

DR. STEELE FULLER STEWART

THE WATUMULL FOUNDATION ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Dr. Steele Fuller Stewart

(1891 - 1978)

An orthopedic surgeon, Dr. Stewart came to Hawaii in early 1942 as chief surgeon for the Shriner's Hospital for Crippled Children, a position he held for four years. Shortly after his arrival in the Islands he also joined The Honolulu Medical Group.

In this two-part interview, Dr. Stewart tells of early anesthetics, the birth of specialized medicine, and the history of the Shriner's Hospitals. He also recalls Honolulu in wartime and provides some personal glimpses at some prominent island families: the Frears, the Athertons and the Dillinghams.

Lynda Mair, Interviewer

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INTERVIEW WITH DR. STEELE FULLER STEWART

At his Pohai Nani apartment, 45-090 Namoku Street, Kaneohe 96744

August 1971

S: Dr. Steele Fuller Stewart

M: Lynda Mair, Interviewer

S: They [Governor and Mrs. Walter Francis Frear] had a crippled daughter [Margaret], an adopted child, and I took care of her. And then they were both involved in an automobile accident on the Coast and I took care of them on that.

M: On the Mainland.

S: On the Mainland. So then the Pan-Pacific Surgical Conference [that was held in Hawaii] is why I came down. My wife and I came down and were guests of the Frears during the conference and in that way I picked up a number of stories from the Frears about conditions. Then my wife-- my second wife [Una Appleby Stewart]--was a close friend of the Athertons, having been a teacher at Punahou School for which Mr. Atherton was one of the trustees.

M: Which Atherton is this now?

S: That's Frank C. [Frank Cooke Atherton]. And I have a number of stories that are related through that because the Athertons always spent their time with us when they were on the Coast. And so, for a late comer I have a good many early contacts.

Well, we'll go back to Mrs. [Mary Emma Dillingham] Frear. Mrs. Frear described herself: "Well, I was born the same year my husband came ashore on the hand of his father," (Lynda chuckles) which was [Christmas Day] 1870. That's when Governor Frear came to the Islands with his father, and that same year she was born. She was the oldest of the Dillingham children. Walter and so on were younger brothers. [Marion (Mrs. John P.) Erdman, Walter Francis and Harold Garfield Dillingham]

M: Yeh.

S: At that time they lived somewhere down towards town or it may have been in lower Nuuanu, I'm not sure.

M: Now who are we talking about?

S: Mrs. Frear.

M: Mrs. Frear.

S: And she said, "We rode across the plains to Punahou." (Lynda laughs) Those are her exact words. Apparently the area where most of the center of Honolulu is was just barren country and so they came across on horseback.

Governor Frear went to Yale [University] and came back and taught Greek at Punahou [School] and that's where she met him. She went to Wellesley [College in Massachusetts], if I recall correctly, but they were married here in the early 1890's. They never had any children of their own. They adopted two daughters. One [Margaret Dillingham Frear] is a cripple and the other [Virginia Frear] is Mrs. Urban [Earl] Wild, the attorney's widow.

That trip [to Hawaii] was my introduction to papaya. She [Mrs. Frear] said, "In the early days we didn't have the small solo papayas, but we had big ones." And they would keep them in the coolers--they didn't have iceboxes--until they were really mushy. And she said, "I hated them because they smelled so and they tasted so, but then we got the solo papaya and we're very fond of that." Now that's a very small item in the life of Honolulu.

M: But, you know, it's so interesting.

S: It is a small item but it is of interest.

He [Governor Frear] was the first Chief Justice [of the Supreme Court] of the Islands [and was appointed by President William McKinley on June 14, 1900, the same year that Hawaii became a Territory of the United States]. Then [President Theodore] Roosevelt, I believe it was, made him governor of the Islands. You see, the governors were all appointed at that time.

M: Was he governor, though, when you came in 1921?

S: No, no. No, he was governor across the [William Howard] Taft administration [1909-13] and into the [Woodrow] Wilson administration [1913-21]. [Governor Frear resigned as governor on December 1, 1913 and later became the senior partner of the private law firm of Frear, Prosser, Anderson and Marx.] I think he was appointed by Roosevelt and held over through Taft to Wilson.

M: Oh, you're talking about Teddy Roosevelt then?

S: Yeh. (Lynda laughs) Way back now. And he came home and told her [Mrs. Frear] that he'd gotten the word of his appointment as governor. And she said, "I just broke down and cried for fear I couldn't uphold the position."

Now her father was a Dillingham [Benjamin Franklin Dillingham]. Her grandfather was a Smith. B.F. Dillingham came here as a ship's chandler and married, I think I'm correct in saying, Emma [Louisa] Smith, who was of missionary descent. [Emma Louisa Smith was the daughter of the Reverend Lowell and Abigail Willis Tenney Smith. Reverend Smith built the Kaumakapili Church.]

He [Dillingham] built the Oahu Railroad which was called by the people in town "Dillingham's Folly". (Lynda chuckles) He evidently made money right from the start--that is, Dillingham. He later gave the campus where Central Union Church stands to Central Union Church. Right next to that he established one of his daughters, Marion [Eleanor] Erdman [wife of the Reverend John Pinney Erdman]. And he gave the site of Arcadia [Retirement Residence] to Mrs. Frear and they, she and her husband, built Arcadia--that is the old home Arcadia--on the site of the present Arcadia.

M: What was Mrs. Frear's first name?

S: Mary [Emma] Dillingham Frear. You look up, confirm the facts with the Men and Women of Hawaii of the first edition because these people were all living at that time and their dates would be more correct than mine.

Mrs. Frear was a very lovely, intelligent and generous woman. Now I don't know what the estate was worth in the end but it ran up into the six or seven figures, somewhere along in there. I don't know what, but they were well-to-do. But she would take a berth in a six- [person] cabin [when she traveled] in order to save money so she could give it away. Now that's just a little glint at the woman. I think Judge Frear was more conservative about things.

She became a regent of the University [of Hawaii] and she carried her knitting to the meetings of the regents (Lynda chuckles) and called down the wrath of some of the men on her because she spent her time knitting instead of paying attention to business. (chuckles) She probably knew just as much what was going on as they did.

Judge Frear was a tall, handsome man when I knew him but he was deaf, quite deaf. He was writing a book on Mark Twain in Hawaii and that was published. He did a good deal of research. He was born in California, if I recall correctly. I don't know what his father did that brought him

to the Islands.

And they were very generous entertainers. I never saw any liquor served in their home at all. Gregg [Manners] Sinclair--he's an ex-president of the University [of Hawaii, 1942-55]--knew them even better than I did. They also had a place up on Tantalus where they would go in the summertime to get cool. Maybe something else will come to me as I talk to you about things.

And then switch to the Athertons. The Athertons were a younger group than the Frears. They were of direct missionary descent. The Cookes--I don't know where the Atherton part came in. I don't think that the Athertons' line directly was missionaries, but probably business. His mother was a Cooke which is a missionary line.

[Juliette Montague Cooke, married to Joseph Ballard Atherton, was the daughter of Juliette Montague and Amos Starr Cooke, missionaries who arrived in Honolulu with the Eighth Company from Boston in 1837. In 1839 they were charged with starting the Chiefs' Children's School, which later became the Royal School for children of the ali'i.]

He [Frank Cooke Atherton] was born about 1878 [July 1, 1877]. He had a brother, Charlie [Charles Henry Atherton, born July 12, 1867]. Mr. Atherton--Frank--was very proper about things. His brother Charlie, I've heard, liked to do things that were very improper so as to embarrass Frank. (Lynda chuckles)

I don't know what part of town they lived in at that time. Well, his father came down here because of threatened tuberculosis. Then Frank went east to college and they thought he was present with tuberculosis, so he quit school.. (Counter at 442)

END OF SIDE 1/1ST TAPE

M: Let me get those two stories about Charles Atherton--the bird story and the . . .

S: Well, we were starting when that tape quit. We were talking about Frank Atherton and the check incident down at the bank.

M: That's way back.

S: Yes, it's a way back--long time. (Lynda laughs) Well, I'll go back. It's no trouble.

He got a job with the Bank of Hawaii, I believe, and was acting as teller. One day a man came in with a check for a thousand dollars and wanted it in one bill. Inadvertently, Atherton picked up and gave him two one-thousand dollar bills instead of one. And when the end of the day came, the shortage was discovered. The money was eventu-

ally recovered without incident because it wasn't recognized by either party at the time of the mistake. Now what next did we have to say?

M: And then you talked some more about Frank Atherton. Oh, we were talking about how he made his money and all his . . .

S: Well, let's see if we can piece that together.

M: The thing about Ewa?

S: Oh, yes. That's very good. Frank Atherton told me the story of the time when his father came home and said, "Tomorrow Castle & Cooke, [Incorporated] will close its doors." At that time Castle & Cooke's stock was selling for four cents a share. Then the next morning the steamer came in and the mail brought a check from the bank in San Francisco for one million dollars. And that saved Castle & Cooke and the project of the plantation, which was either Ewa or Waialua, for the development of water rights, or of water.

M: Um hmm. When you say a check came from San Francisco, what did you mean by that? Did they have a main office of some sort?

S: No, no. Apparently they had made application for a loan of some sort . . .

M: Oh.

S: . . . from a San Francisco bank. Of course, there was no cable at that time and there was no wireless and the only way that you'd know anything about anything was when a boat came in. And the boat came in fortuitously that day.

Now the Athertons were one of the group that were instrumental in starting Ewa and Waialua [plantations] and the pineapple company and I don't know what other things they were involved in. But the money probably came from the growth in the value of Castle & Cooke stock and the various plantations that they had interests in.

Mr. Atherton married a Eleanore [Alice] Simpson, who was the daughter of a Presbyterian minister in Cleveland, Ohio. She came out to teach school at a mission college on Maui. I think it's Mauna Loa [Maunaolu Campus--United States International University, Makawao, Maui], but I'm not sure of the name. He met her there and eventually they were married. They had three children. One was Marjory [Elizabeth (Mrs. Chauncy B.)] Wightman, [Joseph] Ballard, [II] and Alexander [Simpson], or Pug. [See p. 25]

M: Is Ballard dead?

S: Yes. He died, well, at least ten years ago. Atherton's mother was a Cooke. That's where they came into the missionary family. I think maybe I've given you this before but we're not sure of the tape.

M: Yeh. Well, that's fine because I'm not sure I do have it. (recorder turned off and on again)

S: . . . as long as you don't have a tail hanging off of you. (laughter)

Then there was another brother, Charlie Atherton, whom I never saw but I would judge to have been a small, rather chunky individual. Frank Atherton was always very proper, and his brother always liked to tell stories and do things that would embarrass Frank. His sister was [Mary Cushing Atherton] Mrs. [Theodore] Richards, the wife of a very fundamentalist type of minister. And they had Monte [Herbert Montague] Richards and [Joseph] Atherton Richards and I don't know--I think there was a girl or two but I'm not sure of that part. [Ruth Richards (Mrs. Frank E.) Midkiff]

M: Now wait. I just realized that I'm confused right there. I didn't pick it up the first time. The Richards--whose sister married a Richards?

S: Frank Atherton's.

M: Sister.

S: Um hmm.

M: Frank and Charles Atherton's sister.

S: Um hmm, yes, married a Richards.

M: Okay.

S: Got it?

M: Yeh. (laughter)

S: Frank was very generous and tall, straight--both physically and every other way as far as I know--and described himself as a matter of parts and pocketbooks. He had another term that he tied onto that but I've forgotten. His charities were always sub rosa; nothing flamboyant about him.

Charlie, his brother, was, as I have indicated, quite different. He--that is, Charlie--was one of the directors of the Matson Navigation Company. It was his habit to walk

from their house up in Manoa beyond Punahou, across the Punahou campus to Wilder [Avenue] and Punahou [Street] to catch the streetcar into town each day. He always wore white linen suits. In the morning he would carry with him a bag of breadcrumbs to distribute to the mynah birds and they always greeted him. One morning he forgot the bag of breadcrumbs and they greeted him and gave him a thorough scolding and dirtied him, so that he had to go home for a change of clothes. (Lynda chuckles)

Another time he was down at the dock to meet the incoming steamers, as was his custom, when some woman got off and said to him, "Here, boy! Get me a cab! Take these bags!" He very dutifully did so and when she offered him a five-dollar tip he said, "I cannot take it." She said, "Well, what's the idea? I've been paying tips on Matson ever since I got on in San Francisco and here you won't take a tip." "Well," he said, "Madame, I am one of the directors." (laughter) Now let's see.

M: I forget what came in there, and then we were talking about this. . . . Who was it now that was having a bishop for dinner? I forget who it was.

S: How what?

M: Somebody was having the bishop for dinner. Who was it?

S: Oh. There was a woman here in town by the name of . . .

M: Oh yeh.

S: . . . Mrs. Charlie [Charles Augustus] Brown who was having the bishop for dinner. She went to her Chinese cook and said she wanted a nice cake for dinner tonight, that the bishop was coming. "What bishop?" "Oh, number one God-man." So when they brought in the cake that night, here on the icing: Number One God-Man, Mrs. Charlie Brown. (laughter, then long pause) Well, no use running tape unnecessarily. [Irene Ii Brown later married C.S. Holloway.]

M: Now you were talking about how every household had some servants and . . .

S: Oh yeh. It was a common thing in those days to have one or more servants in the house, usually Oriental of some sort, and that was the introduction to Mrs. Brown's story.

M: Yeh, yeh. I'd like you to tell me something about, also, some of the experiences that you had as a doctor and . . .

S: Well, you see, I didn't . . .

M: . . . people that . . .

S: . . . come here to stay until 1942, so I'm way late.

M: Oh, I see. Well, have you . . .

S: I have the war picture for you.

M: Oh, that would be fine.

S: Well, I was offered the [position with the] Shriner's Hospital [for Crippled Children] on December 2, 1941. I said I'd give them my answer tomorrow after I talked with my wife, but I knew she had wanted to come down back to the Islands and so, on the 3rd, I accepted the Shriner's Hospital [job]. On the 7th the war broke out [World War II when Japan bombed Pearl Harbor].

A little later I got word to stand by ready to leave for the Islands on twenty-four hour's notice with not more than thirty pounds of baggage. I didn't hear and I didn't hear and I didn't hear. Finally one night Dr. J.F. [Forrest Joy] Pinkerton called me up and said, "Where in the hell are you?" "Well, I'm here." "Well, why aren't you down here?" "Well, I haven't had any orders." "Well, what's the idea? You call up McGilvery in San Francisco tomorrow and tell him we want you down here."

So I called him--McGilvery--in San Francisco. He was the Western representative of the Shrine board. So I called him up and he said, "We don't know whether we've got a hospital down there. We don't know anything about it. We're not going to send anybody down there till we know something about it." I said, "I understand that. All right." So I called Pinkerton back that night and I told Pinkerton that they hadn't had any letter or report from the board here about the conditons and that they weren't going to send anybody till they knew what things were like. "All right, I'll take care of it," [he said].

In about ten days, why, I got my orders to go to San Francisco. I went over to the fort and told them who I was and what it was for. "Well, we haven't anything for you. You go down and see the navy department." So I went to the navy department and explained to them. "Well, we haven't got anything right now, but you come back this afternoon--three o'clock or something like that." So that went on morning and afternoon for about three or four days. Finally they said, "You go down to the Matson company and get your ticket. You report at the pier tomorrow." And that was a Saturday, I believe. They went through all my baggage, took out my flashlight and any electrical equip-

ment that I had and said I'd get it when I got to Honolulu. We went aboard. It was the President Monroe, a ship built for 96 passengers, and there were 196 first-class passengers aboard. You running short [of recording tape]?

M: No, I just want to make sure it's doing what it's supposed to do.

S: So we went down to our cabins and there was a little bit of a cabin meant for two and it was set up for three and there were signs that we weren't to open our windows. So we went to bed that night in the hopes that we would feel the sway of the waves as we went through the [Golden] Gate during the night. Well, the next morning we woke up and they were still loading deck cargo. (Lynda laughs)

Then, about ten o'clock big Greyhound buses began rolling up and discharging men, and they frisked every man as they came aboard. Some of them came aboard in aloha shirts, some of them wore coats down to their shoes, and they were loaded in the hold. The loading of airplanes and so on went on right over all the time.

Well, we lay there the second night and the next day, why, we pulled out in the harbor and we said, "Well, we're on our way." We got out; down went the anchor. (Lynda laughs) We sat there in the harbor all that day and all that night. There was some schoolteacher aboard and the suspense was too much for him; he had to get off. Well, he couldn't get off; he had to stay on, now that he was on, and he was pretty wild.

Then the next day dirigibles and airplanes came over and we finally pulled out of the harbor, escorted by a cruiser and two destroyers, and there were dirigibles over us all the time out. When we got out around the Farallon Islands, I was standing just below the bridge, and over the starboard side, why, I saw a floating mine about a hundred yards off. It was spotted by others beside myself. The dirigible came and spun around over the thing and dropped a smoke bomb and the convoy went right on. But then one of the destroyers dropped off and went back. We watched it and when it was pretty nearly a hull out on the horizon, we saw it turn and come full steam ahead to where we were and they evidently destroyed the mine.

Well, it turned out that the night before we sailed, a Japanese submarine had gone down the coast and had shelled Santa Barbara, or the little city just above there where there were oil tanks, and they hit one tank. The shell went right through the tank but the tank was empty. (laughter)

Well, the next morning we got the alert signal and there were finally ships showed up on the horizon on the

port side and we were joined by three big ships which were carrying troops. These fourteen hundred men that were in the hold of our ship were workmen to come for Pearl Harbor and the Navy Yard and Hickam Field and so on and so forth. Well, they'd made really no provision for these fellows in the way of help or room or anything of that sort and the situation got pretty desperate. A fellow got up to get his breakfast in the morning and the last fellow going by for breakfast was followed by the first man [in line] for to get his dinner. They had to send the aviators down in the hold to straighten things out and get things quieted down.

We were bringing down the air crews that fought at the Battle of Midway. That's what our group consisted of. But the waiters were so jittery that the fellow piled one plate of pancakes right on top of the next one. (Lynda laughs) When we'd give our dinner order, of course they had the little caps [or lids], you know, for the plates and he couldn't remember which way he'd gotten his dinner order and who belonged to where and he'd have to go through this whole stack every time to get anybody's dinner out. (Lynda laughs)

The little tables were somewhat that shaped (demonstrates)--the waiting tables--and one day he set his tray down across the table, took everything off on that side and left the coffee pot and cups on this side. (laughter) It flipped over.

I got to talking to one of the fellows from down under and he said, "Well, I know we're going to get in on Saturday. I have never missed a church service in my life and I know we'll get in on Saturday and I'll go uptown and I'll get shaved and then I'll go to church on Sunday." Well, it was either Monday or Tuesday when we got in. (laughter) We zigzagged all the way.

Well, I reported to the Shriner's Hospital, of course, and then I was entertained by the Athertons for a night or two that time. It was either the first or the second night I was here that there were a couple or three great big Boom! Boom! Boom! and the Japanese had dropped bombs on Honolulu right in behind the Roosevelt High School. Did no damage at all, but of course everybody was in jitters.

Well, then I moved down to the Frears and then I joined The [Honolulu] Medical Group. I got my boards. I think I'm the only man that ever got his medical certificate from the Governor of the [Territory] of Hawaii and not the medical board.

M: Hmm. You didn't have to wait around then.

S: Yeh. When the ship got in it was towards evening and I got off, called up Frank Atherton, and he said, "You get

up here to the Castle & Cooke office. We're just leaving for home and I'll take you up home." It was pretty grim because getting off the ship, carrying the bags--the streets were vacated at that time, all the windows were criss-crossed by stickum paper, you know, to keep the glass from shattering, and the front of the RCA building was all jacketed in concrete.

The Shriner's Hospital, which is not there anymore, had bunkers three feet thick all around the outside of the building up to the level of the roof. It had two courtyards and the courtyards were lined with bunkers too. In case a bomb came in, why, it wouldn't do more damage than was necessary. They had a beautiful operating room at that time with a picture window looking right off toward Tantalus and Round Top and so on and that was all covered with newspapers that had been tarred on. And--say, won't you stay for lunch?

M: I'd love to but I got three children at home.

S: Oh, that's a good reason. I'll have to make my story short. We doctors were allowed to have a light on our car. The headlight on my car--I bought a car from the Frears--was painted out except one spot about that big around (demonstrates). They were all painted solid black. And that one spot in each headlight was painted blue so it was a very dim light that we had to drive by. (Lynda laughs)

M: Yeh.

S: And all the taillight was painted out except for one-quarter inch square.

END OF SIDE 2/1ST TAPE

BEGINNING OF SIDE 1/2ND TAPE

August 18, 1971

S: Was the other transcription all right?

M: Um hmm. Yeh. One of the things we never got around to last time was talking about your Shrine Hospital--what you did when you got here which is--that's why you came, right?

S: Yeh. Well, I told you about going up to the Athertons' and the bombs and so on.

M: Yeh.

S: And then about the hospital all being bunkered in and

no lights and so on.

Well, the Shrine Hospitals in the United States were started about 1923 or 1924. I'm not a Mason and what I tell you has been told me by Masons but not with any idea of hush-hush. A number of them have told me that the starting of the hospitals was the only thing that saved the Shriners. Apparently, like sometime after the Civil War, there were a number of subsidiary organizations formed among the Masons, of which the Shriners are the only survivors. [The Shriners are 32nd-degree Masons from the Ancient Egyptian Arabic Order of Nobles of the Mystic Shrine.] And they would be sort of the snob groups or the play groups of the men who had taken all their degrees. I think that the movement to found the Shrine Hospitals began probably about 1917 or 1918. The original idea was to build a big hospital in Saint Louis and have all the cripples in the United States brought to Saint Louis for care.

M: Hmm.

S: Then somebody said no, it would be better to have smaller hospitals scattered through the United States. I can't give you the exact order but the Saint Louis hospital, I think, was to be number one; and I think [followed by] Philadelphia; Springfield, Massachusetts; Greenville, North Carolina; San Francisco; Portland. And then they established two, what they called, mobile units; one with headquarters at Salt Lake and one at Honolulu. The idea of the mobile unit was they would send an orthopedic surgeon down here for two years and he'd clean up all its cripple problems in two years and then he'd go back to one of the hospitals in the States. Well, two years has now stretched out into almost fifty years. Well, this is my judgment, but it's the best-run charity in the State and is strictly a charity.

While I was chief [surgeon], it was during the war and I suggested that they ask each parent of the child that was admitted to the hospital to donate a pint of blood in case the child should need it--donate it to the Blood Bank [of Hawaii]. Well, they couldn't do that because their work was charity and there was no charge whatever. There was going to be a charge.

Well then, twice each year I went to each one of the other major islands and held clinics at various places.

M: What do you mean by "held clinics"?

S: What?

M: What do you mean by "held"?

- S: Well, the public health nurses on the outside islands would get word of a child being born with clubfeet or wry-neck or something else and then they'd look the child up. Then when I would come they would bring the child in for me to see and see what my advice was. And if I thought they should be admitted to Shriner's Hospital for care, why, I so indicated. Then they went about getting the red tape taken care of and getting transportation and so on. The child would be brought in here. The average [length of] stay, as I remember it when I was chief, was about a hundred days. I doubt if that's changed very much because . . .
- M: This was completely free of charge, too.
- S: Huh?
- M: Completely free of charge.
- S: Yeh. Well, the point was that each Shriner was assessed, I think it was, two dollars a year for the hospital purposes. I think, although I may be wrong, that there were about three million Shriners in the United States at that time. So that'd make about a six million dollar hospital budget for these various hospitals.  
Each one [of the hospitals] would have, you might say, its own particular problems, or peculiar problems. Clubfeet were a heavy group of patients here, especially among Hawaiians, because they were much more common among Hawaiians than any other group. Now we didn't take care of harelip, which was much more common among the Japanese and Orientals. And . . .
- M: Why wouldn't they take care of harelip?
- S: Well, that is a job the average orthopedic surgeon isn't prepared to take care of at all. It requires remodeling of the mouth and the lips and so on so as to get things closed up, because many of these kids with harelip don't have any tops of the mouth; there's no palate at all (demonstrates). The idea is to reduce that cleft entirely or as nearly as possible, entirely.  
And we didn't have anything to do with cross-eyes or things like that because that was still another specialty field. And these were just for crippled children.  
Miss Hindsley, who lived right below me, was the head nurse at that time; she'd been here several years. And there'd been a nurse before her and there was some trouble about it.  
Well, the organization, as I said, was the best-run charity in town. They've had high quality men all the way

through. I happened to be in--you might say as an auditor--on some of the organization, early. Not here, but back in Boston. My chief in Boston was selected by the Shriners as the chief consultant for the Shrine. That was Dr. Osgood. And he said he would not accept the job if Masonic politics had anything to do with it. He was not a Mason himself.

So they chose their doctors without regard to their Masonic affiliations. That isn't to say that pressure wasn't brought to bear subsequently to join up. But to begin with, that's the way it's supposed to be. And I think a great many of the Shrine surgeons were Masons and Shriners.

Ted Trent is the head of the Shrine board at the present time, I believe. He was on the board and I think he was named vice chairman or something of the local board. And the local board can act on who is admitted to the hospital, but any major problems they can't do anything about.

M: Hmm.

S: And that's a weakness in the arrangement. For instance, the Hawaii Shrine Club--that's a group of Shriners on the Island of Hawaii--offered to install a walk-in icebox at the Shriner's Hospital here and keep it supplied with meat throughout the war. Well, the board back in Philadelphia wouldn't permit it, because it meant cutting a hole in the wall. (Lynda chuckles)

And the lighting was so poor with all these bunkers around covering all the window space, that I couldn't see a lot of times what the patient had. One day I said that the patient ought to have a certain procedure. Okay, and we took him in the operating room. And here were the scars of that procedure already having been done. (Lynda chuckles) Well, that's rather embarrassing.

M: Yeh.

S: So, I told the board about it, and the board ordered adequate lighting. The board in Philadelphia made the local men pay for it out of their own pockets; it was just that stupid.

M: Uh huh.

S: And yet, still, I can say I think it's the best-run (chuckles) of any of the charities. They were sort of hit-and-miss, and pretty sloppy about things.

M: What kind of problems did you have during the war? Just the usual things that would . . .

S: Oh yes. [Dr.] Alfred [L.] Craig was the first surgeon here and he came down. . . . Not the first surgeon, no. I've got to take it back. [Dr. R. Nelson] Hatt was the first surgeon and he was followed by [Dr. J. Warren] White, all on the two-year basis of the temporary idea. He was followed by Craig and Craig in about 1941, maybe earlier, developed Parkinson's disease and [Dr. John William] Cooper was employed to take up the work. Then I was brought in.

When the war broke out, Hatt went into the Army and he went through the troops to North Africa and France and so forth. I knew Hatt before and I knew White before because the three of us were all at the Massachusetts General [Hospital] together. Hatt was always a happy-go-lucky sort of a fellow. He went from here to Springfield. White, who followed him, went to Greenville, South Carolina. Then Craig came in.

At the close of the war, Hatt came back and wanted his job. Well, meanwhile he'd been replaced in Springfield and--this is what I was told--they thought they'd send Hatt out here. Then, within about two years, why, he was found dead in bed.

And then White was very dissatisfied back in Greenville because he had so much asthma, so I was pushed out, being the low man on the totem pole, which was understandable. Hatt came back, then he was followed by White and White stayed until his retirement and then he died within about a year. I don't know exactly the dates. He was replaced by [Dr. Ivar J.] Larsen who's there now. [Dr. Donald A. Jones is currently the chief surgeon in 1981.] This gives you background of things today.

Now, going back to previous conditions. The common problem orthopedically, outside of the congenital defects that run everywhere, at the beginning of the century was tuberculosis--TB spines, TB hips, TB knees and so on--and they were terribly disabling and deforming. When I was an intern with [Dr.] Lovett in 1920, one day we made rounds and we hadn't noticed anything unusual. He said, "Gentlemen, do you realize that we didn't see a single case of tuberculosis on the wards today?" Well, that had followed the pasteurization of milk and enforcing that in the Boston area. In fact, he'd cut it out. There were cases but that particular day there were none at all and that had struck him. Then he said, "When I was a young fellow at the old children's hospital down on Massachusetts Avenue, that was practically all we took care of."

Tuberculosis, when I came in to the Islands, was still fairly common but they had had the milk inspection and pasteurization program here, although I think it was probably not too well enforced. But we didn't have too much of it. Most of it was among the Filipinos who came.

So the other problems that were left were polio and osteomyelitis or bone abscess.

Well then, it would be four or five years before I came down when sulphanilamide was discovered. And then after I came, why, penicillin came into use and then osteomyelitis practically disappeared because if a kid would complain of a pain in his leg, the first thing a doctor would do is give him a shot of penicillin and that would end it. You wouldn't see anything more of that. That is, I wouldn't have given penicillin but a general practitioner would heal that so that the problem practically disappeared. And then, of course, polio--they'd had several epidemics here in the Islands and then they came out with a polio vaccine and it's practically disappeared so that the major problems in the Shriner's Hospital in the Islands have practically disappeared. And that's true, of course, all over the United States.

The result is that the Shriners are now working in concentrating their efforts into three or four big burn hospitals for the care of severe burns. Now here, when I came, burns were quite common especially among plantation children. I wasn't a plastic surgeon, but I straightened out arms and lifted chins and did all sorts of things with scars over the chin right down to the chest. And, really, it wasn't my field.

I remember one boy that had a Santa Claus mask and it had caught fire and this whole area was burned. His chin was down here. We took all the skin off from here, clear around to here and around here (demonstrates), and then skin-grafted him. I've never seen the boy after he left the hospital but he was in pretty good shape when he left us. A good cosmetic surgeon might have done a good deal better job; might even modify the pictures today.

M: Yeh. Did you handle any war-related cases?

S: Oh, there were a few, but very few. See, I got here the 2nd of March and Pearl Harbor was well-minded by that time. We had one little Filipino boy who was sitting on a windowsill when the Japanese came over and a machine gun bullet hit him and his legs were bent this way (demonstrates). The machine gun bullet hit him here, came out the back of his leg, went into the back of his calf and out the front of his leg. In the process, it had cut what we call the peroneal nerve--the nerve to this side of the leg. It cut it in two places and I had to repair that. Well that, of course, didn't show up when he was first hurt--that is, they didn't examine him that closely--and so I attempted to do that. That really was a neurosurgical problem rather than an orthopedic problem.

M: Yeh.

S: But it represents a thing that would be true at the beginning of the century. I've got to go further back than that because. . . . You don't mind all this background?

M: Huh uh. No.

S: Well, back in England there were physicians and barbers. And the physicians were all bound by the Hippocratic oath, among which forbade them to cut, particularly for stone, which would mean bladder stone; and they were not to give poisons. Well, there's no drug that you give that isn't poison to some degree if you get a big enough dose. So, any case that needed any surgery was referred to the barber.

M: (laughs) That's right, I've read about that.

S: What's that?

M: I've read about that. Isn't that fantastic? Any time it was serious, it was sent to the barber.

S: And in fifteen. . . . (recorder turned off and on again) . . . people's loss of belief in doctors. Want to change [the tape]?

M: No.

S: In Europe it's "Yes, my dear doctor" and they are looked upon with great awe and respect. That was the way it was originally here but people sometimes found their idols had more than feet of clay; they were all clay. The result was that they began not to believe what they were told and went out after all sorts of fancy claims. They'd take somebody's claim for the thing without any. . . . And they were sometimes justified in a thing of that sort.

Now just to give you a little bit of personal history, my mother [Eliza Letitia Steele Stewart] was paralyzed four days after my sister was born. She couldn't turn over in bed and she couldn't help herself. Many, many years later I talked to the doctor about it and she told me the story of my mother's illness. It was about twenty months that Mother couldn't do anything to help herself. She just lay there in bed and Father [Seth Fuller Stewart] was, I think, getting pretty desperate in fact. I mean, he had me and my little sister on board and a sick wife and a business. He had the best doctors that Des Moines could afford. [Dr. Stewart was born in Des Moines, Iowa.] He wanted to bring a specialist down from

Chicago and they told him it was no use, which was perfectly true because Mother's condition wasn't something that would be reversed by somebody coming down and waving a warrant over her or giving her medicine.

Well meanwhile, while she'd been in bed, why, her leg had drawn up and her back was--I don't know what condition it was in--and he wanted to take her down to Kirksville, Missouri to see Doctor. . . . I can't think of the name of the fellow that started osteopathy. [Dr. Andrew Taylor Still, 1828-1917, devised the treatment known as osteopathy in 1864 when three of his children died of spinal meningitis. He founded a school of osteopathy in Kirksville in 1892. <sup>edKBA</sup>] Oh, that was terrible. Well, in his desperation he saw an advertisement in the paper one day of an old colored preacher who claimed to be a magnetic doctor and much to the . . .

END OF SIDE 1/2ND TAPE

M: Yeh. Why was the hospital built here so much earlier?

S: Well, I have a feeling that Honolulu [residents], so far as the influential whites were concerned at that time, were mostly of New England extraction with relatively high degrees of education. They were three, four weeks away from San Francisco by boat at that time and if anything happened, why, you were just stuck with what you had here. And I think the hospital--of course, it was originally built for the care of the Hawaiians, but I think it was that education that the missionaries had and their attitude that probably led to the building of a hospital to try to take care of the sick here.

Well, in 1850 there was an illiteracy [rate] in the United States of over fifty percent. My father finished grade school but he was about fourteen years old when he went to work. He had an older brother that went to college and then two younger brothers who were living with an uncle who was a doctor, more educated then, but education was pretty low. There was a gradual development but not all over the United States.

Well then, this that I'm going to tell you next may have a degree of bias in it, but I think not. About 1901 Dr. James R. Judd returned to the Islands from having his medical training and internship at, I believe it was, [the College of] Physicians and Surgeons in New York City.

M: He was the son of Gerrit [Parmele Judd].

S: Yeh. [Dr. James Robert Judd was the grandson of Dr. Gerrit P. and Laura Fish Judd; and the son of Albert Francis and Agnes Hall Boyd Judd. <sup>edKBA</sup>] And the father of Bob

[James Robert, Jr.] Judd down in the [Hawaiian] Trust Company. And I knew him very well--[I was] a partner of his for a number of years--so I'm speaking with a little degree of authority. (chuckles)

M: Yeh.

S: But he told me that he performed the first removal of an appendix at Tripler General Hospital [now Tripler Army Medical Center] sometime after he came here. Well now, he did general practice because he delivered Marjory Atherton [Mrs. Chauncey B. Wightman]. He told me that. If I recall correctly, his fee for the delivery was thirty dollars. I would say that surgery was practically introduced in the Islands by Judd. [Dr. Joseph Emerson] Strode, who was the head of the Straub Clinic for many years, had his training under Judd. And a good many of them in the Islands--[Dr. Jay] Kuhns, and I can't think of the name of the fellow who lived on Maui in Lahaina--great big fellow--all trained under him. So he had a great deal to do with the training of the young men of Hawaii in regard to surgery.

Then I think that I'm right in what I say that about 1920 Dr. Nils [Paul] Larsen was brought down to head up Queen's Hospital--medical program at Queen's Hospital. And from all I can gather, he'd had clinics, I think, on Wednesday morning which the other doctors here in town felt were outstanding, and he very quickly became the favorite consultant in medicine in the Islands. But he got into difficulty with Queen's Hospital and with the other doctors because they accused him of using Queen's Hospital as the jumping-off place for his practice and taking their patients away from them. Well, some of those things were just perfectly natural; and some of them, there may have been something to them because he wasn't always the man with the best judgment.

I remember when he had a friend up at the hospital, a patient of some other doctor, and he just breezed in and changed orders and so on without being asked or anything else and we fellows told him, "You can't do that; it's not right." He never did see it. "Well, he's my friend!" (Lynda chuckles) That was his whole excuse. So I say he didn't always have the best judgment about things.

Well, it was essentially a general practitioner's town, with service all over the Islands. And the other thing which you've got to remember is that there were practically no automobiles, and many roads were not fit for automobiles for a long time after Judd came here, and so a man could practice just as far as his horse could carry him, and then some other horse had to pick up on the other side. (laughter) It wasn't really till the coming

of automobiles that made getting around easier that you could begin to have specialization here.

I think [Dr.] Rolla O. Brown was either [University of] Pennsylvania 1917 or 1919, I'm not sure which. Well, he was a thoroughly trained neurologist from the Mayo Clinic. He had his training there.

M: Mayo Clinic?

S: Mm hmm. And he couldn't make a living down here because the doctors wouldn't refer anything to him, so he had to go into general practice. Now he told me that himself.

M: Hmm.

S: So you see, the problem wasn't a simple problem.

M: Yeh.

S: Well even when I came here I know there were doctors on the outlying islands that wouldn't refer anything to the orthopedic clinics. "I take care of everything."

M: Oh, they didn't want to get rid of anybody.

S: No, and some of them are pretty poor. Well, I think that gives you a pretty fair idea of . . .

M: Yeh. Yeh, it does.

S: . . . medicine in the islands and its background.

M: Mm hmm. Maybe you could go on and tell me something about how you got into The [Honolulu] Medical Group. [Dr. Stewart was with The Medical Group from 1942 until 1956 and then continued with them as a consultant.]

S: How what?

M: You know, you went into The Medical Group then after that.

S: Well . . .

M: That was a specialized--a group of specialists.

S: No.

M: Specialists? No?

S: Not to any extent at all. I've written that up and that's in the archives of The Medical Group.

M: Now wait a minute. Could you just sort of give me the general . . .

S: I'm not sure when the Straub Clinic was started but I think about in the early twenties [January 1, 1921]. They were more or less a group of general practitioners at that time. Then in 1926 [Dr. Arthur van Horn] Molyneux and [Dr. Francis J.] Halford graduated from [the University of] Pennsylvania and came down here as interns. Then they finished. They wanted to go in with Dr. Judd. I think Dr. [Edwin D.] Kilbourne was doing nose and throat at that time, and so Dr. Judd and Dr. Kilbourne charged them five thousand dollars apiece for association. That was 1927 or '28 I would say.

Well then, The Medical Group itself was not formed until 1934 and Larsen was brought in at that time. Well, that gave them the outstanding surgeon and the outstanding medical men in the community, and Halford and Molyneux were doing general practice. And then they brought in a fellow from Kauai--I can't think of his name now; I just met him once--[Dr. Raymond J. Mansfield] who sort of developed the obstetrical department. And then Halford's daughter took sick in San Francisco in 1938 or '39 and he came back and he insisted that they bring Dr. Don [Donald C.] Marshall down here as a pediatrician.

[Dr. Joseph] Joe Palma--I don't know Joe's background --had been doing pediatric practice before that. He was connected with the Straub Clinic and [Dr. Guy C.] Milnor was doing obstetrics up there when I came here. He was also from Penn. There were a bunch of Penn men in this area. Then in 1939 to '41 The Medical Group took in two or three other fellows that had been interns here. I don't know that they had any particular specialty at all. And then in 1939 or '40 they built a small part of the present medical group [building].

M: Building.

S: Um hmm. And they rented part of it to a dentist. Well then, December 7th came and Dr. [Francis D.] Nance was on his way back to Shanghai, where he had been raised and practiced, and the war broke out and he and his wife and family were stranded here in Honolulu. He was a pediatrician and they got him to work up at Punahou [School] which, at that time, was the head of the engineering department of the Army. It was all surrounded by barbed wire.

Then I landed here in connection with Shriner's Hospital on the 2nd of March and on the 15th, why, I was a member of The Medical Group. Well, [Dr. Alfred L.] Craig, meanwhile, had come down here as an orthopedic man and he was trying to get along and had his physical difficulties

and I was replacing him. Cooper was also trying to get going but he didn't make much of a hit with the men.

Then after the war, why, then they began to import men who had practiced in different specialties. It really wasn't till after the war that you began to have the development of specialties to a great degree here in the Islands.

M: Hmm.

S: [Dr. Forrest Joy] Pinkerton, when I came, was doing eye, ear, nose and throat; and the elder [Dr. James A.] Morgan was doing eye work. There were several eye, ear, nose and throat men here. That was the common specialty that really led out. Then other specialists came in and the clinics began to grow, increase in size and complexity.

M: How many people were there in The [Medical] Group when you joined it, do you know?

S: Oh, there was Judd, Larsen, Halford, Molyneux, Mansfield, Marshall. Then I was the next full partner. Nance wouldn't come in till after the war, till he'd gone back to Shanghai and see if he wanted to return here to practice. He was offered, but he just refused it. I can understand. His heart was in China; he'd been born in China and of course nobody knew when the Communists would take over and things were pretty much in a harum-scarum situation by that time.

M: Yeh. Did you ever have anything to do with the plantation hospitals?

S: What?

M: Did you ever work in any of the plantation hospitals?

S: Um, yes. I was called several times during the war, and then more after the war, to go to some of these outlying hospitals, not here on this island particularly--although I did some here--but to the other islands to take care of broken hips and things of that sort. The fellows and I would go over for the Shrine. They would bring their patients in for me to see, or have me go and see them at the hospital, in that case. Well that was an all-day job. That is, if you went to Kauai in the morning, why, you got there in the morning and you operated and had lunch there and then you came back sometime in the afternoon whenever the planes left. And some places you had to spend all night because you couldn't get back the same day.

M: Did you ever have anything to do with the leprosy problem?

S: Emergency?

M: Leprosy problem. Of course that would be outside of here.

S: No. No, everyone of us had to observe and I was taken over to the leper settlement to operate several times. That is, a person would wear a hole in the sole of their foot and the bones would start to stick out.

M: They wouldn't know it?

S: They wouldn't know it. Then I would be taken over to clean up the mess. We wouldn't give them an anesthetic; we'd just go ahead and operate. They didn't feel it.

M: You're sure of that.

S: Yeh. (Lynda laughs) Heavens, we wouldn't have operated if they could have felt it without an anesthetic. You know, that's one of the characteristics of leprosy, the neurological form, that they become anesthetic, particularly the feet and the fingers, hands.

M: Yeh. (long pause) What else can you tell me about things in general? (laughs) What time is it getting to be?

S: It's eleven-thirty a.m.

M: Do you mind if I have a cigarette?

S: What? No.

M: You don't mind smoking?

S: No.

M: Were you ever involved in any flu epidemics here or any type epidemics at all? I guess you wouldn't be with your kind of specialty.

S: No.

M: Did you ever have to deal with any of the famous people around here, as patients that is?

S: Oh, yes. I've had to deal with a number of them, but I would be a little bit hesitant to talk about those things.

M: Oh yeh. Yeh.

S: It wasn't till well after the war--long after the war-- that they began to have anesthetists here, an anesthesiologist.

M: Oh.

S: You'd get another doctor to give it [the anesthetic] or the nurse would give it or something of that sort. Some of them were good and some of them were terrible.

M: That must have been a problem, huh?

S: Well it was a problem all over the United States. When I was at the Massachusetts General where the clinical use of ether was first publicized [in 1846 by Dr. W.T.G. Morton of Boston]--I won't say developed; it was developed in Georgia by a man named [Dr. Crawford W.] Long about two or three years earlier [in March 1842]--they were giving the worst anesthetics that I ever saw in 1921.

M: What do you mean, the worst anesthetics?

S: Well, I'll make a contrast so you'll appreciate it. I had my first training with [Dr. Harvey W.] Cushing at the Brigham Hospital and he had a nurse anesthetist by the name of Hunt, Miss Hunt. She would go in to see the patient. She was a little English woman. She was very soothing in her speech. I don't mean syrupy but just quiet and assuring. She'd say, "Now we'll have to put a towel over your eyes" and there would be no objection to that. And then she would take a little bit of what we call a cone that was a sort of an egg-shaped mask about like that. "Now I'm going to put this over your nose. Just breathe naturally." Then she'd put a drop or two of essence of orange on it and they would breathe that, and then she'd drop a drop of ether on it. Then she'd drop a second drop and a third drop and gradually increase it and they went off to sleep like that.

M: Well, she was a real good . . .

S: They would go off to sleep and they would wake up with the usual retching that goes with an ether anesthesia. She couldn't do much about that till after the anesthesia was over. She had a machine that she gave anesthesia with to Cushing's patients who were lying face down, because he was operating on their heads and she couldn't work up around the face. She'd put a tube in the nose after she'd get them to sleep. But she was a whiz-bang of an anesthetist. When he left Harvard and went to Yale he took her with him. That was the way I learned to give anesthesia.

Over at the Children's Hospital we had a couple of assistants who gave pretty good anesthetics.

Then down at the Massachusetts General (recorder turned off and on again) they took a strip of stiff red cardboard--it has a special name, called manila board, something like they use for covers for manuscripts and stuff of that sort--and they would fold that into a tube. It would be about that deep (demonstrates) and surround the nose. That was wrapped in a towel and then they stuffed it with gauze. They would clamp that on the nose, hold it on tight and just pour the ether in, and the people would struggle and fight and scream until they just went to sleep from exhaustion almost.

I had the nurses try it on me one day. Well, it was just a choking thing; this mass of ether suddenly hits you. Why, the only thing you could do was to choke. That was the only kind of anesthesia they had around Massachusetts General.

M: I thought that was supposed to be a real fine . . .

S: And that was supposed to be the tops, but it didn't compare with the Brigham [Hospital] either in its technique of giving anesthesia or the technique of the surgery. Well, I hope they've improved in the last fifty years. (laughter)

M: You were still using just ether when . . .

S: Yeh. We didn't begin to use gases to any extent till after I was in private practice, and then . . .

END OF SIDE 2/2ND TAPE

END OF INTERVIEW

Re-transcribed and edited by Linda I.L. Tubbs

Audited, edited, and final typing done by Katherine B. Allen

NOTE:

(p.5) In 1898 Miss Eleanore Simpson was teaching at what was then called Maunaolu Seminary in Makawao, Maui, a mission "'Home School' for Hawaiian girls" which was founded in 1861 by Mr. and Mrs. C.B. Andrews and was "an out-growth of the 'East Maui Female Seminary.'" <sup>U</sup>KBA A music major, she graduated from Oberlin College. edSFS, Jr.

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## THE WATUMULL FOUNDATION ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

In May 1971, the Watumull Foundation initiated an Oral History Project.

The project was formally begun on June 24, 1971 when Katherine B. Allen was selected to interview kamaainas and longtime residents of Hawaii in order to preserve their experiences and knowledge. In July, Lynda Mair joined the staff as an interviewer.

During the next seventeen months, eighty-eight persons were interviewed. Most of these taped oral histories were transcribed by November 30, 1972.

Then the project was suspended indefinitely due to the retirement of the foundation's chairman, Ellen Jensen Watumull.

In February 1979, the project was reactivated and Miss Allen was recalled as director and editor.

Three sets of the final transcripts, typed on acid-free Permalife Bond paper, have been deposited respectively in the Archives of Hawaii, the Hamilton Library at the University of Hawaii, and the Cooke Library at Punahou School.