

ASHRAE Leadership Recall (formerly Leadership Recalled)

Transcription

Audio Interview of: R. Alex Anderson

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Interviewed by: Ann Boutwell

Note: The original tape recording of this interview no longer exists.

R. Alex Anderson

This is Robert Alexander Anderson. I style myself in my writings of music and so forth as R. Alex Anderson. I was born in Honolulu, Hawaii, June 6, 1894. My parents, my father, Robert Willis Anderson, a dentist who grew up in Plainfield, New Jersey, and was graduated from Philadelphia Dental College, came to Hawaii in 1885 and started a dentistry practice. My mother was born in Hilo, Hawaii. Her parents being Alexander Young, a Scot, and Ruth Pierce, and English Woman, who were married just before embarking to Vancouver Island back in the early 1800s. He being an engineer sent to erect the first saw mill in British Columbia. Following that, he and his wife set sail for Australia. In those days the sailing was rather rugged, so by the time they reached Hawaii, I rather imagine that my grandmother said that she had had enough and let's get off here, it looks pretty nice. They settled in Hilo, Hawaii, and grandfather set up a machine shop to begin with. He later became very much involved in engineering of the sugar machinery, having patents for many improvements to increase sugar yields from the cane. My mother was born in 1868 in Hilo, only three years after her parents had arrived there. She grew up in Hawaii and California, some schooling in each place. Mostly her schooling was at Poulonho where most of our family have attended, including myself, and they were married in Honolulu. I would have to look up the date, but it was sometime in 1892 or 1893 because I was born June 6, 1894, a year or 18 months after their marriage. Our home, which was presented to my mother and father by her parents after her father had done very well with serving the sugar industry. My grandfather was then called a millionaire in good hard dollars. That meant something. He presented each of his daughters with homes as they married. Our home was on a property a block long, from Barritanya to Kenou Street on Kalmouko and had a very comfortable sizable house with four bedrooms, two on the ground floor and two on the second floor, a living room, a den, wide porches all around the south side, beautiful shady trees on the grounds and very nice landscaping. Separated from the house was the so called carriage house because this was the day of the horse and buggy, the automobile not having arrived yet. We had two sorrel horses and a buggy. I remember going on Sunday drives, my sister and I, my sister a year younger than I, singing in the back seat of the surrey and father and mother driving a pair of very nice horses. We were very comfortable situated with three servants. The servants being very easy to come by in those days and not too expensive. We had an excellent Chinese cook, a Japanese yardman, and a Japanese maid in the house. Across the street lived a Hawaiian family, and they were very musical and I attribute quite a bit of influence of their music to my subsequent activities in that direction. I would join them and listen

to them singing Hawaiian songs, playing ukuleles and guitars. I learned quite a few old songs from them. This was when I was still in grade school. I started school at age six. Pounouhou originally called Oahu College was established by a missionary family, the Bingham family. It is one of the older prep schools in the nation. I don't remember the date, about 1845, I think 1850, somewhere along in there it was founded. I went through the 12 grade in regular succession. My grades were good. In fact, upon graduation I was accepted as an entrant to Cornell University Engineering College without having to take entrance examinations. My grandfather, Alexander Young, as I previously said was an engineer and an inventor. He was very interested in my career, especially when I showed an interest in what was then called wireless telegraphy and I built my own ham set to communicate with other youngsters my age who had similar sets around town. Five or six of used would dot-dash at night back and forth and he once asked me if I needed any new equipment. I said, "Yes, a transformer would be very helpful, it would improve my equipment." He asked what the price was and I said, \$30 whereupon he gave me three ten dollar gold pieces. Paper money wasn't being used in those days, it was hard gold and silver which was pretty bulky in people's pockets but quite comforting at that.

I remember my father, a dentist, coming home with a pocket full of gold. Some patient had paid him off and we didn't think of being robbed in those days. It was a simple life. Doors were left open and you didn't mind having a few hundred dollars in cash in the house. Nobody was afraid of being molested. It was a very nice life in that respect.

At age 10, I very nearly gave up my life when peritonitis set in after an appendix operation. I think medical practice was not as far advanced in those days and an infection took place, which kept me on the verge of living or dying for three or four weeks until it finally healed up. My grandfather's interest in what I was doing made me admire him and think that being an engineer might be what I wanted. So I began looking at university catalogs and listening to alumni of the various institutions. In the first place, I wanted to go east. We were pretty well acquainted on the west coast, but the east was a foreign country and I wanted to know something about it so I looked over the eastern institutions. I learned that Cornell had an excellent engineering curriculum, a very good reputation as also did MIT. My choice of Cornell was because Cornell featured athletics more strongly. I was interested; I had won my letter in high school in baseball, track, and football. Although, I was too small for college football, I was interested in continuing track training which I did for four years at Cornell.

Those are the things that sometime influence a person when there is nothing else in the way. My father having been a dentist had no contact in the engineering direction so I made my own decision. I asked my parents for help which they readily gave me and saw me through four years on a budget which is so minimal today compare to what the cost of a college education is today. As I remember it, I think \$1,200 a year took care of me, tuition and everything else. I probably paid a little more \$200-\$300 a year in transportation coming home for the summer, but even that was reasonable in those days. In college I took regular mechanical engineering courses specializing in electrical engineering as far as Cornell gave it in those days. They did not give a degree in electrical engineering but a certificate showing what subjects had been covered. Being interested in the electrical end, I accepted a bid from Westinghouse in my senior year. Their representative came to the university to pick up one or two

students and I went to East Pittsburgh in the fall, I think it was in September, and entered there. I forget what the course was called, but it was sort of a preliminary course, an apprentice type of course for a year or so before settling into any permanent job. The work I did was mostly on the test floor testing large electrical equipment before it was sent to the purchaser. We would run a 24-hour test on a big generator. Transformers were always under test, and did all the necessary data taking of temperatures and load factor and so forth to see that it was delivering as guaranteed. I remained in this work and was interested in it until the war was declared in April of 1917. Several of us, two or three other Cornell grads, my classmates, we got together and we were very excited about the war. We felt that our country probably needed us and we should do something about it. I had an inkling toward aviation and went along with one of my classmates to the recruiting officer and applied. He said, "Well we have signed up all the aviation people we want for the present, why don't you go to Officers training camp at Fort Niagara? We are accepting people for that." I did sign up on that. In May 1917 while there was still ice on the river and it was pretty cold. The issue of blankets had not arrived yet at Fort Niagara we spent some uncomfortable nights piling clothes on ourselves to keep warm, finally settling down into routine and real boot camp instruction. After two weeks of this a notice appeared on our bulletin board that two volunteers from each company would be accepted for aviation training. After having been told that the lists were all closed that was quite a surprise, but it was what I wanted and I volunteered along with a chap named Baldwin. We were sent back to Cornell again to go through the 10-12 weeks ground school course prior to any flying instruction. At the end of the ground school course it was announced that those of us who had the highest grades, I forget how many, I think there were 10-12 of us were selected to go overseas immediately without having been in the air. As a result of scholastic standing in the ground school I was one of those. The next thing I knew I was waiting at Mineola, Long Island for a steamer presumably to go to Italy for flight training. England, Great Britain, France, and Italy were allies and each country was taking American cadets to train them to fly. America had practically no air force. As far as I could tell there were only a few so-called aviators. So, suddenly being plunged into the war we had to depend on our allies who had been in the war for three years and had well established air forces to train our young men to form an American service. On the way across, in the ship Carmania, it was a convoy of about 12 vessels, big ships, we had 5,000 or 6,000 troops on our ship including 150-1200 cadets, which I was one.

Interesting little anecdote; on the trip over was Sir Harry Lauder, the Scot who featured the Scot songs, "Roaming in the Gloaming" and so forth. One night they prevailed upon him to do some singing, a concert, but he had no accompanist so he asked me, or somebody suggested that I accompany him, and with a few minutes rehearsal, we put on a concert which was of course very well received.

Another thing that happened on the trip over, the eminent violinist Albert Spalding was aboard. He was an Italian and so was Fiorello La Guardia, later mayor of New York. These two men taught us Italian lessons, each in a great big class, teaching us the terms that we would come up against in learning to fly and a few simple Italian sentences and phrases.

It was a pleasant trip of about 10 days, smooth passage. We didn't cite any submarines. I think there were 10 or 12 big ships in the convoy and we put in at Liverpool. This must have been some time in

October 1917; the war having been declared in April. We had shore leave and presumably we were going to continue on the Italy but were notified very shortly that we were to stay in England, that the convoy that had come through a week ahead of us had been sent on to Italy and there had been a switch. That pleased me greatly because I felt the British had the finest air service and flyers of any although the American press gave great publicity to the French and named many of the French flyers whereas our instructors were aces of 20 and 30 victories and were home on leave and teaching flying in the meantime. So I was very happy to be in England. They were not ready for us. England had training squadrons dotted all over England and Scotland. I don't know just how many there have been 20 or 30 different flying schools. They were constantly training new pilots because the loss ratio was pretty high, pilots going to the front. They had not made room for us yet in the training squadrons and sent us to Oxford to repeat the same ground school courses that we had had in America at Cornell. Our courses having been patterned right after the British so we had the same subjects over again, just to kill time mostly.

Following that they took us to a machine gun camp at Grantham, England, where they taught ground machine gunnery. Eight hours a day we were taking guns apart and putting the together or lying on the target line and firing them; cotton in your ears not to go deaf. I have some loss of hearing and I think perhaps that didn't help any.

I remember that Thanksgiving occurred while we were at Grantham. Of course this meant nothing to the English, but we Americans decided we wanted a party. We told the English people we wanted turkeys, we wanted a dinner party. They provided for us and a lot of wine was present and quite a high time was had. I remember one of our cadets was name Gyper. He couldn't have weighed more than 110 pounds, he was a little guy. We had some giants with us also. When the party got pretty high they were throwing Gyper across the room, two big guys to two more big guys were catching him. It was a pretty raucous party before we got through but in all good clean fun. Shortly after this we were broken up and sent to various training squadrons all over England. I went to Huntington new St. Ives in the middle of England and got my first experience in the air in a DH6, a DeHaviland 6. It was a slow relatively safe machine. You could land and takeoff at about 45 miles an hour. When there was an accident there were very few casualties because there was a lot of wire and wooden strut protection around you. After several weeks of preliminary training__ Well to begin with I had four hours of dual instruction with a qualified instructor and then I went solo. After I had soloed about eight hours I was sent to an intermediate training school at Coulney, a half an hour on the train out of London. This was a big station for intermediate flying. We flew the Avroo two seater followed by the So with pub single seater. The first plane we got a little aerobatic instruction in and the S.P.A.D., which was a service type plane and a pretty hot number in those days. My training there was interrupted. This was during the winter months and we had a lot of fog and bad weather. Whenever that happened they were flying as they called it. We found ourselves in London in the Savoy Hotel greeting and meeting our friends from other parts of the country who had had a similar experience. Finally, however, in spite of bad weather we got through with that intermediate training and were sent to Turbury, Scotland. There was a fine big hotel there. It was built on a golf course where part of the course was being used for flying. We could fly in the mornings and play golf in the afternoons. It was a great life for awhile. It was while there I

received my commission as a first lieutenant and my wings, having completed the pilot training. This part of the training was aerobatics. We were in combat with each other, simulated combat and had camera guns with which we shot at each other. If the picture showed the other plane it was equivalent of making a hit. We also dove on rafts out in the water firing down at the rafts as targets and some of the planes didn't withstand that. One plane in particular, the linen covering of the wings came loose and the plane dove straight into the water. The pilot was killed of course. We went to several funerals while I was there. It was the most dangerous part of the whole training and the planes as I said weren't always up to top standard, they had been used a lot.

Following this training, I was sent to France to pilot pool from which pool they were drawing and squadrons. The fighter squadrons at the front would draw replacements as they lost men in their squadron. After about two weeks in the pool my name came up and I was sent to number 40 squadron, located at San Paul, France, near the ocean, the northern part of France near the Belgium border. This was the part of the line that the British were defending. SE5 planes, single seaters, fighters with two machine guns, one mounted over the engine firing through the propeller, the other on the top wing fired over the propeller. I was taken out and given a lot of instructions and told to be careful in the first patrols. We always patrolled over on the German side of the line; they never came to our side. If you were looking for a fight you had to go and find it on that side of the line. We patrolled at about 10-12 thousand feet elevation protecting observation planes that were operating lower down spotting artillery fire. We occasionally had skirmishes and one of my flight companions and I downed a two-seater German plane and went in and claimed credit for the victory. I guess we each got a half credit. I was beginning to feel pretty confident about my ability in a fight when on the 30th of August, I got into trouble. Four of us had started out on a dawn patrol which meant leaving the ground while it was still a little bit dark. You could see the exhaust coming from the planes a little bit ahead of you. We flew up to the lines and it got light and two of our chaps dropped out with engine trouble. In those times the machines were not as perfect as they are today and an engine would start missing and sputtering for no apparent reason. In that case a pilot would drop out and head for home. So of the four of us, just my leader and myself were left. Near the end of a two hour patrol we were at about 10,000 feet when we spotted five German Poker planes below us. My flight leader gave the signal to attack, which was rocking the plane back and forth, so I followed him and fixed on one of the five planes and went after it. I learned later that he had taken a shot while still up above them and turned and headed for home leaving me in the midst of five hungry German fighter planes defending myself most of the time, defending myself when I could. The result of this was that I gradually lost elevation in maneuvering to get out of the way of a burst. One German got on my tail and I felt a sting in my leg and in my back and I knew that I had been hit. I didn't know how badly. I rolled over on my back and went down in a dive. Shortly after that I was only just above the ground and made a forced landing on shell town country. I managed to stay right side up after almost going end over end. It turned out I was right next to a German field artillery battery. Before I could get out of the plane I was somewhat attuned because the force of the landing had struck my head against the cowling, and as I settled back in my seat the Germans were surrounding my plane. I had been wounded. One bullet had gone through a tendon beside my knee. Fortunately no real damage to the knee as it turned out, but very painful. I was sent with the wounded Germans to railroad line. I was taken by a German on a two wheel cart to where the

train pulled in. Along with a lot of wounded Germans I spent the next five or six hours in a box car on the way to Mons, Belgium. There we got out at 10:00 or so and I was taken to a prisoner of war hospital. I spent the next three weeks there while my wound was taken care of and healed. Following that I was due to be sent to Germany to a prison camp to spend the rest of the war. On the way to the holding camp there were a lot of American aviators, prisoners like myself, and two of them had planned an escape from the building in which we were being held. They found that the tiles could be loosened in the roof of a low two story building and they had planned to escape just when myself and a guy named Tillinghase came in. They extended the invitations to us to join them and we readily accepted. A British corporal named Rogers came into the group. He had had a lot of experience. He had escaped before and knew that the Belgians would help you once you got out. The others in the group were Americans. Oscar Mandel from Chicago, Charles Tillinghase from Rhode Island, Donaldson, we called him on all the time, I don't recall his first name, was an eastern man and myself and Rogers the Corporal, there were five of us in all. We got out through a hole in the roof and we dropped to the ground hanging from the edge of the roof. Then we were outside the compound and we headed across a canal. There was a canal and a street parallel to each other on either side of the camp and we didn't dare hit the street because we would be seen so we went to the canal and swam across to some open country and started out walking. We had in mind to try to get to Brussels where this man Rogers knew there was an underground established.

He had the name of a man who was in the underground. We were to go and find him. The first objective of the group was to attempt what Donaldson and Mandel had attempted to do, which was to steal a German plane and fly back to our side of the line. They had almost succeeded in taking down a tent hangar around a German Plane, spending all night to do it, just the two of them. They didn't get away with it because daylight overtook them before they were ready to fly to get the plane out to fly. They were recaptured. This was the second escape they were making. These two chaps. Tillinghase and I were novices, this was our first attempt. Well, we scouted various German airdromes but came to the conclusion that they were too well guarded and in most cases they were on the outskirts. Brussels, for instance, a great big airdrome with big steel doors had to be manipulated to get a plane out. We gave up the idea and said we would head for Holland across Belgium for Holland, and we did this by walking nights and sleeping days in farm houses, barns, wherever the Belgians would put us up. They were very good at this. We would knock on a door and invariably they would be excited about it and help us. They took care of us, passing us along night after night, spending days in their farm houses or in the barn. Finally, we got up near the Dutch border, which we understood was electrified. It was electric fence separating the two countries. It was patrolled by sentries at regular intervals so it was a very difficult thing to get through. We learned later that two of our party, we had split up shortly after we got out, split up into two and three. Mandel and Rogers went out by themselves. They were the ones that got recaptured when they got to the fence. Tillinghase, Donaldson and I finally made it through because when we got near Holland we found a man who knew the underground and put us in touch with a so-called guide who made regular trips back and forth cutting the fence here and there, cutting the fence in various places. He was approached under cover of woods and when we went with him he lay in shadows for quite awhile until a sentry went by. About a hundred yards to our left there was a shot, a sentry was hit. We think by a confederate of our guide. Our guide summoned us and we ran out and

then he clipped the wires, the electrified wires. We saw flashed of light. Our guide had large, hedge-like clippers with rubber handles and he wore rubber gloves and rubber boots to insulate himself from the shock. Having clipped four or five of these wires about a foot apart we all dashed through to woods on the other side, ran for a while and he slowed us down and said, now you are in Holland, you are safe.

We were in the eastern end of Holland, we took a train and spent most of the day jogging across Holland, stopping here and there, to Amsterdam and there we looked up our American Consul. We were wined and dined and feted and the press got our stories and there were headlines in New York papers and so forth. We spent about two days in Holland and were sent by ship back to England. We reported to our London headquarters. By this time it was November first.

They sent me up to Scotland, to my former training squadron. I taught cadets how to escape and to lectured them, which I did and had a good time doing it. While I was there the armistice was declared and everything went wild. Every pilot on the place took up all the old planes and we buzzed around 1,100 feet over the ground, hedge hopping and having a grand time. It's a wonder we didn't kill ourselves, but we got away with it. So that was the end of World War I.

I went back to London and immediately got papers to be sent back to America to be discharged, honorable discharge, at Mineola, Long Island where we had started before we went abroad. I mentioned the two chaps that had tried to steal the plane and fly back. Two things happened that were responsible for the movie that came out later The Dawn Patrol. When I got home I immediately started to write my story in great detail, spending a couple of hours each morning on the typewriter. A Hollywood writer heard of my escape and the title Dawn Patrol and called on me and asked if I would tell the story, which I did. I wasn't thinking of any movie to my credit, but I told how at dawn my buddies had almost got away with a plane to fly back to our side of the line. Well, she went back to Hollywood and wrote a scenario for Richard Barthelmass which was later made (in 1930) into a very popular movie which they called the Dawn Patrol. In this movie of course he was successful in stealing the German plane and flying back, doing in the movies what was possible and what with us had been a failure. We had not been able to accomplish it, but that is how the Barthelmass movie came about, through my story and our attempts to accomplish this escape which in the movie turned out to be successful. On the way home after the war, I stopped in Chicago and invited a pal, another pilot, to visit with me at home. We went back to Honolulu and he spent a month or so in our home and fell in love with my sister. Later he went home and then six months later came home and they were married. They ultimately went back and lived in Chicago. Meantime he knew that I was footloose, I didn't intend to go back to Westinghouse. I had heard of pioneering developments in refrigeration, household refrigeration and so forth and became interested. It turned out that his father was connected with a company in Chicago called ISCO who were starting to make a unit to be put on top of a person's ice box, a tank in place of the ice, and they were going into this in quite a big scale and offered me a job. I went back to Chicago and was enjoying this work of further development in their research department when all at once thousands of machines that they had put out, mostly along the Atlantic coast, sending them to plumbing establishments and distributors of that nature, who were installing them, began to return them because they were failing. They would run very well for two or three months and all at once they

ceased refrigerating. The reason was that they used sulfur dioxide as a refrigerant and it was not chemically pure. It began to work on the metal and caused a deposit, metallic deposit, to form over the lubricating holes of the compressor which rendered it inactive, inoperable, and refrigeration ceased. The company failed on that account. They had one little thing, if they had chemically pure sulfur dioxide they might still be operating. But that broke them, so many machines came back on them.

I was out of a job, but learned that there was an opening with McClellan Refrigeration Company. This company was making up made-to-order kits for butcher shops and places that used walk-in refrigerators of the small size, all over on the east coast also. They had distributors who were taking measurements and sending them to the factory. The factory would manufacture coils and compressors and, incidentally, these were ammonia compressors, and sent a whole package back to the distributor to be installed in somebody's meat market. They were doing quite a good business at this and I was assistant to the Chief Engineer enjoying the connection. I believe it was at this point that the chief engineer suggested I join ASRE and told me what it was doing and all the technical advice it was giving its members, so I joined. I have maintained that membership all through my career, finally becoming a Life Member of ASHRAE. I was in this job two years and began to have health troubles. The roughage that I had been eating, I learned later that German bread is 50 percent sawdust, it had worked on my insides until I was in a bad way with ulcers. I was treating with a doctor in Chicago. He said, "you ought to have a rest from whatever you are doing and give this a chance to heal up." I asked for leave to come home to Honolulu and it was readily granted. I got home to Honolulu and my uncle showed me through the family business which at that time was the von Hamm-Young Company, financed by my grandfather Alexander Young. It started a mercantile business, 1898, and Mr. Young was mechanically inclined and took on some machinery lines and Conrad Von Hamm had been in the dry good business and he started a wholesale dry goods operation. By this time they had gone into the automobile business. They had pioneered it when the first automobiles came out and in 1923, which it was now, they had Dodge and Packard and Cadillac and Buick separated in two showrooms.

They also had a general machinery department that had compressors and various types of machinery, and among other things, an agency for the Frick refrigerating machine. They supplied one to our local ice works, Hawaiian Electric Company, a plant which had been imported from the Frick Company for ice making. That's as far as they had gone prior to my coming there. My uncle said, "Why don't you stay home and join the company?" I told them that I'd become very interested in refrigeration and I had after ISCO's failure. I had investigated what Frigidaire was doing and I had called on a Frigidaire distributor in San Francisco on the way home and found out that a sub-dealership would be available to us if we wanted it. So I said that if I came with the company and we get Frigidaire, I would like to start a refrigeration department, and he agreed. So shortly after that he went to San Francisco and I asked him to order a B9 Frigidaire which was the nine cubic foot, self-contained. The B12, 12 cubic feet, and these were wooden boxes incidentally in those days, but a factory job of insulation and then there was a BR unit which was a separate compressor and coils to be installed on any ice box. So with that equipment we started a refrigeration business. I engaged a jack-of-all-trades Japanese named Obie to install equipment and I would go with him on the first installations, gradually we would sell one here and one there, it wasn't a fast thing to begin with, people didn't know much about what was going on in that

field, but gradually we spread to branched on other islands, Hilo, Hawaii, and Kauai, Maui, and Papau Kai, and I made trips to these other island and called on the wealthy people. They were the ones that would pay the 12 or 10 hundred dollars that was necessary for a nine cubic foot job. Then as things grew we began to take on a sales force in Honolulu and advertised and began to step in production. We gradually established on acceptance for Frigidaire and did a very good business with it. Meantime, I had engaged a refrigeration engineer to go into commercial refrigeration business. Our first installation there was a small Frick compressor in a Chinese grocery/ meat market where he had a walk-in-cooler of about 6x8 feet. We fitted it with a pipe coil in his show case and this was the start of market refrigeration in Hawaii. Also, the largest fish market down in the waterfront area had a big market with 5 or 6 walk-in refrigerators being cooled by ice. They were loaded every day with ice and did a fair job that way. I sold them on the idea of putting in Frick equipment again and coils and we made the installation. I remember it was tricky at first adjusting the expansion valves on this circuit of six boxes and I would be down there any time of the day or night to see that we had adjusted it to the right temperature. Finally, we got things balanced and running nicely. That was our first good commercial job. Later we got into other markets. Then about this time Frigidaire began coming out with commercial equipment. We took on the Tyler line of cases and reach-in refrigerators counters. We had Hussmann for a time along with Tyler, and we began going after the local markets.

McEnernies, located at Fort and Merchant Streets in downtown Honolulu, I believe this was 1939 or 1940. They imported a new manager, Lawson Riley, he came from San Francisco. This was in the summer and he was immediately suffering from the heat- moving from San Francisco. He told the McEnernies that he would not stay unless he could have his store air conditioned. I heard of this, and I immediately called on him and said we could do the job of refrigerating his store. I don't remember the area's cubic feet, it was a pretty good sized two story building. We air conditioned it. We used Frick compressors and Trane evaporators, cooling coils, blowers, we put in ducts and turned out a very satisfactory job which caused Mr. Riley to say that he became very good friends right from that time. We went on to other air conditioning jobs, first our own establishment, our own offices in the Alexander Young Building. Gradually others became interested. It was all pioneering work but very interesting and very rewarding. I enjoyed it. We had developed quite a commercial refrigeration department with an engineer, Clarence Dyer at the head of it and Walter Lockmiller, the air conditioning man. I, in the meantime, had gone up to more general executive positions. I was treasurer at one time and then vice president. Ultimately, I became president and finally retired after 40 years of service as chairman of the board.

I had joined the American Society of Heating and Ventilating Engineers ASHVE sometime about 1921 or 1922. It is interesting that when we first took on Frigidaire we were handled by their export department. This was a department that shipped automobiles and other products all over the world. Distinctly separated from the domestic department. For instance, Frigidaires came to us completely boxed, heavy wood boxes, which they used in shipping to Europe and all over. Whereas, W.A. Ramsey handling the G.E. machine would get them in slotted crates which was the domestic way or crating. There was quite a cost difference. Also, we found that export had a little percentage tacked on higher than domestic distributors were playing so I made many trips to the factory before I finally got them to

yield and switch us from export to domestic. Export thought we were a good account to hold and didn't want to give us up. They finally consented when it was pointed out that they might be losing some business. Frigidaire might generally be losing some business due to our unfavorable competitive situation. I did a lot of pleading with the head people in Dayton before I was able to get that done. There was of course, some resistance to refrigeration in the early days. People had been used to using ice so long and considered it a satisfactory method of refrigeration even though they didn't know how much spoilage they were incurring. Finally that was broken down as one Frigidaire customer would tell his friends how superior it was to ice. Gradually the word spread and gradually there was universal acceptance of mechanical refrigeration. The ice man had to look elsewhere for his business.

The Von Hamm- Young company occupied one end of the Alexander Young Building which Alexander Young, my grandfather, had built in 1903. The ground floor being stores and the upper floors being a hotel. The Alexander Young Hotel was opened in 1903. For many years it was the leading hotel in this part of the world. It was first class in every respect. We hired a German chef and imported people who had a great deal of know how in the hotel business, including the hotel manager from the mainland. I was more and more thrown in with that part of the business on the side once I had established a good refrigeration department organization and could devote myself to some other activities. I finally supervised the operation of the manager of the Young Hotel and the Alexander Young Building generally so that at one point I was elected one of the early presidents of the Hawaii Hotel Associations. I served for a year in that capacity. I have maintained a close relationship with hotel people as a result of that.

After the death of Mr. Von Hamm and later the death of a large stockholder, his estate put his stock on the market and a group of people bought his stock and started accumulating the stock of the Von Hamm Company. They succeeded in accumulating a majority of the stock and demanded to take control. This was the beginning of the downfall of the Von Hamm Company, which had always been operated very conservatively by my uncles and myself.

The new organization began to over-extend in various directions, trying to expand the business too rapidly. A name change took place from the Von Hamm-Young to the Hawaii Corporation. After a few years of operation the Hawaii Corporation went bankrupt. Before this happened the new owners of the company had sold the fee of the downtown property on which the Alexander Young Building was located. The new owners, the Northwest Mutual Life Insurance company of Milwaukee, finally came to a point where owning the property, they decided they would tear down the Alexander Young Building and put up a high tower on the northwest corner, with a park in between. This is a very sad thing for those of us connected with the Young building. A group of us, many citizens also, felt the Young building was a fixture that should not be eliminated from the city. It had been the first large building to be built and a group formed to try and block the demolition of the building. In spite of all we could do the city did not choose to make it an historic monument. The new owners had their way and the building was demolished. I must say that the resulting development is probably the best that could be done. It is very attractive. It is a nice park and it is being used by the public. I think if we had to lose the building this is probably the best result that could have been attained.

As a hobby alongside my business in engineering career I early developed into a song writer. My first successful song was Houle Hula in 1927. The biggest song, written in 1940, was Lovely Hula Hands. In all I have written over 100 songs. During the 1930's there was what I can the Red, White, and Blue Suite, the Red Opu, White Ginger Blossoms, and Blue Lei, and then there was the Cockeyed Mayor of County Kaika, a comic song.

In all I have done 100 and enjoyed it as a hobby and relief from business. I have been able to sing and play the ukulele. I recently made my first commercial recording of 13 of my songs, accompanied by my son on clarinet and by one of the top steel guitar players, Gerry Byrd, and a very good straight guitar and base. I, myself playing ukulele and singing. This was the first commercial recording made at that age of 90. People say it is fairly acceptable so I have enjoyed doing that as my hobby along with my business engineering career.

End of Interview.