

Samuel Proctor Oral History Program
College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

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PCM-001

Interviewee: Leo Krziza

Interviewer: Paul Ortiz

Date of Interview: November 3, 2009

O: So we are here today with Mr. Leo **J.** Krziza who is currently living in Ocala. My name is Paul Ortiz, the University of Florida. First of all Mr. Krziza, thank you so much for taking time out of your busy schedule to talk with me today.

K: Yeah, I'm retired but I'm busy. Right.

O: I know. [laughter] I can tell by the walls. Well Mr. Krziza, I wonder if you could tell me about your early life before the Panama Canal, where you were from, a little bit about your parents, your background.

K: Well, that's simple because I was an orphan at fifteen. My mother was killed in an auto accident with a drunk driver—she was not driving of course—and I just had an urging to see the world because I'd see aeroplanes, Ford Trimotors that would fly from New York to Detroit where they were made, and then they'd go to Chicago. And they'd come over our house, and I thought, by golly, get into an airplane one of these days. But, I says, it is going to cost me some money and I have to get an education, and so I was thinking about that. So I was fifteen years old. And well, I got the time, I got to get educated and I see how much money I had saved up, and went and checked in my little piggy bank and I had fifteen cents. And so that was how much money I had, see?

O: One cent for every year, right?

K: Yeah. [laughter] I had one for every year. So that's where I started, but I kept going and going. I was an orphan. There was five other kids in my family were all left. Dad went to Detroit to catch more money, mother was gone, couple sisters were in college, so it was up to Leo to do it. And so I remembered that you have a goal or you have something that you really want to do, go for it, because nobody else is gonna help you except you. So eventually I thought well, those aeroplanes' world must be great. So I studied geography and kept going on it and going on it and then two of my sisters had gotten jobs with Panama Canal. So when I got almost finished with college, I went to Notre Dame and then Wayne University in Detroit, University of Wisconsin, and then the war coming on. Well, I tried to get in the army, but my ears wouldn't work because I had been swimming so much in the lakes and they had waterlogged so my hearing's down. So I got a deferment; they wouldn't take me. So, okay, I'll go down to Panama, visit my sisters, and play golf for a year and have some fun. And so I got down to Panama on the United Troopboat, and the next day I went for some interviews to see if I could find a job of some sort there to help support myself. And then twelve hours later, I had a permanent job with the Panama Canal. A permanent job is if you're on parole or on practice for thirty days, and then after thirty days they will say, yes they'll take you or no, I'm sorry. Well that thirty days came up and they didn't say anything to me, and so I just kept on working and thirty-two years later I retired.

O: Wow. It's simple as that.

K: That's simple as that. [laughter]

O: Mr. Krziza, your sisters preceded you in Panama, do you know how they got their jobs? Did they just go down or did they...

K: No. [laughter] That was funny. The oldest sister, she was a teacher, and she was teaching at [inaudible 04:28] Detroit , and this boyfriend that she was supposed to have a date with stood her up. He called her up, oh wah wah wah wah and he went on another date see, so she got shoved aside. Well she said, to hell with this. She didn't want this kind of stuff: I'm going to do something. So she goes down to the post office and there's a Form 57 up there, employments available federal government, and there was one there so she thought, that sounds good. So she sent in an application that uses teachers, she had her degree from Wayne University, and by golly, they said, yeah we'll take you . They give her a ticket to the ship from New York and so she went down to Panama. Well she gets down to Panama and holy smokes, this place is great. This is a lot better than [inaudible 05:20] Michigan where it snows. [laughter] So you have three months' winter and nine months' no summer or something. And it was awful—well, not awful, but it was bad. Boy, she gets there, gets the other sister: hey this is great, there's a lot of men down here. This is great summertime all the time. Things are cheap . You get paid every month. No deferments on the payment, you get it. So boy, come on down. So she gets that sister down. Well, they got two of them down there. Well here's Leo. Now, I've got summer vacation here, the deferment, I can't get in the army, that's when I go down. And so bang, I was down. So there are three of us, of

the Krziza family down there, see? So it was great. So hell we had a good time .

Paychecks coming in all the time.

O: Now you had tried to get into the military, Mr. Krziza, and were your other friends trying to get in at the same time?

K: Well, nobody because I did not have any other friends, let's say. But I was trying to get in, yes. I was trying to get in because if you had two years college you could get into the Cadet Flying Corp. And that's what I did. Well, by that time I had three years in but I had poor hearing, and they said, well, no, you put this on there and you couldn't hear what the other guy was saying. You might do the wrong thing, make the wrong turn in your P-40 , and so they kept pushing me off, pushing me off. Well, of course, by that time I was working for Panama Canal anyway, and I had money coming in my pocket for the first time in my life, and so I just kept on and on until eventually they got to the bottom of the barrel evidently and says, hell, hey buster you have to come and join the army. The war had started by then. And so I had to get in but the Pan Canal says, well, you're sure you're on a war project here, they deferred me for a long time. Finally they let me go, and I went and spent about four years in the army. Well, the ironic thing on this thing is that just a ship went through the canal and went out of Cristóbal there, and it went out there. It was a little United Troopboat and had the U.S. mail on it going to New Orleans. Well they go out there, and in there is a German sub sitting out there. Now that German sub is in Honduras—

O: Belize, right, they had a—yeah.

K: They had a base. The United States knew all about it because Germany had that base, and everybody kept quiet. But that base had deciphered the German code that they were using, see, so everybody was quiet about that. The Germans didn't know that our little office down there in the bushes in Honduras was taking all of their codes and deciphering them, and giving it to all the ships out on the Atlantic Ocean. And so that was it. That was what they were doing. He was a new captain on that sub: boy, here's a boat. Well, he takes his torpedo and he torpedoes that boat. Bang! The boat goes down to the bottom of the Caribbean Ocean, doesn't he? All the mail and everything that he's got, down there. That's it. [Inaudible, 9:30] In that thing was a lot of finance offices of the army, payrolls from the army, , all of that stuff was down at the bottom of the ocean. Now how are you going to justify twenty-five million dollar expenditure when all the papers are down there?

O: [laughter] Right.

K: There's not Xerox machines, no nothing. Well, what are you going to do? The only thing you can do is replace them. The finance office knew which offices had their payrolls done at Corozál office, so they started. They needed typists. Where are you going to find enough typists to replace all of it? We've got to do it. No, they had twenty-five million dollars we have to account for. We know where it is—it's down there—so we had to replace those things. So they did. So they found all the people—not found, they checked the 201 files and found out who could type. Just happened they come along

with mine. I was in training to be a paratrooper in the Bushmaster group. I was going to be in the Bushmasters.

O: To the Philippines.

K: In the Philippines, that's correct. They were training me for that. So they come along and I get my training in the Bushmaster, trying all of that stuff there because I was a good shot. I was physically all right, and I could speak Spanish, and in the Philippines they speak Spanish because that was the protectorate from the Spanish from the Inquisition way, way back. They look at my special abilities, Leo Krziza, typing, fifty words a minute. And I could type fifty words a minute. I learned to type before I went to Wisconsin to school, so I could do that. I had a portable typewriter, so bang! They grabbed me, put me in the truck, they run me around to—I don't know where I'm going. You don't ask the army anything. [laughter] That's right. You say yes sir, that's all you do. They put me in there and hauled me from Amador over to Corozal, finance office, in an old French building; it was brought in when the French had it. They brought it and put it together and we had that. And so I ended up instead of running a tank, being trained for a tank, I was running a Royal Typewriter. And that's what I got. So I spent the rest of my time in the army driving a Royal Typewriter.

O: All right. That's a good job to have, a necessary job for that.

K: That's right. Oh, yeah. A couple of times I tried to get out of the job and do something. [inaudible 12:45] The colonel said, no no.

O: He needed you.

K: That's right. He said, people like you, we need you. You help us on those files. Eventually I and about four other guys got all that stuff typed, about two or three years typing, but we got it all done. Got him out of the hole for twenty-five million dollars. You gonna to let me go?

O: Heck no. One of my favorite quotes is from General Pershing. He was the commander of the American Allied Expedition, yeah. At the end of World War I he was asked, how did the Allies win? He said two words: service and supply. He said, every war from this point on, nine out of every ten troops will be service or supply, and that's the key to winning a war, so that was what you were doing.

K: That's it.

O: One of the questions I was going to ask you, Mr. Krziza, you were in the Canal Zone of the Panama Canal during Pearl Harbor.

K: I was there.

O: That's very interesting to me because most of the testimony we have from Americans about Pearl Harbor and the impact it had—most of that testimony is from people who were in the States. You were in Panama. Do you remember how people reacted?

K: Absolutely. My two sisters, we all three, Esther, Ethel. Poor Esther's up there. I'll show you her picture up there. She had an interesting thing. We all three were in Panama on the seventh of December when that thing blew, boy. So we were there from the start of the World War until the end. We were there when Truman finally signed off on the wording on the **Missouri** that the war was over. We were there; we did it. We know what happened from the beginning to the end. And yes, we were caught with our pants down also, but the thing that saved our hide: where we are. [Laughter] If you know where Panama Canal is, that's gonna help this discussion because you know where I'm talking about. We were there, in Panama, and we were a hell of a long ways from Pearl Harbor and from Hong Kong, let's put it. How are you going to get an aeroplane plane that can fly from, let's say, Pearl Harbor or Hong Kong, through the Panama Canal, drop his bombs, and then fly back that way. That's fifteen thousand miles. The gas tank wouldn't take it, would it?

O: No.

K: So they couldn't do it. Well, our military down there understood that up to a point. We thought, well, maybe they'll add some rockets that they could use: MacArthur, they could get some rockets, if we can get to Honolulu. If we could get that we could show them some rockets of some sort. Now they don't have the rockets that we have now—the sophisticated stuff—but we could take some rockets and give them a bad time shooting over there and disable the Panama Canal. We knew it, and so we had blackouts there for a long time. They shut off all the electricity. Well that shuts off all the

refrigeration and every damn thing and all the operating room stuff at Gorgas Hospital and all of that stuff. [Laughter] That shuts everything down. You can't do that. No ships go through the canal? You can't do that.

O: So the war had an immediate impact.

K: That had an impact on the thing. We worked on twelve-hour basis up to a point, but could work it out where we had dimmed lights. We'd have red lights. Nothing could find us. We would hide for—this was a period probably for a couple years. Little by little, we realized that the Japs couldn't do anything to us. And so we opened up and had exposure to the world. We did have a scare on that thing for a couple years. Of course our food, we didn't have to worry about food. The food came from Argentina and it came from Australia, didn't it? Swift & Company and all of them, double hull ships would come on up and stop in Panama to get out, get some fuel and some fresh water before they went on up to New Orleans. We would say okay, we want so much butter, we want so much hamburger, we want so much steaks. We got our food before the people in the United States did, [laughter] but we didn't say anything about it, but that's the way the thing runs. It could come from Argentina, Swift and Company, and these guys, oh yeah, we'll take you through the Panama Canal. But we'd like to have this, this, this. And we'd give them warning; we'd alert them that we resupply our stuff with your stuff, ice. Oh sure, we'll give you your water and your gasoline. We got our gasoline from Aruba. You know where Aruba is? Down there.

O: Yeah.

K: Oh yeah, that comes up. We had a little tugboat. They were always in a little tanker. Twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, all the time that little tugboat was bringing in thousands of gallons of fuel up the Panama Canal so we didn't have any gas rationing. We didn't tell anybody that. Where could we go anyplace? We couldn't go anywhere. You can't go for a ride, the canal is only ten miles wide and fifty miles long, and at that time, there was no road across the Panama Canal at that time.

O: Oh, the highway hadn't been built yet.

K: That's right. So we didn't need much gasoline. So finally, just for appearances' sake, they gave us four gallons a week just to put it in the paper that we were giving it, and we were cooperating with the other poor people in the United States. Now, we could go a whole month on four gallon.

O: [Laughter] Yeah, because you didn't have to drive.

K: There was no place where we could go, except Fort Davis.

O: Yeah, it's interesting because I take it for granted because when I was there you have the trans-isthmian highway.

K: That's right. We got that after the war.

O: Well, how did you get around before that highway was

K: We didn't.

O: You didn't. You just stayed.

K: There was nowhere to go. Nope, you didn't. You could hike. I was a hunter; you could walk across, but you're not going to walk fifty miles to go deer hunting.

O: It's a jungle.

K: You stay on your side there, if you got enough place to deer hunt on your side. You're not going to go around to that guy's side. We got along. We put that out there. We had sincere people. You know the people down there in Panama are sincere people whether they're Panama Canal civilian or whether they're military, you're all together in that little group down there and that's it. You're all helping one another and taking care of one another and that's it.

O: But surely though after Pearl Harbor, Mr. Krziza, there was a fear that something could happen. I mean, if you were eating things from Australia, Australia had been pretty hard hit. So maybe rumors. . . .

K: There was rumors. We realized that, aw hell, we were so damn far. Nobody in the airplane could hit from any places. The airplane couldn't come over and bomb us and then go on home. He couldn't get to us. We were so remote.

O: After the war broke out though, were there people in the Panama Canal, say U.S. citizens who maybe left to go back to the U.S?

K: They wanted to. We had okay, bang! Okay, it was Sunday night, you know that. So boy, we all were just sitting there. We got the news about two o'clock in the afternoon on Sunday, the notice got into our area. So the MPs were picking up all the Japanese people to get them so they wouldn't sabotage the thing. Well, the thing was, the MPs couldn't tell a Japanese from a Chinamen, and we had a lot of Chinamen left over from digging the Panama Canal. So they had all the Chinamen picked up and put them in the concentration—not...quarantine camp there. They had maybe a half a dozen Japanese and they had probably two hundred Chinamen. Well, the Chinamen came; they helped build the Panama Canal, and they stayed there. So they looked around, well, we're not at war with China, we're at war with the Japanese. Where are the Japanese? Well yeah, there's one. [Laughter] So they thought that we didn't have any Japanese. There were so very few on there. Let's say we were aware of sabotage and we took care of things the best we could. But they were so informal that we just said, be careful is what we did and there was not any sabotage. We had a few Germans and of course. . . .

O: Honduras.

K: Yeah. You had that German thing and we knew that and we kept quiet about that and. . . .

O: They didn't do too much damage, really.

K: No damage. No sabotage or anything. No. We were so remote they couldn't do anything to us there because they'd have to get here, then they'd have to get back out. They couldn't do it. Same as the Bushmaster group that I was being trained for. What happened to that, it went down the tube. They didn't run it because what happened is they figured, well, okay, we got all these guys; we're dropping them down there, maybe a thousand paratroopers. When they use up their ammunition, what are they gonna do? No more ammunition.

O: No more supply.

K: That's right. No supply. No resupply. Sure you can eat bananas there for a long, long time, but we don't worry about the bananas. [Laughter] We were just going to have a bunch of guys and they're all going to get killed, so you can't do it. So there was the geography of the thing, isolated us from a lot of the activities that would be otherwise in the normal war you would have. We took care of it and we had just a small cadre of American. The Panama Canal took care of us very well because they always wanted to have a cadre of pale-faced Americans that they could trust. And we were that. So we got several benefits that the people in Washington D.C. did not get. One of them was a twenty-five percent differential. We had that for a long, long time because the people get down to Panama, oh hell, geez, we don't want this, and so they have to send them back. They have to repatriate them. What they did, they said well, no, we'll give you twenty-five percent differential. Oh well yeah, hell yeah, I'm going to stay. [Laughter] This is a good job. Better than Washington D.C. So we had some of those things, but

they kept a cadre of goods like your military. They kept some good guys. They kept you down there.

O: How did the war change the canal? At the end of the war, 1945, did the war change things there for you?

K: Well, it eased up on a lot of the old ideas as far as that's concerned. It limited these, but there is an agreement between the United States and Panama and those agreements always stay down there. You there when they had commissary books and the Panama Canal was using Panama Canal money? Were you there when they had changed that?

O: They had changed that because we used cash to my recollection.

K: You used cash. We didn't. We used Panama Canal money.

O: Oh, ok.

K: We could buy in the company store. If you didn't work for the Panama Canal, you couldn't buy in the company store because you didn't have their money. So we would use the commissary books. And scrip is really what it amounted to, and we would use that. So we had buy everything in the company store, and the company store had got everything in it, and our gasoline and our cigarettes. You couldn't buy booze and they couldn't sell booze in there. Word was, Uncle Sam is not in the booze-selling business. [laughter] They were putting ships through the canal, but all we had to do was go across

Fourth of July Avenue right there in Panama City and buy a bottle of booze for about five dollars. That's all you had to do. You could send your kid in there, and they could buy it for you, anything. So you had certain things and a few of the people that had gone like myself—I was in the army from Panama from 1943 to [19]46 practically. Three years more actually in there training and running my typewriter, of course. We didn't have a great big change on that. There was the third locks had started. Now that was Coclé. I don't know if you remember a town Coclé on the Pacific side. They were starting to get ships bigger because some of the aircraft carriers, they had a hell of a time getting them through the Panama Canal. They were built to go through the Panama Canal, the width and this and that, but when they put those machine gun turrets on the side of the aircraft carrier, it knocked every damn light post down.

O: [laughter] Because there were lights right there.

K: Yeah the lights were right there. From there here comes this big aircraft carrier and got all those gun turrets on the outside hanging out there, knocked them all down. They replaced them years later. They put them back in another spot because they get bent. There was adjustments that we had, but we were so remote that. . . .

O: Mr. Krzizia I was going to ask you about family life. Now I assume your sisters stayed with you.

K: Well, both of us were on the Pacific side, luckily, Esther was a teacher there at Diablo in Balboa. Ethel was at Gorgas Hospital; that's the main hospital on the Pacific

side. And I worked for Panama Canal. They moved me mostly. During the wars I was in the construction business there. I was an accountant, finance man. So I was taking care of whatever was going on around there. And I could speak Spanish so I was a good help. I would run—well, not run errands, but I would do field work because we had people from all over the world had come to work, to help build the Panama Canal. They stayed there. When the war was over, I stayed there too didn't I?

O: Yeah.

K: I wasn't going to go home. Hell no. They didn't need the Chinamen and the Hindus to see the stuff around. There's our seal of the Panama Canal. And I'll give you something here. . . .

O: Do you want to take a quick break?

[Break in interview]

K: This is the seal of the Panama Canal. Okay? That's the seal. Okay. Now you send that to, let's say, it went China. Let's say it went to China, maybe it was India, I don't know. Now we sent that picture to them and we said, we need some seals of the Panama Canal, so that's what they sent us. How did they make that seal?

O: The brass seal from this.

K: Yeah.

O: I have no idea.

K: They mailed that to India to the Hindus. Now how could you make that? Send that over to the Hindu. You saw the Hindus in Panama. We had contact with them.

O: So they crafted the. . . . Is that bronze?

K: Brass.

O: Brass.

K: Brass, right.

O: Okay. That's incredible craftsmanship.

K: How would you do that?

O: Well first of all, my question would be, where would you get that much brass?

K: Well, that could be the first thing. [Laughter] Where would you get the piece of brass that big? That's right.

O: Maybe from. . . . I know the Navy was disposing of a lot of equipment at the end of the war?

K: No this was all done over in India, or Hong Kong. Wherever it was.

O: It looks to me like it's handmade. I don't see a machine. Yeah, you got me totally stumped.

K: Everybody else had told me they don't know how. And that's it. That's what we sent them right there. You could see that's the seal of the Panama Canal. That's all we had. So we took it down down to a Hindu down on Central Avenue, you know where that is.

O: In Panama City?

K: Yeah in Panama City. And he sent it over to some people over in India. They got twelve of 'em.

O: Wow. That's really interesting. Did that used to be up on a building?

K: No.

O: That was always your. . . .

K: Just like that.

O: Okay. So after the war, Mr. Krziza, were you still doing the same kind of work?

K: Oh, yeah. I went back. The Panama Canal wanted me back. When they discharged me I had a paper that said the Panama Canal was responsible for Leo Krziza and the commanding general at Corey Heights said, he goes right back to Panama Canal. They had it all written down. I'm glad they did because then I knew I had a job. So I was a college graduate. They kept me because they could depend upon me; I was honest.

O: You were doing accounting work?

K: Doing accounting work. I had one interesting job I got. Accounting work you get bored with. Especially if it's the government, all you're doing is shoving figures from here, there. You're not counting any money. The tolls paid in cash or check by the agents and that kind of stuff. So, hell we didn't have anything, because all our money was paper.

O: So you were processing tolls as ships would come through.

K: No, that's the other guys. I wasn't. I was in the construction business. Actually, then I was running the motor pool. We had six hundred cars in our thing because we had the fire trucks, we had the garbage trucks, we got the police **detail**, we had the school buses, and we had the pilots' buses. We had 660 cars in our motor pool. So I had to send in certain reports to the general accounting office. I had a lot of paperwork. This is getting into another area of Panama Canal. After the war got settled and this and that, they wanted to get these third locks going again. They had **a run** at Coclé. They had started it there, and they'd put a big cut down there, but they—well, they weren't going to go that route; they're going to see if they could go and do it someplace else. So they were going to go down to Darien. I don't know if you've heard about Darien in Panama. It's down before you get to Colombia. Actually Turbo was down there, and so we were going to see about that. Or we were going to go into Nicaragua. Nicaragua: look there, Jesus Christ, you've got a great big mountain up here. That volcano's gonna do it. You don't want to build a hole down here and you got a volcano sitting up there.

So they knock off Nicaragua. We get up beyond where you were at El Salvador. You went up to El Salvador?

O: Mm-mm.

K: Yes. Well, we went up as far as there and looked to see if we could find a cut to go through. We wanted a new place to get in there. We had difficulty finding that. I was luckily a finance man. The Corps of Engineers was going to do the work. Panama Canal was going to help them. The Corps of Engineers was going to make the survey. You know the Corps of Engineers?

O: Yeah.

K: Okay, they can do it. The Corps of Engineers said, we need a lot of people to help us. Panama Canal, why do you loan us some of your people? Okay, yeah, we'll loan 'em. So who gets a job? Leo gets a job.

O: [Laughter] Leo gets the job.

K: Yeah, he's the finance man. He knows all about the finances. He can take care of that job. So I end up with running the field office down in the Panama Canal and I'm the finance man. I'm the big chief on the finance **stuff**. So I get some other people to help me. I got help from other people, girls. I'm not selling the bank account or anything like that. I'm here. My job on that was running the big money—millions of dollars—from the United States to the Corps of Engineers. Corps of Engineers would give millions of

dollars to the Panama Canal. Okay, Leo would take care of it going into Panama Canal, but Leo was also working for Corps of Engineers. So I had two hats that I would wear all the time. For Panama Canal, working for them, and Corps of Engineers. So I had a really fun job. That's how much territory I was running on that job. My job was finance man, with Bogotá, Columbia. Now you have an idea of where Bogotá, Columbia is.

O: Yeah.

K: Now that's the lowest spot that I would go to. Now I had some work that I did, working down there with some people down in there. I wasn't doing anything like that. It was all paperwork. My headquarters with the Corps of Engineers just happened to be a town up here in Florida, Gainesville or something.

O: [Laughter] Okay. You went all the way up. . . .wow

K: That's what my territory was. Wow, that's what I thought.

O: That's amazing.

K: That's amazing. So I could be in any one of those places and be on the job.

O: Were you working with contractors?

K: Well, we had a few contractors but not too many of them. The Corps was doing it. It was scientific but it was the Corps drilling. We had some of it. We had people doing some bulldozer work. We weren't gonna go out and buy a dozen bulldozers. Hell no. We let that thing on out.

O: Contracted it out.

K: Yeah, contracted it out. So that was that. To give you an idea of the rest of this: so I'm in charge of the money that was taken from—I didn't get the money from Jacksonville. No, they kept theirs, but they'd give us down in Panama Canal X million dollars to do our work down in the Isthmus of Panama and wherever we were working. So we would run that, and that was my job of taking care of that. I had what we called a petty cash fund because the people on the routes, the foremen, were running the lines. We had to survey it all, the Atrato River area. We didn't get down to the Amazon; we didn't get that far. I had to see if those guys were using their money as required and needed. So that was my job. I had to put a petty cash fund.

O: It must have been a substantial petty cash fund.

K: Yeah I had to take it on the route so they could hire somebody to haul this or do that. They had a lot of laborers, and they were chopping machetes and cleaning the things out. We had to pay all of them. You couldn't say, well you'll get a check from Jacksonville. No, no.

O: You had to pay them now.

K: That's right. That petty cash fund was thirty-five thousand dollars. Now, that's petty cash.

O: That was a lot of money back then.

K: That's right. [Laughter]

O: Even now that's a lot of money.

K: Well, one of the auditors of the Panama Canal was auditing me. I'm doing this.

O: So they kept an eye on you.

K: They kept an eye out for me. So he was making a report of some stuff like this for the G.A.O., the General Accounting Office, and he says, Leo, this item here you put down there, petty cash, is thirty-five thousand dollars. He says, couldn't we change that thing to read something different than petty cash? [Laughter] That doesn't quite fit. So, I don't know. We changed the wording a little bit so it wasn't petty cash.

O: Contingency fund, or

K: [Laughter] We had a nicer name for it. To me, it was petty cash, that's what it is. They come in and audit me. Sometimes I'd go down to San Blas and I'd audit them there, or go down to Bogotá or someplace like that where our foremen would have some money. The U.S. Weather Bureau had a lot of people checking the clouds and all of that stuff. All of that stuff you could check to see whether you want to build a canal.

O: What a huge operation. I cannot even imagine it. Do you remember when you went up to Gainesville, who you were working with?

K: I worked with the top guy in the finance of Corps of Engineers

O: OK so it was Corps of Engineers in Gainesville.

K: Corps of Engineers, yes, I was reporting to them. Really, even though I was working on the Panama Canal, Panama Canal had assigned me to Gainesville or to Corps of Engineers. I had my Panama Canal house, and all that stuff still the same, but instead of going to work for Panama Canal, really, I went to work with my boss as a colonel in the Corps. I worked for Colonel Sutton; he was my boss. Another guy in Gainesville, he was my boss, too. It was a very complicated situation but very well-organized. It lasted over four years—I want to say five years.

O: Wasn't it completed in the early [19]90s?

K: No they looked it over and, I don't know if politics got into it or what happened, but they said they would hold off on the thing. We were going to do it nuclear. Our surveys was, what are we gonna do nuclear? Well, you don't want to blow a hole in there and it turns out it's a water hole and you don't have anything to dig out. You don't want something like that. You wouldn't want to make a canal in the high Amazon River. [Laughter] How are we going to do that?

O: Yeah, if the water table is too high.

K: That's right. You couldn't do it. So they finally got that, and then some of the countries were afraid of the carryover or the medical things that would happen with having nuclear operations in their territory. Some of these little countries, they didn't know whether that would be healthful or not. But this was after the war, so some of the

counties didn't want trust the country. Especially these Latin American countries, they have a revolution and that's it, they're gone. They're not dependable. We had Colombia and Panama, not Nicaragua because we wouldn't take that because the volcanoes were up there. In Panama there wasn't anything good or anything better than what we had already. In Panama, they'd have nuclear damage for our country for a hundred years or a thousand years if we have all this nuclear activity taking place. So they kind of got scared out of it and then **they get probably the money** deal but we didn't get that far. That was somebody else's politics up. We were **doing the** work down in the field. That's where we were.

O: Once that project ended, Mr. Krzizia, did you continue in accounting?

K: Oh, they just told me to go back to Panama Canal. They had my job left over for me. They couldn't fill it. So I had my job and I just went back. I only had three more years before I retired. So **hell**, then I'd be fifty-five years old. So hell, the Panama Canal was glad to get me back. I got fifty-five and I thought well, boy, I better pick up the chips and run.

O: What year was that? Around what time?

K: The Panama Canal?

O: When you hit fifty-five.

K: With retirement. I could get full retirement. I could get full civil service retirement there. Got a good retirement: this is federal civil service. Thirty-two years is what I had and that's a pretty good retirement. I had that and of course, then I had the health benefits that are all to me there. Yeah, I thought, shoot, am I going to say no? Hell no. I had thirty-two years working and that was enough.

O: In all those years, Mr. Krziza, in the canal did you notice any changes between the time you started there and the time you retired? Had life began to change?

K: Yes. There were the treaties. They made the treaty the first time, 1904. They said, okay, Panama, we'll give you up for a hundred years; Uncle Sam, you can have the treaty to put this canal through. So, Goethals and **old big wheel**, they got together and said, okay, we can do that. We can build that canal, but how are you going to do it? We're going to get the plans. Who in the hell's got the plans to dig a canal fifty miles long? Who's ever done it? Nobody's ever done it. Pretty damn hard, isn't it, huh? They never had any plans. Well, we'll get some engineers that will do it for us. Where are you going to find some experienced civil engineers that have ever dug a canal that's fifty miles long? That's right. These engineers from the Corps of Engineers, Goethals, and all those guys, they looked the area over. Did they have any aeroplanes going over and surveying it?

O: No.

K: No, they had nothing. Now what the hell are you going to do? You go over and you look it all over and say, well, this is all you have to do to this. This part is all right. How about those big hills? What are you going to do about those? Well, you go to move a hill don't you? Okay, we can move a hill. How are you going to move it? You take a bucket and put some sand in it. Take it over here and dump it. Then you're going to take a pail and fill it up full of sand and you're going to take it way over here. Oh, well we're going to build a little railroad on that land. Okay, we'll build a little railroad and take it over here half a mile and we'll just keep doing that and maybe in four or five years we'll have it done. Well ten years later they had it done. They got up in the hills, they got some dynamite; we're going to blast that. So they blast it. These big hills. Bucyrus-Erie—I don't know if you remember—Lorain was another one: great big steam shovels. They could probably pick up four or five ton at a time. So they built a little railroad. Vanderbilt and Carnegie, you'll run into them way back. They built the railroad that ran across from Colón to Balboa. They built a railroad fifty years before the Panama Canal. Those guys in New York, they bought that because of gold. They were bringing the gold up from down in Peru, down where we're going to be going, down in gold mines. Bringing it on up, crossing that little isthmus we have there and broadening it and sending it to New York. If they can do it, okay, we can too. We got going and just kept following that idea. Eventually, you're gonna have all of this here over on the **[inaudible 55:38]**. You've just got to keep going.

O: Mr. Krziza, do you want to take maybe a short break and then we'll do another ten or fifteen minutes?

K: Oh, I don't care.

O: How are you feeling?

K: You know how I'm feeling. I'm ninety-one years old.

O: You look great. I just want to make sure I'm not. . . .

K: I'm getting a little tired from talking, but when I start talking Panama Canal, I get going on it. I don't stop.

O: You get excited.

K: Excited. That's right. I got her so excited. So now what? We've made two or three trips down. She knows more about the Panama Canal now. She wrote a dissertation on it. Get him one of those letters. I caught all of those fish. Go over and look at 'em, boy, you'll see 'em.

O: Mr. Krziza it says that you would deep-sea fish, you caught a marlin. What was the biggest one you ever caught and how did you catch it?

K: Well 552 was the biggest one. I got one 590, that one was the biggest one. That picture's up there.

O: That looks like a great white shark. That's huge.

K: No, it's not. That's a black marlin. They're all black marlin.

O: About how long would you say, about?

K: Well that's about fourteen feet.

O: Fourteen feet long. How on earth did you catch a fish that big?

K: You've gotta wear him out. You can't hold him in. I had an eighty-pound test line, was all I had on that thing. On a couple of the other ones, I had a 132-pound test line. Then, we had monofilament lines, so they could cut the water better and wouldn't drag and you wouldn't have any troubles.

O: Yeah, I always wondered about that because I grew up near Seattle. We would catch salmon, maybe twenty pounds, and our lines would break all the time.

K: Yeah. The drag on them.

O: I cannot even imagine catching a fish that big with an eighty-pound fish line. Do you just let it go?

K: See the reel there? The reel is sitting around here somewhere.

3rd person: There's a reel over here.

K: Where's the reel, honey?

4th person: So this is your sister, Ruth?

K: That's my ex-wife. That's a 485-pounder. She left me for another guy.

3rd person: I guess they usually do! [Laughter]

K: Here's a 540. This fish right here is 368. I was gonna put that one but it wouldn't fit here. I would have to cut a hole in the house. This is one of the big ones...See the reel?

O: Oh yeah.

K: That's the eighty-pound test line right there. We had very sophisticated equipment. I had the best; got it from Miami all the time.

O: I never used a test this big.

K: Here's the 552. That won all the prizes.

O: Wow a black marlin. Sixteen feet, 540 pounds, thirty-five minutes.

K: It's hard to get the hook in 'em. Sometimes if you hook him up in his eye or his ear or something like that. **[inaudible 01:00:00]** You're not going to be there very long, see? So you have to wear him out, or the line wears out, before you wear out, before the pole wears out. There's some give, see, on that thing there. I don't think I ever gave up on a marlin. I gave up on a shark. I had a shark that probably weighed maybe eight hundred or a thousand pounds. I had that thing on my line for probably about four hours. I thought I'd shoot it. No point in trying to get this darn guy. We were out here

catching fish, and all I was trying to do is lift up a great big hunk of meat from the bottom of the ocean. [Laughter]

(elapsed time: 1:00:45)

O: That's also a big hook.

K: Yeah. See the hook. That's the kind of hook you use.

3rd Person: That's heavy, boy. You have to have a pretty strong person to bring in something like that.

O: What do you put on that hook?

K: Live bonito is the best thing to do. It's kind of big. He swims around and he attracts the big fish. They come up and get him, and then you have your troubles. You don't know what you have. It could be sharks for all you know. Sometimes you get down in Colombia and there's a lot of sharks. It's in the current. In Panama we had the middle of December to about the middle of February, the current was full of marlins and that's when we did our big fishing.

3rd person: Honey, he knew about the shoes.

K: Yeah. Here, I saw you looking at this. I will see whether your history is all right. Did you ever hear, London bridges falling down, London bridges.

O: Yeah.

K: [Laughter] You hear that? All right. You'll never know about this short thing. Those two, I'll say, schooners...what the hell we call the darn thing. . . . Those things are called emblems. Those two emblems, you know what happened to the London Bridge about ten, fifteen years ago? A wealthy landowner bought it because they were going to tear it down in London. It's right around London, where the London Bridge is. He was going to tear it down, and this one developer, who lived in Fort Worth in Texas, he remembered that because he was a kid and they used to sing, London bridge falling down falling down falling down London Bridge falling down my fair lady. He remembered that and he found out they were going to destroy the bridge, he said, oh no, I'll buy it from the developer of that area. He bought the bridge, had it packed up, dismantled it. Nice load of boxes. They were all coded. They shipped it over. They put it over in Arizona and they reconstructed it over the California River. So London Bridge is now in the United States. Long story short, I saw them before they were unloading it from the boxes there, because I was living in California at that time. This was right on the border between California and Texas. What happened is the boxes were there and they built the bridge. Now I was traveling in between California and Texas, let's say...this darn thing, I get my states mixed up. From Texas, the next one is—

3rd person: California?

O: Louisiana?

K: Louisiana. That's it. They were putting it all together and they had these things left over, and they just threw them on the trash. When I was going through one day to a swap meet.

3rd Person: In California.

K: In California. I saw all these things in a swap meet, some big emblems. They were dirty and they were rusty and everything. I thought, well I'm a trash man like that, so I bought them from the guy. He happened to live near me in California, and so I was talking, and he said, you remember one day that you bought those emblems? I says yeah, I got them. He says, well, here's the story on those things. Those were the emblems on the bridge, this way, and then there was one at that end of the bridge. They were. And they got to the end of putting the bridge all together, and they looked so cruddy, and so lousy.

3rd Person: It was all rusted.

K: They did, they put them in the trash.

O: That's incredible.

K: He got them out of the trash, and he had them. Well, I bought them from this guy who had them in the trash, whose wife said, you've had these in the garage now for two years, and you haven't done anything with them. Get rid of them. So he sends them to this swap meet as we all them, and I buy them. I didn't know when I bought them what

they were. I knew that I was going to have a nice emblem on my house. Then I find this other guy that told me what they were. I got them, gave them to one of these fellows that rebuilds cars. He worked in a garage that does that. So he said, well, I'll clean them up for you. He takes his sandblaster, and he sandblasts them all, cleans them all up. I take them to another guy to get them painted. Those are where they are. [Laughter] So those are from London Bridge.

O: That's incredible.

K: That's right. Nobody ever had them.

O: Wow. This thing here—

K: It's locked in there. The kids I was afraid would play with it on the door, and you know what they would do. Kill a kid.

3rd Person: Did you see his plaque? We got that on the ship.

O: This one?

3rd Person: **[inaudible 1:08:43]** of recognition. No, and the Roosevelt Medal for outstanding work.

K: Yeah, for the work I was doing there.

O: The inner Roosevelt circle.

3rd person: This was taken. . . . look how young he is. In [20]06, that was about the last of his graduation class. We went back to Michigan. Then they got the school torn down. He got the plates made up and gave each one. He paid for the whole thing.

4th person: Of all the crew he was the youngest one.

3rd Person: Yeah, he was even younger. At a restaurant, we ate downtown in Michigan and I said, he looks like an owner. They all had gray hair, they all wore glasses, and he looks like he's the owner of the restaurant. Hell, look at that.

O: That's amazing. So that was your high school, Mr. Krziza?

K: Yeah, that's right.

3rd Person: It's torn down, and I think they are going to send him a **[inaudible 1:09:36]**.

K: Sixtieth year. Boy you look back: sixty years ago you graduated from high school. Holy smokes.

3rd Person: You want to look at the house now since we're walking around? Get a little exercise.

K: Okay.

[Break in interview]

K: Actually the Panamanians have done a very good job of realigning the activities of the Panama Canal Zone. We were limited by the treaty of expanding. We had to do it the old way and that's the only way, so we were not competing against them. But now, Panama has much more freedom and much more know-how. Like people like you guys. You can go in there now and do some things, whereas I couldn't. I couldn't do the publishing like you're going to do. I couldn't do that. I could do it in my mind, but I could not go out and make public statements and printing and that kind of stuff. You can do that now. There's much more freedom on that. That allows Panama to develop a lot more than what it was because it was done the old way. That's all we could do. We had our own company store. We didn't have to buy in the company store; we could go into Panama, but the company store was about half of what this outfit would charge us.

O: Do you miss Panama?

K: Yes, I do. But I'm happy I'm here, because for one thing the doctors and the medical attention that you get here, especially at this stop and up in your area too, is great. What they do is what it's called--there's other elderly people from New York and those places coming down because of the weather. They get down here and it's easier living down here than it is up in New York, and maybe a little cheaper too. They can do that so that brings down people to knowing what's going on down here.

O: Do you keep in contact with other Americans who served in the canal?

K: Well yes, we do, through our reunions and our associations. We're one great big family, that's it, and some of these trips that we take on the Panama Excursions.

3rd Person: Cruise lines.

K: Yes, we do because that's our family. That was us. So all these, like Joe Wood and those guys. Hell, Joe was this big when I saw him the first time, or no well he was probably about this big the first time I saw him. But I knew his father, I worked with his father. His father was an auditor.

O: There's a fraternity of people who worked in the Canal Zone.

K: Absolutely. It's a great big fraternity. We all had the same goals and our requirements were the same so we treated everybody decently. If you ever been on one of our Panama trips?

O: Not yet. [Laughter] I'd like to though. That would be fun.

K: They ought to give you guys. . . . You fellas get a trip to see how---or see some of our meetings. Now are meetings are not that important but to get the feeling. It'd be good for you fellas to give you a trip out of it to see what Panama atmosphere is like. Now you've been here for two or three hours now. You know how I feel about it, and what you're going to get out of me from here. I'm sure that you've got a different, say apprehension of what Leo is compared to what you had four hours ago. The guy can't

shut up. He just keeps talking. [Laughter] He's been there, he has a **[inaudible 1:14:36]**.

4th Person: I learned quite a lot during the reunion. It's a big family. Everybody knows one another in the reunion.

3rd person: That's why I wrote my book. I'm part of them but I didn't work with them. They let me into their lives, too.

K: Yeah, it's a fantastic group. I know more of them. It's, well, thirty-two years I was down with them and most of these people were down there. My ex-wife, she was thirty-seven years. She had to work five more years than I did because she was five years younger. So when we said goodbye, okay, I got out of there when they were passing out the retirement checks. Boy, I was in the front line. I've got to get mine before somebody else does. But she had to wait until she was fifty-five. Now she had thirty-seven years. Now you can figure thirty-seven years federal civil service.

O: That's pretty good.

K: You better believe it.

O: Good retirement.

K: You don't have to worry about anything. You get all your medical for nothing. You've got that under Medicare, and your other stuff, everything. Actually, you're a different group as far as that's concerned.

4th Person: Do you guys have any children?

K: No. There were eight kids in our family and my sister said, that's enough. We don't want anymore. Esther and that. Oh, I was going to tell you about that one flag up there. Esther. This is an interesting little bit of thing, how things can happen in your life. She was there, war broke out. We were all down there. She was a school teacher. What happened is, of course we were all working for the federal government right there, so automatically we were in it. We don't have to sign up for anything on there because we're already on it. We were already working for the federal government. Esther, she was schools. Well, schools didn't need her too much after a while because the kids had all been repatriated and sent back to the United States. So the schools kind of closed down. Her job got, well, we can get along without Esther, but we're not going to let her go. They never let anybody go. So they put her into the censors' group that read all the letters to all the boys and all the mail going in and out. She's a college graduate so they put her in that group, assigned her to that. Same pay, same thing; she's working for the U.S. Navy now. She was working on the Navy, censoring all the mail. Well, come to find out later on that well, Navy boys are not sending any mail home. They don't write home to anything. She doesn't have too much work to do. They were right. Sailors weren't writing home to their mothers every week or something. I don't know, about once a year they'd send Mother a letter or a card or something. So they said, okay, the air force over here, Albrook Field. Do you know where Albrook Field is?

O: Yeah.

K: Well, they send her to Albrook Field. Panama Air Depot, P.A.D. Oh yeah, plenty to do all over there. They transfer her and now she's working for the air force. The war gets all over, she's got a discharge from the U.S. Navy and she's got a discharge from the U.S. Army Air Force. Now how many women in World War II had discharges from two war departments?

O: Not many.

K: None of them. Nobody would. She had that. She had a discharge from both of them. [Laughter] The navy somehow lost her papers in the transfer from the navy to the air force someplace along in there. Well the navy was carrying her as A.W.O.L. for ten or fifteen years. [Laughter] They couldn't find her. They didn't know what happened to her. They checked everything, and the navy had this lady, Esther Condry—probably she was Krzizia then—lost. They did every darn thing. Checked every source and they couldn't find her. In a publication of the navy, or military, this one writer wrote the case of the missing woman. The navy lost a seaman and they can't find her. The navy is carrying this seaman here now for ten or fifteen years and they can't find her. Nobody lost her. This gal got lost. The navy was amazed that they could lose a person and never find them. Well, this writer of a little newspaper or something knew Esther a little bit. He read that article. There's a navy girl missing. He said, well, Esther was in the navy. He takes that paper over and is sitting there in the coffee shop, and he says, you kind of fit that description here. She read it, she said, you better believe it. I fit that description because that is me. It went up to this point and then dropped off. She says,

absolutely because they transferred me from the fifteenth naval district to the P.A.D. And then when she's P.A.D., they lost it. They couldn't put it together anymore, so they never didn't know who lost her. Did the P.A.D. lose her or did the fifteenth naval district lose her? They could never figure it out. It came on out that they had found this, so they sent it into the Navy Department. By God, the Navy Department gave her a discharge from the U.S. Navy. So she's got discharges from the U.S. Navy, and from the P.A.D. from the United States Air Force. You don't find a woman that served in two departments of the army.

O: That's incredible.

K: Yeah. [Laughter] She was great. So she got a free ride down to Peru down at Machu Picchu. Of course, she worked for the Army Air Force and they had a plane, the missions they called them. So they took some of the girls from P.A.D., Panama Air Depot, and put them on the plane. It was going to be down there for about a week. The girls just got on there, they were military girls. They didn't have uniforms on or anything. They went down there, and then the plane comes back, the girls come back. They were on duty. She got a kick out of that. As a result of that trip I went down after. I caught a ride down on a missions plane and went down. I was down in Lima, Peru when the crewmen signed the papers terminating the war the fifteenth of August, 1945.

O: The town that I grew up in was Bremerton, Washington, shipyard town. For about three decades or so, the *U.S.S. Missouri* was mothballed in our hometown. As kids, it was the only field trip we had. We would go every year, two or three times a year, to the

U.S.S. Missouri. Then when the *Missouri* left, it was re-commissioned. They sent it to the Gulf, shelled Lebanon, came back. The town tried to get it back because it was the best thing going for that town. The only reason you ever would have come to Bremerton is to see the *Missouri*. We never got it back though. Instead we ended up getting the *U.S.S. Turner Joy*, which was one of the ships, remember the North Vietnamese had supposedly fired on?

K: Oh yeah.

O: The Gulf of Tonkin incident. Yeah. And then it turned out to be a big. . . .

K: Yeah.

O: So anyway. We always joke in my town how we lost this magnificent battleship and instead we got this little knickknack ship instead. [Laughter]

K: Yeah. My brother, he got in the navy. He had to lie about three or four things to get in. But he was too young and everything, but he got in the navy. He ended up at Farragut, Idaho. He said that was an awful place. He just hated that thing. Then they got done with him there, so he went out, we were in Bremerton. I'd had a weekend off, or he's off for a few days. So he took some fishing tackle with him. He went down to the river or wherever it was and by God, he caught some salmon. He was bringing those salmon home, and this fellow stops the car and says, hey salmon, where'd you get those? Oh, I got them. What are you doing to do with them? Oh I'm going to take them back and probably give them to the cook or something, I don't know. Oh well, I'll give

you so much money for them. The civilian there, boy, he got some money on him gave it to my—said well, that's all gravy. From then on, Chris, he liked to go fishing there. Well, that didn't last too long because he got transferred. When they found out he had a bum knee, they took him out of sub school and couldn't do it. They didn't want him in the submarines anymore because he hurt his knee one time on the football field. They transferred him down to San Diego. He got down to San Diego: oh boy this is nice. He said, I'm going to sign up for thirty years. He said, this is not Farragut, Idaho. He said, this is great. Palm trees here, everything's all nice and white. He said, sure, I'm going to stay here. I'm not going to worry about going to work out here. This navy, I'm going to make a career of it.

O: In San Diego, yeah.

K: Yeah, he was glad. We got his letter in the mail eventually. He was complaining about Farragut, Idaho, how bad it was. The snow and slush.

O: Idaho's tough.

K: It was bad. Now all of a sudden he's in San Diego and oh man, he's going to have this forever. He's going to sign up thirty years right now.

O: Yeah my dad was in the naval reserves and every summer, his ship went down to San Diego and we always called it his vacation. Two weeks, what more could you ask for?

K: Oh yeah. It was fantastic. He loved it.

O: Mr. Krziza, I know we have taken up a lot of your time, but were there any final things you wanted to say?

3rd person: Thirty-two years of vacation.

O: Thirty-two years of vacation. You went on a thirty-two year vacation.

3rd Person: That's all it amounts to, you know?

O: In Panama. [Laughter]

K: Oh, I know what she said. Well, one of the things I put in some of my communication, you don't realize this, that to me, Panama Canal was a thirty-two year vacation with pay. [Laughter] That's what I felt.

O: Wow. I'd like to get that kind of vacation.

K: Well from what you know, wouldn't that be right?

O: Yeah but I was in the army. They sent us out in the jungles of South America.

K: Well I was in the jungle. I used to deer hunt in jungles down there.

O: Yeah, there's good deer hunting town there. Shoot.

K: Hell, I know the jungles. That's why they were going to send me with the Bushmasters group to the Philippines. Because I was a good shot, and I knew the

jungles and I spoke Spanish. My characteristic thing—you can put that on there—that to me, my tour of duty in Panama was a thirty-two year vacation with pay.

3rd Person: Say something in Spanish and then say what you just said in English. Say something in Spanish.

K: Yo habla Español. **[inaudible, Spanish, 1:31:05]** Getting stuff done, you're way, way down in ninety degrees from the Equator. You're away from all of this stuff here. I was a student, I was a scholar. What I did, I studied Spanish before I went down there. I was at University of Wisconsin, studied, and Wayne University of Detroit. I had studied some Spanish, but I get down to Panama, and I'm dealing with a gang, a bunch of people. The fellows were from Salvador, they were from Ecuador, they were from Nicaragua, all the lands. Naturally, it starts coming back to you, so I got my Spanish back in a hurry. Then I thought, well, I am going to go on vacation. One thing Panama Canal did, was you have sick leave and then you have vacation leave. You have two things, two vacations. You had sick leave, you take that off, and the other one you get two weeks' vacation. Well, Panama Canal didn't like to give all of that leave, and so people weren't showing up for work. Girls were knocking off every day. So what they said, well, what we're going to do is take a fixes for leave, so you have vacation leave. There's no sick leave. So whatever you have is all yours, and whenever you leave any vacation time, we're just going to pay you cash for it, so you don't have to worry about it. Well, holy smokes, and you'd take that. And there were some other things. If you go below the Tropic of Cancer or above the Tropic of Cancer you get an extra five days'

vacation. If you take the Panama-aligned ship, you know that doesn't cost you anything. The ship's going there anyway so you can ride for nothing. But we'll give you five more travel days. So you add that thing on up. What you did, you worked for ten months, and you got two months' vacation with pay.

O: That's not bad.

K: That's right. It was all legal as far as that's concerned. Nothing illegal. But what it did, it brought the people to work. Nobody would take a day off and throw it away as far as that's concerned because they had a stomach ache or something like that. Uh-uh. They saved all their vacation. The first big trip that I took—well, I took some trips to New York—didn't cost you anything. The ship's going there anyway. So you ride up and down on the thing. You stop in Haiti. You don't have any trouble on that. You save your vacation. I'll take two months this year, I'm going to save that, two months next year, now I've got four months. I'm going to keep that in the bank. In case I do get sick, I've got four months' vacation with pay all the way through. I don't have to worry about that. Then I got that in the bank. This next year, I got two years, I have to take this one here. I thought well, I've got these two years, and this; I can do it and I can build this up again. So I thought, well hell, I'll take a trip around the world. [Laughter] I did. I took a trip around the world. Where are we going to send your paychecks? I don't know. I'm going to be going around the world. How the hell do I know? So just hold the paychecks. I went clear around the world. Started down in Mexico City--that's where I picked up my airplane ticket--and I went around the world with my wife. Up to New York and then we

got on our company ship and rode back here. One hundred and one days. When I got back I had a stack of paychecks that big and she had a stack of paychecks that big.

O: That's a hard life.

K: Paid it all, the Panama Canal. Why would I want to give up a job like that?

[End of Interview]

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