational lakes. All of the tuna fishermen had to have small outboard motors to tend the nets when they were out catching bait, so every tunaboat had several outboard motors aboard and small skiffs. That was a big part of the business, the Evinrude franchise. Herb Styris was an excellent business man and administrator and Jack was the entertainer. All the red hot salesmen came in. I remember about my 5th or 6th year aboard, I went back to New York to boat shows. Somebody would go back each year. My turn came and Mrs. Porter and I went and had a great time back there. It was our first trip east of the Mississippi. It was exciting. They had a good reputation with all of the manufacturers. Most of the manufacturers were in Connecticut or Massachusetts and the cordage places and the net makers were back east around Salem and Gloucester, Mass. I think a good percentage of the Portugese fishermen in San Diego had grown up in Gloucster and Bedford so it was a thrill for me, having lived cheek by jowl with so many Portugese guys. It was kinda fun to see their roots and how they grew up.

**SW:** Were we manufacturing nets here at all in San Diego? I know they used to mend them, but I don't know if they made them.

**DP:** No, there was no manufacturing. Columbia Cordage, there were several big cordage companies. They manufactured manila rope as well and they sold netting, but of course soon after the war, the Japanese started to flood this market with their cordage -- so much cheaper. That drifted away and we had to deal with the Japanese firms. But that was a big, big part of the chandlery business. In those days so was netting. Of course, when the purse seiners came in, that was even a bigger part of the business.

**SW:** So you serviced the purse seiners, ordering the nets or the panels or whatever you call them?

**DP:** Yes, buying bales of net. They looked like big cotton bales. That's what we bought and handled and stored. The first 8 years of our business, of course, the big purse seiners were not in existence yet. They had not invented that big revolving, automated pulley for handling those big nets. That came in later. A guy named Gray Silva, who was a Captain, had several boats and was a very inventive bright man.

**SW:** That is an old Portuguese family, Silva, in the Roseville area.

**DP:** Yes, and Gray, I think, had some other blood in him. His father married into the American family. Gray Silva was an inventor and a tinker and he would drive you cuckoo sometimes looking at things in the shop. He invented an automatic fishing pole that never went anywhere, but he was a real tinkerer. He was an interesting man and he was a good Captain. He knew where the fish were.

**SW:** If I'm not mistaken his ancestors may have been one of the few Cape Verdans that came here to San Diego with the Portuguese.

**DP:** That sounds Spanish doesn't it?

**SW:** They are right off the coast of Africa.

**DP:** I didn't know anything about Gray. I think he had a son or two, but he was the guy that basically invented that pulley that was hydraulically driven. I think he gets credit for developing that thing.

**SW:** We had quite a few inventors in our tuna fleet -- the Medina panel and now the pulley. All sorts of things came out of San Diego.

**DP:** The panel. Medina panel, did a great service. It was tragically killed in the tuna industry but yes, people were always developing things. Underwater lights and. gosh, some of the things that came out of that tuna industry were interesting!

**SW:** They actually worked on underwater lights?

**DP:** Yes, for night work. It improved the area where they were pulling the fish in, avoided getting them mixed up with the racks that were around the edge of the ship in the water. There were all sorts of people who had all kinds of ideas. In the early days before I came on board, in 1938 I guess, they didn't even have a canopy over the bait tank.

**SW:** How did they keep the bait fresh?

**DP:** It was o.k. The problem was to protect the chummers up there. The guys were standing up there right in back of the fishermen and when a fish breaks away, I remember, thank God, I had a heavy jacket, a heavy canvas surplus jacket. I was up there chumming or maybe even shooting seals, but I was on top of the canopy. That was further away, so you didn't get too much. There was this one big guy on the corner rack -- he came back with a

pole and caught me. He instinctively knew what he had done and he just quit. Otherwise he would have pulled me right back overboard by that hook and I would have gone over the side and had a big tear in my back.

**SW:** So when they were chumming, they were using the same poles they used for tuna?

**DP:** No, no. A chummer is a small net, a small 10-12 inch net on the end of a stick that you dip into the bait tank. pull out those squiggly bait fish and throw them out.

**SW:** The guy who got you was actually in the rack with a pole. Didn't they call that something like the butcher shop or slaughter house, that one corner on the rack?

**DP:** It was the hot corner.

**SW:** So many people were injured.

**DP:** Yes, but there's where the best guys were. This guy was one of the best. He was a big guy. He would have pulled me right on over. I didn't even have to yell. He just stopped. He just knew he had hit me. It gets so wild and wooly, the foam, the fish, the tails flapping and sure enough, once in awhile, you would get a swordfish. I remember one swordfish came in right alongside me. We pulled him in. My partner pulled him in. He came right in between us, wriggled a little, but he had already stuck in the wood of the boat so he couldn't wriggle too much. Oh boy, every once in awhile everybody would get out, three guys on either side, get the hell out of the racks and behind the gunwale until they got that sword fish out of there or they would bang the sword fish on the head and bring him aboard so we would have him for lunch. It was so exciting and so mad, but it was a thrill. Once in awhile a great big whale shark would come up and stick his nose in our business and we would have to work around him. I remember I marked one along the length of the boat and it was about a 60-foot whale shark. The thing about whale sharks is that there are always fish working under them. Little bait fish come up under him for protection in the open ocean and all the tuna come up after them, so wherever you see a whale shark you go over and start fishing and sure enough, there is tuna out there.

**SW:** I know that in some of the other oral histories from the tuna fisherman, they would set on logs. I suppose it's the same thing, protection for the small fish and the tuna follow.

**DP:** Yes, the bait gathers up underneath, the sardines and boy, the fish come up after them. Whenever you see jetsam or flotsam out there you go work it and it's usually successful. Those whale sharks do not move very fast, but they do keep moving, very slowly, flipping that big tail.

**SW:** When you're that big you don't have to move quickly.

**DP:** Except the boats.

**SW:** How long did the ship chandlers last? How long was there a viable industry here? I know you saw a lot of changes with the tuna fleet leaving.

**DP:** The Navy only used the chandlers for emergency purposes or repair parts. Many of the chandlers had agency agreements with some of the diesel engine makers; Union Diesels of Washington, of Seattle, and GM Diesel and some of the diesels that came along later. Superior was a big one and they would name one of the chandlers as their agency and supply house for the area. We would carry spares and had a whole big department out in the yard for work on outboard motors, Evinrudes and Johnson, and then parts that we would have to order from Seattle or San Francisco Union Diesel.

The Navy didn't really buy very much, didn't procure very much from local agencies, but when they did, we would get a good order on emergency basis or because we had an exclusive or something. The Navy depended on us very little, but the tuna boats depended on us entirely. The big thing we would do would be salesmen. We would go out and wine and dine these guys when they were building a new boat down at Campbell Machine or San Diego Marine Construction or Crofton Diesel or some of these places.

**SW:** Most of our boats were built here in San Diego, so that was another huge industry attached to the tuna industry.

**DP:** Yes, I think it was Martinolich that came down from Seattle and set up a shipyard. He became a big factor and his timing was beautiful because he got a lot of war contracts. Campbell Machine was totally busy. San Diego Marine Construction was very busy and then National Steel.

**SW:** When did National Steel come in? That wasn't local was it?

**DP:** Yes, it was. Some family had that place and Oakley Hall bought it or took it over. No, National Steel was a local steel construction company. He was a farmer of steel. He would make girders.

**SW:** Not necessarily marine?

**DP:** That's right. He would do commercial steel. He had a yard on the waterfront right off Crosby Street. Then C. Arnoldt Smith got interested in it through the financial end. I guess they were over-expanded during the war, and C. Arnoldt Smith got hold of it and moved it down to the waterfront where it became National Steel and Shipbuilding. Of course, that is a success story. Did you read they got a \$200 million dollar contract last night (1996) for Navy construction?

National Steel, coincidentally, through the years they became a very good client of mine as a custom house broker. I helped them import a whole big floating dry-dock from Japan. That created history in the customs business.

**SW:** Now, here comes Mr. Smith's name again connected now with the Marine construction industry.

**DP:** He was so political that we were all terrified of him and what he would do. If he smiled right or if you shook his hand right, why you would probably get somewhere.

**SW:** But you must say he certainly had foresight. He seemed to know exactly...

**DP:** Well, he was a financial genius. I'm afraid it got him in the end, but you know, he just went overboard. He and Johnny Alessio tied together on some financial deal because Johnny Alessio had a gold mine in the Caliente Racetrack and whatever Johnny did, he did, and Arnoldt helped him. They became partners in Mr. A's restaurant. They had a lot of things going, and all of these guys would have ranches or some kinds of outfits out in the county. I remember that Styris had a beautiful piece of property at the east end of Lake Henshaw on the way to Warner's Springs. Of course, we had all of the company picnics out there through the years and when we got to go to the ranch for some purpose or other or meetings. That was the outpost of the company. Campbell had a place. One of the Campbells is still in the horse business out in the country and they married Dr. Immenshuh.

**SW:** Yes, we have her oral history.

**DP:** She's a delightful lady, as I remember; George's daughter.

**SW:** She was full of information about that whole horse breeding business.

**DP:** Well, that Campbell family was bright, to say the least. They were super people. They had a lot of money and put a lot of it into the ranch, but that seemed to be the habit. Now, Arnholt Smith got his daughter into horses. It seemed to go with the territory. We were talking about the avocations of various waterfront typhoons. It was interesting. A guy named Bert Crofton was the son of one of the successful early Californians. He had the General Motors diesel engine franchise on the waterfront for marine engines at the foot of G Street and that's where some of the chandlers finally ended up. Crofton was a successor to C. J. Henry Co. C. J. Henry Co. was one of the big names in the San Francisco Chandler business. They had master contracts with some of the manufacturers and you had to go through C. J. Henry sometimes to get specific brands. C. J. Henry was always a heavy name on the West Coast and they had a big operation, probably a little bigger than Nuttall Styris Company during the war years, because they had been there so long. It was a gold mine operation in San Francisco. It started in the 1950's and 60's.

**SW:** Did our San Diego companies serve us in Mexico too?

**DP:** Well, that was my job. I was the export manager.

**SW:** That's how you got into exports?

**DP:** I had been in the export business and that's one of the reasons they picked me up so quickly at Nuttall Styris Company. I had the language and I was willing to travel and the shrimp industry was just beginning to burgeon in Baja, California, in the interior below Nogales, Arizona and Puerto Penasco.

**SW:** San Felipe?

**DP:** Yes, San Felipe was one of the early starts, but it soon moved south to the Guaymas area and to Mazatlan. I travelled extensively in Baja, California. when Penasco was just a fish camp. If you go there today it's a city almost. There was money to be had there, but the credit problems were horrendous. I was always in trouble with the boss because I was too generous with my credit.

They needed nets, they needed an awful lot of nets. They needed oars in those days for their skiffs and pangas and they needed engine parts. There were some surplus engine parts that came off Superior engines and General Motors engines. These companies lost control of the parts that worked on the wartime engines and they came into the market. They demanded parts, especially in Superior engines.

**SW:** Mexicans buying our war surplus mainly?

**DP:** Yes, they could because it was so cheap and available in great quantities, but the government had set up certain restrictions to bringing back certain brands of merchandise into the United States. I remember I got into trouble with forklifts when I didn't realize there were prohibitions to reselling forklifts that had been in service in the Pacific war area.

**SW:** Why was that?

**DP:** Just to protect the factories so that they wouldn't have all of this cheap stuff coming back on the United States market. It was very self-serving and protectionist, but it took care of itself as the parts wore out and new engines and new models came on the market. For a long time war surplus was

big business and we would buy locks from here and there and bring them home and sort them out and resell them. That was part of the commercial picture for, I would say, four or five years after the war.

**SW:** Now, when did this protectionist attitude start?

**DP:** Very quickly. Some of the boys in Washington went to their senators and congressmen and got certain protective laws passed. They told US Customs that these models couldn't be brought back and they had some legal reasons. They had already been sold to the U.S. Government once and were government property basically. The government had trouble deannexing them and it confused the issue for a long time. Basically, then you could bring them in bond and send them into Mexico and not be involved with the U.S.

**SW:** Now, explain that to me - "bring them in bond".

**DP:** That means you could bring them into the Ports of San Francisco, Los Angeles or San Diego, unload them under customs custody, make a bond for transportation and exportation (we called that a T and E) that you could take them down to Mexico, cancel the bond and they were Mexican merchandise. They didn't enter the commerce of the United States.

**SW:** You could send them to various foreign countries, but you could not flood the market here in the states?

**DP:** It did not apply to some surplus that had been the property of the government. It was not eligible for that kind of treatment. Some were and you had to separate them out and try not to get stuck with stuff that was not permitted.

**SW:** How long were you with the chandlers? The next step in your career was the formal inport-export business.

**DP:** There was a hiatus there when I worked for myself. I opened my own hardware store.

**SW:** Let's get to that then.

**DP:** It was about February or March of 1946 when I went to work for Nuttall Styris Co. It was about May of 1955 that I stopped and opened my own hardware store, out east of town in a newly-developed subdivision.

**SW:** And where was that?

**DP:** It was called Valencia Park. My hardware store was at Euclid and Imperial Avenue.

**SW:** It's still called Valencia Park, isn't it? **DP:** Yes, it is. Incidentally, my Father had done some of the development and sale of real estate in Valencia Park in about 1928-29 and 30. It was a very difficult year for development and I think that was part of my father's difficulties. subdividing and getting rid of some of that property. That carries you back into the Mattoon Act. It was a murderous problem which developers had to solve in those days. Anyway, in 1955, I decided that it was time for me to try my own hand at the hardware business. With the help of the local wholesalers and distributors, I developed a hardware store and borrowed most of the money from my father and father-in-law.

**SW:** You had already made contacts with all these suppliers?

**DP:** Oh yes, I knew all of my suppliers. It was an interesting experience but, unfortunately, even as I had the opening celebration of my hardware store, about a mile up the way an outfit called Fedmart opened its first wholesale type operation open to the public. It was very difficult. I hung on for almost three years, but finally I sold it to a guy who had come out from Nebraska and wanted something for his retirement and I sold it to him. I think he lasted for a few more years, but the days of the neighborhood hardware store were numbered because everyone went to Fedmart or the wholesale house.

**SW:** I'm amazed there are still small stores that have been able to hang on. There are not many of them. DP That's right. You know, I wanted a bigger volume, and I had a family to support. As I said, I hung on for about 3 years and then this guy came along who wanted it worse than I did. I got out with the skin of my teeth. I think I ended up owing my father or my father-in-law about \$1100, so that took awhile to pay down.

But I went to work briefly for Oscar's Drive In, the forerunner of Jack in the Box. Bob Peterson, who was a classmate and fraternity brother of mine made a Chamber of Commerce trip to Sweden and Denmark and came back all excited. He wanted to get into the import business and I strung along with Bob for a long time.

**SW:** Was this before he had started Jack in the Box?

**DP:** No, it was the same time. He had many balls in the air. He wanted to do this and had a counterpart to me in Copenhagen. He had me in San Diego. We tried to put together some deals, but it was a matter of financing. He only had a limited amount that he could put into that kind of an operation and the big suppliers of glassware and art goods and stainless steel in Denmark were picking and choosing large distributors. We were just trying to develop something. They didn't pay much attention to us and they didn't quote competitive prices so it was very difficult to do. I finally, believe it or not, slipped over into a Norwegian wire rope manufacturer because as I watched the development of the tuna industry from afar, the wire rope became very important in purse seining. Miles of it and it wore out. This outfit in Norway had been supplying the whaling industry for years. Those guys would go down to the South Pole and they would be gone for nine months. They had to have quality stuff. It was beautiful cable and it was made for salt water use. I got in with this one little manufacturer who was very loyal and would take my letters of credit. I started bringing in through Scanus as Bob Peterson called his import house and we survived for awhile doing that. I would go down to Campbell Machine Co., my buyer, and they ordered reels and reels of this stuff. I would bring it in through the Port of Los Angeles and down to San Diego. They would chop it up and sell it. Campbell Machine had a wire rope operation that could cut and splice, so that carried us on for another 6 or 8 months. Finally, Bob said "We're not getting anywhere". I stayed with his organization for another year.

I had some experience in San Francisco with coffee importation, so we started to import coffee. There was a roaster we had acquired in downtown San Diego. The old guy who had run it for a long time taught me how to roast coffee and we finally moved the roaster over into Oscar's operation at Rosecrans and Midway. We tried that, but the quantities that I could handle were not big enough for the coffee brokers in Los Angeles.

**SW:** Was that marketed under your own name?

**DP:** "Oscar's Blend". He didn't can it or anything, he just used it in his drive-ins. They were a limited market. Coffee soon became so big, that I couldn't sustain it, so I parted company.

**SW:** Did they bring the coffee into the Port of San Diego by ship?

**DP:** No, it was always Los Angeles and down to San Diego in small quantities. People began to get tired of that and said I can't bring 50 bags in anymore you have to buy 100 bags.

**SW:** Have we ever had a port or terminal facility for large commercial shipments, containers, etc. We never had a large commercial port, did we?

**DP:** No, because for \$150 you could truck a container down from the Port of Long Beach or Los Angeles and get your merchandise in a 40-foot container in San Diego for \$150, more than you would have to pay for it at Long Beach. The liners as they grew got more efficient. They wouldn't want to make a stop in San Diego and unload 100 containers out of 800 aboard the ship when they could unload them all at Los Angeles. You know you have another 24-hours of sailing and port charges and pilot and longshore expenses to bring a ship in here. If you didn't have three or four hundred containers, nobody was interested. We tried it for awhile with Statesline Steamship Co. and the American Presidents Line. We tried to work with the Port of San Diego, but there just wasn't the demand. We didn't have the hinterland that LA has.

**SW:** Now, we are talking about the 60's?

**DP:** Yes, 1958, 59, 60. The early 60's.

**SW:** As far as the bay and the port itself-could our bay take large tankers and freighters?

**DP:** They were beginning to dredge to about 54 feet, but once in awhile one of the big cotton ships would get hung up coming into the 10th Avenue terminal or even hit the bottom and wait for a tide to get off. I don't think they ever had to tow them off.

**SW:** Why would they bring cotton into San Diego?

**DP:** Well, because we really jumped into the cotton industry in about the early 1950's, because Japan was becoming a big market for cotton export business. We would ship from New Mexico, Arizona, Northern Mexico. We would get the cotton bales here through sales efforts of the Port of San Diego.

**SW:** Were they moved by train or truck?

**DP:** By truck. We didn't really have any trains, because the trains went to LA first.

**SW:** So, at least we got a section of the market.

**DP:** We did. We would get ten and twelve Japanese, Egyptian and Indian freighters a week during the cotton season.

**SW:** Now, that is something I never knew before. I didn't know we had such a healthy export business here.

**DP:** It was really thrilling to see the Port of San Diego blossom. The 10th Avenue terminal was just finished at that time and coming into its own. The cotton was very promising. Of course, Los Angeles worked like heck to try to get that trade, but there were advantages in San Diego. There was congestion in the Port of LA and, my gosh, there must have been at least one hundred vessels a month between the two ports. We'd get ten a week.

**SW:** Were you partially involved in that?

**DP:** Yes. When I came back into the custom brokers I activated my license.



**SW:** That was after you sold the hardware store?

**DP:** And after I had worked with Peterson for about two years. I went back and I found a partner who was a good exporter and had the cotton contacts. His name was Milt Hallen, and he was very well known on the waterfront. He had been the transport and traffic manager for Walker Scott stores and for some other department stores in Los Angeles. He was good and dedicated to the export business. I was the import guy with the custom house broker's license and he was the exporter with the forwarder's license. We formed a partnership that lasted for about 5 years and did well. We had an office at the 10th Avenue terminal and I would find imports as best I could. I began to act as a custom house broker.

**SW:** What exactly is a custom house broker?

**DP:** That's a person who is licensed by the U.S. Customs, part of the Dept. of Commerce. The U.S. Customs issues a license to qualified persons to represent anybody as an import broker. We take the paperwork, make the deals with the ship lines and get the merchandise where it belongs. We file and entry, as you call it. You enter the merchandise, pay the proper duty on the value of the merchandise and then distribute it where you can and often, from this Port, a lot of it was in transit to Mexico. You didn't want to pay U.S. Customs duty on the stuff, so you'd pick it up at San Francisco. You would be involved in the transaction as it came off the ship in San Francisco or Los Angeles (or the airplane) and get it in bond moved to San Diego to the buyer.

**SW:** In other words "in bond" means it was not going to be on that particular market -- it was in transit.

**DP:** That's right. In transit to somewhere else or it would come in bond if they didn't have the proper paperwork to get it away from the steamship company or a proper invoice to pay duty on the value. So it was just a period of movement and transportation where somebody needed a broker who could help him do this work. It took a lot of time. You had to go to the bank and work your letters of credit to get it released from the steamship company who would not let go of it until the ocean freight was paid. These were the mechanical transactions of an importation of a purchase abroad. We would get it and either on-forward it by truck into Baja, CA., or if it was going somewhere else by air, we would on-forward. We had to have a good relationship with the customs people and we had an office at Lindberg Field as well as the 10th Ave. terminal. As time went on, we parted company. He kept his transportation and I had learned enough about exporting from him so I took a few of his people with me and he downsized and I started upsizing. He was a wonderful teacher and he really got me well-founded in the export business, a side that I had not really concentrated on in my early years or in the importations in which I was involved. That really set me up in the import/export business, so I became a freight forwarder and a custom house broker.

**SW:** What was the name of your company?

**DP:** Porter International, Inc. because I incorporated, of course, along the way, but I was sole owner. I had all the stock, but we had to subsequently open an office in Los Angeles because it was so practical. Especially with air shipments.

We didn't have international flights into San Diego, still don't to any extent. I opened a Los Angeles office and solicited Los Angeles business. I never did close the Los Angeles office, but I had to spend some time up there and nurse it through some hard times. It grew and became an important part of my total service to clients that were importing or exporting from San Diego.

**SW:** About how many people did you employ at that time?

**DP:** Well, the most I employed, just before I moved to Otay and was right smack on the border, I had about 30 people and then, as I opened up on the border, I had a warehouse and trucks and that sort of thing, and I got up to about 65 people maximum.

**SW:** So, you were an important employer in San Diego?

**DP:** Yes, that's right. I was on the Board of the Chamber of Commerce for a couple of years and got involved in the National Custom Brokers Assn. which always met in Washington, D.C. They finally started having meetings on the Pacific Coast as well.

That was interesting. It got me to Washington a couple of times a year and we could travel to the regional conventions, get a little into the political side and meet some of the heavy bureaucrats in Washington who were collectors of customs or Commissioner of Customs for the Dept. of Commerce. It was very interesting.

**SW:** What an opportunity to remind them that San Diego was still here.

**DP:** That's true. It was a period of growth and development. The Port was rather small. They do have one gantry train, you know that big blue thing down on 24th street, and they developed that with the intention of developing different trades. We are only now beginning to see the fruits, and I do mean fruits, from Chile and El Salvador and some of the ports, basically Chile and Peru for fresh and frozen products. They have developed the 10th Avenue terminal to handle that kind of produce and it's been a long tough operation because we do have to compete with Los Angeles. So often they say, "Yeh, I pick up fifty tons in El Salvador, but I have to deliver it to Los Angeles because I'm not going to spend forty-eight hours. Our ship is already programmed on a schedule and it would take twenty-four or forty-eight hours to come into San Diego to give you a quarter of our load and then the rest of the load goes to Los Angeles." So, it's been a very tough uphill haul. Congestion at the Port of LA has helped considerably and now we are beginning to expand really, because of the efficiency of the freezing and cold storage handling. They can take in the afternoon a refrigerated or a cool-cargo truck and go overnight into Los Angeles market and stay away from the congestion at the piers. It goes to the wholesalers who might be in the valley or even in Bakersfield or somewhere in Southern California.

**SW:** Do you see the 10th St. terminal as a growth facility?

**DP:** Yes, I really do and I don't think we have to worry about the depth of the piers anymore. The ships are fairly stabilized in that trade. The aircraft carriers, of course, are going to have to be attended to, and we're going to have to go deeper in the channels for the carriers that are going to be in and out of here in the next few years.

**SW:** It would be nice to see the port come back, because I think it's had a period where not much has been going on.

**DP:** Yes, that's right. Well, I know it's a herculean task but I think Bob Filner, the Democratic Congressman, has done more than anybody to beat the drums. I have to give Brian Bilbray credit (the Republican Congressman), to get what Filner calls "the jobs train". Somebody is going to have to put eighty or ninety million dollars into the port. The NAFTA thing has been a real blessing. If it works it's because NAFTA has taken hold and is going forward because that's the most promising thing that has ever happened to this port. It puts us into competition with guys who ship from LA harbor to Nogales, Arizona, or even El Paso, Texas. We've lost that business because we don't have a train connection.

**SW:** That's always been our problem, since the 1880's.

**DP:** Of course, as the trucking industry is developing, becoming more sophisticated. We can have the control of the movement through Mexico down to Mexican ports. Mexico is a tremendous market and why should they have to go over and get into the congestion in El Paso, Texas, when they could go through Nogales or San Luis, Arizona, or Tecate/Tijuana? That is happening.

We've fought for years because we give it to a trucker, a gypsy trucker, in Tijuana to get down to Mexico City. His cousin might be having a wedding in Mazatlan this weekend and they didn't have any radio communication. The sophisticated shipper in San Diego says "Call them on the phone". Well, they don't even have telephones or pay phones in Mazatlan or Guaymas or on the way down, so it has been very primitive.

**SW:** NAFTA would allow our truckers to carry right through?

**DP:** Yes, right to the destination, even if it's outside of Mexico. Nobody can picture how much Baja, CA has grown. The Port of La Paz and the fishing village of Cabo San Lucas, gosh there are one-half million people down there now. The trucking is getting more sophisticated and you can depend on deliveries.

**SW:** Also, I think the Mexican government has begun to deal with Baja.

**DP:** Yes, but the political situation is still a problem. I'm proud to say that in the last 30 years that I've worked on that border, even now, especially now, that the "mordida" and the bribes that you have to pay are disappearing. We just don't do that anymore. Of course, that started with the maquiladoras. The Japanese and the Koreans are saying, "What are you talking about?" If you had to pay something, you didn't charge it to the importer of record, you didn't charge it to the Japanese corporation, so we said, "No, we don't have it to pay". Sure enough the Mexican government really cleaned house in its custom service to a great extent so that problem is behind us.

**SW:** It's not one that people assume is behind us.

**DP:** No, the picture is still there and I suppose when you get a traffic ticket in Tijuana you could still buy it out, but by and large it's gone away.

**SW:** You moved your office to Otay - when?

**DP:** In 1989.

**SW:** So you were there at the beginning of the big maquiladoras. Tell me a little about that.

**DP:** Well, the maquiladoras are a glorious success for Mexico. It's incredible because the stuff can be moved from offshore, where the cheap labor is, the components and brought to Mexico without paying any US duty. They go into Mexico, are turned into a television set or a recorder or a radio.

**SW:** In other words, they come in through the Ports of San Diego or Los Angeles bonded?

**DP:** In bond and they move in bond. The companies pay very little money as compared to anywhere else and it's done under their control and supervision. The foreigner or the US technician is there and the Mexican government makes the arrangement for labor permits, work permits for foreigners and makes an easy playing field for the people to assemble a Japanese product that is destined to come back into the United States. So the work is done under the control that it needs, according to the manufacturer's specifications. It's handled and under their supervision. It is packaged and

labeled and ready for the U.S. market. It comes back, gets through customs and the US duty on that product, coming into the United States, is not the components. It's the completed TV set that establishes the rate of duty.

**SW:** So I see. It's charged as duty on a finished product.

**DP:** Maybe the duty on the television set is 9% but the duty on the picture tube might be 14% and some of the other transistors and components would be charged at a high rate of duty, but as a total television set they come down to about 9- or 7% or whatever, so you got a cheaper rate of duty coming back into the U.S.

**SW:** Which means it can be put on the market cheaper here.

**DP:** That's right. It's very competitive.

**SW:** I noticed when I was coming back from the Meling Ranch we had to walk through, of course, at the border, and I was standing there talking to a lot of young Americans. They looked like computer people and, yes, they were indeed working across the border in the maquiladoras. I didn't realize that we had a labor market here in San Diego that also depended on that.

**DP:** Well, it's kind of narrow. It's basically the truckers and the custom brokers and the warehousing. It has to be counted in and controlled to satisfy Mexican requirements because Mexico has a special set of requirements for maquiladoras operations. They are not charging duty at all. They are just benefitting from the Mexican nationals who make a living as technicians and workers.

**SW:** Well, these young men, for the most part were, I would say, in lower management professional types. They told me they commuted across the border every day. one of them worked for Sony. They were young professionals, white collar.

**DP:** Well, when you read the reports of the news people and gatherers of statistics, up to forty-thousand people come across that line at 7 in the morning to go to work in San Diego. Now they might be domestics or they change tires at Pep Boys, but forty thousand work and they take home a U.S. paycheck every week to Tijuana. That's a license to steal for the Tijuana merchants. That's the way the economy survives. Some of those people come into San Ysidro. They go to Wal Mart in Chula Vista and then they come home and buy their produce and groceries and milk and stuff in Tijuana. A lot of their manufactured stuff and household goods are bought on the American side so the poor Mexicans have to be very competitive. It's the way the San Diego-Tijuana economy is working. By and large it's growing and there are benefits in both San Diego and in the Mexican operations.

**SW:** The border has always been such a problem here in San Diego or seems to have been such a problem. Do you really feel conditions are much better in this country at the border?

**DP:** I really hope that the old Bracero program comes back. I've heard stories since Christmas time (1995) that with the trouble in Chiapas and down there in the uncivilized states that over Christmas hundreds and hundreds of people would come home to Mexico. They'd have a pickup truck from Texas or the corn belt or wherever they were working, would come back home and help the grandparents or parents start a new foundation for their houses. They would buy material for their houses, work a couple of weeks during Christmas vacation and give them real incentive. Then they come back. Some of them were legal, some of them were not and they always have trouble getting across the line. The Bracero program, in the old days, formalized that. There are still people who will not do stoop labor in this country.

**SW:** I know so often they say that American workers will not do this agricultural labor. You've got to find somebody and I guess it is the Mexican laborer. You don't see Americans out in the fields very often.

**DP:** That's right you don't. Caesar Chavez was the hero to those people because he fought like hell to get some protection for those guys. Our US customs people just chatting over lunch or having a drink at the bar would say, "I can't stand to see these Imperial Valley farmers hire these people, make them live in tents, don't feed them enough". They really have a country-store attitude. What they do is take it out of their wages. Some of them cancel payment on their checks after they go home".

**SW:** Has any of the legislation dealt with this question of reinstating the Braceros with a certain amount of autonomy or whatever it would be, oversee the wages and the taxes that would be taken out, the living conditions, contracts. Have they ever thought of doing that?

**DP:** Well, I'm sure that a lot of them have thought about it and some of them have tried to fight the fight, but the difficulty among the State of California and the Dept. of Labor and the Immigration Service means it's a very tough thing to resolve. I'm sorry they broke it down when they did. I forget, was it during the war years when they needed defense workers or something? It never was reinstated properly.

**SW:** So often people have said the Bracero movement actually started the overwhelming migration from Mexico -- migrant workers.

**DP:** It's a natural growth with the population growth we had.

**SW:** There was some connection there?

**DP:** Yes, under Braceros, yes. It was easy on the borders and it would take very little documentation to get people up here. I think it would relieve the situation here in San Diego.

**DP:** It's terrible. They are so downtrodden and we say "What the hell".

**SW:** Now David, we are going to cover some of the problems with migrant workers coming into the United States. Some of the problems that have developed. Your opinion on these problems. Where do you think we're going with them? Please explain the Bracero movement which a lot of us are not familiar with because that was during the 30's or post-war.

**DP:** I thought it was a wonderful program and it really solved a problem of lack of laborers in the fields of California during war time when everyone was in the defense industry. We would bring in, in orderly fashion, Mexican laborers who were experts to do the scut and the stoop work in the California fields and it worked very well. They would work here for a period of time, then they would return to their homes in Mexico until the season came again. It was pretty harmonious. Unfortunately, some of the growers and some of the agents for the workers were crooks and they would cancel checks when the Mexicans went home or they would charge them the 'company store' business. It was very hard to control. Nevertheless, by and large, it was a blessing to both California who needed the labor and to the laborers who were doing it.

**SW:** Did these workers have to deal with individual farmers or was there a cooperative run by the government that supplied the labor or oversaw their living conditions?

**DP:** I think the government was very careless in its control. I think contractors who were Spanish-speaking or of Spanish heritage would round up people in their neighborhood in Mexico where they had some credence. They would act as agents and sometimes there was hanky-panky. They would

charge the poor laborer a percentage for getting him the job. So these were things done in the wildness of World War II. Everybody was busy fighting a war, but everyone needed badly the produce that was being handled. It went badly, but it was better than anything else.

**SW:** Were these workers eligible after a time for US citizenship?

**DP:** I don't think it was built into the contracts, and there wasn't good enough record keeping. The border was thin in those days. You could walk past the border anywhere and nobody would catch you or take you back, only if someone got into real trouble and the Sheriff went after them would anyone be deported. As time went on, that had to be handled because people were against free immigration or uncontrolled immigration, and it did become a problem. I think it was a shame. It was an orderly business. In the later years after the war, Caesar Chavez was the villain of the piece. He was, of course, totally pro labor, a labor agitator, and he wanted a piece of the action for the labor party. Of course, there were enough labor union members in California, so he had some muscle in Sacramento and even in Washington. It was a battlefield. Caesar Chavez built up his power sometimes, and at other times he would lose power because of crop conditions or the time of the year. It was a very seasonal thing. Anybody who was trying to reach ahead for the next season and get commitments had a problem. It was going pretty well, but Caesar Chavez increased his strength and found supporters. He got a lot of sympathy with the news people and people who were interested in the union movement, to say nothing of the Democratic party. Those things really slowed it down. They finally just did away with it.

**SW:** Here in San Diego I think there were very active groups of people, particularly at San Diego State, that supported Caesar Chavez and the labor movement. Do you remember anything about that?

**DP:** Oh yes. There was total sympathy, and the students would go out on strike or have a sympathy strike or would wine and dine Chavez and arrange to give him a great reception when he came to speak in San Diego. Yes, he had a real following. We used to call them "bleeding hearts". They would say "the poor laborer is being exploited". It was raw socialism. It became more and more powerful and as the Democrats took more power in Washington and Sacramento, Pat Brown and other Democratic leaders, it got tougher and tougher and pretty soon it disappeared.

**SW:** What disappeared?

**DP:** The Bracero system. Close the borders and forgot about it.

**SW:** What did the liberals, the bleeding hearts and particularly the students do? This was coming along just about the time of the Vietnam demonstrations. Did it become a part of that culture?

**DP:** Right parallel with it. All these years, agriculture was making quantum leaps forward in technology, developing these tremendous Deere and Caterpillar machines. Companies were all working on stuff to make the labor go away and to mechanize things. It became less of a problem as time went on, but you still had to have a lot of people in the fields and certain crops, I think some of the quick crops like tomato and celery and that sort of thing, are labor intensive.

**SW:** When did this tremendous influx across the border start? When the labor unions decided they couldn't handle this? When the labor unions didn't have to exploit it anymore? Was it loss of their own people or the rise of prosperity when people didn't have to do stoop labor that the hue and cry went down? Government is so sensitive to public pressure and politics. These people would come across the border and nobody would make a big fuss about it. At ports of entry like Calexico, Yuma and all along the border people didn't pay any attention to it. The labor was needed and the problem ignored. Do you think that the labor coming over now, the majority of them, are coming to actually stay in the United States or do you think they are still coming over to work seasonal jobs and then return to Mexico?

**DP:** Well, it's so economically motivated. If a guy comes across and gets a permanent job at the Hotel Del Coronado being a waiter or a cook, he finally feels that he can bring his family over and live on this side of the border because of his salary. He will do it because he wants his kids to have some medical protection and, certainly, an education. It's a quantum leap into the land of opportunity. If a guy can get away with it economically, he's going to try to do that. Now, what percentage I'm talking about? You know this is the raving of an untrained mind here.

**SW:** It's also the mind that has been at the border for many, many years and has observed what is going on there. This leads into the questions of the Maquiladoras. Supposedly they are taking up some of the slack in this problem of so much Mexican labor coming across the border. They will now have jobs in Mexico. Do you think that is an actuality?

**DP:** Yes, indeed. My goodness, oh yes. There are thousands of people working in the maquiladoras along the border. It's been a godsend for the Mexican economy and it's been so strong that it has led to the development of the NAFTA agreements. It's a win-win situation for everybody.

**SW:** I was reading an article that said that actually the maquiladoras were simply furnishing a training ground for workers. That as soon as these people acquired the skills, say on a stamp press or assembling computers, they immediately cross the border illegally for permanent jobs here as soon as they could. Do you think that's true?

**DP:** No, these jobs have disappeared up here. That kind of labor is staying in Mexico because that's where the work is being done. It doesn't make sense. You can't come up to McDonald-Douglas or Convair or Rohr Aircraft and get a job anymore or in the whole defense industry.

Now, in the communication industry, it has definitely found a cheaper way to go by sending it to Taiwan or Korea or Mexico, but it keeps the people in Mexico. It has proven to be a real boom to the Mexican economy as has been proven by the NAFTA agreements and the NAFTA approval. It's been a godsend to both sides, and I was interested to hear this week in South Carolina (1995) that Dole carried the day principally because the industrial complex of South Carolina has answered the so-called competition. It has been able to hold an economic market in the industrial part of the equation to support export which does a lot more for the state than just paying salaries for low-cost assemblers. I think that is going to be the trend of the future. We are going to be on the technical or heavy side of manufacturing and do things that we can do best and the low-cost labor will stay in low-cost countries.

**SW:** You were there on the border. Your offices were established there on the border. Do you remember the first maquiladoras? When they started out there?

**DP:** Yes, I think it was about 1978-79 when it was enacted in Mexican law to encourage this sort of thing. I don't think San Diego was the point where Mexico instigated it on the Mexican side of the border. It was just free enterprise. All of the enterprising cloak and suit boys in Los Angeles who had been utilizing these Filipino women and the Mexican people who came up to the thriving garment industry in Los Angeles decided to do something about it. They were smart enough to get Mexican legislature passed and certain requirements undermined or done away with in immigration law so that it could start. The people in Los Angeles would send down the cut goods that they had imported from trans-Pacific somewhere, or even Carolina, or wherever gingham and cheap stuff was made -- cotton goods. They would send them down to Mexico and have them sewn in Tijuana. This was in the late 70's or early 80's.

This really began to be a boom to me because they were looking for people who spoke Spanish. They were looking for people who could deal with the Mexican enterprisers. Many of them were women and that was kinda an interesting development. They ran into great difficulties because nobody knew where the limits were, and the temptation was great to undervalue so that the duty finally paid when the goods did come back in finished

conditions was low. Nobody realized what a tremendous sledge hammer US Customs had. It was just as bad as the IRS. Customs was very dangerous and people were taking chances. They were undervaluing and trying to cut corners to save money. The US Customs came down on them.

**SW:** How did they do that exactly? When you say they undervalue - did they undervalue the finished product coming back over the border?

**DP:** Yes, because that's when the duty is assessed. When the finished product comes back into the United States for consumption, you have to make what is called a consumption entry. You declare that this is how much you paid for the goods that were used in that production and this is how much labor you paid. These are your costs, and this is what you are willing to pay. In those days it could be even as much as 24% duty on the value of that merchandise, or maybe 19 or around 20%. The temptation was great to underprice, undervalue the returning goods.

**SW:** Now, you mentioned that most of the business people you dealt with were women, Mexican women who were running their own shops.

**DP:** They had been fore-ladies attending a group of Mexican ladies who were sewing in a sweat shop in Los Angeles. They would come to Tijuana and say, "I can do a better sweat shop down here and pay a lot less labor to my ladies. I know how to do it. I know what they need, and I can supervise well". They would go to the manufacturers in LA and say, "Give me a thousand dozen of these things, and I'll turn them out to our satisfaction and charge you only half of what you're paying now to the ladies in Los Angeles" (which wasn't very much). It was a tough, competitive business, and it really did amount to sweat shops in so many cases, especially if they were bringing in people from the Phillipines or the Indonesians.

**SW:** You mean into the Los Angeles area?

**DP:** Yes, but it soon spread among varied people, and they would send the sewing machines down. The Custom control and supervision over maquiladoras became very complicated. It became necessary charge a rental basis on the machines because US Customs was trying to equalize costs of production in the United States as compared to abroad. If you are sending the sewing machines down there for the ladies in Tijuana to do the work Uncle Sam wants his part of the value of the sewing machine. It got more and more complex, and I think the people who did the very best were the Customs attorneys. There is a whole group in the practice of law that does work in the Customs courts. There's a US Court of Customs and Customs Appeals. It's a whole federal law section that has its own attorneys and its own group of laws.

**SW:** Do we have an office of Customs here in San Diego?

**DP:** No, Los Angeles is the closest Court of Customs Appeals.

**SW:** Isn't that strange that it is in Los Angeles rather than in San Diego with the traffic across the border?

**DP:** Yes, but the US Customs entry at the Port of San Diego is small compared to the Port of Los Angeles because of the steamships that come in there.

**SW:** We do have this growth of companies across the border. The maquiladoras. You would think that would warrant..

**DP:** No, it just never got that big. Los Angeles was so gigantic that the government never considered opening an office here.

**SW:** So poor San Diego got bypassed again. From your recollection what were the first companies to try the transporter business? Were they Americans? Or were they foreign?



**DP:** They were designers and producers in Los Angeles who had small shops. Some of them had big shops, and they were the first ones. Then when the thing settled down, it even got into agricultural products- packing, cleaning, sorting, counting of various agriculture products.

**SW:** How did that work at the border, because there have always been such stringent restrictions on agricultural products back and forth? Did we actually send fruits and vegetables from the United States to Mexico?

**DP:** No, it was the processing of raw agricultural products that came up as far as the border and then were packaged, frozen, wrapped, cleaned and poisoned. Whatever happens began to happen at the border, just to handle exports. It happened on small farms and dairies in Mexico, but not anywhere near the volume into which it grew.

**SW:** When they did they start to get into technical products?

**DP:** In the late 70's and early 80's. They started moving big, big stuff, chemical mixers, heaters, vulcanizers and all sorts of welding, soldering equipment. There were very great technical problems during the years as to how much is a manufacturing process and how much is an assembling process. The Customs laws had to be rewritten and reinterpreted because they were very simplistic in the beginning. People would throw these incredible questions at them and say, "Hey, look, we're assembling, we're not manufacturing". It always had to be clearly designated as to your processing. The paper work, the consultations and the decisions went back and forth between Washington, D.C. or Customs Court in New York. It got to be a nightmare and Custom Brokers got to be the heroes of the pieces because we were the pioneers.

**SW:** I was going to say you're standing right in the middle of a new....

**DP:** Yes. We probably lost as many clients as we gained because they couldn't believe the complexity of what they had to go through to save 19 or 20 percent duty on something. Again, the temptation was great, but the laws were mighty. Some of the customs fines and penalties that came down put a lot of people out of business until they really realized that they had to be very, very legal and very strict on their interpretations. Various fights (there have been some horrendous things as I remember), some of the wheel assemblies that were down and the decorative wheel covers that were developed. It got to be big business for the people. Automobile choppers would change and revamp for all the low-riders and stuff in Southern California.

**SW:** Now that's something I would like you to explain to me as a non-Californian, what exactly is a low-rider? Where did it start?

**DP:** Well, I don't know that California can take credit for it, but a low rider is an adjusted commercial automobile that is sold as you buy it from the factory in Detroit and then it is lowered so that it becomes... you readjust the springs and the axles and you do a lot of stuff. You put fancy stripping and paint jobs, and so forth, to make a custom car out of a Detroit car.

**SW:** I see, it seems to be very popular among the young Hispanics on both sides of the border. They even have low-riders shows.

**DP:** It becomes a little startling when you go down and watch them going down the street in a parade, and they push a button and everything springs up. The whole car comes up 5 inches, and you wonder what the heck is going on. It's just a fad, and it's tough. Special rims got a lot of people in trouble because they were so fiercely competitive that some of the big guys would get contracts with large auto repair agencies to jiggle the prices and fool Uncle Sam. A lot of the heavy penalties were issued and delivered, so it became tough. You had to be an accountant as well as a teacher to see whether this guy, who had a great idea and had a market of a quarter of million dollars a week for 10 weeks, would disappear. That became very painful sometimes.

**SW:** When did all these new buildings... you go out to Otay, cross the border in that area, and you see these huge industrial parks. When did all that start? That's Mexican, isn't it?

**DP:** No, its Japanese and Koreans.

**SW:** I mean the Mexicans were doing the building.

**DP:** The Mexican contractors would, yes. They had a boom period. They are still doing developmental areas. There is a whole new area in Calexico that is developed because a new gate has been indicated and committed about 4 miles east of downtown Mexicali. It is going to be the new crossing point. They probably spent 20 million already on both sides of the border preparing the roadways, the inspection docks and that sort of thing. It's big business.

**SW:** Do you think the other border crossings are better maintained or have they been planned in a different way to be more efficient than our crossing here at Otay?

**DP:** I don't think so. Laredo, Texas, (they have the Rio Grande River to fight with), they have to build bridges. Each bridge goes north and south. There has to be a lot of political hemming and hawing before they find out which direction their bridge is going to go. There's a new one in New Mexico that hasn't been there before. As I remember it's 60 miles west of El Paso, Texas, and it's going to be one of the big players. I don't think there is any railroad service to it yet, but there is trucking and agricultural products and cattle.

**SW:** Do you think that San Diego and the border area here will lose a lot of business if these maquiladoras will settle near these new border crossings? Is that going to take business away from both sides of the border here in San Diego?

**DP:** Well, it might move it 25 miles one way or another, but it's still going to be San Diego. It's wet to the west. We've got a captive audience and it's going to be that way for a long time. I think the crap shoot that I am most excited about is the Port of Ensenada. The Mexican government has decided to privatize the Port of Ensenada and it should be very tempting to the ocean trade and to various people who need water transportation.

**SW:** That should take something from Los Angeles then?

**DP:** Yes, it would. Los Angeles stands to lose more. I think it will in various ways, and maybe one of the ways is going to be rail movement from Ensenada to Tecate, for example, or somewhere along that way. The Guadalupe Valley, below Tecate and on the way to Ensenada, is a tremendous wine producing area already.

I can't tell you how up I am with the passage of NAFTA. It has been a godsend to San Diego and it's even exciting people who would like a rail connection from San Diego to the Imperial Valley. It's hard to go over the mountains and it's hard to compete with trucks, but there is a rule of thumb about how far you go and how much tonnage you have before railroads can cut in and compete with trucks. It's kinda a crapshoot depending on the industry you're in.

Sooner or later, if we get into heavy fertilizer, gypsum and some of the traditional bulk stuff, even wheat and cotton, that there might be some changes in the transportation pattern. The great thing is that Mexico and the U. S. government have these 10 or 12 years of real preparation and experience to make it easier. There shouldn't be the surprises that there were in the early days.

**SW:** I think a lot of people in San Diego have hesitated to make any investment in Mexico because of the possibility that suddenly they might take back the land... the instability.

**DP:** It's been a dangerous thing through the years.

**SW:** David, you've certainly had a varied career. Now I would you tell us, something about the Consulate Corps; how you got involved in that? We don't think of consulates in San Diego very often, but take me back, and tell me how you got involved in this.

**DP:** I became involved with the Chamber of Commerce, probably in 1962 or 63. I was on the Board of the Chamber of Commerce for awhile in the committee on inport/export and that sort of thing. Lee Grissom, who was the Director of the Chamber of Commerce in those days, arranged a tour through International Chambers of Commerce with the powers that be in Canton, China, for a visit. I think just two Chambers of Commerce... a Canadian Chamber of Commerce and we were invited to participate in the International Sales Congress in Chou, China.

**SW:** Did this precede Nixon's overtures to China? This was before that, wasn't it?

**DP:** Yes, it was. It was very rocky, and obviously we didn't have a very good connection. We were the only Chamber I think it was probably through the efforts of Solar Company.

They were trying to settle a big potential sale in the oil fields of Eastern China in those days, and it was very difficult to have any relationship with China. This great big International Business Fair in Canton was attended by all the other countries -- the Eastern countries, European countries, Canada, Central and South America -- everybody but the United States. We were left out and Nixon had not come to the surface yet with enlightened ideas of trade. The Chamber - we got maybe 40 to 50 people -- got an invitation to come to Canton and participate in this fair for about 4 days. Lee Grissom told me, "You and Kay have to go". We said "Gee, we sure do have to go! It's a very exciting invitation".

**SW:** At that time, there were not many Americans that had been in China.

**DP:** Absolutely not. We got about 35 or 40 people, mostly couples, made arrangements to fly to Hong Kong, stay in Hong Kong a couple of days and then take the train up to Wong Chou which was over that famous bridge where the survivors got to come through or the people that were being immigrated. We crossed that bridge into the jaws of Communist China. It was quite exciting to go in a Rolls Royce automobile from the Peninsula Hotel up to the bridge. We didn't walk across the bridge because we got on a train just east of the new Canton, or whatever that area is before you go into Canton. We all trooped up there and we went across on a train, got off the train and were then transported by bus into Canton.

**SW:** Did you feel a little uneasy?

**DP:** Well, it was very interesting. All of the military people! There were a million of them. You couldn't tell the officers from the soldiers, except for a ballpoint pen, often in the pocket of an officer. It was just really strange. You didn't know who was giving orders or who was taking orders. It was all very silent and very mysterious. You went where they told you and you didn't strike out on your own and curiously look around.

We were assigned to the Tan Fang. The top of the Fang was about 15 stories and we were gathered there because we began to separate, going into various places within the compound. This was a tremendous compound -- like Balboa Park. There were some 20,000 foreigners there during the exhibition and probably 100 were US citizens. Everyone else was from somewhere else. We had just gotten our fingernail under the edge, but it was fascinating. I think that was one of the first Chamber of Commerce tours I had taken, but I have to backtrack now.

Probably six to ten months before I went on another Chamber of Commerce junket to Tokyo. We went to Tokyo and Kobi, and that was about it. On that trip my roommate was a former Counsel for the United States in Tijuana. He and I, because we spoke Spanish, would bunk together, and we traveled together. When the beggars would approach us on the streets, we would start to speak Spanish, and they couldn't move in on us. It was fun. The guy was a very effective Counsel. He had done a lot of pioneering work between the Tijuana Chamber of Commerce and the San Diego Chamber of Commerce. He said that he had received word that the government of El Salvador needed a representative, and I frankly cannot remember whether there had recently been a representative of El Salvador in San Diego. The Chamber of Commerce thought it would be a good idea. I had had almost no business to transact in El Salvador through my customs business, but I was familiar with the steamship lines and the services down there because I had stayed close to the steamship industry. Anyway, they asked if I would accept and they sent my pedigree back to the Embassy of El Salvador in Washington, D.C. They approved and appointed me. I think my Execuator is dated in March of 1965. That's the document between two governments which indicates this person is entitled to represent your government in our country. The date of your Execuator sets your seniority for the whole diplomatic service throughout the world. I was always like a Rear Admiral in San Diego in pecking order and it was fun because San Diego was so military, so many Marines and so many naval operations going on. That was the fun of the Consulate Corps in San Diego, the military receptions.

**SW:** It brought you into another world, out of trade and commerce and into the military.

**DP:** It was very exciting. That's the way I got into the Consulate Corps and if you stay long enough you end up as Dean of the Corps. There is one guy ahead of me, Dan Lawson, who is the Consul- of Denmark. He's the Dean of the Corps, because his Execuator is dated 1964, so he was just a couple of months ahead of me. He is a lot younger than I am. It's been a bitter pill, but that's o.k.

**SW:** What were your duties?

**DP:** My duties were to represent my country of El Salvador in any matters that would come up in the legal confines of California or San Diego.

It was soon after the terrible uprising and revolutions began in El Salvador. Something like a million and a half people just disappeared in the struggle between the conservatives (14 families and their representatives) and the proletariat (the peasants of El Salvador). There were about four and a half million people in 1965 in that country and it has since grown to about six million. In that 13-year period some one and a half million people disappeared. It was bloody and terrible, and it was up and down. Poor Nixon struggled with it and Lyndon B. Johnson, the guy who signed my Execuator in 1965, he struggled. It became a very painful issue for Central and-South America. The Communists would be poking in, and they would come over from Nicaragua where they had a foothold and stir up hate and discontent.

**SW:** I was wondering about the 14 families in El Salvador. It seems to be a status quo in most Central and South American countries that the government is in the hands of small numbers of wealthy families. There is also the problem of the people of pure Spanish blood as opposed to the Indian blood. Does it go all the way back to the 15th century?

**DP:** Absolutely. I don't know that El Salvador has any direct lineage back to the Viceroyalty or to the seat of government in Europe, but I think it was 1821 when the revolution against Spain was effective. Central America and all those countries have about the same independence day, between 1821 and 1822, but certainly the land was doled out with the blessing or the control of the Catholic Church. It was run that way and the acciones, you know the somebodies, were always of Spanish background. But in later years, when I say 14 families, some of those families were Germans and some were English who came over during the Industrial Revolution and set up coffee machinery businesses. The doctors never amounted to much. You know the health industry wasn't there.

**SW:** You could back even to the 16th century with so many nonnative families controlling everything, and they are still there?

**DP:** What native families? If you're not a Spanish family you're out of luck.

**SW:** That is still reflected in Mexico too - the creoles?

**DP:** Don't forget the Ejidos system in Mexico where they divided the land in small plots for the people. It was a true revolution. They expropriated land. They really didn't expropriate the land in El Salvador. In Mexico they made the people acknowledge that their slaves really were somebody but I still don't think they got title unless it was a very benevolent move on some of the descendants of the original landholders.

**SW:** I want to take you off on another tangent for a minute. I have heard so many people remark that the government of Mexico has tended through the years to ignore the people in Baja. They have never really seen a future in development there or anything worth putting effort into in Baja California. Have you noticed that? I think it's beginning to change now.

**DP:** Well, I can only report on General Rodriguez who, and I was just reading about the dam named for him in the headlines today, was a tremendous benefactor. I don't know that he was a native Californio, but he had property, and he had his home in Baja. In fact he was the appointed Governor of Baja California north and south. He was a guy who became president of the country and one of the most enlightened presidents to come along. This was in 1928. He did wonderful things for Baja California. He developed the olive industry up here and the beginnings of the wine industry. He also developed the Port of Ensenada. He established El Sol because that was just down the water from his own home and orchards. He was a great guy and was very friendly to San Diego. He was revered here and did more for Baja California than anyone before or since. One of the other Presidents, Miguel Alamande, was a tremendous help to Baja and, of course, he was riding high during the war years. He was protecting Baja California from the invading Nazis and everything else, but he made more money than almost any president up to now. He became tremendously wealthy, and he did everything. He contracted for all of the highway systems that now exist in the whole nation of Mexico, he built dams, he built ports, he built infrastructure up to here and, of course, he took a little bit of every contract, But that's the way it was done in Mexico. There were tremendous strides, but too bad Mexico didn't get a 100% of everything. Alamande got about 80%.

**SW:** Well, you know, Americans very often think that this is the way everything is done in Mexico. Do you find that has changed?

**DP:** I have to say, as an old Mexican in my attitude and my love for the country, that one of the worst shocks I have had, and I have to be frank about it, was I thought that Salinas was going to leave that country without increasing his own wealth, but he didn't. There was the drug influence and with regard to money honesty was totally blurred. I was disappointed.

**SW:** I think Salinas (1995) has done a great deal to ensure that this attitude among Americans will go on for sometime.

**DP:** You mean the doubt we have about their honesty? He just ground us into the dirt, those who were supporting him and hoping that this would be the end of this terrible blight on that country. As we speak, poor Zedillo has to go after the Governor of Guerrero state just to save face and when is it going to end?

I think the worst thing that ever happened to Mexico was the one-party system. It's been ingrained and almost impossible to stamp out. The more that the PAN can do in its innocence and its weak condition, the better off they are. I think the Mexicans are beginning to realize with the advent of television, the money in television being invested in that country and the control of the newspapers that it has to change. It's going to force change. People can't be that innocent and stupid that they are not going to see. I might have told you before, but when Kay and I were in Mexico City, the first time we visited the Archeological Museum I went up on the second floor and there was this very humble Mexican hut, I looked and up on the ceiling area, under a bamboo and paper roof, was a television set. It really hit me, "Oh my God there goes the neighborhood". Sure enough, this was 30 years

ago, but there was a television set in that museum setting in that simple hut. I thought "Oh boy". But it's taken longer than I had hoped to get the country up to speed. They are very simple people, very poor people, and they have been hit, hit, hit by the colonial system. It's taken a lot of years for them to get off their knees and ask for their share.

**SW:** This goes all the way back to the 16th century. They have been waiting a long time, haven't they?

**DP:** Well, I don't want to throw rocks at the Catholic Church, but they have had some real tough sledding.

**SW:** Any religion used as an arm of conquest, no matter under what banner. I think people now can look at it in a more objective way. Now, to get back to your Consulate duties, how long were you Consul to El Salvador?

**DP:** Thirty years.

**SW:** Have you retired?

**DP:** No.

**SW:** How many trips to the country have you taken?

**DP:** I'm ashamed to say, not enough. I think I've been there three times. Kay has been there two times, but the conditions were such that it was physically dangerous to be there.

**SW:** Exactly, you can't just time it between revolutions.

**DP:** That's right, and there wasn't any real purpose. I got going on some hopeful development between traders in the Los Angeles basin because there are almost 300,000 people from Salvador background in Los Angeles County. It's just incredible. A million of them escaped, and I think about 300,000 are in Los Angeles County. The last thing they want to see is a government representative from Salvador because they are all illegals. Just this last week, a guy called me on the phone and said, "I want to take my wife and my kids back to Salvador. No questions asked, I just want to go back". I sent him to the deportation arm of the Immigration Service, and I didn't hear anything more from him. I hope he got a free bus ride. In the earlier days, some of the bigwigs from the government would want to send their children or their wife or their mothers through Scripps Clinic or something like that, and I would see to them, but by and large, there have been very few Salvador citizens who have contacted me for any purpose all because so many of them are illegal.

**SW:** I suppose because of the instability there you never had any opportunity to set up any economic situation, trade or something like that.

**DP:** The closest I came was through a church organization. a Christian church, non-Catholic, non-sectarian, like Methodist or Congregationist. They wanted to set up some deal with the natives down there.

The cooperatives are beginning to get a little stronger and their liaison with the federal government is strengthening. They have some subsidy and aid programs for the farmers that are trying to get together with what little land they've been given or what little privileges they have.

**SW:** So, it's still basically a feudal system?

**DP:** Yes, it still is, and you have to work very hard to get together into a cohesive group to have any clout with the bank. Until you get money to plant your crops or to pay for the water. It's tough going.

**SW:** So, until that situation is remedied and political parties put in place, I suppose there really isn't going to be much of a future.

**DP:** No, it's slow coming. As I say, the only places I have seen any activity are the churches, because they want to do good for those poor peasants. But the poor peasants are having trouble. The government has beautiful brochures and stuff saying "This is what we are ready to do and these are the products we can come up with", but they are talking about a very few cooperatives that have been permitted to grow and develop. I'm sorry to say that I haven't been able to find any economic statistics on what the 14 families have done on their own other than the obvious, the banana and the coffee business.

**SW:** And generally keeping themselves going.

**SW:** David, since you are in the Consulate Service and out in the international world, I want you to tell us what you've done here in San Diego for us, as far as being a member of the international community.

**DP:** Well, I think one of the high points has been the International Visitors Bureau. Some dedicated people who early on, attracted by, I think, Dick Capen in Washington (he was the Republican that came in with Bush and was with Nixon before that). He was a former editor of the San Diego Union, if I remember right, and he is quite a young man and for all of that. He got us into the USIA. There were one or two other San Diegans, I think, who were involved in that and got a branch started here because there were grants that were issued through the Embassies in Europe, mostly, but worldwide, Africa, everywhere. These were grants to bring potential politicians and diplomats into the United States, visiting various cities in the country and finding out the about legal, medical and political systems, even the city operations, a total picture of the way we do things in the United States. My gosh, Mitterrand and Maggie Thatcher and LeClaire of South Africa were part of the troupe that were invited. USIA had funds to bring these people over and brought them over either singly, doubly or in small groups up to ten people. To reach out to cities and municipalities and say, "Get together you guys and find out which judges, which doctors, which governmental people, which police chiefs they can visit, which unions, whom they can visit and come back with a story about what they saw in San Diego, California. It was really exciting, because there was money enough in this grant to wine and dine them, put them up in a hotel, arrange bus transportation and really be hosts to these people as they came through. It was exciting -- like a trap shoot. You don't know which ones are political free riders or which ones are real comers in those countries. The International Affairs Board -- I'm trying to remember some of the people -- a sub-editor of the San Diego Union was the President when I came aboard, but I think my friend, Nancy Reed, was the one that brought me in. There were some people who were dedicated to this thing because it was so exciting. They had to have some connection in Washington or connections with the San Diego Union. I have to give them a lot of credit for pushing on this thing. Neil Morgan and Herb Klein, various people and certainly, Jerry Warren get a lot of credit.

Anyway, it developed and we got into it, got excited and invited other people aboard. It was a social thing, husbands and wives usually joined together. Everybody come to the open houses and the receptions for these people, because these people are always very interesting. Another one of the highlights of this is was to invite people into American homes, which is important to the visitor and certainly a break for us. So we had to develop a network of people who spoke various languages, of people who were happy to entertain. You don't put them up at your house, you bring them from the hotel into your home and have dinner and invite people who you think would be interested. It's a wonderful social event, and it works out very well. Of course, one of the fringe benefits is that when you go to their country, they are anxious to see you and repay you for the courtesy you gave them in San Diego. It's got everything going for it. It's a fail-safe proposition.

**SW:** It's still going, still active?

**DP:** Oh yes, as we speak. We are not sure, because the USIA has been threatened to be cancelled by the new regime, but it hasn't happened yet. The budget has been cut back, and we would be in bad shape if we had to pick up the cost of housing. We made a wonderful arrangement with a couple of hotels, but they would say, "Yeh, we'll put these people up at the government rate" (which is a lot lower than the conventional rate) but to take these people in you have us as your headquarters and if you have any needs, lunches or breakfasts, we'll throw it in.

**SW:** Hopefully, that's bread cast on the waters.

**DP:** That's exactly what it comes to and, sure enough, many of our members, when they travel, have looked up these people, and by and large, are warmly accepted because we cast our bread on the water.

**SW:** Can you think of any economic advantage that has developed out of this for San Diego?

**DP:** It's been mostly on a governmental level. We've found specialists in police work or specialists in hospital work, but mostly in welfare and I would say the legal profession and the welfare operations of various governments have been of great interest to these visitors.

**SW:** Probably the border problems too.

**DP:** Yes, border has been a big magnet for these people. They want to know how we handle our immigration problems and, of course, we have a lot of customs and immigration, people that are willing and able to talk to these people when they come.

**SW:** I don't know how it is in the orient, but when I was living in Europe, this was a problem.

**DP:** Look at France and Algeria.

**SW:** Exactly and they really have far less patience than we do.

**DP:** Shoot them?

**SW:** Not exactly-that, but they didn't get very far.

**DP:** We are an enlightened nation, whether we like it or not.

**SW:** You were on the ground floor of this International visitors Council?

**DP:** It was already four or five years old when I was introduced to it, and then I got on the Board and then president of it.

**SW:** The International Visitors Council of San Diego was funded by the U. S. Information Agency. I just wanted to get that straight. It is still going on now? **DP** Yes, it is.

**SW:** Do you know of any of their new projects or groups of people they are bringing in this year?



**DP:** No, I really don't. I've lost touch over the last year.

**SW:** You did serve as President?

**DP:** Yes, I did -- two terms.

**SW:** Another thing I wanted to ask about was your directorship of the Export Council. That's not the whole name.

**DP:** It's the District Export Council of San Diego and it's made up of exporters who have business abroad. It is a civilian arm for the Dept. of Commerce. Our biggest success there was the relationship between the Dept. of Commerce and the Dept. of Census, the Census Bureau, because we were being, and still are to some extent, blanketed on our census reports, our economic exports through the Port of Los Angeles. We had to fight a terrible fight to get the Census Bureau to move us out and get us into what we thought of as the answer -- postal zones that were more representative of the origin of the exports. Our people are manufacturers. Our local exporters are people who are in the export trade and they were being shortchanged. The records were not properly kept and that was our real mission for a long time. I don't know what we're doing now because the Dept. of Commerce is drawing back and is threatened with closing now, so we are just laying back.

**SW:** Are you still active?

**DP:** Well, I'm a member of the board. Still a member of the Export Council.

**SW:** You really don't know where it's going to go now?

**DP:** No, we don't because it's Washington's decision as to whether it will continue (1996).

**SW:** Did you have anything on the agenda before all of these cutbacks started? I mean, do you and the Council have an idea of where you would like to go?

**DP:** Well, we would like more publicity and more record keeping showing the involvement of San Diego County in the export business. We have Caterpillar here, we've had Convair, and we've had Rohr and some of the heavy industry, but also we have the "think tanks" and a lot of medical development. They have come to us in the past -- biotech industries -and asked us for direction. We have been the pipeline for advising when and where in the world are the exhibitions or trade shows they should be involved in, what would be available.

**SW:** So, you are acting almost like a Chamber of Commerce, but for people who export from our area?

**DP:** Yes, with an axe to grind. It's been very interesting and some of our own people have grown considerably since their involvement in it. We've had people who are trade show experts and know how to advise these people. Some have even written books on how to conduct yourself abroad at a trade show and the pitfalls and the customs, etc. We've been supported by several big legal firms in San Diego that have specialists in export trade on their team. We help them and they help us.

**SW:** As the biotech industry increases -- and it's been forecast that biotech, the health industry, will grow. I don't know much about the high tech industry here, although we do have Qualcomm and several other high tech oriented companies, but as these businesses grow, obviously there's going to have to be more export to keep them going. That's where you all are sitting, right in that niche? Will you have the funding?

**DP:** Yes, if we have the funding. We're the pipeline for the connections with Dept. of Commerce's efforts. The Dept. of Commerce in its Export Trade Division has put a lot of effort into this. We do have trade shows around the world and a lot of these guys grump because the U.S. is always in the back room, not a public or private industry. The Dept. of Commerce hasn't had the funds to help us as much as some of our friendly competitors. The aviation business, except Boeing, is a wonderfully shining example of what it should be in the international trade. It's been an uphill battle, and it's been a challenge, but I think that San Diego itself has made a mark, especially on record keeping at the Census Bureau on true export trade figures.

**SW:** Then we're not just a part of Los Angeles? Of course, that's always been our problem.

**SW:** You've retired from almost everything, but you are still active on the Council and you are still the Consul for El Salvador. What else are you doing with your time?

**DP:** Well, seeing you.

**SW:** I'm going to put you to work at the Historical Society, but do you have other interests that have an impact on San Diego that you can now pursue?

**DP:** Well, I'd love to get more involved, as Kay is, in the Historical Society.

**SW:** And we would love to have you involved.

**DP:** I'm saving room, as it were, for that.

**SW:** We're delighted to hear that. Before we close -- I heard you talking about Mr. Hall, your father-in-law, and that wonderful episode during W.W. II. Tell me again how Mr. Hall helped the Japanese in San Diego who were being interned.

**DP:** Well, it's a wonderful story. Edward C. Hall, my father-in-law, was born about 1892 or something. His father, Michael Hall, was a real wham blaster. He grew up in Tioga County, New York, upstate New York, and at an early age, because he married a Methodist lady from upstate, he got drummed out of his own Catholic family. As a young man he was a train butcher. He would sell stuff to people.

**SW:** I don't think people know, but I know because my father used to talk about the train butcher. It doesn't mean they were running up and down the aisle slicing up meat. They were people who sold sandwiches, candy and drinks on trains.

**DP:** He graduated from that and got into selling wholesale lots of produce out of upstate New York. He tried to sell them down south and moved up and down the east coast selling things. Somehow he ended up in the land boom in Oklahoma, and while he was there, he got a stake and bought some property.

He was trying to build an inventory of land but he learned his trade in New York as a candy butcher and as a candy maker. Now, whether he got this from his father, I don't know. He really didn't have a father. He had mothers and aunts who raised him. We still have some big copper kettles that he had.

He would move around and being in the train business too he could move his kettles with him. He'd set them up anywhere. During the land boom in Oklahoma there were thousands of people ready to go out on this big charge to get land. He was sitting around a week or two beforehand making and

selling candy, which is amazing. When he got to Coronado, California, he set up a candy shop to support himself while he was out picking up tax liens on property and so forth...

**SW:** He was selling the candy and putting the money into real estate.

**DP:** Into real estate and it worked pretty well for him. There were good times and bad times. You'll see in your pictures here all those "For Sale" signs. M. Hall would always be one of the sellers. He was a fascinating guy. He made friends early on with Mr. and Mrs. Asakawa who were brought from Japan in 1914 to operate the Japanese Tea House during the first exposition. Mr. Asakawa was raising a family and doing very well with his tea house, but he was also a nursery man, and I think he was teaching his sons the nursery business. He ended up, when the tea house closed down, as a nurseryman, like Kate Sessions. I don't know what their relationship was but it would be fascinating to research the relationship between Mr. Asakawa and Kate Sessions.

**SW:** Because they were both operating at the same time?

**DP:** And in the same part of town. Mr. Asakawa would acquire property and Mr. M. Hall was the guy who was feeding it to him, selling property and giving him breaks on land that wasn't developed yet. Mr. Asakawa would set up a nursery. This was in the area of Tecolote Canyon and the Mission Valley mouth down in Old Town. This went on and Ed, who was M. Hall's son, took over the business. He was the real estate operator when poor old M. Hall ran out of steam and died. Ed Hall had this M. Hall Company, and he had all the records of Asakawa because M. Hall had sold him all the property. Then came this crazy December 7, 1941 when General DeWitt who was the western guru for the U. S. Army, said "We're going to confiscate all the property of all the Japanese. We're going to send them out into the camps". This came up quickly, within 48 hours or 50 hours.

**SW:** I think it never would have gotten a toehold, if it hadn't come up quickly and in the middle of a panic. I don't know how it could have.

**DP:** It was total reaction, and it was bad news. The thing that triggered Ed Hall was that he said, "Hey, these are my people, these are my lessees, they are on my property. If they are not on my property, they are paying me for the property they've bought from me". Well, anyway, that Sunday morning, he grabbed up a bunch of quit claim deeds from his desk. He went out to Mr. Asakawa, the old man, Moto was his son. He said "Here, sign these".

Mr. Asakawa signed over all this property to Ed Hall Co. and then they were taken away. Ed could put it out to the U.S. Government or whoever was in charge of the County, that this was his property now, and they couldn't take it away.

**SW:** I have been so anxious to verify this because we had been told that many people living here in San Diego did either take over or somehow managed to hold on the property of the Japanese citizens to give it back to them when they got back, keeping it out of the hands of the speculators. Of course, there was a great deal of that going on apparently.

**DP:** Well, this fortunately didn't happen in this case. Ed said "I'll take your car too", and he took Moto's 1940 Chevrolet automobile and kept it during the whole war. As soon as the family came back to San Diego and the war was over, Ed just gave him back the quit claim deeds. He was given a beautiful Christmas tree every year as long as he lived -- he and Mrs. Hall. That was the thanks he got from the family. There were other transactions after that, of course, but that was the thing he thought he should do, and he did it quickly and saved the day.

**SW:** I was so delighted to find out that more and more San Diego people did not go along with the internment. It was not the desire of most people in the country. Yet, I can see, because of the panic, how it happened.

**DP:** I think I was 19 and living in the fraternity house at Berkeley. We had soldiers on the floor and searchlights outside on the lawn. That was that morning we heard about it, and I remember, to my credit, that I was totally incensed when this word came across, as mad as we were at the Japs, that they were going to run the locals out. I had grown up with too many of them in my neighborhood in Pacific Beach where they were farmers and at school, and I really was incensed. This was the wrong move, and what in the hell were they doing? I got upset.

**SW:** And yet I think there are people today who simply still agree with it. David Porter-68

**DP:** Well, that was a very primitive move. There are a lot of things we've been ashamed of through the years. That was one of them.

**SW:** Well, David I really want to thank you on behalf of the Society for this informative interview. It will be a valuable source for our researchers.

***END OF INTERVIEW***

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