NINTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

125 South Grand Avenue
Pasadena, California 91105
(626) 795-0266

ORAL HISTORY

ALEC L. CORY, ESQUIRE
PROCOPIO, CORY, HARGREAVES & SAVITCH LLP
San Diego, California

An Interview Conducted by

Sylvia Arden
San Diego, California
2000

Copyright ©2000 The Ninth Judicial Circuit Historical Society

In 1985, the Ninth Judicial Circuit Historical Society established an oral history program to document important events in Western United States history. Judges and lawyers throughout the states and territories of the Ninth Circuit are interviewed to record their recollections. Oral history is a technique for gathering resource information through tape-recorded interviews conducted by informed interviewers. The transcript of the record is reviewed by interviewer and narrator for clarity and accuracy, corrected, and deposited in the Society's archives. An oral history transcript is not intended to present the complete, verified description of events; it is rather a spoken personal account given in response to questions. As such it transmits the narrator's thoughts, perceptions, and reflections; it is partisan, unique, and irreplaceable.

All uses of this document are covered by a signed agreement between the narrator, the inteviewer, and the Society. The information is thereby made available for research purposes. All literary rights in the transcript, including the right to publish, are reserved to the Ninth Judicial Circuit Historical Society. No part of the transcript may be quoted for publication without the written permission of the Director of the Society.

Requests for permission should be addressed to the Director and should identify the passages to be quoted, probable use of the passages, and identification of the user.

It is recommended that this oral history be cited as "An Oral History of [name of narrator]" conducted [date] by [name of interviewer], the Ninth Judicial Circuit Historical Society, Pasadena, California.

NINTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Oral History Project

INTERVIEWEE: ALEC L. CORY, ESQUIRE

INTERVIEWER: Sylvia Arden

DATES: February 4 and 11, 2000

[Begin Tape 1, Side A]

SA: This is Sylvia Arden, interviewer for the Ninth Judicial Circuit Historical Society interviewing Alec L. Cory, Esquire, at his office at 530 *B* Street, Suite 2100, San Diego, California, on February 4, 2000.

Good morning, Mr. Cory. I'm pleased to be here for our first interview session. First, would you tell us your full name and the date and place of your birth?

ALC: Yes, my name is Alec Leon Cory. I was born in Gallup, New Mexico, March 11, 1915.

SA: What brought your family to New Mexico?

ALC: My father immigrated from Lebanon in about 1898, I believe, when he was still quite young.

SA: Tell us your father's name.

ALC: His name was Elyen Namen Kitouri [phonetic spelling].

SA: When was the family name changed to Cory?

ALC: About 1890.

SA: What caused him to come from Lebanon? Were there problems there and how did he come here and get citizenship? Continue telling us about your father and his coming from Lebanon.

ALC: He was born in a small mountain village about forty miles from Beirut and he had heard and read a little bit about what he referred to as The New World, the land of opportunity, and he determined that he would like to come here, and, I guess, see if it was true.

SA: What was the procedure then for coming to the United States from a foreign country?

ALC: At that time he went first to Brazil and he traveled just with a cousin about his own age, which was only in the late teens, and he lived in Sao Paulo, Brazil for, I think, three or four years, and then immigrated to the United States. He came in through the port of New Orleans and there he met and married my mother.

SA: Did they need a sponsor then or did they need any green card to work, do you know?

ALC: I believe not, but I'm not really sure. I feel almost certain that they did not.

SA: What brought your parents to New Mexico where you were then born?

ALC: Well, after he married, I think he came to the conclusion that he didn't want to be dictated to by his mother-in-law (laughter), and he was adventurous

enough to put his wife on a train and say, "We're going out West." And that's exactly what they did. They moved to Colorado.

SA: Colorado? Was that without knowing anyone there?

ALC: Without knowing anyone there. What he heard about Colorado, I haven't the slightest idea, but he did put my mother on the train and they took off for Colorado.

SA: And at that time they were just a young couple?

ALC: A very young couple. I think he was eighteen or nineteen and my mother was about two years younger.

SA: Did he and your mother tell you about that experience in Colorado and what finally brought them to New Mexico?

ALC: My father told me a little bit and I'm sorry to say my mother died when I was only three years old. At that time she had borne five other children and I was the youngest of six.

SA: When she died, she left quite a family.

ALC: She did--six children. I was the youngest and my sister, Ethel--she died just a few years ago here in San Diego--was the oldest, and she became more or less my mother.

SA: Did your mother die in childbirth?

ALC: No, my mother died in an influenza epidemic in 1918 which took so many people.

SA: Oh, my goodness! Were they already in New Mexico by then?

ALC: They had moved to New Mexico from Colorado.

SA: What brought your father to New Mexico?

ALC: Just thought there was a better opportunity there. He was a merchant. He had a little store--a mini-department store, kind of a general store, and he continued that kind of a business and raised six children.

SA: Did he remarry?

ALC: No, he never remarried. He lived until 1950 when he was seventy-two, I believe.

SA: Did he talk about your grandparents that he left in Lebanon?

ALC: Very little. I can remember when I was quite young he made one trip back to what he referred to as the old country, and his mother was still living then. His father had died.

SA: What did your grandfather do for a living?

ALC: He was a stone mason.

SA: Tell me from your early recollections about what kind of a man your father was.

ALC: Well, he was a man from the old country. I think the culture in that country was one where the father was in all respects the head of the household. He was stern in many ways. He would give anything--absolutely anything--to his children. He had a fourth-grade formal education and yet he read

everything he could get his hands on in both Arabic and English. He would read the newspaper from cover to cover and wanted his children to be well educated.

SA: So he was an inspiration to you.

ALC: He was an inspiration. He was stern.

SA: What do you remember about Gallup, New Mexico?

ALC: A year or two after my mother died, one of my aunts, my mother's sister, who was living just outside New Orleans at the time, wanted me to come and stay with her and talked my father into letting me do that.

SA: Just you?

ALC: Yes. I was six or seven.

SA: Did you want to go?

ALC: Well, I think so. I certainly didn't object, and she had children a little bit older than me, but she treated me just absolutely wonderfully.

SA: And you were able to adjust to leaving your family and going to New Orleans to live with your aunt?

ALC: Yes, they were like family, and I was there between one and two years.

SA: Did you go to school there?

ALC: I went to school there for one year. It was Covington, Louisiana which is just across Lake Pontchartrain from New Orleans. And, as I say, she treated

me wonderfully. She had three children of her own, all of whom are a few years older than me. She wanted to adopt me.

SA: How long did you live with her?

ALC: It was between one and two years.

SA: And then did you go back to your father?

ALC: Then he came and got me and brought me back.

SA: So you learned very early to adjust to many kinds of situations.

ALC: Oh yes.

SA: So you became very flexible. Tell me what your life was like when you went back.

ALC: I went back to school. I had even started school right after my mother died because we didn't have any help in the house or anything of that nature, and so my oldest sister--I mentioned her--took me to school with her and I would sit in a corner. She was in high school then.

SA: And they let her do that then?

ALC: Oh, yes, they let her do that. It was a small town.

SA: So you started to absorb.

ALC: Well, I don't know how much I absorbed, but I did sit there rather quietly, I think she said. She bragged about that, that I behaved so well.

SA: When you went back to your father and you went back to school, what grade were you in?

ALC: I went to grammar school for a few years--two or three or four years in Gallup.

SA: How did you take to school? How did you like it?

ALC: Well, I liked it.

SA: Your sister was the oldest and you didn't have your mother. What was family life like?

ALC: Family life was very close. My oldest sister became the head of the family basically as far as the maternal side was concerned. We lived at home. We did the very normal things that a family does, but my father was in a way old fashioned, I suppose. We were kids, and we played and we did school activities and those kinds of things. So it was quite a normal life. Father had a little store.

SA: Did any of the children help in the store?

ALC: All of the children helped in the store at some time or other!

SA: What were your chores in the store?

ALC: Sweeping out and those kinds of things--little things that somebody had to do because he didn't have much help. We didn't have much help in the store, or at home for that matter. We all had chores that we had to do.

SA: Did you have any time for recreation?

ALC: Well, yes. You know I did the normal chores that a child would do and my brothers and my other sister did their part, too. My older sister did the cooking, keeping the house, and looking after the kids.

SA: Did you celebrate any holidays?

ALC: We celebrated the normal holidays. The Christian holidays were always celebrated. My father belonged to the Greek Orthodox Church.

[End Tape 1, Side A - Begin Tape 2, Side A]

SA: When you were getting a little bit older in school, did you start to have any favorite areas of study, and did you begin to think about what your main interests were?

ALC: Well, very early on, when I was in grade school, I didn't think of any, I didn't have anything in my mind about what I wanted to do.

SA: What about in junior high, when you started to develop into your teens? Did you begin to have favorite areas of interest?

ALC: Oh, I think not really, as far as a vocation is concerned. I think I felt like so many other high school kids, I knew quite early on that I'd like to be able to go to college, because I had seen my oldest brother go off to college, and another older brother just about ready to go to college. My dad made it quite clear that he'd *like* his kids to go, he *wanted* his kids to go to college. Not so much the girls, because that wasn't quite so important in his culture. And it mustn't be understood that the women were in any way subservient.

The boys were taught very, very, very clearly that we were to take care of our sisters, *always*. That was part of our culture. He believed, yes, if the daughters wanted to go to college; it was also necessary for the boys to go to college, whether they wanted to or not, I think, in his mind.

SA: And I think the whole culture didn't encourage girls to go to college in those years.

ALC: I think that's right.

SA: Was it easy financially to go to college, unlike today? How were they able to go, your brothers and you?

ALC: It wasn't easy in those days--nor is it easy now, for that matter, for so many of them. But that was the one thing that my father believed in spending *whatever* he had. He had no hobbies; personally, he spent little or no money on anything except the necessities, *and* on sending his kids to school.

SA: Did you own the home that you lived in?

ALC: Always owned.

SA: What colleges were your older brothers going to?

ALC: Well, my oldest brother, the one that first left to go to college, went to MIT, and graduated in engineering, and became an electrical engineer. My next oldest brother wouldn't go to college. He was a little bit of a free spirit, I guess, (laughter) a little bit rebellious, and so my father sent him for a year or two to New Mexico Military Institute, in Roswell, New Mexico. And

then my next younger brother, George, who's still living--he's ninety years old now.

SA: Really?! Where does he live?

ALC: He lives in La Jolla. And he went to Berkeley and received a degree in architecture, and then went on to obtain a graduate degree in architecture, also from MIT.

SA: Sounds like a very bright family.

ALC: Well, we were encouraged, as you say, to put it mildly, to get all the education that we could absorb.

SA: Yes, but some may be encouraged and not have the capability of reaching . . . .

ALC: Well, that happens, too.

SA: Let's go back a little bit to your high school days. Where did you go to high school?

ALC: I went to high school in Oceanside.

SA: Oh, wait a minute, we didn't get you back out to California, so tell me . . . .

ALC: Oh, we moved to California then. We moved here to San Diego County, to Oceanside, in 1924, and I was nine years old at the time.

SA: What brought your father and family to California?

ALC: He had heard about California. He always wanted to improve his lot, and the lot of his family. He heard that California was a wonderful place. I

think one of the things about California, and particularly Southern California, that attracted him, was that he had heard about the climate here, and he thought that sounded very much like Lebanon. It's interesting.

SA: Oh! that's interesting!

ALC: And it *is* very, very much like that.

SA: Did he come alone first, to open up a business?

ALC: He came out here and looked around a little bit, and then found a little location in Oceanside where he could start a little store. And then he went back to Gallup and we packed the family in the car (chuckles) and headed out to California.

SA: How many children were still at home, moving with him?

ALC: Well, there were five--my oldest brother was still at MIT, he had just started there, I believe--and so we were five.

SA: How did you all feel about that, moving to California?

ALC: Well, we weren't asked, but we did feel good about it, because we had heard something about California.

SA: Kind of exciting?

ALC: It was *very* exciting, yes.

SA: So you said you moved to Oceanside.

ALC: To Oceanside.

SA: What year was that?

ALC: [That was] 1924.

SA: And what was Oceanside like in 1924?

ALC: A tiny little town, 3,000 people, no military around. That was way before Camp Pendleton, and of course all of the growth that's happened since then. *Very* small town, lovely beach town where you could walk to the beach. It was a really lovely place to live.

SA: So then you went to school there, and what grade were you in by the time you moved to Oceanside?

ALC: I *think* I was in the sixth grade. I started high school in 1927, and graduated in 1931, so I think I was in the sixth grade when I started at grammar school in Oceanside.

SA: Did you adjust quickly to a new school and classmates?

ALC: Well, yes, because it was so small and so friendly. It was easy to adjust.

SA: Were you beginning to get interested in certain subjects? In other words, did you like English better than math, or what were you starting to find your area of interest and where you would excel more?

ALC: Oh, I think I hadn't really thought about those things specifically in that way. I think my best subjects after I got here to high school, when you have *some* selection, at least, were the English subjects more so than math. I would never have made an engineer, I'm sure. Yet I had two brothers who excelled in math.

SA: Did you develop a social life there with your own friends?

ALC: Yes, we had quite a normal social life. Again, both schools, both grade school and high school, were very small, and so you became acquainted very, very easily then. I guess we had a pretty normal life.

SA: Did you begin to have role models--besides, of course, your father--any of your teachers or any other peers? Did you begin to have any role models at all as you were going into high school?

ALC: I can't really say. No, I don't think so. We were a very close-knit family, although we all had friends that we played with and socialized with, went to school dances with and that kind of thing that you have in high school. In athletics, my brother George played football--he was on the football team. My father had two brothers there in or near Oceanside, both of whom had families, and so all the cousins were very close.

SA: Did they move to Oceanside too?

ALC: They followed my dad. He wasn't the oldest, but he was kind of the leader.

SA: When you say they followed your dad, you mean . . . .

ALC: From Gallup.

SA: Oh, in other words, they came from Lebanon too, and then went to Gallup?

ALC: Yes.

SA: How many in Oceanside were related to your father?

ALC: Three brothers.

SA: *Three* brothers! And their families?

ALC: And their families.

SA: Oh, my! So you had lots of cousins?

ALC: Had lots of cousins. One of the families lived in Carlsbad. One of the families lived in Oceanside, very close to us. And one of the families lived in Encinitas.

SA: What were all of these brothers doing to earn a living?

ALC: They were all merchants.

SA: *All* of them?

ALC: Yes.

SA: What kind of store did your father have in Oceanside?

ALC: General, what they called in those days dry goods store. They had clothing and yardage and that kind of thing.

SA: Did the store have a name?

ALC: Cory's. That's all.

SA: So they were all ambitious and able to make a good living?

ALC: They made a good living, all of them--quite good for those times.

SA: You were lucky, surrounded by--you didn't have your mother, but you had all of these relatives and your aunts.

ALC: And my aunts--especially the one who lived in Oceanside, who was my father's brother's wife, who was very close and very helpful after my mother died--helped my sister, taught her things about cooking.

SA: Which relative took you to Orleans?

ALC: That was on my mother's side. My mother's family had always lived in Louisiana or Mississippi.

SA: So when you were in high school, in your second or third year, you had to start thinking where you were going to go to college. Did you begin by then to determine what you might want to do, and where you might want to go?

ALC: Only so far as where I might want to go to college, but not what I wanted to do with my life.

SA: How did you determine which colleges to apply to? Did you have any counselors?

ALC: Just a little bit with the teachers, and from my older brothers, as well. I knew I wanted to go, *needed* to go, to a public university, because the cost was very, very little, as compared with private universities. I didn't have any career goal in mind when I started college.

SA: Did you have to apply to a few, like young students have to do today?

ALC: No, it wasn't very difficult to get into university at that time. If you'd graduated with a high school diploma from an accredited high school, you could easily go into the university.

SA: Where did you decide to apply, and when did you have to do that, the last year when you were a senior?

ALC: Yes.

SA: Where did you apply?

ALC: I applied first at UCLA. I went there, actually, for two years.

SA: As an undergrad?

ALC: Yes.

SA: You lived in the dorms?

ALC: No, the first semester I lived in a boarding house--this was the first full year. And then the second year, four of us--classmates from Oceanside, actually--had a house that we rented and lived in and "batched."

SA: Did you have to work while you went to college to earn some of your expenses?

ALC: No, I really didn't. I worked in the summers, but I didn't really work. I think my father sent me thirty dollars a month, and that was enough to live on.

SA: You probably didn't go out carousing and spending a lot of money.

ALC: Believe me! But, you know, thirty dollars a month paid your room and board and left you a good three or four dollars a month to spend. Who needs any more than that?!

SA: Now, at UCLA, in your undergrad years, were you beginning to determine special subject interests, or any ideas of your strengths? I know you said English, not math. What was your first year at UCLA like?

ALC: Well, I was beginning to think a little bit. You know, still your courses were general education courses in the first two years. They were then, and I think probably to a certain extent they still are. So I wasn't really concentrating on anything, but I think I knew at that time that I wasn't going to be a doctor or a scientist, but not necessarily law. I wasn't thinking about it that early on.

SA: Were you a good student?

ALC: I was a pretty good student. I was no world leader. (chuckles)

SA: So you were two years there. What did you do in the summers? Did you go back home?

ALC: Well, after my second year--and that would have been 1933 or '34. I worked in a cannery for twenty-five cents an hour. And that was a *good* wage.

SA: What kind of cannery?

ALC: Well, there was a fruit cannery there, and in the winter they canned olives. I worked both summer and winter. In the summertime the two main crops were peaches and apricots--dumping boxes of apricots and peaches on a

conveyor belt for the canning process. And then in the winter, it was the same thing with olives.

SA: Is that what your brother was doing too?

ALC: No, he had a store there. But I lived with him, so it didn't cost me anything.

SA: And you were saving?

ALC: I was saving. I mean, after all, I was making a lot of money, twenty-five cents an hour. So I managed to save a little bit, and then I entered Berkeley in the fall, after staying out of college one year.

SA: Well, one thing, when you work like that, you know you want to go to college and develop a career.

ALC: Oh, you certainly do. I didn't want to spend my life doing *that* kind of work.

SA: What made you decide to apply at Berkeley?

ALC: Well, I had wanted to go there, I think, for really a long time. The first two years I went to UCLA, it was kind of closer to home and I had friends. I really wanted to go to Berkeley.

SA: So you applied and you were accepted?

ALC: Yes.

SA: They transferred your UCLA credits?

ALC: Yes.

SA: So now tell me when you went to Berkeley a little bit about your experience there.

ALC: Well, again, one semester I lived in a boarding house, and then after that four of us rented an apartment. I really liked Berkeley and everything about it--the campus, I liked the people, I liked the courses.

SA: Did you have good professors?

ALC: Oh yes. Many I still remember. Wonderful professors.

SA: Were you then getting any advice, or beginning to know what you were going to do? Were your teachers encouraging you in certain areas?

ALC: Well, I don't know that it was anything specific. Early on at Berkeley, I thought I would like to graduate and probably get--you know, just with a bachelor's degree--get a job with some kind of a company. My major was finance--I was in the College of Commerce. I thought I could get a job with a bank or something of that nature. Fairly close to graduation, I could see that jobs were going to be hard to come by.

SA: Was this during Depression out here?

ALC: Oh, believe me, it was in the *depth* of the Depression. We were starting to come out of it a little bit in 1936, but it was still really, *really* hard. I'll give you an example of how things were. At Berkeley, our total fees were twenty-six dollars a semester, and that included ten dollars for your ASUC

membership, which entitled you to all of the football games and basketball games--*all* of the sports.

SA: That's the student union fee?

ALC: That's the student union fee, yes, plus all of the other activities--dances and concerts and that kind of thing. So it was almost nothing.

SA: But it took a long time to earn that.

ALC: But it took a long time to earn it, because the wages were almost nothing.

SA: Right.

ALC: Then, as I was about to graduate, I got to thinking. It seemed to me, I learned that jobs were not that easy to come by, and maybe I ought to continue on. And my father wanted me to continue with my education, whatever I wanted. I thought, well, maybe I could be a lawyer.

SA: Did you have any role models or did you know any lawyers?

ALC: One of my friends in particular, his father was a lawyer in Oceanside. I just thought, "Well, that might be--I might be able to do that." So I guess I must say that my main reason for choosing the law was economic. I thought, "If I get a law degree . . . "

SA: Yes, make a living.

ALC: " . . . I can make it."

SA: And it wasn't then that you had a *passion* for it yet?

ALC: Not a passion, no.

SA: Did you then start to decide where to go to law school?

ALC: Well, it didn't take long to decide. I wanted to stay in Berkeley.

SA: They had a good law school?

ALC: Yes, they had one of the finest law schools in the country--still is, in my view.

SA: So did you start immediately after you graduated?

ALC: Yes. I graduated as an undergraduate in May of 1936, and then entered law school that fall, right there in Berkeley.

SA: Did you still room with friends off campus, or get your own apartment? What were your living conditions during law school?

ALC: The first year of law school I lived in the International House, the *I* House. Are you familiar with that? It's been at the university for a number of years, and mostly--in fact, it's probably required--you have to be a graduate student. I think you can be an undergraduate student if you're from a foreign country. There are many people from many countries, and that's how it gets its name, International House. Yes, it's a very, very nice place, as a matter of fact. And so I lived there. It turns out that three of my classmates in law school also lived there. That was just my first year of law school. And then in the second and third years, three friends of mine and I lived in a house that we rented up above the campus. I don't know if you're familiar with Berkeley, but it's on a hill, above the stadium--there's quite a few houses, and we

rented one--kind of an old house, but very comfortable. We batched there for the last two years.

SA: How many years was law school, to get your degree?

ALC: Three years.

SA: So you went four years, and then another three years?

ALC: Yes, right. Four years undergraduate and three years of law school.

SA: As you started in law school, did you find that it really was something that appealed to you?

ALC: *Very*, very much so. I really liked it.

SA: Anything specific about those years, any area of law you studied? Or was it three years of general legal studies?

ALC: It was general, three years of legal studies. I think *one* of the things I liked about it very much was the fact that it was very small, and you were with the same people throughout, in all your classes, the first year. In those days, admission to law school at Berkeley and some of the other better law schools, I guess, in the country, the admission requirements were not great, but what they did was weed out so many people. We started, for example, with a class of 150-some. By the end of the first semester, approximately two-thirds were dismissed.

SA: Oh, my!

[End Tape 2, Side A - Begin Tape 2, Side B]

ALC: It was *brutal* in many ways. But that was the way they did it in those days. Today, the admission requirements are *extremely* high, but there's a *very*, very, very low failure rate. That's the way it's done now. I *did* love law school, very much. I loved the courses, loved the professors and the fellow students.

SA: Were there many females going to law school then?

ALC: I'm sorry to say, no. In our graduating class we only graduated sixty-four out of 150-some who started.

SA: How many females?

ALC: Four, that graduated in our class.

SA: Before you graduated, did you have an idea of what you might be doing with that law degree?

ALC: Only in the sense that I was going to try to find a job with a law firm or with a public agency or something. I found *that* wasn't easy, either. Firms were not hiring that much. It helped in those days if you had some kind of connection: a relative that had a law firm or dealt a great deal with a law firm, or a friend that did so. It was not easy. There wasn't the demand for lawyers that there is now. Young lawyers now, out of the better law schools receive lots of offers, most of them. So I decided to go to San Diego. We lived in Oceanside, but I'd been gone so long . . . .

SA: Right. So when you came to San Diego, did you know anyone here in San Diego itself?

ALC: Not too many people. No, I didn't know too many people here. My sister, Ethel, was living here. That may have been part of the reason I was attracted to it.

SA: And did you find a job with a law firm then?

ALC: No, not at first. I started with what was then called the Public Attorney's Office. And that was the predecessor to Legal Aid Society, but it was funded in a different way than the present Legal Aid Society is funded. And it was administered by the San Diego County Bar Association. I worked there, just as an assistant, for a little while, and then I got the appointment. That was a pretty high-paying job, not that bad.

SA: How old were you by then?

ALC: I graduated from law school at twenty-four.

SA: So you were a young man. How long were you in that position?

ALC: Then I was there for a year, I think it was. Then I got a job in the City Attorney's Office. Specifically, it was the City Prosecutor, which was a branch of the City Attorney's Office. I later went to work for the [U.S.] Office of Price Administration. Do you remember that? That was the federal agency that handled the rationing and price control.

SA: Oh, yes, of course.

ALC: *Very* large, nationwide, and they hired lots of attorneys. I took a job then as rationing attorney as did lots of my friends--colleagues, lawyers--who also went to work for the OPA.

Interviewer's note: We ended the first session when Mr. Cory was working in San Diego for the U.S. Office of Price Administration. We stopped then, and this is our second session on Friday, February 11, and we're going to start after that job, when the war was starting, and take it from there.

[End Tape 2, Side B - Begin Tape 3, Side A]

SA: Good morning, Mr. Cory. I'm glad to be here for the second session with you. I'd like you to tell me your wife's full name, where you met, and take us through your marriage.

ALC: Good morning. My wife's maiden name was Barbara Stewart Felker. We met in the fall of 1938 on the Berkeley campus. At that time, I was starting my third and last year of law school, and she was in her fourth year of undergraduate and was about to graduate the following May of 1939, which is when I actually finished law school also. We met just through a mutual friend on the Berkeley campus. I think with me, it was love at first sight. I'm not so sure--in fact, I'm quite sure it was *not* exactly the same with Barbara. It took a little bit of time and a little bit of convincing.

SA: How old was she when you met her?

ALC: She was twenty-five, and I was twenty-four. We are exactly a year apart. Our birthdays are just a day apart: hers is March 12, and mine is March 11, so there's one day when we're the same age.

SA: Where was her home when she came to college, where was her family living?

ALC: She was born in San Diego, as a matter of fact, because at that time, when she was born, her father was an official with the YMCA [Young Men's Christian Association], and was in San Diego. However, she lived here for just a very short time. Her family moved, oh, within about a year after she was born, to San Fernando.

SA: San Fernando Valley, near Los Angeles?

ALC: San Fernando Valley, near Los Angeles, and she grew up there and went through grade school and high school there, and was *still* living there when she was attending Berkeley. So we did meet at Berkeley, and it just went from there.

SA: Did you start to go steady?

ALC: After a while we did. As I said, I think, earlier, it took a little bit of convincing, but we did start to go steady. She lived on one side of the campus, and I lived up above Memorial Stadium on the other side of the campus, and it was a very long walk, especially after we'd been out on a date, and one didn't stay overnight in those days (laughter) or even close to

it! (laughter) And so I can remember many nights, real late, and I would walk across the campus in Berkeley, and up there in the hills and thought I'd never get home. But anyway, I persevered.

SA: To prove your love! When did you marry?

ALC: And then we became engaged just about the time we were to both graduate, which was in May.

SA: Did you both graduate the same year?

ALC: We graduated the same year: She graduated from undergraduate, and I graduated from law school--that's when I finished law school. We then became engaged, and we decided to be married as soon as we could, which turned out to be December of that year.

SA: And what year, again, was that?

ALC: That was 1939. I wanted to take the bar first, and Barbara stayed in San Francisco that year and worked, while I was in Berkeley on the campus, studying for the bar. That was the summer of 1939. I took the bar in October. Anyway, about September or October, we decided to get married in December, which I felt was quite a gamble, because I hadn't passed the bar yet, was just ready to take it. Anyway, she was willing to gamble with me, so we set the wedding date for December 17, 1939.

SA: What kind of a wedding did you have, was it a family affair?

ALC: It was a family affair in San Fernando, her home, in a little church in San Fernando.

SA: Did your family all come?

ALC: Oh, yes.

SA: Your father?

ALC: Yes, my father was still living then. As a matter of fact, one of my brothers was my best man. And Barbara's family, of course, were there, because she had grown up there. She had two brothers, and she also had many, many friends there.

SA: Where did you start out your married life, where did you move to?

ALC: Well, we moved to San Diego. It just so happened that I got the bar results, actually, a few days before we were married.

SA: Ah! that was a relief!

ALC: It was a *huge* relief. I got sworn in, as a matter of fact, before the state bar just a few days *after* we were married, while we were on our honeymoon. We made a little honeymoon trip to Carmel, and then went into San Francisco so I could be sworn in. In those days the only place you could be sworn in before the State Bar was San Francisco--not even Los Angeles. So we, as I say, spent our honeymoon in Carmel, and then we drove into San Francisco and I got sworn in.

SA: You had a car by then?

ALC: Had a car, yes.

SA: What was San Diego like when you moved here with her in 1939 before the war?

ALC: Well, San Diego was a very, very small town compared with what it is now. I *think* the population was in the neighborhood of 200,000 or something like that. I'm not *sure* that's right, but it was approximately right. It was primarily a Navy town, I would say, then. That was even before it became a defense industry town--although that started to happen very soon *after* 1939, because by then, the war had started.

SA: Continue telling me when you first moved here to little San Diego.

ALC: Well, we got a little apartment in Golden Hill in San Diego. That's around Twenty-fifth and *C* Street, if you're familiar with San Diego. And San Diego, as I say, was just very, very small, as compared with its size today. The economy was based *so* much on the Navy. In fact, it was so much so that when--as we refer to it--the fleet was out, things were really quiet in San Diego--business and everything, really quiet. And when the fleet came back, businesses prospered a little better.

Then later on, as the war progressed, and the economy of San Diego became defense-industry-oriented, that's when we started building planes here in San Diego.

SA: When you first came, tell me what you did. Did you start your first job then? What did your wife do?

ALC: That's when I started my first job with the Legal Aid Office, which was then called the Public Attorney's Office. But basically, that was the predecessor of today's Legal Aid Society. Things were very quiet in San Diego.

SA: In those days, was it difficult for a woman attorney to get a job?

ALC: Well, one, there weren't many women attorneys; and yes, it was difficult. It was difficult to get a job, period. But in San Diego at that time, I think there were only seven or eight women attorneys--very, very few. Of course our whole bar was maybe 200 members, something like that.

SA: So was Barbara a stay-at-home wife?

ALC: She was a stay-at-home wife.

SA: Which was customary then.

ALC: It was pretty much customary in those days, yes.

SA: As the defense industry started and it was evident that we were going to get into a war, and people were coming in to work in the defense industries, do you remember that dramatic change that happened slowly, but then pretty rapidly, in San Diego?

ALC: It happened rather rapidly that we changed from an economy that relied upon the Navy and the presence of the fleet in San Diego. And then, of course,

along came December 7, 1941, and things changed even *more* rapidly and more *dramatically* then.

SA: Now, when Pearl Harbor occurred, and here we were on the Pacific Rim, and we had the defense industries, was there a climate of fear in the region?

ALC: There was some--in fact, quite a bit. I think there was some fear that we may be, since we were located on the West Coast and we're a very, very important naval installation, that we might be bombed here. In fact, I can remember right *after* December 7, we had blackouts in San Diego for quite a long time. We had to have blackout curtains on our homes, and all of the public buildings, even the hospitals had blackout curtains. And there, even for a while, in a matter of a few weeks, we had barrage balloons over San Diego. Those were these balloons that had a long chain suspended from them, to keep airplanes from crossing over and getting, of course, entangled in those. It was a defense thing.

SA: Do you remember when the Japanese started to be interned? There were a lot from the San Diego region.

ALC: There *were* a lot from San Diego, because a lot of Japanese people were living here. In fact, in my high school class there were a number of Japanese kids. Two or three of my very closest friends were Japanese.

SA: Were their families taken away?

ALC: They certainly were. It was just a tragic thing. We couldn't believe what was happening, and yet we were unsure. Maybe even so many of us were kind of fearful, because of the propaganda--"they're not loyal to America."

SA: Even though they were inducted into the military.

ALC: Yes, some of them later were, and were just absolutely wonderful, courageous, brave people. *Always* were, but we didn't know that.

SA: After the war started, what was your involvement in the military?

ALC: Well, for a while, I was not involved. After about the first year--a little less than the first year, sometime during the first year after Pearl Harbor--one of my brothers, George, went in the Navy. Then he went to officer indoctrination. He had his indoctrination at Northwestern University. In those days, if you were going in the Navy as a commissioned officer in the reserve, you went to a ninety-day or a sixty-day indoctrination. And those were given at various universities throughout the country. And he went to Northwestern for, I think it was a ninety-day period, and then went right on to active duty.

SA: Were they drafting yet?

ALC: They were drafting, yes, soon after Pearl Harbor. There were also, of course, lots of volunteers.

SA: Were you drafted?

ALC: No, I was not drafted. I was not eligible for the draft, because I was married. And as a matter of fact, we had a child at that time. Linda was born in January of 1942, January 9, which was a matter of just about a month after Pearl Harbor.

SA: Yes, they weren't taking men yet with families.

ALC: They weren't taking men with families then in the draft. As a matter of fact, she was born during the darkout. She was born at Mercy Hospital, January 9. So anyway, no, I was not drafted and would not have been drafted.

SA: Did you get involved with any of the civil defense or any of the things that were happening?

ALC: Oh, for a short time there before I joined the service. And that was kind of a difficult thing for me, because I didn't meet the weight requirements, I was too thin. (laughter) I was determined I wanted to get in, so I was on a kind of a diet of milkshakes and bananas and trying to put on some weight, which I managed to do.

SA: I noticed you were in the U.S. Naval Reserve.

ALC: Yes, in the Navy.

SA: When did you do that?

ALC: That was in 1943.

SA: What did that involve?

ALC: Well, my first duty was a sixty-day indoctrination course, and that was at University of Arizona in Tucson.

SA: Did you have to leave your job for that?

ALC: Oh, sure, absolutely.

SA: Leave of absence, is that what you had?

ALC: Well, I just left the job, as so many did at that time, and I went to Arizona for two months. And then I had a short duty period at Camp Pendleton.

SA: Oh! had that been developed by then?

ALC: It was just starting up then--just *barely* starting up.

SA: That meant Oceanside was going to start to grow.

ALC: Yes. Oh, it did, rapidly, of course. And then from there I went, well, first to what they called a receiving station, which was up near San Francisco. Interestingly enough, the Navy took over a racetrack on the peninsula--horse race track on the peninsula. Tan Foran Racetrack, T-A-N F-O-R-A-N, was the name of it. It was a large track. There were some buildings there, and they turned those into barracks. They operated what the Navy called a receiving station, that was kind of like a way station, where they would bring in sailors and the officers, of course, and put them up while they were waiting for specific overseas orders. And I spent a little time there. I was supposed to be there just like a week or two, and in those days in the Navy, you never know when your orders were going to come. You might expect

them next week and they would be six *months* from then. Or you might expect them in six months, and they may give you six *hours.*

SA: So when you went into that reserve, were you now in the Navy?

ALC: Oh, yes, I was in the Navy, on active duty.

SA: Was that as soon you went into the reserve, you were on active duty?

ALC: Oh, yes, you're on active duty then. Your first duty station, in effect, was the indoctrination.

SA: So you couldn't go home.

ALC: Oh, no, you were in the Navy. (laughter)

SA: Wearing a uniform.

ALC: Yes, right. So as it turned out, we kept waiting there at the receiving station near San Francisco, down the peninsula, and our orders didn't come. So I finally decided--and two or three of my fellow officers did the same thing--to call Barbara and have her come up there and live there while we were waiting. We didn't know whether it would be a day or a week or a month. It turned out to be about *three* months, as a matter of fact.

SA: How did you find a place?

ALC: Oh, there was a little what they used to call "courts." You know, little separate units--small, like apartments.

SA: On the base?

ALC: No, off the base. Oh, no, in the city. We were in San Mateo, just about a five-minute drive from the base. Well, she came up there, we got a little place, and she and Linda came up.

SA: That way you could see your daughter.

ALC: Oh, yes. So I was basically living at home.

SA: You came home at night?

ALC: Yes, you could do that. And then my orders finally came and I went overseas, and Barbara came back to San Diego.

SA: And you said it turned out she was there several months in San Mateo?

ALC: Yes, about four months I think it was.

SA: And then you said orders came. Where were you sent?

ALC: Then I got orders with my unit--it was a port director communications unit, in what they called advance base communications. We would go from one Navy base to another--or naval installation overseas.

SA: Setting up communications?

ALC: Yes, setting up communications.

SA: They trained you, I suppose, for that.

ALC: Yes. We went first to New Guinea, and that's where the Seventh Fleet headquarters were located. As a matter of fact, right at that time, General MacArthur's headquarters were located there, while he was getting ready to

go back to the Philippines to take back the Philippines. You probably remember his famous, "I shall return!"

SA: Yes. (laughter) So what was that experience like?

ALC: Well, that was basically my war experience. We trained for a little while in New Guinea, and then we started moving back towards the Philippines, sort of island-hopping. In the Philippines there are many, many, many islands.

SA: Did you stay on the ship?

ALC: Stayed on the ship until we got to the Philippines.

SA: And what did you do in the Philippines?

ALC: We then established a naval base, primarily for repairs, at Subic Bay. Subic Bay, as you may or may not know, became and grew into one of the *biggest* naval bases that the United States had anyplace. And then a few years ago--I don't remember exactly--many, many years after the war was over, just a few years ago, we turned that whole thing over to the Philippines again. But we got there when there was nothing there. We just set up a base there. And then we just were there and were kind of training, and servicing the fleet with whatever they needed. Our particular unit would furnish charts to ships that would come by, and provide the communications for the port. And at the same time, we were getting ready then for an invasion of Japan.

SA: Were you ever in any danger on your ships?

ALC: Well, a *little* bit, not too much, because when we moved up from New Guinea to the Philippines we had real air superiority. So there was an occasional Japanese ship [that] would try to penetrate that, and some danger [from] some of those little two-man submarines that the Japanese had--[they] were a little dangerous. But not much danger, really, when we were moving to the Philippines. (laughs)

SA: What, tell me.

ALC: I can tell you kind of an interesting story about our landing in the Philippines. We were all prepared for whatever, you know. You know what a landing ship tank is, LST?

SA: I've seen them in videos and movies.

ALC: The tanks move off the ship. The ship comes up to the shore and lets down a kind of a gate and the vehicles come off that--a tank or whatever. And we were preparing to land at the little place just a little ways from Subic Bay, called Lingayen, and expected the worst, you know--we were going to be met by all kinds of fire and so on. We got there, and there were maybe half a dozen Filipino people on the beach, sitting there holding up--you know what the victory sign is--and saying the Filipino word for "welcome," *mabuhai*. (laughter) So it was a very pleasant surprise.

[End Tape 3, Side A - Begin Tape 3, Side B]

SA: How long were you in the Philippines?

ALC: I was there about a year and a half, all together--or a year and four months maybe.

SA: Is that when the war ended?

ALC: Then the war ended *while* I was there.

SA: Tell me what happened that day when it ended. I know there were a lot of celebrations all over.

ALC: Well, first, President Roosevelt died while I was there, and that was in April of 1945. And *then*, when the atomic bomb was dropped, I'll never forget this, because one of my radio men came in and he said, "We've just dropped some kind of a big bomb on Japan." We'd never heard of an atom bomb or anything of that nature. Then we got a little bit more information about it, and then just, I think, two or three days later, another one was dropped. And of course you know this, Hiroshima and then the other one. And then we got a dispatch from the commander-in-chief of the Pacific Fleet which said, "Cease all offensive operations against Japan," and basically said something about being careful for any possible offensive action. That was it! That was the end of the war.

SA: So did you go directly home, or where did they send you?

ALC: No, I had to wait a little while. That was in August, and actually I didn't start for home until just about the end of the year, and then went home by ship, not by plane. They sent us home by ship.

SA: So then did you get out of the service completely, or did you stay a little longer?

ALC: No, as soon as I got home, it was in January that I landed in San Francisco. It was a seventeen-day trip home on a Navy ship.

SA: Oh, my gosh!

ALC: We went up, oh, around the north end of Luzon, and then came on into San Francisco. And, as a matter of fact, we arrived in San Francisco on January 9, which was Linda's birthday. And then I flew home as soon as I got off the ship and as soon as I could get cleared and so on. I flew home, commercially, of course, from San Francisco to San Diego.

SA: Now, I know you had a big family of cousins. Did many of them have to go into the war, and did they all come out safe?

ALC: Many of them did, and yes, none of them were injured or killed.

SA: Was your father still living in Oceanside?

ALC: Yes, he was, he was still living.

SA: When you first returned to San Diego, what changes did you notice in the city during those war years, what was it like when you returned?

ALC: Well, San Diego at that time was just starting to become a little bit more diversified in its economy. The defense industry was starting soon after I returned, or about the time, to taper off some, because the war was not over--but just *barely* over. So that took a little bit of time. But again, it was still a rather small town. I don't think it was more than 250,000 or so, population. Of course the *look* of the city was so different from what it is now, because at that time and for several years after, there was still in effect the height limit for buildings. In fact, all over Southern California, there was a height limit of thirteen stories for buildings--even in Los Angeles. There was one building in Los Angeles that exceeded that height limit, and that was the city hall. (chuckles)

SA: Was that because of earthquakes?

ALC: It was because of earthquakes, yes--fear of earthquakes. And then, you know, the engineering developed to where it doesn't seem to make any difference (chuckles) how high you want to go.

SA: So you came back, and where were your wife and daughter living when you came back?

ALC: Well, they were living in the house that we had bought just a year or so--maybe even a little *less* than a year--before I went into the Navy. We bought a house in Mission Hills. One of our friends from Berkeley, who was originally *from* San Diego--a man named Chet Young--had gotten married

while we were in Berkeley. And then after we graduated, *he* had gone into the service. He lived in Northern California, but he had gone into the Navy, and by then he had had a child. And so his wife, Susan--who was also a close friend of *my* wife at Berkeley--and her little boy, came and lived with Barbara in our house. Linda had been born then, and so Susan and her little boy lived with my wife, Barbara, in our house.

SA: You and her husband were in the military.

ALC: Right.

SA: So when you came back, were they still living with your wife?

ALC: They left soon after the war ended, and before I got back, and they moved back to Northern California.

SA: So you went back to this house in Mission Hills that you hadn't lived in yet.

ALC: Just for a very short time, a matter of a few months.

SA: So now that you're back in your house in Mission Hills, tell me what you did to start earning a living to support your family.

ALC: Well, I didn't have a job, and jobs weren't that easy to find for young lawyers (chuckles) as it was just before the war. So I thought I would just start a practice for myself, and try it. Interestingly enough, there wasn't much office space available.

SA: They weren't building during the war.

ALC: They weren't building during the war, and there were only two really what you'd call kind of first-class office buildings in town anyway, and those were Bank of America and San Diego Trust. So as luck would have it, I happened to be in the San Diego Trust Building, inquiring about space, and at the same time, Ed Schwartz, who had just gotten out of the Navy, having served three or four years, and who had been admitted to practice just about the same time I had been admitted . . . .

SA: You knew him?

ALC: I knew him just a little bit before the war. Anyway, he was there looking for space also, and in the building they had one office space vacant. There was *almost* enough room for one attorney (laughter), and not much for two. But anyway, we decided to (chuckles) form a partnership and take the space. It had two windows; it was on the fourth floor of the San Diego Trust and Savings Building. It had two windows, so we put in a little *T* partition, so we'd each have an office with a window--hardly big enough to turn around in. You had a desk and a chair, and then one chair for the client, which you had to move in order to open and close the door. (laughter) And then a little reception area, and that was it. We formed a partnership named Cory and Schwartz, and we started.

SA: Now, what kind of cases were you getting? When you came back, San Diego having been a defense industry, people coming from all over, probably

deciding to stay in San Diego, and a very conservative city, what were the kinds of cases you were getting?

ALC: Well, we were taking any kind we could get. You would get little contract cases, little probate cases, drafting wills and leases and contracts.

SA: And trusts?

ALC: And trusts, those kinds of things. Trusts were less common then than they are now, as a matter of fact. The usual kind of domestic relations cases, landlord and tenant cases.

SA: How did you attract business?

ALC: Oh, just by knowing people. But then, interestingly enough, there were two young lawyers who had offices right next to ours. They had a huge space (laughter) compared to ours. And they were contemporaries of Ed's and mine, but they had not been in the service, either of them. Their names were Sol Price and Frank Nottbusch. Frank had lived here in San Diego for a long time, and as a matter of fact his father was a lawyer here. Sol had been here since he finished law school, which was, I think, a year before I did--or about the same time, maybe, but I hadn't known him at all, nor had I known Frank Nottbusch. Ed Schwartz had known, I think, both of them. Anyway, they had been here and had been in practice then for three or four years, and had built up a little fairly decent practice for two young people. They were quite a bit of help to Ed and me, and they would even refer cases

to us from time to time. So that helped us, and then we both had friends here, and family here.

SA: It just started.

ALC: It just started. You just start accumulating a little bit of business.

SA: Then I understand that you both took other attorneys in.

ALC: Well, then a little later on, after Ed and I had been in practice, just the two of us, for--I can't remember exactly, it was a year or a year and a half, and we'd been very close to Frank Nottbusch and Sol Price, and they'd been helping us, really, to get started--we just decided to join all together. And so we formed a firm with the four of us. And then our practice started to grow.

SA: Did you have bigger offices by then?

ALC: We just had what we had at that time, for a little while, and then we acquired more space from time to time, in the building--just expanded a little bit. And then we also expanded by hiring other attorneys from time to time as our practice built--and secretaries.

SA: Receptionist?

ALC: And a receptionist, yes. I had hired a woman named Betty Temple as my secretary who had moved out here from Boston and had been a legal secretary there. She stayed with me for thirty-nine years until she died about three years ago.

SA: Incredible!

ALC: Thirty-nine years she was my secretary.

SA: That's a rare combination, to have someone so long.

ALC: Yes. Oh, she was just a wonderful lady.

SA: Do you want to say anything about her, about her work?

ALC: She was just an absolutely wonderful lady. She was one of the very, very best--certainly the very best secretary I think I've ever known.

SA: Was she married?

ALC: She was married, they had no children. She, as a hobby, raised Great Danes and showed them all over the country. In those days, you didn't have word processors. (laughter) You're too young to remember all this, but you had a typewriter and carbon paper. When I needed to get something out in a hurry--or any of us, for that matter--needed to get something out in a hurry, we gave it to Betty. She took dictation. I never did even use a Dictaphone. She would sit across the desk from me with her steno pad on her lap, and she could take it as fast as I could talk. When I needed something in a hurry, I'd hear her out there on that typewriter: she would practically make it smoke. She was really mechanically one of the best I've ever seen, but also *very*, very, very bright, intelligent.

SA: That's wonderful. Not only is that giving credit to Betty, but to the many *very* capable secretaries that others have and you never hear about them.

ALC: No, that's true. We've had some great ones in our office--many, many of them--but Betty was really a wonderful person. She was close to my family. I think she always interceded for my daughters when they were away at college and needed something extra. They would call Betty instead of their dad! (laughter)

SA: Were there any cases as your law firm grew and as the city grew that had any historic information about the city or county that you can share with us?

ALC: Well, I think one matter that stands out in my recollection is the sale and development of Rancho Bernardo, which is a community twenty miles or so to the north of downtown San Diego. It was at that time--and this was, I believe, fairly early in the '60s--I should check that, I guess. Anyway, the ranch consisted of some 5,600 acres, a *huge* piece of property. It had been a cattle ranch up to that time, and its ownership had been in my clients' hands, two brothers, for many, many, many years. One of them had a home on the ranch. Other than that, they just ran cattle on the ranch. It was in the county, it was not a part of the city of San Diego. So when it was decided to try to develop it, two individuals from Texas who had done some developing there, wanted to buy the ranch and develop it. The Daleys became interested on the basis of retaining ownership in the development entity, formed a corporation, and the Daleys retained 50 percent interest of the stock of the corporation; and the other individuals, 50 percent. And then

the land, which belonged to the Daleys, was sold to the company/corporation, in which the Daleys were 50 percent owners.

Of course this was, as it turned out to be, a huge, huge development. I don't know how many people live there now, but it's thousands, as you know. The legal problems included forming the business entities that would develop the ranch. One of the early legal problems, the first legal problem, was making arrangements to obtain utilities. And in order to do that, it was necessary to annex the ranch to the city of San Diego.

SA: Oh! is *that* how that works?

ALC: Normally, as I recall, the law provided that in order for a city to annex a property--to expand its borders, in effect--it had to be contiguous property, whereas this ranch was *not* contiguous. But what we did, we worked out with the city a plan whereby they annexed property in the form of almost like a strip of land to the north, which then became contiguous to the ranch land. And then we did an annexation into the city of San Diego. So as you probably know, Rancho Bernardo is part of San Diego now. Before that was done, it was in the County of San Diego, but not a part of the city.

That was something that stands out in my mind, because I can remember that piece of land as a beautiful cattle ranch, and now it's a

thriving city with industrial and commercial, and huge residential, and golf courses. Traffic and all of the things that go with development.

SA: What other of your cases that involved any changes in San Diego can you recall?

ALC: Well, Sol Price had, while we were still together and practicing law, some clients who wanted to develop a discount retail business.

SA: What year, or about when?

ALC: I think that was about 1953 or '54. And so he became interested in helping them form a business entity, a corporation to develop this business. They leased a little kind of a warehouse building down on Main Street, down towards National City, and opened a store there called Fed-Mart. The concept was a membership type of business, a retail store, in which merchandise would be offered very plainly displayed in a big kind of an open warehouse, at some cost saving. Our office, and in particular Sol Price, handled the legal work on that. We were asked to invest something, and started out with a very modest investment. And so some of us--I think all of the lawyers in the office did take *some* stock in the company, which they purchased at the same price that anybody else paid. And that was the start of what became then Fed-Mart, and which developed into many stores across the country.

SA: I used to shop there.

ALC: Yes. So that was kind of an interesting thing, the way it started and the way it developed over the years into something very, very big, and a public company. We went public with it after about three years from the time it opened, and we did some legal work in connection with the public issue of stock.

[End Tape 3, Side B - Begin Tape 4, Side A]

SA: What happened then with Fed-Mart?

ALC: Well, Fed-Mart developed into a public company, and the concept became very popular, and a number of big stores, *much* bigger than the one that was started on Main Street, were built in San Diego, out on Kearny Mesa, and then in other cities. One of the first ones was in Phoenix, and then in San Antonio, Texas, and various other places.

SA: Still under the same group, Sol Price and all?

ALC: Yes. But then, of course, it became publicly owned, and Sol was always active in its management and its direction. As a matter of fact, I was for several years on the board of directors of the company, along with others, of course. And then we did the legal work for the company for many, many, many years.

SA: Were you also involved legally or as a stockholder when Sol Price started the Price Club?

ALC: No, I wasn't involved in that.

SA: Now, I'm sure the first few years of developing and expanding your law practice, you didn't have much time for outside interest and activities, but I know that starting in the 1950s, you not only became very active in civic and community activities, but held the highest positions, such as director. Tell us how this developed, describing your association and interest in these organizations--for instance, the San Diego County Bar Association. You were director for a couple of years.

ALC: Well, I was always interested in, and fairly active in the bar association itself. It was a very much, much, much smaller bar in those days in the '50s, than it is now. And I think in general, in a large part due to size, lawyers were a much closer-knit group than you find now. And again, I emphasize that size has a great deal to do with it. We were a few hundred then, and now we're many thousands--lawyers that belong to the San Diego Bar Association. So I just got started with committees and so on, and then I ran for the board of directors the first time in the 1950s and was elected to a three-year term.

SA: Shows you were a leader. What kind of an organization was it, what were their activities?

ALC: Well, we would have a number of committees in various specialties of practice. You could attend seminars and those kinds of things to further your skills in areas in which you were specialized. That was one of them.

SA: Like they would call in someone to give the seminar?

ALC: And report on recent developments in that field. That was one of the main things that the bar has done. They would also have, oh, an entity to disseminate educational material, and to have some kind of liaison with the courts, in an organized way. And a lot of social activities as well.

SA: Where did they meet?

ALC: Well, in those days--usually the board would meet once a month, and until we had a bar office we would meet in the office usually of the president. (laughter)

SA: So they met in your office, as director?

ALC: Well, by then we had a bar office, by the time I was president. That was the second time that I was on the board. By the time I was president, we had an office, a regular bar office. It was actually located in a building owned by one of the lawyers.

SA: And where was that?

ALC: That was up on Fifth, the offices of Glenn and Wright. I don't know if you remember that name, but it was a prominent law firm in San Diego. And then a few years ago the bar association bought the building which now houses the bar association up at Seventh and *A*. Do you remember the old University Club?

SA: Yes.

ALC: That was their building a number of years ago, and we bought that--we, the bar association.

SA: Do you go to meetings?

ALC: Yes, I still go to some things there. We have some social meetings, and then we have seminars and actual educational meetings there. The state bar requires what we call continuing legal education.

SA: Because laws change?

ALC: Yes. Every three years in order to remain active in the state bar, you have to take a certain number of units of continuing legal education.

SA: Oh! I didn't know that.

ALC: And that's on-going.

SA: Where do they take those classes?

ALC: A lot of those classes are given in various places in the state--but for San Diegans, a lot of them are given here in our bar office.

SA: Oh! okay, and they bring instructors in?

ALC: Yes.

SA: From the universities?

ALC: Universities some, but mostly from active practitioners here or elsewhere in the state--experts in their fields.

SA: What were some of the others that you especially were active in and enjoyed?

ALC: Well, on the legal side, I was appointed to what was called the Review Board of the State Bar Court.

SA: What does that entail?

ALC: That was, at the time--the structure has changed now--but the State Bar Court had responsibility for the disciplinary proceedings, complaints against lawyers. The ultimate authority for discipline of lawyers is the California Supreme Court, but there has always been a proceeding whereby complaints made against lawyers--either by other lawyers or clients--would be heard by lawyers appointed to hear those things. When they got to the stage of being formal complaints that *could* involve discipline, there was a procedure for an appeal to the review board. And the review board was the final authority--except, of course, for the Supreme Court, in connection with those disciplinary proceedings. And those are held just like--more serious ones--just like a court proceeding.

SA: So you were a member for five years of this review board?

ALC: Yes.

SA: Was that a difficult task?

ALC: Well, it was time consuming. We met in San Francisco, I think it was once a month, for two days. And we would review cases, we wouldn't hear them. We were like an appellate department of a court, rather than the trial court, I guess I can add to that.

SA: So you didn't have to deal personally with the attorneys?

ALC: No, except that they could appear--the attorney for the one involved, the accused, in fact--could appear before us.

SA: So that probably was interesting.

ALC: It was interesting, yes.

SA: Then I see you were very busy as a member of the Board of Trustees of the California State University and Colleges for many years.

ALC: Yes, that was an eight-year term.

SA: And what were some of their responsibilities?

ALC: Well, that was the entity which administered all of the state colleges and universities. There were nineteen scattered throughout the state. Of course we're familiar here with San Diego State. That was administered under a chancellor who was in turn appointed by the board of trustees, as were the presidents of the various campuses.

SA: And what was your role, what were the decisions you had to make or review? What was the role of this [board]?

ALC: Well, that board administered the entire state college and university system.

SA: Oh, my goodness!

ALC: We were appointed people, of course. The chancellor was a central figure, and at each campus there's, of course, a president.

SA: Yes. Enormous responsibility.

ALC: Yes, that was a large responsibility.

SA: Was it interesting?

ALC: In the system there were, I don't know, nineteen campuses with about 300,000 students, I think.

SA: Now, did you visit each one of these institutions?

ALC: From time to time, yes. We held our meetings, most of them, in San Francisco, but many times we would hold a meeting at a given campus: San Diego sometimes, and sometimes San Luis Obispo, Humboldt. So you got to visit the campuses quite a bit, yes.

SA: So that wasn't just dealing with legal matters?

ALC: Oh, no. No, it had no part of that.

SA: So you were involved in that for many years?

ALC: Yes, eight years--an eight-year term.

SA: That's interesting. What other organizations do you want to talk about that were interesting to you?

ALC: Well, I was on the board of trustees and chairman for a number of years of the Board of Trustees of Cal Western Law School. At that time, it was part of Cal Western University, it was the law school. It has since separated itself from Cal Western University, which is really now USIU, U.S. International University. And, if you will recall, that campus was located out at Point Loma.

SA: Yes, Point Loma College is there now.

ALC: That College of the Nazarene, I think.

SA: Yes, Point Loma Nazarene College.

ALC: And USIU is located out at Miramar, out that way. Anyway, I was on the board.

SA: Yes. What were some of those responsibilities?

ALC: Well, those responsibilities had to do with management of the university. We had a dean, of course, who was responsible for the direct management, and a rather good-sized student body and faculty also.

SA: Did you ever talk before some of the student groups?

ALC: Well, not very much. Dealt more with the overall management and policy direction--admissions requirements and things like that. But we were, of course, informed by the people who knew--the faculty people and the dean and so on.

SA: Yes. You were a very busy man! What other activities?

ALC: Oh, I, for many years, was one of many in the state to act as an arbitrator for fee arbitrations. The state bar has a department manned by lawyers throughout the state, on a volunteer basis, to hear arbitration disputes. Let's say a client feels that he was overcharged by an attorney, those disputes would be submitted to arbitration in *most* cases. And I was one of the arbitrators.

SA: You filled a lot of important roles.

ALC: Well, those were things that you would conduct in your office. The client would be represented, usually, by counsel, and we would hear those.

SA: Now I see you were director one year of the Children's Hospital.

ALC: Yes. That was a rather large board, and one director didn't really make any (chuckles) earth-shaking decisions. But it was kind of interesting.

SA: You received a lot of honors.

ALC: Well, I guess a few--not too many. This honorary doctorate from Cal Western, I'm sure was in recognition of the fact that I had served as chairman of the board for a number of years at a time of some difficulty for the law school--financial and otherwise.

SA: So they recognized you. Boalt Hall Alumni Association: what did you do, how were you involved with that?

ALC: Well, I've been, over the years, interested. I retained my interest in Boalt Hall. It was very small when I was there, and I have wonderful memories about it. That's about it, I think.

SA: San Diego Volunteer Lawyers?

ALC: I've always been interested in legal aid, and in general whether it's in a given specific organization, or just in general. I've always felt that as lawyers and professionals, we must provide legal aid to people whether they can afford it or not.

SA: Did that interest come from your first job early on with the legal aid?

ALC: Probably, at least in part.

SA: Planted a little seed?

ALC: It's probably in my nature someplace.

SA: Can you tell a little more about the kinds of volunteer work that you've either done or have inspired others to do?

ALC: Well, primarily disputes have to do with people who have a dispute or claim of some kind, and they just don't have the funds to hire a lawyer, just can't afford a lawyer. Those kinds of things vary. A lot of times it's family disputes, and a lot of times it's landlord-tenant disputes, *little* kind of employment discrimination cases. There are some that are maybe too small for an attorney to handle.

SA: How do you hear about these cases?

ALC: They come to an office. They come maybe to the bar association office. Of course, now we have two or three organizations, fairly large organizations, in place.

SA: What are they called?

ALC: Well, one is called the Legal Aid Society; one is called San Diego Volunteer Lawyers. It's an active entity and has *some* attorneys on the staff. But also, because the staff is not large enough to handle all the matters that come to it, there are lawyers in private practice--*many*, many lawyers in private

practice--who volunteer their time, maybe two hours a week, or ten hours a week or something.

SA: On a list?

ALC: Yes, and those are volunteer lawyers.

SA: You've been on that list?

ALC: Not *that* one, because that started, as I didn't have the time--I was sort of retiring--that particular entity. But lawyers in our office, for example, do [devote] a great *deal* of time to Volunteer Lawyers.

SA: So that was an interest you had.

ALC: Yes, and I've always had that interest, yes.

SA: Now, as your law business was growing, I'm sure you couldn't stay in that tiny little office you shared with attorney [Edward] Schwartz, so how did you finally move up into a better office?

ALC: Well, by then, when our firm had expanded into the offices that Sol Price and Frank Nottbusch had had, and I think we had expanded *that* space once or twice, about 1965 we moved into the U.S. National Bank Building on, I believe that's Second and Broadway. We needed more space, and we moved there.

SA: How many were in the firm then?

ALC: I'm not sure. I think at least ten or twelve lawyers at that time.

SA: Did you have a little more spacious office?

ALC: We had more spacious offices, yes. So much better, larger, newer. And we were there until this building that we're *now* in, which is Union Bank Building--*now* called Union Bank Building.

SA: What was it called then?

ALC: It was at that time called First National Bank Building. When it was first built, we were among the first tenants. I think we were the first tenant on the nineteenth floor, and that was, I believe, 1966. And we've been here since then.

SA: Wow, that's a long time.

ALC: Yes, we've been here since then. And we've expanded, our office has grown very much larger than it was when we first moved here. And so we've taken a great deal more space. We have now, I think, five floors.

SA: Five floors! How many attorneys are part of the firm now?

ALC: Well, we have a number of lawyers, some of whom are partners, some of whom are associates. All together we have, I think it's about seventy or seventy-five lawyers.

SA: I know your firm does a lot for the community, because on public television I always see the name of your firm on the opening screens, so I know that it is community-minded. Is that so?

ALC: Well, I think so. Yes, we hope to be.

SA: In more recent years, and currently, how has your law firm changed, and what is the focus now?

ALC: Well, the law itself has changed, and law practice has changed a great deal. Many more specialties--areas of law that really were unknown at the time I started practicing, have developed. For example, environmental law is *very*, very large now. It's grown because of the concerns about the environment in the last twenty or thirty or forty years, become widespread. *I* can certainly remember when I was young, if you drained the oil out of your car, you dug a hole in your back yard and poured it in there. I mean, my God! that would be a capital offense today, almost. (laughter) So the environment has brought with it *many*, many laws and regulations. And it's a very specialized practice, and we have, I think, four or five attorneys who do nothing but environmental law.

SA: What are some of the environmental issues?

ALC: Well, *many*, many, many locations in a city--including a city like San Diego--have problems of contamination in the soil and/or underground water, from underground storage tanks, and that kind of thing. Now, there are laws that require that contamination be removed. And so you have, in many real estate transactions, for example, if you want to build something on your property, you have to be sure there's no contamination there, or if there *is*, it has to be removed. And there are very detailed laws and regulations

a *very*, very, very large practice. That's an area of practice that just didn't exist.

There's an area of practice that perhaps existed, but was not as pronounced as it is now, in terms of employment and employment discrimination. Anyone who has been an adult for a number of years is aware of how that has developed. The awareness, let's say, of discrimination and how it should be handled. And that brings with it issues which still exist in our society about affirmative action and that kind of thing. That area of practice, employment discrimination, has developed.

SA: And you have attorneys . . . .

ALC: Yes.

[End Tape 4, Side A - Begin Tape 4, Side B]

SA: Any other areas in the last decade?

ALC: There've been changes and developments in probably all areas of the law and the law practice. The *nature* of the practice has changed in that so many areas of the law practice are now so complex--much more complex than they were forty or fifty years ago--and so there's been much more specialization. When I first started practicing law, you know, you did a little bit of everything. Now, nearly every lawyer in our law firm has a specialty and

practices in that specialty. Even in the areas that existed before--tax has always been a specialty--now there are even specialties within the *specialty*.

SA: Any new areas since the coming of the cyber technology?

ALC: Well, of course the technology is changed so greatly. I told you a few minutes ago about my secretary who sat across from me and took dictation, which you *never* see. It's a lost art, I think. I really think it is. So we have word processors now, and now we have the Internet, now we have e-mail, now we have so many things, so many communications are different now. So that has changed the practice. The makeup of a law firm has changed substantially--for the good, let me say. We have many women lawyers now. In fact, a large number of women lawyers, and it's increasing as the student bodies of the law schools. When I was in law school, I think less than 5 percent of the students were women. Now, at nearly *every* law school--certainly my own--but with all, I think it's about half and half--I think just a few more women than men.

SA: Really?!

ALC: Well, that's changed things.

SA: Yes, but I didn't know that much. One of the things I would like to add to your interview, do you have a roster of the attorneys in this firm?

ALC: Oh, yes.

SA: I would like to add that to it.

ALC: All right, I'll provide that to you.

SA: That would be interesting to show. So you have moved along into, and seen so many changes, both in the legal field and in your environment and in your life.

ALC: Yes. It's a development over the years. Again, so much of it, I think we see also changes in the law. We didn't see many class action cases when I started practicing law, which are *huge* now. And of course you read about them in the newspaper, such things as the tobacco cases--those are big class action cases, cases that a huge, large group might have a claim.

SA: Do you get some of those in this firm?

ALC: Some, to some extent, but not so much. There are some attorneys, nationwide, that specialize in those things. There's more litigation in what we call product liability cases. So the practice of law has just changed *so* much in the last fifty years.

SA: There'll be some later in this e-commerce.

ALC: Oh *huge*! There are going to be legal issues that arise from that, that I can't even myself imagine. There's going to be those things, so it's changing.

SA: Have you gotten any legal cases with the development of the ball park, of condemning a lot of property?

ALC: Well, see, we represent, we have a large environmental law department, and many of the issues that are arising in that involve contamination of property

that's being acquired by the condemning authority. And (chuckles) it's raised some very, *very* large issues.

SA: I would think!

ALC: The condemning authority, the city or CCDC, it's called, the development agency of the city, in acquiring property that is contaminated, the issue arises, what is the *value* of that property? You know, generally that in condemnation, the condemning authority, authorized government agency, can acquire property for a public use. And it must pay the reasonable value of that property. Well, it sounds like a simple rule, but then the issue is, well, what is the reasonable value? And in these cases where contamination exists, to what extent does that contamination affect the reasonable value? So that's become a very large, *very* large issue in connection with the acquisition of the property for the ball park.

SA: And also what about the extension of that whole area there with the convention center expansion?

ALC: Well, the whole district, whether it's for just the ball field itself. No, it's just the same issue--land is being acquired, part of which is not for the ball park itself, but for the development that takes place around it.

SA: Parking lots and hotels.

ALC: Hotels, exactly.

SA: Must be tremendous.

ALC: And so those are *tremendous* issues that will be probably litigated for a long time.

SA: You'll have to live another fifty years! Do you still practice?

ALC: No, I see a client occasionally, and might consult with one or more of the lawyers in the office that's representing the client, and we'll talk with the lawyer or the client or both.

SA: Keep up with everything that's going on?

ALC: A little bit. I can't keep up with everything that's going on, because it's beyond me now.

SA: I now want to go back to your family, first your immediate family of your wife and your two daughters. Tell me about your home life and your family.

ALC: Well, our home life has been quite a normal life. We built a home out in Mount Helix--we built two homes there. We built one and lived in it from about 1950 until 1961: and then we built another home not far from there, but in that same general location in 1961, and we lived there until 1994. So we lived there a long time.

SA: So you saw a lot of changes in that Grossmont area.

ALC: We saw a lot of changes in the area, of course. Lots more people moved to that area, built in that area. It just grew. Well, like so much of San Diego, like all over San Diego and its environs. But we lived there until 1994, and then we moved to Coronado. By then our daughters--we have two

daughters--had, of course, married and left, and the house was too big for us. My wife had some strokes in 1994, and it wasn't a good place for us to live anymore. She couldn't drive anymore, and living out there, you have to drive everyplace. So we bought a condominium in Coronado and live there now. Since 1994 we've lived there.

SA: Tell me about your daughters.

ALC: We have two daughters. Linda was born in 1942, as I told you, and then Jane, who is five years younger--the war intervened. (laughter) Linda lives in Coronado.

SA: Oh! a neighbor of yours.

ALC: And she's a lawyer, as a matter of fact. She was a schoolteacher for a number of years, and then about fifteen--oh! longer!--I guess twenty years ago she came to me one day and said, "Dad, I'm almost afraid to tell you this, but you know, I think I'd like to be a lawyer."

SA: Oh, how interesting!

ALC: She thought I would say, "Oh, don't be silly," and I said just the opposite. I said, "Absolutely! if that's what you want to go do, go for it!"

SA: Where'd she go?

ALC: She went to Cal Western Law School.

SA: Oh, how interesting!

ALC: In fact, I conferred her law degree on her. I was on the board of trustees.

SA: Oh! Is she working in the legal field now?

ALC: She worked in the legal field for quite some time. In fact, she was in our office for a year or two, and doing very well, but then she came to me one day and she said, "You know, Dad, I've never been much interested in a business kind of practice. I like everybody here, of course, but I'd like to work for Legal Aid Society."

SA: Oh, how wonderful! taking after Daddy!

ALC: Of course, at a fraction of the salary she was earning. (laughs) But that's what she wanted to do.

SA: That's wonderful.

ALC: And she did it.

SA: Yes. Where did she work?

ALC: She worked for the Legal Aid Society as a lawyer.

SA: Where is that office located?

ALC: They're in the bar building. She did that for I think two or three or four years. Since then, she has worked at Community Health Group, it's called. It's located in Chula Vista. I guess it's like an HMO, but its members are people mostly on Medi-Cal. It's large, it's about 300,000 members, I think. And then a year or two ago, that entity applied for--Linda did a good deal of the legal work on this--they applied to the Corporation Commissioner of

California for permission to offer their services to *private* employers, and so they're broadening the scope of their membership.

SA: Does she still work there?

ALC: She works there, but only part-time now. About a year ago she decided she didn't want to be working full-time anymore.

SA: Is she married?

ALC: Yes. The Community Health Group keeps her on a consulting basis. And so she works maybe ten, fifteen hours a week, something like that.

SA: Does she have children?

ALC: She has two children, yes, of her first marriage. And they're both adults. One of them is still in college in Los Angeles, and the other one is here in San Diego.

SA: What are their names?

ALC: Their names are Alec and Adele, a boy and a girl.

SA: Alec after you?

ALC: Yes.

SA: And last name?

ALC: House, H-O-U-S-E. Her first husband's name was Ron House.

SA: And your other daughter, tell me about her.

ALC: Her name is Jane, and she lives in Oregon.

SA: What city?

ALC: In Ashland. It's in Southern Oregon, right near Medford. Ashland is a place that has this great Shakespeare theater. Jane has lived there now for a little over twenty years, I think, and she's a schoolteacher--or she was, she retired about two or three years ago but does a little bit of teaching now. She does some volunteer teaching at the community college there a couple of nights a week.

SA: You brought them up to be civic-minded.

ALC: Well, I don't know if I brought them up that way, but they *are*, they both are, as a matter of fact.

SA: Now, did she marry?

ALC: She's married, yes. She has two children.

SA: And their names?

ALC: Their names are Jason and Erin. Erin's the daughter, E-R-I-N.

SA: And their last name?

ALC: Van Dyke. But she and the father of the children are divorced, and she's remarried and her husband's name is Dennis Gray.

SA: We haven't talked about your father for a while. Tell me a little bit about your father and your family. What happened with them and where are they now?

ALC: My father died in 1950. He had four brothers, all of whom were living in this area of Southern California. One was older than he, and three were

younger. They're all gone now as well. All of them lived a good part of their lives here in Southern California. Before that, of course, they all emigrated *to* this country from Lebanon. I'm not exactly sure, with respect to his brothers, when they came, but it was within a few years of when my father came. And a sister. He had a sister who lived in Maine for a number of years. Somehow or other, she emigrated here directly from Lebanon, and she came into the Port of Boston, and I don't really know much about her at all. I'm going to try to find out a little bit more and just provide that information to you.

SA: Did you interact with your father and the rest of the family over the years before he died?

ALC: Yes. My father's brothers all had children, my cousins, obviously. We visited with them, and were close, actually--particularly one family, because we went to school with them, with our cousins, in Oceanside.

SA: Well, I think we have completed the interview today, and I want to thank you so much for all of the interesting and important information.

ALC: Well, it's been my pleasure, I'm sure.

SA: Thank you on behalf of the Ninth Judicial Circuit Historical Society, who will be seeing that this interview is transcribed and copies made, and we will keep in touch with any additional information you might have for me; or that

I might want to ask you. And thank you again, it's been a pleasure.

ALC: Well, it's been *my* pleasure. Thank you very much.

END OF INTERVIEW