

INTERVIEW OF HEINZ S. HOFSCHEIDER

by Howard P. Willens and Deanne C. Siemer

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- Willens: Representative Heinz S. Hofschneider has graciously agreed to participate in our project. Thank you very much, Heinz, for being available today.
- Siemer: Let's start out with your family. Tell us where you were born and when.
- Hofschneider: I was born in Saipan the year 1957, July 1.
- Siemer: What are your parents' names?
- Hofschneider: My father (deceased) was William Villagomez Hofschneider. He was born in Yap and migrated with the entire Hofschneider family to Tinian. My mother is from Saipan. Her name is Primitiba Roberto Sablan. She was born and raised here in Saipan.
- Siemer: How many brothers and sisters did your father have?
- Hofschneider: Let me count. He was the oldest. Five brothers and three sisters.
- Siemer: Can you identify them for us.
- Hofschneider: Yes. Freddie would be the next oldest. Richard, Bernard, Edward and Hedwig.
- Siemer: And the sisters?
- Hofschneider: Margaret would be the oldest. And Augusta and Wilhelmina.
- Siemer: How about on your mother's side, her brothers and sisters.
- Hofschneider: My mother's side, no brothers. Two sisters, Maria and Rosa.
- Siemer: Tell us where the Hofschneider family name came from, and how long the family had been in Yap.
- Hofschneider: My father's grandfather, my great-grandfather, came from Germany in the middle to late 1800s. He lived in Yap and had only one son, Henry Hofschneider. Henry married a full-blooded Yapese, so that puts my father and everybody in the original Hofschneider family as half Yapese. But the Hofschneider name is from Germany. After the war, my father tells us or used to tell us, that the military came up to their village and asked my grandfather if they would like to relocate to Tinian and start the government there. When they did arrive in Tinian, my grandfather Henry was chosen by the military to run the municipal government, the civilian government. After he died, my father moved down to Tinian to take over his responsibility as mayor of the island of Tinian. After that, he became the Assistant District Administrator of Tinian.
- Siemer: Why did your grandfather think it was a good idea to leave Yap for Tinian?
- Hofschneider: We could never figure that out, because he also gathered not only the Hofschneiders, but the Villagomezes and the Flemings that were living in Yap at that time. So that's how all the Villagomezes and the Flemings are "Tinian-Yapese".
- Siemer: He persuaded them all to come with him?
- Hofschneider: Yes.
- Siemer: When they arrived after the war, were there any people left on Tinian at that time?

Hofschneider: There were a few Chamorro families living there—the Dela Cruzs, I remember, and perhaps the Hocog family. The Mendiolas came later from Rota, as well as more of the Hocogs. But, as I recall the stories back then, the Dela Cruzs were already established in Tinian.

Siemer: After the war, the military actively wanted people on Tinian?

Hofschneider: I never heard that, but it would make good logic to assume that the island of Tinian was being leveled off for military purposes, and they would like to see some civic government going on at the same time. But my grandfather is so secretive also on a lot of things. He spoke Russian, he spoke Japanese, and he knew Morse code. My father was a translator in Morse code during the Japanese war. We used to have family gatherings and hear stories about those times. Freddie, the second oldest, who became later a civic judge in Tinian, was beaten by the Japanese because there were cigarette butts found in and around the communication room where my father and Freddie were working, manning the Morse code, the underwater cables there at that time. But they all spoke Japanese. My grandfather spoke Russian, German, fluent Yapese, fluent English and Chamorro.

Siemer: That's interesting because Yap was not a center of commerce. There were not a lot of people through there. Where did he learn Russian?

Hofschneider: I don't know that. But I know for a fact that when he and the old Flemings talked, sometimes they used Russian. Felipe Salas is married to my father's sister Margaret, the oldest. Every summer when we were kids, summertime is the time that all the kids, the grandchildren, will be sent down to Tinian to live with my grandfather for the whole summer. Every afternoon, he would gather us on the front steps of the house and tell us stories of the days in Yap and his grandfather and so forth. He would have Fleming visit, and they would converse in Yapese. And if my father comes around, because my father spoke Yapese fluently and Japanese fluently and English fluently, they would switch to Russian or German, so no one would pick up what they were saying. So that's the only recollection that I bring back. He never really discussed how he learned Russian, but we all understood how he learned German. His father, however, died early, in his childhood days. So I can't figure out how he picked up German fluently.

Siemer: How long was your grandfather the head of the civil administration in Tinian?

Hofschneider: Specifically I cannot recall, but it must have been more than five years before he had a heart attack, or more than that.

Siemer: And then your father went back to Tinian and took that up?

Hofschneider: Immediately, yes.

Siemer: How long did your father serve in that job?

Hofschneider: My father really didn't care to live in Tinian, but he had to out of respect for the people there and for my grandfather.

Willens: Your father then did not go with your grandfather to Tinian originally?

Hofschneider: We were living here [in Saipan]. He was working here.

Willens: He was working on Saipan?

Hofschneider: Yes.

Willens: And raising his family here on Saipan?

Hofschneider: Yes.

- Willens: When his father died, he had to move from Saipan to Tinian?
- Hofschneider: Right. I remember this because I was in second grade. We used to take the plane down for a couple of months and go to school with him, because he was working as the mayor back then. And when that didn't work, we all got sent back with our mother here. And not too long, maybe a year after that, he decided that was it. He had to move back to Saipan. He wasn't happy working in Tinian. His heart was here. But he loved the work, and I think it was out of love and respect for the people of Tinian and his father, really, that he had to go down and assume the position.
- Siemer: What work did your father do when he lived in Saipan?
- Hofschneider: He was working for Public Works at that time. He later the chief of Labor here.
- Siemer: In the TT government?
- Hofschneider: Yes.
- Siemer: Did your father ever work for the Navy Administration?
- Hofschneider: I believe so.
- Siemer: How long did he stay in Tinian when he moved back after your grandfather died?
- Hofschneider: Not more than three years.
- Willens: His position there was not an elected position, I gather. It was an administrative position under the TTPI?
- Hofschneider: Yes.
- Willens: Did he ever run for elected office?
- Hofschneider: Yes.
- Willens: Where was that?
- Hofschneider: I believe here.
- Willens: In Saipan?
- Hofschneider: In Saipan. It was the Municipal Council, the equivalent to the Legislature back then.
- Siemer: So was he in Tinian in the 1950s?
- Hofschneider: He was in Tinian in the early 1950s.
- Siemer: How many children did your father and mother have?
- Hofschneider: Five brothers and one sister, deceased.
- Siemer: Can you identify them for us.
- Hofschneider: Yes. The oldest is Conrad. I am the second. Henry, William, Joseph and Felix. And the deceased sister is Anna.
- Siemer: All of the Hofschneiders in Micronesia are from a single family?
- Hofschneider: Yes.
- Siemer: Even the ones that spell it with two "f"s?
- Hofschneider: Yes.
- Siemer: How did that happen?

Hofschneider: It's a hilarious story. When my father was still alive, he really wanted to find family members in Germany. I guess it was fate or destiny, but a lady working in the Duty Free in the Guam airport overheard Hofschneider being paged at that time. This was back in 1972, because I remember I was in Hopwood High School. The lady got interested, so she brought up a conversation. Hofschneider, I think I know a family in San Diego that is Hofschneider, but carries a different last name. So that ended up with a lady coming over from San Diego and who introduced herself to the whole family as being one of the descendants of the Hofschneiders in Germany. So they all met the family and the facial resemblance is absolutely a Xerox copy of Augusta [William V. Hofschneider's sister]. It's just unbelievable. Nevertheless, she went back and wrote to Germany, and that's how we had information and newspaper clippings as to the birthplace of our great-grandfather.

Siemer: Where was it?

Hofschneider: I forgot. It's outside Bonn. I forgot the village. But the church where he was baptized, the bakery where he worked, and the whole story on the village—newspaper clippings and so forth, were all sent to my father. That's how we started, and he wanted someone in the Hofschneider family to really put a commitment on themselves and try to visit the place and try to make contact so that the families know each other. We've always been saying, whenever we have a Hofschneider family gathering, that we're going to do it this year, but I guess we just have to put everything on hold and actually do it. We've never done it yet.

Siemer: Actually the name Hofschneider goes back to medieval times. It means court tailor.

Hofschneider: Yes.

Siemer: I met many Hofschneiders when I was an exchange student in Germany. It's one of the old names that goes back to medieval times when people had trades, and you were known by what trade you were expert in. So your family name goes way back.

Hofschneider: Yes. Absolutely. That's according to that lady that came out here. And that's where the two "f"s came. She said that Hofschneider is correctly spelled with two "f"s.

Willens: I see in some of the records I have that Tinian had a legislative body called the Tinian Municipal Council in the late 1950s, and I see that there was a Freddie Hofschneider who was a member of that body for some terms in the late 1950s. That was an uncle?

Hofschneider: Yes. The second oldest on the male side.

Willens: He lived on Tinian, unlike your father.

Hofschneider: Yes.

Willens: And did he continue to have a political career on Tinian, do you know?

Hofschneider: He became an appointed civic judge and served throughout until a proper judicial system was in place. Then he retired from the bench. Like Felipe Salas. That's why people call him judge here. They were both serving as judges.

Siemer: And how about Bernard V. Hofschneider who was on the Political Status Commission?

Hofschneider: That's a younger brother of my father.

Willens: I have here Bernard C. Hofschneider. Is it C or V?

Hofschneider: No. It is V. That's misspelled.

Willens: He served in the Marianas District Legislature for a time and was a member of the Marianas Political Status Commission.

Hofschneider: Right.

Willens: Could you tell us about your education. Where did you go to school?

Hofschneider: I spent two years at Menlo College in Palo Alto. I didn't know what to study, so I picked psychology and economics.

Willens: Did you go to high school here back in Saipan?

Hofschneider: I studied here up until the 10th grade, and then my father decided that one of us should move on in terms of education. The first offer was to my eldest brother, Conrad. That became a scene in the house, because he was the oldest and very attached to the family. He didn't want to leave Saipan. I didn't actually see eye to eye with my father on a lot of issues, and later I understood why. I was headstrong and very opinionated. We cannot sit in a room for 30 minutes without arguing. So he said okay, your oldest brother didn't want to go, do you want to go? I said, why not? So we found a private school in Hawaii, Mid-Pacific Institute, a boarding school, adjacent to the University of Hawaii. I graduated from there.

Willens: How old were you when you went there?

Hofschneider: Tenth grade.

Willens: That would have been then about 15, 16 years old?

Hofschneider: Somewhere around 16, maybe. I graduated from there. A lot of colleges out of the United States were recruiting students from Mid-Pac. It was ranked one of the best schools in the State of Hawaii. So I had a lot of opportunities, but I was more interested in girls than academics at that time. In my senior year in high school, my father died. So my mother said, you have to continue what your father wanted, continue going to school. I almost didn't go back for my high school graduation, because at that time my mom was working for Dr. Torres Hospital earning a meager \$300 biweekly. At that time, my tuition was \$2,300 a year. And my brother, the eldest, had just gotten out of high school and started working as a surveyor with a private company. He supported the family. He continued to support me as well in private school. But it really hurt during the graduation, when I stood at the podium and earned the respect of the school, and not having my father see that I actually did it. So graduation wasn't really in my mind. I needed to get it over and go to the mainland, maybe escaping pain. But I followed my heart, not my mind. I again enrolled in an expensive private school, Menlo College in Menlo Park, California.

Siemer: How did you pick Menlo College?

Hofschneider: Well, a lot of schools came over to Mid-Pac during the year, and they looked at academic records. Stanford was there recruiting, UCLA was there recruiting, Marquette was there recruiting, a lot of good schools. But my girlfriend at that time was attending a Catholic school which belonged to the Menlo College system, Valparaiso in Palo Alto. My first girlfriend in school was Larry Guerrero's daughter, and eventually I had a kid with her. Anyway, I followed my heart and went to Menlo College, spent two years. The relationship didn't work, so I came back. Right after high school, I came back here for the summer. Things weren't working with the other girlfriend, so I thought that to be structured in life you had to get married. And I got married in church. The bishop was the one who presided over it.

Willens: Bishop Camacho?

Hofschneider: Yes. A good friend of mine.

- Willens: This was after high school and before you went to Menlo College?
- Hofschneider: Yes. So immediately after getting married, I packed up the following day and left for college. I attended Menlo for two years and decided to move down to Southern California, since my mother was already beginning to be concerned about funding my younger brother's college years. We had to be in one place that is reasonably affordable.
- Siemer: So everybody could come and live in the same place?
- Hofschneider: Right. Menlo College was expensive. There's no way that my mother and my older brother can support us. So we moved down to Southern California and went to school there, Cal State at Los Angeles. I was beginning now to look forward and majored in health science. I worked on one undergraduate project that landed me a research assistant job at UCLA Medical Center. At that time we were doing a grant from DuPont for blood cultures, in the initial stages of the AIDS research. I was a young student and eager. I loved research. I got offered, after four years of college, to take a look at research in the Caribbean and Central America and South America. I worked there for two years, living in the Dominican Republic, for the most part, 14 months out of the two years.
- Willens: What two years were those?
- Hofschneider: 1982 to 1984.
- Willens: And that was right after you graduated from college?
- Hofschneider: After four years of college, finishing up four years of undergraduate work. I decided to take the plunge and head down there.
- Siemer: Did you speak Spanish by that time?
- Hofschneider: No. But being Chamorro, it was easy to mesh in and adapt to the culture and language. It was very helpful for me. Then after the two years in South America, the Caribbean countries, my marriage broke up. I came back here and stayed. I never went back. Just dropped everything. I wasn't interested in pursuing any other field of interest.
- Siemer: Had you traveled in the States any place other than California?
- Hofschneider: Yes. I did a lot of driving. To Florida. Up the Eastern Coast. Up and down the Western states. Obviously to Vegas and down to Tijuana, and there's another city two hours from Mexico. I loved driving in the States.
- Siemer: Did you have a job when you came back to Saipan?
- Hofschneider: No. I worked at Dr. Torres [Hospital] for about six months.
- Siemer: What were you doing there?
- Hofschneider: I was a physician assistant. Then decided after my marriage broke up, I wanted to try something new. I worked in a lot of businesses, like real estate, for the family on both sides. I did a lot of real estate for my mom. I got married later to my current wife, who is a Tenorio Sablan.
- Siemer: Did you work in the private sector?
- Hofschneider: I was self-employed. We started the first venture with Shell Marianas. We ran it for a year and then I decided to run for office.
- Siemer: What year was that?
- Hofschneider: 1990.

- Willens: The election, though, would have been in 1989.
- Hofschneider: This will be my sixth year [in the Legislature]. So it would be 1990 election and 1991 coming in, right? This is my third term, anyway. I had two terms as an independent and one term as a Republican.
- Willens: Do you remember when you were growing up on Saipan in the 1960s any discussion about future political status of the Northern Marianas?
- Hofschneider: I had no inclination at all to politics whatsoever, no interest at all, until my junior year or senior year in Hawaii in high school, when my civic government teacher said that I should write a term paper on my government. So that's the first time that I read the Covenant and the Constitution of the Northern Marianas.
- Willens: So that was sometime after 1976?
- Hofschneider: Yes.
- Siemer: What political party was your family in back in those days, in the 1960s and 1970s?
- Hofschneider: I can never get it straight, but I believe my father was more of a Democrat. But knowing him, he's not really for a party. He's the kind of guy who brings former presidents to the house for a drink, Kaleb Udui and those guys, and even local people here. Party politics, in my mind, never created any commotion at home. He was never really was active to my recollection. A lot of the families that I knew back then, they would get on a truck and throw rocks and actually have the fire hose be opened against them, in those days. My father was not like that. He was reserved in politics. But I know a lot of people seek his advice, because a lot of people came to the house to talk to him about things. But as far as party, I don't think so. My mom used to, as a matter of teasing him, I think she teased him as being a Democrat. I never heard her tease him as a Republican. That's why I said he's probably more of a Democrat than anything.
- Willens: How about Uncle Bernard from Tinian? Did he have a strong political affiliation?
- Hofschneider: Tinian is interesting because in those days, and even up to today, you see the subtleties of politics. The Hofschneiders, the Villagomezes, and the Flemings tend to support each other in politics, whether they're running as Democrats or Republicans. It wasn't an issue to run as a Democrat or as an Independent. It is the principle of supporting a family member seeking political office. That's more important. As a result, there's also the opposing, not a party, but opposing group of families, the Mendiolas and the Hocogs. But sometimes because of intermarriages, splitting of support is suppressed in terms of public exhibition. It was done quietly in the house. When the two kids are married, the Hofschneider and the Mendiola, they close the door and say okay, support your own family. But they never really would exhibit it out in public. So it was never really a party issue, as far as Bernard or even John, the former Senator, my cousin.
- Siemer: That's Florine's husband?
- Hofschneider: Yes. You can run in any party. The point is the family comes together, whether you're a Republican or a Democrat.
- Willens: During the early 1970s, as you know, there were negotiations that went on for more than two years that resulted in the Covenant. Do you have any recollection of hearing about these negotiations or the plebiscite that related to the Covenant?
- Hofschneider: Whatever brief recollection I have on that issue, I guess the commotion was more important to remember. And those commotions really are driven by a group of people

that were pushing independence as opposed to affiliation with the United States. And there were a lot of skeletons in the closets that they were using as scare tactics. We would become United States citizens, the U.S. citizens would come and overwhelm us in terms of our opportunities, our rights, and everything, especially the land and resources. I remember that distinctly. The other opposing views were looking from a point that the Trust Territory failed in every respect, and we ought to manage ourselves appropriately, and we know how, compared to what the Trust Territory was then offering, or giving. It makes people think. However little support the anti-Commonwealth people had in the plebiscite, they nevertheless gained [support from] some people with their tactics.

Willens: Is it your recollection that those opponents were against any relationship with the United States or were they against the relationship defined in the Covenant?

Hofschneider: I'm talking about foreign investors back then having a hand in the soup, so to speak, for the people here. Saying "go independence because we will bring the money," and rightfully they showed what money can do. So they have a taste of greed, and they were not being honest to the people. They were saying we can invite companies like these people here offering millions for everyone, why should you go with the U.S. affiliation. The point I think is that greed was already beginning to undermine the true sense of what the people want. They have an understanding of how the system can be manipulated. This is why I'm probably not the person to talk about what really transpired then, because I know more in detail than most people would tend to think. That's why I say that the seed that was planted back then to oppose any move by the people to affiliate with the United States was really coming from greed. They wanted the system for themselves.

Willens: Do you remember any concern about separating out from the rest of Micronesia, particularly in the Carolinian community?

Hofschneider: I remember the issue of the Carolinians being forced to be treated the same as the Chamorros. That is still true today. They don't want to be treated the same. They want a distinct identity. They want a separate identity. And that was true back then. I remember that. And it's no different today; it's still the same.

Willens: Is a concern for a separate identity inconsistent with being part of the same political structure as the Chamorros?

Hofschneider: Yes. Because you have to understand the Carolinians are not one faction, one denomination. Where they came from and where they reside here in Saipan is really important to understand. Talking about one central theme for the Carolinians of the Commonwealth is wrong, because there are factions that really do not share the same views or want the same things, and it is important to apply that to the political structure. I remember that was important back then. That is why they had this big fight amongst themselves to create the Aghurup. They didn't want to see themselves being treated the same politically. They wanted something unique that they can exercise and administer politically. The compromise was the Carolinian Affairs Office.

Willens: Has that served to be a useful compromise?

Hofschneider: No. In fact, it's an impediment in my view. And I'm sorry if the Carolinians feel otherwise. But sharing stories and conversations and debates with the Carolinians since I sought their help, especially in Precinct 3, it has been a disappointment on how the Office has been used on their behalf. It was really any given governor leveraging the Office for political gain, but never really being attentive to the needs of the Office and the respect of the Office and how the Carolinians really view how the Office ought to be administered. And

I go back by saying that they wanted a political system, whether the Carolinian Office can be that system or not, that they can administer and manipulate themselves for their behalf.

Siemer: None of those groups is dominant enough to control all the Carolinians, is that right?

Hofschneider: Dominant in terms of population, yes. You can swing a vote for the most populous clan, which resides in San Jose, Chalan Laulau, in District 4, Precinct 2 election district. Because they came from the same origin, they're Satawal and Yap descendants and pretty much the same, and a little bit of Chuukese that merged into the Satawal community, which is San Jose and Chalan Laulau and so forth. Tanapag is quite different. It's more of a Chuukese denomination. This is where Lifoifoi comes. You can ask him about that. But what I observed over the years is that, number 1, the dividing factors really are based on former leaders of the Carolinians fighting amongst themselves to put themselves on a pedestal. One of the handful of leaders, and some of them have died, Abel Olopai, who was very vocal, represented the Carolinian community and started the Aghurup community. Even within the same [political] party, they don't see eye to eye. They made it a political issue, a political agenda, to fraction their own community so that they can manipulate the system, the Chamorro political system.

Siemer: What about the Rogolifoi family?

Hofschneider: Well, they're not that vocal in politics. They're different. They're not tremendously vocal in my view of politics today, except for Pete and Herman R. Guerrero who are out of office. But leadership fractioning, feuds among the handful of leaders, continues in the [Carolinian] community. As an example, Abel Olopai is of one family with Ben Fitial's family. But they just cannot come together as Carolinians for one reason or another. They're a litigious clan. They've been taking each other to court for years. So that's an example of leadership fractioning. And then you have Rabauliman also, belonging to the same clan. But since Abel's too much of a rebel, he developed his own party and they call it the Aghurup Clan, together with Felicidad Ogumuro's father and family. And you have the Limes family on the side. Just to name a few. And then you have the Felipe Ruak in Tanapag, the Lifoifoi group in Tanapag, the Pua in Tanapag, and the Kaipat in District 4 that moved to Chalan Laulau. Dr. Benisto Kaipat also was a rebel like Abel Olopai. So they were trying to set a foundation as leaders, modern leaders. Abel was the only one that really had a joker amongst all players. Before he died, he managed to erect the Aghurup, which is beginning to have momentum in cohesiveness of community support. Maybe they needed a faith, a belief in something, the spiritual value of Aghurup now erected in Managaha. Nevertheless the underlying tone is that Abel Olopai managed to provide something for the fractioned community for one day they'll all come together and put their differences aside. Every year I attend the Managaha event, which is the Aghurup Day, and last year was really something. More people came out. But to understand where the division comes from leadership, then you move down to the clan. You can't get for instance the Ogumuro sitting together with the Kaipat or the Belimi or the Fitial or the Olopai, because they're already fractioned from the leadership aspect. Then you have this societal difference on the Satawal community or culture and the Chuukese descendants. So they have myriads of differences that are anti-matter, repelling each other. That's why the [Carolinian Affairs] Office represents maybe the long desire of something to identify themselves to politically and a legally available system that they can use for their well-being. But they have never been successful.

Willens: Do you think the Office could have served a useful role in overcoming these fractional differences?

Hofschneider: If it is constitutionally appropriated, yes. Knowing what I know, and having gone through six years of statutory appropriation, I say that legislatively it will never materialize. Politicians come and politicians go in the history of the Commonwealth, using the Carolinians as an excuse to get votes, but never actually delivering what they pledge.

Willens: The Carolinians over the past 20 years have been fairly successful at electing members of the Saipan Municipal Council, the District Legislature, and the Commonwealth Legislature, isn't that correct?

Hofschneider: Pretty successful in the sense that they have a representative. Pretty unsuccessful in utilizing the office itself. You have a constitutional office, and you have been successful in electing your own people. Look what the office has contributed to the welfare of the Carolinians. I say zip, until recently when you have Tom Tebutep sitting as the community and cultural affairs secretary. There's more tendency to listen to the office now because he belongs to the Carolinian community and that office reports to him. As opposed to over the years when you have a Chamorro sitting as Secretary of the Department of Community and Cultural Affairs, which the Carolinian Office is budgeted from, and never attentive to the needs [of the office]. This is one thing that I'm going to tell you about. I know that it's unspeakable in the Chamorro and the Carolinian community. But I have to be honest. You want to know the real reason. We have always viewed ("we" meaning Chamorros because I consider myself belonging to the Chamorros, they consider me a Chamorro, and therefore I use the word "we") that in politics, the higher the office, obviously the more scrutiny you get. But there's something else. I think it's more of a racial issue than a political issue. The Chamorros, because they're more populous, don't want to see a Carolinian or a Carolinian descendent or part Carolinian get elected to higher office. Legislature, yes. That's as far as you go.

Siemer: Not governor or lieutenant governor?

Hofschneider: It's not time yet for a Carolinian blood to get to that level of political office. This is one of those fibers of this community that tends to echo in the chamber of the Legislature. When you appropriate money for "their" indigenous affairs or protected right or program or service or intent, you get a phone call from the community. I have so many times, especially when I testified on behalf of the Carolinian Office before the [Third] Con-Con. I was questioned as to my motives. So that feeling is there. It's still alive and well.

Siemer: There's been quite a lot of marriage between Carolinian and Chamorro families, though, has there not?

Hofschneider: Yes, quite a few. More now.

Siemer: And marriages between the various Carolinian clans as well.

Hofschneider: Yes. But they have their own rules on how to tend to differences, still alive and well. It's an impediment.

Siemer: It's an impediment because the Marianas does not have a larger political community to absorb it. If you had a small community like this in a state like California, the various influences at the state level would affect the peculiarly local influences. There are communities, but there are larger political interests that the communities have to deal with.

Hofschneider: Yes. But I guess I'm not making it perfectly clear. Here's one instance. My true desire for this upcoming election is to run for the Washington representative office. By the time this book is written, it would be politically irrelevant so I'm going to tell you the honest truth of what's happening. Juan Babauta is half Carolinian. He is running and identified as a

Republican. I have nurtured, over the years, respect and the trust amongst the Carolinians. That is bearing fruit for me politically.

Siemer: Not just in District 3?

Hofschneider: No. Island-wide. I question myself, do I want to run against Juan Babauta and take the chance of diluting the trust among the Carolinian elders? If I run against Juan Babauta, the Carolinians—Democrats and Republicans alike—most would tend to vote for Juan Babauta because he is part Carolinian, not because of his political affiliation, not because he belongs to the same clan. Regardless of whether he belongs to a different clan, the Carolinians would tend to vote for him. That is something to consider when understanding the political system, they've been relevant politically when it's gubernatorial. It's not necessarily true with legislative elections. But it is very true if it's a gubernatorial election. Theoretically you can discount them, because the last census shows only 3200-3500 identified as Carolinians. So theoretically you can play with the numbers in all the senatorial districts to offset the relevance of the Carolinian votes.

Siemer: At the gubernatorial level, it's the same thing in Rota. If you can deliver a block of Rota votes at that level, it could

Hofschneider: But you belong to the same clan, you're just the Chamorro clan. This is why it is easier to manipulate the political system, political difference, rather than racial difference. This is why I say don't make it a point if it is really inbred in us to make sure it is not a point when it comes to higher offices. But no one has the gall to actually do it, because no one wants to spent half a million dollars for a gubernatorial race and chance it just to prove a point.

Willens: When you came back to Saipan I guess in about 1984 or thereabouts, you'd been away for several years.

Hofschneider: Close to eight years.

Willens: What was your impression with respect to whether any changes had taken place on the economic front?

Hofschneider: Well, since high school I was away for one purpose, and that is to further my education. When I went to college, I still had that firm belief and opinion, that I could not see myself making a living and living in the United States. My heart was here, to come back. I've always had that, and I've never changed that. When I came back, I was inattentive as to the prosperity or the improvements, because I wanted to get into something. I was eager to come back, and when I got here, it wasn't any different.

Willens: It was not any different from when you had left?

Hofschneider: As to my feelings about this place. I wasn't really attentive to development, the economic improvements and so forth. Those weren't important to me. What is important is I'm back. And I can make something of myself. When I came back, it didn't really surprise me, because living in California, it's a well-developed city and State, so why should I be wasting my time comparing Saipan and maybe Los Angeles, east L.A., for instance, or Pasadena, or Menlo College, or Palo Alto, or Atherton. Never dawned on me to do that.

Siemer: How about the number of aliens who were here at the time and the kinds of things that they were doing? Was that different from when you went away to high school?

Hofschneider: Having said that my father worked as a chief of Labor, I remember one of the reasons why he rapidly deteriorated, got sick, and actually became an alcoholic and died of cirrhosis of the liver, was because of his job. He was taken constantly to court by his own people.

He was more defending against the abuses at that time. People weren't paying their workers, and they were beating their employees, for instance. Some of them were really distant family members of his, and they were taking him to court, accusing him of being sympathetic to the non-residents.

Willens: He was trying to enforce the laws and regulations?

Hofschneider: Yes. Knowing that, when I came back here, it was pretty much [in our] culture to accept that the Filipinos are really here for a purpose, and not for competition as to my opportunities or my rights. They were here for a purpose. It was more clear back then than it is today that they were here for a purpose. Today it's misconstrued. A lot of the local people think that they're here, which by the way is beginning to show that their fear is true, that they're here for their own purpose and not for the original purpose of working and helping this economy and helping this community. It is for the greener pastures of American citizenship. It is a prolongation of their existence here that concerns the people. Back then, when I got back, it was pretty much [in our] culture to accept these people, that they were here for a purpose. They specifically occupied certain job occupations. And this is why we have a tendency to look at some occupations in the Commonwealth to be better suited for a non-resident rather than teaching our own kids to venture into those occupations—chambermaids, for instance, front desk, construction, digging a hole for instance, laying a brick. It's unthinkable for our people to be seen digging a hole. We learned to assimilate it and adapt it into whatever "culture" we have, you know, whether we can define what is the Chamorro culture. But it became the culture to accept that these people are here temporarily, and they are here for a purpose. But now the circumstances are just different.

Willens: You identified some jobs in the middle 1980s that related to the tourism industry, both in terms of building buildings and in providing the menial help in those hotels. Did the local people think it was a worthwhile tradeoff to have this kind of immigrant labor in the community in order to benefit from the tourism industry?

Hofschneider: Absolutely. People are always looking after their own welfare, and what better place to work than the government? And what better government than a politically-manipulated government like ours, to continue employing our own people? And simply for that purpose, to protect the better benefit-giving employment, which is the government, and leave the lesser benefit-giving occupations to the non-residents. It works wonderfully, perfectly, in the general scheme of things. Our people just don't want to admit it. And this is why we continue to fight, for the wrong reason, for the ever-increasing size of government. Politically it's correct to fight whoever is the incumbent, whether it's back then or today. The incumbent governor and the administration and make a political debate out of employing your own people. We just had a big fight with the governor on the fiasco of the 118 FTE. That is a classic example of what I'm saying. We just don't want to accept the fact that we discriminate, whether legally or maybe unconstitutionally. Nevertheless, that's not important. Each of our people thinks the important thing is my welfare. And it is okay for me not being employed and wanting to be employed in the government. It is okay to force the system to be manipulated so I can get a piece of the pie myself. Because this pie is baked for the local people, not for anybody else. And fine, if you, a non-resident, want to work in the private sector, do so. We have no qualms about that. We're not saying no. But when you start questioning your existence, redefining your purpose here, your existence here in the Commonwealth, other than economic opportunities, when you start construing it to mean economic opportunities is equal to citizenship and equal

rights, then we have a different view. Out the window goes economic principles, legal and constitutional principles, ethics and morals.

Willens: When you came back in the middle 1980s, you went into the private sector and worked in a variety of businesses.

Hofschneider: I was primarily looking and working with real estate people, investors coming in. That necessitated me to hire either locals or non-residents. On the occasion of building up the first Shell Marianas service station here, yes, it was necessary to look at employment issues. But I worked with the young kids. I gave them the opportunity to come in and work. I knew the fact of turnovers very well. I compute that to be a greater burden than running the business itself. That is understood. Yes, in the one year and a half of operating that [service station], we hired two non-residents. But generally speaking, we hired all young kids, high school kids and those just out of high school, even college students going part time, to give them opportunities.

Willens: Do you think that the private sector is more or less attractive today to the local Chamorros?

Hofschneider: It hasn't changed. It has not been attractive enough. Why? Because the government continues to pad the protective or the reward side of being employed in the government. We just raised the merit increase annually, and we just raised the salaries. And Pepero introduced, or insisted that in order for us to get a compromise budget with the governor, we had to reserve lapses, which is a cockamamie way of appropriating salary increase for government employees. But it's politically soothing. It's what the governor said: feel-good political correctness. So you appropriate the lapses for salary increases. And every year in the last five years that I've been in the Legislature, always, every year, somebody introduces legislation to increase the padding on the benefit plans of government employees.

Siemer: Not just in election years?

Hofschneider: No. Irrespective of election year or off-year. Every single year there is someone who is going to introduce something to pad the ever-increasing benefit plan of the government. So has it changed? No, it hasn't changed. Because how can you [in private enterprise] keep pace with the government benefit plan? Even on basic wage and salary, you cannot compete. A four-year college student seeking a job opportunity in the government would be well-rewarded on basic wage and salary alone. Take that kid and try and find a job in the private sector. It would be one-third of the basic pay in government. Now it has increased in terms of the overall pay scale, a significant improvement, but not enough to be in my view a change, to make a difference, because it's moving parallel, or together. You can't compete with the government.

Siemer: When you came back in the mid-1980s and you were working in real estate, were you concerned about the foreign interests that were acquiring leases here and what they were using them for?

Hofschneider: I think I'm going to represent the entire people's view. When the going is good, why worry? When the gas tank is beginning to become empty, everybody panics and becomes worried. I think that's basic human nature. In 1989-1990, who cares about what the government is having? Had the minimum wage, the labor and immigration argument with the federal government, occurred in 1989-1990, honestly, when I'm making millions overnight selling my beach property at \$1,200-\$1,400 per square meter, why should I worry about \$4.25 minimum wage? Why should I worry about who's going to construct what. The only focus is the \$3 million that I just made on the real estate. Whatever they

want to construct, let them construct. Let them worry about who's going to manage it. Why should I worry when I've got it made? But when the bubble burst, the champagne became stale, then there were discriminate drinkers and thinkers. Boones Farm used to taste in 1989 and 1990 to be Dom Perignon. Dom Perignon became Boones Farm after the bubble burst. People got worried. They didn't know how to manage the wealth. The community, or the government system itself, the educational system never had anything in place in terms of financial advice, investment advice, whatever. Nobody had anything in place to teach and guide these people who made wealth overnight. What happened? We surround ourselves with five Toyota pickups. It was a joke, and it's a true joke. There were only three people driving in one house; they have five brand new cars parked outside. So the materials things came. It was the dawning of the material mentality. That's why federal relationship or complexities as to conditions set forth in the Covenant or the Constitution were not a concern then. Ha, let me sign off on Article 12. Just don't say it. When we get to court, I'll deny it. I'll sue my own brother or my mother if she tells on me. These are classic cases going on now. The family agreeing to sell; they part with the money; then five years, ten years later, its "I want more. If you don't give me more, I'm going to take my land back. I'm going to say what we all said in one room that should not be written down, that we're violating Article 12, never happened." Then you begin the degradation of family principles because of material needs. The dawning of the material age here in the Commonwealth. The almighty dollar and the yen.

Willens: You mentioned the federal relationship and the Covenant. Let me just put that on the table with a general question as to how you think the relationship defined by the Covenant with the federal government has worked out?

Hofschneider: I call it the great experiment in government. It has worked wonderfully. No one ever envisioned the complexities. But I know the people have written down way back, that they knew about the problems that would be forthcoming. They knew what was going to happen. Believe me they knew it from the very beginning, that once you're developing you're going to have the full societal pains. Classic murder cases, criminal acts, drugs, it's right before our eyes. The Covenant itself is wonderful. It worked and it's working. The unfortunate turn is that the people that were involved [with the Covenant] and that committed themselves to sticking to the original intent have all left us, and we have a new breed of thinkers that are swayed because of pride, loyalty, or individual ego trips to define the Commonwealth again. To make a name for themselves. They want to rewrite the intent of the Covenant. No, no, no, Section 502 doesn't mean that way; it means this way. Because I want to mold the policy of the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas. That is the unfortunate undertow, so to speak, that is occurring now with our status.

Willens: Is some of that still going on?

Hofschneider: Yes. Instead of taking away the unilateral provision, why can't we work together to strengthen the unilateral provision? And if you have the opinion of it being a failure, or one of the unilateral provisions is a failure, is it a unique failure or a common failure? It's very important to distinguish. Because if it is a unique failure, the only blame should be on the Commonwealth, because it is our own administration and our own management of that unilateral provision. But if it is a common failure, then by golly we're no different from the voters of the southern states. And by golly, we're no different in trying to protect the unilateral provision as those people trying to dismantle NAFTA. Why should a part for a Toyota that is sold in America or a Boeing that is sold worldwide under the auspices of a corporation established in the United States be any different? It is made by [workers earning] less than a federal minimum wage in a third country. Why is that any different

than a garment being produced by having the Northern Marianas capitalize on a third country that has the manpower and the skills [needed for that production]? The workers are being paid tremendously more than what [they could earn in] the third country, the original nation where they came from. Why should it be any different? Why is it all right at times to look at the unilateral provision, be hypocritical, and stand on the policy of the federal side, but it is not okay to be hypocritical when the policy is being applied from the Commonwealth side? Why is it not right? Is it because somebody else redefined the sovereignty section? That irks me every time I talk about federal issues here.

Willens: These are views that are coming from the federal side?

Hofschneider: No, it's here too, because someone is trying to be politically correct and aspiring to higher office. They perpetuate the view of the opposing party, which is the federal side. Take, for instance, Juan Babauta. So many times I catch him being an accomplice to the spanking of the Commonwealth and the scolding of the Commonwealth. So many times. And I never open my mouth about it. Why is it? For a political agenda. You are willing to redefine what is working perfectly well? You ought to be an accomplice in protecting the original intent and definition of those sections, not an accomplice to redefine it suddenly. Come on. He came here a white knight one time when he literally took on Willie Tan and the entire government. Since then, what has he proposed to the federal side and to the Commonwealth side? He has never produced an economic study that has shown that the garment industry is a negative nor has he ever proved that the garment industry is a net positive either. But it is perfectly okay to posture on the minimum wage. I've always had the policy of before you say something bad about an opinion or about a product, be ready to provide something better, otherwise you have no business opening your mouth. This is the pain of this government in this community. We tend to wash our mouth in the morning with the ineptness of the current administration, but we never have any breakfast nutritional in value that is better than the mouthwash itself, on how bad the policies are. It's the nature of this community. And I've always loved to share my philosophy about these islands. To understand our people, if it is simple, make it complicated. We amuse ourselves with complexities. And that speaks to everything. I guess it's the nature of the seasonal occurrences of typhoons that we adopt a policy of reaction. The dam, for instance—let it pollute. But boy, when it's getting near the gubernatorial election, we get cranky. All of a sudden, people are expert on mercury poisoning, PCBs [a type of pollutant], they even describe how methane is produced ten feet under.

Willens: All right. Well, thank you, sir, very much for your time and effort. Have we left anything out that you would like to touch on in conclusion?

Hofschneider: Well, yes. I was hoping you would ask if you were to pick one failure, what would it be?

Willens: And what would it be?

Hofschneider: The education system.

Willens: How so?

Hofschneider: We're too busy as parents tending to the pressure at work, the material needs. We found a system that would relieve us, and be legally permissible, this domestic helper business. It all boils down to the degradation of the education system. We as parents love to find excuses to bring in domestic help, because both of us work. We need more money to provide more for our kids. But we also took it to the full extent of denial. We transposed all of our parenting obligations and responsibilities to the domestic helper. I've looked at ten years of the effect of it. Generally speaking, domestic helpers from the Philippines

are not educated. And when I give a newborn to a domestic helper, the number one failure that I have done as a parent is the maternal-child bonding aspect. There's a psychological problem right there already. And we hear so many cases where both parents are sometimes jealous because their own kid respects the domestic helper more, is listening more attentively more to the domestic helper, and shares more emotional events or occasions with the domestic helper. As they start school, the kids have somewhat of a mixed understanding—first of being an indigenous person belonging to a culture that is expected of him or her to carry, and second also adopting, behaving, and thinking like the domestic helper who to that day has cared for that kid. That is the beginning of disrespect, lack of authority in school and in the community. The minute that same child goes to school and looks up in the classroom at a Filipino teacher, that person becomes the authority figure in class. But when I get home, as a child, my father and father or my brothers and my elders, would use words that are too much of demeaning effect on the domestic helper, with whom I have partially bonded with and respected. Why is my mom calling her a bad word? Why is it that she always gets to be blamed for the mischiefs of my brothers or myself? Why are my parents being like that? As the kids continue on and develop their own ability to think and rationalize and reason out what is right, beginning the foundations of morals and ethics, they hear peer pressure groups bringing in from the house about domestic helpers and Filipinos in general or non-residents in general. The high school now is complaining that kids today are just terrible. They have no respect at all for teachers. No respect at all for authority, for rules of the school. They say these kids are bad. I don't think any parent ever intentionally gives birth to a bad child or a disrespectful child. That's why the recent murders here were so bad. When a Bangladeshi or a Chinese is murdered in some drug-related crime for instance, someone asked me why didn't the community react the same way as when one of yours died or was murdered. That's exactly the reason. He says, don't you think that because they're outsiders that you people didn't feel the same emotions. I said no. No, not at all. It is really an expression of the community, the local people here, the indigenous people here, that when an outsider is killed or murdered, they say there are too many of them here. We should get rid of all of them. That's the common opinion that you hear in the community. When it's an outsider that fails or dies or someone gets afoul of the law, it is just one of "them" and expected. But when one of ours was killed in a drug-related murder, we were very upset. That was our normal behavior. The only alarming difference, in other peoples' view, is that we didn't express it with the non-residents. Obviously we lacked respect for them already, and that's why we didn't express the emotions that were required or expected of us. It goes back to the degradation of authority over the kids. We allowed it because we tend to rely on domestic help. By golly, you know, now with the advent of cellular phone, it gets worse. The mother and the father will get out of work, get in the car, punch the number, and say Maria, make sure the kids are fed and they shower and they do their homework. We're going down to the 19th hole for one hour or two hours. We'll be home later. Make sure they're asleep before we get home. What kind of parenting responsibility is that? This is ten years of effect of these patterns developing. Surely there must be a relationship, because the kids are not performing in school. Why? The parents are not there. It's not enough for the teacher and the system itself to teach them. It's you and I, parents. So don't blame it on the system. Blame it on the rule in the house. You create the rule, live by the rule. Thank you.

Willens:

Thank you very much.