

Samuel Proctor Oral History Program
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Interviewee: Robin Morland

Interviewer: Sarah Blanc

Date of Interview: July 7, 2011

B: Good afternoon this is Sarah Blanc and I'm here with Mr. Robin Morland and it is July 7, 2011. Mr. Morland, can we start just with some basic details about where you were born and your parents' history.

M: Sure. Okay, my mother came to Panama in 1916. She was a daughter of one of the first fifty Panama Canal pilots taking ships through the Panama Canal. She was four years old and she came down with three other sisters, a brother, and her mother and dad from Brooklyn, New York. My father came out in 1929 to work in a shipping agency in Panama—not the company that he actually came out to work for two years later on a permanent basis. Firstly, he came in 1929 to work for another company on a two-year basis, and then he was finished and because they had other people coming out, so he went back to England. He was from across the Mersey of Liverpool. He was from a place called Birkenhead. Anyway, so he was sad to go back because he had already met my mother who was like a junior in high school. Anyway, they wrote long-hand, of course, letters and what have you, but then the company that he came out to permanently work for in 1931 hired him on a permanent basis and that was the condition. If he came out, that it wouldn't be a two-year, it'd be permanent. So the company that I work for now, Charles Butler Fenton and Company, CB Fenton & Company, hired him to come out and so he started to work there in 1931. By that time my mother had graduated from high school in the Panama Canal Zone. She was,

like, nineteen and they married in 1933. My father was working on the Atlantic side but my mother was going to high school on the Pacific side, but anyway.

When they got married in [19]33, my mother came over and in short they had six kids, two boys and four girls. My father moved up the ladder with CB Fenton & Company to the point where he purchased the company in 1958. Then I started working in 1963. I'm a Miami Hurricane, sorry. But anyway—

B: So is my dad [laughter].

M: I went to school there for a year and then I went to a small school in North Carolina, and then after--I wasn't really school material, I was okay. So I went back to work and started in 1963 and I'm still with the same company today, with the exception of two years in the late [19]60s I went to South Africa. Anyway, so I came back and started working again after the twenty months, and I've been there ever since. We were always deemed by the Panama Canal authorities, being the Canal Zone government or the Panama Canal Company, to be somewhat integral to their operation of the vessels through the Panama Canal. So many shipping agents were allotted certain areas of the Canal Zone to have their businesses, and we could also have homes in the Canal Zone. Not of Panama Canal housing or anything, but separate areas where we could build our own places of residence. So we were very fortunate in that regard. We were issued, I think they called them authority cards in those days, but we could shop in the commissaries. We could do everything that dependants of Panama Canal Company personnel also could do. So we were Zonians and very happy and

proud to have been one like all of my American friends. I think and talk like an American, but I am not. I am British and Panamanian. I'm still down there and I am working with the company, trying to sell it now. We're on good feet and we're on a former U.S. Air Force base now, which is a economic zone. So we still work with the ships going through the Panama Canal and I think that the family and everybody who was born and raised down there, all the dependants of Panama Canal Company personnel have been very fortunate to have been raised in the Canal Zone and have had the experience of going into the Republic of Panama and seeing how life was over there. The benefits and the good life that the Americans were able to lead. It showed how lucky that we were. So, being in a private company in the Canal Zone, my mother and father partook much in life in the Republic of Panama, whereas I feel that there were a few Zonians that wouldn't go outside the area of the five miles each side of the canal. But it was a very unique utopia place because we had our own police, our own customs, our own--and I'm sure you've heard the whole list. But for private companies, we didn't have to pay any corporate income tax or personal income tax to the United States. That is a—

B: [laughter] That's the first time I've heard that one. That's a big deal.

M: Because I'm probably different from the other Zonians that you meet here that are all in here. But I'm just like them and I know many of them and their family, but I was different as well as my sisters and my brother. So I have always been proud to be a Zonian just like them and they've accepted me. But Joe Wood is

very special, and he's a very good friend of my brother-in-law Burt Mead who's a Seminole. Anyway, they live together over in Tallahassee—not together but houses side by side. Basically I went to high school there and went to UM for a year and then a small school in North Carolina and then I came back to work in Panama in 1963, and I've lived there ever since. Right now it's a booming area. The Canal under Panamanian hands has really exceeded many expectations, and they're doing a wonderful job. Whereas under American government it was doing the job it was supposed to do, but it wasn't a business. Therefore decisions may take a day or two, whereas in Panama now they make decisions like that. Okay, you can, well, this ship is deep down and you've got to get that fixed otherwise you can't transit. But they'll give decisions within hours. Whereas with the U.S. government, you know, it was, I don't want to say bureaucracy, but well, I have to call my boss but he's not in this afternoon, I'll speak to him in the morning. They wouldn't even call him at night. So when the Panamanian government took over in the year 2000, we've seen a lot of different things happen. That's one of the reasons my brother retired; he preferred to work under the American system. But anyway, things are going well and they're widening the Canal, as you know, Sarah, and it's a very busy place to be right now. Apart from the canal, other things are just growing, their banking and investment and what have you. So, we feel fortunate to have been brought up in that area; born and raised there and to have been a Zonian, I'll always be proud of that. There are fewer of us as time goes on, you know. I'm very happy about the Panama Canal

Museum and you all picking up the ball to help out and the support of the museum because the American era should never die. And you all should be with that 100 percent. And it's very easy for me just to say that, but it's very important and the Republic of Panama has a tendency to—they feel that their ancestors were coerced to give this piece of land in exchange for some money maybe underhanded to a Panamanian official, and to protect them against the Colombian government who—Panama was just a province of the Colombian government. So, a lot of the Panamanians blame their forefathers for having—but where would they—I mean, they are making so much money with the canal now. But, you know, they just don't like to come forward and admit that. And they consider the liberation of Panama in 1989 when Noriega was taken out by the Americans, they deem it an invasion to their sovereign territory. So, there is some hard feelings there, and I can understand both sides. But without the USA, there would be no Panama Canal, there would be no Panama Canal operated very well now by Panamanians. They don't want to include that in a lot of their history. They have a museum down there—I don't know if you've been down there—but they have a museum in Panama. But they touch on the American era but not in the way that they should be proud of, it's part of their history. It's fact. But anyway, maybe I'm talking too much.

B: Oh no, that's the point [laughter].

M: Anyway, it is operating well now, and I'd have to say even a little bit better, quicker. While they widen the canal, ships are still getting through. In this very

fast world now with technology, you just have to be, in our business, you have to be on the ball. We have a lot of competition. What we do, Sarah, we receive tolls, money on behalf of our principles. We probably do about a 110, 105, 110 ships a month. We're probably number six out of about twenty-five or thirty agents. We had bigger business before. We had Maersk who opened up their own office after seventy-four years we had them. You've heard of Maersk Shipping?

B: Unh-uh.

M: Anyway, they were the owners of that ship that got hijacked off of Somalia about two years ago. Maersk Alabama I think it was.

B: Okay.

M: But anyway, we had some good clients and we lost them because they—not through anything that we did wrong—but we lost them because the world got smaller and they opened their own offices there. However, so, we more or less babysit a ship when she comes to the canal or he comes there—whatever you want to call a ship. So the owner will send us tolls money. Instead of dealing directly with the canal they go through an agent. So we receive that money from the owner, and then we pay the tolls to the Panama Canal authorities so that that ship can go through the canal. And then we take men to the doctor, we deliver cash to the master, if they need provisions in the way of foods or whatever they need, we ensure that they receive these requests prior to their transit of the canal because once you transit you wanna go straight to sea instead of anchoring and waiting for—so you want to utilize the waiting time to start transit, to take care of

all the requirements, taking men to the doctor and what have you and then back to the ship before the transit. Because normally they're delayed now about forty-five—uh, sorry—twenty-four to forty-eight hours in transit. So they come in and they wait if they're not pre-booked. You can also book a ship or make a reservation to go through the canal a lot quicker than others, so you pay a premium to go through the canal with a reservation system. That's basically what we do. We pay all the invoices, on behalf of the ship owner, and for this we assess a fee. Regardless of how big or small a vessel may be. It could be a yacht, it could be a 200,000 ton ship. All the paperwork is the same, so we charge a fee, not in accordance with the vessels size, but in accordance with the work that we have to do. It's very competitive.

B: And you said there's twenty or thirty so companies that do something like this?

M: Yeah. I'd say twenty-five shipping agencies and we're just one.

B: And do they vary drastically in the type of services that they provide or are they pretty much the same responsibilities?

M: Same responsibilities, same responsibilities. It used to be we handled more Scandinavian companies but it's now basically European, which Scandinavia is part of that. European and Asian, and not too many Americans because the Merchant Marine of the United States is not too much anymore. Yes, all the agencies are supposed to do the same kind of work and many ship owners may not be happy with one agent and may change to another because of the poor service they may receive from another agent. Our tariffs are back to 1988. It's

very competitive so we don't increase our rates because we don't wanna give more room to those that will undercut, you know. It's tough. It's very tough, but we're doing okay. We're doing all right.

B: Yeah. To go way back, you went through all of your schooling, up until high school in the Zone. Correct?

M: Yes, I did.

B: So, you were in American schools that whole time?

M: Yes, I was. And, the Canal Zone, or Panama Canal people that was part of there—they were dependents of their parents working for the Panama Canal so it didn't cost them anything. But, my dad being private business, he had to pay tuition. But, he was happy to do that because the schooling was so much better in those days then what we would get in the Republic of Panama.

B: And you also had wealthy Panamanian students that would come to those schools too, right?

M: Yes, that is very correct. Lots of Panamanians went to those schools.

B: Okay.

M: And they also paid tuition just like my dad did.

B: Was it a little more socioeconomically diverse than it sounds or was it pretty much like the top tier of the Panamanian students?

M: Uh, I would say definitely . . . no, I would say there was a lot of top tier that didn't go to the Canal Zone schools either. I would say more middle-class to top tier went to Canal Zone schools but I wouldn't say all of them by any means. I would

say to a lesser—less than 30 percent of them went to Canal Zone schools.

There's some fine, fine schools in the Republic of Panama. Even in those days. I have a lot of—I think more Panamanians went to school when I was in high school [door opens] in the [19]50s and the [19]60s—Hello.

Photographer: Hi.

B: She's the paparazzi [laughter]. You can just ignore her.

P: Yeah, that's what everyone does [laughter].

M: Thank you.

P: Keep going [laughter].

M: Okay. So, not all of them went, not all the hierarchy or the middle-class went to school in the Canal Zone because they were basically for dependents of Panama Canal company personnel. I was one of them. I am Panamanian but I was one of those that were fortunate enough to go there. My dad being in business with the—they felt my dad's business was integral to the fluidity of the ships going through the canal. We were very, very fortunate to grow up in the Canal Zone with a lot of my American friends. I think we got preference over Panamanians because we were integral to shipping. So, my dad—we could of gone to school in the Republic of Panama too, but my mom being from Brooklyn—my dad just preferred for us to go to the American schools there.

B: Do you remember anything from your history classes in those schools?

M: From my history? Basically it was the history that—it wasn't history about Panama or anything like that—it was worldwide history that you would've learned

in United States schools. It was taught as if we were not in the Republic of Panama. It was taught as if we were in the United States.

B: Okay.

M: Really.

B: So, did you have Civics and—

M: Yep.

B: Everything?

M: Yeah, yeah. Just like the United—they wanted to make it as much American as possible. Yeah there some things about Panama but they didn't really focus that much on the Republic of Panama. They focused on worldwide history.

B: And when did you graduate from high school?

M: When?

B: Yes.

M: 1960.

B: Okay. So, you were out of the country then, during the riots there. You were in college, correct?

M: I came back—the riots were in [19]64.

B: Okay.

M: And I came back in [19]63.

B: Okay, so you did come back.

M: So, I was there. Yeah, that was a very tough time. I blame both sides. I think that sort of—the Americans said, you know, there could always be problems now. I

think that that was—I think it was decided then under LBJ, Lyndon Baines Johnson. Kennedy was assassinated in [19]63, the riots were January 9th, [19]64. I think they said that they would have to make a deal with Panama sooner or later. Then, Kissinger, I think, made some comments under Nixon in the early [19]70s that he'd like to move this up from the backburner. Then Carter got a hold of it and he just moved it straight to the front and made the deal. There's been a lot of American rejection of what has happened. Even Reagan, when he was running—he didn't win—but when he was running for the Republican nomination against Ford who took over when Nixon was—left office—not impeached, but he resigned from the presidency and Ford took over. Ronald Reagan ran against Gerald Ford for the Republican nomination in [19]76 and he beat Reagan, but Reagan always said, I will never give away the Panama Canal to this ten-horn dictator, Omar Torrijos, who overthrew a democratic government in the late [19]60s in Panama. Anyway, and then Carter just moved it up when he became president in [19]76 actually. He beat Gerald Ford who had beaten Reagan and then Carter became president and he just moved the treaty up. That happened in [19]77, and they signed it [19]77 and it started in [19]79, October of [19]79. Where we would have dual policemen, a Panamanian and an American policeman in a car until thirty months later, until April of [19]82 and then Panamanians were controlling—Panamanian police were controlling the Canal Zone. Until the year 2000, when the full treaty went into effect where Panama was doing everything from post office to hospital and what have you. It's been

okay to live through all of this and to have experienced it. I'm really happy to have spent all my time down there but do look forward one day to moving up here. It's just the American era is over, a lot of my friends I see at these reunions and I have a lot of Panamanian friends also, but I'd sorta like to start another chapter of my life and move to North Carolina, where I have a home already.

B: I love North Carolina.

M: I will always go back to Panama in January, February, and March of every year. It's the dry season there. It's a nice time of the year, it doesn't rain that much and it's cooler in North Carolina. I don't like the cold. But, I've got a lot of friends and I'm thankful for them, but now I actually, you know, the last couple of years has been an eye opener for me because I see a lot of Canadians coming into Panama now—

B: I heard that.

M: And Americans coming in, they're buying businesses. I'm meeting a lot of people now, I said, gee, should I leave here? I'm a golfer, I like to play golf. I don't play that much now because I'm very busy in the business, but it's still a great place. If I don't like the States, I'm going back to Panama [laughter]. But I know I'll like the States. I know I'll like it. I've spent a lot of time in North Carolina and I know the state very well.

B: Have you been there for the winter?

- M: And I've been there for the winter. Pretty brutal [laughter]. But anyway, no only through December. We've had a couple of tough Decembers, including last December it snowed. I just don't like the cold weather.
- B: Yeah.
- M: But, anyway. Panama is always eighty-five to ninety-five.
- B: Um-hm.
- M: And you'll get rain, or sunshine and breezy. It's nice, you know. And I know the Panamanians, and what to expect and not where to go on certain days and they're protesting in the streets. That's the way it is, you know, and you cope with that. So, it's not as orderly as the United States, of course.
- B: [laughter] I think it's really interesting just among the handful of people that I've spoken with today, you know, I always get to what did you do after the treaty, how did you feel after the treaty and I've gotten everything from people like you who say, oh, well, you know I still live there and then I've had people who've said, I left immediately, I took my wife and kids and I didn't feel safe in the country anymore. I just think it's bizarre that there's such a huge difference between those two reactions—
- M: Yeah, actually, I don't blame people who left right away when the treaty was signed because rumors were rife that hey, you're gonna lose your job, you better find something for your family in the States. So, a lot of people left thinking that they would be rift or a reduction enforced. It's turned out that there's still Americans that never left and none of them have been fired. In other words—in

fact, I was speaking with the fellow that your partner is interviewing now and he just spoke to a Panama Canal pilot, American guy taking ships through the canal, they're making \$1,000 a day. A day. Because overtime is so much and they're just raking it in. Panama has kept the American pilots, but when they leave they replace them with Panamanian pilots. So, only the people who lost their jobs, they would be put into another position. You know, If you were in customs for years and years, well, they would never reduce your salary but you may have to do something entirely different that is not your expertise, but they wouldn't release you. So I feel badly for the people who were told they better get out and find something in the States because you're gonna get fired and by the time you get fired all those jobs that are available in the States would be taken. It didn't turn out that way and many people are very sad that they left Panama so hurriedly. Those people who told you that, yeah, things have changed but they're down there, they're happiest. Believe me.

B: [laughter] I definitely picked up on that.

M: Really, really life is good. I mean life is good. The Panamanian supermarkets are up to speed. We're doing okay. In many ways we're third world still, many ways, but they're really moving up the ladder fast. Number one economy—actually number two in all of Latin America. Chile is number one, Panama is number two and number one by far in Central America. If you go to Panama City and then you go to San Jose, Tegucigalpa, San Salvador, these other capitals, Managua, of these other Central American countries, I mean it's night and day. Panama is

booming, really cosmo and beautiful malls. When you go to these other countries, they just don't have it. We're living in a dynamic . . . atmosphere right now in Panama. We had a big boom about seven years ago and then it sort of went down for a couple years and then it started back about three years ago. Beach resorts are going up. Breezes is there now, not that Breezes is a big deal, but I mean—

B: [laughter] It will drop.

M: But things are going, things are moving. They're making some areas that used to be U.S. military bases, international airports now so that people don't have to go into Panama City and then catch another flight, or a bus, or a taxi up there. A lot of things are going forward, very rapidly.

B: Okay.

M: It's a—but it's dangerous. Security's pretty bad down there now. I live in a very quiet area because I'm a very quiet guy now, but I would never go into places I used to go now. It's very dangerous. You got Colombians, Venezuelans there now—

B: Is it all cartel related?

M: Security's bad. Crime is bad. So you just have to be careful. But the areas where the nice hotels are and what have you, you can walk outside but be with somebody, you know. It's not the safe place it used to be.

B: Okay. That's actually the first time someone's mentioned something about that.

M: Oh yeah, it's not safe at all. I read about it all the time. I read three Spanish papers every day and I pick up a lot of what's going on. There's a lot of things that they don't like to publish because they don't want tourism to leave.

Tourism—over two million tourists a year now. So what's that, about six hundred a day, maybe something like that. That come on in to the Republic of Panama to spend money in the hotels and what have you. They think each stay is about three or four days and maybe they spend eighty to a hundred dollars a day. Which I don't think includes their hotel rate so, people are—I tell you, retail is very strong in Panama.

B: You mentioned in the late [19]60's over a third of the democratic government there. Were you already involved in your company at that time?

M: Yes. I started in [19]63 and yes, there was an overthrow, but it had no effect on the Canal operations.

B: Okay.

M: No effect whatsoever. Ships kept going through, the Canal Zone government was fine, people came to work. It was a pretty quiet takeover.

B: Okay.

M: Let me say something else. Also in the late [19]80s, before Noriega was taken out, and that would've been [19]89. December of [19]89. What the United States government did—because they were still operating the Panama Canal. So, all the banks shut down in [19]88. This was before the invasion, or the liberation. What the United States did is that agents used to have guarantees up for their

money and what have you, but the banks shut down for like forty-four days in the Republic of Panama and Noriega said, no, you can't do this and that and they shut down. There was no way for agents to receive money from Copenhagen or Oslo or Seoul or Tokyo to guarantee for the vessels to go through the canal. The U.S. government took agents word that when the banks reopened, they would be repaid for all the ships that went though the Canal. So, the U.S. government accepted on credit because our credit used to go through the banks and the Canal Zone government used to deal only with the banks and not with the agent. So, the banks on our behalf used to put up for guarantee all the vessel expenses. So, there were no banks anymore. People would fly to Miami and bring in cash of \$8,000 to pay their employees and what have you. But the U.S. government allowed I think about—I'm not sure of the amount—fifteen or twenty million dollars worth of shipped tolls to go through without receiving any money. Then when everything got back to normal and the banks reopened and what have you, they were repaid every penny but it showed—and a lot of people don't know that the United States did that. I mean, they took, so that they would not interfere with worldwide ship traffic—to effect worldwide ship owner operations and produce getting to other ports and what have you. They allowed ships to go through the Canal without receiving any money, the U.S. government. Really. And not many—and I think people know that but Panamanians know that but they don't make it a point to say how good the United States did in that instance. That was wonderful. I think it was about forty-four days the banks were closed.

B: Was that under Reagan, or Bush?

M: That was under in [19]88. That would have been under—well that was in [19]88, [19]89. Reagan and then who came after Reagan was Bush, right?

B: Yeah.

M: It would have been the Republicans anyway. So, they did wonderfully, really. They got every penny from the agents and some agents did establish accounts in New York and Miami but the U.S. wasn't receiving any of that money for the tolls. So, our accounts when we moved—when we had the open accounts—our accounts went sky high without paying the United States government. Until the banks reopened in Panama and then we sent that money all the way over to our banks and then we paid the U.S. government. That was a very interesting time also.

B: Yeah.

M: Yeah, yeah.

B: So, when you go back to the Zone now, what is there?—

M: It's the former Canal Zone. It's not the Zone anymore, they call it the former—Panamanians call it the Canal area and it's really the official name is the former Canal Zone. So, when I go back there now, yes, your question was?

B: Is it still a portrait of its old self, is there a lot that's been taken away or changed?

M: Many of the areas are still the same, but it's not as clean as it used to be. The U.S. ran the Canal sometimes at a surplus, sometimes they were in debt, but whatever surplus they had they used to build tennis courts and what have you for

Canal people. It was not supposed to be a profit-making organization. It was a canal constructed for worldwide shipping and they did a wonderful job. But it wasn't a business so they weren't interested in making money. They wanted to break even but cover all their expenses to make life fine in the Canal Zone, for the people that worked for the Canal Zone government. And there were many Panamanians also that worked for the Canal Zone government. I think four out of five employees were Panamanians. I think the work force was eight, nine, ten thousand people in the Canal Zone and so, maybe two thousand were Americans, or three thousand. I'm not sure. So, many areas are still the same and the buildings are older now and not kept, you know, maintained as well as the Americans kept them, but it still looks very much the same. Some areas have changed. I live in an area that the FAA built in the late [19]40s—Federal Aviation Authority. And then they turned over that area in [19]54 to the Canal Zone government, Panama Canal Company. I live out in this area now and I like it very much. The housing that was constructed in the Canal Zone by the American people was very solid, not needing much repair. I mean the building where my mom came to live when she was four years old, in 1916, is still right there. Poured concrete, I mean, really strong [clears throat]. Excuse me. The Americans really established something really good there and much of it is still there. All the army, air force, naval, and marine bases are there. And now Panama owns all of that. In fact, we now work out of a former U.S. Air Force base on the other side of the Canal on the west bank called—it was called—

Howard Air Force Base. But now a company called Panama Pacifico has established, through the government of Panama, Panama Law, that anybody can move in there and not pay any taxes if all of your business is international. We don't have one local—one Panamanian client except taxi drivers that we pay them and what have you. We add a little bit for insurance and what have you to build a ship owner because it costs, you know, we pick up crew members at the airport, take 'em to the hotel, next day pick 'em up take 'em to the ship that is coming in. Then crew members come off and we take them to the hotel or straight to the airport so, we were thinking of having our own van service but didn't want to get into that in case of an accident. So even though you can get insurance, but they wanna limit your liability. And Panama traffic is awful.

B: Really?

M: The drivers are terrible [laughter]. Yeah, really. Anyway, so, we are in this tax free area now and benefitting from—we used to pay taxes—now we won't have to pay taxes. I think the Republic of Panama has granted us permission to go in there because they want other international maritime companies coming from overseas to go into this economic area. It's a forty year lease that the people who were operating Panama Pacifico are called London and Regional Panama. It was the former Howard Air Force Base which was the largest U.S. Air Force Base in the Republic of Panama. My sister, by the way, who Joe Wood knows very well and his wife Beth—she was the Southern Command. I think SOUTHCOM is in Miami now or south, maybe they're in Homestead. But, she was the Four-Star

General Secretary. She was secretary to Wesley Clark, Barry McCaffrey—who was the drug czar—George Joulwan who speaks on CNN from time to time about what's going on in Afghanistan and Iraq.

B: What is your sister's name?

M: My sisters' name is Mary Coffey. She was the SOUTHCOM Secretary for the four-star general who was in charge of the army, navy, air force, and marines for about twenty-five years. Twenty-five years. Anyway—and she'll be here tonight. I understand she's coming. She's been in the States for about a month visiting her youngest son in Kansas and now Michael Coffey—have you met this guy Michael Coffey? He's got something to do with this reunion here. But, maybe not. He's very much involved with the Panama Canal Society. But anyway, that's her son. Mary doesn't normally come to these and she was here last year, so I'm surprised that she's gonna come again. I don't normally come—I normally come here maybe once every three or four years and especially when my class has—I just had my fiftieth class reunion last year—but I made a commitment. I told somebody I would be here this year so I'm here. But I didn't really want to be here [laughter]. But anyway, I'm a person of my word. It's nice to come here and I bumped into a lot of people today and I'm glad I came.

B: Good!

M: And happy to do this on behalf of the Panama Canal Museum and the interview.

B: Is there anything else that you wanted to share before we wrap up the interview?

M: Uh, not really—

B: It'd probably come to you—

M: If there's anything, I can email you or something like that.

B: Sure.

M: I think I've more or less . . . told you something about my life in the Panama Canal—which was a little bit different than other people who you all have interviewed because I'm sure most of the people that you've interviewed have either worked for the Panama Canal or were dependents of Panama Canal personnel who were working with the Canal. Whereas I was in private business in the Canal Zone and we benefitted a lot from shopping in the commies and what have you. Whereas my father and—some people were jealous of the fact that we were able to operate in the Canal Zone and not pay or corporate or personal income taxes to the Republic of Panama. And they have to shop in Panamanian stores which are very nice and what have you but imports—when you import something nice and there's a supermarket there that has great American variety there, but the prices are like double what you would buy them for in the stores here. So, we've had a unique life down there. Zonians have been—they will never forget their time there. When you first hit Panama, even today, I mean, you like it okay, but it really grows on a person and there's many people who don't wind up disliking Panama at all. It was, and is still, despite all the changes in the Canal not being American anymore and what have you; it's still a great place to live.

B: Yeah.

M: But there are people who will not return because it's not the way it was. And that's pretty sad because they only liked it their way. I include a good friend of Joe Wood's and that person is my brother-in-law who lives in Tallahassee. He's a big FSU guy. You know, Joe is a University of Florida guy. They live next to each other in Tallahassee.

B: So this is probably a conversation [laughter]

M: Well, no but Joe is an easy-going guy and he's a great, great guy. I was really happy to donate to this latest cause that they had and really happy about the University of Florida really coming in to keep this thing burning for many, many years. I think it's a wonderful thing.

B: All right.

M: It's a wonderful thing.

B: Okay. Well, I'll just wrap this up. Once again this Sarah Blanc here with Mr. Robin Morland and it's July 7, 2011.

[end of interview]

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