

## INTERVIEW OF BETHWEL HENRY

by Howard P. Willens and Deanne C. Siemer

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- Willens: Bethwel Henry, Postmaster General of the Federated States of Micronesia, was a distinguished member of the Congress of Micronesia for many years, has been an active participant of Micronesian politics, and he has very kindly agreed to be interviewed as part of our project. Mr. Postmaster General, thank you very much for being available. As I mentioned off the record, we'd like to begin with some information about your personal background. Can you tell us when and where you were born?
- Henry: Thank you. I was born March 3, 1934 on a small island, Mokil, about 100 miles east of Pohnpei.
- Willens: What was the name of the island?
- Henry: Mokil, it's called Mwoakilloa now. Used to be Mokil. So that's where I was born.
- Willens: It's about 100 miles away from ....
- Henry: East of us; east of Pohnpei.
- Willens: East of Pohnpei.
- Henry: That's where I was born and raised.
- Willens: What were your parents' names?
- Henry: My father was Frank; my mother was Sera. Both have passed away.
- Willens: Were they born in the same community in which you were raised?
- Henry: Yes. They were both born in Mwoakilloa.
- Willens: Did you have any understanding of how many generations of your family had lived in that community?
- Henry: Far back, several generations, four that I can remember.
- Willens: Four generations or so?
- Henry: Yes.
- Siemer: How big an island is Mwoakilloa?
- Henry: Mwoakilloa is about one-fourth of a square mile of land. It's an atoll. If you fly from here to Majuro, you will see it in about 15 minutes. It's right under the plane or off to the left or right. The farthest point from reef to reef is two miles. Mwoakilloa Atoll has three islands. If all the land of these three islands were to be put together, it would make just about one-fourth of a square mile. It's a small atoll, no channel. Ships go there and stay outside, and passengers go ashore from there on small boats.
- Willens: How many people live on the island?
- Henry: About 300-400. Most of the people from there, like myself, are living in Pohnpei now.
- Willens: Were you educated on that island?
- Henry: Yes. My first elementary school was there.

- Willens: That was under the Japanese?
- Henry: Yes. I went to school one year during the Japanese time. When the War reached our area, the school stopped. I didn't go to school during the War years. But in the meantime, my father came to Pohnpei and worked here—one of those fellows taken to work for the Japanese.
- Willens: It was forced labor?
- Henry: It was forced, yes, because this was not their desire. They were taken there.
- Willens: Was he paid?
- Henry: Yes, they were paid. They were to be returned after one, two years. During his term of work it happened that the war got here, so we stayed. He brought the family. I had one sister, so the sister, myself and our mother came. So during the war we were here in Pohnpei. There was some bombing.
- Willens: We don't know very much about the war in this area. Did the Americans bomb the area?
- Henry: Yes. When the U.S. fleet moved to the Marshalls and set up on such islands as Eniwetak, U.S. planes would fly to Truk to bomb the Japanese fleet. On the way back from these bombings, these planes would empty their bombs on our islands, which are between the Marshalls and Truk. Then when the fleet moved from the Marshalls to Saipan, it stopped for several hours and bombarded Pohnpei before passing on. So, yes, we were bombed by the Americans.
- Willens: They basically did not invade the island as they moved up toward Saipan.
- Henry: Did not invade. Pohnpei was not invaded, but it was bombed. There were several people who died from the bombing, Japanese and natives. And there was a big garrison of Japanese soldiers. Many of them were stuck here because they couldn't go down south with the rest of the ships.
- Willens: So your family lived here in Kolonia as a unit during the early 1940s until the war ended?
- Henry: Yes, until the middle 1940s when the war ended. Then all of us from Mwoakilloa were repatriated back to Mwoakilloa by the U.S. Navy.
- Willens: Did you want to go back?
- Henry: Yes, everybody wanted to go back right after the War, because they really missed home. Home is to us a small island with a sandy beach, no mountains, no big hills to climb. It's a different environment. A lot of fishing.
- Willens: You were then about 11 or 12 years old.
- Henry: That's about right.
- Willens: Did you then pick up your education?
- Henry: Then the school started under the TTPI. I remember the school was started there, so I enrolled with the other students. Then from that elementary school we came to Pohnpei.
- Willens: Was there an intermediate school of some kind?
- Henry: That's right, the intermediate school.
- Willens: Was that under the Naval Administration?

- Henry: It was under the Naval Administration.
- Willens: Then did you continue your education?
- Henry: Yes, but under the Naval Administration only selected students would come to these higher schools. Not everyone was given the opportunity. After two years at the Pohnpei Intermediate School, I went to Honolulu. I went to school in Hawaii.
- Willens: When was that approximately?
- Henry: In 1951 I went to Mid-Pacific Institute.
- Willens: That was a private high school?
- Henry: A private mission school. Yes, high school, for two years. In those days, the policy of the Trust Territory, which was headquartered in Fort Ruger, Hawaii, was that after two years Micronesians must return home, so that they would not lose their customs. I think it was not a good policy, but this was the policy. So after two years, we had to come back.
- Willens: I'm interested in that. I hadn't really heard about that policy before. So you went to Hawaii in about 1951.
- Henry: 1951.
- Willens: And then two years at the Mid-Pacific Institute, 1951-1953 or thereabouts.
- Henry: Yes. 1953.
- Willens: And by that time you had finished high school?
- Henry: No. I was a special student at Mid-Pacific Institute the first year, unable to speak English well. That was the big emphasis when I went to Hawaii. I was to learn to speak English. So I was a freshman, but also a special student. There were other foreign students there—Japanese, Chinese, Filipinos. And those of us who were Micronesians and several of these other foreign students were put in a special class of English so we could devote most of our time to learning to speak and write the language.
- Willens: Did you want to learn the language?
- Henry: I thought it was necessary. Yes, we did. As you know, during the Japanese time most of the emphasis was to learn to speak the Japanese language, and I think the feeling was still the same. And learning the language exposed you to and made you ready to learn more things that are out there. So yes, I was anxious to learn the language.
- Siemer: What did you do when you came back home?
- Henry: I came back and then I had my first job. I was what they called a junior clerk working in an office here for one year.
- Willens: Of the TTPI office?
- Henry: Yes, a TTPI office, the Education Department of the Pohnpei District central office. So I started as a junior clerk for one year.
- Willens: How long did you stay there in that position?
- Henry: One year. Then I went back to school in Hawaii.
- Willens: Where in Hawaii?
- Henry: At Lahainaluna Technical High School in Lahaina, Maui. They call that the oldest school west of the Rockies in the U.S. It was started in 1831 by the missions, I think. Lahaina

used to be the capital of Hawaii, and this school was started way back. It continued on and became a vocational school where there was industrial, academic and agricultural training. So we were sent there. There were several of us from Micronesia, four of us from Pohnpei, one from Palau, one from the Marshalls, and one from Truk. We were sent there to learn about agriculture, because they thought Micronesians should learn about agriculture. None of us were interested in agriculture. In fact, the Marshallese guy that was there was complaining that he was among the cattle and he didn't know what to do with cattle, because there were no cattle in the Marshalls.

Willens: Was that consistent with the TTPI policy that you mentioned earlier? I mean, you had two years at the Institute and then came back.

Henry: Yes, it was earlier.

Willens: Did they change the policy?

Henry: Yes, they changed the policy later on.

Willens: Do you know why?

Henry: I don't know, but maybe some people in the office decided that this was not a good policy. I know that there was an administration personnel change, and maybe these people thought there's really no use for having us return to be Micronesianized again and then go back to America and learn about America.

Siemer: How long did you stay in Lahaina that time?

Henry: One year.

Willens: And you studied agriculture?

Henry: Yes, I studied something about agriculture, farming, learning about raising broccoli. That was not bad. Then also chickens, poultry, and hatching them in the incubator, and the hogs, swine. We were learning about raising pigs. We had an experiment feeding them coconuts and feeding them commercial feed, you know, and then seeing the difference. So it was not a wasted effort, but it was not the thing I was interested to learn.

Willens: What happened when you came back?

Henry: From there I went to the University of Hawaii.

Willens: Directly to the University of Hawaii at that point?

Henry: Yes.

Willens: And how long were you at the University of Hawaii?

Henry: I was there for two years, and then I had to come back to Pohnpei but just for the summer of 1957.

Willens: When you came back?

Henry: After I returned to Pohnpei from Mid-Pacific Institute in 1953, I worked in the Education Department for one year. Then I went back to Hawaii in 1954 to attend Lahainaluna. I went to the University of Hawaii after Lahainaluna. After two years at the university, I returned to Pohnpei and worked in the District Administrator's office as an interpreter-translator. This was for the summer of 1957.

Siemer: Who was the District Administrator at that time?

Henry: I think it was Mr. Neas.

- Willens: Maynard Neas?
- Henry: Yes, I think it was Maynard Neas.
- Willens: Who later went to the headquarters to deal with the land issues?
- Henry: That's right. He was in the Marshalls, then he came here, or was he in Yap sometime also. I remember Dr. Mill was there also at about this time.
- Willens: So you came back in approximately 1956?
- Henry: 1956 or 1957.
- Willens: 1956 or 1957. What kind of job did you have in the District administration?
- Henry: My title was interpreter/translator. So I was doing a good deal of translating U.S. English documents into the local language, into Ponapean.
- Willens: Were you one of the few people who had learned English to the extent that you had this ability?
- Henry: I think so, yes.
- Willens: Was there a policy at the time in the late 1950s of trying to bring more Micronesians into the TTPI Administration?
- Henry: Yes, it was at the lower levels, because at the top levels they were all Americans. The effort was to train Micronesians, but there were limited scholarships. Only a few Micronesians could go out to learn. Transportation was not as good as it is now, so when you left your family and everyone would come and stay over and say goodbye. And you would be going for a long time, because there was no plane flying here. We had to fly to Guam, for instance. When we went in 1951, we had to fly to Guam, and we spent about a week or two trying to get our passports made. In those days, a passport for TTPI citizens was something new. What is a TTPI citizen? That is what we were—TTPI citizens. I think they were trying to find out what is a TTPI citizen and what a passport for a TTPI citizen would be like, so it took us that long to get our passports. Then we had to travel from there by plane, Pan Am, to Wake Island and then to Honolulu. Then on the way back, we came by MATS, Military Air Transportation Service, from Honolulu to Kwajalein and stay overnight, to catch the plane to fly from there to here, to Pohnpei.
- Willens: Was there an airport here, or did you land out in the lagoon?
- Henry: We landed in the lagoon, flying in an SA16 or PBY or PBM amphibian.
- Willens: How many years did you stay working the District Administration?
- Henry: That was just for the summer months of 1957.
- Willens: Then what was your next job?
- Henry: My next job was when I came back and taught at PICS.
- Willens: Had PICS moved to Pohnpei by that time?
- Henry: Yes, PICS moved to Pohnpei in 1959 from Truk. There were two of us who were designated to teach at PICS. Moses, a Palauan who lived and passed away in Saipan, and myself. So we came. We joined this teaching staff at PICS, the Pacific Islands Central School. When it started at Pohnpei with new buildings after moving from Truk, the High Commissioner himself took over direct control. I think it created a controversy somewhat because the principal at PICS was on a level similar to or even higher than the District Director of Education and reported directly to the High Commissioner. So this was a

special setup by High Commissioner Nucker in 1959. PICS had students from all over the TTPI, including some students from Rota. I taught there for about 10 years.

Willens: Ten years?

Henry: Just about 10 years. I was teaching at PICS when I was elected to the First Congress of Micronesia in 1965. Before I returned to Pohnpei from Hawaii in 1959, Mwoakilloa had selected me as its representative in the district-wide Ponape District Congress.

Willens: Did you consider going to PICS yourself?

Henry: When I was told that the job was open to me by High Commissioner people, I said I'll take that job. It was offered.

Willens: When you were a student though, you went to the Mid-Pacific Institute rather than PICS yourself. Could you have gone to PICS as a student if you had wanted to?

Henry: Yes.

Willens: But you decided not to do that.

Henry: No. The Director of Education here was Robert Halverson. He was the one that selected two of us to sponsor to go to Hawaii. This was more attractive than anything else.

Willens: I can understand that.

Henry: So I went there.

Willens: What was your general assessment of High Commissioner Nucker and the way in which the Trust Territory was run in the late 1950s?

Henry: I was with High Commissioner Nucker in 1959 when he appeared before the Trusteeship Council for the annual report. He was a very effective public speaker, and I think he was a good administrator. When the move from Hawaii to Guam was made, he was Deputy High Commissioner. The High Commissioner was Midkiff, who had a lot of holdings in Hawaii and couldn't move, because of his responsibility to the Hawaiian Trust and the land in Hawaii. So Nucker moved there, and I can remember some of the Americans that were here, talking and tape recording to their Congressmen in the U.S., lobbying for Nucker to be appointed as High Commissioner. I remember that, and he was eventually selected and was the first High Commissioner when the Headquarters of TTPI was set up in Guam. I think he was very effective, but he didn't have enough money to work with. I think there was so little money.

Willens: You probably heard that in the 1950s the Trust Territory government did not have very much money, but they seemed to have a policy of letting the Micronesians develop very slowly, and in fact not encouraging the teaching of English. Did you have any sense that the Micronesians were being held back by the TTPI policies under Mr. Nucker?

Henry: Yes, during his time. And I know Dr. Gibson was also the Director of Education, and he had a policy of not having the Micronesians go too far. I think that this policy of returning after two years of education off-island was done with his strong recommendation.

Willens: Did you ever discuss those issues with Dr. Gibson?

Henry: No. I was just a student in those days.

Willens: Did you disagree with those policies?

Henry: I disagreed. I don't think that was right. They were talking about having students learn the local language in schools up to a certain grade, but no English was to be taught.

- Willens: You mentioned earlier that you thought it was a good idea to learn English.
- Henry: Yes.
- Willens: Was that a feeling that was shared by the young men and women that you grew up with?
- Henry: I think so. I think people thought that that should be done, but they had no part in making policy. In those days, policy makers were either in Guam or they had moved to Saipan when the TTPI headquarters was moved to Saipan. Eventually more Micronesians got involved in the decision making process, but in most cases they were not. That's where I said Nucker was effective, because he had more and more Micronesians involved. But in those days we were really unable to get involved in what kind of policy we should have. There was a lot of complaining that went on by parents, for instance, because they were coming up with these books, like *The Island Family*, and all that. And then some books were made in the local language, learning the names of these birds and all this, and parents would say, "Why? I know this, I didn't send my child to school to learn the name of the bird that I know and he knows, and he should be learning a different name." That kind of thinking was widespread.
- Willens: When did you first run for office?
- Henry: I was still in Honolulu when I was selected to the newly formed Pohnpei District Congress. That's what they called it. The Pohnpei District Congress was set up in 1958, and Bailey Olter was the first representative from Mwoakilloa. He is the President now. So he was Mwoakilloa's first representative. Then he decided to go to school, and I was coming back in 1959, so Mwoakilloa elected me to take his place in the Congress in 1959. So I joined the Pohnpei District Congress in 1959. That was my first elected job.
- Willens: How often did the Congress meet?
- Henry: They met I think twice a year. It was the first time that we had a Congress consisting of representatives from all the different municipalities in Pohnpei. So that was my first. In that year also I was elected President of this Pohnpei District Congress.
- Willens: You were elected President of the Congress in your very first term?
- Henry: First term, yes. I think because in those days they were looking at people that had education. I think many people in the Congress didn't know me that well, but they heard that I went to school. So I think it was because of that.
- Siemer: How were elections conducted back in those days?
- Henry: In the election of the President of the Congress, it was done by secret ballot. But the designation of myself to come to the Congress, I think it was done by the Mwoakilloa Council. It was not a popular election. In Mwoakilloa, the Council consisted of only men, so these men met and said okay, this person. Any disagreement? No! Okay, that man will represent us. This was the way.
- Siemer: You and Bailey Olter came from the same island?
- Henry: Same island. In fact, our fathers are half-brothers. His father is older than mine; they have the same mother but different fathers.
- Willens: What did the Congress do?
- Henry: This was called the Pohnpei District Congress, but mostly it was a body that made recommendations to the High Commissioner. So we'd meet and then we'd pass certain proposals, and then we'd recess. There was what we would call a legislative committee

consisting of one from each of the municipalities on Pohnpei Island and one representing the outer islands. That small committee would meet after the session and then look at the proposals that we passed, write them into recommendation form, and then sign and send them to the High Commissioner. The High Commissioner would then either incorporate your recommendations into orders or ignore them.

Siemer: Did the High Commissioner have anybody other than the District Administrator here in Pohnpei?

Henry: No. That was his representative.

Siemer: Just one. No health people or others like the district road-building people or things like that?

Henry: Well, they had what they called the public works officer, the head of the hospital, and then some community development personnel and finance people. They did have these people under the District Administrator.

Willens: Did your recommendations go through the District Administrator on the way to the High Commissioner?

Henry: Yes, they would just go through him. And then the High Commissioner would effectuate whatever it was.

Willens: Either act or not act. Were there important differences between you and the other members of the Congress and the District Administrator as to what was going on in Pohnpei?

Henry: I'm trying to think of examples, but it's so many years ago and so many different bodies. But there were differences. I think that there was less of a demand for a voice then compared with later on. I think this was the situation at the time.

Willens: Did you have any funds that you as the Congress could allocate to the people?

Henry: That's a good point. We did raise some money, local revenue, and we were paying for all the teachers. All the teachers here were paid from funds that we raised—taxes like import tax, excise tax, cigarette and beer taxes.

Willens: What would happen if you did not raise enough money to pay for the teachers? Would the Trust Territory government provide additional money?

Henry: Eventually they took over, but no they wouldn't at the time. They were paid according to the money that we raised. And they were not highly paid in those days.

Willens: How much, for example? Can you remember?

Henry: I really don't know. When I started teaching at PICS, I was getting \$66 every two weeks, which was high, very high in those days. Because when we were in school in Hawaii, we were getting \$20 a month scholarship, you know, money to spend. And that was plenty. That was a lot of money that we were getting.

Willens: That was for room and board, I mean for housing?

Henry: No, just money to ....

Willens: Spending money?

Henry: Yes, spending money. So I think ordinary salary in those days was about \$15 a month.

Willens: For an ordinary teacher in the islands.

- Henry: I think so. I don't have the exact figure, but I think that was about the salary in those days—\$20, \$30 would be high for a month.
- Willens: Who was it from Pohnpei that served on what was called the Council of Micronesia?
- Henry: In Ponape, political development started with what was called the Island Congress, which consisted of one house of Chiefs and one house of people. That body represented only Pohnpei Island. The outer islands were not part of this. Then they graduated to what they called the Pohnpei District Congress, which included the outer islands in one body.
- Willens: It didn't include any of the chiefs?
- Henry: They could be, yes. In fact, they could be there in that one body. In fact the person with whom I was nominated to be President of the District Congress was one of the traditional chiefs from Pohnpei. I won over him in that election. Then from that, I was involved in changing the body which is about 40 some members, the Pohnpei District Congress, to what we called the Pohnpei District Legislature, which reduced down to 20 some members. In those days it included Kosrae, because Kosrae was still part of the Pohnpei district. So this was the way it happened.
- Willens: Did you play any role in the creation of the Congress of Micronesia?
- Henry: Oh, yes. In 1959 I represented Pohnpei to this committee of advisors.
- Willens: The Advisory Committee; it was called the Indigenous Peoples Advisory Committee, then it became the Council of Micronesia.
- Henry: We called it the Inter-District Advisory Committee to the High Commissioner. It was the body that preceded the Council of Micronesia
- Willens: And you served on that?
- Henry: I was in the Committee but not in the Council. But the speaker of the Ponape District Legislature and another member represented us. Two from each district. So I did not go to the Council. I didn't serve in the Council of Micronesia. I served in the previous committee but not the Council.
- Willens: When did you first hear that there was going to be a Congress of Micronesia?
- Henry: Well, the persons who represented us on the Council were from our District Legislature, so we knew that that was coming. They had also sent out members of the Council to go around the districts to solicit thinking. So that was one of our recommendations, too. So we knew that they were coming up with the Congress of Micronesia.
- Willens: Did you think that having a Territory-wide legislative body was a good idea?
- Henry: Yes.
- Willens: Why?
- Henry: Because we were a very spread out and distant territory, and we lived separately. And I thought that having one body, you know, was better than what we used to have, like the committee or the council, which could only make recommendations to the High Commissioner to put into force.
- Siemer: At that time, had you traveled to the other districts?
- Henry: Yes.
- Siemer: To the Marshalls and Palau?

- Henry: Not to Palau and Yap, but to the Marshalls, yes, I did.
- Siemer: In the course of your teaching work?
- Henry: No. In my teaching, I only stayed in Pohnpei and taught at PICS. I met the students from those places, many of whom became leaders. But that's how I got to know those places, was through the students, or in Hawaii when I'd meet with some of the students from several places in Micronesia. But I wouldn't say that I traveled to them, because I don't remember traveling to those places until I was in the Congress of Micronesia.
- Willens: Did you run in the very first election?
- Henry: Yes. Again, it was not a running. There was a group meeting representing our election district, which consists of several of the municipalities here. They met and they selected candidates, and I was one of the candidates. There were other candidates that withdrew. So in the first Congress of Micronesia election, I was an unopposed candidate, so I ran unopposed. In fact, I got elected I think by default in the first election, because my name was never on the ballot, so there was no vote.
- Willens: It was never on the ballot?
- Henry: Never on the ballot because I was unopposed. And I think they didn't know what to do with the procedures, because after the election was over the High Commissioner was to certify winners. Then what happened to me? What happened to him? Why? There were no votes cast for him. In order to get elected, you have to have at least one vote, but there was no vote. Well, he was not on the ballot. So the AG ruled that I was elected. I don't know what he used for the rule, but that's what he did.
- Willens: What a great start. But somebody else must have been elected. I mean there were some Senators elected.
- Henry: Everybody else was elected.
- Willens: And some representatives were?
- Henry: Bailey was elected at-large. And Dr. Pretrick. They were the two elected at-large on Pohnpei. And then three others besides myself were elected. One was a chief, and one was a dentist, and one was an educator. They were all elected.
- Willens: Were they opposed?
- Henry: They were opposed, right.
- Willens: But from your district, there was no opposition to you?
- Henry: Right. And in the entire Trust Territory, I was the only one that had no opposition.
- Willens: How did it happen then that you were then elected speaker?
- Henry: We went to Saipan in 1965, and it was the first session, and we elected Dwight Heine from the Marshalls to be our speaker, Chief Petrus [Mailo] was Vice Speaker. I was elected Legislative Secretary, the third-ranking position, which we later changed to Floor Leader. Then when Dwight got elected Speaker. In that same session, he was offered the job of District Administrator of the Marshalls so he resigned from the Congress and Chief Petrus became Acting Speaker, until the next session which was one year later, 1966. And in that 1966 session, Chief Petrus and I were the two candidates for the speakership, and I was elected.
- Willens: In that very first year or two of the Congress of Micronesia, what issues were you personally most concerned about?

- Henry: Well, somehow the designation of bills as urgent became very interesting, because when we met we found that under the Secretarial Order that set up this body we were to have legislative authority. But there was in the Order a provision which provided that if the High Commissioner designated any measure that he sent us as urgent, we must pass it in the form that he sent it to us. And if we don't, it becomes law without our approval. Any action by us becomes null and void. Whatever action we do, if we amend it and pass it, then our action caused the submission to be law. Even if we want to change it.
- Siemer: The way it was originally submitted?
- Henry: Yes. So we wanted to change that. I think it became the beginning of our wanting more and more of our own authority.
- Willens: Did you think about a change in that procedure?
- Henry: Yes, we did. Finally the Secretarial Order was changed, and that designation was eliminated.
- Willens: Well, at the time the Congress was created the High Commissioner was Mr. Goding, and then he was succeeded a year or so later by Mr. Norwood.
- Henry: Yes.
- Willens: What was the relationship between the Congress and those two High Commissioners?
- Henry: Mr. Goding I think was not a very vocal person. I met him also after he was High Commissioner in D.C. several times. He was more fortunate that more money was coming our way, more than double what we used to have, so that more programs were started here, like the AESCP program, all the school buildings built, and the American teachers came out to us. That helped to improve the status of teaching. So all this was done under Goding. But I don't think there was much involved in what authority the Congress of Micronesia should have, that's the way I remember it.
- Siemer: Did you go back to the U.N. with the High Commissioner during those years?
- Henry: I went back only when we were to testify for the Compact.
- Siemer: Oh, so that was considerably later.
- Henry: Right.
- Willens: How about when the U.N. came here? Did you meet with them?
- Henry: Yes. Almost all the time.
- Willens: What did you think of the visiting missions?
- Henry: Well, they instigated a lot of thinking and made people excited, oh, this is the U.N., let's clean up the place and let's get the garage and all the cars in line and all that. We only had a government garage. And then they will come and sometimes they would criticize what the U.S. was doing, and many people liked to hear that.
- Willens: Did you have the sense that the United Nations visiting mission could bring about any change in the U.S. policies?
- Henry: Well, they really thought that that would happen.
- Willens: You thought so?
- Henry: Yes.

- Willens: Were there any examples where you thought the U.N. had persuaded the United States to change its policies here?
- Henry: I think we were mainly thinking about ourselves. You know, what they can do to give us more and improve more. In some of the decisions they make, maybe that's not the right decision. Maybe the U.N. can help the U.S. to change. Even in some projects later on, like the killing of the starfish. Some of our people thought that that was not the right thing to do. Let the starfish die themselves, but when the Interior people decided to take a lot of money and do that, we thought that that money would be better spent to build more ships, into having more ships, so more ships will go out there to the outer islands. We disagreed. So we went to the U.N. for things like that, but mostly it was the big issues for our future, future status.
- Willens: You mentioned earlier some of the changes that came with the Kennedy Administration under Mr. Goding. What was your understanding as to why these changes came about? Did you have any idea why it was that the Kennedy Administration decided to put more money into education and do other things like that?
- Henry: Well, several thoughts. One was that it's about time the U.S. should have more interest in us. Because many people were thinking that America was not that friendly with us, and people were going to other places to seek support and were joining groups against the U.S. But many people thought differently about the Democrats, and believed that the Democrats will give us more attention, because their attitude is more toward the poor or the lower classes and these people will help us more than the Republicans who are more interested in the better off. So these ideas were even amongst Micronesian students in colleges, they would talk this way. These were some of the expressions that were made.
- Siemer: Were there any U.S.-owned businesses out here back then?
- Henry: No. It started, yes. There was USCC, ITC. When you say U.S.-owned, not the government, right?
- Siemer: Right. I mean private. Were there private people who owned small hotels or people? Did Mobil Oil have any people here, anybody like that?
- Henry: In fact, there was no hotel as such, you know. It was just a government building in each of the centers.
- Siemer: Oh, the government guest houses.
- Henry: Yes, government guest houses, right. These were the only things we had. Shipping was all outside owned. There really were no businesses that were owned by us, by Micronesians.
- Willens: The USCC I know was U.S. government-owned. But that only lasted for a couple of years.
- Henry: Yes.
- Willens: And then there was an Island Trading Corporation . . . .
- Henry: ITC.
- Willens: . . . that assumed some of those importing/exporting responsibilities. Was that run by local people?
- Henry: No. Mostly headed by an American. And then there were local people working under them, but . . . .
- Willens: What happened to it?

- Henry: It just went out of existence when there was no longer any need for it. There was no need for it, I think, because there were other companies that came and took over local businesses.
- Siemer: So those were locally owned?
- Henry: Yes.
- Siemer: And how about the copra business?
- Henry: That's what the USCC and ITC were. They were useful, because they were buying and then having it sent to Japan for sale. Then for instance Japan became interested and started buying copra. A federation got set up in Pohnpei, a locally owned company, although they're bankrupt now. But they were taking over. They were buying the copra and shipping it to Japan for sale.
- Siemer: There were some kind of shells that were also ....
- Henry: There were also trochus shells.
- Siemer: What is that?
- Henry: Trochus shell is a shell that makes buttons.
- Siemer: Oh, yes, I know what that is. Like mother-of-pearl buttons.
- Henry: That's right. In fact we have a button-making machine here now. You can talk to Bob about that. Because we have had bad experience with the government now. But they used to have a season when everybody went out and harvested, brought in that shell to local buyers, and he'll buy and send it to Japan.
- Siemer: And those were the things that the District Congress and the District Legislature were taxing—copra, trochus shell and scrap. And those were the locally-raised revenues that you could appropriate as you saw fit?
- Henry: Yes. Actually we were encouraging export so there was very little minimal tax on these exports.
- Siemer: What about imports? Could you tax imports as well?
- Henry: Yes. In fact, that was what we had most—especially beer and liquor and cigarettes. They were our biggest income. Liquor and cigarettes.
- Willens: That's what's known as sin taxes.
- Henry: Sin taxes. Then we had a very small import tax on building materials and food items.
- Siemer: That carried over to the Congress of Micronesia. The Congress could appropriate those local revenues as well.
- Henry: Right.
- Siemer: When the Congress of Micronesia took over those revenues, what happened to the District Legislature in Pohnpei?
- Henry: I think the excise tax remained with them. Import tax was taken away. Then later we created our own income tax. They had their own sales tax. So they had their own taxes.
- Siemer: So from the very start, the Congress of Micronesia had existing taxes that it could rely on?

Henry: That's right. But they were really taking over what the states or the districts used to have and then we delineated what kind of tax the central government should have and what tax the district governments and the local governments should have.

Siemer: At the beginning, when you were first elected to the Congress of Micronesia, what could the Congress do with respect to the federal money?

Henry: Pass resolutions.

Siemer: That's all?

Henry: That's all.

Siemer: The High Commissioner would present a budget?

Henry: Yes. And if you check the volume of resolutions vs. bills in the first Congress, it's many more resolutions than bills. In the succeeding years, the number of resolutions got fewer and fewer, and bills got more numerous. That's really what happened. So mostly in the first few Congresses we were mainly voicing our frustration, our gratitude, our feeling, everything, through resolutions. I know some people would introduce a resolution here for this thing and then the next day he'd introduce a resolution against the same thing that he supported before.

Siemer: I read some of those speeches.

Henry: So initially we had no influence over the federal budget. But what happened was that we eventually got to influence a really good part of it. Because finally we set up a committee of the Congress to review the High Commissioner budget and make our own submission to the U.S. Congress along with the High Commissioner's submission or the Secretary of the Interior's submission to the U.S. Congress with a line item that would reflect our submission. Then we thought of an even more effective way to express our views when the High Commissioner couldn't support certain projects. So we took upon ourselves to support these projects by saying that even though Interior couldn't support this project, the Congress of Micronesia does and believes that this project should go through. The Palau bridge was one that I can remember well that the High Commissioner wasn't able to support, but this was a Congress of Micronesia project, so we went there, and I testified for that in either the House or the Senate.

Siemer: In Washington?

Henry: Yes, in the U.S. Congress. And then some busses for school in Saipan. Those were some of the examples. And eventually, Olympio Borja, Raymond Setik and I were the first from the Congress of Micronesia who accompanied the High Commissioner to testify in the U.S. Congress. So we finally testified with the High Commissioner.

Siemer: That's what I was going to ask you. When did you first start going to Washington?

Henry: We used to go with them, but never sitting and testifying with the High Commissioner. But I remember when Olympio Borja was the Senator from the Marianas. When we went there, it was the first time we were put in the witness stand and testified or expressed our feelings. It was at the time that Johnston was nominated to be High Commissioner.

Willens: What was your assessment of Senator Borja as a representative?

Henry: He was good. I know him well. He was a good representative of the people there. Very, very concerned about the people. He would always talk about "the people, the people." And when the Congress started, he was one of the most powerful persons in Saipan.

- Willens: Was he?
- Henry: Yes. Joe Cruz was with him, but Joe Cruz was second to him. And we would go to parties, where the villages would give us parties, and he would be . . . .
- Willens: In Saipan?
- Henry: In Saipan, yes.
- Willens: What was your opinion of Joe Cruz when you got to know him in the Congress?
- Henry: Joe Cruz would always express his opinion like the Free Press that he had. And at times he would be so very emotional. The House and the Senate chambers were separated by a wall but were right next to each other when we started the Congress. And at times in the House we could hear Joe Cruz shouting in the Senate while giving a speech. Joe Cruz was giving a speech. He would be the only person that would be giving a speech in the Senate that we could hear in the House.
- Willens: It was like a joint session. Do you have any recollection as to why it was that there was a challenge to Joe Cruz being seated in the first Congress? Do you remember that?
- Henry: I know that that happened. I'm trying to figure out what it was, because there was a committee I think that studied the matter and they made a report. I really cannot recall. I wish I could.
- Willens: Let's turn then to the question of political status. In the first year or two of the Congress, did you personally have any idea of what future political status for Micronesia you wanted to see?
- Henry: I personally don't know what it was that we wanted, but I know that for myself I didn't want us to be affiliated with America as closely as we could. I was somewhat reluctant about this and feared that we might lose our land, we might lose everything. It was just that feeling. It was so unknown what the future was. At the same time, I was one of those that did not support complete independence.
- Willens: Why was that?
- Henry: Because I thought that we did not have enough resources to support ourselves if we were to break and become independent at that time. But I wanted some kind of independence where there could be some assistance from the U.S. And also I was not supporting any idea that we might be linked with a nation other than the U.S. because of the language that we had learned, because of the schooling that our children had been exposed to. So there were some things that we wanted and some things that we didn't want. So when we set up the committee to search and find out what status alternatives would be available to us, if we were to do away with the Trusteeship status, they came up with this idea of free association. I then began my support of that idea, that this was the best for us. But at the same time, I wasn't thinking that this would be our final political status. It was always the thinking that this would be a status we should move into before we actually decided whether we would be independent or become a state or whatever of the U.S. So that was the kind of thinking that I had. For instance, I went to the Nauru independence ceremony in 1968. I met this Dr. Davis from Australia.
- Willens: Davidson?
- Henry: Davidson. He was involved in the final arrangement of Nauru. Then I came and talked to Lazarus about the person, and he wrote to him and invited him. And he helped us to decide, helped us to see a clearer picture of what we really wanted to seek.

- Willens: In 1966, the Congress of Micronesia considered a resolution directed to the President of the United States asking him to create a Commission to study future political status. Do you have any recollection of that?
- Henry: Yes. I think at that time the U.S. was considering a resolution to decide our future. We were not part of that, and we wanted to be part of it. So we wanted to tell the President this is what we want you to do, instead of our sitting in Saipan or in our offices and then waiting until this thing is brought out to us. So this was mainly the way I understand it. When you asked that, I think this was the situation. We wanted to be involved in the decision.
- Willens: Is that why you created your own commission in 1967?
- Henry: No. With nothing happening in the U.S., I think we created our own commission simply because we wanted to do our own. We wanted to see what was good, what the future ought to involve. Because at the same time, we already had different feelings among our own members—the Marianas want this, the Marshalls were questioning about our getting too much of the money away from them and they're paying more than anybody else. So all these differences were already brewing among ourselves.
- Siemer: In the first Congress of Micronesia when you considered how to allocate the locally-raised revenues, what was your view about the best way to do that among the districts?
- Henry: Personally I think that we needed to satisfy the districts. I'm not saying personally, but in the position I was, I thought the best way to reach a solution was to have the committee, the committee that consisted of representatives from each of the districts, decide and recommend to the Congress what was the best solution. In hindsight, I think that this was the problem that happened for the Marshalls, because we have a representative from the Marshalls who was not in league with Amata [Kabua] who was in the Senate.
- Siemer: Oh, he was not?
- Henry: They were not seeing things eye to eye, and eventually it got to the point where Amata just would say that he didn't think that this is the right way. Because they were saying that in the beginning they were paying more into our pot when we were getting much of our money from copra tax, and the Marshalls had more copra. Then we were threatening to sue Kwajalein to ensure that Kwajalein should pay their tax into our pot. And finally a decision was made in the U.S. that some money from Kwajalein should be paid into the Congress of Micronesia fund. That added even more to the Marshalls contribution into the pot. And the Marshalls in their view was not getting their fair share of the return, you know. So this was getting worse and worse. So I think that, looking back, what our committee was doing was not satisfying the Marshalls.
- Siemer: Did the committee finally come up with a formula that divided the local revenues approximately equally among the districts?
- Henry: No. I think the position of the committee was to give each district what it needs. In brief, this was what they were working on.
- Siemer: The needs were greater in Yap, for example, than they were in the Marshalls?
- Henry: I wouldn't say Yap, but as an example, yes, if it were there, but as you know Yap didn't get that much from the Congress. But if it were there, keep it there.
- Willens: Were there similar problems developing with respect to the Northern Marianas? Did the representatives from the Northern Marianas think that they were contributing more revenue to the Congress than they were getting back in terms of programs?

- Henry: From the way I understand it, no, it wasn't the same issue in the Northern Marianas. The Northern Marianas were just saying they were more with the American family than the rest of us, and they really needed to be there more than with the rest of us. At least that was the majority of the thinking.
- Willens: I came across an issue of economic development where there was a proposal I think that Senator Borja presented about the establishment of Duty Free Shops at the terminals, and the Marianas representatives were all in favor of this because it offered more income from the tourist industry. And some of the other members of the Congress stood up and said we aren't interested in more economic development. We have as many tourists as we want. Was there a difference in view among the districts as to the desirability of economic development?
- Henry: Well, let's just take that issue—tourism. I wouldn't say economic development. But on tourism, there were very different feelings on it among the separate areas. In the Marianas, I understand they were depending more on tourism than any other district at the time. For instance, you just compare Olympio Borja and say Hirosi Ismael from Kosrae. Hirosi would say Kosrae has the best oranges in the world. Best limes in the world. You come to Kosrae; it's a beautiful island; and that's the place that you will find paradise. And somebody would ask him whether that's a good place for tourism. "I'll kill the first tourist that ever comes to Kosrae." You know, the Marianas is saying let's accommodate the tourists and so on and so forth. So in those days, there were differences of thinking about what were the economic development priorities.
- Willens: Well, take the case of tourism and the contrasts you just presented. Was there a concern in Kosrae and elsewhere that tourism would contaminate the local culture?
- Henry: Yes, I think that was a very big concern.
- Siemer: Did they have that thought from seeing Hawaii?
- Henry: I think so, right. And many of them had gone to the Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico, and to the South Pacific. They had places to compare, and people would talk to them—opponents and proponents of tourism, development, culture retention, all that. I think they had heard all those things.
- Willens: Did you have any consultants in the Congress of Micronesia or Peace Corps lawyers in those days that were advising you about economic development and tourism?
- Henry: Yes. In fact, there were Peace Corps lawyers. Most of these people were in the districts. So when we had our sessions, we would bring these people in, I think mostly lawyers.
- Willens: Do you remember what their views were? Did they influence the thinking of the Congress?
- Henry: They did influence to some degree, because they gave their opinion. And some of them were respected and some of their opinions were used. Some of course were not. We'd reject some. But yes, we did use many of the Peace Corps people that came up.
- Willens: There came a time I guess around in 1969 when the Peace Corps lawyer program was terminated, and the Congress of Micronesia passed many resolutions complaining about that and asking for lawyers to be assigned to the Congress. Do you remember that?
- Henry: No, I don't remember that.
- Willens: Going back to the Future Political Status Commission that the Congress created in 1967, it issued an interim report in 1968 and a final report in 1969. Did you have the concern

that if you didn't have your own commission, there was the risk that the United States would take some action and just impose it on you?

Henry: Yes, there was that feeling. There was a movement in D.C. and we thought that the best for us to do was to do our own instead of letting it be brought down on us.

Siemer: At the time that the first committee was established by the Congress, was there already a feeling among the members in the Congress of Micronesia as to how they thought the status was going to come out?

Henry: I think you put it correctly. But I mean you can expand on that feeling, because there was that feeling that it could be resolved, but that feeling might not be the same in the different parts of the Trust Territory. In some places, some of the people might want to become independent, and some might like to continue the Trusteeship, and some might want to join the U.S. now. Then there was also the feeling that we might stay together, but I don't think that everybody believed that we would be able to stay together. There were very strong forces among ourselves that would like us to separate into separate, different status situations.

Siemer: What did you think at the beginning, back in 1966 and 1967?

Henry: My own personal thinking was that the best for us was to stay together, because it was the best opportunity for us to decide what we wanted in the future. If you compare what is the best for us, is to stay together. For what status? Well, we can develop, we can decide the status by ourselves. But that was my own feeling.

Siemer: But even at the outset there wasn't any other district except the Marianas that thought a closer association with the United States was a good idea, was there?

Henry: That's right. No.

Siemer: And there were some that thought total independence was a good idea.

Henry: That's right. Correct.

Siemer: So you were faced with quite a large range of views.

Henry: Very true.

Siemer: What did you think you could do to bring all those people together?

Henry: Well, we thought maybe the best was, for example, to have two leaders sitting together. If they cannot resolve a consensus of how we should stick together, there is just no way we can do that. Because we knew our people were speaking very loudly about different things, people we represent. And I think it was finally brought out in the Convention that we couldn't stay together. But at the same time, we knew that the U.S. was supporting separation like the Marianas break-away, they were supporting that, so that was a big force. We couldn't do anything to counter that kind of strong force, because the feeling was strong there with the U.S. support and actually doing it, setting up the mechanics to make that a reality, and there was nothing we could do to break it. So sometime we would break up, which was something I didn't want.

Siemer: When the election came around for the second Congress of Micronesia, was the status issue something that people in the villages and the leaders talked about during the election?

Henry: Could happen, but you know, even in that, there was still not much campaigning. In

the first election, I'm sorry I'm going back to the first election, but in the first election, in Pohnpei, only one out of six of us that got elected went on the air, used the radio to campaign.

Siemer: Who was that?

Henry: Olter Paul. And Olter Paul went on the air and he said I'm sorry, I don't want to say anything about what I can do, because whoever you select would be the person representing us. Almost like an apology, and he got elected. Others that used the radio gave strong campaign speeches. These didn't get elected, but the rest of us that were elected did not go on the air. Of course, I was not running. Then the next one, I think there was a little campaigning, and actually I was telling people that if you elect me for this one, this is what I will do. The status question was brought out by some of the leaders of the municipalities. Even before the first Congress of Micronesia election, when the two of us delegates from Pohnpei to the 1959 Inter-District Advisory Committee to HiCom visited the municipalities to gather items for the conference, the status question was brought up in some places. For instance, in one municipality person said I'd like us to be like Puerto Rico. So I said what is that? Commonwealth. So I said well, what is it like? How is Puerto Rico? He said he didn't know the detail of the government of Puerto Rico. You know, he didn't know the setup. But that's what he wanted. He was an older man, a judge from there. So even in those days, people were formulating their opinion as to what future status they wanted. So I would say that for Pohnpei I think more status talk was done in that election than in the next one. When was that? 1966?

Willens: The election may have been in 1966.

Henry: Yes, 1966.

Willens: The session began probably in 1967.

Henry: That's right.

Willens: There were some people in the United States that felt that if you had a plebiscite in all of Micronesia in 1967 or 1968, and you asked the people whether they wanted to affiliate permanently with the United States, that the people overwhelmingly would have voted for that.

Henry: That's right.

Willens: You think that's right?

Henry: I think so. And that's one of the concerns I think that Lazarus and others had about the people voting in a plebiscite. People really didn't think deeply into this status, you know—what is this, what is that. And many of the issues were not known to us. For instance, the military requirements. We didn't know about the needs of the U.S. military—it was a secret—until we started these negotiations. Then things got revealed in papers we read in the Philippines and here and there. And a little bit slowly we learned what was the position of the U.S. fall back and the importance of this line and then fall back to other positions. And what areas in the TTPI were especially of interest to the U.S. military. So those things we didn't know. But life was good, and war was not coming down on us. So I think that yes, if we had to vote then, there would be more so than we would say like now. People now are more outspoken about what they want, and the more outspoken they are about what they want, the more they talk about myself, being myself, and I don't want any interference from outside, even to the point where when the question about independence come up: What about independence? You cannot eat independence. Well, I don't care. Independence is what I want.

- Willens: You mentioned yesterday that you recall helping prepare for the visit of Secretary Hickel in May of 1969. The Nixon Administration came into power in January of 1969, and we've been told by Secretary Hickel that he sent out some people from the Interior Department, including a young man named Edgar Kaiser, to do some advance planning. What's your recollection about your first encounter with people from the Nixon Administration in 1969?
- Henry: Well, it was Kaiser that made the arrangement for us to meet with President Nixon and Kissinger in Guam. I was with the High Commissioner and the President of the Senate, Amata Kabua, and Lazarus Salii, that met with him. And that was arranged by Edgar Kaiser, because he came and we met and we were talking before we actually went up to meet with the President.
- Willens: What was supposed to be the purpose of that meeting? You had passed a resolution in the Congress asking the President and the U.S. Congress to seriously consider the future political status issue. Why was that resolution passed, if you remember?
- Henry: Again?
- Willens: You took a resolution to deliver to the President, and the resolution asked the President and the U.S. Congress to consider positively the question of future political status. Then your delegation, as you just described, carried it to Guam. What did you hope to accomplish by meeting with the President?
- Henry: I think our meeting was mainly just to be there so the President could see us and express his interest. Because we thought in those days that interest for Micronesia was not that much, so just to be present there. The opportunity to meet with the President was just too important for us to miss. We were having a session, so during the session we had to leave and come and tell him that. Because our interest had always been let us decide our future, and we wanted to make that feeling known to the President. But when we went there, he was asking several things, like what is the population of Micronesia.
- Willens: The President asked that?
- Henry: Yes. And what is your number one priority. What is your number one interest. We told him development of agriculture and fisheries. There were these things that were asked. We met with him for only 15 minutes.
- Siemer: Where was the meeting held?
- Henry: At the Top of the Mar, in a small place there.
- Willens: In Guam?
- Henry: Yes.
- Siemer: Top of the Mar Hotel?
- Henry: Top of the Mar. Top of the Mar is that place that the Navy has its club and offices.
- Willens: I see. And is it your recollection that Dr. Kissinger was there?
- Henry: Yes, he was there.
- Willens: And did he ask any questions or say anything?
- Henry: No.
- Siemer: Who else was with the President?
- Henry: Just the two of them.

- Siemer: Just the two of them?
- Henry: Yes.
- Siemer: And how many of you?
- Henry: From the Congress of Micronesia there were the President of Senate, Amata Kabua, myself, Speaker of the House, and Lazarus Salii, who was the designated Chairman of the Status Committee. And then High Commissioner Johnston, and Leo Falcam and Dwight Heine, the two top Micronesian administrators in the High Commissioner's office. So these were the people who were there.
- Siemer: Did Lazarus Salii speak at all?
- Henry: Yes. In fact, he was speaking for us.
- Siemer: He was the designated speaker?
- Henry: Well, from the Congress' side.
- Willens: Was Edgar Kaiser at the meeting?
- Henry: He was not, but we knew he had arranged the meeting.
- Willens: He was not at the meeting, but you think he arranged it.
- Henry: Yes, because he flew in to Guam and we all met for breakfast at the Cliff Hotel restaurant to discuss our meeting with the President later that day. Members of Guam Legislature were not happy that they didn't have a meeting with the President like us and Governor Camacho.
- Willens: Had you met Mr. Kaiser earlier in the year before Secretary Hickel came out in May?
- Henry: I really don't remember. But when Secretary Hickel came out, there were these advance people that came out.
- Willens: There were some advance people?
- Henry: Yes. One of them was Walker.
- Willens: Ron Walker?
- Henry: Yes. I read about him in the papers later on.
- Willens: Did you? I haven't. Did you meet with him?
- Henry: Yes. I flew from Guam to Saipan with him on one of the Coast Guard planes and then see if we could arrange this meeting with Hickel and Congress coming into session. It was unfortunate at that time for us, because at that time Norwood was out and Johnston had not come in. This was when Hickel came out. So there was no High Commissioner. Screen was designated Acting High Commissioner. [Joe] Screen decided to call a joint session of the Congress of Micronesia, which he had no authority to do. He could call us into a special session, but a High Commissioner cannot call a joint session. No, I mean, this is the way. He decided to call a joint session of the Congress, which he could not do. He could call a session of the Congress, but only the Congress can by joint resolution combine the two houses into a joint session. So many of our people were traveling around the districts, so we tried to ask them to come in and see what we could do to accommodate the visit of Hickel. Many of us didn't know that he was coming, but after we were informed, we were doing that.
- Willens: How much notice were you given that he was coming?

- Henry: Not that much.
- Willens: A couple of weeks?
- Henry: I think it was less than that. So we talked to some of our leaders to come in, because we were going to meet with Hickel. He was coming to Saipan and we were to meet with him. So there were a lot of discussion about what kind of a meeting. Screen had already said that he was going to call a joint session of the Congress to meet with Hickel, but he couldn't do that. So finally we decided to meet with Hickel in Chalan Kanoa, in a public meeting where he would give a speech, and I would preside, I would be the master of ceremonies, instead of a session. So this is what happened. Hickel gave his speech there.
- Willens: What was your reaction to the speech?
- Henry: I thought it was better, because I had been told, as you know, there were some people in Honolulu that were going on a hunger strike and claiming that the U.S. was coming out to annex Micronesia.
- Willens: There was a rumor to that effect?
- Henry: Yes, there was a rumor to that effect. In fact, the pro-independence people were strongly against this visit, that he was coming out to annex. And Cisco Uludong and some of those guys were going on a hunger strike at the University of Hawaii, and all this was happening. So there were forces against us in trying to get a meeting with Hickel. I was one of those who was trying to arrange for a meeting.
- Willens: There were some who were opposed to having any meeting at all with him?
- Henry: Yes.
- Willens: Were some of those based in the Trust Territory, or were they from Hawaii?
- Henry: No, well those students were doing their own, but some of our own members were not happy to meet with the Secretary. So we had a question on what to do. And eventually, as I said, we had our meeting; it was a public meeting instead of a meeting with the Congress of Micronesia in session. We had a public meeting in Chalan Kanoa.
- Willens: Was it attended by members of the public?
- Henry: Yes.
- Willens: Was there a large crowd?
- Henry: It was a good crowd.
- Willens: Secretary Hickel did not say anything about annexation.
- Henry: No. That's why I said I thought it was a better speech than I anticipated.
- Willens: You were concerned?
- Henry: I was concerned. There was a lot of behind-the-scenes activity. The Administration came out trying to convince me that this is an important meeting. Let's arrange this meeting. I couldn't arrange a meeting that the High Commissioner had already called, because you had to pass a resolution, and if the members of the Congress say this and that, it's not going to happen.
- Willens: Well Secretary Hickel did state for the first time publicly that the United States wanted to work out some long-term relationship with the Micronesians. This came at the same time that you had a Future Status Commission that was just about to issue its report, but

its conclusions had already been made public that it was favoring something called free association or possibly independence.

Henry: That's right.

Willens: Did you have the sense that Hickel was making an offer to the Micronesians that they might find attractive?

Henry: I think so. In fact, eventually we met with him also in D.C. We had lunch with him and Secretary Rogers of the State Department.

Willens: That's when you went in later in October of that year?

Henry: Yes.

Willens: Did you think Hickel's speech in May was well received by the Micronesians?

Henry: Well, it was well received, but it wasn't received by everyone, because not everyone was in Saipan to listen to it.

Siemer: How was he as a speaker?

Henry: He was a good speaker, a really good speaker. A good person, too. I thought he was a very good person.

Siemer: Did he talk to you about his experience as a Territory citizen when he lived in Alaska?

Henry: No, but I was aware of it, because he was Governor of Alaska and a self-made millionaire, so I respected him for many things that he had done in the past. Self-made man. Then I learned later that he really wanted to do more than what the Administration was able to accommodate him. Then that thing about only 90,000 people out here that was said in the book. But I thought that he, and not just directly from him but also through Johnston, with several speeches that he gave in the Congress sessions. Because he'd say this is from the highest office: This equal pay for equal work. Those are the kind of things that are really attractive. Those are things that Micronesians never dreamed could come about, but were coming out, coming about. Those are the kind of things that we liked to have happen then.

Willens: Secretary Hickel did put together what was called an action plan. It included 12 programs, and he announced a civic action team, equal pay for equal work, more Micronesians. My question to you is whether this was all just words, or did in fact some changes occur as a result of Hickel's announcement of this program?

Henry: There were some real good definite changes that were happening.

Willens: What do you remember as happening?

Henry: Well, they raised salaries.

Willens: Were the salaries raised afterwards?

Henry: Yes. And more of our voices were heard. We were involved more with the Congress hearings. We actually went there. And then the committee that I was talking about, what is called the Program and Planning Committee, became a real committee. We could get all the Administration people in, whereas in the past we never got their input in. And we asked them. And then we got a well reasoned document and written report representing the TTPI situation, its needs and so forth. Then we would go to the Congress, too. So along with the Executive Branch or the High Commissioner, we became more a part of the government than ever before. In the past, we would just come in, have our session, then leave. So real government became more possible.

- Willens: In his initial speeches to the Congress of Micronesia, the new High Commissioner, Mr. Johnston, seemed to be making a sincere effort to bring a closer relationship between the Executive Branch and the Congress. Was that your sense at the time?
- Henry: Yes. When he was leaving, we had a party for him, and then they asked me to speak on behalf of the Micronesians. I said looking at what happened during Johnston's time, I can openly say without any reservation that he was the best High Commissioner we had. Because many things had happened during his time.
- Willens: That's interesting, because many of the people in the Northern Marianas had a different view of the High Commissioner.
- Henry: Is that right? And one thing also, as you can see, our headquarters were in Saipan. And he came out and had more contact with the people out here than ever before.
- Willens: Is that right?
- Henry: Yes.
- Willens: After your meeting with the President and Dr. Kissinger, the Congress was in session at the time, and you appointed a political status delegation to send to Washington to meet with U.S. representatives as Secretary Hickel had requested. Was there any debate within the Congress that you remember about whether to send a delegation and what kind of instructions to give them?
- Henry: Yes, I think there was some. One of the problems that I saw at the time was who was our committee going to be working with in the U.S., like my good friend Harrison Loesch, Assistant Secretary for Land Management. We thought this was the wrong place for our status to be discussed. What happened later, Ambassador Williams was appointed and a separate committee representing the President of the United States handled the negotiations. That was the kind of representation on the U.S. side that we would prefer speaking with.
- Willens: From the very beginning you thought that dealing with Interior alone was not a good idea?
- Henry: Was not a good idea. That's right.
- Willens: Why were you concerned about Interior?
- Henry: I think we had a bad history with Interior. And then at the time there was all the talk about having us to be dealing more through the State Department than with the Interior Department. And we were told that this is not the right way. For instance, Senator Fong would say this is wrong.
- Willens: Let me mention a few Department of Interior people who you might have met in the 1960s and see what your recollection is. Did you meet Assistant Secretary of Interior John Carver?
- Henry: I don't think I personally met him, but I know about him, and also the speeches that he gave. I don't think I personally met him.
- Willens: What do you remember about his speeches and his attitude toward the Trust Territory?
- Henry: He talked about new vision, how to take care of us, and that's what I can remember now. But I don't recall the specifics.
- Willens: Did you meet the woman who was the head of the Office of Territories, Ruth Van Cleve?

- Henry: Yes. I met her. In fact, she came out here, and I met her several times in D.C. When she came out here, the farmers loan program, the housing program that came out here, had her support, because when she came up here she was talking about the program, and we had that program, we continue to have it, we still have the program now. But here's another program that she was complimenting when she came out here, and it's a good program, we still have it now.
- Willens: Do you have any recollection of conversations with her about future political status?
- Henry: Maybe our committee talked with her on status, but in those days we dealt with the Congress on status and then the committee on status, and I don't think she was in that committee.
- Willens: At the time that the delegation went to Washington in October 1969 (and I understand you went but you weren't part of the delegation), the United States had already prepared a draft organic act. Do you recall seeing a draft organic act which would bring all of Micronesia under the United States at about that time in late 1969?
- Henry: I don't recall actually seeing it.
- Willens: Did you hear about it?
- Henry: The organic act—yes, and we rejected it of course.
- Willens: You what?
- Henry: We didn't like any organic act for us. As I said earlier, we would like ourselves to be directly involved in whatever government we have. We don't want it to be done or decided for us out there, and this was what I was alluding to earlier. Any government that we have, we should have direct authority. Instead of having an organic act passed by the U.S. Congress to administer us and subject to amendment only by the U.S. Congress. That kind of a situation we didn't want. We wanted a constitution. I think from that time, after studying the various statuses, we would prefer that our government be one that is based on a constitution that is subject to amendment by the people here. So this was the thinking that we had then.
- Siemer: When you first formed the committee to study future political status, were those people appointed by you as Speaker?
- Henry: Yes.
- Siemer: And by the President of the Senate?
- Henry: Yes. There were some of them that I actually did make the appointment, but there were some that were of course designated by their own delegation and then I followed the designation.
- Siemer: Well, that's what I was going to ask you. How did you pick the people who were on that very first committee to examine future political status?
- Henry: Well for Pohnpei we picked Bailey (Olter) because he was our senior Senator elected at large. The rest of us were elected in the House and he was a senior, so he was elected. For the rest, just like that. It was a person who was designated by his delegation. And when I say Bailey, I mean Bailey Olter designated by the Pohnpei delegation. But there were people that I got involved in selecting, like John Mangefel. When he got into the status later on, I did it because there was either none or only one House member, so I said well we need a House member in that. So we had him selected. Most of them were coordinated with the delegations. These were very important appointments.

- Siemer: It was going to be very important how those people worked together as well. Did you have any leeway in who was appointed? As Speaker, could you try to urge delegations or try to get a particular person on that Committee?
- Henry: No. I never did do that. It always had to be delegation approved. I wouldn't force my own selection, even though with the Senate President I had it legally, to designate whoever. I did that for other committees, but not in this one, no.
- Siemer: How did Lazarus Salii become the spokesman for that group?
- Henry: You know, that also is very interesting. Because when John Ngiraked was the Senate President at the time, and I was Speaker, we went to Palau to select the first Status Committee. Neiman Craley, former U.S. Congressman and Public Affairs Officer in Saipan, who worked with the Marianas later on, was with us in Palau. Lazarus belonged to one party and John Ngiraked belonged to another party—Progressive and Liberal—Lazarus was Liberal. So there were many people in the Progressive Party, John Ngiraked's party, who wanted not Lazarus but somebody else to be appointed. John Ngiraked was decisive. He said no, Lazarus. So we decided at that meeting that Lazarus was to be the representative from Palau. And of course he was eventually selected by that Committee to be their Chairman, so that's how Lazarus got there.
- Siemer: How did he become Chairman? What drove that result?
- Henry: He was involved in writing certain papers on status when he was at the University of Hawaii, and then he was outspoken at the Congress.
- Siemer: When he was a student at the University?
- Henry: Right. And when he was in the Congress, he was an intelligent person. We all knew him. A leader who could be a leader. He and I ran for the Speakership in 1967, and I won. And that position in the committee was given to him, and it was a very strong committee, because they had their own office.
- Siemer: Actually if he'd been Speaker, he could not have been on the committee.
- Henry: That would have prevented him from being on the committee, perhaps.
- Siemer: Later as the future political status developed, you had an opportunity to add different people to the commission and then the delegation. How did you make those decisions?
- Henry: Again consultation with the district delegations.
- Siemer: So you were looking for a consensus from the districts as to who should be on those committees and who should be a spokesman. Did that consensus last throughout the political status process?
- Henry: In some cases, no. Some of their own delegation people would complain that they were being misrepresented.
- Siemer: Would those complaints typically come to you?
- Henry: Sometimes they would come to me. I say sometimes because I don't know. I'm sure they went to other places too, but some of these were brought to my attention.
- Siemer: Then how would that be worked out when there were complaints?
- Henry: Many times we wouldn't change the person sitting there, because it would also involve other people complaining. It was a difficult assignment.
- Willens: When the group went to Washington in 1969, they had 11 topics that they wanted to

present to the United States. The very first one deals with the fact that the people of Micronesia want to draft and adopt their own constitution. And then there were other points here about confiscation of land . . . .

Henry: Which was a very important issue.

Willens: The Chief Justice told us that these 11 topics had been worked on both in Saipan and in the Marshalls before the group flew to Washington. Were you part of the deliberations that produced these 11 points?

Henry: Yes. From Saipan we flew to the Marshalls, and these meetings were held, and we were saying that the reason why the Marshalls, because it's the last point in Micronesia to America. So we had a few days of meetings there and there was a prayer sendoff at the airport, and then we departed. Yes, I was in the Marshalls.

Willens: There is nothing here about free association. This deals with a series of what seems to be fairly concrete issues. Was it your sense that these were the 11 points you wanted to put on the table?

Henry: At that time. I would say at that time. There were some, like the constitution and the land. The land issue was very important, because when we started the Congress of Micronesia there was this eminent domain power by the U.S. which got to become a very sensitive issue among us members. So those were important issues. But I think the idea of free association that eventually came in, with the help of Davidson, and then the group when they went to visit other countries. I forget the time, but when I talked about Olympio Borja, Setik and myself, when we went to the budget hearing for the first time, there was another group that went to the South Pacific.—Lazarus was heading that group that went down and surveyed the South Pacific governments and came up with the idea of free association after looking at the Cook Islands, and saying that's a good thing to look at. But that free association got evolved into what we eventually had. So it really developed over discussions as those at Hilo and in other places between us and the U.S.—what the U.S. was able to give and what the U.S. was able to add. For instance, in Hilo they were saying government to government. Before that, we thought we would never be recognized as a government, negotiating with any government, but at that time they were. So the idea of free association I think evolved. That's the way I understand it.

Willens: Did you participate in any of the meetings with Assistant Secretary Loesch and other U.S. representatives in 1969?

Henry: I sat in some of the meetings that they had, yes.

Willens: What was your impression of the way in which the United States responded to these 11 points?

Henry: I wish I could recall really what happened. But as you can see, I think that we didn't agree to the proposal that the U.S. had as a whole, the Organic Act. But the U.S. accepted some of the things that we took there.

Willens: The United States side, based on the papers I've seen and the people I've talked to, recall that after the 11 points were presented, most of the discussion was about land and eminent domain, and the United States was opposed to the point that your people expressed that they wanted to control their own land. Mr. Loesch recalls that he and Mr. Hickel tried to develop some kind of compromise whereby if the United States agreed to your position on land, they wanted you to agree to some kind of a permanent territorial relationship with the United States. Do you recall hearing about that effort to work out a compromise?

- Henry: No, I don't.
- Willens: Did you think that the people who were in Washington in October 1969 would have agreed to a permanent, long-term relationship with the United States if the U.S. had agreed to these 11 points?
- Henry: I don't know. But I think this idea of a permanent association (at that time) was one that we wouldn't be able to sell. That's what I think. People may vote for it, but I don't know that we could come and say now we have a permanent relationship with the U.S., let's vote for it and approve it. I don't think that we would have been able to do that at the time.
- Willens: After that session broke up, a few months later Mr. Loesch came out to Saipan to deliver what was called a Political Status Act, and it was later called a Commonwealth Proposal, and he asked Mr. Salii, on behalf of the group, to react to it. Do you have any recollection of what your feelings were when the United States made these proposals of an organic act or a commonwealth proposal?
- Henry: I know that we went to D.C. to see if we could find any opposition there. Nakayama and I met with some Senators, and then we were convinced that the U.S. was very serious, that they were not going to change their mind.
- Willens: When did you go?
- Henry: It was after this trip that we went to see some of the Senators.
- Willens: In 1969?
- Henry: No, no, no, later on, afterward. And Burton, and of course he had his Republican counterparts there. And we were saying to him that this breakup is the beginning of a breakup that would not be good for the Territory. But we came out convinced that this was going to happen. I mention the trip because we learned that he was supporting the Commonwealth.
- Siemer: When you say you thought the U.S. was pretty entrenched, did you think at that time that the Marianas would find that acceptable and that's why it was going to be a breakup?
- Henry: Yes. In fact, we knew that the people of the Marianas supported that status. That's what they wanted. The only thing that was holding them back was the U.S. decision, and when the U.S. decided, to us that was the green light. But we knew that to be the majority thinking in the Marianas.
- Willens: Was there anything that you thought the Congress of Micronesia could do to prevent that from taking place?
- Henry: No. We had no authority to do anything but to have the people vote on the issue. In fact, it happened before our plebiscite for the Constitution. The Northern Marianas already became separate so, in the plebiscite for the constitution, the Marshalls and Palau voted to separate, and that decision was what we anticipated. But when we learned that the U.S. was already supporting separate negotiations, Nakayama, who was President of the Senate, myself and some of our American staff traveled to D.C. to lobby against that, actually.
- Willens: Who went to lobby?
- Henry: Nakayama, who was the President of the Senate, and myself. Really I don't think I used the right word, because lobbying was not the word. But we went there to say that we think that this is not the right move. So we went to see the appropriate U.S. Senators and Congressmen.

- Willens: Was this when the Covenant was being considered?
- Henry: No, no, no. Way before that. This was before that came into effect.
- Siemer: It was before the U.S. announced that they would ....
- Henry: After the U.S. announced that they would ....
- Willens: In 1970 there was sort of an impasse between the Micronesian representatives on the one hand and the United States representatives on the other hand. The United States was trying to sell a commonwealth proposal, and the Micronesians (with the exception of the Marianas) were making clear they didn't want that. And the Micronesians developed what became known as the Four Principles, which emphasized sovereignty and the right to have your own constitution and the right to exercise self-determination, and the right of unilateral termination. Do you have any recollection as to where those Four Principles came from?
- Henry: I think Davidson was quite instrumental in helping us to come up with those Four Principles. I remember when those were presented in the U.S. at one budget hearing, Senator Johnston commented that these guys want unilateral termination; whoever thought this crazy idea would ever pass this government.
- Willens: Is that right?
- Henry: Yes. And he became one of our best friends and helped get the Compact approved by the U.S. Congress. Unfortunately, he is one of the few people that knew us and he is out of the U.S. Congress now.
- Willens: That's right.
- Henry: But I remember when that came up, it took a lot of education for some people up there to understand what it was that we really wanted. But eventually, some of these things became part of the accepted definition of our status. The Four Principles came up from our committee. Then our Congress approved it.
- Willens: In 1970, you approved those Four Principles, and then in March 1971, Ambassador Williams was appointed.
- Henry: That's right.
- Willens: What was your reaction to his appointment?
- Henry: Well, we thought it was a good move by the U.S., because as I said, we had wanted the negotiations to be on that level. As you can see, it was in a way satisfactory to us, because here we're talking about let's get independence, some of our people, and the more independence you have the more you work with the State and less with the Interior, the more they recognize you as independent. And you know, the head of the negotiating group was called an Ambassador and that was a good sign of the U.S. attitude.
- Siemer: Before Ambassador Williams was appointed, did you and Senate President Nakayama visit the State Department when you went to Washington?
- Henry: I know we visited the State Department several times, sometimes with Paul Warnke, but I cannot recall the timing.
- Siemer: Do you recall your impression of the State Department's attitude toward your proposals and your position?
- Henry: I think it was really mainly a move on our part for self-recognition. It was mainly that now people were wanting more to work with the State Department than Interior on the

negotiation, at least on the negotiation, who would be doing the negotiation with us, who in the U.S. government would negotiate status with us. So we were leaning, not leaning, we were actually saying we would prefer being run by the State Department than Interior, even though we did know that the State Department didn't have the personnel or staff that was experienced to take care of territories such as ours.

Siemer: What about the Defense Department? On those trips, did you meet with anybody from Defense?

Henry: Yes, we met with Defense. The offices in Honolulu were always open to us. We visited with the Commander in Chief . . . .

Siemer: CINCPAC.

Henry: CINCPAC, right. It's mainly that.

Siemer: Was Senator Fong's office helpful to you in arranging trips to Washington?

Henry: Yes, it was during the Nixon Administration. He would be the person we would go through to get our points through to the Administration or to get points from the Administration to us. And he was of course the person who got Johnston to be appointed High Commissioner. In fact he told us before everybody else knew, when we were in D.C. for this budget hearing. I think he was honest with us. He told us, "Stay with Interior. You'll get more attention that way." We do have some connection with Interior now, as you know, fundings and things like that.

Siemer: Did he visit down here, Senator Fong?

Henry: I cannot recall. I really don't know that he did.

Siemer: What about any of the other representatives in Hawaii? Did they visit down here?

Henry: I don't know.

Willens: How about Patsy Mink?

Henry: Yes. Okay, Patsy Mink did come down with several House members. And when they came down, they decided to tell us what they think was best for us.

Siemer: What did she think was best for you?

Henry: With the U.S.

Willens: At one point she supported a resolution (I believe) to annex the Trust Territory to the state of Hawaii.

Henry: Right.

Willens: You would have liked that because you enjoyed Hawaii.

Henry: It would connect me with some of my friends in Hawaii.

Willens: After Ambassador Williams got involved and negotiations resumed in late 1971, how did you personally stay informed as to what was going on?

Henry: Ambassador Williams?

Willens: Yes. Did the Joint Committee report back to the Congress?

Henry: One thing that impressed our representatives was the way Ambassador Williams was conducting the negotiations in that they were more formal and gave the two sides time to prepare and then make their statements or responses, no across-the-board discussion.

- Willens: Was that good or bad?
- Henry: Good. I think it was good.
- Willens: Really?
- Henry: One side would give its view, and then we would go and study, and then write up our view, and then come and present our view. So I think this was better. We had our different thinking, so I think this was good.
- Willens: Did you personally meet with Ambassador Williams from time to time?
- Henry: Yes.
- Willens: Would these sometimes be private meetings with just the two of you?
- Henry: Yes.
- Willens: What was your overall assessment of his performance as the representative of the U.S.?
- Henry: He was a very good representative. I met him and one time some of us were invited to his suite in D.C. We had dinner also at his club in D.C. close to the State Department. Then [he invited us] in Saipan when we were having negotiations in Saipan. And then he invited us to San Francisco. But I didn't meet with him there. I think he was a good representative of the U.S. That's what I would say.
- Willens: Did you get to meet any of the other members of the U.S. Delegation, Admiral Crowe or Jim Wilson?
- Henry: Yes, I met with Admiral Crowe. He became a friend of ours when he became Commander-in-Chief. Both President Nakayama and I visited him in his office. Of course we talked with other members of the group, but we knew that Ambassador Williams was the person to talk to when we wanted things because he was in charge. There were representatives from the various Departments, but it would be most useful to us to talk to the Ambassador himself.
- Siemer: When you met with Ambassador Williams and talked to him, did you think he truly understood what your views were?
- Henry: I don't know. I really don't know. He was hard to understand or to tell. But of course we were most interested in what we wanted, and we knew that he would try to get the best of what could be done with the U.S. So in many ways of course we didn't accomplish all of what we wanted to accomplish during his time. We had to do it later when Rosenblatt came. But there were some milestones that happened during his time, but many things yet to be decided.
- Siemer: Did you have the sense that Ambassador Williams thought you were just negotiating with him? Did he understand what your bedrock bottom position was, how you really felt about these issues?
- Henry: I don't know. Those people that were in the negotiation itself, like Andon and Lazarus, they would probably know more than me.
- Siemer: Well I was thinking about your own conversations with him. Did he understand how you felt about this?
- Henry: Well maybe he did, but he wouldn't give in all the time. Maybe, I don't know. I really don't.

Siemer: How about Admiral Crowe? Was he easier to communicate with than Ambassador Williams?

Henry: Yes, but he was not on the Commission that long. He just was there as Deputy and then he had to leave when he got promoted. So he didn't stay in that long. But yes, he was an easy person to talk to and to get to know. Ambassador Williams I would say was a professional.

Willens: When he was appointed, do you recall any publicity about the fact that the Asia Foundation had had some CIA funding?

Henry: Yes, we were all aware of that.

Willens: What was your reaction to that?

Henry: Well, as you probably know we had an incident of taping conversations by us. The story told to us was that CIA taped conversations by us.

Willens: By your own delegation?

Henry: By the CIA of our delegation members and other Micronesian leaders. So we didn't know what to do. Then they said that some of our own people were informants with or without knowing that they were informants.

Willens: Did you ever learn who those people were?

Henry: Well, that's when Carter came in. We traveled to Washington, D.C. to meet with Cyrus Vance, designated to be Secretary of State. We met him on a lower floor because he was not actually yet up there. And we specifically asked him that we would like the U.S. to reveal the names of who these people were who were informants. Who were these people from among ourselves who were informants. We thought we would be losing our credibility with our own people. And he said yes, but nothing happened afterward. I think it's more complicated than the answer that he gave us. But we got from one of the New York papers, the *Daily News* or the *Times*, one of the papers in New York, told us that the Speaker of the Palau Legislature and Luke Taman were not among those people. So we say oh, you two, you're the only two that got freed. The rest of us are still suspect. Some of the people that are here, some of our own lawyers in the Congress of Micronesia, Micronesians, were saying that they were doing it but they didn't know it, and they told us, the Congress leadership, so we were aware.

Willens: Do you recall dealing with John Dorrance during the years he was here?

Henry: Yes.

Willens: What was your reaction to him?

Henry: John Dorrance was in Saipan. He was a very active person, very strong, he was a special USA government representative.

Willens: His job was to try to find out what was going on, what you were thinking, and report it back to Washington. Did you feel free to talk about issues with him?

Henry: Oh, yes, we talked to him. At times we thought that was the way to get our message across. That's the best thing to do. We were aware of it. I think he knew we knew, because many times we would talk. But he was a person who came out and was really friendly with people. Of course, he was very sharp, too.

Willens: Very sharp?

Henry: Very sharp.

- Willens: Let me just remind you of a few other events that may bring back some memories. In February 1971 the Congress of Micronesia buildings were burned in Saipan. Were you on Saipan at the time?
- Henry: Yes. I had a house very close to the Congress buildings, a house for the Speaker. So I was there. And Amata, the Senate President at the time, was down in Garapan, in a rented house. So when we heard about it that early morning, I had the Speaker of the Pohnpei Legislature and some other people staying with me. I sent word down to Amata. I said tell Amata I'm alive. And the next day he came back and said you know I was really concerned about what was happening to the members.
- Willens: Did you go inspect?
- Henry: I went up later in the day. We didn't go to see the fire. We just stayed there and didn't move until later that morning. Then we went up and saw the ashes. The whole building burned down.
- Willens: Was the Congress in session at the time?
- Henry: Yes.
- Willens: What happened to your session?
- Henry: We decided to move and meet in the building that used to be the Club Topatapi where we had our chambers in the first sessions of the first Congress. We moved down there and had a makeshift meeting, and we decided to recess that meeting and meet again in a special session in Truk.
- Willens: What were your feelings about that event?
- Henry: My own personal feeling, I said that was the end of our connection there. That was really the end of it.
- Willens: Connection to ....
- Henry: In Saipan.
- Willens: With the Northern Marianas leaders?
- Henry: Yes.
- Willens: Did you blame them for this event?
- Henry: No, no, no. Because I had the attitude that whatever decision was to be made was really up to the people to decide. But at the same time, I worked hard to see that we kept the unity if we could retain it. In fact, I didn't even know that it was the people of the Marianas who had burned that place down. There were all kinds of suspects. There was one suspect, but they didn't know that it was really truly him. But we thought it was not safe to meet again there at that time. So when I said no, I truly didn't blame them, because I know it's probably one person or two persons or three persons. We have had several occasions where when, for instance, they'd take this Senator Lanwi, put him in jail, and this was done by some young boys and not all the people.
- Willens: So this was another example of confrontation and hostility between the Congress on the one hand and the Northern Marianas on the other?
- Henry: Yes.
- Siemer: It was Senator Lanwi from the Marshalls?
- Henry: Yes.

- Siemer: That provoked quite a bit of discussion in the Congress about immunity and whether anybody could arrest your Congressmen.
- Henry: Right. Lanwi from the Marshalls.
- Siemer: What had he done that led to this?
- Henry: He said something, I think, about the Marianas. He said something which they took to be derogatory. So they went after him with this citizens arrest.
- Willens: In the special session at Truk, the Northern Marianas Delegation tried to boycott the meeting, but Congressman Felipe Atalig showed up.
- Henry: Oh, that's right. I remember that.
- Willens: What was your recollection of Congressman Atalig?
- Henry: Well, he was a former student of mine when I was teaching at PICS. But I knew that Felipe Atalig was a very independent person. He would decide and do things on his own.
- Willens: The boycott wasn't very long lived, because all the members showed up finally.
- Henry: Yes.
- Willens: What happened? What kind of reception did they get?
- Henry: Oh, they got a good reception. We all welcomed them and applauded their entrance into the chamber, and continued as we were always friendly with each other.
- Willens: Did they say anything to you or to other members of the Congress about that burning incident?
- Henry: Yes. Then they also said they didn't know who did it. They did themselves say that it was not the right thing to do.
- Willens: Was that taken as an apology?
- Henry: Yes, I think so.
- Willens: It was about in 1971 at this Truk special session and also in 1972 when an Independence Coalition developed within the Congress. How did that come about?
- Henry: I think it was just some people among these Micronesian people decided that was the best course for us. And they were invited and went outside Micronesia and talked to different people.
- Willens: There was a new consultant who appeared on the scene at about this time, Dr. Gladwin.
- Henry: That's right. I forgot about him.
- Willens: What role did he play, if any?
- Henry: I think he played like he was something like an advisor to them, and he worked with them. I think when the Congress of Micronesia adopted the enabling legislation for the constitution, he disappeared. I think he was against that.
- Willens: He was against an internal constitution?
- Henry: Oh, yes.
- Willens: Why?
- Henry: I don't know. There was something that we adopted. I wonder if that was the thing, but

there was something that we worked on, everybody. It was a controversial thing. When we passed it, he disappeared.

Willens: The Independence Coalition seemed to have much of its strength in Truk.

Henry: Yes.

Willens: How can you help us understand that?

Henry: I don't know, but I know that some of the Senators from Truk were very strong in this and spoke out very strongly for the FSM to be independent, for the country to be independent. Many of them were from there, some of the strong leaders. Hans Williander got invited to go to the Peoples Republic of China.

Willens: Did he go?

Henry: He did go. He was one of the first in those days.

Willens: Did he make a report back to Congress?

Henry: Yes. He came and spoke very favorably about the situation there.

Willens: Did that influence you?

Henry: Well, no. I think I made my own decision.

Willens: Were people dissatisfied with free association as an alternative at the time, or do you think that independence was being used in part as a bargaining strategy?

Henry: They said that they were serious about independence being the best and that was what we should have. But as you know, it was not offered on the ballot when we have the vote that the only legal status was free association.

Willens: Well, as you said earlier ....

Henry: But they said that they were serious, but I don't know the degree of seriousness. But all indications to me were that they were serious about our becoming independent. But when free association came about, they were with us and they supported the adoption of the free association status.

Willens: I think it was here in Pohnpei in the summer of 1972 that the Congress directed the Joint Committee to negotiate not only for free association but to negotiate for independence. And when the United States delegation heard this a few months later, it caused a breakdown in the negotiations because Ambassador Williams said he didn't have any authority to negotiate independence. Did you think that was a good development or not?

Henry: I think so, because one other area we needed to think about in the future was could the U.N. approve whatever status we submitted to them. Since independence was the option that was in the Trusteeship Agreement, we thought that it should not be left out and should be in until we made our decision on the goal or option for this future status. So I think that it helped us when we finally went to the U.N. At that time the Soviet Union was still a problem. But I think it also sent a message to the U.S. that we really wanted something more than to just be associated with the U.S.

Willens: The whole idea of free association was changing over this period of time.

Henry: Then you know when we met with President Carter, he used that term, independence, in the White House. He said these are the people who want independence. He used that

term independence. So that eventually became a word that is not poison to the U.S. Government officials.

Willens: Did he say that if you wanted independence you could have it?

Henry: No, he didn't say that. He said these are the people who will be getting their independence.

Willens: How long did you stay in the Congress of Micronesia? Did you stay until it was terminated?

Henry: Yes. I became Speaker of the House in 1966 and remained as Speaker until 1978 when the Congress of Micronesia was no longer. Then in 1978, for the FSM, that's when the interim FSM Congress was formed, and I became the Speaker. So I stayed until the end of the Congress.

Willens: Then how long did you stay as Speaker of the FSM Congress?

Henry: From the beginning until 1987.

Willens: What did you do then?

Henry: In 1987 I ran at large to be a candidate for the President of the FSM. And Bailey and I and Leo. Bailey was Vice President of the FSM. I was Speaker. It was my thinking really that after eight years we should rotate the leadership in the government. So the Speakership should be up for whoever wanted it. So I ran, and it happened that Bailey and I are from the same island and we would cater to the same votes. And so in that election, Leo Falcam was elected.

Willens: As President?

Henry: No. As the Pohnpei at large Senator and then a candidate for the Presidency. In that year, John Haglegam got elected FSM President. He was the floor leader of the previous Congress.

Willens: When did you become Postmaster General?

Henry: When John Haglegam became President and offered me this position. I couldn't get it right away because by law when you are in the Congress and set up an office, you cannot be appointed to it for three years. So I had to wait until 1988, which was the third year after the establishment of the Postmaster General position. So in 1988, I took my present position.

Willens: You've been working for many years.

Henry: Yes. I'm an expert in making stamps. Actually I don't make the stamps.

Willens: I think that about concludes our interview, Mr. Henry. Are there any thoughts that you have about how it has all worked out in your judgment?

Henry: I think, when I really think back, that there are many things that we would have changed, you know, if I knew what today would be like, for instance. But I don't regret what we did. What we did was the best that we thought we could do under the circumstances in those days. Really, many big changes have happened in this area.

Willens: That's right. You served for 30 years at the most exciting time in this part of the world, and you played a leading role and, if I may say so, you really ought to be very proud of what you have done.

Henry: But you know I forgot many of these matters, so when you ask these questions, I have to think a little bit.

Willens: Well, your memory's very good. In any event, we appreciate your help very much. Thank you.

Henry: Thank you very much.