

BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY: Hannibal M. Tavares

Hannibal M. Tavares was born September 24, 1919 in Makawao, Maui. He was educated at Lincoln, Roosevelt and Maui High Schools, and the University of Hawaii, San Diego State College, and American Management Association, School of Management, New York.

Tavares was captain of the Maui County Police Department from 1941 to 1948. He was a teacher at Maui High School for three years, then worked as the community coordinator and public relations aide for Hawaiian Commercial and Sugar Company for the following nine years. From 1961 to 1972, he was the legislative analyst and public affairs coordinator for Hawaii Sugar Planters Association. He then became the vice president for community relations for Alexander & Baldwin, Inc. for two years.

A Republican party member since 1941, Tavares was elected mayor for the County of Maui in 1979. He served until 1990.

Tape Nos. 17-77-1-91, 17-78-1-91 and 17-79-1-91

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

Hannibal Tavares (HT)

January 23, 1991

Kula, Maui

BY: Warren Nishimoto (WN) and Daniel W. Tuttle, Jr. (DT)

Joy Chong: The following is an interview with Hannibal Tavares. It took place on Kula, Maui, on January 23, 1991. Interviewers are Dan Tuttle and Warren Nishimoto. This is videotape number one.

WN: The interviewers are Warren Nishimoto and Dan Tuttle.

Well, Mr. Mayor, why don't we start by having you tell us when you were born and where you were born.

HT: Okay. I was born on a Thursday [Wednesday] morning at five o'clock—I understand it was storming outside—and this was September 24, 1919. And I was born—if I can point to that house, that bedroom. (Laughs) That was the beginning of Hannibal Tavares. I was the fifth child of Manuel [A.] and Maclinna Estrella Tavares. Had four sisters above me. There was Helen, Margaret, Edith, Sophie. Then four-and-a-half years later, there was Hannibal. Interesting story about how I got my name, if you want to go into something like that.

WN: Sure.

DT: Yes. Somebody crossed the Alps or something like that?

HT: Well, Dad was a self-educated man. His brother was Antone [F.] Tavares, who became a senator, a lawyer, and all that sort of thing. Maybe you heard of Nils's [i.e., Cyrus Nils Tavares, former district judge] father. Well, he was the youngest brother. And my father had said to Antone that, "You will go to school as far as you will go and I will put you through school, with the understanding that every day when you come home from school, you will teach me what you learned in school that day." And that was the arrangement these two brothers had. So Dad learned to read and write, and he was a very intelligent man. He was a whiz in mathematics where none of us could match him in math; he'd make us look silly in math.

Well, Dad learned to read, and he read everything he could get his hands on. About the time I came along, the story goes, he was reading about the Romans and the Carthaginians and Hannibal in the Alps, and he thought that Hannibal was quite a great militarist. Of course, the history shows that he was one of the greatest in his time. So he thought that would be a good

name for his son. (Chuckles) That's how I got named Hannibal. I've always joked about that. I said Dad was very prophetic because his son, Hannibal, naturally was born a Republican and led a lot of elephants over Haleakalā (chuckles) in my period of time as a party man and a politician. So that was our beginning.

Dad was a rancher and a businessman. He had some business property in Lower Pā'ia. Very successful. A wonderful man where he just had everything it takes to make a perfect father. Good sense of humor; very skillful in handling us, especially me because I caused a lot of problems (chuckles) all over the place, all the time.

But Dad built that house himself. It's a two-story house, as you can see, with seven bedrooms. It was one of the first houses to have two bathrooms indoors, plus the three-holer outside. (Chuckles) But he built that himself. He designed it. In fact the story was that he made a trip back to Portugal. On his way back, he stopped at New Bedford, Massachusetts and he saw a house like this, kind of a Cape Cod. He sketched it. When he came home, he drew that to scale using meat-wrapping paper and a yardstick, one-inch scale. And he designed that house, and with one helper, in about a year's time they put that house up. It stood there for a long time. It was taken down right after World War II. The military had taken over the house and, frankly, they ruined it. When I inherited it, I tried to see what it would cost to put it together. The cost was so prohibitive. I was a sergeant of [the Maui] police [department] at that time, and I couldn't afford to do all of that, so the house was taken down.

Well, my early school days were at Makawao School. I went there with what we call the receiving grade, actually it's the kindergarten and first grade. And then my dad died in 1926 when I was not quite seven years old. And my mother married again. Interesting story there, too, was that she married a man by the name of Joseph Oliveira from Honolulu, who was a very good friend of my father.

And I still recall, I can remember the conversation—he was on his deathbed in Makawao, in the same bed that I was born in. And he was telling my mother that she was still quite young—she was twenty-four years younger than my dad. And he was telling her that it would be important that she would marry again and find a good husband and a good father for their children. I know Mother was quite upset with that conversation, but Dad was a very persistent guy, and he said, “I want you to listen carefully what I have to say about this.” And he spoke in English. They spoke Portuguese and English, but mostly with us they spoke English because they wanted to learn English from us. And sad to say, we didn't learn Portuguese too well.

But anyhow, this conversation went on and he told my mother, “You know, I know such a man who is single. He's fifty years of age. He's got a good job in Honolulu. He's taking care of his parents. He's a very nice man.” My mother had met him once before on a trip that they both made to Honolulu. Well, to make a long story short, that's the guy that she married. And I remember when that first happened, I gave my stepfather a bad time. I was obstinate. I said there could be only one father for me, and no one could take his place. And here this man was trying his best to win me over in every which way, and I just gave him a heck of a bad time.

Well, as time went by, I realized how fortunate we were to have a man like him for our

stepfather. So he and I became close over the years. And I know, as I got older in high school and so forth, he would introduce me to his friends, and he would say, "This is my son, Hannibal." But he wouldn't mention my last name. And so people said, "Oh! Glad to meet you, Hannibal Oliveira." And I would not correct them. I'd let it go. And you know, I'd see a twinkle in his eye every time I'd do that. So he and I became very close. Oddly enough, my four sisters all got married in a period of two years. We were all living in Honolulu, in Punchbowl. And they all got married in two years' time. So there I was, the only guy at home now with my father—my stepfather—and mother. So he and I had to take care some of the chores around the house. My mother would say, "I'm going to do the cooking and you will do the dishwashing," and so forth. So my stepfather and I would end up doing the dishes every night. And I remember we'd talk about all kinds of things. He was just a wonderful guy, easy person to like. So we talked about all kinds of things, and one day I remember saying to him—I used to call him "Pa." "You know Pa, I could never understand how you, a successful bachelor for fifty years, married a widow with five kids." I could never understand that.

You know what his answer was? He looked at me and said, "Your father made me do it." Just like that.

That stopped—I never broached that question anymore. That was (chuckles) enough for me. But he and I became very close. But my dad gave me a tremendous heritage. He brought us up in such a way that there was a lot of love in our . . .

(Tape interrupted by static, then resumes.)

HT: Mother and Dad were devout Catholics. And whether we wanted to or not, we went to church every Sunday. And when Manuel Tavares and his clan would come in, we'd take up a whole pew. There'd be five kids and my mother and father. And we had a very wonderful life.

DT: He was born in Portugal, was he?

HT: He was born in the Azores [Islands]. My grandparents came over to do the contract with the [sugar] plantation here on Maui. And I guess they were contracted to what they called Maui Agricultural Company, MA Company, which later on became part of the A&B [Alexander & Baldwin] family. So he worked as a laborer in the fields. My father was twelve years old when they arrived here with their five children—four boys and a girl, in their case. Dad was a husky guy at twelve years of age, and he went out and worked side by side with my grandfather in the fields. That's on my father's side.

On my mother's [Estrella] side, my grandparents also came from the same island of Saint Michael, or San [São] Miguel, and the town was Britannia with a lot of French influence. Their settlers from France had come over to this place on this Portuguese island.

So Dad worked on the plantation for a while and later on decided to go into business for himself. And the Azores is noted for its dairy business. Almost everybody there has milking cows. And they use a co-op system where big farmer, small farmer, you had two cows, you'd milk them every day and you'd take them to the processor and sell the milk to the processor. So the dairy business was the main business in Portugal where my father came from. So he started a small dairy in Pukalani [Maui]. And the small dairy became a large dairy [Pukalani

Dairy & Pineapple Company]. And he did very well and invested his money in a ranch [Kama'ole Ranch]. He and his brother were together in many things like that. So we had a very good life.

Dad got hurt on the ranch one day. They were branding cattle. And he had lassoed a calf and had its legs secured and ready to put the iron on it. The calf gave a kick and threw my dad off balance and he fell very hard on a big rock. He hit his chest right on the rock. And later on the doctor said that developed into a heart problem, and he died from angina pectoris—enlargement of the heart. He was only fifty-eight years old when he died. That was practically the end of the world to us. It was a real traumatic experience when Dad died. He was a very, very popular person.

I'll never forget the funeral; it was right from the house. And as the hearse reached the cemetery in St. Joseph's Church [also known as Makawao Catholic Church], about, oh, a mile, mile and a half away, the cars still hadn't left our yard in the procession. It was the biggest funeral they'd ever seen in Upcountry here. Dad was a very well-liked person.

DT: He never participated in politics per se . . .

HT: Well, he did—in a funny way, you know, that's an interesting thing, too, because as my uncle Antone grew a little older, he ran for office, and my dad was his campaign manager. And then years later when his son Hannibal runs for office, Antone's son, Bill, was my campaign manager.

DT: Yeah, that's right (laughs).

HT: Yeah, kind of a--you know, there's a lot of things like that of interest.

WN: What party label was your . . .

HT: Was always Republican, yeah. We had many, many meetings in that house there with my uncle and his workers. At that time, the upcountry vote was a sizeable vote. And so we had a lot of meetings up in my dad's house. And then later on, kind of go full circle here, I come along and become the politician on that side of the family. My cousin Bill William [Tavares] is my campaign manager. The company that my grandfather came from Portugal to work for [Alexander & Baldwin], I ended up working for and became a corporate vice president of that same company.

DT: But you were not exactly a corporate Republican, though, were you? I mean . . .

HT: I was a maverick.

DT: Your roots were elsewhere, they were not in the developers of the world. They were . . .

HT: At that time, almost everybody was a Republican. But Uncle Antone was a very intelligent person, highly respected in the community. He ran for the [territorial] house of representatives back in the early 1900s, and then he became a [territorial] senator for several terms. So he was very active in politics. He was one of these guys that kind of did it his way, you know. He was not an establishment Republican. I guess neither am I. But Uncle Antone

cut quite a wide path in his political life, and my father was right there with him.

WN: Was the Portuguese community—the Upcountry Portuguese community—pretty much Republican in those days?

HT: It was in those days, and then they became very strong Democrats after that. Harold [W.] Rice, I guess, was one of them. You know more about this than I do, Dan, but when Harold Rice started building up the Democrat party, a lot of his Democrats were disgruntled Portuguese and a lot of Hawaiians. Hawaiians and Portuguese, especially, were the backbone of the party here on Maui. That's why you have the [Elmer] Cravalhos, and the [John] Pireses and several other Portuguese who were very active as Democrats. So there was kind of a division for a long time in Portuguese Democrats and Portuguese Republicans, and that still is the case today.

DT: Well, back in those days, even before you were growing up, the Democratic party was really a sort of a facade or this sham.

HT: Yeah, yeah.

DT: There really wasn't any depth to the party until, probably until almost after World War II, right?

HT: After World War II, then things really began to change and they came into their own, as you know. So for that time prior to that, the Republicans were really the only political entity on Maui. It began to grow on O'ahu and other places. But after World War II was when the Democrats really started growing rapidly and became the power.

DT: You know, this is how a number, I guess, of your people—Toshi [Toshio] Ansai might be another example of a person who became a Republican and stayed a Republican . . .

HT: Yeah, yeah.

DT: . . . even though he certainly wasn't (tape inaudible) or anything of that sort.

HT: No, it had nothing to do with that. I think in our case, it was the fact that my uncle became a politician and my father was right there with him, so they dealt with the Republican party. But both my uncle and my father were considered kind of mavericks, because they were not the plantation-type Republicans. At that time my father had left the plantation. My grandparents were passed away. So they were on their own. They were independent, small businessmen. And they just did their own thing, but they were Republicans by label.

WN: I know, in interviewing Toshi Ansai, he was a Roman Catholic. I was just wondering, was there any kind of link between the religion and the Republican . . .

HT: I don't think so. Toshi becoming a Roman Catholic has a separate history, because you know, most of the Japanese here were Buddhists. Like my in-laws were Buddhist and my wife [Harriet Y. Tanaka Tavares] was a Buddhist and then she became a Catholic. But we'll get to her later. A very important part of my life (chuckles). But anyhow, yeah, I think Toshi was one of the few Orientals who became Roman Catholic. There were a few who became

Protestants, but most of them remained Buddhists, as they are today.

WN: Okay, but you were talking about your happy childhood on Maui. How would you compare it with Honolulu when you moved when you were eight years old?

HT: Well, really, moving to Honolulu, if you can just picture the scene, was traumatic. Here I had this big place up here in Makawao, big house, big yard. What my dad did, he had about four-and-a-half acres of land in Makawao, right on Makawao Avenue. And he had fenced off a full acre of that property so that he could have our dogs running at large within this yard, because Dad would not chain a dog. He would not do that. He said if you cannot have an adequate place for your dogs to roam around in and grow up in, don't have a dog. But he loved animals, all kinds of animals, so we had two collies. And those dogs had the run of this whole acre, and Dad had grassed it with what we call *mānienie* grass or Bermuda grass, planted a lot of trees. It was a very, very pleasant place. And so all of my playing was done within the confines of the one-acre playground, and half of the neighborhood would come over there to play with me. And so it was that kind of a life that we had—you know we had the toys and all of that bit. And so my early life was a very, very pleasant life.

And after my dad died, just like our world came to an end. So here, about two years later, the whole family moves to Honolulu. My stepfather had a quarter acre of land on Punchbowl, on Lisbon and Lusitana [streets]. Now you can't be much more Portuguese than that, to live on Lisbon Street . . .

JC: Can we make a stop and go on from here? And I have to change tapes.

WN: Okay.

(Taping stops, then resumes.)

JC: This is a continuation of the Hannibal Tavares interview. This is videotape number two.

WN: Tape two with Hannibal Tavares. We were talking about your experiences moving to Honolulu.

HT: Yes. After my dad passed away and then my mother remarried, the whole family moved down to Honolulu. That was quite a traumatic experience for all of us. 'Cause here we went from this big property in Makawao and country-style living, right practically down into the city, because my stepfather's property was on Lisbon and Lusitana Street. And he had about a quarter of an acre, and in that quarter acre, he had four houses that he had built. One we lived in, and three he rented. So the house that we moved into had two bedrooms and one screened porch we called the sleeping porch. Well, I had four sisters. The four sisters stayed in one bedroom and I stayed in the sleeping porch, and my stepfather and mother in the other room. I was a very unhappy child. I guess I must have been about eight years old at the time, and here I am in the city that I didn't want to be in, living in very crowded circumstances compared to what I was accustomed to. So I was a very unhappy child. I stayed that way for a long time. I (chuckles) gave my parents a bad time.

Fortunately, I loved to read, and one of the things that I discovered within the first week was the Library of Hawai'i [now the Hawai'i State Library], which was right where it is now, on

[South] King Street. And I used to practically live in that library. And that helped a lot.

I went to Ka'ahumanu School and later on to Lincoln [Elementary] School, which at that time was called an English standard school. And it was supposed to be difficult to get into the school, but some of my friends had urged me to go to Lincoln. They wanted me to be on their athletic team. I was a fairly good athlete. And so I went down one Saturday to take this exam to get into this so-called great school, Lincoln School. I went through a whole Saturday of exams. The exam consisted of academics and then oral. And after you're through with all of that, you come in for an interview with the principal.

The principal was Eva Hendry. I'll never forget her; she's quite a character. She's passed on, of course, but she was quite a character. I walked in there—she had all the stuff in front of her, and she was shaking her head like this, you know. Then she kind of sat down and she looked at me. “Well Hannibal, I don't know what we're going to do with you.” She said, “You scored one of the highest we've ever seen in the academics, but your oral English is hopeless. It's atrocious.” She's using all these words that I didn't understand. She said, “You just have a very unusual type of English.”

I said, “Well, I guess that's Makawao Portuguese English, you would call it.”

She said, “Yeah, it certainly is. You simply have not met the standard for Lincoln. However, we're going to make an exception in your case, because you did so well in the academics. We think that we can teach you how to speak good English here, if you will promise us that you will do your best to learn good English, and you will not teach the others your Makawao style of English.” (DT chuckles.)

And I said, “Okay, I promise.” That's how I got into Lincoln by the skin of my teeth. But fortunately, there was a teacher there by the name of Ruth Lindsey, who had been in Maui for a long time and knew the family. So she took a special interest in me, and used to work with me during recess and after school and helped me a lot. So by the time I finished Lincoln, my English wasn't that bad. And by the time I got into Roosevelt [Intermediate and High School], well, I was a debater, an orator, and everything else, you know. Roosevelt, at that time started at the seventh grade and they went up through the twelfth. And later on [Robert Louis] Stevenson [Intermediate School] was organized, and then they [Roosevelt High School] went from sophomore to senior. I got a very, very good education at Roosevelt.

I came to Maui High School for one year, my junior year [1936], and that was a little unusual. My mother had this property in Lower Pā'ia that my dad had developed, and we had a number of tenants there. And these tenants simply were not paying their rent, and the collectors were not doing a very good job in collecting rent. So I told my mother one day, “Let me go up there. I'll live on the property and I'll collect the rent. I'll make them pay the rent.” So she was a little bit dubious about having me come up. I was a junior. I was older than my peers, because they had a stupid rule in those days that you could not be a first-grader unless you were actually six years old. My birthday was September 24. [When school started on] September 1, I was not quite six, so I lost a year. When I came up, finally convinced my mother to let me come up and manage the property—I was seventeen. So I came up and I lived in a little bungalow that we had on the property. And I collected the rent and everybody paid on time. I was a rugged kid in those days (laughs). If I said, “You pay the rent,” you pay the rent.

So that's how I went to Maui High that one year. And that was an interesting year in my life. I lived by myself. I cooked some of my meals. Some of my meals, I ate at Liberty Cafe, which was part of the property. So it was an interesting little interlude in my life.

But I graduated from Roosevelt and went to University of Hawai'i. And then later on to San Diego State College when the war [World War II] came along and many other things happened.

DT: You must have made a lot of friends in the process of that. Even though you said you were unhappy as an eight- or nine-year-old, you must have made a lot of friends as you grew up and into the high-school age.

HT: Yeah, I've always been kind of a people person. Back in even grammar school, I was involved in student government. In Roosevelt, I was in student government, also. I remember the assembly, and a lot of things like that happened. I've always loved people; I had a lot of friends. I had no problem getting elected in school.

So things began to change. I began to adjust to being in Honolulu, although in the back of my mind, someday I'm going to live on Maui. My sisters were just the opposite. They enjoyed being in the big city. They thought it was great to be in Honolulu, you know. And there were a whole lot of arguments at home about that. They just thought they would never move back to Maui, and they thought that I was stupid to want to come back to Maui and move backwards, you know, in their judgment, because they always thought that living in the city was great. So I adjusted in time and became a part of the city, but every chance I'd have, summertime, would come to Maui for a little vacation. But later on, as I got into high school, I was not able to do that, because we had to work every summer in the [pineapple] canneries. And I felt that was the only way I'd be able to save money to go to college. So every summer, from the time I was fifteen years old, we worked in the canneries in Honolulu.

I worked one year in the plantation fields here [Maui]. The one year that I came back for Maui High, I stayed the whole summer here and worked in the cane fields in Pu'unēnē. And then I went back and finished my senior year at Roosevelt. But let me tell you, that one year at Pu'unēnē was, again, another important part of my life, because that was hard work, much harder than working in the cannery.

DT: I was going to chide you. I can't imagine how you worked in the cannery, worked in the fields, and you still remained a Republican?

HT: (Laughs) Yeah. But it was so funny, because you know, we'd come in at Pu'unēnē, the labor truck would pick us up. I was living with a cousin in Wailuku, so the labor truck would come right down Main Street. And we'd meet at the corner of Main and Market, get on the Pu'unēnē HC&S [Hawaiian Commercial & Sugar Company] labor truck and come down to the labor station. The very first day I came down with my *kaukau* tin, you know. And we're sitting there, and a whole bunch of young fellows. Some are workers—student workers. The boss comes along, picks this guy, this guy, this guy, this guy. Get on the truck and head for the field.

We get out to the field and get off the truck, they said, "Okay, you have the pick, you got the shovel, and you're going to dig irrigation ditches." We had a supervisor, a *luna*, as we called

them, who's going to show us how to dig this ditch. And as I recall, the ditch had to be something like four feet wide and three feet or four feet deep. And I got the pick because I was a big guy, and I've never worked harder in my life than using that pick all day. My hands got all full of. . . . I thought I was a pretty tough kid, but I found out I wasn't so tough after all. But you know, a lot of pride---I wanted to quit; all of us wanted to quit. But you just don't. You know, you had pride in your job, and you're not going to appear to be a softy or a guy that couldn't take it, so you just made up your mind no matter how much it hurts, you're going to do it. Well, you know, like many other jobs, after about two weeks or so, you're right into it, and I became a pretty good ditchdigger. But I'll never forget, after doing this for about three weeks, we're back at the labor station, and boss comes along and he said, "Any of you guys here can drive the truck?"

Well, my hand went up; I'd never driven a truck in my life. I didn't even have a driver's license. I knew how to drive a car, but, boy, my hand went right up, "Yes sir!" I got called out of the line. (Chuckles) I'll never forget this guy, Jack [John] Walker, he was the superintendent.

He says, "Okay, this is your truck and this is your helper." The helper was an old-time Japanese man, I think he was in his sixties. And he said, "He will show you where to go, and your job will be to go to the camps and pick up the rubbish from the rubbish pits and take it down to the. . . ." They didn't call it the landfill then. They called it the dump. Okay, I get in this car and I---truck---and I start it up you know, the engine's going. And as soon as the superintendent walked away, I tried the gears to see which one made it go forward. Well, I found the right one to go forward, so we went creeping out of the garage and get to the first cane field road, and I turned down the road.

And my helper said, "No, no. This is not the place."

"I want to practice." So I went down this road, I was fooling around with the gears, which one was compound low. I'd heard all of this conversation, you know. I finally got the gear down into my mind. So we started going out to the first camp to pick up this rubbish from the rubbish pit. Well, I backed up to the pit all right and did that all right and stopped. And I know this helper of mine, he was really doubtful about me. He figured that I had pulled a fast one. He was watching me, you know, and seeing what I was doing. So we get out there and we're supposed to use pitchforks, and fork the rubbish, throw it into the car. So I let him go first, because he's been there, of course, he's an experienced guy. And boom, a whole big pile of rubbish went sailing into the truck. So I get in there, I put my fork in and I lift it up, it all falls on me, you see.

So he looked at me and he laughed. He said, "You don't know how to use a pitchfork?"

I said, "No. I don't know how. You teach me." So in a little while, you learn. Finally, we got this truck filled. And then he showed me how to get to the dump site. Okay, we get down there and there's other trucks there. I turn around and I back toward the pit, stop just in time. Then I don't know how to dump the damn thing. I'm looking all around, how do you make this bed go up, you know, look all around. Finally he points to the lever over there. I grab that lever and it starts going up, boom, boom, boom, boom, boom. Goes all the way. The rest was kind of automatic.

So the guys knew that I had pulled a fast one. By the time I got back to the garage, I was the last truck in the garage. And it was just about getting dark. I drove in the garage. You drive down this narrow driveway, then you have to reverse your truck into your parking stall. These smart guys over there had gotten me the stall next to [company president] Frank Baldwin's Buick red sedan, and I'm supposed to park between his car and the next truck. Well, this is going to be a real test. So I go out and slowly back up, back up, and all of a sudden I hear, "Bang!" Wow! I slam the brakes on, you know, and got out of the truck. I thought sure I rammed the boss' sedan. And here all these guys are laughing their guts out, because they had hit the side of my truck with their pitchfork, getting a big kick out of that. I really got my initiation right there.

But I tell you, that job was a very important job to me, because it made me realize what hard work is. Started with the ditches and then, finally, getting to be a truck driver was really something of a great promotion. The most important promotion of my life was a ditchdigger to truck driver. That was the greatest thing that ever happened.

DT: Important to use your head, too, in the process.

HT: (Laughs) That was my first big lie. I certainly was not George Washington. But I spent the whole summer, the rest of the summer doing that, then I went back to school at Roosevelt.

WN: Back to the soft cannery.

HT: Oh, yeah, the cannery was soft after that. Duck soup.

DT So you went to UH [University of Hawai'i] for what, one year or two years . . .

HT: I went to UH for one year [1938], my freshman year. And then from there, I went on---my sister had moved to San Diego, and we were on a summer trip with my parents, and I kind of fell in love with the place. And my sister offered to house me if I went to San Diego State College. My parents were not too happy about that, but I wanted to do it. I wanted that experience up there. So I went to San Diego for a year [1939], and that was the end of my formal education. After that was education in many other ways.

DT: Interested in anything in particular at the university here in Hawai'i or in San Diego or . . .

HT: No. I found that the studies at University of Hawai'i were very, very good and I had no trouble transferring into San Diego. In fact, I found San Diego a little bit easier than UH. UH was tough. There was a lot of competition at UH, but it was fine.

Then about that time was when they had this. . . . This was the year 1940, I guess, '40-'41. That was when they passed the compulsory military law that every—I think it was just boys at that time, every man at that time from eighteen years on [to thirty-five years old] would have to give one year of military service. That was before the war. The war in Europe had already started. But I guess part of [President Franklin D.] Roosevelt's preparedness program was to start training these young kids. So they had the draft and we all had draft numbers. And then if your number was called, if you were still in school, you could finish that semester and then go do your one year.

Well, I had done a lot of ROTC [Reserve Officers' Training Corps] at Roosevelt and the University of Hawai'i, and I was already a sergeant in high school. So I decided to come back to Hawai'i when my number was called. I wanted to serve where my friends were. 'Cause in the back of my mind, I said if I go in for that one year compulsory, I'm going to try to become an officer as soon as I can and just bear in and do it. That was my plan. But when I got over here, my friends told me, "Hey, wait until you're called. Don't volunteer." I was going to volunteer and get it done. They said, "No, they got all these jobs at the Pearl Harbor [Naval Shipyard] that are paying good money. So a lot of us guys are working at Pearl Harbor, so why don't you go down there and work until your number's called?"

I said, "Well, that sounds like a pretty good idea. I could make some money, have some fun in the meantime . . ."

DT: So you went to work . . .

HT: So I went and worked at Pearl Harbor [in 1940]. I started out as a timekeeper and ended up as a foreman of a maintenance crew.

DT: Okay, we'll stop there and pick it up on the next tape.

HT: Okay (chuckles).

END OF SIDE ONE

SIDE TWO

JC: This is a continuation of the Hannibal Tavares interview. This is videotape number three.

WN: Tape number three with Hannibal Tavares. Okay, we're talking about your Pearl Harbor experience.

HT: So I did go to Pearl Harbor and, as I had said, I ended up as the foreman of a maintenance crew. And about that time, my draft number was called. So I went in to see my boss to tell him that I had to leave to answer the call. And he told me, "I'm sorry, but you're frozen to your job. Defense work is essential, and by military order you are frozen to your job. We can't let you go."

Well, that was something I hadn't planned on. Wow, that's really going to upset all of my plans of finishing my one year and going back to college and all of that. I said, "Okay," and went back to my job. Well, later on, a few days later, I had met one of my colleagues; we were friends from the University of Hawai'i. And he was in a police uniform. I said, "Jimmy, what are you doing?"

He said, "Well, I became a police officer. I wanted to go to law school. But I can't afford it, so I'm going to be a police officer for a while and learn something about law enforcement and save some money, then go back to school." He said, "Isn't that what you wanted to do?"

I said, “Well, yeah, I kind of had that at the back of my mind, but heck, I’m at Pearl Harbor and I’m stuck there.”

He said, “No you’re not, because police work is also essential. So if you get appointed into the police force, Pearl Harbor will have to let you go.”

I said, “Well, how do we do that?”

Well, you have to take the civil service exam and all of that, which I finally did. We walked into this examination room at the University of Hawai‘i. There must have been about 250 people there vying for thirty spots in the police force. And so they gave us this exam which was a tough exam. I was surprised that the exam was that hard. It was something like the university entrance exam. It had all the different sections. Well, fortunately, I did very well in that and I came in number one, as a matter of fact, in the exam. So I got selected to join the police force, and Pearl Harbor had to let me go. So I started my police training with the Honolulu Police Department.

The training was done all at the University of Hawai‘i. I think it was two months of training before you finally hit the road. And you started your classes at 7:30 in the morning and you ended about 7:00 at night. It just was a very intensive course; a very good course. Looking back now, it was an excellent, excellent course. So I finished that all right and we had graduation exercises, and I was number one in the class.

So I got my first call—that was to pound the beat at Hotel [Street] and River Street. That’s where they sent all the big guys. And again, you know, my being big was not so much of a plus. You (chuckles) got all the rough assignments. So Hotel Street was rough. There was a lot of military [personnel] there at the time and we had our hands full as police officers there.

Well, [Police] Chief [George] Larsen, [Jr.], was the chief on Maui. He had been [a] captain [and chief] of detectives, Honolulu, became the Maui first chief of police [in 1939], when Maui went from the sheriff system to the civil service police system and merit system. He saw my name someplace in this story about the graduations and, “Hey, this guy Hannibal Tavares, is he part of the Tavares clan on Maui?”

“Yeah. He’s a Makawao boy.”

He writes me a letter. Said wouldn’t I rather be a policeman on Maui than in Honolulu? I said, “Oh yes, I sure would.”

So that’s how I ended up on Maui. So I joined the Maui police force in August of 1941, before the war started. So I didn’t have to go through any training there; I went to the beat directly. My beat was pounding Market Street, which I did for about two months and then became what we call a motor patrolman. And then I was assigned to the Pā‘ia district as a motor patrolman.

On December 7, a Sunday, I was patrolling my beat near Nashiwa Camp on Baldwin Avenue, the plantation area, when Pearl Harbor was attacked and all this stuff started coming over the commercial radio. And you know, we didn’t know what was going on. Everybody was in shock. Most of us were taken by surprise. Maybe some others knew, but we didn’t and we

weren't quite sure what would happen. So we---about four of us single guys went directly down to the chief's office to volunteer to fight for our country. And we got sent back to our beats. He said that, "You guys are frozen to your job by military order." All the police officers were frozen to their jobs. "We need policemen as well as we need soldiers, so you guys are trained to be policemen and that's what you're going to do." So back to our beats we went.

But prior to that, while I was still at the University [of Hawai'i], I wanted to mention the fact that I got to know Sparky [Spark M. Matsunaga].

DT: Yeah, I wanted to get that in here.

HT: Yeah, I got to know Sparky quite well. He and I were both in the same Teachers' College, because I thought maybe I'd start off as a teacher and then see what would happen later on. Well, Sparky and I became good friends, and he was a brilliant student, very good. He and I were competitors. And I liked him a lot, and so that whole year, he was part of my close friends. Then when I went to San Diego State [College], I kind of lost track of Sparky until many years later when we caught up again in politics.

DT: I'll bet you did.

HT: He was a big wheel in the [territorial] house [of representatives], and I was a lobbyist, but that's kind of getting ahead of the story.

DT: I think you mentioned when you were in the Honolulu Police Department, you ran into another person who became a political figure of sorts.

HT: Oh yeah, right. My captain was John A. Burns.

DT: Okay. (Chuckles)

HT: And John Burns was stone-faced at the time, too. He was the strictest captain on the force. A very outstanding person. All of the officers had a lot of respect for John Burns. And his brother, Ed [Edward J. Burns], was also on the force. But I didn't get that closely acquainted with him [John Burns] because, you know, patrolmen don't get that close to captains. But I got to hear him talk to us many times. I would see him all the time. And boy, you'd never forget him in uniform. He was ramrod, just as straight and military as could be. He already had his gray hair. You know, very outstanding person. And he would talk to the officers every now and then. He was very good. Later on he becomes governor [1963-74].

I'll never forget a little sequel to this. I became active in politics, and he and I met at the airport on Maui one day. He said, "You know, Hannibal, I bet any money, when you go into the voting booths and vote, you still vote for your old captain, don't you?" (Chuckles)

I said, "Well, who knows?"

(Laughter)

HT: But anyhow, that's how I ended up in the Maui police force [1941-48]. And about February

[1942], they promoted me to sergeant of police and made me the district commander of Hāna. I got transferred out to Hāna to take charge of the Hāna district. And it was kind of strange, because I'd been on the force only six months. And when I got called in by the chief, kind of a funny feeling because patrolling my beat, and my car number was car ninety-six. I get this call, "Car ninety-six, report to the chief's office, immediately." Rare that a patrolman gets called to the chief's office. If you've done anything wrong, you'd probably get as far as the lieutenant or captain, but not the chief.

"Oh, I wonder why is he calling me?" all the way down, barreling down to get to his office as soon as I can. All kinds of thoughts went through my mind. I was still single, you know, and I had girlfriends here and there. I thought well, maybe somebody's talking. (Chuckles) I get into the chief's office and I don't know if you ever knew Larsen. Larsen is a big, tough Swede and very competent guy, really a police officer's chief, just a great guy. I walk in.

"Sit down, Tavares," very gruffly. He's still there, working on some reports. So finally he takes his glasses off, puts his pen down, he looks at me, "Well, Tavares, you want to get married?"

I thought, wow, what an opening question, you know. Thoughts run through your mind a mile a minute. "Well, I guess eventually. Why do you ask?"

He said, "Well, because where I'm going to send you, you're going to need a wife."

"Where are you going to send me?"

"I'm sending you to Hāna, immediately. This afternoon, if possible, but not later than tomorrow."

Well, I had never been to Hāna. I knew where it was on the map, you get on Hāna Highway, you eventually get to Hāna. Why in the heck? Being assigned to Hāna was just like being sent out to Siberia. It's supposed to be punishment, you know. And he could see this look on my face, he said, "Well, you're going to be the district commander out there. You're going to be acting sergeant. You take the exam. You flunk that exam, I'll kill you. You pass that exam and then you'll be a full-fledged sergeant. In the meantime, you'll be acting sergeant with sergeant's pay and you're going to be the district commander."

I looked at him, I couldn't believe it. I said, "I'm not ready to be a sergeant. I'm still a rookie."

He said, "Well, it's going to take you about three-and-a-half hours to get out there." It was all dirt road in those days. "And in three-and-a-half hours, you're going to become a sergeant up here. You're going to think sergeant all the way, and when you get there, you're going to be the boss. You get that in your head, and that's what you're going to do."

I left that office kind of walking on air, you know. Off I go to Hāna. That same afternoon, I packed my stuff—I was living in that house up in one of the rooms—and packed all my stuff in my car and headed for Hāna. And I didn't know really where Hāna was. I knew where it was on the map.

DT: Headed for Hāna and . . .

HT: I headed for Hāna.

DT: And for marriage, too?

HT: Well, that's the next step.

DT: Okay.

(Laughter)

HT: 'Cause he told me I would need a wife. When I get out there, the first village I come to is Ke'anae, and I thought, "Hey, this is Hāna." So I stopped at the old Ke'anae store and there's a bunch of guys out there. I had my stripes sewn on by my aunt, and I had my gold braid. You know, I was a superior officer. Here, I was district commander. Big deal. I saw a little Chinese store, [M. S.] Ching [General] Store. I got out. A bunch of Hawaiian people were sitting around the store, you know, talking. By the time I got there, it must have been, oh, eleven o'clock in the morning. So I said, "Boy, this Hāna is a beautiful place."

This one guy, "Hāna? This not Hāna, this Ke'anae. Hāna, twenty miles more down the road."

I said, "Oh."

"Who you?"

I said, "Oh, my name is Sergeant Hannibal Tavares. I'm the new district commander of Hāna."

He said, "You the district commander, and you don't know where Hāna?"

(Laughter)

HT: So I got off to a beautiful start (laughs). Well, couple of more hours I was in Hāna. That became a great experience. Well, the district commander was entitled to a clerk-secretary, and there was a vacancy. And I spotted this little, cute girl down at the beach, and called for her. Asked her what her background was. And she had been to---she was a graduate of Mid-Pacific Institute in Honolulu. And she knew typing and clerical work, so I hired her. And this girl's name was Harriet Yoshiye Tanaka. Six months later, she was Mrs. Tavares.

(Laughter)

WN: The suspense is *pau*.

HT: The chief was right. I needed a wife, and Harriet—we've been married now for forty-eight years and she's been a wonderful, wonderful wife. She's been really the highlight of my life. Harriet has been with me through all kinds of experiences. And she's been right there, even-tempered, always encouraging, always loving, always caring. She's just been an outstanding

person.

We had three children. Two [were born] in Hāna, and then later on I was promoted to lieutenant and sent to Moloka‘i as district commander, and later on became captain over there. And so we had our last child—our son, Gary—was born on Moloka‘i. We stayed there for about three years, and I thought it was time for me to kind of shift gears in my career. I didn’t think I wanted to spend too many years on Moloka‘i. I wanted to do some other things.

So I came back and became a schoolteacher at Maui High [School in 1948]. I didn’t have my college credentials, but at that time, as you probably remember, they had what they called limited-term contracts, if you had what they thought might be equivalent. So when they looked at all of my stuff, the fact that I had had these different jobs and had been a police officer and I had been a superior officer, worked up the ranks, they felt that would be equivalent enough for me to get a limited-term contract.

So I got a limited-term contract, was assigned to Maui High where Mac [Malcolm] Clower was the principal. I don’t know if you knew Mac, but he was an outstanding guy. And he and I just hit it off, right off the bat. And he was so happy to have an ex-police captain on the faculty, that all discipline problems would be handled by me, and that there should be no trouble for him, as far as discipline was concerned. And that’s the way it worked out. It worked out very well. I became, besides the math teacher and the social studies teacher, I was also the boys’ advisor, the assistant football coach, the assistant track coach, and just kind of fit into the family.

Well, limited-term contract is up for review every year, and he kept on putting in for extensions. But when I got my third extension, there was some grumbling from some who had the full credentials. And what was I doing there without full credentials. But Clower’s feeling was that I was holding my own as a teacher. In fact, he thought that I was doing a pretty good job. But I didn’t feel right about it. I felt that it wasn’t quite fair for me to be up there as a high school teacher when others with full credentials, master’s degrees and so forth, would be eligible. So I started looking around.

That’s how I got hired [in 1951] by HC&S [Hawaiian Commercial & Sugar] Company. And I went into personnel. I was a personnel aide. And all the training and background I had was just perfect for that. And [John E.] “Stu” Milligan became my boss. You remember Stu. Stu became a member of the senate. [John Milligan served as a member of the house of representatives, 1959–64, not the senate.] Stu was a wonderful, wonderful boss, and he and I hit it off right away. So he promoted me to community coordinator of the plantation. In that capacity, I was the advisor—paid by the plantation—for all of the clubs and organizations on the plantation, in addition to some personnel work.

That became a natural for politics, because you roam the whole plantation and the community circle. I’d put in many hours a day, because most of these associations, of course, met after work. Lot of night work involved. But I really got to know the people. I’ve always been a people person. I love people. And I got very close to them. And before you know it, some of the rank-and-file people were suggesting that I run for office. “We can’t endorse you, because you’re a Republican, but we think you still should run for office. We’re going to vote for you anyhow.”

So that's how it happened. And in 1952, was the first time I ran for office. And the [Republican] party had urged me to run for the house of representatives. Maui had six representatives. Six to be elected. I came in number seven, but I was very close to number six. [In the 1952 general election, HT placed ninth out of twelve candidates.] In those days, I didn't know the first thing about campaigning or putting together any kind of an organization. All I did was to use the soapbox, wherever it was. And the party, in those days, we had these old-fashioned rallies. It was a matter of getting up on the platform and making your speech. And I enjoyed doing that. And so when they counted the votes that first election, I missed by a few votes. So I made up my mind that I was going to run again, but this time, I would run for the office that I wanted to run for. And that was a member of the [Maui County] board of supervisors. So two years later, in 1954, I ran for that office. And I was the only Republican elected, but I was second. [S.] George Fukuoka was first.

DT: Probably the world's worst year around as a Republican.

HT: That's right.

DT: Still made it.

(Laughter)

HT: I was the only Republican elected [to the Maui County board of supervisors] that year, but I was second out of [eight]. So, gee, I felt kind of good about that. And George Fukuoka was number one. But George and I had been classmates together at Maui High. And George, you know, became a senator and a judge, and so forth. We were good friends. So . . .

DT: We'll pick it up.

WN: Pick it up on the next tape.

(Taping stops, then resumes.)

JC: The following is a continuation of the Hannibal Tavares interview. This is videotape number four.

WN: Tape number four with Hannibal Tavares. We were talking about your first run for the—no, I'm sorry—we were talking about your race for the board of supervisors, right?

HT: Right.

WN: And George Fukuoka led the ticket.

HT: Yeah. That was my first run for the board of supervisors. First time running for office was in 1952. And I ran for the house [of representatives] and became [ninth] out of six [elected]. The following time, I decided to run for the board of supervisors, and I came second, and George Fukuoka was first. But it was interesting because—I was surprised, more surprised than anybody else, that I would do as well as that. But George and I got along real well on the board of supervisors there.

I have to tell you a story. The first meeting, I came to the meeting kind of loaded for bear. I was ready to go. So I got up to make some motions. So I made the first motion—Eddie [Edward F.] Tam [chairman and executive officer of the board of supervisors] was presiding—and everybody kind of looked at everybody else, not knowing whether they should second the motion of a Republican. So I turned over to George and, “Come on George, you know that’s a good motion. Let’s get that thing seconded so we can discuss it.”

George said, “Second.” So we had a good discussion and the motion passed.

Well, George and I worked very closely together on the board of supervisors. And they found out that my attitude was not partisan. The partisan thing was in the background. My feeling was we’re here to represent all of the people of this county, and I’m not going to let party lines make much difference. That got me in some trouble with the Republican party, but that was still my attitude and it always was. So it got to the point where I worked out very well with the majority of eight [the Democratic chairman and seven board members]. And it became issue-oriented, where some of the Democrats were disagreeing with each other. So it was not a party thing at all. It became issue-oriented and our discussions went along accordingly. I tried to be active, and George and I were very close, along with Goro Hokama. Goro Hokama was elected [to the board of supervisors] in that year for the first time, also. The youngest guy. I think Goro was only about twenty-five years old, or something like that when he first got elected. So we got along pretty well, and I enjoyed council work. I took some unpopular stands, but still did it.

WN: What kind of support did you get from the Republican party here?

HT: Well, I guess they didn’t have much choice.

(Laughter)

HT: When I ran the second time [in 1956], out of the clear blue sky I got endorsed by the ILWU [International Longshoremen’s and Warehousemen’s Union]. And that kind of surprised me, because I didn’t solicit it. And all of a sudden the newspaper comes out saying that ILWU had endorsed Hannibal Tavares. The press was after me immediately to find out what my reaction was. I chose my words kind of carefully. I thought, I said, “Well, my attitude is that in running for office, I’m looking for the endorsement of every voter. So whether the voter is a rank-and-file, or businessman, or an independent, it doesn’t matter. I’m looking for his endorsement, because I feel I’m fully qualified to serve all of the people in this county.” And that’s as much as I would say. Then later on I heard the union was wondering, did I say thank you or not?

(Laughter)

HT: We went on to that and got reelected. The second time, I came number one. George Fukuoka, in the meantime, ran for the [territorial] senate [in 1956] and got a very strong vote. George was always a strong vote-getter. So he got elected to. . . . I think he went to the senate. He didn’t go to the house first, did he?

DT: I think he went straight to senate. But I may be mistaken about that. [S. George Fukuoka was elected to the Maui County board of supervisors in 1954, and to the territorial senate in

1956.]

- HT: I think he went straight to the senate, so I was the number one vote-getter that year [in the board of supervisors]. But again, the only Republican.
- DT: Well, this illustrates one thing. And this is sort of a pause here, that you got your start really in a multi-member district race.
- HT: Right.
- DT: And you managed to work your way up from second to first or even from coming in [ninth], and then later coming in second and [then] first. Would this give you reason to reflect upon whether it might not still be good to have multi-member districts for our legislature in Hawai'i, as opposed to the single [member] district?
- HT: Boy, that's a good question. There are pros and cons both ways. Even here on Maui, I think that the next time the charter is up for review, there'll be a lot of debate about council districts, rather than the at-large system . . .
- DT: Really?
- HT: . . . kind of the unique system that we have here. So I don't know how that will go, but it will be discussed. I know that some people will lean toward the single-member district for the council as they did with the house.
- DT: Yeah, with the house and senate in Honolulu. Jack Burns, I know, was very much of a single-district man.
- HT: Yeah.
- DT: I used to debate this with him. Because I felt that in Hawai'i, certain uniqueness about Hawai'i, that if you had single-member districts, you would get people in and stay there for the rest of their lives, practically incumbency, because there would either be an economic factor which would be primary or an ethnic factor, in particular. And this is what worries me about our legislature today.
- HT: But even that is debatable . . .
- DT: Oh, it's a debatable question . . .
- HT: And I think that the . . .
- DT: . . . but since you're one who profited, let's say, from the single-member district.
- HT: Well, I guess it was just kind of a circumstance that I could get. . . . All my life, the work that I did in the school and as a police officer—I was a strict police officer, but I was fair, and I spent a lot of time at my work. I spent a lot of time with the young children as a police officer, 'cause my heart was there. And all of those things, you know, with the PTA [Parent-Teacher Association], and the Boy Scouts and the Girl Scouts, and church work and all.

When they looked at Hannibal, I don't think they looked at me as a Republican or what. I think they knew me as a person. That would work fine for Maui, probably not work on O'ahu. But I got good votes in every district here. Wherever I went to, the votes were there. But I guess I was just a kind of a political animal. It worked out.

DT: A while ago, I interrupted you here, before. I missed a question. Immediately brought into context, was one of the personality boys of Hawai'i politics, Eddie Tam.

HT: Oh yeah.

DT: You must have had some reaction, because later on I think you challenged him, and yet he was almost the one who shouldn't be challenged.

HT: That's right. It was a strange thing, too, 'cause I had finished my second term successfully, I was the top vote-getter. The Republican party felt that I would be the one to bring about a change by taking on Eddie Tam. That was not how I felt. My feeling was quite different. I told the party that I felt that I could continue to be elected to the board of supervisors and maybe someday, take a stab at the legislature. I did not believe that anyone could defeat Eddie Tam. But we had quite an argument about that. They told me, "You can, because look at your votes."

I tried to point out to them that the votes you get in the [eight]-member race is quite different from a man-to-man race, and I don't care how you feel about it, he can or you think he's a good mayor [chairman and executive officer] or not. He is still a loved person. And I don't think that I can defeat him. In fact, I like the guy. I get along very well with him. Well, we talked back and forth, back and forth, and finally they convinced me that we could not let that position run unopposed or without a good competition. And then the discussion went that, you know, "Even if you lose, so what? You can still come back the next time and run for the board of supervisors again and probably win." So in a weak moment, I said yes, and that's how we jumped into the Eddie Tam-Tavares campaign [in 1958 and again in 1960].

Well, when I announced, Eddie was very disappointed, 'cause he and I had been very good friends. And I explained to Eddie, I said, "This is just a matter of giving the people a choice, and we do have a two-party system here and I guess I have my obligations to my party, and they want very much that I run for this office. Nothing personal. It's just that I will campaign on things that I believe in, and you'll campaign as you always do. And you're going to be a very difficult person to defeat."

And he said, "But you know, I don't know why you actually even think about running for mayor, because you and I now are running this county." (Chuckles) There's some truth to that. But, you know, this is how it's going to go.

So if I recall, I lost by some 600 votes the first time around. And right away the party said, "See, you almost did it. You almost did it. You've got to try at least one more time. So for two years, I started beefing up my organization campaign. So I ran a second time [in 1960] against Eddie Tam. Eddie Tam never worked so hard in his life and spent as much money as he did in seeking reelection. But the second time, the percentage of loss was about the same. I think it was about a thousand votes or so, but it was still about the same [HT lost by 769 votes]. However, I think that your history would show, Dan, that I came closer to defeating

Eddie Tam than anybody ever did. If I recall, the next vote close to him was something like 2,500 votes away.

DT: What years are these now exactly? Fifty . . .

HT: The first time against him was '58, and then the second time in '60.

WN: Now when you ran for mayor, well, for chairman at that time—I know you got ILWU support for your second time on the board of supervisors, but you didn't get it for mayor. [In 1969, the position of chairman and executive officer changed to that of mayor, and the board of supervisors was replaced by the county council.]

HT: No, in fact, they told me I was making a big mistake, that they would continue to support me on the board, because I'd always been fair in my dealings with organized labor, not just the ILWU, but the labor people as a whole. And. . . .

DT: Meanwhile, of course, you lived through the era. But it wasn't as bad on Maui, I gather, the era of ILWU support would really be the equivalent of communists backing you . . .

HT: Well, it was all of that, but Maui did not feel that so much, because Maui's a small place. We're all friends and relatives, you know. The heck, I had relatives who were officers in the union. I had relatives who were rank-and-file. I had many, many friends who were rank-and-file, so that was not the feeling. In fact, my own feeling was that the union—the workers were smart to organize. I think that there was representation that they needed to have. And I was very sympathetic with that particular cause. And so my relationship with them was always good. Whenever they were unable to endorse me, it was no problem. I understood that they couldn't do it. They could not endorse me over Eddie Tam. In fact, I didn't seek it. Said, "Well, we'll let the people decide. We'll just run the campaign and see what happens in the voting booth."

So after that last defeat, I said, "Well, that's it. I'm not going to run against Eddie Tam anymore, because people love him, they want him, and that's fine. In the future, I'll take a look at what I'll do. I may run for the board of supervisors again."

In the meantime, that's when I got this offer to go to the HSPA [Hawaiian Sugar Planters' Association] to head up the governmental affairs department [in 1961]. There was a separate department. And I went down—I was in competition with some others—and went down for the interview. And they selected me as the head of this department. At that time, I think you remember, Dan, the sugar industry already had this sort of revolution there. And the sugar industry was having a very difficult time with the legislature. And the sugar industry felt—in fact, they were having a hard time in the legislature. (DT chuckles.)

When they hired me, they said, "Well, you're the first guy on this job on a full-time basis. We don't have any job description for you. We expect you to work that out yourself."

And so I reported to an HSPA legislative committee. And the members of that committee were representatives from each one of the so-called Big Five, the parent companies [C. Brewer & Co., Ltd.; Castle & Cooke, Inc.; American Factors, Ltd.; Alexander & Baldwin, Inc.; and Theo. H. Davies & Company, Ltd.]. And they were all of vice presidency rank.

And so I answered to them, to this legislative committee.

So I started from scratch, setting up procedures and programs and so forth. And we did a lot of different things. I felt that I heard so much about lobbyists and this kind of a—not the best thing in the world to be a lobbyist. Cigar smoking, back room stuff. And I said, “That’s not my idea of what a lobbyist is. I think that a lobbyist plays an important role in legislative action, and I think our role is primarily to present reliable, honest information on a point of view, so that the legislators will hear this point of view and weigh it with other points of view that they are responsible to obtain.” So I looked at our whole effort in lobbying for the sugar industry as presenting concrete facts, and figures, and positions, and suggested legislation amendments, and so forth, so that the legislators would have something to consider and chew on. And as a result, we started out forming some very close friendships with the legislators. And one of the persons that helped me right from the very beginning was Elmer Cravalho, who was speaker of the house. And I think Dan remembers this, that Elmer [a Democrat] became speaker, largely as a result of a Republican coalition. And I often reminded him of that.

(Laughter)

DT: The other people had, too, I think, from time to time.

HT: It came up again this last time when they talked about a coalition now, with the organization of the house. But early on, I think probably the first two weeks of my taking this new job—of course I had known Elmer from Maui for a long time. He and I were both schoolteachers at one time. And we’re always friends, although opposite parties. So I called for an appointment, and “I want to come in at the end of your day when you can spend some time just talking to me.”

So he said, “Fine.”

I went up there and I just asked him a question. I said, “Elmer, I understand and I’ve been told that the sugar industry has a rough time with the legislature. How do you feel about it?” Then I just shut up and listened for over an hour. And he had a whole list of things that he felt the sugar industry and business, as a whole, were doing wrong.

He said, “You know, you guys look at Democrats as though we’re all anti-business. Some of you think we’re all communists.” And he said, “That isn’t the way it is.” So he gave me a long lecture on what he felt we were doing wrong.

DT: By this time Elmer had been in the legislature for quite a while.

HT: That’s right.

DT: So he had the background, but you didn’t.

HT: I didn’t. That’s right. I was just brand-new, fresh. I didn’t know much about the legislative arena. There’s some relationship with the board of supervisors and the legislature, but not that much.

But anyhow, I listened to him and we had a long talk. I spent a lot of time talking to other leaders, including Tom [Thomas P.] Gill, and [William Hardy] "Doc" Hill, and Nelson Doi, and a few other leaders of the legislature, asking more or less the same question: what's wrong with what we're doing in representing ourselves? And I got a lot of insight as to what was bothering them. They said, "For one thing, every session, you hire a couple of paid attorneys and they could come up here and represent the sugar industry. Most of them are good attorneys, but they really do not know the industry. When we started asking them questions about the industry, we talked about some of the nitty-gritty stuff. For example, what kind of pesticides are you using? The attorney doesn't know that. 'Well, I don't know, I'll find out.' We don't have the time to have him go find out and tell us. We became annoyed at the industry having incompetent people or people without sufficient knowledge of the industry, testifying before our committee."

DT: That was amazingly intelligent of you, because you had one whale of a job to really represent HSPA to the legislature at that time. I think we'll get into some of those reasons when we go to another tape.

END OF SIDE TWO

TAPE NO. 17-78-1-91; SIDE ONE

JC: The following is a continuation of the Hannibal Tavares interview. This is videotape number five.

WN: Tape number five with Hannibal Tavares. We were talking about, um. . . .

HT: HSPA.

WN: HSPA.

HT: Yeah, well we started this department of governmental affairs, which included lobbying for the sugar industry on a statewide basis. And I started out by trying to find out what the problems were. And I went straight to the leadership. I went to Elmer Cravalho and he gave me a lot of pointers. He gave me a long, long lecture on what was wrong in the way HSPA was conducting itself. And not only HSPA, but the business community as a whole, the chamber of commerce, the whole gamut. I spent a lot of time, my first three or four weeks, just talking to the legislative leaders in very candid conversations. And I think what was coming across was that we were not doing a good job in representing our positions. And we were doing it with people who were not completely knowledgeable on the subject matter.

So then I started, in writing, setting up this organization. We had a number of programs. One of the first programs was to be sure that we would send witnesses who were the most knowledgeable persons in the entire sugar industry on the subject matter being discussed. So that if you're discussing a bill that referred to land, we had land experts in the industry that would go and be the key witness with backup. And so we started doing that, and part of my job was to rehearse these guys. And I would take the position of the devil's advocate as to the kind of questions that they could anticipate. And some of the times, I made our witnesses

very angry. They said, “Well, who’s side are you on?”

I said, “Well, you better believe I’m on your side, ’cause the questions I’m asking you, I’d be very surprised if most of them are not asked.”

So right off the bat when this first new system went into effect, one of the first guys, the guy that you know very well, Dick [Richard] Cox, who was the land expert for Alexander & Baldwin and for the HSPA. We got up there on land bills, and there’s Tom Gill asking practically every damn question that I had asked in our rehearsal. And Dick would be sitting in the witness stand and I’d be off here on the side, and every time a question was asked that I had asked, Dick would kind of look at me, but he was ready. And I’d coach him about how to handle yourself, how to be cool, don’t get cocky, don’t be argumentative, all of that stuff. We went through all of these techniques, and pretty soon our witnesses started gaining some credibility and respect up there. And in the meantime, I kept on working on another program which was a kind of a corny program . . .

(Telephone rings. Taping interrupted, then resumes.)

HT: Okay, to continue with what we were saying, the HSPA decided to change their format completely by having a full-time department established with the total responsibility of representing the industry in legislative and governmental affairs. So I was doing this—of course I was the first guy hired to do this job, and the hiring was done by the HSPA legislative committee, which I explained earlier was made up of five vice presidents of the parent companies.

So part of the thing was to, number one, get knowledgeable witnesses on the subject matter involved in the hearing or in the committee meetings. We worked that out very, very carefully with a great deal of detail. I spent many, many hours day and night doing this.

And the other thing was to go into a program that we called “Getting to Know You.” And if you recall, Dan, about that time, the chamber of commerce came in with *Who’s Who in the Legislature* [later titled *Who’s Who in Government, State of Hawai‘i*].

DT: The publication which is still published.

HT: Yes, and that was my idea.

DT: Oh really?

HT: That was my idea, so that we would know who the people are, with a little bit of a biographical sketch. So the program that I called “Getting to Know You,” after the song. And I said a lot of our key leaders in the sugar industry don’t even know who these legislators are. And that came up with something that Howard [Y.] Miyake had told me. He was majority leader of the house, I think, at the time. So I was talking to Howard, as I said, talking to leaders. I knew Howard at University of Hawai‘i, and he and I were friends, so that helped. And he said, “You know, Hannibal, I can walk down the street and pass one of your top executives, and they won’t know who I am. I’m just another guy walking down the street. And unless they come to the legislature, they still won’t know who I am.”

I said, “Oh, that’s very true.” So we started—I started programs of bringing in our leadership to meet with legislative leaders. And we would have our infamous luncheons, you know. I would throw a lunch and invite Elmer and these people.

I’ll never forget one luncheon that we had at Michel’s [restaurant] out at Waikīkī. And I invited the five presidents of the five parent companies—Malcolm MacNaughton [of Castle & Cooke], Boyd MacNaughton [of C. Brewer & Company], and the whole bunch of them [Harold Weidig of Theo. H. Davies & Company, Cornelius Clay Cadagan of Alexander & Baldwin, and C. Hutton Smith of American Factors]. And I said, “I am going to ask Elmer to be our guest speaker at this luncheon. And I’m going to ask him to tell us how he feels that we can improve our relationship with the legislature. And I’m going to ask you presidents not to argue with him and not to challenge him. Just let him make his speech, and listen carefully to what he has to say. And then later on, I will discuss the matter with you.” ’Cause I had arranged for him, the moment he’d finish his talk, there was a car to take him back to the legislature. And I would stay back with the five presidents. Well, we did this, and Elmer loved it. He just loved the opportunity to tell these guys off. Can’t you just . . .

DT: Correct. And you also had something else going for you, too. A goodly number of your legislators were very flattered to be able to sit down with these people that they had read about but didn’t really know, right?

HT: That’s right. So Elmer came out. He gave a very excellent talk on how the sugar industry could improve its relationship with the legislature, and he pulled no punches. And I could see, especially Malcolm MacNaughton. He was just bristling. (DT laughs.) And I kept on motioning him; just keep calm, keep cool. Let Elmer say his piece. And Elmer just went on. These guys were scolded by Elmer. Actually scolded. And that’s hard for these high-powered, so-called Big Five presidents to take this stuff. But they followed my advice, and then when he left, then we had a good discussion.

I said, “Okay, you don’t have to agree with everything that Elmer has said, but there’s a thread here that we’re stupid if we don’t recognize. And that’s what we’re going to try to do with this organization. Otherwise, you should abolish the department and I’ll go look for another job.”

DT: About the same time that you were humanizing, let us say, the chamber of commerce along with HSPA, you had another person who was at work politically to try to bring the two groups together, I think.

HT: Well, I was involved in that and, who was the person now?

DT: The person I’m thinking about is by 1962, [Democrat] John A. Burns [was elected] governor, one of his first moves was to try to solidify his political strength by bringing the ILWU and sugar and pine[apple], and recognizing a community of interest, which thereby sealed the doom of your old political party [the Republican party] for almost a generation.

HT: And yet, you know, we were out knowing which way they would go. I was involved in that along with Jack—what’s the head of the ILWU? Jack. . . .

DT: Hall. Jack Hall.

HT: Hall. Jack Hall and Eddie [Edward C.] DeMello. Eddie [an ILWU lobbyist] was my counterpart. And we started talking along lines like this. I went back to the chamber of commerce—the Honolulu chamber. And I said that politically, we'd be a lot stronger if we had a statewide organization, so that the chamber members of Hawai'i would be involved with the legislators of Hawai'i, and Maui, and Kaua'i, and so forth. And we would have some direct contact there. So I'll get to another program after the "Getting to Know You."

The "Getting to Know You" started to work very well. It started through our efforts at HSPA. The leaders of the sugar industry and of business began to relate with the key legislators. You can't meet them all, but we started with the leaders, the chairmen, and so forth. That started to work very well. This went on year after year after year and got better as we went on. It got to the point where I think Elmer would be probably one of the first to admit that our credibility improved tremendously during this period of time. And other leaders of the legislature, even today, speak highly of the efforts that we made then. They refer to me as the dean of the lobbyists, and stuff like that.

Well, another program that we put into play was a man-to-man contact system. Using the same old basketball defense. And it worked like this. Take Maui, for example. You would have a sugar industry person who would be the key contact for Elmer Cravalho. Now that contact person should be someone, preferably, who's a good friend of Elmer. Who knows Elmer. A relative or a good friend, and someone who was active in his campaign, or who'd be willing to become active in his campaign. So this seemed like kind of a real tight organization. But that's exactly what we did.

We had a sugar industry guy as a contact person for every single legislator in the state. And the contact would work something like this. I can't expect—this all came under my jurisdiction—I can't expect every contact person to know all the answers on legislation that we're concerned about. All that the contact person has to do, is to call his friend and say, "John, HSPA is very much concerned about house bill number so-and-so, that we feel that if it passes the way it is, it's going to hurt the industry a lot. Now, contact Hannibal and he'll have someone come up and sit down with you, and explain the industry's point of view and involvement in this particular bill. I don't know all the answers, but if you call Hannibal, he'll have somebody come up." Okay.

Psychologically, the fact that you got a call from a friend, a person that you know, and you respect, and you like, and a person that's been active in your campaign, you are going to call Hannibal. I got many, many calls. And I'll always send up a knowledgeable person, and most of the time, I'd go, too. That gave us a chance to sit down with the key legislators and at least explain our point of view. And I will always start out very frank. I said, "Look, John, this is a prejudiced point of view. This is how the sugar industry feels about it, but I thought you'd be interested in this point of view, as well as other points of view. So I want to present to you this point of view. Prejudiced or not." You know.

DT: That same person-to-person approach, which worked very effectively, I would suggest—and I don't know whether you ever noticed it or not—was picked up by a fellow who was seeking reelection about that same period, Hiram Fong, who used it quite effectively with the business community, and so forth. Did you ever think about that?

HT: Oh yes. Oh yeah. Yeah, I was involved with Hiram's campaign. A lot of my politics has

been . . .

DT: I don't think anybody ever took particular note of it (chuckles).

HT: No, no. But this man-to-man contact system---in fact, we even had a corny thing that we called contact-o-gram. Okay? Right on top of this form it says "HSPA Contact-o-gram." So I would write a little telegram to every contact person and say, "Make your contact and tell your contact blah, blah, blah, blah. One, two, three, four, five." That would go out by courier to all of the contact people. And so pretty soon the phones would begin to ring. If you get a call from some industry person that you don't even know, that call doesn't mean much. But if you get a call from a sugar industry guy, a guy that works at HC&S [Hawaiian Commercial & Sugar Company], or Pioneer Mill [Company], or Wailuku Sugar [Company], a guy that you know, he's active in your campaign, he's a friend, that call means something. Well, we used that technique very well. But we didn't overburden our contact person by telling him you got to know all of this stuff, because that becomes too difficult for the average guy.

WN: Did you solicit help from the union in this respect?

HT: Nope. This was strictly HSPA. It was Hannibal's plan. And by golly, it really worked. And when the session was off, then my job was to go to every island and meet with all of the people. First of all, I'd make my legislative report of the session just passed, and then I would meet separately with all the contact people and we'd review what happened the year, the session before. How'd you guys make out with your phone calls? And the report that I was getting back was that they said, "We get very good reception. A lot of times the guy will tell us that you guys are all wet, that your position doesn't make any sense at all. So we would pass that on to you," which they did.

And I would say, "Well, wait a minute. There's a good point here." And I remember some cases where we would say to a leader, committee chairman, especially, "If we would amend the bill to say this and this, would that make the bill any better?"

"Oh hell, yeah! But that's not what you guys are saying."

"Well, we're going to say it."

We'd go back and we'd draft an amendment, and I'd run it up. And time and time again, the guy, "Well, this is fine. Now you guys are cooking." You know, things like that.

DT: In the meanwhile, the union on the other side of this coin, the people were telling the unions---some of your opponents, the Democrats---some of your Democrats were telling the unions, "You'd better start listening to what Big Five, or the erstwhile Big Five management was saying, because your---" pardon the expression, "destiny," which John A. Burns used a lot---"is tied up with these companies, you see."

HT: And that was very helpful, because during this period of time of my activity with HSPA, I became very close to John Burns, a man I respected a lot. I had a lot of respect for John. And a lot of these things I would discuss with him in his office. In fact, sometimes he'd call me to come up. And then he would like to sit down with DeMello and me together. And Eddie and

I became good friends.

And I said, "Eddie, you're going to find that in much of the legislation, you and I will agree, because it's for the betterment of our economy here. It's for the betterment of the state. We're not enemies in some of this. When we come down to some of the labor laws, yeah, we may have some problems there. And I know I won't be able to change your mind, you won't be able to change mine. But there are many other things beside labor laws, and things like that, that would be to our mutual advantage to support each other on."

And we started doing things like that, you know. And Eddie and I became very, very close that way. We respected each other. We knew our limitations. And that's how we did our job. And I got acquainted with Jack Hall as a result of all of this, too. When it came to labor differences, well, there were labor differences, you know. Management had a different view than labor did.

DT: Yeah, but even these became less and less . . .

HT: Oh, less and less.

DT: . . . I noticed over the years. And I guess it illustrates what one person said about the political world boiled down to its lowest common denominator: politics is the art of the possible.

HT: That's right. And that's where people like Stu Milligan were very important, because he was now a [representative]. And yet he believed in all of these things that we were saying. And he had a good relationship with the unions. So things began to change a lot, I would say. And many of us played a role. I don't want it to sound as though, you know, I'm trying to take credit for all of this. No, I was just one part of the machinery.

DT: Things do tend to work together. We'll have to wait till the next tape, however, to continue the story.

(Taping stops, then resumes.)

JC: The following is a continuation of the Hannibal Tavares interview. This is videotape number six.

WN: Tape number six with Hannibal Tavares.

I have a question that I'd like to start with. Who was the typical contact person? Was it a rank-and-file type of union person?

HT: It didn't matter what his rank was. As long as—well, I have to correct that. It should be a person in management. It could be a frontline supervisor, a person who was part of management's team, because this was a management effort. Now, in many of the issues involved, the rank-and-file were supportive, but they had their own legislative program of the union. So there was that division. The rank-and-file guy was with the union program, but there were many, many times when the positions meshed. And I would capitalize on that every opportunity I had. And so we opened up a dialogue with the labor people, as well as

the business people, and tried to—I guess a lot of it was the attitude I had that, hey, this is our state and let's work together to make it better.

And Governor Burns was fantastic in this regard, because he was a very conservative person. And I guess his attitude was that the success of the state of Hawai'i depended largely on the business and economy that was successful within the state. And so he felt that labor and management, labor and business, would have to play their roles to make it work out right. So he became a good leader for both sides, because he had the ear of both sides. A lot of people on so-called Merchant Street had a lot of respect for Governor Burns. And you began to see quite a change in attitude. A lot of your labor strikes began to almost disappear. And the attitudes changed quite a bit where, you know, we were talking to each other.

On the legislative level, representing the HSPA, I also, to some degree, represented the Chamber of Commerce [of Honolulu]. And I had very close relationship with DeMello, who was the chief lobbyist for the ILWU, so . . .

DT: You really continued in this role as sort of a public relations man for the business community for almost twenty years.

HT: Yeah, that's right.

DT: Meanwhile, however, on another front, you became almost Mister Republican in an organizational sense, because you were always at those Republican conventions. I know I saw you there many times, not always, because I couldn't always get to neighbor island conventions. But you were there, and much of the time you were even presiding over them, right?

HT: Yeah. My attitude was that there's a very strong need for a two-party system, so that there're different points of view that are placed before the public. And till today, I still feel that it's important to have a two-party system, although the Republican party seems to be having a rough time. But the two-party system is still there. So while doing all of this legislative work for the industry, I continued my responsibility as a Republican. And so I was active in Republican conventions, and the formulation of platforms, and the election of offices. I kept that up. In fact, I think I hold the record of state convention chairmanship. I think I've been the chairman of the convention for the past twenty years or so. But that is, again, part of my feeling that there's a real strong need for a two-party system.

Yet my relationship with the Democrats has always been good. I mean we respect each other, you know. When I'm sitting down, talking to the chairman of the Democrat party, there's no animosity. We just talk man to man, with differences of opinion in some cases, but a lot of agreement in others.

David Trask, [Jr.], you have, for example. David was a strong Democrat, starting from his father. He and I were friends from way back in our young days. He went to St. Louis [College], while I was going to Roosevelt. I got to know him then. But it was so funny when I was here on the Maui County Board of Supervisors. David Trask was representing the HGEA [Hawai'i Government Employees' Association] on Maui, and he would come as a lobbyist to almost all of our meetings. And there was one particular time when he and I got into a pretty hot argument. We were going back and forth, and I even forget the issue, but

there was disagreement. And he looked at the clock, said, “Oh, Hannibal. What time are you going to pick up my kids?”

And I said, “Well, as soon as you stop talking, I can go do that.”

He said, “Okay, okay, okay. I said what I had to say,” and the meeting stopped. And the reporters were all sitting there. Charlie [Charles] Young, especially. Remember Charlie Young? He said, “What’s this all about? You’re going to pick up his kids?”

“Hey listen, David and I are friends. When he’s got to go someplace, I take care of his kids. His kids come and stay with us. And when he comes back from Honolulu, he picks ’em up.”

(Laughter)

DT: That reminds me of something else. One of David Trask’s trademark was, in the political arena, was trying to outshout the other fellow. But not Hannibal Tavares.

HT: No, he couldn’t do that with me (laughs). He couldn’t outtalk me either (laughs).

DT: You developed, really, your trademark—telling a good story, Abraham Lincoln-style.

HT: Yeah, right, right, right, right, right.

DT: Which I think you thoroughly enjoyed throughout all the years, particularly as an emcee, for example, not only of your own political party but of other groups.

HT: I found, too, that having a sense of humor was essential. And I remember—I know we’re getting off the subject a little bit, but some of these . . .

DT: I think it’s very much on the subject.

HT: . . . tidbits, you know. I remember Clarence Crozier, Clarence “Fat” Crozier, formerly been a senator and now he was a member of the board of supervisors in the mid-fifties there [on Maui]. And I was on my feet talking about our budget. And I made a statement, I said, “You know, we’re spending money like a bunch of drunken sailors.”

Crozier got up, “Mr. Tavares, you are insulting the men of our navy.”

And I looked at him and I said, “Clarence, you’re absolutely right. I apologize. What I meant to say is, we’re spending money like a bunch of drunk stupid-visors. That’s us.” And everybody roared and that changed the tone completely. (Chuckles)

DT: Isn’t Crozier a relative of Willie [William] [Crozier]’s?

HT: Yeah, brothers. Brothers. Yeah. Terrific guys.

DT: So a nephew’s now in the legislature. Mike.

HT: No, Mike is Willie’s son, isn’t he? Willie’s son, yeah.

- DT: Yeah, so that'll be a nephew of this fellow [Clarence Crozier] you're talking about.
- HT: Yup, yup.
- WN: You know this networking, one-to-one networking, it strikes me as being very grass roots, Democratic kind of thing. Was this something really revolutionary in the HSPA, or a Republican organization, too?
- HT: Well, I think it was the first time that anything like that had happened in Hawai'i, excepting for the unions kind of did this in their own way. But with us, I tried to look for people who were in the management's team but at the lower rung of the ladder. So you had guys who were frontline supervisors who were the contact persons. Not the company manager.
- DT: Actually, I think, in essence, what you were saying is to the overlords of those days, was stop and think a little, well, swallow some of your pride, sit down with these people, and use your head.
- HT: That's right.
- DT: Don't try to do it by force. Don't try to do it with the almighty dollar, but use your heads and you can find some common ground and get what you want at least part of the time, if not all of the time.
- HT: That's right. It worked out very well. The important thing was the sincere dialogue. That was important.
- DT: Which all goes back, I would suggest, to what you repeated here several times in our conversation, how much affection you have for all people, really.
- HT: Well, that's right.
- DT: It's hard to find a person who Hannibal doesn't like, right?
- HT: That's right. There are very few. In fact, I can't think of anybody offhand.
- (Laughter)
- HT: I've had differences, but the differences never lasted.
- DT: Which almost reminds me of [local newscaster] Joe Moore's favorite, Will Rogers.
- HT: Mm hmm, mm hmm, mm hmm [yes]. I think Elmer and I, we've had our differences over the years. But we've had many times of agreement, and many times of mutual support. The last election [November 1990], I had a little bit of trouble with Elmer, because he decided, for whatever reason, to zero in on my administration and was very critical of my administration. And I thought, hey, I'm not his opponent. That's a mistake. And I told him so. But by that time, I guess too much had happened.
- DT: I think we've had---you still want to chat about . . .

WN: No. I'm satisfied . . .

HT: I think---let me wind up the HSPA bit. The key of this thing was that the sugar industry recognized the necessity to deal with the legislature on a full-time basis. So they created a department-level position. I was director of---the same position in any other department in HSPA. And so that really led to a lot of changes in attitude and techniques, all of that, that I think ended up by giving the sugar industry a lot more credibility than they had ever had before.

And some real friendships grew out of this whole system. I know there was one guy who was a contact for Elmer, management person, became a personal friend of Elmer. And they got to really know each other, and like each other. Well, that was fine. That was okay. That was part of the objective. And in the contacts that we had, if there was no one that actually knew the representative or the senator, I would assign someone. And I tried, well, looking at this guy's personality, I think he'll get along okay with the senator or the representative. I would say, "Okay, you are assigned to so-and-so. Get to know him. Go have lunch with him. You both play golf? Go play golf with him. Get to know him; get to know where he's coming from."

WN: Did you try to match island with island?

HT: Well, we did this all island-by-island unit, all within the plantations in each island, so that was a natural. It just worked out very well. And it got to the point where, most of these contact people became part of the individual's campaign. I said that the attitude that I started out with is that every legislator that I can think of wants to do a good job as a legislator. He wants to be respected by his peers, he wants to be admired by his family. He wants to be held at high regard by his friends. So he wants to do a good job. He doesn't---he or she---doesn't always know how. Almost every one of us in office, we say, "We want to do the right thing." We don't always know what the right thing is. So you search for what will convince you is the right thing.

Now in that kind of a search, you need the help of a lot of people. And I feel---my attitude was that, as a lobbyist, the legislator wants to do a good job. He needs information in order to do his job effectively. Part of my job is to give him reliable information on a point of view. And I repeated that over and over. And I would start out by saying time and again, "This is a prejudiced point of view. It's the sugar industry's point of view. But sir, I'm sure you want to hear it, so that you can weigh it as you make your judgment." And that was the whole attitude, and nobody objected to that. That made sense. Almost everybody we tell, "Yeah, that makes sense." So that was the premise on which we based a lot of our activities. So that whole system worked out very well for the sugar industry.

Later on, the chamber of commerce tried to follow some of that, but none of them quite did it the way the HSPA was able to do it. And that took us through the HSPA.

DT: Then you shifted allegiance to A&B [Alexander & Baldwin], right?

HT: A&B, yes. [HT was named director of community relations for Alexander & Baldwin in 1972.]

DT: Where, essentially, you were doing some of the same things.

HT: Well, what was funny there—I'd like to tell you how that happened. See, Elmer Cravalho, in the meantime, had become mayor of Maui County. [Elmer Cravalho served as chairman and executive officer, 1967–68, and as mayor, 1969–79.] And he was a tough mayor. He was giving a lot of the businesspeople a bad time. And A&B, as you know, was the principal owner of WaiLea resort area, and they were having a difficult time dealing with the county and with the mayor, especially. And they got to the point where Elmer had no one in A&B that he wanted to talk to. For a while, he and [Arthur] Woolaway were good friends. But somebody had suggested that they needed Hannibal to represent A&B on Maui. Why doesn't A&B hire Hannibal? And I didn't know all of this was going on. Woolaway was involved in a lot of that.

So one day, I get called down to the president's office in A&B, that was Allen Wilcox, [Jr.]. And I had known Allen from our activities with HSPA. He and I were good friends.

He said, "Hannibal, we think you've done enough for the HSPA. You've got the procedures all lined up. Somebody else can carry on from there. We want you to come and work for A&B."

And I said, "Well, that's interesting."

He said, "We want you to be the director of community relations. Not public relations, but community relations. We want you to handle governmental affairs for A&B, pretty much as you've done with HSPA, excepting that we want to tell you we're having a real problem on Maui. And we have sizeable investments there, and we're just not getting off the ground. So we feel that if anybody can sit down and talk with Elmer, you'd be the guy."

I always wanted to go back to Maui. Here was another opportunity to come home. So I accepted the job, and that was in 1972. I'll never forget the introduction to Elmer. Woolaway set up a meeting for Wilcox, Woolaway, and myself to come and tell Elmer that I was being hired as of that day by A&B, to tell Elmer what this was all about.

So we walked in and Elmer was sitting there very cold. He looks at me, and he's trying to figure out what am I doing there. He thought I was still HSPA. Wilcox says to Elmer, "Well, Mr. Mayor, we wanted you to be the first to know that we have just hired Hannibal as our director of community relations. He will be headquartered on Maui, but he'll be representing A&B in governmental affairs."

Elmer looked quite surprised. He looked at me and he looked at Wilcox, he said, "Well, all I can say is that it's a very good deal for A&B. I don't know whether it's a good deal for Hannibal." Just like that. He said, "Okay, thank you for informing me. I would like Hannibal to stay back. The other two of you can leave. I want to talk to Hannibal privately."

Well, they didn't feel too good about that. So Woolaway and Wilcox left the office. Elmer looks at me, he says, "Why didn't you tell me you wanted to come back to Maui to work?" He said, "I could have found a very high-ranking position for you right here in the county."

I said, "Well, that's not the way it worked out."

He said, "I know they need you, but you don't realize that you're working for a bunch of people that I don't have a lot of respect for."

I said, "Well, what's the problem?"

So he went through a whole list of things like he (chuckles) did years ago with HSPA. And a lot of things he was criticizing for doing wrong. And he went through a whole bunch. And he was angry and adamant. "These guys are double dealers. You can't take them at their word; they're not honest," and all of this sort of thing.

So I just listened, and listened. And when he got through, I said, "Well, Elmer, I look at it this way. If us two *Pordagees* can't work this out, neither of us is worth a damn." And that just hit his funny bone. He just roared—I thought he was going to fall off his chair. He just laughed, and laughed, and laughed.

He said, "Well, you got something there, but it's going to be hard."

(Laughter)

HT: And we got off to a good start. So I did a lot of work with Elmer . . .

DT: Thereafter followed about eight or nine years whereby Elmer thought he was educating you, right?

HT: That's right, and I let him think so.

(Laughter)

WN: Why don't we break.

HT: But I thought it was going the other way. (Laughs)

END OF SIDE ONE

SIDE TWO

JC: This is a continuation of the Hannibal Tavares interview. This is videotape number seven.

WN: This is tape number seven with Hannibal Tavares. You were saying that starting in '72, when you became a director of community relations with A&B, it started the Tavares-Cravalho era.

HT: That's right.

WN: Can you tell us something about what happened?

HT: Yeah, A&B had a lot of things going on Maui, primarily the development of the WaiLea resort area. [In 1971, Alexander & Baldwin's subsidiary company, WaiLea Land Corporation,

formed a partnership with Northwestern Mutual Life Insurance Company. Together as WaiLea Development Company, this joint venture planned to build a 1,500 acre resort community along the south Maui coastline in WaiLea.] And I got involved in all of the planning there. The mayor had a lot of strong feelings about that development. He knew that we needed the economic boost that this would bring, the jobs that it would create, because at that time, unemployment was very high on Maui, and Elmer wanted to see the economic base increased. But he wanted to see it done in what he called the right way. And so we started working out details on what some of his feelings were, because he had run into a lot of opposition with the A&B leaders prior to my coming on board.

And one of the things that he was very much concerned about is, you develop all of these hotels and stuff along the shoreline, that the public would lose its access to the shore. And he did not want to see that happen. And he said that was one of the problems he was having with A&B, because even though the shore belongs to the people, you can make it almost impossible for them to get there without trespassing over private properties.

And I said, "Well, you have no problem with me on that, because I feel very strongly about that myself." And I said, "In fact, the state law does say that any developer of shoreline property must provide rights-of-way to the shoreline every 1,500 feet, I think it was. But it required only a fifteen-foot right-of-way, which is tantamount to a trail."

And Elmer said, "Well, how do you feel about that?"

I said, "Well, I don't think that's adequate. I think what I would suggest to my people would be that they make wide rights-of-way to every bay that's in WaiLea, so that there'd be a place to park, a place to shower, to picnic, and so forth. And do it for every beach along the WaiLea property."

And he said, "Well, you're not going to sell that to your people."

I said, "Well, let's see."

So I went back and made a whole pitch for this. And at that time the president, I recall, was Larry [Lawrence] Pricher. And Larry said, "Well, how do you feel, Hannibal?"

I told him how I felt. We should have a really wide right-of-way and make it easy for the people to get down to every beach, and to have a public walkway along the entire length of the property. They bought that. And we did some sketches. And I came back to Elmer and I showed this whole thing and he looked at that. He said, "Did they agree to do this?"

I said, "Yeah."

He said, "Well, this will be an example. This is terrific." So as a result of all of that, we were allowed to move the road *mauka* as long as we protect all these rights-of-way. Well, those rights-of-way turned out to be forty-four feet in width, paved, curbs, gutters, and landscaping, irrigation system, restroom down at the edge, turn-around place for the cars, and parking for the cars. Nobody could believe that, but that's what A&B agreed to do. Well, that got WaiLea off the ground.

We had a lot of arguments, Elmer and I, about heights, height limitations, and all this kind of stuff and . . .

DT: Perhaps a little bit about housing, maybe, for employees?

HT: Housing was part of it. You know, we were working with housing. We worked out all of those details. Elmer was satisfied with that. We contributed to the sewer system, water system that went all the way from Waihe'e out to Mākena, which took care of A&B's needs, as well as the needs of Seibu [Group Enterprises, which had plans to develop Mākena], and the county. The county had its own customers along the way. So all of these things that I'm going over very rapidly, took months and months to develop, and a lot of discussion and a lot of arguments, but it finally worked out where Elmer was satisfied that things were okay. So WaiLea got off the ground. Kā'anapali [resort area] was already done, and he noticed—this was before he became mayor—and he noted some errors of Kā'anapali where the public was not taken care of the way that we had agreed to take care of in WaiLea. So that got off fine. So our relationship in that development worked out very well.

He was a taskmaster. He wanted certain things for the people. He had really, in most of those cases, he had an ally in me. And it got to a point where he and I were working very well together. But on the side what was going on, he was having a lot of trouble with the council. At one time, Elmer had all the votes he needed on the council. And then, I think it must have been about 1974, '76, when he lost that control. Then the council started giving him a bad time. And I think what brought it to a head was one of his budgets. I forget whether it was the '76 or '78 budget. They had changed it drastically [HT is referring to the fiscal year 1977-78 budget]. The council had changed it drastically. And the changes that they made angered him quite a bit. When it came back to him, he did a whole number of item vetoes with a veto message that went back to the council. The council overrode every one of his vetoes, and that was the first time that he had ever had something like that happen to him. And that annoyed him no end. He could not believe that the council would not follow his leadership, especially in budget, because he was very good at that. He was very good at finance.

DT: You suppose there was another factor? He had begun making some noises about maybe running for governor, right?

HT: Yes. That was all about that same time.

DT: Yeah, see.

HT: And there were trial balloons, you know, that he was going to run for governor. I remember that, when he was approached to run for lieutenant governor, I think both with [John] Burns and [George] Ariyoshi.

DT: Oh yeah, yeah. If your version's the same as the version I have, is that he was really [then Governor] Burns' first choice [for a running mate in the 1966 election]. That was before he came back to run for mayor. [Elmer Cravalho was then speaker of the house of representatives.]

HT: That's right. That's right.

- DT: That Bert Kobayashi [the attorney general] was the number two choice and [later, in 1970], Ariyoshi sort of also ran.
- HT: Elmer would never accept number two. I understand that at one time he said, well, he would be willing to be lieutenant governor if he would be in charge of certain departments, and the governor was not able to make that concession.
- DT: What Burns really had in mind is [Elmer Cravalho] running for governor after him, you see, . . .
- HT: That's right. That's right.
- DT: . . . and he'd been disappointed in Tom Gill who wouldn't be a good boy at all, obviously (chuckles).
- HT: There was a good relationship with Elmer and Governor Burns. But Governor Burns wanted him to really run the number two spot . . .
- DT: That's correct.
- HT: . . . with the idea of his becoming the successor. But Elmer could not see himself in a second-fiddle position, so he turned that down. It came up again later on with Ariyoshi [supporters of then Governor Ariyoshi approached Elmer Cravalho to run for lieutenant governor in the 1978 election], and he turned that down, too.
- DT: But then he saw Ariyoshi in performance for a while, and then he began to itch himself, right?
- HT: He put up some trial balloons for governor [in both 1974 and 1978]. And that didn't pan out the way he wanted it to be. He didn't have enough assurance. Then he started having trouble with the council. And then he started having trouble with the EPA [Environmental Protection Agency] on the sewer system. So a lot of these things were all happening at the same time, and he became kind of disgruntled. I think he felt, you know, "I've had enough of this." And when he told me that he was planning to resign, I didn't believe it. I said, "No, you can't do that. You have to finish your term, Elmer."
- He said, "No, I'm sick and tired of taking all of this crap."
- DT: See, he had threatened to run for governor in '78, but ran for mayor instead, right? Got reelected, and then less than a year later, or something like that?
- HT: Yeah, nine months later.
- DT: He let you know that he was . . .
- HT: Well, he had told me, after the election in 1978—he was having all these problems with the council and also with the feds—that he was getting very unhappy in the job. And he said, "You know, I'm getting sick and tired of this damn thing." He said, "These people simply will not follow what I'm trying to do." And he said, "I'm going to resign." That's when he

told me, he said, “And you better get ready.”

I said, “What do you mean?”

He said, “Well, if I resign,” he said, “I think you’d be the logical guy to take my place.”

I said, “Well, I haven’t even given it any thought at all.” And I hadn’t.

He said, “Well, start thinking about it, because I think that’s going to happen.”

I said, “Look, if that would happen, I think you should finish your term and then take a look, and then we’ll see what happens. There’ll be a lot of other Democrats who’ll probably want to run.”

He said, “Well, they won’t have a chance against you.” That was his feeling. Now, we hadn’t talked about it for quite some time. On my way to the airport with my car radio on, and here’s Elmer on the air resigning. [On June 20, 1979, Elmer Cravalho announced his plans to resign the office of mayor effective September 11, 1979. However, prior to this official September resignation date, he stepped down on July 24, 1979.]

DT: (Laughs) Typical, huh?

HT: Yeah. Out of the blue, he called in a press conference. He had a prepared statement. Boom. For personal reasons, and he had a very carefully-worked-out statement. I turned around, came right back. Then went to his office. He said, “You didn’t believe me, did you?” He said, “I told you I was going to resign, and I’ve done it.” He said, “You get ready. You get ready. This is it.”

And so, he made me do a lot of soul-searching and thinking, but interestingly enough, I got a lot of encouragement from many of my friends to run for that office. I had a good job at A&B. I had been elevated to corporate vice president. And I guess I was the first Portuguese boy to become a Big Five vice president, all that kind of stuff. And I liked my job. I liked the people I was working for, and they were very good to me. Well, that caused me to move back to O’ahu. Because then my office was in corporate headquarters, but I still had a lot of dealings with Maui. Well, all this happened, you know, bang, bang, bang.

DT: So all of a sudden, you were back home, but if we can pause right here, maybe jump ahead ten years, because there may not be a better time to get it in. Isn’t it possible since Maui is still a relatively small island, that some of those Democrats that might have wanted to have succeeded Cravalho back in ’79, didn’t rise up to hurt him as he sought a comeback in 1990. Is there any evidence that maybe they carried this in their minds as Democrats who had been bypassed? In other words, he was willing to take a very kindly view of a Republican, yourself mainly, taking over. Is it not possible that they remembered this and said, “He’s that guy. He pulled that on us and resigned. Let him stay out.”

HT: It could very well be. I think a lot of people were surprised that he came back in [to run for mayor in 1990]. They did not expect him to do that. I did not expect him to do that. And I don’t think that the party as a whole, expected that to happen. I know that he was disappointed in me, because [as mayor] I did not pick up the phone and call him and say,

“Elmer, what shall I do about this?” I never did that once. Because when I got elected mayor, I was captain of my own ship, and . . .

DT: But you still had some communications with him, didn't you?

HT: Very little.

DT: Oh really?

HT: Very little. Because by that time, he was kind of angry with me, and he kind of stayed away from me and I stayed away from him.

DT: And maybe some of that surfaced again in the most recent 1990 campaign.

HT: When he ran, part of his campaign strategy, which I thought was a mistake, he zeroed in on criticizing my administration. And I was not running for mayor. I was not his opponent. [Term limitations restricted HT to serve not more than two consecutive full terms as mayor.] He had a couple of other opponents, Linda [Crockett] Lingle, especially. He should have been worrying about her, rather than criticizing my administration. Now what happened was that some of the people in his camp had advised him to knock that off, because the feedback was bad. There's a lot of people up here that still have a lot of respect for me. And they said, “How come he's criticizing Hannibal? We think Hannibal has done a very good job.” And so my people were saying, “We're not going to vote for that guy.”

DT: Trying to get back his Democratic support, perhaps, too, from his point of view.

HT: Yeah, yeah.

DT: Anyway, I took you ahead of time. I think Warren wants to probably dip back to the time when you get elected mayor back in '79.

HT: In 1979, that special [winner-take-all] election was held. There were eighteen candidates. I thought, “Holy mackerel. I can never make this.” There were some well-known Democrats there, like Ron [Ronald Y.] Kondo, who was former majority leader of the house, member of the [Maui County] council. Abe [Abraham] Aiona from the council. And Senator [Henry T.] Takitani, with three years left in his term, [all] resigned to run for mayor. So when I saw these biggies, plus a whole bunch of others, I figured I'd never be able to make it in a Democrat county like this. I think it's about seven-to-one Democrats, if you slice it that way, although that never worked in my case. But as a whole, that's about what it is. Well, okay.

Well, I had resigned as vice president of A&B. Clear-cut. And I got rid of all of my stock in A&B, all of my options. I got rid of that, because that's the way I wanted to do it. A lot of people said I was crazy to do that. I said, “No, if I'm going to go into this campaign, I'm going to go in with no strings attached, because I know that one of the things they'll use against me is my A&B connection. And I expect that to be used in the campaign.” And it was, very vigorously. Well anyhow, I had severed all of this. So what happens after this, I don't know, but I have enough confidence in me, that if I go out looking for a job, I'll find one. I'm not going to worry about that.

And my wife, as I said, has been very supportive. First she thought that I was foolish to give up this A&B position. She was wondering why I was doing it. And I explained to her. I said, "Well, I guess it's something that I've always wanted to do." And you can ask the same question of why does a guy become a minister. Why do you do certain things? I just had a feeling that if I could get elected mayor, I could help the people in this community in a very down-to-earth, personal way, 'cause I'm a people person. And I think I could do something like that. I went into this campaign. It was a vigorous campaign. It was really something. With eighteen candidates running, it was almost like a circus. So I'd make a joke like, well, there were seventeen trombones and one tuba. The tuba made the best sound in that racket.

(Laughter)

HT: But that's really (chuckles) how far I got.

WN: Was there any kind of pressure on Elmer Cravalho to name, to endorse anyone?

HT: By that time, he just said, "*Pau*." He'd closed the door. He was unhappy, disgruntled. He just was not involved in the campaign at all. He backed me up to some degree behind the scenes, because as a Democrat, he couldn't do much else. But you know, I guess he felt that I'm going to be a vigorous campaigner. I guess he thought he had taught me enough that I learned to be the tuba.

DT: Yeah. (Chuckles) Okay.

HT: But we ran a---I thought we ran a very good amateurish campaign. In fact, one of the Democrat biggies said, "You know, you guys are running a campaign like a bunch of amateurs."

And I said, "Well, maybe so. Let's just see what the vote turns out." Well, the end result of that was I ended up with 51 percent of the vote, and got elected without a runoff.

WN: Without TV, either.

HT: Well, I refused to go on TV. I did not go.

DT: Yeah, this was facilitated a little bit, perhaps, by the fact that you had so many competitors.

HT: Well, I think so, because they diluted. You see, they ended up with 49 percent of the vote, divided amongst seventeen people.

DT: But it could easily have been otherwise.

HT: Yeah, yeah.

DT: But it was quite a tribute to win without a runoff.

HT: And then, see, it was pretty much a nonpartisan effort. You know, they didn't really get into a partisan-type thing. There were too many candidates. So those who were known Democrats kind of diluted the vote.

DT: This was a special election, was it not?

HT: Special, right.

DT: Yeah. Okay, I guess we better quit there and depend upon the next tape.

(Taping stops, then resumes.)

JC: The following is a continuation of the Hannibal Tavares interview. This is videotape number eight.

WN: This is tape eight with Hannibal Tavares. Okay, we were talking about the [October 20], 1979 [special] election, and you termed it sort of a strange election.

HT: Yeah, it was a strange election, because we had these eighteen candidates [eight Democrats, two Republicans, seven nonpartisans, and one Libertarian]. And I guess, when the votes were counted, I had 51 percent of the vote, which meant in this special election, I did not have to go through a runoff. If I had received less than 50 percent, we would have a runoff between the two [top vote-getters]. And the two would have been Hannibal versus [Wayne] Nishiki, because he came second. So consequently, (DT laughs) by 1 percent of the vote, didn't have to go through that.

WN: Well, can we talk about Nishiki a little bit? Well, we have some heavyweights: Takitani, Kondo, and Aiona running, and then you have this political neophyte Nishiki . . .

HT: Nishiki came out of nowhere. He came second.

WN: And all he had . . .

HT: I think what happened was that a lot of the biggies just diluted the Democrat vote. And Nishiki has his own following. He has the Nishiki following, period. It's not a Democrat party following at all. It's just his own particular following. So he ended up number two.

So we saddled up for that special election and came into office with lot of things to do and started cracking at it right off the bat. One of the things that I found out was that in the case of the sewer system in Lahaina, it was a major mess, and the EPA was very much concerned about it. To make a long story short, I sat down with them and worked out a compliance schedule which did materialize. They ended up being satisfied with what we were able to do. And I guess what made the difference was they noticed that I had a definite attitude of cooperation. And my feeling was, look, the feds have paid 75 percent of the bill. They should have some say as to what happens here. Well, that was not the same attitude that Elmer had. Anyhow, we put into place this compliance schedule.

Then I was also surprised to find out that Maui County had not done anything to comply with the federal Safe Drinking Water Act of 1974. And here it was 1979, five years later, and we had done nothing to bring our systems into compliance. The EPA and the DOH [Department of Health], which was representing the EPA, was very unhappy with Maui County. So again, another set of meetings with the EPA and the Department of Health, and we set up a water compliance schedule. And we cracked away that pretty well, so those things were done.

In the meantime, we had. . . . I came up with the idea of having community plans to be part of the county general plan so that we could take care of our growth in an orderly fashion. And this has been some of my arguments right now through my term is that the thing that controls the growth in Maui are the plans—the community plans, the general plan, and the zoning. And all of those plans have a great deal of input from the public. It was public hearing after public hearing after public hearing.

For example, you got a Wailuku-Kahului community plan. There was a citizen's committee formed to come up with the first cut of that plan. So there were nine district plans, including one for Kaho'olawe. And the Kaho'olawe community plan is a good plan. As [present] chairman of that commission, I'm using that as a takeoff. So anyhow, these community plans, to me, became an important part of the controlling or directing the growth of Maui County. And I felt that each community was a little different. You cannot take the guidelines for Wailuku and say, "Well, that applies to Kula and Makawao." They're two different ballgames.

So we came up with the idea of community plans. That became an ordinance. That ordinance passed. So the community plans were started, and in about three years' time, they were put into place by ordinance. There were a lot of public hearings, a lot of public input. So what I keep on saying to the people who are complaining that Maui's growing too fast, we're getting too big, get involved in the democratic process that involves consideration of these general plans, community plans, and zoning.

Now the law requires that the general plan be reviewed every ten years, community plan every ten years. The council right now has in its hands a revised general plan. And there'll be more public hearings, and the public should be involved there, because that will determine what happens to the entire county, community by community. And I believe in that system. That's a good democratic process. So if people feel that they want to stop hotels, they should get involved in the hearings that will center around community plans and all these other plans. And they can actually say no more hotels. They can do that if there's enough public support for that kind of position. The council and the mayor have the authority to make it happen.

So that was my contribution to the growth of Maui, was to set up these plans as definite long-term guidelines. And the average person is not fully aware of how this works. You got to remember, a lot of people who come here and are complaining about Maui's growth are people that don't understand what this is all about. They've never been through this process, but the process is there. And I think that the new mayor, Linda [Lingle], and the council will be very busy in taking a look at revisions and revamping of these plans. But that is the way to go, and that's the democratic way to go.

You know, we did a lot of things with the sewer system, the water system, law enforcement. Beefed up the police department, the fire department. Lot of things were happening day after day. And I would say that 90 percent of the time, there was good cooperation between the mayor and the council. But the only time you hear of any conflict is when it makes the headlines. And the only time that you make the headlines is when you are in conflict. But I would say, if you look over my record with the council, the council members will tell you that they had a good relationship with me as mayor. Lot of dialogue. I spent a lot of time talking to council members. In fact, one of my favorite things to do is to have brown bag luncheons with two or three or four councilmen at a time. And you know, we'd have open

dialogue all the time so that they could see where I was coming from, and I could understand where they're coming from. And it goes right back to the technique of lobbying, Dan, we talked about earlier.

DT: Person-to-person . . .

HT: Whether you're mayor or not, it's still the same—the human dynamics that are involved. And I think by setting up this kind of dialogue between the mayor and the council, that worked out very well. So the county had a lot of problems. I left a lot of things on Linda's lap as I found on my lap when I came in. And that's the way it is. I'm sure that [George] Ariyoshi left [John] Waihe'e a lot of things to do [when Ariyoshi left the governor's office in 1986]. And I think by and large, the system itself, to me, works very well. The democratic system of doing things in a very methodical way.

WN: Did you really look at some of the problems that Elmer Cravalho had with the council, and try to, when you decided to take the plunge into the mayor, try to avoid some of that?

HT: Definitely. In fact, when I first came in, it was right there. The sewer system in Lahaina was in very bad shape. The drinking water was zero, so we started putting things together. And I worked with the council very closely on that and got their support, because a lot of these things find their way to the budget. And the budget has to be approved by the council. Without their approval, it's just not going to happen. So there was a lot of good dialogue.

My first budget, we ran into some buzz saws, because I was expressing my own philosophies. [The council overrode HT's veto of the fiscal year 1980–81 budget.] But after that, they began to move very smoothly. In fact, there was one budget [fiscal year 1983–84] that they had butchered a lot and I vetoed their budget. And they did not have the six votes to override my veto. So our charter says the mayor's budget stands. So we had a lot of fun with that. In fact, we had a burial of their budget. We had a meeting in their meeting room and they brought the budget in a little coffin, and they burned it. I was there. We had a lot of fun, you know, we had food to eat and all that. And their guys, they said, "Well, you taught us a lesson. We'll be more careful the next time." And we made very light of it. But you know, our relationship, I would say, was very good.

DT: Which underlines that politics is people, among other things, and a sense of humor gets you over some of the rough spots.

HT: Yeah. And you know that [Councilman Wayne] Nishiki—I had a policy of never going to meetings of the council. I would let staff do that. I did not put the mayor in the middle of stuff like that. And that's just a matter of my own technique, but I did go down once on a very important matter. I think it had to do with housing. And Nishiki was giving me a lot of flack. And then finally, it worked out. Everybody was satisfied with that. And then he says, "You know, Mr. Mayor, you should come down to our meetings more often. Because we argue with you, and then when we're all through, everything works out okay. We need you to be here."

And I said, "Well, you've got to respect the separation of powers. You've got the executive and you've got the legislative. You do your thing, and I do my thing. And we may have some different views on how that is being done, but one thing I want to tell you, Nishiki, is that

although I'm a Republican, and I'm built like an elephant, and the elephant is the symbol of our party, no matter how many peanuts you offer me, I will not be part of your circus." And that brought the house down.

(Laughter)

HT: He laughed. He sat; he laughed.

DT: Once again, the humor. Interestingly enough, and it's really sort of an aside here. Recently, we were going to have to set up a new charter in Honolulu. At least a charter review this year [1991]. And I was in a meeting the other day, and [former Honolulu city council member] Marilyn Bornhorst was suggesting that there ought to be closer relations between the mayor and the council, whereby you sat down in a meeting together, periodically, which is a different twist. I thought at first, she meant something else, but you would tend to take the George Washington point of view: I don't want to sit in the senate. I am an executive and removed from you.

HT: Yeah. But you know, there's nothing to prevent dialogue. You don't have to formalize it. You don't have to say, well, every quarter you're going to sit down with the council. I don't have any favor with that. I think a lot of it, it depends on what the issues are.

DT: Okay, back to this item about development and plans that you have for Maui, and Lingle coming in, and perhaps during your time as mayor, did you have any confrontations, any big problems with persons who are in and around or part of Japanese national developments on Maui? In other words, we've had this on O'ahu of course, a lot . . .

HT: Yeah. I didn't have that kind of personal problem, because my attitude was that investments are international. If you look at the kind of investments that our country has all over the world, they are sizeable. You look at investments that Britain has in other places of the world, they are sizeable. Japan happens to be in a position now, where they have investment money available, and they're willing to make all of these investments. And when they came to Maui, I thought, well, their money is as good as anybody else's. They'll follow our laws. They'll develop according to our schemes. That's the only way they're going to do it. And in dealing with them, I always emphasize the fact that you consider keeping most of your people local. And they have done that.

DT: Are a lot of these pending from Japanese developments?

HT: Not too many pending on Maui right now. We're just about reaching the end of the line on hotel resort development on our existing plans. I think that WaiLea, probably one or two more spots. Lahaina, [the] north shore will be probably four more spots, if it goes. Now, those could be investments from anywhere. It could be from Japan. It could be from Hong Kong. It could be from England. It could be from Mainland U.S.A. It could be anywhere.

DT: There's nothing on Moloka'i, for example?

HT: Moloka'i, too, you got some Japan holdings in West Moloka'i. And the feeling on Moloka'i is that the east part of Moloka'i will not be developed as a resort area. West Moloka'i, Kaluako'i, in the present plan, that's the only place that's available for development. Now,

none of those plans are cast in concrete. They can always be amended, but amendments are not easy to come by. If you wanted to, say, build a hotel in East Moloka'i, you'd have to come in and amend the entire general plan, community plan, and zoning. And my feeling would be, it'll never happen, because there'd be so much opposition to it. It simply would not happen.

Now, the things that you see happening on Maui are all part of the general plan and the community plan. There are areas that have been zoned for resort hotel development, and they're reaching the end of the line there.

DT: No evidence that any of these developers felt that Cravalho might, in 1990, had been too tough a nut to crack. That Lingle might be a little bit more inexperienced and amendable to this than Cravalho.

HT: I guess they kind of. . . . I guess a lot of them, I think, were a little bit afraid of Elmer. They thought he would come in and really crack the whip. But again I say, that all isn't the way that democracy works. It is the general plan, the community plan, and the zoning, and all of that are in place by ordinances, by laws of the county. Those laws can be changed, but they're not easy to change.

DT: Now, you're talking Maui. Now, I'm talking about Maui in the statewide context. And that is, I heard some fairly prominent person—Democrat, capital *D*, Democrat on O'ahu—comment the other day, "Elmer Cravalho never did anything for the Democratic party," which is an amazing point of view to suddenly surface . . .

HT: I have a hard time buying that point of view . . .

DT: . . . in 1990. Well, so did I.

HT: To me, Elmer did a lot for the Democratic party. I think it's the position that he held. He was [Democratic] national committeeman, and I think he did a lot of keeping the Democrats together . . .

DT: He supplied a program for Jack Burns, quite frankly.

HT: That's right. So I don't agree with that statement at all. I think . . .

DT: So this is what I'm--I'm trying not to be too transparent, or else make sure that you clearly understand the implications of what I'm asking here about these pending developments and their wariness of Elmer.

HT: Well, I think that they looked at Elmer, seeing how the people feel now, I would say a lot of people on Maui feel our development has gone far enough. We'd better start slowing down, because we're getting more people than we probably want to have. At the same time, there has to be a fine balance between job opportunities, economy, and all of that. So the council and the mayor have to weigh that very, very carefully. And I think when we came up with the plans during my time—Elmer's time and then my time—we provided, by these plans, a lot of development potential. And that's being exercised by all kinds of investors, foreign as well as United States . . .

- DT: Let me be a little more explicit and then let's sort of wind this up, Warren. Kaka'ako in Honolulu is a biggie. That's big dollars and cents. And yet you find no questions raised about this up there now. Anything. To any extent. A little bit here and there. This is big dollars. Now, if these people are happy, let's say capital-*D* Democrats are happy with Kaka'ako the way it's going, then they would not want to go back to the days of a big-*D* Elmer Cravalho, even here on Maui, in a small sense. Does that make sense?
- HT: Could be. I think, having lived on O'ahu for a long time myself, I look at Kaka'ako as a place that needed to be changed, needed to be redeveloped. And what I see happening there, to me, is good. I think that it's going to be a good extension of the city of Honolulu.
- DT: You mean Kaka'ako?
- HT: Kaka'ako. I like what I see going on there. And if I were mayor there, again, we'd go by the general plan, by the community plan, by the zoning. The money would come from wherever the money is available. But the plan is the thing that decides what is going to happen.
- DT: Okay, I think we need a little bit more time. Let's go to the next tape. Very briefly.
- WN: Then we'll wrap it up.

END OF SIDE TWO

TAPE NO. 17-79-1-91; SIDE ONE

- JC: The following is a continuation of the Hannibal Tavares interview. This is videotape number nine and the last in the series.
- WN: Tape number nine with Hannibal Tavares. Let's see—I'd like to talk a little bit about some of the other areas of Maui County. For example, Lāna'i is one and Kaho'olawe is another. Now, first of all, Lāna'i is a—well, both of those islands are very unique. One is privately-owned and one is controlled by the federal government. First of all Lāna'i. In talking to some residents there, they're afraid what's going to happen there is that the development is going to be made, the infrastructure is going to be put in, the housing is going to be put in, and then David Murdock [chairman of Castle & Cooke, which owns most of the island of Lāna'i] may turn around and sell that entire island to, maybe, the Japanese. According to zoning laws or whatever, is that possible?
- HT: That is possible. But whoever buys it will still have to follow the zoning law. And the land use plan. No matter who buys it. A lot of the Japanese investors are beginning to find that out. That you come into Maui, you just don't do what you want to. No, it's all controlled. And I keep on talking about the plans. That's what does it. Now, the attitude on Lāna'i is that you need something there to boost the economy, to create jobs on the island because pineapple is having difficulty there. They grow good pineapple. They got to ship it all the way down to Dole cannery [in Honolulu]. That is becoming a problem. However, I think that there'll be a strong pitch, both on the county and state level, to keep most of Lāna'i in agricultural zoning. That doesn't mean it has to be pineapple. It can be pineapple and other

crops.

And a good example of this is the ag-parks [agricultural parks] in Moloka'i and here at Kula. We have ag-parks that are run by the county. And they're supplying all kinds of produce to O'ahu and to the rest of the state. And those are ag-parks that go anywhere from two acres to twenty acres or thirty acres, with the rentals being very, very reasonable because the state and the county are not in there to make a profit on land speculation. We're not speculating on land. So, the result is you've got farmers on there getting a piece of land to farm at very reasonable rental rates.

Now, I can see the same kind of thing happening on Lāna'i where you could go into a diversified agricultural scheme like they did on Moloka'i and here in Kula, where you would have a variety of produce that you could sell right here on the island. Right now, when you look at the large percentage of things that we import, there are a lot of things we can grow right here that would offset that importation. Now, in the past that hasn't happened because sugar and pine[apple] have taken almost all of the best land. But as those things begin to phase out, you still have good land, good ag land that can produce other crops.

Now, Maui example, [C.] Brewer [& Company] has gotten out of the sugarcane business entirely. They are diversified. Primarily macadamia nuts and pineapples. And it's working out all right for them there. Pineapple is still holding its own on Maui. Maui [Land &] Pine[apple Company] is still doing very well. HC&S, as a sugar plantation, will probably be the last to ever give up, if they ever do give up, because so far economy of scale, a good scientific management, good mills, they are still able to stay in the black on sugar production. If something were to happen, if sugar was to go under, there'd be other opportunities on those choice lands to be used for diversified crops. You know, it's not going to sit there idle.

Even if you said, "Well, all right. Let's go back into the beef industry, ranching." My last figure was that we import about 70 percent of our beef, comes from the Mainland, or Australia or New Zealand. Well, that's because there's no real good area here for ranching. But if all of a sudden a whole bunch of prime land became available, you would have the kind of diversification I'm talking about. I think that the future is going to be okay, that investments will still be made to meet the needs of various things. Kula ag-park started out as (a diversified agricultural development). Both Elmer and I worked on that. We got about three or four hundred acres down there. We're into the second increment now. All of those units are operating very successfully.

We got a lot of help from the University of Hawai'i on crops, and techniques for farming the crops, and marketing and all that. They're doing okay. The whole idea was, you take this large piece of prime ag land and it stays in ag in perpetuity, whereas the old-time Kula farms, as the old-time farmer gets tired and no longer wants to farm, his kids are doctors, lawyers, engineers. They are not farmers anymore. So pretty soon the old-time farm is sold, bought by some wealthy guy, and becomes a gentleman's estate. Now, with the state-county ag-park system, that will always be farmed in perpetuity. If this farmer wants to retire, there's another guy to take his farm. Because if he doesn't own the farm, he cannot sell it. So, all of that control is happening here on Maui and Moloka'i, it's exactly like that. The same thing, before I left office, I was trying to set up the same kind of task force to do that for Lāna'i. Should pineapple go out, we'd move into something else.

WN: Let's talk about Kaho'olawe. I know you're very active in it right now.

HT: Kaho'olawe is going to be a very interesting process. It's a five-member federal commission, and the charge of this [Kaho'olawe Island Conveyance] Commission is to report back to the Congress of the United States as to how the conveyance of the island should take place back to the state [of Hawai'i]. And I think that you're going to have a lot of debate on ceasing of military use of the islands forever, *pau*, finished, no. The military will put up a big argument about that, but I have a feeling they're going to have a hard time to sustain that argument. Number one, they've been doing that for a long time. Number two, Kaho'olawe is too close to Lahaina and Kīhei for comfort. It's too dangerous. The kind of ordnance they're using now, it's just too dangerous. (If some)body just doesn't calibrate accurately, (a) good portion of Lahaina could disappear. And we just don't want to see that happen. And on top of that, there's a lot of emotional feeling about Kaho'olawe, religious feelings. The island has its own spiritual character, and the Hawaiians and others feel very, very strong about that. I know that I've been to the island several times, about five times, and I have to admit that when I get there to participate in the functions, there is a feeling on that island. It's a spiritual feeling. And it seems like almost desecration to be bombing the hell out of that island that is so close to us.

I remember once—I was not mayor at the time, I was still working in Honolulu—I had a meeting with the [U.S.] navy on this. The chamber of commerce had a resolution about Kaho'olawe. I had introduced that damn resolution to stop the bombing of Kaho'olawe. So we had this meeting with a bunch of admirals, and I remember they were saying that there's no other place we can go. I said, "Well, off the top of my head I can think of another island. It's called San Clemente Island. It's right outside of the commander-in-chief's house and he can watch [you] maneuver from his veranda or his *lānai*, or patio as we call it."

DT: That was cruel, wasn't it? (Laughs)

HT: I'm sure he didn't enjoy me doing that. "That would be another island you could think of. I think you've had Kaho'olawe long enough." Well, I think that attitude was there. But I'm going to try to be fair about it. They finally made me the chairman of the commission. I'm not entirely happy about that, but at the same time there is a little bit of a thing in me that wants to get that thing done. It could go through this whole process of going to the public, going island by island. Letting people come in and tell us how they feel about Kaho'olawe. Let them come off the wall or whatever they want to say and get that all into the record before we start making our recommendations to Congress. I think you're going to find all kinds of things. But practically everything that is to be said, has been said. But this time you do it officially, you get it into part of the record of the commission. It all becomes, you know, part of the report that you send in.

But I think the military is beginning to realize that there is a lot of public sentiment against the continuation of that use there. And everyone says, "Well, what about the Persian Gulf war [January–February 1991]?" Well, they probably should not be training in Kaho'olawe. They should be training in the desert of Texas and Arizona and Oklahoma and Utah.

DT: And the Persian Gulf (laughs).

HT: Try to imitate the Persian Gulf. They're not going to do it at Kaho'olawe. So anyhow, it's

going to be an interesting time. I think there is going to be a lot of stuff in the press as we go along because they follow us wherever we go and. . . . We had our last meeting on Friday, which was the second meeting of the commission, and that was really information gathering. So we got a lot of stuff into the record. Things we've heard before. I didn't hear anything new that I haven't heard before. But now it's getting into the official record of this commission.

WN: My last question is, if there weren't a term restriction for mayor would you have run again [in 1990]?

HT: I don't think so. I'm seventy-one [years old] now, heading for seventy-two. I want some private life, too. In fact, the last time I almost didn't run. In 1986, I was not going to run. I'd had seven years in office and the charter term is eight. Seven is pretty close to eight. I thought seriously of not running at that time. But as long as your supporters and backers know that you've got four more years by law, they're not going to let you off the hook. I got a lot of pressure. When they heard me saying that I was thinking seriously of not running—this was way back in about August or September of '86—right away the heat was on from my own people. They said, "No, the law allows you four more years. We need you. We want you. Go do it. Let the people decide. If they don't want you they'll throw you out in '86."

I said, "Well, okay."

But, I don't think I would run again. I like the two terms. That's another debate, old one. But, I favor the two terms. After eight years, you're going to get kind of intense, maybe a little stale, a little disgruntled, cynical. I could feel all of those things happening to me. So I think I was ready to move on. I was planning my retirement, things that I wanted—private things that I wanted to do. I've got so much crap in my den that you can hardly walk in there from things that I've moved out of my office. You'd be surprised how much junk you collect in eleven years.

(Laughter)

HT: Now I gotta go through. I've got pictures, I've got certificates, what do I do with all this stuff? I got a small house. I'm not going to build another room, a gallery, you know, "Hannibal's Library." (Laughs) I don't think so.

DT: And now the latest issue is a cap on the term of lawmakers. You've noticed that . . .

HT: Yes.

DT: . . . which we may get to. If I may, do we have time for a quickie, a couple quickies, maybe you have a short answer to this, Mr. Mayor. You mentioned your great support and belief in the two-party system several times here. Yet, year after year after year or maybe almost decade after decade after decade, the Republican party is still not there to give us a viable two-party system. Do you have any suggestions for that?

HT: I keep on trying to remember that the Democrats must have felt that way over fifty years ago.

DT: Oh, I'm sure they did.

HT: It took them fifty years to finally change the tide, turn the tide, which they did very successfully. So, right now, the Democrats are going through their heyday. And I think they're beginning to have some problems. I see some cracks in their armor that maybe the Republican organization might come up with the kind of leadership and techniques that may convince the people, "Yeah, it's time for a change." We had one change in, when was it, '46, '48, '54?

DT: Fifty-four. [Nineteen] fifty-four was the biggie change. So that's fifty years there and the Democrats, well, maybe are working on about thirty years, so within the next twenty years you foresee a Republican snapback?

HT: Yes, I do, that's right. Whenever I [think], man alive, you know, we're getting whacked all the time. I gotta remember, how do you think the Democrats felt fifty years ago? The whole thing was Republican. The Democrats had to hide behind trees.

DT: I think there will be quite a few people that say there's still hope that that will happen (laughs).

HT: There's still hope. There's still hope. And I think somewhere along the line, people tend to become disgruntled with the establishment. You know, we've had enough of that. You end up with a new governor next time that people are not going to be attuned with. That's causing some problems. Legislature may start to change. I think there's still hope. The Republican party has a real challenge. It can only go one way and that's up.

DT: (Chuckles) That's right.

HT: We keep on making our contribution until the last breath and then see what happens. I think that some new young people are coming into the party. I see some young people that feel it's time for a change. They want to see some change. But it won't happen overnight.

DT: I think a young man, Michael Liu at the last election, gave some sort of promise there for, perhaps, Republicans.

And the final one, Mr. Mayor, an issue, and perhaps it's a serious one, that we keep hearing about—is it a passing fantasy or is it something maybe to be concerned about—the so-called issue of sovereignty in Hawai'i.

HT: You know, I hear that all the time, and it had already come up in our second meeting of the commission. I don't know enough about it to intelligently discuss it. It depends on what are they talking about, in sovereignty? Are they talking about like an Indian nation that has it's own program, it's own confines? What are they talking about? Until I see that, I don't know how to respond to that question. I think there'd be a lot of public discussion and debate before anything like that happened.

DT: I guess you'll be thinking about that along with the rest of us.

HT: Yeah, right. You know, I have a lot of feeling for the Hawaiians. Very deep feelings for the

Hawaiians. You know, I love the Hawaiians as a group. A lot of my friends, relatives are—you know, [Cyrus] Nils [Tavares] is a Hawaiian-Tahitian, and that side of the family we have a number of—Edna [Tavares] Taufaasau. We have a number of members of our family who have been active leaders. And I just listen to what the development is. What are the problems that they feel they would solve with this system? What advantages would they have? How far would they go?

You know, look at Hawaiian Homes Commission [Department of Hawaiian Home Lands]. It was designed to take care of land and housing for Hawaiians, but still within the American government framework. If I'd be talking about a sovereign nation, what do you mean by that in regard to the American or democratic framework? You know, are you going to be a nation all by itself? You going to have a king and queen and America leaves Hawai'i? Not really, no.

DT: Well, there are even some quarters where they have a king designated already, I think, some little boy. At any rate, the future will solve all these problems, I'm sure.

For us, Warren, I've said it all. I'll let you say thank you for us both.

WN: Thank you very much, Mr. Mayor, for your time.

HT: It's been a real pleasure to talk to you folks. It brought back a lot of memories, you know, when you sit down like this and reminisce, really. A lot of it is just kind of off the top of the head, but I've lived through it all and it's been a wonderful life.

DT: Good fun. Thanks a lot.

WN: Thank you.

END OF INTERVIEW

**HAWAI'I
POLITICAL HISTORY
DOCUMENTATION PROJECT**

Volume I

**Center for Oral History
Social Science Research Institute
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa**

June 1996