Oral History Interview

with

NORMAN L. "RED" METCALF

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Carson City, Nev.

By Michael R. Adamson

Metcalf: Let's get with it then. Now, I do all that talking, now we've started I'll probably shut up and you'll have to pry it out of me. [laughs]

Adamson: Get you to repeat. Some of my questions will be specific, but this first one is pretty broad because I don't have a lot of information on the Kiewit days. So I'll have you start by telling me about your background in the building industry and how you came to work with Peter Kiewit and that part of your career.

Metcalf: My father was the second youngest of ten children, two girls and then eight boys. Almost all the eight boys and their father, my grandfather, was in construction, almost all of them. One was a gunner in World War II on a B-29. Some of them were masons. Most of them were carpenters.

Anyway, I grew up as a kid, as far back as I remember, in about the sixth or seventh grade, helping my grandfather pulling house-moving jacks under the houses, putting timbers under there, jacking houses up, moving them in Alva, Oklahoma, and in Wellington, Kansas, where I was born in 1935. And I can remember doing that as a kid.

Now, most of the time I grew up in Southern California. My family moved out there in about 1940, so I was only about five years old. But you know how families are, especially in construction. Every few years my dad and mother decide it's time to go back to Kansas. My dad could always get a job as a superintendent or a foreman or a carpenter, and so we off and on moved back to Kansas and that area back there. I went to about eighteen different schools. I've got a list of them if you want them. I just made it up the other day. So you can imagine how much we moved around in construction.

When I went to junior college in Oceanside, California, I'd been married. I got out—well, let me back up. I joined, I was—well, no, I don't want to back up too far. When I got out of one year of college, I went to work as a summer hire out of the carpenters union in Vista, California. You could work as a summer hire as long as it was the summertime. You didn't have to be a union member, other than just for students. When it come about time to go back to start my second year of junior college, I decided I would work a while because I was making some pretty good money, and so the union informed me that I had to join the union and go to apprenticeship school for four years or I had to go back to school. I couldn't work as a summer hire. My dad, of course, said, "You know more than most journeyman carpenters. You've been working at this all your life. You don't have to go back to apprenticeship school. I'll send you up to San Bernardino," who the man up there, Vern Rippetoe, was the secretary, I think, of the carpenters union in San Bernardino. And so I went up there, and Vern Rippetoe signed me up as a journeyman carpenter, put me in the union as a journeyman.

I'll never forget the first job I went on was a junior high school job in San Bernardino. It was under construction. It was building concrete forms and stuff. And

the secretary or this whoever he was that worked with the union, I took him my work slip from the union hall that Vern had gave me, and the secretary called the foreman over, or this guy called the foreman over and said, "I want you to put this guy to work on your crew and put him to work building forms." I had my carpenter overalls on and my hardhat and my toolbox, and I was twenty years old. And this guy looked at me and he asked the foreman, he said, "What period apprentice is he?" [laughs]

And this guy said, "Hey, he's not an apprentice. He's a journeyman carpenter."

And this carpenter said, "I'll eat my hardhat if this kid's a journeyman." [laughs]

And he said, "Hey, hey, shut your mouth. Keep it quiet. He's a friend of Vern Rippetoe. Just put him to work on your crew and shut up." So that's how I got started as my journeymanship as a journeyman carpenter.

About three months later or so, I moved back down to Oceanside, California, and was helping building houses and stuff down there for a house developer, which my dad was the foreman for, or superintendent, and that's when I decided to join the Navy, not go back to school. I decided I'd go in the Navy, get my military time over with, and then go back to school.

My dad had been in the Navy, World War II, and my brother had been in the Navy for four years as a photographer. I decided I'd go in and maybe get in the Seabees because I liked construction, so that's when I put my journeyman card, whatever, on hold. They'll let you put it aside if you go in the military. I went to boot camp in San Diego, found out I was eligible for the NAVCAD [Naval Aviation Cadet Administration] program, which is a flight program, to learn to fly.

But before I got into the flight program, I went to Norman, Oklahoma, to AN&P School. There I went back and seen my old high school sweetheart, who you just met when she left. She was graduated from high school then. She was two years behind me. We got engaged, was going to get married after I got out of the flight program because cadets couldn't marry, couldn't be married.

It went on. They sent me to Memphis, Tennessee, to Aviation Electronics School. I was told by several people that "You can be married and be in NAVCAD if you don't tell them. You just can't claim your wife."

So the wife and I had been engaged then for about nine months or so, and we decided to go ahead and get married. She had been to some kind of school up at Wichita, some kind of a bookkeeping school or something, and she said, "I can get a job."

Anyway, we got married and went down to Pensacola, Florida, to flight training, and I was there for one year, married. In the meantime, about three months into that one year, my wife decided that she wanted to start a family. So when that one-year period was up and I got sent to advanced training in Corpus Christi, Texas, I was flying multi-engine aircraft, I took my wife back to Kansas because she was seven months pregnant, and she had our first child, Tom, my son, our son.

We was about three months into the advanced training, multi-engine training, when they told us that they were overloaded with Navy pilots and they were going to start cutting back, so be careful, don't mess up, you'd be kicked out. There was a mix-up on a hop, a flight. They scheduled it wrong. It was their mistake. They admitted it. They had

me go back to ground school and fly Link, which was the box you know you sit in, simulator, and fly this omni-range hop, and I went back and flew that.[1]

Then I come back to reschedule my hop that I had failed because of their mistake, put me on it too soon, and they told me I had to go see a speedy board. I said, "Why? It wasn't my mistake."

And they said, "Hey, you're scheduled to go see a speedy board."

So they sent me to five officers, and they interviewed me and talking about this hop and what was the mistake and what happened and all that, and everybody told me, "Don't worry about it. It wasn't your fault."

But I'll never forget when I got up to leave, this marine officer said, "One more question, Mr. Metcalf." They had to call us "Mister" then because we had gold on our hat, wore little things. But anyway, he said, "Are you married?" [laughs]

And I thought, "Oh, boy, not supposed to be married and cadets aren't supposed to lie, steal, or cheat, so what do I do? Do I lie? Do I admit it?" So I said, "Cadets aren't allowed to be married, sir."

And he said, "I didn't ask you that, Mr. Metcalf. I asked you if *you* was married."

And I thought, "Oh, boy, what am I going to do?" I said, "No, sir, I'm not married."

And they said, "Okay. We'll talk to you later," or, "Give you our decision later."

So then I go out. They had to schedule me. Then I heard they gave me a down, which is up or down. They gave me a down. And when you got a down from the speedy board, you had to go see two psychiatrists, the commanding officer of the multi-engine

[1] Link Aviation Devices, now a division of L-3 Communications and known as Link Simulation & Training produced the standard instrument trainer for pilots during and after World War II.

training, and the admiral. So I found out from the commanding officer when I got to him, he said, “The speedy board gave you a three-to-two down. The two psychiatrists recommended you for an up. I’m going to recommend you for an up, but you've got to go see the admiral. He has to make the final decision.”

So a couple days later, I went and seen the admiral, and I’ll never forget, he said, “Mr. Metcalf,” he said, "if you’d ever crash and kill yourself in an airplane or something, I’d really feel guilty about it. I think I’m going to have to give you a down.”

So I went out on the front steps of the building out there and sat down and cried, you know, just because it had been fifteen and a half months of training school, flight training. It was just kind of a relief. It’s over. So they put a white hat back on me and sent me to an aircraft carrier on the West Coast, which was good, San Diego, by my family.

Adamson: What year is this?

Metcalf: This had to be about 1962. Yeah, about 1962. Anyway, because I was in the Navy from—oh, I’m sorry. It had to be about ’59. Yes, about ’59, because they sent me overseas for six months. I come back and got discharged.

Adamson: In San Diego?

Metcalf: In San Diego. And then I went to work for my dad, who was building houses in Carlsbad. He owned some land there and he was doing some development. I went to work for his company, framing houses and stuff.

What else happened? Then I went to work for Bud Shaw Construction, and it got real slow, laid off everybody except me, even laid off his brother-in-law. That made his brother-in-law really mad because he kept me and laid off his brother-in-law.

We were framing Hicks Homes in Carlsbad, Oceanside, Vista area. My dad rented a brand-new home in his development that he had been building to Lloyd Loetterle, who was one of the original partners in the Pankow Company. Lloyd was getting ready to start the barracks buildings at Camp Del Mar, eight two-story precast barracks buildings. My dad wanted me to put up the drapery rods and finish little stuff in this house that Lloyd had rented. If I remember correctly, he had twin daughters, him and his wife and twin daughters, and the daughters were probably young—ten-, twelve-, eleven-year-old girls, if I remember correctly. Actually, this house was right next door to the house I was living in that my dad owned. And, of course, my father said, "You need to hire my son. Oh, he's a great carpenter. You ought to put him to work out there at Camp Del Mar for Kiewit."

And Lloyd said, "Well, come see me when we get started, and maybe we will."

So I told my boss, Bud Shaw, that I was framing houses with, that I had a chance to go to work to Kiewit, and he said, "Boy, if you've got a chance to go to work for a big company, do it, because I don't know how much longer I'm going to be able to keep you busy," because housing was kind of slow then.

So if I remember correctly, I went out and seen Lloyd about a few weeks later, after they got started or something, because we were just into the foundations, and he put me to work. Harvey Vocke, who was with Kiewit for years, was my foreman. John Gully was the project superintendent. I guess Lloyd was the project manager. John Gully was with Kiewit for many, many years. He finally retired from Kiewit. Harvey Vocke quit and tried to get me to go to work for his new company back when I was working out of San Diego.

Anyway, I went on that job, Camp Del Mar, and it was eight barracks buildings, and most all of it was precast panel. John Gully was a tough superintendent. He was a good superintendent, but, I mean, he walked around with layoff checks in his pocket. I always remember I'd go to work and look around for my partner, because they usually paired us up in pairs, and I'd say, "Where is Joe?" or Bill.

"Oh, he got laid off yesterday. Didn't you know?" [laughs]

So I'd go home and tell the wife, "Well, I don't know how much longer I'm going to make it, but they're laying off pretty steady out there."

I'm kind of tooting my own horn here, but I was the last one on the job. They handed me the keys. Everybody went back to the L.A. office. Pasadena?

Adamson: Arcadia?

Metcalf: Arcadia office, yeah. The Kiewit Arcadia office. And said, "Call us if you got any problems. You just do the final punch list with the inspectors," the Navy inspectors.

So I wound up going around with the navy inspectors and doing little punch things with them.

My foreman, Harvey Vocke, had got transferred down to San Diego to start about a twenty-story or something—I've got a picture of it somewhere—high-rise building in San Diego, and he told me, once he got it started and I got through at Camp Del Mar, to come down there and he'd put me to work.

So I got laid off from the barracks building. It was finished, everything done, and I went down to see him. They said, "Okay. We can put you to work. We're getting started." They had a big, deep hole for the basement right down there on—I forget the street, but it's about one block off of Main Street down in San Diego.

They stalled me off for about three weeks, two weeks. I said, "You know, I can't wait. I can't sit around out of work. I've got to go to work somewhere. I got a young family." I had a new daughter then. I had a son about three, four years old, a daughter about six months old. And I said, "I've got to go to work somewhere."

And they said, "Well, maybe you better look for another job, and then we'll call you when we can."

So on the way home in Vista, I come to a new Safeway store going up right close to my house, so I stopped in and talked to the foreman. The foreman said, "Well, you look young and strong and healthy." He said, "I'll put you to work. Go down to the hall and get a clearance out of the Vista local." I had a new home in Vista. That's where we were living, the family. I went down to the Vista hall, and they said, "You can't do that. You've got to go on the books, and when your turn comes up, you can go out. You can't just go look for your own work."

And I said, “But the superintendent said he’d put me to work.”

He said, “I don’t care.”

“Well, the superintendent said if I had any trouble, you call him. Here’s his name and phone number.”

Evidently he had been in that local for a long time and he knew everybody, because this dispatcher got right on the phone and called this guy, and I heard them arguing. And when the dispatcher hung up the phone, he said, “Okay. I’ll dispatch you out on that job, but you can’t ever do this again. You have to come in and get on the books. You can’t go out and find your own work.”

So I went out to work on that job. The next day I went to work on it, and that afternoon, the sawman from the Camp Del Mar job, his wife drove up on the job site and said, “Red, they called Smokey [the saw man] and wanted Smokey and you to go to work down in San Diego on that Kiewit job.”

I said, “God, I just started this job this morning. I can’t quit in one day.”

She said, “Well, that’s up to you, but they want you and Smokey down there tomorrow, if you’ll come down.”

So I went to the superintendent and told him what happened, and he said, “Hey, if you got a chance to stay with a big company, stay with them, because this is only going to last a few months and then it’ll be over with.”

So I worked for that guy one day, and I drove down to San Diego, and I didn’t even clear out of the hall because I’d just left a Kiewit job, so they just signed me up and put me to work. Okay. They put me to work there on the slipform, vertical slipform, and Harvey Vocke, the same foreman I had at the Camp Del Mar, he was in charge of the

slipform because he had done one or two with Kiewit up in L.A., I believe. I heard stories about it, but I'd never seen them.

Well, that's where I learned slipforms. We got up about halfway, myself and another carpenter and one laborer. We were running the slipform. We had a lot of laborers pouring the concrete, ironworkers tying the steel, but we built the slipform and we run it, two slipforms, one stairwell on one side, and I think it was four or five elevator shafts and a stairwell on the other end. We got about half way up or so, and the story that I remember is [that] Peter Kiewit wanted to build the Los Angeles Music Center. Have you heard that story?

Adamson: Yes.

Metcalf: Anyway, Charles Pankow said, "No, I don't want to have anything to do with that. It's a big city project. It's just going to be a hassle. I don't want to do it."

Well, I guess the story I remember, [Peter] Kiewit said, "Well, I'm going to bring down the Seattle Building District, then, to build it." So they bid the job and they got it—or maybe they negotiated it, I don't know. But, anyway, Kiewit started the job in Los Angeles, the big Los Angeles Music Center. I heard all kinds of horror stories about how it was so messed up that the Seattle District—and I didn't know those guys, so I can't—maybe it's true or not, but I heard that it was so screwed up that [Peter] Kiewit come to Charlie and said, "You have to go finish the Los Angeles Music Center."

So they started pulling guys off of jobs, supervisors that they needed, good men that they needed to go there and finish that job. Harvey Vocke was one they pulled off

the San Diego job. We were, if I remember correctly, about halfway up then. Now, Alan Murk, Bob Carlson, George Hutton, Tony Giron, Jack Grieger, myself, was on that job in San Diego. Now, all those guys, if you talk to any Pankow people that's been around long, all those names, because they all went to work for Pankow.

When they pulled Harvey Vocke off, George Hutton come out. He was the project engineer that was in charge of the slipforms. And when he come out one morning, I remember when I come to work and he said, "Red, you're younger than—." I think his name was Joe Farmer, the carpenter that was working with me, the two carpenters. He said, "You're younger than Joe, but I think you've got a little more hustle and experience, so I'm going to make you the foreman in charge of slipforms."

Well, that was a ten-cents-an-hour raise. Boy, I remember that. I went home and told the wife, "I got a ten-cent-an-hour raise. I'm a foreman now." [laughs]

So I run that job to finish the slipforms, the vertical slipforms. That's all I was in charge of. Tony Giron was the general foreman. He would come up and check on me once in a while, see if everything was going okay, but he had nothing to do with slipforms. I worked directly for George Hutton, the project engineer.

Finished that job, and they asked me to go to Santa Monica and do a job for Ralph Kiewit, who was a developer, Peter's brother. So I went to Santa Monica and built the slipform there and run the vertical slipform and got it to the roof. Just about the time we was ready to cut it off and take it down—well, we weren't taking it down; we were cutting the pieces off—I get called in to—wish I could remember his name, the superintendent, a nice guy, been with Kiewit for years. He's, of course, died a long time

ago. But, anyway, he called me in the field office and said, "Red, George Hutton wants you in San Diego to start a slipform job down there on a Medical Building."

I said, "Well, you want me to finish taking this one off or what?"

And he said, "Well, George says he needs you right away, and we're going to ship down these forms that you can modify and reuse the forms instead of building new forms."

I said, "Good."

He said, "Well, you pick out the ones you need. Here's the plans." It was just a core in San Diego. It was only going to be, if I remember correctly, about twenty-eight-foot square. It was going to slipform the stairwell, elevator shafts, janitor's room, in a one square core building.

So if I remember correctly, I finished cutting off enough with my crew, forms, and got them stacked and said, "Okay. This is the ones we need in San Diego."

Then I moved my wife and kids back down to San Diego, and got down there and George had me—first thing to do was detail the form design with the panels coming down, and we started the slipform down about seemed like it was twenty foot in the ground. They had to dig a big hole to get the foundation down and everything, and we'd come up out of there with the slipform.

We put that slipform on a two-day cycle. I'll always remember that. We slipped every other day. We slipped the walls one day, and they were about twelve-foot walls because it was a Medical Building, high, about twelve foot high. We'd slip one day. Then the next day, we'd get all the steel and electrical and stuff in it ready to go, and then

the next day we would slip again. Then the off day, we'd get everything ready, and then we'd slip again.

So we took the tower crane and the core to the top of the Medical Building while they were building the fancy precast panels and stuff, getting ready to bring the floors up around the core. I got a book on that thing somewhere, or magazine. It was very interesting because we took the tower crane up with us, which was in the shaft of the janitor's closet. So George Hutton come up with the design. Of course, you had to bolt the tower crane down to the foundation when you started out, and then as you start jacking them up, in this case we put holes in the wall and we slid steel beams through the holes and then the crane would sit back down on top of that. Then up higher would be another bracket to keep the crane from—so we would slip a floor. After we got so high, then we'd have to jack the crane on the off day, put the beams under it.

It was George Hutton's design. It was pretty hairy, because I was the one that was in there moving the beams with come-alongs and stuff, and we'd pull them out from the bottom and hang them below us. Then we'd jack the crane with the hydraulic jacks up on the higher one. Then we'd have to put the beams back through the new holes and then set the crane back down on those walls that we'd pour concrete to. So we took the crane and the slipform to the top and cut the slipform off, and then they built the precast building up around it. The job went pretty good. It was fast. Like I say, a two-day cycle on that slipform.

Where'd I go? Oh, I know what it was. And come the end of that slipform, then they put me in charge of building all the poured-in-place stairs and landings. I was the carpenter foreman, and I was doing all the stairs going up the inside of that core that I'd

built. George Hutton came up with a great idea. He decided we'd pour the slabs from the top down, which George and I always laughed about because we said we'd never do it again. [laughs] So we had this core up, and then we built our table for our flying forms, which instead of flying them up like this, we hung it from the slipform. We poured it and then we'd lower it down and pour it, lower it down and a pour it, lower it down and pour it, till we got to the bottom, and then we built the stairs going back up between the floors. George had read about it in some book or magazine, construction magazine, where they'd poured the floors coming down and how much money they saved. Well, we figured later we didn't save much money doing it, because it kind of cost.

Anyway, so I then was doing the stairs going back up as the stair foreman. Jack Grieger, who was the general foreman—and I'd worked with him at the other San Diego job, First and C Street, they called it, First and C Street in San Diego. This one was [at] Fifth [Avenue] and Washington [Street]. The Medical Building was [at] Fifth [Avenue] and Washington [Street]. The one downtown was [at] First [Avenue] and C [Street]. Jack had been a general foreman at First and C, but I didn't work for him; I worked for George. But when I come over here, George now was the field engineer again; Alan Murk was the project superintendent; Jack Grieger was my general foreman; and I was a carpenter foreman. George Hutton was going to be transferred to the Rancho Bernardo Reservoir. It was going to be his first job as a project superintendent, and he told me he wanted me to go up to that job, which was better because I was living in Vista. That was lot closer to my home, anyway. Didn't have to drive down from Vista to San Diego or

whatever. But Jack Grieger come out and said, "Red, I got to cut you back to a carpenter."

And I said, "How come?"

And he said, "Well, the job's coming to an end and we got to save costs, and we don't really need you as a foreman, just as a carpenter."

And I said, "Jack, for ten cents an hour, eighty cents a day, you're going to take my pay away from me? I'm supposed to go up on Rancho Bernardo as a foreman up there. Why cut my wages?"

Well, anyway, he said, "Well, I can—"

So I called George Hutton at home that night. He had went up to Rancho Bernardo and started the job and said he'd send for me as soon as he got started. I told him, "I'm going to quit." I said, "I'm not going to work for Kiewit anymore. I followed you up to Santa Monica, back to San Diego. This is my fourth or fifth job," whatever it was. I said, "And you're going to cut my pay by ten cents an hour?"

And George said, "Red, don't do that. I'm going to get you up to Rancho Bernardo just in a week or two. Please don't quit, and I'll get you up as soon as I can." Well, this was about the time that this Pankow thing was going on.

Adamson: While you're talking about these jobs, the Music Center thing is still going, right?

Metcalf: It went up and they finished it. I never did go up there. I heard at one time I might be sent up there, but I didn't go up. As far as I know, that job was—I don't know

when it finished, but yeah, see, I went from San Diego to Santa Monica, back to San Diego. When I was first starting or about a few months into the first San Diego job, that's when they started pulling guys off to go up and finish the L.A. Music Center. So I'm sure it was probably finished. About the time I left Santa Monica to go back down to San Diego, it was probably finished.

Adamson: Because it was my understanding that that was the last job that Charlie worked on before he—

Metcalf: That could very well—because as far as I know, Charlie was still with us at the Medical Building. The Fifth and Washington, [Charlie] was still there. Yeah, because Alan Murk—but I'm sure it was kind of in the middle about that time, because the rest of the story is about a week or two after they cut my wages, I was sent up to Rancho Bernardo with George Hutton as my project superintendent. And I no sooner got there and I went work for Tony Giron in the casting yard for all the precast beams and columns for this covered reservoir we was going to build. George Hutton was running the job, Tony Giron was running the casting yard, and I was a carpenter foreman building forms and putting stuff together for them.

About this time, George Hutton comes to me and said, "Red, I'm going to quit and go with Pankow. He's going to start his own company."

I said, "No kidding."

He said, "Yeah, but you stay here. Hang on. We'll be sending for you, because our first job up in San Francisco is a slipform, Turk and Eddy."

And I said, “Okay,” you know.

He said, “Hey, we’ll get in touch with you because we really want you to come up there.”

So then they have a big meeting with the people that was staying with Kiewit, and they put—oh, shoot, maybe you could tell me his name. Who took Charlie’s place? Really nice guy. [Ed.: Metcalf recalls that it was Russ Osterman.]

Adamson: Tom Paul?

Metcalf: No, Tom Paul was Charlie’s boss. Tom Paul was his boss. I don’t know if I ever met Tom Paul.

Anyway, he [Russ] gives us a big speech about: “A bunch of guys from Pankow or with Pankow are leaving and quitting, but we’re going to keep this company going, and Kiewit will be around forever, and you guys stay with us and we’re going to be the greatest company in the world,” you know, Kiewit.

Adamson: Meaning the Building Division?

Metcalf: The Building Division, Southern California Building Division. And he was encouraging us to stay with him. He was going to start running it.

Adamson: The story I have is that basically—the reason I don't know his name is because a couple people that have talked to me about it basically said the Building Division didn't last too long.

Metcalf: Yeah.

Adamson: After Charlie left. That's why I don't know his name. I never heard a name of a replacement for Charlie.

Metcalf: I'll think of his name maybe before we're through today. [Ed.: It was Russ Osterman. See in-line note above.]

So he gives us a big speech. We have a safety meeting at a restaurant and feed all of us and drinks and telling us what a great company it was.

Do you know when President Kennedy got assassinated? Because it was just about that same time, because the inspector drove up on my job and just before that I get the word that—well, George Hutton left, I told you that. George Hutton left. They put Marion Young in charge of that job. Marion Young was the new superintendent on that job, Kiewit superintendent, and I'd met Marion somewhere else. Really a nice guy. But anyway, he took George's place. Then it wasn't just a week or two later, Tony Giron quits and goes to work for Pankow, and so they put me in charge of the casting yard, made me a general foreman then and put me on salary. That's when I got put on salary, five dollars an hour, two hundred a week. I got put on salary. Boy, just took it rain or shine. The first week it rained two days, I got paid sitting at a desk. [laughs] So I

thought that was great. But here I was, in the back of my mind, when Pankow calls me, I'm going to go to San Francisco. And [Russ Osterman] comes driving up, and I won't forget, Rancho Bernardo job in a green Pankow company car. He's the new district manager of the Building Division. And he calls me over to his car because he knew my connection with Pankow and George Hutton and all of them. "Get in, Red," and I jumped in the car. And he said, "Red, I'm going to quit Kiewit and go to work for Charlie."

I said, "I can't believe you guys. You're the one that wanted me to stay with Kiewit. Now you're leaving."

"Yeah," he said, "I'm going to go to San Francisco and work for Charlie up in San Francisco." So I'd lost my project superintendent, my general foreman, and now my new district superintendent for Kiewit.

I can't remember the exact timing, but it wasn't too much longer than that that Charlie Pankow and I'm pretty sure it was Lloyd Loetterle and Bob Carlson. I can't remember exactly. I know Charlie and two other guys that I had known with Kiewit come to our house in Carlsbad. They called my wife and said, "Can we come down? We want to talk to Red." And so they come down. We just had a little duplex apartment, two little kids. The wife made a big pot of coffee. We sit around and talked, and they told me that they wanted me to go to work for them at Turk and Eddy in San Francisco.

I always respected Charlie for the fact in a way, he didn't try to hire me away and he said he wouldn't do that. He said, "I'll pay you the exact same wages you're getting right now. I'm not going to pay you a big wage to get you to leave Kiewit. But I will promise you that if you come with me, that you'll be running your own work someday,

that you will be a construction project superintendent," and that made me feel pretty good, and the fact that he promised me something if I done a good job, but he wasn't going to pay me extra to get me to jump ship with Kiewit.

Well, I go back to work and I tell him, "Okay, I'll go."

They said, "We'll pay all your moving expenses. We want you to move up probably to Walnut Creek. That's where a lot of the guys are living, in Walnut Creek area. We got this big Turk and Eddy job we're going to start to slipform." I think their first job was some kind of a shopping center up there.

Adamson: MacArthur Broadway in Oakland?

Metcalf: In Oakland, yes, okay. I just remember hearing stories about that.

Adamson: Turk and Eddy was another early project.

Metcalf: Yes. I think Charlie had had that in the fire before he ever quit.

Anyway, I go back to work, and I tell Marion Young, "I'm going to give you—."

Oh, and Charlie said, "Give two weeks' notice, but if they fire you tomorrow when you show up for work, you're on our payroll, so don't worry about losing any time." But he said, "Give them two weeks' notice, and we'll expect you up there in two weeks."

And I said, "Okay."

So I go to work the next day and I tell Marion Young, I said, "Charlie and the guys come to the house last night and convinced me to go work for them up in San Francisco, so I think I'll quit."

And he said, "Are you sure that's what you want to do?"

And I said, "Yeah. I've thought a lot about it. I think I want to stay with George Hutton and Charlie Pankow and those guys."

And he says. "Okay, I'll call Arcadia and tell them."

Well, I get a call from somebody, the new guy, one of the new guys that took the other guy's place. [laughs] I get a call from him, and he wanted to come down and see me. He was in, I think, Colorado at a job site. "Fine, but I've decided go."

So he comes down and convinces me that I should stay and that Pankow would never make it. "They'll go bankrupt or they'll go broke here in a few months and they'll never make it and you better stay with Kiewit. We're a great company," and really talked me into staying.

So I called Charlie and told him, and I always respected the fact that Charlie said, "Red, I don't blame you. I understand what you're saying. But if you ever decide to quit Kiewit, give us a call." He didn't try to pressure me to go to work for him or anything else, didn't offer me the world if I'd go. He just said he respected my decision and that Kiewit was a good organization, but if I ever decided to quit, give him a call.

Well, I found out later that Marion Young had called the Arcadia office or whoever and said, "Red Metcalf's going to quit, go to work for Pankow, and I think I'll quit and go to work for Pankow, too." [laughs] I never will forget that, because I had no idea Marion was going to quit, but I'm pretty sure Marion did not quit.

Adamson: I haven't heard the name before.

Metcalf: We finished that job, him and I both, and that's the last contact I know I had with—and also, I don't know if I told you, but Rosser Edwards called me and said, "Red, I really need you to stay with Kiewit. I need you as a general foreman on this Valley Music Theater up in Woodland Hills," that dome. He said, "I need you there as my general foreman, my field superintendent or general foreman. I wish you wouldn't leave." So he kind of helped talk—I had worked with Rosser on the Fifth and Washington job in San Diego. Rosser, I'd seen him down there. [Ed.: Metcalf clarifies that he meant to say that he worked with Mr. Edwards on the aforementioned condo job in Santa Monica for Ralph Kiewit. He did not work with him in San Diego.] So he talked me into staying, and this other guy that come from Colorado.

So I went up, built the Valley Music Theater.[2] That's about the time that the Building Division—see, Charlie had already had that job lined up, I'm pretty sure. And after that job, the Building Division didn't really have much negotiated or lined up. Charlie was into negotiating work instead of hard bidding.

Adamson: He did that with Kiewit?

Metcalf: With Kiewit, yes.

Adamson: He started that with Kiewit?

Metcalf: I think that made Peter Kiewit a little nervous. They liked to bid work, I think, more so than negotiate.

But not too long after that job, Rosser Edwards quit with another Kiewit engineer and started their own company. I forget the name of their company. They were in San Francisco for years.

Adamson: The Webcor guys?

Metcalf: I think so. Webcor, yes.

Adamson: That was later in '69, '70.

Metcalf: No, that wasn't—

Adamson: Oh, no, that was somebody else.

Metcalf: That was somebody else.

Adamson: That was another Edwards.

Metcalf: Yes.

[2] "Music Theater Dome Formed on Earth," *Southwest Building and Contractor* (24 April 1964): 44–9.

Adamson: There's another Edwards.

Metcalf: Yes, and he done a lot of work in San Francisco and around.

Adamson: Duncan Ross. And there's an Edwards. That's how I'm confused.[3]

Metcalf: Yes. Rosser was this guy's name. Rosser Edwards. I worked on that Santa Monica job with Rosser. He was the project engineer up there. That's where I knew Rosser from. Then I went back to San Diego, done the Medical Building, and then up to the reservoir. That's when I told him I'd quit, and then that's when Rosser called me from L.A. or that area and said, "Red, I want you to do the Valley Music Theater with me," because him and I had worked real close on the slipform in Santa Monica.

So I stayed and I went up and we built that Valley Music Theater. At that time, didn't they tell me it was the largest freestanding concrete dome in the world? Freestanding. We poured six inches of concrete and then went inside and dug it out. I asked the structural engineer, the San Diego guy, I forgot his name, I said, "How big can you make this dome?"

He said, "You can make it as big as you want, because it collapses. It's the tension ring around the bottom that holds it together. Just don't break that tension ring or the whole thing will collapse." That always made me nervous because when we went

[3] By way of clarification: Webcor was founded in 1971 by William Wilson III with Ross Edwards and David Boyd. Boyd and Edwards were working for Pankow at the time. They left to join Wilson, who approached them while they worked on projects associated with the development of the Borel Estate in San Mateo, California. Today Webcor Builders is a general contractor based in San Mateo, with offices in San Francisco, Los Angeles, San Diego, and Hayward, California. It focuses on office and commercial construction. Its Silicon Valley clients have included Adobe, Electronic Arts, Oracle, Palm, Siebel, Sun,

inside with loaders and dug it out, excavated it, then we built the theater in the round, went back up with it. Art Linkletter was involved in it. Nick Mayo was the owner's rep.[4]

Anyway, we built that. Then they done away with the Building Division.

Adamson: That was it?

Metcalf: As far as I can remember. So they sent me with heavies, what they called heavies, and that's when I went up to—where did I start? In Los Angeles we built a water treatment plant, and I was the general foreman on that job and I run the saw yard and I made all the forms for all the work. I built the forms and took them out in the field, and they put them together.

Then after that, Kiewit asked me to—or the guy on that job site come out and brought me some plans, little quarter-scale plans, for the San Luis Rey [Canal] project, the siphon barrel for the canal bringing water down from the Feather River. They said, "We want you to move to Fresno, or we'll pay for you a room and whatever, give you living expenses if you don't want to move your family. You'll be up there about six months building this siphon barrel."

I never will forget, I took the plans home, and I opened it up and look at it, and it was 28-foot inside diameter, 500-foot long, two barrels side-by-side. The barrels were 250-foot long, and then on each end there was 175 foot of transition from round to square to laid back. I got pictures of it somewhere.

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and Symantec. (From the company Web site, accessed 9 October 2008. See also the oral histories of Dean Browning [p. 5], Alan Murk [p. 59], and Lee Sandahl [pp. 40–1] in this series.)

[4] Peter Kiewit Sons' built the structure for Music Theater, Inc., whose officers included Art Linkletter, Randolph Hale, and Nick Mayo ("Music Theater Dome Formed on Earth," 48).

But I went back to work the next day, and I said, “Why did you pick me to build this job?”

And they said, “Well, you built that transition for the pumping plant here or the filtration plant for the reservoir.”

And I said, “Yes, but it was only eight foot in diameter from round to square. This is massive.”

And they said, “Well, you’ve been recommended to do it.”

And I said, “Well, I’m not going to live away from home. If I go up there, I want to take my family with me.”

And at that time, they said, “We’ll give you a pickup,” which I didn't have before. They gave me a company pickup. And, of course, I was already on salary. So the wife and I and the kids, we moved to Fresno and started on that job, and I was there for two years.

We had a million-dollar change order. They bid the plans off of sketches, and by the time we got through with it, it was a massive change order. It was quite an experience building that. I had to go up to Northern California and get a set of steel tunnel forms from the Dams and Tunnel Division of Kiewit. We brought those forms down and put them together.

Like I say, I was there almost three years, two and a half years or something, building that siphon barrel, and then they put me on some other stuff along the canal. Then they sent me down to Bakersfield to work on a section of canal there. Then a crane, Kiewit crane, on the Tehachapi Freeway job got into some high-line wires and killed a young apprentice carpenter that was holding onto the rig, the cables; electrocuted him.

So there was a big deal with OSHA on that, and they fired the foreman, general foreman, in charge of that, and they cut the superintendent back, and they sent me up to take the place for the superintendent on that, and so I worked up there in Tehachapi for, I forget, about a year.

Then we moved to Palmdale, and they sent me to the Pearblossom Pumping Plant, and I was in charge of the fab yard there, and I was building all the forms to go down into the pumping plant where they pump the water up and over the mountains [State Water Project]. It was a big, big job, and I was building all the transition forms because I'd had this experience with all these transitions and doing that on the fab yard up there.

That's about the time George Hutton called me and wanted to know if I would come to Hawaii and go to work for him. Well, you could see I was slowly working my way back into Los Angeles. I didn't really want to go back to work into Los Angeles, and Hawaii sounded awful good. So that's when I got out a map and showed it to my daughter, who was about seven, maybe seven or eight years old, and I remember when I showed her Hawaii on the map, she said, "It's an awful[ly] little place." [laughs]

My wife was gone to the grocery store. When she come back, I said, "You want to move to Hawaii?" And, of course, we had a long discussion about it and decided that's when I'd move, and that's when I went down.

George Hutton told me, "Don't let them talk you into going anywhere else. I need you in Hawaii."

I went down to Altadena, met with Bob Carlson. I think Alan [Murk] was there. Alan, Bob, and Charlie Pankow was there, and we had a discussion about me going to

work for them, and that's when they said, "Well, would you like to go to Louisville, Kentucky? We got a job there. We really need you there."

And I said, "Hey, George Hutton said don't go anywhere but Hawaii. He needs me in Hawaii."

And they said, "Okay, but you can pick your job this first time, but from now on you got to go where we send you."

So they sent me to Hawaii. I worked on a total of seventeen jobs there. I worked a little while just kind of like a general foreman out in the field helping, and then I got a little bank building out in Hawaii-Kai [Kaiser Hawaii-Kai Bank], started that.

Then George said, "I need you to start the Kauluwela job now. It's going to go." That's a high-rise, and it was a slipform, and that was my expertise at the time. So he put another superintendent in charge of the bank, sent me over to set up the job site at Kauluwela Co-op.

I'll never forget that job. I had a big fat Hawaiian with no shirt on, driving the bulldozer, clearing the site for me, and there was a big monkey pod tree right where the elevator shaft went, and he was digging around that monkey pod and pushing on it. It was a huge, big monkey pod tree, and he was pushing on that monkey pod tree trying to get it over. This woman pulls up. I had a little job shack about 8-by-16 or something like that on the job site. She pulled up and run over to my office and said, "What are you doing?"

And I said, "We're clearing the site to get ready to start a co-op building."

And she said, "Oh, you can't. Can't you move the building? Don't knock that tree down. That's a beautiful monkey pod tree."

And I said, “Lady, I didn’t design the job. The monkey pod tree is right in the middle of the elevator shaft.”

So she said, “Well, stop him and I’ll be right back. I’ll be right back,” and she took off.

I went out to this big Hawaiian guy, I never will forget, on the bulldozer and said, “That lady wants you to stop, that she’s going to try to see about getting the building moved over.”

And I won’t say what that Hawaiian said, but he more or less said to hell with her, and he kept pushing, and he pushed that big tree over, and I never seen that lady again. [laughs]

So we built that job. That job was going real good. It was a vertical slipform, I forget, twenty-some stories. It was going real good, when Mr. Hutton come along to my house one morning, called me and said, “Can I talk to you?”

And I said, “Yes.”

And he come to my house, had some breakfast with me, and said, “I’m going to send you over to 250 Ohua Street,” which was a job that was up about the same height I was [that is, the Kauluwela Co-op job], but it was a poured-in-place job. George was going to fire the superintendent because he wasn’t happy with the job, and he asked me to go over and finish it, which I told him I didn’t really want to go finish somebody else’s job. My job was going real good, and I’d like to stay there.

But he sent “Big Daddy” (Bob Crawford) and I—actually, he sent Bob over first, and he sent my finisher superintendent over. Then he sent me over. Big Daddy, when I got there, the first thing I done was fired the office manager, and Bob Crawford told me,

he said, "I told that kid when you got there you was going to fire him because he was no good. I knew he was no good, and I told him, 'Well, I hear Red Metcalf's coming over to take over this job. You're going to lose your job. He'll fire you.'" And I fired him about the first or second day I got there. Bob liked to tell that story. "I told that kid you was going to fire him." [laughs]

Anyway, I finished that job and—

Adamson: Before we get too many of the Hawaii jobs, I want to go back and ask you a bit about Kiewit and Charlie starting the company, because you had this path that didn't include Charlie while he was at Kiewit so much. From my understanding, when Charlie started, as Alan Murk was it—they asked George to stay on the job he was on, so George didn't come over right away.

Metcalf: Yes.

Adamson: I'm wondering what the job was that—

Metcalf: That George was on?

Adamson: —that George finished before he came. Was it the Medical Building?

Metcalf: Well, the last one he finished, and he didn't really finish it, that was the Medical Building at Fifth and Washington Street. That was the Medical Building that George got

sent to start the Rancho Bernardo job. Now, I don't know if George knew that Charlie was leaving in that time frame there. My earliest recollection of anybody leaving, Charlie and everybody else, was when we was on that reservoir job, now, because, see, I remember George telling me, "Don't quit. I want you up on the reservoir. Come up there with me." Now, George might have known that Charlie was getting ready to leave and he was going to leave, and then wanted me to go to San Francisco eventually because of my slipform experience. I'd run three slipforms for Kiewit, just boom, boom, boom. George might have known at that time.

I do remember, like I told you, the guy's name I can't remember, driving up in that green car and said, "Red, I'm going to quit and go with Pankow, also." And I remember that Tony Giron left that job. George Hutton left that job. So if I remember correctly, Lloyd Loetterle, the superintendent that my dad rented that house to, him, Lloyd Loetterle, Bob Carlson, Charlie Pankow, and Ralph Tice—no, was it Ralph Tice who first started it?

Adamson: Yes. And then the other name is Ralph Van Cleave.

Metcalf: No.

Adamson: I don't know where he fits in, but he was also mentioned as someone who was early on. I don't even know if he came—

Metcalf: I don't recognize that name at all.

Adamson: But Bob Carlson, Ralph Tice were mentioned.

Metcalf: Lloyd Loetterle?

Adamson: Lloyd Loetterle.

Metcalf: Now, Lloyd quit pretty early on. I don't know, did anybody tell you that?

Adamson: Yes, but no one told me why or what the circumstances were, but they did say he left early.

Metcalf: Well, the way I heard the story, and there might have been—that's the guy my dad rented the house to, the guy I met that put me on with Kiewit. My understanding and I think what happened first, and I heard this story and I assume it's true, his two twin daughters were like teenagers then, like, I don't know, thirteen, fourteen, fifteen years old in San Francisco or Walnut Creek, somewhere up there. One of them stepped out off a curb, and a car hit her and killed her right in front of the other one, and I heard that it was real tragic, of course, with Lloyd and his wife and his daughter that survived. Now I heard that story, and I don't know if it's true.

But then I heard that Lloyd got into it with Charlie early on in the company because Charlie was doing a lot of flying around and negotiating and spending a lot of money getting work going, and Lloyd, of course, being one of the original stockholders and part of the company, objected to Charlie doing all this highfalutin negotiating and

whatever. I think he was more like, "Let's bid a job and get it. Let's don't—." You know. Now, that's kind of the way I heard the story. If it's true or not, I don't know. I'm assuming it is.

Okay. That's all I know about those guys.

Adamson: So when did you first meet Charlie?

Metcalf: Pankow?

Adamson: Right.

Metcalf: Well, you know, to be honest, I remember meeting Peter Kiewit on the Camp Del Mar job, but I don't remember meeting Charlie there, but I'm sure he must have come there. But I don't remember meeting Charlie. I remember meeting Kiewit, because I was so impressed, here's Mr. Kiewit from Omaha, and the man walks on the job. And I heard he was real good about this, it was, "Hi, Red, how's it goin'?" I was building these forms for the precast. Here I was just a carpenter, and he referred to me as Red. I'm sure somebody said, "This is Red Metcalf. He's out here doing this," whatever, and he was very informal.

I remember Kiewit coming to the water filtration plant in La Verne, California, that I was building just before I went to the canal. Peter Kiewit himself come out there and asked me questions about these forms I was building and even had his man call back from Omaha to see if we'd got these special bolts for a column form. I couldn't believe

that a man of Kiewit's stature—and when I was up on the canal job, I remember they sent somebody out on the job site to get Kiewit because the Secretary of Defense for the United States wanted to talk to him. [laughs]

But my first recollection of Charlie was when I was doing First and C Street, I believe, and Charlie would have these safety meetings every six months or so. All the supervisors would be invited to some nice restaurant, and we'd have a conference room, and they'd have safety talks and he would give a little lecture. And one thing that stuck in my mind—like I say, I'm sure I probably met Charlie at Camp Del Mar, but I was just a carpenter. It was probably, oh, there's Charlie Pankow, the district construction manager from Kiewit or whatever, but I don't remember.

The first recollection of Charlie that I have was at, I think, one of the meetings in San Diego. And I'll always remember, Charlie was on the podium talking to all of us, and I think we were sitting around eating dinner or finishing up having our drinks or whatever. And Charlie said—and it's always struck with me—he said, "I want to give you guys some advice. One thing I can tell you right now, none of you will advance in this company unless you train somebody to take your place, because obviously if they don't have somebody to fill your shoes, then you can't move up." And I've always remembered that, because I've always thought, you know, I've worked for some supervisors that wouldn't tell you what they were doing. They didn't want you to know their business because they was afraid you'd be smarter than them, I guess. But the ones that I always seen succeed in the company and really do good was when they trained somebody under them. And so I always remembered that, and I always tried to get guys

in the field to think for themselves so they could take my job if they moved up, because you're no better than the people you've got working under you. I've always said that.

I've had guys come to me when I was building all those high-rises and say, "How did you learn to do this?"

And I'd say, "Hey, I asked Kiewit when I was at the first Kiewit job if I could take home a set of quarter-scale plans so I could just look at them to see what we was doing." I didn't know how to read plans, a big set of plans like that. But when I would see something I didn't understand on the plans and then a few days later maybe I'd see what they were doing out in the field, "Oh, that's what that means. Oh, now I see why we're doing that."

When I first went to work for Kiewit, building what they called heavy construction or concrete work, I had framers that I was working with tell me, "You don't want to do that work. You can work months and months and months and never knew what you're doing. You're just putting forms together. You don't know what you're building." I always remembered that.

But then after I went to work in heavies and in construction, high-rise buildings, I realized that, hey, it's a lot more interesting than framing a house. After you've framed twenty or thirty or forty houses, it's the same thing over and over and over. But I always remember Pankow telling us that. He had a way to, I feel anyway, make people want to work for him.

Charlie never socialized with me. One time he took me to the side in Honolulu, me and another superintendent, took us out to a nice dinner and handed us a big bonus check, just, boom, because we had been running a couple of jobs and were making real

good money over there. I went home and handed that $30,000 check to my wife, and she about died, you know. But that's the way Charlie expressed his appreciation for what we was doing.

This one job that Al Fink made the movie about [Pearl Two], did you see that one that we done in, what, thirty-two days or thirty-three days or whatever?

Adamson: Yes. You won the bag of nickels?

Metcalf: Yes. Thirty-two stories in sixty-four days or ninety-four, -six days or something like that? Yes, where we won the Build America Award or whatever?

Adamson: Right.

Metcalf: We brought that job in exactly a million dollars under estimate. I don't know if Al told you that.

Adamson: He told me the problem with the concrete and the floors.

Metcalf: Yeah, we had a lot of trouble. We kept on cycle. We got it done. And I can remember Al was my project engineer year on that job. I was the project superintendent. Did Al tell you about me picking him up and sticking his head in the toilet stool?

Adamson: No.

Metcalf: [laughs] I wanted to be at his retirement party so I could tell that story. We were laughing about that when I was over there a few months ago, eight months ago or something.

Al was always this kind of feisty guy, you know, like this, and one time we were—and I just grabbed him and turned him upside down and carried him in and threatened to put his head down to the toilet bowl. "No, no, no!" [laughs]

Anyway, Al kept saying, "Red, we got to start showing more profit," because we done a job cost report every month. We had to turn in a job cost report every month and report where you were and how much money you was going to project you was going to make or lose, you know, so the company, Altadena or whoever, would know what was going on.

As we got along on certain things, it was obvious we was going to save a lot of money and not spend the money that was in the estimate, and Al kept wanting to, "We got to start showing that."

I said, "Al, at the end of a job, you always spend more money. You always spend more money than you think you're going to spend. Just hold back, hold back, hold back."

So right towards the end, we started dumping in about every month 200,000 more profit, 200,000 more profit. So we went almost exactly a million dollars below estimate on that job because it went so smooth. It was the ideal job. I don't know if Al told you. We moved from a twenty-three-story that was a little longer and lower, and we moved almost just across the street and set up and done that building.

Well, I had the same carpenters, already had the flying forms. I just moved the flying forms across the road. We had them already built. All we done was refinished the top of them. They was already put together. It [Pearl Two] was a little narrower and higher, the same building, the same subs, the same crew. I had the same finishers, the same carpenters, everybody.

Adamson: Is this Pearl One?

Metcalf: Pearl One and Pearl Two. That Pearl Two just shot up, no problem, except for that concrete problem at the bottom was a real scare for a while, and I give Al Fink a lot of credit for—Al was always the kind of guy that if there was a problem, he jumped right on it, he solved it. If I had a problem when Al was working for me, I'd say, "Al, we got to make—"

"Okay, I'll take care of it," where a lot of guys, it's a problem, "Let's talk about that next week," or something. You know what I mean? But Al, right from day one when he went to work for me on that first Kauluwela job, I got the impression that if I have a problem, tell Al and he'll take care of it, and he was very good at it.

That job we done for Bob Allen downtown, the one with the peaked roof, the Executive Centre was a real moneymaker, too, for Pankow. It was a good job, and Al was the project superintendent on that or he was the—you know, it got to be a fine line between project manager and project engineer. I was the project superintendent, and I think Al was more the project—I don't want to say engineer. He was probably more the project manager on that job because he was really handling all the paperwork, because

the engineers worked for him, the field engineers and everybody. You know, I was thinking about that the other day. Was Al my project engineer or was he the project manager on that job? Anyway, yeah, Al Fink done a real great job, and we worked about one, two, three, four—I forget how many jobs together, quite a few. But I'm getting off on a tangent here.

Adamson: I want to get into some of these. I have some questions on some of these Hawaii projects, but I want to just finish up with a couple more Kiewit questions.

Metcalf: Sure.

Adamson: One is you mentioned Ralph Kiewit as a developer, so he wasn't part of the Building Division?

Metcalf: No. Let me tell you what I know about that, which might be of interest or not, and I don't even know if it's true, but this is the way I remember hearing the story. Mr. [Peter] Kiewit, Sr., whatever you want to call him, owned a brick company in Omaha, made red bricks, and his business was making red bricks for streets and red bricks for everything else. But back in the old days when they put brick roads down in Omaha, he had a road contractor that went belly-up and couldn't pay for his bricks. So old man Kiewit took over construction of those roads because he was supplying the bricks, so that's how he got into the road business. He finished that job and said, "Hey, there's money to be made. I can make the bricks and—." Okay.

Then I heard the story that he died and left—or maybe before, but he left the two sons, Ralph and Peter, the business. Ralph? Yes. Ralph Kiewit. Because there was a Ralph junior also. Do you know that?

Adamson: Right. Peter and Ralph is a name that repeats in the generations, so it's hard to keep track of the nephews and the uncles and the sons.

Metcalf: So, anyway, this is back, I think, pre-World War II, because then I heard that I think that just the two brothers was running this road company, brick company, and whatever. I don't know if Dad died about this time or retired or whatever, but World War II come along and a lot of airbases were starting to be built all over the United States. Peter, I understand, was real aggressive and wanted to get these big air force government jobs, and Ralph said, "No, no, no, no. We don't want to do that. We want to stick with our road business." That's when they split the sheets. That was my understanding. Now, I could be wrong on that, but that's when they separated their ways and it become Peter Kiewit & Sons. And my story, if you ever see anything with the letterhead Peter Kiewit & Sons—what was it they said? There was no asterisk? They were never in business together. Peter Kiewit and his sons was never in business together. Peter Kiewit's sons took over the company after the old man retired or died.[5]

But then Ralph and Peter split the sheets, and as far as I know, when I built that Santa Monica job—why was it I went back there later? For some reason I went there.

[5] On the history of Peter Kiewit Sons', see, Jeffrey L. Covell, "Peter Kiewit Sons' Inc," in *International Directory of Company Histories*, vol. 8, ed. Paula Kepos (Detroit, 1994), 422–4; Hollis Limprecht, *The Kiewit Story: Remarkable Man, Remarkable Company* (Omaha, Neb., 1981); Harold B. Meyers, "The Biggest Invisible Builder in the World," *Fortune* 73 (April 1966): 147–151, 197–200.

They invited me back. Ralph Kiewit had the penthouse on the top floor, right there on Santa Monica Boulevard overlooking the ocean. And his son, Ralph junior, I always remember he had one of those new Fords had come out, convertible where the top was retractable. He'd drive up on the job. He was kind of his dad's representative or whatever, and he would be on the job making sure the construction was going good. So I met Ralph junior several times on the job.

I got invited up to the penthouse after they moved in, Ralph senior and his wife, and that's the only time I ever remember meeting him, Ralph senior, and his wife, and I remember going into the penthouse. They had some wine or some drinks.
But then I seen Ralph junior a few times in Hawaii because he kept in touch with the Pankow people. He kind of liked the Pankow people. And last time I seen him, he was in Hawaii, and George Hutton and Ralph junior and I went out to lunch and stuff because we kind of went back into the old days. But that's the story I remember on the Kiewit organization.

Adamson: So Ralph junior wasn't part of the Kiewit organization, either?

Metcalf: No, not Ralph junior.

Adamson: Neither one of them? Neither the senior or the junior Ralph Kiewits were a part of—

Metcalf: Well, see, I don't know what the old man's name was, the original guy that owned the brick yard. Was it Ralph? I think it was Peter.

Adamson: It was Peter.

Metcalf: Okay. So there was Peter Kiewit, the original one. Then there was Peter and Ralph, Peter junior and Ralph, and then Ralph junior, the third generation. I don't think I've ever heard anything about Peter Kiewit's, the junior's, lineage or whatever.

Adamson: Well, my understanding of the Ralph Kiewit junior from Dean Stephan was that he has a—we were trying to interview him. I think he has a house in Malibu or something. He was the nephew of Peter Kiewit.

Metcalf: Yes, or the grandson of the original Peter Kiewit.

Adamson: But it was not clear. It's never been clear to me what his, Ralph Kiewit junior's, relationship to either Peter Kiewit & Sons, the company or building—

Metcalf: To my knowledge, never been any connection. Now, he might have been a little boy when his dad and Peter first started taking over, and then when they split the sheets, I'm sure Ralph junior went with his dad, and as far as I know, they were always just into development after they left the Kiewit organization. I just heard that story. I don't know if I asked somebody, "Well, is Ralph in business with Peter?" and they said,

"Oh, no, back during World War II they split the sheets because Peter was too aggressive and Ralph didn't want to take those chances."

I remember at the time we built the Santa Monica job for him, there was names, like I remember seeing some letterheads on development company and stuff. He developed quite a bit of buildings and stuff around Southern California. To my knowledge, that was the only one that Kiewit built for him, but that was because that was the only one I was on. He might have built several buildings for Ralph that I wasn't involved in.

Adamson: It's my understanding from Al Murk that around the time of the Music Center job, either before or after, Charlie Pankow actually went to Omaha or one of the meetings for Peter Kiewit and wanted Peter Kiewit to approve basically replicating the Building Division around the West Coast, put Charlie in charge of putting Building Divisions in different parts of the country for Peter Kiewit the company, and that idea really didn't fly, and that was one of the reasons why he went off on his own.

Metcalf: Well, it could be. See, the way I remember it, what I heard and stuff, was that Charlie was a firm believer in negotiating work, and he felt that everybody should negotiate. My son's following that pattern now. We negotiate a lot of work. And that was Charlie's theory, and there was a lot of—if I'm understanding correctly, a lot of not hard feelings, but disagreements between Southern California and Seattle Building Division up there, and especially after they come down and supposedly screwed up the Los Angeles Music Center and Charlie had to take it over and finish it, which my

understanding, he didn't want to do to begin with because he just didn't want to get involved with the city and a hard bid job and all that stuff, but [Peter] Kiewit wanted to do it for the name. You know, Kiewit built the Los Angeles Music Center.

But, yeah, what little bit I know about Charlie's negotiating and stuff, there was a lot of people in Kiewit that felt like Charlie was way out on a limb. "What was he doing?" I think that's why a lot of them said, "Aw, he'll never make it, stay with Kiewit. They're going to go broke." I remember somebody said, "Oh, he's going to go broke in a couple of years. He'll never make it."

And I heard a story one time, which I asked George Hutton about one time, and he said, "I never heard that." I heard one time that Charlie Pankow had plenty of money, he had contacts in London, and that if he needed any help, he had all the money in the world out of London, England, and I heard one time that he flew to London a lot. But then I asked George Hutton about that one time, because, see, George certainly knew a lot more about Pankow than I did. He said, "Oh, I never heard that." So, you know, stories fly. You never know what's true.

Adamson: I guess the essence is, Charlie sort of developed this design/build approach sort of independent of Kiewit as the organization.

Metcalf: That's my understanding. That was my understanding. When I was at the San Luis Canal, we were bidding a little section of another canal, and they were going to put me in charge of it, and that was a big deal for me. So they got me involved in the estimating. I remember we rented a motel room somewhere, and about four of us spent

the whole night there in that room getting an estimate together, all this stuff, and I just remember that they was hard-bidding that canal job, and that's the way they done their work.

I never will forget, I took the bid to the bid opening. I don't know who it was with, state or probably the Bureau of Reclamation because that's who was doing the big canal, and they opened Pankow's bid first, and I forget what it was, a few million dollars. And they opened another bid. It was a lot higher than ours. Another bid, a lot higher. Another bid. They got to the last bid, they opened it, I think it was $500 lower than ours, and that guy got the job. [laughs] I never will for get that. It was just that much. And, boy, that was going to be my first job as a project superintendent, and we didn't get it. [laughs]

Adamson: With that said, when you came to Pankow and as you've worked with Pankow, do you see any similarities or what maybe Charlie took with him when he started his company? Are there similarities between Kiewit and Pankow that you can identify?

Metcalf: Well, see, I always worked for Charlie, so it was like working for the—when I got there, George Hutton, Jack Grieger, Tony Giron, Alan Murk, all those guys were there. It wasn't like changing companies. It was just like, hey, here's all my old buddies, you know. So to answer your question, the similarity—well, ask that again. I had an answer, but I don't quite understand. You said was there any similarity between the Kiewit organization and the Pankow?

Adamson: The way they did business, the way they were set up.

Metcalf: I worked for Pankow on both companies, so, no. The similarity was exactly the same, I think, but that's why Pankow left Kiewit, because actually if I'd have worked in another division with Kiewit, I might have said, oh, this Pankow guy's completely different, the way we do business. I understand, I heard stories, that that's where Charlie kept bumping heads with Kiewit, because Ralph or Peter would say, "What are you doing?"

And Charlie would say, "This is the way we do business here. This is the best way to do business. This is the way I get work."

I think the Kiewit organization and the Pankow organization, I would say the biggest similarity was they both built from within. I'll give you a good example. When I was running that canal job, the siphon barrel, I wasn't running the canal, I was just building a siphon barrel. We had thirty-five miles of canal, and I had this one end, building this one barrel or twin barrels. But I had a general foreman working for me then, and it was getting slow, that was coming to the end, and he was out hustling work at another job because he was afraid he was going to get laid off. Actually, he was afraid he was going to get transferred back into Los Angeles, like I was. And he come and told me, he said, "Red, I'm going to quit. You know I like working for Kiewit and everything, but I don't want to go back to Los Angeles." And he said, "I went and talked to—." I forget the name of the company. My dad actually worked for that company at one time. I think when they built the Olympics at Squaw Valley, my dad built the sewer

disposal and the bathrooms and stuff up there. Glanville. I think it was Glanville Construction. Anyway, the guy said, "I think I'll go to work for Glanville."

And I says, "Well, you sure that's what you want to do? You've been with Kiewit a long time now."

"No, I want to work for them." He said, "I got to tell you a story, though." He said, "I went in and asked for a job, and the guy said, 'No, we're not hiring. We don't need any help right now.'"

And he said, "Well, I'd sure like to go to work for you. I'm working with Kiewit right now on a canal, and I don't want to go back into Los Angeles."

He said, "Oh, you're working with Kiewit. Well, come in. I want to talk to you."

He said, "The guy set me down and he said, "How long you been with Kiewit?"" and he told him.

He said, "We like to hire all the Kiewit men we can because they're the best trained, poorest paid company in the United States." [laughs] I always remember that, the best training and poorest paid company in the United States. "We like to hire their men."

But Kiewit was very good—and Pankow—about training and bringing you up and trying new ideas. Now, I don't know about Kiewit, but Pankow was always into flying forms, slipforms, any kind of stuff that was a little different. And that's what I liked about the Kiewit and Pankow organization, which was the same, was they was always willing to try something new. If you come with an idea like pouring the slabs coming down—they didn't always work. I remember they done the San Mateo Bridge.

Adamson: Kiewit or Pankow?

Metcalf: Kiewit. San Mateo. And Charlie took some of the guys that I'd worked with in San Diego and they went up there to do that San Mateo Bridge, and I heard about how they worked for weeks and weeks or months developing a horizontal slipform to do the piles. Instead of pouring them in place and stripping the forms, they actually had a form they'd drag along here on a bed and pour the concrete in it, and by the time it come out the end of the form, it was set up. And I remember hearing that story about how they worked and worked and worked on it and finally got it developed to where they really made some good money on that job, on that San Mateo Bridge job.

I heard at one time we were going to do the Chunnel in London. Kiewit was all hot to build that because they'd done the tunnel up in San Francisco, under the Bay. Kiewit built that cast and sink, and a bunch of us were looking at plans and thinking, "Hey, we might go to London and build the Chunnel cast and sink." But some Swedish outfit or somebody else got it or whatever. Bob Kennedy, my superintendent on the canal, he got transferred to the tube up in San Francisco. At one time they talked about me going up there, but I never did.

Adamson: You mentioned on the phone—and I think I got this right—you mentioned the first wave of people who came with Charlie, but you said that you knew all of the second and third waves of people who had joined Pankow. I was wondering what you meant by the second and third waves of people who joined Pankow and who those people were.

Metcalf: Well, you mean guys after me?

Adamson: No, after the original Bob Carlson, Bob [Ralph] Tice, that group. Then I think you said there were a couple more sets of guys who went from—

Metcalf: Well, George Hutton and Tony Giron and Jack Grieger and—

Adamson: That's what you're talking about.

Metcalf: That's what I'm talking about. And there was a couple other guys that come after I did, but not—

Adamson: From Kiewit, a couple more?

Metcalf: From Kiewit, yes. There was one foreman that worked with me down at First and C Street. Matter of fact, we used to ride back and forth together. He was a carpenter foreman, and he was with Pankow for years, but I honestly can't remember his name right now. But he stayed on the mainland working where I went to Hawaii. I think he went to work maybe before I did. Mike Liddiard, he went to work about the same time I did, but he was up at Seattle working for Alan Murk. Actually, I think he told me he was headed for Alaska when he stopped in there and asked for a job, and Alan hired him, and he stayed with Pankow all these years. What did you think of his home up there? Isn't that something he built? Isn't that beautiful?

Adamson: That's amazing.

Metcalf: And he done most of that himself, I mean hired subs and stuff. He designed it and done a lot of the work himself.

Adamson: That's what I told your wife when I walked in, is interviewing all the Pankow people, it's nice because everyone has amazing homes.

Metcalf: Well, that was a good thing about Pankow and Kiewit. Peter Kiewit had a hell of a stock program. They owned the Bank of Omaha. Once you were on salary with them, I think you had to be a project supe—no, just had to be on salary with them, and they would loan you money through the Bank of Omaha, and if you'd put up a thousand dollars and buy stock, they'd loan you a thousand. Or if you put up five thousand, they'd loan you five thousand at a really cheap interest rate. So it was really a good stock program.

This guy John Gully, the superintendent on my first job with Kiewit, I seen him years later after he retired down in Vista, California, and he told then, he said, "Red, you should have stayed with Kiewit. You should have stayed with Kiewit. We made so much money in our stock program."

I said, "Yes, I know it, but I've done all right with Pankow stock, too." When I first went to work for Pankow, I said, "Hey, you know, I gave up a stock program. When can I can buy stock?"

And they kind of, "Well, wait until you run your own work," and this kind of stuff. So it was a few months after I went before they let me buy in stock. But Pankow had a good stock program, too, and so they both had that incentive to give the salary people a chance to own part of the company, and so that makes you work a little harder and I think just be more involved and whatever.

[break]

Metcalf: Have you heard the story of when I went and seen Zeus at the hospital?

Adamson: Who?

Metcalf: Zeus is the guy I had to cut his hand off with my pocketknife. Did you read that?

Adamson: I've read his story, yes.[6]

Metcalf: He had his hand caught in a concrete pump, and it was almost cut completely off. He's just really a nice local Japanese guy. Zeus is what they called him. I forget now his exact name. Maybe that was his last name. But they spent like I don't know how many, twelve, fourteen hours putting his hand back on. And it was either the next day or the day after, a couple days after, I went up to the hospital to see him, and I walked in the

[6] "Employee in Focus: Norman 'Red' Metcalf," *CPI News* 3 (Fall 1985).

room, and Zeus said, “Look, Red. Look, they put it on backwards.” [laughs] Jeez, Zeus. He had a sense of humor, anyway. He said, “Look, they put it on backward.”

Adamson: You did work in Hawaii, so I don’t know if you can make comparisons so much, but I’m just wondering if you had any perspective on the way Pankow did business in Hawaii and did construction in Hawaii, how that may have differed from the way Pankow built buildings in L.A. and San Francisco. It’s a pretty broad question.

Metcalf: Yes, I’m trying to—

Adamson: Formulate an answer.

Metcalf: Of course, we were two separate districts, so we were competitive to a certain extent. We thought Hawaii was the best. One year, I don't know if Al told you, but we all wore aloha jackets to the company meeting on the mainland. Here were these flowery colored red, green, purple jackets. George Hutton’s idea. “Everybody get an aloha jacket.” Back then you could buy one for $25 or something. So we all wore these aloha jackets to be different from the mainland.

I felt like, and maybe it’s just me, but I feel like that the wife and I had a lot to do with the camaraderie in Hawaii. But the fact that we got young engineers from the mainland come clear over there or superintendents from over here, hired them off, you know, we had some come from Florida wound up working for us in Hawaii. Everybody over there was way away from their family, so we had to be more or felt like more like

family group over there. We kind of hung together because that's who we knew. We didn't go see our cousins or our uncles or our aunts or our parents over the weekend.

I feel like we had a lot more of the team spirit or whatever over there, and I'll give an example of that. That one year the wife and I, after I'd been there, I don't know, ten years or maybe a little longer, maybe fifteen years, anyway, we added on to our house. I built a swimming pool, a covered patio and added on to the house. Because we had a lot of young engineers and people there that didn't have families, said we're going to have Fourth of July party at our house, and everybody would come over. We had a Fourth of July party.

The next year, one of the new engineers, John Fishback, had been with us a while, he said—what was that? I forget where they had it, but they was going to have a Fourth of July picnic, and he put out a flyer, Pankow second annual Fourth of July picnic. And not even thinking about it, I said, "Second annual? We've never had a Pankow—."

He said, "Yeah, we did, last year at your house."

"Oh," I said, "okay." I guess that was the first annual Fourth of July picnic.

Well, then I can remember when we come back from the mainland, we had another one on this house. We had this big—and we had all the people there. And we had a lot of Pankow get-togethers with the kids and the wives and the families and stuff.

Now, when they sent me to the mainland, I forget the time frame there, but we got invited up to Altadena to a Pankow Fourth of July picnic, and I think that was the first one they had had. And somebody told me there, and said, "Well, we hear you guys have them over there in Hawaii all the time, so we thought we'd have one here." And so that kind of made me feel like, well, they didn't do things here in Southern California, which

when I was here almost three years, I don't remember having a party other than a company party for some special reason. There was no get-togethers, and I didn't ever go to anybody else's house or anything that I can remember. But over in Hawaii, we done it quite a bit. But I can't say, well, the people here on the mainland, they didn't do this because they're stick-in-the-muds or something. They didn't do it because they were scattered out more and they had families all around, their own families, see. Well, we was kind of away from families.

We had a ball team. We had a Pankow basketball team. We had a Pankow softball team, mixed league of mountain ball where the women and the men played together in a league there, a city league. I remember, I got to tell you, Charlie Pankow come over one time, and George knew that we were playing, the Pankow's softball team was playing that night at Mapunapuna, an industrial area. So he told me, he said, "Red, I'm going to bring Charlie by just for a little while. We'll watch you guys play some softball." This mountain ball, that big ball, you know, and you had to pitch it six foot over the guy's head or something, or it had to be over his head.

Anyway, Charlie showed up. It was a night game. Charlie showed up and George, and we were getting our butt beat. It was just terrible, eight to nothing or something. But what was so funny, I played first base then, and I said, having a good time, I said, "Okay, okay, let's show these guys. Let's show these guys. We're going to show these guys. We're going to pull our triple play on them. Let's pull our triple play."

The next ball hit, hit it to second base. The guy tagged it up, threw it to third base, got the runner going down there, threw it back to me on first base, and we made a triple play. First time in our lives, probably never do it again. But what was so ironic

was that I had said, "Let's show them our triple play," and Charlie was there. [laughs] We still got our butt beat. We didn't win the game, but we had a lot of fun together.

Like I say, I think it was because that we was more like family over there. And like I say, I give the wife and I credit enough that we kind of initiated that stuff more than anybody else and we invited more people to come.

Like this Ron Yamaguchi that Al Fink took his place, I think it was the first job. It might have been on the second with him, just before Al went to work. I invited him and his wife and two little kids over to make some homemade ice cream to Kailua. Are you familiar with Hawaii at all?

Adamson: I've been to Maui, Kauai, and the Big Island. I haven't been to Honolulu, no.

Metcalf: Anyway, you go over the Pali [highway] to go to Kailua, which is on the windward side. Honolulu is on the leeward side. You drive over the Pali.
So Ron lived over here in Aiea or Pearl City or someplace, and he brought his family over. They'd never seen homemade ice cream, and the little kids were all excited about it. But I'll never forget it's snowing. It just snowed a little out there [points outside the window]. Anyway, ever seen it snow? [laughs]

Adamson: Yeah.

Metcalf: So here was a man that was probably in his late twenties, born and raised in Hawaii, and he said, "This is the first time I've been to the windward side in twelve or

fifteen years. I've never come over here since they built the new highway and the new tunnel." So people just didn't get around the island as much. That just amazed me, that he hadn't been there for years.

But the only difference I could see in the mainland and there was I felt like we were closer over there because it was such a smaller, tight group and a smaller community, and therefore we had to do more things to entertain ourselves because we couldn't go see Mom and Dad or brothers and sisters or aunts and uncles, family that was scattered around. We had a lot of young engineers come over there right out of Purdue or Arizona or someplace, and first time they was really away from home after they got out of college. Tim Royco who called me this morning, Tim Royco was—have you heard his name?

Adamson: Yes, there's a profile of him in the company newsletter.[7]

Metcalf: Tim called me this morning. He's in Indiana. He worked for me on, I forget now, one or two jobs over there. But then him and Steve Kennedy—

Adamson: I haven't heard his name.

Metcalf: Steve Kennedy was with Pankow over there, worked with me. Steve Kennedy is the one that started the rumor. I got to tell you this story. We went over to the Big Island to build the Sheraton Hotel, and I was the project superintendent. Steve Kennedy was the project engineer, and the owners had a rep that was kind of a funny guy.

Anyway, he was the owner's rep that I had to deal with. We had our own batch plant set up, and we'd make our own concrete right on the job site. I was pouring the back of the house slab on grade, and the concrete truck come over there and started dumping the concrete, and they'd do a slump test. It was too wet. The owner said, "That's got a four-and-a-half-inch slump. You're not supposed to have over four. You've got to dump that load."

And I said, "Come on. I can pour it out on the bottom and then put other concrete over it. It won't hurt a thing."

"No," he said, "you've got to dump it."

And I said, "I'm not going to dump that concrete. That's ridiculous to waste that concrete." Because this guy was an inspector for the owner, but he didn't know what he was talking about.

Anyway, the structural engineer walks out of the office about that time and the structural engineer asked Steve Kennedy, "What's Red arguing with the owner's rep out there about?"

And he said, "Oh, I think the guy's going to make Red dump that load of concrete."

And he said, "How come?"

He said, "Well, the slump's a little high."

So the structural engineer walks out there and said, "What's going on, Red?"

I said, "He's making me dump this load of concrete because the slump's about a half inch too high. That's ridiculous. I can pour it right out there."

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[7] "Employee in Focus: Tim Royko," *CP News* 9 (Fall 1990).

But the owner's rep said, "The spec says it can't be over four inches," or three and a half or whatever.

And the structural engineer turned to me and he said, "Would you like for me to change the specs, Red?" [laughs]

And I said, "Yeah."

He said, "What do you want?"

I said, "Give me at least four and a half."

He said, "All right, I'll send you [a change order]."

The owner's rep threw up his hands and walked away. [laughs] He was so upset because the structural engineer would just say, "Sure, whatever you want, we'll change it."

I had that same guy out there and we was talking about sending an air compressor back, and he said, "I'm not going to pay for that air compressor."

I said, "Well, if you keep it here on the job site, you got to pay for it. If I send it back to rental, you don't have to pay for it."

He said, "But I'm not going to pay for a guy to take it back."

I said, "Then you got pay for it while it's on the job."

He said, "No, not if it's not—."

I said, "You can't just draw a line like that. You've got to make a decision."

And Steve Kennedy started the rumor that Red drew a line in the sand and invited the owner's rep to come across and he was going to whip him. [laughs] We weren't fighting at all, but that story got around. "Oh, yeah, I hear how you drew a line in the

sand and told that guy if he stepped across it, he's going to hit him." That's how rumors got started. Funny things.

Adamson: Dean Stephan suggested that because Charlie didn't—I'm not sure how much time he spent in Hawaii, but that as far as at least the people on the mainland were concerned, was Pankow in Hawaii was George Hutton and it was pretty much a separate operation, and at certain points or at one point that they wouldn't have been surprised if they all went off and formed their own company. I'm just wondering if you could speak to that sort of separation.

Metcalf: Well, I know there was thoughts along those lines. I know George Hutton asked me to go with him if he started a new company. And to be honest with you, I told him I would. I told him, I said, "George, I've really been working for you all these years. I haven't been working for Charlie." Because I was in direct contact with George almost on a daily basis, where Charlie I'd see once every few months. Maybe he'd take me to lunch with him, and George and I would go have lunch together. I respected Charlie and everything, but I didn't feel like I was working for Charlie; I was working for George.

So I know there was talk about that. I know there was, I think, professional jealousy, competition between the two. I know at one time anyway, as far as I know, we carried the mainland. We were just building job after job, and the mainland didn't have any work hardly going at all. And, of course, as stockholders we'd see how much money each district made, and there for a couple of years, "Boy, it's a good thing they got us.

We're carrying the company." And then it turned around, too. I think there was times when the mainland was making a lot more money than we were.

I knew Dean Stephan, but not very well. Like I say, I worked with George for years, so I knew him very well. I remember when his first child was born in San Diego on the job down there, went by his house, and he showed me his new little baby boy. So I kind of grew up with George. George is a couple years older than me, but we kind of, you know—Dean, I didn't really know. I felt Dean was kind of cold towards me, but so was Charlie, as far as that goes. I mean, we didn't socialize. We didn't know each other. I tell you, to be honest, I cried when Dean Stephan come in and asked me to retire early. I told Al Fink, he said, "What are you going to do, Red?" And I said, "Well, I think I'll go see if Dillingham's hiring."

"Oh, you can't go to work for our competitor over here. That wouldn't look good."

"What do you mean? You fired me."

"No, we didn't fire you. We asked you to retire early."

I said, "What's the difference?" Well, they gave me an incentive to leave early. They'd pay off more of my stocks and stuff and gave me some extra money if I'd leave early. So they did retire me early, but still they laid me off, and that kind of broke my heart when Dean done that. But I didn't have any hard feelings. I mean, I continued working. Matter of fact, I think it was Al Fink or somebody called me up, said, "Red, what are you doing?"

I said, "Well, I'm turning this job over to so-and-so."

"Well, you're off the payroll."

I said, "I know it," but I wasn't off the payroll. They agreed to pay me, I think, six months' salary and move me back to the mainland. So I wasn't really off the payroll, but they told me, "This will be your last week and you can turn the job over to so-and-so."

But I mean, you get up and go to work every morning for thirty years, you don't just walk away from a job. I felt like it was my responsibility to turn it over to somebody, and I did not harbor bad feelings. I know other guys, like, I think, Jack Grieger, Tony Giron, and Jack Parker and those guys, I know they was kind of bitter about it. I was disappointed, and maybe you can say I was bitter, but I always felt like they laid me off because I was making too much money. I got myself to a point where with my bonus and my salary and everything, they were paying me—and I knew it because I was doing a little remodel job on a warehouse, which you could hire almost any carpenter to do, but they were just keeping me busy until something else come up. Dean come in and said, "Red, it's going to be probably at least two years before we get another job that really justifies your experience and everything, so we're going to ask you to retire early."

I didn't want to retire early. I was fifty-nine years old or something. I wanted to wait a little longer. But look back on it, just like when they kicked me out of the Navy flight program, I have no regrets for the way my life—I wouldn't change anything. I'd have loved to stay longer with them. I've had several of the young engineers that worked with me since then say, boy, that was one of the biggest mistakes Pankow made when they let guys like you and Mike Liddiard and Tony Giron and guys with all the experience, the construction experience. We was all carpenters.

Adamson: Prior to the early nineties when some of you guys left, there were down times in the Hawaii business cycle. Did George keep everyone around when there was less work so that you'd have people around when the work—

Metcalf: Wait a minute. Wait a minute. I'm sorry. Say that again.

Adamson: Hawaii business has been characterized to me as sort of boom and bust. They had cycles. So you ramp up and then you're left with less work. Did George keep everyone around during the downtimes so there would be people around for the up times, or was there pretty much enough work to keep people busy or how did that work?

Metcalf: I never—

Adamson: Lacked for work?

Metcalf: Yes. Looking back on it, I can remember just before they sent me to the mainland, that was a down time. I moved on a job site to start, but it couldn't start yet, and we sat there in a trailer doing preconstruction and all that kind of stuff, about four of us, waiting to start that job, and that's the only time I can remember. Then that's when they come to me and said, "We don't know when this job is going to start."

Actually, we was over here at a company meeting. That was it. And they come and told Jack Parker and myself that "We're going to send you guys to the mainland."

Actually, Jack Parker and I traded places. They was going to send me to San Francisco and they was going to send Jack Parker to Los Angeles. And then Jack and I got to talking. He had family up right in San Francisco, and I had family down in San Diego. I said, "Jack, why don't we trade places?"

And he said, "Hey, that's fine with me."

So we went to George Hutton and said how about asking the mainland if we could—because we was both superintendents. And so we traded places, and I went to Southern California.

To answer your question, boy, I had the reputation of never finishing a job. I said, "I don't like to stick around and fix my mistakes." "Oh, yeah, Red leaves and we got to fix all the mistakes." Because I guess I specialized more in the concrete work and the construction, and then I always had guys working for me that would do the punch list and follow the subs and do the final punch list to check out, to turn the building over to the owners. Typically, I was never around for that because I was off starting another job by the foundation.

I was there how many years? Twenty-three years, take away the two and a half years I was here, so I was only actually working over there for about twenty years. I done seventeen jobs over there, and most of those jobs took right around a year to a year and a half. So I hardly ever got in on the finish punch listing of a job. I was always over starting another job.

So as far as carrying people with downtime, there was times when George let other superintendents go and kept me and some of the other guys that had been there

longer or with him longer, so I can't ever remember anybody saying, “Boy, look at all these guys sitting around doing nothing. What the hell is going on?”

But like I say, when they laid me off or asked me to retire, I was doing a little warehouse remodel, just something to keep busy. So, yeah, that was where I was then. When they sent me to the mainland, I was sitting in a job shack probably for, I don’t remember, but maybe for six months, five months, waiting for that job to start. So that was a slow time. Now, that’s the only slow times that I could ever remember. The first one, they sent me to the mainland. Now, I look back on it—

Adamson: This profile says after sixteen years, they’re sending you to Southern California. Why was that?

Metcalf: That was when we didn’t have any work.

Adamson: In Hawaii?

Metcalf: That was when I was sitting in that job shack waiting to start that job, and they come along and told me and Jack Parker and also Jim Thain, and I think Bob Crawford, I’m trying think—I think some of the engineers, they probably sent at least eight, maybe ten of us, from Hawaii back to the mainland between San Francisco and Los Angeles, because they were booming and we were bust at that time.

Now, I look back on it, I might have made a mistake. I done that first two office buildings in Costa Mesa, and then they sent me to Long Beach to do that big Sheraton

Hotel and stuff. Jack Grieger was the project superintendent. I was superintendent in charge of concrete specialties. Charlie Pankow done that job partners with Taisei, a Japanese contractor. But Charlie didn't want the Japanese involved in our concrete work, so he started a special company, Concrete Specialties, and I was the superintendent in charge of that. I was doing all the concrete work. Jack Grieger was the project superintendent for the overall job with Taisei. So I really worked for Taisei-Pankow, but I was Concrete Specialties.[8]

I'm losing my train of thought. When that job come to an end, almost to an end—

Adamson: Is this Shoreline Square?

Metcalf: Shoreline Square. Alan Murk asked me to go to San Francisco with him, and we flew up there and looked at a job or two up there. That's the first time I'd ever done anything with Alan Murk like that. I look back on it, right after that trip I went to Charlie and asked him if he'd send me back to the Islands because my son and grandchildren and daughter-in-law was over there, and I heard Pankow was getting more work over there, and I went in and they said, "Well, you talk to Charlie."

I went in and talked to Charlie and told him, I said, "I own a house over there. My grandkids are there," blah, blah, blah. "I'd liked to go back to Hawaii."

I look back on it sometimes and think that if I'd have stayed on the mainland with Alan, because Alan was the greatest guy in the world, and I think we both respected each

[8] Shoreline Square, a mixed-use development in downtown Long Beach, California, was a joint venture between Stanley Cohen, North American Taisei Corp., and Marubeni Real Estate Development. Its construction was a joint venture between Charles Pankow Builders and North American Taisei Corp. The

other, and he thought enough of me to take me up to San Francisco and show me around the area up there, and I think he was kind of grooming me a little bit to move up or stay with the company.

Adamson: Because he's operations manager.

Metcalf: Over here on the mainland. But I wanted to go back to Hawaii real bad, and they sent me back to Hawaii, and then I worked a couple jobs there, and then George Hutton quit. That's when he split the sheets with Charlie. I think that was over Aloha Tower. Charlie didn't want to do it. George did. I think George made a mistake, because it wasn't a very successful job. Then George quit, and then they sent people from the mainland over to run the work over there, like Mike Liddiard, Chris Osheroff. Quite a few of the guys come over from the mainland. I was stepped down, and I worked for Mike, which was fine. But then after that, then that's when Dean Stephan come over and retired me.

Adamson: So if you look at how George did business in Hawaii and how you and the people on the job site worked, what can you say is different about working in Hawaii versus working in California? First, if you take how George got jobs and then how you worked on the job site.

Sheraton Long Beach Hotel was part of the project, which also included a 21-story office building ("Project of the Quarter: Shoreline Square," *CP News* 7 (Spring 1989).

Metcalf: Well, I think the mainland and George got jobs about the same. I think Charlie, that was his—you know, negotiate. I don't honestly remember any hard bids on either side of the ocean, but there could have been.

When I worked for the mainland over here, that two and a half years when they sent me back here, I was working for Alan Murk, and I couldn't ask for a nicer guy to work with. I threatened to quit one time when Jack Grieger and I got into it on a big job over there because Jack was working Taisei-Pankow and I was Concrete Specialties, and Jack was making me do something that cost Concrete Specialties a lot more money. And in my opinion, it wasn't necessary. And I called Alan Murk and said, "I'm going to quit, Alan. I can't believe that Jack won't let me do this to save Pankow money because he says it's not right with Taisei-Pankow." It wouldn't have hurt Taisei-Pankow at all.

But anyway, Alan come out and went and talked to Jack and straightened it out and made Jack agree with me. And I feel like if I had have done that over there with some situation, and I'd have called George Hutton, it would have been the same situation. He'd have taken care of it. So never was I feel like that I was out on a limb with no help from anybody because I was here on the mainland, Alan Murk and the powers to be over here. Tom Verti was my boss on that first job I done. So I've worked with Tom Verti, who I had a lot of respect for. I thought he was very good, and Alan Murk. I didn't have much contact with Dean Stephan over here. See, over there I was in direct contact with George Hutton all the time. But over here, I never had much contact with Dean Stephan. I don't really know what Dean Stephan done over here. I really don't know. If you asked me what was Dean Stephan's job. Everybody said it was the same as George's, but I was involved with George Hutton over there, but over here, never seen Dean, or if I did,

it was just a quick job site visit to the job, and it might have just been because he was so busy and he didn't really know me that well. That first job I done with Tom Verti, I can't—matter of fact, on both jobs I can never remember seeing Dean Stephan on the job.

Adamson: It's been suggested that George got the work but that he was less concerned with the construction, the design/build, he wasn't as into it as Charlie was, for instance. He was more of a sales guy, not as much of a construction guy, that he left it to you guys to implement the projects more so than, say, Charlie might be more interested in the actual construction of a project. I'm not sure if that gets at anything.

Metcalf: I certainly can't agree to that, but it's because I never really worked that close with Charlie nor Dean Stephan nor anybody else. Where George Hutton, like I was showing you, I can remember sitting there and said, "George, why don't we try this?" Precast stair operation, we thought was terrific. We tried to get the mainland to use it. "Oh, no, that's too expensive. We can't do that. We tried it on a job. We lost money. We could do metal stairs a lot cheaper." But I know they couldn't. I think it was just an idea that they didn't want—"Hawaii, let them do that over there. We're going to do ours here."

I can remember designing flying forms and George coming out to the office, sitting there in the job trailer talking about it. "Well, George, what if we tried this, what if we tried that." "Yeah, let's do that."

The two and a half years I was here, I never seen Dean Stephan. I seen Alan Murk, but not near as much as I seen George Hutton. But like I was telling you about the

families, it was a lot different over there. We were a tight-knit group there because we were isolated, and it was just a lot different, I believe.

Adamson: This employee article, at least at the time, this is 1985, said that you had the record, twenty one, for making presentations at the annual meeting, and the second-place person had only thirteen at the time.[9]

Metcalf: That could be.

Adamson: So I was just going to ask you about, in general, it was great fun for you?

Metcalf: Yes and no. I'm a terrible writer and a terrible speller. I don't like to write anything. When I died and went to heaven is when I had a secretary on the job, and I would say Elaine is one of the best I had over there for years, a Japanese lady. I'd call Elaine into my office, say, "Elaine, I need to write a subcontractor a letter and I want to tell them they got to do this, this, and that, and according to this." She'd sit there and take notes, walk out, come back in ten minutes later, lay it down in front of me and, boy, I'm so smart. I mean, she wrote the nicest letter, and I signed it. You know what I mean? I needed somebody like that to support me.

I think right away I learned—and I'm going to back up and tell you that story in a little bit. When I was doing that Ralph Kiewit job in Santa Monica, Rosser Edwards, "Red, would you stick around tonight and help? We're going to jack the crane."

[9] "Employee in Focus: Norman 'Red' Metcalf."

I was the slipform foreman. I didn't have anything to do with the crane or anything else on the job, just the slipform. And I said, "Sure, I'd like to learn how to do that. I'll stick around."

So we were down there cutting the shoring posts and the timbers and getting everything, wedges and stuff you have to do to raise the tower crane and jack that tower crane. The next day I turned in my timecard with something like four hours of overtime, and Rosser comes out, "Red, how come you put down overtime here?"

I said, "Well, you asked me to stay."

He said, "Yeah, but I didn't know you was going to charge us for it. I thought you were just going to—."

I said, "Come on." I said, "Okay." This is before I went on salary. I was an hourly carpenter. I said, "Okay, take it off. I don't care. I'll screw you somewhere else for some overtime, but you go ahead and take that off. I don't care." So he took it off.

Well, the story I was getting at, that was the first time I'd ever been involved in jacking a crane. So I go to the next building with George down there at the Medical Building, and we hang the crane inside the shaft, which is not done every day, and took it up with us that way. That was completely different. Every other day I would come in at like six o'clock in the morning, and the crane operators would take turns. One of them would have to climb the ladder to the top, and then he would raise me and the other operator up on the hook. So we'd ride the hook, which you're not supposed to do. We'd ride the hook up to the slipform, and then we'd jack the crane up. We'd do that every other day there for several days, for a while till we got the crane to the right height.

So then I go to Hawaii, and we put up a tower crane. And George says, "Can you erect this tower crane?"

I said, "Sure." So I get involved, and so I teach this [Melvin] "Butchie" Schmidt, my operator, how to jack a crane. He's a German-Hawaiian. And we jacked all of our own cranes and raised them, erected them, raised and all that kind of stuff. The mainland never done that stuff, I don't think, like we did over there, but it was because of what we had available to us over there. Not that they couldn't do it; they just didn't get involved in it. So we just done a lot more of that kind of stuff ourselves.

Adamson: So this is the sort of things that you would present at the annual meetings?

Metcalf: See, I got off on a tangent. I forgot what I'm talking about. One of the talks was jacking or erecting and dismantling tower cranes. "Red, we need you to give a forty-five-minute talk on that." So I'd get some of the old pictures from the jobs and I'd write up some stuff and get some information from the crane companies, and then I'd get up there and start going through. And they'd say they'd have to get a hook to pull me off the stage because I just wanted to keep talking.

But it was a case of what we had to do over there versus what they had to do over here, and slipforms, because I had more experience than anybody else in the company slipforming. So I don't know how many times I got involved in slipform meetings.

Tim Royco, I mentioned called me this morning, works for a big company back in Illinois, him and I built a model, a little mockup of a slipform, and took it to one of our company meetings. Matter of fact, somebody, I think Al Fink, told me they still had it

out at the warehouse there in Hawaii. I can remember that talk. It was because I was the logical one to get involved in it.

Flying forms, as far as I know, the mainland never done any flying forms until they seen what we done in Hawaii. The reason we done them over there is we seen a competitor down the street when I first got over there. I'd never seen flying forms. You know what I mean, pull the form out and take it up to the next floor. So I went through a lot of learning curve learning how to build and fly forms, and so I gave talks on flying forms. I gave talks on precast stairs because I seen somebody else do it. We dreamed up our own form and we changed it to what worked for us. We used it to do that. So, yes, I didn't realize they'd said that about me, giving more talks than anybody or whatever, but probably did.

Adamson: When you were in Hawaii, was that like the one time everyone would go to the mainland, for the annual meetings?

Metcalf: Yeah. Typically, they took pretty much all the supervisors, the foremen and up. Not always did they take the foremen, but usually they did. Not necessarily salary, but foremen. For a long time they wouldn't take any women. Charlie wasn't too hot about having women involved in the company for the first few years. But then towards the end, I went to a company meeting or two after I got retired, and you'd see a lot of women, engineers and secretaries and stuff. But, boy, the first few years, it was just, "We don't want woman at our company meetings."

[break]

Adamson: In many of these projects that you worked on in Hawaii, a succession of condos, you were mentioning fly-forming and slipforming, and from what I've gathered from most of the Pankow people, much of this innovation technique was learned on the job site over a succession of a period of time. My question is, did these jobs in Hawaii get more and more sophisticated as you did them over and over?

Metcalf: The jobs didn't change much, and I've said that to quite a few people. The fact that you look at the aircraft industry or the television or radio and so many things, electronics, yet you go back—my dad, when he was a young man back during the depression, worked on the slipform for a grain silo in Kansas, and he told me how they done it. Now, what they done was they had screw jacks and it had like a big Acme threaded bolt with big threads and they had them every so often, and they had a handle you stuck in there and you walked around and twisted it and it raised the form an inch. He said they'd shovel concrete into the form, and the foreman would blow a whistle and everybody would lay their shovel down and walk over and make one trip around with their jacks to raise that form up an inch or whatever it was.

Now, when I first started slipforms in San Diego, we used a Heede system, which was a hydraulic jack that climbed a one-inch black pipe that had thread inside of it. You threaded the inside of it and then put a coupling bolt to thread two pipes together so the outside was smooth, and that's what your jack climbed on, and every time you threw the hydraulic lever, the hoses went up to each jack, hydraulic pressure made the jack go

down and get another bite, raise up an inch. And then it would slip, the springs would slide it back down, get ready for the next throw to make it raise another inch. So the operator stood there on the form, and he might have a hundred jacks all scattered around, and he would [demonstrates], so that hydraulic, and it would raise the whole form up an inch or whatever, three-quarters, whatever it was, and we moved at about two foot an hour.

Now, the three jobs I done in Southern California was Heede hydraulic jacks. Then when I went to Hawaii, Herb Walker was working for Charles Pankow. Let's see if I can get this straight now. They was using an air jack, not hydraulic, but air pressure. That company was going out of business. Herb Walker had worked for that company and he knew enough about the jacks that—and I could have this wrong again—but my understanding is Charlie Pankow and Herb Walker got together and designed, we called them a Walker jack because I think Charlie put them in his name. So we had our own air jacks that were designed to raise a slipform. So that's what we used all the time in Hawaii, was what we call Walker jacks. They was really a copy of somebody else's air jack that had went out of business, and Charlie Pankow had a bunch of them made up, or Herb Walker did.

When Herb Walker first come over to Hawaii, he was showing me how to put a slipform together. I had done three of them myself. At that time they were still using the old system where you used flooring staves, wood flooring with tongue and groove, and we put it vertical and this would let the form slip on it. We left a little gap in it. The details are there that I drew up. [points] But then we did the first one that way. Herb Walker come over and we set it up, and I told Herb Walker, I said, "Why don't we use

plywood? Why don't we use high-density plywood? It would be so much easier," because we had to soak the wooden staves in oil. We built an oil tank, and we would soak those wooden staves for, I don't know, hours, and then we'd take them out one at a time and nail them onto the horizontal whalers and space them so that when they swelled with the concrete moisture, they wouldn't buckle. It was a lot of work.

So after that job, after the first one there, when I suggested to Herb, he said, "I don't know why we don't use plywood." And I talked to George [Hutton] and we decided to go with plywood, and that's what we did from then on. We just used a form ply, which has got a real slick finish on it, and it works so much better, so much better. But the old theory was that if you had to fix a repair form, you could knock out one or two staves, slide a new one in and nail it on, and you'd be replaced. Or if you had whole four-by-eight sheet of plywood, it was a lot harder to replace. I can't ever remember replacing a sheet of plywood. Every once in a while you'd get a scratch or groove from a piece of rebar that got out too far or something, and that would kind of leave a scratch. But typically we had finishers following along behind us rubbing out the finish on the exterior. The interior, they didn't finish. They just waited and then they just skin-coated it with plaster inside, typically. But, yeah, your question was what was the difference between the two?

Adamson: It was basically, from what I've gathered, is a lot of the innovations on Pankow were job-site innovations. My question was basically over time these fly-forms, these slipforms, do they get more sophisticated or is it more repetitive like an assembly line?

Metcalf: Like when I built that first one with Herb Walker over there [in Hawaii], that was the first one—that wasn't the first one. I know what. I'm sorry. We built them out of plywood on the mainland. Those first three jobs I'd done was out of plywood. But I'd been away from Pankow organization for about six years, and I don't know how many slipforms Pankow done anywhere else, but when I went to Hawaii, they sent Herb Walker over there, who I think had been on a slipform job over here for Pankow because they'd made up these jacks and stuff, and I was told that this Herb Walker, who was a nice elderly man, he was probably about sixty-five then, or sixty, he was building it out of staves like they used to wherever he come from they done. I said, "Well, why are you doing this? Why don't we use plywood? It works so much better."

So the next job we did, we went back to plywood. I'm pretty sure that's how it worked. Then we had a guy go to work for us that used to work in Florida on slipforms, and he told me, "I'll tell you exactly where the wooden staves started from." He said, "When they started building slipforms down in Florida, they bought barrel staves, and that's why they made them three-foot-six high because that's the height that the barrel staves come in. But then when we started building them out of plywood, we made them four foot high." And he said, "The reason they used to be made them three-foot-six was they used barrel staves, vertical staves, to slip."

So there's all kinds of stories about the—Heede International was the owner of the hydraulic jacks that I used on the first three jobs in California.

Adamson: How do you spell that?

Metcalf: H-e-e-d-e, I think it was, Heede International. And the guy that taught me how to do a slipform down in San Diego, the first one I worked on, I seen him a few years later and he told me about a job, he went down to Mexico to teach them how to build a slipform and slip it, and he said, "Boy, was I in for a rude awakening. Down in Mexico, twelve o'clock, they'd take a two-hour siesta and a lunch, and here we're moving along with the slipform, and all of a sudden my whole crew walks off and they say, 'Oh, siesta time, siesta time.'"

He said, to start a slipform, you have to start off slow. Then you have to move it at the rate that your concrete comes out the bottom that's hard enough that it'll stand by itself; it won't fall out. If you move too fast, the concrete falls out the bottom, you've got a real problem. Or if you move too slow, it gets hard too fast and it'll stick on you sometimes and it won't move. Then you've got to break it loose. I've had to take a crane sometimes and work over the form, have a crane give me some lift because the jacks weren't strong enough.

I've slipped too fast and—the Medical Building in San Diego, when we was doing those thirteen-foot floors, George Hutton was my engineer, and he come up with the design. I think I mentioned earlier or I told you we had to climb a ladder. So every twelve or thirteen foot before I could come down off the slipform, the crane would pick up a new section of a metal ladder with a cage around it, bring it up to right under the slipform, and I would go down with the safety belt, rotor hammer, and stuff, and I would put bolts into the wall and bolt the new section of ladder to the concrete wall. So every time we slipped, we added another section of ladder. So you had to climb this ladder

right up with the cage right behind you, but just a ladder straight up the side of the building. We was up about ten floors or eleven, maybe, and I'm walking around the slipform, and you check how fast you slip with a rod you stick down in the wet concrete to see how hard it is. If it starts to get hard, you slip a little faster. If it's a little too soft, you slow down a little bit.

So I'm walking around checking the concrete as the laborers are putting it in and vibrate it, and I look over the side, and here's the job trailer down there and George Hutton is standing down there like this, you know [demonstrates, waving], and I waved back at him. He comes up that ladder, he gets to the top [panting], and I said, "What's the matter?"

He points over the side, and I look over the side and a big chunk of concrete had fell out. There was a big hole in the wall, because I was going too fast, and it was wet. George [panting] and his eyes are about this big. [laughs]

He likes to tell the story, on that same job, Alan Murk and him was there, "Okay, who's going to take the slipform down? When you take it down, you've got to cut it apart piece by piece and work your way back, and the crane takes it to the ground."

First thing I do, and this was dumb on my part and the company's part, they had Fred Heater, the cement finisher foreman, was at the very bottom, ground level, finishing the first slab under my core, and the wall was up, I think, thirteen stories, and we're taking the slipform off. My carpenter cut out one of the hydraulic jacks and handed it to me, and I turned like this [demonstrates] and I hit my elbow and I dropped that jack, and I just could look straight—I couldn't even holler out. Here's Fred down there on his hands and knees finishing this concrete, and that jack come down just like this. It's about that

big around and about that long, a steel hydraulic jack just like a torpedo, and it hits that wet concrete right in front of Fred. He turns and looks, and he shook his trowel at me like that [demonstrates] and got up.

I come down off the slipform and I said, "Look, I'm not going to cut any more of this during working hours. It's just too dangerous. I could've killed that man so easy."

So they had me take it down on Saturday. So Alan Murk and George Hutton is standing down on the ground, and I'm taking the slipform down with my carpenter and laborer. (This is getting into way too much information.) This is another wild idea of George's, was to have a center core like this [draws]—George loves this story—and the stairwell's like this, and I think this was the double men and women's bathroom, and then this is a double elevator shaft, and this is a mechanical room, a janitor's room. This is the twin elevators. This is about twenty-eight-foot square.

This wall here is a six-inch wall, which is hard to slip. Don't want to slip it in there because it gets too narrow. Freestanding until the stairs are in. So George comes up with the design, [every] six foot or six-foot-six or whatever it was, seven foot, we'd put a double two-by-six brace cut like this with a point on it. All the way up every six-foot-six, we had this double two-by-six like that. We'd wedge it in with wedges as we went. We had a hanging form underneath, catwalk underneath the slipform, so we could get down underneath and work on it. So we'd go down, my carpenter and I, and we'd slip that in every six-foot-six as we went.

Well, we're stripping this off, and this hanging platform I told you was in here, it was a hanging wooden platform that we'd build, and you'd have to take it off piece at a time. And here again, my carpenter dropped this. Not me. He dropped one of these

jacks or these scaffold things that's made kind of like this with a walking platform here. Anyway, he drops this and it goes down and wipes out all these braces going down. This wall is like thirteen stories high, six inches thick and about ten or twelve foot long or whatever it was, maybe even a little longer, and it's standing there like this all by itself, no braces on this.

George tells me, he said, "And that come down like a cloud of dust, boom, boom, boom, boom, boom," and the dust just boils out the bottom door because all this stuff hit the ground down below and the stuff. George said, "Alan Murk and I called you every name under the sun. We knew that goddamned Red had knocked that wall down." They knew that wall had collapsed, and all that happened was these braces come out. These two braces here come out. When one fell out, it relieved this one, that one fell out, but these were still in. But that wall was standing there with these two braces gone.

So they put me in a basket, a crane hook, and a rope, and they sent me down in this basket right here, and I take the first brace at halfway up the building, about six or seven stories, and put a brace—and I could just move that wall with my foot—I go in there and it was too tight on this side, so I'd get over here and I'd just push that wall over until I could get this brace in, and then I'd get this one in here, then I'd drive wedges. I felt a lot better after I got the ones in at halfway. Then I got them in at quarter points, and then I put them all back in.

But George likes to tell the story about we had a thirteen-story six-inch wall standing for thirteen stories by itself. It stood there by itself inside that building. [laughs] It was kind of scary. But he said, "Red, you don't know what names Alan and I called you, that no-good Red knocked that wall down."

Anyway, here I'm going again. I got to shut up. What are we talking about now? Jacks, hydraulic jacks?

Adamson: Innovations in general. I was going to say that my next question was, there's an article in this company newsletter, and it was saying that the Hobron and Mandarin projects were very similar, and because they were very similar and built around the same time, whoever wrote the article said that [paraphrasing] because they were so similar, even though the job sites were a little different, Pankow was able to conduct what they called a controlled experiment, as it were, in concrete construction and design/build techniques.[10] I'm wondering if you can compare those two projects and tell me if you learned anything by doing those two jobs.

Metcalf: I'm trying to remember. Holbron was right down in—I wish you had pictures.

Adamson: Let me see if I can get the actual article.

Metcalf: Mandarin.

Adamson: They changed the name of Mandarin to Maile Court.

Metcalf: I can't even place them. I mean, it does sound familiar but I can't put a—

Adamson: Maybe it was before you came back.

Metcalf: I never worked on either one of those jobs.

Adamson: Oh, okay. They listed you in your profile as working on the Hobron project.

Metcalf: Hobron sounds familiar, but I don't have it on my list of jobs. Hobron Lane. I wished I'd have kept better records, I look back on it. I keep saying one day I'm going to—

Adamson: Let me generalize the question and just say on these projects that you worked on in Hawaii, if you just looked at your whole body of work as a whole in those years, what stands out as the most important things you learned on the job site in the area of concrete construction?

Metcalf: Well, concrete construction didn't change all that much. When we done Honolulu Tower [a 395-unit condominium], I think the lesson we learned there that we should not have—let's see, which job did we—we'd done one job in two slips. That was, I think, Pearl One, and it was so hard to control the two slips because if one wanted to go this way a little bit, the other one would go that way a little bit. You couldn't bring it back together as one unit. So we swore up and down we'd never do that again, and I think when we went to Pearl Two, it was shorter and we made it one slip, and that made it a lot better. This is Executive Centre.

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[10] "Projects of the Quarter: Hobron and Mandarin," *CPI News* 2 (Winter 1984).

I'm sorry. Okay. Hobron Lane. Sure. This is one I finished, and this one was poured in place. Hobron, I finished. Mandarin, Bill Deuchar done, or Maile Court. Waikiki, yes. Well, they're both in Waikiki. Okay. I'm sorry. Hobron Lane—

Adamson: Here's the quote from the article. It says, "When all the facts and figures are in, it will be very interesting to make some comparisons" between those two buildings in terms of the way they were slipformed, the way the concrete was placed, cast in place, etc., and so on.[11] So the article there, we won't take the time to read the whole thing, but it makes some comparisons between the two sites in saying that we can learn something.

Metcalf: Did we?

Adamson: Well, that's my question to you. Did you learn something?

Metcalf: Well, let me tell you. Bill Deuchar done the Mandarin, Jim Thain done the Hobron Lane. Jim Thain got it up about halfway or three-fourths. This was a slipform. This was a slipform, and this was three sets of flying forms, so that Jim could fly them faster. He was on a three-day cycle there. They sent Jim to the Outer Islands, because actually Jim come to me and threatened to quit if he didn't get to go to the Outer Islands, because when George Hutton hired him back in the days of The Esplanade [a nine-story, 209-unit condominium], he told George, "I want to do Outer Island work so if you get any." And George said "Hey, we'll see." Because he was local Hale boy. His grandfather was brought over by the queen from Scotland to be the island forestry guy.

The queen—Liliuokalani [1838–1917] or whatever, the queen of Hawaii before it was a state and everything—she had went to Scotland and visited some royalty over there and was so impressed with their gardens and everything that she convinced them that she needed one of their gardeners to come to the Islands, and Jim Thain's grandfather was the guy that supposedly come over.

Anyway, Jim Thain and his wife, Suzy, who's still there—Jim passed away a few years ago—Suzy's family was there a long time, both Hales, but more or less raised on the Islands. Jim was born and raised there. Suzy moved over as a young girl.

Anyway, George had promised him he could go to the Outer Islands. Jim come to me. They was getting ready to start a big shopping center over on the Big Island, he said, "Red, George promised me the Outer Islands, and if I don't get to go over there, I'm going to quit. It makes me mad."

I went to George and said, "George, we don't want to lose Jim Thain, for crying out loud. He's too good of a man. Why don't you send him to Hawaii, the Big Island?"

And George said, "Fine, but you've got to go over and finish Hobron Lane." So I went over and finished this job, topped it out. I do remember something about a study between the two. I can't honestly tell you. I never seen any comparison that I know of, which job made the most money, but this, I'm sure, was all poured in place.

Hobron Lane, Bill Deuchar built this job. [Ed.: Metcalf clarifies that Mr. Deuchar built the Mandarin, as he has noted above.] Bill Deuchar bought this building [Hobron] a few years ago and renovated it into condos and made a bundle of money on it. When I was over there the last time, they bought up the whole city block around it and they were developing real high-priced condos around here. But you heard my son [Tom, at lunch]

[11] "Projects of the Quarter: Hobron and Mandarin," 6.

mention the fact that Bill Deuchar's in trouble right now because things have died over there and this job's probably went sour on him. He showed me a couple of properties up on Punchbowl, right on the side of Waikiki there, that he had bought the property for development but nothing had started yet, and I don't think it still started. It's just sitting there costing a lot of money.

I can't answer that question because I don't know. I don't know. I think as far as I know, they were both successful jobs. This job was on a three-day cycle.

[break]

Metcalf: Really, I can't tell you any comparison there in cost. I'll tell you a little story about this Hobron. We had it on a three-day cycle, and Pankow was kind of getting a lot of reputation then about how fast we were going with our jobs. I forget who it was now, I think it was Dredging [Hawaiian Dredging Construction Co.], right across the street here about a block over here, they put up a little tower that was smaller than this one, put it on a two-day cycle.[12] They poured a floor every two days, and they done it just for show. They had to lose money because they made a floor every two days, but they worked seven days a week to do it because they had to raise their man hoist, raise the crane on Saturdays and Sundays. They built three or four sets of flying forms so they could move them real fast, and it was a little dinky—I think there was only two apartments per floor. It's right across the road there. It's got a real peaky hat on it. It's

[12] Hawaiian Dredging Construction Company was established in 1902 to dredge the main channel into the Pearl Harbor Naval Base. Since 2002, it has been part of the Kajima USA Group, which also controls The Austin Company (from the company Web site, accessed 30 May 2009).

right down on Waikiki area. But I just remember that they had to be done, and they went on a two-day cycle. And they did, they did it, but it was quite a project.

Adamson: Again, I'm going off of an article in the company newsletter. You were talking about working on Shoreline Square. This is another aspect of that. From the article, it said that the project was on a, quote, "grueling twenty-three-month fast-track design/build schedule."[13] So can you talk about what a fast-track design/build schedule would be as it applied to that project?

Metcalf: Well, fast track, of course, is like a three-day cycle or something like that where all the subs and everybody has to be in line and everything has to happen pretty quick. As far as I'm concerned, all the jobs were. [laughs]

Adamson: Maybe this is just company newsletter article—

Metcalf: Yes, maybe so. It was, what, a fast-track grueling—what'd you say?

Adamson: "A grueling fast-track design/build schedule."

Metcalf: Well, design/build, of course, you understand that nomenclature, where we get involved with the developer early, and he more or less gives us his concept and his architect. And this is where Charlie, I think, was head and shoulders above most of our competitors back in those days, because Charlie, like if you was a big developer and

Charlie got word that you was going to build this forty-story condo downtown in Dallas, Texas, he'd get a hold of you early and say, "Look, before you design it, before you let some architect draw up some weird design or some structural engineer come in and come up with some—let us work with you, and we'll help you design that building, get what you want, but by the contractor working with you, we're getting a design for you that we can build fast and quick and save you money."

So we'd done a lot of design/build, as far as I know, with Pankow. That was one of his big things. Get the developer right at the beginning of the stage if you can, help him pick out your structural engineers. Hobron Lane was bought by a developer that could not afford to build it when it was all designed and everything.[14]

The story I remember about Hobron Lane, Charlie got a hold of this developer, or maybe the developer come to Charlie and said, "Can you help me here?"

I remember that we said, what I was told, we said, "If you let us change the structural design, we'll save you a lot of money." Because most structural engineers when they design something, they put a lot of steel and stuff in it to cover theirselves. We gave that structural engineer on that job, Dick Libbey, a bonus for every pound of steel that he could take out of it. And I forget what it was, but I heard something about Dick Libbey got $50,000 or something for a redesign, you know, of stuff he took out of it.

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[13] "Project of the Quarter: Shoreline Square," 3.

[14] In the mid-1970s, construction on both Hobron and Mandarin halted after foundation work had been completed because the original developer went bankrupt. Construction resumed in 1984 after the Bankruptcy Court ruled that the original building permits were still valid. The City of Honolulu had sought to revoke them, contending that they did not conform to the Waikiki Special Design District Ordinance, passed in 1976. The City salvaged a consolation prize from the proceedings, namely a ruling to "restart the clock" on the time allowed to complete the structural work on both projects. Pankow thus had six months to complete the Hobron project, now headed by Ed Fujinaga's Domain Corporation ("Projects of the Quarter: Hobron and Mandarin," 3).

Well, we passed on a big savings to the owner, and it made it easier for us to fast-track it. If the owner draws up something with poured-in-place parapet walls around the edges, and we say, "We can do that cheaper in precast and faster than if you go to an owner that's already got his plan to the architect," well, that'll cost you a lot more money to redesign that precast.

So if we're involved at the beginning, we tell the architect or the structural engineer, "This is what we want you to do. You give us an idea of how you want to build it, what you want it to look like, and then we'll tell you the cheapest way for us to build that for you, with precast panels or slipform walls or jumpforms or whatever it is." So that's why it was so important for Charlie to get in with an owner or developer before he got a complete set of plans and went out to bid with everybody, because it just saves a lot of money. Design/build saves a lot of money. And like I say, our company, Metcalf Builders, we try to do that a lot now ourselves.

Adamson: It says here the original investor went bankrupt and the project sat around for a while. And it revived because—

Metcalf: There you go. And what I remember, what I heard in the rumor mill, was that Charlie and George went in with this developer and said, "Look, we can change that around for you, save you some money, and get it—." And as far as I know, that developer made some good money on that job, and he had one hell of a good Christmas party. When we went to the party, we walked in and he gave us all a plastic lei and said, "Now, the game is at a certain time we're going to cut it off. The one with the most leis

wins a good prize, and the way you get somebody else's lei is if you get them to say the word, 'No.' If you can get them to say, 'No,' you get their leis." It was hilarious. It was fun.

First thing, I walked in with my lei, and my wife had her little plastic lei on. I walk over to this guy, and I forget what sub he was or who he was, I just barely knew him. He said, "Oh, Red Metcalf. You work for Hawaiian Dredging, don't you?"

And I said, "Ha ha ha. You know I work for Pankow." He wanted me to say no. It was hilarious. We had more fun.

George and Nan Hutton came in, and I watched them come in and I watched them get the instructions. They walked in the door and come in, and I walked up to them and said, "Did Dick and Jan Ackerson come with you guys?"

"No, they're driving by—."

I said, "Give me your leis."

"Oh, we just walked in." [laughs] We had a lot of fun with that.

But that developer was—as far as I know, that was a good project, but I don't know what happened. It turned into a hotel, and then Bill Deuchar's company bought it out and completely renovated it. It started out just little dinky apartments, didn't even have a closet in the bedroom. They had a little wooden wardrobe thing. The developer was saying he was building those for the Japanese, and they didn't need much room.

Adamson: So you worked on Shoreline Square and then you said you were on the mainland for two and a half years. What were other projects that you worked on before you went back to Hawaii? Or were you on Shoreline Square the whole time?

Metcalf: No, Shoreline Square was the Long Beach job, and you're asking me where I went from there?

Adamson: Right, because you said you were there for two and a half years on the mainland.

Metcalf: Well, between Shoreline Square and Costa Mesa—

Adamson: Honolulu.

Metcalf: No, Costa Mesa. I built the twin tower office buildings down there, two six-story office buildings right off the main highway there [405 freeway]. That's kind of a strange story because the guy [up] here that's a millionaire, and he's got grape vineyards up here, and he's talking to my son and he said, "I want to meet your dad. I understand he worked for Pankow and Kiewit. I know some Kiewit guys." And I was starting this grape vineyard about that time, and he said, "I've got a big grape vineyard down [here]."

So I go down and talk to the guy at Red's [Red's Old 395 restaurant, Carson City], and telling him what I'd done, and he said, "Where did you build that?"

Anyway, he was good friends of the owners that I worked for to build those two office buildings on Shoreline Square. Tom Verti was in charge of that. I called Tom Verti to double-check the names, and he was right, it was the same guy. This guy had quit the construction business and invented some kind of paint that paints all of the

military aircraft. It's a special paint, so you know why he can afford to build a multi-million-dollar development [up here].

Adamson: And then you said Costa Mesa. Was that the South Coast Plaza area?

Metcalf: No, that was called Executive South Coast Plaza.

Adamson: Executive South Coast Plaza. Because South Coast Plaza is the shopping mall, right?

Metcalf: Oh, no, no.

Adamson: It's in that area, though, Costa Mesa?

Metcalf: It's pretty close to that area. It's a little further south. This is all my Hawaii jobs. I never listed my mainland jobs.

Adamson: I'm just giving the chronology here. So by then in 1989, you're back in Hawaii at Honolulu Park Place; is that correct?

Metcalf: Yes, I believe so, yes.

Adamson: How did it come about again that you got back to Hawaii?

Metcalf: I asked Charlie if I could go back. At first I asked Alan Murk, and he said, "You'll have to talk to Charlie." And I went to Charlie. I remember going up to the office and talking to Charlie and told him. I don't remember if he said, "I understand you want to go back to Hawaii."

And I said, "Yeah, I hear George has got a big job starting there, and I'd really like to go back. I own a home there," that I'd rented out for almost three years. "I'd like to go back. I've got three grandkids over there and my son and daughter-in-law, and I'd really like to go back to Hawaii."

And he said, "Well, okay. We'll send you back."

So he sent me back. And looking back on it, that might have been a mistake as far as my career with Pankow, but it worked out fine.

Adamson: So you were the superintendent on Honolulu Park Place?

Metcalf: Honolulu. I'm sorry, I get these names mixed up.

Adamson: Honolulu Park Place, the 1989 project. When you went back.

Metcalf: Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah.

Adamson: Because Al [Fink] was telling me about the project, how the lanais—he was talking with the City, and they had some regulation, and he was talking about the design and how they stuck out. I don't know if you recall this.

Metcalf: Yes, they were changing that code around, and I can't remember anything necessarily about the lanais. I do know that Charlie changed all the tile because he thought it was too slick, the floor tile, and we scrapped—they bought a bunch of tile, and he said, "We're not going to put it down, because if people slip and fall on it, they're going to sue us." So we wound up with a warehouse full of tile, and they bought new tile to put on that job.

That's when I think we made a mistake and made a slipform too big. It made it a lot harder to control. It was just so huge. That was the biggest slipform that Pankow had ever done, and it was a big one. But as far as I know, the overall job went all right.

Adamson: If we went through every project you were on, we'd be here until midnight. If you sum up, looking at you're whole body of work working for Pankow, how do you think your career reflects what Pankow Builders was all about? How did your career, what you did, represent a Pankow person?

Metcalf: Well, I feel like that one reason I worked for Pankow so long and enjoyed working with them was the fact that, like I say, when I'd say to George Hutton, "Well, why don't we try precasting these stairs?" They were doing them flat, and I said, "That looks like a slick system, but if we turn it up on edge, all we have to finish is the side that

goes against the wall." They were finishing the whole soffit side, and that's always exposed, the bottom of the stairs when you look out at them.

So George and I—and I forget, maybe it was his idea—but we come up with this design to set them on edge, and every time you pour a slipform, we're pumping the concrete up the building or crane poured it. Most cases, toward the end, we was always pumping it. You have to have what we call blow down. At the end, you have to have so much concrete in the pipe to get that to come out the top. Now we're through, now you had to put a big rubber ball in there, hook up an air hose, open up the pump end at the pipe. We rigged it up to where we put a concrete bucket under the opening, and then we'd turn the air pressure on and blow the ball down that, and that would blow all that concrete in the line back into that bucket, and we'd pick the bucket up and pour our precast stairs.

So we saved all the blow down, where on other jobs you have to throw that away. So that was a big savings in precast stairs, we thought anyway, and we was on a three-day cycle. We poured a set of stairs every three days when we slipformed a set of walls. So we had a set of stairs. Then the next day we'd move the forms over, get ready. The next time we'd slip, we'd pour that, we'd blow down the waste, pour it, take these stairs up and set them, move the forms over here, do them again.

To me, you know, going on about that, precast stairs, because that's the first time I think the company and the only time we ever done them, we felt that it was a very good system. We saved a lot of money. The flying of the forms, we come up with the different ideas of different panels the way we would break them free, get them out of there. We'd come up with the—oh, just things like, I never will forget, a stevedore jack.

A stevedore jack is nothing but two two-by-fours, one longer and shorter than the other one. Anyway, the whole idea is you take these two two-by-fours, and to raise that form up, you just put this under there, push that, it pushes it up. You screw the jack [up] to the right elevation, and you got it. Before that, guys were screwing up one, screwing the jack, screwing it up to get it to go up to about four or five inches. This way you take a stevedore jack, pop it up, raise it up, and you go. Our guys got so good at it, but when we first started, now, I don't remember, I think it was one of my carpenters said, "Why don't we make a stevedore jack?"

I said, "What the hell's a stevedore jack?"

He said, "Well, I'll show you," and he took two-by-fours, nailed them together, and all you got to do is put it under here and come up with this. Well, that's a great idea. Started doing it.

After the first guy or two that pinched their fingers between the two, we put a piece of plywood in there so they wouldn't go completely together. That way, if you had your finger in there, it wouldn't smash it like we did a couple times.

But the rollers, to roll them out on, I can remember going to Walko Welding, and I don't remember whose idea it was, really, if it was mine or Al Fink's or George Hutton or somebody. We went to a place in Hawaii at Mapunapuna, and this guy worked with us all the time, a welding shop. Wally at Walko Welding, great guy, went and seen him last time I was over in Hawaii. I told Wally what I wanted to design [it] so [that] if you turned it upside down, it would roll on the rollers about this long, [12-inch] steel rollers, just a tube like a washing machine roller, but it was steel. And you had about four of those and a little channel frame. If you turned it upside down, it laid on the channel iron.

If you turned it upside down, it would roll on the rollers. So it worked great, because when we took the form out, we'd turn it upside down, drop it on that, and roll it out, and it just worked, great system. I forget what other people was using about that time, but I think we're the first ones that come up with that.

There's just so many little ideas that we tried and worked. You look back on it, you really don't remember who thought about it. I can remember sitting in the office trailer with George Hutton and an engineer or a couple guys and saying, "Well, we got a problem with the way we're breaking the form loose from the wall or stopping the slobber on slipform walls." So we tried putting a little rubber edge along the form; tried that. That was labor-intense. It worked, but it didn't work. It was too expensive to maintain it. So then we come up with these pop-in filler pieces, that when it dropped down, this piece of plywood just come out and would take the form up, go back up, put them fillers back in, and that worked a lot slicker.

Just a lot of different things. Handrails. I haven't thought about this stuff in years. The handrails of the flying form. I remember we had a bunch of these sheet-metal brackets made up that we could nail on to the runners of the form, the top runners on the scaffold, and the joists and the plywood, and we made these up so that we could build a tow board, a double handrail. We put wire mesh on it, chicken wire, so that little things couldn't fall out. But then when we went to fly this form, the next form then on top, you could just lift that handrail out and get it out of your way and just drop it back in. So we had some sheet-metal company make us up a bunch of these little brackets that we nailed on the form.

One time we tried ice for our block-outs in the slipform. They worked great, except the hot concrete melted the ice too fast and it wouldn't work. We thought—or I thought, anyway; I don't remember—"Let's put a block of ice in there, pour the concrete over it. When it comes out the bottom, the ice will just melt out. We don't have to clean the Styrofoam out." Well, that didn't work for beans. So all of our ideas didn't work. That hot concrete melted that ice in a hurry.

Block-outs. I remember we tried cardboard block-outs. Styrofoam was the best. It was messy. We tried removing it with gasoline until OSHA caught us and said, "You can't spray gasoline up here. It's too dangerous." We tried different chemicals, but really the best was just take a crowbar and pop the Styrofoam out of the walls. We made a lot of wooden block-outs, but then the sawman had to nail all these wooden four-sided—we'd drop them in the form and pour concrete over it, and we'd stick a crowbar there and pry them out. It worked, but it wasn't as good as Styrofoam, and from a Styrofoam company, we'd just buy precut. We'd figure out the different sizes of Styrofoam blocks we needed, because we had to put all these blockouts in the walls. Some went clear through the interior walls, outside walls, and one-sided walls just halfway through, clean the Styrofoam out and then hook the rebar around that, run the rebar through there.

I'm trying to think of different things. Pumping concrete. I think we was the first one to start pumping concrete. That Nuuanu Brookside [a 23-story, 198-unit condominium completed in 1979] site, we got a pumper out there, Carlos, he was a Mexican from Southern California, owned this pumping company. He was a boxer in his younger days and up for a title, doing real good, and he said every time he fought he

looked like he got beat, he'd got cut up so bad. He said that boxing manager come to him and said, "Okay, your next fight," and Carlos said, "I'm not fighting anymore. I'm through with fighting." He went to work for a patio contractor in Southern California, pumping concrete. The guy retired, he took over his company. When he come over to Hawaii on Nuuanu, he was a pretty big pumping contractor then. He pumped our concrete up the building for us, up the slick-line pipe. He hooked his truck in there and pumped it up.

Adamson: And that was not done before?

Metcalf: I can't say it wasn't done. It probably was done. I don't think it was done in Hawaii. We tried. There was something we tried that didn't work. Typically, we'd pump the concrete up into a hopper, and then the laborers would run their Georgia buggy and dump a bucket full of concrete over and dump it in the wall. So I told George, "Let's try to use a placing boom and we'll take the hose and just walk along and put it in the walls. It will save a lot of money."

It was so messy, the laborers worked themselves to death. Bob Crawford, "Big Daddy," come in my office and said, "Red, my men are going to quit if you make them do that again. It don't work."

I said, "Try it one more time, Bob. Let's try it and tell them one more time, and if it doesn't work, we'll quit."

We tried it one more time, and it didn't work. It was just too labor-intense. It was too messy, scattered. You know that hose hanging down splattered all over. So then

we went to just pumping into the hopper, and then taking up with the Georgia buggies and dumping it in the walls.

Then we got—and I don't know whose idea it was. It wasn't mine. I think it was Bob Carlson come over to Hawaii become the district general superintendent or whatever, and he wanted to try, because he'd seen it on other jobs somewhere: a cable hoist that winched the concrete bucket up the side of the building and dumped into the hopper back down like that. As you raised the—it was just cables running up the side of the building, but attached to the slipform was a—Pearl One and Two was done that way. Pearl One, Bob Carlson wanted to try it, but he said, "We need these donkey engines."

My father was an equipment salesman in Southern California, his own business. So I called my dad and said, "We're looking for two donkey engines that will pull so much weight up and down in a bucket on the side of a building." So my dad went to some oil company in Southern California and bought these two winches and shipped them over there, and then he come over to make sure. He had to come to Hawaii to make sure they worked and everything.

We designed this hopper on the side of a slipform. Now, I don't know if anybody else ever done this in their life, but that's how we hoisted the concrete up to the slipform. We had two of them mounted, one on each end or one at each corner, and we'd take the concrete up and then these guys would load it into Georgia buggies and dump it in the wall, and that's how we done Pearl Two. It was thirty-two stories high [completed in 1975], and we had problems there with them donkey engines would get so hot with that [demonstrates], hoisting that concrete bucket. Seemed like it was about a yard and a half, maybe a two-yard bucket. It was a pretty big bucket.

But that engine would get so hot, when we got up pretty high there, Butchie Schmidt——that guy I was telling you was my operator foreman—we bought blocks of ice and stacked on top of the radiator. We had about fifty pounds of ice stacked on top of them. It would just slowly keep melting over the radiator to keep them engines cooled down. But they were just automobile engines or truck engines, regular with a radiator and everything, and then the operator sat back here on the seat, and he had levers up and down and a brake pedal. We built a shed roof over him, put a mirror on it, so he would be protected if something fell off the building, because he was pretty close to the edge of the building. Run the cables over and up the side of the building, and that bucket would come down the concrete truck and just fill the bucket and back down.

Adamson: Was that part of the solution of keeping that project on schedule after he discovered that the concrete on the lower floors was—

Metcalf: Well, that was to replace a concrete pump that you had to run a slick line and had to add to it as you went, and you had to put a placing boom up on top to move that around. So this was just a concrete bucket. The way we poured our slabs underneath the slipform, we was usually two and three floors above the slabs as we went up the building. So we had to dump the concrete through the slipform working deck with—and then I remember now, see, I don't know that we invented it, but it seems like we did. We went and had this sheet-metal shop make us up these tubes about this big around [demonstrates], come down to a cone to a tube about this big, and then hung straight down.

We first started out hanging the hose—that was it. We first started out taking the hose from the pumping concrete pump, the boom up on the top, and we'd run the hose down through the hole, and the guys would pour that section. Then he'd have to come up out of the hole, move over, and go down in another section, pour the concrete. Then he had to come up, move over, go down in another hole.

So then we said, hey, quit moving around like that with the hose. Let's make up two or three of these sheet-metal tubes with kind of a funnel on the top, hanging by chains up on the top. When you wanted to move it, the guys on the bottom would say, "Okay!" and they'd raise up on the tube. It was empty. And the guys up on top would unhook the chain. The guys down below would take it down, move it over to the next bay, stuck it back up, and the guy would hook it back up again. We usually had two or three of these so they would leapfrog ahead.

Then when we was using a pump, then the pump would just go over to that hopper that was sitting on the floor that went into that tube, and they would just pump the concrete into there, and the guy down at the bottom would just take that tube and point it wherever he wanted. It was a sheet-metal tube and not a hose. So that worked, really sped us up and helped us.

Then when we went to the donkey engines, what they would do is take them up, dump it into the hoppers, and then the Georgia buggies would fill up just like it did the slipform, but they'd go over and just dump it in that hopper that was going through the floor. They'd keep dumping it in as fast as the guys down below would spread it out.

Looking back on it, I don't know anybody else was doing that. I can remember when we dreamed up those tubes and those hoppers and all that stuff. You know, it is a

shame that guys like myself didn't write down every one of those things when we thought about them. But I remember telling George—

Adamson: Isn't it in some of the technical reports that you write?

Metcalf: Yes, it is, it is, it is. But I mean just a book on new ideas and innovations. Maybe there is somewhere.

Adamson: A shame you didn't write down some of this stuff down.

Metcalf: Yeah, a shame we didn't write all this stuff down. But, no, I remember sitting around and brainstorming some of this stuff with George Hutton, say, "This is what I'm having a problem with." "Well, did you try this? Did you try that? What about this?"

I know what I was going to say now. I was going to say I told George Hutton one time when I come out of those meetings, not necessarily with him, but with my engineers or my superintendents, field superintendents, Roger Stevenson, I always thought was very good at this sort of stuff, and Al Fink was very good, about trying to come up with new ideas and stuff. And after we had a session and come up with an idea that really worked, whose idea was it? It was really no one person's idea. It was a group effort of guys sitting around saying, "Well, how about if we—well, yeah, but let's change it. Well, that would work." By the time you got it designed, in your mind, everybody agreed, it was everybody's idea, and that's what worked so good with Pankow, I thought, and Kiewit, too, you know, which was Pankow when I started with him and everything.

But they was very good at that kind of stuff. There's so many ideas that I wished I'd have wrote them all done. I got one of these articles out in my garage or something, I had a—I don't think it's in this stuff. I was looking at it when I was looking. It was when I was with Kiewit. Red Metcalf won the safety award for the quarter or something like that. They gave you a little plaque. I got it somewhere.

My idea was tie a rope onto the gang ladders. We always had gang ladders coming out of a hole or up a big form or something, or maybe a four- or six-foot-wide ladder with rungs on it, and you'd get yourself in trouble if somebody caught you carrying something up or going up with one hand. [Bill] Carpenter was always good about throwing his toolbox over and going up a ladder. Well, that wasn't safe. He was always keeping it in trouble.

So my suggestion, my bright idea suggested, safety, was to tie a rope on every gang ladder and have it hanging down so if you got to go up that ladder, you can tie your tools or whatever, blockouts, or something you're going to take up. You climb the ladder and then pull up the rope and save you from carrying stuff. So I won a safety award for that. [laughs]

But there's just so many little things that you don't think about, that come up with ideas and things that it just develops, and, well, whose idea was it? Gee, I don't know, we just—

Adamson: What is your favorite Pankow project?

Metcalf: You know, I've always said that when we look back on projects, we forget about all the hard times and you just remember most of the good things. Of course, you remember the tough days. I can't honestly say that I had a favorite Pankow project. Probably if I had to say a favorite one, was Pearl Two, and the reason was that I had Al Fink and I had my office managers. I forget now exactly who all the engineers were on that job working for Al, but I had my operators, my general foreman, my foremans, my carpenters, come right off of Pearl One and move to Pearl Two, so, you know, that's got to make any superintendent's job so much easier. My subcontractors, because they knew exactly what I expected out of them. They knew how to do it. It makes my job so much easier, or the project, whoever is in charge of that job. Your job is so much easier if you've got people working around you that you can trust. You know they know their job, they know how to do it, and you know it's going to get done. You know if there's a problem out there, we'll all get together and figure out how to fix it, and there's problems on every job.

We had a big collapse, I seen in one of these reports. Where did I see that report? We had a failure at Pearl One. It was the day Bob Carlson was leaving to go back to the mainland. He wasn't going to be district superintendent in Hawaii anymore. He was going back to the mainland. It's not too long before he died of lung cancer.

It was the day he was going to leave, and he was talking to George and said goodbye, "I'm going out and tell Red goodbye, and the guys." And we had the first floor in the garage collapsed and fell during concrete pour, and it was a failure on the connection where the rebar wasn't done right. Everybody was running around looking for Fernandez, was the laborer, a little skinny Filipino laborer, that his job was to stand

under and wash the concrete that leaked through the forms so we wouldn't have to get dry and hard. He'd wash it off. Of course, when it collapsed, they all went, "Where's Fernandez? Where's Fernandez?" And his hose was laying there. He wasn't there. We was all running around looking for Fernandez, and he come walking up, "What's the matter?" He couldn't speak very good English. He'd went to the bathroom just before it collapsed. [laughs] But we learned a lot on that job. We learned a lot from that collapse. We learned that it was just a real mistake on the ironworkers, the quality control, and the steel wasn't being put right exactly in the right place.

Talking about innovations and stuff, the mainland come up with a way to lift precast columns and stuff by hooking up, putting these holes through the—anyway, it was something we done, I forget now what it was, to improve that. And I can remembering being at a company meeting in the mainland here, and we were talking about, "Well, here at Pearl One we tried this, what you guys do over here, and we done this, but we come up with this way here to make it—." I can't even remember what it was. It was some way to pull the pin and pull it back out, simple or something. So there was always guys trying to improve the systems and the methods we were using, which that makes it so much interesting and so much better for the company and everybody involved, all these little secret ideas—not secret, but all these ideas of improving and making it faster and safer, which was very important.

Adamson: You mentioned green project engineers coming from the mainland to Hawaii. I've talked to, I guess, people who were those project engineers. Just brings to mind the

question: Who decided to send those people to Hawaii? Were they just sent? Did someone request them? How did that usually work?

Metcalf: Let me tell you the only incident I remember. We were on the mainland to the annual meeting, and George Hutton come to me and said, "Red, kind of watch this guy, Dean Browning, and this other Joe Blow, because Charlie says we can have one of those guys in the Islands. So I'm trying to decide which one I want. What do you think? Let me know what you think."

So during the meeting, I made it a point to talk to the guys a little bit and visit with them, and I told George Hutton, "I don't think this guy Dean Browning's going to make it, but this other guy, he's really good. I think we ought to get him." He was there about three months before he quit, went back up to the mainland. I think Dean Browning's still with the company. [laughs] I told Dean that story several times. I said, "Boy, was I wrong."

So as far as deciding who goes over, that's the one incident I know that I was involved in the decision, and it was completely wrong. So I think a lot of times George would say, "I need some guys. I need a couple new engineers. I need this," or, "I need that," and if they had somebody over here, or whoever was recruiting over here, would say, "Well, we might send you to Hawaii, or you might work in San Francisco or Los Angeles area or whatever," and then the company would make that decision.

We got several guys over there that just didn't make it, didn't last. Those decisions were made—like Bob Carlson came to me before we started Pearl Two. I don't

know if this kind of stuff—but anyway, he said, "Red, you got any problem working for a black man?"

And I said, "No."

He said, "Well, we're going to hire this guy." I think he was from Dredging. I forget his name, really a nice guy. He was a black guy, and his wife and a couple little daughters. Anyway, really a nice guy. He [Carlson] said, "I'm going to put him in charge of Pearl One and let you run the field, but I'm going to put him in charge of the job."

Bob took me to lunch there and gave me this story, and I said, "Okay, Bob, that's fine." And it didn't bother me, wouldn't bother me, to work for somebody else or certainly not to work for a black person. I'd worked with a lot of good guys.

Anyway, but it wasn't too long, I don't know, Bob's conscience was bothering him or whatever, he come to me and he said, "Red, I know your faults. I know your faults, so I'm going to put you in charge of that job. I really don't know this other guy. So I'm going to put him on as your assistant project superintendent."

I said, "Fine. That's great."

So this guy worked for me on that job, and he rode with Jim Thain and I from Kailua over to Honolulu, over to Pearl City every day, and we got along fine and he worked for me.

I remember, though, Pankow had always tried to cast everything on site under the hook so you didn't have to transport stuff in. So when we laid out our parking garages precast, we laid them out so that as we built, we could put the stuff up, erect it with a crane and work our way out of the building. So I told this guy—and I can't remember his

name, nice fellow. I put him in charge of laying out the precast in the parking garage. A few days or a week later or so, he come to me and he said, "Red, I can't get it to work. There's no way we can lay it out. I know where there's a piece of property for rent down the street. We could set up a casting yard down there. We could truck them."

I said, "No way. Charlie would kill us if we done something like that. I know that we can lay that out on the site, under the hook, and do it. You go back and see if you can't do it."

After a while, he come back to me. "Well, I think this will work. Look at this." And we changed a few things, and he made it work. I guess my point is there that he didn't have the Pankow mentality yet of making it work, making it work on site, because anytime you throw in a trucking fee, double handling—I mean, we started doing stack casting over there. Now, I don't know that anybody else—I know they didn't do it on the mainland at first, and then when I say stack casting, we'd pour one column and pour another one. We'd spray it with bond breaker and pour another one right on top of it, spray that with bond breaker, pour another one on top of that. We'd pour them three high. It would be about this high, where a truck could back up and tailgate into it, so it didn't have any pumping or craning or just—okay. We'd build a form on one side, and then we had a two-sided form over here, so the finishers and the columns were usually about that deep, sixteen inches or foot and a half or so. So we'd build a four-foot-high form or so over here, and then we'd cast one panel and then we would cast a second panel. Then we'd strip this form and move it straight up and pour another panel, and then we'd strip it, raise it straight up, pour another panel. So we would have three or four columns stacked on top of each other, just pour concrete on top of concrete.

When Bob Carlson first come over there, we was doing The Esplanade job, and we'd already done this somewhere, and we started building the forms and I was going to stack cast them. I remember Bob Carlson saying, "Are you sure those will come apart?" [laughs]

And I said, "Well, they always have in the past. I hope they do." But it worked slick as the dickens.

Then we started casting our precast beams side by side, and that worked real great. What we would do is put up one form, put up the second form here on a precast beam maybe three foot high with rebar coming out of the top of it so the slab could be poured on it, and the three sides that are underneath here in the garage or wherever could be exposed. We'd take one form, two forms, set it up, pour it, and then we poured a slab, a casting slab. Excuse me. We'd pour a casting slab. I can't talk without my hands.

Adamson: That's all right.

Metcalf: Then we would set this one form. We'd pour it, and then we'd just move straight over a foot or eighteen inches, whatever, and we'd pour another one. Then we'd move over again, pour another one, so we was only forming one side. The other side was concrete of the beam we'd poured before, and we'd spray bond breaker on it.

Well, these were normally precast beams—I mean post-tension, where you stressed them after you poured them. So when we'd start stressing them, this first beam would—they always crowned up with what they called a camber in them. So we'd stress it and it would pop up. Well, that would break the bond. You'd stress the next one, it

would break it, press it. Then when you picked them out of there, they was beams, and we only had to form one side, first one two sides, and the rest of them one side. We done quite a bit of that kind of stuff, and, looking back at it, I don't know exactly who thought of it, where it started, but it was ideas like that that we kept coming up with that really helped our precast systems.

Adamson: Were there things that you could do in Hawaii that they couldn't do in California because of the earthquake codes?

Metcalf: I believe so. I believe that our reinforcing steel was a lot lighter. We didn't have to put as much reinforcing steel in it because of the codes. Although seems like somebody told me one time when I mentioned that over there, they said, "Hey, Hawaii has the same earthquake code as California."

Adamson: Oh, really?

Metcalf: And I thought, well, gee, seems like in Los Angeles and San Francisco area, you look at their jobs and there was a lot more reinforcing steel in their buildings than we ever had to put in. But maybe it was just the engineers over there wasn't as skittish. I heard a few years before I left Hawaii that the insurance rates were getting so high for structural engineers that they were over-designing everything just to make sure they wouldn't have any failures, because their insurance rates would just go out of sight, and

some of them even didn't have insurance because they just over-designed to the point they weren't worried about it.

I can also remember being in meetings with owners, structural engineers, and architects. I remember one time Jim Adams, a structural engineer that we used quite a bit, he made the statement to the owner, and it always made me feel good, he said, "Let me tell you something, why I like to work with Pankow," he'd point at me, Pankow, "because when these guys find a problem in the field, they tell me about it. They don't try to hide it, and we figure out a way to fix it. Too many other companies, they either don't understand the problems or they don't want to tell anybody about the problem. That's why I like working with Pankow, because we solve the problems. When they find them, we solve the problems. They work with us, and that's why we like to work with them." That made me feel good, and I think that Pankow had that reputation on the mainland as well as over there.

It was very seldom that anybody tried to hide anything. I'll never forget, I told you about that first Kiewit job, Rancho Bernardo. [Ed.: Metcalf clarifies that this job was Camp Del Mar, not Rancho Bernardo.] They got shut down at Christmas. About two weeks before Christmas, the Bureau of Docks or something like that, it was Navy inspectors, shut the job down because they found out that Kiewit had made a two-inch bust in the precast wall panels. They were two-stories high, and they were two inches short, and they were trying to hide that.

Now, I don't know who it was, John Gully or Harvey Vocke, I don't remember who or whatever. But they shut that job down for two weeks right at Christmas, and here I am, two little kids, a new house, a new car, up to here in my eyeballs in debt, and, oh,

my god, Christmas. They come asked me if I wanted to work through Christmas, they could find some work for me to do, and I said, "You damn right."

They said, "You might be sweeping floors and cleaning things up, but if you want to work."

But anyway, I was out there working kind of by myself. The Navy inspector come along. His name was Johnny John Johns. That was his name. His three names was Johnny John Johns. But Mr. Johns told me—and I never forgot this lesson—he said, "Red, if they would have told me about this mistake, we could have fixed it easy. But the fact that they were hiding it from me, I'm making them put it in writing, draw it up, and get it back and submit it, let us approve it, then we'll let you start back to work." That taught me a good lesson: Don't hide stuff from your inspectors or your boss. The best thing you can do is just say, "Hey, here's a mistake. What are we going to do? Let's get together and figure it out." That taught me a good lesson when Johnny John Johns told me about that. That shut that job down for two weeks just because somebody said, "Well, let's don't tell the inspector. Let's just go ahead and move that panel up two inches or an inch here and cheat over there an inch, and that'll be good enough."

Of course, the inspector's out there, "Hey, wait a minute. You're two inches off here."

"Oh, yeah, but we can—."

"Hey, you put it in writing and come back to me, and I'll let you start back to work." So that was a good lesson.

Adamson: Dick Walterhouse took me through a video that the company made about a year before Charlie died. I think you're familiar with it, because you were on the video with one blurb or quote. I think they call it a culture video. They show it to the engineers. I don't know where they pulled the quote, when they actually asked you the question. But Charlie had a few quotes. I just wanted to ask you about something Tom Verti said on there. He talked about a culture of respect at Pankow, and I'm just wondering what that means to you, especially working with non-Pankow people, structural engineers, architects, laborers, what the firm's integrity and culture of respect would mean as it applies to a job site or a job.

Metcalf: Well, I'm not quite sure I understand your question.

Adamson: I'm just quoting what Tom called the Pankow way of working with people, as there's a culture of respect for others within the company.

Metcalf: Well, I think that goes alone with the line I just told you about Jim Adams making that statement. I think Frank Slavsky was the architect at the Pearl jobs and on the Nuuanu Brookside job, not the Nuuanu one, the radiused [*sic*] one [Kauluwela Elderly] on the—anyway, those guys we worked with for years, and I think there was a lot of respect between us because they knew, at least after they worked with us for a while, that we wouldn't try to hide things from them, and they wouldn't screw us to death with some kind of a fix that was way overkill just because we made a mistake. "Well, okay, you made that mistake."

I can remember a job. Well, I won't go into it, but we had a column failure because a subcontractor stripped a form too soon, and right away the structural engineer said, "Oh, you're going to have to shut the job down, shore the floors up. That whole building could collapse."

So we called in an outside—it was Dick Libbey, the one that said, "What slump do you want, Red?" [laughs] We called in Dick Libbey, and when I was walking out to the job site to show him what happened, I was explaining to him, he said, "Oh, you don't have to worry about it. This is my design anyway. Danny Shin," structural engineer, "stole that design from me anyway. You don't have to worry about that. Let's go look at it."

We went out there and looked, he said, "Oh, you guys just put some shores up here and here, and keep right on going." Danny Shin was going to shut us down, make us stop until we fixed that one column, and we, by, I think, working with Dick Libbey, and [being] up-front and honest and showing him what happened, he knew that, "Okay, you guys can fix this. Just do this, this, and that."

I think Frank Slavsky, the architect on that one job that Al [Fink] first went to work on, Al set up a deal with Frank. Instead of walking into every room and punching every apartment out, fix that [unclear]; this takes time and time and time. I think this was Al's idea, I think. He said, "How about if you and I walk through one floor and you punch list it for me, tell me what you want me to fix. Then I'll fix everything from there up, and you come out and you pick out whatever floors you want to go in and you check, and if you find anything that I haven't fixed, then we'll go back and do it again."

Frank Slavsky said, "That's great." And that's the way we punched that building out, and we done it so quick, and the architect really appreciated it. He didn't have to walk into every apartment and look at it.

Al then had the subs come back and fix everything that he knew that architect wanted fixed and had them go through the whole building. When Al was satisfied that it was done, he called Frank back out, Frank walked into a few, and he said, "Fine. Fine. Done." So, just little ideas like that and things that just saved so much time and effort on everybody's part. And I think that was due to a lot of trust in the architects and the engineers over there.

Adamson: What would you say over the time that you worked for Pankow changed most about the company? I know it got bigger. I know they put in more formalized systems of accounting and estimating and those sorts of things. But for you, what was the most significant changes in the company?

Metcalf: Computers in the field. I was not computer-, I'm still not, computer-literate. I know my engineers were. I felt it first, the same as George did. They lost a lot of time fooling with computers and all this stuff. Hey, just figure out this design and go on.

Of course, the thing was, you kind of grow up. When I first went to Hawaii, George's Honolulu office was about half as big as this family room right here, with about three guys in it. Then he rented this other office space, and that's when I told you I was sitting at a desk, George was here behind me, the office manager was here, and an accountant was over here, all in one room. And if George had a meeting with an owner,

he had to either go to lunch with him everywhere or tell us guys, "Hey, I've got somebody coming at ten o'clock. Why don't you guys go get something to drink. I want to be alone with this guy," or something.

When I left, they had a big fancy office and corner office, George had, and we had fifteen, twenty people in accounting and all this kind of stuff. So the fact that I grew up with it, to tell you what changes I seen and whatever, was we expanded from a field office out in the field to Mike Liddiard's trailer at the Landmark. I don't know if he ever explained that to you.

Adamson: No.

Metcalf: But we had one, two, three—I think we had three big office trailers, one this way and two this way, and a roof built over that out here. This was all accounting in the middle here, two or three girls, a desk, doing the accounting. This end down here was a big conference room. One trailer was a conference—Mike's office was over here, project engineer was over here, and another engineer I know was over here. I can't remember where everybody was. I had an office kind of down here on this end.

But, I mean, like I say, my first job was probably—where was it? I seen that. You can see the difference of—oh, this isn't it. Yes, it is. The jobs, some of the jobs we do here now are twice as expensive as some of the high-rise buildings I done over there, and they were just simple jobs, because of the cost of whatever. These jobs were like—where was the money? Money, money, money, money, money. Cost value, okay. See, here's one. Honolulu, the Kaiser Hawaii Kai Bank. That was that first one I got pulled

off from. That was a $643,000 job. Then we got up here to Century Center was 15 million. Craigside was 30 million. Esplanade was 9 million. Executive Centre was 58 million. You know what I mean? And here's 2 million, 2 million, 2 million, the Kaimana Lanais, Kauluwela Elderly Housing, Kauluwela One, it was all 2 to 3 million dollars. So when I first went over there, a $2 million job, oh, this is a big job, $2 million. When I left, a $38 million job, that was a nice job. [laughs] So the changes I seen over there was the sizes of the jobs grew and grew and grew and got bigger and bigger and bigger.

Adamson: How did your job change? How did construction, constructing these buildings change, other than their getting more complex? Were there other factors? I don't know if it affected you, but some people have mentioned it got more legalistic, it got harder to get financing in some sorts, labor might have changed, city land-use changes affected the way you designed a project, for instance, at your level.

Metcalf: Well, safety. OSHA come in. OSHA come in sometime in that, so that got a little more involved with the OSHA inspections and stuff and safety, and it made us more safety-conscious, although I think Pankow—when I first went to work with Kiewit, Kiewit had a safety engineer that come on our job every three or four months to make sure that we was being safe. Pankow jobs, as the jobs got bigger, we would put guys in charge of safety. We'd put maybe one carpenter in charge. His job was to cover that job from top to bottom every day, and if he seen anybody doing anything unsafe, he'd write them a little note saying, "Where's your hardhat?"

"Oh, I laid it down over there."

"Well, you put your hardhat on. If I write you up again, you'll be off the job for a while or fired completely."

Finding handrails down. I remember, I think it was Landmark or couple of the big jobs where we had a couple carpenters doing nothing but going around and fixing safety things, because there's always somebody that takes down a handrail to get to something, and he doesn't put it back up. We warned people and warned them that you get fired if you get caught doing that kind of stuff. So I think the safety got more intense.

Years ago, like I said, when I first went to Hawaii, it was nothing to see a guy come on the job in Jap flaps, short pants, and no shirt on. It was just the way those local guys worked over there. That big bulldozer operator had no shirt on, riding that bulldozer, you know, and pushing that monkey pod tree over. But that slowly changed, slowly changed to the point where we had signs up everywhere, "Hardhat area," "Do not enter job site," "Report to office first."

Now, when I was over there last time, they took me on a tour, Al Fink and Calvin Yoshida. Calvin Yoshida's running a big job right downtown Waikiki, right across from the Landmark, right across the street. I had to go through a safety orientation. They had a safety guy come to me, said, "Okay, Red, I know who you are, but I got to tell you. I got this spiel. You got to wear a hardhat; you got to have boots on; you got to have glasses or safety glasses on; you got to wear this vest, an orange vest when you go out on the job site." So it's changed considerably since I left.

I went up to Chris Osheroff's job up here at Squaw Creek or in that area, and he run a big job up there, and same thing. He had to give me a little safety orientation, had

me put on a vest, safety goggles, and all that stuff, where thirty years ago, if you didn't have a hardhat, "Hey, buddy, put your hardhat on." "Okay, yeah, yeah, yeah."

But Pankow and Kiewit was safety-conscious. They tried to always enforce it. They weren't near as strong twenty, thirty years ago as they are now. Now it's a whole new ballgame, which is good, which is good.

I always was amazed at construction, like I was trying to tell you earlier, I think, about slipforming. My dad was doing slipforming. Now, I don't think they're doing many slipforms anymore. They must be on silos and stuff. But I think the only reason they're not doing it in buildings is because it takes practice. You have to have somebody that knows how to do them, how to build and how to run them, and a lot of people don't want to fool with it now. I don't know. I'm not an estimator. I don't know. Maybe it's not the cheapest way to go. We always felt it was. For years Charlie thought it was the best way to go, and we done a lot of slipforms.

Adamson: What made Charlie and George good businessmen?

Metcalf: Having guys like me working for them. [laughs]

Adamson: Good answer.

Metcalf: I think what made them good businessmen, number one, I would say, first, they were good talkers themselves. They knew how to talk to an owner, a developer, a client, an employee. They knew how to kind of size somebody up. They knew how to hire

people that they felt fit their mold, what they wanted. Like I say, Charlie and George, I think they really felt like that if they got the right people working around them, they could do about anything, especially if they had people that was always trying to think of a better way to do something, you know, faster or shorter or something to help that cycle go a little faster. I think that was the important thing, was their ability to pick people that could do the job and was dependable.

I told you the story earlier, I think, that Charlie said, "If you want to advance in this company, then you got to train somebody under you." I remember he made a statement, he said, "Visualize where you want to be a few years from now."

I remember I told Charlie after that, I said, "You know it busted out, really crowded out around that podium because everybody was visualizing your job. I want his job. I want to be in charge some day." [laughs]

But Charlie had a good way of putting things like that. Just think about where you want to be in five years from now. Do you still want to be a carpenter out in the field driving nails? Do you want to be a foreman running your own crew? Do you want to be a general foreman, running several foremen? Do you want to be your own job site superintendent? What do you want to be?

Now, I knew my niche in life. I was not capable or qualified to negotiate work and estimate work and to work in the office. I was a field personnel. That's what I enjoyed doing. That's what I felt like I could handle.

One time George was telling me about raises coming along. He said, "God, it's hard to figure out how you give out these raises. Every year at the annual raise time, who do you give 10 percent, who do you give 2 percent, who do you don't give a raise?"

I said, “Oh, George, it can’t be that hard. Just carry it out.”

He said, “I’ll tell you what. I’m going to give you the list. You tell me what you’d do.” And he did, he gave me the list.

I looked at all these names of these salaried people, and I thought to myself, “God, I wouldn’t want this job,” you know, because I knew if I gave this guy—I don’t care how secret it is. They find out who’s making what, you know. I remember one time one of the guys hacked into the computer payroll system and he knew what everybody was making. That was John Fishback. They were really mad when he started telling everybody he knew what they made. But it was tough. I wouldn’t want to do that job. I wouldn’t want to have that job to have to decide that “This year you get a 10 percent raise,” and, “I’m sorry, you don’t get but 2 percent,” or cost of living or nothing at all.

I know George didn’t like to fire people. He come to me one time and said, “I got to fire that guy.”

I said, “George, just do it.”

“Oh, I don’t want to.”

I said, “George, you’re going to feel a lot better if you just go back and fire him right now.”

George come back about an hour or two later and said, “I fired him, Red. I got rid of him.”

I said, “Now, don’t you feel better?”

“Yeah, I do. I had to do it. I didn’t like doing it, but I had to do it.”

My son’s a lot that way. He doesn’t like to fire people or lay people off, and now with hard times, he’s had to do a lot of layoffs in the last six months, you know. It’s

tough. It's a tough job. I didn't like it. I didn't like it. I fired a guy one time, a carpenter, said, "You're fired. Go get your check. You're fired."

He said, "You can't fire me. I got a wife and kids to support."

I said, "I've got a wife and kid to support, too, and it's my job to fire people like you. You're fired. Go get your check." So, you know, you hate to do it.

The first partner we fired with our company here, Metcalf Builders, my son calls me up, "Dad, I think we need to fire Ted."

I said, "Are you sure that's what you want to do?"

"Yeah. Would you do it? Would you go fire him?"

I said, "Yeah, I'll fire him."

He [Ted] cussed an architect out on the phone, called him a dumb son of a bitch or something, and you can't do that. An architect, you know, one of our architects that we were doing business with. Of course, word got backed to my son. So I went and told the guy, "You're fired. You can't talk to architects and structural engineers and our clients that way. You can't do it." So I fired him. But nobody likes to do that.

Like I say, if anybody asks me about Charlie and George, and, I guess, Dean Stephan, although I really didn't know Dean that well, people into that, Tom Verti and those guys, Rik Kunnath—I thought Rik Kunnath was a really—I worked with him in Hawaii a little bit when we started Craigside. I really liked Rik Kunnath, and they up and transferred him to the mainland, so I didn't see him very much after that. But those kind of guys, I give them a lot of credit for having the ability and the know-for-all to hire and fire people, and it's all a gamble, you know, I mean?

Like I say, when I picked out that one engineer, I could—told George, oh, Dean Browning would never make it, let's take the other guy. I told Dean, and Phyllis, his wife, I've told them that story several times. [laughs]

Adamson: You left more than a decade ago, but several people have commented that—and I think this is what Charlie wanted. But they remarked that if you look at the list of old-line California construction companies, they're either gone or bought out, but Pankow goes on as an independent company. Does that surprise you?

Metcalf: No, not with Charlie Pankow, no. No. No. And George Hutton and the guys, and Tom Verti and Rik Kunnath and all the guys that are still hanging in there. No.

I think because we've had two or three offers from big companies to buy Metcalf Builders, because we're established here, we have a license. So they want to buy us and absorb us and have us work for them for a while, and then we're gone, and it might happen someday when my son gets tired of whatever he's doing. But I think Charlie and everybody involved with the Pankow Company when I was involved in it, we all really liked and enjoyed what we were doing, and that's the way with my son.

Now, my son-in-law, they enjoy doing this, although they lose a lot of sleep over it and, you know, collecting money from owners that don't want to pay; have to sue somebody to get your money. There's a lot of headaches.

I don't know, you've heard the story about Charlie suing Irwin Bank, was it?

Adamson: Crocker Bank, was it?

Metcalf: Crocker Bank.

Adamson: I think they sued one another, or one—

Metcalf: Yes, Charlie won. Charlie won. That was big bucks for Pankow at that time. Most guys wouldn't take on that. They'd just roll over for this big Crocker Bank or whatever, but Charlie knew he was right, and, by god, I'm going to—and he won.

But, yes, there was—god, Irwin [Union] Bank is my bank out here. Crocker Bank, yes. I remember when that happened, but guys like Charlie and George and those guys, it was the heat of the battle or whatever that kept them in there, the challenge to get something done, and I think they thrived on trying to figure out a better and faster way, a more competitive way to do anything, and I think that was Al Fink and I lots of times—I can't—like I said I wished I'd have wrote down all that stuff, I can remember him and I talking about different things and trying to come up with better ways to do things and faster ways and how to cycle a job faster, get the subcontractors to do things, and it paid off, I think. In the long run, we'd done a lot of work.

Adamson: I usually ask this question in relation to Charlie Pankow, but since you worked with George Hutton primarily and so much, do you have a favorite anecdote about George that illustrates the sort of person he is or the sort of businessperson he was, something that you haven't mentioned already?

Metcalf: No, I can't really say that. I don't know that I can—like I say, I didn't know Charlie that well, personally. I knew George pretty well personally but still, there again, I did not socialize with George and Nan Hutton. I mean, I went a lot of times to parties at their house and things, but George and them people was more the business end of it where I was the field construction end of it, out in the field. I mean, George has paid me a lot of compliments, he's introduced me to people saying, "This is the best superintendent I ever worked with," and things like that, but I could turn right around and say the same thing about George, you know, because we worked together so long and we knew each other's faults and what was good and bad about it.

But, no, I can't think of anything that I would want to say there that—I can't even think of anything for that would even fit into that category.

Adamson: Here's the last question on my list. What is the best way of understanding Pankow Builders, as they're now known? What's the best way of understanding their contributions to the building industry? What are the best known for, or what should they be best known for?

Metcalf: Well, I think, Charlie Pankow for many years, I think, and maybe still does but I think that Charlie tried to be a real leader in the precast industry, and I think by working with his engineers and superintendents to come up with new ideas of how to do something a little faster and quicker and cheaper and better product, it seemed like that that was always the idea at our company meetings was to share our ideas with each other

and share what we thought would help the other job sites out if they tried this and show them what we've been trying and work together.

I know in Hawaii, like I say, it was a little different situation over there. Al Fink, Jack Parker, Jack Grieger, those, Tony Giron, all the guys that was over there for years, that if one of them needed help on another job we was right there to help them. I remember when Jack Parker was taking down a slipform, and he called me and asked me if I could come over and help him cut the slipform down to get it off real quick on a Saturday, and I got three or four of my foreman that were good workers and guys and asked them. Well, of course, they got paid for it. I didn't but they got paid overtime.

And Frank Branlitt, god bless him, he was a black carpenter foreman—we went to my job first, that was Pearl One and we got our tools and stuff and chainsaws and things that we's going to need over there, and tools. Anyway, we's coming down the elevator, and Frank was kidding about standing in the back of the man hoist. Because he was black, he said, "I know my place. I'll stand back here with you white guys up-front," or something like that, joking about it. But the fact that those guys was all right there to go over and help Jack take that form down as fast as we could and, I think, Jack appreciated it.

I remember Al Fink putting up a Favco crane on a high-rise job downtown, and he was having trouble, a pin wouldn't fit, and I went by there to see what was wrong. He said, "Oh, they can't get this one pin to go in," these guys who were erecting it.

And I said, "What's the matter?" I went up and looked at it, and it just would not fit, and I said, "Well, let me have it, and I'll run to Walko Welding. I'll call Wally [Burton] and ask him if he'll stay open," because it was getting dark, "and I'll have him

machine that down," because he had a machine shop. "I'll have him take just a fraction off of it."

Al commented later, I think, in a company meeting one time, he said, "You know, I'll always remember Red Metcalf coming over to my job, and I was having trouble putting up this tower crane, and he grabbed that pin and run down to Walko Welding and had it fixed and brought it back, and we got that crane up before dark or something like that. We was really in a bind if he hadn't come by."

And I can remember two or three times guys helping me out, too. I mean, it wasn't just me helping them. But that was what I felt like tied the group together, at least in Hawaii, and made us a more close-knit group. And I've seen superintendents that just would not help out another superintendent for the world. I'm not going to help him out, he'll get my job or something and just petty crap in any business.

But I think the Pankow organization that's—and I go back to Charlie and George and those guys, that's the kind of people they wanted around them. That's what made their company better, more profitable, more independent, more outstanding than anybody else, as far as I'm concerned. But I worked for one guy for thirty-three years so, come on now, what do I know. I might a lot rather go to work for Bechtel. Bechtel might have been a good company to work for. I went to work for Morrison-Knudsen when I first went over there, and Bob Crawford, labor foreman then, labor superintendent, he said, "Hey, Red, Morrison-Knudsen's paying by the hour. If you come over and work on Saturdays and Sundays, they'll pay us cash."

Well, I think that was five dollars an hour then, cash, they'll pay it, because you couldn't get any help. So I went over there and started working for Morrison-Knudsen

on weekends, Bob Crawford and I, doing carpenter work. We start out setting forms in the foundation. It was a lift-slab job, first one I ever worked. Bob and I wound up putting the computer room floor in. We's the last two guys off of that job, last two guys off of that job and we were—

[break]

Adamson: Anyway, you were saying with Morrison-Knudsen, finishing up, you were the last two persons; you and Bob were—

Metcalf: Oh, they tried to hire me.

Adamson: At the end of the job? Right.

Metcalf: Yes, when we was coming to the end, they said, "How'd you like to work for Morrison-Knudsen? We could use you on—we've got a lot of work."

And I said, "Hey, I've just been here about one year and Pankow paid my way over. I like working for you guys and everything, but I'm not going to leave Pankow, I've been with them for a while."

Adamson: So you were working five days a week with Pankow and the weekends with—

Metcalf: And after work some nights, and George told me, "Hey, Red, Charlie found out you was working on the side for Morrison-Knudsen. That doesn't look too good for our superintendents to be working side jobs."

I said, "George, I'm not running a job for them. I'm over there driving nails. I'm just a carpenter. They were paying me cash. You tell Charlie if he'll pay me more money, I won't go over there." But I said, "It's expensive living here in Hawaii. I need some extra cash." And I did. I mean, it was a struggle. They didn't overpay any of us. At that time I wasn't making all that much money, that was when they first sent me over there, and so I was out trying to hustle a buck. Every once in a while, I'd go out and work a side job with somebody. But not much. But never in competition with Pankow, of course, I never would've done anything like that.

But that was back when, and you couldn't get help. I don't know if I told you the story about the first time I called the union hall when I first built that first high-rise building, I said, "I need three good form carpenters." And the guy laughed at me.

Adamson: This is in Hawaii?

Metcalf: Hawaii. I called the carpenters union and said, "I need three form fitters, good form carpenters." And he laughed.

I said, "No, I'm not kidding."

And he said, "Well, I'm not kidding either. I could use about a hundred good form carpenters."

I said, "Well, what am I supposed to do?"

He said, “Do like everybody else, find somebody on the streets that can drive a nail and bring them down, and we’ll sign them up as carpenters.”

That’s how hard it was to get help over there. My first crane operator never operated a crane in his life. He was a Cat skinner. He was a bulldozer operator. He was afraid to sit in the cab and run the crane. He stood on the slipform and run it with a remote control, because he was afraid to ride up there in the cab.

Adamson: This was because of the physical shortage of labor or because of—

Metcalf: There was so much work going on. I counted something like twenty-three tower cranes up from the airport to downtown Waikiki. There was so much work going on that you could not hardly hire anybody. And the good thing about it after we built up a reputation and working there and doing jobs, I can remember subcontractors telling me, “We like working for Pankow because you guys pay your bills on time and you pay.” And Charlie was very strict about that. Sometimes an invoice would get dropped through a crack or something, and Charlie or Pankow organization get a nasty letter from some sub, “If you don’t pay me my monthly bill I’m going to sue your company because—.” Boy, Charlie would just come unglued. I remember it happened a couple of times, not with me. But I heard about it on other jobs.

And, by god, Charlie wanted his reputation. He wanted his bills paid on time, and he didn’t want to pay subs for work they didn’t do. But he wanted to pay every dime they had coming to them and pay them on time. So we got a lot of respect out of subcontractors.

It wasn't you I told. I was telling someone else about California Drilling and Blasting, was blasting the blue rock on that Craigside job—not Craigside, anyway, one of the jobs, yeah, and California Drilling and Blasting—I said, "When can you haul the rock off? I need to start my foundation."

He said, "I can't get trucks, rock trucks, to haul. I've called all over the island."

I said, "Did you call Richard Lee Trucking," who we'd done a lot of work with.

And he said, "Yes, and they told me they couldn't get any rock trucks to me for three or four days."

I said, "Well, let me see what I can do." I went down and I called Richard Lee, and this was a Chinaman that was born and raised there in Honolulu, been there all of his life in the trucking business, probably the biggest trucker in Honolulu now. Probably was then, too. But anyway, I said, "Richard I need some rock trucks."

"Oh, how many, Red?"

I said, "I could use three or four right away."

"When do you want them?"

"I could use them this afternoon."

"Okay, I'll get the trucks right over there for you."

I went over and went outside and talked to the foreman of California Drilling and Blasting. I said, "Okay, I got you three or four rock trucks coming."

He said, "When?"

I said, "This afternoon."

"From who?"

I said, "Richard Lee."

"Well, they wouldn't give me any trucks."

I said, "Because we've been working with them so long and we pay our bills and we're a good company to work for, they're right there for us."

I called Jimmy, Jr., at A-1 Electric one night when his men told me they wouldn't have a pour ready for the next morning. I said, "Jimmy, I've got to pour that slab tomorrow, otherwise it'll shut my whole job down. I've got to pour it in the morning."

"Okay, Red. I'll take care of it."

About an hour later, I had about four electricians show up from other jobs and worked until almost dark getting it, got it ready for us. So working in one place like that for so many years with so many good subcontractors that liked to work with us because we set a cycle and we made all the subs stay on it, that's what made us produce what we did so fast and efficiently. And I think that's what made Charlie a lot of money and the Pankow organization, and I think that's a reputation that hopefully is still going on. When they say they're going to do something they do it, they produce, and they get good prices from subs because they're good to their subs. They treat them right.

Adamson: I think we can end on that note.

Metcalf: Oh, very good.

Adamson: Thank you for your time, this was very interesting.

Metcalf: Well, good. I enjoyed it. Of course, I always enjoy talking. Now if you had asked me to write all that down and put it [on paper]—I can't do that.

[End of interview]