

## INTERVIEW OF FLORINE M. HOFSCHEIDER

by Howard P. Willens and Deanne C. Siemer

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- Willens: Florine Mendiola Hofschneider has graciously agreed to be interviewed with respect to our historical project. She responded with such enthusiasm that we are here together on a very brilliant, sunny morning on Saturday when all of us should be doing something else. Florine, thank you very much for being available, and I will defer to Deanne to begin the questioning regarding your personal and family background.
- Siemer: Thank you. Florine, first, tell us about your family—your father and mother—where they lived, where they came from, where they were educated.
- Hofschneider: Both my parents were originally from Rota. They were married there, they were raised there. My father during the war was very loyal to the Japanese government. He was one of the chosen (for lack of a better word), the cream of the crop of the Chamorros, so they used him as a spy for the Japanese during the war. He was sent to Guam as his station there, to pick up information and to give it back to the Japanese. After the war he was a prisoner of war for a little while, then he came back to Rota. Of course, the U.S. government came in at that point. Life was very difficult. He felt that Guam offered a little bit more employment for money. They lived there for a little bit, maybe a year, two years. Then he went back to Rota and tried again to make a living. When that didn't quite work, he moved the entire family to Tinian.
- Siemer: Approximately when was that?
- Hofschneider: Let's see. I have to refer these through the number of children he has. I think that was in 1953 or 1952. He moved to Tinian, and from there on, he stayed there for the rest of his life. His education during the Japanese times was up to sixth grade. I don't know what that equates to in the U.S. standard, but I tell you, I can remember him telling us a lot of things, and I'm thinking well, a sixth grader learned that? But apparently they had a very strict school, and they learned fast. So his education was stuck at sixth grade, and that was the highest you can go. They had to send him over to Saipan for that last grade, because this was where sixth grade existed.
- Siemer: So he was educated in the Japanese system?
- Hofschneider: Yes. My mother went as far as the third grade.
- Siemer: What was her maiden name?
- Hofschneider: Maratita. She never went anywhere except she took care of the family, because there were 12 children. So they stayed on Tinian. My father's passion was politics and farming.
- Siemer: Was that his first occupation on Tinian?
- Hofschneider: Yes. In the political arena. But even when he was not in the political race or the center of politics, he was always a very involved person. He's with the community, or he's in the political arena. So it's the church, the elderly, his farming, and the politics of course.
- Siemer: Where did the family settle when you moved to Tinian?
- Hofschneider: When we first moved to Tinian, right off Broadway.
- Siemer: In San Jose?

- Hofschneider: Yes, in San Jose. We lived there for a couple of years, and then during that time the Trust Territory government was doing homestead programs, so he got a couple of properties there.
- Willens: Did he have both a village homestead and an agricultural homestead?
- Hofschneider: He never got an agricultural homestead. He had a village homestead, and that was it. Of course at that time his children were growing up, so he turned all his attention in terms of property to getting properties for his children, so each one of us, it's almost like what do you call it, as we get married ....
- Willens: A dowry.
- Hofschneider: Yes. As we get married, he comes and he says, this is a property, and it is for you. Now you start your life.
- Siemer: But that was all property that he bought?
- Hofschneider: Yes.
- Siemer: He didn't have any homestead?
- Hofschneider: There are some that he bought. He bought quite a bit in Rota. But on Tinian, he didn't have property from purchasing as much as he did on Rota. These were all properties acquired through the village homestead and the agricultural homestead. He used them, then when you marry, you get your paper and off you go.
- Siemer: How many brothers and sisters did your father have?
- Hofschneider: Nine of them.
- Siemer: Did any of them come to Tinian with him?
- Hofschneider: No.
- Siemer: How about your mother?
- Hofschneider: My mother has one brother and a sister.
- Siemer: So your father's brothers and sisters and your mother's brother and sister stayed in Rota?
- Hofschneider: Yes. Except for one. One brother went to Ponape and stayed there, got married. The rest, they go someplace and they're kind of transient. They know that it's not home, so they stay there for a couple of years and then go on back to Rota.
- Siemer: Your dad spent all of the war years in Guam?
- Hofschneider: You know, I really don't know. But he must have, because the way he tells us these things, during dinner or family gatherings or just sitting down, it seems like during the war, sometime into the war, he was sent to Guam, never to be seen until after the war. So I'm not too sure how many years into the war he was sent over.
- Willens: How old was he at the time of the war?
- Hofschneider: I think in his early 30s.
- Willens: So he was born sometime in ....
- Hofschneider: 1911.
- Willens: Did he have a job in the Japanese Administration before the war started?
- Hofschneider: Yes. There were police officers of the Japanese government. The way he was talking about his job was that his assignment was mainly to deal with the natives. They even have a

name for the natives, and he deals with them. And the family talked of him being very strict, extremely neat and clean. He sees a little bit of deviation, and you get it. They're very strict, so he was a good police officer for the Japanese government.

Siemer: What was his full name?

Hofschneider: Felipe Camacho Mendiola.

Siemer: And your mother's full name?

Hofschneider: Maratita Mosca. My mother's last name was a typical Rotanese name, but you see my dad has that Camacho. That comes from Guam. His mother fell in love with the grandfather and migrated to Rota. So all our relatives from the Camacho side were originally from Guam.

Siemer: Tell us about your brothers and sisters.

Hofschneider: My father had two other children, because he had a prior marriage. His marriage to my mother was the second marriage. We have one sister from the first marriage, and one brother. My sister was married to an Air Force man and traveled a lot with him. They settled a little bit in California and had three children and now they're back here. The second child was illegitimate. He settled on Guam just for a little bit, and then I understand he's back on the island. The oldest one of the second marriage was Fermiena Camacho married to Luis Camacho. She was a nurse early in her life, and switched over to the private sector—basically Joeten and M.S. Villagomez—the big stores of the island at that point in time. She got married and continued to work, and now she has 12 children. Now the second one, Rosie, was away for school for the longest time, and we didn't have the secondary schools on Tinian, so she was sent over here. She stayed with American families that were here to teach school. They opened their homes to these outer island students. She lived with the Ludwigs until she graduated from high school. I don't know if you know Roger and Susan Ludwig. They were here for the longest time. Anyway, she went away to school in Texas, stayed there, got married, again to an Air Force guy, so she was going around with him from one base to the next. Then they retired for a little bit in Texas, and came back here. He passed away, and she's on Tinian doing business now. My brother James, the first son, I don't know whether it was a curse to be his first son or whatever, but it seems like there was a lot of responsibility on him. That was just my dad's tradition, first male, you know. You take care of your mother and everybody else. Of course he followed in my father's footsteps, the passion for farming, the animals, and the politics. He went right in there, and he's still in there.

Siemer: Is he going to run again?

Hofschneider: That's what I've heard. I haven't talked with him lately, because I'm just so afraid of the question, that he would say yes. Because I didn't want to hear that. But with political games here, sometimes when there's smoke, there's not necessarily fire. It's all a game. He's still down on Tinian. He's working now for Personnel. I think the last Con-Con was his second time around in there. So he was pretty involved. James was married to a Japanese woman. They had three children. They're separated, and now he is starting another family. And I have a brother Felix. My brother Felix has always been a police officer. He has been very steady, very predictable.

Siemer: On Tinian?

Hofschneider: Here.

Siemer: On Saipan?

Hofschneider: Yes. He has five children. They're all going to school. He's still a police officer. He's very stable, very focused on what he wants, and he's out to get it. After Felix, then comes me.

Siemer: When were you born?

Hofschneider: I was born in 1951. I was raised on Tinian.

Siemer: How many years did you go to school on Tinian?

Hofschneider: Up to ninth grade. Then my father sent me away to Guam. I stayed there since then until after college.

Siemer: What schools did you go to on Guam?

Hofschneider: John F. Kennedy. After that, I just went right straight to the University of Guam.

Siemer: What did you study there?

Hofschneider: Secondary education. Right after college, Roger came over to Guam and was recruiting for the CNMI, so they hired me. I taught for about a year and a half. Then suddenly somebody said well, I think we may want you in the central office. I didn't like that, because I enjoyed teaching very much.

Siemer: At what school were you teaching?

Hofschneider: Marianas High School. After a couple of months, maybe two or three months, they probably thought I was very, very unhappy. I was so unproductive; I didn't know what to do in an office. So they sent me to Tinian, because at that point in time Tinian was used as a training ground supposedly to groom you into something. I just wasn't aware of it. So after about maybe a year there, I was appointed to the Board of Education, the first Board of Education. I thought well, what do we do? So I went in there, and I learned a lot from those people. They were very seasoned in terms of managing or playing the role of a Board person.

Siemer: When did you start serving on the Board of Education?

Hofschneider: 1978 or 1979.

Willens: When did you come back to the Northern Marianas from Guam?

Hofschneider: In 1974, December. Then I started teaching in January 1975.

Willens: So you were basically on Guam in the late 1960s and the early 1970s?

Hofschneider: Yes.

Willens: Did you come home from time to time for vacations?

Hofschneider: Yes. Vacations and in between breaks. That's when we were trying to catch up with the political negotiation. It was very difficult, but I had some professors that saw that event as an excellent ground for learning. So a lot of times I would be excused from classes just to come over here and see and participate and talk to people and that sort of thing.

Siemer: When did you go back to Tinian to teach?

Hofschneider: I think in the late 1970s, maybe the beginning of 1978.

Siemer: And that was when you went on the School Board?

Hofschneider: Yes. Or 1979. I'm not too sure. Late 1978 or 1979.

Siemer: How long did you stay on Tinian?

- Hofschneider: I stayed there until around 1980 or 1981. Then I had to come over here. Of course, at that point in time I was married to John. And he went into politics.
- Siemer: John Hofschneider.
- Hofschneider: Yes.
- Siemer: How is he related to Henry?
- Hofschneider: The oldest brother.
- Siemer: Is he related to Bernard?
- Hofschneider: An uncle. Bernard is their father's brother. So we were staying on Tinian. I was staying with my parents. At that time we had a baby, and it was really a very difficult time, because he was very busy over here, and when the baby was born, my father was his father, and John is just an uncle who comes during the weekend with all kinds of goodies. He woke up very quickly to that and he said no, I think we should be together. So we moved over here. I worked for the Planning and Budget Office for a little bit. At that point in time, Governor Camacho had lost the election, and Pete Tenorio was coming in.
- Siemer: That was 1983?
- Hofschneider: Yes. So I was the first one in the office to get the ax.
- Siemer: Was your husband a Democrat?
- Hofschneider: Yes.
- Siemer: And you were a Democratic appointee to the Board of Education?
- Hofschneider: Yes. My father was a very staunch supporter of the Democratic Party.
- Siemer: Some of the Hofschneiders are Republicans, though, aren't they?
- Hofschneider: Yes. Even John's parents at that point in time. We were trying to get married, and you know, a fiance who comes from a staunch Republican family moves over to the Democrats, and so you can see the tension, the family and everything else, Tinian being so small. It's incredible.
- Siemer: How many people were there on Tinian back in those days?
- Hofschneider: I think there were only maybe 800 or 700. It was really nice. I thought that was the best time.
- Siemer: How many kids in the school at that time?
- Hofschneider: Oh, my goodness. I think around 100, not more than 120.
- Siemer: So there was one school for all grades at that time?
- Hofschneider: Yes. One self-contained school.
- Siemer: What did you do after the Tenorio Administration came in?
- Hofschneider: Well, I sued them for getting rid of me, because it was very clear that I was civil service at that point in time. I think somebody didn't do their homework during that transition. But all they wanted was that Hofschneider lady—get her out of there. Planning and Budget has always been like the nerve center . . .
- Siemer: For the Governor?
- Hofschneider: Yes. So of course you know, they don't want me [in that office]. I said well, you could have offered me something. But I brought a lawsuit against them. They knew they were going

to lose, so they said okay, what is it? We've got all these programs, pick your choice. I said okay, I understand, this is a game, but we also have to do it legally here. So anyway I was offered the Child Protective Services at that point in time. So we started building that up.

Siemer: You were Director?

Hofschneider: Actually, I was kind of everything, because it was just new there. So we did a lot of grants from the federal government. We built it up to the point of [becoming the] Division of Youth Services.

Willens: What was the name of the office?

Hofschneider: Child and Family Services under Community and Cultural Affairs. Then eventually, as we go to the Legislature and strengthen it and did a lot of things that would enable us to get more federal funding, it became the Division of Youth Services. I left I think in 1985.

Siemer: What did you do after that?

Hofschneider: I went to the States, because I felt I needed to get out of here and breathe the air and be by myself and just get lost.

Siemer: Where did you actually go?

Hofschneider: Initially we went to Michigan. I don't know why we did that, because it was so cold. We left in November. I'm saying, is it always like this? I said no, it's too cold. We were kind of figuring out what to do. Then John's sister called from Oregon and said it's not so cold here. It's nice. And it's not too fast. It's a laid-back state. That's perfect; that's us. We went there, and when we landed it was like 15 below. They were having a snowstorm. I said, didn't you say on the phone that it was very temperate here? She said oh, yes, this is just unusual. So we stayed there for about two years. My husband of course was coming back here, and he was into insurance at that point in time, because he lost the election.

Siemer: He lost when Pete P. came in?

Hofschneider: Yes.

Willens: What office had he held?

Hofschneider: The Senate from Tinian. So after that he just went into Microl Corporation, working there for some kind of steamship. You know, all these ships that are coming around the Pacific area.

Siemer: Microl Corporation down on Beach Road?

Hofschneider: Yes. Gradually he got transferred to insurance. Somehow he ended up with Dave Cassidy on Guam with the Lincoln Insurance, Continental Insurance. Anyway, when we went there, he got hooked up with the Lincoln people in Oregon. I went to work for the county, for the aging services in the county. We stayed there for about a year and a half to two years. Then John figured, you know, he comes here for two or three months, then comes back, and stayed there for two or three months. He was beginning to feel like oh, this woman here is getting too independent, not going to go back to the tradition. He didn't like it there. It was too cold for him. What bothered him the most, I had to wear those suits every day. Why can't we just wear a shirt? Well, different place and different rules. But it's something that he really couldn't feel comfortable with, so we came back here.

Siemer: When did you come back? What year?

Hofschneider: I think 1990. I worked for the Catholic Social Services initially to work with the Department of Corrections, to provide some casework services to the prisoners. We started that and eventually got into a lot of projects on youth preventative programs for intervention, at that point in time. Then I went back up to Tinian. It was very difficult. You see, when we were here, we were staying initially at Capitol Hill, where I don't think about water because there's always water. But then when we came back from the States, there was no water, and I kept thinking, something's wrong. And my neighbor said oh, no, we have lots of water. Just wake up at 5:00 o'clock in the morning. I said oh, no, we can't do that. I have a baby. Anyway at that point, I said there's got to be better things in life than not having water. So we went to Tinian where we could actually shower any time of the day. I got pushed into the Board of Education again. At that time I ran for office, because it was an elected office.

Siemer: When did you serve on the Board of Education that time?

Hofschneider: From 1992 to 1994.

Siemer: You went back to Tinian in 1992?

Hofschneider: Or 1991. Somewhere around there. Because as I was finishing up my term, second year into my term, I lost John. And I remember that very clearly. But I think two years or a year later, I moved to Saipan, basically because I couldn't get along with the Mayor. I kept getting NMC into trouble.

Siemer: Mayor Manglona?

Hofschneider: Yes. Because he wanted to chase me out of the building, and I was saying, you don't do that. But of course he's saying oh yes, watch me. So I think the president of the college felt that it was best that I come over here. I agreed with that.

Siemer: You had been working for the college on Tinian?

Hofschneider: Yes.

Siemer: What is your position now?

Hofschneider: Director for Admissions and Records, Financial Aid. I was the Program Coordinator down there.

Siemer: Go back to your family for a moment. Who's the next child after you?

Hofschneider: Tina, Martina. Again, she was sent to Guam and lived with families on Guam. After high school she went to Hawaii for a little bit, got married and moved to South Carolina. Then she eventually settled in Texas for about 20 years. She never came home. She found a job with the Department of Defense, was in Europe for about ten years, and is now in Japan. So she comes here often. The next one down is my brother Rufino. He has a family now with four children and he is working for the Department of Agriculture. My father sent him to Japan to learn about cattle ranching, because my dad at that point in time was building up a cattle ranch on Tinian. He stayed there for a little bit, but it was too cold or there was just too much culture there for him to penetrate. Then he was sent to Hawaii. There he fit in a little too much. My dad said, time to go home. After that we have Felipe Jr. Felipe again was sent to Guam. From then on, the children were all sent directly to Guam, either under relatives or just families who opened their homes.

Willens: For high school?

Hofschneider: Yes. He went to Michigan. There must be something about Michigan and our family. He went to Kalamazoo and went to school there. He graduated and came back to Guam.

He worked a little bit for the Bank of Guam. Then he came home for a little bit. Then he went back to Michigan and has lived there since. The next one is Tomas. Tomas has a family, has two children. Now he kind of works for my brother James. They fix boats, they farm, they raise chickens to fight. The next brother, David, we lost seven years ago. We have Joseph, who recently got married and has four darling girls. He was appointed to the Gaming Commission, the first Gaming Commission.

Siemer: On Tinian?

Hofschneider: Yes. He lived in the States and Europe for a little bit. He now owns a print shop on Tinian. The youngest one, Juanita, she's still trying to figure out what she wants to be. She has three children and works for the Arts Council on Tinian. She's into all the arts, cultural things. So that's my family.

Willens: Just one question about your job in the Planning Bureau. That was at the beginning of the Camacho Administration?

Hofschneider: I think that's the tail end, when I came in.

Willens: Who was the head of it?

Hofschneider: Manny Sablan.

Willens: Let's go back then to the 1960s and the early 1970s. Just to provide some framework, in 1969, Secretary of the Interior Hickel came out to visit the Northern Marianas in May of 1969. He made a major speech to the Congress of Micronesia and said, among other things, that the United States wanted to explore a relationship with the entire Trust Territory as affiliated with the United States. That was the first time that anyone of high standing in the United States had clearly stated what the United States wanted to accomplish. Later that year a group of Micronesians went to Washington to begin a long process of negotiations about future political status. When did you first personally become aware of the political status negotiations?

Hofschneider: I would think early 1970s, around 1971 or 1972.

Willens: In 1972, the United States finally agreed to conduct separate negotiations with the Northern Marianas, which wanted a closer relationship with the United States than did the other parts of Micronesia. Do you remember the discussion and the decision that led to separate negotiations?

Hofschneider: You know, because I was a student at that point in time, I don't remember as much as when they were already negotiating it. At that point in time, it was more of an academic discussion at the University of Guam. So my recollection will be an academic discussion at a classroom level.

Siemer: Do you recall what your dad's view was with respect to the negotiations, either with respect to all of Micronesia or the separate negotiations?

Hofschneider: I used him a lot for my class project as an interview source. So I remember very clearly that his position was. Because of the educational level of the people that the United States were dealing with, it was extremely unfair to come in and impose upon people who cannot even fathom the impact of what they will be doing. He said with other countries you will have hundreds and hundreds of years, many years of experiences which they can draw from to negotiate with a major nation. He kept saying that we were not equipped at that point in time to sit down with a nation that was 200 years old and had tremendous resources. We had to have knowledge of who we are in order to sit down and say okay, we're on equal terms, let's talk business. He felt that it was too early, that the people must



be informed and be educated in negotiating skills, what you need to have to negotiate. That was his major point.

Siemer: He thought it was better to wait?

Hofschneider: He thought it is important that the people be educated and that they understand the impact of what they're doing and what needs to be done in a global view and not just the Northern Marianas.

Willens: You told us that he was a member of the Democratic Party, which was then the Popular Party?

Hofschneider: Right.

Willens: The Popular Party leadership on Saipan had been pushing for separate negotiations and a closer relationship with the United States for more than 10 years by the time these negotiations started.

Hofschneider: Right.

Willens: Did your father basically differ with the Popular Party leaders on Saipan as to the timing of this effort?

Hofschneider: Exactly. And he is the type of person that he doesn't get hung up with the philosophy of an organization but rather what he felt was right and what he felt ought to be done. So many times, yes, he comes into clashes with his own political party.

Willens: Now from Tinian at various times, the representatives on the Marianas Political Status Commission included Joe Cruz, Bernard Hofschneider, Francis Hocog, and at one point for a limited time, Herman Manglona, the present mayor.

Hofschneider: That's right.

Willens: How did your father evaluate Joe Cruz, for example?

Hofschneider: Oh, we had many, many tense sessions right outside our yard, because basically he believes that you have to have control over your land. Initially they wanted to take the entire island and relocate people to Saipan or elsewhere. He was a firm believer that without the land and the resources around it, what is your bargaining chip? There is nothing to bargain. There is no leverage. So what he was saying was that Tinian will become the carrot, or rather the negotiating point, in exchange for the U.S. passport. And for the longest time, they don't even talk to each other. And if they talk to each other, they're fighting.

Willens: Who was on the other side?

Hofschneider: That will be Joe Cruz. Ben Manglona, I think, was in there much later.

Willens: That's correct.

Hofschneider: Well of course, Herman never even gets close to my dad, because my dad was a great uncle to him. I think he was more looked upon as a father by Herman, the present mayor.

Willens: So did the present mayor respect your father's opinions?

Hofschneider: He respects them but he doesn't necessarily believe in them. And these were the clashes he was going through.

Willens: The debate became a question of how much of Tinian, whether all of Tinian or two-thirds of Tinian, and your father was repeatedly quoted to the effect that he thought the United States should not have anything more than one-third of Tinian. Was he basically taking

that position because he did not want to have any permanent relationship with the United States?

Hofschneider: No. It's not so much the relationship with the United States. I think he was thinking more of the people having very low education, having had no exposure to the outside world. So he's saying, if you bring the military in, what would happen to the people? You cannot say that there is going to be an economic benefit when the labor force is not educated and their work ethic is not good. He was saying we need to do something with our people first before we get industry here, if the military is to be looked at as an economic industry. He said, just look at our kids. Can you honestly say the military will hire them? We don't even have a high school. So where's this benefit going to come in?

Willens: There was some discussion that the building of a base on Tinian would provide educational facilities, better infrastructure, new homes, and all kinds of economic benefits were laid out as possibilities. Do you remember hearing about those possible economic benefits?

Hofschneider: Yes. They even laid out a plan, I remember very clearly. There was a slide show, and there was a group of people from the United States that came in. They showed us the map of Tinian and how much they're going to take. I think we still have that slide show, but it's with our friends in Hawaii. They showed us the type of house that would be available, concrete houses that will be built. How many bedrooms. They even had the design for everything, and they laid it out. We were all going to be situated in the southern portion of the island. So it was very detailed.

Willens: What was your personal reaction to that presentation?

Hofschneider: My personal reaction was it's a total disregard to the cultural type of living that the people had, and that is the casual raising of chickens around the house, a pig or two, and the outside kitchen and all that. That's what makes us, you know. And if you take a typical American town, that's what it was. It comes with sidewalks and all that. We were saying it looks really nice. The presentation was excellent, I thought. But then we see the death of a village, a traditional village at that point, whatever that may be in terms of tradition.

Siemer: Where do you think the slide show is now?

Hofschneider: The slide show is with Charles Young. He's with the Native Hawaiian Affairs Bureau.

Siemer: With the Hawaii state government?

Hofschneider: Yes. State government.

Siemer: We could find it there, you think?

Hofschneider: Yes. If not, let me know. I think my brother-in-law Rudy still has his number. He comes here every once in a while.

Willens: Do you remember attending a meeting at which Ambassador Williams was personally present?

Hofschneider: Yes.

Willens: He went out there twice for major meetings. Once was in June 1973, which was shortly after the whole thing burst out, namely what the United States wanted and that it involved moving of the village of San Jose. He and military representatives, as well as members of the Marianas Political Status Commission, went to Tinian for a long meeting one evening. Were you personally there?

- Hofschneider: I don't know if it was the first or second, but we have some pictures at home, and I think I can go back and verify.
- Willens: A year later they decided they didn't have to move the village of San Jose. The materials suggest that some of the people on Tinian were upset with that. In other words, some of the people on Tinian wanted to have the village moved. Is that right?
- Hofschneider: Absolutely. Yes. The presentation was excellent, like I said. The people who made the presentation couldn't be any better. I mean, they chose the best people. And of course, I would have done the same thing. It's part of the negotiating skills. And yes, there were a lot of people who were upset, because they wanted the concrete house, they wanted their house to be just like that. We were all living in wooden, tin-roofed houses. With typhoon after typhoon, that concrete house was looking pretty good. To some of them, it's an answer to running away every time there's a storm. You go find a bunker and stay there. So yes, it was very appealing to a lot of people. I think it was the second time he made his appearance, we staged a rally and we had our signs up, just like any demonstration. And we wanted to have a dialogue, but we were shut out.
- Willens: What happened?
- Hofschneider: They did not want us in there.
- Siemer: How did the rally get organized?
- Hofschneider: It was Senator David Cing, myself, my parents. There were a lot of college students who were coming home because it was just so exciting to be home. So we got all organized. We got our signs. We worked all night. We wanted a dialogue with Ambassador Williams, a bunch of crazy college kids, you know, so they wouldn't let us in. So we sat right in front of the Fleming Hotel. We sat right across the street. We had our plaques. Nobody wanted to talk to us. But we were yelling at them, you know. There must have been 30 or 50 of us. We were saying you cannot go on unless somebody listens to us. In fact, I went to his hotel room, and I argued with the guard. I said, I need to see that guy.
- Willens: On Tinian?
- Hofschneider: Right here.
- Willens: On Saipan.
- Hofschneider: Yes. I followed him right here.
- Willens: What happened?
- Hofschneider: He said no, you can't go through. I said I just want one minute, two minutes. I said listen, I appeal to your sense of fairness to the people of Tinian. I remember it was the Hyatt [hotel].
- Willens: Was it after there had been a meeting on Tinian about the military needs?
- Hofschneider: Yes.
- Willens: And what did you want to tell him?
- Hofschneider: I wanted to maybe appeal to him for his sense of fairness to people. Let's not just talk about the nation now, which was crazy, because he was representing a nation at that point in time. I said just be one of the people for a little bit and say if you have this many people and you have that much impact, you know that you would effectively kill them. Not murder them, but you would effectively get rid of that tribe, for a lack of a better word. You know, he was just so much like my dad. He comes from Ireland, he started telling me.

I said, okay appeal to that sense. But of course he's not going to say oh yes, we're not going to negotiate. We understand what you're saying. I don't know what I was trying to do but maybe just appeal to his sense of people-ness and say there's got to be something wrong in what you're doing. You do not kill a tribe.

Siemer: You were worried that the military presence would be too big and therefore the people on Tinian....

Hofschneider: The social and economic impact would definitely just—you know it's like we were never there.

Willens: The original plan was in fact to take the entire island and move the civilians off the island, but that was opposed by the people on Tinian and by the Commission. So the United States modified its request to seek only two-thirds of the island.

Hofschneider: So they can gradually get rid of them.

Willens: Was it your view that if the military restricted its needs to just one-third of the island, that that would leave an opportunity for the local community to survive and prosper?

Hofschneider: For one-third? Yes. For example, I lived with the military family in Guam. It's completely different; it's like a world within a world. They're on their own, they have their own stores, they have their own fences, they tend to their own affairs. I felt if they take one-third, the change will come of course, but at least it won't shock [our people] to a point where everybody just disappears and a lot of weird things are happening.

Siemer: Were there any families on Tinian at that time who had owned land or settled on Tinian before the war?

Hofschneider: I think it would be the Hocogs. There was only one family there at one time.

Siemer: Everybody else came after the war?

Hofschneider: Yes.

Siemer: So were everybody else's landholdings homesteads that had been granted by the TT government?

Hofschneider: Yes. Or exchanged in property exchanges. For example, my dad had some property exchanged between Rota and Tinian.

Siemer: He gave the government land on Rota, and they gave him land on Tinian?

Hofschneider: Yes.

Willens: Did your father have any business relationships with Ken Jones?

Hofschneider: No. He worked for him for a little bit.

Willens: You mentioned that he was into cattle ranching, and I wondered whether it was affiliated with Ken Jones' operation.

Hofschneider: No.

Willens: Ken Jones, at one of these public sessions, made a very strong statement critical of the U.S. request. Did he and your father have similar views about these negotiations?

Hofschneider: I don't think so. The fact that Ken Jones was a well-known figure, I think my dad to some extent used him, attached to him, so they won't take all the land or most of the land. And if Ken Jones is going to stand there and argue it, he will agree to that and say okay, at least

- his motive was that he has his own cattle ranch to think about, and there were a lot of people who were working for him. So yes, he agreed in that sense.
- Willens: Your father was elected mayor sometime in the early 1970s, either in 1972 or maybe it was 1974. He succeeded Mayor Antonio Borja. Was he elected in part because of his attitudes toward political status?
- Hofschneider: To some extent. But my father was never well-liked. He's very blunt, very straightforward. The Chamorro culture is that you don't confront. If I have problems with you, I'll go to her to save face. But my father was very different. You'd say something, he'd let you know what he felt about it, and that's the end of the issue. But in the tradition no, you've hurt my feelings, I'm going to stay hurt for a little while, and when I'm truly healed then I'll come to you. He's always like that, and the children are always sensitive to, oh, gosh, what did he do now to the neighbor, you know, so they won't be talking to us and all that. I don't know where he got that—but he just had the view if you think this is not nice, then let me know. And people don't let him know, they go to my mother and say, I don't like the way your husband said this or I don't particularly care for this. My dad would say no, that's not what he said. But he never learned that for some reason.
- Siemer: Was your mother a peacemaker?
- Hofschneider: Oh, always, because like I said, he was very blunt, he was very direct. He's never fearful of letting people know what his opinions are.
- Siemer: But politically he was quite successful.
- Hofschneider: Oh, yes, because the children and the family come in and say well, you know, he's crazy, he really doesn't mean that, he meant this. Translation, translation, translation. But in the end, I think a lot of people respected him. Now I hear people saying gosh, you know, your father was very visionary. And I said, why didn't you let him know at that point in time? But he was a very difficult person to talk to. At times he was very condescending.
- Willens: Did he have any business relationships with Japanese interests?
- Hofschneider: Yes.
- Willens: What were they?
- Hofschneider: Initially they wanted to build some kind of shipping, some tuna fishing thing. During Trust Territory time it was very, very difficult for foreign people to come in. So I think to some extent he was used for people to come in and do some studies on the ocean and eventually to do fishing. But they never materialized, because for some reason the Trust Territory government could say no, you cannot do that.
- Siemer: Was he fluent in Japanese?
- Hofschneider: I felt that he was, but he was telling us that he could not speak the higher class type of Japanese. He didn't have the etiquette for it or the vocabulary for it.
- Willens: At various points during the negotiations, there were efforts to conduct a referendum on the island of Tinian about military needs and whether the Tinian people would go along with the U.S. request. What is your recollection of public sentiment on Tinian? Do you think it was evenly divided as to the U.S. request, or was there a clear majority one way or the other?
- Hofschneider: I would say it was evenly divided. With one group, they were saying we need all those material things. We need our houses; we need to go to work; we need a good salary; and the old American dream of good job, a house and children. And the other side was saying,

you get the old American dream when you work for it and you have the education for it. But look at us. Who's going to get the old American dream or the old Chamorro dream of having your own house and successful children and successful family, if you do not send the children to school. During that time education was very, very competitive, even within and among families. Because it was looked at, their family has how many college graduates and high school graduates. So it was something to achieve.

Willens: So a close relationship with the United States offered more opportunity for education?

Hofschneider: Yes, absolutely. Also the fact that it was very uncomfortable to go into Guam and to have to apply for a visa. If you're a student, you have to apply for I-20. There's a lot of bureaucratic process that needs to be done before you're actually accepted. That was very uncomfortable to a lot of people. So yes, by being associated with the United States, you come and go as you please. If you can do college and graduate, you can go anywhere.

Willens: Was there any sentiment on the island of Tinian that it would be better if the Northern Marianas had stayed with the rest of Micronesia and tried to negotiate some common relationship?

Hofschneider: No. That was very clear that they did not want it united. I felt that they did not want it. One of the things that I kept hearing at that point in time was, there's just too much cultural difference. The traditional values in Chuuk and Yap will always clash with the Chamorros. So I felt that they were not really fighting for it, but they were not really going for it either.

Willens: Did you agree with that assessment?

Hofschneider: At that point in time, yes, I agreed.

Siemer: In the early 1970s, were all the families in Tinian Chamorro?

Hofschneider: Yes. So I agreed with that, that it would be impossible for all Micronesia to be united and be politically stable and economically independent. There was just too much that needed to be done. At that point in time, I think my father made me believe that the cultural differences will become the glaring focus and one of the major obstacles that we would have.

Siemer: Had he been there, to Chuuk and Yap?

Hofschneider: Yes. During the Japanese times, apparently he went to Palau and Ponape. I think those were the only two.

Siemer: There were a number of Chamorro families who had been in Yap at that time, were there not?

Hofschneider: Exactly. The Hofschneiders and the Villagomezes and the Cruz's were the families who were relocated to Tinian because of the cultural clashes in Yap. There were just too many differences. That's what I heard from the elders.

Willens: Recognizing that your father had political differences with Joe Cruz, was Joe Cruz generally recognized as an effective political leader?

Hofschneider: He was recognized as an effective negotiator, and a lot of people give him credit for bringing in the U.S. passport and having a good deal, whatever that may have been. Yes, so you're right. They respected him for that.

Willens: Before the negotiations came to conclusion, the United States announced that in fact they were not going to build a base on Tinian for the foreseeable future. Did that have any

effect on the sentiment of the people on Tinian with respect to supporting and voting for the Covenant?

Hofschneider: I don't think it had an effect, because what I was hearing was that we have to vote for the Covenant because we want our U.S. passport. They expect that some Santa Claus is going to drop all these nice things and life will be good. So it didn't affect them. In fact, they wanted them immediately.

Willens: Did you participate in the campaign either in support of the Covenant or in opposition to it?

Hofschneider: Yes.

Willens: What was your position?

Hofschneider: Of course we were getting a lot of inside information there. Those people who were negotiating for the two-thirds had a personal interest within that two-thirds. Most if not all of them owned properties. Even during the negotiations, one of the delegates there has secretly purchased properties that belong to his family within the two-thirds.

Willens: Who was that?

Hofschneider: Edward Pangelinan. He had purchased property within there. Joeten, J.C. Tenorio owned property there; Olympio Borja owned property there; I'm not too sure about Vicente Santos. There were a lot of real estate transactions under disguised names of families, extended families, on Tinian. So I was very suspicious. You can't help but be suspicious about whose interests are we serving. So I didn't have that much confidence in the negotiations that were going on. There was just too much interest at that point in time.

Willens: Did your father play an active role in the campaign?

Hofschneider: Yes.

Willens: What was his position?

Hofschneider: His position is that we get rid of all the negotiators and get some people in there that have no interest whatsoever other than for the people.

Willens: So he was opposed to the Covenant?

Hofschneider: He was opposed, yes. The way it was negotiated, who was negotiating it, and the fact that two-thirds of the island was going to be taken.

Willens: Do you have any recollection of Bernard Hofschneider's views with respect to the Covenant?

Hofschneider: You know, it's very funny, because Bernard was a very quiet person. I don't know how he got in there, but it was very difficult for us, especially me, to communicate with him because of the relationship to my husband. So I always have to be very careful in what I have to say. There are normally restrained statements or statements that take into consideration what my relationship was to him or my husband's relationship to him. So I stayed away from him as much as possible, don't rock the boat type of thing. I think it was Oscar Rasa who came in toward the very end, the tail end, so we shifted our focus to Oscar. Of course, it was too late at that point in time. This instrument was already almost ready for the plebiscite.

Siemer: That was when Oscar had been elected to the Congress of Micronesia?

- Hofschneider: I don't remember whether it was Congress of Micronesia or the Board. There were a lot of things that were going on at that point of time. But I remember he refused to sign, whether it was the Covenant or it was the Con-Con. I'm not too sure.
- Willens: Well, it was the Covenant. He was elected to the Congress of Micronesia in November 1974. He and Pete A. Tenorio defeated Ed Pangelinan and Herman Q. Guerrero. There's some debate about whether political status was an important issue. Do you have any recollection of that election and whether political status was an issue?
- Hofschneider: Yes. It was. I remember the old Royal Taga where we usually conducted our meetings, and I remember Oscar saying—he was at the tail end of it, and it was very difficult because support from the inside was just not there, you know.
- Willens: Support from the inside for what?
- Hofschneider: To delay the plebiscite and have more education over it. It was overwhelmingly the support of the group that decided, let's go with the plebiscite as scheduled. We felt the Covenant was a very important document. It's a very technical document. You need a lot of education. We were pushing for classroom instruction on it. Every available means of the media should be used. It was translated, it was sent out to the community, and people were coming around for questioning and answering.
- Siemer: How did the public education go on Tinian? What happened after the Covenant was signed and before the plebiscite?
- Hofschneider: Oh, my goodness, it was very tense, because people would come and make presentations for three or four hours, and that was the education that we got.
- Siemer: It was mostly people coming from Saipan, members of the Commission?
- Hofschneider: Yes.
- Siemer: And others coming from Saipan to answer questions and explain?
- Hofschneider: Right. And then you're given the brochure to look at. For a community with a very low education level to read that technical document and ask questions, it was very difficult. I'm saying, why don't you change shoes and let me ask. Of course they're going to say yes. It is tradition when you don't understand anything, it's yes ma'am. Translation, no ma'am, help me, I don't understand. You have to read all the body language. People do not see what we're trying to say—of course they're going to say yes. We respect people of position. We don't say no.
- Siemer: So the people who were on the Commission were people of position and therefore the voters would approve what they had done?
- Hofschneider: Yes.
- Siemer: Did the translation of the Covenant into Chamorro help much on Tinian? Did people read Chamorro well?
- Hofschneider: Yes. They read Chamorro very well. The concept of government, the concept of negotiation—totally foreign. So the political language is just not there. The terminology is okay in Chamorro, but when applied to a relationship between two countries, they're saying—it is not there.
- Willens: Was there a sense among the more educated element of the community that the United States had taken advantage of the Northern Marianas representatives?



- Hofschneider: Absolutely. At least the group that I was involved with. It was a perfect time for people to come in from other nations, not just the United States, any nation. You know, you must come in at the right time. And we felt that it was the wrong time, because the complexity of the relationship between countries, that is foreign to us.
- Willens: Was there any specific aspect of the Covenant that you and your friends thought was evidence of the unequal bargaining power of the negotiating teams?
- Hofschneider: For example, there was a technical agreement for the use of the two-thirds [of the island of Tinian]. I felt at that point in time I did not understand anything of it. It was just a little too complicated for me. I was not exposed to a lot of those concepts. I had no idea of how things are done. So I felt I did not know what that was all about. We didn't understand that. The condition in the leaseback agreement. At that point in time, I have very vague idea of, you know, you can come in and use it, but if we come in . . . They put it down so simply, it's all right, we have no immediate plan, you may go in there and just use it, it's just that when we need it, you . . . They laid it down so effectively, I thought. But we didn't understand the complexity of that. I think basically it's that technical agreement that threw us. But the focus of their selling point was the social security benefit. How can a social security benefit be negotiated between two nations? Those are program administrative things. So I'm saying there must be something about social security.
- Siemer: Back at that time, what did you think would happen if the Covenant were rejected by the people?
- Hofschneider: Oh, a lot of people felt this fear that the United States is going to leave us, and now what? I sensed that at that point in time. But personally I felt that they would say okay, let's renegotiate. What are the values here that you're willing to talk about on the table? I just really believed that the United States would say okay, this is not the thing that you guys want. Let's go renegotiate again.
- Siemer: During the public education campaign, Oscar Rasa and Joe Mafnas had a set of points that they thought should be renegotiated. Do you recall that?
- Hofschneider: No.
- Siemer: Do you recall there was also some opposition to the Covenant from the Congress of Micronesia and the Congress of Micronesia provided some funds for the opposition at that time? Do you recall anything of that?
- Hofschneider: No, I do not. We were busy with Carl Young, from Hawaii. We were doing all kinds of research, because we hear from our negotiators we do not have the resources. We don't have anything to—as leverage to negotiate.
- Siemer: This is what you heard from Bernard and Frank Hocog and people like that?
- Hofschneider: Yes, or from Cruz and all those negotiators. So we will run to the University of Guam to do research. What does the ocean mean to us, what does it have, what kind of resources, the potential. We come right back and we say you see, you see? We just need time to research and to say what is it that we have, because somewhere along the line, somebody made us believe that we didn't have anything. So we're getting into that. All we need is some time to do research, and we were even offering that we go to the United Nations and use all their research material about the ocean out here. The strategic values to all the nations surrounding Asia, that could be a leverage. That's what we have. But it was very frustrating, because I think we were looked at as crazy college students, you know, who have nothing better to do.

- Siemer: Who were some of the other college students at the time?
- Hofschneider: David Cing, his brothers, Bill, my brothers, the Fleming children, and some of the Hofschneiders, my generation.
- Siemer: Mostly students who were at the University of Guam?
- Hofschneider: Yes. And who were kicked out of the island to go to school, troublemakers. And their parents. So that technically made up our group. It's a weird group. Those were the people.
- Willens: What was your impression of Ambassador Williams based in part on that private meeting you had with him?
- Hofschneider: My goodness, I went away believing that he was a person, that he empathized with us and that he really understood what we were trying to do. Yet, there's a mission that he has to accomplish, because he constantly says I am a personal representative of the President of the United States. So my impression was that he empathized, he understood, but he has to do his job.
- Willens: Did your father have any personal meetings with him?
- Hofschneider: Not in any private meeting. It was always in his office. It was always a public meeting.
- Willens: Did you have any feeling at the time that the people on Tinian would be at a disadvantage in a future commonwealth because of the majority of the population being on Saipan?
- Hofschneider: We have always felt that way. I grew up feeling like Tinian is in Siberia. That if we have left over, we'll think about that. So that's how I felt. And I still believe that I need to scream a little louder than the Saipan people in order to make sure that people understand Tinian. The same sentiment I think is city, county and old farm town, you know. So yes, we felt that we always get the hand-me-downs.
- Willens: You know that at the very late stages of the negotiations, Tinian and Rota insisted that the Covenant contain a provision for a bicameral legislature with one house in which the three islands would be equally represented. Do you think that that has provided a safeguard for the people of Tinian?
- Hofschneider: I think to some extent it provided the visibility and also the funding because it was certainly more than before. However, at the same time, I think I really believed that it opened the potential for fragmentation, because it's always like Tinian delegation and Rota delegation and Saipan delegation. You're not any delegation, you're Northern Marianas delegation. So it came in two forms. It worked at some point to our benefit and it worked against us. For example the dump area, that's been going on for a long time. One of the Senators says you know we were at some reception, and we made a comment that when are you folks going to make the money available and move the damned thing, because it's messing up everybody, and not just the tourists. Oh, that's not my problem; that's Saipan delegation's problem. I'm saying, excuse me, the hospital is right next door. We all go there. And that to me was really bad, because it created a fragmentation. What affects Saipan affects Tinian. It's only a hop and a skip away. You're not talking about from here to Japan.
- Siemer: By the time the Constitutional Convention came around in 1976, you were back here in Saipan and you'd graduated from college?
- Hofschneider: Yes.
- Siemer: Were you active in politics at that time?

- Hofschneider: I kind of laid back because I felt so defeated. You know, after the Covenant, the plebiscite. So I really wasn't that active. I kind of just said what the heck, the floodgate is open, go for it.
- Siemer: Were there particular things with respect to Tinian that you thought the Tinian delegates to the Constitutional Convention should attend to?
- Hofschneider: No. Like I said, I was feeling so disgusted about everything, so I stayed away for a little bit.
- Siemer: Did you go to any of the Constitutional Convention sessions?
- Hofschneider: No. It was a total denial.
- Siemer: What was your view after the Constitution was published and you had a chance to see it before the vote was conducted?
- Hofschneider: You know, I don't think I voted for it. Like I said, okay, you know, it's survival of the fittest now.
- Willens: What is your assessment of how the Commonwealth has worked out over the last nearly 20 years? What are its strong points, and what have been the weaknesses?
- Hofschneider: Let me just give you an example in education, because that's where I have spent most of my life. During that time when it was very difficult to go and have an education, we have more college graduates than now when it's wide open. Now you can go any time, go to school, you don't have to wait for a visa. We had more graduates then during that time when it was very difficult.
- Willens: Than you do now.
- Hofschneider: Than we do now.
- Willens: Why is that?
- Hofschneider: You know, by providing this, it was just too easy. People take advantage of it. They go in; they go out. I don't know.
- Willens: Well, I've heard it suggested the reason people from Tinian and Rota don't go on to get an education is because there are well-paying jobs in Government available at a very early age and earn a lot of money for doing nothing. Is that an overstatement?
- Hofschneider: No, I don't think so. To some extent, that's true. Because there is an influx of sudden money coming in. And they believe that a 15-year-old should have a truck and a couple of cars. So where's the motive? Why go to school? You're right to some extent. Everything came in real easy suddenly. Another example I can give is we have right now a student here whose parents built a house, who has a car, and who comes to college and takes the same class every semester, because they can't pass it. There is no motive. The car's provided; the food's provided. Why go? The political, the spoil system has gone crazy. We have a drop-out student who comes in and makes \$35,000 vs. a student who went to college, finished it up, comes back and makes \$15,000 or \$18,000. So yes, that is the pushing factor, pushing out factor. We do not see as many drop-outs as before. It used to be a competition; it used to be, you know, the community's pride and joy for students to come home and be crowned with that diploma. But it's no longer there. Even before the political system came in. I remember my father when he was a mayor. There were only three staff. He had three staff, and that was it. So the political spoil system was not as bad then.

Willens: How about the economic development on the islands, Saipan in particular, now with the promise of casino gambling on Tinian? Do you think this economic development has yielded benefits for the people?

Hofschneider: I think there are some definite benefits, but there's also a lot of stress on the resources. I don't know if anyone has made a study on out of a tourist dollar how much actually stays here. If the Commonwealth is happy with two cents, apparently they're happy. But I haven't seen the true figures on it. In order to make it nice and comfortable or even adequate for the tourist, how much did that cost us for the Hyatt, for the Hafa Adai, and all that. How much did that cost us? No one has done an analysis on that, and I think it's very critical and it needs to be done. With regard to Tinian casinos, we have always been a staunch opponent of the casino industry. My father was one of them. He made us believe that for any casino, just like any military, to come in and take a look at how much the labor force, the number of the labor force, and how skillful the labor force is, you would have to be crazy to think that there's going to be some economic benefit. Because they will put in their people. It's like an island on an island.

Siemer: How strong is the support for organized gambling on Tinian?

Hofschneider: Very strong.

Siemer: What is your own view of the outlook for Tinian given the current system of government and the developments with respect to the gambling?

Hofschneider: Not very good. Casino gambling as an industry is a very sophisticated industry. The monitoring is very sophisticated. The movement of that cash is very fast, and if you blink your eyes you lose millions. So we don't need to say we have not been very good in terms of our financial books in handling maybe \$1 million or half a million. What makes me believe that millions of dollars we can actually at an adequately level figure out where it's all going. It boggles the mind to think that with the current educational power of the community that it can in all honesty manage that much money and monitor the gaming activities. The island is a little bit too small. The commissioners are cheek to cheek with the operators. So the casino is going to rule down there. What is it that the people want in terms of, what is their adequate level, what is their acceptable quality of life without turning to this? I even tell my own family, go and see "Casino", and you see not the main characters but the secondary stories within that movie, and you let me know that that's not Tinian. I said I'm scared. I am very scared of the industry. And now the question is, is Tinian home? Is Tinian going to be home? I may be selfish by saying I want Tinian to be exactly like it is right now, because I think every one of us should have a sanctuary to put our souls back into our body and say what is real and what is important, you know. So it's going to be a heck of an interesting development down there in Tinian.

Willens: Thank you, Florine. That was a very helpful statement. Thank you again for participating.

Hofschneider: You're welcome.