

GEORGE BRANGIER

An Interview by Ken Pratt

August 8, 1984

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This is an interview with George Brangier who has been a member of the Outrigger Canoe Club since 1935. This interview is being conducted on August 8, 1984, at the home of Ken Pratt, 4817 Aukai Avenue. The interviewer is Ken Pratt representing the Outrigger Canoe Club Oral History Committee.

KP: George, before we get into your early days at the Outrigger Canoe Club, can you tell us a little something about yourself?

GB: Well, I was born in France, came to California near San Jose where my father ran a alcohol distillery for this group in San Francisco - he was a part-owner - and he made a deal with ASB, Alexander & Baldwin, for molasses. We used to have storage tanks in Hilo. The molasses went into Crockett and part of the molasses and dry alfalfa made into cattle feed. The balance went down to the distillery near San Jose and was distilled into 190 proof alcohol. Then later they made uncut whiskey for the two-bit shots.

KP: Oh, yeah.

GB: ...in the old days. And we used to have 30 coopers there making 50-gallon charred barrels all day long, eight hours a day. Then it was put into the charred barrels and eventually sent to a distributor. What they did with it, we didn't know, and didn't particularly care.

KP: I see.

GB: Then, the First World War came along and an engineer said to my father, you know the residue from the distillation we used to put - dump - in the Alviso Creek which eventually landed in San Francisco Bay - that we make potash out of it. It was really like finding gold, you know. During the war we figured out - my father figured out - that he could make acetone out of the potash, and we were furnishing acetone to the DuPonts from that period on until the war ended.

KP: For goodness sake. Now, did you get into the war yourself at all?

GB: I was too young for the first one and too old for the second one.

KP: I see. But now, you had to put in duty in France. Is that right?

GB: Yes, my family - my father retired and took the whole family back to France, and then he bought the newspaper in the small town of Niort, where we came from because his friend's son was supposed to run it after the war. But the boy had lost both arms and both legs, so he was a basket case. So my father bought the paper and had my godfather run it, and they talked him into running for the Senate. He said, "This is ridiculous, I've been gone from the country for fifteen years." And in the old days that's just like being a foreigner. Well, he ran, and was elected.

KP: That's interesting.

GB: And, eventually he ended up on the Disarmament Commission with Maginot, but, being a French citizen, I had to do two years' military service. I was getting fifty centimes a day, which is a little less than 10¢.

KP: (Laugh) You couldn't go out on the town on that. (Laughter).

GB: No, I'll tell you.

KP: Well, when did you get back to the United States? What year?

GB: Well, I don't know if you want all that story.

KP: Well, not too long, we've got to get back to the Outrigger.

GB: Well, I got back in 1923 - the end of '23, the beginning of '24 - via Panama, where I went broke. I worked four months as a truck driver. Believe me, in those days that was really rough. So that's when I got back to California. They made one little picture in Burlingame, I worked in it and I said, I want to really get into pictures, so I went to Hollywood. As a matter of fact I started the same time as John Wayne, Gary Cooper and Clark Gable.

KP: That's interesting.

GB: Gary Cooper used to see all the studios apart from Universal in those days that were in Hollywood. Fox was on the corner of Sunset and Western. I remember Gary Cooper standing out in front with the boots, the jeans, the kerchief and the hat, and the second assistant director came up and said, "Hey, you, \$3.00 and lunch." He'd say, "Yup." That was a dead tired box lunch - two sandwiches and an apple - and \$3.00. In those days I lived at the Village Inn which was about four blocks beyond going into Hollywood from Fox. Then two blocks beyond that was Warner Bros. Clark Gable, which wasn't his name then, lived in a garage apartment behind the little hotel when I was there. Oh, I was a big shot, I was paying \$10. a week for a room and bath. So, Gable was working at Warner Bros. as a laborer digging post holes - they were putting new fencing around Warner Bros studios there. Wayne never had a

decent suit of clothes because he drank everything he made so they had to put him in a mob scene or in costume.

KP: Well, eventually he became a star.

GB: Oh, sure. They all became stars. I didn't.

KP: But, you were in a good many movies.

GB: Oh, sure. I never did anything big. I did extra work, and I did small parts, I did small scenes here and there. Like, for instance, John Ford, the old motion picture producer, was a very good friend of mine. I used to play hearts practically every Saturday night with him, John Wayne, his wife - Mary Ford - Wingate Smith his brother-in-law, and any time he had a scene where he wanted a Frenchman - hotel manager - just a couple of shots. He wanted a French soldier in the trenches - well, I was elected.

KP: And you could speak French fluently, of course.

GB: You never hear it in pictures - they were silent pictures - it didn't make a damned bit of difference. He wanted a guy who was a Frenchman.

KP: Now, weren't you in a movie with Duke Kahanamoku?

GB: That goes way back to 1927, on the Roughriders, and we worked - Duke worked with us all the time in Texas when we were in San Antonio for that picture, for about two months, and we came back to Hollywood and there was a scene on the beach. See, one day we were Cubans fighting the Americans, and the next day we were Americans fighting the Cubans. (Laugh). So, that's all of the two months in Texas. There was a scene on a beach. Well the minute I heard that I put a pair of swim trunks on under my uniform, and I saw the Duke out there body surfing and I said, "Brother, I have to learn how to do that," so I stripped down to my swim trunks and I went over and I said, "Hey, brother, show me," and he showed me how to body surf.

KP: (Laugh) Isn't that great. This was at Laguna, eh?

GB: Yeah, Laguna, outside of Laguna a little beach - not right in town, a little beach outside of town where there'd be no people. So we became good friends and eventually I came over here, the first time in 1928, and I was down on the beach by the exit for the bathers of the Royal Hawaiian and Elmer Lee used to have a little shack there...

KP: Sure, I remember that.

GB: ...used to sell different things, and Duke was there, and he had Chick Daniels, Duckbill, Curley - I don't know, several of the old timers - and he said to me, "Hey, Keeki, hey, how are you?", so I went over and shook hands with him and he introduced me to the other beachboys, so I had a front door entrance to the beach gang.

KP: That was the Hui Nalu bunch?

GB: Those were the beachboys. Oh, the Hui Nalu beachboys, yes. As a matter of fact one of them said - I had a little dump down on upper or lower Cleghorn I was paying all of 25 bucks a month for - and one of the boys said, "Where do you change Keoki?" I said, "At home." "Eh, no," he said, "come in and use Hui Nalu." That's where they kept the boards. There were no lockers, they were stacked. So when you went in to look for your board somebody always was at first break with it. You had to wait until they came in.

KP: An hour wait, eh?

GB: So I used their locker room, showers and everything. Dudie Miller ran the Hui Nalu, you know.

KP: Sure, he was top man there for years.

GB: And, er, it was interesting to meet that whole gang. They accepted me, and when they needed an extra man besides a second captain that they didn't have to pay, I would always volunteer. I wanted to work out, get some exercise, so I was the third paddle when they had a big load of tourists.

Then we'd all go fishing. I'd go fishing with them, and it got to be sort of a thing, it went on for years. And, even after I went into business Chick would say, "Hey, Keoki, we've got some fish for you," and put in an envelope, a brown manila envelope, a few fish - might have been octopus, but I had a Japanese cook who knew how to cook it.

So it was to me - I'll never forget - the first day, the second day I was on the beach. Do you remember those hau trees before you got to the Moana - the benches there?

KP: Oh, yes, yes.

GB: I walked in there and put my elbows on the back of those benches, I watched the surf, the canoes, and I said, "This is it." I stayed.

KP: You were not going back to the Mainland.

GB: No way. No way.

KP: It was a smart decision you made to stay in Hawaii.

GB: Oh, sure.

KP: I don't think there's a better place in the world.

GB: Oh, Christ, no. I've been all over the world, all the West Indies, all the islands in the Pacific, islands in the Indian Ocean - the Seychelles, Mauritius, and on, and on and on. Climatically, we've got it licked, and as far as a place to live - this is it.

KP: Well, now, so your first introduction to Waikiki beach was at the Hui Nalu site. When did you join the Outrigger Canoe Club?

- GB: Well, see, I went away, and then I came back. I came back in 1935. I got a lease on a store in the Dillingham building - the old Chez Pierre's restaurant there going makai, and I opened a men's shop there with a partner, Miller - Neil Miller - who claimed he had a lot of experience. Then I found out later that he'd worked for a two weeks' Christmas vacation in a men's store in Los Angeles. I'd never run a store. I always felt I knew clothes...and I went on a buying...He said, "You're doing all right, you buy for us," so I bought the whole thing. I didn't even know how to mark those things at first.
- KP: What was the store called?
- GB: Miller-Brangier.
- KP: I see.
- GB: I put his name first because mine is too hard to pronounce - some people address me as 'Brassiere'.
- KP: [Laugh]
- GB: So, we started that in 1935; and not knowing any better I opened the store two weeks before Christmas instead of two months. But, I brought over lines they'd not seen the extent of before; they hadn't seen this, they hadn't seen that. I had a custom tailoring. I knew how to measure because I had all my clothes custom made and we selected the materials, and four weeks later you had your suit. I knew all about the alterations - shorten the back a little bit... and, I don't want to seem braggadocios, but three days after Christmas the first year I was calling the Mainland for more merchandise.
- KP: It was an immediate success.
- GB: It was, and then...then the following year I ordered twice as much merchandise, but that was the year we had a six-month shipping strike and I got my merchandise the following March after Christmas.
- KP: Ah-ha.
- GB: So, nothing to do, I had to get something in there, so I bought batiks at the East India store; Japanese stores I bought Japanese prints, and I found little dressmakers. In the meantime, Nat Norfleet, Sr. had come over and he was helping me because Miller had gone back to the Mainland. He was helping sell, window dress in the store. We had shirts made, I had swim trunks made, and on and on and on, put them in the store and they all sold. So that's when Walter Flanders - the name is combined - and Walter Mac (Macfarlane) wanted to buy my shop. I had taken Neil - Neil Miller - out of it with a cashier's check, so I was the sole owner. I had gotten him on a boat with a cashier's check so he could repay his mother, but otherwise....

KP: (Laugh)

GB: They wanted to buy the store so I sold it to them, and I started - I first called it "Branfleet" - the factory for making sportswear, half my name and half of Norfleet's name. And after we got well established all over the country, even London, Paris - Gallerie Lafayette in Paris - David Jones in Australia, and all the Bullocks stores, I talked to them, because we used "Kahala" as our label in the shirts. I said, "Don't you think it would be better to change the name to Kahala Sportswear?" and they said, "Yes." There's no confusion with it - which we changed a few years later. As I say, er, it didn't happen overnight, but we had them all - the big ones.

KP: Now, its still in the '30s or are you talking about the '40s?

GB: Oh, we're up into the forties, now. I mean to give you an idea - B. Altman, they were buying for four big stores back East - their opening order was \$185,000 the year I left the company.

Anyway, the thing to me that was so contrary. Nieman Marcus buyer came out. I usually let Norfleet sell because he's a lot more patient than I am. I am inclined to be impatient with people when they are too stupid. So I was kibitzing - in other words I was sitting by to see what was happening, and there was a print that I had designed in Japan - we had our prints done in Japan - and we also used California hand prints from Hermosa Beach that were all screen printed textile. This way we knew we had an exclusive.

KP: Uh-uh.

GB: This buyer looked at the little shirtmaker dress and she said, "I think that print is terrific, I like that dress." It was a monotone, nothing loud, just subdued, which I am inclined to like myself. She said, "You know Nieman Marcus won't let us sell a cotton dress for less than \$55." - that's quite a few years back - I said, "So." "Oh," she said "Nieman won't let us take a long mark-up." So I said, "That's no problem, I'll double the price." She said, "Fine, I'll take 300."

KP: (Laugh) Nice deal for you, eh?

GB: We were making 40% already!

KP: You said you got here in 1935, that is about the time Bill Mullahey was putting together his beach services, wasn't it? Do you remember anything about that?

GB: No, I don't. Oh, er, I remember hearing about it vaguely, but I don't really know.

KP: Actually, in the early thirties "Toots" Minvielle had talked to the Board and said he could put together a beach service deal that would be a gold mine.....

GB: ...under the new Outrigger Club.

KP: That's right. That's right.

GB: I remember that now.

KP: But then he went to Molokai for about three years and in the meanwhile Bill Mullahey came in and they turned to Bill to set that thing up.

GB: I'm the one who put the garments in that little office.

KP: Is that right?

GB: Kahala Sportswear.

KP: ...and the Club made good money out of it.

GB: Oh sure. But it...I had to get hold of Val who did the building - Ossipoff - to put some shelving in there because when "Sally" (Louis) Hale was running it, all the garments were in a room up by the main office as you walked in. So if he happened to bring the wrong color or wrong size for a gal who wanted a two-piece suit he'd have to go all the way back, and forth, so I got Ossipoff to work out some deal to put a miniature storeroom with the bulk up the other end, but we had a display so we could show several things at one time. All we had put in at the beginning was Duke Kahanamoku stuff. Do you remember the coat of arms and heavy material?

KP: Oh, yes, sure.

GB: Two piece suits for women, and swim trunks for men, and shirts, that's all. We didn't have enough room to put all our other merchandise there.

KP: Talking about garments, I guess the Desha law was passed before you got to the Islands. Remember the Desha law on swimming suits where you couldn't wear an abbreviated swimming suit on the street.

GB: Oh, yeah, I remember that. I belonged to the old ladies' club when the Outrigger moved up here.

KP: The Uluniu Swimming Club.

GB: Yes. You couldn't walk around unless you had an undershirt on with your swim trunks.

KP: I forgot that.

GB: Sure. We'd get out on the beach, take it off, then we'd walk back in the Club again and we'd put it on again.

KP: Now, you were a member of the Uluniu Swimming Club for a good many years too, weren't you?

GB: Not too long. I joined when we moved up here.

KP: Oh, that late? I thought you'd joined long before that.

GB: Oh, no. I used to go in there. In fact, they had gotten the impression that they were going to be kicked out when the Royal wanted to put a snack bar in there. I am trying to think of the manager of the Royal's name at that time. Nice guy. He went to work for...he ran a bunch of hotels for Rockefeller. I went and talked with him and I said, "Now, look, this would be very bad public relations if you kick these old timers out of here just to put in a snack bar." I said, "Isn't there some way that we could share with you?" He said, "Yes, yes George, I won't kick them out, I'll just use part of it, use the chairs and tables so people can sit down and eat and have a counter where they make the sandwiches." So I went back to the gals, and I said, "You don't have to move. Isn't that great - just share." They said, "Really?" "You're all set...from the head man's mouth." And then, you remember that dance studio that was on the Royal Hawaiian's grounds?

KP: Dan Wallace? Yes, sure.

GB: In a two-story grass shack. I worked on something that if the old gals had to move out of there...I talked with Midkiff who was a trustee...

KP: Frank Midkiff.

GB: ...of Bishop Estate. I talked to him and a couple of other people, and I got Frank Slavsky to draw some plans, which he was doing gratis for the club, because he was using the club - just his cost - that we could put in the old ladies' club there in that two story grass shack.

KP: Would have been a natural.

GB: Sure.

KP: Walk a few more feet, but what the heck...

GB: It would have been a little tight. There was even a room with a bar-kitchen for a guy to take care of it and live there. We would not use the Royal Hawaiian chairs and towels. We'd just use the beach. This was fine. But the gals wouldn't go for it. All the work to be done and a thousand a month.

KP: Dirt cheap.

GB: What the Royal wanted. But the thing that killed the deal was that there was about \$60,000 expenses to put in the club.

KP: Oh, I see. I see. They had a pretty good portfolio of investments.

GB: Sure, but they didn't want to go for that amount, and they were talking about moving out to Laie. I said, "Now, wait a minute. Laie! How many people do you think are going all the way out to Laie just to get a swim after work? That's ridiculous. It has to be closer in, accessible." Then we were working on another thing, er...I can't think of the name of it...the gals had a club down there in Waikiki right next to DeRussy.

KP: Oh, that was the Waikiki Swimming Club. Yes, I remember that. Actually I think that was the YWCA.

GB: Right. Right. Well, I was trying to work a deal for there, you know, it would be that close.

KP: Nice little place.

GB: Yeah, yeah. Yes, but you had, what, eight parking stalls?

KP: Ah, yes.

GB: And, they were all chained off. So you come, double park, you go in and get the key to your stall, put your car in, and then when you'd take your car out you'd have to lock it up again and take the key back to the office. So, there was no way we could do it. I was grasping at anything that might work to keep them close in.

KP: Uh-uh.

GB: But, we had it for, I don't know how long, with the Royal - I think a couple of years or something like that. I was able to fix up some of the dressingrooms.

KP: I think they finally lost the lease around '68.

GB: Something like that.

KP: ...and some of them were very happy with the home out there at Laie. I went out and looked at it, its not a bad place. If you don't have any other place to go, it was great.

GB: You took the words right out of my mouth. If you don't have any other place to go.

KP: Well, we were very fortunate at the Outrigger Canoe Club that some of the Board and other people were far sighted enough to latch on to that Elks Club property. Do you know any of the background on that purchase?

GB: No. Sam - what's his name...

KP: Poepoe?

- GB: No, not Sam Poepoe - Hawaiian, big guy, part-Hawaiian, he was on the Board of Directors at that time. (Sam Fuller). I think the place that we missed, and missed badly...You remember Chris Holmes' house there?
- KP: Oh, that would have been a great thing.
- GB: We were offered two acres, the main house and two side things that were used for servants' quarters and garages, and could have been used for juniors, on each side. Had a kitchen that was big enough to handle a hotel.
- KP: Yes, I've been in that.
- GB: You know, before they converted it to Queen's Surf...No, wait a minute, what was the name of the restaurant there? Spence Weaver put in a restaurant.
- KP: Yes. Spence Weaver took over.
- GB: But we were offered that. Inay Makinney - you remember Inay Makinney - Kenneth.
- KP: Inay was an old buddy of mine.
- GB: Well, he and his group offered it to us.
- KP: Wow! I never heard that.
- George, you have been a tremendous help to the Club as an active member of the Buildings and Grounds Committee. As a member of this committee for many years could you give us some idea of the many changes that took place at the new Club. You got in there shortly after the Club moved to the new location, didn't you?
- GB: I don't exactly remember the date. I changed a lot of the planting, some of it was in the wrong places, we shifted them around. I added...  
...Now, what we are trying to stop is the kids from putting their salty surfboards on all the plants.
- KP: Is that right? They're killing them, eh?
- GB: Oh, they've been doing it for years. I have been trying to stop it since the Year One, but nobody wants to...
- KP: I know when they first moved in there was some talk about cutting down some of the old ironwoods - the ironwood trees, they were going to cut them down.
- GB: On our frontage.
- KP: Yes, on the frontage.

- GB: Well, I don't think they'd let us - that is not ours.
- KP: Oh, that was on the sidewalk, I see.
- GB: Yes, on the other side of the sidewalk.
- KP: So you couldn't have done that anyway. I remember there was some talk...
- GB: I know a City and County guy came to me and said the trees were up-rooting all the sidewalk and we'd have to do all the sidewalk over. I said, "Well, I am going to have to cut a hell of a lot of roots off those trees." He says, "Forget about the trees. Forget about it, leave the roots there." Not having Neal Blaisdell, of course I had the same problem with Kahala Sportswear - the sidewalk was all falling apart and they told me I had to do it, so I called Neal and he said, "Forget about it."
- KP: Neal was the greatest Mayor we ever had, and a great guy.
- GB: A great guy. I was very fond of him. She's still alive, isn't she?
- KP: I think so. I think she lives in the old home of the side of Kaimuki overlooking...you can see out to Koko Head from her home.
- GB: She was a nice gal. I was very fond of her.
- KP: She was teaching right up even after he went out of office, up until just a few years ago, she retired.
- Now getting back to the Outrigger, again. I don't think I've ever seen the Club look better than recently. How do you account for that?
- GB: I've been on the Buildings & Grounds now for eleven years. I live a block away. I go down every morning and tell the boys what to do and what to trim. You are limited in what you can do - certain areas, you know. There's that space in front of the private dining-room, makai - the little lanai there?
- KP: Oh, yes.
- GB: The wind, the currents, everything comes Koko Head-way and hits that corner. I temporarily have some plywood to protect the naupaka and the pittesporum variegated, to get the stuff to grow, but I've had to replace three sets of plants out there. The salt water comes up...
- KP: ...and kills them, eh?
- GB: Sure it kills them.

KP: How about sea grape. Have you ever tried sea grape?

GB: They grow into a big tree, yeah.

KP: Too big, eh?

GB: We want something to grow into a sort of hedge. The Elks Club would start screaming if we blocked their view.

KP: Oh, oh, of course.

GB: I put in two sets of naupaka in there, and they went, finally. Then, I dug up a lot of the soil and I put in cinders for better drainage and I put holes in the wall.

KP: Yes.

GB: Now there's that - I am trying to think of his name, the man who was head of our Building & Grounds last year - just came back from California. He was at the Balboa Bay Club and he said right where the waves splash up on it, these people put six foot high strips of heavy glass. In that case the Elks Club couldn't complain because they would look right through it. It would have to be hosed down periodically every other day, and it would protect all the plants. So I am going to bring it up at the next meeting.

KP: It will cost an arm and a leg, but it would probably be worth it.

GB: I think it would. I mean we are getting those extra bathrooms finished for the help now. Do you know how many toilets and wash-basins we had for the femals help, and how many for the men?

KP: No idea.

GB: Two toilets and one wash basin for each group. I told them about six or eight months or more ago, I said, at least I would like the people waiting on me to have clean hands.

KP: So they are putting in several.

GB: That's why they have cut the length of the Board Room and pushed it out toward the street.

KP: Now pushing that Board Room out towards the street will cut a lot of your landscaping out of there. How does...It will cut a lot of the landscaping out - your plants.

GB: That whole area is shot, now, I have to do it all over again. I am not going to do it myself. I am going to get a young landscaper in to work with me.

KP: You just have to move a lot of those plants back, I guess.

- GB: When they were put in they were about this high, now they are tremendous. They've grown up and their roots are up like that, level with the walls on the garage side - a part of it - and level with the walls towards the juniors' dressingroom and the passageway there near the ladies' dressingroom.
- KP: So how are you going to plant any stuff in there? Are you going to get a drill and drill through those roots and hope to Christ everything grows?
- GB: Its like the area next to the Colony Surf. There are eight or nine coconut trees in there and about six sea grapes and several brassaia. This is just a solid root structure.
- KP: So you can't grow any small plants...
- GB: What I wanted to do...I don't know if you have noticed when you go to the snack bar, you notice those little walls against the wall there?
- KP: Yeah.
- GB: I put those up. That was a mess - the messiest area in the Club. I have a variegated brassaia in there. I planted it. I wanted to do it along the wall to the Colony Surf. To go like this, see, on that ledge seat there, all that old redwood is termite eaten and I want to take that out and just put a six inch wall, the width of a tile, about 18" all the way back to the Colony Surf, finish it like the other wall, paint it the same color, so I could come in with a foot of soil.
- KP: Oh, I see, I see.
- GB: Otherwise, you have to get in there with a post hold digger to cut through the roots to get anything to grow.
- KP: ...and if you put in rich enough soil you could get a nice root structure there.
- Now, they put in about eighty coconut trees there, I understand, when we moved in to the Club.
- GB: Well, three of them went bad - one on the hau terrace at the Ewa end. That died, one next to it in the sand, and then the one in back of the area by the garage where we are working. That was completely hollow to the top.
- KP: Is there some bug here? Did some bug "hit it"?
- GB: Termites.
- KP: Termites.

George, you were with the Club in the old location for many, many

years. In fact you remember the old Hui Nalu spot in the mid-twenties.

GB: Yup.

KP: Was this a blow to you when we had to move out of that location?

GB: Certainly was, because the surf is so much better down there.

KP: Is that why you stayed at the Uluniu Swimming Club?

GB: That's right. I had one board there and one I kept up at the new Club because the surf was so much better.

KP: When Castle was up you'd go down to the Outrigger.

GB: Today with the mobs we get...I remember in the old days at the Blow Hole we used to complain when there were ten people out there. Today there would be a hundred. Its wall-to-wall bodies there.

KP: Its just too crowded.

GB: Its just too crowded, but the surf where we are now is nothing in comparison to what we had at Blow Hole, Popular, all that.

KP: Yeah, I remember back in those days old Lorrin Thurston going across with his big board - you remember his big board? He used to go like a bat out of hell.

GB: Yeah, well I had one hollow one Rudy Choy made that was 13 feet, weighed 85 lbs., outside anything I've ever seen - no skeg, just a regular shape.

KP: Now, you went through all the boards didn't you, like you had a redwood?

GB: Yeah. I mean the first redwood I ever got, Abe, one of the beach-boys said to me, "Keoki, you got to get a board," and I said, "Yeah." He said, "OK, let's go down to Lewers & Cooke tomorrow." OK. So we go down and they have these blanks that are, what, 20 feet long, four inches thick, and I don't know, 20" wide. We start lifting them. I said, "Hey, not getting lighter, they're getting heavier, let's take No. 2." So we take No. 2, pay for it - no kiln dried then. They put it up under a tin roof to dry and six months latter we call them up, they cut it in half and deliver it, and right in front of that vacant lot next to the Moana, you know, where the new Surfrider is there was a big vacant lot.

KP: Yes, I remember that. That was the Judd property.

GB: The Judd property, that's right. And we start working on it, getting it in shape. Of course, I didn't know anything about shaping I was just following what Abe was telling me. And we got it down until we could get it sanded, all the way - got to sand

it down. The damned thing weighed about 85 or 90 lbs.

KP: Yeah. I had one of those.

GB: Had to carry it down to Kapili, that little street between upper and lower Cleghorn.

KP: Yes, yes.

GB: Up to the second floor - I had horses there. First you put on one coat of linseed oil. People told me you can't do that, and I said, "Yes, you can." After it is put on, in 24 hours you wipe off the surplus. You don't put varnish on because varnish dries from the inside out. You put shellac on because shellac dries from the outside in. And the shellac seals, you see. Seals the linseed. Then you put on one coat of shellac, two coats of varnish, four or five coats of varnish, and in those days we didn't have wax. I am sure you remember that.

KP: I don't remember when we started using wax. I guess it was when we began using the lighter boards.

GB: Yeah. Well we didn't have wax. So, I don't remember whether it was Abe or one of the other beachboys came to me. He came out with a big salt shaker, the type they use in the kitchen, you know, for a big quantity. So on the next to last coat of varnish on the top, about four feet up towards to the forward - four or five feet - while it was wet we put salt on it. Then you let it dry and then you put the final coat on, but you've got a textured surface.

KP: A little bit rough. So you didn't slide.

GB: Not enough to cut your body; but enough to give a little texture so your feet could grip a little bit.

KP: I'll be damned. That is extremely interesting.

GB: It is...

KP: I've never heard of it.

GB: It is. You are not the only old timer who has not heard of it.

KP: Now, do you remember when we first converted to the skeg?

GB: Oh, yeah, yeah.

KP: We just used our old boards, cut a groove in the back to fit the skeg in, and then we'd go into the Moana Hotel and swipe a couple of wax cups to wedge in the side so the thing wouldn't slide out. Remember that?

GB: Yeah.

KP: Then on a big wave, you'd be going across and the paper cup would slide out. (Laugh). Then you'd lose control.

GB: Then you'd be going down backwards to the nose of the board. I remember that. There was a time when the board I was using was a Hui Nalu deal, was gone so I grabbed an old clunker there and I've had those things just spin around. There you are going down backwards with the whole front of the board coming at you.

KP: Now, when you first moved to the new Club - Kalakaua at Waikiki, not Kapiolani Park - weren't you interested in having a paddle tennis court put in? You and Kay, was it?

GB: Yes, I wanted a paddle tennis court put...you are talking about the new Club, now?

KP: Yes. Where the volleyball courts were.

GB: Yeah, OK. Not up here.

KP: No.

GB: Well Harold Kay, I don't think you remember him.

KP: Oh, I remember him well. Local attorney. Married one of Clarence Cooke's daughters. I knew the family well.

GB: Harold and I were great paddle tennis players, and there was room enough at the new Club there next to the Moana.

KP: Ah, yes.

GB: ...on the roof. We got a quote. We could put a paddle tennis court in there with the wire mesh clear up to the top so that the balls wouldn't land out on Kalakaua Avenue on that building - on the locker room building and the office building. We got "dinged" by the volleyball players and I can't remember the exact amount - it was quite a long time ago, it was 1941 or '42 - Harold and I were each putting up...

KP: This is Harold Kay?

GB: Yes...enough to build it - I think it was around \$400 or \$450 each. Then we were dinged. I don't know what Harold did, but the Club was a little short of money in those days.

KP: Yes it was going through a rough time.

GB: So I told them. You keep my \$400 as advance dues.

KP: Uh-uh.

GB: So...but, I didn't get my paddle tennis court.

KP: You were out of pocket on that one, huh? Well the Club needed a lot of help. Remember in '39, 1939, they passed by-laws where they were giving term bonds, you might call it, for 25 years and you'd pay advance dues over a period of years. I think it was '39 and then it was to go on through 1960.

GB: I know I paid \$350, \$400, \$450 advance dues on the money I put up for the paddle tennis court.

KP: You also got a term - 10-year term bond in 1944, I understand from the records.

I imagine that if there were not a lot of you guys who did that the Club might have gone out of existence. Without the work of Walter "Mac", Walter Macfarlane, really did an awful lot for the Club during those days.

GB: Well, I figure it this way. If I could afford that money for half the paddle tennis court, I could afford to leave that money with the Club to help them out of the tough spot they were in.

KP: Oh, yes. Yes, they have been in and out. I think it was in the late 60's when they finally pushed over the \$1 million mark. Remember that?

GB: Yeah.

KP: And, even the net operating results were about \$70,000, and the Club has done very well since then.

It might be interesting, George, just to give a little something on dues. What were the dues when you joined for instance? How much did it cost you in initiation fee to join?

GB: Originally?

KP: Yes, originally, back in '35.

GB: Thirty-five bucks. And the dues were, I think, \$1.75 a month. We had that old wooden shack with cold water showers.

KP: Ah, yes.

GB: You remember that?

KP: Yes, yes.

GB: Nothing glamorous. We had lockers for surfboards. We didn't even

get towels. We had to furnish our own towels, and there was nothing glamorous, I can assure you. When you came in late, because after work I'd go surfing, sometimes being guided by the lights of the Royal Hawaiian.

KP: (Laugh)

GB: With a dark board, it was very scary, because if you lost your board you'd never see it again.

KP: Did you ever lose a board?

GB: Never did.

KP: Never did.

GB: Oh when I'd get in so far, I'd lie down and stop standing up. Remember old Fred Cordes?

KP: Sure, sure.

GB: Fred came in with that long hollow board - it was again late in the evening - lost the board and he couldn't find it.

KP: Fred was an amazing man, even in his late 70s and early 80s. He joined the fellows on that - remember that relay around the Island? Where each guy went, maybe, five miles...

GB: That's the way he died.

KP: Is it.

GB: Yes. Fred was 79 and he started jogging three miles a day, or something like that - four miles, or whatever - up on the Ala Wai. Back and forth, back and...

KP: I didn't know that.

GB: ...and, he dropped dead there.

KP: I didn't realize that. I thought he died of cancer.

GB: Up towards McCully, and his son came by and identified him. And then they called his wife - she was a great old gal.

KP: She still is.

GB: She's still alive?

KP: Yes.

GB: The police called her, and said would you like to come down and identify your husband? She said, "No, my son has already seen him and I'd much rather remember him the way he was when he left the apartment earlier this morning with a smile on his face."

KP: Wonderful. Wonderful. That sounds like Mrs. Cordes. I am not sure if she is still alive, but I recall her at Central Union Church not too many years ago, and of course, the son is still active...

GB: On the Mainland - travelling - I have the keys on a gold chain so that I don't take them out and leave them any place, they are right here, the keys to my suitcases, and so forth and so on, and my safety deposit box here, so when I get back I don't have to look for keys. Well, Fred had a gold chain, a snake chain as they call them, beautiful gold chain. It had to be this long - 24".

KP: Oh.

GB: Mine was a rather skimpy little thing by comparison and I used to kid him. I said, "Fred, if this ever disappears, you know where to come and look for it." I'd kid him. So, er, this was a gift - a 50th wedding anniversary gift that she had given him - so he told her...so after Fred died, she called me one day. She said, "I am leaving that chain for you at the Outrigger desk, because I am sure Fred would have wanted you to have it."

KP: Isn't that great? Fantastic. Fan-tastic!

GB: The thing has got to be worth, I don't know, \$500, or more.

KP: Well, George, this has been extremely interesting. The Club owes you a tremendous amount of thanks for your going down to the Club. You go there an hour or two a day, don't you?

GB: They made me a Life Member, you know.

KP: A Life Member is nice, but that hardly takes...they owe you, still a lot, because not too many people have the time or the green thumb.. People have told me that you have a green thumb.

GB: I have a green thumb, and another thing, I live a block away so there's no problem to go.

KP: You can get there in two minutes. Well George, thanks very much. I appreciate it.

GB: Not at all. I have a few other things to do there. They've got to be done. Slowly, but surely.

KP: Well, you are doing a great job. Thanks very much.