

LEX BRODIE

and

WILBUR CRAW

An interview by Alex Castro

August 8, 1983

This oral history interview is a project of the Historical Committee of the Outrigger Canoe Club. The legal rights to this material remain with the Outrigger Canoe Club. Anyone wishing to reproduce it or quote at length from it should contact the Historical Committee of the Outrigger Canoe Club.

* * * * *

"The reader should be aware that an oral history document portrays information as recalled by the interviewee. Because of the spontaneous nature of this kind of document, it may contain statements and impressions that are not factual."

--Quoted by permission of the University of Hawaii
Ethnic Studies Program, Oral History Project.

LEX BRODIE
and
WILBUR CRAW

Interviewed by Alex Castro

August 8, 1983

Good afternoon. This is Alex Castro. We are sitting here on the diningroom lanai of the Outrigger Canoe Club on Monday, August 8, 1983, and we have an interview this afternoon with two prominent businessmen from Honolulu, Lex Brodie and Wilbur Craw, who joined the Club many, many years ago, and most of our interview this afternoon is going to be spent in anecdotes and remembrances of things past.

AC: Lex, when did you first join the Club?

B: I can't give you the precise date Alex. However I initially was the guest of Tommy Ellis whom I had met at Honolulu Military Academy. He brought me in as a guest and it wasn't too long thereafter that I bought Tommy Ellis' old redwood board, had a locker and joined the Club and it must have been late 1924 or maybe early 1925.

AC: What kind of a board was that you bought from Ellis?

B: It was an old redwood plank that had his initials on it which read T.E.E. and incidentally after I bought the board I changed the initials from T double E to H double E - we called it the Tee Hee because at that time, I think...wasn't there an expression at that time, Wilbur, about "tee hee what's going on over there"? - so, that was the name of the board, "Tee Hee".

AC: So, it was about that time that you came in, Wilbur?

WC: Yeah, 1924, Alex, and I guess I was brought in through the auspices of "Dad" Center who was a good friend of the family and he wanted me out there on the beach and out of mischief. That was my introduction to the Club, and from then on it was membership to this day with the exception of a couple of WW II years.

AC: Did you live in the Waikiki area at the time?

WC: No, I did not, Alex. I lived up on Kinau Street and caught the street car to ride down every day.

AC: Via Pawa junction?

- WC: Via Pawaaw junction and across the old McCully bridge.
- AC: Where did you live, Lex?
- B: I lived in Manoa Valley, on Oahu Avenue. Each weekday we would go to Waikiki after the close of Lincoln School at Thomas Square, get on the street car, the King Street street car, go to Pawaaw. Then we transferred to the Waikiki line and we'd go clattering across the swamp and.....
- AC: Look at the ducks.....
- B: Look at the ducks. That's right - and it smelled to high heaven, as I recall.
- AC: This was 1924, more or less.
- B: Yeah. And then we'd get off at the Outrigger Club and spend the afternoon.....
- AC: You wouldn't drop off here?
- B: I am talking about the old Club between the Moana and the Seaside Hotel. This was before the present Royal Hawaiian was built. The Seaside was a white frame building and cottages, as I recall.
- WC: That's right.
- B: And, with those big beautiful coconut trees which are still there - very stately palms.
- AC: Now, you're both members of the Outrigger in 1924 or '25, and of course you had magnificent privacy and locker rooms and all the rest of it, did you?
- B: Yes, this was when the locker room was back close to the road and we had a little parking lot, as I recall, Wilbur, between what was called the pavilion and Kalakaua Avenue, and we'd go on through there and I believe we had a woman at the desk - wasn't her name Helen. She was just sort of a mother to all of us there and that's where we'd pick up our key and we'd go on in and undress and usually if the surf was up we'd be out surfing right away pronto. If there wasn't any surf then we'd be, I believe, learning our way about the volleyball court until the big boys came in around four o'clock or four-fifteen and then they'd kick our little butts out of there, and they would take over the court. We, of course, might be able to sneak in as a fifth or a sixth on one of the big teams, but as I remember best, we had two courts at that time.
- WC: That's right.
- B: We had two courts. One was for doubles - for doubles games, and the other for the "big" games. There was "Chippy" Chase, for example, who was trying to always run the game and there was George

Dyer. I believe, he would be in there, Potter Thurston, Lorrin Thurston would be in there.

WC: "Duck Neck" Singlehurst, "Uhu" Minvielle, R. Q. Smith, "Dad" Center.

B: Right, right. Then I think there was George Brown, wasn't there?

WC: Right.

B: He'd be in the game there. We didn't see too much of Gay Harris on the volleyball court, did we?

WC: No, no. Every now and then you may get Randy Crossley playing.

AC: Really?

WC: Yep.

AC: He was a big boy. I imagine "Dad" Center didn't fool around with the volleyball, did he?

WC: Oh, no. "Dad" was very active in volleyball. He'd play six-man, and well into his fifties he was playing two-man.

B: That's right. If I had one game, I had a hundred as "Dad's" partner. "Dad" would let me do the running and I'd set 'em up for "Dad" and "Dad", of course, couldn't get off the ground any longer and really hit the ball, but he could certainly place it; cross net, back, or a drop shot.

AC: What kind of a volleyball game did Alexander Hume Ford play?

B: Well, I think, Wilbur, you go ahead and take over on old "Pop" Ford there. He played other games.

WC: Yeah, old "Pop" Ford - he was a ladies' man.....

AC: You don't want to say too much about it? You want to.....

B: Let dear old "Pop" Ford rest in peace.

AC: All right. All right, that's great. Let's.....

B: "Pop" Ford was quite a fixture around there, Alex.

AC: Well, he was the founder, the founder.

AC: He wasn't the athletic.....

B: He was the, er...well, let's leave it right there.

AC: All right. What kind of dues did you have to pay in those days?

- B: They were absolutely outrageous. I mean, my surfboard locker cost me 25¢ a year I think it was, and I think my little 12"x12" locker where my trunks and towel and whatnot were was about the same amount, 25¢ a year.
- AC: Did you pay dues - membership dues?
- WC: Well, I can't remember paying an initiation fee, Alex, I don't think they had such an animal for small kids in those days, but my parents used to stand the dues, but like Lex says, I don't believe it was over 50¢ a month - it was awful good dues.
- AC: Was it 1925 to about 1930, would you say?
- WC: In that neighborhood Alex, then things started to change. We became big boys and before we knew it we were senior members and then they took care of us on the dues.
- AC: You were junior members - was there a senior membership?
- WC: There was quite a differential, as I recall.
- AC: There was an intermediate membership, wasn't there - now we just have a junior membership.
- WC: I think there was just junior at that time.
- B: Through your seventeenth year, wasn't it - or sixteenth year, I've forgotten.
- WC: Then you became a regular member.
- AC: ...a regular member. Well, now, in this period of time we are speaking of were you in any of the organized athletics, or were you just horsing around?
- B: We were, I think, largely horsing around, although Wilbur's swimming at that time was organized and I think "Dad" took you under his wing and you, er.....
- WC: Yeah, the Club had a very good swimming program. It had a regular Outrigger swimming team that used to enter swimming meets. Of course you know there were the Crabbe boys, "Buster" (Clarence) and "Buddy" (Edward), and Lex mentioned Tommy Ellis, and I was a small kid on the thing, but then there were all the girl swimmers, Mariechen Wehselau, Lillie Bowmer, Dot Waters and Bea Newport, to name a few.
- AC: Gerd Hjorth, Josephine Hopkins - they were older than you weren't they?
- WC: Yeah, they were considerably older and they were real tomboys.
- B: Remember, wasn't Dr. (Rodney) West down there at that time?

WC: Yeah, Dr. West was there.

B: Because he had been swimming at the Military Academy along with Sam Kahanamoku, and then I think we also had Pua Kealoha, didn't we?

B: Right.

WC: Wasn't he in there swimming too, at that time?

B: Yes, Pua was swimming. He was awful heavy, though. He could still do a good backstroke.

AC: Who was your coach?

WC: "Dad" Center.

B: Of course - no one else.

AC: Was he the one? You got very interested in swimming early, didn't you Wilbur?

WC: Yep, right. He got me started practically as soon as I got to be a member and I was training at the Punahou tank and then down at the beach, and as I grew older he'd send me out with "Buster" Crabbe to swim from the old Outrigger Club up to Castle's, where we are now, and turn around and swim back in - that was about two or three nights a week.

AC: Inside the reef.

WC: Outside the reef.

AC: Outside the reef?

WC: Awful lonesome out there off the beach.

AC: Did you have any escorts? Any.....

WC: Escorts! What's the.....(Laughter)

AC: No escorts, canoes, nothing?

WC: He'd say, "Hey, Wilbur, go swim out to Castle's, kick half way out, then with only your arms swim to Castle's. Rest, then swim back in."

AC: Good training. Did you follow swimming, Lex?

B: No, I didn't. They got to me at Lincoln School and in as much as my father had been a Canadian track man, middle distance at McGill University, and subsequently with the Montreal Athletic Club, I got talked into track at Lincoln School. I think it was in the sixth or seventh grade that I started out running the quarter mile and the half-mile, when we moved to Roosevelt. I was in the first

graduating class at Roosevelt. We had to move to the new school.

WC: I was with you in the first group.

B: Right.

WC: I was two years behind you.

B: Right. We had "Spud" (Claude) White and we had "Jinky" (Douglas) Crozier as coaches - seeing that I had some ability in that area I didn't swim or play football at that time. I tried to concentrate, specialize, in the one item, track.

AC: But you also got into canoe racing, didn't you?

B: Yes, I got into canoe racing because Wilbur and I had been, er, doing quite a bit of canoe surfing out there. We were in No. 10 and No. 9 canoes. These were small two-man canoes, and it wasn't too long after we got into canoeing that I think we took an old canoe that was upside down under the pavilion there, what number was that, 26?....or whatever it was.

WC: Yeah, fixed it up.

B: That thing had been hanging there for years and we went up mauka and we cut the iakos and got the ama, put that part together and ...who did we have helping us? The Banks boy, Jackie Banks?

WC: Yep. Jackie. He was the go-for.

B: Yes, he was the gofor and the bucket-boy, and all. And, whereas, we had been surfing at the Blow Hole which was pretty big surf in those days for a two-man canoe, we took this other canoe that we resurrected out to first break and that was quite a thrill. It was a wonder that we didn't tear that damned canoe apart. That canoe was just as dry and brittle as you could make it.

AC: This was the canoe that you had taken off the ceiling of the pavilion?

B: Yeah, it was just hanging there unused and had been there as long as Wilbur and I could remember.

WC: We took some planes and chisels and took off all the dry rot from the bottom of it, and Lex got the wild idea let's fill it full of boiling linseed oil and we darned near set the old kitchen on fire (Laugh) but we put the boiling linseed oil in it and that actually did preserve the bottom of the canoe - it soaked it up and brought some life back into that canoe.

AC: You were about 17 or 18?

- B: Oh, no, I think we were closer to 14-15. That kitchen was something else, now that you mention it, Wilbur, all those gas stoves in there, talk about a fire hazard. That was something unreal. Do you remember.....
- AC: Was the kitchen under the clubhouse diningroom?
- B: No, it was in the...they had a big sort of hau tree terrace.
- AC: I remember.
- WC:on the side.
- B: It was built on the side and up above was where they hung the laundry and a few odds and ends.
- AC: The building was wood, wasn't it?
- B: Oh, wood, very much so.
- AC: Creosoted.
- WC: Right.
- B: They also had some lockers in that general vicinity. "Dad" had one, and "Toots" Minvielle had another, that's where they kept their paddles for the canoes along with their outboard motors.....
- WC: That's right.
- B:and all the sails.....
- WC: Along the fence.
- B: That is correct, and, er, it was about that time we were also using "Dad's" canoe and the beach services were formed, and as I recall the canoe ride charge at that time for tourists was a buck for three rides and we would go hustling up and down the beach, and for every dollar we made we'd kick back to "Dad" Center 50¢, so we were getting 50¢ a tourist and that was really big money. I can remember in 1931 we had some tremendous surf out there and I was using "Dad's" canoe, I was using the Royal Hawaiian, and I made a total of \$29. in one day.
- AC: That was b-i-g money.
- B: That was big money and "Dad" was getting half of that. It was earned between two o'clock and six o'clock that evening. I never had so much fun in all my life.
- AC: Wasn't that great.
- B: The Royal Hawaiian canoe was probably the best surfing canoe Waikiki has ever seen.

- AC: What's happened to that canoe?
- B: That canoe - over the years gradually deteriorated and was rebuilt and rebuilt until the only thing that was left were the manus and the gunwales. Where it is today, I don't have the faintest idea, do you Wilbur?
- WC: No. When the Club moved up here it disappeared along with several other canoes that we lost track of.
- B: We also had a canoe that was a pretty darned heavy, one that we used for sailing and we used to go out around Diamond Head buoy.
- AC: With a sail?
- B: With a sail, and I think one of the most memorable trips that we had was when Waldo Bowman and I had Jeanette McDonald and her husband Gene Raymond. We started coming around that buoy out there, we were on the reach going like hell and were taking on water. To keep that ama down we made Gene Raymond get out on the outrigger and hold the damned thing down. But we were still taking water so we made Jeanette McDonald get in the bottom of the canoe with a bucket and start bailing. (Laughter). She was very good, I might add. Just an absolutely charming lady. These were the days when she was with, er, the mounted police you remember?
- AC: Oh, yes. Nelson Eddy.
- B: Nelson Eddy. Right.
- AC: Rose Marie.
- B: Rose Marie!
- AC: Now, those were the play times, did you have any real racing that you participated in, in canoes?
- B: Oh, yeah, let Wilbur take over on that.
- AC: You guys were both in it together, I don't know which one to ask. What do you say, Wilbur?
- WC: First, Lex and I were on the first inter-island racing regatta which was held up in Kona, and the result of a lot of effort by "Toots", "Dad", Lorrin Thurston and, of course with the help of John D. Kaupiko and some of the others. In those days when you were on the senior six crew, you paddled the six-man race, you took a four-man contingent from the six and paddled the four-man race, and then the other two paddled the two-man race - the Out-rigger won all of them.
- B: Actually, Wilbur, we had two teams up there as I recall, we were

working out on the White Horse, the Lio Ke'oke'o canoe, and then we had a second team up there comprised of Campbell Stevenson and, er, George Perry and George Bates and, I forget who else. They did very, very well in that race using the canoe named Kakina. In that race we also had the Hui Nalu, and in the Hui Nalu, as you said we had John D. Kaupiko and Joe Ahuna. But we had one boat, the Dowsett canoe, which Duke Kahanamoku had all of his brothers in, and I think.....

WC: That was the 'A'a.

B: Was that the 'A'a?

WC: No, no. We tried to get the 'A'a that was hanging up in the Bishop Museum and they wouldn't let that canoe out at that time, so they got Dowsett's canoe - Herb Dowsett's canoe. It was a lovely canoe, it was a little small for racing, but you had Duke in there, you had Sam in there, you had Louie in there, you had old "Eagle Beak" - Sargent. "Eagle Beak", he just loved to be called that name.

AC: Yeah, I bet.

WC: There was, er, Duke's younger brother, David. Oh, yes, "Tar Ball".

AC: Who's "Tar Ball"?

WC: Well, he's still around. He is one of the Kahanamoku brothers who's still around.

AC: Sarge is still around.

WC: Sarge is still around. Louie, I think, is up on the Big Island.

B: Yep. But they had a problem there, they didn't really have a working steersman, as I recall. Duke just sat there pretty much with the paddle in hand, and well, as you say, Wilbur, we did a clean sweep up there in Kona.

"Dad" won all kinds of money betting with the Kona ranchers and businessmen who were supporting their teams. "Dad" and Lorrin Thurston cleaned them out completely! Remember that? Oh, my heavens they were taking bets everywhere with old man Shipman, Leighton Hind, Robbie McWayne, the whole Kona bunch were all taken to the cleaners - thousands of dollars.

AC: You made a clean sweep, eh?

B: We had an absolute clean sweep. We won that damn thing by a quarter of a mile in the senior six.

WC: We were so far ahead at the finish the Kona people could not believe it.

B: It was just a walkaway.

WC: They were taking our pictures when they were still paddling to the finish line.

AC: This was a nucleus of about eight guys?

B: Actually this was the first inter-island canoe race that was held, and from then on.....

AC: Can you give an approximate date of that?

B: 1932, I think, somewhere in '32.

AC: All kinds of money at the bottom of the depression, is what, a couple of hundred bucks, maybe?

B: Who, "Dad"?

WC: "Dad" won thousands.

AC: Thousands!

B: That's an understatement, and of course that night after the races, I mean, we proceeded to take Kailua Kona town apart and I'll never forget what happened there. The manager of the Kona Inn was a fellow named Cherry, George Cherry, who used to be manager of the Outrigger Canoe Club.

AC: George Cherry, I remember him well.

B: And we had a few boys who got themselves pretty well wound up, one was Wilfred Paul, and if you remember Willie Paul was taking those big fire extinguishers off the wall and as I remember it, they were having fire extinguisher fights on the second floor of the Kona Inn.

AC: Is he the man who became a rather prominent policeman?

B: No, no. Willie Paul is still here. He was a great guy, he was a swimmer, he was at the University of Hawaii, he ended up working for Del Monte, public relations man for Del Monte. Now, his mother, Mrs. Paul was at the beach when Wilbur and I first got down there and she was quite the swimming instructor. She was a very, very strong woman, a lovely woman.

AC: So that was the inter-island race. Do you remember any other canoe races of any great note that you participated in?

B: Actually, we used to participate down at the Honolulu harbor, Wilbur.

WC: Yep.

- B:and this is where we had these pick-up crews. Remember? Nobody trained. It was after the Kona race that we paddled, I don't know how many years we paddled for the Club, but I can recall vividly after graduating from Roosevelt, I went to the University of Hawaii. The University of Hawaii decided that it was going to get into canoe racing and "Pump" (Theodore) Searle was then the coach. I was told in so many words that I'd have to quit the Outrigger team in order to paddle with the University of Hawaii. I said, "Uh-uh", I'll stick with "Dad", and that year they held back my track letter. The University of Hawaii wouldn't give me my leather jacket that I had coming, and I thought that was pretty darned manini.
- AC: They should.....
- B: That was old "Pump".
- AC: You know, on these trips to the outer islands, I imagine the trip itself - the transportation was quite memorable. What did you go on, the Kinau or something like that?
- WC: Better than that. We had two cattle boats, one was the Humuula and the other one was the Hawaii.
- AC: All right.
- WC: And we paddled the canoes down to the harbor.
- AC: From here - Waikiki beach?
- WC: From Waikiki beach - the racing canoes to the harbor, and we lashed the canoe, we had the canoe on a cradle there right next to the Humuula, whichever one, and we'd take off the iakos and the ama and then that was hauled up on deck, and as I remember all the canoes were laid out on the deck. And it was particularly memorable that first trip up because that was when the song "The Cockeyed Mayor of Kaunakakai" was going so strong and we'd have people up there with ukuleles and we would sing "Sweet Leilani" from Harry Owens band.
- AC: There wasn't very much sleep those nights, was there?
- B: No. There was no sleep at all.
- AC: You paddled the next day.
- WC: No, no, no.
- B: No, no, no. "Dad" was wise in that area. The first year he took us up, what was it, one week, two weeks ahead of the race?
- WC: To get used to the weather.

- B: What they did - didn't they come in to Kailua and they lifted one canoe at a time...No...Yes, they unloaded at Kealekekua, didn't they?
- WC: Yes. Then they put the canoes up on the beach under the heiau. There was a good beach there then.
- AC: Where was this exactly?
- B: I was thinking of Keauhou.
- AC: Keauhou.
- WC: Did the ship take it right down to Napoopoo?
- B: Yeah. It was Napoopoo that we off-loaded, yeah.
- AC: The landing area, the little pier.
- B: Because we went back and forth - we had Arthur Myhre running one boat. We had two speedboats up there, and it was seven miles as I recall from Kailua-Kona to Napoopoo and we fished going and coming.
- WC: And every morning - I am trying to think of his name...he had the speed boat he used to go fishing with us...but every morning when we'd go down there we'd come around the point into Napoopoo there'd be this big shark. Remember him?
- B: Yeah. I hadn't thought of him in, well, 50 years. A tremendous, big black son-of-a-gun.
- AC: Was he waiting for you?
- WC: Well, he thought of that as his home. He had territorial rights.
- B: He was right there at the point.
- WC: We'd go by - go within, maybe forty or fifty feet of him. He wouldn't move.
- AC: He was out there sunning himself...Well in these canoeing days what other personalities were there as your crew.
- WC: Ted Waters' name came up in our discussions.
- B: Well, Ted Waters had the concession there adjacent to the Royal Hawaiian. Now the Royal Hawaiian, I believe, was finished off... what was it, in 1928?*

* Opened February 1, 1927.

- AC: 1928 was the Grand Opening, yeah.
- WC: Ted Waters had the beach service concession, I believe. Up to that point he used to be in charge of fixing the canoes.
- AC: At the Outrigger.
- WC: At the Outrigger, and Lex and I happened to be out in one of them and we had a collision. It broke the front end and Ted was waiting for us on the beach. Did we ever catch hell! (Laughter)
- B: All hell, boy!
- WC: When that petered out, well, he went over to the Royal.
- AC: Didn't he - wasn't he one of the first people in that organization, the Waikiki Beach Patrol or something of that nature, where they all wore uniforms?
- B: Well, I think that was "Sally" Hale, Louis Sallisbury Hale.
- AC: Oh, yeah "Sally" Hale.
- B: And, er, he used to wear that nautical cap of his, and during the summers I was in the Beach Patrol and he had quite a number there. We had Chick Daniels you know, we had Sam, and we had, oh, we had Panama Dave Baptiste, we had Curley Cornwall, Indian Frank Telas was in, we had - oh - I still have that picture - that picture of Shirley Temple down there when she was about three years old or four years old and she was reviewing the so-called beach patrol. I don't think she was three feet tall at that time. She was really in her heyday at that point.
- AC: Talking about Ted Waters, I overheard a funny story about when you were moving canoes around one afternoon after Ted had been down to see the doctor.
- WC: I think what you are referring to was when he got circumcised.
- AC: At that age?
- WC: Yes. He couldn't give up the thought of missing out on collecting money from Lex and me and the other fellows who were working for him, and then he'd have to help with the canoes, you know to pull them up, especially when it was high tide, then he'd come dashing in and he'd get wet...and he'd run like hell...[Laughter].
- AC: The first time you'd ever heard him scream?
- WC: Yeah. (Laughter). Only when he took a bath.
- B: Old Ted would pay us off every night about five-thirty, and of course, it was all cash...

WC: Wet.....

B: ...and he had a roll that was probably an inch-and-a-half thick and we'd wait outside there about five-thirty or six o'clock to get our cut for the day. We were into swimming lessons and we were into surfing lessons, board lessons, and canoeing and we used to hustle. We used to go from umbrella to umbrella down there and it was really knocking on the door, so to speak. We did very, very well. Now, of course, the way to do it was to find a couple who had a charming daughter, and you'd arrange it so the daughter would ask you to the Royal Hawaiian to dinner that night, and you'd have dinner with the family. That got you into the Royal, that got you a dinner, and that got you to the dance floor, and she would sign the chits that night, and it was a very inexpensive way to have one hell of a wonderful.....

AC: And you still had Ted Waters' money in your pocket.

WC: Well, you had to spend \$1.50 for a ginger lei!

AC: Of course, of course.....Let's take a little break here.....

B: That was Ted Waters' era there. I was teaching a young couple how to surf and his name was Joe Colman and he was from Yale University, and his girl friend on the beach was Sue Lehman. Her uncle was then Governor of New York, and they were spending the summer at Waikiki with the idea that they were going back to the East Coast to marry. Then they had a change of plans and they decided they'd get married at Waikiki and while I didn't attend the wedding, I was at the reception on the fourth floor of the Royal. But the interesting part of this story is it was only a year ago that my phone rang down at the tire store and this woman said, "Are you the same Lex Brodie who was on the beach many years ago?" and I said, "Yes". And she said, "Do you remember the name Sue Colman, rather Sue Lehman?" And I said, "Very much, and the boy friend was Joe Colman". Now this was fifty years ago. Well they'd been married and he'd been through Guadalcanal, the whole thing, and he was now the Chairman of the Board of, I think it was Pall Mall, one of the very, very large companies, and they were on their way to Guadalcanal and other points through the Pacific that he wanted to revisit - those points where he had been engaged in combat. But she had seen one of my TV commercials and called the tire store.

AC: Ha!

B: So that same day we had lunch together at the Royal. We recapped the whole doggone thing near fifty years later. They are very, very happy, and as I say, I took him out tandem surfing at first break. He never got over that.

WC: You know when you get pushed on a board out at first break.....

AC: That was Fifty years ago.....

B: That's right. Get 'em out there and let 'em lie on the board and you are just about in the curl and give them a shove and you can just imagine, you know, I mean that board would flip fifty feet up in the air. Well, we took them canoeing, surfing and all the like, but this is what has occurred, Wilbur, and.....

AC: That's great and she was married for fifty years, and you hadn't heard from them?

B: Never one word, and she just picked up on this TV commercial on tires.

AC: I'll be darned.

B: ...and that's how we got together. Small world.

AC: Sometimes I wonder whether Lex Brodie's big expense in advertising is worth it, and that proves it is. Right?

WC: Come in and buy my tires.....

B: I didn't sell them a thing, though.

AC: Wilbur, we were talking about...you went to Yale?

B: He was at Yale. Joe Colman was at Yale University.

AC: Wilbur, you had a story about swimming - about performing for the Yale coach. How did that go?

WC: Actually, the big deal - the Yale swimmers used to come down, and the coach was Bob Kiphuth. The team would compete in the local swimming races and then we would compete - train with the team. I recall this one particular incident that was at an afternoon swim meet and I was entered in the 100 and 200 meter races. "Dad" Center told me to take it easy on the 100 meter race, and if I was ahead just to keep the lead and not try to extend myself any more, just to keep the lead as I had to swim the 200 meters two races after the 100. So I won the race and later on I was told that the 200 meter race was scratched. So I went back to the Club and "Dad" and Bob Kiphuth were talking so Dad asked me how I made out and I.....

AC: Kiphuth was then the coach at Yale?

WC: Yes, he was the coach at Yale, and so I told them I had won my race, so he asked me what time it was - the race was for boys under 13. My time was 1':03" for the 100 meters, and Kiphuth

said, "My God". I didn't know what he was talking about. Later "Dad" told me that the best time the Yale swimmers made was 58" and 59".

AC: :58"?

WC: Yes.

AC: And you made it in one minute and.....

WC: ...three seconds. Just about a couple of seconds in back of them. That was always a big deal, and talking about the Yale swimmers, one of the swimmers, very prominent swimmers, he is now the No. 1 Master swimmer in the United States and is married to Joan Dowsett, who by the way is also the No. 1 Women's Master swimmer in the U. S.

AC: Lloyd Osborne?

WC: Lloyd Osborne! I used to swim against him. He was much older than I was.

AC: He was at Yale?

WC: Yes, he was a Yale swimmer. A fine Yale swimmer.

B: I didn't realize that he was from Yale.

WC: He's still a great swimmer.

AC: He's also a great salmon fisherman, I understand.

WC: I read about him all the time. Do you know "Impy" Sexton, Harold Sexton, is swimming in the Masters now and he's out for some of Lloyd's records.

AC: Speaking of...I was mentioning the fact that Lloyd Osborne is a great fisherman as well as a great swimmer, you have a fishing story that has to do with uhu - you went uhu fishing with the big boys.....

WC: Oh, yeah. When you are a small kid on the beach there, you are the gofor, so "Toots" Minvielle and "Sally" Hale and some of the fellows who used to go out spearing decided to take out "Toots'" canoe and go down to - off the present reef runway at the airport. They hung an outboard engine on the canoe just like "Dad" Center's Veedol and we went down there to fish and I was the bag boy. I had a gunnysack. Every time they caught a fish why they'd call me and I'd swim over and put the fish in the gunnysack. I was carry-a large gunnysack. After you fish a while you go swim two or three hundred yards away from the canoe, you know, and my sack was pretty full and I was stringing them on my spear and swimming with

the gunnysack under one arm and holding the spear in my hand and they decided they'd go and get the canoe. They got to the canoe and then they all smoked cigarettes. I found a coral head and was resting on the coral head with just my chin above water and a wave would come and I'd get swept off the coral head, then I'd swim back on. Finally they got the canoe started and they came over and picked me up. I sat up in the front and they were heading back home. We hadn't gone, I guess, much more than 150 feet from where they picked me up and I looked down in the ocean in the water and here's this g-r-e-a-t big jack - he must have been about 12 feet long, swimming directly up stream to where the scent of blood was. I never went out with those guys again.

AC: He was heading your way?

WC: He was heading directly for me.....

AC: Now, this canoe. You'd take it out of the Outrigger premises and go down there?

WC: Oh, yeah, it belonged to "Toots" Minvielle.

AC: Oh, "Toots"? I see.

WC: Yeah, it belonged to "Toots".

AC: Well, "Dad" owned quite a few canoes, didn't he?

WC: "Dad" owned quite a bunch.

B: There were quite a few private canoes at that time, Alex, Gay Harris, for example, had canoes, and then the Club had a lot of canoes, but I think the private canoes were the well-maintained canoes because the people using them were very maintenance conscious, and restrictive.

AC: There was Thurston, Harris.....

WC: I don't remember - did Potter Thurston have any canoes?

B: Not that I can think of.

WC: "Yabo" Taylor - remember, he used to have his Indian canoe upside down under the pavilion?

B: Yep. And, of course, "Yabo" even today is in pretty darned good shape. He used to go out there to Blow Hole and he could slide that thing left like a surfboard.

WC: Right.

- B: He'd do a tremendous job out there. Another one who wasn't a member of the Club at that time, as I recall. He was living at the beach. We used to call him "Shark Bait" Steiner (Ernest Steiner). He had a two-man canoe and we used to drive him absolutely bananas, because he'd be out there waiting to catch a wave, then he'd catch it and we'd come up on our boards and pass him and run over his manos and iakos and everything else as we'd scoot left into Cornucopia.
- AC: Wait until I get Ernie to listen to this. His name is now Ernie, not "Shark Bait". He lives at Waimanalo Beach. I'll invite him in to hear this.
- B: Yeah, he'd like that.
- WC: We'd just wave a paddle at him.
- AC: He used to live right here on the beach, didn't he? Right on the water. By the Surfrider Hotel.
- B: They had their place there, and I think some of the trees - I think that old hala tree is still there. I'd see his brother once in a while - the judge.
- AC: Harry.
- B: Yeah. He'd be out there surfing.
- WC: The canoe that "Dad" had, he kept at the Outrigger, also, until the general.....
- B: "Dad's" canoes were pretty much for "Dad", and for "Dad's" friends.
- AC: Now, they don't have any private canoes here on the Club premises, do they?
- B: Not that I know of.
- AC: A lot of private buoys.....
- WC: A lot of buoys and surf skis and.....
- AC: ...and, stray boats lying at anchor here.
- WC: I wonder whatever happened to that big canoe we had hanging up at the Club for years and it was never taken down until we got into this canoe racing - that was the Hana Keoki.
- B: Oh, yeah. They lightened it up, I think it is downstairs. They used to use it as a training boat.
- WC: I believe when they used it as a training boat it was probably about three inches thick.

- B: It was a thick, heavy, big canoe.
- WC: We had it up there with us in Kona.
- B: That's right...and, that was the canoe after the races that year we put "Toots'" 16-horse outboard on and you and I, "Toots", and "Dad" took off...was Cookie (Edric Cook) with us? Was it a five-man deal?
- WC: Yes, five men.
- B: And we went right on up all the way to Kawaihae. And one night we stopped off - I guess it was...where was it?...
- WC: We got socked in.....[end of tape]
- AC: Let's go back to...You say you came around the point at Kawaihae... let's take it from there.
- WC: Alrighty...On the way back a storm came up - we ran into Francis Brown's Keawiki Pond and.....
- B: Just as we were coming around we got that 30-lb ulua, do you remember that?
- WC: That's right - that big son-of-a-gun, and you'd see turtles swimming - it was just a fisherman's paradise, and it was a delightful place - big fishponds in back and strangely enough during World War II I bumped into Francis up at the Volcano House and he enlisted my aid, along with Billy Ruddle, to go drag the pond. So we went down there - we left at the crack of dawn from the Volcano and we drove over to Kawaihae - ran up the coast in his speed boat, dragged the pond and on the way back he was handing out mullet like crazy, every house we went by he'd toot the horn and a couple of mullet went out - all the way up to the Volcano. We had two big gunnysacks of mullet when we left Kawaihae and when we got to the Volcano House he had about 12-15 left!
- B: It was about that time that we had a very interesting experience down there at Kailua-Kona. Wilbur and I wanted to go out and do some trolling from a canoe where we would just paddle and fish for papio, using a little hand line, but we couldn't find any bait and we wanted some octopus, he'e, for bait and of course, the ocean floor there around Kailua is lava and sand. We were out there near the pier looking around and there was this old Hawaiian in a pair of overalls watching us and he says, "Eh, haole, what you want, what you looking for?", and we said we were looking for squid, and he said, "Well, I'll tell you something", he said, "there's only one squid hole in Kailua Bay and that squid hole is right under my feet, over here". And this feller only had one leg and a pair of overalls and he just went right off into the water, no goggles, no

nothing, no spear, and comes up with this squid in his hand and he says, "Here, you go fish".

AC: Manuahi.

B: Yeah, manuahi. Tremendous. I'll never forget that.

AC: You could have all the papio you wanted.

B: The guy said there was only one squid hole in Kailua Bay! (Laughter) ...and it was right there,

AC: Keawiki is still in the Brown family. Zadoc Brown now owns the house.

B: Hasn't changed an awful lot.

WC: And how about those ponds right next door?

AC: The ponds are still there. I don't know about the shrimp, but there is a road now from the new highway. Its a lava road but you can get in. Used to be you could only go in by boat.

B: Right. I know it. The buildings still there?

AC: Yeah. The peacocks are gone.

WC: Francis Brown would never eat any fish out of his own fishpond. Catch them in the ocean - he ate it. Anything out of his fishpond, he did not eat. I asked him why, and he said, "Just my own superstition, I give my fish away", and by God that's what we were doing all the way up to the Volcano. When we got up there I think he had about 12-15 fish left, and he said, "Gee, I forgot to offer you one" and I said, "What the hell do you think I wanted to help you drag the damned pond for?"

AC: Did Francis have the swimming pool there in the middle of the lave when you were there?

B: Yeah.

AC: Wasn't that a beautiful thing? Ice cold on a hot day...black lava all around it. Just paradise.

Well, now we are going along here. You did do some work in the caring of canoes. I don't imagine you got around to actually making one or all the rest of that, but you did make surf boards, didn't you?

B: We were making surfboards, repairing surfboards.....

AC: Where did you get the raw materials?

B: Well, we used to go down to Lewers & Cooke and, as I recall, Lewers & Cooke was located on King Street at that time.

WC: Where the Department of Transportation is located now.

AC: They had Lewers & Cooke next to First Hawaiian Bank

B: Across the street.

AC: ...on King Street.....

B: They had a small lumber yard.....

AC: Then they had a lumber yard down on Queen - Queen and Punchbowl.

B: Punchbowl. That was the corner that I.....

AC: That was a lumber yard?

B: Yes, that was a lumber yard.

AC: That's where you got your raw material?

B: You could get ten-foot, eleven-foot, and twelve-foot drain board stock - redwood drain board stock.

AC: Kitchen material.

B: Right. And that was the widest, thickest, longest piece you could find.

AC: Do you think they still stock drain board material.

WC: I kinda doubt it.

AC: Kinda doubt it. So then, how did you make it?

WC: Like Lex says you take it down, you picked out the piece you wanted, you liked the grain and you check that.

B: Weight was a big factor, Wilbur.

WC: Yes, weight was a big factor. You went through the entire stack, you know, lift each piece, and then you put the one you selected out to the side.

AC: What were you looking for?

WC: Light.....

AC: The lighter the better?

WC: ...and good grain.

AC: And good grain.

WC: And then, take it and dry it out like Lex says, by the Hawaiian Electric boilers - nice and hot - leave it there a couple of months.

AC: Tell us about the Hawaiian Electric boilers.

WC: Well, we had an 'in' there at Hawaiian Electric. Gay Harris, a member of the Club, worked there as a machinist.

AC: The old plant down there at the waterfront?

WC: Yeah.

B: That's it...and he was a well-known swimmer - he was a machinist at Hawaiian Electric, and he used to go fishing - or we'd go fishing with him - and being a machinist he was a very fine feller to know when it came to repairing a reel. The reel. You know, he could take them apart in his sleep and put them back together again. Through Gay we were able to get these pieces of redwood into Hawaiian Electric and they'd be stacked up next to the boilers, and this would dry them out, and.....

AC: Over a period of how long?

B: What would you guess, Wilbur? Three months?

WC: Something in that order.

B: That heat, that constant heat was just like kiln dried. It was better than kiln dried.

WC: Sure.

B: But I've never run into a finished board, a redwood board that was ten feet or longer that ever weighed less than 60 lbs., and of course, after you'd been surfing for two or three hours they felt like they weighed 90 lbs. And if you hadn't maintained your Valspar finish it soaked up a lot of water, I mean you would, er, stumble up the beach cold, tired, and it was a great relief to get that thing into the locker.

AC: These boards you were making, were they less than 60 lbs. when you got them made?

WC: That's what I said, finished - they'd be 60 lbs.

AC: Finished.

- B: I had one board there that I bought from the manager of the Moana - I'm trying to recall his name now, small guy, a local boy - but that board weighed 110-120 lbs. and out at first break in choppy water it was absolutely great because it would go through this chop with no problem at all, and if you caught the wave in the right place and got that board set, you'd have one hell of a ride. Let me tell you there was no zigging or zagging on that wave.
- AC: Just a great big bulldozer.
- B: T-h-a-t's right. And you didn't get hit by your own board.
- AC: No.
- B: It was too damned heavy.
- AC: Yeah. You actually made your own boards and they came out to your satisfaction?
- WC: Well, according to your design, you know, you'd incorporate a little modern thinking, the half-round bottom, the round bottom.....
- B: Let me give you the metamorphosis here of the boards. We had these boards up until 1930-31 and about this same time we got a few of the old balsa boards in. I think they were bringing wood in from Ecuador - balsa. And that was an extremely light wood, and about the same time they were bringing these boards in from California which were laminated redwood and balsa. Also at this same time we started getting into paddle boards which were 11-, 12-, 13-feet and I believe the Outrigger was using these paddle boards as rental boards at the beach and they didn't turn out very well because you had no maneuverability at all on those boards, they were easy to paddle but no good on the waves. So finally, after those boards had been disqualified, so to speak, as a rental board, they were left hanging there and one of the days when they were cleaning out old boards down there they were getting ready to throw these away and I picked up two of them, and I still have one of them now over at my place in Kaneohe - that board is fifty years old. Its all glassed, its an excellent board for paddling.
- AC: In Kaneohe Bay?
- B: Yeah, paddling around the bay. Its a wonderful board, just for paddling.
- WC: Lex, talking about paddle boards, didn't Waldo Bowman design the first hollow board - surfing board? Then Tom Blake got Waldo's plans, because he borrowed my plane to make it and he returned the plane after he was through all busted up.
- B: (Laugh)
- WC: ...and Waldo's design was what Tom Blake is given credit for.

Waldo had all the templates and everything, as the father of the hollow board. Tom Blake was no more the father of the hollow board than the Man in the Moon.

- B: You may be correct, Wilbur. It seems to stick in my mind that Tom Blake bought that first hollow board in California and he brought it down here. He was surfing at Castle's and first break on this board and then Waldo improved on that board. Now, as I say, I could be quite wrong.
- AC: Is the hollow board used very much now?
- B: It's not used at all. We've gone to styrofoam.
- AC: And you've also gone to skegs.
- B: Now, I believe Waldo had the first board out there with a skeg on it - Waldo Bowman.
- WC: Yes. Right.
- B: ...and, the name of his board was the "Nani", wasn't it?
- WC: That's right, the Nani.
- B: Well, he had a very long skeg, and a shallow skeg, and that was to keep the board from tail-spinning in the surf.
- WC: Now, you and I made our boards out of koa wood. We had the only koa hollow boards on Waikiki Beach. I sold mine to artist Arthur Emerson when I finally got rid of it. I needed some money to go to the University, so I sold it.
- B: 1,500 brass screws in each one of those boards, Wilbur.
- WC: Yeah. Put in by hand.
- AC: 1,500!
- WC: All put in by hand, and that was about the time that Weldwood glue came out.
- B: Wasn't that what we used?
- WC: Weldwood glue - had never heard of it before.
- B: But we ran into a little problem, I know on my board we called it Lordosis.
- WC: That's right. Mine had the same thing. The top, instead of lying flat had a.....

B: Instead of being spoon-shaped in the front so you could avoid going pearl diving, it went the opposite way.

WC: (Laugh) Then, on the other hand you could surf that board top or bottom.

B: Yes. You could catch a wave. They were the only two koa boards Waikiki has ever seen. Never seen one since.

AC: Koa hollow board!

WC: Koa hollow board. We went down to C. Q. Yee Hop.....

B: That's right.

WC: ...found a big plank of wood, koa wood, long, and had them cut in their band saw into, er, what were they - a quarter-inch?

B: Three-eighths - quarter...about three-eighths, I guess, planks and that was the top and the bottom and whoever made the board matched the edge grain.

AC: What was the advantage, the theoretical at that time, advantage?

B: Lighter.

AC: Just lighter.

WC: Lighter. Easy to paddle.

AC: How was the maneuverability on the waves?

WC: On the wave, very poor, no control. Then the Outrigger rental boards that I was speaking about just a moment ago were plywood. Remember that?

B: Yeah. They were quarter-inch/five-sixteenths-inch plywood.

WC: I don't think they were marine ply, either.

B: No, I don't think they were either.

WC: Construction grade. (Laugh)

B: I don't think marine ply had come out at that time.

AC: Now, what's your favorite board now, Wilbur?

WC: My favorite board?...is the bar!

AC: The bar. Well, I know you're kidding, but you have given up surfing?

- WC: Yeah, I dropped it about ten years ago.
- AC: You're still surfing, aren't you Lex?
- B: I'm still surfing. I have a foam board ten feet long, about twenty-four inches wide, three-and-a-half/four inches thick, weighs 18 pounds.
- AC: Got a skeg on it?
- B: Very nice skeg on it. Its a little too hot for me to handle - my co-ordination isn't quite fast enough.
- AC: On smaller waves you can still have fun on it.....
- B: I'm fine on three, four or five foot waves, but I don't kid myself that I'm much of a surfer any longer except to say that I'm still there.
- AC: Well that's quite a bit to say.
- B: I'm bound and determined to get one more year out of it so I can say that I have been doing it for sixty years.
- AC: Now, we've covered all the facets of early membership as young men in the Club including the participation in sports and the repairing of canoes and making of boards, but, do you have any girl stories to tell me about when you were younger men, like stories pertaining to canoes and moonlight nights? You told one about getting a free meal now and then at the Royal Hawaiian because some Mainland haole girl would take a shine to you, but surely there were girl members of the Club, weren't there?
- WC: Oh, yeah. I'll tell you a person who is still a member here, Fred Hemmings and his younger sister, Bessie Hemmings, who was just an outstanding surfing partner. She was very, very light, very agile. She must have weighed maybe 105 or 100 pounds - she was relatively light weight, and she was nimble, very, very well coordinated. She was quite a girl to have out there on a tandem, but I think you were referring a little more toward the romantic end of.....
- AC: Not necessarily. I think its nice in an interview like this to have a few female names in it.
- WC: It's true.
- AC: Bring back your memories as young men. Wasn't there a swimmer... did she ever participate in Outrigger - Olga Clarke?
- B: Yes, Olga Clarke is, I believe, still around.

WC: Yep. She is.

B: ...and, wasn't she at Roosevelt?

WC: She was at Roosevelt.

B: With us. Right.

AC: I think she made a big name in tank swimming.

B: Tank, that's right.

AC: Who were the other girls.....

WC: You take some of the old girl swimmers at the Outrigger, like Mariechen Wehselau, Helen Moses Cassidy, Dot Waters, Lillie Bowmer and, oh, Janice Lovett, and there were quite a number of them, they were all real tomboys and Lex and I, we were small kids around and they didn't waste too much time with us. But I can recall that you didn't get them riled at you because they were always together, and this one occasion that I recall I've never forgotten was when Bill Newport, I think it was, and a friend of his decided to have some fun with the girls and they climbed up on the canoe shed with a bucket of water and a bucket of sand and the girls were down on the beach taking a sun bath and they dumped the water on them and then dumped a bucket of sand on them, and these girls chased the fellows around the Outrigger and they were up in the trees - up in the hau trees - and finally caught them and then they took them down to the beach and all these gals, I mean they were pretty rugged strong kids, and they dug a deep hole - they put one in one, and one in the other and left them right up to their chins in sand, (Laughter) and didn't get back for an hour and a half. (Laugh).

AC: How come you escaped?

WC: I wasn't in on it.

B: No, we were just small fry.

WC: I was just lucky.

AC: Well, these are wonderful stories about the old Outrigger. I think this just about wraps up our interview, gentlemen. Thank you so much Lex Brodie and Wilbur Crow.

We still have about a half a tape left, so one of these afternoons before we start typing it up if you think of anything, let me know and we'll have another luncheon. O.K?

WC: Very good, sir.