

## INTERVIEW OF PATIENCE “SUE” CANHAM

With diaries of Erwin D. Canham attached

by Deanne C. Siemer and Howard P. Willens

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- Siemer: We are with Sue Canham in her home in North Truro, Massachusetts. She has kindly agreed to an interview to assist us with our oral history project. Sue, could you tell us a little bit about your own background—where you were born and where you were educated?
- Canham: Yes. I was born in England. My correct name is Patience (for obvious reasons that’s a difficult name to grow up with), and I started being called Sue when I was about 10 or 11. The nickname stuck. But I am legally Patience, and I sign everything Patience.
- Siemer: What is your maiden name?
- Canham: Daltry. My family lived mostly around London. My father was a prep school headmaster. He had just scraped into the World War I as a 19-year-old in 1918, and he was in the Territorial Reserves. So when World War II started, he went back into the Army and stayed in the Army until he was finally invalided out in the early 1950s. Because of World War II and my family’s moves, I went to a lot of different schools. I was educated mostly at private schools. I went to the University of Birmingham. I was a teacher, taught in Birmingham government schools for eight years. I became an Assistant Principal. I became a Christian Scientist when I was 20. It came to a point in my career where I was competing to be Principal against all the men who had come back out of World War II and were vying for jobs. There were thousands of them. It was easy enough to be an Assistant Principal, because there were plenty of men principals who knew how to handle a woman assistant principal, but to get to be a woman principal was much harder. I was at that point the youngest assistant principal in Birmingham. I could see that I wasn’t going to move. I wondered what I would do next. I was very interested in Christian Science, and the headquarters of the movement is here [in the Boston, MA area], so I came over. I emigrated in 1958 and arrived in Boston not knowing anybody. The next day I went to the Christian Science Publishing Society and got a job. They started me in the circulation department, filing. I spent a lot of time saying, “God, can I go home?” But eventually I got into the editorial department of the religious periodicals and then onto the Monitor, which I absolutely adored.
- Siemer: When did you join the Monitor? [The Christian Science Monitor]
- Canham: In 1964.
- Siemer: Where did you live in Boston?
- Canham: As my salary increased, I upgraded my living places. Mulberry Street, Beacon Street, and then at the end I had an apartment at 100 Memorial Drive. There’s a very nice apartment building there. I married in 1968.
- Siemer: What was your first job at the Monitor?
- Canham: Oh, they wanted somebody to put out the children’s book supplement. I had a lot of friends on the Monitor by that time, and they kind of said oh, she’s a teacher, she’ll know

about children's books. And somebody came up to me and said would I like the job, and I said yes. Then we found out whether I could write or not. That was my first job.

Siemer: That was in 1964?

Canham: Yes. I became Assistant Book Editor and started editing or putting out the Book Page once a week. The book editor loved to write more than to edit, so he would come in the office one day a week when the page was going to be done up (we had a weekly book page) and the rest of the time I dealt with the day-to-day business and sorted books to see if we were going to review them, that kind of stuff, and then reviewed things that were in my area of competence and continued to do the children's books.

Siemer: How long did you stick with the book page and the children's books?

Canham: Until I married.

Siemer: Then what did you do?

Canham: Traveled with Erwin.

Siemer: Was Erwin editor at that time?

Canham: He was editor when I first joined the Monitor, and then he was editor-in-chief. At that time, he was spending a lot of his time away from the office in all the outside groups he was involved with.

Siemer: After you married, did you continue to live in Boston?

Canham: Yes. I moved into his house on Beacon Hill.

Siemer: Where was Erwin from?

Canham: Born in Alban, Maine. He grew up there, went to school there, and went to Bates College. Then he was a Rhodes Scholar, and he went to Oxford.

Siemer: When was he in England for his Rhodes Scholarship?

Canham: He was class of 1925 or 1926 in Bates and he didn't get it the first time he had applied. He went and worked at the Monitor office in London and applied again the next year and got the second time. So I would say it would be about 1927, 1928, 1929, that he was in England. He went to Oriole College and read History.

Siemer: Did he come from a Christian Science family?

Canham: The family went Christian Scientist. His mother had healing when he was about 10.

Siemer: You said he read History at Oxford?

Canham: Yes.

Siemer: What did he do after that?

Canham: I don't know whether he first came back to Boston as a cub reporter and then got sent out to cover the League. But he probably inevitably came back to Boston for a period of time. Then he was out covering the League of Nations in Geneva. That's where his older daughter was born. Then they moved back to Washington when he was chief of the Washington Bureau. Then in the 1940s, mid-1940s I would think, he came up to Boston as managing editor and then was made editor.

Siemer: How long did he stay with the Monitor:

- Canham: All his life. Until finally he was made editor emeritus. Then, even when we went out to the plebiscite, he just went to do that and his office was still in Boston. When we went out for the period as Resident Commissioner, we were told that would be anything from 18 to 24 or even more months, that was when he sort of gave up the office at the Monitor.
- Siemer: What do you recall about how Erwin was approached with respect to the job of Plebiscite Commissioner?
- Canham: My recollection is that Mary Vance Trent called him. We knew Mary Vance. Her sister Nan was then the woman's page editor of the Monitor. We had quite a lot of contact with Mary Vance. My memory is that he called me and said how would you like to go to the Marianas (I said where are they, you know, like everybody else) for about three months. I'm pretty certain that it was Mary Vance that called him originally. He didn't have a lot of contact with Haydn Williams. The contact with Haydn Williams came after the plebiscite when there was the Canham Committee looking into the running of the Asia Foundation. That's when we met Haydn. Now Erwin may have met him at some do before then, but to know him well enough to be recommended by Haydn—I think that came afterwards.
- Siemer: Did you or Erwin know Haydn Williams socially before the plebiscite?
- Canham: I didn't. I met Haydn after the plebiscite. Erwin may have met him. I can't say. Because he met thousands of people, with all the committees and things he was on. I'm sure their paths may have crossed. But he didn't know him well.
- Siemer: What was your assessment of this assignment when you heard about it?
- Canham: I was interested. I thought it would be a fascinating thing to do. I wanted to know what the background was. Of course, being sort of very questioning, I immediately said well how very convenient for the U.S. that they want part of Tinian, if the military were kicked out of the Philippines, and that these people with whom they have to negotiate want to have Commonwealth status with us. There wasn't any question of whether we would go. Once it was presented and Erwin talked to the Board of Directors of the church, it was "Great, go." So there was no question about it. I'm sure he must have gone down to Washington several times to talk to people. On day trips I didn't usually go down with him. If it was an overnight, I went. I don't remember going down before we went out. Where did we meet Haydn? We must have met Haydn, because he was so very personally involved in all the negotiations. And at some point we got to know Jim Berg too. Have you talked to Jim?
- Siemer: Yes. He's in Brussels now.
- Canham: Yes, I know. We still do Christmas cards. But really I'm very fuzzy. I remember we went out in about the middle of April to middle of June, July. About a three-month period.
- Siemer: The phone call from Mary Vance Trent came sometime at the end of March? I wondered if Erwin had known about this possibility before he was approached?
- Canham: No. Absolutely not. Because that kind of thing Erwin wouldn't not have told me. And I didn't know until he called me up, and he called me up I'm pretty certain as soon as he put the phone down from Mary Vance.
- Siemer: What was Erwin's assessment, at the very beginning, of the United Nations situation with respect to the Marianas? Did he expect that there would be difficulties in getting United Nations approval of what went on?

- Canham: Oh, yes. He was aware of that from the very beginning. And he was also aware that there might be difficulty in getting it through Congress too. He was aware that there had to be no question about the operation of the plebiscite—that it had to stand every kind of inspection. And he was also aware that to a certain extent he was chosen for the job because people would say that he wouldn't monkey about with anything. He had a reputation for integrity.
- Siemer: Did they expect Erwin to help them with the United Nations and with the U.S. Congress?
- Canham: Definitely help with the Congress. And he did of course. once we got back, all that fall I remember him going down for meetings in Washington. We went down for House hearings together, because they were running into several days. I remember a lot of that going on after we came back. Oh yes, they expected him to help.
- Siemer: Erwin had had a good deal of experience in and around the United Nations before this assignment, had he not?
- Canham: Yes. He was an alternate delegate when Eleanor Roosevelt headed the delegation (which would be in the 1940s)
- Siemer: How did that come about?
- Canham: I don't know.
- Siemer: How long did he serve?
- Canham: I don't know. Sorry. It's all before my time, you see.
- Siemer: Had he had any U.N. assignments in the 1960s?
- Canham: Our connection with State was that he did several jobs down in South America. We went to Peru a couple of times. They would get a visiting honcho to come down, and it was a way of meeting people. The people at the Embassy, the people who were working say in Lima, would get somebody from the mainland and then throw a lot of cocktail parties and invite a lot of people and cement relationships that that way. We did quite a few of those. So he had an ongoing connection with State. With Interior, nothing very much.
- Siemer: Had Erwin ever done any work on a plebiscite before?
- Canham: No, not as far as I know.
- Siemer: How about any kind of voting effort in the United States or abroad?
- Canham: I don't think so.
- Siemer: What was Erwin's sense about how well organized this Marianas plebiscite effort was?
- Canham: I don't have any feeling for that. I'm sure he was told that there was a guy out there called Neiman Craley, that Neiman had been there a long time, that Neiman had been a one-term Congressman, and that Neiman would give him all the help he needed.
- Siemer: What did he feel about the amount of time that he had to get this done?
- Canham: Erwin didn't beef about things like that. This is what he was expected to do. I think if he had gotten out there and found out it was totally impossible, he would have said hey we've got to do something about this. But it wasn't impossible. I remember there was more of a concern about the relationship between him as Plebiscite Commissioner and Ed Johnston as High Commissioner, because I remember having the impression that Ed wasn't totally popular in all circles in Washington, and that the feeling was that if you have any trouble

- let us know because you have our full authority to do whatever you need to do out there. And that he must keep his hands off this. If he doesn't, or if he doesn't cooperate—we'll back you fully.
- Siemer: Did Erwin know anyone out there at the time?
- Canham: No.
- Siemer: Had he had any contact with the U.N. Trusteeship Council or any of the Visiting Missions that went out there from time to time?
- Canham: We went out blindly. I think again we weren't surprised at that, because what we were told was, "We want somebody who has been nothing to do with the negotiations at all, who cannot be said to be biased, and kind of the less you know about the past, the better." And he didn't know anything about it.
- Siemer: How did he feel about the quality of the information that he got at the outset?
- Canham: I don't remember any complaints.
- Siemer: How soon after he started did you leave for Saipan?
- Canham: Well if the call came late March, my memory is that it wasn't very long.
- Siemer: You went with him?
- Canham: Oh, yes. We were out there three months.
- Siemer: Where did you live when you got there?
- Canham: We lived in the Continental Hotel.
- Siemer: For the entire time?
- Canham: The entire time. It had just been built. It had been opened the previous year. It was the first big modern hotel there, and it was full of emptiness, because they hadn't built the new airport then, and they weren't getting the Japanese tourists in that they were expecting. So we had a marvelous time. We had an extra room and everything. It was great.
- Siemer: Where was the Plebiscite Commissioner's office?
- Canham: The Plebiscite Commissioner's office was sort of off Hamilton's. It was in that building. But Neiman would have fixed all that up.
- Siemer: So that was all arranged by the time you got there?
- Canham: Oh, yes. As I remember, it was the usual overnight flight to Guam, and we arrived in Guam at 2:00 o'clock in the morning their time, and went to the Guam Hilton. Joe Murphy from the PDN came and interviewed us in the morning, both of us, and we went up to Saipan early afternoon as I remember. I don't think Ed Johnston was there. I think he was off-island. Al Bergesen from the State Department and Bobbi, his wife, who became our very good friends, and Neiman and Janet Craley were there. Those were the people I remember meeting us at the airport.
- Siemer: Who else did Erwin work with closely from the U.S. other than Bergesen and Craley? Did Bergesen have an assistant at that time?
- Canham: Oh, yes. Alf had a woman assistant, and I ought to be able to pull up that name, but I can't.
- Siemer: There was a fellow that Neiman Craley recalled named George Callison.

- Canham: George Callison worked for the Trust Territory government. I think he was more involved in publicity and stuff like that. The person that Erwin worked with more than anyone else was Neiman, and then Alf because of the State Department angle. We all went to the beach together on Saturdays and things like that. It was a friendship between the four of us. I can't remember Erwin's secretary's name. Neiman should know. I didn't go into the office with him. I went whenever there was a meeting of the Plebiscite Advisory Committee and the Voter Registration Board, which were two pretty fair-sized committees that met quite regularly during the period of preparation.
- Siemer: Do you think your notes from the committees or your minutes still exist?
- Canham: I don't have them. I handed them over, you know. I mean they weren't mine. I only got into it because Neiman was writing up the minutes, and I said, "Don't be silly, Neiman, you've got more than enough to do, I can come and take the minutes." I remember the first time I went. I didn't know any of these Micronesians who were sitting around the table, and I just sort of drew a chart of the table and put "1,2,3,4,5,6" and then said "I said," and got Neiman to fill in the names for me afterwards. That's how I did it. I think the secretary typed up the minutes. There must be copies there somewhere.
- Siemer: So for each meeting, the Plebiscite Advisory Committee and the Voter Registration Board, you created minutes?
- Canham: Yes.
- Siemer: What did Erwin do when he first got there?
- Canham: He began by talking to Neiman. He talked to Alf too, but mostly to Neiman. As far as I remember, there was pretty soon a program mapped out as to how this thing was going. We had the voter education and the leaflet that was put out.
- Siemer: The 29 questions?
- Canham: That's right. We had to get those translated into Chamorro and into Carolinian. I remember we had great difficulty getting one—I think it must have been the Carolinian—translation back. Then the translator said something like, "Well I've given the jist of it." The great concern that I remember all the way through was that the situation had to be made perfectly clear, especially to the Carolinians, who were, we were told, feeling the Chamorros had pushed the deal on through over their heads.
- Siemer: What was your sense while you were there about whether a Carolinian version of the pamphlet helped people because they liked to read things in Carolinian?
- Canham: My impression would be not terribly much. I think it had to be done, but I think that the Carolinians are not a people who read greatly. It's an oral society.
- Siemer: What do you recall about the problem of getting the translations done? Why was there a problem?
- Canham: The guy who was translating them, and I haven't a clue who it was or if I ever met him, just took longer, and we had trouble getting them out. I remember that. But then everything took longer. There were meetings held in all the villages. I remember that. The first meeting, which was probably the end of our first or second day there, we went down to meet a group of people, and Agnes McPhetres was running the meeting. There was a great sense to me that there was not hostility, but there was a reserve. In the question period, there were questions thrown up about Erwin. Well, are you prepared to let this happen? Are you prepared to let the Carolinians have a choice? Erwin said this thing is going to be totally fair. I remember a lessening of tension at that meeting, and the people who were

sort of more reserved when they said hello, said goodbye in a much more friendly fashion, including Agnes. And Neiman's feeling was that that meeting had gone well. Then mostly it was a matter for me, my involvement, apart from going around to the villages in the evenings, was taking the minutes at these things which met at least once or twice a week, these endless meetings, with Ben Manglona taking up an absolutely disproportionate amount of time, on questions of Rota, and hammering them through over and over and over again. Little details. And the concern of all the Micronesians was that it would not be a fair vote—both Chamorro and Carolinian.

Siemer: What specifically did they have in mind with respect to the vote not being fair?

Canham: Oh, people would go around from polling station to polling station. That's why we had the red ink that people dipped their finger in and was not supposed to be washed off. It was supposed to take 24 hours. If they had this red ink, you couldn't go vote twice. This was all because they were sure that people would stack the vote.

Siemer: Had that happened in prior Trust Territory elections?

Canham: I don't know. I supposed it must have happened, because they didn't have any other kind of election. They were full of horror stories of voter fraud. They were convinced there would be voter fraud.

Siemer: And both the Chamorros and the Carolinians thought there would be voter fraud?

Canham: Yes, but the Carolinians were more worried, because they were outnumbered.

Siemer: How did Erwin go about getting to know Carolinian leaders, for example?

Canham: He would have asked Neiman. Most of his information and his input came from Neiman. I think over and over again Erwin said, "Thank God for Neiman Craley in this," because there he is thrown as a total unknown into this situation. Our impression was that Neiman was about as fair as any individual could be in those circumstances. I mean he had his long involvement with the Trust Territory by then, but he did his very best to have a fair vote of the thing. Erwin would have asked Neiman, "Who do I need to speak to?" A lot of his day to begin with was having these various people in to talk in the Plebiscite Commissioner's office.

Siemer: Did he typically invite them to come to the office?

Canham: I wouldn't have known. You see he had a driver and car, and he went off the morning. He would come back for lunch. And then he came back at the end of the afternoon. It was not arduous except as it got closer to the plebiscite. Then there' was more to do. But I wouldn't have known.

Siemer: Do you recall Felix Rabauliman?

Canham: Oh, yes.

Siemer: What do you recall about him?

Canham: My recollection is that what he said carried a lot of weight, but there was also tension about what he would do.

Siemer: How did he get along with Erwin?

Canham: I don't remember there being any disagreement or undue tension.

Siemer: Do you remember Frank Palacios?

Canham: Yes, but he was Chamorro surely.

- Siemer: He was Chamorro but had strong Carolinian ties and had some claim to Carolinian leadership as well.
- Canham: Yes.
- Siemer: What do you recall about the views in the Carolinian community pro and con with respect to the Covenant?
- Canham: Whether this is what I made up for myself in my head or whether it came in some briefing that Erwin had in Washington, the feeling was very much that it was the Carolinians who were extremely nervous about the Covenant.
- Siemer: Why were they nervous?
- Canham: Because they thought that the Chamorros, who outnumbered them, were going to push through a deal that they weren't sure they wanted. Now whether this is what Erwin got in briefings and told me before we went out there, or whether it's just in my head, I'm not sure.
- Siemer: How about Abel Olopai and Lino Olopai? Did you meet them?
- Canham: Lino wasn't there much; Abel Olopai, yes.
- Siemer: What do you recall about Abel?
- Canham: I remember having sort of a warning that he was somebody who we might have difficulty with and finding him extremely reasonable, and what he said in all the meetings was extremely reasonable. I cannot remember the names of all the people who were on the Voter Registration Board and the Plebiscite Advisory Committee, I think it was. Those were the two things that I took minutes for, and there was quite a lot of overlap, some people being on both. But I can't remember now.
- Siemer: How about Gus Tagabuel?
- Canham: Don't remember at all.
- Siemer: Luis Limes?
- Canham: Yes. I can't remember anything special, but I remember the name.
- Siemer: There was quite an outspoken young woman named Felicidad Ogomuro.
- Canham: Oh, yes. I knew her. Oh, yes. I liked her very much personally, so I have a bias there.
- Siemer: In your view, how did she approach the Covenant?
- Canham: Well I think it was the Carolinian-Chamorro split. For all the fact that there was intermarriage, there was also this tremendous suspicion by the Carolinians because they were outnumbered. I think she wanted to see fair vote and wasn't sure she was going to see that happen.
- Siemer: Were the younger Carolinians concerned about the amount of information that was available about the Covenant?
- Canham: I think that's what both the Voter Registration Board and the Plebiscite Advisory Committee spent a lot of time talking about—how they could get as much information out as possible. I think there was genuine concern that people should be informed so they would know what they were voting about.
- Siemer: How about Oscar Rasa and his brother Alfonso?
- Canham: Yes. Well, you always heard the comment of almost "Wait until you meet Oscar," you

know, as though he was going to be totally unpleasant. He was I think the only person out there who was ever slightly impolite to me. I mean he would tend to walk out if you came in. On the other hand, I've also held conversations with him when he didn't do that. But he was the sort of watch-out-for. I think we'd been warned about him before we ever got out there.

Siemer: Did Erwin meet with Oscar?

Canham: Oh, yes.

Siemer: What was his view about whether Oscar could be persuaded on any subject that had to do with this plebiscite?

Canham: Well, the view was very quickly that there were absolutely no flies on Oscar at all, and whether he could be persuaded was up for grabs. But Erwin was absolutely hands-off of this. I mean yes, he was sent out by the State Department, and they were expecting him to do a good job of getting that vote in for the plebiscite. But that was not what he thought he was about, and it was sort of from the beginning, look, the vote will be as it is, take it or leave it.

Siemer: I was talking more about the plebiscite procedures—what success did Erwin have in persuading Oscar that the plebiscite would be fair?

Canham: Not very much. I know he told him and talked to him, but whether Oscar believed that or not I don't know.

Siemer: Why did Erwin put Oscar's brother Alfonso on the Voter Registration Board?

Canham: I don't know, but I would imagine that he did it on Neiman's advice. Now you'd have to check with Neiman. If Neiman says I told him not to, I think I would have known that, because anything on that level would have bothered Erwin. He had a great respect for Neiman and they worked together tremendously well on that. I think I would have heard. So I would have imagined that Neiman, who had a soft spot, even though he was exasperated with Oscar, but he still had a soft spot for the Rasa brothers. I'm sure he probably advised him to.

Willens: Dr. Kaipat?

Canham: Oh, yes. I'd forgotten about him.

Willens: Just one question from me about the Carolinians. Just to refresh your recollection, Felix Rabauliman and Oscar Rasa were both on the Marianas Political Status Commission and were the two of the 15 who did not sign the Covenant. You had probably heard that at some point during the briefings.

Canham: Yes.

Willens: Is it your sense that the Carolinians were basically concerned with any relationship that would leave them with the Chamorros in the Marianas to live together, that they regretted the separation of the Marianas from the other islands? Was that something that you heard? Or did you get the sense that they were prepared in a relationship with the Chamorros but they didn't think that this particular Covenant was something that was fair or acceptable?

Canham: My impression, especially if you talk about somebody like Oscar, it would be that he was suspicious of both. My impression was very much that this was a Chamorro-forced deal and the Carolinians were not sure they wanted to be part of it. So I would say that it was the Chamorro issue more than the U.S. issue, but they didn't have an awful lot of reason

to feel very trusting of the U.S. either.

Siemer: What was your own sense after you'd been out there for a short time as to the political sentiment with respect to the Covenant?

Canham: Oh, I went out very cynical. You know, how very convenient for the U.S. that this should be the choice of the majority of the people. I became totally convinced that it was the choice of the Chamorros, with some of the Carolinians supporting it somewhat. But that the Chamorros wanted it. Not because of any desire to be U.S. citizens except for the perks that came with it.

Siemer: How well informed did you think the Chamorros were with respect to the relationship that they were going to undertake if they approved the Covenant?

Canham: There were the very active leaders of the Chamorros who were extremely well informed. They were so bright, and they had been sitting there for years waiting for each new U.S. delegation to come out totally green so they could run their circles round them. That group, there was nothing you could tell them that they didn't know. The sort of man-in-the-street Chamorro, I would say through the family network they were fairly well informed. But the farther away they were from the leaders, it was less.

Siemer: It was a fairly small community at the time.

Canham: Yes. It was a fairly small community.

Willens: Whom do you remember as the most active Chamorro leaders?

Canham: Ben Santos, Ed Pangelinan. But of course Ed was so much a part of Washington. He had been away, he had come back, he was more obviously part of the group that wanted this. You've talked to Frank Ada?

Willens: Yes. Do you have a recollection of Frank Ada?

Canham: Oh, yes. My recollection is somewhat negative in that I think that he didn't do an awful lot. He was Erwin's assistant when Erwin was Resident Commissioner. Frank was interested in Frank and Frank's well being and Frank's family maybe, but I don't think he was doing an awful good job.

Willens: Do you remember Joe Cruz?

Canham: Of course. After the plebiscite was over and we were back here, we went down to Washington for House hearings, and Joe Cruz absolutely snowed the entire House Committee by singin "God Bless America." The wonderful thing about Chamorros, you know, is they can burst into song at any time, and they really are very good. And there he is, and there wasn't a dry eye in the place from this "God Bless America."

Siemer: Were you there?

Canham: Yes.

Willens: At the hearings?

Canham: Oh, yes.

Willens: Was it after they had voted, after the House of Representatives had voted, or was it actually in the hearings?

Canham: It was in the hearings. There he is making his pitch for the Covenant.

Siemer: Was he sitting at the witness table?

- Canham: Yes.
- Siemer: And what happened?
- Canham: I can't remember who she was, but some woman who was on the House Committee said, "Oh it's so nice for people to want to be Americans," because we were being kicked around somewhere else on the globe at that time. This woman was wiping tears away and saying, "Oh, it's so nice to have these people want so much to be American and to love Americans so." And I'm thinking, "Oh yeah?"
- Siemer: What happened that caused Joe to decide to sing?
- Canham: Oh, that was just part of his nature. Joe was a showman. He could do this at the drop of a hat, and he did it.
- Siemer: And he understood it would be effective?
- Canham: Oh, yes. They had been negotiating and talking to Americans for so long. They sized us up so well. They were the pros; we were the neophytes. And they really were pros. One of the things that I remember is a trip to Japan that we took with some Chamorros. I can't remember why we went to Japan, but it was when Erwin was Resident Commissioner. There was an all-day bus tour. Erwin and I were the only two haoles, and the rest were all Chamorros. They were all part of the new Marianas Delegation. I'm very good at hunkering down and laying low, and I said, "Shut up Erwin, don't say anything." So we sort of pulled the covers up and pretended we weren't there. First of all, they were saying things like, "Well I wonder what Mr. Canham thinks about this?" And Erwin would just shrug and take no notice. Then they got talking among themselves, and they almost forgot we were there. And they were telling stories about negotiations with Haydn Williams. It was hysterical. They had us sized up so well. And I said to Erwin, "Don't ever think these people are stupid. They're far brighter than we are. They can take us to the cleaners." And they did. But it was very, very funny at that time. It would have been something to do with the airlines, when Japan Air Lines were opening a new route. Probably the new airport had opened and they were bringing the hordes of tourists and invited a bunch of us over. Occasionally if we had a party and we had some Chamorro guests, they loved to play games. You could play charades with them. You could play word games. You could put down a tray full of things and see how many things you could remember when you removed the tray, write down 18 objects that were on it. They loved it, and they were awfully good at it. Then they would sort of let their hair down a bit more, and you'd get some of the comments. I used to say to Erwin, "Never let us let anything go to our heads because remember what are they saying about us when we're not there." The Chamorros particularly are so bright.
- Willens: Did you ever talk about the negotiations with Haydn Williams, not necessarily in the light that you've just explained, but did you ever get a view from him as to what he thought had been accomplished in the negotiations?
- Canham: Is Haydn still alive?
- Willens: Yes he is.
- Canham: Have you spoken to him?
- Willens: Several times. We have not interviewed him formally, but he said he will answer questions if we give them in writing and give a little background.
- Canham: Yes. Haydn had been at it so long, and Haydn was so vested in this thing. It had become Haydn's project. So there was a kind of pomposity in his attitude which didn't make it

easy to deal with him. Personally, on a social level, Haydn's fine. I like Haydn. But by the time we got into it, it was his baby, and there was only one result for the plebiscite. Erwin didn't have that view, and of course I, myself, went out expecting the whole thing to be rigged deal, you know. So Haydn was vested.

Siemer: Did Haydn come out to the Marianas during the time that you were there when Erwin was Plebiscite Commissioner?

Canham: I think not. I think he stayed away. I think he deliberately stayed away. He came out to the Marianas for various ceremonies after that. When Carlos Camacho was sworn in as Governor, I remember him being there, and I remember sitting between them at some do. Haydn is pomposity itself, trying to tell Carlos what to do, and Carlos was sitting there behind his dark glasses just sidestepping Haydn. I was laughing fit to bust between the two of them and you know sort of saying, "That wasn't the answer he wanted, Carlos."

Siemer: I wondered if you remember during the plebiscite, Haydn coming out to talk with the Carolinians about land and to reassure them that the plebiscite was not going to take away their land?

Canham: I don't think he came out during the plebiscite; I honestly don't. I think it was hands-off.

Siemer: Did anyone else from Washington come out?

Canham: I'm sure they did. Before the U.N. delegation came out you mean?

Siemer: Yes. Other than Jack Craft, who really came from Kansas City?

Canham: That was part of the Kansas Mafia, as we called it. There was Dan High up at the Trust Territory who brought all these Kansans out there, and I think Jack Craft's name came from Dan High.

Siemer: But you don't recall anybody else coming out from Washington before the U.N. visit?

Canham: My impression was very much that the people who came out, came out after that.

Siemer: Did Erwin go back to Washington at any time during the plebiscite work?

Canham: No, absolutely not. We were out there the whole time. Because I'd have gone back with him, and I didn't.

Siemer: Tell us about the Plebiscite Advisory Committee. Can you describe a typical meeting? How would these things go?

Canham: Neiman set the agenda, and I can't remember the first one I went to. I was probably just too busy trying to get it sorted out. But it would be mostly things that people brought up. I remember people like Ben Manglona taking up an enormous amount of time with little details about Rota, but details of how the plebiscite would be conducted.

Siemer: Where polling places would be and things like that?

Canham: Where polling places would be, what hours of voting would be, how the translation of the Covenant would be gotten out to the people. There was this sort of education thing that we were supposed to be doing, the program, where the meetings would be held, all that kind of stuff.

Siemer: Where were the meetings held?

Canham: Most of them were up at Ham's.

Siemer: Who presided?

- Canham: The Plebiscite Advisory Committee, Erwin.
- Siemer: Who presided over the Registration Board?
- Canham: Wait a minute. I'm not sure about that, either Neiman or Erwin.
- Siemer: Was there a Chairman of those Committees?
- Canham: I took the minutes, and I can't remember. My guess is that there was some kind of nominal Chamorro chair, but I wouldn't be too sure. This is a long time ago. But the meetings were virtually run by Neiman, who knew what had got to be accomplished.
- Siemer: How did they actually accomplish their business? Did they go around the table and everybody say what they wanted to say?
- Canham: Yes.
- Siemer: Did they actually vote on things?
- Canham: Yes.
- Siemer: So you would have recorded the vote?
- Canham: Yes.
- Siemer: What do you recall doing with the minutes after you were through?
- Canham: I gave them to the secretary who typed them up.
- Siemer: So you would take them in longhand?
- Canham: Yes.
- Siemer: Would you see them again after they were typed up?
- Canham: I don't think I did. It was pretty casual, you know.
- Siemer: Would they get distributed to the members of the Committee at the next meeting?
- Canham: I don't remember anybody picking the minutes to pieces, but I'm sure they got copies of them, yes; they would have to have done.
- Siemer: How was Ben Manglona regarded by the other members of the Committee from Saipan at those meetings?
- Canham: I may have been dumb, but I didn't sense any hostility as you might have gotten in a haole committee—oh God here he goes again—and people's eyes glazing over.
- I think that there was the solidarity of the Micronesians versus the haoles, which overweighed the thing of being irritated at Ben if they were.
- Siemer: Was there another person from Rota along with Ben?
- Canham: There must have been, but I can't remember.
- Siemer: Who were the principal people from Tinian?
- Canham: You'd have to give me names.
- Siemer: Felipe Mendiola was the mayor in Tinian. Shortly before you got there, there was a big dispute between him and the Municipal Council. He was an opponent of the Covenant, and most of the members of the Municipal Council were supporters of the Covenant. So I wondered who wound upon your Advisory Committees—whether they were Mendiola people or whether they were Municipal Council people?

- Canham: I would say they were Municipal Council people. The feeling of the Voter Registration Board—it was more “We don’t want people who are against the Covenant voting four times in four different places against it,” than “We don’t want people who are for the Covenant voting four different times for it.” That’s my feeling. I’m sure there were anti-Covenant people, because Neiman would have picked that Voter Registration Board very, very carefully, and after all Erwin didn’t know the people when we went out there, so he would have taken Neiman’s say-so on that. But I would say it was weighted for. That was inevitable almost if you gave a fair proportion to the people who supported the Covenant.
- Siemer: Did you have anybody on either one of those Boards from the Northern Islands?
- Canham: I don’t know.
- Siemer: How did Erwin go about taking care of the Northern Islands?
- Canham: He went up there.
- Siemer: Did you go?
- Canham: Oh, yes.
- Siemer: What do you recall about the trip?
- Canham: I recall going up to Pagan and having a meeting there and Erwin talking about the plebiscite. Neiman of course was there, too.
- Siemer: What did Pagan look like in those days?
- Canham: It was beautiful. It was black sands—first time I’d ever seen black sand.
- Siemer: How many people were there?
- Canham: I would say probably about 20, and they had this marvelous cook-out, fiesta, for us. We ate far too much, and came back. There was a meeting where Erwin described the working of the plebiscite and how the vote would be done and all that, and they listened very attentively. I don’t remember any hostility or any hostile questions.
- Siemer: Were those primarily Carolinians?
- Canham: Yes.
- Siemer: Did you go anyplace else in the Northern Islands?
- Canham: There were only about two that were occupied.
- Siemer: Anatahan?
- Canham: Yes. No, we didn’t go there.
- Siemer: How did Erwin go about registering people up there?
- Canham: That’s a very good question, isn’t it? The registration must have been done by somebody going up on the field trip vessel.
- Siemer: Because the trip that you took was to educate people about what was going to go on?
- Canham: Yes. Whether they got any people from Anatahan and Alamagan, I think there were people on there, too.

- Siemer: Agrigan maybe?
- Canham: Whichever. Whether they got any of them to Pagan, I can't remember. I would imagine they probably didn't. But we flew up. But I remember going down to see material being put on one of the field trip vessels, plebiscite education material and stuff like that, to watch it go off, go up there.
- Siemer: Did you go over to Tinian?
- Canham: Oh, yes.
- Siemer: What was your impression of the sentiment on Tinian?
- Canham: I don't remember any apprehension like, "This is going to be hostile territory. These are the people who are going to be most affected by the Covenant." I don't remember anything like that at all. I remember a warm welcome when we got there and the usual meeting where Erwin and Neiman did their stuff.
- Willens: Did you have any occasion, or did Erwin, to meet with military people during this period and learn whether there was eventually going to be any development of Tinian?
- Canham: Oh, yes.
- Willens: What was your understanding?
- Canham: That it wasn't going to happen until we were kicked out of Subic. If and when we were kicked out of Subic, then this was an option that might be taken up. The Navy on Guam periodically came over and would meet and would talk about things with Erwin, or he would go over there for the day or something like that. But I wouldn't have been part of that. I was a wife, remember. I only got into the meetings because they needed somebody to take minutes. Then when we toured the island and went out to the villages in the evening, I went on all of those.
- Siemer: When Erwin was doing the political education program, and you said he and Neiman would go out and do their usual explanation, were there Chamorros or Carolinians who went along on those neutral political education trips or meetings?
- Canham: I think the Chamorros and the Carolinians' were there, and they arranged and they got the people. But it wasn't like a delegation of us went out.
- Siemer: So it was principally Erwin and Neiman?
- Canham: Erwin and Neiman and me.
- Siemer: You mentioned the meetings, and you mentioned a question-and-answer brochure. What else was done in the political education part of Erwin's work during the plebiscite?
- Canham: As I remember it, that's what was done. The brochure was gotten out, and there were these meetings in the villages and the one on Pagan and Tinian and Rota.
- Siemer: Did the Covenant make it out in Carolinian?
- Canham: I thought it did.
- Siemer: How about the Technical Agreement? Do you remember that making it out in Carolinian?
- Canham: No, I don't.
- Siemer: And how about the question-and-answer brochure?
- Canham: That was supposed to be in Carolinian and Chamorro, and it was the Carolinian that was

more difficult to get the translation.

Siemer: What do you recall about the radio and TV time being made available as a part of the political education program? How was that done?

Canham: I don't remember a darn thing about anything being done, but there may have been.

Siemer: Do you recall Erwin appearing on television?

Canham: No.

Siemer: How about radio? Did he do radio addresses?

Canham: I'm getting terribly confused here, because after he'd been Resident Commissioner, he did commentaries on television and radio. He was back to being a journalist again by then. I don't remember him on television or radio for the plebiscite.

Siemer: Did you keep any tapes of any of his appearances, either radio or TV?

Canham: I think I might have some. That would be the stuff that I took back to Honolulu. That would be in storage.

Siemer: Did he ever publish anything about the experience as Plebiscite Commissioner?

Canham: No.

Willens: He did have plans to write a book, though?

Canham: Yes. That's what he was spending his time doing, and he would spend the mornings researching, but he didn't get anything written.

Siemer: Were there particular issues that were raised during the campaign that troubled Erwin as to the potential for inaccuracy or just wrong facts?

Canham: What are you thinking of in wrong facts?

Siemer: Were there occasions when Erwin felt it was necessary to just come out and say this issue has been raised and this is just not true?

Canham: I don't remember that happening. I remember that when we first got out there, he was from the U.S., he was sent out by the U.S. government, therefore he was in the minds of Chamorros and Carolinians inevitably pro-Covenant, and that was the thing he had to say no, that's not what I'm here for.

Siemer: What was his private view about the Covenant?

Canham: Well like me, he may have wondered at the convenience of it, but after a while you were absolutely convinced that the Chamorros wanted it very much.

Siemer: What was his own view about whether it was a good development for the Chamorros?

Canham: It sounds like a phony excuse, but if the U.S. hadn't filled that space, somebody else would pretty soon have done it.

Siemer: That's a very real factor.

Canham: Yes. And therefore it probably was better that the U.S. did it. The Chamorro people wanted it. What was happening to the culture as a result of the U.S. presence was something of great concern. What was happening to the family structure. What had been obviously this tight relationship with the Catholic Church and the close family bonds that were being broken up as the American influence became stronger and stronger. There was concern about that. But then it was sort of inevitable. As Erwin would say as soon as

the first transistor radio reached there, the rot set in and from there it goes on, and you can't stop people wanting what they see other people have. It's no good for us with all our washing machines and dryers and everything else saying look you've got this marvelous climate and you've got the trade winds, you can dry your clothes outside. So he was a total realist about it.

Siemer: When did he die?

Canham: January 3, 1982. I didn't leave until January 30, 1984. But some of this was happening even before Erwin died, and it concerned both of us a lot. You had this tremendous number of teenagers and people in their early 20s. I'm not talking about the ones who got into positions and were occupying all the positions in the Marianas government and were going to be there for 40 more years because they were so young themselves. They were already there. There were all these kids with nowhere to go and no jobs for them. You would see them zooming in gangs of eight and 10 in the back of pickups. From Suicide Cliff they'd go zooming over to Bonsai. They'd go zooming over to the Grotto. It was getting to be a much less safe place. This was all inevitable, you know. It would have happened with Guam being so near anyway. As soon as planes came in and people could go and look at the way of life on Guam, was going to happen. But Erwin's feelings about the mixed blessing that the Covenant was, they were there, but it was probably the best of choices, the best choice available to them.

Siemer: How did Erwin go about actually setting up the mechanisms for registering people?

Canham: Neiman did that stuff. I mean Neiman knew where to get the voter lists. Neiman knew all the people to ask for all that stuff. That would be Neiman. We couldn't have existed without Neiman.

Siemer: How much influence did the Voter Registration Board have with respect to specific procedures?

Canham: A great deal. The dipping a finger in the red dye, for example.

Siemer: How did that come about—the dipping of the finger?

Canham: Oh because they were totally convinced that people were going around from polling place to polling place to vote six times.

Siemer: The opponents would?

Canham: Carolinians were also convinced that the proponents would, too, and they were already outnumbered. So it was both sides. This whole long lengthy discussion we had about the red dye and whether it would come off and how you were going to test it.

Siemer: Where did the idea of the red dye come from?

Canham: It could have been Ben. You'd have to look at the minutes for that. But it all came up in these meetings.

Willens: Did you personally observe anyone putting their finger into the red dye at the time of voting?

Canham: Oh, yes. By the time the vote happened, I knew enough of the people. And I went around with Erwin, because we went around to all the polling places, you know. And I dipped my finger in, you see, and I'd walk in (of course I had no right to vote at all) and say, "Look I've voted already," and Erwin would say, "Oh shush, don't say things like that." But they knew me by then and it was safe to do it, you know. "Oh, which did you vote for, Mrs. Canham? Did you vote for Commonwealth or against?" And I'd say, "Oh that I'm not

telling." Oh, yes. They used it.

Willens: We did have one person say that although the idea was generated and plans were made to use it, that there was some reluctance on the part of the local people to do it.

Canham: I don't remember hearing any complaints. Maybe at one polling station some people were reluctant to do it. Willens: But you personally observed it?

Canham: It was there.

Willens: You stuck your own finger into it.

Canham: I stuck my own finger in it.

Willens: That's good evidence for us, then.

Canham: And they were there at all the places, you know. I wouldn't have done anything as risky as that at the beginning of our stay. I didn't know the people well enough. But by that time it was okay and it was safe to do it. We had the U.N. Commission there watching every move. The Brit—I can't remember his name—with the monocle who led the Commission.

Siemer: Murray.

Canham: Murray. That's right.

Willens: Did you greet him at the airport when he arrived?

Canham: Yes.

Willens: Do you remember his attire?

Canham: Yes.

Willens: What was his attire?

Canham: I'm not sure whether it was a homburg or a bowler [hat], but he was not dressed for Micronesia.

Siemer: He's been described as a typical Englishman in the Pacific. Would you agree with that?

Canham: Oh, yes. And I'm sure there was a furled umbrella there too, you know. He was quite savvy when you got to know him.

Willens: What did you hear from the individual members of the visiting mission about the process?

Canham: I remember sitting in the meeting that Murray had with the Advisory Committee or the Voter Registration Board, one of those. I was there taking minutes again, and he asked questions about all the procedures. I didn't get any impression that he felt that there hadn't been as thorough a job done as could have been done. He seemed to be perfectly savvy when you explained the difficulties to him.

Siemer: Did you and Erwin entertain the U.N. mission while they were there?

Canham: Oh, yes. We were living in a hotel, but they stayed in the hotel too. I remember walking the beach with Murray, and I'm sure we had dinner together. It was pretty cozy.

Siemer: Were there issues that they raised that worried Erwin?

Canham: No.

Siemer: Anything about their visit that he was concerned about?

- Canham: I don't remember any criticism. Erwin was not the kind of person who worried. I would have jimjams if I was being inspected, or an operation that I was responsible for was being inspected. Erwin didn't have. He'd done the best he could do. I don't remember him worrying about it at all, and I don't remember negative comments.
- Siemer: Was there anything that happened during the campaign leading up to the plebiscite that worried Erwin?
- Canham: I think there were delays in printing the booklet that we weren't going to get it out in sufficient time for people to have long enough to read it, whether it would get up to the Northern Islands, that there might be criticism because of some of those mechanics. That I remember.
- Siemer: Was there anything done in Washington during this time that worried him?
- Canham: I don't remember anything, no. I think Washington was fairly hands-off as I remember.
- Siemer: He certainly used to send back these cheery messages about everything's going fine, having a wonderful time, don't worry about a thing.
- Canham: Yes, that's Erwin.
- Siemer: As a matter of fact, there's one wonderful cable that he sent back about his brochure in which he says, "I'll deal with this particular topic, don't worry about it. I'm sure you could improve on the language, but we'll just go ahead with what we've got." It was the most wonderful put-down of Washington's ability to review anything—though done in a very cheerful manner and seemed to be very diplomatic. But he seemed to be going ahead without any interference.
- Canham: Oh, yes. Oh I don't remember any sense that we felt we were being watched over.
- Willens: How about the Trust Territory? Did the High Commissioner stay apart as he had been directed to do?
- Canham: Oh, Ed and Claire were all right. I mean they were all right to us. He had been told he had to keep hands-off, and he did. I think they managed to be off-island most of the time we were there, or they said they were, and my memory is that they did finally have us up to dinner just before we were leaving.
- Willens: Did you get the sense that he had any personal views about these negotiations with the Northern Marianas as distinct from the rest of Micronesia?
- Canham: He wouldn't have said that to us. My feeling was that there was this negative sense about Ed in Washington that we went out with. I would have gotten it through Erwin, and he would have gotten it from somebody at State or Interior or somewhere—that Ed wasn't high on their list of "good boys". So it was if you have any trouble with him, let us know. That was the tone that we got from Washington. And I think Ed probably sensed that. He came back on odd visits after that, and he was always very nice. Then there were the Peter and Nora Coleman, the Deputy High Commissioner. Pete's dead, isn't he?
- Willens: Yes.
- Canham: He's Samoan. And Nora was Hawaiian. We saw more of them actually. There was tension between the Colemans and the Johnstons, and that we were very well aware of. Again, we got enormous input from people like Alf and Bobbi Bergesen. When we went out there as Resident Commissioner, Bobbi and Alf were still there. We were walking the beach with Bobbi one day and they were going to leave in about another week for good. And Bobbi said to me, "I don't think I should go and leave you with all these vultures," being very

kind of roetective. But they clued us in on a lot of the problem spots there might be with people.

Siemer: Where did the Bergesens go? What was his next assignment?

Canham: It was somewhere overseas, and then he retired. can't remember.

Siemer: They left in 1976?

Canham: I would say late 1976 or early 1977, but probably late 1976.

Siemer: Do you remember an issue coming up fairly late in the day from the Carolinians with respect to the ballot language of the "no" option? There was concern that the way the "no" option was phrased was not fair.

Canham: Yes, I do. I had forgotten it totally, but now you mentioned it, there was.

Siemer: Did Erwin meet with a young lawyer from the Micronesian Legal Services named Ed King about this?

Canham: He probably did, yes.

Siemer: The Carolinians had gone to the Micronesian Legal Services to think about suing to stop the plebiscite, which I assume would have been a concern to Erwin.

Canham: Yes.

Siemer: Do you recall whether he did anything to try to persuade the Carolinians not to sue?

Canham: He didn't have special meetings with them to persuade them not to sue. Now he may have seen various delegations in his office. I remember that there was this issue. That's perfectly true.

Siemer: Was it that issue that caused Erwin to ask Washington to send a lawyer out?

Canham: I'm not going to be able to help you here.

Siemer: It might well have been just the possibility of registration challenges or other difficulties.

Canham: Yes. We haven't got one; we need one. I think that was it. I don't remember the issue about the language of the "no" thing being as big an issue as I'm gathering that you've heard that it was. But that may have been because I missed it.

Siemer: No, we have interviewed Ed King, who ultimately did not bring a lawsuit, but I wondered how it was perceived from Erwin's standpoint, the threat that somebody might sue to stop the plebiscite.

Canham: Yes. Those kinds of things came up at regular intervals, and then they fizzled out.

Siemer: What do you recall about Jack Craft, the lawyer who came out from Missouri?

Canham: He got bitten by something and had one of these bites that went all the way up his arm. I remember that. It was a stone fish.

Siemer: He tried to pick one up?

Canham: He must have, because it was up his arm. I remember leaving him and being concerned, because we were going off somewhere for the day and he was supposed to come with us and he couldn't come. But he took himself up the hospital and they dealt with it.

Siemer: Did he sit in on your Voter Registration Board meetings after he got there?

Canham; He probably did.

- Siemer: Was he assigned to work for Erwin?
- Canham: He was assigned to work for the plebiscite. Whether he worked officially for Erwin or for Neiman, I don't know. You see, Neiman was Executive Director.
- Siemer: Did they tell him what to do?
- Canham: Oh, yes.
- Siemer: What did they have him dosing?
- Canham: I don't know. That would have been in their day-to-day stuff; you see, I wouldn't have been part of that.
- Siemer: Once he arrived, was he part of the day-to-day activities?
- Canham: I imagine he was, because on this thing that I remember when he was bitten, wherever we were going it was work, it wasn't play.
- Siemer: What do you recall about the plebiscite day itself? What did you do that day?
- Canham: Went around the polling stations. "Hello, is everything going all right? How are you? Has the vote been heavy?" That's what I remember.
- Siemer: What was Erwin's expectation with respect to the vote by that time? Although he was neutral, he must have had some expectation as to how it was going to come out.
- Canham: Oh, I think he had enough of the feel that it was going to go through. We didn't know how big the vote would be.
- Siemer: Did he see any problems at any of the polling places?
- Canham: I don't remember any complaints or anybody coming hysterically and saying, you know, hordes of Carolinians or hordes of Chamorros are coming in and voting six times. I don't remember anything. It all went pretty smoothly. And the U.N. went their way too.
- Siemer: Were they with you?
- Canham: Oh, no. They were separate.
- Siemer: Who was accompanying the U.N. folks? Did they simply go around on their own?
- Canham: They must have come out with some folk from Washington when they came out.
- Siemer: But it wasn't Bergesen or you?
- Canham: No, not us. It would have probably been Alf. Probably Alf did all that.
- Siemer: Were there any complaints from the U.N. as to the conduct of the actual voting?
- Canham: Didn't hear any. Heard complimentary stuff, privately, personally. I didn't hear any negative comments. Wasn't there an official report?
- Siemer: Yes.
- Canham: That wasn't negative as far as I remember.
- Siemer: Did you go to the counting of the ballots after all the ballot boxes were brought back to the Civic Center?
- Canham: I think we went down at the end. I have a vague memory that we went down at the end. We certainly weren't around for the actual whole of the count, no.
- Siemer: How did that processing go, from Erwin's point of view?

- Canham: You know I'm blank on that.
- Siemer: So you don't recall any problems?
- Canham: No.
- Willens: Who communicated the results of the plebiscite back to Washington?
- Canham: Erwin or Alf.
- Willens: Did he personally speak to Haydn Williams after the results were in?
- Canham: Could have. But you know Haydn was supposed to be backing off, same as Ed Johnston. They were supposed to be keeping their distance from this. Once the results were in, whether Erwin talked to Haydn or not—probably Alf did again. Erwin was supposed to be neutral, and he was trying to maintain that.
- Siemer: What did you do right after the plebiscite, you and Erwin?
- Canham: Packed up his office and then we went around to tour the rest of Micronesia.
- Siemer: How long did it take you to pack up his office—the office at Hamilton's?
- Canham: Yes. Not long because you see Neiman would have taken care of all that anyway.
- Siemer: Where did all that material go?
- Canham: You'd have to ask Neiman. The secretary is dead, but her husband may still be alive. He was an agriculturalist, and she was out there because of his job. He was working for the Trust Territory, and she did secretarial work, had done secretarial work for Neiman, so he got her in for the plebiscite.
- Siemer: So she was from the States?
- Canham: Yes.
- Siemer: Where did you go on your trip?
- Canham: We went to Yap, we went to Palau, went back through Guam, then to Truk, and Ponape and the Marshalls.
- Siemer: Had you been to any of those areas prior to that time?
- Canham: No. We were out there to work. We were out there for the Marianas. We weren't out there to take side trips.
- Siemer: What was your impression of the other districts as compared to the Marianas?
- Canham: Well they weren't as advanced. It depends on your definition of advanced, you know. But they didn't have the TT presence and such numbers. Beautiful islands. Yap was the least forward-looking.
- Willens: Did you discuss status with them at all when you traveled around?
- Canham: No, we went privately. Now we went privately, but Neiman called up people he knew, so it was privately in quotes, because wherever we went we were met and somebody said, "Do you want a car and a driver." So we had a certain amount of special privilege, but Neiman fixed that up because he knew all these people. And you see his wife Janet worked for the Congress of Micronesia, so she knew all the people in all the districts. And they just made contacts for us so that there was somebody to take us around, which was being spoiled

- rotten.
- Siemer: How long were you away?
- Canham: I think we did the whole thing in less than two weeks out in the districts—three or four days in each one.
- Siemer: What did you do after you got back from your trip around the other districts?
- Canham: Personally I went into total misery and wanted to go back and live on Saipan forever. Erwin went back to work.
- Siemer: At the Monitor in Boston?
- Canham: At the Monitor in Boston and doing all the jobs he normally did. There were a lot of trips down to Washington. If they were overnights I went, too.
- Siemer: What do you recall about the process of getting the Covenant approved by Congress? Did Erwin go to most of the major hearings?
- Canham: Yes. I recall him going down. I recall calls coming, you know, we're having a meeting and we think it would be useful if you would talk too.
- Siemer: Were there particular Senators or Congressmen whom Erwin knew personally?
- Canham: Well, was Ed Brooks still around then? Of course he knew him. He knew Ted Kennedy. Yes, he knew quite a lot of them. Who was the Congressman, Phil ...
- Willens: Burton on the House side.
- Canham: Phil Burton. Those people.
- Willens: In the Senate, there was some opposition that developed to the Covenant from Senator Kennedy and others who opposed it because of the military aspects of it and some of the United Nations aspects of it. Did Erwin meet with any Senators or staff in order to try to discuss these issues with them?
- Canham: He may have. I think I would remember if he'd met with Teddy. You see that was part of the reason why they used him, because they knew they were going to be up against this. If the vote came through for Covenant, then they were going to have these people who would question it. And they wanted to have somebody who would be persuasive to talk about what the people wanted. So there may well have been meetings [with Senators or staff]. I remember it as a busy fall and with quite a few meetings down there. The rest of the summer (we were back before the end of July) and fall I remember as being pretty busy.
- Siemer: How about the United Nations? Did Erwin go there or work with any of the U.S./U.N. Mission people about getting U.N. approval?
- Canham: When he was Resident Commissioner, we went to the U.N. meetings in 1977.
- Siemer: How did the Resident Commissioner appointment come about?
- Canham: As I remember it, he was home, it was about 5:00 o'clock in the evening. I had put some cookies in the oven and had gone to take them out and the phone rang. It was somebody I think from Interior saying could they talk to Erwin. He was there so I handed him the phone. I heard him say "Oh, yes? Well I don't know." or something like that and then "Well we can talk about it when I come down tomorrow." He was going down for one of these meetings. I just thought oh they want him to talk to somebody about something about the plebiscite. He said, "How would you like to go back to Saipan?" knowing that

I had wanted to go back to Saipan for a period of maybe two years or so. And I said, "What?" And that's how we heard about it.

Siemer: What was Erwin's reaction?

Canham: Actually Erwin's reaction was, why not? Then I was the one who pulled right back, because I knew what it would be in terms of his life for him. At that point he was more than 70, and a lot of the boards and things that he was on, some of them had waived the age limit when Erwin reached 65, because they wanted to keep him on you could take three months' leave of absence from a board; you can't take two years. And I knew very well that he would have to resign most of the boards, and he was already over the age limit on some of them and they were keeping him on because they wanted him, and this would be a whole different way of life when we came back.

Siemer: What were some of those Boards?

Canham: Oh, he was on Twentieth Century, that's a group in New York. Resources for the Future. He was on an awful lot of boards around Boston. I think he was still on the John Hancock board then. I used to say he didn't know all the things he was on, you know, NAACP, Urban League, those things.

Siemer: So your concern was that when he came back, he would not any longer have all those appointments?

Canham: Yes. That if we severed connections for two years he wouldn't be coming back to pick up this way of life, and that he would then be "retired." Was he thinking about this? And I wanted to be very sure he wasn't just saying oh yes because he knew that I was saying oh yes. So I played devil's advocate.

Siemer: How did he feel about that?

Canham: He thought it all through, and he thought it would be the greatest spot and why not.

Willens: Did the call come in from Interior after President Ford had signed the Covenant?

Canham: I think it was after. I'm not sure of the exact timing on that, but I think it was after.

Willens: Do you recall when in fact you moved out there?

Canham: We went out for a week in April of 1976 when they had all the big celebrations. Then we moved out permanently toward the end of May. You see we were subletting our condo on Beacon Street, and we had to do all the business end of things. It took us a few weeks to do all that. And also he was finishing up with the Canham Committee, which we had spent a lot of that fall going around six or seven countries looking into the workings of the Asia Foundation, the thing that Haydn Williams heads up.

Siemer: What was the Canham Committee's function?

Canham: To look into the way the Asia Foundation was run and to make recommendations on its future and purpose, which was kind of sticky when we were also in all these negotiations with Haydn over Micronesia.

Siemer: How had that gotten started?

Canham: I'm not sure, but it was whether it was being run to the best advantage. There was a lot of stuff going on there. But he only just got all the Canham Committee stuff finished up in time for us to get out to Micronesia at the end of May.

Siemer: So that was going on in 1976, the Canham Committee?

- Canham: I think it was the fall of 1976.
- Willens: Who established it?
- Canham: One of the biggest funders, I think.
- Siemer: But it was after you came back?
- Canham: It was after we came back from the plebiscite work.
- Siemer: And before you went out as Resident Commissioner?
- Canham: Before we went out. It was in that interim period, yes. I know the last bits were very busy for Erwin before we went out for good to Micronesia—finishing up the Asia Foundation report, which was the Canham Committee. Sam Berger, who is dead now, he was on it. There were two Ambassadors on it. Erwin was the Chairman. We always had this joke as to who would get the suite in the hotel, you know, did the Chairman get it or did they give it to one of the Ambassadors? So in all the countries we went to, we always went and inspected the suite, and if we weren't in it we said our room was much better. This was what we all did each other. It was an interesting committee, that one.
- Siemer: When Erwin arrived back in Saipan as Resident Commissioner, how did he organize his office?
- Canham: He had wanted to have Neiman as his Deputy. When we were out for the week for the celebrations in April, there were a lot of negotiations about who he would have. It was decided that it would have to be a Micronesian, not another haole. And that's where Frank Ada came in. Neiman he got as his Special Assistant.
- Siemer: So it was the three of them?
- Canham: Yes. And Neiman I don't think was very high on Frank Ada. And Janet certainly wasn't. It wasn't an ideal combination.
- Siemer: How did it actually work out in fact?
- Canham: The Resident Commissioner job? I don't know. There was an awful lot of criticism that came with the job. There was a lot of flack that Erwin took. I used to say I would know what the story was in the PDN, because if I went to the farmers' market, and the guy there carried my parcels to the car, I knew there was a nasty story about Erwin in the PDN. They were always extremely nice to me and very careful to say, "Don't take it to heart, Mrs. Canham, this is politics, and we like Mr. Canham." There was a lot of mud slung about any decision that was made. I don't know that he got an awful lot of help from Frank Ada of the kind of help that Neiman had given of look, this is going to be a trouble spot.
- Siemer: One of the matters that came along fairly quickly when Erwin arrived back out there was the problem of conducting the Constitutional Convention. The Legislature was considering bills about the structure of the Constitutional Convention. Erwin vetoed three of them in a row. Do you remember anything about that?
- Canham: Yes. I remember that he vetoed three of them in a row. But I don't remember why it was.
- Siemer: He was very concerned about the Carolinian representation and whether there would be a fair representation of the Carolinians in the Constitutional Convention. Do you remember any discussions about how to do that?
- Canham: No. You see I wasn't involved in any of those meetings. The second time out, I wasn't in any meetings at all.

- Siemer: What was Erwin's view about the Constitutional Convention?
- Canham: We knew it was going to happen, but it was something that he was largely hands-off. I mean he had to be hands-off. His job was to keep the islands running.
- Siemer: How about the Office of Transition Studies and Planning headed by Pete A. Tenorio? What do you recall about Erwin's connection with them?
- Canham: I remember it existed. I knew Pete A. You see I got involved in other things, and I was doing other stuff. It wasn't that he didn't talk about what went on in the office. We didn't have that kind of relationship. And I remember there were times when things got very, very sticky and the Legislature would be mad at him, and we would talk about that. But I don't remember an awful lot.
- Siemer: What were you doing at the time?
- Canham: I couldn't take a job, but I tutored down at the Catholic School.
- Siemer: At Mt. Carmel?
- Canham: Yes, at Mt. Carmel.
- Siemer: Tutored English?
- Canham: No. What I did was I took kids who had reading problems. I loved dealing with this. I'm a teacher by trade. I made the teachers' lives more bearable for them by taking some of the worst trouble-makers, who were trouble-makers because they couldn't read, out of the room and getting them out of their hair for a while. So that was one of the things I did. There was quite a lot of entertaining to do.
- Siemer: Because Erwin was now the head official in the Marianas.
- Canham: Right.
- Siemer: Who were some of the Marianas folks that you associated most closely with during that period when Erwin was Resident Commissioner?
- Canham: There was John Sablan and Pete A. and Pete P. We used to have people up to dinner. I like small dinner parties, so we tried to do that. The ones where we got an awful lot of information was where you had a marriage like Sam McPhetres and Agnes, because the bridge between the haole and the Micronesian had already been—the gap had already been bridged. We got an awful lot of insights from them. We spent a lot of time having people to dinner to get them to talk so that we could listen and know what was going on.
- Willens: What was your sense at that time about the ability of the Marianas leadership to takeover self-government under their own Constitution?
- Siemer: That they would be very capable of doing it, but that there would probably be an awful lot of bumps that they would go through before it all settled down. We used to have a joke that every trip that anybody took to Washington to a meeting always went by Las Vegas. And what could have been a five-day trip was a 10-day trip. That minor misuse of funds, that kind of thing. I used to say but then they've had the American presence all these years and seen all the people out on the golf course in the middle of the afternoon—they learn well. So we knew there would be a lot of bumps. Carlos Camacho wouldn't have been, I wouldn't have said, the ideal choice as first governor.
- Willens: What's your recollection of him?
- Canham: Carlos was sort of an unknown, somebody who kept his dark glasses on. I used to say to him, "Carlos I've got to see what your eyes look like. Would you take your glasses off

- please when you talk to me?" You see I was very privileged in that I was Erwin's wife and nobody was going to give me a hard time there. And I wasn't any threat because to them I didn't have power. At the usual party, the Chamorros arrive as a couple and the men go to the bar and the wives sit all the way around the wall as rows of wives. Well they were totally prepared to accept that American women didn't do that. So this was okay. I got treated by them extremely well. But I was also very careful not to tread on toes. I was fascinated. People fascinate me, so I would listen and talk to them a lot, as much as I could. But there were barriers there.
- Willens: A couple of names we haven't mentioned are Joeten and Oly Borja, who ended up being a ticket to run for the top positions. What is your recollection of those two individuals?
- Canham: After Erwin had stopped being Resident Commissioner, and I was principal of a private school on Saipan, I had Joeten's grandchildren in the school.
- Siemer: Which school was that?
- Canham: Saipan Community School. Down by the little community church there on Beach Road. I ran that for five years. I couldn't do a job while he was Resident Commissioner, but I did afterwards. I only met Joeten socially, you know, and found him very nice.
- Willens: Were you surprised that he ended up being a candidate for Governor?
- Canham: Joeten or Oly?
- Willens: Joeten in particular.
- Canham: No.
- Willens: How about Oly? What were your dealings with him?
- Canham: Very few. Erwin may have had more than I did.
- Willens: Do you have any recollection of what the issues were in that first election for Governor and Lt. Governor? You had Carlos Camacho and Frank Ada on one ticket and Joeten and Oly on the other.
- Canham: No, I don't remember much about that campaign at all.
- Siemer: How did Saipan Community School come to be set up?
- Canham: Some American parents wanted something better for their kids than they could get in the Marianas schools. They'd started as a preschool in somebody's house and it just grew.
- Siemer: They approached you to run it?
- Canham: Oh, no. I had a friend who had gone in as a reading specialist, and she was leaving the islands. She wanted somebody to continue taking care of the reading and I was ready to look for a part-time job then. And so I said I'd do it. I was sort of against it as a fat-cat school, and she kind of took me by the ear and said there are some kids there who are just as much in need of your help, you know. So I went in as a reading specialist. It was at the point where they were going through fourth grade, and they had four classrooms built. It was no longer possible to run it as a loose organization with a group of people all agreeing. I would go down in the morning and do the reading stuff, and there would be some horrendous argument going on, and they'd say, "Sue would you come down and talk about this." I kept on coming down in the afternoon to take care of situations which weren't anything to do with reading, and gradually they realized they needed a principal, and I was kind of acceptable. There were two American families both teaching there—one Smith and one Jones—and they were at loggerheads. When one walked into the

teachers room the other one walked out, and that's what I inherited. So I was the one who went in and said, "Look we've got to have some policies now. And you can't have children running out of their classroom to their mother who is teaching another class if they've had a row with the teacher. This has got to stop. We've got to be like a professional school now." I was older, I was different, they would accept it from me, whereas the group that had nursed this thing up from infancy were all too tight-knit to accept it from each other. So I was able to come in at a different level and somehow be acceptable.

Siemer: What year was that that you started working at the school?

Canham: 1978.

Siemer: Was that one of the reasons that you decided to stay after Erwin stopped being Resident Commissioner?

Canham: Yes. We came back that summer and sold the condo and moved the furniture. We moved the furniture down here [to North Truro] and went back the end of the summer to live out there. By that time you see it had sort of taken hold of us and we liked it. It was really great fun. And also, what I knew would happen had happened, that in the two years absence, so many of the connections that Erwin had had faded out. He was still on the board of Resources for the Future of the Twentieth Century Fund. Until he died and used to come back by himself twice a year for their Board meetings. He made a trip in the spring and a trip in the fall. Then we came back here [to North Truro on Cape Cod] every summer.

Siemer: And how long did you stay in the Marianas?

Canham: Until the end of January 1984.

Siemer: Then where did you go?

Canham: Honolulu.

Siemer: How long did you stay there?

Canham: Ten years.

Siemer: When did you come to Massachusetts?

Canham: May 1994.

Siemer: To North Truro?

Canham: Yes.

Siemer: Have you been employed since you left the Saipan Community School?

Canham: Oh, yes. I ran the bookstore for St. Andrews Cathedral in Honolulu.

Siemer: How long did you do that?

Canham: Four years.

Siemer: Anything else?

Canham: I did odd tutoring, you know. That kind of stuff.

Willens: We have reached the end of our questions. We usually give our interviewees the opportunity to say a few last words for the record about their experience.

Canham: It was a wonderful experience, and it was tremendous fun going back there to live. We had a marvelous time, and I'm awfully grateful we had that time. I have a tremendous respect

for the ability of the Chamorro people, but I think there's going to be a lot of shaking down. The stories that I hear now of what it's like on Saipan are pretty grim compared with what it was like when we were there.

Willens: Well one thing we will say is that there's no one who dealt with you and your husband who didn't come away with the highest respect and affection for you both. You made an incredible contribution to that community, and I think you should be very proud of that.

Canham: Well thank you. It was a wonderful time.